

Public Document Pack

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Date: 26 October 2022

Dear Sir or Madam

The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel – Thursday, 3 November 2022, 10.00 am – New Council Chamber - Town Hall

A meeting of the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel will take place as indicated above.

The agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours faithfully

Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer

To: Members of the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Councillors:

Timothy Snaden (Chairman), Sandra Hearne (Vice-Chairman), John Cato, Wendy Griggs, Ann Harley, Karin Haverson, Ruth Jacobs, Huw James, Richard Tucker, Richard Westwood, Roz Willis and Georgie Bigg.

This document and associated papers can be made available in a different format on request.

Agenda

1. **Public Discussion (Standing Order SS09)**

To receive and hear any person who wishes to address the Panel on matters which affect the District and fall within the remit of the Panel. The Chairman will select the order of the matters to be heard. Members of the Panel may ask questions of the member of the public and a dialogue between the parties can be undertaken. Requests to speak must be submitted in writing to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, or the officer mentioned at the top of this agenda letter, by noon on the day before.

2. **Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes**

3. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)**

A Member must declare any disclosable pecuniary interest where it relates to any matter being considered at the meeting. A declaration of a disclosable pecuniary interest should indicate the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. A Member is not permitted to participate in this agenda item by law and should immediately leave the meeting before the start of any debate. If the Member leaves the Chamber in respect of a declaration, he or she should ensure that the Chairman is aware of this before he or she leaves to enable their exit from the meeting to be recorded in the minutes in accordance with Standing Order 37.

4. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 10)

Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 7 July 2022 – to approve as a correct record.

5. **Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other Committees and Panels (if any)**

6. **Carers Inquiry Day Action Plan update** (Pages 11 - 12)

Report of the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing.

7. **Amendments to HomeChoice Allocations Policy** (Pages 13 - 74)

Report of the HomeChoice Team Manager.

8. **Cap on Care Costs** (Pages 75 - 80)

Report of the Care Cap Implementation Programme Manager.

9. **ASH Panel Work Plan November 2022** (Pages 81 - 84)

Report of the Policy and Scrutiny Senior Officer.

Exempt Items

Should the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel wish to consider a matter as an Exempt Item, the following resolution should be passed -

“(1) That the press, public, and officers not required by the Members, the Chief Executive or the Director, to remain during the exempt session, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the ground that its consideration will involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972.”

Also, if appropriate, the following resolution should be passed –

“(2) That members of the Council who are not members of the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel be invited to remain.”

Mobile phones and other mobile devices

All persons attending the meeting are requested to ensure that these devices are switched to silent mode. The chairman may approve an exception to this request in special circumstances.

Filming and recording of meetings

The proceedings of this meeting may be recorded for broadcasting purposes.

Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chairman. Any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting, focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard to the wishes of any members of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairman or the Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer’s representative before the start of the meeting so that all those present may be made aware that it is happening.

Members of the public may also use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

On hearing the alarm – (a continuous two tone siren)

Leave the room by the nearest exit door. Ensure that windows are closed.

Last person out to close the door.

Do not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do not use the lifts.

Follow the green and white exit signs and make your way to the assembly point.

Do not re-enter the building until authorised to do so by the Fire Authority.

Go to Assembly Point C – Outside the offices formerly occupied by Stephen & Co

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Draft Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 7th July 2022

held in the New Council Chamber, Town Hall.

Meeting Commenced: 10:06 Meeting Concluded: 12:39

Councillors:

P Timothy Snaden (Chairman)

P John Cato

A Mark Crosby

P Wendy Griggs

A Ann Harley

Karin Haverson

P Sandra Hearne

P Ruth Jacobs

P Huw James

A Richard Tucker

Richard Westwood

P Roz Willis

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Officers in attendance: Hayley Verrico, Gerald Hunt, Michael Hennessey (Adult Social Services); Mark Jarvis, Kathy Fisher, Brent Cross (Corporate Services).

ASH Election of the Vice-Chairman

1

Resolved: that Councillor Sandra Hearne be elected Vice-Chairman.

ASH Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

2

Apologies as above; no substitutions.

ASH Public Discussion (Standing Order SSO 9)

3

None.

ASH 4 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

None.

ASH 5 Minutes (Agenda Item 5)

Minutes of 24 February 2022 – to approve as a correct record.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of 24 February 2022 be approved as a correct record.

ASH 6 Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other Committees and Panels

None.

ASH 7 Adult Social Services Annual Directorate Statement (ADS) 2022/2023 (Agenda item 7)

The Director of Adults Services presented the report, which highlighted the key aspects of the annual directorate statement and the links to the medium-term financial plan and transformation programme. The Director suggested that regular update reports to the Panel would be useful to scrutinise how the objectives in the Statement were being met.

In discussion, the following points were raised (officer responses in italics):

- How were the outcomes in the statement to be measured?
Organisation-wide commitments were set by the performance team. The Director would be able to bring performance measures for the Directorate to the next ASH Panel meeting.
- Would there be a renewal of the safeguarding training for Members?
This had slipped during Covid, and would be reinstated.
- When was the next CQC inspection due? *These were due to restart in April 2023 – the last one had been in 2010. The new regime for CQC inspections was to be based around outcomes and behaviours. The Director introduced Michael Hennessey, who was the newly appointed CQC Assurance Programme Manager, and was the officer leading on preparations for the CQC inspection.*

Concluded: that the report be received and that Members' comments be forwarded to officers in the form of minutes.

ASH 8 Adult Social Care Reforms (Agenda item 8)

The Director of Adults Services presented the report updating the Panel on the key aspects of the reforms along with timescales for implementation, and highlighted the risks to North Somerset Council as well as the actions being taken to address these. The uncertainty on how the reforms were to be funded was explained, along with the background of North Somerset having the lowest cost of care in the south-west (while being close to the England average), and with 54% of the care market being self-funded in the District.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Who would pick up the bill for self-funders once the cost of care cap had been reached? *The Directorate was undertaking a cost of care exercise, and there were concerns that this would be higher than currently paid. Providers, on the other hand, were concerned that this would be lower than they currently received.*
- What was the process involved for North Somerset to implement the reforms? *There would need to be recruitment or secondment to fill the staffing gaps, and there was a risk that some projects might have to be de-prioritised.*

There were also concerns raised around the issues of communicating the changes to the community, and whether the £200 per week living allowance was sufficient

Concluded: that the report be received and that Members' comments be forwarded to officers in the form of minutes.

ASH 9 Adult Social Care Finance Update (Agenda item 9)

9

The Senior Accountant updated the Panel on the current forecast spend against budget for Adults Services, highlighting key variances, movements, and contextual information. The £350,000 adverse variance was an improvement on the 2021 forecast and was better than predicted. The key work for the coming year was to identify where sustainable savings could be made.

In discussion, Members raised the point of the travel allowance being too low, at 45p per mile, and discussed methods of lobbying national government to allow HMRC to increase this.

Concluded: that the report be received, and the Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes.

ASH 10 Older Person and Specialist Housing Needs Assessment for North Somerset

10

The Principal Head of Commissioning, Partnership and Housing Solutions presented the report commissioned from Housing Lin to the Panel, which outlined predicted demand for specialist older people's Housing requirements for North Somerset over the next thirty years and provided granular detail at the local level to evidence market engagement plans and business case for investment in accommodation shift proposals as part of the MTFP (Medium Term Financial Plan) process.

Members then discussed assured tenancies and shared ownership for older people.

Concluded: that the report be received, and Members' comments be forwarded to officers in the form of minutes.

ASH North Somerset Annual Complaints Report 2020-21

11

The report was presented by the Director of Adults Services, and contained statistics of customer feedback received from April 2020 to March 2021. The report indicated that complaints were lower compared to 2019-20, but also highlighted some trends, learning and service improvements that resulted.

In discussion, Members discussed whether compliments were recorded (they were, but had to be made in writing), and whether complainants were signposted to the appropriate advocates when necessary.

Concluded: that the report be received, and Members' comments be forwarded to officers in the form of minutes.

ASH Draft Carers Enquiry Day Report

12

With the Strategy & Policy Development Officer unable to attend to present the report, Members discussed the recommendations and next steps. The Inquiry Day and resulting report sought to inform and influence the development of the Carers' strategy.

Members felt that there should be a 'think carer' golden thread running through the work of the Council, as well as that there should be a Carer's Champion promoting an understanding of, and championing support for, carers.

Concluded: that

(1) the Panel recommended that an elected Member be a Carer's Champion; and that

(2) the final report and recommendations be submitted to the Executive Member for consideration.

ASH The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 9)

13

The Scrutiny Officer discussed the Panel's work plan and invited discussion with Members for additional items to add to it, as well as picking up any actions from the meeting.

Concluded: that the work plan be updated.

Chairman

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Recommendation:

1. Think Carer thread
2. 'Carers Champion'
3. Review carer info on website
4. Increase respite capacity
5. Gaps in wellbeing

Progress :

1. Hayley Verrico seeking agreement from CLT to take request to Exec to embed 'Think Carer' approach.
2. Hayley seeking agreement from CLT to take request to Exec to seek Carers Champion from the members.
3. Work to begin this November by Strategy and Policy Officer and SPA Carers Service.
4. New 'meeting centre' day support for people with dementia and their carers opened in March '22 in Portishead, Clevedon, Nailsea, delivered by Alive.
5. Public Health grant funds new monthly arts and crafts session for carers in Clevedon, delivered by NS Carers Support (Alliance Homes). Further work will be considered within 'community model of care' below.

Recommendation:

6. Community model of care

7. Strategy for community engagement

Page 12

Progress:

6. Commissioning team with Strategy and Policy Development Officer are exploring how this model is developing in other LAs to inform work in NS.

7. a) Questions will be added to the Adult Care Survey to better understand what matters to those who use services.

b) Adult Care's Strategy and Policy Development Team are creating a Panel of residents with lived experience. Corporate has an existing Citizens Panel.

c) ConnectED have a Service Users and Carers Advisory Group that we are engaging with which will potential inform research, strategy and policy going forward.

d) Workshop planned for Adult Care and Corporate to progress engagement.

North Somerset Council

Report to the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting: 3rd November 2022

Subject of Report: Amendments to HomeChoice Allocations Policy

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Kaycee McMahon/Kay Eccles

Key Decision: No

Reason:

Proposed amendments to HomeChoice Allocations Policy are largely minor in nature, with no financial implications and do not represent a significant impact on access to the housing register or to housing generally.

Recommendations

To review and agree the adoption of the proposed changes to the HomeChoice Allocations Policy to ensure the document is current, accurate and reflective of current legislation and good practice.

1. Summary of Report

The HomeChoice Allocations Policy allows for minor wording changes to be made to the policy as required to keep it updated and accurate, where these changes are insubstantial and have no material effect on the application of the Policy. However, where changes cannot be described as insubstantial and mark a change in approach or practice, or they represent additional text or the removal of text, these changes have been tabled for consideration.

Very few of the changes represent a significant departure from current policy or practice and are simply a means of clarification.

2. Policy

Commitment within our Housing Strategy 2022-2027 to keep the HomeChoice Allocations Policy under regular review.

3. Details

There are 18 more significant changes proposed to be made to the Policy, most of these serve as clarifications, or to bring the Policy better in line with legislation and best practice. The aim is to ensure that a resource as scarce as housing is allocated as fairly and consistently as possible according to need. Many changes will lead to improved outcomes for service users.

4. Consultation

Wide consultation across a diversity of internal and external stakeholders including housing colleagues, Housing Sub-Group, our partner Registered Provider landlords, third sector organisations and DLUHC colleagues

5. Financial Implications

N/A

Costs

N/A

Funding

N/A

6. Legal Powers and Implications

These changes have been considered and written in line with, and with guidance from, the following statutory context:

- Housing Act 1996 Part VI, Part VII, all relevant amendments including the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and the most recently issued Codes of Guidance pertaining to this legislation.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

There are no climate change or environmental implications relevant to this report.

8. Risk Management

Failure to undertake regular reviews of the HomeChoice Allocations Policy would be in direct contravention with the recently published Housing Strategy 2022-2027. The changes ensure the Policy is lawful and compliant with recent legislation and failure to adopt some of these changes would potentially leave us open to legal challenge.

9. Equality Implications

Equality Impact Assessment completed, with no significant concerns of disproportionate negative effect on citizens on the basis of protected characteristics. Increased likelihood of better access to housing register and higher priority bandings as a result of the proposed amendments.

10. Corporate Implications

The Housing Strategy requires that regular reviews of the HomeChoice Allocations Policy are regularly undertaken in order to meet stipulations within the Action Plan.

11. Options Considered

None – review required.

Author:

Kaycee McMahon, HomeChoice Team Manager, 01934 426406

Appendices:

HomeChoice Allocations Policy Table of Proposed Changes Final
HomeChoice Allocations Policy 2023 Final

Background Papers:

HomeChoice Policy – Table of Changes 2022

Section/Sub-section	Issue	Amendment
1.5.1 Exceptional Circumstances/Appendix I	New sub-section/additional sentence	North Somerset Council has a limited supply of social units to allocate to, and therefore we are unable to support large volumes of applications from people without a connection to the area or a compelling reason to live here.
2.2.1 Family connections – applicant’s immediate family member (parents, siblings, non-dependent children) has lived in North Somerset for the last two consecutive years and applicant has a need to live near this person to give or receive care or support;	Amendment to criteria added in 2020 to clarify. ‘significant’ should be taken to refer to a higher level of support than most ordinary applicants would benefit from, and this should be demonstrated with evidence where possible. For example, most families would benefit from help with childcare and most people would benefit from low-level mental health support from relatives, however the word ‘significant’ denotes a higher threshold than what most applicants could meet.	Amendments: applicant’s immediate family member (parents/ caregivers , siblings, non-dependent adult children) has lived in North Somerset for the last two consecutive years and applicant has a need to live near this person to give or receive significant care or support;
2.2.3 Homelessness - Have had a main duty accepted by North Somerset Council under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, or; - Is homeless or threatened with homelessness and North Somerset Council has accepted a prevention or relief duty and there would be a main duty if a homelessness application were determined, or;	Removal of distinction between cohorts with prevention or relief duties.	2.2.3 Homelessness - Have had a main duty accepted by North Somerset Council under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, or; - Is homeless or threatened with homelessness and North Somerset Council has accepted a prevention or relief duty.
2.3.6 Applicants who owe any scheme landlord or private landlord more than £200 in rent arrears or other rechargeable debts or owe North Somerset Council more than £200 in Council Tax, will be excluded from the Housing Register until they have made twelve successive monthly repayments as part of an agreed payment plan or they have reduced their outstanding	Increase of debt threshold from £200 to £500 and length of adherence to payment plan reduced from twelve to six months. Inclusion of financial abuse in exceptions.	Applicants who owe any scheme landlord or private landlord more than £500 in rent arrears or other rechargeable debts or owe North Somerset Council more than £500 in Council Tax, will be excluded from the Housing Register until they have made six successive monthly repayments as part of an

HomeChoice Policy – Table of Changes 2022

<p>balance to below £200, at which time they may reapply. This will not apply if the landlord is working with the applicant to alleviate their under-occupation, or they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3; or</p>		<p>agreed payment plan or they have reduced their outstanding balance to below £500, at which time they may reapply. This will not apply if the landlord is working with the applicant to alleviate their under-occupation, they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3, or financial abuse has taken place, or</p>
<p>2.4.1 Applicants can complete an initial application form to establish if they qualify for the Housing Register. If they are assessed as qualifying, they can then complete the full Housing Register application form to have their application assessed.</p>	<p>Remove as does not apply/outdated, and replace.</p>	<p>Replacement: Applications are completed online using the Housing Jigsaw website. Application completion is the applicant’s responsibility, however applicants who are not able to complete the online form for age and/or capacity related reasons can request assistance from a member of the HomeChoice team.</p>
<p>3.3.6 Care Leavers</p>	<p>Suggested addition to clarify policy.</p> <p>This award is intended as a one-time award only. The Housing Assessment Team Manager will have the discretion to reinstate this award in exceptional circumstances only.</p>	<p>Addition: This award is intended as a one-time award only. The Housing Assessment Team Manager will have the discretion to reinstate this award following the failure of a tenancy in exceptional circumstances only. This award will not be made in conjunction with a 3.4.8 Band B Supported Housing Move-On award.</p>
<p>3.4.1 Homelessness Relief Duty (RPHN)</p> <p>Except where paragraph 3.6.1 applies, Applicants to whom North Somerset Council has accepted a relief duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) and there would be a main duty if a homelessness application were to be determined;</p>	<p>Removal of distinction between cohorts within this group.</p>	<p>Except where paragraph 3.6.1 applies, Applicants to whom North Somerset Council has accepted a relief duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017)</p>
<p>3.4.2 Homelessness Prevention Duty (RPHN)</p> <p>Except where paragraph 3.6.1 applies, Applicants to whom North Somerset</p>	<p>Removal of distinction between cohorts within this group.</p>	<p>Except where paragraph 3.6.1 applies, Applicants to whom North Somerset Council has accepted a prevention duty under Part 7 of the Housing</p>

HomeChoice Policy – Table of Changes 2022

<p>Council has accepted a prevention duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) and there would be a main duty if a homelessness application were to be determined;</p>		<p>Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017).</p>
<p>3.7.2 Emergency Priority Band</p> <p><i>Emergency Priority Band will only be issued to any applicant who requires an 'urgent' move to ensure the applicants safety and welfare for whatever reason. Substantial evidence must exist before such a priority is awarded. This priority may be awarded where circumstances could include where the Police recommend an urgent move to escape violence or threats of violence, or where the applicant, or a member of their household, has suffered a sudden 'traumatic event' and living within their home will cause considerable distress (e.g., serious sexual assault, etc).</i></p>	<p>Entire removal of last sentence due to potential confusion between Band A award and Emergency Priority award on threat of/violence cases following recent complaint.</p>	<p>Emergency Priority Band will only be issued to any applicant who requires an exceptionally 'urgent' move to ensure the applicant's safety and welfare for whatever reason. Substantial evidence will be required before such a priority is awarded.</p>
<p>3.8.2 Effective Date</p> <p>An application's Effective Date is determined by the date that evidence was received for their eligibility for that banding, regardless of when that evidence was actually assessed.</p>	<p>Effective date currently set out in policy as date evidence received. This is unclear as multiple submissions can be made. This will change to 'date of decision' to foster consistency with homelessness legislation, other LAs housing registers and provide clarity. As long as assessment timescales are met then it is reasonable to allow the service this time to assess provided evidence.</p>	<p>An application's Effective Date is determined by the date of decision of the highest banding award.</p>
<p>3.11.4 Suspending Applications</p>	<p>Insertion of new paragraph within 'Cancelling Applications' section</p>	<p>Applications may be suspended for reasons other than those mentioned elsewhere in this Policy, in order to prevent bidding in cases where information that may affect eligibility, qualification, bedroom entitlement or banding is conflicting or requiring clarification and/or evidence.</p>
<p>4.1.3 Children are considered to be resident where they stay with the applicant for more than four nights per week or seven nights each fortnight. This is subject to satisfactory evidence</p>	<p>Addition immediately following on.</p>	<p>Where parents/guardians are separated and a child is co-resident with both parents on a 50/50 basis, if the child is already adequately housed with one parent, they cannot</p>

HomeChoice Policy – Table of Changes 2022

<p>being submitted to support access/residency right.</p>		<p>be included on the housing application of the other parent.</p>
<p>4.1.5 For applicants who are pregnant, the unborn child will be classed as a child for the purposes of property size eligibility only. Where a household already has another child (other children), the unborn child will be classed as the same sex as the youngest child. Unborn children do not count towards whether an applicant is lacking in bedrooms.</p>	<p>At what stage do we allow a new pregnancy to affect bedroom calculation?</p>	<p>For applicants who are pregnant, the unborn child will be classed as a child for the purposes of property size eligibility only, from the 20th week of pregnancy. Where a household already has another child (other children), the unborn child will be classed as the same sex as the youngest child. Unborn children do not count towards whether an applicant is lacking in bedrooms.</p>
<p>5.3.3 Homeless Case Properties</p>	<p>Addition</p>	<p>The Council reserves the right to respond to unusually high pressure on temporary accommodation resources through the increased use of direct lets or considering backdating application effective dates for those currently resident in temporary accommodation placements.</p>
<p>5.5</p>	<p>Addition sub-section</p>	<p>It should be noted that all scheme landlords operate their own lettings policies and criteria independently of HomeChoice North Somerset. The Council works closely with them to foster consistency in the discharging of our statutory duties via the allocation of social housing units.</p>
<p>5.6.2</p>	<p>Additional sentence</p>	<p>Applicants not currently owed a homelessness duty by North Somerset Council who have refused one offer of suitable accommodation will have their banding reduced by one band for six months. Applicants in band D who have refused one offer of suitable accommodation will no longer qualify to be registered for a period of six months. Applicants who have refused two offers of suitable accommodation will no longer</p>

HomeChoice Policy – Table of Changes 2022

		qualify to be registered for a period of 12 months. The decision on the suitability of a property under offer will be for the Housing Assessment Team to make. This is a reviewable decision.
Appendix B – Medical Assessments	Removal of a circumstance excluded from medical priority consideration	Where the medical condition is as a result of a lifestyle choice (e.g. drug use)
Appendix E#	<p>Appendix E refers to old Thursday morning shortlisting calls conducted by the Officers which are no longer in place.</p> <p>Policy however does not currently cover new requirement to provide evidence of certain circumstances at point of application.</p>	<p>Replace current Appendix E with:</p> <p><i>The HomeChoice scheme will require certain evidence at point of application prior to the assessment and activation of applications for bidding. Applicants will be expected to go to reasonable lengths to submit proof of circumstances, including (but not limited to):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proof of identification for all household members - Evidence of income and financial status - Proof of pregnancy - Evidence of child dependency - Medical evidence - Evidence of welfare circumstances <p><i>Relevant evidence of circumstances will be required during the life of an application if changes to circumstances will result in a change in eligibility, qualification, banding priority or bedroom entitlement.</i></p>
TBC	Insertion of tenancy course incentive	<i>Prospective tenants may be eligible for their application effective date to be backdated by 3 months upon recent completion of a North Somerset Council approved tenancy-ready course, where available.</i>

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LETTINGS AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

Version 6.12 – January 2023

Directorate: Adult Social Care and Housing Solutions



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introducing HomeChoice North Somerset

1.1.1 This document describes the HomeChoice North Somerset Scheme (“HomeChoice”) run by North Somerset Council (“the council”) in partnership with the majority of registered providers of social housing (“housing associations”) operating within North Somerset. It also sets out the procedures that the council follows in the allocation of affordable housing in its district.

1.1.2 The housing associations that are part of the scheme are known throughout this document as the scheme landlords. These are listed at Appendix A. A copy of the HomeChoice North Somerset Lettings Policy will be available free from the council or one of the scheme landlords, and is also available on the council’s website at www.n-somerset.gov.uk.

1.2 What is an allocation?

1.2.1 The allocation of housing by a housing authority is defined in s.159 of the 1996 Housing Act as:

- Selecting a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation held by them (i.e. by that housing authority);
- Nominating a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation held by another person (i.e. another housing authority);
- Nominating a person to be an assured tenant of housing accommodation held by a private registered provider (housing association).

1.3 Statement on choice

In 2009 HomeChoice, a Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) scheme was introduced.

It involves a partnership between the housing authority (North Somerset Council) and registered social landlords (also known as housing associations).



1.4 Overview of the policy and process

- 1.4.1** The Council assesses applications from applicants those who would like to rent affordable homes in order to determine:
- Whether they are eligible for an allocation;
 - Whether they qualify for an allocation;
 - The level of their housing need, assessed against four bands.
- 1.4.2** The council stores the information about eligible and qualifying applicants on an electronic data base known as its Housing Register. This information is shared with the scheme landlords.
- 1.4.3** Scheme landlords advertise their vacant properties in North Somerset to those on the Housing Register, including photographs and a description, on a weekly basis. Applicants may apply (“bid”) for their choice of properties as long as they meet the qualifying criteria for a particular property.
- 1.4.4** The successful applicant will be the person in the highest band, with the greatest number of higher band Reasonable Preference Housing Needs, with the earliest effective date, as set out in more detail in paragraphs 3.2.3 – 3.2.6. An offer will then be made subject to a visit and subsequent acceptance by the potential landlord to confirm the details on the original application form. Incorrect information may result in the offer being withdrawn and the band re-assessed.
- 1.4.5** Feedback is provided to applicants on the level of demand for vacant properties previously advertised. This helps applicants to make more informed choices, including looking at the other housing options promoted through the scheme.

1.5 Exceptional circumstances

The policy may be departed from where the Team Manager considers that an individual’s exceptional circumstances warrant a departure from any part of this policy, and has recorded reasons for that decision and the written/emailed agreement of another senior housing manager within North Somerset Council. See Appendix I for Exceptional Circumstances relating to HomeChoice qualification.

North Somerset Council has a limited supply of homes to allocate to, and we are therefore unable to support large volumes of applications from people without a connection to the area, or a compelling need to live here.



1.6 Tenancy Types

1.6.1 An applicant can be offered the following types of tenancies:

- Lifetime Tenancies; or
- Flexible Tenancies.

Both tenancies can be offered on either a Social Rent or an Affordable Rent basis. These terms are explained below.

1.6.2 Lifetime Tenancies

Lifetime tenancies remain available to a tenant for as long as the terms of the tenancy agreement are upheld. These are offered on an Assured Tenancy basis.

1.6.3 Flexible Tenancies

Flexible tenancies are offered for a fixed period of time and the tenancy ends on the last day of that period or term unless extended by a scheme landlord. The scheme landlords will decide their own typical length to offer a tenancy, but the recommendation from the council's tenancy strategy is 5 years.

1.7 Rent Levels

1.7.1 Both lifetime and flexible tenancies can be offered on a Social Rent or Affordable Rent basis.

1.7.2 Social Rent

Social rent is based on a formula set by government. It is usually less than an affordable rent.

1.7.3 Affordable Rent

Affordable rents are set at 80% of the market rent in the private sector.



2. ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATION

2.1 Eligibility

- 2.1.1** Certain people from abroad, including some who are subject to immigration control, are not eligible for an allocation of affordable housing. The regulations setting out which people from abroad are eligible or ineligible for an allocation are the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulation 2006. These regulations are set by Government and updated regularly. The Council follows these regulations, that are available on request.
- 2.1.2** Applicants who are eligible for allocation as per the paragraph above must be over 16 years of age, and meet one or more of the criteria defined in section 2.2, to qualify for an allocation and join the housing register.
- 2.1.3** There are also a number of excluded groups, defined in section 2.3, that may disqualify an applicant from joining the housing register.

2.2 Qualifying Groups

An applicant qualifies to join the housing register if they meet one or more of the following categories :

2.2.1 Local Connection

- Have, by choice, lived in North Somerset for the two consecutive years preceding the date the application is made or reviewed; or
- Have, by choice, previously lived in North Somerset for ten consecutive years no more than five years prior to the date the application is made or reviewed; or
- Have retained continuous employment in North Somerset, of a minimum of 16 hours per week, for at least the 12 months preceding the date the application is made or reviewed; or

- 2.2.2** Family connections – applicant's immediate family member (parents/care-givers, siblings, non-dependent adult children) has lived in North Somerset for the last two consecutive years and applicant has a need to live near this person to give or receive significant care or support;



2.2.3 Armed Forces personnel

- Are a member of the Armed Forces or former Service personnel, where the application is made within five years of discharge; or
- Are a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death (as a result of service) of their spouse or partner; or
- Are a serving or former member of the Reserve Forces who needs to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service; or
- Are a divorced or separated spouse/civil partner of a serving member of the Armed Forces and need to move out of accommodation as a direct result of the relationship breakdown and where no settled accommodation has been obtained since that breakdown, ;

2.2.4 Homelessness

- Have had a main homelessness duty accepted by North Somerset Council under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996; or
- is homeless or threatened with homelessness and North Somerset Council has accepted either a prevention or relief duty.

2.2.5 Social Housing tenants living outside North Somerset

- Social Housing Tenants who have a need to move to North Somerset to avoid hardship and need to move because the tenant works or has been offered work in North Somerset and has a genuine intention to take up the offer. In determining this, regard will be had to paragraphs 16-34 of the DCLG (now known as DLUHC) Right to Move Statutory Guidance on Social Housing allocations for Local Authorities in England (March 2015)

2.2.6 Domestic Abuse

- Have experienced domestic abuse and are occupying a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation, in North Somerset.



2.2.7 For the purposes of this section, residence in the district is not of a person's choice if it is a consequence of serving in the Armed Forces or being detained under the authority of Act of Parliament or by being placed in the area to receive treatment or rehabilitation of any kind for any kind of dependency.

2.3 Excluded Groups

An applicant is excluded from the housing register in the follow circumstances:

2.3.1 Owner-Occupiers

For the purposes of this section, owners of mobile homes are not considered to be owner-occupiers

Applicants who are owner-occupiers will be excluded from joining the Housing Register unless:

- they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3.
- or their accommodation is unsuitable for their needs due to their age or medical condition, and they do not have the resources available to improve their situation.
- they are unable to afford to live in their current home.

2.3.2 Sufficient Financial Resources

Single person households with combined savings and annual income of more than £30,000, households without dependents with combined savings and annual income of more than £35,000; or households with dependents with combined savings and annual income of more than £40,000 will be excluded from joining the Housing Register unless they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3 or are in receipt of income related benefits. For the purposes of this section, this exclusion will not apply to those applicants wishing to apply for a Gypsy and Traveller Pitch. Current or former Armed Forces members, or their families, who have in the last five years received a lump monetary sum as a direct result of having sustained serious injury/illness/ disability or having been bereaved as a direct result of service, will have this sum disregarded from any income assessment for these purposes. These figures are subject to annual review;



2.3.3 Perpetrators of Anti-Social Behaviour

- Applications containing an individual who has been found to be guilty of antisocial behaviour will be excluded from joining the Housing Register for a period of 3 years unless they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3.
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defines Anti-social behaviour as ‘Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household (as the perpetrator)’. Evidence of this type of behaviour may include but is not limited to:
 - Recorded anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years where the applicant (or other person included on their application) was issued (or will be issued) with a formal warning or an acceptable behaviour contract.
 - Any other behaviour, in the last 3 years that has resulted in (or will result in) Possession proceedings or other legal action being taken by an agency or landlord (legal action includes, but is not limited to, formal action under the anti-social behaviour legislation, service of notice of seeking possession/ notice to quit on the grounds of anti-social behaviour, convictions and cautions for offences related to antisocial behaviour).
- Where an applicant can demonstrate that they (or the member of their application to which this exclusion refers) have taken substantive steps to address their behaviour and there is clear professional evidence to support this, their suitability to be a tenant/their exclusion from the register will be reconsidered

2.3.4 Perpetrators of Hate Crime/Incidents

- Applications containing an individual who has been found guilty of perpetrating a hate crime/incident will be excluded from joining the Housing Register for a period of 3 years unless they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3.
- The term ‘hate crime/incident’ is used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim’s disability, race, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Evidence of hate crime/incident perpetrated includes but is not limited to:



- Information within the last 3 years, from a multi-Agency panel where the applicant (or other person included on their application) was deemed to be a perpetrator of a hate crime/incident;
- Any behaviour, in the last 3 years that has resulted in (or will result in) any legal action relating to a hate crime/incident
- Evidence of a hate crime/incident provided by a relevant agency, including police, community safety team, registered social landlord, children's or adults' social services; or

2.3.5 Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

- Applications containing an individual who has been found to be guilty of perpetrating domestic abuse will be excluded from joining the Housing Register for a period of 3 years unless they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3.
- Domestic abuse is defined as 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender.'
- Evidence of domestic abuse perpetrated includes but is not limited to:
 - A discussion, within the last 3 years, at a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) where the applicant (or other person included on their application) was deemed to be a perpetrator of domestic abuse.
 - Any behaviour, in the last 3 years that has resulted in (or will result in) legal action relating to domestic abuse.
 - Evidence of domestic abuse being perpetrated within the last 3 years provided by a relevant agency, including police, domestic abuse specialist provider, children's or adults' social services.

Arrears/Council Debts

- 2.3.6** Applicants who owe any scheme landlord or private landlord more than £500 in rent arrears or other rechargeable debts or owe North Somerset Council more than £500 in Council Tax, will be excluded from the Housing Register until they have made twelve successive monthly repayments as part of an agreed payment plan or they have reduced their outstanding balance to below £500, at which time they may reapply. This will not apply if the landlord is working with the applicant to alleviate their under-occupation, they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3, or if financial abuse has taken place.



2.3.7 Applicants who have received loans to secure accommodation from the Council's Lettings service and who do not regularly maintain their agreed repayments will be suspended from bidding on the Housing Register, unless they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3.

2.3.8 Penalty Clause

Applicants who are found to have knowingly omitted information that would disqualify them or have given false information to gain eligibility or improve their priority on the register, will be excluded from the Housing Register for 3 years from the date they become eligible for the register, unless they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3.

For example, an applicant who states that they have lived in North Somerset for two years when in fact they have only lived in the district for one, will have their application cancelled. Once they meet the local connection criteria, they will be excluded for an additional 3 years before they are able to qualify.

2.4 Processes

2.4.1 Applications are completed online using the Housing Jigsaw website. Application completion is the applicant's responsibility, however applicants who are not able to complete the form for age and/or capacity/ability related reasons can request assistance from the HomeChoice Team.

2.4.2 Where the council decides that an applicant is ineligible or does not qualify for an allocation to join the Housing Register, it will notify the applicant of that decision and the grounds for it via the Housing Jigsaw website.

2.4.3 A request for a review of a decision should preferably be made in writing and can be made by an applicant or a representative on behalf of the applicant within 21 days of the decision. The appeal should include information that the applicant believes had not already been taken into account or new information that will support application.

2.4.4 To be reassessed, applicants will be required to show how they now may qualify. This must relate to the reasons for non-qualification to do this each applicant will be told their criteria for reassessment and possible qualification.

2.4.5 Applicants are responsible for notifying the Housing Assessment Team of any change of circumstances or address that occur, as they may have an impact on their application. Any bids placed between the change of circumstances occurring



and the application being re-assessed may be invalid, and can be withdrawn by a HomeChoice Officer.

- 2.4.6** Should an applicant's circumstances change resulting in them no longer being eligible, then their application will be closed. They may choose to re-apply should they become eligible again at a future date.
- 2.4.7** When an excluded applicant's exclusion expires, they may choose to re-apply to join the register, but will be required to demonstrate that the cause of their exclusion no longer applies. For example, with regards to anti-social behaviour, the applicant will have to provide evidence that they have maintained a tenancy with references.

3. ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING NEED

3.1 Policy

- 3.1.1** All applicants who are eligible and qualify to join the Housing Register will be assessed and placed in the appropriate priority band that represents their household's needs.
- 3.1.2** The law requires that reasonable preference for an allocation must be made in the following cases:
- (a) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996).
 - (b) people who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2), or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985, or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3).
 - (c) people occupying unsanitary (unhealthy) or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
 - (d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability.
 - (e) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).



3.1.3 The Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 requires that 'additional preference' must be given to applicants who fall within the above reasonable preference categories, have urgent housing needs and who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The person is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partially) to the persons service.
- The person formerly served in the regular forces.
- The person has recently ceased or will cease to be entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.
- The person is serving or has served in the reserve forces and suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is (wholly or partially) attributable to the person's service.

3.1.4 Preference can also be given to other categories of applications to meet local priorities.

3.2 Assessment

3.2.1 Based on housing need, all applications will be placed into one of four bands – A, B, C or D (see paragraphs 3.3-3.6) – or in exceptional circumstances placed into Emergency Priority Band (see paragraph 3.7). Each of these bands contains definitions of different housing needs, some of which are the needs that require the reasonable or additional preference referred to in paragraphs 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 be given. These are called Reasonable Preference Housing Needs (RPHN).

3.2.2 Where an application has more than one housing need or Reasonable Preference Housing Needs (RPHN) which appear in different bands, it will always be placed in the higher band.

3.2.3 If an application is in the same band as another, the applicant with the greatest number of higher band Reasonable Preference housing needs will have greater priority than those with less

3.2.4 If an application has the same number of higher band Reasonable Preference Housing Needs as another, priority will be given to the application who has been waiting in that band for the longest period of time.



3.2.5 If an application has the same number of higher band Reasonable Preference Housing Needs as another and has been in that band for the same period of time, the date of application will be used to decide the order of the shortlist.

3.2.6 If two or more applicants are still assessed as equal on number of higher band Reasonable Preference Housing Needs, period of time in that band and period of time on the shortlist, then any offer of property will be at the scheme landlord's discretion.

3.3 Band A

3.3.1 Approved Homeless (RPHN)

Except where paragraph 3.6.1 applies, applicants to whom North Somerset Council has accepted a main homeless duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017).

3.3.2 Urgent Medical Need (RPHN)

The applicants, or someone in their household, have an urgent and potentially life-threatening need to move on medical grounds, where their health is directly and adversely affected by their current accommodation, and where a move would see a clear improvement in their health (see Appendix B).

3.3.3 Urgent Welfare Need (RPHN)

Applicants who have an urgent need to move on welfare grounds, where their welfare is aggravated by housing conditions and would improve if other accommodation were offered (see Appendix C).

3.3.4 Lacking 3 Bedrooms/Statutory Overcrowding (RPHN)

Applicants who have access to three less bedrooms than their bedroom need as calculated using the DWP bedroom standard or are statutorily overcrowded as defined in Part 10 Housing Act 1985, UNLESS evidence proves that the overcrowding is deliberate. For the purposes of this calculation, unborn children do not count towards the entitlement.

3.3.5 Under-occupying 2+ bedrooms

Applicants who are a tenant of a scheme landlord, resident within North Somerset, who are under-occupying their property by two or more bedrooms.



3.3.6 Care Leavers

Where North Somerset Council is the corporate parent and the Care Leaver is ready to live independently, or with floating support. The Homelessness Prevention Officer for Care Leavers must confirm in writing that the applicant is ready for such a move and has acquired reasonable skills to sustain a tenancy, and this must be agreed by the Home Choice Team Manager

Young people qualifying for Band A must be a North Somerset Care Leaver. The only other young people qualifying for Band A would be those who were adopted through North Somerset Council and this arrangement has broken down after their 16th Birthday and as a result the young person has had the option of being re-accommodated by the local authority and reunification has been unsuccessful; or where the young person is subject to a Special Guardianship Order and a full Leaving Care Duty is part of the Support Plan identified as a contingency by the Court that granted the Order.

This is intended as a one-time award only. The Home Choice Team Manager will have the discretion to reinstate this award following the failure of a resultant tenancy in exceptional circumstances only. This award will not be made in conjunction with 3.4.8 Band B Supported Housing Move-On award.

3.3.7 Foster Carers or Adopters

- Applicants who need to be rehoused or housed by a scheme landlord because they are either a foster carer who needs larger accommodation to foster more children or intend promptly to become a foster carer and require larger accommodation in order to perform this role. Applicants must have approved Foster Carer status by North Somerset Council's fostering service.
- Applicants who need to be rehoused or housed by a scheme landlord because they are intend promptly to adopt a child via North Somerset Council's adoption service and require accommodation in order to perform this role.
- Applicants who need to be rehoused or housed by a scheme landlord because they have taken a special guardianship order (SGO) and need larger accommodation to perform this role.

3.3.8 Disabled Adaptations

Applicants requiring an adapted property where their current property cannot easily be adapted practically and/or economically, and a move has been agreed as a preferred option by the Housing Adaptation Service in lieu of a Disabled Facilities Grant.



3.4 Band B

3.4.1 Homelessness Relief Duty (RPHN)

Except where paragraph 3.6.1 applies, applicants to whom North Somerset Council has accepted a relief duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017).

3.4.2 Homelessness Prevention Duty (RPHN)

Except where paragraph 3.6.1 applies, applicants where North Somerset Council has accepted a prevention duty under Part 7 Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017).

3.4.3 Significant Medical Need (RPHN)

The applicants, or someone in their household, have an urgent but not life-threatening need to move on medical grounds, where their health is directly and adversely affected by their current accommodation, and where a move would see a clear improvement in their health (see Appendix B).

3.4.4 Lacking 2 Bedrooms (RPHN)

Applicants who have access to two less bedrooms than their bedroom need as calculated using the DWP bedroom standard UNLESS evidence proves that the overcrowding is deliberate. For the purposes of this calculation, unborn children do not count towards the entitlement.

3.4.5 Under-occupying 1 bedroom

Applicants who are a tenant of a scheme landlord, resident within North Somerset, who are under-occupying their property by one bedroom.

3.4.6 Rough Sleepers

Applicants assessed as sleeping rough (street homeless, in a tent or in a vehicle) by Home Choice Manager, Home Choice Officer or Homelessness



Prevention Officer and who are engaging with relevant support services. (see Appendix D).



3.4.7 Category 1 Hazard (RPHN)

The applicant's home is dangerous due to a Housing Act 2004 Category 1 Hazard existing, and where there is no prospect of the Hazard being remedied. The council's Private Rented Housing Service must confirm the presence of a Category 1 Hazard and that it would be more appropriate for the applicant to be re-housed. This includes verification from the council's Private Rented Housing Service that a gypsy and traveller pitch is overcrowded and that the applicants require a move to a larger pitch.

3.4.8 Supported Housing 'Move-On'

i. Applicants who live within a Supported Housing project in North Somerset and are seeking to 'move-on' into independent accommodation. This does not apply to applicants whose placement is to receive treatment or rehabilitation of any kind for any kind of dependency. This only applies to applicants who met the local connection criteria in paragraph 2.2.1 at the time of the original referral and acceptance into the supported housing project. The Project Manager must confirm in writing that the applicant is ready for such a move and has acquired reasonable skills to sustain a tenancy or has the necessary support in place to do so. The case will then be considered by the Home Choice Manager as to whether the applicant meets all the criteria to move into Band B.

or

ii. Applicants who live in residential or nursing care settings and are seeking to 'move-on' into independent accommodation. This does not apply to applicants whose placement is to receive treatment or rehabilitation of any kind for any kind of dependency. This only applies to applicants who met the local connection criteria as set out in paragraph 2.2.1 at the time of their move into their current accommodation. The Adults' Support and Safeguarding team leader responsible for that service user must confirm in writing that the applicant is ready to live independently and has the necessary care and support in place to do so. The case will then be considered by the Housing Assessment Manager as to whether the applicant meets all the criteria to move into Band B.

or

iii. Applicants who are victims of domestic abuse who have been provided with temporary protection in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation in North Somerset, who are looking to move into settled accommodation and appropriate support will be put in place following an assessment of the households particular needs.



3.4.9 Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsy and Traveller applicants who are living in bricks and mortar to which they have a cultural aversion and wish to move to a gypsy and traveller pitch.

3.4.10 Significant Welfare (RPHN)

Applicants who have a significant need to move on welfare grounds, where a move to more suitable accommodation would alleviate significant social or welfare issues (see Appendix C).

3.5 Band C

3.5.1 Minor Medical Need (RPHN)

The applicants, or someone in their household, have a clear but not urgent need to move on medical grounds, where their health is directly and adversely affected by their current accommodation, and where a move would see a clear improvement in their health (see Appendix B).

3.5.2 Sharing Basic Facilities (RPHN)

Applicants sharing basic facilities such as toilets, bathrooms and kitchens with people unrelated to everyone in their household.

3.5.3 Lacking 1 Bedroom (RPHN)

Applicants who have access to one less bedroom than their bedroom need as calculated using the DWP bedroom standard UNLESS evidence proves that the overcrowding is deliberate. For the purposes of this calculation, unborn children do not count towards the entitlement.

3.5.4 Other Homeless Applicants (RPHN)

Except where paragraph 3.6.1 applies, Applicants who North Somerset Council has accepted a prevention or relief duty to under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017) and who do not meet any of the qualifying homeless bands.

3.5.5 Former Armed Forces member (RPHN)

Applicants who are either

- (a) former members of the Armed Forces



- (b) serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service,
- (c) bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner, or
- (d) serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.

3.5.6 Employed Applicants

Applicants whose principal home is in North Somerset and are employed for a minimum of 16 hours per week.

3.5.7 Unable to Work

Applicants in receipt of Universal Credit or Pension Credit.

3.5.8 Mobility / Hardship (RPHN)

Applicants who are Social Housing Tenants who have a need to move to a particular locality in North Somerset to avoid hardship, and need to move because the tenant works or has been offered work in North Somerset and has a genuine intention to take up the offer (see appendix F); or Applicants who have a need to a move to a particular locality within North Somerset and that need to move is to avoid hardship (see appendix F).

3.6 Band D

3.6.1 Homeless Applicants

Applicants who would ordinarily be excluded or suspended from the register under paragraphs 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 2.3.5, 2.3.6 or 2.3.7, but fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3. These applicants will be offered support to assist in addressing any issues and will have regular reviews. Following reviews applications may be reinstated to the assessed level.

Applicants where the Council has accepted a prevention or relief duty and who do not have a local connection as defined in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.



Applicants where the Council has accepted a homeless duty whose household has a combined annual income and savings in excess of that set out in paragraph 2.3.2 (excluding those in receipt of income related benefits).

3.6.2 No other housing needs

Applicants who do not meet any of the criteria for Bands A to C will be placed in Band D.

3.7 Emergency Priority Band

3.7.1 *Note:* Awarding of Emergency Priority Band can only be made with the written/ emailed agreement of two members of a group including senior housing manager(s) within North Somerset Council, and senior manager(s) of the scheme landlords.

3.7.2 Emergency Priority Band will only be issued to any applicant who requires an 'urgent' move to ensure the applicants safety and welfare for whatever reason. Substantial evidence must exist before such a priority is awarded.

3.7.3 Emergency Priority Band is time limited and will last for 28 days. If the applicant has not applied for a property suitable for their needs (size, type, adaptations etc.) within that time their Emergency Priority Band will be reviewed by the Assessment Panel and if not renewed the applicant will be placed in the appropriate band for their needs. If no suitable vacancy has arisen within this time, then the Emergency Priority Band will be renewed automatically.

3.8 Effective and Application Dates

3.8.1 All applications will be given an "Effective Date". This will be used when allocating properties, to determine how long an applicant has been in their current banding.

3.8.2 An application's Effective Date is determined by the date of the decision to award the highest band.

3.8.3 Applications will also have an "Application Date", which is the date the applicant first applied to join the housing register, to determine how long an applicant has been on the HomeChoice Register.

3.8.4 Where an applicant whose application has previously been closed wishes to re-join the housing register at a later date, their new Application Date will be the date they re-apply.

3.9 Notification

3.9.1 Once an application has been assessed and entered onto the HomeChoice



Register, the applicant will receive a letter within 21 days confirming their application details. This notification will include:

- a) The band in which the applicant has been placed (A, B, C or D),
- b) The size property the applicant is eligible for (see section 4),
- c) A reminder about informing us of any change in circumstances, and
- d) The HomeChoice North Somerset review procedure (see paragraph 3.10).

3.9.2 Once applicants have been entered on the HomeChoice Register and notified of banding and bedroom entitlement, they can start to look for a property of their choice (see section 5).

3.10 Application Renewals

3.10.1 Annual Renewals

Every 12 months from the date of their application or their last renewal, all applicants will be sent a renewal email or letter advising them to complete an online renewal. If the renewal is not completed within 28 days their application will be cancelled, as set out below.

3.10.2 No-Bid Renewals

Periodically where an applicant has not bid for any available properties for the previous year, they will be contacted to see if they still wish to remain on the HomeChoice North Somerset Register. If there is no response within 28 days, their application will be cancelled, as set out below.

3.11 Cancelling Applications

3.11.1 An application will be cancelled from the HomeChoice North Somerset Register in the following circumstances



- At the request of an applicant.
- Where an applicant ceases to qualify or becomes excluded.
- Where an applicant does not maintain their application through the renewals process or no-bid renewals process.
- Where the applicant moves and does not provide a contact address.
- When a tenant completes a mutual exchange.
- Where the applicant has died.

3.11.2 Any applicant whose application has been cancelled has the right to ask for a review of the decision.

3.11.3 If the applicant contacts the council within 28 days of their application being cancelled and indicates that they still wish to be considered for housing, the application will be reinstated from their last applicable date in band, if the applicant remains eligible and qualifying.

3.11.4 Applications may be suspended for reasons other than those mentioned elsewhere in this Policy, in order to prevent bidding in cases where information has been received that may affect eligibility, qualification, bedroom entitlement or banding priority that is found to be conflicting or requiring clarification and/or evidence.

3.12 Review Procedure

3.12.1 Once an applicant has been notified via email or letter of the band in which they have been placed or their ineligibility, they will have a right to request a review against the assessment. The request must be submitted made in writing and sent to the council within 21 days of the date on the notification letter and include the reason why the applicant believes their banding or ineligibility is wrong together with any additional information that the applicant believes is relevant.

3.12.2 The request for a review will be acknowledged by the council within seven days. A Senior Officer who played no part in the original assessment will carry out the review and respond via email or letter, to the applicant within 28 days of the receipt of the review letter. Following the review, the applicant will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for it.



4. BEDROOM ENTITLEMENT

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1** Applicants will be able to bid for selected properties, which match the needs of their household in line with the Housing Benefit Regulations¹, namely one bedroom for:



- each adult couple.
- each other person over 16.
- two resident children of the same sex under 16.
- two resident children under 10, regardless of their sex.
- a disabled child who cannot share a bedroom with another child because of their disability.
- any other single resident child left.
- an overnight carer for a disabled person.

4.1.2 Applicants calculated as needing more than 4 bedrooms will be entitled to bid for 4-bedroom or 5-bedroom properties.

4.1.3 Children are considered to be resident where they stay with the applicant for more than four nights per week or seven nights each fortnight. This is subject to satisfactory evidence being submitted to support access/residency right. Where parents/guardians are separated and a child is co-resident with both parents on a 50/50 basis, if the child is already adequately housed with one parent, they cannot be included on the housing application of the other parent.

4.1.4 Non-dependent visiting children will not be considered part of the household for bedroom entitlement calculations.

4.1.5 For applicants who are pregnant, the unborn child will be classed as a child for the purposes of property size eligibility only, from the 20th week of pregnancy. Where a household already has another child (other children), the unborn child will be classed as the same sex as the youngest child. Unborn children do not count towards whether an applicant is lacking in bedrooms.

4.1.6 Houses with their own gardens will be restricted to applicants with resident children under 16, and some upper floor properties will be restricted to applicants without children under 10. This decision will be made by the landlord at the point of advertising the property.

4.1.7 Partner landlords may, at their discretion, advertise properties outside of these criteria and permit under occupation where necessary (for example, to allow applicants with a 1-bedroom need to bid for a harder-to-let 2-bedroom flat or sheltered housing). This decision will be made by the landlord at the point of advertising the property



- 4.1.8** Where applicants are allowed to bid for a property that is larger than their minimum bedroom entitlement, partner landlords may prioritise applicants with a larger minimum bedroom entitlement within the same band. This decision will be made by the landlord at the point of advertising the property.

5. ALLOCATIONS AND LETTINGS

5.1 Advertising of Properties

- 5.1.1** Affordable properties for rent are advertised for a seven-day period from Thursday to Wednesday.
- 5.1.2** Properties are advertised on the HomeChoice North Somerset Housing Jigsaw website.
- 5.1.3** Vulnerable applicants who are unable to access the website will be offered a service appropriate to them to ensure that they are aware of relevant properties.

5.2 Property Descriptions

- 5.2.1** Property adverts carry a photograph of the property or similar and always have a full description of the property. This description usually includes the following information:
- Type (House, Flat etc)
 - Number and max occupancy of bedrooms
 - Location
 - Level of accessibility for those with mobility issues/wheelchair users
 - Services provided (sheltered housing scheme manager, caretaker etc)
 - Heating type
 - Age restrictions
 - Whether pets are allowed
 - Availability of outside space (garden etc) and parking
 - Rent and service charges (split weekly/monthly)



- Special information (location of bus routes/ other amenities etc).
- Whether customers with a 'local connection' get priority.

5.3 Labelling of Properties

5.3.1 Advertisements will also give information on who will be eligible to apply for the property. An adapted property suitable for someone in a wheelchair may be labelled to say that applicants must require such a property.

5.3.2 Sheltered/Age-restricted Properties

Scheme landlords may impose restrictions on the allocation of sheltered accommodation. Details can be obtained directly from the landlord. Advertised properties will also be labelled with information regarding the age/disability of an applicant who will be permitted to bid.

5.3.3 Homeless Case Properties

To fulfil its statutory duties towards the homeless and to create a through flow of temporary accommodation the council may label properties giving preference to households to whom the council has accepted a main or relief homelessness duty.

The Council also reserves the right to respond to unusually high pressure on temporary accommodation resources by increasing use of direct lets or considering a backdate of application effective dates for those currently resident in temporary accommodation placements.

5.3.4 Transfer Properties

All the partner landlords are keen to ensure that they make the best use of their own stock. To achieve this, up to 25% of properties advertised will be labelled giving preference to existing tenants of that scheme landlord. The number of properties labelled as such will be monitored on a regular basis.

To create a sustainable community, the following properties may be let to transfer tenants:

- A property which needs to be let sensitively because of previous tenancy management problems in the property
- An estate where there are higher than average level of tenancy management issues.



Any properties will be let subject to the transfer quotas agreed in the Partnership Agreement. To assist in meeting their statutory responsibilities, the following properties will be advertised as available to all applicants on the HomeChoice Register:

- New build properties
- Adapted or accessible properties
- Large properties of 4 or more bedrooms

5.3.5 Local Lettings Policies

A property may be labelled in accordance with an agreed local lettings policy which may include rural exception sites and some new build sites which may be restricted to local residents through section 106 planning agreements.

5.3.6 Sensitive Lets

Sometimes landlords will request that the advertising of a vacant property is treated as a sensitive let. An example of this would be where the previous tenant has caused anti-social behaviour and it is important to get the right mix of tenants in the area. The landlord and the local authority may agree that the applicant at the top of the shortlist is not suitable to be offered the property and agree to offer it to a more suitable applicant

5.4 Bidding for Properties

5.4.1 Where an applicant meets the eligibility criteria, they may bid for that property within the deadline given. Applicants will be able to make three bids per weekly cycle.

5.4.2 Applicants may bid for properties using a variety of methods:

- Online at www.homechoicensomerset.org.uk

5.4.3 Applicants will not be permitted to bid for other properties if they have an outstanding offer in place.



5.4.4 At the close of the bidding cycle and where an applicant appears at the top of more than one shortlist, the applicant will be contacted by a scheme landlord and will be expected to select their preferred property and their details will be made available to the appropriate landlord. The other properties will be offered to the next suitable applicant on that shortlist

5.5 Selection Procedure

5.5.1 Once the advertisement deadline has passed, a report will be run from the computer system. This will list all the advertised properties and all the applicants who have applied for each of them. For each property advertised the successful applicant will be the one(s) who is in the highest band, with the greatest number of higher band Reasonable Preference Housing Needs, with the earliest effective date, as set out in more detail in paragraphs 3.2.3 – 3.2.6.

5.5.2 Prior to any offer, each successful applicant's details will be checked to ensure they are eligible for the property. In addition, the scheme landlord may carry out an individual risk assessment which may affect an offer being made. Only those applicants who meet the stated criteria and have a satisfactory risk assessment will be offered the property.

5.5.3 The name of the successful applicant will be forwarded to the agreed officer within each scheme landlord. Each individual landlord is responsible for the verification of the successful applicant (for example proof of ID and other relevant documentation). The council will be responsible for checking that the applicant is in the right band. Each applicant will be given the opportunity to view the property before making a final decision on whether to accept or refuse. Assistance with viewing will be available if required.

5.5.4 If a scheme landlord cannot accept an applicant as a tenant for a property they have successfully bid upon in line with the landlord's own lettings policy, this must first be agreed with the council. The scheme landlord will contact the applicant to inform them they have not been considered for the property. In these circumstances, the scheme landlord will write to the applicant to:

- Explain their reasons for refusing the applicant, including their right to request a review of the decision in writing within 21 days of being informed of the decision not to accept.
- Inform the applicant of any properties they can be considered for
- Include information on how to request a review by a scheme landlord senior manager.



- 5.5.5** If an applicant is refused for a property, it will be offered to the next viable applicant in shortlist order. Properties will not normally be kept available during a review appeal period.
- 5.5.6** If an applicant's appeal is successful, the scheme landlord and the council will work in partnership to directly offer the applicant the next suitable property. In selecting the next suitable property, the Housing Assessment Team will consider the size and general area of the property the applicant was originally refused for. If the applicant refuses the directly offered property no further offer will be made, however the applicant can continue to bid for homes during and after this process, subject to the normal HomeChoice policy.
- 5.5.7** If a property is subsequently withdrawn after an applicant has successfully bid, because for example the tenant of that particular property has failed to vacate the property or the property has been incorrectly labelled, the landlord will inform the successful applicant that the property is no longer available. If the property is not ready for occupation following a successful bid and the applicant is likely to wait some considerable time before moving in, the landlord will inform the applicant and give them the option to bid for any other suitable properties or accept the offered property.
- 5.5.8** It should be noted that all scheme landlords operate their own lettings policies and criteria independently of HomeChoice North Somerset. The Council works closely with them to foster consistency in the discharging of our statutory duties via the allocation of housing.
- 5.6 Refusals**
- 5.6.1** If an applicant decides to refuse an offer of accommodation, either at the accompanied viewing, or when an initial verbal offer is made, the property will be offered to the next eligible applicant.
- 5.6.2** Applicants who have refused 1 offer of suitable accommodation will have their banding reduced by one band for 6 months. Applicants in band D who have refused 1 offer of suitable accommodation will no longer qualify to be registered for a period of 6 months. Applicants who have refused 2 offers of suitable accommodation will no longer qualify to be registered for a period of 12 months. The decision on the suitability of a property under offer will be for the Housing Assessment Team to make. This is a reviewable decision.
- 5.6.3** Those households 1) accepted as statutory homeless and owed a duty to be housed; or 2) who have been granted homeless status under section 166A (3) (a) (people who are homeless within the meaning of part VII of the Housing Act 1996) will



lose their priority status banding homeless award if they refuse a suitable offer of accommodation unless they have another reason to be awarded priority banding. The offer of suitable accommodation made will also bring to an end any statutory homeless duty to any of these applicants under section 193(2) or 195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 and they will be warned of this consequence at the point the property is formally offered to them



Note: if an applicant does not reply to an offer within 2 working days of receiving the offer it will be deemed to have been refused and the property will be offered to the next applicant on the register who qualifies for that offer.

5.6.4 If the Council makes what it considers to be a suitable offer of private rented sector accommodation and the applicant refuses it, the Council will review the level of priority awarded under the HomeChoice Policy and will normally withdraw the Band B priority for homelessness prevention unless it determines that exceptional circumstances exist.

5.6.5 Records will be maintained on the number of refusals for each property and the reason why the applicant decided to refuse.

5.7 Contrived Circumstances and Intentional Homelessness

5.7.1 Where an applicant has been adjudged to be intentionally homeless under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (not due to anti-social behaviour or rent arrears) or has deliberately worsened their circumstances in order to qualify for additional priority on the register, their application will be assessed on their housing need at their last settled accommodation before the intentional homeless decision was made or the change in their circumstances occurred.

5.7.2 Circumstances could include (but not limited to):

- An applicant sells a property that is affordable and suitable for the applicant's needs.
- An applicant moves from a secure property to an insecure or overcrowded property.
- An applicant moves a family member(s) or friend(s) and / or any other household into their current home, within the last 12 months where there is no need.

5.7.3 The HomeChoice Team will also consider whether an applicant has made a fraudulent application.

5.7.4 Where an applicant's circumstances subsequently change their priority will be reviewed.



5.8 Feedback

5.8.1 An important part of the scheme is giving applicants feedback on who has recently been allocated properties. Accompanying each advertisement will be a feedback section giving details of the properties allocated, including:

- a) Property size and type
- b) Property location
- c) Number of applicants who applied for each property
- d) Band of successful applicant.

5.8.2 Using this information, applicants will be able to see where properties are more likely to become available and where they may have the best chances of making a successful 'bid'.

5.9 Direct Lets

5.9.1 Homelessness Duty

To discharge its statutory Homelessness Duty under s193(2) of the 1996 Act, the council may make a direct offer or automatically place bids for any applicant assessed as homeless under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017) who has not secured accommodation under Part 6 of the Act within one month of being placed in Band A. The period of time may be extended where no suitable properties have become available.

5.9.2 Dangerous or Potentially Dangerous Offenders

Upon a referral from the Police, Probation Service or Home Office under the North Somerset Multi-Agency Protocol an offender may be made a direct offer of a property, regardless of their eligibility under chapter 2 of this policy.

Re-housing of dangerous offenders will be carried out in consultation with the relevant agencies to minimise the risk to the public and with the long-term aim of influencing the successful accommodation and resettlement of the offender, thus minimising the risk of re-offending and protecting the public and victims of offenders.



5.9.3 Other Direct Lets

The Council and all the scheme landlords are committed to advertising as many vacant properties as possible through the HomeChoice system. There will be occasions, however, when certain properties will not be advertised and maybe let directly, the reasons for these exclusions will be monitored. Some examples are:

- Extra care vacancies which are allocated jointly with the council's Adult Social Services directorate – there is a separate policy for this.
- Applicants who have succeeded a tenancy who need to move to alternative accommodation.
- Exceptional circumstances agreed between the council and scheme landlord.
- Properties required for existing tenants whose properties are subject to major works or changes of use requiring them to vacate.

5.9.4 If a property has been excluded from the scheme, the let will still be processed as a direct let and the outcome of the letting will still be advertised.

6. GYPSY AND TRAVELLER PITCHES

6.1 Policy

NB: for the purposes of the policy, the definition of a gypsy and/or traveller is as set out below

“Gypsies and Travellers” means-

- a) persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan; and
- b) all other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including:



- i) such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old aged, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently; and
- ii) members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people (whether or not travelling as such).

6.1.1 There are a number of gypsy & traveller pitches in North Somerset provided by the council and by Registered Providers that are available to rent. Whilst legally allocation of and nomination to these pitches falls outside the scope of the Housing Act 1996 and of our Choice Based Lettings Scheme, the same principles for allocation will apply to those applicants who wish to apply for a pitch.

6.1.2 Unless otherwise stated below, the terms of the HomeChoice North Somerset Lettings and Assessment Policy will apply.

6.2 Eligibility and Assessment

6.2.1 Local Connection

In place of the local connection criteria in section 2.2.1 of this policy, for the purpose of gypsy and traveller pitches a Gypsy and Traveller applicant qualifies to join the housing register if they:

- Have, by choice lived in the North Somerset area for a combined total of 12 months during the last 3 years prior to application, or
- Have, by choice, previously lived in North Somerset for a total of seven years out of ten consecutive years, no more than five years prior to application, where time living in North Somerset is combined over the 10 year period; or
- Have retained continuous employment in North Somerset, of a minimum of 16 hours per week, for at least the 12 months preceding the date the application is made or reviewed.

6.2.2 Band Assessment

A Gypsy and Traveller applicant's banding award for a gypsy and traveller pitch will be based on an assessment of how the allocation of a pitch would address their housing needs, using the criteria set out in Section 3 of this policy.



6.3 Allocation

6.3.1 Bidding

In place of the bidding process detailed in section 5.4 of this policy, applicants eligible for a pitch are required to indicate on their HomeChoice application whether they would be interested in a pitch.

6.3.2 Selection Process

In place of the selection process detailed in section 5.5 of this policy, if a pitch becomes available the Council will nominate an applicant for the vacant pitch to the Registered Provider, or allocate the pitch in the case of the pitch being provided by the council, taking into account any planning restrictions or landlord lettings policies for the pitches in question.

6.3.3 Offer

Except in exceptional circumstances, the applicant offered or nominated for a pitch will be the one who is in the highest band, with the greatest number of higher band Reasonable Preference Housing Needs, with the earliest effective date, as set out in more detail in paragraphs 3.2.3 – 3.2.6. The applicant will be informed of the site make up (e.g. which particular community is mainly resident on the site) prior to allocation or nomination to determine whether they wish to proceed with the vacancy.

6.3.4 Refusal Process

The procedures for a Registered Provider refusing an applicant detailed in sections 5.5.4 through 5.5.7 apply.

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

7.1 Monitoring

7.1.1 A number of areas within the HomeChoice North Somerset system will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the system is operating in the most effective way. Areas to be monitored may include:

- Number of registrations received
- Percentage of applicants registered and notified within 21 days
- Number and percentage of applicants registered within each band
- Number of properties advertised by type, area, landlord



- Number of properties advertised with local connection label
- Number of properties with reasons excluded from the HomeChoice system, by landlord (i.e. decants)
- Number of bids and method of bidding
- Number of bids for each property by band
- Profile of those bidding (i.e. waiting list, transfer, homeless, disabled, ethnic background)
- Number of applicants bypassed for breach of tenancy conditions
- Number of accepted offers by band
- Number of tenancies refused at sign up
- Number of properties re-advertised due to difficulty in letting
- Number of review requests
- Number of applicants in short term supported housing awaiting active rehousing (following confirmation by scheme of readiness to move)
- Number of homeless applicants in Band A awaiting rehousing/(notbidding)
- Number of Band A applicants who have not bid for more than six months
- Number of Emergency Priority applicants awaiting rehousing
- Number of people housed by band

7.2 Equal Opportunities

7.2.1 All partners of HomeChoice North Somerset are committed to a fair and equitable housing policy and to providing equal opportunities for all when allocating available properties. All housing applicants will be assessed according to their housing need and in accordance with the published lettings policy

7.2.2 All partners of HomeChoice North Somerset are opposed to direct or indirect discrimination and recognise the need for appropriate systems to actively prevent discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender, sexuality, marital status, religion, physical disability or mental health. Any allegations or concerns that an organisation has not acted appropriately have to be made directly to that organisation. All partner landlords are publicly accountable and have to have a complaints policy and an independent ombudsman.



7.2.3 Regular monitoring will also be carried out to ensure that the council complies with the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice for rented housing.

7.3 Social Inclusion

7.3.1 All partners of HomeChoice North Somerset believe that applicants should be given every assistance to access the housing register and search for suitable properties. For example, the provision of the HomeChoice North Somerset telephone number will assist those applicants who experience literacy problems or who are either blind or partially sighted and unable to read the advertisements.

7.3.2 To further assist applicants the following methods may be used:

- Applicants potentially disadvantaged by the scheme will initially be identified from the application form. Staff will contact these applicants and offer them a home visit or interview. Staff will seek to establish what the support needs are and identify ways of enabling the applicants to participate in the HomeChoice North Somerset system. This may include sending copies of the advertisements in large print to an applicant or simply providing advice.
- If the applicant agrees, staff may contact any professional or voluntary workers from health or Social Services with whom the applicant is involved to ensure they understand the procedures and that necessary support is provided. All agencies funded through Supporting People should be in a position to provide their clients with help on housing issues
- Disadvantaged applicants are able to nominate a person (including family members, friends or professional worker) to bid on their behalf or to help them bid for suitable properties.
- An alternative is for HomeChoice North Somerset staff to automatically put the applicants forward for vacancies that would be suitable, in the small number of cases where the applicant has no support.

7.4 False Information

7.4.1 Applicants who are found to have knowingly given false information on their HomeChoice application will have their application cancelled immediately and will be excluded from the Housing Register for 3 years from the date they become eligible for the register, unless they fall into one of the homelessness qualifying groups defined in paragraph 2.2.3.



7.4.2 An immediate review of an application may also be undertaken if an applicant is found to have deliberately changed or worsened their housing situation in order to be placed into a band higher than they would normally have been awarded. If an applicant is rehoused through false information, steps may be taken to end the tenancy and court action may be taken which could result in the applicant receiving a fine up to a maximum of £5,000.

7.4.3 All landlords in this agreement are committed to taking legal action to evict any applicant found to have gained a tenancy based on false information in their application form. (Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996).

7.5 Access to Personal Information

7.5.1 Individuals are entitled under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 to request details of their personal data held by North Somerset Council. A charge may be made for providing this information.

7.5.2 The information received, in conjunction with housing applications, may be disclosed to other housing providers/RSLs but will only be retained if accommodation is to be provided. Any additional personal information obtained may also be provided to RSLs if they provide accommodation.

7.6 Policy Review

7.6.1 The HomeChoice North Somerset Scheme is regularly reviewed to ensure that the policy meets its stated objectives and complies with legislative changes. Any material changes that directly alter the application of the Lettings and Assessment Policy are implemented only after delegated authority has been received from the Executive Member and the majority agreement amongst the partner landlords.

7.7 Complaints

7.7.1 Any complaints about the applicants banding should be directed to the council. Complaints regarding the labelling of the property e.g., size, amenities etc should be referred to the individual landlord of the property. If a successful applicant is not offered the accommodation for any reason, then any complaints regarding this should be directed to the landlord making this decision.

7.7.2 If an applicant is not satisfied with the action taken by either the council or a Registered Social Landlord and has exhausted the complaints procedure available, they can send a written complaint to the ombudsman.

7.7.3 The Housing Ombudsman Service can be contacted at:



Housing Ombudsman Service
Exchange Tower
Harbour Exchange Square
London
E14 9GE

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Fax: 020 7831 1942

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk



APPENDIX A – HOMECHOICE NORTH SOMERSET SCHEME LANDLORDS

Abri

Alliance Homes

Aster Communities

Brighter Places

Brunel Care

Curo

Elim

English Rural Housing Association

Guinness Partnership

Hanover

Housing 21

LiveWest

Bromford Housing

Places for People

Sanctuary

South Western Housing Society

Sovereign Housing

Stonewater



APPENDIX B – MEDICAL ASSESSMENTS

When ill health, disability or ageing is aggravated by housing conditions and would improve if other accommodation were offered, the award for medical consideration is a range from Band A to Band C. These bandings are reviewed annually on the date of the application renewal.

Band A: Urgent and potentially life-threatening problems

Band B: Urgent, but not life-threatening problems

Band C: Clear, but not urgent problems

When awarding additional priority on medical grounds, there are three questions that have to be considered:

1. Is there a direct link between the identified medical complaint and the current housing accommodation/situation?
2. Is there a realistic expectation that the identified medical condition would improve if alternative, more suitable accommodation was made available?
3. Are there properties available within the HomeChoice North Somerset system that would be more suitable for the applicant?

The HomeChoice Team will carefully consider any representation received and check the circumstances outlined with any banding award that may have previously been made. Where there is a need, a change to banding will be made.

To achieve this consistency in the allocation of banding under this heading a descending schedule is detailed below

Band A: Urgent and potentially life-threatening problems

This top category will be reserved for exceptional cases where an applicant's or tenant's life can in some way be said to be at risk because of associated medical and housing difficulties which are inherent in the existing accommodation.

Band B: Urgent, but not life-threatening problems

This again is a high banding category and should only be used to reflect urgent medical difficulties that have a clear relationship to existing housing circumstances. It is distinguished from the previous banding (i.e., high / life threatening problems) because in this instance the person's life cannot be considered to be at risk.



Band C: Clear, but not urgent problems

The degree of the problem is clearly less severe but must still have a clear relationship to existing housing conditions.

Procedure

The Housing Assessment Team will carry out the majority of medical priority assessments. When an applicant indicates on their application that they have a medical need, they will be contacted by a Housing Options Assistant who will conduct a brief interview to discover if there is a medical condition that warrants assessment.

If the Housing Assessment Assistant assesses that there may be some medical priority due, they will send a self-assessment medical form to the applicant for them to complete so that the full medical details of the applicant can be gathered on a single form

The Housing Assessment Team does not usually request an applicant or tenant to submit medical certificates or to obtain letters from their GP. The belief is held that this is a purely voluntary matter for the GP and patient. The Housing Team has no wish to create further work for doctors by insisting that medical certificates are produced before any application or transfer request is considered.

However, there will be occasions when the advice of North Somerset Primary Care Trust will need to be sought. For example, where an applicant's housing circumstances are affecting their mental health, or where a GP considers a patient requires High Priority as a result of a medical problem.

When determining what banding to award, staff should approach the matter from the standpoint of assessing what degree of need exists and, secondly, what adverse effect this has on the lifestyle of the household as a whole?

The important aspect is to make a decision on what banding should be awarded, and then record the rationale as to why bandings have been awarded at that particular level within the HomeChoice customer records management system.

The following list covers some of the main factors, which can be reflected in a banding award under Medical Considerations:

- An applicant's inability to manage stairs, control temperature, etc
- Applicants more or less confined to their existing accommodation
- Where present accommodation is causing an applicant's mental or physical disability.
- An applicant's restricted ability to fend for him/herself
- The need for adapted housing and/or extra facilities



- The need for sheltered or supported housing
- The need for housing as part of a care plan

Medical priority cannot usually be awarded in any of the following circumstances:

- Disrepair problems
- Overcrowding
- Neighbour disputes
- Homelessness
- Pregnancy-related problems
- Inconvenient location
- Disability of someone who is not on your HomeChoice application
- If your situation can be resolved by adaptations or equipment



APPENDIX C – WELFARE ASSESSMENTS

An award of either Band A or Band B welfare priority can only be made when an applicant's welfare is directly affected by their housing conditions and only a move to alternative accommodation would alleviate the situation (please also note that welfare priority will only be awarded to a household, not to individual members of the family/household).

The higher A Band priority, will only be awarded to reflect urgent welfare difficulties that have a clear relationship to an applicants' existing accommodation and their safety, or wellbeing, would be seriously affected if they remained in their current home.

The lower B Band priority will only be awarded to reflect significant welfare difficulties that have a clear relationship to an applicants' existing accommodation and their independence, or quality of life, would be significantly affected if they remained in their current home.

Any professional, for example a Social Worker, Support Worker or Homelessness Prevention Officer, working with a person or their household can ask for a welfare award to be considered for a client.

The representative will need to provide a written report, with additional evidence to support any reasons to move that are beyond their scope (i.e. Police records), which will then be carefully considered by the Housing Assessment Team, who will decide which priority band, if any, to award the application.

Some of the areas that can be considered for an award of welfare priority include:

- The need to give or receive support.
- The need to recover from the physical effects of violence, threats, physical, emotional, sexual abuse etc.
- Young people at risk.

There is an expectation that applicants who are awarded Band A welfare place regular appropriate bids. All Band A welfare applications will be reviewed every 4 months and may result in the removal of welfare banding if, for example an applicant is not placing regular bids, or the reason welfare banding had been given is no longer relevant.



APPENDIX D – ROUGH SLEEPER & OTHER HOMELESS ASSESSMENTS

When an applicant claims to be rough sleeping, street homeless or sleeping in a vehicle then the award of a Band B rough sleeper can be made where it is assessed that the applicant finds themselves in this position through no fault of their own.

Before awarding additional priority for rough sleeping, the HomeChoice Manager, HomeChoice Officer or Homelessness Prevention Officer must carry out an investigation considering the following questions:

1. What are the applicant's current housing circumstances (street homeless, in a tent, in a car, etc)?
2. Where has the applicant slept for the previous seven nights?
3. Where does the applicant intend to sleep for the next seven nights?
4. What toilet and washing facilities has the applicant been using?
5. Where was the applicant's last settled address?
6. Why can they no longer occupy that address?
7. Does the applicant have any other friends or family that could accommodate them?

The officer may also carry out an unannounced visit to the location the applicant states they may be sleeping to verify the information provided.

If, following this investigation, the officer believes that the applicant is sleeping rough with no fault of their own, then Band B rough sleeper can be awarded providing the applicant is engaging with relevant support services.

Other Homeless

Households owed a homeless duty by any other local housing authority under the Housing Act 1996 Part 7 s.188, s.190, s.198 or s.193, will be regarded as non-qualifying persons regardless of whether they have been placed in North Somerset or not. This is because that other local authority retains the responsibility for housing whether under s193, Housing Act 1996 or any other duty by which the other local authority retains responsibility for their accommodation. Households placed in North Somerset Council district under a homeless duty by another local authority who have been placed under that duty for more than 5 years will be allowed to qualify.



APPENDIX E – Provision of Evidence

The HomeChoice scheme will require certain evidence at point of application prior to the assessment and activation of applications for bidding. Applicants will be expected to go to reasonable lengths to submit proof of circumstances, including (but not limited to):

- Proof of identification for all household members
- Evidence of income and financial status
- Proof of pregnancy
- Evidence of child dependency
- Medical evidence
- Evidence of welfare circumstances

Relevant evidence of circumstances will be required during the life of an application if changes to circumstances will result in a change in eligibility, qualification, banding priority or bedroom entitlement.



APPENDIX F – HARDSHIP

Awards for hardship can be awarded where applicants have a need to move to a particular locality within North Somerset and that need to move is to avoid hardship (to themselves or others). Other than in exceptional circumstances this award will only be made where the applicant needs to move to a particular locality in North Somerset and needs to move because the applicant works or has been offered work in North Somerset and has a genuine intention to take up the offer.

In determining whether to award Band C status regard will be had to paragraphs 16-34 of the DLUHC Right to Move Statutory Guidance on Social Housing allocations for Local Authorities in England (March 2015) and The Allocation of Accommodation guidance for local housing authorities in England.



APPENDIX G – DWP BEDROOM STANDARD

Currently used to determine under occupation for housing benefit assessment, the DWP bedroom standard is used to determine lacking bedrooms banding. Under the DWP bedroom standard, each of the following require 1 bedroom:

- Couple
- Single adults aged 16 or over
- Two children of the same gender up to 15
- Two children of either gender up to 9.
- Any other single child
- An overnight carer where required.



APPENDIX H – PROTOCOL FOR HOUSING DANGEROUS OFFENDERS AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS OFFENDERS

There is a North Somerset Multi-Agency Protocol in dealing with dangerous offenders that allows the exchange information about any applicant who has been convicted of a serious offence. Any applicant who confirms on their application form, or who is suspected, or accused, of being a dangerous offender, will be subjected to the provisions set out in the information exchange protocol.

The North Somerset Multi-Agency Protocol is only for a specific offenders group and only covers referrals from the Public Protection Team and Avon and Somerset Police and does not guarantee the provision of a tenancy.

There is not a 'blanket ban' preventing dangerous offenders from being included on the housing register. However, before any known offender is offered housing, full consultation will be undertaken with the relevant agencies to assess the risks involved. Some dangerous offenders will be given a high priority so that the relevant agencies can continue to monitor them.

In the interests of public protection, it is essential that the Police and Probation Service are able to control and monitor the behaviour and activities of dangerous offenders. This task is made more difficult if such offenders do not have a fixed address or are housed in circumstances that make it difficult for the agencies to monitor them appropriately.

Re-housing of dangerous offenders will be carried out in consultation with the relevant agencies to minimise the risk to the public and with the long term aim of influencing the successful accommodation and resettlement of the offender, thus minimising the risk of re-offending and protecting the public and victims of offenders. The local authorities or Probation Service will bid on behalf of any applicant who falls within this category.



APPENDIX I – Exceptional Circumstances

Where a person would not qualify for the register on the basis of either 1) not meeting the local connection residency rules or 2) they come under one of the exclusion criteria; but they believe that they still have a particular need to be housed in the North Somerset district due to exceptional circumstances they can submit an exceptional circumstances case through following the process set out in this appendix.

The Council retains the ability, in exceptional circumstances, to exercise its discretion when making decisions about including persons on the Housing Register. Such cases will be referred to a panel of officers who will consider whether the applicant's circumstances (or those of a member of the applicant's household) are so exceptional that the exclusion or qualification rules should be waived.

The Council will contact any applicant whom they believe has a communication difficulty and does not meet the eligibility criteria to enquire if they have any exceptional circumstances.

Please note that the Council cannot waive the eligibility rules for applicant's who are legally not allowed to access social housing due to the rules set by the Government and such cases will not be referred to the Officer Panel if a case is submitted.

The Council will only waive the qualification rules where the applicant's circumstances are considered exceptional. The following list contains examples of what might constitute exceptional circumstances. The list is for illustrative purposes only.

- Private sector tenants and residents of dwellings where the Council's Private Rented Housing Service has determined that the property poses a category 1 hazard under the Health and Safety fitness rating and the Council are satisfied that the problem cannot be resolved by the landlord within 12 months and as a result continuing to occupy the accommodation will pose a considerable risk to the applicant or a member of their households' health and the household are not able to resolve their own housing problem by moving to alternative accommodation. This includes a property that has severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of roof, or have living conditions which are a statutory nuisance.
- Where specialist health services and or social care perceive an applicant's housing condition is having a very serious impact on the applicant's health and re-housing is required to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care. Or where the applicant's health is so severely affected by the accommodation that it has become life threatening and the applicant's existing accommodation is the major contributory factor.



- Applicants who do not meet the North Somerset local connection rules but have an exceptional need to move due to evidence of abuse, extreme violence or extreme harassment or threats of violence and there is a high risk to the applicant or their family's safety if they remain in the dwelling/area. This may include where a move is necessary to protect a witness to criminal acts. It will also include certain MARAC cases where there are exceptional circumstances

In deciding whether an applicant's circumstances are exceptional the Panel will fully consider the Equality Act duties and the duty placed on the Council under Section 11 of the Children Act and will specifically consider:

- ✓ Whether the person, or a member of their household that they wish to be housed with them, meets the definition of a relevant protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010 e.g. disability
- ✓ If the Council agrees that the applicant or a member of their household comes under the definition for a relevant protected characteristic it will fully comply with section 149 of 2010 Equality Act and ensure that it has obtained all relevant information relating to the applicant's relevant protected characteristic and will consider, if they were not able to qualify for the scheme, whether this would have an exceptionally detrimental impact on the person with the relevant protected characteristic.
- ✓ The officer panel will ensure that any decision that the applicant's circumstances are not exceptional, and that the applicant does not qualify for the North Somerset District Council housing register is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The Panel will also in considering whether an applicant's circumstances are exceptional take into account the general duty placed on the Council by section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and will ensure any decision is made having had full regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This will include the physical, psychological, social, educational and economic welfare of any children in the household.

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North Somerset Council

Report to the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting: 03/11/2022

Subject of Report: Cap on Care Costs

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Abby Murphy

Key Decision: No

Reason:

Report for information only

Recommendations

The Panel is asked to consider this information as an update of where we are with preparing for the cap on care costs as part of the Adult Social Care Reforms

1. Summary of Report

This report is a summary of activity undertaken and planned for North Somerset Council to be ready for the Care Reform / Cap on Care Costs in October 2023

2. Policy

The council's Performance Management Framework includes a requirement for quarterly reporting of our transformational projects so that members and officers can monitor progress against our key plans and objectives and take appropriate action where progress is below target or needs additional focus.

3. Details

What does the Cap on Care Costs mean for North Somerset Residents?

- From October 2023 a Care Cap will be set at £86,000 as the maximum amount a person will pay for their care. This excludes daily living costs (£200 per week) the cap will rise in line with inflation
- Costs that count towards the Care Cap will be based on:
 - For those financially supported by the LA – what the LA charges the person to meet their eligible care and support needs
 - For self-funders what the cost to the LA would be of meeting their eligible care needs if the support were commissioned by the LA
- This will mean we need to develop and maintain a Care Account so that people can see how they are progressing towards the Care Cap
- This also means that Self-Funders will have an automatic right to ask the LA to commission care on their behalf
- In addition, the means testing threshold will be increased from £23,250 to £100,000

What does this look like in real terms?

In a word - **Increases**:

An increase in the number of people requiring Care Assessments, Financial Assessments, Care Reviews and Brokerage and potentially carers that we've not heard from before.

Early figures estimate this increase could be as much as 50%

This will also increase the number of contacts to our services, DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards), safeguarding concerns and potentially complaints.

Added into this we will have new responsibilities to meter care and produce Care Account Statements for people.

Trailblazers

The Government are working with 6 trailblazing Local Authorities who are starting the Care Reform work early they are:

- Wolverhampton
- Cheshire East
- North Yorkshire
- Blackpool
- Newham
- Oxfordshire

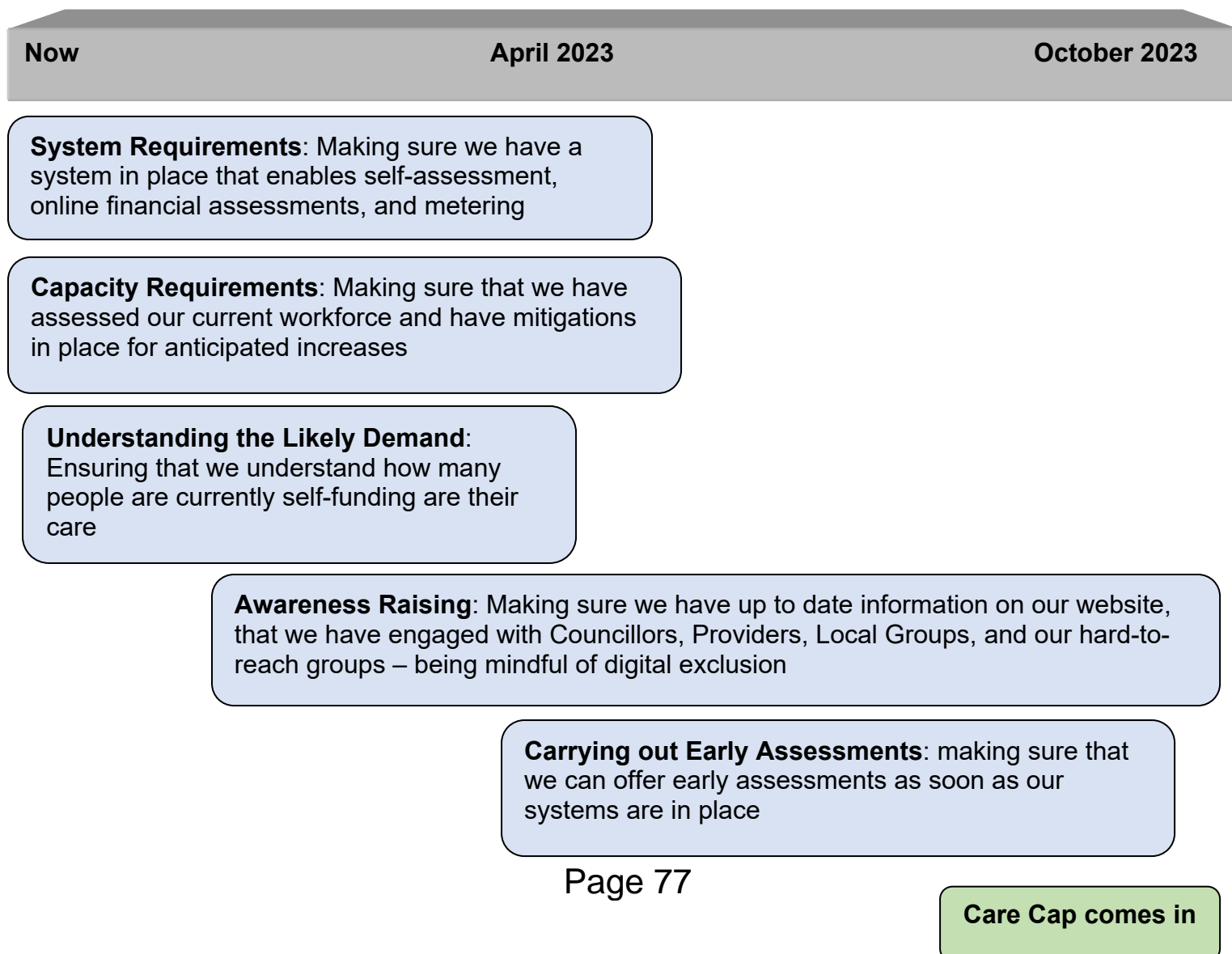
The table below is taken from the DHSC wording from advise given by trailblazers and we have ranked our current progress.

Key Eight Things Trailblazers Think Local Authorities Can Be Doing Now	NSC progress
Read the guidance and then read it again! Undertake a full gap analysis to understand what activity you will need to undertake to be compliant with the new legislation.	85%
Make sure all service heads have read the guidance and understand the changes	90%
Create programme structure & governance including Comms, Finance, Heads of Service, PSW, Commissioning, Brokerage, Financial Assessment Team, Data and Reporting and System Development.	90%
Understand any local variation in the impact of reforms (e.g. local cap, demographics, number of care homes, number of self-funders, number of home owners, digitally enabled).	20%
Crunch the numbers. How many people are likely to hit the cap in their lifetime? How will you manage these messages?	15%
Seek opportunities for join up. New operating model? Strength Based Assessment? Covid legacy? Trusted Assessor model? Community Relationships?	15%
Plan your early assessment approach.	5%
Think about when you are going to train staff and the delivery vehicle for this. What else will be happening during this time? i.e. other reforms, winter pressures."	10%

What have we done so far?

- Set up a working group to focus on Care Cap which is made up of Heads of Service, Principal SW, Finance, Brokerage, Operations, Commissioning, Business Intelligence, and links to Liberata and Agilisys
- Recruited a Care Cap Implementation Programme Manager
- Engaged with Agilisys to provide direction in terms of systems and our current supplier of our adult's case management system Liquid Logic
- Become active members of the SW ADASS Care Reforms group / SW ASDSS Reforms Data
- Set up regular meetings with the Care Cap leads for BNSSG so that we can pool our ideas, look for ways of joint working and network
- Attended briefings held by DHSC to listen to the latest advice and hear from Trailblazers
- Attended sessions from various alternative suppliers who have self-assessment solutions for self funders, to ensure we procure the best solution possible.
- Established a work plan and project overview site for internal communications and project oversight
- Produced our project initiation document, risk register and terms of reference.
- Begun work on a communications plan
- Began early engagements with service leads that will develop into a workforce plan
- Begun a review of current procedures to look at ways in which we can best prepare for the reforms
- Begun work on a full gap analysis of the reforms to identify all areas which need to be covered, what mitigations we will need and who will be responsible.

General Project Plan Timeline Overview



Current anticipated risks and mitigations plan

Potential Risks	Current RAG	Mitigation/dependencies
Systems: identifying a suitable solution	Amber/Red	Engagement with supplies, Advise from Agilisys, recommendations from SWADASS
Systems: timescales to purchase and implement solution	Amber/Red	Suppliers are aware of tight time scales, making sure we identify our desired spec
Capacity: recruiting a workforce to meet increased demands	Amber/Red	Establish a working group to focus purely on workforce requirements
Awareness Raising: Hard to reach groups / non digital	Amber	Involvement from NSC Coms to produce a solid communications plan and build on existing relationships with partner agencies
Understanding Demand: making sure we are resourced to the right level	Amber	Feeds into work force plan. Accurate data modelling which is being undertaken to check Newton modelling
Carrying out early assessments: ensuring we have the ability and resource to do this	Amber	Dependent on successful procurement and implementation of systems and good workforce planning.

4. Consultation

This report has been completed in full consultation with the project sponsor and Director, Members briefing sessions, and engagement with this Select Committee will continue as these reforms are progressed. Provider engagement will take place with Care Association and via Provider Forums. A communication action plan is being developed as service users, families and carers are key stakeholders.

5. Financial Implications

There will be financial implications from the following areas:

- Workforce to meet the increased demand across areas of adult social care such as, front door services, social workers and care workers, DoLS, Safeguarding, Brokerage / Commissioning and Court of Protection.
- Workforce in Corporate Services to meet increased demand, financial assessment officers, finance, Business Intelligence, customer services (complaints), HR for recruitment
- Increase demand for Agilisys for systems upgrades and implementation, and potentially Care Connect
- Procurement of systems to meet the requirements of Care Cap, Self-Assessment, and metering none of which we have at present, although upgrades to our current Adult Care Management System will allow this (at cost).

The government has indicated national funding targeted at this reform and is consulting on how the different elements of the funding will be distributed. Initial research of the likely costs of this reform suggests a significant shortfall at a national level. North Somerset has a far higher proportion of self funders, an above average house ownership level for those above 65 years of age, and in a regional context a lower than average care home fee level, all red flags for potential above average costs.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

N/A at this stage of the preparation

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

N/A – Although pursuing more self-serve and less reliance on paper where possible will have a small environmental benefit.

8. Risk Management

Please see above, risk management is considered by the project board on an ongoing basis

9. Equality Implications

Yes – in draft

The specific equality impact assessment for this programme is currently in draft and due for consideration by the Project Board at the next meeting.

The equality objectives (part of the Corporate Performance Management Framework) are regularly monitored and are reported to the Corporate Management Team and the Council's Equality Scheme Implementation Group.

10. Corporate Implications

It is important that we consider the scope and cost of these reforms to the Council as the programme progresses

11. Options Considered

N/A

Author:

Abby Murphy – Care Cap Implementation Programme Manager

Gerald Hunt – Project Sponsor – Principal Head of Commissioning, Partnerships & Housing Services

Appendices:

N/A

Background Papers:

N/A - Although all DHSC briefings, recordings of updates from DHSC are available on request.

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ASH Policy and Scrutiny Panel Work programme November 2022

(to be updated following each Panel meeting)

The Panel will consider issues of significant public concern, areas of poor performance and areas where Members think the Council could provide better value for money. This is a “live” document and is subject to change as priorities or circumstances change.

SECTION ONE – ACTIVE & SCHEDULED panel Projects as identified in the overarching Strategic Work Plan.

Topic	Reason for scrutiny	Method of scrutiny and reporting process	Timeline	Progress	Contact
Cladding and other fire safety issues in the district (following Grenfell outcomes)	Reference from Council: requesting Place Panel establish policy recommendations on a series of specific points raised	Joint working group led by Place Panel (PP&SP led) reporting back to Council	TBA	WG mtgs: last met 30/11/21 Building Safety Bill still progressing through parliament with some improvements. WG liaising with officers on local Homes England study progress and local funding	
Unpaid/ Carers review	National and local concerns about challenges faced by these carers, particularly during covid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To arrange a stakeholder Inquiry day (ED) In order to inform development of Council carers strategy 	Oct	Executive Member feedback to Panel at November 2022 meeting.	

SECTION TWO – proposed projects (listed in priority order). These must be agreed at Panel and will be referred for discussion at Chairs and Vice Chairs – for inclusion within the Strategic Work Plan:-

Topic	Reason for scrutiny	Proposed method of Scrutiny & reporting process	Timeline	Contact

SECTION THREE – planned briefings, workshops, and informal Panel meetings. Outcomes may, with Chairman’s agreement, generate Panel agenda items (for inclusion in S4 below) or, with Panel agreement, escalation to S2 above:-

Topic	Reason for scrutiny	Date	Outcome	Progress	Contact
Housing issues Standing Group	To periodically engage with and provide Panel feedback to officers on emerging housing policies and/or service developments.	Last met 15/06/2	Lettings and Allocation Policy changes to November 2022 meeting		Kay Eccles, Howard Evans
Commissioning Standing Group	To engage with and provide feedback to officers on future commissioning decisions as and when required	Last met 26/09/22	Considered extension of spot-purchasing and learning disability / mental health frameworks		Gerald Hunt, Teresa Stanley
Development of Housing Strategy	All Cllr pre-consultation briefing for Member feedback	19/01/22	Member briefing and feedback provided.	Post consultation engagement TBA	Kay Eccles
ASH Service “co-production”	For Member feedback	01/10/21	Members briefed on co-production principles		Mark Bodley
Strategic Housing Enforcement Policy Update – briefing note	To engage on Policy development	N/A		Member responses fed back by 1 July.	Howard Evans
ASH All-Member briefing: Refugees in North Somerset	To brief all Members on the accommodations for refugees in North Somerset.	04/07/22	Members briefed		Hayley Verrico, Sheila Smith
ASH All-Member Care Reforms briefing	To brief all Members on care reforms	26/07/22	Members briefed		Hayley Verrico

SECTION FOUR - agenda reports to the Panel meetings as agreed by the Chairman. This section primarily provides for the forward planning of agendas for the coming year and a useful record of panel meeting activity. When considering reports at meetings, outcomes may include proposing a workstream, escalating it to S2 above for potential inclusion on the STRATEGIC WORK PLAN.

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Outcome (actions)	Progress	Contact
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Panel 7th July 2022

Adults Social Services Annual Directorate Statement	To update the Panel on the ADS, and to promote Panel engagement with the ADS.	ADS noted.		H. Verrico
Care Reforms	To update the Panel, and for the Panel to agree on how engagement with implementation should proceed.	Panel discussion of engagement with Care Reforms		H. Verrico
Finance Update	Budget monitoring	Report received		K. Sokol
Older People's Housing Needs Assessment	To update the Panel on demand for Older People's Housing over the next 30 years.	Panel updated		G. Hunt
Annual Adults Complaint report 2020-21	To update the Panel on complaints to Adults Social Services.	Panel updated		H. Verrico
Carers Inquiry Day Report	To endorse the findings and recommendations of the Carers Inquiry Day.	Panel agreed findings and made recommendations to Executive Member		B. Cross/ L.Taylor

Panel 3rd November 2022

Carers Inquiry Day Action Plan update	To update the Panel on the response to the Carers Enquiry Day report			Cllr Mike Bell
Changes to the Lettings and Allocation Policy	To update the Panel on changes to the policy after informal discussion on 14 July 2022			Kaycee McMahon

Cap on Care Costs	To update the Panel with ongoing preparations for the cap on care costs as part of the Adult Social Care Reforms			Abby Murphy
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SECTION 5 - Recommendations - Response from Executive Member

Area for investigation/ Recommendations	When were the recommendations to the Executive agreed?	Expect answer by (first panel meeting after recommendations were submitted)
Recommendations from Carers Enquiry Day Report	7th July 2022	3 November 2022

SECTION 6 - Progress and follow-up on implementing Panel recommendations

Panel Recommendation	Date of Response	Actions – implementation progress