

DECISION ITEM



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	7 JUNE 2016	5
FYLDE COAST MYHOMECHOICE AREA LETTINGS PLAN 2016/17			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

Although the Council does not own or manage any social housing stock all local authorities are required to have an allocation scheme. The allocation scheme comprises of two documents. The first of which is a Fylde Area Lettings Plan that sets out how to make best use of the stock, taking into account the Council is not a stock holding authority and as a consequence, are reliant on our Registered Providers. The second document is a Fylde Coast Consistent Assessment Policy that sets out how applicants will be placed in different priority bands when they apply to join the housing register. These policies are delivered by the Housing Providers through the MyHomeChoice Scheme. This report details a summary of the consultation on the Area Lettings Plan and provides a copy of the final draft Area Lettings Plan 2016/17.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the results of the consultation for the Area Lettings Plan with MyHomeChoice partners
2. To approve the final draft of the Area Lettings Plan for adoption for 2016/17

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Minutes of Cabinet 16th February 2011

1. The new Allocation scheme for the borough is adopted
2. The Partnership Agreement is entered into as soon as a final draft has been agreed by the Council's legal officer
3. The SCL system is procured as outlined in this report
4. The set-up and running costs of the new CBL system are agreed as outlined in the report

Minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee 10th January 2013

1. To note the review of the allocation policy and to welcome the report of the consultation responses to a future meeting.
2. To recommend that the Council approves the draft Fylde Coast Tenancy Strategy
3. To note the new power in the Localism Act 2011 that enables Local Authorities to discharge their homelessness duty using the private rented sector.

Minutes of Policy Development Scrutiny Committee 23rd May 2013

1. The consultation results be noted
2. To recommend that Cabinet adopt the draft Housing Allocation Policy

3. To recommend that Cabinet approve the Fylde Coast Tenancy Strategy.

Minutes of Cabinet 26th June 2013

1. Approve and adopt the final draft Housing Allocation Policy
2. Approve and adopt the final draft Fylde Coast Tenancy Strategy.

Minutes of Policy Development Scrutiny Committee 13th November 2014

1. To note the summary of activity over the last 12 months
2. To note the proposed Area Lettings Plan for consultation
3. To request the results of the consultation were reported to a future meeting of the committee

Minutes of Policy Development Scrutiny Committee 12th March 2015

1. To note the results of the consultation for the Area Lettings Plan with MyHomeChoice partners;
2. To approve the final draft of the Area Lettings Plan for adoption and;
3. To request an update to the appropriate committees regarding planning agreements and sheltered housing, the appropriate time.

Affordable housing provided through planning obligations was discussed at the Environment Health and Housing committee 8th September 2015 and a recommendation was presented to Development Management Committee 16th September. Resolved to

1. That future S106 agreements entered into by Fylde Borough Council to secure affordable housing should not reflect the occupancy restrictions as set out in the local lettings policy
2. To engage with representatives of registered social landlords to help feed into a review of policy for truly affordable housing.

Lancashire County Council proposal regarding the support funding for sheltered housing was discussed by the Environment Health and Housing Committee on 5th January 2016 and a consultation response was approved by the Committee on 23rd February 2016.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services

(Value for Money)

✓

Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council **(Clean and Green)**

✓

Working with all partners **(Vibrant Economy)**

✓

To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live

(A Great Place to Live)

✓

Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit

(A Great Place to Visit)

✓

REPORT

1. The Area Lettings Plan provides an update on the issues raised by the Registered Providers in 2015-16 and also details a proposal for the coming year. Registered Providers have been consulted on the plan and were given the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions. A final draft of the Area Lettings Plan is detailed in Appendix 1.

Consultation comments received	
Annual letting plan reference	Comment made
<p>3. Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment – p.4</p> <p>“For Fylde, if the economy is to grow, there will need to be in migration of working age people to replace the large numbers of people who are going to retire in the period to 2032”.</p>	<p>Comment</p> <p>How is this possible if the lettings criteria is restrictive to Fylde?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Area Lettings Plan is proposing flexibility with allowing up to 25% of properties to be let outside of MHC following a proposed criteria.</p>
<p>8. Moving forward on low demand issues – p.9</p> <p>“It is used in historically hard to let areas or hard to let property types and/or in areas where historically there has been limited affordable housing provision”</p>	<p>Comment</p> <p>This be removed and Housing Associations given the flexibility on this.</p> <p>Previous Area Lettings Plan provided the option to let all sheltered accommodation to any applicants regardless of local connection. Would request this be re-instated in the plan.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Area Lettings Plan is proposing some flexibility with allowing up to 25% of properties to be let outside of MHC following a proposed criteria.</p>
<p>9. Scheme / Area specific lettings restrictions</p> <p>Chain Lane, Staining</p> <p>S106 local connection to Staining. In the event that after a reasonable time as agreed by the local authority, there are no qualifying persons meeting the criteria for local connection can be offered to a Fylde connection. Reasonable time 3 letting cycles or 3 weeks.</p>	<p>Comment</p> <p>I propose that 2 letting cycles is a more reasonable period in the case of Staining.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>S106 notes that after a reasonable period agreed by the local authority.</p>

2. Two issues were raised by partners and were included in the 2015-16 plan. The first issue concerning planning obligations (S106 agreements) was looked at and reports were presented to the Environment Health and Housing committee and Development Management Committee. All the detail was examined and discussed and the Development Management Committee resolved that future S106 agreements to secure affordable housing should not reflect the occupancy restrictions as set out in the local lettings policy. However it was requested that the Local Authority engage with Registered Providers to help feed into a review of policy for truly affordable housing.

3. The second issue was regarding low demand for some properties. Registered providers had asked the local authority to consider relaxing the local connection rules around hard to let properties. Through the Area Lettings Plan this was discussed at the Fylde Coast Housing Providers meeting and a pilot was designed to be carried out across all three local authority areas. The pilot was completed between 1st July 2015 and 31st December 2015.
4. The pilot did not allow the relaxation in local connection rules, it did however allow the registered providers to let up to 25% of their vacant properties outside of the MyHomeChoice scheme. The aim of this was to be able to reach prospective applicants who would not normally access social housing. The pilot was used as a way to find new applicants and all applications were assessed as normal using the Common Assessment Policy.
5. Registered providers were expected to comply with local connection rules, ensure that applicants had some form of housing need and that all results were reported back to the partnership.
6. Results from the pilot showed that, it was used to find tenants for historically hard to let properties, and Progress owned properties in the Fylde pilot were let to households with a Fylde connection. It should also be noted that within each organisations pilot a significant number of applicants were actually already registered with MyHomeChoice. Certainly for the applicants in the Progress Housing Group pilot 3 of the 7 were registered with MyHomeChoice but had closed applications due to local connection not being verified. This has raised important questions regarding marketing in general of MyHomeChoice and processing of applications that is making it easier for applicants to provide information to complete their application. Details of the pilot and results are presented in the final draft of the Area Lettings Plan. An actual summary of the pilot results is detailed in Appendix 2.
7. To note during 2015-16 a total of 126 lettings were completed in Fylde. If the proposal to allow up to 25% of lettings outside of MyHomeChoice was operational this would have resulted in up to 31 lettings completed outside of MyHomeChoice.
8. Following the results of the pilot registered providers in Fylde have requested that this is adopted as a tool to help tackle low demand for certain properties. A proposed list of criteria has been drawn up that registered providers would need to follow, this is listed below
 - a. Properties should always be advertised for one bidding round on MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast
 - b. The local connection criteria is applied in all cases
 - c. It is used in historically hard to let areas and historically hard to let property types
 - d. Applicants will need to demonstrate housing need including affordability issues
 - e. It can only be used for up to 25% of lettings
 - f. All partners will be asked for lettings details on a quarterly basis
 - g. The criteria and figures will be reviewed again after one year
9. It should be noted that the pilot has highlighted a gap in knowledge of and overall marketing of MyHomeChoice and processing issues with applications. It is recommended via the Area Lettings Plan that this is also reviewed over the coming year. Offering registered providers the flexibility to let outside of MyHomeChoice is just one tool that can be used in dealing with low demand issues.
10. Therefore Members are asked to consider the results of the pilot, the proposed criteria and the recommendation to allow registered providers to complete up to 25% of lettings outside of MyHomeChoice. Blackpool and Wyre authorities are waiting for the MyHomeChoice partnership agreement to be signed before the Area Lettings Plans for 16/17 are taken to Committee.
11. The Area Lettings Plan has also been updated following the recent R (H and others) v Ealing LBC (2016) case and advice from Legal Services at Fylde BC in regard to the Equalities Act, European Convention on Human Rights, Public Sector Duty and Children's Act 2004. Namely in Appendix 2;

the definition for full-time employed households for Band E status has been amended to reference the Common Assessment Policy definition to working households: and, local connection is, as is defined in 5. Area Lettings Plan 2016-2017. There is a need to better reflect disabled persons who are unable to work or undertake voluntary work within the Area Lettings Plan and this will be taken forward via the Fylde Coast Housing Providers during 2016/17.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	None
Legal	None
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Kirstine Riding	01253 658569	18/05/2016	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Common Assessment Policy My guide to applying for a home My guide to finding a home Fylde BC – Housing Waiting list - MyHomeChoice	2014	https://www.myhomechoicefyldecoast.co.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/176.aspx http://www.fylde.gov.uk/resident/housing/housingwaitinglist/

Attached documents

1. Appendix 1 - Draft Area Lettings Plan 2016-17
2. Appendix 2 - Results of the pilot to let a % of properties outside MyHomeChoice



Fylde Borough Council
Area Lettings Plan
2016-17

Fylde Area Lettings Plan

1. Background

Each local authority has a statutory responsibility to make best use of its scarce housing resources and ensure that, as far as possible, priority for re-housing is based on a combination of re-housing needs and waiting time. It does this by setting out how social housing will be allocated to people in need within its area in an Allocation Scheme. The Allocation Scheme for Fylde comprises two elements – a Consistent Assessment Policy and a borough-specific Area Lettings Plan.

The role of the Consistent Assessment Policy is to set out how applicants for social housing are assessed when they register their requirements for a home, and to provide consistent procedures for the operation of the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast system across the three local authority areas.

This Area Lettings Plan maps out the supply and demand issues impacting on social housing specifically in the borough of Fylde. Using this information, the Area Lettings Plan sets out priorities and vision of how social housing is let in the borough over the next 12 months. The Registered Providers where possible will work to achieve the priorities in the plan when letting their stock. The appropriate mechanisms will be set up within the choice based lettings IT system to ensure the plan can be monitored and reviewed each year. The plan is a strategic tool that enables lettings by registered providers to be linked to wider strategic issues and ensures best use is made of their stock available. This ensures that Fylde Borough Council is carrying out its duty as a non-stock holding strategic housing authority and is making best use of the scarce social housing stock.

While the needs of applicants will be assessed in a consistent way across the Fylde Coast, each local authority has its own Area Lettings Plan to reflect different demand and supply issues and local priorities. Fylde BC will consult with registered providers on the detail of the lettings plan when it is developed each year. As lettings are made by registered providers because they own and manage the social housing stock, the local authority is reliant on them for delivery of the priorities set out in the Area Lettings Plan. The MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast system provides comprehensive data on lettings that is monitored to understand the extent to which the priorities of the Area Lettings Plan are being implemented, and to review the Plan on an area basis.

The existing plan was developed as part of the implementation of MyHomeChoice. The priorities have been reviewed and will change to reflect future lettings in particular an increase in new build properties.

2. Strategic priorities

The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy 2009 sets out the overall challenges and priorities for providing Fylde Coast residents with a great place to live – both in terms of individual homes that meet households' needs at a price that they can afford, and in providing attractive residential neighbourhood environments where people can lead fulfilling and productive

lives. There are three objectives that particularly need to be taken into account in framing Area Lettings Plans:

- provide more of the affordable homes that are in the highest demand
- reduce concentrations of deprivation on large social housing estates by improving the neighbourhood environments, re-developing unpopular housing stock, and diversifying tenures
- provide new opportunities for people at risk of homelessness, and those without work, to make a positive contribution to the local community

Social rented housing plays a small but important role within the whole housing market. Along with private rented housing subsidised through Housing Benefit, it provides homes that are affordable to people on low incomes, and is therefore critical in meeting a fundamental need for a significant proportion of the local population. Social rented homes offer security of tenure, low rents that people can afford without further assistance if they are in low paid work, accommodation at Decent Homes standards, and reliable standards of management and repair. The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy sets out the need for the provision of additional social rented properties because the existing stock of socially rented homes cannot meet the high demand.

Despite efforts to provide more new homes, a shortage of social rented homes, will continue for the foreseeable future. This means that difficult decisions have to be made to prioritise who gets access to a limited resource. It also means that we need to be using existing social rented homes to their full potential, and it may be appropriate to use the allocations scheme to help people who want to move out of social rented homes that are larger than they need (“under-occupying”) to smaller homes.

Issues and actions in Fylde?

It should be noted that the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy 2009 has come to the end of its lifespan and will be refreshed. It should be noted that the issues below may be changed or added to:

Fylde’s more detailed issues and priorities for action from the Fylde Action Plan include:

- The shortage of available social rented accommodation compared with demand is especially high in Fylde. We need to carefully manage expectations and offer alternative options.
- Younger people are not being attracted to Fylde, nor persuaded to stay; the high cost of housing is driving them out of the area.
- Sustainability of rural communities / services
- Large and growing population of older people - making effective use of properties suitable for people with mobility problems / close to support services
- Establish a plan for changing the balance of specialist support for older people – may become appropriate to widen access to properties currently designated as sheltered if support is increasingly provided wherever people live rather than focused on designated accommodation.

- Agree and deliver plans for meeting the housing needs of people requiring long term care, including people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities -
- We need to provide opportunities for people in specialist supported accommodation to move on to general needs properties when they no longer need specialist support.

Appendix 1 contains an analysis of current applicants registered on MyHomeChoice for 2015/16.

3. Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Within Fylde there are a significant number of detached properties, particularly in the rural areas, while there has been substantial delivery of flats in Lytham & St Annes such that almost 90% of the borough's flatted stock is located within this area.

Overall, with regards to tenure, owner occupation levels are high, while in the context of national levels the proportion of social rented stock is low. Whilst the proportion of private rented stock is lower than in Blackpool, there are higher concentrations in the urban areas. The housing stock is typically relatively large in Fylde, with larger dwellings historically delivered in the rural areas in particular, and coupled with an older population, there is a relatively high level of under-occupation. House prices are high in Fylde, relative to the rest of the Fylde Coast, with properties on average invoking a premium of at least £40,000 over comparable properties elsewhere, and areas of the borough remain among the least affordable in the Fylde Coast.

For Fylde, if the economy is to grow, there will need to be in migration of working age people to replace the large numbers of people who are going to retire in the period to 2032. New housing will be needed to accommodate these people. The SHMA across the Fylde Coast was first published in February 2014 and updated in November 2014 following an updated analysis of housing need in light of the 2012 Sub National Population Projections. The SHMA forms part of the evidence base of the Emerging Local Plan to 2032¹.

For Fylde, the 2012 Sub National Housing Projections project an increase of 4,641 households over the period 2011 – 2032, equivalent to an average of 221 new households per annum over this period, this is translated into a modelled need for approximately 237 dwellings per annum. Historic market conditions, including slightly worsening affordability and historic under-provision of housing against plan targets, in Fylde are likely to have impacted upon projections of household formation rates of selected younger households groups. Therefore need for affordable housing remains high at 247 dpa, this suggests the need to ensure that the level of provision is uplifted in relation to basic demographic derived demand to ensure the balance between supply and demand does not exacerbate affordability issues.

¹ <http://www.fylde.gov.uk/council/planning-policy--local-plan-/local-development-framework/evidence-base/>

4. Supported People Funding

Lancashire County Council identified £4million of savings to the Supporting People budget implemented April 2015. Various client groups within the Supporting People Programme have had budgets cut including funding for sheltered housing to be reduced by £2.5million. The County council need to deliver £176 million of savings by April 2018. All areas of the County Council are considering budget options therefore further funding cuts to Supporting People cannot be ruled out. To note Supporting People budget funds the support costs for people who are eligible for assistance whilst housing benefit funds the housing element. This proposal relates to the support element only for sheltered residents.

On the 16th November 2015 the LCC published proposals to deliver further savings of £65m over the next 2 years and on the 11th February 2016 LCC full Council made its decision to approve budget proposals to deliver further savings.

The Proposals to cease non-statutory element of Supporting People funding

- Cease the non-statutory element of the Supporting People service from 1st April 2016
- Revenue funding to be provided to support homeless 16 and 17 year olds (current proposal approx. half of current SP funding for young people's services)
- Use £10.15m reserves in 16/17 to fund the 12 month 'transition period' to enable appropriate cessation of Supporting People contracts/arrangements
- Apply waivers, as appropriate, to Supporting People contracts during the transition period
- Where contracts are in place until March 2017 or beyond, contracts will cease on 31st March 2017
- Appropriate notice will be given for services/contracts which expire on a date after March 2017 to bring them to an end on 31st March 2017

A report was taken to Environmental Health and Housing Committee, Fylde BC on the 5th January 2015 that detailed the proposals announced on the 5th November 2015 by Lancashire County Council (LCC), to cease the non-statutory element of the Supporting People Funding from the 1st April 2015 as part of measures to deliver further savings of £65m over the next 2 years.

The Committee expressed concerns in the strongest possible terms regarding the removal of the proposed funding. Fylde BC held an event on the 22nd January 2016 that brought together Service Providers, Fylde BC Housing Benefit and Homelessness and Housing Advice teams and Supported People Team at Lancashire County Council to consider the implications on services within Fylde and direct impact on service providers. The findings from the session were split into two Parts and have been used to inform a full consultation response sent to Lancashire County Council that is intended to gather views about the budget proposals and any ideas or concerns respondents had, running from 05/04/2016 to 24/06/2016;

- Part I considers the wider implications on service provision for vulnerable adults within Fylde and transitional arrangements prior to the funding being withdrawn

completely in March 2017 and alternative options available to provide the service and support required.

- Part 2 gives information on the direct impact on service providers as a result of the funding being withdrawn for non-statutory services.

Implications from withdrawal of SP funded services in Fylde

- Will affect the most vulnerable people
- Housing Benefit unable to fund service charges
- Increase in homelessness within Fylde with more vulnerable clients in crisis approaching the local authority
- Joint working between service providers will be affected as services become over stretched organisations from a resource planning perspective will need to consider what they can realistically provide with the funding and paid or voluntary resources available to them.
- Accommodation based services will be lost
- Purpose built single use buildings once used for accommodation based services will need to be reconfigured, then cannot be reinstated.
- Shift from long term funding to short term annual funding will impact on resource planning with services being spot purchased based on individual needs
- Ultimately there will be a loss of skilled staff and service restructuring.

5. Area Lettings Plan 2016-2017

In Fylde, priority will be given to applicants who have a local connection to the borough of Fylde, either through current residence or work. This will be achieved through the following mechanism.

When deciding eligibility applicants must be able to show they have a local connection. Applicants have a local connection if they can demonstrate one of the following:-

- Local residency – they have lived in local authority of Fylde consecutively for the last three years
- Permanent employment in the area of Fylde
- Close family association – has a parent, adult child, adult brother or sister who is living in the area of Fylde and has done for the last 5 years
- Applicants who are serving in the Armed Forces and who are either employed or are resident in the area of Fylde
- Former armed forces personnel who had a previous residence in the area of Fylde as a result of a former posting in the area of Fylde within the last 5 years
- Homeless applicants where there is a statutory duty to provide housing by Fylde Borough Council.

For priority when bidding, there are 3 levels of priority:

1. Connection to the local authority
2. Connection to the Fylde Coast
3. No connection to either of the above (Armed forces only)

This means that - for example - in Fylde properties will be offered to those with a Fylde connection first and then will only be made available to people from the other two authorities if no one with a qualifying Fylde connection, as outlined above has bid for the property. The property will then only be made available to people outside Fylde Coast area if no one from the three local authority areas has bid.

This means that generally properties will be allocated as follows:

- Band A – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
- Band B – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
- Band C – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
- Band D – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
- Band E – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
- Band F – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
- Band A – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)
- Band B – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)
- Band C – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)
- Band D – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)
- Band E – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)

Band F – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)

6. Section 106 Agreements

The 2015-16 Area Lettings Plan noted that the priority for bidding is not aligned to current S106 agreements which only allow lettings to those with a Fylde connection; the aim of the plan was to resolve this anomaly. The Environment Health and Housing committee made a recommendation to the Development Management Committee in September 2015 which was discussed in detail. The Development Management Committee resolved that future S106 agreements should not reflect occupancy restrictions as set out in the local lettings policy. It was resolved to engage with representatives of registered social landlords to help feed into a review of policy for truly affordable housing.

7. Low demand issues

The 2015-16 plan noted low demand for some properties in particular sheltered housing. On the 14th May 2015 a MyHomeChoice Operational Group meeting was called to discuss issues emerging with the letting of properties across the Fylde Coast. One approach the group was in favour of was piloting letting a percentage of properties outside of MHC in order to attract a different client group.

The group were unanimous in favour of this approach for the following reasons:

- Potential economies of scale doing this as a partnership
- It would allow partners to compete directly with the private rented sector and raise the profile of Social Housing
- There is an opportunity to attract new customers – balance communities
- The changes through “Right to Move” will allow an element of wider Local Connection eligibility for households with an offer or employment

However there was discussion around some areas of concern in particular the need to ensure that statutory allocation requirements are met (reasonable preference) and the need to ensure that statutory guidance is considered, for example transparency as to who gets social housing in the area.

On the 17th June 2015 a separate meeting was arranged with the Fylde Coast Housing Providers to work up the parameters of the pilot.

- A need to comply with local connection to each authority
- Possible flexibility around other prioritization of need
- Opportunities to attract new customers, and enable applicants to find somewhere quickly
- Ensure that the process is transparent for all partners to be clear on what is expected

- A need to meet statutory requirements to house people in housing need, by demonstrating that a majority of lets go to people in a 'reasonable preference' category
- It was agreed in principal to pilot a new approach to letting a proportion of properties outside of MHC for 3-6 months
- Proposed that 10-25% of lettings are completed outside MHC
- RSLs would be given some freedom to define which properties to let outside of MHC but it was required that a report be brought back to the partnership detailing which properties were let and to whom.
- A need for clear monitoring arrangements

Results

A summary of the main findings:

- Pilot ran from 1st July to 31st December 2015
- Local connection applied in all cases
- It was for historically hard to let properties
- It was used to gauge demand in traditionally low demand areas
- All properties were let to households with a local connection to Fylde
- Methods used – Rightmove, McDonalds, Moving Soon
- Majority of properties were Upper Floor Flats
- It attracted households who would not traditionally register for social landlord stock
- It attracted employed households
- The majority of lets demonstrated housing need

8. Moving forward on low demand issues

Within Fylde it is accepted that the ability to be able to advertise properties outside of the Choice Based lettings scheme allows for greater flexibility when allocating properties to applicants.

The results of the pilot have been reviewed and the ability to advertise properties outside of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme will be presented to members for their approval. It is proposed that this amendment could start once a new Partnership Agreement is signed.

When RSLs are operating within Fylde and adopting to use the flexibility of letting outside of MHC Fylde Coast, the following criteria is proposed:

- Properties should always be advertised for one bidding round on MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast.
- The local connection criteria is applied in all cases
- It is used in historically hard to let areas or hard to let property types and/or in areas where historically there has been limited affordable housing provision
- Applicants will need to demonstrate a housing need

- It can only be used for 25% of lettings
- All partners will be asked for lettings details on a quarterly basis

If this proposal is approved by Members it will be reviewed after year one. It is important to note that this proposal is one tool available in attracting new customers to MyHomeChoice. The pilot has highlighted a gap in the advertising and marketing of MyHomeChoice which will need to be addressed over the coming months.

9. Scheme / Area specific lettings restrictions

In some parts of the borough, or for some specialist housing stock, there is a need to have further restrictions on who can live there. These restrictions will be made clear to people on the waiting list when these properties are advertised.

Broadly, there are two types of restrictions:

a). Where priority is given to applicants from particular localities, rather than to people from the whole of the borough (or wider Fylde Coast). This is especially the case in rural areas where affordable housing has been built on the understanding that priority will be given to people from the immediate local area. In some cases, these restrictions are legally enforceable through Section 106 Agreements signed when the homes were given planning approval. The areas of Fylde that have such restrictions are:

Willowfieds Wesham	S106 local connection to Kirkham or Wesham required. Widest connection is to Fylde	NFH
Crossing Gates Wesham	S106 local connection to Kirkham or Wesham required. Widest connection is to Fylde	Muir
Clifton Drive North St Annes	S106 first preference to people with a connection to Lytham or ST Annes. Widest connection is to Fylde	Great Places Housing Group
Mythop Road Weeton	S106 local connection to Parish of Weeton-with-Preese required. Then connections to Staining, Greenhalgh, Medlar with Wesham and Westby will be considered.	NFH
Lytham Quays Lytham	S106 local connection to Lytham or St Annes (current residence, employment, give/receive care). Widest connection to Fylde	Great Places Housing Group

Rock Works St Annes	S106 local connection to Fylde	Great Places Housing Group
The Close Kirkham	S106 local connection to Parish of Medlar with Wesham or Kirkham. Widest connection to Fylde	NFH
Wrea Green	S106 local connection to Ribby-with-Wrea Parish	Great Places
Orders Lane	S106 local connection to the Parish of Medlar with Wesham or Kirkham and age restriction 40 years+ or disabled.	NFH
Yew Tree Gardens Whitehills Westby	S106 local connection to Westby, Staining, Weeton, Wrea Green, Warton, Lytham St Annes. After 6 weeks can be offered to a Fylde connection	Muir
Harbour Lance Warton	S106 local connection to Freckleton or Warton. After 6 months can be offered to a Fylde connection	NFH
Chain Lane, Staining	S106 local connection to Staining. In the event that after a reasonable time as agreed by the local authority, there are no qualifying persons meeting the criteria for local connection can be offered to a Fylde connection. Reasonable time 3 letting cycles or 3 weeks.	ForViva

b). Where eligibility for certain types of housing is restricted by age, type of household, or health conditions. Within the current stock there are a number of ground floor properties and adapted properties. Priority for these properties will be given to people with a specific ground floor need and or a need for an adapted property.

The social housing in Fylde that has these types of restriction is:

Saltcotes Place	Local Lettings Plan implemented by New Fylde Housing	Progress
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Heyhouses Rigby Court	As part of the planning consent the upper floor flats are to be let to people aged 55+. The Ground floor flats are to be let to people who are disabled with no age limit set.	Progress
Orders Lane Kirkham	As part of the planning consent the upper floor flats will be let to a person aged 40+. For couples the age of the eldest tenant will be taken into account. Ground floor flats will be let to applicants with a need for an adapted property or specific ground floor need	Progress
Heyhouses mobility bungalows	As part of the planning consent 4 fully adapted bungalows are available. They will be let to applicants with the appropriate need e.g. full wheelchair users	Progress

10. Rural Lettings – existing stock

There are properties located in Little Eccleston, Elswick, Greenhalgh, Singleton, Weeton, Clifton, Newton, Staining, Wrea Green, Salwick and Singleton and are considered to be rural lettings. These properties require a local connection to the parish which includes current residence in the parish, family residing in the parish, the need to give or receive care in the parish, or other long standing connection. Therefore properties in these areas will be allocated as follows

(Local Plan period to 2032 divides rural settlements into Tier 1 Larger Rural Settlements: i.e. Newton, Staining and Wrea Green or Tier 2 Smaller Rural Settlements: i.e. Clifton, Elswick, Singleton and Weeton)

Band A – Local connection (Parish)

Band B – Local connection (Parish)

Band C – Local connection (Parish)

Band D – Local connection (Parish)

Band E – Local connection (Parish)

Band F – Local connection (Parish)

Band A – Local connection (Fylde)

Band B – Local connection (Fylde)

Band C – Local connection (Fylde)

Band D – Local connection (Fylde)

Band E – Local connection (Fylde)

Band F – Local connection (Fylde)

Band A – Partner connection (Blackpool and Wyre)

Band B – Partner connection (Blackpool and Wyre)

Band C – Partner connection (Blackpool and Wyre)

Band D – Partner connection (Blackpool and Wyre)

Band E – Partner connection (Blackpool and Wyre)

Band F – Partner connection (Blackpool and Wyre)

Appendix 1

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast

As of the 31st December 2015 there were 945 active applicants for re-housing on the Register as detailed in Table 1. Of the year 15/16 to December 2015, 126 applicants had been housed.

Table 1: Status of registered applicants

Application Status	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Active	922	944	945	975
Cancelled	246	8	38	151
Closed	179	59	83	32
Enquiries Complete	100	120	160	260
Housed	23	70	33	34
Online Application Complete	7	0	29	63
Online Application Incomplete	98	103	80	107
Pending Enquiries	1	4	4	2
Requesting Closure	2	0	0	0
Suspended	102	115	97	96
Under Review Active	0	1	0	2
Under Review Suspended	0	0	0	1
Total	1680	1424	1469	1723

Table 2 illustrates the majority of applicants are Housing Register applicants with 14% being Transfer applicants.

Table 2: Application types

Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q2, Q3 Change
Homeless Applicant	0.37%	0.23%	0.30%	0.27%	-0.02%
Housing Register	82.04%	82.41%	80.68%	79.18%	-1.5%
Transfer Applicant	15.49%	15.61%	14.88%	13.79%	-1.09%
Blank	2.10%	1.75%	4.15%	6.76%	2.61%

Of these applicants the majority are tenants of a private landlord 528, with 278 being transfer applicants from their current Housing Association tenancy. Numbers living with friends or relatives and stating they have No Fixed Abode has remained fairly static over the year.

Table 3: Who owns your current accommodation?

Owner of Accommodation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
I am the Owner	146	154	152	153
Living with Friends/Others	32	30	34	36

Living with Relatives	130	119	122	132
No Fixed Abode	24	23	21	28
Occupier/Leaseholder	18	18	25	25
Other (please state)	70	73	70	72
Shared Ownership	15	17	18	16
Social Services	6	8	8	10
Tenant of a Private Landlord	511	502	528	590
Tenant of Council	47	47	53	58
Tenant of Housing Association	288	277	278	303
Tied Accommodation	8	8	7	8
Blank	41	37	35	34
Total	1336	1313	1351	1465

Table 4 details the number of people in each household requiring accommodation. Currently within Fylde there are significant single and two person households. Demand for three and four bedroom accommodation remains high, with accommodation for 5+ bedrooms being less. Therefore within the borough and the period of this lettings plan there is a need to secure one and two bedroom accommodation.

Table 4: Number of household members

No. of Household Members	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1	564	570	567	615
2	393	384	403	445
3	202	183	193	100
4	101	100	109	115
5	50	49	53	64
6	16	14	15	14
7	6	9	8	9
8	3	2	3	3
9	0	0	0	0
10+	0	0	0	0
Blank	1	2	0	1
Total	1336	1313	1351	

Table 5 gives the breakdown for households by banding. Applicants are assessed and a priority banding awarded based on their current circumstances. MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast uses 6 Bands to demonstrate housing need – A to F, with Band A being the highest priority. All applicants have to be able to demonstrate a local connection to Fylde. Further explanation of housing circumstances that determine banding are provided in Appendix 1.

Table 5: Banding for Active applicants

Band	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
A	6	7	7	8

B	106	98	105	110
C	3	3	3	4
D	126	129	133	137
E	176	185	185	187
F	505	521	511	528
No Band	0	1	1	1
Blank	0	0	0	0
Total	922	944	945	975

Table 6 analyses the number of active applicants that are employed. Band E is specifically for applicants working, employed or voluntary. Band B and Band D determine a fairly high need for re-housing, and has just under 30% of employed households within each banding. This level of need amongst employed households would justify development of low cost home ownership tenures within the borough.

Table 6: Active applicants that are employed

Fylde Coast	A	B	C	D	E	F	No Band	Total
Employed	0	29	0	44	169	99	0	341
Active Applications	8	110	4	137	187	528	0	975
%age								
Employed	0.00%	26.36%	0.00%	32.12%	90.37%	18.75%	0.00%	

Table 7 illustrates that the majority of households requiring affordable accommodation are age between 26 and 49. Households under the age of 35 would have been affected by the changes to the Welfare Reform Measures, where if in receipt of housing benefit they would only be eligible for the shared room rate of £61.50 per week. This may make housing association and many private sector tenancies unaffordable.

Table 7: Age group of main applicant.

Age Group	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
16-18	2	2	2	5
19-25	147	123	121	125
26-40	378	358	384	436
41-59	414	426	431	467
60-65	109	107	118	119
66-74	136	146	148	158
75+	149	151	147	155
Blank	1	0	0	0
Total	1336	1313	1351	1465

During Quarters 1 to 3 2015/16 137 properties were let by 424 offers/bids made which averages out per let to 3 bids per property. The table below illustrates the numbers of properties let.

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
11	3	8	13	33	31	10	6	22	10	13	20

Table 8a and 8b illustrates bids by property type and number of bedrooms required. In Quarters 1 and 2 there was a high number of bids for one and two bedroomed accommodation which were flats, which lessens off in Quarter 3. There are still sufficient bids being received for three bedroom accommodation.

Table 8a: Bids by property type

Property Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Bedsit/Studio	1	1	0	0
Sheltered Bedsit / Studio	4	0	0	7
Bungalow	131	107	45	50
Sheltered Bungalow	49	32	6	19
Flat	236	446	128	201
Multi-storey Flat	3	1	0	0
Sheltered Flat	79	67	54	42
House	352	384	295	230
Sheltered House	0	0	0	0
Maisonette	0	3	0	0
Sheltered Maisonette	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	855	1041	528	549

Table 8b: Bids by number of bedrooms required

Min Bedrooms Required	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Studio	4	1	0	3
1 Bed	332	421	131	229
2 Bed	302	378	182	239
3 Bed	209	236	204	72
4 Bed	8	5	8	4
5 Bed	0	0	3	2
6+ Beds	0	0	0	0
Total	855	1041	528	549

Appendix 2

Priority Bands

Each application is assessed and the applicant(s) will be awarded a priority band according to their current circumstances. The scheme uses 6 Bands – A to F, with Band A being the highest priority.

BAND A

The main group in Band A are:

- Homeless applicants where there is a statutory duty to provide housing by Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council or Wyre Borough Council

Other applicants to be placed in this band must be able to demonstrate at least one of the following ...

- Be a vulnerable person, who faces imminent discharge from hospital or temporary residential care and for whom there is no suitable accommodation to return to
- At the discretion of *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast*, have exceptional circumstances including being in immediate danger, for example, of physical violence

BAND B

To be placed in this band, applicants must be able to demonstrate one of the following:

- Occupy a property where category 1 hazards have been identified by Environmental Services and in relation to which the landlord has failed to take the required action
- Live in a property, which one of the Partner Organisations requires to be demolished or vacated
- Are an existing tenant of a partner within the Fylde Coast area who under-occupies their existing house and is looking to move to a smaller, more suitable property. This also applies to applicants no longer in need of a property with a disabled adaptation. (This will only apply if the under occupation has arisen after the start of the tenancy, e.g. because some people in the household have moved out.)
- Need to move because of urgent medical or disability reasons and there is a medical assessment that current housing conditions are having a serious detrimental impact on the applicant or members of the applicant's household's health or ability to live independently. The assessment will consider the applicant's (or member of the household included in the application) medical condition, the effect their property has on that condition and how moving to an alternative property could help that condition.
- Armed Forces Personnel, who are currently serving or have served in the last five years who need to move and meet one or more criteria from Band D
- Need to move because of urgent social or welfare reasons. This can include but is not limited to:

- the likelihood of admission to residential care or hospital if not re-housed
- the likelihood of a child being accommodated by the Local Authority if not rehoused
- the need to give or receive essential care and support.
- Have a serious risk of harm in their present accommodation. This can include but is not limited to:
 - victims of domestic abuse, serious harassment including racial or homophobic, crime,
 - serious anti social behaviour and witnesses of crime
- Are in a priority need group as outlined in the section 189 of the Housing Act 1996 and as amended in the legal provisions of the Homelessness Act 2002 and are potentially homeless through no fault of their own. This priority will only be awarded by the relevant Local Authority once evidence has been verified and the applicant is co-operating with the local authority to prevent their homelessness.
- Are unintentionally overcrowded in their current accommodation and in need of 2 or more additional bedrooms.
- Leaving Local Authority Care from the relevant Local Authority with appropriate tenancy support where there is a statutory duty to provide housing under the Leaving Care Act 2000.
- Are rough sleeping, threatened with or have a history of rough sleeping and are supported and referred by the Housing Teams of Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council or Wyre Borough Council
- Currently living in supported housing or rehabilitation and are ready for independent living as agreed by the provider and tenancy support (as appropriate) is in place, if required.

BAND C

To be placed in this band, applicants must be able to demonstrate ...

- Meet more than one criterion from Band D

BAND D

To be placed in this band, applicants must be able to demonstrate one of the following ...

- Need to move because of medical or disability reasons. This is because there is a medical assessment that current housing conditions are affecting the health or ability to live independently but there is no serious detrimental impact. The assessment will consider the applicant's (or member of the household included in the application) medical condition, the effect their property has on that condition and how moving to an alternative property can help that condition.
- Need to move because of social or welfare reasons, which can include but is not limited to:

- Applicants who need to move to a particular locality within the borough to avoid hardship to themselves or others
- Occupy a property where Category 2 hazards have been identified by Environmental Services and the landlord has failed to take the required action.
- Are unintentionally overcrowded in their current accommodation and in need of one additional bedroom
- Are assessed by Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council or Wyre Borough Council as being homeless but there is no priority need for housing
- Are assessed by Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council or Wyre Borough Council as being intentionally homeless and there is no statutory duty to re-house
- Currently reside in supported accommodation or rehabilitation and are not yet ready for independent living and have no tenancy support in place.
- Armed Forces personnel, who are currently serving or have served in the last five years and meet the local connection criteria.

BAND E

To be placed in this band, applicants entering must be able to demonstrate one of the following ...

- At least one adult member of the household is in employment either in the local areas or elsewhere.
- At least one adult member of the household is contributing to the community through voluntary work.

The Common Assessment Policy (CAP) Appendix 3 provides a definition of working households and community contribution as follows:

Working for 16 hours per week or more. The employment must have been held for a minimum of 6 months prior to the application for the award in order to be eligible. It should be noted that this must be confirmed at point of application and evidenced at point of offer.

Choosing to give your time to benefit other people without being paid for it for example completing voluntary work in a charity, voluntary organisation or community group, public sector organisation (local council), a social enterprise or a local business. The voluntary work must have been held for a minimum of 6 months prior to the application for the award in order to be eligible. It should be noted that this must be confirmed at point of application and evidenced at point of offer.

Further information is available from:

<https://www.myhomechoicefyldecoast.co.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/176.aspx>

BAND F

This Band is for applicants who can demonstrate:

- Are adequately housed and are therefore in no housing need
- Who do not meet any of the criteria within the bands above
- Who are currently suspended due to meeting the suspension criteria

- Awaiting a decision on a homeless application

This Band is also for applicants who are:

- Armed Forces personnel, who are currently serving or have served in the last five years who cannot demonstrate a local connection.

Appendix 2 Analysis of Lets outside MHC

45 lettings were made outside MyHomeChoice between 01/07/15 and 31/12/15

RSL	Lettings outside MHC	Type	Pilot 1	Method	Cost	Housing Need	Working	Local connection	MHC registered and reasons
BCH	13	1 studio 11 UFF 1 GFF	Hard to let - 13 Historic hard to let – 0 Flexible let - 0	McDonalds – 4 Moving Soon – 8 Internal transfer - 1	McDonalds £125 a month Moving Soon £250 3 months	No housing need (6); Medical disability (1); Overcrowded (3); Unknown (1)	Yes (6) No (5)	Yes(11) No (0)	Yes(4) No (7) Why? Took too long (1) Not ware (3) Low band (2) Only just registered (1) Appeal in for Local connection (1)
PFP	21	8 UFF 3 GFF 10 houses	Hard to let – 11 Historic hard to let – 4 Flexible let – 6 (gauge demand)	CBL – 11 PFP WS & CBL – 3 PFP WS only – 6 Internal transfer - 1		No housing need (1); Medical disability (3); Unsatisfactory (1); Unknown (1); move due to hardship (2)	Yes -11 No -10	Yes-21 No – 0	Yes (15) No (4) Why? Had to move mother died Wasn't actively looking Be near relatives – specific area Only wanted PFP
Great Places	2	2 – GFF	Hard to let – 0 Historic hard to let -1 Flexible let low demand – 1	Advertised locally – 2	£80	Medical disability – 1 Unknown – 1	Yes -0 No – 2	Yes – 2 No – 0	Yes (0) No (2) Why? Elderly Only just applied
Progress	7	3-UFF 4 – House	No detail provided	Right Move		No housing need – 5 Overcrowded – 1 Unsatisfactory -1	Yes – 3 No – 4	Yes – 7 No – 0	Yes (3) No (4) Why? Closed LC not verified

RSL	Lettings outside MHC	Type	Pilot 1	Method	Cost	Housing Need	Working	Local connection	MHC registered and reasons
									Closed LC not verified Part registered
Regenda	2	House	No detail provided	McDonalds	No cost	No housing need (2)	Yes -2	Yes – 2 No – 0	Yes(0) No (2) Why? Wanted to under occupy so not registered

BCH = Blackpool Coastal Housing; PFP = Places for People;