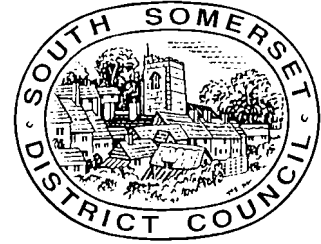


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



District Executive

Making a difference where it counts

Thursday 2nd June 2016

9.30 am

**Main Committee Room
Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil
Somerset BA20 2HT**



Disabled access and a hearing loop are available at this meeting venue.

Members listed on the following page are requested to attend the meeting.

The public and press are welcome to attend.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, **Angela Cox 01935 462148**, website: www.southsomerset.gov.uk

This Agenda was issued on Tuesday 25 May 2016.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ian Clarke'.

Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)

This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

District Executive Membership

Ric Pallister
Clare Aparicio Paul
Carol Goodall
Peter Gubbins
Henry Hobhouse
Jo Roundell Greene
Sylvia Seal
Peter Seib
Angie Singleton
Nick Weeks

Information for the Public

The District Executive co-ordinates the policy objectives of the Council and gives the Area Committees strategic direction. It carries out all of the local authority's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council. It delegates some of its responsibilities to Area Committees, officers and individual portfolio holders within limits set by the Council's Constitution. When major decisions are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Executive Forward Plan in so far as they can be anticipated.

Members of the Public are able to:-

- attend meetings of the Council and its committees such as Area Committees, District Executive, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- speak at Area Committees, District Executive and Council meetings;
- see reports and background papers, and any record of decisions made by the Council and Executive;
- find out, from the Executive Forward Plan, what major decisions are to be decided by the District Executive.

Meetings of the District Executive are held monthly at 9.30 a.m. on the first Thursday of the month in the Council Offices, Brympton Way.

The Executive Forward Plan and copies of executive reports and decisions are published on the Council's web site - www.southsomerset.gov.uk.

The Council's Constitution is also on the web site and available for inspection in Council offices.

The Council's corporate priorities which guide the work and decisions of the Executive are set out below.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

South Somerset District Council – Corporate Aims

Our key aims are: (all equal)

- **Jobs** - We want a strong economy which has low unemployment and thriving businesses
- **Environment** - We want an attractive environment to live in with increased recycling and lower energy use
- **Homes** - We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income
- **Health and Communities** - We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant, and have individuals who are willing to help each other

District Executive

Thursday 2 June 2016

Agenda

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 12th May 2016.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (adopted July 2012), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting. A DPI is defined in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 1464) and Appendix 3 of the Council's Code of Conduct. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 2.8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 2.9.

Members are reminded that they need to declare the fact that they are also a member of a County, Town or Parish Council as a Personal Interest. As a result of the change made to the Code of Conduct by this Council at its meeting on 15th May 2014, where you are also a member of Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council within South Somerset you must declare a prejudicial interest in any business on the agenda where there is a financial benefit or gain or advantage to Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council which would be at the cost or to the financial disadvantage of South Somerset District Council. If you have a prejudicial interest you must comply with paragraphs 2.9(b) and 2.9(c) of the Code.

4. Public Question Time

Questions, statements or comments from members of the public are welcome at the beginning of each meeting of the Council. The total period allowed for public participation shall not exceed 15 minutes except with the consent of the Council and each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes. Where there are a number of persons wishing to speak about the same matter, they should consider choosing one spokesperson to speak on their behalf where appropriate. If a member of the public wishes to speak they should advise the committee administrator and complete one of the public participation slips setting out their name and the matter they wish to speak about. The public will be invited to speak in the order determined by the Chairman. Answers to questions may be provided at the meeting itself or a written reply will be sent subsequently, as appropriate. Matters raised during the public question session will not be debated by the Council at that meeting.

5. Chairman's Announcements

Items for Discussion

6. Verbal Update on recruitment of Chief Executive Officer

Councillor Jo Roundell Greene, as Vice-Chairman of the Appointments Committee, will update Members on the progress the Committee have made in the recruitment of a new Chief Executive Officer.

7. SSDC Annual Performance Report 2015/16 (Pages 5 - 15)

8. Revised Homefinder Somerset Policy (Pages 16 - 84)

9. Fixed Penalty Notices for fly tipping (Pages 85 - 89)

10. Local Strategic Partnership South Somerset Together (SST) Annual Review
(Pages 90 - 101)

11. Corporate Grants report 2015 - 2016 (Pages 102 - 111)

12. Increase in Councillors on Brympton Parish Council - Community Governance Review (CGR) (Pages 112 - 128)

13. Monthly News Snapshot (Page 129)

14. District Executive Forward Plan (Pages 131 - 134)

15. Date of Next Meeting (Page 135)

Agenda Item 7

SSDC Annual Performance Report 2015/16

Executive Portfolio Holder: Ric Pallister, Leader, Portfolio Holder for Strategy & Policy
Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Place and Performance
Assistant Director: Martin Woods, Economy
Service Manager: Charlotte Jones/Andrew Gillespie, Performance Manager
Lead Officer: Anna-Maria Lenz, Performance Officer
Contact Details: anna-maria.lenz@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462216

Purpose of the Report

This report presents the following annual summaries:

1. Council Plan 2012 - 2015 Actions – Final Monitoring Report
2. Corporate Performance Indicators (PIs) for 2015-16
3. Complaints made during 2015-16

Forward Plan

This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of June 2016.

Public Interest

The Council is accountable for its performance to the local community and we publish performance data to enable us to demonstrate achievements against targets. This report details the annual performance for 2015/16.

Recommendation

To note the 2015/16 performance information at Appendices A, B and C.

Background

The SSDC Performance Monitoring Framework:

- The Council Plan 2012-2015
- Corporate Performance Indicators
- Service plans
- Key strategy action plans

Council Plan 2012- 2015 Actions Final Monitoring Report:

The ***Council Plan on a Page 2016 -2021*** was adopted by Full Council in April 2016.

The final monitoring report on the previous Council Plan 2012 – 2015 is attached at Appendix A. It shows, under each focus area, the status of the 11 out of 42 key actions that were not completed by April 2015.

Performance Indicator Report:

The Performance Indicator report consists of 39 locally set indicators which are linked to our corporate priorities. These were selected and approved by members on 3rd May 2012. 18 of these are corporate performance indicators, against which the Council's performance is measured. The remaining South Somerset indicators are those over which the Council has less influence.

Summary of Corporate Performance Indicators:

Indicator Status	2015/16		2014/15	
On or Above Target	14	82%	15	88.24%
Within 10% of Target	0	0%	1	5.88%
More than 10% Below Target	3	18%	1	5.88%
TOTAL	17**	100%	17*	100%

*Annual data not available for PI 031 in 2014/15.

** Annual data not available for PI031 in 2015/16.

Please refer to Appendix B for details.

Complaints:

During the period 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016, SSDC received 243 complaints from members of the public.

The number of complaints in relation to the volume of transactions completed remains very low.

The majority of cases (96.4%) have been resolved at stage 1, indicating that the complaints procedure is effective.

Please refer to Appendix C for details.

Financial Implications

None

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Background Papers

Council Plan 2016-2021

(<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/about-us/council-plan-2016---2021/>)

SSDC Corporate Plan – Full Council February 2012

SSDC Corporate Indicators – District Executive May 2012

Appendix A – Council Plan 2012-15 Final Monitoring Report

Council Plan Action	Status 03/2016	Service	Comment
Focus 1. JOBS			
C1.07 - Work in partnership to deliver investment and development that local people value in Chard.	Partially Completed	Economic Development	Negotiations with developers ongoing within the Chard Eastern Development Area to facilitate housing development and bring forward employment land, highway infrastructure and the Stopleveline Way. The project is included in the Somerset Growth Plan with grant funding applications made to LEP Growth Fund in 2015. Discussions also ongoing to establish the future employment land requirements of Chards major employers
C1.08 - Secure land with planning permission for employment use in areas where it is needed.	Partially Completed	Economic Development	Establishment of Strategic Regeneration Board and Area Regeneration Boards to identify and assess new projects from the Areas and refresh the Investing in Infrastructure programme. Currently working with developers to secure land at Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Castle Cary and Yeovil. Work also underway to establish a programme of securing employment land in other market towns and rural areas. The programme is included in the Somerset Growth Plan with applications made to LEP Growth Deal in 2015
C1.11 - Progress the Chard Regeneration Scheme to create a vibrant town centre, by working with a development partner to invest, create new jobs.	Partially Completed	Economic Development	Working with development partner to secure suitable end-users for this element of the regeneration scheme. Project planning the wider elements of the town centre scheme is underway.
C1.12 - Regenerate the former ACI site and the Boden Mill site by 2013.	Behind Target	Economic Development	Negotiations are ongoing with developer delay caused by prevailing market conditions for major retailers and superstores. Development Agreement will expire in April 2017. Further options being considered.
C1.15 - Facilitate a programme for economic growth by assembling land packages for business use in Chard by 2014.	Partially Completed	Economic Development	As per C1.08 above, land packages for business use being negotiated with developer in CEDA. Applications for infrastructure funding made through both Growth Deal 2 and Growth Deal 3 funding rounds
C1.16 - Facilitate a realistic development programme for new employment sites that have been identified in market towns by 2015.	Partially Completed	Economic Development	This target is a key focus of the Investing in Infrastructure programme which has 10 prioritised projects that include employment land in all of the market towns. Further work in identifying sites will be undertaken as part of the Housing and Employment Land Allocation study. The programme is included in the Somerset Growth Plan and LEP funding applications are underway

Council Plan Action	Status 03/2016	Service	Comment
C1.17 - Support early delivery of Super-Fast Broadband to rural areas by 2015.	Partially Completed	Economic Development	Phase 1 of the Connecting Devon and Somerset Scheme will draw to a close in 2016/17. This will phase will have enabled connectivity to around 90% of premises, leaving approximately 10% without access to superfast broadband Phase 2 of the project will be put to tender in 2016 and this will seek to enable access to superfast broadband to 95% of all premises. Along with other District Councils, SSDC has made an 'in principle' commitment to help fund the second phase of the programme. This decision will be subject to final confirmation prior to the commencement of the second phase.
Focus 2. ENVIRONMENT			
C2.06 - Promote the Green Deal and similar schemes that enable householders and businesses to make existing buildings more energy efficient.	Not Started	Spatial Policy	Following officer discussion it was decided not to link the council with the Green Deal due to the reputational risk.
Focus 3. HOMES			
C3.05 - Have an adopted Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy in place by 2014 that will ensure all new development contributes towards important community infrastructure.	Partially Completed	Spatial Policy	South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) was adopted March 2015. The Community Infrastructure Levy will be submitted to the Examiner in the summer 2016, and is scheduled to be adopted in autumn 2016.
C3.06 - Identify a temporary stopping point for gypsies and travellers by 2014.	On Hold	Health & Wellbeing	No further progress/action since end of year 14/15: On hold. Decision taken in early 2014 for a site to be identified on a Somerset basis in conjunction with neighbour authorities, rather than proceeding on a stand-alone South Somerset basis (end of year report 14/15).
Focus 4. HEALTH & COMMUNITIES			
C4.06 - Work with and lobby partners to help communities to develop transport schemes and local solutions to reduce rural isolation and inequalities to meet existing needs of those communities.	On-going	Spatial Policy	This is on-going commitment, therefore carried forward.

**Appendix B:
2015/16 Annual Performance
Monitoring Report**

Key:						
Target:	On Target	<10% Below Target	>10% Below Target			
Trend:	Improved	↑	Stayed the Same	↔	Deteriorated	↓

Measure	15/16 Target	15/16 Outturn	Previous Year Outturn	Target	Trend	Comments
Corporate Performance Indicators:						
PI003 - % of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse	33%	25.00%	45%		↑	There has been a significant improvement in the councils' ability to defend decisions at appeal it is considered that the workshop with members will have contributed to this improved performance.
PI004 – Number of days taken to process Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events.	12.00	8.75	7.75		↓	
PI005a - % Working age people on out of work benefits	8.7%	6.9%	7.17%		↑	As at August 2015; Nov 2014 6.9/Feb 2015 7.1/ May 2015 6.9/ Aug 2015 6.9
PI008 – Requests for action from the Streetscene team	3,100	1,721	2100		↑	
PI010 – Total number of fly tips reported	1,800	1,079	1,253		↑	
PI011 – Total estimated cost of reported fly tips	£55,860	£51,045	£52,733		↑	
PI012 – Average number of days to respond to a reported fly tip	5.0	4.8	3.0		↓	This year we have focussed our resources towards other aspects of the service such as weed control and litter clearance of major roads & main road sweeping. We have delivered within the set timescales in the vast majority of cases, clearance has only gone over our target in cases where we had to investigate and clarify the incident (such as potential asbestos tipped, or land ownership type issues).
PI013 - % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	45%	45.6	45.1		↑	
PI014 - Performance against the Streetscene annual work program - 80% either on target or complete	80%	100%	98%		↑	

**Appendix B:
2015/16 Annual Performance
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Key:						
Target:	On Target	<10% Below Target	>10% Below Target			
Trend:	Improved	↑	Stayed the Same	↔	Deteriorated	↓

Measure	15/16 Target	15/16 Outturn	Previous Year Outturn	Target	Trend	Comments
PI019 – Average length of stay in Temporary Accommodation (B&B)	3.5	0.6	0.5		↓	
PI020 – Total number of people in Temporary Accommodation (all types)	75	38	36		↓	
PI026 - Number of Vacant Dwellings Returned to Occupation or Demolished	25	11	115		↓	11 empty properties were actively brought into use however the target was not met due to less officer time to spend on Empty Properties following combining the role with that of Housing Standards Officer. A further 43 properties were brought back into use without officer intervention.
PI026a - % of Vacant Dwellings Returned to Occupation or Demolished	4%	0%	18%		↓	Despite 11 properties being brought back into use the percentage shows as nil, as more properties came onto the Council Tax Baseline report than where taken off (October 2014, 636/ October 2015, 739).
PI031 - % of calls to the contact centre resolved in the contact centre	62%	<i>Data Not Available</i>	<i>Data Not Available</i>			Due to problems with integration between new Lync system and the Contact Centre telephony system no performance data has been available this year. The replacement Contact Centre Management System has now been successfully in use since 15th December. This performance indicator cannot be collected through the new Telephone Management system but other performance covering time taken to answer calls is available in the TEN performance system.

**Appendix B:
2015/16 Annual Performance
Monitoring Report**

Key:						
Target:	On Target	<10% Below Target	>10% Below Target			
Trend:	Improved	↑	Stayed the Same	↔	Deteriorated	↓

Measure	15/16 Target	15/16 Outturn	Previous Year Outturn	Target	Trend	Comments
PI032 – Working days lost due to sickness absence per Full Time Employee (FTE)	8	6.88 ¹	4.72		↓	<p>Total sickness absence per FTE came to 10.58. The figures have been broken down to show sickness absence in more detail.</p> <p>65% of absence was long term ¹ 32.7% was short term² sickness and 2.3 % phased returns³ to work.</p> <p>18% of total sickness absence was the result of long term sickness of 5 members of staff.</p> <p>28% of staff had no absence throughout the whole year. Training has been run for managers and team leaders on how to handle sickness absence.</p>
		3.46 ²	3.39			
		0.24 ³	0.46			
PI035 – Percentage of Council Tax Collected	95%	97.6%	97%		↑	
PI036 - % of staff either satisfied or very satisfied with the Council as an employer	75.00%	78.00%	80.50%		↓	
PI038 – Total cost of SSDC per head of population	£1111.35	106.07£	£106.07		↔	

**Appendix B:
2015/16 Annual Performance
Monitoring Report**

Measure	15/16 Outturn	Previous Year Outturn	Comments
South Somerset Indicators:			
PI001a – Number of Housing Benefit cases received	9,618	9,982	
PI001b – Number of Council Tax Reduction cases received	10,570	11,178	
PI002 – Total number of JSA claimants in South Somerset	701	836	
PI006 - Instances of inward investment into the District and measure of economic impact (number of new jobs created/ sustained/ start up business supported)	N/A	N/A	Approx. 30 enquiries were received from companies seeking to relocate to South Somerset. 3 of these enquiries were passed to us by the LEP. One of these companies has completed their relocation. Dialogue is ongoing with several of the enquirers. We continue to support 7 companies who relocated to South Somerset prior to 2015. The Into Somerset programme was relaunched in the autumn of 2015 following a brief break in service following the end of the original programme in March 2015. This will lead to an increase in enquiries in 2016/17.
PI007 - Number of Economic Development Enquiries	940	873	
PI009 – Number of bin collections missed per 1000 households (all types – dry recycling and kitchen waste, refuse and garden)	2.45	2.72	
PI015.1 - % of households on the Choice Based Letting waiting list in the Bronze banding	52.9%	55.6%	Q1 1,093/ Q2 1,096/ Q3 1,101/ Q4 1,048
PI015.2 - % of households on the Choice Based Letting waiting list in the Silver banding	33.2%	30.6%	Q1 647/ Q2 697/ Q3 697/ Q4 685
PI015.3 - % of households on the Choice Based Letting waiting list in the Gold banding	13.8%	13.7%	Q1 309/ Q2 283/ Q3 269/ Q4 267
PI015.4 - % of households on the Choice Based Letting waiting list in the Emergency banding	0.1%	0.1%	Q1 3/ Q2 4/ Q3 4/ Q4 0
PI021 - Affordable homes completed as a % of all new housing completions	N/A	17%	Primary evidence for this indicator is gathered and processed from 31st March 2016, the end of the financial year. The resulting data will be included in a report to District Executive on housing delivery – anticipated date August 2016.

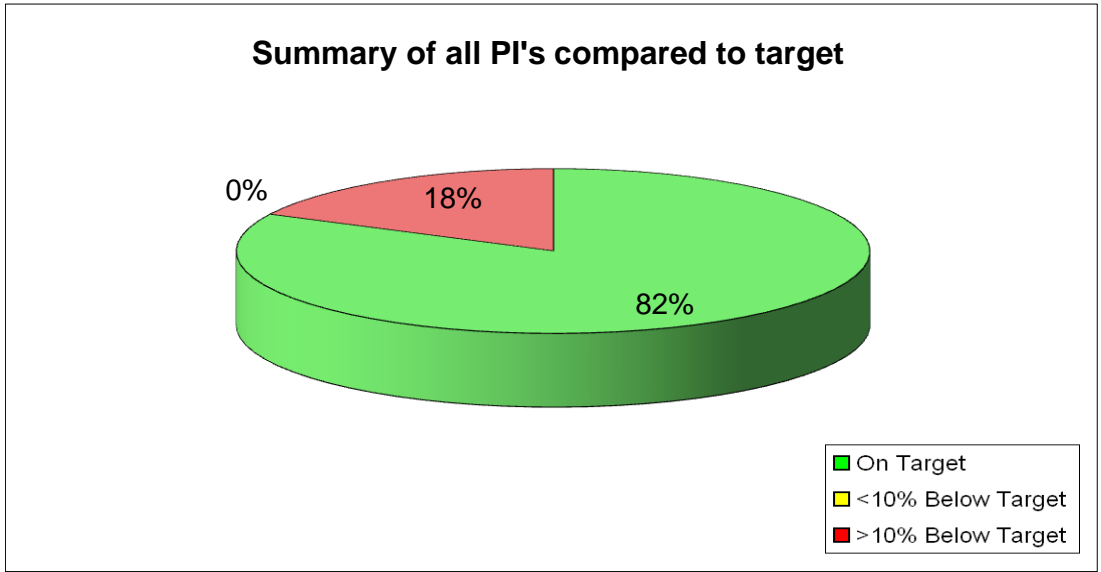
**Appendix B:
2015/16 Annual Performance
Monitoring Report**

Measure	15/16 Outturn	Previous Year Outturn	Comments
PI022 - % New Homes built on Previously Developed Land	N/A	21%	See comment of PI021.
PI023 - Net additional homes provided SSDC	N/A	779	See comment of PI021.
PI025 - Number of cases of homelessness helped	37	43	
PI027 - Number of new affordable homes enabled	N/A	134	See comment of PI021.
PI028 - Net increase in dwellings on the Council Tax Register	632	418	Data is from the Government return - CTB which is taken at October each year.
PI029 – Number of incidents of antisocial behaviour reported to SSDC (excluding fly tipping and dead animals)	2,080	1,727	Slight overall increase from last year of 8%. Most notable increases is that of reported abandoned vehicles that have increased this year by 110% to a total of 97 from 46 last year. Reports of noisy neighbours have seen an increase from 45 last year to 61 this, showing a 35% increase on the year.
PI030 - Number of local action groups supported per year	4	3	Yeovil, Crewkerne, Martock and Chard
PI033 – Total number of complaints received	243	148	There has been an increase in the number of complaints received. The majority of complaints have been resolved at stage 1 of the complaints procedure.
PI034 - % of complaints resolved at stage 1 of complaints procedure	96.4%	95.3%	
PI037.a - Number of FTEs employed by SSDC Annual Snapshot	409.68	418.64	

Appendix B - Performance Indicators 2015/16

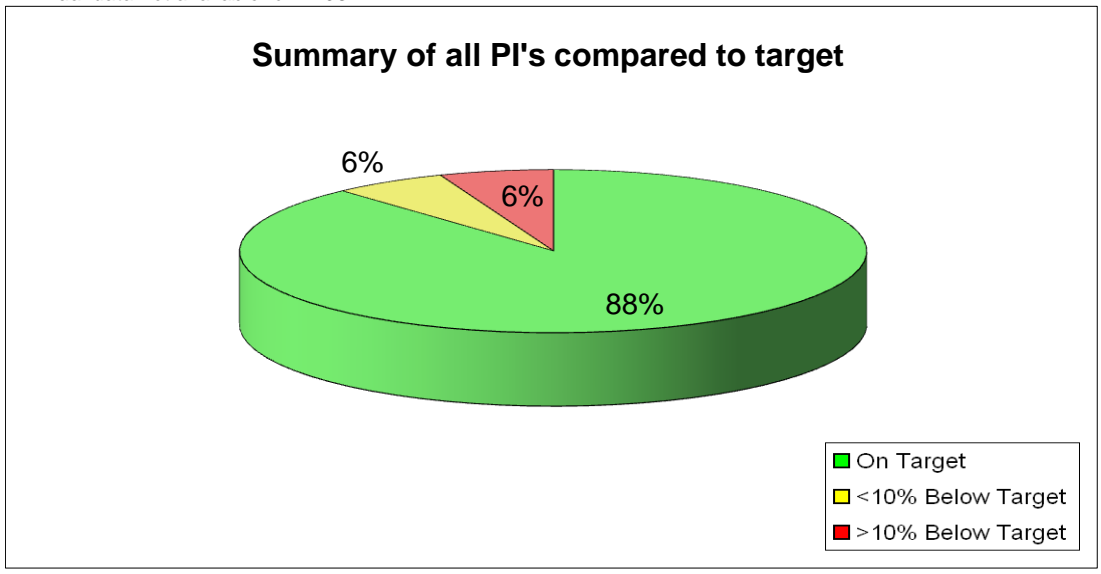
2015/16					
On Target	<10% Below Target	>10% Below Target	Total Comparable	Monitoring Trend - Not comparable to target	Total PIs*
14	0	3	17*	21	39
82%	0%	18%	100.00%		

*Annual data not available for PI 031 - see table.



2014/15					
On Target	<10% Below Target	>10% Below Target	Total Comparable	Monitoring Trend - Not comparable to target	Total PIs*
15	1	1	17*	21	39
88%	6%	6%	100.00%		

*Annual data not available for PI 031.



Appendix C
Complaints Monitoring 1st January 2016 – 31st March 2016

Key:
No Complaints

Service	Previous years totals					2015/16 complaints total	Access Method							Type							Stage			Compensation Issued? Y/N	Compensation Amount (£)	Action by SSDC							
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15		Email	In Person	Letter	Online	Other	Phone	Via CS	Equality	Failure to deliver	Issue with content/ publication	Issue with Policy/ Decision	Not SSDC Responsibility	Other Type	Poor Communication	Staff Handling	Stage One (Service Manager)	Stage Two (Assistant Director)			Stage Three (Ombudsman)	NO ACTION REQUIRED	Changes in working practice/ procedure	Improved Communication	Improved Monitoring of Service Delivery	Improved Partnership Working	Problem Rectified	Staff Training
Area East Development	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Area North Development	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	N	0	0	0	0	0	1	0		
Area South Development	1	3	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	N	0	0	0	0	1	0	0			
Area West Development	2	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Arts and Entertainment	31	15	19	13	21	33	23	1	6	0	0	3	0	9	7	3	1	9	0	4	33	0	0	N	0	30	3	0	0	0			
Building Control	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	N	0	0	1	0	0	0			
Civil Contingencies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Communications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Community Health & Leisure	4	4	1	3	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	0	0	N	0	1	0	1	0	2			
Countryside	9	10	1	1	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	N	0	2	0	0	0	0	0			
Crematorium	0	0	0	0	0	26	2	17	3	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	21	5	0	25	1	0	N	0	13	0	2	0	11			
Customer Focus Support	4	4	0	0	0	31	6	2	0	10	0	13	0	22	2	5	1	1	0	0	31	0	0	N	0	6	2	0	22	1			
Democratic Services	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Development Control/Spatial Policy	50	41	21	14	4	15	8	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	10	13	2	0	0	0	12	0	3	0	0	0			
Economic Development	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Engineering and Property	7	7	2	1	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	Y	£100	2	0	0	0	0	0		
Environmental Health	14	15	10	17	19	21	5	1	8	1	0	5	1	0	2	3	2	1	4	8	21	0	0	N	0	6	1	6	0	7	1		
Financial Services	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Fraud and Data	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	N	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Housing and Welfare	5	7	13	8	13	19	6	1	3	0	1	8	0	2	0	1	3	4	1	8	16	3	0	N	0	11	1	1	2	0	3	1	
HR	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	N	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ICT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Legal Services	0	8	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Licensing	4	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	N	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Performance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Procurement and Risk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Revenues and Benefits	12	20	20	17	45	37	20	0	7	8	0	2	0	4	1	9	0	9	2	12	36	1	0	N	0	21	0	3	0	0	12	1	
Spatial Systems	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Street Scene	52	60	59	23	25	31	12	0	2	14	0	1	2	0	14	0	2	11	0	1	3	31	0	0	N	0	11	1	2	0	0	16	1
Partnerships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste	45	20	19	20	12	16	7	0	4	0	0	1	4	0	6	0	4	0	4	2	0	16	0	0	N	0	6	0	0	0	0	10	0
Totals =	242	236	177	119	148	243	96	22	42	34	1	41	7	0	60	12	33	19	56	18	45	236	7	0	Yes	100	124	9	18	25	0	63	4
							243					243					243					243											

Note: A single complaint:

- May be reported using more than one access method.
- May cover more than one type.
- May not always require action or may require more than one action to be taken.

Agenda Item 8

Revised Homefinder Somerset Policy

Executive Portfolio Holder: Sylvia Seal, Leisure and Culture
Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess, Operations and Customer Focus
Assistant Director: Steve Joel, Health and Wellbeing
Service Manager: Kirsty Larkins, Housing and Welfare
Lead Officer: Kirsty Larkins, Housing and Welfare Manager, Housing and Welfare
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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to outline the proposed amendments to the current Homefinder Somerset Policy and seek agreement from District Executive to implement the revised policy.

Forward Plan

This report appeared District Executive Forward Plan with a anticipated Committee date of June 2016

Public Interest

The proposed changes in the report will change the way in which housing need is assessed when members of the public apply for social housing within Somerset. The changes may also impact applicants who are currently on the housing register, they may have their applications re-assessed and this could result in a change of banding.

Recommendations

- (1) District Executive approves the revised Homefinder Somerset Policy
- (2) To delegate authority to the Housing and Welfare Manager to approve the use of the plain English version of the policy.

Background

Homefinder Somerset (HFS) Partnership first went live in December 2008. The partnership consists of the five Local Authorities in Somerset and over forty social landlords. The HFS Partnership has undertaken a number of reviews since going “live” in 2008 in response to changes in legislation and welfare reform.

Over the last 12 months the HFS Monitoring Board has reviewed the common allocations policy in the response to ongoing changes to welfare reform and changes to the way applicants express an interest in properties.

The review has taken into account issues raised across the whole partnership. The draft policy has then been reviewed in detail by a variety of local authorities and registered provider groups. There was then a consultation exercise with applicants and stakeholders.

Proposed policy changes

The table below sets out the proposed policy changes, and the summary responses from the consultation feedback. Over 1,100 applicants (13.6% of the active register) responded to the

consultation exercise, with all changes being agreed. The full version of the amended policy change found in Appendix 1.

Appendix 2 summarizes in more detail feedback from the consultation exercise, the full consultation report runs to over 100 hundred pages and is published on the SSDC website but not included in this paper Agenda. We will provide feedback to applicants on the outcome of the consultation process via the HFS website.

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
3.2	<p>The main applicant is the individual named as such on the Homefinder Somerset application form. The application may include anyone that is reasonably expected to live together as part of the same household; this may include friends of the applicant. If a friend is included on the application then they will normally be expected to be a joint applicant and a joint tenant on any tenancy granted at the discretion of the landlord.</p>	<p>Change introduced to make clearer that when friends apply to the register, if they are housed they will be joint tenants with joint responsibility for the rent and any other charges.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree - 70.7% No view – 24.1%</p>
6.8	<p>The following types of applicants may be exempt from the requirement for a financial assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Applicants who have an overriding medical or support need; b) Applicants applying for extra care housing from a Homefinder Somerset partner landlord; c) Applicants applying for sheltered housing Homefinder Somerset partner landlord; d) Applicants who are under occupying a Homefinder Somerset partner landlord property type that is in high demand in a specific area (excluding private rented tenants); e) Applicants that need to be decanted from Homefinder Somerset partner landlord accommodation; f) Applicants that are left in a Homefinder Somerset partner landlord property where the tenancy agreement states that the Homefinder Somerset partner landlord will provide the applicant with another property when the tenant dies. <p>These exemptions will be dealt with on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>Additional categories of applicants that may be exempt from the financial assessment are suggested as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those applying for sheltered housing (because this is typically hard to let and not in high demand); • applicants applying for extra care properties (again because this property is hard to let and not in high demand); • applicants that need to be decanted (because they need to move quickly and their need to move isn't of their making); and • Those applicants that have been left in a property where they have a right to a new property (because the landlord has to rehouse these applicants and needs the usually larger property back for family housing). <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 62.2% No view – 33%</p>

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
6.12	Removal of gold band under occupation	<p>Under occupation is not a reasonable preference category within the Housing Act – it was included when the policy was originally drawn up (in 2007) because at that time 3 and 4 bedroom properties were in short supply and this banding was designed to free up these properties and make them available for families. Circumstances have now changed and 1 and 2 bed properties are now in higher demand so there isn't the need to free up larger properties. In addition the majority of applicants in this band have never bid and it is felt that including these applicants in gold band is incorrectly stating housing need. Applicants will be rebanded into bronze and asked to complete a change of circumstances if they feel they should be banded in a higher band.</p> <p>This will affect the following numbers of applicants (correct at 27.4.16)</p> <p>MDC 81 SDC 155 SSDC 131 TDBC 163 WSC 41 Total 571</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 73.5% No view – 16.9%</p>
6.12	<p>Supported Housing: The applicant resides within a short-term Supported Housing project (usually up to a maximum of two years) and is seeking to 'move-on' into independent accommodation. NB: The Project Manager of the scheme must confirm in writing that the applicant is ready for such a move and has acquired reasonable skills to sustain a tenancy. Until this time, the applicant will be placed within the Bronze Band. The effective date will be the date they entered the Supported Housing, or the date a homeless application was made, where the earliest</p>	<p>This change is to correct a mistake in the current policy. The date referred to should be the effective date in band rather than the registration date.</p> <p>This change was not consulted upon as it is a correction to reflect the actual process that is being carried out.</p>

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
	date will apply.	
6.12	<p>Tenancy Succession Where the Local Authority receives written support from a Homefinder Somerset landlord that an applicant has been living in a social housing property within the Homefinder Somerset area but has no legal right to succession on that property and the landlord confirms that they intend to pursue possession of the property, or the applicant needs to move to a different property in order to make best use of stock, then the applicant may be placed into gold band. The applicant will be subject automatic expressions of interest after a 9 month period. Please refer to section 26.8 for further details.</p>	<p>This change was added to enable landlords to move applicants in order to make the best use of stock.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 60.1% No view –36%</p>
6.12	<p>Disrepair: Based on the conditions identified by the local authority, it has been shown that your home has Category 1 hazards, Bands A - C (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) that CAN be resolved or reduced to a Category 2 hazard within 6 months and/or has shown that your home has Category 2 hazards, Band D (Housing Health & Safety Rating System).or at least 4 Category 2 Hazards of any rating. In all cases the landlord must be informed of the hazard in order for this banding to apply.</p>	<p>This change has been put forward to make clearer the requirements for a disrepair banding and to make clear that the landlord must be informed in all cases.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 81% No view –15.3</p>
	<p>Other Homeless: Homeless/threatened with homelessness applicants not accepted by the Homefinder Somerset partners under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 or who have nowhere to live (e.g. No Fixed Abode 'NFA'). This band will be awarded 2 months before the expiry date of a valid notice to quit.</p>	<p>We have made clear when this banding is awarded in terms of the timescale to the expiry of the valid notice to quit. This has been happening in practice for the past 5 years we have added it to the policy to make this clearer to applicants.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 62.3% No view –35.7%</p>
6.12	Removal of silver band children in flats banding	<p>This banding reason was introduced when the policy was first agreed back in 2007. Circumstances have now changed and it is felt reasonable that applicants with children that are under 10 should be able to be housed in flats and should therefore not be given a reasonable preference if they are already living in a flat.</p>

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
		<p>This will affect the following numbers of applicants (correct as at 27.4.16)</p> <p>MDC 82 SDC 81 SSDC 73 TDBC 56 WSC 23 Total 317</p> <p>These applicants may well be reassessed as silver because of other housing needs.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 53.3% No view –27.3%</p>
6.12	<p>Bronze Accepted An Offer That Doesn't Meet Needs The applicant has accepted a tenancy and moved into accommodation that does not meet their housing needs.</p>	<p>This paragraph has been rephrased to make it easier for applicants to understand what it means.</p> <p>Not consulted on as this is a rewording of the policy not a change.</p>
6.12	<p>Bronze Sheltered Housing/Extra Care No Local Connection Applicants applying for sheltered housing or extra care housing that have no local connection and no other housing needs.</p>	<p>This has been added to make it easier to let these types of properties (which are typically very hard to let) by encouraging applicants without a local connection to join the register for these properties.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 59.2% No view –29%</p>
7.3	Removed in revised policy	<p>This has been removed as it was felt that emergency banding was too high for this circumstance and it is now covered within gold band tenancy succession.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 63.5% No view –31.4%</p>
8.2	<p>In order to give additional priority to the following groups:</p> <p>(a) Serving members of the armed forces or those that have served in the last 5 years.</p> <p>(b) serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their</p>	<p>Clause a) has been reworded to make clear that it applies to those that are serving OR are former members of the armed forces that have left the services in the last 5 years.</p> <p>In addition we have now made clear that the backdating of the registration date to give additional priority will only be given once.</p>

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
	<p>service</p> <p>(c) bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, 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</p> <p>(d) serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service</p> <p>In these cases the effective date will be backdated two years from the date of application. The backdating can only be used once by any applicant.</p>	<p>Consultation Response wording change Strongly Agree/Agree – 60.4% No view –37%</p> <p>Consultation Response backdating change Strongly Agree/Agree – 57.2% No view –39.6%</p>
9.1	<p>If an applicant changes address and wishes to remain on the register a new housing register application must be completed within 28 days of the date of the change of address occurring.</p>	<p>This change has been put forward to make clear to applicants that they have a limited time period within which to tell us about their changes in circumstances. We have removed the facility for applicants to notify their changes to the LA by telephone as applicants are pushed towards the online form. Telephone help will still be given to vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Consultation Response addition of 28 days Strongly Agree/Agree – 77.7% No view –16.7%</p> <p>Consultation Response removal of telephone facility for change of address Strongly Agree/Agree – 78.1% No view –13.5%</p>
13.1	<p>Applicants will be able to express an interest for selected properties that match the needs of their household. A maximum of two people can share a bedroom. Household members living together as a couple will be assessed as requiring one bedroom unless there are exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p>We have added in the words ‘normally’ in order to provide flexibility to allow more than two children to share a bedroom if the applicant wants to do this in order to express an interest in a smaller sized property.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 47.5%</p>

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
	<p>To calculate the bedroom eligibility we normally allow one bedroom for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single applicant or couple (married or unmarried) <p>We normally allow one additional bedroom for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any two children of the same sex under the age of 16 • Any two children under 10 irrespective of sex • Any other person aged 16 or over • Any other child, (other than a child whose main home is elsewhere) • A carer who does not live in the household but provides a household member with long term overnight care 	<p>No view –29.3%</p>
13.5.3	<p>The main or joint applicant has adult child/children in full time education and their main and principle home is with the main or joint applicant. Except where the child /children is in rented accommodation for the purposes of attending their full time education course where an additional bedroom cannot be granted (except where this accommodation is for term time only). Evidence for this will be required (e.g. halls of residence letter, tenancy agreement).</p>	<p>This change has been introduced to make clear that applicants with children in full time education who are away from home that live in accommodation that is for term time only will be granted an additional bedroom.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 67.9% No view –23.1%</p>
13.5.5	<p>The main or joint applicant is pregnant. If the expected baby would mean a change to the existing bedroom need of the household an additional bedroom can be granted on receipt of evidence of expected delivery date. If the award of an additional bedroom would affect the banding of the application this will not take effect until confirmation of the birth is received.. Evidence will be required for this (e.g. the main or joint applicant adding new child's details to the application by completing an online change of circumstances or receipt of a birth certificate.).</p>	<p>We have removed the reference to the MATB1 form as this is now not given to pregnant applicants but they are given an expected delivery date.</p> <p>Not consulted on as this isn't a change we have a choice over.</p>
13.6.2	<p>There is evidence that a member of the main or joint applicant's household has the need for regular overnight care. Under normal circumstances an additional bedroom will not be given for</p>	<p>We have removed the requirement that a qualifying benefit must be in payment as this wasn't felt to be a useful evidential requirement for the need for the additional bedroom.</p>

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
	<p>short periods of incapacity or for recovery periods from serious operations /illness. Only one additional bedroom may be granted under this criterion. Evidence for this could include a care plan, occupational therapist report/letter, medical professional report/letter.</p>	<p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 60.7% No view –29%</p>
<p>14.1 – 14.7</p>	<p>14. Medical & Welfare Assessments (For the purposes of the medical and welfare assessments the applicant or the member of the household affected will be referred to as the individual).</p> <p>14.1 The approach when banding under medical and welfare is to focus on how the individual’s medical and welfare issues and their general well-being could be improved by a move to alternative accommodation. Account will be taken of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The individual’s medical or welfare condition; ii. The affect the current property / environment has on the individuals medical or welfare condition; and iii. How moving to an alternative property would help the individual’s medical or welfare issues or improve their general well-being. <p>14.2. The Homefinder Somerset scheme reserves the right to request supporting evidence when banding under the medical or welfare criteria. Evidence from a third party is mandatory when considering the award of Gold or Emergency band. Any evidence submitted should be from a professional person who has first-hand knowledge of the individual and the environment they live in. The professional should advise of the individual’s medical or welfare condition and give their professional opinion on the affect the current property / environment has on the individuals medical or welfare condition.</p>	<p>This section has been completely redrafted to provide much clearer guidance on the medical & welfare assessment and under what circumstances a welfare banding could be awarded.</p> <p>Consultation Response Medical Agreed – 81.6%</p> <p>Consultation Response Welfare Agreed – 84.5%</p>

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
	<p>14.3 A medical professional could include an Occupational Therapist, a Doctor, a Community Psychiatric Nurse or a Consultant. A professional worker could include a Social Worker, Environmental Health Officer, Health Visitor or Housing Officer. The Homefinder Somerset scheme is aware that professional time is at a premium and do not expect applicants to specifically request medical professionals to write letters. Reports and letters from the applicant's consultant to the applicant's Doctor for example may be sufficient. It should be noted that any fees that applicant's incur to provide this information cannot be reimbursed. and do not expect applicants to specifically request medical professionals to write letters. Reports and letters from the applicant's consultant to the applicant's Doctor for example may be sufficient. It should be noted that any fees that applicant's incur to provide this information cannot be reimbursed. The final decision on applicable banding will be made by housing officers from the relevant local authority.</p> <p>14.4. The medical and, or welfare issues of any individual can be assessed as follows:</p> <p>Medical</p> <p><i>(i) Physical condition/illness:</i> An assessment will be made taking account of the information provided by the applicant and any medical professional who has knowledge of the individual, their conditions and the effect the current property is having on their conditions.</p> <p><i>(ii) Mental Health</i> An assessment will be made taking into account the information provided by the applicant and any professional worker who has knowledge of the individual, their mental health conditions and the effect the current property or local environment is having on their mental health.</p>	

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
	<p>Welfare</p> <p>(i) General Welfare An assessment of the property and the local environment the individual is currently living in will be made to establish whether the individual has access to reasonably comfortable, affordable and secure living standard based on the information provided by the applicant and any professional worker who has knowledge of the individual and the environment the individual is living in. Consideration of the general housing circumstances in the district, the availability of facilities, resources and services in the property and the local environment where the individual lives in will be taken into account as well as the ability of the individual to access them.</p> <p>(ii) Financial hardship A full assessment of the household's income and expenditure will be undertaken to determine if the cost of the current accommodation is affordable or if it is creating financial hardship that cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time.</p> <p>All medical or welfare applications will initially be assessed by an appropriate member of the Housing Team based on the medical & welfare assessment notes in Appendix 2.</p> <p>14.6. Following a medical or welfare assessment, the applicant will be informed in writing of the outcome. If the applicant does not agree with the assessment a senior officer will review the banding. If the applicant still disagrees with their banding their case will be considered by the Choice Based Letting Operational Group at the next monthly meeting.</p> <p>14.7. Where an individual's medical or welfare circumstances changes, these</p>	

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
	details should be submitted in writing together with any supporting evidence as soon as the change occurs.	
15.1	The application form asks applicants about the condition of their current home this information will be used by other officers to assess any hazards and an additional inspection of the property may be carried out. If the applicant resides outside of the Homefinder Somerset area, then the Homefinder Somerset Partnership will contact the respective Local Authority to arrange an inspection, if required.	<p>The underlined text has been removed because this procedure doesn't actually occur and probably never did. The text now better reflects what actually happens in each partner.</p> <p>Not consulted on as this is a wording change only to reflect actual practice.</p>
22.1	Adverts will also give information on who will be eligible to apply for the property. For example, an adapted property suitable for someone in a wheelchair may be labelled to say that applicants must require such a property.	<p>We have removed certain text referring to the application of age labels on sheltered accommodation, as equalities advice has indicated that in all but very special circumstances the application of age barriers on adverts is in contravention of the Equalities Act.</p> <p>Not consulted on as change needed to comply with equalities advice.</p>
22.4	The Homefinder Somerset housing authorities usually only accept applications to join their housing register where the main or joint applicant has a local connection to the Homefinder Somerset area (with some exceptions). Local connection can only be established by the main or joint applicant. Where applicants feel that their circumstances are so exceptional that they should be allowed to join the housing register with no local connection to the area, such applications will be assessed by the Local Authority Operational Group on a monthly basis.	<p>The underlined text has been added to address an issue raised in a recent case (LB Ealing) where the blanket application of a local connection qualification requirement that excludes those with a reasonable preference with no local connection was contrary to the law. This amendment will give us flexibility to allow applicants with no local connection but with a reasonable preference housing need to apply to the register.</p> <p>Not consulted upon as change made to reduce risk of legal challenge as a result of recent legal case.</p>
22.4	The main or joint applicant has work in the Homefinder Somerset area. The Local Government Association guidelines define this as employment other than of a casual nature. For the purposes of this policy this will be defined as having had permanent work	<p>We have removed a reference to working in the area for at least 6 months, as this was contrary to the Right to Move statutory instrument.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree - 73.4%</p>

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
	with a minimum of a 16 hour contract per week, and without a break in the period of employment for more than three months.	No view – 19.9%
22.4	<p>Main or joint applicants that fall within the following categories will be deemed to have a local connection to Somerset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) Serving members of the armed forces or those that have served in the last 5 years. • (b) serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service • (c) bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, 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 • (d) serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service • (e) Applicants applying for extra care properties only (note that in the absence of any other housing need these applicants will be placed in bronze band and will only be able to bid on extra care vacancies.) • (f) Applicants applying for sheltered housing only (note that in the absence of any other housing need these applicants will be placed in bronze band and will only be able to bid on sheltered housing vacancies.) 	<p>We have reworded section a) to make it clearer that this applies to both serving and former members of the armed forces.</p> <p>In addition section e) and f) have been added to reflect the amendment to the policy mentioned earlier whereby applicants for extra care housing and sheltered housing will be able to join the register if they have no local connection.</p> <p>Not consulted on as change to wording is reflected in other consultation questions which have all been agreed.</p>
24.2	Each individual landlord is responsible for the verification of the successful applicant and discrepancies in your application will	We have added in text to make it clear to applicants what the timescales are for them to make a decision. These

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
	<p>be referred back to the local authority and this may result in a change to your banding. Each applicant will be given the opportunity to view the property before making a final decision on whether to accept or refuse. Applicants will be expected to view a property within 48 hours (following contact from the landlord) and will be expected to make a decision on any offer within 48 hours of receiving the offer.</p>	<p>timescales have been in place via the schemes procedures since we went live but LA partners feel it would be best if these were also reflected in the policy itself for the benefit of applicants.</p> <p>Consultation Response Agreed - 84.1%</p>
26.6	<p>Applicants approved as being, or threatened with being homeless are placed in the gold band; and are expected to use their three weekly expressions of interest against any suitable properties advertised through the Homefinder Somerset scheme. If an applicant has been unsuccessful in securing a property within four weeks of the date the applicant was accepted as being, or threatened with being homeless; the Local Authority may decide to place expressions of interest on the applicant's behalf. The Local Authority will ensure the properties are suitable for the household in line with the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012. If the homeless applicant refuses a suitable offer of accommodation, the Local Authority will consider its duty towards them as a homeless household discharged, subject to the statutory review process. The Local Authority may decide to use its power to discharge the homeless duty with a suitable Private Rented Sector Offer. In either case the gold band status for accepted as being, or threatened with being homeless will end.</p>	<p>This section has been reworded to reflect the practice in some LA partners with regard to gold band homelessness and the use of automatic expressions of interest within the system and how the LA partner may then discharge its homelessness duties.</p> <p>Consultation Response Strongly Agree/Agree – 66.4% No view – 28.9%</p>
Appendix 1	<p>Addition of following words into disrepair guidance</p> <p>Please note that with regard to Category 2 rated hazards Environmental Health staff are under no obligation to take any action with regard to these issues.</p>	<p>This has been added following discussions with Environmental Health staff. This now makes it clear that EH staff are under no obligation to take action for category 2 hazards.</p> <p>This was not consulted upon as it's a procedural change.</p>

Policy Ref	Revised policy wording	Reason for amendment to wording and result of consultation feedback from applicants.
Appendix 3 Medical & Welfare Guidance	This appendix has been completely rewritten to provide clearer guidance on the medical AND welfare issues that are covered by the policy. Appendix 3 gives the full changes	The appendix now provides clear guidance on the various bandings for medical and welfare situations. Not consulted upon because the changes are procedural and medical and welfare main changes have been consulted on already.

Following applicant and stakeholder feedback the partnership is currently working on a plain English version of the allocations policy. This version will not change the substance of the policy but will make it more accessible to members of the public.

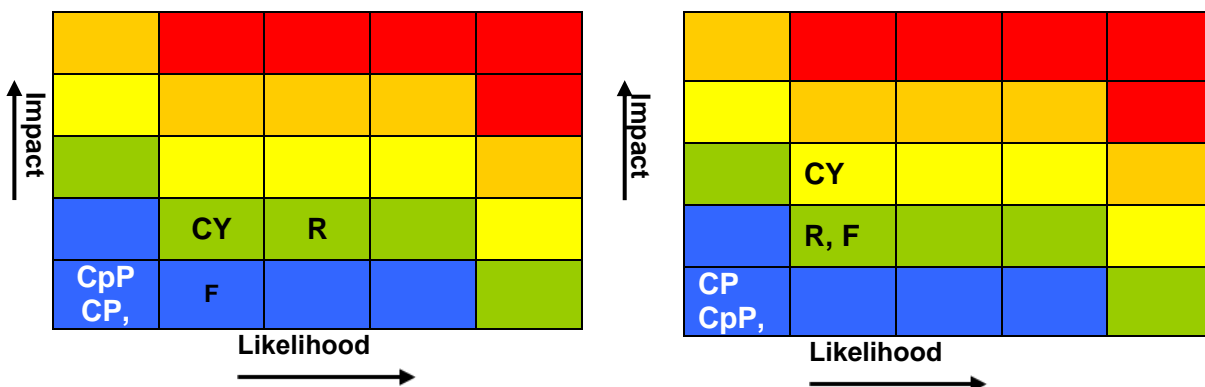
Financial Implications

There are potentially some additional staffing costs due to the work involved with reassessing applicants housing need. These costs will be met within the current Housing and Welfare Budget.

Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations

Risk Profile after officer recommendations



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

Homes

To work with partners to enable the provision of housing that meets the future and existing needs of residents and employers we will:

- Minimise homelessness and rough sleeping.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out across the HFS partnership.

Privacy Impact Assessment

There are no impacts on privacy.

Background Papers

- District Executive Report Revised Homefinder Somerset Policy 03/10/13
 - Appendix 2 - Homefinder Somerset - 2016 Allocation Policy Consultation Feedback
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homefindersomerset.co.uk

Homefinder Somerset Common Lettings Policy

April 2016

How the Somerset Choice Based
Lettings Scheme Works

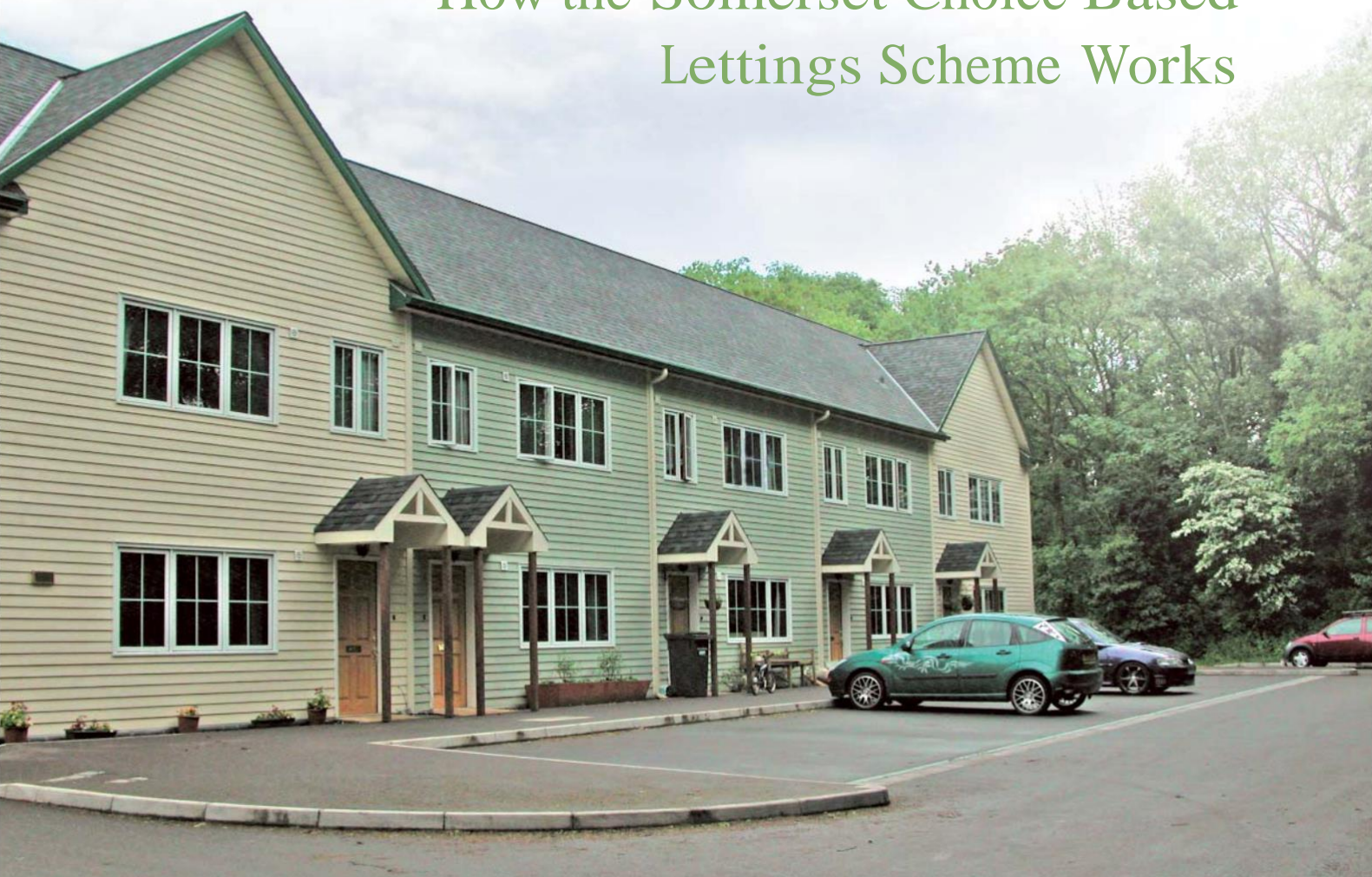




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Homefinder Somerset - Common Lettings & Assessment Policy

I. Introduction

I.1. This document describes the Homefinder Somerset Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBL) and Common Housing Allocation Policy run by the five Somerset district councils in partnership with the majority of housing associations operating within Somerset. It has been drawn up with regard to the following documents:

- Somerset Strategic Housing Framework
- Somerset Homelessness Strategy
- Somerset Tenancy Strategy

I.2. We believe that such schemes involving a partnership of housing authorities and registered providers of social housing working together with private landlords wherever possible is the best way to achieve the greatest choice and flexibility meeting applicant's needs.

The scheme's key objectives are:

- To deliver a customer-led choice based lettings system.
- To widen the choice of housing outside traditional local authority boundaries.
- To ensure the scheme is open, fair and accountable to applicants and staff.
- To increase understanding and satisfaction in the lettings system.
- To give new tenants a feeling of ownership of their property.
- To help create 'sustainable' communities.
- To make more efficient use of the available housing stock.
- To help tackle low demand.
- To reduce 'void' turnaround times.
- To reduce the number of refusals on 'hard to let' properties.
- To create a single point of access to all social housing in the County.
- To bring together a larger pool of available housing, giving applicants more choice and helping to ease localised problems of high demand.
- To enable greater regional mobility.
- To meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002).

2. The Scheme in Brief

2.1. All applicants for social housing across Somerset will complete the same application form and will be assessed against the same clear set of criteria laid out in the 'Banding' structure (see section 6). Depending on their circumstances, applicants will be placed into one of four Bands, Gold, Silver, and Bronze or in a very small number of cases an Emergency Priority Band.

2.2. Once the application has been registered, applicants will be advised of their banding, application date, the size of property they are eligible for, together with a personal reference number which will enable them to express an interest for social housing vacancies being



advertised across the whole of Somerset. Affordable housing including shared ownership and accredited private sector vacancies may also be advertised using this same process.

- 2.3. Expressions of interest for properties can be made, by using an automated phone line, the Homefinder Somerset website (via the Internet), or in person by visiting an office of one of the partner landlords. Applicants will be able to monitor the success of their expressions of interest and their history of expressions of interest via the website.
- 2.4. Once the deadline has passed for expressions of interest to be made, the successful applicant will usually be the person in the highest band with the earliest application date. An offer will then be made subject to the potential landlord confirming the details on the original application form and the current circumstances of the applicant. Incorrect information may result in the offer being withdrawn and the band being re-assessed.
- 2.5. Applicants for sheltered or supported housing will also have an assessment of their support needs. Applicants with identified support needs that express an interest for sheltered or supported housing vacancies will have priority over other applicants within the same band irrespective of whether those with no identified support needs have an earlier application date.
- 2.6. The banding and application date of the successful applicant, together with the total number of expressions of interest made for each property will be published. This enables applicants to develop realistic expectations regarding their chances of success and likely waiting period.

3. Application Procedure - Who Can Apply?

- 3.1. The Homefinder Somerset Register is open to almost any one. It may include existing tenants looking to transfer to another property, homeless families looking for a permanent home and other applicants who either rent in the private sector, own or are buying a property or lodging with family and friends. Married couples and civil partners will receive equal treatment under the policy. Social landlords normally allocate properties to families in order to make the best use of stock – please refer to section 13 (property size) for more information.
- 3.2. The main applicant is the individual named as such on the Homefinder Somerset application form. The application may include anyone that is reasonably expected to live together as part of the same household; this may include friends of the applicant. If a friend is included on the application then they will normally be expected to be a joint applicant and a joint tenant on any tenancy granted at the discretion of the landlord.
- 3.3. Where the main applicant names a joint applicant on their Homefinder Somerset application they will be treated as joint applicants. Where the policy refers to applicants this includes the main and joint applicants.



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- 3.4. To apply for a property, applicants must be registered on the Homefinder Somerset Register and that application must reflect their current circumstances.
- 3.5. Application packs are available from the offices of all the partners within the scheme and include details of how the scheme works and how to find and express an interest for a home
- 3.6. Who Cannot Participate?
- 3.6.1. The Homefinder Somerset Register is open to all applicants except the following:
- 3.6.2. Persons from abroad who fail the 'habitual residence' test, UNLESS they have refugee status, exceptional leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain. Habitual Residency provides details about an applicant's right to stay in the UK and any eligibility for public housing.
- 3.6.3. There are certain regulations laid out by statute that govern the allocation of properties to persons from abroad and these will be referred to when assessing applications.

Persons between 16 and 18 years of age

- 3.6.4. It should be noted that a tenancy will not usually be given to applicants under the age of 18 years without a 'guarantor' (e.g. Social Services, parent, guardian, litigation friend). Partner organisations may have different policies in dealing with persons under the age of 18. For more details please contact the individual landlord.

Non Qualifying Persons

- 3.6.5 Applicants who do not have a local connection to one of the five local authority partners within Homefinder Somerset (as defined in section 22.4 below) will not qualify to join the Homefinder Somerset Housing Register.

3.7. What Other Factors Are Taken Into Account?

- 3.7.1. An application can be affected where there is evidence that an applicant has broken their existing or previous tenancy conditions (including rent arrears and anti-social behaviour) for which there are statutory grounds for possession, or who have committed acts of physical violence against staff or other residents. Grounds will not be used as a 'blanket ban' against all such people, but will be considered alongside each applicant's relative housing need. See Selection Procedure 24.3.
- 3.7.2. Where possible, such grounds will be identified at the initial application stage of the Homefinder Somerset process and the applicant will be informed in writing that any expression of interest for a property may be unsuccessful. All partners of Homefinder Somerset will also be notified of this decision. Applicants will be informed, on request, of decisions about the facts of the case that may affect whether to allocate housing.



3.7.3. Any applicant has the right for a review of the following decisions:

- a) That they are ineligible.
- b) That all priority will be suspended because of unacceptable behaviour.
- c) About the facts of their case: e.g. banding or eligibility for a property.

A Housing Officer who has not been involved in the original decision will carry out such reviews.



4. Protocol for Housing Dangerous Offenders and Potentially Dangerous Offenders

- 4.1. All five District Councils within the scheme have entered into an agreement to use the Somerset Multi-Agency Protocol in dealing with dangerous offenders in order to exchange information on any applicant who has been convicted of a serious offence. Any applicant who confirms on their application form, or who is suspected, or accused, of being a dangerous offender, will be subjected to the provisions set out in the information exchange protocol.
- 4.2. There is not a blanket ban preventing dangerous offenders from being included on the housing register. However, before any known offender is offered housing, full consultation will be undertaken with the relevant support agencies to assess the risks involved. Some dangerous offenders will be given a high priority so that the relevant agencies can continue to monitor them. The Somerset Multi-Agency Protocol is only for specific offender group and only covers referrals from the Public Protection Team and Avon and Somerset Constabulary and does not guarantee the provision of a tenancy.
- 4.3. Re-housing of dangerous offenders will be carried out in consultation with the relevant agencies to minimise the risk to the public and with the long term aim of influencing the successful accommodation and resettlement of the offender, thus minimising the risk of re-offending and protecting the public and victims of offenders. The Local Authorities or Probation will express an interest on behalf of any applicant who falls within this category.
- 4.4. In the interests of public protection, it is essential that the Police and Probation Service are able to control and monitor the behaviour and activities of dangerous offenders. This task is made more difficult if such offenders do not have a fixed address or are housed in circumstances that make it difficult for the agencies to monitor them appropriately.

5. Transfer Policy

- 5.1. All existing tenants of the partners have the right to apply for a transfer, subject to any restrictions that apply to their tenancy. Tenants' housing needs will be assessed and placed in the relevant band on the register together with all other applicants.
- 5.2. Some advertised properties will be labelled giving preference to transfer applicants to ensure that each landlord makes the best use of their housing stock.



6. Assessment of Applications

- 6.1. The scheme will assess all applications according to the level of housing need of individual applicants. All applications will be placed into one of four Bands - Gold, Silver or Bronze or in exceptional circumstances placed into Emergency Priority Band (section 7 refers).

Applicants financial resources

- 6.2 Social Housing provided throughout Homefinder Somerset is for people who are considered to have insufficient resources to meet their housing need.
- 6.3 The resources available to each household will be assessed to determine whether they are sufficient to meet their housing need in accordance with this policy.

Household Income

- 6.4 Applicants with a gross household income more than five times higher than the relevant Local Housing Allowance level (or successor) prevailing in the relevant Somerset local authority area at the time will normally be considered to be able to meet their housing need, through either renting privately or owner occupation. Local affordability issues will be taken into account given that some areas of Somerset have especially high property values. Such applicants will therefore be placed in the Bronze housing need band unless the applicant falls within the circumstances set out at 6.8 below.
- 6.5 Further information on the financial assessment and the Local Housing Allowance rates that apply across Somerset are available from local authority housing teams.

The following types of income are fully disregarded:

- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance

Capital, Savings and Equity

- 6.6 The capital, savings, property, land and equity available to an applicant's household will be assessed. If it is determined that, given:
- The applicant's household capital, savings, property, land and equity;
 - The size and composition of the applicant's household;
 - The local housing market (for example prices to buy or rent privately);

that an applicant can resolve their own housing need within their local housing market, they will be placed in the bronze housing need band.

- 6.7 Applicants can contact their local authority housing teams for details of how this assessment is made.



6.8 The following types of applicants may be exempt from the requirement for a financial assessment:

- a) Applicants who have an overriding medical or support need;
- b) Applicants applying for extra care housing from a Homefinder Somerset partner landlord;
- c) Applicants applying for sheltered housing Homefinder Somerset partner landlord;
- d) Applicants who are under occupying a Homefinder Somerset partner landlord property type that is in high demand in a specific area (excluding private rented tenants);
- e) Applicants that need to be decanted from Homefinder Somerset partner landlord accommodation;
- f) Applicants that are left in a Homefinder Somerset partner landlord property where the tenancy agreement states that the Homefinder Somerset partner landlord will provide the applicant with another property when the tenant dies.

These exemptions will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

6.9 Partner landlords within Homefinder Somerset may have different policies relating to the levels of income and other assets of those households that they will accommodate. Whether an expression of interest for a home is accepted will therefore be subject to the policies of the each partner landlord. More information is available from each Homefinder Somerset partner.

6.10 Applicants may be required to demonstrate that they can afford the rent on any prospective tenancy before being allowed to sign for it.

Banding Criteria

6.11 Note that an applicant who accepts an offer of housing that does not fully meet their housing needs and then subsequently reapplies to the housing register with no change in their circumstances, will normally be placed in the bronze band.

6.12 The criteria for being placed within each band is as follows:

Gold Band

Homeless/Threatened with Homelessness:

Applicants accepted as homeless by a local authority within the Homefinder Somerset area under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) including Rent (Agricultural) Act Cases.

Lack of bedrooms / Overcrowding:

Applicants who lack 2 or more bedrooms, (Section 13 refers) or have been confirmed as overcrowded (defined as a category 1 hazard and/or Statutory overcrowded) by a Local Authority officer, UNLESS evidence exists that proves the overcrowding is deliberate. Where an applicant is sharing facilities please also see Silver band Lodger/Shared Accommodation.



Harassment:

The applicant is a victim of harassment or violence (including racial harassment) at their current property within the Homefinder Somerset area, providing evidence exists to substantiate the claim (e.g. from Police/Housing Officers). This band will last for three months and may be extended for a further three months if the harassment or violence is continuing and evidence is provided to confirm this. Applicants must express an interest on properties away from the area where the harassment or violence is or has been occurring.

Medical/Welfare:

The applicant is awarded a 'high' medical/welfare priority (see section 14).

Note that where public monies have been committed or works begun to adapt the applicants property to meet the applicants housing needs the applicant may be moved to bronze band.

Disrepair:

Based on the conditions identified, the local authority has deemed your home to have the presence of Category 1 hazards, Bands A - C (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) that CANNOT be resolved or reduced to a Category 2 hazard within 6 months. In all cases the landlord must be informed of the hazard for this banding to apply.

Supported Housing:

The applicant resides within a short-term Supported Housing project within the Homefinder Somerset area (usually up to a maximum of two years) and is seeking to 'move-on' into independent accommodation. NB: The Project Manager of the scheme must confirm in writing that the applicant is ready for such a move and has acquired reasonable skills to sustain a tenancy. Until this time, the applicant will be placed within the Bronze Band. The effective date will be the date they entered the Supported Housing, or the date a homeless application was made, where the earliest date will apply.

Care Leavers:

Where a young person who has been looked after, fostered or accommodated and has had a duty of care accepted under the Children Act in the Homefinder Somerset area, and is ready for independent living, they should be awarded gold band to enable a planned move on to independent suitable accommodation providing a support plan is in place. The application date will be the date of the applicants 16th birthday.

Combined Medical/Welfare:

The applicant has been awarded a 'medium' medical priority, combined with a 'medium' disrepair award from the Silver Band (See Appendix 1&2).

Cumulative need

The applicant is awarded three or more silver band housing needs with the exception of those applicants that are found to be intentionally homeless by the relevant local authority.



Decants

Social Housing Tenants of a Homefinder Somerset landlord whose existing properties are subject to major works for rebuilding/renovation or re-designation and are within the Homefinder Somerset area and need to move to another location, will be placed into the gold band to enable them to move quickly. Applicants will be placed into gold band up to 12 months before the proposed start date of the scheme/works (this date has to be confirmed by the landlord) and will be given an effective date 1 year prior to their actual application date.

Tenancy Succession

Where the Local Authority receives written support from a Homefinder Somerset landlord that an applicant has been living in a social housing property within the Homefinder Somerset area but has no legal right to succession on that property and the landlord confirms that they intend to pursue possession of the property, or the applicant needs to move to a different property in order to make best use of stock, then the applicant may be placed into gold band. The applicant will be subject automatic expressions of interest after a 9 month period. Please refer to section 26.8 for further details.

Silver Band

Medical/Welfare:

Applicant awarded a 'medium' medical /welfare priority (see section 14).

Disrepair:

Based on the conditions identified by the local authority, it has been shown that your home has Category 1 hazards, Bands A - C (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) that CAN be resolved or reduced to a Category 2 hazard within 6 months and/or has shown that your home has Category 2 hazards, Band D (Housing Health & Safety Rating System).or at least 4 Category 2 Hazards of any rating. In all cases the landlord must be informed of the hazard in order for this banding to apply.

Lodgers/Shared Facilities:

Applicants that have dependent children and are lodging with friends or family or in accommodation with shared living facilities. This will take precedence over any lack of bedroom requirements.

Lack of bedrooms:

Applicants who lack one bedroom in their current home.

Other Homeless:

Homeless/threatened with homelessness applicants not accepted by the Homefinder Somerset partners under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 or who have nowhere to live (e.g. No Fixed Abode 'NFA'). This band will be awarded 2 months before the expiry date of a valid notice to quit.



Split Families:

Applicants who, not by choice are living in separate households due to the lack of suitable accommodation available, and cannot live together and wish to be re-housed and have not been accepted by the Homefinder Somerset Partners under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). This includes those who may not have been living as part of the household at the time of the application, but whom it would be reasonable to expect to live with the applicant, as part of his/her household. An application form should be completed by the household living in the worst property out of the households applying, to ensure the application is placed in the correct banding.

Work/Support

Applicants who are able to demonstrate the need to move nearer their place of work within, the Homefinder Somerset area because they have secured or has permanent employment (over 16 hours) in the area (evidence of the employment must be provided). Also applicants who are able to demonstrate the need to move nearer local facilities or relatives, in order to receive, or give, essential and critical medical or other support or care within the Homefinder Somerset area where significant harm would result if this was not provided.

Bronze Band

Adequately Housed:

Applicants who, at the time of their application, live in a property which is adequate for their needs in terms of size and facilities. This applies to applicants who live in social housing, are owner-occupiers or tenants of private landlords. Note an applicant that lives in a self contained bedsit/studio flat or apartment where no facilities are shared will be banded in bronze unless they have other housing needs.

Owner occupiers:

Applicants who are owner-occupiers (this includes shared equity properties), whose home is not suitable for their needs and who have sufficient equity within the property to obtain suitable alternative accommodation. The Local Authority will consider each application on an individual basis. (Note: high medical needs or disrepair problems may over-ride this rule and place the applicant in a higher band).

Medical/ welfare:

Applicants awarded a low medical/welfare assessment. (See Section 14)

Disrepair:

No significant hazards identified justifying enforcement action by the local authority. (See Appendix 1).



Move-on:

Applicants who are living in short term supported housing within the Homefinder Somerset area or are care leavers, prior to confirmation received by the Project Manager of the scheme or relevant care leavers protocol arrangements that the applicant is ready to move on, (at which point they will be placed into the Gold Band whilst maintaining their original application date).

Lodgers/Shared Facilities:

Applicants with no dependent children that are lodging with friends or family or in accommodation with shared living facilities. This will take precedence over any lack of bedroom requirements.

Adequate Financial Resources

Applicants that are deemed to have adequate financial resources that can meet their own housing needs.

Accepted An Offer That Doesn't Meet Needs

The applicant has accepted a tenancy and moved into accommodation that does not meet their housing needs.

Previous use of Under Occupation

The applicant has previously made use of the underoccupation banding and has reapplied to the register with no other change in circumstances.

No Housing Need

The applicant has no identifiable housing need.

Deliberately Worsened Circumstances

Households that have been assessed as having deliberately worsened their housing circumstances by moving into accommodation that is unsuitable for their needs and /or by taking no action to improve their circumstances which can be evidenced may be placed into bronze band.

Sheltered Housing/Extra Care No Local Connection

Applicants applying for sheltered housing or extra care housing that have no local connection and no other housing needs.



7. Emergency Priority Band

- 7.1. An 'Emergency Priority Band' will only be issued to any applicant who requires an 'urgent' move to ensure the applicant's safety and welfare for whatever reason. Substantial evidence must exist before such a priority is awarded. This priority may be awarded where circumstances could include:
- a) The award of an 'urgent' medical assessment as defined in appendix 2 or
 - b) The award of an 'urgent' disrepair inspection by a Housing Standard Officer or Environmental Health Officer (EHO), or
 - c) In extreme cases where the Police or other relevant agency recommend an urgent move to escape violence or threats of violence. Applicants must express an interest on properties away from the area where the violence or threat is or has been occurring) , or
 - d) Where the applicant, or a member of their household, has suffered a sudden 'traumatic event' which is linked to their home and living within their home will cause considerable distress (e.g. serious sexual assault), or
 - e) Where there are extreme cases of cumulative need and where it is unacceptable for the applicant to remain in the current banding (subject to the discretion of the Assessment Panel).
- 7.2. Please note that awarding of 'Emergency Priority Band' can only be made by the Assessment Panel except where confirmation has been received from a hospital that an applicant is bed blocking and they are unable return to their home due to its unsuitability or where the circumstances referred to 7.3 below apply. Where an immediate decision is required, the Senior Manager within the respective local authority administering the housing register will consult two other members of the Assessment Panel, one of which must be from another partner organisation in order for a decision to be made. The case, and subsequent decision, must be reported to the next Assessment Panel meeting.
- 7.3. Emergency Priority Band is time limited and will last for 28 calendar days. If the applicant has not applied for a property suitable for their needs within that time their Emergency Priority Band will be reviewed by the Assessment Panel and if not renewed the applicant will be placed in the appropriate band for their needs. If no suitable vacancy has arisen within this time then the Emergency Priority Band will be renewed automatically.



8. Application Date & Effective Date

- 8.1. All applications will be given an 'Application Date', this is the date the application is **treated** as being received. This date determines how long an individual has been on the housing register and is usually the date the application is made.

All applications will also be given an 'Effective Date' this is the critical date for allocation purposes. The Effective date is the date the applicant was placed in their current band, for most applicants this will be the same as their application date (see 8.1 (a) to (c) and 8.2(a) to (d) for exceptions). If an applicant's circumstances alter resulting in a change of banding their Effective date would be amended (see 9.2 for details).

a) Applicants in short term supported housing will be given an effective date of the date they moved into the scheme.

b) Homeless applicants accepted under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) will be given an effective date of the date the formal homeless application is taken by the Local Authority, unless they are already in Gold band for other needs.

c) Care leavers with a care plan in place and confirmation they are ready to move on will be given an effective date of the date they reach their 16th birthday.

- 8.2 In order to give additional priority to the following groups:

- (a) Serving members of the armed forces or those that have served in the last 5 years.
- (b) serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
- (c) bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, 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
- (d) serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service

In these cases the effective date will be backdated two years from the date of application. The backdating can only be used once by any applicant.



9. Change of Circumstances

- 9.1. A change to the information supplied on the initial application could result in a change of banding and, or bedroom eligibility. Once registered for housing the applicant has a responsibility to promptly report any change of circumstance to the local authority in writing or by completing a paper or online change of circumstance form.

Examples of changes in circumstances that an applicant must report are:

- Change in household members
- Change in medical condition of any household member
- Changes/alterations to the condition of the property they live in
- Changes in income of any household member
- Changes in capital including the inheritance of any capital or property of any household member
- The inclusion or exclusion of domestic pets
- They no longer wish to remain on the housing register
- Where a landlord has carried out improvements to remove previously identified hazards

If an applicant **changes address** and wishes to remain on the register a new housing register application must be completed within 28 days of the date of the change of address occurring.

- 9.2. After the initial banding of an application where the application and effective date are usually the same. If there is a change in the applicants' circumstances resulting in a move to a higher band; the effective date will be amended to the date the change is reported. If an application is moved into a lower band the effective date will be amended to the application date.
- 9.3. In circumstances where registered 'Joint' applicants subsequently separate, the Homefinder Somerset scheme reserves the right to apply the original registration date to the household affected.

10. Application Renewals

10.1. Annual Renewal

Within 12 months from their initial registration date, all applicants may be sent a renewal letter. If the renewal information is not returned within 28 calendar days a cancellation letter will be sent.

If the applicant has been identified as potentially disadvantaged, including prison leavers, a letter will be also be sent to the carer/agency specified. Failure to respond may result in a cancellation of application. Applications that are cancelled are subject to the review process.



10.2. No Expression of Interest Renewals

Where an applicant has not expressed an interest in any available properties for one year, from their date of application, they may be contacted to see if they still wish to remain on the Homefinder Somerset Register. If there is no response within the required time limit of 28 calendar days from the letter being sent, the application may be cancelled. The applicant will be notified of the cancellation in writing. If the applicant contacts the Local Authority within 28 calendar days of their application being cancelled and indicates that they still wish to be considered for housing the application will be reinstated from their last application date in band.

11. Cancelling Applications

11.1. An application will be cancelled from the Homefinder Somerset Register in the following circumstances:

- At the request of an applicant,
- Where an applicant does not respond to an application review, within the specified time limit,
- Where a Local Authority or a Registered Social Landlord has housed the applicant,
- When a tenant completes a mutual exchange,
- Where an applicant does not maintain their application through the review process, or where the applicant moves and does not provide a contact address,
- Where the applicant has not supplied the relevant information requested within 28 calendar days.

11.2. When an application has been cancelled (except where an applicant is housed by a Homefinder Somerset partner landlord) , the applicant or their representative will be notified in writing. Where an applicant has been highlighted as potentially disadvantaged, the Local Authority will contact the applicant to check their circumstances before cancelling the application.

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

12. Rejoining the Homefinder Somerset Housing Register

12.1. Where an applicant wishes to re-join the housing register at a later date their new date of registration will be the date they re-apply. Their date in band will be the date that they are placed in the housing needs band following assessment of the new application. This will apply to all applicants unless the applicant falls within the provisions of section 8.2 in which case those provisions will apply.



13. Size of Property

- 13.1 Applicants will be able to express an interest for selected properties that match the needs of their household. A maximum of two people can share a bedroom. Household members living together as a couple will be assessed as requiring one bedroom unless there are exceptional circumstances.

To calculate the bedroom eligibility we normally allow one bedroom for:

- A single applicant or couple (married or unmarried)

We normally allow one additional bedroom for:

- Any two children of the same sex under the age of 16
- Any two children under 10 irrespective of sex
- Any other person aged 16 or over
- Any other child, (other than a child whose main home is elsewhere)
- A carer who does not live in the household but provides a household member with long term overnight care

The bedroom calculation awards a separate bedroom for any other person over the age of sixteen. If the household has two same sex household members that wish to share a bedroom the applicant must sign a 'bedroom reduction declaration form' to confirm this. This would allow applicants to express interest on properties smaller than the standard bedroom calculation. The applicant will be made aware that their current banding could be affected and should they need to reapply for social housing this declaration will be taken into account when calculating the bedroom requirement.

When letting houses, priority will normally be given to households with children under the age of 16. Individual landlord's letting policies or local planning policies can affect the size of the households that may apply for particular properties. Any such restrictions will be included in the property advert.

- 13.2 Because of the very high demand for properties within Somerset, additional bedrooms cannot be given to applicants who do not have children who normally live permanently with them as their full time principle home. Partner landlords may choose to allow applicants to express an interest for properties that are larger than their needs but this will be on a property by property basis and is at the landlord's discretion.
- 13.3 For any current tenant of a partner landlord downsizing to smaller accommodation there are restrictions on the size of property they can move in order to prevent overcrowding. The new property has to have at least one bedroom less than their current home. However in certain circumstances, where an applicant for example is moving from a house to a flat with the same number of bedrooms, then the number of bedrooms in the new property maybe disregarded.
- 13.4 Where tenants of a partner landlord are overcrowded within their accommodation account should be taken of the room sizes in determining an applicant's banding. For example, where a tenant is living in 2 bedroom, 3 bed space unit, if there is a couple and 2 children living within the property, these applicants should be viewed as one bedroom overcrowded, Silver Band, eligible



to apply for a 2 bedroom property, as they are one bed space overcrowded. The bedroom eligibility is not changed.

- 13.5 Applicants who are overcrowded by 2 bedroom spaces or more should be 'Gold Banded'. See section 6.1 – gold band for further information.
- 13.5.1 When calculating bedroom entitlement **members of the main or joint applicants household not currently living** as part of the household can be taken into consideration if any of the criteria detailed in sections 13.5.2 to 13.5.4 below are met:
- 13.5.2 The main or joint applicant has **adult child/children in the armed forces** and the child/children's main and principle home is with the main or joint applicant. Evidence for this will be required (e.g. Forces paperwork).
- 13.5.3 The main or joint applicant has **adult child/children in full time education** and their main and principle home is with the main or joint applicant. Except where the child /children is in rented accommodation for the purposes of attending their full time education course where an additional bedroom cannot be granted (except where this accommodation is for term time only). Evidence for this will be required (e.g. halls of residence letter, tenancy agreement).
- 13.5.4 The main or joint applicant has been given the **custody of a child/children currently in care, a foster placement or living with another family member** and the child/children will be returning to the main or joint applicants household on a permanent basis. Evidence will be required for this (e.g. a court order or confirmation in writing from Social Services).
- 13.5.5 The main or joint applicant is **pregnant**. If the expected baby would mean a change to the existing bedroom need of the household an additional bedroom can be granted on receipt of evidence of expected delivery date. If the award of an additional bedroom would affect the banding of the application this will not take effect until confirmation of the birth is received.. Evidence will be required for this (e.g. the main or joint applicant adding new child's details to the application by completing an online change of circumstances or receipt of a birth certificate.).
- 13.6 An **additional bedroom** over and above the calculated bedroom need of an applicants' existing household as detailed in 13.1 may be granted if one of the criteria detailed in 13.6.1 to 13.6.6 are met. Evidence of the need for an additional bedroom must be provided by or on behalf of the main or joint applicant. For the purposes of points 13.6.2 and 13.6.3 a medical professional is considered to be a General Practitioner, Consultant, Specialist, District or Specialist Nurse.
- 13.6.1 The main or joint applicant is an approved **foster carer/adopter** or is in the process of gaining approval. Only one additional bedroom may be granted under this criterion. Evidence will be required for this (e.g. a letter from the relevant adoption or foster agency).
- 13.6.2 There is evidence that a member of the main or joint applicant's household has the need for **regular overnight care**. Under normal circumstances an additional bedroom will not be given for short periods of incapacity or for recovery periods from serious operations /illness. Only one additional bedroom may be granted under this criterion. Evidence for this could include a care plan, occupational therapist report/letter, medical professional report/letter.



- 13.6.3 There is evidence from a medical professional that there is a **medical or safety reason** for a member of the household to have their own bedroom. Under normal circumstances an additional bedroom will not be given for short periods of incapacity or for recovery periods from serious operations /illness. The receipt of a qualifying benefit may be taken into account. When undertaking this assessment each case will be looked at on its merit. Evidence for this may include occupational Therapist report/letter, medical professional report/letter.
- 13.6.4 There is evidence that a member of the household is dependent on **large or essential medical equipment** that cannot be kept elsewhere in the property. This does not include the storage of mobility scooters or wheelchairs. Only one additional bedroom may be granted under this criterion. Evidence for this may include occupational therapist report/letter.
- 13.6.5 There is evidence that a substantial **Disabled Facilities Grant** will be made to adapt the property for a member of the household and awarding an additional bedroom would prevent a future move due to the age change of a household member resulting in a change in bedroom eligibility. Evidence for this may include occupational therapist report/letter.
- 13.7 Applicants who have adult children in the armed forces where the child's main and principle home is with the applicant may be granted an additional bedroom.
- 13.8 Applicants who have adult children that are in full time education where the child/children's main and principle home is with the applicant may be granted additional bedroom(s) except where the child is in rented accommodation for the purposes of attending their full time education course. Any such additional bedrooms would not qualify for Housing Benefit.

14. Medical & Welfare Assessments

(For the purposes of the medical and welfare assessments the applicant or the member of the household affected will be referred to as the individual).

- 14.1 The approach when banding under medical and welfare is to focus on how the individual's medical and welfare issues and their general well-being could be improved by a move to alternative accommodation. Account will be taken of:
- (i) The individual's medical or welfare condition;
 - (ii) The affect the current property / environment has on the individuals medical or welfare condition; and
 - (iii) How moving to an alternative property would help the individual's medical or welfare issues or improve their general well-being.
- 14.2. The Homefinder Somerset schemes reserves the right to request supporting evidence when banding under the medical or welfare criteria. Evidence from a third party is mandatory when considering the award of Gold or Emergency band. Any evidence submitted should be from a professional person who has first-hand knowledge of the individual and the environment they live in. The professional should advise of the individual's medical or welfare condition and give their professional opinion on the affect the current property / environment has on the individuals medical or welfare condition.



14.3 A medical professional could include an Occupational Therapist, a Doctor, a Community Psychiatric Nurse or a Consultant. A professional worker could include a Social Worker, Environmental Health Officer, Health Visitor or Housing Officer. The Homefinder Somerset scheme is aware that professional time is at a premium and do not expect applicants to specifically request medical professionals to write letters. Reports and letters from the applicant's consultant to the applicant's Doctor for example may be sufficient. It should be noted that any fees that applicant's incur to provide this information cannot be reimbursed. and do not expect applicants to specifically request medical professionals to write letters. Reports and letters from the applicant's consultant to the applicant's Doctor for example may be sufficient. It should be noted that any fees that applicant's incur to provide this information cannot be reimbursed. The final decision on applicable banding will be made by housing officers from the relevant local authority.

14.4. The medical and, or welfare issues of any individual can be assessed as follows:

Medical

(i)Physical condition/illness:

An assessment will be made taking account of the information provided by the applicant and any medical professional who has knowledge of the individual, their conditions and the effect the current property is having on their conditions.

(ii)Mental Health

An assessment will be made taking into account the information provided by the applicant and any professional worker who has knowledge of the individual, their mental health conditions and the effect the current property or local environment is having on their mental health.

Welfare

(i)General Welfare

An assessment of the property and the local environment the individual is currently living in will be made to establish whether the individual has access to reasonably comfortable, affordable and secure living standard based on the information provided by the applicant and any professional worker who has knowledge of the individual and the environment the individual is living in. Consideration of the general housing circumstances in the district, the availability of facilities, resources and services in the property and the local environment where the individual lives in will be taken into account as well as the ability of the individual to access them.

(ii)Financial hardship

A full assessment of the household's income and expenditure will be undertaken to determine if the cost of the current accommodation is affordable or if it is creating financial hardship that cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time.

14.5. All medical or welfare applications will initially be assessed by an appropriate member of the Housing Team based on the medical & welfare assessment notes in Appendix 2.

14.6. Following a medical or welfare assessment, the applicant will be informed in writing of the outcome. If the applicant does not agree with the assessment a senior officer will review the



banding. If the applicant still disagrees with their banding their case will be considered by the Choice Based Letting Operational Group at the next monthly meeting.

14.7. Where an individual's medical or welfare circumstances changes, these details should be submitted in writing together with any supporting evidence as soon as the change occurs.

15. Disrepair Assessments

15.1. The application form asks applicants about the condition of their current home this information will be used by other officers to assess any hazards and an additional inspection of the property may be carried out. If the applicant resides outside of the Homefinder Somerset area, then the Homefinder Somerset Partnership will contact the respective Local Authority to arrange an inspection, if required.

15.2. Following the inspection, and depending on the condition of the property, a level of priority will be allocated - either nil, low, medium, high or urgent, which will determine the band in which the applicant is placed. If the applicant is an existing social housing tenant the relevant landlord will be notified of the problem.

16. Notification

16.1. Once you have been verified as eligible to join the register, your fully completed application form will then be assessed. We aim to undertake this assessment within 15 working days. You will then receive a letter confirming your application details. This letter will notify you of the following ;

- a) The Band in which the applicant has been placed (bronze, silver or gold or emergency)
- b) The reason for their banding
- c) The size of property the applicant is eligible for,
- d) The Application Date,
- e) A reminder about informing us of any change in circumstances,
- f) The Homefinder Somerset review procedure (see section 17),
- g) A personal reference number to allow expressions of interest for properties.

16.2. Applicants will also receive notification of their application details within 15 working days if they have submitted a Change of Circumstances' form.



17. Review Procedure

- 17.1. Once an applicant has been notified in writing of the band in which they have been placed or their ineligibility, they will have a right to request a review against the assessment. Reviews must be submitted in writing, to the local authority housing office within 28 calendar days of the date on the notification letter and include the reason why the applicant believes their banding or ineligibility is wrong, together with any additional information that the applicant believes is relevant.
- 17.2. The request for a review will be acknowledged by the Local Authority within 7 calendar days of its receipt. An officer who played no part in the original assessment will carry out the review and respond in writing to the applicant within 28 calendar days of the receipt of the review letter. Following the review, the applicant will be informed of the outcome in writing.
- 17.3. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the review then they can request a further review through the relevant local authorities reviews procedure.

18. Finding a Home

- 18.1. Once applicants have been entered on the Homefinder Somerset Register and notified of banding and reference number, they can start to look for a property of their choice.

19. Advertising

- 19.1. All partner landlords are committed to advertising their available properties as widely as possible. Properties can be advertised on a weekly/fortnightly basis and may be advertised in one or more of the following ways:

a) Newsletters

Adverts may also be placed into free Homefinder Somerset newsletters, which will be available in a number of localities across Somerset.

b) Website

A dedicated Homefinder Somerset website is available (www.homefindersomerset.co.uk) and is accessible to anyone with Internet access. The website will allow applicants to view all available properties across the whole of Somerset and apply 'on-line' for properties of their choice.

c) Local Offices

Computers will be placed in some landlords' offices for applicants to view and express an interest for available properties. Other sites may also be considered.



d) Hotline

A local number is available for applicants to call to hear what properties are available. Applicants will hear an options menu where different size properties can be selected and heard. This service is important to the Homefinder Somerset service and our efforts to assist disabled applicants, particularly those who are blind or partially sighted to access the service. The Hotline service will also benefit those applicants who are unable to read.

20. Advertisement Deadlines

20.1. All advertisements will carry a deadline by which time expressions of interest for particular properties must be received. This will normally be one week from the date of the advert. Any applications received after the deadline has been reached will not be considered for the property.

21. Property Descriptions

21.1. Properties advertised will carry (where possible) a photograph of the property and a full description. As a minimum the description will include:

- a) Type of property
- b) Number of bedrooms
- c) Location of property
- d) Any adaptations (e.g. disabled facilities)
- e) Services provided (e.g. support, caretaker, cleaning)
- f) Heating type
- g) Rent charged/service charges

22. Labelling Properties

22.1. Adverts will also give information on who will be eligible to apply for the property. For example, an adapted property suitable for someone in a wheelchair may be labelled to say that applicants must require such a property.

22.2. Properties will only be available to applicants in certain 'Bands' according to the size and type of the property, the number of annual vacancies and level of demand. For example, a three-bedroom property in a high demand area may only be advertised to 'Gold' Band applicants, areas where there is low demand may be offered to both Gold and Silver Band applicants, or in some cases, all bands. In addition certain properties may only be available to applicants that meet specific eligibility criteria (e.g. eligible for supported housing, or having certain age requirements for household members).



22.3. Supported Accommodation (e.g. sheltered)

In addition to the banding system, all partner landlords may wish to ensure that supported accommodation is allocated to those who have not only a housing need but also a 'support' need (as detailed in the application form). Landlords will therefore be looking to accept expressions of interest from applicants in the highest band and who may have an identifiable

support need in addition to the earliest application date. This support need will be verified at the time of the home visit.

22.4. Local Connection

The Homefinder Somerset housing authorities usually only accept applications to join their housing register where the main or joint applicant has a local connection to the Homefinder Somerset area (with some exceptions). Local connection can only be established by the main or joint applicant. Where applicants feel that their circumstances are so exceptional that they should be allowed to join the housing register with no local connection to the area, such applications will be assessed by the Local Authority Operational Group on a monthly basis.

The Homefinder Somerset policy defines Local Connection as:

- The main or joint applicants are normally resident in the Homefinder Somerset area. Local Government Association guidelines define this as having resided in the relevant area for six of the last twelve months, or three out of the last five years, where residence has been out of choice.

The main or joint applicant has work in the Homefinder Somerset area. The Local Government Association guidelines define this as employment other than of a casual nature. For the purposes of this policy this will be defined as having had permanent work with a minimum of a 16 hour contract per week, and without a break in the period of employment for more than three months.

- Note that residency in a property where treatment or rehabilitation of any kind whilst working will not count towards establishing a local connection.
- The main or joint applicant needs to move to take up an offer of permanent employment (over 16 hours and evidence will be required) within the Homefinder Somerset area and commuting to their new place of work from their existing home would be unreasonable.
- The main or joint applicant have family connections in the Homefinder Somerset area. The Local Government Association guidelines define this as immediate family members (parents, siblings and non-dependent children) who have themselves lived in the area for five years and with whom there has been frequent contact, commitment or dependency.



- The main or joint applicant can demonstrate a need to move to the Homefinder Somerset area to give or receive essential and critical medical or other support where significant harm would result if this was not provided.

Main or joint applicants that fall within the following categories will be deemed to have a local connection to Somerset.

- (a) Serving members of the armed forces or those that have served in the last 5 years.
- (b) serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
- (c) bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, 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
- (d) serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
- (e) Applicants applying for extra care properties only (note that in the absence of any other housing need these applicants will be placed in bronze band and will only be able to bid on extra care vacancies.)
- (f) Applicants applying for sheltered housing only (note that in the absence of any other housing need these applicants will be placed in bronze band and will only be able to bid on sheltered housing vacancies.)

Preference may be given to local residents who may be economically or socially driven from their community due to a lack of affordable housing. This may be due to planning restrictions (Section 106 Agreements) or to ensure sustainability of the parish where there is a clearly proven local housing need.

22.5. Transfer Applications

All the partner landlords are keen to ensure that they make the best use of their own stock. To achieve this, it is likely that a certain proportion of properties advertised will be labelled giving preference to transfer applicants or transfer applicants in a specific band, for example the silver band and in some cases preference will also be given to existing tenants of that landlord. The number of properties labelled as such will be monitored on a regular basis.



22.6. Accepted Duty Homeless Cases

In order to fulfil its statutory duties towards the homeless and to create a through flow of temporary accommodation a Local Authority may label properties allowing only households who have been accepted by that Authority as unintentionally homeless and in priority need, to express a preference or give preference to this group.

22.7 Sensitive Letting – individual properties

Occasionally there may be a requirement to assist in dealing with issues that impact on a small, specific location that may be only 1 dwelling on an estate or within a block. This may be to:

- Reduce the concentration of certain needs groups which are impacting on housing management
- Promote a mixed and sustainable community by seeking to select/not select households with particular characteristics

On these occasions certain property labels (e.g. minimum age of household members) may be used following a discussion between the local authority and the relevant landlord (where the local authority is not the landlord itself). The decision to apply particular requirements will be made by the relevant Homefinder Somerset local authority.

22.8. Labelling Caution

The general effect of labelling can be seen to compromise the extent to which vacancies will be let to the highest priority applicant as described under the banding system. It is therefore important for each landlord to minimise such labelling in order to maintain transparency to the allocation system.

22.9. Complaints

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

23. Expressing an interest in a Property

23.1. Where an applicant meets the eligibility criteria, and is placed within the stated band or bands given in the advert, they may express an interest for that property within the deadline given.



23.2. Applicants are limited to three expressions of interest per advert cycle, however, this will be monitored by the Homefinder Somerset Scheme on each advert cycle. Where an applicant expresses an interest for more than one property successfully, they will be given a time period (normally 48 hours) in which to decide which property they will accept.

23.3. Applicants may apply for properties via www.homefindersomerset.co.uk or via the telephone. Computer facilities for expressing an interest in properties are available at the local authority offices shown below:

a) Mendip District Council, Cannards Grave Rd, Shepton Mallet
BA4 5BT
Tel: 0300 303 8588 web:- www.mendip.gov.uk

b) Sedgemoor District Council
Bridgwater House, King Square, Bridgwater, Somerset
TA6 3AR
Tel: 0845 4082540 web:- www.sedgemoor.gov.uk

c) South Somerset District Council
Housing Advice Centre, Petters House,
Petters Way, Yeovil, Somerset
BA20 1EA
Tel: 01935 462462 web:- www.southsomerset.gov.uk

d) Taunton Deane Borough Council
The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton,
Somerset, TA1 1HE
Tel: 01823 356356 web:- www.tauntondeane.gov.uk

e) West Somerset Council
West Somerset House,
Killick Way,
Williton
TA4 4QA

And:

1 Summerland Road, Minehead
TA24 5BP
Tel 01643 703704
web:- www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk



24. Selection Procedure

- 24.1. Once the advert deadline has passed, landlords will review the prioritised list of applicants (the shortlist) that have expressed an interest in each property. The successful applicant(s) will normally be the applicant(s) who is in the highest band with the longest effective date. In the situation where there are two households with the same band and effective date the landlord will contact both households to assess who is in the greatest housing need and will take into account cumulative preferences and who is most suited to the property. Where an advert has been placed with more than one preference setting and no applicant meets all the preference criteria the shortlist will be ordered in accordance with the remaining preferences set for the property. The landlords will only offer the property to those applicants who meet the stated criteria and pass verification of their application.
- 24.2. Each individual landlord is responsible for the verification of the successful applicant and discrepancies in your application will be referred back to the local authority and this may result in a change to your banding. Each applicant will be given the opportunity to view the property before making a final decision on whether to accept or refuse. Applicants will be expected to view a property within 48 hours (following contact from the landlord) and will be expected to make a decision on any offer within 48 hours of receiving the offer.
- 24.3. If an applicant has been identified as being unsuitable to be a tenant due to the grounds described in section 3.7, and has made no attempt to rectify the situation then the applicant may not be allocated the property despite a successful expression of interest. The applicant can make an application if they consider that they should no longer be treated as ineligible for an allocation of social housing, e.g. because the rent arrears have been cleared or an agreement has been reached and maintained over a reasonable period of time or because the person who had been guilty of anti-social behaviour is no longer part of their household.
- 24.4. If a property is subsequently withdrawn after an applicant has successfully expressed an interest, because for example the tenant of that particular property has failed to vacate the property or the property has been incorrectly labelled, the landlord will inform the successful applicant that the property is no longer available. If the property is not ready for occupation following a successful expression of interest and the applicant is likely to wait some considerable time before moving in, the landlord will inform the applicant and give them the option to express an interest for any other suitable properties.
- 24.5. If an applicant is banded in the Emergency band under 7.1 (c) where a relevant agency has recommended an urgent move to escape violence or threats of violence or are in the Gold band due to harassment in a specific area and expresses an interest on a property in the same general area. The landlord or the Local Authority may choose not to offer that property to the applicant if they are top of the shortlist if in their opinion it is unlikely to address the issues.
- 24.6. When offering properties landlords should have regard to the housing needs of the applicant as per their banding reason.



- 24.7 A small number of properties advertised through the partnership are excluded from the selection procedure as described in section 24.1. These properties will be allocated using the criteria within the landlord's own individual allocation policy that will be detailed in the property advert.
- 24.8 It is the landlord's responsibility to explain their reasons for not offering properties to applicants including any landlord allocations policies
25. Feedback
- 25.1. An important part of the scheme is giving applicants feedback on who has recently been allocated properties. Accompanying each advert will be a feedback section giving details of the properties allocated.
- 25.2. Applicant's personal details will not be included. However, it is envisaged that the feedback form will include:
- a) Property size and type
 - b) Property location
 - c) Number of applicants who applied for each property
 - d) Band of successful applicant
 - e) Application date of successful applicant
- 25.3. An overview of this information will be regularly monitored.
- 25.4. Using this information, applicants will be able to see where properties are more likely to become available and where they may have the best chances of making a successful 'expression of interest'. It is essential that with any choice-based lettings scheme, applicants have as much information as possible in order to help them make an informed evaluation of their housing options.



26. Refusals

26.1. If an applicant decides to refuse an offer of accommodation, either at the accompanied viewing, or when an initial verbal offer is made, the property will be offered to the next eligible applicant.

26.2. If a homeless applicant refuses an offer of suitable accommodation, the Local Authority may decide to discharge its duty under the Homeless Legislation.

26.3. Homeless applicants have the right to request a review of certain decisions made by the

local authority in respect of their homeless application. Within the Homefinder Somerset Common Lettings Policy this includes the decision to discharge the main homeless duty to secure accommodation by providing suitable accommodation for the applicant.

26.4. If a homeless applicant wishes to request a review of the suitability of accommodation offered, this should be requested before the end of the period of 21 calendar days beginning with the day on which they are notified of the housing authority's decision to discharge its main homeless duty.

26.5. A homeless applicant who is requesting a review about the suitability of accommodation will be advised to accept and move into the accommodation pending the outcome of their review request. The Local Authority's Homeless Section will inform the appropriate officer as soon as a decision has been made, normally within 7 calendar days as to whether or not the property will remain available through the review process. It should be noted the property will only be held open in exceptional circumstances. If a non statutory review is conducted and the offer withdrawn by the Homeless Officer on grounds of suitability then the second placed applicant will be made an offer of the property. If the outcome of a review is overturned in favour of the homeless applicant, the alternative accommodation will be provided as quickly as possible. However if the review of suitability of the offer is upheld the applicant will still have accommodation to live in whilst they consider their further options.

26.6. Applicants approved as being, or threatened with being homeless are placed in the gold band; and are expected to use their three weekly expressions of interest against any suitable properties advertised through the Homefinder Somerset scheme. If an applicant has been unsuccessful in securing a property within four weeks of the date the applicant was accepted as being, or threatened with being homeless; the Local Authority may decide to place expressions of interest on the applicant's behalf. The Local Authority will ensure the properties are suitable for the household in line with the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012. If the homeless applicant refuses a suitable offer of accommodation; the Local Authority will consider its duty towards them as a homeless household discharged, subject to the statutory review process. The Local Authority may decide to use its power to discharge the homeless duty with a suitable Private Rented Sector Offer. In either case the gold band status for accepted as being, or threatened with being homeless will end.



- 26.7. Records will be maintained on the number of refusals for each property and the reason why the applicant decided to refuse. With the exception of applicants who are in gold band because they are homeless or threatened with homelessness, applicants who refuse three formal offers for suitable accommodation will have their case reviewed by the local authority managing their case. They will be offered advice and assistance regarding the Homefinder Somerset scheme. If they subsequently refuse one further offer they will be suspended from bidding for a period of 3 months from the date of the last refusal. After 3 months the applicant will be reassessed and placed in the appropriate band and may lose their original effective date.
- 26.8 Where an applicant is placed in gold band for tenancy succession, if after a period of 9 months applicants are not actively expressing an interest for suitable accommodation then automatic expressions of interest may be placed on their behalf. Before automatic expressions of interest are placed the relevant local authority will carry out an assessment as to what type of property would be suitable and in what location. Automatic expressions of interests will be limited to the areas where the applicant has expressed a preference to move to.
27. Difficult to Let
- 27.1. If a vacancy cannot be filled via the CBL scheme, the property can be re-advertised on a wider basis in conjunction with the Local Authority.
28. Excluded Properties
- 28.1. All the partner landlords are committed to advertising as many of their vacant properties as possible through the CBL system. There will be occasions when certain properties will not be advertised and the reasons for these exclusions will be monitored. An example would be extra care vacancies which are allocated jointly with Somerset County's Community Directorate (Social Services).
29. False Information and Deliberately Worsening Circumstances
- 29.1. Applicants who are found to have deliberately given false information on their Homefinder Somerset Register application form will have their application reviewed immediately. This may result in the 'Band' awarded being changed as a result. If an applicant is re-housed through false information, steps may be taken to end the tenancy and court action may be taken which could result in the applicant receiving a fine up to a maximum of £5,000 and/or a prison sentence.



29.2. An immediate review of an application may also be undertaken if an applicant is found to have deliberately changed or worsened their housing situation in order to be placed into a band higher than they would normally have been awarded. Households that have been assessed as having deliberately worsened their housing circumstances by moving into accommodation that is unsuitable for their needs and /or by taking no action to improve their circumstances which can be evidenced may be placed into bronze band.

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

30. Access to Personal Information

30.1. Individuals are entitled under the Data Protection Act (1998) to request details of their personal data held by the five Local Authorities. A charge may be made for providing this information.

30.2. The information received, in conjunction with housing applications, may also be used for housing management and research purposes.



31. Monitoring

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

- Number of registrations received
- Percentage of applicants registered and notified within 15 working days
- Number and percentage of applicants registered within each band
- Number of properties advertised by type, area, landlord
- Number of properties advertised with local connection label
- Number of properties, with reasons, excluded from CBL system, by landlord (e.g. decants)
- Number of expressions of interest and method of expressing
- Number of expressions of interest for each property by band
- Profile of those expressing an interest (e.g. waiting list, transfer, homeless, disabled, ethnic background)
- Number of applicants bypassed for breach of tenancy conditions
- Number of accepted offers by band
- Number of tenancies refused at sign up
- Number of properties re-advertised due to difficulty in letting
- Number of review requests
- Number of complaints
- Number of applicants in short term supported housing awaiting active re-housing (following confirmation by scheme of readiness to move)
- Number of homeless applicants in 'Gold Band' awaiting re-housing (not expressing an interest)
- Number of 'Gold Band' applicants who have not expressed an interest in a property for more than 6 months
- Number of Emergency Priority applicants awaiting re-housing
- Number of applicants from outside the Homefinder Somerset area being re-housed
- Banding the property is advertised in
- The use of labelling
- Number of people housed by band

32. Equal Opportunities

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

32.2. All partners of Homefinder Somerset are opposed to direct and indirect discrimination and recognise the need for systems to actively prevent discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/guidance-all/protected-characteristics> Any allegations or concerns that an organisation



has not acted appropriately should be made directly to that organisation. All partner landlords are publicly accountable and must have a complaints policy and an independent Ombudsman.

33. Social Inclusion

33.1 All partners of Homefinder Somerset believe that applicants should be given every assistance to access the housing register and search for suitable properties. For example, the provision of the Homefinder Somerset 'Hotline' number will assist those applicants who experience literacy problems or who are blind or partially sighted and unable to read the adverts.

33.2. Applicants that lack capacity in decision making, particularly around changes in accommodation or who have learning difficulties may be assisted in the following ways:

- If the applicant agrees, staff may contact any professional or voluntary workers from health or Social Services with whom the applicant is involved to ensure they understand the procedures and that necessary support is provided. All agencies funded via Local Government should be in a position to provide their clients with help on housing issues.
- Disadvantaged applicants are able to nominate a person (including family members, friends or professional worker) to express an interest on their behalf or to help them express an interest for suitable properties..
- In the small number of cases where the applicant has no support Homefinder Somerset staff could set auto bidding up so the computer system would automatically place expressions of interest for suitable vacancies.

33.3. All partners of home finder will make sure that the system is as accessible as possible. This will be achieved through the usability of the system, its interaction with accessibility software and the language used in Homefinder being in clear plain English. The system will be reviewed annual to make sure these standards are kept and improved where possible..

34. Policy Review

34.1. The Homefinder Somerset Scheme is regularly reviewed to ensure that the policy meets its stated objectives and complies with legislative changes. Any changes to the Common Lettings Policy are implemented only after prior notice to members and the majority agreement amongst the partner landlords.

35. Complaints

35.1. Any complaints regarding the scheme should be directed initially to the organisation processing an applicant's claim.



36 The Housing Ombudsman

- 36.1. If an applicant is not satisfied with the action taken by either the Local Authority or a Registered Provider of social housing and has exhausted the complaints procedure available, they can send a written complaint to the ombudsman.

For complaints relating to landlords:

The Housing Ombudsman Service can be contacted at:

Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych London WC2B 4HN

Tel: 0300 111 3000
Minicom 020 7404 7092
Fax 020 7831 1942

Email info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Web address www.ihos.org.uk

For complaints relating to local authorities:

The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 DEH

LGO Advice Team on 0300 061 0614
www.lgo.org.uk



APPENDIX I

Disrepair Guidance

Gold: High

Based on the conditions identified the Private Sector Housing Team has deemed your home to have the presence of Category 1 hazards, Bands A - C (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) that CANNOT be resolved or reduced to a Category 2 hazard within 6 months.

Silver: Medium

Based on the conditions identified the Private Sector Housing Team has shown that your home has Category 1 hazards, Bands A - C (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) that CAN be resolved or reduced to a Category 2 hazard within 6 months and/or has shown that your home has Category 2 hazards, Band D (Housing Health & Safety Rating System).

Bronze: Low

No significant hazards identified justifying enforcement action by the local authority.

Please note that with regard to Category 2 rated hazards Environmental Health staff are under no obligation to take any action with regard to these issues.



APPENDIX 2

Medical & Welfare Considerations

When ill health, disability or welfare is aggravated by housing conditions' including the location of the property; and the ill health, disability or welfare would improve if other accommodation were offered; the banding awarded will be dependent on two crucial factors:

- The link between the identified medical or welfare issue(s) and the individual's current housing situation.
- The realistic expectation that the identified medical or welfare issue(s) would improve if alternative, more suitable accommodation was made available.

When determining what banding to award, staff will assess what degree of need exists and, what adverse effect this need has on the lifestyle of the household as a whole. To achieve consistency in the allocation of banding under this heading a schedule is detailed below in tables 2A & 2B that sets out the different levels of need:

Table 2A – Medical considerations

Medical Considerations	Impact current property has on medical issues	Band
Low	Minor impact, where the existing housing circumstances have a low impact on an individual's medical issues.	Bronze
Moderate	Moderate impact where there is a clear relationship to an individual's medical issues and the existing housing circumstances.	Silver
Significant	Significant impact where the individuals medical issues makes it unreasonable to remain in the current accommodation; or where the property cannot be adapted to meet the applicant's needs or funds are not available for such adaptations or landlord permission cannot be obtained.	Gold
Severe	Severe impact where the individuals medical issue is life threatening or which is causing bed blocking with hospital / care facility	Emergency



Examples of circumstances that may fall into each banding category are shown below but please note that this is not an exhaustive list and each case will be reviewed on its merits. Supporting evidence would be expected in order to award Gold or Emergency band.

<p style="text-align: center;">Severe</p> <p>Medical specialists will not allow the individual to be discharged from hospital to their current property.</p> <p>All other cases need referral to the medical/emergency assessment panel.</p> <p>Individual lives alone and has chronic mobility and, or medical issues; or is living with another frail individual who has serious mobility or medical issues and with virtually no support or contact with family or neighbours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair and the property necessitates the climbing of steps/stairs to gain access to the property and, or steps/stairs within the property itself and is effectively housebound. • Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair but cannot manage in the property due to the lay out not being compatible with the aids required. • Is reliant on oxygen and has to manoeuvre oxygen cylinders up and down the stairs to access the building or within the property. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Significant</p> <p>Individual has serious mobility or medical issues and has no access to a lift/stair lift and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair but has difficulty in the property due to the lay out not being compatible with the aids required (unable to access bedroom or bathroom). • Has difficulty in managing the layout or size of property (toilet, bathing facilities). • Is confined to the existing property as dependant on assistance to leave/return to the property. • Lives in a property which necessitates the climbing of stairs to gain access to the property and, or steps within the property itself and has medical issues which make it difficult to managing this.
<p style="text-align: center;">Moderate</p> <p>Individual has moderate mobility or medical issues and has access to a lift/stair lift and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair and has some difficulty in the property due to the lay out not being compatible with the aids required. • Has some difficulty in managing the layout or size of property (toilet, bathing facilities). • Lives in a property which necessitates the climbing of stairs to gain access to the property and, or steps within the property itself and has medical issues which means there us some difficulty to manage this. • Is not confined to the existing property and does not need assistance to leave/return to the property but would benefit from living on a ground floor/level access property. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Low</p> <p>Individual has low mobility or medical issues who do not require a lift/stair lift or are already living in a level access, ground floor property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual suffering from generalised symptoms of asthma and eczema aggravated by the cold. • Minor problems relating to recurring colds/asthma or regular depression or unusual allergies could be pointed under this heading providing a link to the existing accommodation could be demonstrated.



Table 2B – Welfare considerations

Social welfare is concerned with the [quality of life](#) that includes [factors](#) such as the [quality](#) of the [environment](#), [services available \(gas, electric, water, public transport\)](#), level of [crime](#), extent of [drug abuse](#), [availability and distance](#) of essential [social services](#), individuals place of work, education as well as religious and spiritual aspects of life. The age, physical or learning disability, behavioural difficulties and threats to the individual should be considered as well as the impact on the rest of the household.

Welfare Considerations	Impact current property has on welfare condition	Band
Low	Minor impact, where an individual’s welfare issues has a low impact on the existing housing circumstances.	Bronze
Moderate	Moderate impact, where there is a clear relationship to an individual’s welfare issues and the existing housing circumstances.	Silver
Significant	Significant impact, where the individuals welfare issues makes it unreasonable to remain in the current accommodation	Gold
Severe	Severe impact, where the individuals welfare issue could be life threatening	Emergency

Examples of circumstances that may fall into each banding category are shown below please note that this is not an exhaustive list and each case will be reviewed on its merits. Supporting evidence would be expected in order to award Gold or Emergency band.

<p style="text-align: center;">Severe</p> <p><i>For cases where an individual’s welfare could be life threatening</i></p> <p>All cases need referral to the medical/emergency assessment panel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual suffers dizzy spells and arthritis lives alone in old caravan in grounds of a house in rural area. Only mains service is electricity. Fetches water from an outside cold water tap and uses an Elsan bucket toilet situated some distance from the caravan. Dangers include cold during the winter and potential falls when collecting water or using the outside toilet. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Significant</p> <p><i>For cases where an individual’s welfare has a serious impact on their housing need making it unreasonable to remain in their current property</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing home seriously limits the care and support that can be provided to the individual • The environment in and around the home has a serious detrimental effect on the quality of life of the household • Remote location of property resulting in isolation and it can be demonstrated a move to an area with greater facilities will significantly improve quality of life, health & wellbeing • High financial hardship created by the cost of the current property which is unsustainable and cannot be resolved • Significant cumulative need to move due to several welfare factors for one or all members of the household that are not covered elsewhere in the policy.
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Moderate

For cases where an individual's welfare has a moderate impact and a clear relationship to existing housing circumstances.

- The existing home moderately limits the care and support that can be provided to the individual
- The environment in and around the home has a moderate detrimental effect on the quality of life of the household
- Moderate isolation whereby it can be demonstrated a move to an area with more facilities will greatly improve quality of life, health & wellbeing
- Moderate financial hardship created by the cost of the current property which may be resolved within 6 months with debt intervention.
- Moderate cumulative welfare need to move due to some welfare factors for one or all members of the household are not covered elsewhere in the policy.

Low

For cases where an individual's welfare has a low impact on the existing housing circumstances

- The existing home has little impact in the care and support that can be provided to the individual
- The environment in and around the home has a low detrimental effect on the quality of life of the household
- Low isolation whereby it can be demonstrated a move to an area with more facilities will greatly improve quality of life, health & wellbeing
- Low financial hardship created by the cost of the current property which can be resolved within 6 months.
- Low cumulative welfare need to move due to some welfare factors for one or all members of the household are not covered elsewhere in the policy.

Referrals by the housing team for advice / information to third parties

In the rare event that information contained within the application makes the assessment of an applicant's medical priority for re-housing unclear the applicant's circumstances and available medical information may be referred to an independent third party for advice to be given to officer's in relation to the applicant's medical issues and thus the applicant's need for re-housing. Upon receipt of a response officers will consider this information in order to assist them in making a decision as to the applicant's priority for re-housing.

Referrals to the Councils assessment panel.

In limited often complex cases officers may be undecided about which band (priority) to award the applicant for re-housing on medical grounds. In such cases the matter can be referred by officer's to the Council's assessment panel. The panel will form a view considering all information available from the application (which may include information from relevant third parties) and reach a decision as to the client's banding priority for re-housing on medical grounds.



APPENDIX 3

Glossary of Terms about Choice Based Lettings

Advertising Period - The number of days in which a applicant has the opportunity to express an interest' in a home once it is advertised.

Cancellation of applications – this will mean the closing of an application on the system.
Choice Based Lettings (CBL) - A new system being introduced for the allocation of social housing. CBL is designed to offer more choice and involvement for applicants in selecting a new home. It is a much more open, transparent and customer-based approach in the allocation of properties.

Consultation Period - A period of 6 weeks in which Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, South Somerset District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset District Council consulted with all interested parties and stakeholders about its plans to introduce Choice Based Lettings. The initial consultation period was from May 2007 to August 2007 . A subsequent consultation took place between October 2010 and December 2010 with a further period in June and July 2013.

Express an Interest - - To be considered for an available home, applicants are required to contact us to 'express an interest' or 'bid' for a property. No money is involved in 'making a bid' or 'expressing an interest' in a property.

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System is a way of assessing properties to calculate the level of hazard (category 1, 2 etc.) or risk to health of a vulnerable household living or residing in that property. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/rentingandletting/housinghealth/> and <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/hhrsoperatingguidance>

Housing Register - A list of applicants for housing accommodation.

Banding Scheme - The system currently used by the Homefinder Somerset Scheme to determine the priority of a applicants housing need. Banding is allocated to the applicant to reflect their current circumstances and future housing need. The banding allocated determines the applicant's position in the waiting list for a particular type/size/location of a home.

Property Label - A description of the property being advertised as available to let. The label will generally include a photograph, location, type of property, number of bedrooms, type of heating, any disabled adaptations, whether there is a garden or not, if pets are accepted and other features. The label will indicate who may be eligible to express an interest for the property. This could include, for example, where a local connection may be required, if there is an age restriction or the property has adaptations.

Registered Provider – This is a term introduced by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 applying to housing associations registered with the Homes and Communities Agency. Registered Providers have access to Social Housing Grant public funding for the capital costs of providing housing.



Shortlist - Once the deadline has passed for registering an interest in a property, a list of those that have expressed an interest, who have met the advertising criteria for each individual property is generated by the computer system. Generally, the applicant offered the property will be the person who has been in the highest housing needs band for the longest period of time.

Social Rented Housing - Housing of a high standard, which is provided at below market cost for households in housing need by local Authorities and Registered Providers. It operates on a basis of accepted and regulated standards of good practice in relation to physical conditions, management, allocation, equal opportunities and accountability. The Homes and Communities Agency sets the maximum rent levels.

Supported Housing – Each partner Local Housing Authority will decide on the criteria that defines supported housing within their own area for the purposes of this policy.

APPENDIX 4 – Eligibility Guidance

The Homefinder Somerset partnership will exclude from the scheme people who are not resident in the United Kingdom at the date of their application. In line with Government legislation the HFS partnership will also exclude people who are subject to immigration control or who are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area or who only have limited rights of residence in the Common Travel Area under European Union law, unless they have been prescribed as eligible by regulations, or unless they are already secure, introductory or in certain cases assured tenants. The Homefinder Somerset partnership will have due regard to any future changes to European Union law / Rights to Reside legislation.

Please see http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/homelessness/eu_and_eea_nationals and annex 2-4 of <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/2171391.pdf> for further guidance.



Appendix 5 – Statement on Decision Making Process

All applications are banded and given a bedroom eligibility by a member of the Registration Team based on the information provided at the time of registration by the applicant or applicant's representative and the applicant's household make-up. The applicant is notified in writing of the Registration Teams decision.

If an applicant wants the band or bedroom eligibility awarded by the Registration Team reviewed a written request they must be made within 28 days of being advised of the decision. The decision will be reviewed by another Officer who was not involved in making the original decision.

If additional information is received with the review request a review may not be required as the new information will be treated as a change in circumstances and in the first instance the banding/bedroom allocation will be reconsidered by the Registration Team.

If the applicant is not satisfied with the other Officers decision the Local Authorities complaints procedure may be followed.

Details of amendments made to Appendix 2 in Common Allocations Policy

Updated Appendix 2 Medical & Welfare Considerations

When ill health, disability or welfare is aggravated by housing conditions' including the location of the property; and the ill health, disability or welfare would improve if other accommodation were offered; the banding awarded will be dependent on two crucial factors:

- The link between the identified medical or welfare issue(s) and the individual's current housing situation.
- The realistic expectation that the identified medical or welfare issue(s) would improve if alternative, more suitable accommodation was made available.

When determining what banding to award, staff will assess what degree of need exists and, what adverse effect this need has on the lifestyle of the household as a whole. To achieve consistency in the allocation of banding under this heading a schedule is detailed below in tables 2A & 2B that sets out the different levels of need:

Table 2A – Medical considerations

Medical Considerations	Impact current property has on medical issues	Band
Low	Minor impact, where the existing housing circumstances have a low impact on an individual's medical issues.	Bronze
Moderate	Moderate impact where there is a clear relationship to an individual's medical issues and the existing housing circumstances.	Silver
Significant	Significant impact where the individuals medical issues makes it unreasonable to remain in the current accommodation; or where the property cannot be adapted to meet the applicant's needs or funds are not available for such adaptations or landlord permission cannot be obtained.	Gold
Severe	Severe impact where the individuals medical issue is life threatening or which is causing bed blocking with hospital / care facility	Emergency

Examples of circumstances that may fall into each banding category are shown below but please note that this is not an exhaustive list and each case will be reviewed on its merits. Supporting evidence would be expected in order to award Gold or Emergency band.

Severe

Medical specialists will not allow the individual to be discharged from hospital to their current property.

All other cases need referral to the medical/emergency assessment panel.

Individual lives alone and has chronic mobility and, or medical issues; or is living with another frail individual who has serious mobility or medical issues and with virtually no support or contact with family or neighbours.

- Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair and the property necessitates the climbing of steps/stairs to gain access to the property and, or steps/stairs within the property itself and is effectively housebound.
- Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair but cannot manage in the property due to the lay out not being compatible with the aids required.
- Is reliant on oxygen and has to manoeuvre oxygen cylinders up and down the stairs to access the building or within the property.

Significant

Individual has serious mobility or medical issues and has no access to a lift/stair lift and:

- Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair but has difficulty in the property due to the lay out not being compatible with the aids required (unable to access bedroom or bathroom).
- Has difficulty in managing the layout or size of property (toilet, bathing facilities).
- Is confined to the existing property as dependant on assistance to leave/return to the property.
- Lives in a property which necessitates the climbing of stairs to gain access to the property and, or steps within the property itself and has medical issues which make it difficult to managing this.

Moderate

Individual has moderate mobility or medical issues and has access to a lift/stair lift and:

- Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair and has some difficulty in the property due to the lay out not being compatible with the aids required.
- Has some difficulty in managing the layout or size of property (toilet, bathing facilities).
- Lives in a property which necessitates the climbing of stairs to gain access to the property and, or steps within the property itself and has medical issues which means there us some difficulty to manage this.
- Is not confined to the existing property and does not need assistance to leave/return to the property but would benefit from living on a ground floor/level access property

Low

- Individual has low mobility or medical issues who do not require a lift/stair lift or are already living in a level access, ground floor property.
- An individual suffering from generalised symptoms of asthma and eczema aggravated by the cold.
- Minor problems relating to recurring colds/asthma or regular depression or unusual allergies could be pointed under this heading providing a link to the existing accommodation could be demonstrated.

Table 2B – Welfare considerations

Social welfare is concerned with the quality of life that includes factors such as the quality of the environment, services available (gas, electric, water, public transport), level of crime, extent of drug abuse, availability and distance of essential social services, individuals place of work, education as well as religious and spiritual aspects of life. The age, physical or learning disability, behavioural difficulties and threats to the individual should be considered as well as the impact on the rest of the household.

Welfare Considerations	Impact current property has on welfare condition	Band
Low	Minor impact, where an individual's welfare issues has a low impact on the existing housing circumstances.	Bronze
Moderate	Moderate impact, where there is a clear relationship to an individual's welfare issues and the existing housing circumstances.	Silver
Significant	Significant impact, where the individuals welfare issues makes it unreasonable to remain in the current accommodation	Gold
Severe	Severe impact, where the individuals welfare issue could be life threatening	Emergency

Examples of circumstances that may fall into each banding category are shown below please note that this is not an exhaustive list and each case will be reviewed on its merits. Supporting evidence would be expected in order to award Gold or Emergency band.

Severe

For cases where an individual's welfare could be life threatening

All cases need referral to the medical/emergency assessment panel.

- Individual suffers dizzy spells and arthritis lives alone in old caravan in grounds of a house in rural area. Only mains service is electricity. Fetches water from an outside cold water tap and uses an Elsan bucket toilet situated some distance from the caravan. Dangers include cold during the winter and potential falls when collecting water or using the outside toilet.

Significant

For cases where an individual's welfare has a serious impact on their housing need making it unreasonable to remain in their current property

- The existing home seriously limits the care and support that can be provided to the individual
- The environment in and around the home has a serious detrimental effect on the quality of life of the household
- Remote location of property resulting in isolation and it can be demonstrated a move to an area with greater facilities will significantly improve quality of life, health & wellbeing
- High financial hardship created by the cost of the current property which is unsustainable and cannot be resolved
- Significant cumulative need to move due to several welfare factors for one or all members of the household that are not covered elsewhere in the policy.

Moderate

For cases where an individual's welfare has a moderate impact and a clear relationship to existing housing circumstances.

- The existing home moderately limits the care and support that can be provided to the individual
- The environment in and around the home has a moderate detrimental effect on the quality of life of the household
- Moderate isolation whereby it can be demonstrated a move to an area with more facilities will greatly improve quality of life, health & wellbeing
- Moderate financial hardship created by the cost of the current property which may be resolved within 6 months with debt intervention.
- Moderate cumulative welfare need to move due to some welfare factors for one or all members of the household are not covered elsewhere in the policy.

Low

For cases where an individual's welfare has a low impact on the existing housing circumstances

- The existing home has little impact in the care and support that can be provided to the individual
- The environment in and around the home has a low detrimental effect on the quality of life of the household
- Low isolation whereby it can be demonstrated a move to an area with more facilities will greatly improve quality of life, health & wellbeing
- Low financial hardship created by the cost of the current property which can be resolved within 6 months.
- Low cumulative welfare need to move due to some welfare factors for one or all members of the household are not covered elsewhere in the policy.

Referrals by the housing team for advice / information to third parties

In the rare event that information contained within the application makes the assessment of an applicant's medical priority for re-housing unclear the applicant's circumstances and available medical information may be referred to an independent third party for advice to be given to officer's in relation to the applicant's medical issues and thus the applicant's need for re-housing. Upon receipt of a response officers will consider this information in order to assist them in making a decision as to the applicant's priority for re-housing.

Referrals to the Councils assessment panel.

In limited often complex cases officers may be undecided about which band (priority) to award the applicant for re-housing on medical grounds. In such cases the matter can be referred by officer's to the Council's assessment panel. The panel will form a view considering all information available from the application (which may include information from relevant third parties) and reach a decision as to the client's banding priority for re-housing on medical grounds.

Appendix 2 - Current wording

Medical Considerations

When ill health (including both physical and mental health issues), disability or old age is aggravated by housing conditions and would improve if other accommodation were offered. The award for medical consideration is a range from Gold to Bronze Band.

Low	Minor Problems	Bronze
Medium	Moderate Problems	Silver
High	Serious Problems Medical issue(s) which have a serious impact on your housing need or make it unreasonable to remain in your current accommodation.	Gold
Urgent	Urgent Medical need which is life threatening or which is causing bed blocking with hospital/care facility	Emergency

(See following examples which are for guidance only)

In the case of stress this will be reflected when deciding on banding.

The two crucial factors that are looked for in any awards of medical conditions are:

1. The physical link between the identified medical complaint and the current housing accommodation/situation.
2. That there is a realistic expectation that the identified medical condition would improve if alternative, more suitable accommodation was made available.

The Housing Team will carefully consider any representation received and check the circumstances outlined with any banding award that may have previously been made. Where there is a need, a change to banding will be made. You do not normally need to submit medical certificates or letters from your GP. However, no supporting evidence is refused and may assist the Housing Officer in assessing your application. Please note that the Local Authority will not pay any costs associated with the provision of supporting medical evidence.

When determining what banding to award, staff should approach the matter from the standpoint of assessing what degree of need exists and, secondly, what adverse effect this

has on the lifestyle of the household as a whole?

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

Urgent Problems – Emergency Band. This band will be reserved for those cases where an applicant's or tenant's housing medical issue(s) are urgent and are life threatening or which are causing bed blocking within hospital/care facility

Example 1: An elderly applicant who the medical specialists will not allow to be discharged from hospital back to a second floor split-level flat which necessitates the climbing of stairs both to gain access and also within the flat itself. This person suffers from a chronic heart condition and the only accommodation available to them would place their life at risk. This view is amplified when further research reveals that the applicant lives alone, has virtually no contact with any neighbours, becoming in effect, a prisoner within the flat should the medical authorities decide to discharge him/ her from hospital.

Example 2: Mr Stevens, a frail, elderly gentleman, lives on his own in an old caravan in the grounds of a house in a country area. The only mains service is electricity. He fetches his water from an outside cold water tap and must use an Elsan bucket toilet situated some distance from the caravan. Mr Stevens suffers from dizzy spells, arthritis and was admitted to hospital as a result of the cold during the winter and the danger of falls when collecting water or using the outside toilet.

High/Serious Problems – Gold Band. This band will be reserved for those cases where an applicant's or tenant's housing medical issue(s) have a serious impact on their housing need or make it unreasonable to remain in their current accommodation.

Please note that gold band will only be made where the property cannot be adapted to meet the applicants needs or funds are not available for such adaptations or landlord permission cannot be obtained.

NOTE: It is expected that any medical award, which is assessed to be a serious problem, will be linked to medical or social service recommendations that have been received by the Housing Team.

Example 1 Mr Brown is a 39 year man who suffers with severe headaches, called cluster headaches. For this he takes large doses of medication and also needs oxygen to help relieve his pain. He currently lives on the third floor in a flat, which results in several problems. Mr Brown has to lift heavy oxygen cylinders up and down the stairs of the building to the third floor. In addition he finds that when he is suffering with his severe cluster headaches he finds himself very dizzy and this has proven to be rather dangerous when he has tried to go up and down the stairs. Mr Brown's headaches are also brought on by lots of background noise, and therefore struggles when he has noisy neighbours.

Example 2: Mrs Smith, an elderly widow, lives on her own in a first floor flat. She suffers from severe rheumatoid arthritis, and is unable to climb stairs. As a consequence she is housebound.

Medium/Moderate Problems – Silver Band. This again is a high banding award and should only be used to reflect moderate medical difficulties that have a clear relationship to existing housing circumstances.

Example 1: Mrs Baggins and her daughter are living in a property where Mr Baggins (husband and father) died of cancer. The young child (7 years old) is now constantly looking for her father in the property and this is causing considerable upset.

Example 2: Mr and Mrs Brown, are both aged 70, are the owner-occupiers of a large Victorian property. Mrs Brown also suffers from osteoarthritis and now finds mobility painful, which is aggravated by this large dwelling, where only the WC facilities are on an upper floor. Mr Brown has a blood disorder and has considerable problems keeping warm because the property has no central heating. The GP is concerned on both accounts and has advised the Housing Team accordingly.

With both serious and moderate problems officers have a certain amount of discretion regarding the award. This will be of particular use to visiting officers in assessing the degree of seriousness of any medical problem.

Low/Minor Problems – Bronze Band. The degree of the problem is minor.

Example 1: A family with a young child suffering from generalised symptoms of asthma and eczema aggravated by the cold.

Example 2: Minor problems relating to recurring colds/asthma or regular depression or unusual allergies could be pointed under this heading providing a link to the existing accommodation could be demonstrated.

Who is responsible for assessing medical priority?

The Housing Team undertake the majority of assessments for applicant's housing need for re-housing under medical grounds. The team will base their assessments on the information provided in the application and any supporting information supplied by the applicant and /or their representatives.

Referrals by the housing team for advice / information to third parties

In the rare event that information contained within the application makes the assessment of an applicant's medical priority for re-housing unclear the applicant's circumstances and available medical information may be referred to an independent third party for advice to be given to officer's in relation to the applicant's medical issues and thus the applicant's need for re-housing. Upon receipt of a response officers will consider this information in order to assist them in making a decision as to the applicant's priority for re-housing.

Referrals to the Council's assessment panel.

In limited often complex cases officers may be undecided about which band (priority) to award the applicant for re-housing on medical grounds. In such cases the matter can be referred by officer's to the Council's assessment panel. The panel will form a view

considering all information available from the application (which may include information from relevant third parties) and reach a decision as to the client's banding priority for re-housing on medical grounds.

The following list covers some of the main factors, which can be reflected in a banding award under medical considerations.

1. Mobility - Inability to manage stairs/control-heating (e.g. put on extra clothing or adjust fire). size of accommodation, garden.
2. Applicants or tenants who are more or less confined to their existing accommodation, or where they depend on others to enable them to leave the dwelling.
3. Where present accommodation is causing the applicant's mental or physical disability, which could be overcome by a move to more suitable accommodation. The approach in this instance is to focus on how the applicant or tenant's circumstances could be improved by a move to alternative accommodation - banding will be awarded accordingly.

Agenda Item 9

Fixed Penalty Notices for fly tipping

Executive Portfolio Holder: Carol Goodall, Environmental Health, Health and Safety
Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess, Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus)
Assistant Director: Laurence Willis, Assistant Director (Environment)
Service Manager: Alasdair Bell, Environmental Health Manager
Lead Officer: Vicki Dawson, Principal Environmental Protection Officer
Contact Details: Vicki.dawson@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 463546

Purpose of the Report

For Members to agree an appropriate level at which to set the fine for new fixed penalty notices available for persons committing an offence of the unlawful disposal of waste (fly tipping).

Forward Plan

This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of 2nd June 2016.

Public Interest

One of the pieces of legislation enforced by Environmental Health relates to the illegal deposit of waste, usually referred to as fly-tipping. If individuals or companies are believed to have committed an offence under this law then council officers can prosecute them. If they are found guilty in court then they can be given a fine of up to £50,000 or sent to prison for up to 12 months. In reality the fines nationally are rarely anywhere near the maximum.

From 9th May 2016 the law is changing to give the Council the option of offering a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to those guilty of fly-tipping. Other enforcement options, including prosecution will still remain the same.

If an FPN is accepted and paid then no further action is taken in relation to that offence.

This reports relates to the level at which the Council will set the fixed penalty. The law allows the level to be set anywhere between £150 and £400.

Recommendations

That the District Executive agree to set the level for fixed penalty notices for offences under Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 at £200 with a reduction to £150 if paid within 10 days of the date of issue.

Background

Dumping waste illegally is an offence under Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This offence is known commonly as fly-tipping.

Environmental Health enforcement officers investigate reports of fly tips to try and find evidence of who has dumped the waste. Unfortunately in the majority of cases nothing can be found. In these cases Streetscene Services are responsible for clearing up any fly tips on public land. An element of the clear up cost is re-imbursed through the Somerset Waste

Partnership. This is to cover potential additional flytips that may have resulted from changes at the waste and recycling facilities. Last year this amounted to £3,600

However, if evidence is found that identifies who may have been responsible for the fly tip, then the enforcement officers will undertake further investigation. If sufficient evidence can be gathered to prove who dumped the waste then officers can bring a prosecution against the offender under the provisions of section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

To date the only formal sanctions available for such offences are a prosecution or a simple (formal) caution.

Report Detail

The Unauthorised Deposit of Waste (Fixed Penalty) Regulations 2016 came into force on 9th May 2016. The new regulations introduce the ability to issue an FPN to persons believed to have committed an offence of fly tipping. FPNs offer a person the opportunity to discharge their liability to conviction for the offence by the payment of a fixed penalty. A number of other fixed penalties already exist within Environmental Health for environmental crime offences, including dog fouling and littering. The level of fixed penalty for this offence can be set anywhere between £150 and £400.

Fly tips can vary hugely in their scale, impact on the environment and cost of clearing. It is therefore useful to have a range of sanctions available which can be implemented in proportion to the severity of the offence. It gives the option to issue a penalty without the time needed to go to court, where this is more appropriate to the offence committed.

This is particularly useful given the difficulties that can be experienced in taking enforcement action. During the past 12 months it has only been possible to bring one successful prosecution and issue one formal caution. There are a number of other investigations ongoing, a couple of which are very involved and taking considerable resource. The option of an FPN will provide a more effective and efficient remedy in some circumstances.

All formal action taken will follow the principles set out in the SSDC Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy and must have regard to the public interest test. It is anticipated that FPNs will only be used where these public interest test consideration indicate that it is a more proportionate and reasonable penalty in the circumstances. For example for a very small scale fly tip, by an individual with no prior history of this offence, who is co-operative with the investigation, then an FPN may be the most suitable course of action.

Given that FPNs are likely to only be offered in these type of circumstances, it is believed that a level of £200 is an appropriate and sufficient penalty to make it clear that an offence has been committed and also to act as a deterrent against further offending. Offering a reduced rate for early payment is in line with the policy set for other FPNs issued by the Council. This encourages prompt payment. For comparison the cost of clearing up a small fly tip is approximately £115.

Should an FPN not be paid, officers are still able to continue with a prosecution instead.

For more serious or recurring offences prosecution is likely to still be the recommended course of action. Each case will of course be considered in turn and in consultation with legal services where necessary.

It is therefore proposed that the level of penalty be set at £200 with reduction to £150 if paid within 10 days.

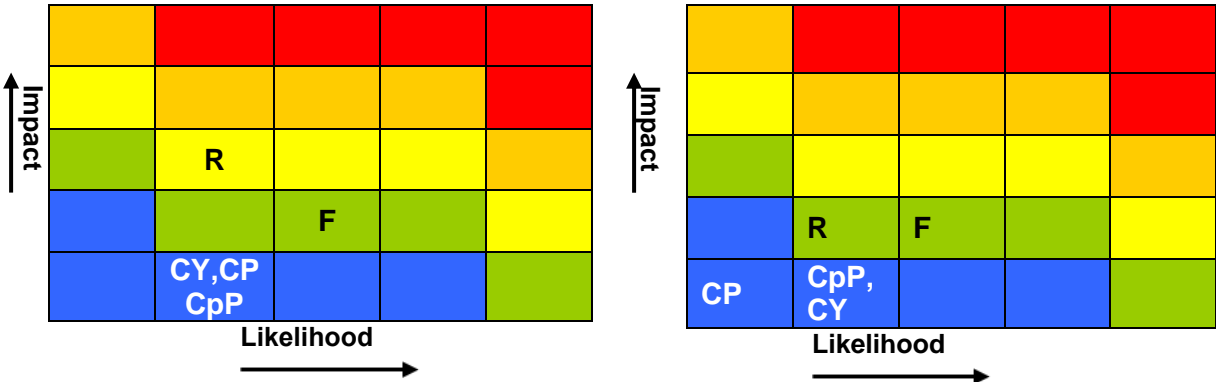
Financial Implications

Receipts from fixed penalty notices are retained by the authority to which they are paid. Any FPNs paid will therefore go a small way to help offset the costs to the Council of enforcing and clearing fly tips. It is not anticipated however that there will be significant numbers of FPNs issued due the difficulties in obtaining evidence as outlined above. (It is not anticipated that more than 2 to 3 FPNs will be issued a year resulting in receipts of between £300 to £1,200)

Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations

Risk Profile after officer recommendations



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

This report supports the following priorities in the Council Plan 2016-2021

Environment

To keep South Somerset clean, green and attractive we will:

- Keep streets and neighbour-hoods clean and attractive.

Health and communities

- Help keep our communities safe.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

The report has no adverse climate change implications. Any actions to help ensure the proper and responsible disposal of waste will have positive implications for the wider environment.

Equality and Diversity Implications

An equality impact assessment has been completed. The report has no equality and diversity implications.

Privacy Impact Assessment

There are no new implications for any personal data. The existing provisions for enforcement of the relevant legislation will remain the same.

Background Papers

None applicable

Stage 2 Equality Analysis - Fixed penalty notices for fly tipping

Impact	Low Impact	Lead Officer	Vicki Dawson
Date of EqA	10/5/16	EqA Review Date	10/5/17
Why are you completing the equality analysis?			
Proposed new policy or service (please specify)			
What are the main purposes of the policy, strategy or service area?			
<p>One of the pieces of legislation enforced by Environmental Health relates to the illegal deposit of waste, usually referred to as fly-tipping. If individuals or companies are believed to have committed an offence under this law then council officers can prosecute them. If they are found guilty in court then they can be given a fine of up to £50,000 or sent to prison for up to 12 months. In reality the fines nationally are rarely anywhere near the maximum.</p> <p>From 9th May 2016 the law is changing to give the Council the option of offering a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to those guilty of fly-tipping. Other enforcement options, including prosecution will still remain the same.</p> <p>The proposed level for the fixed penalty is £200 reduced to £150 for early payment (within 10 days)</p>			
Evidence			
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2016/334/made			
Supporting Documentation/Links			
District Executive report Fixed Penalty Notices for Fly Tipping June 2016			
Conclusion	Date	Comments	
No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	10/5/16		
Please comment/explain how you will meet the General Equality Duty (GED)?			
Consideration given to different protected characteristic. Generally positive impact. Sufficient information and resources are already in place to mitigate any negative impact.			
Lead Officer Sign Off	Vicki Dawson	Date	10/5/16
Equalities Officer Approval Comments	Jo Morgan approved	Status	10/5/16

Agenda Item 10

Local Strategic Partnership South Somerset Together (SST) Annual Review

Executive Portfolio Holder: Ric Pallister, Leader of the Council
Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Place and Performance
Assistant Director: Helen Rutter Communities
Service Manager: Helen Rutter, Assistant Director (Communities)
Lead Officer: Helen Rutter, Assistant Director (Communities)
Contact Details: Helen.rutter@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01963 435012

Purpose of the Report

The report gives an overview of the progress made by the Partnership on strategic priorities during 2015/16. It explains the new simplified arrangements for the partnership that start from 1 June 2016.

Forward Plan

This report has appeared on the Executive Forward Plan with a presentation date of April 2016. It was delayed due to fundamental changes in the Partnership at the end of the current funding and partnership agreement.

Public Interest

South Somerset Together (SST) is the local strategic partnership (LSP) for the District. It brings together senior representatives of the main public and voluntary sector organisations operating in the District. The Partnership works on shared strategic priorities, developing new service initiatives that address these priorities and many of which aim to improve effectiveness of service provision for the benefit of local people.

Recommendations

That the District Executive:

- (1) Note the achievements of the South Somerset Together Partnership in 2015/16 and the new, simplified arrangements
- (2) Notes that the Partnership agreement terminated March 2016 and new simplified governance arrangements are being put in place from June 2016

Background

Since 2012 annual reports on the activities of the Partnership have been presented to the Executive. A simplified Partnership model was adopted in April 2012 and ran for 4 years, being updated annually, until March 31 2016.

The Partnership has been lead through an independent Chairperson and Co-ordinator underpinned by a package of funding and other support from Partners which met the core operating costs. A pump priming fund has been available to help new initiatives to be launched.

Activity during 2015/16

Work has been going on throughout the year, led by regular meetings of the Strategy Group, to focus on a small number of strategic priorities. Please see the strategic priorities progress summary in Appendix A.

Three successful assemblies were held last year with over 170 attendees from local businesses, organisations and communities.

- A health assembly was held in May 2015 around health & primary health care services, looking at how to create a sustainable health and social care system for the long term, highlighting both the service provider and patient perspectives. This event was very well received and stimulated interesting discussion with a number of practical issues and suggested actions raised. A new health sub-group was set up to take this forward.
- In July the Partnership held its annual general meeting with a key theme around digital inclusion and there was also an update from Partners working on the Transport and Access to services, and Housing priorities. As a result of this a multi-agency South Somerset Digital inclusion group has met and ran a community focussed event in April 2016
- A follow up Housing Assembly was held in November to further explore what is preventing housing from coming forward in our rural communities and how, in a climate where legislative and budgetary changes further impact on housing delivery, partners can better work together to provide homes to meet the demand.
- In March 2016 SST hosted an assembly around the changes to Welfare Reform and the challenges they present for our communities in South Somerset. Key speakers and feedback from delegate group discussions recognised that changes as well as the needs and demands of those affected will increase as time goes on, and that it will be important for agencies to continue to monitor & measuring impacts to understand what is happening and raise awareness effectively. The opportunity provided through one-stop shop approaches was strongly supported.

Earlier in 2015 SST was successful in recruiting a new financial partner, Stonewater Housing, who contributed £5,000 to the Partnership. This matched the contributions from Yeovil College, Yarlinton Housing Group and Yeovil District Hospital.

SST funders have done a thorough review of priorities & progress in the run up to the end of the three-year Partnership Agreement. Partners agreed the Partnership plays an important, positive role and were supportive of continuation of the Partnership. It is a challenging time financially for partners and the likely impacts of legislative and budgetary changes post-Election May 2015. All this mean they all felt it was necessary to make a reduced financial contribution or substantially change the way the Partnership operates.

Partners agreed the main strengths and added value of the Partnership include:

- Enabling the opportunity to share knowledge and forge crucial relationships and linkages, some of which may not have been so easily accessible.
- Raising the profile of our area and its needs/ opportunities with key bodies like LEP/ SCC etc.
- Creates ability to mobilise rapidly with joined up thinking on major issues and opportunities for external funding.
- Sharing of good practice sessions.
- Well targeted Assemblies can open up all kinds of new links and understanding, shine a light on important issues etc.

At the end of March 2016 funding partners reaffirmed their support for strategic partnership working, but agreed to introduce a simplified Partnership model.

This will operate by informal, collaboration between existing Partners. This will remove the requirement for core funding contributions whilst retaining the most valued aspects of the strategic linkages. The Partners will rotate the chairing and hosting of meetings. The new Partnership model is in operation from 1st June 2016, when the 2 dedicated roles of an Independent Chair and Coordinator will cease.

Grateful thanks are extended to Cathy Bakewell, Chairperson and Chereen Scott Partnership Coordinator, who have fulfilled these roles with great distinction over the last few years.

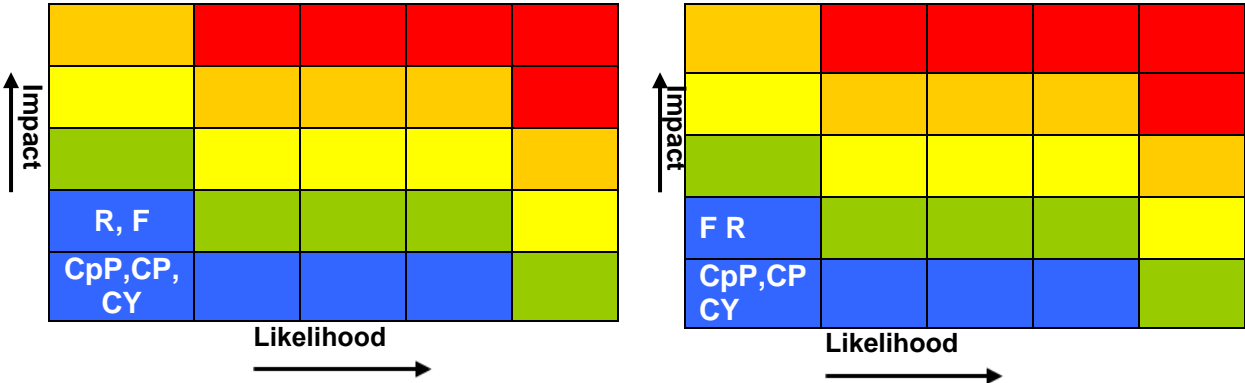
Partners are due to meet at the end of May to revisit the governance and strategic priorities going forward. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

Financial Implications

SSDC has allocated £12,000 as a contribution to the Partnership in its budget for 2016/17. This sum is being retained to cover the period of wind down and pending finding suitable employment for the Partnership Officer. From 2017/18 this will be a saving in the MTFP.

Risk Matrix

No implications as the report is for information



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

South Somerset Together and its priorities help contribute towards all of our corporate focus areas, jobs, environment, homes, health and communities.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

The Partnership lobbied for and completed a programme of work on lowering carbon emissions as one of its strategic priorities. This is now mainstreamed within partner organisations.

Equality and Diversity Implications

These projects support the outcomes of the Council's Equality Objectives.

Privacy Impact Assessment

None

Background Papers

None

Appendix A

The South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is a master plan, summarising how people in the district want to live and work, now and in the future. South Somerset Together set its long term goals through the Sustainable Community Strategy and in 2010, a study was completed that reassessed the key issues and trends identified in the SCS

It uses pump priming money to attract matching funds and commission research and/or kick start new multiagency projects. Lead partners champion particular programmes of work.

As a strategic partnership (LSP) its role is not duplicate any of the work or activities being delivered by the organisations that belong to the partnership, other organisations or communities. The focus of South Somerset Together is to identify what is not happening, what could be delivered differently to give better outcomes, make it happen faster or more consistently across the District and save money and effort.

The table below provides a progress summary for 2015/16.

Projects LSP holds partner project funding (£21,000)	Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2015/16	Project Lead and Progress
Strategic Priority: Building Community Resilience. Helping individuals and communities to do more things for themselves and others		
Supporting 'Our Place' type Integration of Services Long Term Outcome - Improving People's Long Term Health (especially in places with health inequalities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded £20k pump priming sum by DCLG for an "Our Place" pilot programme in Westfield. • Supported Martock Parish Council in a similar bid that has also been awarded 	Rina Singh, SSDC / Jeremy Martin, NHS / John Evans, Yeovil College Westfield: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to lack of clarity from locality, DCLG did not sign off the Westfield Our Place Programme to end project. All £20k project funds were retained. • The action plan content forms the 'Our Westfield' community action plan (some addition themes included by the community association). • Actions are being progressed, some complete and partners engaged. These are mainly projects rather than the service redesign • A new partnership meeting has been to re-engage with all stakeholders showing examples of partnership projects to date. This was very successful • The tools and training – project definition template, cost benefit analysis methodology, logic model, best practice networking events – were all very helpful for ongoing project management.

Projects LSP holds partner project funding (£21,000)	Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2015/16	Project Lead and Progress
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cost benefit workshop was held with partners and VCS to share this tool. The logic model also has wider applications. <p>Martock:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project mission: To improve the health, wellbeing, skills, financial security and quality of life of the people in our project area and to reduce their dependency on health, social, welfare and other services. Operational Plan approved by DCLG March 2015. Project selected by DCLG for national case study. A further grant award by DCLG to build monitoring and evaluation system that will enable ongoing cost-benefit analysis. Appointment of full time Community Services Coordinator and part time Seniors' Support Coordinator, a number of community engagement, awareness and intergenerational events held, and an integrated plan for youth work delivery developed and enacted. Working with the County Council to develop a community hub at Martock library that will also provide office and one-to-one support space for project workers. Working with the NHS Symphony project to integrate with Symphony hub for Martock and South Petherton.
Long Term Outcome - Improving People's Long Term Health (especially in places with health inequalities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSP funding awarded (£5,000) towards the mapping of support & care services and delivery of Symphony self-management pilot 	<p>Jeremy Martin, YDH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LSP funded element of this project employed a key worker to support the first steps along the road to delivering a new model of support and care for people with multiple long term conditions and/or frailty in South Somerset. The work led to the collection of local information regarding voluntary service and self-help groups within south Somerset to produce a directory of services for use by the Symphony Complex Care Hub. This will link with Somerset Choices and support the patients to move

Projects LSP holds partner project funding (£21,000)	Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2015/16	Project Lead and Progress
		towards self-help. Further developments are to load this information onto an IT system that can be used outside the office and could be accessible to other key stakeholders e.g. GP surgeries.
Supporting 'Our Place' type Integration of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSP agreement to support the coordination of Yeovil One project if required 	<p>Tim Coombe, A&S Constabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team now firmly embedded and significant reductions in calls for service achieved over the first 12 months • Domestic Abuse drop-in centre now established and a number of partners agencies are also attending regularly • Tactical team in place, chaired by Cllr Tony Lock • Area covered by the One Team extended from Central to include East ward. • Funding received from the PCC for 2015.-16 to support projects and implementation
Promote localism and volunteering	<p>LSP funding awarded (£1,000) towards a SSVCA-hosted high-profile voluntary sector Fayre.</p>	<p>Katherine Nolan, SSVCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSVCA voluntary sector fair provided information, guidance and support to help boost and empower community groups to continue, improve and to work towards ensuring the valuable work they do in our local community is sustainable. • Invited local businesses to find out more about the benefits of engaging with their communities to fulfil their corporate social responsibilities. 170+ delegates and extremely positive feedback. We hope to make this a regular event, subject to funding.. • SSVCA represent the voluntary sector on a number of strategic boards and are key to the development of the Somerset VCSE Strategic Forum, the main route for cross-county engagement. Have also been working with Somerset CCG and other partners on Outcomes Based Commissioning. We will continue to play a major

Projects LSP holds partner project funding (£21,000)	Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2015/16	Project Lead and Progress
		<p>role in this as proposals are developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSVCA facilitating voluntary sector involvement in local Symphony pilots.
<p>Monitor impact of benefits and other austerity changes on vulnerable people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new, multi-agency welfare reform task group has been formed to review available data and assess impact of changes covering South Somerset and agree how to address any gaps identified Data sharing is raising the profile and understanding of the issues and stimulating creative solutions LSP awarded £5k towards welfare reform project to map the impacts and support services and develop suitable options 	<p>Cathy Bakewell, LSP Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The multi-agency Welfare Reform Task Group has met quarterly over the last year. A real benefit of the group has been the opportunity to forge crucial links between agencies, including the DWP, to share knowledge, issues and practice but importantly identify where there may be opportunities to link work and mobilise quickly. Have gather local data and knowledge in a coordinated way with the aim to help partners to work together to identify intervention measures in areas of areas of most need. Much of the focus to date has been around the benefit cap and job sanctions. SST hosted an assembly in March 2016 on welfare reform with the aim to raise awareness with our communities of changes to the welfare system and the challenges they present. It also explored how local communities can help people prepare for these changes and highlight areas where other local communities have worked together to help people affected by the changes.
Strategic Priority: Skills for a Thriving Economy		
<p>Increasing access to training to help people gain skills/ qualifications and improve work prospects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful Skills Assembly was held on 30th April 2014 with speakers from Further Education, Employers and the Heart of the South West LEP LSP funding awarded (£4,750) towards an employability project in Martock and Westfield area of Yeovil Special follow up meeting held with 	<p>John Evans, Yeovil College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy Group represented on SW LEP Forum to feed in local issues and seek to influence strategy. Successful bid for project to support the development of enhancing Employability skills delivered by Yarlinton -Inspired to Achieve and Yeovil College. The project started in January 2015. Individuals identified the skills needed to access employment opportunities in the

Projects LSP holds partner funding project (£21,000)	Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2015/16	Project Lead and Progress
	<p>Chris Garcia CEO of the Local Enterprise Partnership the aim was to build links and understanding</p>	<p>local area with local employers. Young people were supported to identify their personal key skills and understand the value of these skills to potential employers. Individuals were supported to recognise and 'feel' behaviours and attitudes that are viewed both negatively and positively by employer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the academic year 2014/15 Yeovil College managed over 1000 apprentices. • Following the appointment of a Work Experience Placement Co-ordinator in 2014 at Yeovil College (Skills Assembly action), 97% of students benefitted from meaningful work experience engaging with 546 employers. This resulted in 97.4% of leavers in 2014/15 progressing successfully onto further learning, Higher Education or onto an Apprenticeship. • Yeovil District Hospital and Yeovil College have created a bid to build a 14-19 Career College. The concept is to create a college on the hospital site that will directly address the skill shortages in the Health sector. SST have met with LEP to support the project. A full business case has now been produced. Expressions of interest has been received by the LEP for Growth Deal 3. LEP are supporting the bid.
Strategic Priority: Rural market housing to meet local need		
<p>Developing new models for market housing in rural communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group that formed in 2012 to explore options has continued (following the data analysis that showed escalating demand from increasing numbers of older residents, with needs not met by current housing stock). The aim is to encourage innovation in private sector, older persons housing provision • LSP hosted successful follow-up 	<p>Ric Pallister, SSDC / Phyllida Culpin, Yarlinton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three rural sites are complete and a fourth is underway. • A very successful follow up Housing Assembly was held on 12th November 2015 with over 60 representatives from the district's Parish Councils, organisations and some local developers. The event helped to highlight the important role of community in the process of housing delivery. • SSDC has adopted a rural lettings policy. This would aim to enable some families to remain closer to their roots. Progress is being

Projects LSP holds partner project funding (£21,000)	Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2015/16	Project Lead and Progress
	<p>housing assembly in November 2015</p>	<p>monitored and early results were reported to the assembly in October 2015.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is underway on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and this will explore further the need for bungalows, regardless of tenure. • Lack of revenue support continues to impede access to HCA funding stream launched to support this type of development. • Housing related support for sheltered schemes by SCC received significant cuts in 2014 though not as high as the 50% reduction of funding as previously anticipated. However further changes are now being considered, including a potential cut to extra care housing schemes. • LSP continues to work together to look at how to help bring forward detailed appraisals from private sector for tailored older person accommodation.
Strategic Priority: Transport and Access to Services		
<p>(a) Promote integrated transport system in Yeovil</p> <p>(b) Promote rural transport & access solutions</p>	<p>LSP funding awarded in 2014 (£5,000) for development of Wincanton public information website – this has since been revised and funds held in principle towards a larger piece of work</p> <p>Work done around the Wincanton Hub, funded by the LSP was cited by SCC as good practice and helped them to secure a major grant > £200,000 for the Total Transport project</p>	<p>Martin Woods, SSDC / Phyllida Culpin, Yarlinton Housing Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In September 2015 SCC appointed a Project Officer to coordinate the Total Transport project. They have mapped most of the public, school, health and social care regular routes that SCC undertakes as well as community, DRT and car schemes. In addition, completed some work on demographics across Somerset using census data to identify unmet needs and demand. The outcome will show a better pattern of need but also opportunities for more commercial work. • Jane Newell, SCC attends a national group with DfT as the SW representative. There is a great deal of interest from No10 and all of the Cabinet departments and the group are being asked that if barriers arise but could be broken down by a change in policy to let them know. Across the country the main barrier seems to be raising awareness of the potential for more joined up thinking in transport within the NHS. In Somerset we are ahead of the game as we

Projects LSP holds partner project funding (£21,000)	Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2015/16	Project Lead and Progress
		<p>already work in partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West Transport group (SWTG) have agreed to work together to identify an IT portal to provide better information, they plan to link in across the Country with groups trying to achieve a similar outcome to have a comprehensive solution across the Country if possible. Initial meetings are taking place with Traveline (the National Public Transport Information Website) to see if other forms of transport, other than traditional PT could be held on Traveline. They are keen to be involved and this would be a good solution as they already have the software in place which links to the stops and destination etc. It is hoped this can be developed during 2016. The SWTG is currently in discussion with a range of Web Portal and APP suppliers. • SCC continue to work on rolling out smartcard technology on buses. All DRT vehicles are equipped with ticket machines and now discussing interoperable tickets with public transport operators. Smart application is also underway. SCC are developing real-time information for the Taunton Park & Ride with a view to rolling out real-time information available via mobile phone apps in the urban areas including Yeovil. • Within the Wincanton access hub work has started with job centre to identify how clients travel to & from appointments, this will identify common themes and travel sharing opportunities. The Wincanton hub is also proposing a pilot project to work with a school and community transport to consider solutions for allowing pupils that rely on school transport to use community transport so they are able to join in with extra curriculum activities.



Agenda Item 11

Corporate Grants report 2015 - 2016

Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sylvia Seal, Leisure and Culture
Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Interim Chief Executive
Assistant Director: Helen Rutter, Assistant Director (Communities)
Service Manager: Helen Rutter, Assistant Director (Communities)
Lead Officer: David Crisfield – Third Sector and Partnerships Co-ordinator
Contact Details: david.crisfield@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462240
helen.rutter@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01963 435012

Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the overall spend on voluntary sector grants in 2015/16.

Public Interest

Our successful grants programme supports voluntary and charitable organisations, not-for-profit groups, parish or town councils and other organisations with ideas to improve local quality of life. This can include anything from covering the cost of hiring a room/pitch or equipment to help to start new activities, to creating or improving local recreation facilities and refurbishment of community halls and meeting.

Recommendations

That the report be noted.

Background

Each year SSDC supports a wide range of voluntary and community sector organisations through both on-going partnership funding (via Service Level Agreements) as well as one-off grants. Area Community Grants are agreed by either the Area Development Manager and Ward Member(s) or the Area Committees, and District-Wide funding by District Executive.

Total grant funding for 2015/2016

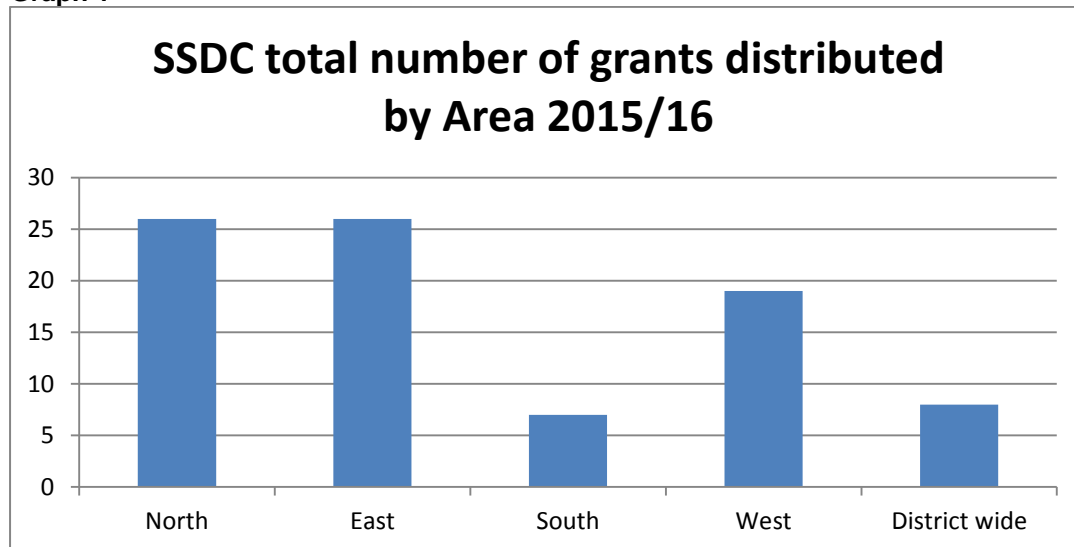
Table 1 below provides a breakdown of the total number and value of grants awarded by SSDC in 2015/16.

Table 1

	Total no of grants awarded	Total £ amount of grant awarded
Area Community grants	65	210,966
District Wide funding	3	203,990
Community Health & Leisure Youth Development funding	13	2,475
Funding for Arts organisations	4	18,000
Equalities & Diversity funding	1	8,000
TOTAL	86	443,431

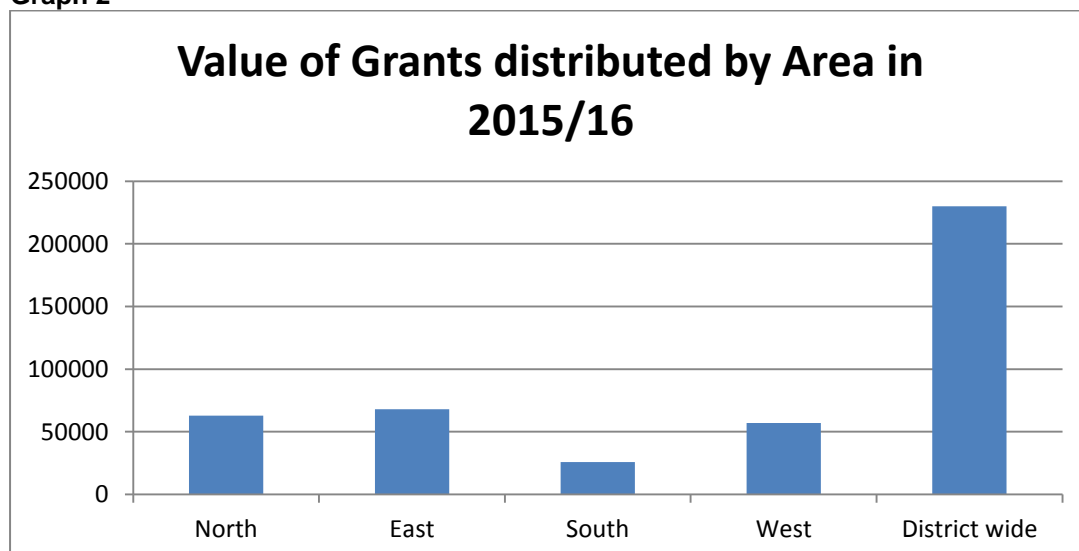
Graph 1 below shows the number of community area grants (by area) and districtwide grants awarded in 2015/16

Graph 1



Graph 2 below shows the total value of the grants distributed in 2015/16 by community area and districtwide.

Graph 2



Grant funding comparisons - 2015/2016 against 2014/2015

In Table 2 below you will see that the total value of the Area Community Grants in 2015/16 was twice that of the spend in 2014/15. This is due largely to one significant village hall project that received funding of £40,000 and 6 other grants where over £10,000 was given. The grant of £40,000 was for a new build Village Hall in Tintinhull and helped secure an additional £1.08million of external funding, and where SSDC's funding was 4% of the total project costs.

Table 2

	2014/2015		2015/2016	
	Total no of grants awarded	Total amount of grants awarded £	Total no of grants awarded	Total amount of grants awarded £
Area Community grants	68	103,711	65	210,966
District Wide funding	3	203,990	3	203,990
Community Health & Leisure Youth Development funding	9	900	13	2,475
Funding for Health & Well-being (Arts)	4	15,150	4	18,000
Equalities & Diversity funding	1	8,000	1	8,000
	85	331,751	86	443,431

Area Community grants

The total project costs supported from the Area community grants budget was **£1,924,077** indicating that for every **£1** invested, **£8** of external funding is secured for the voluntary sector and community projects in South Somerset. Community grants are either for one-off grants or funding agreed under a Service Level Agreement.

Table 3

By Area	Total no of grants awarded	Total £ awarded	Total £ project costs	% awarded against project costs	Total £ Parish & Town council contribution
North (35 parishes)	18	61,391	1,322,352	5	185,200
East (38 parishes)	23	67,426	374,368	18	19,773
West (33 parishes)	18	56,466	136,334	41	6,126
South (9 parishes)	6	25,683	91,023	28	11,350
	65	210,966	1,924,077		222,449

Chart 1 provides a breakdown of the total number of grants awarded across the areas in 15/16, by theme:

Chart 1

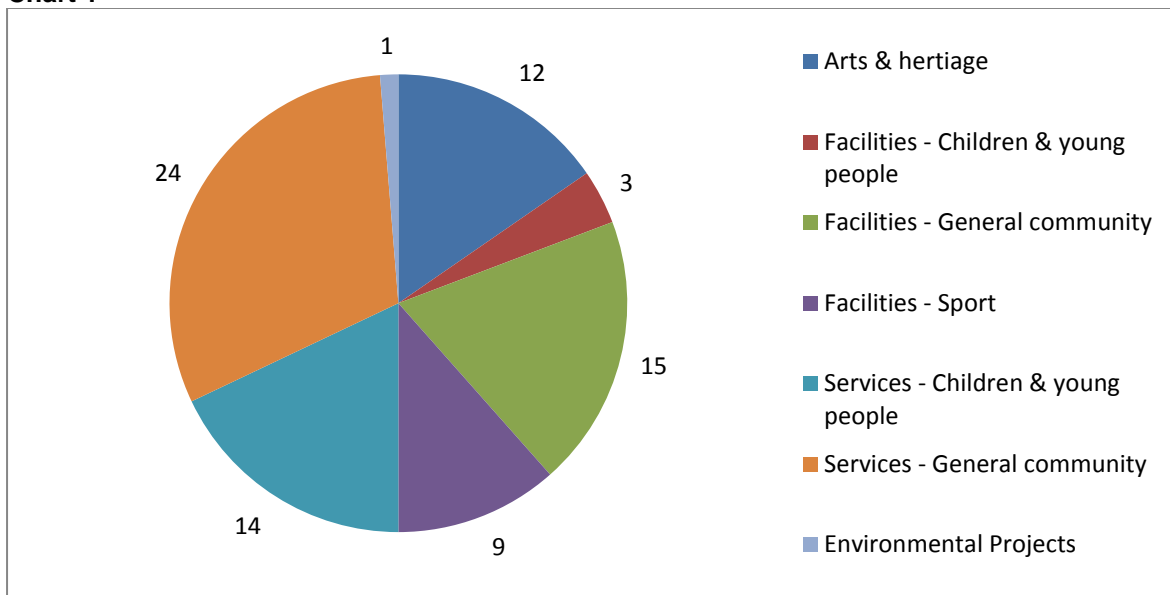
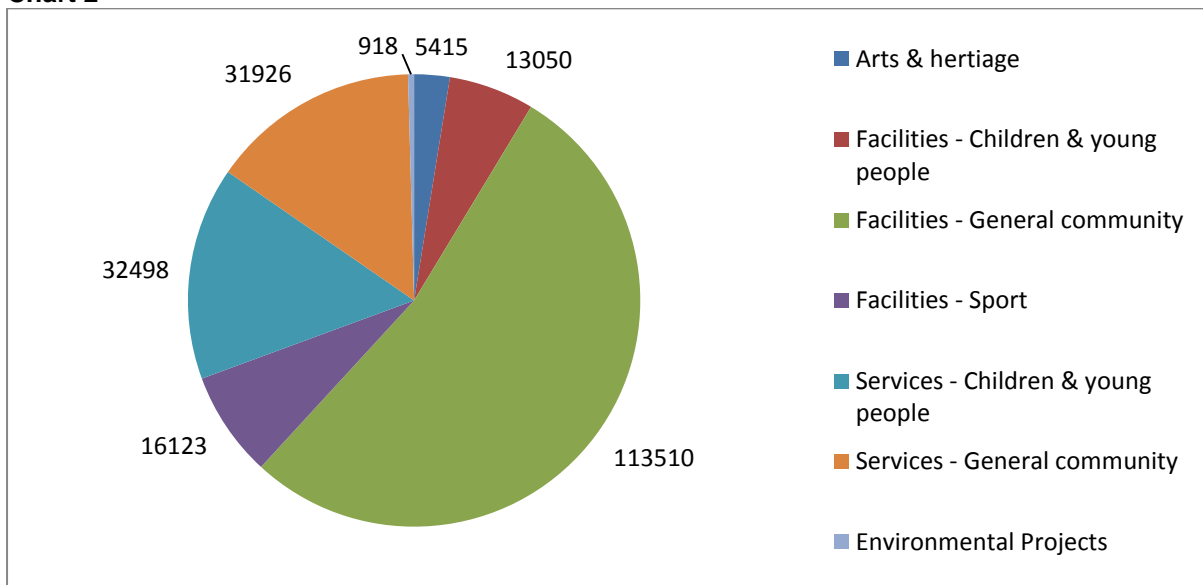


Chart 2 provides a breakdown of the total £ funding awarded across the areas in 15/16, by theme:

Chart 2



Appendix 1 gives examples of projects supported in the local community by our community grants scheme.

District wide funding

- Service Level Agreements awarded - £74,260 to South Somerset Voluntary Community Action (SSVCA), £121,730 to Citizen Advice South Somerset (CASS) and £8,000 to Somerset Rural Youth Project (SRYP).
- SSDC supports SSVCA and CASS to ensure that both voluntary organisations and people across South Somerset are able to access free, impartial and expert advice; to deliver services to some of the people most in need and to meet a range of objectives in our Corporate Plan.
- SSDC works in partnership with SRYP to provide additional services for young people aged 11-25 in rural Somerset. SRYP provides stimulating things to do and places to go, target those who are disadvantaged and encourage positive contributions and supporting choices for young people living in rural areas of South Somerset.
- The 2015/16 annual performance data for Somerset Rural Youth Project was presented to members at the March 2016 District Executive meeting in support of the request for funding in 2016/17.
- 2015/16 nine month monitoring data for SSVCA and CASS was also presented to members at the March meeting.

Community Health & Leisure Youth Development funding

- £2,475 was awarded for 13 different play activities and youth groups across the district.

Funding for Health & Well-being (Arts organisations)

- Four Arts organisations (Actiontrack, Take Art, Somerset Art Works and Somerset Film) were awarded Service Level Agreements amounting to £18,000.
- The 2015/16 annual performance data for Actiontrack, Take Art, Somerset Art Works and Somerset Film was presented to members at the March 2016 District Executive meeting in support of the request for funding in 2016/17.

Equalities & Diversity funding

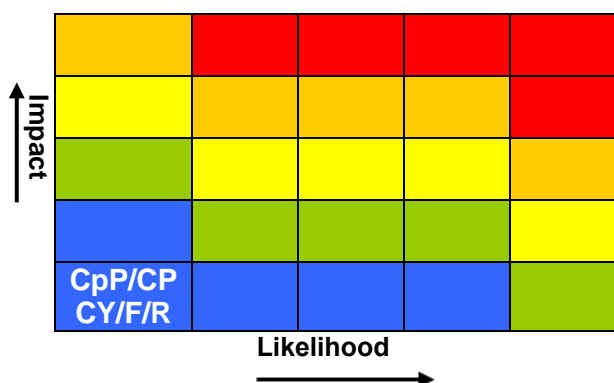
- Service Level Agreement awarded - £8,000 to Access for All to provide specific services and expertise and ensures compliance with our Public Sector Equality Duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- The 2015/16 annual performance data for Access for All was presented to members at the March 2016 District Executive meeting in support of the request for funding in 2016/17

Financial Implications

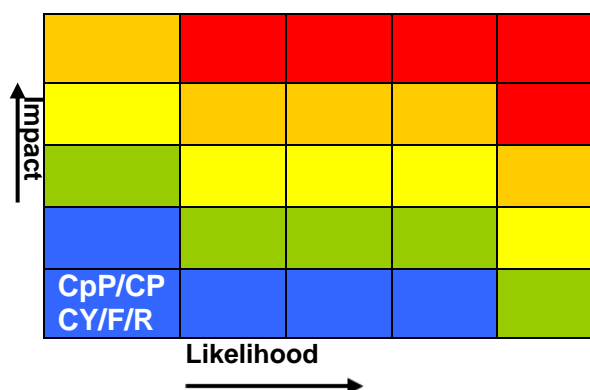
None for this report.

Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities

We will continue to provide country parks, the Octagon Theatre, support local play areas and community buildings.

We will continue to help communities to identify their own needs and priorities in order to take more control over shaping the places where they live and work. Our dedicated area teams and area committees ensure that we are well placed to work creatively with partners (at a parish, district or county level) to support practical ways for people to influence or take control of important local facilities and services.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

If community facilities are not provided close to where people live or shop, traffic movements and traffic congestion will increase with subsequent increases in carbon emissions.

Equality and Diversity Implications

An accessible community building will be of positive benefit to all groups. Local community facilities can play a vital role in reducing health inequalities, social isolation and may contribute towards community cohesion.

Privacy Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

Background Papers

Corporate Grants 2014/15 DX Report 2nd July 2015; District-wide grants 2016/17 DX report 3rd March 2016; Area Committee grant reports.

Projects supported by the Area Community Grant Scheme 2015/16

Area North – Chilthorne Domer Recreational Trust – Enhanced park and play at Chilthorne Rec

Project costs - £148,886

SSDC award - £10,000

Chilthorne Domer Recreational Trust is a registered charity and occupies land leased by the Parish Council. The freehold is owned by South Somerset District Council.

Over the last 6 years the committee has taken a phased approach to bring about a wide range of improvements to the pavilion building and recreational facilities. The trust has also successfully broadened its sports provision by becoming a venue for youth and walking football teams.

A key issue that remained outstanding was the lack of facilities for disabled users. This latest phase of the works will deliver widened corridors, fully accessible toilet and new store room within the pavilion building as well as new all-inclusive outdoor play equipment and a car park extension to include 2 dedicated blue badge parking bays.

Support was provided by the Neighbourhood Development Officer to complete a successful grant application to Viridor Credits which resulted in an award of £110,110. In addition to the grant of £10,000 from the Area North Capital programme, a specification was also provided by SSDC for the car park enhancements which were of great assistance to the trustees.

Area South – Inspired To Achieve (i2a) – funding towards the cost of running the Incredible Tuesdays Group

Project costs - £9,000

SSDC award - £3,500

Incredible Tuesdays supports young people to fulfil their educational and skills potential to maximise their life chances and opportunities in a fun and safe environment appropriate to their needs. The group strives to improve the quality of their lives through making opportunities more accessible. Sessions include: life skills (independent living, employability and skills, job hunting); sports and recreation and outreach visits to country parks, the sea-side and tourist attractions; delivery of housing and benefit advice; keeping young people and vulnerable adults safe in their physical and on-line communities. The group also provides support for parents and carers through respite care. I2a work with local educators to identify and engage young people who would benefit from the group. They encourage peer referrals and link with external providers such as The National Autism Society.

Area South – Sutton Bingham & District Canoe Club – funding towards the purchase of two KataKanus

Project costs - £6,605.60

SSDC award - £1,200

The project includes the purchase of two KataKanu boats and 100 hours of coaching. Each KataKanu seats 6 people and is very stable. The stability of the boats will help to increase the range of people accessing paddle sport. The boats can be used by those who are less

confident and also people with a disability who may struggle to access the activity using normal craft. The boats are also suitable for family paddling so parents can participate in activities with their children. There is high demand for these activities as the club's school link sessions and training courses are all oversubscribed.

Area East – Kingsdon Community Shop – Internal Shop improvements

Project Cost - £16,069

SSDC award - £7,000

Kingsdon Centre Ltd is responsible for operating the Kingsdon Village Shop. The shop is run solely by volunteers from all sectors of the community, for the benefit of the local residents, many of whom are retired. The concept and establishment of this volunteer led and managed community shop came about following the closure of the only shop within the village in 2013. Located within the boundaries of the old disused Kingsdon Primary School, the Kingsdon Centre Ltd and their volunteers have developed stronger relationships with suppliers and local authorities as well as more personal local relationships by promoting volunteering opportunities in the shop and supporting vulnerable isolated residents within their community.

By doing so, the village shop have enhanced their business model, incorporating a village tea rooms, shop, small information point and meeting space as a community hub. These developments have meant that the small trading area has now reached its limits.

In order to generate greater income to help fund future refurbishment (their intended sinking fund) of the premises and to increase the product selection options currently available, greater floor space is now required. This 'open plan' layout will have additional benefits such as better facilities to cater for small groups/clubs who wish meet. The enhancements will also provide a more accessible layout enabling local residents to use the space easily. The key aims and objectives identified by Kingsdon Centre Ltd are:

- Increased trading area to increase turnover and revenue, to ensure the ongoing viability of the village shop thus providing a much needed local service
- Greater range of products/ services provided to local residents
- Better community group / meeting facilities for residents and outlying villages
- Preservation and maintenance of local grade 2 listed building
- More environmentally friendly use of utilities (efficient water / heating, etc)
- Improvement to current layout & facilities of the building making them more accessible for all.
- Development of retail training opportunities and personal skills
- Increased usage of the tea room as an information point and social area for people to meet and feel more included within their community.

Area East - Wincanton Town Council – Cale Park improvements

Project Cost - £184,345

SSDC award - £10,000

Rickhayes Recreation Ground (now renamed Cale Park) is the largest open space area within the town. Over the years the surrounding area became vandalised and started to take on the feeling of being somewhat threatening and uninviting.

At the start of 2013, a group of local volunteers began work on the River Cale with the aim of clearing litter and debris and bringing back native wildlife to the river. At the same time, the Town Council started working with South Somerset District Council on how to regenerate

Rickhayes and the Play Park in particular. In early 2013 they commissioned a Landscape Architect to look at options for the whole recreation ground area. He created an initial master plan which has undergone extensive public consultation through dedicated workshops, local press articles and as a sitting project within the Town Council's offices.

Alongside this, SSDC Officers have worked with local schools and the youth club to finalise plans for the Play Area culminating in an agreed master plan for the whole area and a fantastic plan for a play area which will meet the needs of young people of all ages, including provision for disabled children.

Area East - Bayford Mission Hall Society – Purchase and Refurbishment of Bayford Chapel

Project Cost - £76,000

SSDC award - £11,000

The hall is described in the Parish Plan for Stoke Trister with Bayford as a huge asset for the parish. The future of the hall was uncertain at the time of publication and the Parish Council had begun to consider the response to the potential loss of the asset.

In early 2015, the Administrative Trustees of Stoke Trister with Bayford Parochial Church Council convened a public meeting to announce that they could no longer maintain two premises within the Parish and that Bayford Mission Hall was to go for commercial disposal. Following the meeting a Working Group formed and conducted a Feasibility Study. Part of the Study was a community survey in which 79% of the households responded and of which 89% either considered it 'very important' or 'important' that Bayford continues to have a hall/meeting place. And again, of those that responded, over 82% were in favour of owning Bayford Mission Hall as a community facility.

The Community has responded to the potential loss of what is considered an important community facility and is working towards securing the building and making it a flexible meeting space for a range of local groups and services.

The purchase price has been agreed and once Bayford Mission Hall has been procured, it will be, within capabilities, immediately available to the parish for use. It will be a fully functional small community hall complete with toilets and refreshment facilities. The Hall will then offer the parish, and the wider community, a meeting space capable of fulfilling a range of activities including exercise classes, children's parties, sales room/market, polling station and bridge classes.

Area West – Ilminster Literary Festival

Project Cost - £1,951

SSDC award - £400

Ilminster's inaugural literary festival will run from the 1st to the 9th June 2016. The Ilminster Literary Festival was set up to offer local people of all ages in the town and surrounding area an exciting and enjoyable opportunity to meet a variety of authors, editors, and script writers through discussion, talks and meetings.

The festival is being organised by representatives from a number of local organisations - the Arts Centre, the Warehouse Theatre, Ilminster Rotary, the two local bookshops and the Town Council. To help make the festival possible the group approached SSDC for a grant towards the cost of insurance and promotion.

The organisers have arranged for a wide variety of authors to speak at the festival including Ann Widcombe, poet James Crowden, travel writer Luke Waterson, crime writer Paul Toolan, romantic novelist Sue Layborne, Virginia Bergin an author of young adult books, children's author Carina Lagnado and comedy writer James Cary.

There are over 25 events taking place in a variety of venues in and around the town. As well as talks by authors the festival includes a literary quiz night and a children's poetry reading competition. Many of the events are free; especially those aimed at children, tickets are available at an affordable price to buy for other events. The organisers anticipate that this first literary festival will be a success and become an annual event.

Agenda Item 12

Increase in Councillors on Brympton Parish Council – Community Governance Review (CGR)

Executive Portfolio Holder: Carol Goodall, Chairman of Area West Committee
Assistant Director: Ian Clarke, Legal and Corporate Services
Lead Officer: Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager
Contact Details: Angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462148

1. Purpose of the Report

To report the receipt of a request (under the provisions of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) from Brympton Parish Council to increase the size of the Parish Council from 11 to 12 Councillors.

2. Public Interest

A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of a district to consider one or more of the following:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- the naming of parishes and the style (i.e. whether to call it a town council or village council etc) of new parishes;
- the electoral arrangements for parishes – the ordinary year of election, the size of the council, the number of councillors to be elected and parish warding;
- grouping parishes under a common parish council, or de-grouping parishes.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007, sets down the principal legal framework within which councils must undertake these reviews.

A valid request has been received Brympton Parish Council requesting that the District Council conduct a consultation (Community Governance Review) of all the electors and local interested groups to ask if they would support the increase in the number of Parish Councillors from 11 to 12. This report asks for the authorisation of Council to carry out that consultation.

3. Recommendations

The District Executive recommend that Council:

1. Note the receipt of the request and its validity;
2. Agree to undertake a Community Governance Review of the Parish of Brympton;
3. Agree the Terms of Reference of the review as detailed in Appendix A, including the timetable and arrangements for public consultation;
4. Agree that the review will be carried out by the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with Ward Members, Assistant Director (Communities) and the Area South Committee;
5. Note that further reports will be brought to Council in order that decisions may be made in respect of draft proposals and final recommendations of the Review.

4. Background

Before the coming into force of the 2007 Act, District Councils had power to vary the numbers on local councils by making an order. Procedures were not prescriptive and numbers on parish councils, or other Parish electoral arrangements, could be varied easily and quickly. Unfortunately this is no longer the case and the procedures prescribed for community governance reviews, set out in the 2007 Act, have to be followed even when the only issue to be considered is a variation in a parish council's numbers.

The Act allows for the public to petition for reviews in their areas. Reviews must be undertaken if petitions are received as follows:

- Area with fewer than 500 electors - at least 50% of the electors
- Area with between 500 and 2,500 electors – at least 250 of the electors
- Area with more than 2,500 electors - at least 10% of the electors.

It is, however, not necessary for a petition to be received to initiate a review. The Parish Council has requested an increase in its numbers and it is for the District Council to decide whether it wishes to undertake a review of the Brympton parish area with a view to increasing the size of the parish council.

5. Request from Brympton Parish Council

The Parish Council have given the following reasons to support their request to increase the size of the Parish Council to 12 members:-

- The Parish Council request that the number of Councillors on the Parish Council be increased from 11 to 12.
- The last boundary review for Brympton Parish Council was carried out in 2003, when the number of Councillors was increased from 9 to 11. However, since that review, the electorate within the parish has increased.
- Derived populations, post 2000, are based on factors of 1.7 electors per property (a recognised ratio) with 2.375 persons per property (again a fairly reasonable factor).
- Due to the Lufton Key Site, which will deliver approximately a further 620 houses, it is believed that the total electorate in the year 2020 will be about 6,200 and we believe that this is the number to be used in determining the numbers of Councillors.
- Research carried out in 1992 showed that the typical Parish Council with a population between 2,501 and 10,000 has 9 – 16 Councillors. The Parish Council therefore feels that an increase in the number of Councillors can be justified.

Brympton Parish Council has put forward a reasoned request for an increase in numbers. There is no formal guidance on the size of parish councils, but the minimum number is 5. The DCLG reports that, nationally, local councils representing the following electorates have, typically, the number of councillors stated:

- Less than 500 – between 5 and 8 councillors
- Between 501 and 2,500 – between 6 and 12 councillors
- Between 2,501 and 10,000 – between 9 – 16 councillors

The 1972 Act, as amended, specifies that each parish council must have at least five councillors; there is no maximum number. The Electoral Commission has no reason

to believe that this pattern of council size to population has altered significantly since the research was conducted. Although not an exact match, it broadly reflects the council size range set out in the National Association of Local Councils Circular 1126; the Circular suggested that the minimum number of councillors for any parish should be 7 and the maximum 25.

Brympton has 5,154 electors. In the light of the reasons put forward by the Parish Council, officers consider that a review should proceed.

Allowing for the need to report to Council at the various stages of the review progress, it is estimated that the review will take 6 - 9 months to complete. Any agreed changes in the composition of the parish council will take effect at the beginning of the next Council year in May 2019. Brympton Parish Council are aware of this delay in increasing their numbers and are content to wait to implement the increase.

6. Community Governance Reviews – General Principles relating to Parishes and Parish Councils

Under the legislation the District Council must aim to ensure that community governance in the area under review:-

- reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area
- is effective and convenient
- takes into account any other arrangements for the purpose of community representation or community engagement.

When considering this, the Council should take into account a number of factors, including:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the size, population and boundaries of any new local community or parish.

A review involves the following stages:

- (1) Setting terms of reference of the review (if the Committee recommends a review in Brympton, suggested terms of reference are set out in Appendix 1);
- (2) Publicising the terms of reference (for the purposes of the Act, the review formally commences when the terms of reference are published);
- (3) Undertaking consultations with the local government electors for the area and any other person or body (including the Parish Council) who appears to have an interest in the review;
- (4) Considering representations;
- (5) Preparing and publishing draft proposals;
- (6) Undertaking consultation on the draft proposals;
- (7) Considering representations;
- (8) Publishing recommendations;
- (9) Making an order to bring into effect any decisions arising from the review;
- (10) A review must be concluded within 12 months of the publication of the terms of reference.

When undertaking a CGR a principal council must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission. However, subject to this, it is for the Council to decide how to undertake the review.

7. Financial Implications

To produce a consultation leaflet for every elector and deliver them every household within the parish would cost in the region of £4,400. It is therefore proposed to conduct a 'light touch' review as the request has been made by the Parish Council and the proposal will incur no direct cost to the electorate.

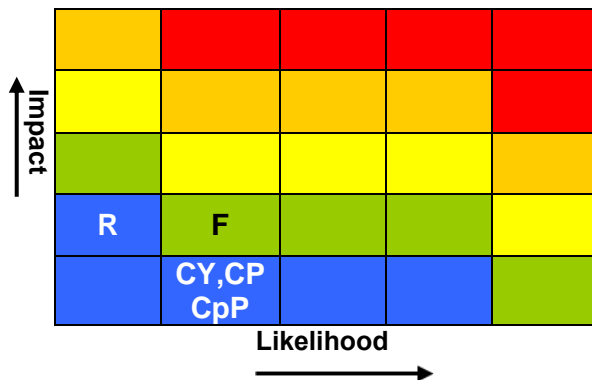
Because the change is minor, it should be possible to do this by posters and leaflets within the Parish and adverts on the SSDC and Brympton Parish Council websites, rather than the usual method of sending a consultation leaflet to every registered elector. This would significantly reduce the cost to SSDC and should ensure that the cost is kept below £100.

There is no specific budget for Community Governance Reviews and therefore all costs will have to be absorbed within the existing Democratic Services budget for 2016/17.

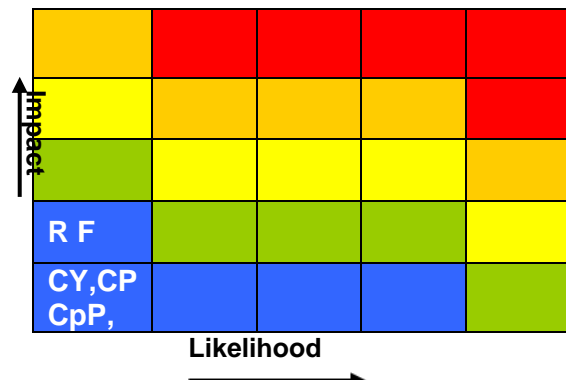
There is no power to re-charge the cost of the review to any other Council, except by agreement. This is because the statutory power to conduct the review rests with this Council.

8. Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan	Orange = Major impact and major probability
Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CP = Community Priorities	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
CY = Capacity	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability
F = Financial	

9. Corporate Priority Implications

No implications at the current time.

10. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

No implications at the current time.

11. Equality and Diversity Implications

All local government electors within the parishes of Brympton will be consulted on the proposal and their views considered as part of the consultation process. The council must have regard to the need to secure that the community governance arrangements for the area reflects the identities and interests of the community in the area and are effective and convenient.

12. Background Papers

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

The Electoral Commission Guidance on Community Governance Reviews, April 2008

Request from Brympton PC dated 28 April 2016

Terms of Reference of the Community Governance Review of the Parish arrangements for Brympton (attached).



Brympton Parish Council

Clerk to the Council, Mrs E M James

The Parish Office, Abbey Community Centre,
The Forum, Abbey Manor Park, Yeovil, BA21 3TL
Telephone: - 01935 424332

28th April 2016

Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager
South Somerset District Council
Brympton Way
YEOVIL
BA202ht

Dear Angela

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

In accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007., Brympton Parish Council request that South Somerset District Council consider undertaking a community governance review.

The Parish Council request that the number of Councillors on the Parish Council be increased from 11 to 12.

The last boundary review for Brympton Parish Council was carried out in 2003, when the number of Councillors was increased from 9 to 11. However, since that review, the electorate within the parish has increased.

Derived populations, post 2000, are based on factors of 1.7 electors per property (a recognised ratio) with 2.375 persons per property (again a fairly reasonable factor).

Due to the Lufton Key Site, which will deliver approximately a further 620 houses, it is believed that the total electorate in the year 2020 will be about 6,200 and we believe that this is the number to be used in determining the numbers of Councillors.

Research carried out in 1992 showed that the typical parish council with a population between 2501 and 10,000 has 9 – 16 Councillors.

The Parish Council therefore feels that an increase in the number of Councillors can be justified and looks forward to receiving a response from the District Council.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E M James
Clerk

South Somerset District Council

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Brympton Parish Council

INTRODUCTION

- **Setting the Context**

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides for a principal council to conduct a community governance review at any time. The Council can undertake a review of the whole or part of its area. The Council is also under a duty to carry out a community governance review if it receives a valid community governance petition for the whole or part of the council's area or, a request from the Parish Council. However, the duty to conduct a review does not apply if:

- a) the principal council has concluded a community governance review within the last two years which in its opinion covered the whole or a significant part of the area of the petition; or
- b) the council is currently conducting a review of the whole, or a significant part of the area to which the petition relates.

In this case the District Council has been requested to undertake a review to increase the number of Parish Councillors from 11 to 12 on Brympton Parish Council, following the receipt of an e-mail request from the Parish Council.

These terms of reference relate to the area comprising the existing Brympton Parish Council boundaries as detailed on the attached map.

In undertaking the review, the Council will be guided by Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972, Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issues in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and The Electoral Commission in April 2008, and the following regulations which guide, in particular, consequential matters arising from the review: Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625); Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/626). Section 81 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the Council to publish its Terms of Reference in a review.

These Terms of Reference will be published by placing a copy on public deposit at the offices of South Somerset District Council at the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT and on the Council's website at www.southsomerset.gov.uk

The matters on which the Community Governance Review is to focus are set out later in these Terms of Reference.

- **Why is the Council undertaking the review?**

The Review is being carried out in response to a written request from the Parish Council. The request seeks to increase the number of Parish Councillors from 11 to 12.

- **What is a Community Governance Review?**

A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole part or part of the district area to consider one or more of the following:

1. Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
2. The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
3. The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish wardings) and
4. Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

- **Who undertakes the review?**

The Council have approved the terms of reference for this review and will deal with all matters in connection with it through the relevant Ward Members and the Area South Committee which will make final recommendations to full Council following the review for their consideration and making of any necessary Reorganisation Order.

The lead officer with regard to this review is Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager.

CONSULTATION

- **How the Council proposes to conduct consultations during the review?**

The Council has drawn up and now publishes this Terms of Reference document. This document lays out the aims of the review, the legislation that guides it and some of the policies that the Council considers important in the review.

In coming to its recommendations in the review, the Council will need to take account of the views of local people. The Act requires the Council to consult the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review and to take the representations that are received into account by judging them against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The Council intends to consult with all households and interested parties in the area, inviting initial submissions and seeking views on the draft proposals.

The Council will also identify any other person or body who it feels may have an interest in the review and write to them inviting them to submit their views at both stages of consultation.

This will include:

- Ward Members
- Tenants and Residents' Associations
- Groups and Societies
- Schools and Colleges
- Members of Parliament

- Somerset Association of Local Councils
- Local Political Parties
- The Police

The Council will also be pleased to receive comments from any other person or body that wishes to make representations; any such person that makes representations during the initial invitation to submit proposals will be invited to make comments in respect of the draft proposals.

As required by Section 79(3) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the District Council will notify Somerset County Council that a review is to be undertaken, provide them with a copy of the terms of reference for the review and will consult them on the matters under review.

The Council intends to clearly publish all decisions taken in the review and the reasons for taking those decisions and will work towards the Government's view in undertaking the review that "Community Governance Reviews should be conducted transparently so that local people and other stakeholders who may have an interest are made aware of the outcome of the decisions taken on them and the reasons behind these decisions."

In accordance with the Act, representations received in connection with the review will be taken into account, and steps will be taken to notify consultees of the outcome of the review by publishing them on the Council's website at www.southsomerset.gov.uk, through general press releases, public notice adverts in local newspapers, placing key documents on public deposit at Council Offices and publicised on the relevant Parish Council website and local public noticeboards.

- **How to contact us:**

Any queries regarding this review should be directed to:

Angela Cox
Democratic Services Manager
South Somerset District Council
Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil
BA20 2HT

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Timetable for the Review

Publication of these Terms of Reference formally begins the review, which must be completed within twelve months.

The table below details indicative timescales for the review.

Action	Timetable	Dates
Compiling Terms of Reference		May 2016
Report to Council to approve terms of reference		21 July 2016
Publication of Terms of Reference		22 July 2016
Introductory Stage – Invite initial submissions	2 months	August / September 2016
Preparation of Draft Proposals and approval by Council	1 month	October 2016
Publication of Draft Proposals		October 2016 (following approval by Council)
Consultation on Draft Proposals	2 months	December 2016
Preparation of Recommendation / Reorganisation Order and approval by Council.	1 month	January 2017
Publication of Recommendations		January 2017
Publication of any Reorganisation Order		February 2017
Effective date of Order		1 April 2017
Town/Parish Council Elections		May 2019

ELECTORATE FORECASTS

- **The electorate forecasts for the district**

The Council has used the Register of Electors as at 1 April 2016 in providing the existing parish electorate figures.

When the Council comes to consider the electoral arrangements of the parishes in its area, it is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts. The Lufton Key Site,

which is currently under construction is expected to deliver a further 620 houses, and the Parish Council believe that the total electorate in the year 2020 will be about 6,200.

- **Demographic trends and influences in our area**

The Lufton Key Site is a large scale development and it is reasonable to expect that the work of the Parish Council will increase with the number of electors. It is therefore reasonable to increase the number of Parish Councillors to 'spread the burden' of issues which they deal with.

THE PRESENT STRUCTURE OF THE PARISH AND THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Present structure of the parish is:

Brympton		Ratio of Electors to Cllrs
Existing No. of Parish Councillors	11	1:468
Proposed No. of Parish Councillors	12	1:430

Guidance in connection with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act requires the consent of the Electoral Commission to be obtained if the Council may wish to alter the electorate arrangements for a parish whose existing arrangements were put in place within the previous five years by an order made either by the Secretary of State or the Electoral Commission. No such consent will be required following this review.

- **Previously unparished areas**

The Council is required by law to consider other forms of community governance as alternatives or stages towards establishing parish councils. There may be other arrangements for community representation or community engagement in an area, including area committees, neighbourhood management programmes, tenant management organisations, area or community forums, residents' and tenants' associations or community associations, which may be more appropriate to some areas than parish councils, or may provide stages building towards the creation of a parish council, which are already successfully creating opportunities for engagement, empowerment and co-ordination in local communities.

The Council will be mindful of such other forms of community governance in its consideration of whether parish governance is most appropriate in certain areas. However, the Council also notes that what sets parish councils apart from other kinds of governance is the fact that they are a democratically elected tier of local government with directly elected representatives, independent of other council tiers and budgets, and possessing specific powers for which they are democratically accountable.

PARISH AREAS

- **Introduction**

The legislation requires that the Council must have regard to the need to secure that community governance with the area under review:

1. Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and

2. Is effective and convenient, and
3. Takes into account any other arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area.

- **Parishes**

The Council is anxious to ensure that electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident because it considers that this sense of identify and community lends strength and legitimacy to the parish structure, creates a common interest in parish affairs, encourages participation in elections to the parish council, leads to representative and accountable government, engenders visionary leadership and generates a strong, inclusive community with a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride.

There is no request in this review to alter the existing parish boundaries, which remain easily identifiable.

- **Viability**

The Council is anxious to ensure that parishes should be viable and should possess a precept that enables them to actively and effectively promote the well-being of their residents and to contribute to the real provision of services in their areas in an economic and efficient manner.

Some parishes are anxious to take on the new power of well-being provided in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007; others hold Quality Parish status, while others are anxious to enter into charters with principal councils for the provision of local services. The Council sees these initiatives as important measures of effective and convenient local government and will respect them in this review.

NAMES AND STYLES

- **The naming of parishes**

The 'name' of a parish refers to the geographical name of the area concerned, whereas its status or 'style' allows for that area to be known as a town, community, neighbourhood or village, rather than as a parish. The status or style of the parish will be reflected in the name of any council of the parish. So, for example, the council of a parish, which has the style "town" will be known as the 'town council' and its councillors as the 'town councillors', etc.

There are legal requirements (as defined in Section 76 of the Local Government Act 1972), particularly with regard to subsequent notification, with regard to the naming of parishes, however, there is no proposal within this review to alter the name of the existing Parish Council.

- **Alternative styles**

The Local Government and Public Involvement Act 2007 has introduced 'alternative styles' for parishes. If adopted, the 'alternative style' would replace the style "parish". However, only one of these three prescribed styles can be adopted:-

"community", neighbourhood" or "village".

A parish shall cease to have an alternative style if the parish begins to have the status of a town.

Where new parishes are created, the Council will make recommendations as to the geographical names of the new parishes and as to whether or not it should have one of the alternative styles.

ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

- **What does “Electoral Arrangements” mean?**

An important part of the Council’s review will comprise giving consideration to “Electoral Arrangements”. The term covers the way in which a council is constituted for the parish. It covers:

- The ordinary year in which elections are held;
 - The number of councillors to be elected to the council;
 - The division (or not) of the parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors;
 - The number and boundaries of any such wards;
 - The number of councillors to be elected for any such ward
 - The name of any such ward
- **Ordinary year of election**

The Local Government Act 1972 states that ordinary election of parish councillors shall take place in 1976, 1979 and every fourth year thereafter (i.e. 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 etc.) The Government has indicated that it would want the parish electoral cycle to coincide with the cycle for the district/borough council, so that the costs of elections can be shared.

However, where the next ordinary elections are not for some time, the Council may resolve to modify or exclude the application of sections 16(3) and 90 of the Local Government Act 1972 to provide for the first election to be held in an earlier year, with councillors serving a shortened first term to allow the parish electoral cycle to return to that of the district.

- **What considerations cover the number of parish councillors?**

The Government has advised, and this Council concurs that “it is an important democratic principle that each person’s vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimated competing factors, when it comes to the election of councillors”. Likewise, the Council notes that the number of parish councillors for each parish council shall be not less than five. There is no maximum number. The Aston Business School found the following levels of representation –

Electorate	Councillor Allocation
Less than 500	5 – 8
501 – 2,500	6 – 12
2,501 – 10,000	9 – 16
10,001 – 20,000	13 – 27
Greater than 20,000	13 – 31

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) suggested that the minimum number of councillors should be seven and the maximum 25.

The government’s guidance is that “each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and pattern of communities”. This Council is prepared to pay particular attention to its existing levels of representation, the broad pattern of existing council

sizes, which have stood the test of time and the take up of seats at elections in its consideration of the matter.

It is recognised that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors. By law, the Council in this review must have regard to the following factors when considering the number of councillors to be elected for the parish:

- The number of local government electors for the parish;
- Any change in that number which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

The Council will also take into account the following considerations:

- To ensure that the allocation of councillors to parishes is equitable across the district, while acknowledging that local circumstances may occasionally merit variation.
- To appreciate that there are different demands and consequently different levels of representation are appropriate between urban and more rural parishes in the district.

The Council also acknowledges that there may be exceptions to the above, where some weight will be given to the following considerations in forming the proposals;

- A high precept and high levels of service provision;
- Where representation may be required to meet the challenges of population sparsity;
- Supporting a warding arrangement in a particular parish and achieving a good parity of representation between wards.

- **Parish Warding**

The Act requires that in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards for the purposes of elections for the parish council the Council should consider the following:

- Whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish council would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient;
- Whether it is desirable that any areas of the parish should be separately represented on the council.

The government's guidance is that "the warding of parishes in largely rural areas that are based predominantly on a single centrally located village may not be justified. Conversely, warding may be appropriate where the parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities, a village with a large rural hinterland or where, on the edges of towns, there has been some urban overspill into the parish".

With regard to urban parishes, the government has suggested, "there is likely to be a stronger case for the warding of urban parishes". In urban area community identity tends to focus on a locality, whether this be a housing estate, a shopping centre or community facilities. Each locality is likely to have its own sense of identity".

The Council will be mindful of this guidance, noting further that, "each case should be considered on its merits and on the basis of the information and evidence provided during the course of this review."

The Council also wishes to emphasise that warding arrangements should be clearly and readily understood by and should have relevance for the electorate in a parish; they should reflect clear

physical and social differences within a parish: one parish but comprising different parts. Furthermore, ward elections should have merit; not only should they meet the two tests laid down in the Act, but they should also be in the interests of effective and convenient local government. They should not be wasteful of a parish's resources.

- **The number and boundaries of parish wards**

In reaching conclusions on the boundaries between parish wards, the Council will take into account community identity and interests in an area and will consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries.

Equally, the Council, during its consultations in this review is mindful that proposals, which are intended to reflect community identity and local linkages should be justified in terms of sound and demonstrable evidence of those identities and linkages.

The Council has noted the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable, as well as taking into account any local ties which might be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries. The Council also emphasises that ward boundaries should be clearly understood; they should represent the most appropriate parting of local attachments within a parish that comprises different parts. The Electoral Commission has suggested that the district wards should not split an un-warded parish and that no parish ward should be split by such a boundary. The relevant legal provisions do not apply to reviews of parish electoral arrangements, but the Commission has requested the Council to bear this in mind, which the Council will do.

- **The number of councillors to be elected for parish wards**

The Council has noted that it is required to have regard to the following when considering the size and boundaries of the wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward;

- The number of local government electors for the parish;
- Any change in the number, or distribution, of the local government electors, which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when this review starts.

The government has advised, and this Council concurs that "it is an important democratic principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimated factors, when it comes to the elections of councillors." While there is no provision in legislation that each town/parish councillor should represent, as nearly as may be, the same number of electors, the Council considers that it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation between different parish wards.

The Council is likewise anxious to avoid the risk that, where one or more wards of a parish are over represented by councillors, the residents of those wards (and their councillors) could be perceived as having more influence than others on the council. During the review process and in its consultations, the Council is committed to consistently showing the ratios of electors to councillors that would result from its proposals.

- **Naming of parish wards**

With regard to the names of parish wards, the Council will endeavour to reflect existing local or historic place names, and will give a strong presumption in favour of ward names proposed by local interested parties,

REORGANISATION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE ORDERS AND COMMENCEMENT

The review will be completed when the Council adopts the reorganisation of Community Governance Orders. Copies of this order, the map(s) that show the effects of that order in detail, and the documents(s) which set out the reasons for the decisions that the Council has taken (including where it has decided to make no change following a review) will be deposited at the Council's offices and on its website.

In accordance with the Guidance issued by the government, the Council will issue maps to illustrate each recommendation at a scale that will not normally be smaller than 1:10,000.

These maps will be deposited with the Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government and at the Council's Offices at Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT.

Prints will also be supplied, in accordance with the regulations, to Ordnance Survey, the Registrar General, the Land Registry, the Valuation Office Agency, the Boundary Commission for England and the Electoral Commission.

The provisions of the Order would take effect, for financial and administrative purposes, from 1st April in the designated year.

New or revised parish electoral arrangements come into force at ordinary parish elections, rather than parish by-elections, so they usually have to wait until the next scheduled parish elections, namely May 2019. They can come into force sooner, which will have the effect of cutting the term of the existing councillors. In addition the term of the new councillors will also be shortened to ensure that the parish election cycle continues to correspond with that of the District Council (and other parish councils) so as to ensure that election costs continue to be shared.

CONSEQUENTIAL MATTERS

- **General Principles**

The Council notes that a Reorganisation Order may cover any consequential matters that appear to the Council to be necessary or proper to give effect to the Order. These may include:

- The transfer and management or custody of property;
- The setting of precepts for new parishes;
- Provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities;
- Provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.

In these matters, the Council will be guided by Regulations that have been issued following the 2007 Act.

In particular, the Council notes that the Regulations regarding the transfer of property, rights and liabilities require that any apportionments shall use the population of the area as estimated by the proper officer of the Council as an appropriate proportion.

Furthermore, the Council notes that the regulations regarding the establishment of a precept for a new parish require the Council to calculate the first anticipated precept for a newly constituted parish council and for the amount of that precept to be included in the Reorganisation Order.

- **District ward boundaries**

The Council is mindful that it may be necessary, although it is not anticipated, for it to recommend the Electoral Commission to make alterations to the boundaries of district wards or county electoral divisions to reflect the changes made at parish level. The Council notes that it will be for the Electoral Commission to decide if related alterations should be made and when they should be implemented, and that the Commission may find it appropriate to direct the Boundary Committee for England to conduct an electoral review of affected areas.

The Council notes that the Electoral Commission will require evidence that the Council has consulted on any such recommendations for the alterations to the boundaries of district wards to County electoral divisions as part of the review. Of course, such recommendations for alterations may only become apparent during the course of the review. Even so, the Council will endeavour to include any such draft recommendations for alterations at the earliest possible opportunity for consultation that will arise after they become apparent.

Where any such consequential matters affect Somerset County Council, the Council will also seek the views of that council with regard to alterations to electoral division boundaries in accordance with the government's guidance.

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THESE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Date of Publication: 3rd June 2016

Any modifications (if any) will be published as soon as practicable after they have been made.



- The Licensing Team recently held a training day for partners in Public Health, A & E and Ambulance services on working together to improve data sharing in relation to alcohol related harm. Further meetings to work on data sharing protocols are being arranged between the services and Council. This work will lead to better more targeted enforcement and hopefully a reduction in attendances to A & E for alcohol related harm.
- The Environmental Protection Team has seen a big rise in the number of abandoned vehicles they are having to deal with in the first four months of 2016. The numbers have more than doubled with 140 reports being investigated this year compared to 63 in the same period last year. This has resulted in 22 vehicles being removed over the four months compared to just one last year. The reasons for the increase are not fully known although a drop in the price of scrap metal is most likely.
- The Leisure Team were busy recently helping to install a new bridge at Cale Park in Wincanton. The bridge is the first step to help transform the play area.
- Environmental Health Enforcement Officers are continuing to implement new microchipping legislation following the success of two free microchipping events held by them in March. 197 dogs were microchipped at the two events; 102 at Yeovil Country Park and a further 95 at Ham Hill Country Park. All breeds of dogs from Chihuahuas to Huskies and from ages 10 weeks to 14 years old were successfully microchipped before the legislation came into effect on 6th April requiring all dogs to be microchipped.

Latest headlines:

- A consultation into possible changes to planning controls of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in parts of Yeovil is underway. The consultation runs until Friday 10th June and proposes that a planning application would be required to use a dwelling in particular areas of Yeovil as an HMO for more than 3 unrelated people. To find out more information about the consultation, visit <http://goo.gl/uakNYe>.
- Residents are being reminded to make sure they are registered to vote in the EU Referendum by the deadline of Tuesday 7 June. A booklet from the Electoral Commission which contains important information for voters on the referendum, how to register and how to cast your vote. For more information, visit <http://goo.gl/EPFodF>.
- A generous donation from The Lions Club of Yeovil to the Friends of Yeovil Country Park has enabled them to buy children's binoculars for use in Yeovil Country Park. Read more about this at <http://goo.gl/zub9M8>.

Agenda Item 14

District Executive Forward Plan

Executive Portfolio Holder: Ric Pallister, Leader, Strategy and Policy
Assistant Director: Ian Clarke, Legal and Corporate Services
Lead Officer: Ian Clarke, Legal and Corporate Services
Contact Details: ian.clarke@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462184

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report informs Members of the current Executive Forward Plan, provides information on Portfolio Holder decisions and on consultation documents received by the Council that have been logged on the consultation database.

2. Public Interest

2.1 The District Executive Forward Plan lists the reports due to be discussed and decisions due to be made by the Committee within the next few months. The Consultation Database is a list of topics which the Council's view is currently being consulted upon by various outside organisations.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The District Executive is asked to:-

- I. approve the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A;
- II. note the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B.

4. Executive Forward Plan

4.1 The latest Forward Plan is attached at Appendix A. The timings given for reports to come forward are indicative only, and occasionally may be re scheduled and new items added as new circumstances arise.

5. Consultation Database

5.1 The Council has agreed a protocol for processing consultation documents received by the Council. This requires consultation documents received to be logged and the current consultation documents are attached at Appendix B.

6. Background Papers

6.1 None.

SSDC Executive Forward Plan

Date of Decision	Decision	Portfolio	Service Director	Contact	Committee(s)
July 2016 July 2016	Annual Monitoring Report and Five-Year Housing Land Supply	Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning (Place Making)	Assistant Director (Economy)	Paul Wheatley, Principal Spatial Planner	District Executive South Somerset District Council
July 2016	Approval of the Somerset District Authorities Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy 2015-2020 and the Environmental Protection Enforcement Policy 2015-2020	Portfolio Holder for Area West	Assistant Director (Environment)	Alasdair Bell, Environmental Health Manager	District Executive
July 2016	Capital and Revenue Budget monitoring reports for Quarter 4 (out-turn reports)	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services)	Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)	District Executive
July 2016	Management of information requests (under the FOIA, EIR and RPSI regulations)	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services)	Lynda Creek, Fraud and Data Manager	District Executive
July 2016	Somerset Waste Partnership New Waste Collection Model	Portfolio Holder for Environment & Economic Development	Strategic Director (Operations & Customer Focus)	Vega Sturgess, Strategic Director (Operations & Customer Focus)	District Executive

Date of Decision	Decision	Portfolio	Service Director	Contact	Committee(s)
July 2016	Asset Management Plan 2016/17	Portfolio Holder for Property & Climate Change	Strategic Director (Operations & Customer Focus)	Vega Sturgess, Strategic Director (Operations & Customer Focus)	District Executive
July 2016	Update on recruitment of Chief Executive Officer	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Ric Pallister, Leader of Council	Ric Pallister, Leader of Council	District Executive
July 2016	Community Right to Bid Quarterly Update Report	Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning (Place Making)	Assistant Directors (Communities)	Helen Rutter, Assistant Director (Communities)	District Executive
July 2016	Annual Review of SSDC Partnerships	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Assistant Directors (Communities)	David Crisfield, Third Sector & Partnerships Co-ordinator	District Executive
July 2016	Removal of restrictive covenant, 9 Ham Lane, Compton Dundon (Confidential)	Portfolio Holder for Property & Climate Change	Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services)	Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)	District Executive
August 2016	Capital & Revenue Budget monitoring reports for quarter 1	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services)	Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)	District Executive
August 2016	Update on recruitment of Chief Executive Officer	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Ric Pallister, Leader of Council	Ric Pallister, Leader of Council	District Executive

Date of Decision	Decision	Portfolio	Service Director	Contact	Committee(s)
September 2016 September 2016	Adoption of the Revised County Wide Tenancy Strategy	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Assistant Director (Economy)	Colin McDonald, Corporate Strategic Housing Manager	District Executive South Somerset District Council
September 2016	Quarterly Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Strategic Director (Place & Performance)	Andrew Gillespie, Performance Manager	District Executive
September 2016	Update on recruitment of Chief Executive Officer	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Ric Pallister, Leader of Council	Ric Pallister, Leader of Council	District Executive
October 2016	Medium Term Financial Strategy & Medium Term Financial Plan for 2017/18 to 2019/20	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services)	Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)	District Executive
October 2016	Update on recruitment of Chief Executive Officer	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Ric Pallister, Leader of Council	Ric Pallister, Leader of Council	District Executive
November 2016	Capital & Revenue Budget monitoring reports for quarter 2	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services)	Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)	District Executive

APPENDIX B - Current Consultations – June 2016

Purpose of Document	Portfolio	Director	Response to be agreed by	Contact	Deadline for response
<p>Strengthening Local Government Transparency - Consultation on changes to the Local Government Transparency Code 2015</p> <p>We are consulting on proposals to change the way that local authorities record details of their land and property assets, and publish information about their procurement, their contracts and the delivery of some of their services.</p> <p>We are also proposing to include new requirements about information on parking charges and enforcement and about the way transparency data is published and presented.</p> <p>Finally, we are proposing to include recommendations that local authorities publish information about their dealings with small and medium-sized enterprises.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-local-government-transparency</p>	<p>Finance and Legal Services</p>	<p>Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services)</p>	<p>Officers in consultation with Portfolio Holder</p>	<p>Donna Parham</p>	<p>8th July 2016</p>

Agenda Item 15

Date of Next Meeting

Members are asked to note that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive will take place on **Thursday, 7th July 2016** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.