

MEETING: CABINET
DATE: Thursday 11th September, 2014
TIME: 10.00 am
VENUE: Town Hall, Bootle

Member

Councillor

Councillor Peter Dowd (Chair)
Councillor Cummins
Councillor Fairclough
Councillor Hardy
Councillor Maher
Councillor Moncur
Councillor Tweed

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Steve Pearce
Democratic Services Manager
Telephone: 0151 934 2046
Fax: 0151 934 2034
E-mail: steve.pearce@sefton.gov.uk

The Cabinet is responsible for making what are known as Key Decisions, which will be notified on the Forward Plan. Items marked with an * on the agenda involve Key Decisions

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution, is: -

- any Executive decision that is not in the Annual Revenue Budget and Capital Programme approved by the Council and which requires a gross budget expenditure, saving or virement of more than £100,000 or more than 2% of a Departmental budget, whichever is the greater
- any Executive decision where the outcome will have a significant impact on a significant number of people living or working in two or more Wards

If you have any special needs that may require arrangements to facilitate your attendance at this meeting, please contact the Committee Officer named above, who will endeavour to assist.

We endeavour to provide a reasonable number of full agendas, including reports at the meeting. If you wish to ensure that you have a copy to refer to at the meeting, please can you print off your own copy of the agenda pack prior to the meeting.

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A G E N D A

Items marked with an * involve key decisions

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Subject/Author(s)</u>	<u>Wards Affected</u>	
1.	Apologies for Absence		
2.	Declarations of Interest Members are requested to give notice of any disclosable pecuniary interest, which is not already included in their Register of Members' Interests and the nature of that interest, relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, before leaving the meeting room during the discussion on that particular item		
3.	Minutes of Previous Meeting Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2014		(Pages 5 - 16)
4.	2014-15 Budget Update Report of the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT	All Wards	(Pages 17 - 36)
* 5.	Section 256 Funding and Better Care Fund Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Older People	All Wards	(Pages 37 - 44)
* 6.	Feedback on Market Testing for the investment, development and management of Southport Golf Links and Bootle Golf Courses Report of the Director of Street Scene	All Wards	(Pages 45 - 52)
* 7.	Animal Welfare Charter - Sefton Council Report of the Director of Built Environment	All Wards	(Pages 53 - 62)
* 8.	Sefton Council Permit Scheme Report of the Director of Built Environment	All Wards	(Pages 63 - 68)
* 9.	Department for Transport Pothole Fund Report of the Director of Built Environment	All Wards	(Pages 69 - 72)

* 10.	Street Lighting - Sub Contractor Framework Report of the Director of Built Environment	All Wards	(Pages 73 - 78)
* 11.	Inclusion in Capital Programme of Coastal Regional Monitoring Programme and Single Beam Bathymetric Survey Contract Award Report of the Director of Built Environment	Ainsdale; Blundellsands; Cambridge; Church; Dukes; Harington; Linacre; Manor; Ravenmeols	(Pages 79 - 84)
* 12.	Merseyside and West Lancashire Traveller Accomodation Assessment Report of the Director of Built Environment	All Wards	(Pages 85 - 92)
* 13.	Property Pool Plus - Policy review Report of the Director of Built Environment	All Wards	(Pages 93 - 156)

THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON WEDSDAY 30 JULY, 2014. MINUTE NO. 10 (2) AND (3) IS NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL-IN".

CABINET

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON THURSDAY 17TH JULY, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Maher (in the Chair)
Councillors Fairclough, Hardy, Moncur and Tweed

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Ball, David Barton and Keith.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cummins and P. Dowd.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Decision Made:

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 27 March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. ADULT SOCIAL CARE CHANGE PROGRAMME

The Cabinet considered the joint report of the Director of Older People and Head of Transformation on the Adult Social Care Change Programme and the proposed planned activity to be undertaken under the Programme.

Decision Made:

That:

- (1) the proposed approach associated with Community Services be approved and the intention to commence consultation on the models of support be noted; and
- (2) the financial and other risks to the Council set out in the report be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

The Council had significant existing responsibilities for Adult Social Care and invests considerable resources (£92 million per annum) into this service. The Adult Social Care Change Programme's overall aim was to

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develop a model for Sefton Council's Adult Social Care that is sustainable, modern and flexible, delivering the four strategic priorities as set out in the ASC Strategic Plan 2013-20 as approved in November 2013, and the delivery of the changes associated with the Care Act.

New requirements, duties and responsibilities associated with the Care Act would be designed, developed and implemented from April 2015 with full implementation planned for April 2016. In the light of the timescale, breadth of changes and associated risks, it was important that the Council prepared for the implementation despite of a lack of clarity about some of the key features.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Maintaining the status quo is not an option due to demographic and budgetary pressures and new legislation.

5. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director Corporate Services on the new procurement strategy for the Council, which identified the changes made to the procurement processes operating within the Council and the measures of success for those changes.

Decision Made:

That the Procurement Strategy be approved.

Reason for Decision:

To seek approval for a new Procurement Strategy for the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

6. ORACLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REPLACEMENT

The Cabinet considered the report of Head of Corporate Finance and ICT, which provided details of the proposed withdrawal from part of the Arvato contract with regard to the provision of the financial management system and the discussions held with Halton Council for the provision of a hosted financial system.

Decision Made:

That:

- (1) approval be given to the phased withdrawal from the Arvato contract with regard to the Financial Management System with effect from 1 April 2015;

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- (2) the ongoing discussions with Halton Council for the provision of a hosted financial system from 1 April 2015 be noted;
- (3) the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT be given delegated authority to continue negotiations in consultation with the Cabinet Member - Performance and Corporate Services, with Halton Council on the contractual, financial and service delivery arrangements for the new hosted financial system;
- (4) it be noted that the proposal was a Key Decision but had not been included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions, because at the time of publication, options regarding the Council's new financial arrangements were still being evaluated. Consequently, the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Performance and Corporate Services) had been consulted under Rule 27 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution, to the decision being made as a matter of urgency on the basis that it was impracticable to defer the decision until the commencement of the next Forward Plan because the licenses are required.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure Cabinet are informed of the proposals to withdraw from an element of the Arvato contract in respect of the Financial Management System and to seek approval to explore with Halton Council a hosted arrangement .

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

7. REVENUE OUTTURN 2013/14 AND TRANSFER TO GENERAL BALANCES

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT which provided details of the revenue outturn position on the 2013/14 General Fund; and sought approval to an increase in General Balances and to utilise resources from General Balances in order to cover anticipated additional expenditure in 2014/15.

The Chief Executive indicated that Officers had been diligent in the management of resources and this had given the Council early budgetary savings which have helped to contribute to earmarked reserves / balances to assist the Authority phase in savings in coming years.

Decision Made:

That:

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- (1) the General Fund net underspend of £3.578m for 2013/14 be noted;
- (2) the Schools Delegated Budget net underspend of £0.107m for 2013/14 be noted;
- (3) the level of General Balances be increased by £3.578m;
- (4) the General Balances be utilised to cover the following anticipated additional expenditure in 2014/15:
 - Finance the Be Active Programme for 2014 (£0.020m) , and
 - To cover the anticipated deficit for Bootle Golf Course during 2014/2015 (£0.095m).
 - To create an Apprenticeship Partnership Fund of £0.068m to support schools in the employment of apprentices.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure Cabinet are informed of the revenue outturn position for 2013/14; to seek approval to transfer the underspend to General Balances and to utilise resources from reserves in order to cover anticipated additional expenditure in 2014/2015

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

8. 2014/15 BUDGET UPDATE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT which provided details of the progress made in the achievement of the approved savings for 2014/15 and any residual savings carried forward from 2013/14 and the additional Government one-off financial support to local authorities relating to the Care Act 2014.

Decision Made:

That:

- (1) the progress to date on the achievement of approved savings for 2014/2015 and residual savings carried forward from 2013/14 be noted;
- (2) the potential overspend on the Specialist Transport Unit be noted; and
- (3) the additional resources of £0.125m to support the implementation of the Care Act within the Council be noted, and approval be given to the inclusion of these monies in Sefton's Budget for 2014/15.

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Reason for Decision:

To ensure Cabinet are informed of the latest position on the achievement of savings, and to allow the use of new resources to help implement the Care Act 2014.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

9. CAPITAL OUTFURN 2013/14

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT which provided details of the Council's overall capital spending in 2013/14 and the reasons for major variations in expenditure on individual schemes.

Decision Made:

That the report be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

The report provided details of the Capital Outturn position for 2013/14.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

10. CAPITAL SCHEME APPROVALS

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT which provided details of the latest capital projects that had been recommended for inclusion within the Capital Investment Plan for 2014/15 by the Strategic Capital Investment Group and the urgent decision taken by the Leader of the Council with regard to the REECH Project.

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT reported that there was a typographical error in the figure provided in recommendation (vi) in the report relating to the Section 106 Deposits and the correct figure was £1,559, 766.

Decision Made:

That:

- (1) approval be given to the Adult Social Care Change Programme in the Capital Investment Plan at a cost of £ 40,000 being funded from the resources set aside for Adult Social Care Transformation as detailed in paragraph 2 of the report:

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- (2) the Council be recommended to give approval to the scheme to relocate Air Quality Monitoring Equipment from the land at Hemans Street and Rimrose Road at a cost of £15,000 being funded from capital receipts as detailed in paragraph 3 of the report;
- (3) the Council be recommended to give approval to the revenue trajectory funding of £549,000 been capitalised to undertake capital work to provide additional places for early education for 2 year old as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report, subject to the Department of Education (DfE) agreeing to switch the grant funding received from revenue to capital;
- (4) approval be given to the inclusion of the Formby Strategic Flood Risk Management Programme at a cost of £50,000 into the capital investment plan as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report;
- (5) approval be given to the inclusion of the Merseyside Groundwater Study at a cost of £60,000 into the capital investment plan as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report;
- (6) approval be given to the inclusion of Parks & Open Spaces related Section 106 Deposits at a cost of £1,559,766 in the Capital Investment Plan as detailed in paragraph 7 of the report;
- (7) it be noted that the urgent decisions indicated below had been taken by the Leader of the Council on 16 June 2014 in accordance with Chapter 5 (Leader of the Council – Matters Delegated Paragraph 2) of the Council's Constitution and with the agreement of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) to invoke Rule 27 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules and Rule 46 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, as detailed in paragraph 10 of the report:-
 1. Note the success to date in delivering the REECH Project, and the positive impact it is making on the economic and social well being of Liverpool City Region;
 2. Agree that additional ERDF funding up to an estimated value of £ 3.5m be accepted and an increase in the REECH capital programme expenditure of 3.5m, offset by 3.5m income;
 3. Agree that Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Tourism be authorised to approve and to allocate ERDF funding to REECH delivery partners up to the value of ERDF grant allocated to Sefton by the Department for Communities and Local Government; and
 4. Agree that the Head of Corporate Legal Services be authorised to execute all necessary legal agreements with DCLG and any other delivery partners as part of this and any future revisions.

Reasons for Decision:

To advise Members of the increased costs of these previously approved capital schemes and the proposed method of funding the shortfall and the urgent decision taken by the Leader of the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The options available to Members are to not approve the schemes which would lead to the new capital work not being carried out.

11. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2014/15

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Corporate Services which sought the appointment of Council representatives to serve on Outside Bodies set out in the report for 2014/15, or for periods longer than one year. Details of the proposed representation on Outside Bodies were set out in the report.

Decision Made:

That:

- (1) the following Members be appointed to serve on the undermentioned Outside Bodies for 2014/15:

<u>ORGANISATION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES</u>	<u>REPRESENTATIVE(S)</u>
British Destinations	1	Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Tourism (Cllr Maher) or nominee
Formby Pool Trust - Board	2	Cllr Page and Head of Corporate Finance and ICT (Margaret Rawding)
Frank Hornby Trust	1	Cllr Kermod
Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (where 3 or less local authorities request the scrutiny of a substantial variation to a service)	3	Chair (Cllr Page) and Vice Chair (Cllr Robinson) of the O & S Committee (Health and Social Care) and one Lib Dem Member (Cllr Dawson) (Lab 2 / Lib Dem1 / Con 0)
Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (where 4	2	Chair (Cllr Page) and Vice Chair (Cllr Robinson) of the O

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or more local authorities request the scrutiny of a substantial variation to a service)

& S Committee (Health and Social Care)

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Cheshire and Merseyside Vascular Service Review

3

Chair (Cllr Page) and Vice Chair (Cllr Robinson) of the O & S Committee (Health and Social Care) and one Lib Dem Member (Cllr Dawson) (Lab 2 / Lib Dem1 / Con 0)

Liverpool City Region Cabinet

1

Leader of the Council (Cllr P. Dowd) (Substitute: Deputy Leader – Cllr Maher)

Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission

1

Cabinet Member – Children, Schools, Families and Leisure (Cllr Moncur)

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Employment and Skills Board

1

Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Tourism (Cllr Maher)

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Housing and Spatial Planning Board

1

Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Tourism (Cllr Maher) (Substitute: Chair of Planning Committee – Cllr Veidman)

Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership Board

Leader of the Council (Cllr P. Dowd)

Liverpool John Lennon Airport Consultative Committee

1

Cllr Roche (Substitute: Cllr Dams)

Local Government Association General Assembly

1

Cllr Maher (5 votes)

Local Solutions

1

Cllr Roche

Mersey Forest Steering Group

1

Cllr Lappin

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Mersey Port Health Committee	6	<p><u>Member</u> Cllr Dodd Cllr John Kelly Cllr Roche</p> <p><u>Substitute</u> Cllr Lewis Cllr Mahon</p> <p>Cllr Robinson Cllr Kerrigan Cllr Thompson Cllr Jo Barton</p> <p>(Lab 4 / Lib Dem 2 / Con 0)</p>
Merseyside Community Safety Partnership	2	Cabinet Member - Communities and Environment (Cllr Hardy) and the Head of Governance, Partnerships and Neighbourhoods (Andrea Watts)
Merseyside Pension Fund Pensions Committee	1	Cabinet Member - Corporate Services and Performance (Cllr Tweed) or nominee
Merseyside Playing Fields Association	1	Cllr Cummins (Substitute: Cllr Moncur)
Merseyside Third Sector Technology Centre (3TC)	1	No formal Council nomination made.
North Western Local Authorities' Employers' Organisation	1	Cabinet Member – Corporate Services and Performance (Cllr Tweed) (Substitute: Cllr Moncur)
PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee	1	<p>Cabinet Member - Transportation (Cllr Fairclough) or nominee</p> <p>(Nominated Member and substitutes must be Cabinet Members)</p>
REECH Steering Group (Renewable	1	Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Tourism

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Energy and Energy Efficiency in Housing)		(Cllr Maher)
Sefton Chamber of Commerce – Member Council	1	Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Tourism (Cllr Maher)
Sefton Coast Partnership Board	3	Cabinet Member - Communities and Environment (Cllr Hardy) and Councillors Booth and Dutton
Sefton Council for Voluntary Service	3	Cllrs M. Fearn, Robinson and Veidman
Sefton Cycling Forum	3	Cllrs K. Cluskey, Hartill and Weavers
Sefton Education Business Partnership	3	Cabinet Member - Children, Schools, Families and Leisure (Cllr Moncur) and Cllrs Keith and McKinley
Sefton New Directions Limited Board	3	Cllrs Brennan and Mr D Rimmer and Chief Executive (Margaret Carney)
Sefton Sports Council	3	Cabinet Member - Children, Schools, Families and Leisure (Cllr Moncur), and Cllrs Cummins and Preece
Southport Pier Trust	3	Cllrs Byrom, Crabtree and Lord Fearn
Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE)	3	Cllrs Bennett, Hands and Papworth
The John Goore Charity, Lydiate	1	Cllr Kermod
Trans Pennine Trail Members Steering Group	2	Cabinet Member - Transportation (Cllr Fairclough) and Chair of the Planning Committee (Cllr Veidman) or their nominees

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- (2) in relation to those appointments for a longer period than one year, the following persons be appointed to serve on the Outside Bodies indicated:

<u>ORGANISATION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES</u>	<u>REPRESENTATIVE(S)</u>	<u>TERM OF OFFICE EXPIRES</u>
Merseyside Strategic Flood and Coastal Risk Management Partnership	1	Councillor Papworth (Deputy representative – Councillor McKinley)	31.5.2017 (4 year appointment)
North West Reserve Forces and Cadets Association	1	Councillor Byrom	15.5.2017 (3 year appointment)
North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority	2	Cllr John Joseph Kelly or nominee and Coast and Countryside Services Manager (David McAleavy)	31.5.2015 (4 year appointment)
<u>CHARITIES:</u>			
Ashton Memorial Fund, Formby	1	Councillor Page	31.5.2015 (4 year appointment)
Consolidated Charities of Thomas Brown and Marsh Dole	2	Councillor Killen Councillor Dutton	26.6.2018 26.6.2016 (4 year appointment)
Halsall Educational Foundation	1	Cabinet Member - Children, Schools, Families and Leisure (Cllr Moncur) or nominee	31.5.2016 (2 year appointment)
<u>NHS FOUNDATION TRUST GOVERNING</u>			

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BODIES

Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Council of Governors	1	Councillor Cummins	31.5.2015 (3 year appointment)
Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust Council of Governors	1	Councillor Killen	31.9.2017 (3 year appointment)
Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust – Shadow Council of Governors	1	Councillor John Joseph Kelly	31.9.2017 (3 year appointment)

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Clarence High School, Formby	1	Councillor Grace	31.5.2017 (3 year appointment)
Peterhouse School, Southport	1	Cabinet Member - Children, Schools, Families and Leisure (Cllr Moncur) or nominee	31.7.2016 (3 year appointment)
St. Mary's College, Crosby	2	Cllrs John Joseph Kelly and Papworth	31.5.2016 (3 year appointment)

Reasons for Decision:

The Cabinet has delegated powers set out in Paragraph 41 of Chapter 5 in the Council Constitution to appoint the Council's representatives on Outside Bodies.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

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Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 11 September 2014

Subject: 2014/2015 Budget Update

Report of: Head of Corporate Finance & ICT **Wards Affected:** All

Is this a Key Decision? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? Yes

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To inform Cabinet of: -

- i) Progress in the achievement of the approved savings for 2014/2015 (and any residual savings carried forward from 2013/2014);
- ii) To highlight other financial risks elsewhere within the budget; and
- iii) The forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is recommended to note:-

- i) The progress to date on the achievement of approved savings for 2014/2015 and residual savings carried forward from previous years;
- ii) The wider financial pressures being experienced in the remainder of the Budget; and
- iii) The forecast position on the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

Cabinet is recommended to agree:-

- v) Agree to extend the existing Homeless and Housing Related Support contracts, referred to in this report to 30 June 2015, to provide continuity of service until the 2015/17 two year financial plan has been considered by Council.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Negative Impact
1	Creating a Learning Community		•	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		•	
3	Environmental Sustainability		•	
4	Health and Well-Being		•	
5	Children and Young People		•	
6	Creating Safe Communities		•	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		•	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		•	

Reasons for the Recommendation:

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To ensure Cabinet are informed of the latest position on the achievement of savings for the current financial year and to identify wider budget pressures being experienced elsewhere in the budget. To provide an update on the forecast the outturn position on the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

A short extension to the existing contracts is recommended to avoid problems for vulnerable service users associated with the potential transition from old to new provision over the Christmas shutdown and Bank Holiday period. The retendering of services will be deferred until the 2015/17 two year financial plan has been considered by Council.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

i) 2014/2015 Revenue Budget

Any under-achievement of the agreed revenue budget savings for 2014/2015 (and residual savings from previous years) will need to be financed from within any under-spending identified within other areas of the 2014/2015 budget, or from the Council's general balances. Any usage of balances will reduce the amount available to support the phased introduction of savings in future years.

The current financial position on approved savings indicates that about £1.170m are at significant risk of not being achieved (the "Red" marked items in Annex A). Should other budget savings not be identified at the year end, then an equivalent level of general balances would be required to support the budget. As at the end of July, other significant variations in the remainder of the Council's Budget total some £0.516m. Hence the net overall budget pressures currently identified total £1.686m.

(B) Capital Costs

Implications: None

Legal: By Section 13A of The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 2012) the Council is required to implement a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Human Resources None

Equality

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1.1 No Equality Implication | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.1 Equality Implications identified and mitigated | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Impact on Service Delivery:

None.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance & ICT (FD 3141/14) and the Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD2433/14) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

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Are there any other options available for consideration?

None.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the call-in period following the publication of the Cabinet Minutes

Contact Officer: Margaret Rawding

Tel: 0151 934 4082

Email: Margaret.rawding@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council approved a two year financial plan for 2013/2014 to 2014/2015 which requires a large change programme of £50.8m to be implemented over these two years. This follows on from significant savings target in the previous two years.
- 1.2 This report presents the latest position on the achievement of agreed savings for 2014/2015, plus the ongoing savings requirements carried forward from previous years. It is important that the Council continue to make the planned progress of the financial plan, i.e. to remain within budget and also to have a sound financial base for the future financial challenges that are expected in 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.
- 1.3 The current financial position on the remainder of the Council's budget is also highlighted in the report.
- 1.4 The report also outlines the current position regarding other key income streams for the Authority, Council Tax and Business Rates, as variations against expected receipts will affect the Council's financial position.

2. **Approved savings for 2014/2015 (and previous years carry forward savings)**

- 2.1 The table at **Annex A** identifies the current position of the agreed savings for 2014/2015. They are analysed into four categories: -
 - Savings achieved to date (Blue);
 - Progress is satisfactory (Green);
 - Outcome is unknown and is at risk of not being fully achieved (Amber); and
 - Known shortfalls, or significant risk of not being achieved (Red).

This approach is designed to ensure complete transparency, effective risk management and improved consultation and engagement.

It should be noted that individual savings may be categorised into more than one area; for example, part of the work to achieve a required saving may be on track (and a value can be shown in Green), whilst another element is potentially at risk (and therefore shown as Amber).

- 2.2 The position as at the end of July 2014 for the achievement of savings for is that £22.835m of the total required savings in 2014/2015 £28.840m (for the current year and carry-forward items) have been delivered or are on plan; with £4.845m are at some risk of not being fully achieved. This leave a further £1.170m of savings that are unlikely to be achieved (identified as "Red"), an improvement compared to the previously reported position at the end of May
- 2.3 All budget savings will continue to be closely monitored, with regular reports being presented to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Performance and Corporate).

3. Other Potential Budget Variations

3.1 In addition to the potential budget shortfall on the above specific saving areas, there are a number of other financial risks / potential areas of underspending that have been identified elsewhere in the Budget. The current forecast for these areas is a net overspend of £0.516m, resulting in an overall forecast deficit in the Council's 2014/2015 Budget of £1.686m. The main areas of variation to the general budget are noted below: -

3.1.1 As reported to the July Cabinet, Specialist Transport (STU) is continuing to overspend; the latest forecast is that the additional expenditure required will total £2.275m. Work is continuing on the review of registration of services and associated links to demand / cost, in order to understand the longer term implications for the Council. Further information will be provided to Cabinet when this exercise is complete.

3.1.2 Within the Children and Young People Directorate, the Vulnerable Children budget is showing a forecast a net overspend of £0.607m. This is due to various pressures including Adoption Allowances, preventative and support budgets, placement care packages and special guardianships orders. There are however underspending in other areas, notably Early Intervention & Prevention and Leaving Care placements (£0.695m). The net forecast, excluding the STU, is an underspend of £0.088m.

3.1.3 The Adult Social Care budget is showing a £2.260m underspend on Community Care costs. This will help support the achievement of the agreed 2014/15 saving on Day Care.

3.1.4 The Admin Buildings budget is forecast to overspend by £0.774m. This is due to additional costs for Magdalene & Merton House (following rent reviews), additional maintenance costs on properties earmarked for redevelopment / sale and reduced income from Council rental properties.

3.1.5 The Council's net debt charge budget is showing an underspend of £0.342m arising principally due to the policy of internal borrowing against forecast capital spending (as opposed to borrowing the money from the Government).

3.1.6 Across the remainder of the budget, there are significant forecast underspends across many services, including staffing, additional income, and a wide range of areas of the budget

3.2 The budget will be closely monitored over the remainder of the financial year.

4. Council Tax Income – Update

4.1 Council Tax income is shared between the billing authority (Sefton Council) and the two major precepting authorities (the Fire and Rescue Authority, and the Police and

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Crime Commissioner) pro-rata to their demand on the Collection Fund. The Council's Budget included a Council Tax Requirement of £100.337m for 2014/2015 (including Parish Precepts), which represents 85.2% of the net Council Tax income of £117.791m. The forecast position for total Council Tax income, as at the end of July 2014 is shown below:

2013/2014	Budget £'000	Forecast £'000	Surplus(-) £'000
Total Council Tax Income	-117,791	-121,126	-3,335

4.2 The forecast shows a surplus on Council Tax income largely because the level of Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) discounts claimed to date is lower than originally estimated. The MTFP assumed a gross surplus of £946k in 2014/2015 (Sefton's share was £806k).

4.3 Due to the Collection Fund regulations, the Council Tax surplus will not be transferred to the General Fund in 2014/2015 but will be carried forward to be distributed in future years.

4.4 In January 2014 the Council declared a surplus of £1.141m for 2013/2014 as part of the budget setting process. This is the amount that will be distributed in 2014/2015. At the end of March 2014 the actual council tax surplus on the Collection Fund was £1.448m higher than January estimate (subject to audit). This variation will be carried forward to be distributed in 2015/2016.

4.5 The total forecast surplus to be distributed in 2015/2016 is shown in the table below:

Share of Council Tax Surplus (-) / Deficit to be distributed in 2015/2016	%	2013/14 Carried Forward £'000	2014/15 Forecast (31/07/14) £'000	Total £'000
Sefton Council	85.2	-1,233	-2,841	-4,074
Police & Crime Commissioner	10.2	-148	-342	-490
Fire & Rescue Authority	4.6	-67	-152	-219
Total	100	-1,488	-3,335	-4,783

5. Council Tax Reduction Scheme – Update

5.1 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) discounts replaced Council Tax Benefit in April 2013. The CTRS placed a significant new burden on local authorities meaning that the monitoring of Council Tax income is even more important than before. The following paragraphs provide an update of the position for Sefton as at the end of July 2014.

5.2 Overall the net CTRS is forecasting a favourable outturn position of £2.5m. This forms part of the council tax surplus forecast in paragraph 4.1. Members are requested to treat this with caution as the position relating to the new claims is frequently changing

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and is sensitive to local economic demands on families and householders who are also affected by Welfare Reform changes.

5.3 Details of CTRS claimants numbers and council tax collection against CTRS cases are shown below: -

Number of CTRS Claimants	31/07/13	03/04/14	01/08/14
Working Age - Employed	3,114	2,874	2,838
Working Age - Other	13,618	13,151	12,877
Working Age - Total	16,732	16,025	15,715
Pensioners	15,001	14,655	14,448
Total	31,733	30,680	30,163

Council Tax Collection CTRS Claimants 2014/2015 (Data at 06/08/14)	Liability Raised £000	Income Received	
		£000	%
Working Age - Employed	1,409	385	27.3
Working Age - Other	2,513	720	28.7
Working Age - Total	3,922	1,105	28.2
Pensioners	1,907	881	46.2
Total	5,829	1,986	34.1

Council Tax Collection CTRS Claimants 2013/2014 (Data at 06/08/14)	Liability Raised £000	Income Received	
		£000	%
Working Age - Employed	1,472	1,190	80.9
Working Age - Other	2,734	2,080	76.1
Working Age - Total	4,206	3,270	77.8
Pensioners	2,043	2,035	99.6
Total	6,249	5,305	84.9

6. Business Rates Income – Update

6.1 The Business Rates Retention Scheme introduced on 1 April 2013 allows local authorities to retain 49% of their Business Rates income. This change made Business Rates income a key financial risk for the Council for 2013/2014 onward.

6.2 Business Rates income has historically been very volatile as it is subject to revaluation appeals and changes in the level of economic activity. The level of income is also subject to changes in the level of mandatory reliefs such as Small Business Rate Relief, Empty Property Relief and Charity Relief. This makes it very difficult to forecast Business Rates income accurately.

6.3 The forecast position for Business Rates income and related Section 31 Grants, as at the end of July 2014 is shown in the table below:

Business Rates 2014/2015	Budget £'000	Forecast £'000	Variation £'000
Business Rate Yield (Net)	-61,890	-63,715	-1,825
Section 31 Grants – Rate Reliefs etc	-2,787	-2,130	657

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6.4 The forecast identifies a surplus compared to the budget position. The main reason for this is an increase in gross rates charges compared to a forecast reduction and lower than forecast retail relief. As the cost of retail relief is met by a Section 31 grant the Council will need to take account of any loss of related grant income in 2014/2015.

6.5 In January 2014 the Council declared a deficit of £3,048k for 2013/2014 as part of the budget setting process. This is the amount that will be distributed in 2014/2015. At the end of March 2014 the actual business rates deficit on the Collection Fund was £1.492m lower than January estimate. This variation will be carried forward to be distributed in 2015/2016.

6.6 The total forecast surplus to be distributed in 2015/2016 is shown in the table below:

Share of Business Rates Surplus (-) / Deficit	%	2013/14 Carried Forward £'000	2014/15 Forecast (31/07/14) £'000	Total £'000
Central Government	50	-746	-913	-1,659
Sefton Council	49	-731	-894	-1,625
Fire & Rescue Authority	1	-15	-18	-33
Total	100	-1,492	-1,825	-3,317

7. Council Tax / Business Rates Income – Summary

7.1 All income from Council Tax / Business Rates is collected in an account called the Collection Fund. The total sum is split between the Council, the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Police & Crime Commissioner (Council Tax only) and the Government (Business Rates only). The forecast position as at the end of January shows additional income of £4.074m from Council Tax and additional income of £1.625m from Business Rates.

7.2 The forecast surplus on both Council Tax and Business Rates needs to be offset against a forecast reduction in Section 31 Grant for business rates reliefs and amounts included in the Medium Term Financial Plan for Council Tax Surplus and Appeals Spreading.

7.3 The forecast impact on the budget / MTFP is shown in the following table:

	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000
<u>Collection Fund Transfers</u>			
Forecast Council Tax Surplus		-4,074	
Forecast Business Rates Surplus		-1,625	
<u>General Fund Grants</u>			
Section 31 Grant - Business Rate Reliefs	657		
Section 31 Grant - Council Tax Annex's	-13		
<u>Remove MTFP Assumptions</u>			
Council Tax Surplus in MTFP		806	

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NNDR Appeals Spreading in MTFP		-324	
Total	644	-5,217	0

7.4 Members are requested to treat the figures with caution as the level of income from council tax and business rates can be highly volatile and the forecasts could change significantly during the year.

8. 2014/15 NHS England funding transfer.

8.1 An update on the use of NHS resources, as part of the funding transfer to Sefton, can be found elsewhere on the agenda.

9. Homeless Strategy

9.1. The Council currently provides a range of services that allow the Council to not only fulfil its legal duty to homeless people but also provide the preventative services that support service users to remain in their home or to move on in a planned manner. The services fall broadly into a number of headings outlined below.

9.2. Accommodation based services: these services provide accommodation for homeless service users and the support that the service user needs to achieve the outcome of independent living. These services will cater for a range of service users; some are generic (homeless people with low-level additional needs) and others are specific to a client group (e.g. high level offenders, addiction abstinence). Service users within these schemes may have been subject to a formal homeless assessment whilst the majority will not. The Council has four current contracts for this style of service, with Bosco Society, DISC Forum Housing Association and North West Property Custodians.

9.3. Floating Support services: in the main these services provide advice and support to those threatened with homelessness by attempting to resolve those issues that could result in them becoming homeless. The support is provided whilst the service user is within their home. The extent, type and level of support provided are dependent on the identified need of the service user. The current services are ordinarily targeted at specific groups rather than a generic service. Some of the organisations that currently provide floating support services also have other contacts with the Council for other services and this report does not seek approval or make recommendations regarding these other services. The Council has five current contracts for this style of service, with Bosco Society, DISC, Light for Life, Merseyside Youth Association and Venus.

9.4. Housing Advice: the Council has a legal obligation to provide free Housing Advice to residents of the Borough. Currently the majority of this formal advice is provided by in-house Council services (Housing Options Team and the Substance Misuse Single Point of Assessment Team) however the Council currently also has a Service Level Agreement with Light for Life, funded from the Homeless Prevention Grant and Neighbourhoods budgets, for the provision of Housing Advice in Southport. This service is a complementary service to the in-house services.

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- 9.5. The Cabinet are requested to extend these contracts until June 2015 to allow the Council to reconsider the prioritisation of these services as part of the 2015/17 budget considerations.

2013-15 LISTED BUDGET SAVINGS PERFORMANCE AT 31st JULY 2014

Totals £k

Savings achieved to date	12,080,400
Progress is Satisfactory	10,744,582
Risk of savings not being fully achieved	4,845,243
Known shortfalls or significant risk that savings will not be achieved	1,169,750

Total of Savings

28,839,975

£ **Red** **Amber** **Green** **Blue**

2012-13 LISTED BUDGET SAVINGS CONTINUING INTO 2014-15

		Comment				
C5.1	Children in Care - Reduce Care Package Costs	396,000	131,350	264,650		Year 3 of a 3 year programme to reduce care package costs by 10%, via a 3.3% (396k) reduction year on year. This strategy is based on an assumption of 'looking after' 400 children & young people, the current figure is 411. The unachievable saving of £131,350 is included in the Vulnerable Children and Young People M2 as an overspend.
E2.2	Supporting People Commissioning Functions	14,000			14,000	Following the formal consultation process, recruitment to the new structure has now been completed. This saving has been achieved.
E2.8	Area Finance / Finance Visiting Officers - Review	25,000	25,000			£75k has been deferred as part of the requirement to achieve D 1.38 Social Care Subsidies, as the staff are required in order to effectively implement the changes and achieve the saving. This deferred saving is shown under 2014/15. Achievement of the remaining £25k of this saving is dependent on Phase 2 of IAS project implementation and the re-engineering of financial back-office functions.
		435,000	156,350	264,650	0	14,000

2013-14 LISTED BUDGET SAVINGS CONTINUING INTO 2014-15

Corporate Commissioning and Neighbourhoods

C11.2	Improved procurement of Council wide communications activity	10,896		10,896	It is anticipated that this saving will be achieved in the prescribed area
E3.3	Cessation of Room Bookings Service (linked to review of Civic Support)	11,029		11,029	Budget reformatting complete so this will be achieved in 14/15

Corporate Services and Corporate Commissioning	21,925	0	0	21,925	0
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Corporate Services

C12.3	Reduced external audit, recoverable VAT fees & improved cash management pension costs	400,000	250,000		150,000	This is a combination of £100k reduction in external auditor fees (complete) and £400k of savings is VAT shelter income from OVH. Receipts currently forecast at £150k against OVH saving therefore £250k is unlikely to be achieved again in 14/15.
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Corporate Services	400,000	250,000	0	150,000	0
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Built Environment

Planning

C1.5	Planning DC - Increase planning application fee	27,000		27,000	Due to legislative changes there are certain applications for which the Council is no longer able to charge fees. This potentially made it more difficult to achieve an enhanced income target. However, actual income for 2013/14 only fell short of the the enhanced income estimate by about £27K, which indicates a partial achievement of the savings requirement. There is no guarantee that income levels can be increased in line with budget provision in 2014/15 as fluctuating factors outside the control of the Planning Department will influence the amount of income generated. In particular, past performance can be no guide to the future. For this reason, the 2014/15 assessment of the savings achievement will be amber at this stage of the year.
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Planning	27,000	0	27,000	0	0
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Investment Programme

	Street Lighting - Review of lighting options	15,000	15,000			Pilot Street Lighting switch off scheme A565 and A59. This saving was not achieved due to the increase in provider electricity unit rate charges in September 2013
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Investment Programme	15,000	15,000	0	0	0
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Economic Development and Tourism

D1.25	Re-financing the Mersey Forest subscription to make a saving on the revenue budget; accept voluntary reduction in working hours from two staff; and make further savings in supplies and services	18,650	18,650			The Mersey Forest annual subscription of £18,650 is an ongoing commitment which ends in 2014/15. The full saving will therefore not be achieved until 2015/16.
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Economic Development and Tourism	18,650	18,650	0	0	0
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Street Scene

Landscape Services

C5.4	Parks incl Nursery and net of frontline - Further changes to Parks Management and standards in parks	50,000		50,000		Not achieved in 2013/14 but will be achieved in 2014/15
F1.2	Ground Mtce incl grass cutting - Recharging grounds mtce/utility costs for adult football/sport users/bowlers	85,000			85,000	This saving has been achieved

Landscape Services

135,000	0	0	50,000	85,000
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Direct Services

C6.1	Commercial waste increased income	100,000		100,000		Additional income was difficult to achieve in 2013/14 in part due to the general economic downturn across the private sector. However, it is anticipated that new income will be sourced in 2014/15 as an Officer post has been dedicated to generating additional business opportunities. In addition, new marketing and promotional systems are in place.
C6.2	Public conveniences reviewed for efficiency savings	20,000		20,000		Saving not achieved in 2013/14 due to one off costs of fitting coin mechanised doors. Savings should be achieved in 2014/15 but will be dependant on the level of maintenance and vandalism costs. Work is currently being undertaken to develop schemes to further reduce expenditure in order to meet savings target. Proposals will be presented in due course.
C6.4	Catering - Other catering activity (income target)	100,000			100,000	Saving is being achieved
C6.5	Vehicle Management and Mtce - MOT Testing (income target)	7,600			7,600	£42,400 of total saving requirement of £50,000 achieved in 2013/14. Second MOT bay now operational therefore full saving expected to be achieved in 2014/15.
D1.19	Street Scene - Building Cleaning - change frequency of office cleaning	19,000			19,000	Due to the closure of a number of Council buildings there was a slight under-achievement of this saving target in 2013/14. However, new additional income and a review of the operation of the service should result in the achievement of the 2013/14 savings in 2014/15.
D1.32	Public Conveniences increase charges	40,000		40,000		Saving not achieved in 2013/14 due to one off costs of fitting coin mechanised doors. Operational arrangements have been reviewed and all toilets have remained open. Saving should be achieved however vandalism costs are currently rising but will be monitored accordingly. Work is currently being undertaken to develop schemes to further reduce expenditure in order to meet savings target. Proposals will be presented in due course.

Direct Services

286,600	0	160,000	126,600	0
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People

£	Red	Amber	Green	Blue
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Adult Social Care

D1.38	Social Care - Subsidies - Increase client contributions for a range of non-residential services	100,000				100,000	This change was implemented on the 6th January 2014. All affected service users have been notified. This follows consideration of feedback from consultation, equality impact assessment and an ongoing dialogue with the Departmental Leadership team and Cabinet Member Older People & Health. The saving will be made in 2014/15.
Adult Social Care		100,000	0	0	0	100,000	

Health and Wellbeing

C10.2	Eze Fitness contract - terminate	55,000			55,000		Saving will be achieved from specified area in future years
C10.3	Leisure Operations - increase in income	150,000		150,000			Income levels are always difficult to predict and will be closely monitored
	Management fee reduction - Formby Pool Contract	50,000		50,000			Discussions are taking place with partner on how to achieve the full saving.
Health and Wellbeing		255,000	0	200,000	55,000	0	

Authority Wide Savings/Financing Options

	Transport Authority - Recharge	631,000				631,000	This has now been achieved via Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority (MITA).
Authority Wide Savings/Financing Options		631,000	0	0	0	631,000	

Integration

11.2	Learning & Development, Training, Professional Training and CPD	3,800			3,800		Balance of saving will be achieved in the prescribed area.
Integration		3,800	0	0	3,800	0	

Total Savings Requirement 2013/14		1,893,975	283,650	387,000	407,325	816,000	
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2014-15 LISTED BUDGET SAVINGS

Corporate Commissioning and Neighbourhoods

C11.2	Improved procurement of Council wide communications activity	75,000		53,593	21,407	Additional income streams to come online in 14/15 however the there is some doubt as to whether the additional £75k saving will be realised in full.
E3.1	Integration of Communications	45,000	45,000			Post earmarked for saving was in fact externally funded so this saving is not achievable.
D1.27	Corporate Commissioning & Neighbourhood Coordination (CCNC) Service - rationalise service	60,000			60,000	Anticipated that saving will be achieved from prescribed area.
Para 3.6 includes prev option D1.29	Double Rating - cessation (2014/15)	150,000			150,000	Payments to Parish Councils have ceased in 14/15.
	Democratic Services - Stop servicing all non-member meetings and those non-standing committees without decision-making powers (officer meetings, taxi drivers annual meeting , area partnerships etc)	0				Budget Council on 6th March 2014 agreed to remove this saving.
	Area Committees - Reduce from 7 to 3	5,000			5,000	Anticipated that saving will be achieved from prescribed area.
Corporate Services and Corporate Commissioning		335,000	45,000	53,593	86,407	150,000

Deputy Chief Executive

E2.6	Central Support	148,000			148,000	Anticipated that saving will be achieved from prescribed area in Business Intelligence.
Deputy Chief Executive		148,000	0	0	148,000	0

Corporate Services

C12.1	Learning and Development	50,000		50,000		Saving remains unallocated. Work required to identify where saving will be achieved.
C12.2	Increased housing benefit grant from reduced error rates	250,000			250,000	Anticipated that saving will be achieved from prescribed area.
C12.3	Reduced external audit, recoverable VAT fees & improved cash management pension costs	800,000			800,000	Only risk if large numbers of VERs cannot be met from Earmarked Reserves.
E4.1	Learning and Development	75,000		16,000	59,000	Officers are aware that the impact of charging outside bodies for non attendance at training courses could cause potential financial hardship, due to the precarious financial position of some of these bodies. A decision will need to be taken as to whether or not the Council is prepared to implement a charge in the light of these circumstances. If charges were not to be made, then approximately £16k of this saving will not be achieved. No decision has been made, so the saving has been treated as amber for the time being, pending further consideration.
E4.2	Review of Corporate Support Services	114,000	20,000		94,000	Split £23k Legal, £58k Personnel £13k Finance. Anticipated that these savings will be achieved. £20,000 of original saving not achievable.
D1.11	Risk Management	25,000			25,000	Saving has been achieved
D1.12	Procurement ICT and financial support	25,000			25,000	Anticipated that saving will be achieved from prescribed area.
Corporate Services		1,339,000	20,000	66,000	1,228,000	25,000

Built Environment

Environment

D1.20	Environment - Trading Standards - staff restructuring	20,000			20,000	Restructure complete.
D1.30	Built Environment - Pest Control - introduction of a charge	10,000			10,000	2014-15 £10k income target should be achieved.
Environment		30,000	0	0	10,000	20,000

Investment Programme

	Parking - Strategic Review of Parking	100,000		100,000		Phase 1 of review complete. Proposals relate to charging, technological improvements and replacement of equipment. Due to recent Court case further legal and financial advice required. Budget Council on 6th March 2014 agreed to reduce this saving from £300k to £100k. Review is still ongoing with implementation not fully achieved by April 14. As a result the saving identified may not be a full year saving for 2014/15.
	Street Lighting - Review of lighting options	49,000	49,000			This saving will not be achieved due to the increase in provider electricity unit rate charges in September 2013
	Investment & Infrastructure - Increase income from Network Management	12,000	12,000			The additional £38,000 income target for 2013/14 was speculative and this achievement includes one off payments which cannot be guaranteed. As such, it is impossible to say how an additional £12,000 could be achieved in 2014-15.
C3.1	Infrastructure - Re-integration, re-commission and restructuring of services	500,000	116,600	383,400		Capita Symonds integration is now complete . Work continues on the IPI restructure but is not expected to be implemented until at least September/October 2014, therefore reducing the capacity to achieve in full the required saving for 2014/15. Delays in implementation to date are estimated to have resulted in non-achieved savings of £116K. The remaining element of the saving has been retained as amber, but will be reassessed in future months as the implementation progresses.
Investment Programme		661,000	177,600	483,400	0	0

		£	Red	Amber	Green	Blue	
Economic Development and Tourism							
C4.1	Economic Development Redesign	67,000	67,000				Review of Service has recommended this saving proposal is reclassified to RED as part of a wider restructuring & refinancing of the Service which may see additional funding provided to equip the service to exploit future external funding streams. In 2013/14 there were various underspends in excess of £175K but these cannot be relied upon in 2014/15.
D1.8	To relocate staff from The Investment Centre to Magdalen House	12,000				12,000	This is the full year impact of the 2013/14 saving which was based on the assumption that the rental payments on the Investment Centre would cease from July 2013. In the event the rental savings were realised from April 2013 and the full beneficial impact was therefore evidenced in 2013/14. However, the comments made against the equivalent 2013/14 saving above, regarding the fact that this is a saving against Admin Buildings, are equally applicable.
D1.9	Budget re-alignment of salaries to be funded from grants, contracts and reserves	116,000	116,000				Review of Service has recommended this saving proposal is reclassified to RED as part of a wider restructuring & refinancing of the Service
	Southport Theatre Complex (Tender or In-house management)	0					Budget Council on 6th March 2014 agreed to remove this saving.
Economic Development and Tourism		195,000	183,000	0	0	12,000	
Street Scene							
Landscape Services							
C5.1	Ground Mtce incl grass cutting - Contractors indexation/eff. Discounts FYE	50,000				50,000	Full Saving achieved
C5.4	Parks incl Nursery and net of frontline - Further changes to Parks Management and standards in parks	50,000	19,000			31,000	Saving achieved based on Parks transformation model. £19k cannot be achieved as it was based on a discount for advance contract payment, which cannot be negotiated.
F1.5	Parks and Green spaces - Increase Fees - allotments	40,000	15,000			25,000	Part saving achieved . Up to 15K may not be achieved this year due to a delay in issuing new tenancy agreements. Full saving should be achieved in 2015/16.
	Street Scene - Landscape - Coordination of voluntary work in parks (transition)	175,000				175,000	Savings achieved by the application of the parks transformation model and by reviewing staffing and SMSS costs across Landscape Services as a whole.
Landscape Services		315,000	34,000	0	0	281,000	
Direct Services							
C6.2	Public conveniences reviewed for efficiency savings	20,000		20,000			Operational arrangements have been reviewed and all toilets have remained open. Saving should be achieved however vandalism costs are currently rising but will be monitored accordingly. Work is currently being undertaken to develop schemes to further reduce expenditure in order to meet savings target.
C6.6	Careline Service/Security Force (income target)	75,000		75,000			Some additional income has been achieved so far, and whilst there is a general economic downturn, it is expected that these services will continue to generate sufficient opportunities to meet budgetary requirements by year end, subject to being able to introduce a Direct Debit collection system to meet customer expectations.
C6.7	Recycling - Rephase cardboard recycling to August 2014	-600,000				-600,000	Re-instatement of saving from 2013/2014
E1.1	Review of Cleansing Services	200,000			200,000		Review has been completed and staffing levels have been reduced to achieve this saving.
F2.1	Street Cleansing - Bulky Items Collection Service - Restructure Crews and introduce charge for bulky items	60,000		60,000			It is hoped that the service will meet the saving target required by year end.
D1.19	Street Scene - Building Cleaning - change frequency of office cleaning	50,000		50,000			Due to the closure of a number of Council buildings this saving target may not be achieved. This will be reviewed further over coming months.
D1.33	Cleansing Service - Reorganisation of workload and work patterns	25,000			25,000		On track to be achieved.
	Cleansing - Charge for Green Waste collections - A 2014/15 / 2015/16 proposal for an opt-in charge	1,000,000		1,000,000			Work is currently being undertaken in relation to virements and re-apportionment of budgets to account for the deferral of charging for Green Waste and the introduction of plastic and card collections. This exercise also involves Option C6.7 above.
Direct Services		830,000	0	1,205,000	225,000	-600,000	

People

Learning and Support

D1.18	Reduce School Targeted Intervention	260,000		260,000	Savings for 14/15 after VRs in previous year are: Admin salaries £20K, Advisers salaries £236K. Efficiency savings of supplies & services £25K based on spend in 13/14.	
	To effect a further saving from the retained element of the Connexions Grant	400,000		400,000	Value of agreed 14/15 Connexions contract confirms this saving will be achieved.	
	Learning and Support	660,000	0	0	0	660,000

Children's Social Care

E2.1	Review of the Commissioning of all residential care beds	600,000	295,150	304,850	There remain some risks from residential dependency and these could destabilise the saving and this will be monitored closely. The unachievable saving of £295,150 is included in the Vulnerable Children and Young People M2 as an overspend.	
D1.7	Social Care Commissioned Services - travel efficiencies	100,000		100,000	Saving anticipated to come from work done via the restrctured social care sections coming from 3 budget areas - reduced family support / Residency Orders / Care Matters	
	Review pathway of support for children with additional needs to increase effectiveness and efficiency	400,000		400,000	This is based on a Health Contribution of 25% of the total cost of the new Respite Service	
	Children's Social Care	1,100,000	295,150	0	804,850	0

Early Intervention and Prevention

E2.4	EIP Service restructure	192,000		192,000	Restructure savings achieved from various teams across EIP.	
D1.16	Healthy Schools - Transfer function of coordination and consultant roles to schools	25,000		25,000	Final removal of this service to schools in 14/15	
	Early Intervention and Prevention	217,000	0	0	0	217,000

		£	Red	Amber	Green	Blue	
Adult Social Care							
E2.6	Central Support	202,000			202,000		Through a reorganisation of Support and Development Services the saving is on target to be achieved, although this will need to be reprofiled against the original proposal, following consultation and review with Service Directors' and Heads of Service
E2.7	Reduced social workers	135,000				135,000	Achieved by VR/VER
D1.14	Assessment & Care Management Teams - Reconfigure teams/skill mix	208,000				208,000	Following the formal consultation process, recruitment to the new structure is complete. VR/VER's have been identified and completed. Staff have been relocated. The new structure will deliver the full saving in 2014/15
D1.15	Reconfiguration of the Supporting People commissioning team	61,000				61,000	Following the formal consultation process, recruitment to the new structure has now been completed. The full saving will be achieved in 2014/15
F1.6	Community Meals - Migrating users to alternative providers	62,000				62,000	This service has now been decommissioned. The £62k is the full year effect of the 13/14 saving
							Current working assumptions has identified that there will be an on-going requirement of at least £3m to enable the Council to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Over the coming months the redesign of the activity will be developed through consultation and engagement with service users, providers and the wider community. Current schedule is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Review need • Consultation & Engagement • Develop redesign options • Cabinet to consider options • Support service users through migration to alternatives
<small>New Option (Options F3.2, D1.39, AND D1.41 should be considered as one option)</small>	Day Care and respite provision	2,240,000	2,240,000				As part of the community resilience work a project is about to commence working with sheltered accommodation providers to create and encourage tenants to organise social activities and events within their facility. A comprehensive directory of services/opportunities within Sefton has also been developed. Note -Council on 6 March 2014 approved £3.9m funding in 14/15 (£3m in future years)to offset the identified high risk of the estimated shortfall in approved ASC savings. The Day Care and Respite saving required £2.55m of this sum leaving a residual saving of £2.24 to be achieved. Although the process to commence consultation surrounding future re-modelling of day centres is to commence shortly, it is unlikely that the savings required will be achieved. Negotiations with New Directions have commenced and it is possible that some savings will be achieved in year.
D1.35	Section 117 After Care Funding	200,000		72,000		128,000	£95k had been secured in 13/14 towards this 14/15 saving. A workstream has been set up to review and redesign the pathway. Further savings of £33k to date have been identified in 14/15
D1.36	NHS Continuing Health Care Funding	400,000		352,600		47,400	This is to be looked at in conjunction with CCG's. To date savings of £47.4k have been identified
D1.37	Assistive Technology - Increase use of equipment to ensure users are able to remain in their homes with minimal outside support	200,000			200,000		Promotion of use of Assistive Technology in all relevant areas via social work teams, re-ablement work etc. The number of clients utilising Assistive Technology as part of their care provision is being closely monitored.
D1.38	Social Care - Subsidies - Increase client contributions for a range of non-residential services	320,000				320,000	This change has been implemented on the 6th January 2014. All affected service users have been notified. This follows consideration of feedback from consultation, equality impact assessment and an ongoing dialogue with the Departmental Leadership team and Cabinet Member Older People & Health. The income generation is subject to sustaining sufficient capacity within the financial assessment service (see E2.8 below) This matter is currently being considered and further proposals in this respect may be brought for consideration in due course.
E2.8	Area Finance / Finance Visiting Officers - Review	75,000	75,000				This £75k saving has been deferred from 2013/14 as part of the requirement to achieve D 1.38 Social Care Subsidies, as the staff are required in order to effectively implement the changes and achieve the saving. A proposal will be presented to Cabinet to offset the saving against additional income anticipated to be generated by Option D.1.38
D1.42	Revise Re-enablement model. Investment of one-off payment of £900,000 from Health will enable more users to go through a re-enablement process, thereby reducing levels of admission to short & long term care	1,200,000		1,200,000			A scoping report is currently being undertaken. The achievability of the saving will be closely monitored
D1.43	Further incremental reductions in housing related support	500,000				500,000	This saving has been delivered through re-commissioning, de-commissioning and further reductions in housing related support services. Some funding for one mental health service continues, temporarily, through the Community Care budget and NHS whilst a review of that service takes place to determine the extent , if any, of health and social care need for the service
Adult Social Care		5,803,000	2,315,000	1,624,600	402,000	1,461,400	

		£	Red	Amber	Green	Blue	
Public Health							
D1.13	Integration Efficiencies	537,000				537,000	Identification of existing Council activity that falls into the definition of Public Health expenditure as outlined in the ring-fenced grant conditions will enable this saving to be realised
	Public Health Substance Misuse - Reduce service specification	500,000				500,000	This saving has been achieved following the tender of the integrated substance misuse service and through review of all other expenditure on drugs service.
	Public Health Integration	100,000				100,000	A further £100k will be charged into the Public Health budget to represent the full cost of central support services to the Public Health function
Public Health		1,137,000	0	0	0	1,137,000	
Health and Wellbeing							
C10.2	Eze Fitness contract - terminate	18,000			18,000		Saving should be achieved in 2014/15.
E2.5	Review all management arrangements	-125,000				-125,000	One off saving in 2013/14
	Libraries - Review of Service	250,000			250,000		Implementation plan agreed by Cabinet 23/5/13
	Local History and Volunteers (transition)	40,000				40,000	Saving has been achieved
Health and Wellbeing		183,000	0	0	268,000	-85,000	
Authority Wide Savings/Financing Options							
F3.1, F3.3, F4.2 & D1.28	Review of Commissioning - reducing funding support to community groups - Commissioning & Neighbourhood Coordination	261,000		261,000			VCF review ongoing as SLT have asked for wider implications of saving to be considered. Therefore it will not be clear until later in the year whether this saving can be achieved in full or in part.
C12.5	Cash limit general non-pay budgets in 2013/14 and 2014/15 (retains £0.5m excessive inflation provision in each year and retains inflation for specific contracts)	3,250,000			3,250,000		Budget reduced. Only risk is if departments cannot remain within cash limited budgets due to excessive inflationary increases, e.g. utilities costs.
C2.3	Licensing (taxi etc) - Licensing reserve (one-off)	-240,000				-240,000	Reinstatement of one off saving
	NHS support for Social Care	260,000			260,000		Grant expected to be received. Only risk is being able to justify the use of funding to the NHS.
	Terms & Conditions - Freezing increments for 2 years	1,500,000				1,500,000	Terms and Conditions changed so increments not being paid.
	Council Tax - 100% on empty properties from month 2	400,000				400,000	Revision to CTRS has been approved by Council.
	Levies - To get total 2 year reduction to £4m	2,189,000				2,189,000	To be met from additional resources provided by Transport Authority (£0.650m) with balance from returned sinking fund resources from Waste Disposal Authority
	Disabled Facilities Grant - Capitalisation	1,000,000			1,000,000		Depends on sufficient alternative resources being identified.
	Council Tax - Council Tax Increase	1,941,000				1,941,000	Budget Council on 6th March 2014 agreed a Council Tax increase of 1.99%
Authority Wide Savings/Financing Options		10,561,000	0	261,000	4,510,000	5,790,000	
Integration							
I1.1	Commissioning, Business Intelligence and data	125,000			65,000	60,000	£60K has been achieved through restructure of Commissioning. It is anticipated that the Business Intelligence element of £65k will be achieved.
I1.2	Learning & Development, Training, Professional Training and CPD	250,000			250,000		Saving likely to be achieved
I1.3	Financial Assessments	250,000		250,000			Work ongoing to identify and allocate savings.
I1.4	Customer Access Point	250,000		250,000			Work ongoing to identify and allocate savings.
Integration		875,000	0	500,000	315,000	60,000	
Use of One-Off Resources to Support the Budget		2,122,000				2,122,000	Additional use of one-off resources required in 2014/2015 per decisions of Budget Council on 6th March 2014.
Total Savings Requirement 2014/15		26,511,000	3,069,750	4,193,593	7,997,257	11,250,400	
Total Savings Requirement 2012/13 Continuing into 2014/15		435,000	156,350	264,650	0	14,000	
Total Savings Requirement 2013/14 Continuing into 2014/15		1,893,975	283,650	387,000	407,325	816,000	
		2,328,975	440,000	651,650	407,325	830,000	
Total Savings Requirement 2013-2015		28,839,975	3,509,750	4,845,243	8,404,582	12,080,400	

SAVINGS UNABLE TO BE ACHIEVED FROM SPECIFIC SERVICE AREA BUT WILL BE ACHIEVED FROM OTHER AREA WITHIN WHOLE OF SERVICE

E2.8	Vacancy savings elsewhere in ASC employee budget.		-100,000		100,000		The ASC employee budget is forecasting an underspend in 14/15 mainly as a result of vacant posts and a forecast underspend on indirect employee costs. These are savings are supporting the Area Finance/Finance Visiting Officers-Review saving
Day Care	Within Community Care Budget		-2,240,000		2,240,000		The Community Care budget has been reduced to reflect all savings. Based on current forecasts and assumptions it is anticipated that the NET Community Care budget will underspend by £20k, the situation will continue to be closely monitored
Total Savings Requirement 2014/15 ie includes 12/13 and 13/14 continuing		28,839,975	1,169,750	4,845,243	10,744,582	12,080,400	

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Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 11 September 2014

Subject: Section 256 Funding and Better Care Fund

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Older People

Wards Affected: All

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

Is it included in the Forward Plan? Yes

Exempt/Confidential

No

Purpose/Summary

To inform Members of recent announcements about NHS support for Social Care and to note the latest developments on the Better Care Fund, and agree to the recommendations to a delegation to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Cabinet Member for Older People and Health, to sign off the BCF submission on behalf of the Council.

Recommendation(s)

That Members:

- i) Approve the funding allocation as detailed in paragraphs 1.7 (existing MTFP commitments) & 1.8 (additional investment in support of BCF programme); and
- ii) Agree a delegation of authority to Sefton Council's Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with Head of Finance & ICT (Section 151 Officer), the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Cabinet Member for Older People and Health, to sign off the Better Care Fund submission on behalf of the Council

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		x	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		x	
3	Environmental Sustainability		x	
4	Health and Well-Being	x		
5	Children and Young People		x	
6	Creating Safe Communities		x	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		x	

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8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	x		
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Reasons for the Recommendation:

The deadline for submission of the Better Care Fund has been set for 19th September. There are linkages between the Section 256 agreement and the wider health and social care integration plans for Sefton, which also inform the Better Care Fund plan

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no additional revenue costs to the Council as this funding is being transferred over from the Department of Health (DoH) to support Adult Social Care Services, which also have a Health benefit. The funding must also be used to prepare for the implementation of pooled budgets in April 2015 and to make early progress against the national conditions and the performance measures set out in the local agreed plan. A condition of the transfer is that the local authority has agreed a completed Better Care Fund plan with its partner CCG, and that this plan has been signed off by the Health and Well-Being Board. Within the current MTFP budget assumptions £5.7m of this £6.9m Health transfer has already been committed to meet existing Adult Social Care provision.

(B) Capital Costs

N/A

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal		
Human Resources		
Equality		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

Positive

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

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The Head of Corporate Finance (FD3138/14) and Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD2430/14) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

If the Health and Well-Being Board did not agree with the implementation of the additional integration schemes identified within this report then this would delay the transfer of NHS funding to the authority and could have a significant budgetary impact in 2014/15. There would also be a knock-on impact to the larger Better Care Fund transfer anticipated in 2015/16.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

Contact Officers: Samantha Tunney / Tina Wilkins

Tel: Ext 4039 / 3329

Email: Samantha.Tunney@sefton.gov.uk / Tina.wilkins@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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Introduction/Background

1. Section 256 Agreement

- 1.1 Similar to previous years the Department of Health has allocated non-recurrent budget allocations to NHS England nationally, for transfer to Local Authorities to invest in social care services to benefit health, and to improve overall health gain.
- 1.2 This year, 2014, there are two components to the allocation; NHS transfer and Preparation for the Better Care Fund. The payments are once again to be made via an agreement under Section 256 of the 2006 NHS Act, as agreed in previous years.
- 1.3 The Department of Health announced revised allocations and transfer arrangements for 2014/15. The funding transfer to Local Authorities will be carried out by NHS England and Sefton will expect to receive;

Description of Scheme	£	NHS England Category
Support to Community Care Services for projected demand in relation to Rest and Nursing Home Placements, Home Care, Direct Payments, Supported Tenancies and Day Care	5,082,057	Maintaining Eligibility Criteria
Contribution to provision of Care-line Equipment to support people at home	100,000	Telecare
Contribution to provision of Community Equipment / Adaptations	300,000	Community Equipment & Adaptations
Investment in Sensory Support Services	16,000	Other Social Care
Investment in Carers Card Initiative Programme	20,000	Other Social Care
Additional funding for Short Breaks and Respite	200,000	Other Preventative Services
Investment in support to the agreed BCF schemes and service integration	1,271,000	Delivering Integrated Care and supporting discharge from short stay and AED. Support step up step down service within the community to
Allocated as follows:		
Additional Social Care and Occupational Therapy Staffing	648,000	
Community Beds, Medical Cover	400,000	
Equipment and Tele Care (additional)	73,000	
Domiciliary Care Packages (intensive support)	150,000	

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		reduce unnecessary admissions and early discharge.
Total Funding	6,989,057	

1.4 A number of conditions must be satisfied, prior to the transfer of funding:

Main Transfer:

- I. The funding must be used to support Adult Social Care Services, which also has a Health benefit. However, beyond this broad condition, the Department wants to provide flexibility for local areas to determine how this investment in social services is best used.
- II. The Local Authority must agree with local Health partners how the funding is best used and the outcomes expected from this investment, as part of the wider discussions on the use of their total health and care resources.
- III. It is recommended that the Health and Well- Being boards are the most appropriate place to discuss the allocations, ensuring that there is regard to the JSNA and existing commissioning plans.
- IV. Local Authorities must demonstrate how the funding transfer will make a positive difference to social care services and outcomes for service users, compared to service plans in the absence of the funding transfer.
- V. The funding may be used to support existing services or transformation programmes, where such services or programmes are of benefit to the wider health and care system, provide good outcomes for service users, and would be reduced due to budget pressures in local authorities without this investment.
- VI. The funding may also be used to support new services or transformation, again where joint benefit with the health system and positive outcomes for service users have been identified.
- VII. The Board will also have regard to the recommendations from “Caring for our future” White paper, which may require some small revenue costs.
- VIII. The Local Authority will be required to provide assurances to the NHS commissioning Board, that the conditions for funding transfer are being met.

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1.5 Financial Implications

As a Council with Adult Social Care Responsibilities, Sefton Borough Council faces a number of challenges over the next few years related to some of the unique circumstances within the Borough, including:

- Particular challenges with regards to its significantly ageing population, with multiple long term conditions, compounded by unacceptably high health and wellbeing inequalities. Between 2011 and 2021, while the overall population of the Borough is expected to remain largely unchanged (an increase of 1%), it is predicted that there will be a 16% (57,366 to 66,545) increase in our population aged 65 and over, and a 40.5% (7,633 to 10,723) increase in the numbers of people aged 85 years and over in the same period, with those over the age of 90 expected to increase by more than 55%.
- This significant demographic shift time-bomb is compounded by significant reductions in Council resources due to the government's austerity measure
- Further efficiency savings of approximately £27m in 2015/16 and £28m in 2016/17
- In real terms Sefton Council's budget will have reduced by 43% by 31st March 2017
- In Sefton, our spending on the most vulnerable adults and children currently accounts for 50% of the 2014/15 budget. If spending on vulnerable adults and children remains the same, then this would account for around 80% of our budget by 2017.

1.6 In light of the current financial and other pressures within the LA it is proposed that the majority of this allocation is utilised to support existing services, which are of benefit to the wider health and care systems and provide good outcomes for service users

1.7 Proposed funding main allocation for 2014/15:

- Maintain the Telecare Service- £100,000
- Maintain support to Equipment, Aids and Adaptations - £300,000
- Investment in other social care / preventative services - £236,000
- Support of mainstream service delivery - £5,082,057

1.8 The additional investment to support the Implementation & Preparation of Better Care Fund will be primarily support intermediate care, reablement, early discharge and step up / step down programmes set out in the Better Care Fund programme and used as follows:

- Delivering integrated care to support discharge - £648,000
- Support Step Up / Step Down Services - £623,000

2.0 Implications for Council's Priorities

- i) To maintain the capacity, quality and range of social care services ensuring that the services provided are relevant to the health, social care and cultural needs of the local population and support people to remain as independent as practicable through a rehabilitative and enabling approach to care delivery.
- ii) To maintain safe and effective discharge from hospital for residents of Sefton. Promote the protection and dignity of vulnerable adults.

2.1 Risk Analysis

There are increasing financial pressures on the Local Authority's budget, in particular on the Community Care Budget.

If the proposals in relation to the revised funding allocations are not approved, then this will have a detrimental effect on the ability of the Council to be able to deliver existing services. In addition, if the proposal to use a significant proportion of the allocation to support mainstream service delivery is not supported, then this will also impact on the Council's ability to meet the required annual efficiency savings for 15/16 and 16/17

Participation and the associated funding in the Better Care Fund (BCF) will require achievement of performance metrics set out in the BCF Guidance issued by the Department of Health, in particular with regard to the on reduced non-elective admissions,. Accordingly, there is a risk relating to non-achievement in performance on the metrics.

3. Preparing for the Better Care Fund

- 3.1 On 25 July, NHS England – via letter to Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board – forwarded revised guidance on producing Better Care Fund plans which includes revised planning and technical guidance, revised templates for completion, and a new timetable for submission, with additional conditions to be met. To date, Sefton's Health and Wellbeing Board have already submitted two iterations of the Better Care Fund in February and April 2014 respectively.

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3.2 The main changes to the process for this third iteration include:

- a revision of payment of £1bn (nationally) so that the proportion of the monies “...is now linked to performance is dependent solely on an area’s scale of ambition in setting a planned level of reduction in total emergency admissions (i.e. general and acute non-elective activity).” The national planning assumption is that this will be in the region of a 3.5% reduction against the baseline detailed in the technical guidance;
- more evidence of sufficient provider engagement and agreement of the impact of plans;
- greater clarity around the alignment of the BCF plan to wider plans and policies, such as how BCF schemes will align with and work alongside primary care; and
- more evidence of robust finance and activity analytical modelling underpinning plans.

3.3 In terms of metrics, the guidance now requires a greater emphasis on health issues, specifically, as mentioned above, a targeted reduction of total emergency admissions, expected to be 3.5%. This appears to be the key one of 6 expected metrics – the others being:

- permanent admissions of older people to residential and nursing care homes;
- Proportion of older people who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital to reablement/ rehabilitation services;
- delayed transfers of care from hospital per 100,000 population;
- a metric on patient/service user experience; and
- a “local metric” to be decided.

3.4 A new section within the BCF plan return seeks confirmed written agreement (with comments) by local Acute Health Providers to the schemes and plans set out in the Integration Plan.

3.5 A challenging deadline of 19th September has been set for this work, and work on the new template and metrics tables is on-going within the Council’s Business Intelligence and Performance Team, in partnership with officers of the Council and Officers from Southport & Formby and South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups.

3.6 As with the two previous iterations of the Better Care Fund plans, the final submission needs to be formally signed off by the local Health and Wellbeing Board, and this will be considered at its planned meeting on 17th September. To ensure that the plan is approved, Cabinet are requested to approve that Sefton Council’s Deputy Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Cabinet Member for Older People and Health, are delegated to sign off the BCF submission on behalf of the Council after the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting.

3.7 The ambitions of the wider Health and Social Care integration goes beyond the requirements of the Better Care Fund, and work continues on identifying and working up details on initiatives and pieces of work that will inform the overall plan. The initiatives and details are part of the foundations of the Better Care Fund Plan, and, as indicated at paragraph 3.4 above, will need to align with plans and ambitions of local Acute Sector providers.

Agenda Item 6

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 11 September 2014

Subject: Feedback on Market Testing for the investment, development and management of Southport Golf Links and Bootle Golf Courses

Report of: Director of Street Scene

Wards Affected: All

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

Is it included in the Forward Plan? Yes

Exempt/Confidential

No

Purpose/Summary

Feedback on Market Testing for the investment, development and management of Southport Golf Links and Bootle Golf Courses

Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet note the response to the market testing exercise and agree that further periodic reports be presented to the Cabinet Member Children, Schools, Families and Leisure on the performance of the golf courses to inform decisions on the future provision of this service.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
3	Environmental Sustainability	√		
4	Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Children and Young People	√		
6	Creating Safe Communities		√	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	√		

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Reasons for the Recommendation:

To decide on the way forward

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no new revenue costs associated with this report/recommendation. However, regular reports will be presented to the Cabinet Member CSF&L to keep the matter under review.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no new capital costs associated with this report/recommendation.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal		
Human Resources		
Equality		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

None

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance (FD3096/14) and Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD2400/14) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

No

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

Contact Officer: Rajan Paul, Head of Landscape Services

Tel: 0151 934 2373

Email: rajan.paul@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None

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Background

1. Cabinet (25th April 2013 and 10th Oct 2013) considered reports on the future of Southport Golf Links and Bootle Golf Courses. It was agreed that a market testing exercise be carried out to assist the Council in exploring options for the future investment, development and management of these golf courses.
2. The necessary background documents for the market testing exercise were prepared, and made available via 'The Chest' to those wishing to express an interest. In addition, signposting adverts were placed in the technical golf and leisure press, and all those who had previously expressed an interest in being involved in the management of either of the golf courses were informed by letter about the exercise
3. In submitting their proposals respondents were invited to lay out in reasonable detail their proposed business model(s) to enable the Council to arrive at a good understanding of their overall proposal. They were encouraged, as a minimum, to cover the following points:
 - Their long term vision
 - Their development proposals
 - Their investment proposals
 - Their financial proposals
 - How those proposals could be delivered
 - The nature of their business model
 - The terms of their business model
 - The duration of their business model
 - The potential benefits to the council
4. Thirty five companies/individuals downloaded the documentation. Five accompanied site visits were requested and undertaken during the process from October 2013 to February 2014. This included a two week extension as some interested parties requested more time.
5. The purpose of this exercise was to draw in ideas that would allow the council to devise a way forward in the most informed manner.

Summary of Submissions

6. Thirteen submissions were received, with varying levels of detail/ideas put forward.
7. These can be summarised as follows:
 - Three were simply in the form of generic brochures from golf course managers and operators
 - One asked to be considered for employment as a Golf Professional at Southport Golf Course
 - One didn't offer a business proposal, but offered observations on the potential physical and business developments that could be explored at both sites

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- Four suggested they could run the golf courses on a fee basis, with improvements funded by a combination of self funding, and/or capital investment from the Council
- One suggested they could manage the golf courses on a no-fee basis, where they would keep the profit, and guarantee a capital investment of £600k across both courses
- Three suggested rethinking the golfing offer at Bootle, in conjunction with significant enabling/ other development

General observations arising from the submissions

8. Although several discussions had taken place with interested parties leading up to the exercise which implied a high level of interest in potential development of the sites, the submissions were fewer than anticipated, and the level of detail provided was for the most part fairly scant.
9. However, there were some common threads which run through several of the submissions:
- *Interest in golf is currently in decline nationally;*
 - *There is increased interest, by the England Golfing Union and by the international 'Golf 2020 Vision', in 'rethinking' the sport by providing a more varied offer, e.g.*
 - *promotion for young people, women and families,*
 - *9 hole (or even shorter) courses,*
 - *indoor and outdoor practice facilities,*
 - *'adventure' golf (a high quality themed putting game)*
 - *A good quality shop, bar/café and clubhouse are very important for attracting and retaining golfers and to maximize income, including income from non golfers*
 - *Promotion, and marketing development are vitally important – but appropriate quality facilities need to be provided first.*

Observations relating to Southport Golf Course arising from the submissions

10. Most of the suggestions made by interested parties in relation to Southport Golf Course centered on:
- Relatively minor improvements to the course itself
 - Diversifying the golf offer for young people, women and families
 - Including new and improved teaching and practice facilities
 - Improving the reception, shop, changing and catering facilities
 - Better marketing and promotion
11. Only two submissions suggested the addition of a driving range (possibly on the Park and Ride site) in the short term. Most saw this as a longer term goal with the improvements listed above being of more immediate priority.

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12. None of the submissions proposed exploring the potential regeneration of adjacent areas as part of a wider strategy for the northern end of Southport Town Centre.

Observations relating to Bootle Golf Course arising from the submissions

13. The suggestions made by interested parties in relation to Bootle Golf Course tended to be more radical and wide ranging, as the site and its facilities are in much worse condition.
14. There is general agreement that to retain the current golf offer there needs to be a high level of investment, both in the course and all of the reception, shop, changing and catering facilities.
15. None of the submissions offered to self fund this level of investment, and so some form of enabling development or council support would be needed.
16. Several submissions suggested making the facility more accessible and family friendly by introducing;
 - better indoor and outdoor teaching and practice facilities,
 - by offering shorter round options (such as 3, 6 or 9 hole options),
 - and by providing better, more family friendly and welcoming reception, shop, changing and catering facilities (including make the catering facilities open to non golfers).
17. One submission focused on providing a new and better quality golf course elsewhere, thereby releasing potentially very valuable development land for commercial, business or residential use. The submission did not identify an alternate location.
18. Two submissions suggested re-thinking the golfing offer which could potentially reduce maintenance and operating costs whilst improving the quality of the golf offer, however the practicalities of this would require further investigation.

Possible Business Models

19. Arising from the submissions, there are three main possible business models for the future investment, development and management of these two golf courses:
 - Council led:
The Council continues to operate one or both courses.
 - Partnership:
The Council seeks to work with a development partner to operate one or both courses.
 - Disposal
The council seeks to dispose of one or both courses to an external organization to run independently of the Council

Additional Information

20. This information is separate to the market testing exercise, but is provided here as background information for Members.

The wider picture

21. Some of the suggestions made are supported by HSBC's 'Golf's 2020 Vision', the international strategy for the future of golf:
This study endorses the need for golf to be more accessible and affordable, for shorter courses and to extend the target audience to families, young people, and women.
22. These findings are also in line with the England Golf Union (the governing body for golf) plans over the next seven years to grow the game of golf in England and to inspire “people of all ages to make golf a part of their life”.

This organization has key aims which not only are in line with the Golf 2020 Vision above but also focus on the role of academies and feeder clubs in attracting new golfers and developing them to join golf clubs that offer better quality facilities and higher standards of play – a key role for municipal pay and play clubs.

The local picture

23. Liverpool City Council has recently ‘leased’ their North Liverpool (Kirkby) Golf Course to a private partner with the intention of reducing their ongoing losses, to retain the facility for the community, and to increase its quality. The agreement is for 25 years.
24. North Liverpool Golf Course is within 3 to 4 miles (10 minutes drive) of Bootle Golf Course and is to be managed by the same group that have developed Formby Hall Golf Resort and Spa. It is extremely likely that NLGC will be in direct competition to Bootle GC.
25. Aintree golf course (within the race course itself) is located very close by and is between these two facilities, although it is a very simple course.

Financial background

26. Bootle Golf Course is in poor condition and is deteriorating. It currently runs at a net loss to the Council. This was approx. £110K in 2013/14 and may be a similar amount in 2014/15. This included the loss of rental (£35K) that the former lessee would have paid to the council as part of that agreement.

Outurn for previous years:

Year	Actual Expenditure	Actual Income	Out-turn	Nr of rounds played	Cost per round

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2013/14	£256,932	£182,779	-£74,153	23,896	-£3.10
2012/13	Not available ¹	£35,000 ²	+£35,000	Not available ¹	Not available ¹
2011/12	Not available ¹	£35,000 ²	+£35,000	Not available ¹	Not available ¹

1: figures not available as course was previously operated by lessee

2: lease income

The above figures are exclusive of VAT and based on direct 'controllable cost' (as used for budget purposes) they do not include indirect costs associated with service management and central establishment charges

27. Southport Golf Course currently makes a net income to the Council of around £100K as it is currently managed. Although this varies from year to year, generally depending on the weather, there has not been an overall and consistent downward trend as there seems to have been nationally.

Outturn for previous years:

Year	Actual Expenditure	Actual Income	Out-turn	Nr of rounds played	Cost per round
2013/14	£224,647	£312,527	+£87,880	35,042	+£2.51
2012/13	£214,402	£286,645	+£72,243	32,673	+£2.21
2011/12	£211,253	£414,755	+£203,502	42,559	+£4.78
2010/11	£244,997	£380,817	+£135,820	41,535	+£3.27

The above figures are exclusive of VAT and based on direct 'controllable cost' (as used for budget purposes) they do not include indirect costs associated with service management and central establishment charges

Agenda Item 7

Report to: Cabinet **Date of Meeting:** September 11 2014

Subject: Animal Welfare Charter

Report of: Director of Built Environment **Wards Affected:** All

Is this a Key Decision? Yes **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** Yes

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

For the Cabinet to consider the Animal Welfare Charter for Sefton Council

Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet,

- a) Notes the content of this report and:
- b) Adopt the Animal Welfare Charter for Sefton Council

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
3	Environmental Sustainability	√		
4	Health and Well-Being		√	
5	Children and Young People		√	
6	Creating Safe Communities		√	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	√		

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Reasons for the Recommendation:

To define the Council's position on a range of animal welfare issues and to provide guidance to elected members, council officials, the business sector and the general public on animal welfare issues.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not to adopt an appropriate charter

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) **Revenue Costs:** None

(B) **Capital Costs:** None

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial: None
Legal: Incorporated into the report
Human Resources: None
Equality
1. No Equality Implication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains <input type="checkbox"/>

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

None

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT (FD.3085/14.....) has been consulted and notes the report indicates no direct financial implications for the Council. . The Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD.2389/14.) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

The Head of Landscape Services (May 2014)

The Head of Landscape Development Management (May 2014)

The Head of Coast & Countryside Services (May 2014)

The Head of Planning Services (May 2014)

The Director of Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (May 2014)

The Assets and Property Manager (May 2014)

Corporate Legal Services – Planning, Environment & Property Services Team (May 2014)

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

Contact Officer: Andrew Naisbitt – Trading Standards & Licensing Manager
Tel: 0151 934 4014
Email: andrew.naisbitt@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

- Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/104.htm>
- The Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/15-16/38>
- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/55/contents>
- Pet Shops Act 1951
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/14-15/35>
- Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1963/43>
- Breeding of Dogs Act 1973 as amended
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1973/60>
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/38>
- Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>
- Animal Health Act 1981
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/22>
- Deer Act 1991
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/54/contents>

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- Animal Welfare Act 2006
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents>
- Animal Welfare Act 2006 Explanatory Notes
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/notes/contents>
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made>
- Defra Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain
<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/policy/animalhealth/strategy/ahws.pdf>
- Defra Code of Practice on the Use of Snares in Fox and Rabbit Control
<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/wildlife/management/documents/snares-cop.pdf>
- Determining the Extent of Use and Humaneness of Snares in England and Wales (WM0315)
<http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=14689>
- Labour Animal Welfare Society: Animal Welfare Policy
<http://www.labouranimawelfaresociety.org.uk/2014/02/labour-animal-welfare-policy-have-your-say/>
- League Against Cruel Sports Manifesto to End Snaring in Great Britain and Northern Ireland
<http://www.league.org.uk/~media/Files/LACS/Publications/Snaring-Manifesto-2013.pdf>
- The Queen v Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council – Case No CO/5148/98 – High Court of Justice Queens Bench Division
<http://policy.mofcom.gov.cn/en/service/fcaseEN!fetch.action?libcode=fcase&id=edd773ad-a77f-4cf2-ae1b-e5d14c0754e2&classcode=293;410>

An Animal Welfare Charter for Sefton Council

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Further to a request from the Cabinet Member Communities and Environment, the Animal Welfare Charter has been drafted to reflect the concerns of local people who care about animal welfare and any cruel treatment, abuse or neglect of animals. The Charter set out in this report states the Council's position on a range of animal welfare issues and aims to provide elected members, Council officials, the business sector and the general public with guidance on animal welfare issues.

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- 1.2 The Council believes that we all have a responsibility to our fellow creatures. It seeks to raise awareness of these responsibilities and explain how best they can be met.
- 1.3 In considering the welfare of domestic or captive animals due regard should be had to the principles, known as the Five Freedoms, that animals must be accorded:
 - Freedom from hunger and thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain health and vigour;
 - Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;
 - Freedom from pain, injury or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment;
 - Freedom to express normal behaviour by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and the company of an animal of its own kind; and
 - Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.
- 1.4 The Council will consider these Five Freedoms for guidance when exercising its statutory powers in relation to animal health and welfare matters.
- 1.5 Through lawful means the Council will also use its best endeavours to promote improvements in animal welfare by taking account of animal welfare issues in the Council's day to day operations, in its decision making process and through influence in association with other local authorities, voluntary welfare groups and government agencies. The case of the Queen v Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, identifies an important issue. It demonstrates that, in exercising its powers, a local authority must be able to demonstrate that there are rational reasons for its decision not to permit an otherwise lawful activity to take place on land owned by it. Such a decision must be made objectively and in accordance with the authority's statutory powers. In order to avoid challenge by way of judicial review such a decision should not be based on the personal morals, views and principles of the decision maker.
- 1.6 Whilst there are areas where the Council is unable to take direct action, as a responsible body it will make its views known via the Local Government Association, Members of Parliament, Members of the European Parliament and the Government.
- 1.7 This Charter is not a fully comprehensive document intended to cover every aspect of animal welfare. It will however provide a framework within which new policies can be developed. It details those areas that the Council considers most important.

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2.0 Background

- 2.1 Any attempt to define 'animal welfare' immediately serves to highlight the complexities of the whole subject and the issues involved.
- 2.2 'Animal Welfare' means many things to many people. For some it simply means the well being of animals while they are alive and the acceptance that farm animals are bred and kept with the objective of eventual slaughter for the provision of food. Others will feel that the whole process of breeding and keeping animals for sale, for entertainment, or for food is unacceptable exploitation and that it is not in the interest of the animal's welfare to control its existence for the benefit of human beings. Some consider that the welfare and behavioural needs of animals can only be met by keeping animals in extensive conditions, while others believe that the 'welfare' losses in intensive conditions are relatively small and are offset by the economic advantages to the consumer.
- 2.3 Both ethical and scientific considerations play a part in the whole subject of animal welfare. It can be asserted that no enlightened society could seriously contest that human beings have an inescapable responsibility to ensure the well being of those animals on which humans depend for their own wellbeing. The obvious area of disagreement relates to the limit to which human beings in a civilised society are prepared to reconcile their need to use animals for food with the above considerations
- 2.4 The Council recognises that the use of animals in the food chain is inescapable. However, the Council supports the aim of ensuring that, in the processes involved, animals are treated humanely, all measures are taken to avoid unnecessary suffering and the guiding principles of the Five Freedoms are observed.
- 2.5 The Council's role in animal welfare is partly one of enforcing its statutory powers and partly one of influencing debate.
- 2.6 The statutory powers of the Council are firstly contained in a range of licensing provisions concerned with the protection of animal welfare in activities such as pet shops, animal breeding and boarding establishments and zoos. Secondly the Council has an enforcement role in relation to animal diseases and also in relation to dog ownership and control.
- 2.7 The influencing role of the Council derives from its status as a democratic tool of local government able to reflect the view of the community which it serves. Whilst there is little doubt that the proper welfare of animals is of increasing concern to the community, the activities of the Council are constrained by the limits on its statutory powers.
- 2.8 As a large organisation within the community the Council has the ability to influence the animal welfare debate and to lead by example through the way it conducts its operations and by supporting and encouraging other organisations with similar interests.

3.0 Enforcement of Statutory Powers

3.1 The Council is responsible for the licensing and enforcement of licence conditions in respect of a range of activities involving animals, including:

- Dog Breeding;
- Pet Shops;
- Animal Boarding;
- Riding Establishments;
- Dangerous Wild Animals;
- Performing Animals; and
- Zoos.

3.2 The Council also has a role in enforcement of a range of other statutory powers in relation to dogs, including dangerous dogs, stray dogs and dog fouling.

3.3 In order to fulfil its statutory responsibilities under this legislation the Council will:

- Employ trained and experienced personnel and where necessary and appropriate call upon the expertise of others to assist in the process;
- Produce, apply and regularly review conditions attached to licences issued by the Council to provide adequate protection for animals and promote their welfare;
- Encourage a better understanding of the law and greater compliance with the legislation;
- Inspect premises and carry out such enquiries as required prior to their licence applications being determined to ensure that they will comply with the licence conditions;
- Respond to enquiries regarding stray dogs, dangerous dogs and irresponsible dog ownership; and
- Liaise with other enforcement agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach to animal welfare.

3.4 The Council recognises that it may also be required to enforce statutory powers relating to pest and disease control. In such cases target species will only be killed where they present a threat to the health or wellbeing of the local community. Consideration will be given to non target species where there is a risk from secondary ingestion of the active ingredient. Pests will be despatched using the most appropriate method depending upon circumstances.

3.5 The Council will fulfil its statutory responsibilities under the Animal Health legislation if appropriate by:

- Taking appropriate enforcement action where necessary;
- Seeking to encourage good practice by maximising publicity where prosecutions are brought;
- Explain the regulations so as to promote a better understanding of the law and greater compliance with the various welfare codes; and
- Liaise closely with other enforcement agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

3.6 The Council will fulfil its responsibilities under the Wildlife & Countryside Act by working with the responsible enforcement agency. It will respond to reported breaches of local Bye-laws by taking appropriate enforcement action where necessary and/or by referring infringements to the most appropriate agency.

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4.0 Influencing Behaviour

4.1 The Council will use its best endeavours to promote improvements in animal welfare by:

- Encouraging animal owners to take measures to prevent neglect and cruelty;
- Encouraging prospective purchasers of pets to ensure they have the necessary equipment, facilities, time and financial means or the level of interest for the proper keeping of the animal;
- Encouraging pet owners to ensure that their pets have sufficient space to avoid stress or suffering;
- Encouraging responsible pet ownership;
- Encouraging the re-homing of rescued animals from recognised societies and establishments;
- Encouraging responsible dog ownership;
- Encouraging the humane training of animals by the Police, other public protection agencies and for those who help the disabled.
- Encouraging the use a recognised method of identification, e.g. electronic chipping; and
- Encouraging the neutering of domestic cats and dogs which plays an important role in countering irresponsible pet ownership.

5.0 Leading by Example

5.1 The Council will take account, where appropriate, of animal welfare issues in its day to day operations and its decision making processes.

5.2 This will be achieved by:

- Not knowingly purchasing animal by products where alternatives are available;
- Opposing the importation of animals from the wild and the importation of products derived from wild animals. However it accepts that the importation of live specimens may be necessary for captive breeding programmes for endangered species;
- Opposing the use of fur;
- Encouraging food establishments to offer vegetarian alternatives to animal products;
- Discouraging the use of caged or performing animals and the giving of animals as prizes.
- Opposing the taking or killing of wild animals or the infliction of pain and suffering, subject to the need to control pests;
- Discourage the use of snares and any trap which causes suffering;
- Encourages anglers not to use lead shot and ledger weights, barbed hooks or live vertebrate bait for angling;
- Supporting habitat conservation (where possible) of river banks, hedgerows, wooded areas etc which provide habitat and cover for other animals which are not normally hunted; and
- Endeavour to ensure its land management practices accord with the welfare of wild animals, their habitats and biodiversity conservation generally. The Council encourages the community to follow similar principles.

6.0 The Decision Making Process

6.1 The Council believes that the rich variety of wildlife in the Borough is an important treasure to be protected and safeguarded and to that end it will:

- Take into account, European national and local strategies which directly affect the welfare of wild animals;
- Support the construction of road crossings and other innovative measures where the necessary regulatory tests are met to safeguard wild animals in the Borough;
- Seek to meet its biodiversity conservation duties and legal responsibilities under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006);
- Through the development management process, advise developers as early as possible in the development process, of their statutory responsibility with regard to the presence of protected species and their habitat.
- Promote effective land management;
- Promote Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites as a positive commitment to safeguarding wild animals in the Borough;
- Encourage the development and use of educational materials to raise awareness of wild animals in the Borough; and
- Consult with local residents and groups who have knowledge, experience and expertise in the welfare of wild animals when devising strategies and action plans to support wildlife in the Borough.

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Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	11 th September 2014
Subject:	The Sefton Council Permit Scheme	Wards Affected:	All Wards
Report of:	Director of Built Environment		
Is this a Key Decision? Exempt/Confidential	Yes No	Is it included in the Forward Plan?	Yes

Purpose/Summary

To seek permission to become a Permit Authority and operate a Permit Scheme for the purpose of coordinating works in streets by all works promoters

Recommendation(s)

1. That Cabinet gives approval to formalise the legal agreement with the Secretary of State for Transport to become a permit authority and operate a permit scheme.
2. That authorisation be given to the Director of Built Environment to agree the final permit scheme with the Department for Transport (DfT)
3. That the Head of Corporate Legal Services be authorised to enter into the necessary legal agreement with the Department for Transport.
4. It be noted that the proposal was a Key Decision but had not been included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Consequently, the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) had been consulted under Rule 27 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution, to the decision being made by the Cabinet as a matter of urgency on the basis that it was impracticable to defer the decision until the commencement of the next Forward Plan because this report was originally included in the Forward Plan for Cabinet on 19th June 2014 however that meeting was subsequently cancelled. DfT has now indicated a timescale for approvals which will be achievable in an effective manner should Cabinet approve the report recommendations at its meeting on 11th September 2014

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How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		*	
2	Jobs and Prosperity	*		
3	Environmental Sustainability	*		
4	Health and Well-Being	*		
5	Children and Young People	*		
6	Creating Safe Communities	*		
7	Creating Inclusive Communities	*		
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	*		

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The introduction of a Permit Scheme, to replace the existing Noticing Scheme, will give the Council greater powers to influence how and when works are undertaken by works promoters on the highway network, thus seeking to further minimise disruption.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

To remain as a noticing authority

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The scheme allows for fees to be applied to each utility permit to ensure that the Council's additional costs are covered. Based on the Cost Benefit Analysis, it is expected that the scheme could generate in the region of £400,000 per annum to cover the additional costs.

(B) Capital Costs

Nil

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial None
Legal Part 3 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) Regulations 2007 gives local authorities powers to design and operate a permit scheme to improve the management of works in the street undertaken by both highway authorities and utilities companies.

Human Resources		
None		
Equality		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input type="text" value="*"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="text"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="text"/>

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

Operating a Permit Scheme will give far greater powers to the Council to allow staff to have greater control on works on the highway network

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

In accordance with Department of Transport requirements, Statutory Undertakers, works promoters and other interested parties have been consulted on the proposed scheme which includes both scheme requirements and proposed permit fees.

In addition, all Elected Members and Parish Councils were also consulted

The consultation period ran from 14th April 2014 until 6th June 2014

Cabinet Member Transportation has been fully briefed and supports this report.

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT (FD3100/14) has been consulted and notes there are no direct financial implications for the Council. The Permit Scheme allows for all costs over and above those currently incurred by operating the noticing scheme to be recovered through permit fees.

The Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD 2404/14) has been consulted and has no comments on the report

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following Cabinet decision to allow for formal processes to be completed with the Secretary of State

Contact Officer: Jeremy McConkey – Service Manager Network Management & Infrastructure
Investment Programmes & Infrastructure

Tel: 0151 934 4222

Email: jerry.mcconkey@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None

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1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 All highways authorities have a duty under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991(NRSWA) and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) to effectively coordinate all activities on the highway to ensure the safe and expeditious movement of traffic, pedestrians and vulnerable road users.
- 1.2 Part 3 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) Regulations 2007 gives local authorities powers to design and operate a permit scheme to improve the management of works in the street undertaken by both highway authorities and utilities companies.
- 1.3 Currently, when a utility company (or other works promoter) wants to work in the street, they have to serve a notice on the highway authority (Sefton) before they start, (unless there is an emergency). Generally, if they meet the requirements of the notice system, they have the powers to get on with the work and it's difficult for us to stop them.
- 1.4 Under the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Government has introduced additional powers for highway authorities to operate a Permit Scheme to replace the noticing regime. The scheme means that a utility (or other works promoter) will have to apply for a permit to work on the street and it is illegal for them to do so until we have issued the permit to them. We can also apply certain conditions to permits when appropriate to provide even greater control to the benefit of the Council and the highway user.
- 1.5 This gives the Council much greater control on works on the highway which will lead to less disruption. We will produce annual report to demonstrate the benefits. The checks officers need to undertake before issuing the permits are quite involved and clearly will take more officer time. The permit scheme allows the highway authority to charge for these extra costs when dealing with permits for statutory undertakers.
- 1.6 The introduction of a Permit Scheme will be a very positive step for the Council, offering major benefits in the management of works on the highway. Incentives within the scheme, and differential charges depending on when works are undertaken and how long they take, will lead to much greater planning of works prior to commencement on site. It will also lead to more collaboration and reduced durations – all very positive in minimising disruption caused by necessary maintenance works.
- 1.7 There are approximately 60 permit schemes in operation throughout England and all have proved to show great benefits in better planning and management of works and consequently reduced disruption. The Secretary of State for Transport has previously written to all Chief Executive Officers encouraging each highway authority in England to consider applying to run a permit scheme within their Authority.
- 1.8 The Permit Scheme allows for all costs over and above those currently incurred by operating the noticing scheme when dealing with utility companies to be recovered through permit fees. There are incentives within the scheme to encourage higher performance by works promoters by offering discounts for better quality works, collaborative working etc.

1.9 The full documentation has been shared with all Elected Members and Parish Councils for information and comment.

2.0 Permit Scheme Application Process

2.1 In developing the Permit Scheme, officers have followed both the Traffic Management Act 2004 Statutory Guidance for Permits and permit fee guidance along with all supplementary guidance.

2.2 A Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is required and has been completed which demonstrates the projected benefits of the permit scheme. Based on scheme costs, proposed permit fees have also been produced to complement the CBA. The draft scheme documentation, which includes an executive summary of the CBA has been through a consultation process with the results provided to the Department for Transport (DfT) who is a statutory consultee.

2.3 Currently, all permit schemes are approved by the DfT and signed off by the Secretary of State for Transport by way of a Statutory Instrument. The Government is introducing a change to the Permit Application process from April 2015 which will require the same processes to be followed, however the sign off process by the Secretary of State will be replaced by a requirement for sign off by the Authority's Chief Executive. In order to give themselves sufficient time to process outstanding permit schemes, the DfT imposed a deadline of 1st August 2014 for submission of formal applications.

2.4 Sefton Council submitted its application on 15th July 2014 which is within the deadline for approval by the Secretary of State.

2.5 The DfT has indicated a provisional target date of 8th October 2014 for Ministerial approval of the scheme, subject to the completion of any agreed amendments. Following Secretary of State giving his approval for the scheme, the Council will be required to nominate a 'go-live' date. Following this confirmation, there will be a 10 week period for the production of the Statutory Instrument. Once formally signed, a further 4 week notification period for utility companies can proceed.

2.6 With a view to having the scheme in operation by 1st March 2015, timings on approvals and formal processes are quite tight. Therefore, Cabinet is requested to give approval to complete that formal process. Should any proposed amendments to the submitted scheme raise any concerns for officers; a further report will be submitted.

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Agenda Item 9

Report to: Cabinet
Council

Date of Meeting: 11 September 2014
25 September 2014

Subject: Department for Transport Pothole Fund

Report of: Director of Built Environment

Wards Affected: All

Is this a Key Decision? Yes **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** No – Rule 27
Applied

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To seek approval to the inclusion of the £380,965 allocated to Sefton from the Department of Transport 'Pothole Fund', in the Councils 2014/15 Capital programme, to be allocated on the basis of priorities agreed by the Cabinet Member for Transportation.

Recommendation(s)

That **Cabinet**;

1. Recommends to Council that the £380,965 allocated by the Department for Transport Pothole Fund is incorporated into the Council's Capital Programme for 2014/15
2. Agrees the proposed additional projects contained in Appendix A of this report to the previously approved Highways Maintenance programme 2014-15
3. That it be noted that the proposal was a Key Decision but had not been included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Consequently, the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) had been consulted under Rule 27 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution, to the decision being made by the Cabinet as a matter of urgency on the basis that it was impracticable to defer the decision until the commencement of the next Forward Plan because delayed implementation of the programme of highway maintenance would place at risk the Council's ability to fully utilise the resource allocated.

That **Council** give approval to the Department for Transport Pothole Fund allocation of £380,965 being incorporated into the Council's Capital Programme for 2014/15

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How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
3	Environmental Sustainability		√	
4	Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Children and Young People		√	
6	Creating Safe Communities	√	√	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	√		

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The resources allocated are capital and thus must be incorporated into the Council's Capital Programme

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs – None

(B) Capital Costs – The additional allocation will augment existing Highway Maintenance resources in order to deliver the priority projects identified by the Cabinet Member, Transportation

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal – None	
Human Resources - None	
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input type="checkbox"/> *
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

None

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance (FD 3103/14) and the Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD 2407/14) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

No

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Meeting

Contact Officer : Alan Lunt
Tel: 0151 934 4580
Email: alan.lunt@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None

1. Background

- 1.1 The Department for Transport has allocated resources to each Highway Authority under the auspices of a ‘Pothole Fund’. While referred to as pothole funding, DfT have advised that the resource should be utilised for a range of priority highway maintenance projects, to be determined by the Local Authority.
- 1.2 Unlike previous years funding, DfT have made clear that the resource for 2014/15 is capital and that it is unringfenced. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate the funding into the 2014/15 Corporate Capital Programme and also confirm that the resource is to be used for Highway Maintenance purposes on the basis of priorities determined by the Cabinet Member for Transportation.
- 1.3 The Chair of the Strategic Capital Investment Group has consented to the resource being utilised for Highway Maintenance purposes. Therefore, Council is required to agree inclusion of the funding into the corporate Capital Programme for 2014/15.
- 1.4 The additional resource will be utilised to augment the agreed Highways Maintenance Programme 2014-15 on the basis of additionally identified priorities, based on detailed site inspections. This additional programme is set out within ‘Appendix A’ to this report.

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Appendix A

In addition to the Council's approved 2014/15 highway maintenance programme, the following projects are recommended for inclusion in order to utilise the additional 'Pothole Fund' allocation 2014-15;

Preston New Road, Southport (Increase patching fund to alleviate vibration issues and settlement) Value £100,000.00

A59 Northway, Maghull (Robins Island RAB) Plane& inlay 40mm, carriageway surface starting to breakdown. High risk of injury and damage claim. Value £46,250.00

Southport Road, Bootle (Roundabout @ Northfield Road) Plane& Inlay 40mm, carriageway in poor state of repair High risk of injury and damage claim, Value £42,500.00 Previously texbanded to arrest deterioration.

Southport Road, Bootle (Roundabout@ Aintree Road) Plane& Inlay 40mm, carriageway in poor state of repair High risk of injury and damage claim, Value £38,150.00 Previously texbanded to arrest deterioration.

Gorse Lane, Litherland £73,100.00 to be added to approved patch funding to cover selective carriageway repairs in Hawthorne Road and Sefton Road

A565 Formby Bypass (Liverpool Road to Altcar Lane & vice versa) Surface Dressing, initial signs of failure identified in carriageway surface. Value £57,035.00

A565 Formby Bypass (Southport Road to Southport Old Road & vice versa)) Surface Dressing, initial signs of failure identified in carriageway surface. Value £103,786.00

Eastbourne Road, Southport (Extension to works approved for Cemetery Road) Surface Dressing. Value £12,920.00

Altcar Road. Formby (Alt Road to A565 Formby Bypass) Surface Dressing. Value £9,000.00

Fleetwoods Lane, Netherton, Surface Dressing. Value £19,975.00

Moss Lane, Hightown (Bends between Gorse Lane and Pheasant Public House) Carriageway in poor state of repair, Plane & Inlay 40mm, (Surface treatments considered but found to be unsuitable due horizontal profile of site.) Value £103,133.00

Remaining balance of funds £75,235.00 to be set to adhoc large patch repairs across the highway network. Site extents to be determined.

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	11 th September 2014
Subject:	Street Lighting - Sub Contractor Framework	Wards Affected:	All Wards
Report of:	Director of Built Environment		
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes	Is it included in the Forward Plan?	Yes
Exempt/Confidential	No		

Purpose/Summary

The Council's in-house Street Lighting operations team continue to deliver the 'Core' demand and planned maintenance activities on the street lighting asset. This includes tasks such as fault repair, cleaning, electrical test & inspection and emergency call out. In addition they also deliver the installation of new and renewal schemes which involve column replacements and associated works. The Authority relies on support from external Contractors in relation to column erection and removal as the Council does not own and operate a Hi-Ab (crane) suitable for such tasks. During periods of 'high' demand the Council also calls upon the same Contractors for additional support in delivering some additional street lighting activities.

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members to invite tenders through the appropriate procurement route for the provision of a Street Lighting Installation Framework Contract for a period of three years with the option to extend for up to a further two years.

Recommendation(s)

1. To give approval to invite Tenders for the Street Lighting Installation Framework Contract on the basis of a 80% Cost / 20 % Quality ratio.
2. To authorise the Director of Built Environment to award the Contract for a period of three years (with the option to extend for up to a further two years) to the highest scoring Tenderer subject to the appropriate Cost and Quality evaluations being completed on tender return.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		*	
2	Jobs and Prosperity	*		
3	Environmental Sustainability		*	

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4	Health and Well-Being	*		
5	Children and Young People		*	
6	Creating Safe Communities	*		
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		*	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	*		

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The inclusion of a Street Lighting Framework Contract will enable the Authority to draw upon additional resources / services when demand is high, at short notice with pre-agreed rates. It will also enable the Authority to deliver certain essential street lighting activities that cannot currently be undertaken in house due to the availability of appropriate equipment and resources.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

To expand the existing in house work force and invest in additional plant and equipment. This has currently been ruled out in the short term due to future uncertainty of Revenue / Capital budgets and subsequent volumes of works which could leave the Authority carrying an unnecessary overhead.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Costs of works instructed under this contract will be contained within the available street lighting maintenance budgets. There is no commitment within the contract that a certain value of work will be instructed.

(B) Capital Costs

Capital works delivered utilising this contract will be primarily funded through LTP monies and will be contained within available budgets.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial None
Legal The appropriate procurement route will be followed when tendering the Contract, following which the mandatory standstill periods will be followed before Contract award.
Human Resources None

Equality		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input type="text" value="*"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="text"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="text"/>

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

None unless approval is not granted to approve the introduction of the Framework Contract. The existing in house street lighting operations team continue to rely on external support from 3rd Party Contractors to deliver new street lighting renewal schemes as the Authority does not own the appropriate equipment for column erections (i.e. Hi-Ab crane).

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT (FD2973/14) has been consulted and notes the contract will be awarded via OJEU as the total value of the Contract could exceed the OJEU threshold. There are no direct financial implications for the RA budget as costs can be contained within the available budgets and LTP Funding and Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD2278/14) have been consulted and has no comments on the report

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

Contact Officer: Andrew Sawyer
Tel: 0151 934 3314
Email: andrew.sawyer@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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1.0 Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Council's in-house Street Lighting operations team continue to deliver the 'Core' demand and planned maintenance activities on the street lighting asset. This includes tasks such as fault repair, cleaning, electrical test & inspection and emergency call out. In addition they also deliver the installation of new and renewal schemes which involve column replacements and associated works.
- 1.2 The Authority relies on support from external Contractors in relation to column erection and removal as the Council does not own and operate a Hi-Ab (crane) suitable for such tasks. During periods of 'high' demand the Council also calls upon the same Contractors for additional support in delivering some additional street lighting activities.
- 1.3 The above arrangements would offer better value for money for the Council by the establishment of a Street Lighting Framework Contract. The basis of the framework will be to appoint up to three suitably qualified Contractors. The contract will include a detailed schedule of rates for varying street lighting activities that can be called upon when demand is high and the need for additional resource / support is required.
- 1.4 The benefit of such a Contract is there are no base costs, the works are drawn down on a 'pay as you go' basis and the Council can draw upon this additional support at relatively short notice without the need for issuing mini-tenders. This then avoids the time and expense associated with such alternative procurement routes.
- 1.5 A similar Contract / Select List was in place in previous years prior to the transfer of engineering services to Capita Symonds in 2008.

2.0 Procurement Process

- 2.1 It is proposed to follow a two-stage process to procure a new term maintenance Contractor which will be in accordance with the statutory OJEU process that governs maintenance contracts of this value. During the first stage, expressions of interest from potential Contractors will be invited via an advert in 'OJEU' (Official Journal of the European Union) and via the Chest portal. Contractors will be required to submit a PQQ (Pre-qualification Questionnaire) following which a tender shortlist will be formulated.
- 2.2 A number of assessment criteria will be developed in order to determine Contractors' ability to deliver a contract of this nature. These will include Contractors' experience, project management capabilities and health and safety records.
- 2.5 Tenders will subsequently be invited and assessed using a 'cost : quality' methodology. The ratio of cost shall be 80% and quality 20%. Each tenderer will be required to submit a Quality Submission and Financial Submission and will be assessed against specific criteria and awarded a score.

- 2.6 As there is no defined volume of work with this being a demand led contract, the financial assessment will be completed using a 'model', based on possible anticipated activity within a year of the contract.

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Report to: Cabinet

Date of Report: 11th September 2014

Subject: Inclusion in Capital Programme of Coastal Regional Monitoring Programme and Single Beam Bathymetric Survey Contract Award.

Report of: Director of Built Environment

Wards Affected: Harington, Ravenmeols, Cambridge, Dukes, Ainsdale, Manor, Blundellsands, Church, Linacre

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

Is it included in the Forward Plan?

Yes

Exempt/Confidential

No

Purpose/Summary

To seek approval to include the allocation of £770,000 grant for Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme into the Capital Programme 2014/2015 and award a contract worth £244,515 to Environmental Scientifics Group (ESG) for Bathymetric Surveys through the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme procurement framework from this grant.

Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet

- (1) approve the addition of £770,000 ring - fenced grant for the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme to the Capital Programme; and
- (2) approve the contract award for the North West Bathymetric Survey (£244,515) to Environmental Scientifics Group as detailed in Section 5 below.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		X	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		X	
3	Environmental Sustainability		X	
4	Health and Well-Being	X		
5	Children and Young People		X	
6	Creating Safe Communities		X	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		X	

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8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	X		
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Reasons for the Recommendation: The £770,000 grant is the 2014/2015 annual allocation of a 5 year programme of coastal monitoring. The bathymetric survey is required as part of the programme to gather data upon the North West Coastline, to establish a series of datasets to support coastal management decisions.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no revenue cost implications.

(B) Capital Costs The cost of this survey is funded wholly from the CERMS 2011-16 grant. Approval of the 4th year allocation (2014 – 2015) has been agreed at £770,000 by the Environment Agency Board and is 100% grant funded by the Environment Agency. The bathymetric survey will be funded from this grant

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal	
Cabinet has delegated authority to approve the entry of new schemes into the Capital Programme.	
Human Resources	
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT has been consulted and notes there are no direct financial implications for the Council. The intended expenditure will be met by the grant allocation of £770,000. This was presented to SCIG on 1st September 2014 for inclusion in the Capital Programme. (FD 3110/14).

The Head of Corporate Legal Services has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report (LD 2314/14)

Are there any other options available for consideration?

None

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

Contact Officer: Graham Lymbery – Project Leader Coastal Defence

Tel: 0151 934 2960

Email: graham.lymbery@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None

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1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 Sefton Council has been the lead authority for the North West Coastal Regional Monitoring Programme since 2007, collecting and analysing data to inform decisions relating to coastal erosion and flood risk management.
- 1.2 A nationally coordinated grant application was made to the Environment Agency in May 2010, and an indicative grant allocation of £4.2million, for the period 2011-2016 has been allocated to the North West programme. £770,000 has been approved for 2014-2015, this grant is ring-fenced for this programme. Sefton Council manages the grant on behalf of all the North West Maritime Authorities.
- 1.3 The North West Coastal Regional Monitoring Programme requires bathymetric data to record the topographic level and features of the seabed. The budget for this work for 2014/15 is £313,000.

2. Strategic Capital Investment Group (SCIG).

- 2.1 The grant allocation of £770,000 was presented to SCIG 1st September 2014 for approval for inclusion in the Capital Programme
- 2.2 At the time of writing this report the SCIG meeting hadn't taken place. The decision of SCIG is being reported separately. This report is conditional that SCIG has approved the recommendation for inclusion in the capital programme.

3. Bathymetric Survey Procurement Process

- 3.1 Following Cabinet approval in October 2010 a tendering exercise to establish a procurement framework for the Coastal Monitoring programme was carried out during 2011. The single beam bathymetric framework detailed survey work packages for call off contracts during the five year programme 2011 – 2016.
- 3.2 Two companies were appointed to the single beam bathymetric framework.
- 3.3.1 For the bathymetric work packages required in 2014/15 there was a price difference of £60,375 between the 2 companies on the call off tendered rates.
- 3.3.2 The company with the Most Economical Advantageous Tender was approached to confirm costs. The costs had risen by 10% due to increases in fuel and staffing costs but were still significantly less than the other company's tendered bid. The total cost is £196,525 and this value is below the budget for this package.
- 3.3.3 A review of the contracts was carried out to verify that the works could be awarded through the framework procedures.

4. Additional Data

- 4.1 The above work left an under spend of £116,475 and a number of different survey proposals were put to the Regional Monitoring steering group and Environment Agency for approval.

- 4.2 The group and Environment Agency agreed two additional surveys, which were:
Tidal Current monitoring along the bathymetric survey lines and
Sediment Sampling at certain locations along the bathymetric survey lines
- 4.3 The preferred company, to undertake the bathymetric survey, was approached for costs to undertake the additional surveys and the price is £47,990.
- 4.4 These surveys were not tendered for in the original framework, so there is no direct cost comparison. However, we are aware from previous surveys that the cost to charter a boat capable of doing these surveys is in excess of £1000 per day and the tidal current survey will take 70 days. So by carrying out the surveys during the bathymetric surveys there is an overall cost saving to the programme of at least £20,000.

5. Contract Award

- 5.1 Approval is sought to award the contract for Bathymetric Surveys 2014/15 to Environmental Scientific Group (ESG). The total cost of this service is £244,515. This will be 100% grant aid funded by the Environment Agency.
- 5.2 Costs made up of:
£196,525 for the Bathymetric Survey
£18550 for the Tidal Monitoring
£29440 for 124 sediment samples to be collected.

The remaining budget will be re-allocated to other areas within the programme which has already been approved by the Environment Agency.

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Report to: Cabinet **Date of Meeting:** 11 September 2014

Subject: Merseyside and West Lancashire Traveller Accommodation Assessment

Report of: Director of Built Environment **Wards Affected:** All

Is this a Key Decision? Yes **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** Yes

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To report on the findings and approve the Merseyside and West Lancashire Traveller Accommodation Assessment

Recommendation(s)

To approve the Merseyside and West Lancashire Traveller Accommodation Assessment

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		✓	
3	Environmental Sustainability		✓	
4	Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Children and Young People	✓		
6	Creating Safe Communities	✓		
7	Creating Inclusive Communities	✓		
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		✓	

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Reasons for the Recommendation:

To approve the findings of the Merseyside and West Lancashire Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Local Plan purposes

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

None arising from this report.

Note that, insofar as the assessment forecasts future additional requirements, there is the potential for the need for additional funding in future years. Further reports will therefore need to be prepared as and when the requirements for additional facilities are specifically identified and developed.

(B) Capital Costs None

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial		
Legal		
Human Resources		
None		
Equality		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

None

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT (FD3120/14) notes that there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

The Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD2412) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

Contact Officer: Ian Loughlin

Tel: 0151 934 3558

Email: ian.loughlin@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Merseyside and West Lancashire Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2014

www.sefton.gov.uk/travellerstudy

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites [see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites>]

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1. Background

1.1 Local Authorities have a duty to provide for the accommodation needs for travellers through their Local Plans. This requirement is set out in the government's 'Planning policy for traveller sites' [March 2012] an accompanying document to the National Planning Policy Framework. Local Plans must identify sufficient land to provide for traveller accommodation based on objectively assessed needs. A number of authorities that have failed to do so have had their Local Plans found unsound.

1.2 Paragraphs 8 and 9 of 'Planning policy for traveller sites' state that:

'Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities'.

1.3 To ensure that the evidence on the needs for Traveller sites in the Liverpool City Region was up-to-date and robust for the purposes of Local Plans, six authorities in the city region [i.e. Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, West Lancashire and Wirral] decided to jointly commission an assessment of traveller needs. Sefton as the lead authority was the commissioning body.

1.4 Following a competitive bidding process a company which specialises in traveller assessments, arc4, was commissioned in March 2013.

2. Study Methodology

2.1 In order to meet the requirements of Government Guidance the methodology for this study has comprised:

- Desktop analysis of existing documents, data and pitch information;
- Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople;
- A Key Stakeholder on-line questionnaire for professionals who have contact with and knowledge of local Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities; and
- Discussions with community representatives and representative bodies including Irish Community Care Merseyside and the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain North West Section.

2.2 The primary fieldwork for this study comprised surveys with Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople; this was undertaken by Gypsy and Traveller fieldworkers. A total of 111 interviews were carried out across the study area, including 21 in Sefton.

3. Study Findings

Permanent traveller pitches

3.1 The assessment of current need for permanent traveller residential pitches takes account of existing supply and demand in line with the Guidance. This took account of the survey work and information from the Local Authorities.

3.2 In terms of **supply**, the assessment considers:

- Total supply of pitches on authorised sites;
- Turnover on existing authorised sites;
- Vacant pitches on authorised sites;

3.3 In terms of **need**, the assessment considers:

- The number of existing households currently living on sites which are intending to move in the next five years, either between pitches on the same site, to a site elsewhere or to 'bricks and mortar accommodation' [the term used to describe traditional housing];
- The number of existing households currently living in bricks and mortar accommodation who are intending to move onto a site within the study area or elsewhere within the next five years;
- The number of emerging households (newly forming) in the next five years which are currently living on a pitch or in bricks and mortar accommodation and will need their own pitch on the same site, or will need to move elsewhere in the study area, outside the study area or to bricks and mortar accommodation.

3.4 The assessment then reconciles total need and existing authorised supply by summarising:

- Total need for pitches; and
- Total supply of authorised pitches.

Summary of future permanent pitch requirements

3.5 The table below sets out the identified future pitch requirement for each local authority in the study area, split by five year time periods.

	Liverpool	Knowsley	Sefton	St. Helens	West Lancashire	Wirral	Merseyside and West Lancashire
2013/14 to 2017/18	0	0	4	6	14	6	30
2018/19 to 2022/23	-4	0	6	1	3	1	7
2023/24 to 2027/28	-4	0	4	-1	3	0	2
2028/29 to 2032/33	-3	0	1	2	2	1	3
Total need 2013/14 to 2032/33 (20 years)	-11	0	15	8	22	8	42

3.6 There is a range of requirements across the study area from an apparent over supply in Liverpool to a need for 22 pitches in West Lancashire. Sefton have the

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second highest need for permanent traveller pitches. The study recommends that each Local Authority meets its own needs and that Liverpool closely monitors its traveller population to see if the predicted demographic changes are borne out.

3.7 There are currently two traveller sites in Sefton both of which provide permanent accommodation:

- A Council run site [Red Rose Park] located at Broad Lane, Formby, which was recently extended by four pitches in 2014 [approved in 2013], and now provides 20 permanent pitches,
- A private site at Broad Lane which has two pitches.

3.8 The additional four pitches provided at Broad Lane in 2014 meet the requirement for permanent pitches in the period 2013-18. There is need therefore to identify land for a further 11 pitches in the Local Plan to meet the needs to 2030.

3.9 These figures show a decrease in the number of sites for Sefton from the previous traveller accommodation assessment study [from 2008]. This suggested a need for 16 additional permanent pitches in Sefton to 2016 [and a 3% annual increase after that].

Transit pitches

3.10 Transit sites are authorised and usually permanent but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay. In practice the length of stay on a transit pitch is generally limited to a maximum of 12 weeks (three months). They are often used by traveller families as they travel from a more permanent base to elsewhere for social or employment purposes. A lack of transit pitches often results in unauthorised encampments. There are currently no transit pitches available in the whole of the Merseyside and the West Lancashire area.

3.11 The two key elements used in determining a need for transit provision were:

- Unauthorised encampment data; and
- Contextual information and views of Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers.

3.12 Unauthorised encampment data for the two and a half year period [January 2011 to June 2013] was collated and analysed to give an indication as to the level of activity across the area. As unauthorised encampments are generally indicative of a lack of transit accommodation, this is a useful starting point.

3.13 Overall, analysis of unauthorised encampment data and contextual information indicates that new transit sites are needed across Merseyside and West Lancashire. It is recommended that 22 transit pitches be provided across the study area as a whole. This is broken down for each individual local authority as follows:

Authority	Five year pitch requirement (single van use)	Total maximum caravans that could be accommodated
Knowsley	3	6
Liverpool	4	8
Sefton	4	8
St Helens	3	6
West Lancashire	4	8
Wirral	4	8
Total	22	44

3.14 The identified need for transit pitches indicates a broad spread across the sub-region. For short periods or for family groups it is possible that a pitch could accommodate two caravans. Given the lack of transit sites, this requirement should be met in the first five year period of the assessment [i.e. 2013-18]. It is not expected that further transit pitches would be required beyond this period, although this should be monitored.

Travelling Showpeople

3.15 Travelling showpeople are a community of people who travel specifically in relation to their employment at fairs. They require a permanent base where they can store, maintain and repair their equipment and where they can station their caravans when they are not travelling for their business. The assessment did not identify a need for sites travelling showpeople in Sefton.

Other findings

3.16 The survey work undertaken with the travelling community looked at a range of issues that went beyond future accommodation requirements. This included questions on the quality of existing accommodation, social issues and barriers and other problems travellers experience. The full report contains detailed surveys results on the following issues:

- Ethnicity
- Tenure
- Facilities
- Repairs and improvements
- Space standards and overcrowding
- Location and safety
- Cost of accommodation and services
- Planned moves and mobility
- Travelling practices and experience

Conclusions

3.17 The study identifies a small but challenging traveller accommodation need for Sefton. The identification of sites for travellers is often controversial as travellers receive a bad press and there is a perception in the wider community that they do not make good neighbours. Some of these issues, e.g. unauthorised encampments, relate to the lack of suitable sites. Nevertheless the Council has a

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duty to identify suitable sites for travellers and this must be addressed through the Local Plan.

3.18 It is recommended that the Traveller Accommodation Assessment is updated regularly basis to ensure that the number of pitches and plots remain appropriate for the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population across the study area.

4. Next Stages

4.1 To identify sites that could potentially be allocated for traveller accommodation we have undertaken a number of tasks to do this:

- A 'call for sites' requesting local landowners to let us know of any suitable sites. This included placing an advert in the local press.
- Liaising with our traveller community to ask if they have sites that may be suitable
- Assessing whether there is suitable land in Council ownership
- Asking a range of Council officers if they have come across suitable sites in undertaking their work.

4.2 These tasks have identified a very small number of potential sites and it is hoped that further sites will be suggested. We are in the process of assessing these sites based on a number of criteria to determine how suitable they are for traveller accommodation. This is a similar process that is being undertaken for bricks and mortar homes but also looks at impact on existing non-traveller residents. It is anticipated that the findings of the process of identifying and assessing sites will be presented in a subsequent report and approval sought to include these sites in the Local Plan.

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	11 th September 2014
Subject:	Property Pool Plus- Policy Review	Wards Affected:	All Wards
Report of:	Director Built Environment		
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes	Is it included in the Forward Plan?	Yes
Exempt/Confidential	No		

Purpose/Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the opportunity to consider the draft revised Property Pool Plus allocations policy (Appendix A). In doing so, Members may wish to particularly note the following key areas of change:
 - Which applicants will be deemed non-qualifying and therefore unable to join the Housing Register (Page 9 of the revised policy)
 - How the policy has been revised to give additional priority to Armed Forces personnel deemed to be in urgent housing need (Page 20 of the revised policy)
 - How the policy has been relaxed to ensure that working applicants are given maximum opportunity to be awarded a Band D priority (Page 27 of the revised policy).

Recommendation(s)

That approval is given for implementation of the revised Property Pool Plus housing allocations policy, subject to all of the participating Local Authorities approving the revised policy.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		X	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		X	
3	Environmental Sustainability		X	
4	Health and Well-Being		X	
5	Children and Young People		X	

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6	Creating Safe Communities	X		
7	Creating Inclusive Communities	X		
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		X	

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The adoption of the revised Property Pool Plus allocations policy will ensure that social housing continues to be allocated in a fair and transparent way, in line with current legislation and guidance, and to those who are most in housing need.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs- there will be no additional revenue costs relating to the amendments being proposed in this policy review

(B) Capital Costs- there are no capital costs relating to this policy review

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial- None	
Legal- None	
Human Resources- None	
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>
The proposed revised policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment on a sub-regional basis and is listed as a Background Paper.	

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

There will be no impact on service delivery; Property Pool Plus will continue to be administered by One Vision Housing on behalf of the Council.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT (FD3126/14) notes that there are no financial implications arising from the amendments which are being recommended for inclusion in the policy review.

The Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD2418/14) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Consultation with service users, partners and interested parties is outlined in paragraph 1.2 below.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting.

Contact Officer: Neil Woodhouse Manager Housing Options Team

Tel: 0151 934 3627

Email: neil.woodhouse@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None

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1. Introduction/Background

1.1 Property Pool Plus was introduced across Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral in July 2012. The allocations scheme operates through a Choice Based Lettings system with one common allocations policy.

1.2 As part of establishing Property Pool Plus it was agreed that the policy would be reviewed and where necessary amended after the first year. This was particularly important and timely given that since Property Pool Plus was first introduced a number of aspects of the scheme needed to be updated to reflect changes in legislation and regulations. In particular these changes included the following:

- New powers and requirements under the Localism Act 2011 which allows councils to decide who can and cannot join the register.
- A new Government Code of Guidance on local authority housing allocations.
- New regulations regarding Armed Forces personnel which provide guidance that they should be given 'additional preference' on the Housing Register.
- The Welfare Reform Act 2012 which introduced a variety of revisions to the benefits system, in particular the under-occupation penalty (or the 'Bedroom Tax') which meant that working-age households deemed to be under-occupying properties in the social sector would lose part of their housing benefit.

2.0 Consultation

2.1 Consultation on the potential areas of change to the policy took place between January 2014 and April 2014. The proposed areas considered for change included:

- Applicants deemed to be Non Qualifying
- Applicants deemed to be in Reduced Priority – Band F
- Armed Forces personnel
- Homelessness
- Employment
- Bedroom Standard

The consultation process targeted a broad range of stakeholders and details of the consultation response is outlined in the table below –

Respondent	Overall Sub-Regional Responses
Member of the public	109 (23%)
Applicant on the Property Pool Plus Register	290 (61%)

Local Authority Councillor	12 (3%)
Representing a Registered Housing Provider	23 (5%)
Representing a support/ Plus Register advocacy organisation	18 (4%)
Other	26 (5%)
Total	478

The outcome of the consultation was that there was a majority in favour of each of the proposed changes to the policy, both in Sefton and across the sub region generally. Consequently all of the key proposals have been incorporated into the revised draft of the policy. Whilst not an exhaustive list, some of the key amendments are highlighted below.

2.2 Applicants deemed to be Non Qualifying

- Where an applicant has been housed under the scheme, or by a participating scheme landlord, in social housing during the past 12 months, and their housing circumstances have not changed.
- Eviction from a social housing tenancy.
- Abandonment of a social housing tenancy.
- Applicants guilty of unacceptable behaviour which makes them unsuitable to be a tenant.
- The length of time an applicant remains non-qualifying is 12 months, after which time the applicant must provide satisfactory evidence to prove that they have modified their behaviour.

2.3 Applicants deemed to be in Reduced Priority – Band F

- Applicants with housing related debt equal to or greater than 4 weeks gross rent but less than 8 weeks gross rent will be awarded reduced priority (Band F) thus reducing their priority for housing but not preventing them joining the register, where they will remain until the debt is reduced to less than 4 weeks.
- Applicants deemed to have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances in order to gain a priority band will be placed in reduced priority (Band F) for a period of 12 months.

2.4 Armed Forces Personnel

- Those applicants that meet the criteria for Housing Priority Band A and who are Armed Forces personnel (or bereaved spouses or partners leaving forces accommodation) will have their priority banding date backdated by 3 months.

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- Those Armed Forces personnel who apply up to 3 months prior to their discharge date, or up to 12 months after discharge, and who do not qualify for priority Band A, will be assessed as priority Band B.

2.5 Homelessness

- Where Councils choose to help homeless applicants in Band A by offering private rented accommodation, refusal of a suitable offer will result in loss of Band A status in the same way it would in the case of refusing a social housing tenancy.
- Applicants being assisted under homeless prevention initiatives (where a Council has a duty to help them) will be placed in Band B for a period of 3 months to improve their prospects of being housed before homelessness occurs.

2.6 Employment

- The length of employment criteria to gain Band D has been eased. Previously an applicant would have had to be in employment for at least 9 of the last 12 months. Any applicant or member of their household who is in employment for 16 hours per week or more will be eligible for Band D.
- The criteria to establish a local connection through employment has been relaxed to include those applicants who have a 12 month employment contract or who have continuously worked in the Local Authority area for the last 6 months.

2.7 Bedroom Standard

- An additional bedroom will be allowed for:
 - A child with disabilities who is entitled to the care component of Disability Living Allowance at the highest or middle rate and who cannot reasonably share a bedroom;
 - A foster child, where it is a requirement of the Local Authority that they have a separate bedroom;
 - A non-resident carer who is regularly required to stay overnight to attend to an applicant's personal care/health needs.
- 16 to 20 year olds of the same gender, sharing a room, as in the existing policy will not be classed as overcrowded. Such households will however be deemed eligible to bid for accommodation of a size to enable 16 to 20 year olds to have their own room.

A full list of the proposals which were put forward and supported through consultation can be seen by referring to the consultation questionnaire (Appendix B).

- 2.8 In addition to those proposals outlined above the participating Local Authorities and Registered Providers also took into consideration the recent Code of Guidance which suggested a minimum 2 year residency qualification to establish a local connection. There was a unanimous lack of support to

incorporate this guidance within the policy at this stage as Registered Providers particularly are looking to increase, not reduce, participation in the scheme due to low demand issues for larger properties affected by the effects of Welfare Reform.

3.0. Conclusion

- 3.1 Sefton is one of five local authorities which participate in the sub-regional PPP Scheme. All five of the partners need to agree to adopt the revised policy. Members are asked to approve the proposed, revised policy subject to all of the participating authorities agreement to the changes.

The proposed changes have been the subject of consultation, the results of which support the proposed changes.

Appendices

Appendix A	Draft Revised Property Pool Plus Policy
Appendix B	Consultation Questionnaire

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Appendix A- Draft revised Property Pool Plus Policy

PROPERTY POOL PLUS

Sub Regional

Choice Based Lettings

Allocations Scheme

FINAL VERSION

June 2014

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The following Councils are members of a Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme, known as Property Pool Plus, and have adopted this common allocations scheme (as required by the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011).

Halton Borough Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Liverpool City Council
Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
Wirral Council

The five Councils are known as the Scheme Councils.

- 1.1.2 The scheme applies to all properties available to the Scheme Councils for nomination purposes.
- 1.1.3 The Scheme Councils also endorse the use of this policy by Housing Associations for lettings for which the Scheme Councils do not have nomination rights.
- 1.1.4 The Housing Associations, known as the Scheme Landlords, who have agreed to participate as of this date are listed below.

Adactus Housing Group	Magenta Living
Beechwood and Ballantyne Community Housing Association	Muir Housing Group
Cobalt Housing	One Vision Housing
Contour Housing	Pierhead Housing Association
Crosby Housing Association	Pine Court Housing Association
Family Housing Association	Plus Dane Group
Guinness Northern Counties	Regenda Group
Habinteg Housing Association	Riverside/ECHG
Halton Housing Trust	Sanctuary Housing
Housing 21 (Liverpool area only)	Venture Housing Association
Jephson Housing Association	Villages Housing
Johnny Johnson Housing Association	Wirral Methodist Housing Association
Knowsley Housing Trust	Your Housing Group
Leasowe Community Homes	
Liverpool Mutual Homes	
Liverpool Housing Trust	

- 1.1.5 The Scheme Councils and Scheme Landlords are collectively known as the Scheme Partners who operate in the Scheme Area.

1.1.6 The Councils of Halton, Knowsley and Sefton have each agreed to contract out the function to administer the scheme to Scheme Landlords. In Wirral the scheme will be administered through the Council and in Liverpool the scheme will be administered through the City Council in partnership with the Scheme Landlords in their area. The organisation which administers the Scheme in a particular Scheme Council area is known as the Administering Scheme Partner.

1.1.7 The Administering Scheme Partners for each Council area are as follows:

Halton: Halton Housing Trust
Knowsley: Knowsley Housing Trust
Liverpool: Liverpool City Council and Scheme Landlords
Sefton: One Vision Housing
Wirral: Wirral Council

Should any of the Scheme Councils change their Scheme Partner advance notification will be provided to all parties affected.

1.2 Aims and principles of the Property Pool Plus Scheme

1.2.1 The Scheme seeks to ensure that social housing in the Scheme Area is allocated fairly and objectively to those most in need, having regard to any law, official guidance and good practice.

1.2.2 The aims of the Property Pool Plus Scheme are to:

- Contribute to the development of balanced communities and sustainable regeneration, including encouraging current and future social housing tenants into employment;
- Stimulate new markets and interest in social housing in the Scheme Area;
- Contribute to the strategic objectives outlined in the Scheme Councils' housing strategies and homelessness and tenancy strategies;
- Improve the quality of service to customers and ensure that applicants have ready access to information on their prospects of housing through the scheme;
- Increase customer choice and broaden housing options by facilitating cross boundary movement within the constraints of the availability of accommodation throughout the Scheme Area;
- Reduce under-occupation of social housing and therefore assist with re-housing of those in need;
- Deliver efficiencies and extend opportunities to meet people's housing needs and aspirations by working in partnership;
- Ensure that every application is dealt with fairly and consistently in accordance with equality of opportunity.

1.2.3 The principles of the Scheme are to:

- Operate a lettings policy based on housing need, which is transparent, open and fair reflecting local needs;
- Give priority to people who fall within the statutory 'Reasonable Preference' categories;

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- Prevent homelessness and give adequate priority to homeless people to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, whilst maintaining a balance between the needs of the homeless and other applicants ;
- Empower applicants by giving them opportunity to express choice and preferences about where they want to live, whilst having regard to the availability of and high demand for housing;
- Make best use of housing stock;
- Ensure that supported housing goes to those for whom this type of housing is most suitable and who are in the greatest need of the support;
- Make best use of public funds.

1.2.4 The scheme will be subject to periodic review. Where this results in a significant change it will be approved through each Scheme Council approval process.

1.3 Statement on Choice

1.3.1 The Scheme Partners are committed to enabling applicants to play an active role in choosing where they live, whilst continuing to house those people in the greatest need, making the best use of the available housing stock and complying with all relevant legislation.

1.3.2 It is important to realise that the demand for accommodation is higher for some types of property and for some areas than others. In making a decision about the options available, applicants need to consider their housing need priority against the availability of properties in any given area.

1.3.3 Applicants can determine whether they are likely to be successful when placing a bid as they will be informed of their position on the shortlist for that vacancy at the time of making the bid. This enables an applicant to make an informed choice when deciding which property to apply for and whether social housing is a realistic option in their circumstances.

1.4 The Legal Framework

1.4.1 The law requires that local authority allocation schemes must afford reasonable preference to certain categories of person over those with no reasonable preference. These reasonable preference categories include:

- People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002);
- People 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). These sections relate to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to disability);

- 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 to others).

1.4.2 However, there is no requirement to give equal weight to each of the reasonable preference groups, and Councils may identify additional preference groups providing they do not dominate the Scheme at the expense of those in the statutory reasonable preference groups. The prioritisation scheme set out at 5.1.1 reflects this approach.

1.4.3 Local Authorities are also required to give additional preference to:

- Serving or former members of the Armed Forces or Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service; and
- Bereaved spouses or civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving their Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.

1.4.4 This Scheme has been framed to address these requirements, and with due regard to the requirements of the 'Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England' June 2012.

1.4.5 The Localism Act 2011 provides Local Authorities with the power to determine what classes of persons are deemed as non-qualifying thereby giving discretion to exclude certain categories of households.

1.4.6 There will be occasions when social landlords will let a tenancy to a household who legally qualify to "succession" of a tenancy. Social landlords may also have their own Tenancy Management Policies which allow for a tenancy to be granted to other non-secure households who may be left in occupation of a property.

1.5 Equality and Diversity

1.5.1 The Scheme Partners are committed to promoting equality of opportunity within the housing allocation process and to eliminate unfair and unlawful discrimination in their policies, procedures and practices. All Scheme Partners have in place corporate policies and action plans aimed at eliminating discrimination and valuing diversity.

1.5.2 The Scheme will deliver a quality service without prejudice and discrimination to all its customers, by preventing and eliminating discrimination on the grounds of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation. The scheme will be accessible, responsive and sensitive to the diverse needs of all individuals.

1.5.3 The Scheme Partners will continue to improve the service to all their customers including addressing the needs of disadvantaged and under-represented groups. In order to achieve this, all customers will be asked to supply monitoring information about themselves and their household when they apply. This information will not be taken into account when assessing the application but will

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be used for monitoring of the Scheme Register, routine analysis of letting outcomes and regular consultative meetings with stakeholders to ensure that the operation of the Scheme meets the needs of all customers.

1.6 Information Sharing, Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 1.6.1 The Scheme Partners will share information in accordance with their existing protocols which will be further developed across the sub region to ensure consistency in sharing information with other statutory and voluntary organisations.
- 1.6.2 The information which an applicant provides relating to their housing application will be treated as confidential in accordance with guidelines on handling personal data. These guidelines relate to the Data Protection Act 1998 that covers both electronic and manual records and governs what can be done with the data, including collecting, storing, using and disposing of it.
- 1.6.3 Requests for personal information may be subject to charges please refer to your Local Authority policy.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Allocations and nominations

- 2.1.1 This Scheme constitutes the nominations agreement between the Scheme Councils and the Scheme Landlords. The Scheme Landlords will be required to allocate at least 50% of their lettings through the Scheme. However, the Scheme Landlords will be encouraged to exceed this proportion in agreement with their Scheme Council.
- 2.1.2 All properties owned by Scheme Landlords that become vacant will be recorded on the Property Pool Plus Scheme. Those properties that the Scheme Landlord wishes to allocate as Direct Lets (2.3 below) will not be advertised through the Scheme. However, information concerning these properties will be made available through the Property Pool Plus customer feedback mechanism.
- 2.1.3 The Scheme represents the Allocations Policy of each individual participating Council. Lettings made via the scheme will be treated as Nominations made by each Council to social landlord properties in its area. When lettings are made by scheme landlords either outside of this policy or by applying different or extra lettings criteria, they will not be considered to be Nominations. If social landlords make lettings outside of the PPP scheme, they should have their own, published policy.

2.2 Local Letting Plans

- 2.2.1 There may be occasions when Scheme Landlords will want to adopt Local Letting Plans to address issues in particular neighbourhoods such as but not exclusively, severe anti-social behaviour. This would involve the use of revised allocations criteria for the affected area, which would normally be temporary, but which should at least be reviewed on an annual basis. Such plans will be developed and agreed with the relevant Scheme Council to ensure they do not unduly disadvantage those in reasonable preference groups. Local Lettings Plans will be published by the Scheme Partners and properties affected by such plans will be clearly identified when they are advertised.

2.3 Housing Association Direct Lets

- 2.3.1 In certain circumstances and where it is supported by the Scheme Landlord's policies and procedures properties may be allocated directly to applicants outside the Choice Based Letting Scheme. Illustrative examples of such Direct Lets are as follows:
- Where an allocation is required to ensure protection of the public for example following a decision made by a Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements meeting (see paragraph 3.2.2.2);
 - Where a customer has been referred as part of the Witness Protection Scheme;
 - Where a sensitive let is required for a particular property because of issues such as drug dealing, violence, public protection or anti-social behaviour;

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- Where a Scheme Landlord tenant's home is being repaired and they need to be moved from the property on a temporary or permanent basis;
- Where an applicant from outside the Scheme Area needs to move due to extenuating circumstances e.g. where life is at risk. In this instance, the applicant may be considered for a direct let even when there is no local connection with the area;
- Where accommodation is required following emergencies, such as fire, flood, serious harassment or other major incidents;
- Where a targeted offer is made to an applicant who is statutory homeless;
- Where a targeted offer is made to a young person leaving the Care of the local authority;
- Where a targeted offer is made to an applicant living in a Scheme Council clearance area;
- Where a targeted offer is made to an applicant for an adapted property following an assessment by Social Services and Occupational Therapy;
- Any other reason as supported by the Scheme Landlord's policies and procedures.

2.4 Sheltered Accommodation

2.4.1 Sheltered housing is designed for older applicants, generally those over the age of 55 years, as a way of providing independent living with added security and support. Scheme Landlords may have differing eligibility criteria for this type of accommodation and this will be made clear in the labelling of properties when advertised.

2.5 Extra Care Housing

2.5.1 Extra Care Housing offers accommodation for older applicants who may need additional care and support services and there are specific assessment criteria to ensure an appropriate balance of residents with high/medium/low care needs.

2.5.2 Places allocated in extra-care housing require an assessment to be carried out by adult care services to determine eligibility and the level of care for this type of accommodation by considering the support each person may need. Priority for extra-care housing is awarded initially on the basis of the care and support need, with housing need as a secondary factor.

2.5.3 Extra Care housing vacancies may be advertised as part of the Property Pool Plus scheme. Scheme Landlords will directly match vacant properties to applicants where required following a detailed assessment of their need for this type of accommodation. Applicants are advised to contact their Administering Scheme Partner for more information.

2.5.4 Individual scheme council's may adopt a further allocations policy for extra care housing. Where this is the case the Extra Care Allocation Policy evaluation, allocation and appeals processes which differ from the main Allocation Scheme will have precedence.

2.6 Adapted Properties

- 2.6.1 Some properties are adapted, for example there may be a stair lift or level access shower. To meet the needs of disabled applicants, preference for adapted vacancies will be given to those applicants whose needs best match the particular adaptations. In such circumstances bypassing may take place, for the reasons set out in 6.4.2.
- 2.6.2 Adapted accommodation will be included in the Property Pool Plus scheme with the exception of the Liverpool City Council area where there are separate arrangements using the Access Liverpool Service.

2.7 Target Setting and Quotas

- 2.7.1 It is important that priority for accommodation goes to those in greatest housing need. However, this does not mean that, in operating a choice based lettings scheme, every property which is advertised will be open to bids from households in all Bands. An allocation scheme may include other objectives, such as:
- Ensuring a balance between meeting the housing needs of existing tenants and new applicants;
 - Promoting more sustainable and balanced communities;
 - The need to meet a Scheme Council's legal responsibilities to homeless and vulnerable applicants, people living in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions and people with an urgent need to move for reasons such as harassment, domestic violence etc;
 - The need to meet strategic responsibilities, for example in relation to applicants being displaced through the clearance scheme;
 - Building economically active communities.
- 2.7.2 To achieve these objectives, Scheme Councils and Scheme landlords may choose to target a percentages of lettings to applicants in particular Bands or Sub Bands. Bands and Sub Bands are described in Section 5.1.1.
- 2.7.3 Where such percentage targets are set, they will be published annually on the Property Pool Plus website and at Scheme Partners' offices so that applicants may see what proportion of properties will be allocated to different Bands, helping them to identify how long they might expect to wait before making a successful bid.

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CHAPTER 3

3.1 Registration on the Property Pool Plus Scheme

- 3.1.1 To join the Scheme an applicant must be both 'eligible' and a 'qualifying person'. Section 3.2 below, together with Appendix 1, describes those who are not eligible. Non-qualifying persons are described in section 3.2.
- 3.1.2 Every application for housing received will be considered according to the facts unique to that application, as every applicant's individual circumstances will vary. Details of how to apply follow in Chapter 4.

3.2 Non-Qualifying Applications

3.2.1 Submission of false information

- 3.2.1.1 Under section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 it is an offence, punishable by a fine of up to £5,000, to:
- Deliberately provide false information;
 - Deliberately withhold information which should have been given.

3.2.1.2 Applicants who deliberately provide false information, or who withhold information which should be given, in an effort to gain advantage will be excluded from the Scheme for 12 months from the date the deception is discovered. Legal action may be pursued to repossess any property secured as a result of deception.

3.2.2 Eligibility and qualification

3.2.2.1 Under section 160ZA of the Housing Act 1996 the Secretary of State has determined that certain persons from abroad, who may or may not be subject to immigration controls, are ineligible for an allocation of accommodation. Full details of the categories of person affected by these provisions are set out in Appendix 1.

3.2.2.2 Subject to being 'eligible', an applicant must also meet additional qualifying criteria which have been decided locally. The following classes of person are 'non-qualifying' and will not be allowed to join the Scheme, or will be removed from the Scheme, as applicable:

- Applicants under 16 years of age.
- Existing tenants who have been housed under the Scheme or by a participating Scheme Landlord within the past 12 months, where their circumstances have not materially changed and the property is still suitable.
- Applicants where they, or a member of their household, have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour deemed serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant, where at the time the application is considered, they are still deemed unsuitable to be a tenant by virtue of that behaviour.

- Offenders/ex-offenders who are subject to level 2 and level 3 Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Rehousing of this group will be made by direct matching outside the Scheme, but only by request of the MAPPA lead Agency.

3.2.2.3 Where a Scheme Council has a legal duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 or the Homelessness Act 2002 to secure accommodation for someone who is homeless, this duty will take precedence over these 'qualification' provisions.

3.2.2.4 The next section considers in more detail the type of behaviour that may be considered unacceptable.

3.2.3 Unacceptable behaviour

3.2.3.1 The aim of this qualification criterion is to project a clear message to applicants (including members of their household or any other person who would reasonably be expected to live and be re-housed with them) that partners of the Scheme are committed to achieving stable, balanced and sustainable neighbourhoods, and to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting good tenancy conduct.

3.2.3.2 Whilst not exhaustive, the following list illustrates the types of serious unacceptable behaviour which may make an applicant unsuitable to be a tenant hence will lead to exclusion from the Scheme.

- Rent arrears and/or a housing related debt equivalent to or greater than 8 weeks gross rent.
- Eviction from a social housing tenancy.
- Abandonment of a social housing tenancy.
- Applicant or a member of their household has displayed conduct likely to cause significant nuisance or annoyance within the locality (anti-social behaviour).
- Applicants or anyone included on the application form who has been convicted of a serious assault on an individual.
- Applicants or anyone included on the application form who have been convicted of the use or possession of offensive weapons (e.g. gun crime/knife crime)
- Applicants or a member of their household who have been convicted for using the premises or allowing the use of the premises for immoral or illegal purposes e.g. the manufacture or sale or supply of drugs.
- Abusive or threatening behaviour toward members of staff.
- Failure to maintain existing social housing tenancy in a reasonable condition.

3.2.3.3 When making the decision to disqualify an application the following will be taken into consideration:

- When the unacceptable behaviour took place.
- The length of time that has elapsed.
- What subsequent steps the applicant has taken to mitigate the unacceptable behaviour.

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- Whether there has been any change in circumstances including health, dependents and the individual circumstances of the applicant.

3.2.3.4 Each application will be considered on its individual merit and any extenuating circumstances will be taken into account. Administering Scheme Partners will give necessary credence to balancing the individual's housing needs with the unacceptable behaviour.

3.2.3.5 Where in exceptional circumstances the individual needs of an applicant or their household are deemed to outweigh the unacceptable behaviour being considered, then the application may be allowed. However the Administering Scheme Partner may still rely on setting relevant conditions to ensure the unacceptable behaviour is addressed. The application will be awarded the appropriate priority according to the housing need.

3.2.3.6 In the case of criminal acts the length of time an application is held to be non-qualifying due to unacceptable behaviour will initially be for a 12 month period. The period will start from the date of the offence or the date of conviction or the date of release from prison whichever is the later. A fresh application may be submitted after 12 months provided the applicant can provide satisfactory evidence to demonstrate that they have modified their behaviour. In all other cases the non-qualifying period will start from the date the application was submitted.

3.2.4 Housing related debt

3.2.4.1 Housing related debts owed to a landlord equivalent to 8 weeks gross rent or greater will lead to a new or already registered application being disqualified from the Scheme. The application will be disqualified until such time as the applicant can provide evidence of having adhered to a repayment plan for a minimum of 52 weeks or having reduced the debt to below the equivalent of 8 weeks gross rent. Account will be taken of arrears arising due to delays in payment of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

3.2.4.2 This qualification may be waived if the rent arrears have accrued solely as a consequence of the Housing Benefit change introduced in April 2013 (the 'under occupation reduction') and the applicant actively bids for smaller properties and/or is seeking alternative cheaper accommodation to reduce expenditure. However, arrangements must still be made to reduce and clear these arrears.

3.2.5 Notification of ineligibility or non-qualification

3.2.5.1 The assessment of an application as ineligible or non-qualifying will normally occur at initial registration. However, this may be applied at any stage during the application and lettings process if tenancy breaches occur, or any of the non-qualifying grounds are later identified.

3.2.5.2 All applicants will be notified in writing of a decision to assess their application as ineligible or non-qualifying. This notification will include:

- Reasons for the decision; and

- The length of time for which the application will be assessed as non-qualifying; and
- Steps they must take to address the grounds that deem them as non-qualifying; and
- Information about the right to request a review of the decision.

3.2.5.3 If on review the applicant successfully appeals the ineligible or non-qualification decision, then their application will be registered from the original date of registration and placed in the appropriate Band. The Band effective date is set out in section 5.3

3.2.6 Mitigation

3.2.6.1 If an applicant is deemed non-qualifying for any of the reasons set out in section 3.2.3, then they will be required to provide evidence that they have taken the necessary steps to modify their behaviour, so that offering them a tenancy will not create problems for the community in which they live. The applicant will be required to reach agreement with the Administering Scheme Partner as to what is acceptable to enable them to re-apply.

3.2.6.2 In all instances, the applicant will be required to demonstrate good behaviour and the ability to satisfactorily maintain a tenancy. This may include:

- Signed authority under the Data Protection Act to allow supporting information to be gathered.
- Evidence of co-operation with professional support agencies, (where applicable);
- Evidence of treatment for any substance dependency issues (where applicable);
- Co-operation in any multi-agency risk assessment process (where applicable);
- Applicant is able to demonstrate they have been able to satisfactorily maintain a tenancy (where applicable).
- No further tenancy breaches or further relevant criminal or anti-social behaviour breaches.

3.2.6.3 The applications of those who are unable to demonstrate changed behaviour will remain disqualified until they can satisfactorily meet this requirement.

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3.2.7 Re-application

3.2.7.1 Subsequent successful applications made by persons who were previously deemed to be ineligible or non-qualifying will be treated as new applications, with no accrued waiting time from any previous application, unless the application is reinstated as a result of a request for a review (Chapter 8).

3.3 **Reduced Priority Status**

3.3.1 Housing related debt

3.3.1.1 Applicants with a housing related debt equivalent to 4 weeks gross rent but less than 8 weeks gross rent will be awarded Reduced Priority status (Band F), thus reducing their priority for housing. Each application will be considered on its individual merit and any extenuating circumstances will be taken into account.

3.3.1.2 This qualification may be waived if the rent arrears have accrued solely as a consequence of the Housing Benefit change introduced in April 2013 (the 'under occupation reduction') and the applicant actively bids for smaller properties and/or is seeking alternative cheaper accommodation to reduce expenditure. However, arrangements must still be made to reduce and clear these arrears.

3.3.1.3 Applicants with Reduced Priority status will remain in Band F until such time as the debt is reduced to below the equivalent of 4 weeks gross rent.

3.3.2 Deliberate worsening of housing circumstances

3.3.2.1 Applicants who have been deemed to have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances in order to gain a priority band will be placed in Reduced Priority status Band F for a period of 12 months from date of decision.

3.4 **Additional Criteria**

3.4.1 16/17 year olds

3.4.1.1 Applicants aged 16 or 17 years may join the Scheme but will not normally be offered a tenancy before they reach 18 years of age. If a pressing need to house such individuals is established by either the Housing Options Service or Children and Young People's Service, the Scheme Landlord may require a rent guarantor and a support plan.

3.4.2 Offenders and ex-offenders

3.4.2.1 The existence of criminal convictions will not prevent an applicant joining the Scheme unless the offence is deemed to be unacceptable behaviour sufficiently serious enough for them to be considered unsuitable to be a tenant or the individual is subject to Level 2 or Level 3 MAPPA (see 3.2.2.2 and 3.2.3.6 above).

3.4.2.2 Applicants who are in custody will be unable to bid for vacancies until two weeks prior to their release date. Ex-offenders will be offered advice and assistance by the relevant Council's Housing Options Service when released from custody or whilst in custody if it is sought.

3.4.3 Income Levels and Home Owners

3.4.3.1 The Government believes that authorities should avoid allocating social housing to people who already own their own homes unless there are extenuating circumstances. The Scheme Councils do not intend to restrict access to the Scheme on the basis of financial means. However some Scheme Landlords, depending on their status (e.g. charitable) may take the financial circumstances of applicants into account and bypass a bid (see section 6.4) if they consider that the applicant has the financial means to secure their own accommodation.

3.4.3.2 In deciding whether someone has sufficient resources to meet their own housing needs, Scheme Landlords may look at income, equity, savings and investments, and the price of buying or privately renting a suitable home in the locality, according to their published policies.

3.4.3.3 Applicants who own a property will have the equity of their property considered as one of the resources available to them, unless there is good reason why it should not. Landlords may make use of their powers to offer a fixed term tenancy which can be terminated if housed applicants are not actively marketing their property for sale. Landlords should have published tenancy policies.

3.4.3.4 Applicants who own a property will be required to provide evidence that their current home is for sale and is not permitted for property owners to sub-let their home and de allocated a tenancy by a Scheme landlord for any property allocated via the Scheme.

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CHAPTER 4

4.1 How to Apply

4.1.1 There are several ways to apply to join Property Pool Plus:

- On line by visiting the Property Pool Plus website;
- By submitting an application form which can be requested by telephone;
- In person by visiting a Scheme Partner office or Scheme Council One Stop Shop.

The full list of access points and phone numbers is available on the Property Pool Plus website.

4.1.2 The Scheme Partner with whom the applicant is registered is known as the Administering Scheme Partner for that application. The Administering Scheme Partner will be the point of contact responsible for registering, amending, renewing and assessing that application, and dealing with any requests for review of a decision.

4.1.3 Applicants will be asked to provide current information to confirm the circumstances of all household members before the application can be checked and assessed. See Appendix 2 for further information on types of evidence required.

4.1.4 Applicants may be asked to provide references at initial registration by some Administering Scheme Partners. These may be from a current or previous landlord or someone who knows the applicant in an official capacity such as a local community representative, advice worker, health visitor, social worker or probation officer. It is appreciated that some applicants have difficulty in providing a reference and these will be considered on an individual basis. In addition Scheme Landlords will normally request updated references if an applicant is being considered for an offer (see section 6.3.3)

4.1.5 The information that an applicant has provided may be verified before an applicant can apply for properties. Following verification, some applicants may be classed as ineligible or non-qualifying as explained in Chapter 3.

4.2 Assistance for Vulnerable Applicants

4.2.1 Applicants indicating the need for support to take part in the Property Pool Plus Scheme will be offered help and assistance by the Administering Scheme Partners. This need may be due to a physical disability, learning disability, illness, language difficulty or for any other reason that may make it harder for someone to participate in the Scheme.

4.2.2 The support may include

- Access to automated bidding;
- Proxy bidding on behalf of applicants who are unable to access the scheme;

- Mailing copies of the advert to those people who are housebound and have no internet access;
- Adverts and other documents in large print and other languages and formats.

4.3 Assessment of an application

- 4.3.1 Applications will be assessed to ensure that people with the greatest housing need are given the greatest opportunity to move to more suitable accommodation. The assessment will be undertaken by authorised officers of the Administering Scheme Partner.
- 4.3.2 The assessment will be based on the household's current circumstances and the type of accommodation they currently live in. Assessments of need will be carried out initially at registration but also later if there is a change in circumstances. Applicants may be required to provide supporting evidence from appropriate agencies such as Health or Social Services, Police or Probation.
- 4.3.3 For some assessments, the views of Scheme Partners assessment panels will be taken into consideration. Such panels may contain representatives from relevant organisations including other Housing Associations, support agencies, Social Services and Probation who are in a position to provide a broader understanding of the circumstances relating to a particular applicant.
- 4.3.4 The assessment will take into account the applicant's recent housing history and, if it is considered that they have moved in order to deliberately worsen their housing situation, then they may be placed in Band F Reduced Priority Status). Examples could include, but are not limited to
- A family giving up an affordable and suitable private rented tenancy which they are able to maintain, to move in with other relatives, creating a situation of overcrowding and sharing of bathroom/ kitchen or a split household;
 - An applicant requesting or colluding with a landlord or family member to issue them with a Notice to Quit.
- 4.3.5 Applicants will be placed in a Band according to their housing need (see Chapter 5). Applicants who have more than one housing need, for example health need and overcrowding, will be placed in the Band which affords greatest priority.

4.4 Change in circumstances

- 4.4.1 If an applicant's circumstances change it is their responsibility to inform the Administering Scheme Partner promptly in order that their application can be reassessed. Examples of changes of circumstances could include:
- Change of address or name;
 - Increase in household size due to the birth of a child or addition of household member;
 - Decrease of household size due to bereavement or person leaving the household;

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- Relationship breakdown;
- The serious deterioration of, or improvement in, a health condition
- Threat of homelessness;
- Rent arrears in their private rented or social rented tenancy;
- A change in employment status;
- A change in local connection with an area.

4.4.2 Applicants' date of registration will not be affected if they change address providing they have not been re-housed to a social housing tenancy. However, their housing need priority may be affected (see Chapter 5).

4.4.3 It is also important that the applicant advises the Administering Scheme Partner of any changes to their contact details as this may affect the ability of the Scheme Landlord to contact them.

4.5 Renewal of applications

4.5.1 To ensure that accommodation is allocated fairly, and to take account of any change in circumstances affecting an applicant's eligibility, qualification, or current or future housing need, applicants are required to renew their application every 12 months.

4.5.2 The renewal procedure will be the responsibility of the applicant's Administering Scheme Partner who will issue an invitation to renew an application either by letter or email. This will take place annually on the anniversary of the registration date. Applicants will be required to respond within 4 weeks, after which their application will be cancelled.

4.5.3 However, if an applicant contacts their Administering Scheme Partner within 6 months of the cancellation their application will be reinstated and they will retain their original registration date. After the 6 month period, applications will remain permanently cancelled and a new application will need to be submitted.

4.6 Cancelled Applications

4.6.1 Applications will be cancelled in the following circumstances:-

- The applicant has been re-housed to social housing;
- The applicant has successfully moved under a mutual exchange scheme;
- A request to cancel an application has been received from an applicant (or their representative);
- There is no reply to renewal letters;
- Letters to the applicant are returned by the Post Office;
- Notification has been received that the applicant is deceased.

4.6.2 Applications which are cancelled will not accrue any waiting time on the register except for applications which are cancelled and then reinstated as part of the renewal process as described in Section 4.5.

4.7 Councillors, Board Members, employees and close relatives

- 4.7.1 Applicants who are Councillors, Board Members, or an employee (including their close relatives e.g. partner / spouse, parent, brother, sister or child) of the Scheme Partners may register on the Property Pool Plus Scheme but this must be declared at the point of registration. Failure to do so may be considered as withholding relevant information and may affect any future tenancy.

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CHAPTER 5

5.1 Assessment of housing need

5.1.1 Once an application has been assessed it will be categorised in one of the following Bands according to the relevant housing need that exists;

BAND	REASON FOR HOUSING NEED
Band A Urgent Priority	Health/Welfare (Urgent) Statutory Homeless (Unintentionally with priority need) Regeneration Overcrowded (2 or more bedrooms)
Band B High Priority	Health / Welfare (High) Overcrowded (1 bedroom) Disrepair Under occupation
Band C Medium Priority	Health/Welfare (Medium) Homeless (no priority need) Homeless (intentional with priority need) Living with family and friends
Band D Low Priority	No assessed need and in employment
Band E No Priority	No assessed need and not in employment
Band F Reduced Priority	Reduced priority status due to unacceptable behaviour; or Rent arrears between 4 & 8 weeks gross rent

5.1.2 The assessment of housing need will be made by appropriate designated officers from the Administering Scheme Partner.

5.2 Prioritising applications within bands

5.2.1 Applicants in Band A are prioritised in order of the reasons for housing need as listed in the table above. However some properties may be targeted for specific housing needs when a property is advertised (see Section 2.7)

5.2.2 There are some important differences in the way applications in Bands B and C are prioritised for accommodation in different Scheme Council areas.

5.2.3 For Halton, Knowsley, Sefton and Wirral applications in Bands B and C are prioritised within each Band by date of entry into the Band and there is no distinction between the different housing need reasons.

- 5.2.4 For Liverpool, applicants in **Bands A**, B and C are prioritised in the order set out in the table above and by date of entry within each Band. For example, applicants in Band B Health and Welfare (High) will receive priority over those in Band B Overcrowded (1 Bed) even though an applicant in Overcrowded (1 Bed) may have an earlier date of entry into the Band. However preference may be given to a particular reason for housing need when a property is advertised to meet local priorities.
- 5.2.5 For all Scheme Council areas applicants in Bands D to F are prioritised within each Band by date of entry into the Band.
- 5.2.6 When applicants are prioritised for a property, if there is more than one applicant with the same date of entry into the Band, the applicants will be further prioritised in order of date of registration.

5.3 Date of entry into Band

- 5.3.1 The initial date of entry into a Band following assessment is shown in the table below;

Initial Band	Date of entry
A	Date the reason for housing need has been fully assessed and confirmed
B	Date the reason for housing need has been fully assessed and confirmed. For applicants in hostel, approved probation hostel or supported accommodation it will be the date at which they first moved into the accommodation or date of registration whichever is the later
C	Date the reason for housing need has been fully assessed and confirmed
D	Date the employment status has been confirmed
E	Registration date
F	Date the Reduced Priority status has been fully assessed and confirmed

5.3.2 Armed Forces and Reserve Forces personnel

- 5.3.2.1 Applicants who are Armed Forces and Reserve Forces personnel or members of their household and fall within one or more of the criteria below **and** meet any of the above criteria for band A will be given additional preference and by having their effective date enhanced by 3 months

The applicant

- Is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to their service;
- Formerly served in the regular forces;

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- Has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service;
- Is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to their service.

5.3.2.2 If an applicant is subsequently reassessed and is placed in a higher Band, the date of entry into the Band is shown below;

Higher Band	Date of entry
A	Date the reason for higher housing need has been fully assessed and confirmed
B	Date the reason for higher housing need has been fully assessed and confirmed. For applicants in hostel, approved probation hostel or supported accommodation it will be the date at which they first moved into the accommodation or date of registration whichever is the later
C	Date the reason for higher housing need has been fully assessed and confirmed
D	Date the employment status has been confirmed
E	Registration date

5.3.2.3 However if an applicant's priority is reduced to Band F and they subsequently address the reason for their reduced priority status they would go back to their previously assessed Band with the original Band assessment date, not the date they left Band F.

5.3.2.4 If an applicant is subsequently reassessed and placed in a lower Band, the date of entry is as follows;

Lower Band	Date of entry
B	Date the reason for higher housing need was fully assessed and confirmed
C	Date the reason for higher housing need was fully assessed and confirmed
D	Date the reason for higher housing need was fully assessed and confirmed
E	Registration date
F	Date the Reduced Priority status has been fully assessed and confirmed

5.3.2.5 If an applicant loses a priority due to a change in circumstances, but is later reassessed for a further higher priority, the date of entry into the Band is the date that the reason for the most recent priority is fully assessed and confirmed.

5.4 Band A – Urgent Priority

5.4.1 Health and Welfare (Urgent)

5.4.1.1 Responsibility for carrying out assessments, banding and inclusion into this Sub Band will be the Scheme Council or an appropriate Senior Officer from the Administering Scheme Partner and monitored by the Scheme Council.

These will include;

- Applicants with severe long term health conditions causing substantial disabilities who are unable to enter or leave their home and are unable to access all the essential facilities (bathing/toileting and separate room for sleeping) in their current accommodation;
- Applicants with an exceptional welfare need, including severe incidents of violence where other temporary resolutions are not possible and where continued occupation of their current dwelling could place lives at risk;
- Applicants ready to be discharged from hospital or residential care where they are unable to access any essential facilities within their home;
- Applicants temporarily or permanently displaced from their accommodation through the intervention of Private Sector Housing/Environmental Health teams of the Scheme Councils using the Housing Act 2004 and/or 1985 to deal with Category 1 and/or 2 Hazards in the premises or Public Health legislation to deal with conditions which are prejudicial to health;
- Applicants temporarily or permanently displaced from their living accommodation through the intervention of Fire and Rescue Services using Fire Safety Legislation to deal with conditions which pose an imminent risk to occupiers' safety;
- Households containing serving or former members of the Armed Forces or Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service;
- Bereaved spouses or civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving their Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.

5.4.1.3 Applicants need to move urgently and therefore they will be expected to be actively bidding for suitable vacancies. Help and assistance in the bidding process will be available including the placing of bids on their behalf if required. Applications will be reviewed regularly to ensure that applicants are actively bidding for suitable vacancies and are being realistic in their choice.

5.4.1.4 Applicants who are not actively bidding for suitable accommodation will be given one reasonable offer of accommodation, refusal of which will prompt a reassessment of the application. This may result in the applicant remaining in the same Band but with a revised date of entry into the Band which will be the date of refusal of the offer. Responsibility for this will be the Scheme Council or a Senior Manager within the Administering Scheme Partner. When considering the

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"reasonableness" of an offer, it should be recognised it may not be possible to provide an offer in the applicant's specific area of choice, but every effort will be made to meet this request.

5.4.2 Statutory Homeless (unintentionally)

5.4.2.1 This will include applicants who are accepted by the Homeless Service as being owed a full housing duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).

5.4.2.2 Applicants need to secure housing urgently and therefore they will be expected to be actively bidding for vacancies. This would mean that they will be expected to check the advert each week and apply each week for vacancies in their own Scheme Council area which are suitable for their household in terms of size and type, but not necessarily in the area they would prefer. Help and assistance in the bidding process will be available including the placing of bids on their behalf if required. Applications will be reviewed regularly to ensure that applicants are actively bidding for suitable vacancies and are being realistic in their choice.

5.4.2.3 Some of the scheme Councils may use the power vested in them by the Localism Act 2011 to discharge their duty to homeless applicants through the offer of a suitable private sector tenancy in accordance with their published policies.

5.4.2.4 Applicants who are not actively bidding for suitable accommodation and are not offered a private sector tenancy will be given one reasonable offer of social sector accommodation.

5.4.2.5 The offer of a suitable private or social sector tenancy will end the Council's homeless duty to the household and the Band A status will be removed.

5.4.2.6 Unreasonable refusal of a private or social sector tenancy will prompt a reassessment of the application. The applicant will be placed in the appropriate Band; this may result in the applicant being placed in a lower band. When considering the "reasonableness" of a refusal, it should be recognised that it may not be possible to provide an offer in the applicant's specific area of choice, but every effort will be made to meet this request.

5.4.3 Regeneration

5.4.3.1 This will include residents being displaced as a result of their home being included in a Regeneration Area for clearance or redevelopment by the Scheme Council or by a Scheme Landlord in partnership with the Scheme Council. Only those schemes approved by the Scheme Council will be included in this Sub-Band.

5.4.3.2 This housing need is given urgent priority to ensure Scheme Council regeneration programmes can proceed. Applicants are prioritised in accordance with the identified priority order for the Scheme Council Clearance areas.

5.4.3.3 Because of the need to re-house residents in a programmed manner, some may receive targeted offers outside the arrangements for the scheme. For example, but not exclusively, when;

- The applicant's land/property is urgently needed for redevelopment, or the remaining residents are at risk, or existing funding is at risk; or
- It can be demonstrated the needs of the resident are more urgent than those other applicants who are currently placed in this Sub Band.

This reason for housing need does not include those applicants who are required to move temporarily as a result of an improvement scheme and will later return to their original home or scheme.

5.4.4 Overcrowded by two or more bedrooms

5.4.4.1 This will include applicants who, by the application of the bedroom standard outlined in Section 5.12, are overcrowded in their current property and require two or more additional bedrooms.

5.5 **Band B – High Priority**

5.5.1 Health / Welfare (High)

5.5.1.1 This will include but is not limited to:

- Victims of harassment, domestic abuse, victims of hate crime who need to move a significant distance to remove the risk;
- People with a severe long term health condition that causes a permanent and substantial disability who are unable to enter or leave their home or are unable to access one of the essential facilities(bathing/toileting and separate room for sleeping) within their home ;
- Applicants living in an area/community that has a serious detrimental effect on their mental health issues;
- Young people leaving the Care of the Local Authority;
- Applicants from hostel, approved probation hostel and supported accommodation where funding is provided by the Supporting People Programme or adult social services and where the residents are expected to move on within two years or where the support is no longer required.
- Applicants will only be included if they have been assessed as ready to move on from such schemes and where their continued support needs have been assessed and, if required, are in place. The assessment procedure may vary in different Scheme Council areas and may include the use of an assessment panel;
- Serving or former members of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces who do not qualify for Band A, have no medical need and are due be discharged within 3 months or who have served in the armed forces or reserve forces and been discharged within the past 12 months;
- Formal referrals from Social Services under the Children Act where it is confirmed the applicants have an urgent need to move. This includes Local Authority Foster Carers;

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- applicants who are tenants of adapted properties owned by the Scheme Landlords where the adaptations are no longer required and where the property is designated by the Scheme Council as being in demand by other priority cases;
- Applicants who have undergone an assessment by the Housing Options Team and where confirmation by this service is received that the applicant requires early intervention in the allocations process to prevent homelessness from occurring in circumstances where, in the Council's opinion, they would be likely to be owed the full homelessness duty.

5.5.1.2 The date of entry into the Band will be the date the applicant's priority is assessed and confirmed. For Hostel dwellers it is the date they moved into the hostel. This is to enable a swift move-on from the accommodation so releasing a bed space which can be used by another person.

5.5.2 Overcrowded by one bedroom

5.5.2.1 This will include applicants who, by the application of the bedroom standard outlined in paragraph 5.12, are overcrowded in their current property and require one additional bedroom.

5.5.3 Disrepair

5.5.3.1 This will include applicants whose accommodation has been inspected by Private Sector Housing/Environmental Health Teams of the Scheme Councils under the Housing Act 2004 to deal with Category 1 and/or 2 Hazards in the premises or Public Health legislation to deal with conditions which are prejudicial to health and where: -

- Enforcement action is considered appropriate to remove the hazards/threats to health; and
- The time scales for undertaking the improvement works or the nature of the works are such that it is reasonable for the applicant to seek alternative accommodation.

5.5.4 Under-occupation

5.5.4.1 Applicants who are tenants of Scheme Landlords in the Scheme Area who are under occupying their present home. The priority is given for a move to suitable accommodation for example single applicants or couples under-occupying a 3 bedroom property would normally be expected to move to a property they would fully occupy.

5.6 Band C – Medium priority

5.6.1 Health/Welfare (Medium)

5.6.1.1 This will include:

- Applicants whose long term health condition is made worse by their living conditions;
- People whose relationship has permanently broken down and who have to leave a shared home;
- People who need to move to a particular locality to give or receive care or support;
- Applicants from hostel or supported accommodation where funding is not provided by Supporting People Programme or adult social services.

5.6.2 Homeless with no Priority Need

5.6.2.1 This will include applicants who are accepted by the Homeless Service as being eligible for assistance, homeless, not in priority need in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 Part VII (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).

5.6.3 Living with Family and Friends

5.6.3.1 This band includes applicants who do not have a tenancy of their own, who are living with family/friends, are not overcrowded or with any other identified housing needs but want to secure a home of their own. This will include applications from people who live in separate addresses but are looking to secure joint re-housing. The date of application will be the date they were assessed as having this need and applicants must provide supporting documentation of their situation to ensure they are not creating a priority need.

5.6.4 Intentionally Homeless

5.6.4.1 This will include applicants who are accepted by the Homeless Service as being eligible for assistance, homeless and in priority need but intentionally so, in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 Part VII (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). Applicants will also be assessed against Band F Reduced Priority criteria and if appropriate will be placed in Band F

5.7 Band D – Low priority

5.7.1 We want to encourage people who can, to work and want to raise levels of aspiration and ambition. We will offer increased priority to applicants who are working and who are therefore making a contribution to the sub regional economy.

5.7.2 This Band will include households where at least one adult household member is in employment but who have no recognised housing need and do not satisfy the criteria to be included in one of the other bands.

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5.7.3 For the purposes of Band D employment is described as having a permanent contract, working as a temporary member of staff or being self-employed. Applicants will only qualify if the worker has been working for a minimum of 16 hours per week. Verification will be sought at point of application as well as point of offer under the same terms. Applicants must provide payslips, P60, evidence from HMRC to pay tax, evidence of trading history, bank statements or a verifying letter on headed paper in order to qualify.

5.7.4 Applicants must inform the Administering Scheme Partner of any changes to their employment status. This will also be checked at the time of any offer.

5.8 Band E – No priority

5.8.1 This will include applicants who are not in employment, with no recognised housing need or those who do not satisfy the criteria to be included in one of the other bands.

5.9 Band F – Reduced Priority

5.9.1 Applicants who have a Reduced Priority Status due to non-qualifying behaviour (see Section 3.3)

5.10 Local Connection

5.10.1 In order to give reasonable preference to local residents, priority for rehousing within each Scheme Council Area will take into consideration a local connection within that area.

5.10.2 To demonstrate a local connection with a Scheme Council Area, an applicant must satisfy at least one of the following criteria;

- Have lived in the Scheme Council Area for 6 months out of the last 12 months or 3 years out of the last 5 years;
- Have a permanent job in the Scheme Council Area, or have a minimum of a 12 month contract or have been working for a continuous period of 6 months in scheme area;
- Have a close family association (parent, child or brother/sister) who is currently living in the Scheme Council Area and has done so for more than 5 years;
- Have a need to be in a specific Scheme Council Area to be near to a particular health facility for long term treatment;
- Have a need to be in a specific Scheme Council Area to give or receive caring support;

5.10.3 This requirement to establish a local connection does not apply to:

- those who are currently serving in the regular forces or who were serving in the regular forces at any time in the five years preceding their application for an allocation of social housing. This applies for a maximum of 5 years after discharge
- bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where
 - (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased (this would be assumed to be for a maximum of 12 months), or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner, and
 - (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service
- existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service. This applies for a maximum of 5 years after discharge.

5.10.4 Unless an applicant needs to move to another area for safety reasons, priority due to Statutory Homeless (Unintentionally) and Regeneration in Band A will be awarded for the applicant's current Scheme Council Area only.

5.10.5 With the exception of priority due to Statutory Homelessness (Unintentionally) and Regeneration in Band A, applicants in Bands A, B, C and D will be awarded that priority for the Scheme Council Areas for which they can demonstrate a local connection.

5.10.6 Applicants in Bands A, B, C and D may apply for vacancies in Scheme Council Areas other than those with which they have a local connection, but their housing need will not be taken into consideration and they will be considered to be in Band E when bidding for those vacancies.

5.10.7 Applicants in Bands E and F may apply for vacancies in all Scheme Council Areas and local connection will not be taken into consideration.

5.10.8 Those applicants with a housing need who live outside the combined Scheme Area may be considered for a priority Band but only if they can demonstrate a local connection with one of the Scheme Council Areas and the priority will apply only to vacancies in that Scheme Council Area.

5.10.9 Those applicants who do not have a local connection with any Scheme Council in the Scheme Area will be placed in Band E. An exception to this would be a need to move to another area for safety reasons.

5.10.10 Applicants must inform the Administering Scheme Partner of any changes to their local connection with an area, for example a change of address of a relative. This will also be checked at the time of any offer.

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5.11 Cross Boundary Mobility

- 5.11.1 Each Council area may let a maximum of 5% of all properties advertised through the Scheme to applicants living outside that Council Areas. This will include applicants in Bands A, B, C and D who can demonstrate a local connection with the accepting Scheme Council Area as outlined in Section 5.10.2., and applicants in Bands E and F who have no local connection.
- 5.11.2 The 5% maximum does not apply to 'readily available' properties (see paragraph 6.1.5)

5.12 Bedroom Standard

- 5.12.1 The standard to be applied is as follows;
- 5.12.2 One bedroom is required for the applicant and their partner. One bedroom is then added for the following people living with the applicant:
- Married or cohabiting couple;
 - Adult aged 21 years or more;
 - Pair of adolescents aged 10 to 20 years of the same sex;
 - Pair of children aged under 10 years regardless of sex;
 - A child with severe disabilities who requires frequent care during the night;
 - A foster child, where a separate bedroom is a requirement of the fostering authority;
 - A non resident carer who is regularly required to stay overnight to attend to personal care/health needs.
- 5.12.3 Any unpaired person aged 10 to 20 years is paired, if possible, with a child aged under 10 years of the same sex or, if that is not possible given a separate bedroom. The same applies to any unpaired child under 10 years.
- 5.12.4 This standard is then compared with the number of bedrooms available for the sole use of the household. Bedrooms converted to other uses are not included; bedrooms not in use are included unless they are uninhabitable.
- 5.12.5 While adolescents of the same gender aged 16 to 20 years sharing a room will not be classified as overcrowded the policy will allow applicants to bid for an additional bedroom, where the household includes adults in this age group.
- 5.12.6 Due to the shortage of larger properties, applicants who are eligible for four bedroom properties may also be considered for larger three bedroom properties, for example a three bedroom property with two separate living rooms where one can be considered to be used as a bedroom.
- 5.12.7 Households with an expectant mother are treated as though the child has been born once the Pregnancy Maternity Certificate (MATB1) has been provided.

5.13 Staying contact with children

- 5.13.1 Where an applicant has staying contact with children, the children will only be considered as part of that housing application if the applicant can provide proof they live with the customer for the majority of the time (over 50%). The proof may be documentation from the court or solicitor, written confirmation from the child's other parent or being in receipt of Child Benefit.
- 5.13.2 Where access has been shared equally between two partners, it is unlikely that accommodation of the same size will be made available to both parents. Usually, a parent with staying contact for children for less than 50% of the time may be allocated an additional bedroom for those children, for example a single person may be eligible for a two bedroom property.

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CHAPTER 6

6.1 Advertising vacant properties

6.1.1 Properties will be advertised on a weekly cycle in the form of an advert and/or Newsletter which may be viewed:

- On the Property Pool Plus website;
- At Council One Stop Shops;
- At offices of the Scheme Landlords;
- At a variety of community facilities;
- From your TV if you are a Sky TV or Virgin Media customer; and
- By mail to housebound applicants who do not have internet access.

6.1.2 The adverts will include a description of the property, form of tenure, rental charge, property size and any disabled adaptations.

6.1.3 Properties will be advertised displaying any specific criteria or restrictions on who may bid for such properties e.g. if there is a restriction on age group or family size. Properties will be offered to applicants who meet the property criteria in order of Band and then date of entry into that Band.

6.1.4 When it has not been possible to allocate a property after the first advert, the landlord may re-advertise the property to include households who were previously excluded from applying.

6.1.5 There may be some properties which have been advertised but the Scheme Landlord has not been successful in letting the property. In these instances, the Scheme Landlord may let the property on a 'first come, first served' basis. These are known as 'available now' properties.

6.2 Bidding for vacancies

6.2.1 Applicants are required to bid for a property if they want to be considered for it and may bid for a maximum of 3 properties each week. Applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria for a property will not be able to bid for the vacancy.

6.2.2 Applicants may bid for vacancies in a variety of ways;

- On line by visiting the Property Pool Plus website;
- By telephone service;
- By text message;
- By TV if you are a Sky TV or Virgin Media customer;
- In person by visiting a Scheme Partner office or Council One Stop Shop.

6.2.3 The Property Pool Plus Scheme has the facility to allow applicants to view their position on the shortlist, when they make a bid for a property. This will enable applicants to make an informed choice as to whether they wish to withdraw a bid where they may be unsuccessful and replace with an alternative bid.

6.2.4 The type and size of property that an applicant may apply for can vary depending upon household size and other circumstances. The following table is a **general guide only** and will vary depending upon the availability of property and demands in particular areas.

Household type	Property type
Single person or Couple	Bedsit, one or two bedroom flat, maisonette or bungalow
Two person household, not a couple	Two bedroom flat, maisonette or bungalow
Household with one child or baby expected	Two bedroom house or family flat/maisonette
Household with two children	Two or three bedroom house or family flat/maisonette
Household with three children	Three bedroom house or family flat/maisonette
Household with four or more children	Large three bedroom, four bedroom and larger houses
Household of adults, no children	Appropriate size flat, maisonette or house to allow one bedroom per adult or pair of partners
Households with specific requirements due to health needs relating to disability	Ground floor flat or bungalow Adapted house
Household requiring support due to old age or other vulnerability	Sheltered or supported accommodation Extra Care accommodation

6.2.5 There may be exceptions to the above guide in terms of property type, for example one or two bedroom houses may be advertised for singles or couples. This will be made clear on the property advert. The age group criteria for property will vary according to the Scheme Landlords' own rules.

6.2.6 There may be exceptions to the above guide in terms of household type, for example households requiring a full time carer or needing an extra bedroom on health or welfare grounds, including space for medical equipment, will be able to apply for a larger property. This will be considered on an individual basis and the applicant will be fully advised.

6.3 Short listing of applications

6.3.1 As the advertising cycle proceeds, applicants who have bid for an advertised property will be short listed according to the Banding criteria outlined in Chapter 5 and any qualifying letting criteria or property criteria specified on the property advert.

6.3.2 Each Scheme Landlord may follow a different process when administering the shortlist. Applicants who are being considered for an offer following their bid will be contacted by the Scheme Landlord who owns the property

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6.3.3 Before an offer is confirmed, all Scheme Landlords reserve the right to carry out pre-tenancy checks which may include;

- Confirmation that application details are correct;
- Confirmation of tenancy history including rent arrears and anti social behaviour issues;
- Confirmation of employment status if applicable;
- Confirmation of local connection if applicable;
- Ability of applicant to afford tenancy;
- Take up of references if required.

6.3.4 References may be from a current or previous landlord or someone who knows the applicant in an official capacity such as local community representative, advice worker, health visitor, social worker or probation officer. It is appreciated that some applicants have difficulty in providing a reference and these will be considered on an individual basis.

6.4 Reasons why an applicant may be bypassed for an offer

6.4.1 In some situations a property will not be offered to the highest ranked applicant who has expressed a preference for it. Short listed applicants may be bypassed for a number of reasons.

6.4.2 The list below is not an exhaustive list and is a general guide as each case will be assessed individually and the personal circumstances of each applicant will be taken into account.

- If an applicant bids for a property and their household details do not match the household criteria set out in the advert;
- If an applicant bids for a property that does not meet their specified health needs. See paragraph 6.4.3 below;
- If there is evidence which had not been identified at initial verification, that an applicant owes money to any Housing Association, Local Authority or private landlord due to rent arrears, damage, costs through abandonment or any other identified housing related costs. In this instance the application will be reviewed and may be given Reduced Priority status.
- If there is evidence which had not been identified at initial verification, that an applicant or a member of their household has committed serious anti social behaviour. In this case, the application will be reviewed and may be deemed non-qualifying due to unacceptable behaviour.
- If the applicant is a Council or Housing Association tenant and their current property is considered to be in a state of significant disrepair or neglect, and there is evidence that disrepair/neglect/damage to the property has been directly caused by the applicant or a member of their household.
- If an applicant's position on the shortlist is due to their employment and this status has changed;
- If an applicant's position on the shortlist is due to their local connection with an area and this has changed;
- If the applicant has already bid for another property and this has been offered to them;

- If the property is adapted and the applicant does not need those specific adaptations;
- If the property is not adapted and the applicant needs specific adaptations;
- If the reason for the move is domestic abuse or harassment and the move is not far enough from the area to resolve the issues;
- If the applicant owes arrears of rent to the landlord of the property;
- If no response has been received when the applicant has been contacted by telephone or letter, despite reasonable efforts;
- If the applicant's family is considered to be too small to fully occupy the property and there are other applicants on the shortlist who would fully occupy the property;
- If the cross boundary mobility target has been met or will be exceeded (see paragraph 5.11);
- If the property advertised is through a Local Lettings Plan and the applicants household details do not match the household criteria set out in the advert (see paragraph 2.2).
- If the applicant or any member of their family has the financial means to resolve their own housing situation. Having regard to income, equity, savings, and the price of buying or renting a home privately (see paragraph 3.4.3).

6.4.3 Applicants who require a property with physical adaptations such as a wet room, stair lift or level access, may apply for an adapted property, or a property suitable for adaptations. Applicants are advised to check the relevant Landlords Aids and Adaptations Policy when applying for property that is not currently adapted and would require adaptations in order to meet their needs.

6.4.4 Any short listed applicant who is bypassed can request a review of the decision, using the Review procedure in Chapter 8 of this Scheme.

6.5 Number of offers

6.5.1 To ensure applicants only bid for properties in which they are genuinely interested, and in order to be as fair as possible to all applicants, the number of offers an applicant can refuse is limited. When the limit is reached, a review of their application and priority will be made by the Administering Scheme Partner.

6.5.2 When an offer is refused, an assessment will be made as to whether this was a reasonable offer. With the exception of homeless applicants (where the decision about the 'reasonableness' of a refusal will be made by the Housing Options Service in accordance with legislation), the Scheme Landlord making the offer will be responsible for deciding whether or not the reason for refusing an offer is considered to be reasonable. As a guide, the following factors may be taken into account

- The property is in the immediate location of someone who could present a danger to the applicant;
- The property has stairs which the applicant is unable to manage and this is confirmed by the health assessment;

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- The applicant needs an adapted property or the current adaptations do not satisfy the applicant's needs and this is confirmed by an Occupational Therapist.

This list is not exhaustive and each case will be assessed individually.

- 6.5.3 If it is considered that the offers made were reasonable, then the following will apply.

Band A - Health /Welfare (Urgent)	One reasonable offer only
Band A - Statutory Homeless (Unintentional)	One reasonable offer only
Band A - Regeneration	No limit
Band A - Overcrowded (2 or more bed)	Two reasonable offers
Band B - High Priority	Two reasonable offers
Band C - Medium Priority	Three reasonable offers
Band D - Low Priority	Three reasonable offers
Band E - No Priority	Three reasonable offers
Band F - Reduced Priority	Three reasonable offers

- 6.5.4 In all instances, with the exception of cases outlined in Section 6.5.5 below, an application is reviewed following the refusal of the stated number of reasonable offers. If the circumstances remain the same, the applicant will remain in the same Band but the entry date will be altered to the date of the latest refusal. However, if the circumstances have altered the application will be placed in the appropriate Band.

- 6.5.5 Applicants in Band A - Statutory Homeless (Unintentional). The application is reviewed following the refusal of one offer and if the offer was reasonable, the Council will deem that its legal duty has been discharged and the applicant will be placed in a lower appropriate Band based on their circumstances having removed consideration that they were found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need. This will also apply if a local authority scheme partner uses its power to discharge its duty with an offer of a private sector tenancy.

6.6 Feedback on Lettings

- 6.6.1 The Property Pool Plus Scheme will publish the outcome for recently advertised vacancies on the website. The information provided will include:

- Property size and type;
- Property location;
- Number of applicants who applied for each property;
- Band and effective date of successful applicant.

This will allow applicants to see where properties are more likely to become available and where they may have the best chances of making a successful 'bid'. Information will also be provided for vacancies which have been allocated as a result of a direct let to applicants on the Property Pool Plus Register.

- 6.6.2 The Scheme Partners will also produce analytical statistics on lettings to determine demand, availability of properties and gaps in provision to inform future housing strategy.

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CHAPTER 7

7.1 Information and advice

- 7.1.1 Information and advice on the Allocations Scheme will be provided free of charge.
- 7.1.2 The following help is available to all applicants who apply to go onto the Scheme Register:
- Help to complete a housing application form;
 - Written and verbal information to help them understand how their application will be dealt with;
 - The opportunity to contact staff to find out whether their needs can be met and, if so, guidance on how long they may have to wait for accommodation;
 - Help with reviews and complaints where appropriate (see Chapter 8).

7.2 Contact details

- 7.2.1 A list of the contact details for the Scheme Partners within the Property Pool Plus scheme can be found on the website.

7.3 Support services

- 7.3.1 Some applicants may need support in setting up, managing or maintaining a tenancy.
- 7.3.2 Every effort will be made by the Scheme Partners to identify applicants who need some level of support via:
- Their Scheme Register application;
 - Referrals from staff and other agencies such as Social Services, Probation and Age Concern;
 - Referrals from family members;
 - Requests from applicants themselves.
- 7.3.3 The applicant may be contacted to obtain more details of their needs to decide what type of support they need, for example:
- Advice on the Property Pool Plus scheme and assessment procedure;
 - Help to select a property;
 - Support in setting up and maintaining a tenancy.
- 7.3.4 If they need help to select a property, this can be given by a nominated relative, friend or support worker who can bid for properties on their behalf. It may also be possible to set up automatic bidding for vulnerable applicants.
- 7.3.5 If the applicant needs help to set up a tenancy every effort will be made by the Scheme Partners to refer them to the most appropriate housing support service provider.

7.4 To prevent homelessness

- 7.4.1 Every effort will be made to identify applicants where threatened homelessness may be prevented. Applicants' details will be forwarded to the relevant Council's Housing Options Team who will contact the applicant giving advice and assistance e.g. dealing with an applicant's mortgage provider or landlord or referring them to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

7.5 Independent advice

- 7.5.1 An applicant may wish to get independent advice about the Property Pool Plus scheme or any decisions made about their application. Shelter, Citizens Advice Bureau and local solicitors are some of the organisations operating within the Scheme Area who may offer free, independent advice to people about their housing application.

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CHAPTER 8

8.1 Review of Decisions

8.1.1 Under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 applicants for housing have the right to request a review of any decision made about their application. The review must be undertaken by an officer more senior to the one who made the original decision.

(NOTE This is different to the right of review that exists under Part 7 of the Act which deals with homelessness. The latter is not covered in this policy)

8.1.2 In the interests of fairness and transparency this policy goes further than the statutory minimum by offering a right to a second stage review if an applicant is still dissatisfied after the outcome of the initial review. The sections below provide further detail about these procedures.

8.1.3 The local authorities and housing associations participating in this scheme each have their own independent complaints/appeals procedures that apply to their everyday business activities. Clearly it would be unmanageable if applicants were permitted to use multiple complaints/appeal procedures (e.g. this procedure, a Scheme Landlord's procedure, and the Administering Scheme Partner's procedure), and therefore the review procedure outlined in this scheme will be the only one used for reviewing housing allocation decisions made under this scheme.

8.1.4 Requests for a review arising because an applicant has not informed the Administering Scheme Partner of any changes to their application will be dismissed, for example if an applicant has been bypassed due to no contact and the applicant has not informed the Administering Scheme Partner of a change in their contact details.

8.2 Request for a Review of a Registration Decision or a Selection Process Decision

8.2.1 The Administering Scheme Partner who registered the application will deal with all requests for a review concerning any decision in relation to an applicant's registration on the Scheme.

8.2.2 The request for a review may cover any issue concerning their application, such as:-

- A decision that an applicant is ineligible to register due to immigration status;
- A decision that an applicant belongs to a non-qualifying group;
- A decision on their priority status;
- The removal or review of a priority;
- A decision to amend date of entry into a Band following refusal of reasonable offers;
- A decision to bypass on a shortlist.

8.3 Request for a Review of a Selection Process Decision

8.3.1 All requests for a review of a decision concerning any aspect of the selection process for a particular property will be dealt with by the respective Scheme Landlord.

8.3.2 Requests for review may typically include: -

- A decision not to offer a particular property to an applicant;
- A decision to withhold or withdraw an offer based on anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance or rent history;
- Lettings Criteria used for a property
- The nature of verification checks made by the Scheme Landlord.

8.4 The Review Procedure

8.4.1 The request for a review can be made in person, by telephone, by email or in writing within 15 working days from the date of being advised of the decision, or from the date of publication of the outcome of the vacancy on the website.

8.4.2 The review procedure is as follows;

Stage 1

The review will be carried out by an officer for the Administering Scheme Partner who was not involved in the original decision, and who is more senior than the officer making the original decision. A response will be provided within 15 working days of the request being received.

Stage 2

If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 review, they may request a review of the decision by stating their reasons to their Administering Scheme Partner within 15 working days of being notified of the Stage 1 decision. An acknowledgement will be issued to the applicant (copied to the relevant Scheme Council) within 10 working days.

The review will be carried out by a panel of officers from the Property Pool Plus scheme comprising a representative of the Scheme Council and at least 2 Scheme Landlords, but not including the Scheme Partner responsible for the original decision. If an officer of the Scheme Council, acting as Administering Scheme Partner, made the original decision under review, then a Senior Officer of the Scheme Council not involved in the original decision may be represented on the Panel.

Applicants will be afforded the opportunity of presenting their case in person to the Panel if so desired. A meeting will be convened within 15 working days of the acknowledgement letter being issued and a decision will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting.

8.4.3 Following the review, where a higher priority band is awarded at stage 1 or 2 of the appeals process as a result of information previously considered as part of an

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earlier banding decision, or as a result of further information relating to the same set of circumstances previously considered, the Band Effective date in the higher band will be the same as that which had been awarded in the lower priority band. If a priority has been refused previously, but subsequently awarded at Stage 1 or 2 of the appeals process then the Band Effective date will be the date the original decision was made.

- 8.4.4 If at stage 1 or 2 of the appeals process new information is considered as a result of a change in the applicant's circumstances resulting in a change in the priority band, the Band effective date will be the date the appeal is considered.

8.5 Further Redress

- 8.5.1 If applicants are still dissatisfied then they may seek other forms of external redress, such as the Local Government Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk) or through a legal process known as Judicial Review. Both of these forms of redress are primarily concerned with ensuring that correct procedure has been followed rather than the actual decision made, although they will consider whether the scheme policy on which a decision was based is lawful.

8.6 Complaints

- 8.6.1 A request for a review is in effect an appeal against a decision which has been made with which you do not agree. A complaint is different – it is an expression of dissatisfaction with the level of service received, or the way it was provided.
- 8.6.2 Complaints should be made to the organisation that you consider has not provided a satisfactory service, and will be dealt with under that organisation's complaints procedure. Details of how to make a complaint can be found on the web site of each organisation.

APPENDIX 1

EXTRACT FROM CODE OF GUIDANCE

Persons from abroad

3.5 A person may not be allocated accommodation under Part 6 if he or she is a person from abroad who is ineligible for an allocation under s.160ZA of the 1996 Act. There are two categories for the purposes of s.160ZA:

(i) *a person subject to immigration control* - such a person is not eligible for an allocation of accommodation unless he or she comes within a class prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State (s.160ZA(2)), and

(ii) *a person from abroad other than a person subject to immigration control* - regulations may provide for other descriptions of persons from abroad who, although not subject to immigration control, are to be treated as ineligible for an allocation of accommodation (s.160ZA(4)).

3.6 The regulations setting out which classes of persons from abroad are eligible or ineligible for an allocation are the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006 No.1294) ('the Eligibility Regulations').

Persons subject to immigration control

3.7 The term 'person subject to immigration control' is defined in s.13(2) of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 as a person who under the Immigration Act 1971 requires leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom (whether or not such leave has been given).

3.8 The following categories of persons do not require leave to enter or remain in the UK:

(i) British citizens

(ii) certain Commonwealth citizens with a right of abode in the UK

(iii) Irish citizens, who are not subject to immigration control in the UK because the Republic of Ireland forms part of the Common Travel Area (see paragraph 3.11 (iii) below) with the UK which allows free movement

(iv) EEA nationals⁵, and their family members, who have a right to reside in the UK that derives from EU law. Whether an EEA national (or family member) has a particular right to reside in the UK (or another Member State) will depend on the circumstances, particularly their economic status (e.g. whether he or she is a worker, self-employed, a student, or economically inactive)

(v) persons who are exempt from immigration control under the Immigration Acts, including diplomats and their family members based in the UK, and some military personnel.

3.9 Any person who does not fall within one of the four categories in paragraph 3.11 will be a person subject to immigration control and will be ineligible for an allocation of accommodation unless they fall within a class of persons prescribed by regulation 3 of the

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Eligibility Regulations (see further below).

3.10 If there is any uncertainty about an applicant's immigration status, housing authorities are recommended to contact the UK Border Agency (UKBA). UKBA provides a service to housing authorities to confirm the immigration status of an applicant from abroad (non asylum seekers) by email at LA@UKBA.gsi.gov.uk. Where UKBA indicates the applicant may be an asylum seeker, enquiries of their status can be made to the Immigration Enquiry Bureau helpline on 0870 606 7766.

3.11 Regulation 3 of the Eligibility Regulations provides that the following classes of persons subject to immigration control are eligible for an allocation of accommodation:

i) *a person granted refugee status*: granted 5 years' limited leave to remain in the UK

ii) *a person granted exceptional leave to enter or remain in the UK without condition that they and any dependants should make no recourse to public funds*: granted for a limited period where there are compelling humanitarian or compassionate circumstances for allowing them to stay. However, if leave is granted on condition that the applicant and any dependants are not a charge on public funds, the applicant will not be eligible for an allocation of accommodation. Exceptional leave to remain (granted at the Secretary of State's discretion outside the Immigration Rules) now takes the form of 'discretionary leave'.

iii) *a person with current leave to enter or remain in the UK with no condition or limitation, and who is habitually resident in the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland (the Common Travel Area)*: such a person will have indefinite leave to enter (ILE) or remain (ILR) and is regarded as having settled status. However, where ILE or ILR status is granted as a result of an undertaking that a sponsor will be responsible for the applicant's maintenance and accommodation, the person must have been resident in the Common Travel Area for five years since the date of entry - or the date of the sponsorship undertaking, whichever is later - to be eligible. Where all sponsors have died within the first five years, the applicant will be eligible for an allocation of accommodation.

iv) *a person who has humanitarian protection granted under the Immigration Rules⁶*: a form of leave granted to persons who do not qualify for refugee status but would face a real risk of suffering serious harm if returned to their state of origin (see paragraphs 339C-344C of the Immigration Rules (HC 395))

Other persons from abroad who may be ineligible for an allocation

3.12 By virtue of regulation 4 of the Eligibility Regulations, a person who is not subject to immigration control and who falls within one of the following descriptions is to be treated as a person from abroad who is ineligible for an allocation of accommodation:

(i) a person who is not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (subject to certain exceptions - see paragraph 3.14 below)

(ii) a person who's only right to reside in the UK is derived from his status as a jobseeker (or his status as the family member of a jobseeker). 'Jobseeker' has the same meaning as in regulation 6(1) of the Immigration (European Economic Area)

Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/1003) ('the EEA Regulations').

(iii) a person who's only right to reside in the UK is an initial right to reside for a period not exceeding three months under regulation 13 of the EEA Regulations

(iv) a person who's only right to reside in the Common Travel Area is a right equivalent to one of the rights mentioned in (ii) or (iii) above and which is derived from EU Treaty rights

3.13 See annex 2 for guidance on rights to reside in the UK derived from EU law.

3.14 The following persons from abroad are eligible for an allocation of accommodation even if they are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area:

a) an EEA national who is in the UK as a worker (which has the same meaning as in regulation 6(1) of the EEA Regulations)

b) an EEA national who is in the UK as a self-employed person (which has the same meaning as in regulation 6(1) of the EEA Regulations)

c) a person who is treated as a worker for the purposes of regulation 6(1) of the EEA Regulations, pursuant to the Accession (Immigration and Worker Authorisation) Regulations 2006 (i.e. nationals of Bulgaria and Romania required to be authorised by the Home Office to work until they have accrued 12 months uninterrupted authorised work)

d) a person who is a family member of a person referred to in (a) to (c) above e) a person with a right to reside permanently in the UK by virtue of regulation 15(c), (d) or (e) of the EEA Regulations

f) a person who left Montserrat after 1 November 1995 because of the effect of volcanic activity there

g) a person who is in the UK as a result of his deportation, expulsion or other removal by compulsion of law from another country to the UK. This could include EEA nationals, if the person was settled in the UK and exercising EU Treaty rights prior to deportation from the third country. Where deportation occurs, most countries will signal this in the person's passport.

3.15 A person who is no longer working or no longer in self-employment will retain his or her status as a worker or self-employed person in certain circumstances. However, accession state workers requiring authorisation will generally only be treated as a worker when they are actually working as authorised and will not retain 'worker' status between jobs until they have accrued 12 months continuous authorised employment. 'Family member' does not include a person who is an extended family member who is treated as a family member by virtue of regulation 7(3) of the EEA Regulations (see annexes 2 and 3 for further guidance).

3.16 The term 'habitual residence' is intended to convey a degree of permanence in the person's residence in the Common Travel Area; it implies an association between the individual and the place of residence and relies substantially on fact.

3.17 Applicants who have been resident in the Common Travel Area continuously during the two year period prior to their housing application are likely to be habitually resident (periods of temporary absence, e.g. visits abroad for holidays or to visit relatives may be disregarded). Where two years' continuous residency has not been established, housing authorities will need to conduct further enquiries to determine whether the

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applicant is habitually resident (see annex 4 for further guidance).

APPENDIX 2

REGISTRATION ON THE PROPERTY POOL PLUS SCHEME – EVIDENCE REQUIRED

Applicants must fill in a new Property Plus Application Form.

This can be accessed online at: www.propertypoolplus.org.uk

Paper copies will be available from all registered providers within the scheme.

What evidence do we need?

When accepting evidence, note that one piece of evidence may provide evidence to cover more than one of the necessary proofs below e.g. a full UK drivers License will provide both Identification and may provide Proof of address also. In cases such as this one proof will be enough.

Photocopies of evidence will be accepted.

National Insurance Number (Lead and Joint Applicant)

Proof of National Insurance number for both the main and joint applicant, originals must be seen and photocopied. Alternatively a copy of a document with NI number on e.g. a payslip will suffice.

Identification (Lead and Joint Applicant)

Acceptable forms of ID include one proof from the following list:

- Current Full Passport
- Birth Certificate
- Current UK or EEA Photo card Driving License
- Current Blue Disabled Drivers Badge
- Current Benefit Agency Benefit Book/ DWP Correspondence
- Armed Forces ID Card
- Current EEA Member State ID Card
- Northern Ireland Electoral ID Card

Proof of Residence (everyone living in the home)

As above or if identification and current address are different – one from the following list:

- Council Tax Bill
- Bank/ Building Society/ Credit Union statements/ Passbook
- Current Benefits Agency Benefit book or correspondence
- Utility Bill – Gas/ Electric/ Water (not mobile phone)
- Household or Motor car insurance
- TV Licence reminder
- Vehicle tax reminder
- Letter from Social Services – e.g. if applicant has been living in hostel accommodation.

Proof of residence must be within the previous 3 months before application.

Landlord Reference

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- The lead applicant must provide a landlord reference.
- The joint applicant must provide a separate landlord reference if lead and joint applicant are not currently living at the same address.
- If applicant unable to provide landlord reference e.g. currently living with parents / friends a character reference will be accepted provided:
 - Character reference is provided by non-family member
 - Referee has known applicant for over 2 years
 - Referee has known applicant in a professional capacity – through work, education, voluntary employment.

If an applicant is unable to provide a reference meeting the criteria outlined above, the Scheme Partner may use their discretion and agree to accept an alternative such as:

- Proof of rent payment – e.g. bank statement
- Letter from a support worker
- Housing benefit statement etc

Appendix B- Consultation

Below are the consultation outcomes from residents or partners within the Sefton area.

Property Pool Plus 2014 Sefton

488 residents responded to this consultation of which 69 were from the Sefton area. Please contact Halton Borough Council Customer Intelligence Unit for further information research@halton.gov.uk

The following charts are restricted to the top 12 codes. Lists are restricted to the most recent 100 rows

General Information

To help us make best use of the information you provide, please tell us which of the following best describes you? Please X one box only

Member of the public (16) 23%
Applicant on the Property Pool Plus Register (45) 65%
Local Authority Councillor (-)
Representing a Registered Housing Provider (-)
Representing a support/ Plus Register advocacy organisation (2) 3%
Other (please tell us in the box below) (6) 9%

The "organisation" and "other" respondents described themselves as:

Benefits & Housing Adviser
Community OT
Occupational Therapist
Sefton Social Services, Community Care Practitioner - Occupational Therapy Team

Please also tell us which Local Authority Area you live in? Please X one box only

Halton (-)
Knowsley (-)
Liverpool (-)
Sefton (69) 100%
Wirral (-)
Other (-)

Questions relating to whether an applicant should be made Ineligible or awarded Reduced preference

Where an applicant has been housed under the scheme, or by a participating scheme landlord, in social housing during the past 12 months, and their housing circumstances have not changed.

Strongly agree (20) 29%
Agree (20) 29%
Neither (11) 16%
Disagree (10) 15%
Strongly disagree (7) 10%

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Those who have previously behaved in an unacceptable manner which would make them unsuitable to be a tenant of a social landlord.

Strongly agree (40) 59%
Agree (21) 31%
Neither (1) 2%
Disagree (5) 7%
Strongly disagree (1) 2%

Rent arrears and/or housing related debt equal to or greater than 8 weeks gross rent.

Strongly agree (16) 24%
Agree (21) 31%
Neither (11) 16%
Disagree (16) 24%
Strongly disagree (4) 6%

Eviction from a social housing tenancy in the last 2 years.

Strongly agree (26) 38%
Agree (25) 36%
Neither (8) 12%
Disagree (7) 10%
Strongly disagree (3) 4%

Abandonment of a social housing tenancy in the last 2 years.

Strongly agree (29) 42%
Agree (19) 28%
Neither (12) 17%
Disagree (7) 10%
Strongly disagree (2) 3%

The Applicant or member of their household has within the last 2 years displayed conduct likely to cause significant nuisance or annoyance within the locality (Anti-Social Behaviour).

Strongly agree (40) 58%
Agree (18) 26%
Neither (7) 10%
Disagree (3) 4%
Strongly disagree (1) 1%

The Applicant or member of their household has within the last 2 years been convicted for using the premises or allowing them to be used for immoral or illegal purposes (e.g. the manufacture, sale or supply of drugs).

Strongly agree (47) 68%
Agree (16) 23%
Neither (3) 4%
Disagree (2) 3%
Strongly disagree (1) 1%

Abusive behaviour toward staff

Strongly agree (34) 49%
Agree (23) 33%
Neither (4) 6%

Disagree (6) 9%
Strongly disagree (2) 3%

Failure to maintain an existing social housing property in a reasonable condition.

Strongly agree (30) 44%

Agree (25) 36%
Neither (5) 7%
Disagree (7) 10%
Strongly disagree (2) 3%

Disqualification under rent arrears and/or housing related debt may be waived if an agreed payment plan has been maintained for 12 months, even if the debt is higher than 8 weeks gross rent.

Strongly agree (24) 35%
Agree (32) 46%
Neither (11) 16%
Disagree (2) 3%
Strongly disagree (-)

Disqualification under rent arrears and/or housing related debt may be waived if the rent arrears have accrued solely as result of the housing benefit under occupation deduction provided the applicant actively bids for smaller properties.

Strongly agree (30) 44%
Agree (20) 29%
Neither (11) 16%
Disagree (4) 6%
Strongly disagree (4) 6%

The length of time an applicant remains non-qualifying is 12 months, after which time the Applicant must prove satisfactory evidence they have modified their behaviour.

Strongly agree (22) 32%
Agree (32) 46%
Neither (8) 12%
Disagree (3) 4%
Strongly disagree (4) 6%

High risk criminal offenders/ex-offenders who are subject to special supervision (Level 2 and 3 Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements).

Strongly agree (44) 64%
Agree (13) 19%
Neither (6) 9%
Disagree (3) 4%
Strongly disagree (3) 4%

Applicants with housing related debt equal to or greater than 4 weeks gross rent but less than 8 weeks gross rent will be awarded reduced priority (Band F) thus reducing their priority for housing but not preventing them joining the register, where they will remain until the debt is reduced to less than 4 weeks.

Strongly agree (16) 24%
Agree (29) 43%
Neither (8) 12%

Agenda Item 13

Disagree (11) 16%
Strongly disagree (4) 6%

Applicants deemed to have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances in order to gain a priority band will be placed in reduced priority (Band F) for a period of 12 months.

Strongly agree (27) 40%
Agree (30) 44%
Neither (6) 9%
Disagree (3) 4%
Strongly disagree (2) 3%

Questions relating to the Armed Forces Covenant

Those applicants that meet the criteria for Housing Priority Band A and who are Armed Forces personnel (or bereaved spouses or partners leaving forces accommodation) will have their priority banding date backdated by 3 months.

Strongly agree (26) 38%
Agree (20) 29%
Neither (11) 16%
Disagree (7) 10%
Strongly disagree (4) 6%

Those Armed Forces personnel who apply up to 3 months prior to their discharge date, or up to 12 months after discharge, and who do not qualify for priority Band A, will be assessed as priority Band B.

Strongly agree (18) 27%
Agree (29) 43%
Neither (9) 13%
Disagree (7) 10%
Strongly disagree (4) 6%

Questions relating to Homelessness

Where Councils choose to help homeless applicants in Band A by offering private rented accommodation, refusal of a suitable offer will result in loss of Band A status in the same way it would in the case of refusing a social housing tenancy.

Strongly agree (22) 32%
Agree (24) 35%
Neither (3) 4%
Disagree (16) 23%
Strongly disagree (4) 6%

Applicants being assisted under homeless prevention initiatives (where a Council has a duty to help them) will be placed in Band B for a period of 3 months to improve their prospects of being housed before homelessness occurs.

Strongly agree (17) 25%
Agree (38) 56%
Neither (7) 10%
Disagree (6) 9%
Strongly disagree (-)

Questions relating to employment

The length of employment criteria to gain Band D has been eased. Previously an applicant would have had to be in employment for at least 9 of the last 12 months. Any applicant or member of their household who is in employment for 16 hours per week or more will be eligible for Band D.

Strongly agree (14) 2%
Agree (41) 59%
Neither (12) 17%
Disagree (-)
Strongly disagree (2) 3%

The criteria to establish a local connection through employment has been relaxed to include those applicants who have a 12 month employment contract or who have continuously worked in the local authority area for the last 6 months.

Strongly agree (12) 17%
Agree (35) 51%
Neither (12) 17%
Disagree (7) 10%
Strongly disagree (3) 4%

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