



## Council

### A G E N D A

#### **All Members of Chiltern District Council**

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Chiltern District Council to be held at **7.00 pm** on **Wednesday, 17 April 2019, Council Chamber, King George V House, King George V Road, Amersham**, when the business below is proposed to be transacted.

#### Item

1 Evacuation Procedure

2 Apologies for Absence

3 Minutes (*Pages 5 - 20*)

To approve the minutes of Full Council held on 26 February 2019.

4 Declarations of Interest

5 Announcements

To receive any announcements from:

- a) Chairman
- b) Cabinet Leader
- c) Head of Paid Service

*Chairman and Vice Chairman's Diary (Pages 21 - 22)*

## 6 Committee Recommendations

There have been no Committee recommendations since the previous meeting of Council held on 26 February 2019.

## 7 Cabinet Recommendations

To receive and consider the recommendations of the Cabinet for the meeting held on 19 March 2019 and to receive questions and answers on any of those recommendations in accordance with Rule 11.1 of the Procedural Rules.

### 7.1 Refreshed Joint Business Plan 2019/20 (*Pages 23 - 24*)

*Appendix A: Joint Business Plan 2019/20 (Pages 25 - 44)*

### 7.2 Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy (*Pages 45 - 50*)

*Appendix 1: Draft Revised Policy (Pages 51 - 96)*

*Appendix 2: Policy Changes Summary (Pages 97 - 100)*

## 8 Verbal Reports from the Leader, Cabinet Members or Chairman of a Committee

To receive and consider verbal update reports (if any) from the Members listed above, and to answer questions on any of those reports from any Member of the Council in accordance with Rule 11.1 of the Procedural Rules.

## 9 Questions with Notice (if any)

The Chairman of the Council; Cabinet Leader or a Cabinet Member; or Chairman of any Committee to receive a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District. Questions must be given in writing to the proper officer 3 clear days before the meeting, or if it relates to urgent business by 4pm on the day of the meeting, in accordance with Rule 11.2 of the Council Procedure Rules.

## 10 Petitions (if any)

To receive petitions and/or deputations (if any) from members of the public including provisions allowing members to ask questions of clarification at the discretion of the Chairman.

## 11 Joint Arrangements and Outside Organisations (if any)

To receive reports about and receive questions and answers relating to any joint arrangements or external organisations.

12 Motions (*Pages 101 - 102*)

Motion 50 – to be proposed by Councillor N Rose and Seconded by Councillor P Martin:

This Council proposes that the Leader should write to Government to request that all enabling works for HS2 in Buckinghamshire should be paused until the Notice to Proceed to main works contractors has been approved. As required by the Department of Transport, Notice to Proceed should not be given until management capability, affordability of contracts and robustness of revised business case have all been proven. We see no reason why the District or County should suffer significant disruption and long term environmental destruction until detailed design and cost has been approved. We also ask that HS2 Ltd significantly improves the effectiveness of its community engagement with those impacted by the line.

13 Exclusion of the Public (if required)

To resolve that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**Note:** All reports will be updated orally at the meeting if appropriate and may be supplemented by additional reports at the Chairman's discretion.



Bob Smith  
Chief Executive  
Chiltern District Council

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**CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL****MINUTES** of the Meeting of the **CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL**held on **26 FEBRUARY 2019**

**PRESENT:** Councillor P Shepherd - Chairman of the Council  
G Harris - Vice-Chairman of the Council

Councillors:	A Bacon	Councillors:	V Martin
	D Bray		S Patel
	J Burton		D Phillips
	E Culverhouse		N Rose
	I Darby		C Rouse
	M Flys		J Rush
	C Ford		M Shaw
	A Garth		L Smith
	J Gladwin		N Southworth
	M Harker		M Stannard
	M Harrold		D Varley
	C Jackson		N Varley
	C Jones		H Wallace
	P Jones		E Walsh
	J MacBean		J Waters
	P Martin		

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillors J Cook, M Smith, M Titterington, C Wertheim and F Wilson

**147 PRESENTATION FROM HOUSING INTERACTION TRUST**

Rosalind Convery and Sharon Allen, from the Housing Interaction Trust (HIT) were welcomed to the meeting and gave a presentation to Council on the work the Trust undertook in supporting the young people, aged 16-25, of the district who were homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Council was informed of the background of the Trust and the services it provided. HIT merged with Connection Support in 2015 and received funding from Chiltern District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council. It was noted that HIT had twelve units of accommodation and provided support, drop-ins, mediation, general advice, informal tenancy support and outreach work.

HIT currently employed four staff members, who were passionate about supporting young people and possessed a broad range of qualifications and skills.

The Trust aimed to support young people before they reached crisis point, discussing parental relationships, drug and alcohol misuse and homelessness. As part of this, mediation was offered to assist in keeping families together. An independent living skills work book had been developed to cover all aspects of independent living. This included tenancy rights and responsibilities, budgeting, cooking on a budget, effective communication and active living. Young people would work with HIT until they were ready to live independently. Various methods were used to support young people to live independently such as using roleplay, assisting with interview skills and attending meetings with the young person.

Referrals could be received from anyone, although these were more commonly received through self-referrals, education staff or outside agencies. In order to be eligible for housing the young person must be deemed vulnerable.

Council was advised that the majority of those who engaged with the service completed the programme in its entirety and two case studies were discussed where positive intervention had significantly helped vulnerable young people engage with services, progress to independent living and secure jobs or re-enter education.

Members raised questions on the percentage of young people accessing the service who gain accommodation; the length of the waiting list; prime causes of homelessness in young people; tenancy conditions; sources of funding and the impact of universal credit.

In response to the number of people who receive accommodation, if a young person was deemed suitable and was positively engaging with the service they would be offered a property. A young person would be in supported housing, which was a one bedroomed flat, for up to two years and when ready would be encouraged to move on to apply for social housing, house shares or private tenancies. The length of the waiting list was ever changing, as five young persons had moved on in a relatively short period there were presently no vacancies with a further eight people on the waiting list. If it was thought that there was an immediate risk of homelessness or there would be a longer need for housing, a referral could be made to Padstones or other supported housing providers, although understandably most young people wished to remain in the area.

The main cause of homelessness for those aged 16-25 was said to be family relationship breakdowns. To qualify for a tenancy, as well as engaging with the

service, property needed to be kept in good repair and the young person must understand the issues of living independently.

In response to the funding question, it was said that the Trust wished to provide a more extensive service and was presently looking to raise money to create a welcome pack which would include household essentials and cleaning items for when a young person first moved in. Along with Council funding, the Trust made its own attempts to raise funds with corporate companies, amongst others funding some services. The Trust also made use of food banks for its clients. A Member recommended the King's Church in Amersham as a possible support provider as they had recently provided item packs for vulnerable people.

Universal credit remained a difficulty and delays in benefits being received had continued. This had generally seen an increase in youth homelessness and regular discussions were held with Paradigm and the Council to anticipate potential problems and find solutions. This also caused further uncertainty for young people who did not wish to commence a tenancy owing money.

The Chairman, on behalf of all Members thanked Rosalind Convery and Sharon Allen for the presentation and recognised the Housing Interaction Trust for its excellent work and the positive impact made to the lives of some of the District's most vulnerable young people.

*Note 1: Councillor H Wallace entered the meeting at 6.41 pm*

### **148 MINUTES**

The minutes of Full Council held on 8 January 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **149 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Dispensations under Section 33 of Localism Act 2011 had been granted to all Members previously in relation to the setting of Council Tax, agenda item 8.1. There were no other declarations of interest.

### **150 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **(a) Chairman's Engagements**

A list of Engagements carried out by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council between 1 January 2019 and 17 February 2019 had been circulated.

**(b) Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman announced that the Annual Chairman's Reception would be taking place on 1 March 2019.

The Chairman, on behalf of all Members congratulated Cllr C Ford and his wife on the arrival of their son, Toby on 14 February.

**(c) Announcements from the Leader of the Cabinet**

The Leader of the Cabinet had no announcements to make.

**(d) Announcements from the Head of Paid Service**

The Chief Executive reported that the installation of a new access pass system at King George V House and Capswood was underway and that in anticipation of the new readers being installed Members had been provided with a new access pass. Members were advised to continue using their previous access pass until the installation was complete. Democratic Services would notify all Members when the new cards were ready for use. Any Member not in attendance could collect their card from the Democratic Services team.

Further, the Chief Executive advised that the Declaration of Related Parties Transaction forms for 2018/19 had been given to Members at the meeting. Relevant guidance was attached to the form and Members were asked to return these to the Finance team before 5 April 2019.

**151 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2019/20 - JOINT STAFFING COMMITTEE - 28 JANUARY 2019**

The Localism Act 2011 required all Councils to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement each year. As such, Full Council was asked to agree the Pay Policy Statement 2019/20, as recommended by the Joint Staffing Committee meeting held on 28 January 2019.

It was moved by Councillor I Darby, seconded by Councillor M Stannard and

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 be adopted as recommended by the Joint Staffing Committee meeting held on 28 January 2019.**



**152 CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS****BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2019/20**

Full Council had before them the following two reports:

- The Budget and Council Tax Report 2019/20 as considered at the Cabinet meeting held on 5 February 2019, and
- The supplementary report: Council Tax 2019/20 which contained final information from the precepting authorities leading to the total Council Tax for the district which Full Council was required to approve at this meeting.

Councillor I Darby, Leader of the Council, presented the budget to the Council.

With the new unitary Authority coming in to existence on 1 April 2020 this was the last Budget and Council Tax to be set by the Council. The Budget and Council Tax setting had continued to be based on the principal of providing residents value for money and delivering quality services.

The budget reflected the procurement being undertaken on a new joint waste collection contract between Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils, a service which was amongst the most appreciated in the County and would ultimately deliver cost savings whilst still providing an excellent service to residents.

The budget further reflected the commitment of the Council to invest for the benefit of its residents. The former ambulance site in Amersham would be re-developed to provide affordable housing and there was an ambitious plan to develop the Chiltern Pools site which would deliver financial savings whilst delivering services in an energy efficient manner. This was also the year that the new crematorium in partnership with Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe District Councils would open in Bierton, Aylesbury. Now that this had been paid for, a surplus of funds totalling £197,000 was accounted for in the budget and would be set aside to fund community projects.

The shared service delivery with South Bucks District Council had continued to benefit residents and was a scalable model to a new unitary authority.

The development of the Joint Local Plan continued and the budget reflected the continuing commitment to resource this important work by £217,000. It was planned that the Joint Local Plan would be submitted for inspection and consultation in the coming months.

Councillor Darby was proud to announce that the budget made no use of general reserves and recognised that Government funding cuts from 2020/21

would be challenging. As such future years had been considered whilst setting the budget to ensure that the new authority had sufficient funds to continue the culture and values set by Chiltern. The Council remained in a sound financial position and continued to deliver high quality services.

The increase in Council Tax to a Band D property would amount to 10p per week.

Councillor Darby then paid tribute to the Deputy Leader for leading the budget work and expressed thanks for the contributions of Officers.

Councillor P Jones gave thanks to the Leader and commended the Cabinet for their enthusiasm, commitment and efforts over the past year. It had been credibly noted that the Council had taken into consideration the funds required for a new unitary authority and had not elected to use its general reserves. Councillor P Jones further thanked all officers and Members who had contributed to the Council over the many years of its existence. Concern was raised that challenges may arise from the impending Joint Local Plan submission which Members would need to carefully review when presented in draft format. Further concern was raised that if residents did not use the Chalfont and Chesham Leisure Centres, these would be increasingly uneconomic to operate should the Chiltern Pools redevelopment take place and the forecast usage numbers of that centre materialise.

The Council's Procedure Rules required the names of members voting for or against or abstaining from voting to be recorded in the Minutes. Furthermore all members had been granted dispensation under section 33 of Localism Act 2011 to speak and vote on the Council Tax setting.

It was moved by Councillor I Darby, seconded by Councillor M Stannard and on being put to the recorded vote the recommendations were agreed, with the votes being cast as follows:

For (33): Councillors: A Bacon, D Bray, J Burton, E Culverhouse, I Darby, M Flys, C Ford, A Garth, J Gladwin, M Harker, G Harris, M Harrold, C Jackson, C Jones, P Jones, J MacBean, P Martin, V Martin, S Patel, D Phillips, N Rose, C Rouse, J Rush, M Shaw, N Shepherd, L Smith, N Southworth, M Stannard, D Varley, N Varley, J Waters, H Wallace and E Walsh.

Against (0)

Abstained (0)

*Note 2: Councillor A Garth entered the meeting at 7.18 p.m.*

**RESOLVED:****Revenue Budget 2019/20**

- 1) That the Revenue budget for 2019/209 as summarised in the table in paragraph 4.13 be approved.
- 2) That the following use of earmarked reserves for 2019/20 be agreed:
 

- Local Development Plan	£217,000
- Planning Digitalisation	£81,000
- Economic Development Reserve	£62,000
- Waste Efficiency Reserve	£66,000
- Leisure Fund	£50,000
- 3) That the following additions to earmarked reserves for 2019/20 be agreed:
 

- Capital – Funding replacement refuse vehicles	£394,000
- Capital – Funding of capital programme	£189,000
- 4) That the creation of a new earmarked reserve of £1,995k for unitary implementation costs be agreed. Part of this reserve will be drawn down in 2019/20 after approval by the Shadow Authority.
- 5) That the creation of a new earmarked reserve of £250,000 for the creation of a Community Projects Reserve be agreed.
- 6) That a budget requirement of £10,910,000 be approved which will result in a District council tax of £186.30 for a Band D property.
- 7) That the level of fees and charges for 2019/20 (Appendix C) be confirmed.
- 8) That the advice of the Director of Resources (Appendix A) be noted.
- 9) That the comments in the report on the Council's financial position in respect of the years following 2019/20 and the updated Medium Term Forecast be noted.

**Council Tax 2018/19**

1. That it be noted that the following amounts for 2019/20 have been determined under delegated authority and in accordance with regulations made under the local Government Finance Act 1992:

a) 44,716.00 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax Base for the year.

b) The amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items (i.e. Parish precepts) relate, are shown below.

<b>Council Tax Base 2019/20</b>	
<b>Amersham</b>	<b>6,903.90</b>
<b>Ashley Green</b>	<b>471.00</b>
<b>Chalfont St Giles</b>	<b>3,153.00</b>
<b>Chalfont St Peter</b>	<b>6,723.60</b>
<b>Chartridge</b>	<b>841.90</b>
<b>Chenies</b>	<b>148.40</b>
<b>Chesham</b>	<b>8,206.50</b>
<b>Chesham Bois</b>	<b>1,643.00</b>
<b>Cholesbury</b>	<b>505.30</b>
<b>Coleshill</b>	<b>328.20</b>
<b>Great Missenden</b>	<b>4,914.10</b>
<b>Latimer &amp; Ley Hill</b>	<b>512.70</b>
<b>Little Chalfont</b>	<b>3,173.10</b>
<b>Little Missenden</b>	<b>3,162.20</b>
<b>Penn</b>	<b>2,403.90</b>
<b>Seer Green</b>	<b>1,218.70</b>
<b>The Lee</b>	<b>406.50</b>
	<b>44,716.00</b>

2. That the Council calculates the following amounts for 2019/20 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011):

a) £46,233,061 being the aggregate expenditure which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act (including the General Fund and Parish Precepts).

b) £34,721,426 being the aggregate income which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.

c) £11,511,635 as its council tax requirement for the year including Parish Precepts being the amount by which the aggregate expenditure at 2(a) above exceeds the aggregate income at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act.

d) £257.44 as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year, being the council tax requirement at 2(c), divided by the Council Tax Base for the year (44,716.00) at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act.

e) £3,181,044 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (i.e. Parish Precepts, there being no other special items).

f) £186.30 as the basic amount of its Council Tax for dwellings in its area, excluding Parish Precepts, being the amount at 2(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2(e) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act.

g) The amounts given by adding to the amount at 2(f) above the amounts of the Parish Precepts for the relevant Parish divided in each case by the Council Tax Base for the Parish at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in each Parish is:

<b>2019/20 BASIC COUNCIL TAX £</b>		
	<b>Parish Amount</b>	<b>CDC + Parish Amount</b>
<b>Amersham</b>	<b>102.41</b>	<b>288.71</b>
<b>Ashley Green</b>	<b>37.79</b>	<b>224.09</b>
<b>Chalfont St Giles</b>	<b>68.26</b>	<b>254.56</b>
<b>Chalfont St Peter</b>	<b>61.09</b>	<b>247.39</b>
<b>Chartridge</b>	<b>14.25</b>	<b>200.55</b>
<b>Chenies</b>	<b>53.91</b>	<b>240.21</b>
<b>Chesham</b>	<b>116.74</b>	<b>303.04</b>
<b>Chesham Bois</b>	<b>47.53</b>	<b>233.83</b>
<b>Cholesbury</b>	<b>19.39</b>	<b>205.69</b>
<b>Coleshill</b>	<b>32.60</b>	<b>218.90</b>
<b>Great Missenden</b>	<b>45.10</b>	<b>231.40</b>

<b>2019/20 BASIC COUNCIL TAX £</b>		
	<b>Parish Amount</b>	<b>CDC + Parish Amount</b>
<b>Latimer &amp; Ley Hill</b>	<b>38.52</b>	<b>224.82</b>
<b>Little Chalfont</b>	<b>74.34</b>	<b>260.64</b>
<b>Little Missenden</b>	<b>48.23</b>	<b>234.53</b>
<b>Penn</b>	<b>26.04</b>	<b>212.34</b>
<b>Seer Green</b>	<b>38.57</b>	<b>224.87</b>
<b>The Lee</b>	<b>35.12</b>	<b>221.42</b>

h) The amounts given by multiplying the basic amounts for each Parish 2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

3. That it be noted that for the year 2019/20 the main precepting authorities have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with s40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

<b>Band</b>	<b>Bucks County Council Precept £</b>	<b>Bucks &amp; Milton Keynes Fire Authority Precept £</b>	<b>Police &amp; Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley £</b>	<b>Total Preceptors £</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>886.43</b>	<b>43.05</b>	<b>137.52</b>	<b>1,067.00</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>1,034.16</b>	<b>50.22</b>	<b>160.44</b>	<b>1,244.82</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>1,181.90</b>	<b>57.40</b>	<b>183.36</b>	<b>1,422.66</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>1,329.64</b>	<b>64.57</b>	<b>206.28</b>	<b>1,600.49</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>1,625.12</b>	<b>78.92</b>	<b>252.12</b>	<b>1,956.16</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>1,920.59</b>	<b>93.27</b>	<b>297.96</b>	<b>2,311.82</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>2,216.07</b>	<b>107.62</b>	<b>343.80</b>	<b>2,667.49</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>2,659.28</b>	<b>129.14</b>	<b>412.56</b>	<b>3,200.98</b>

4. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts of the District's and preceptors requirements, in accordance with s30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets amounts of the council tax for the year 2019/20 for each category of dwelling as follows.

Band	District & Parishes Council Tax £	Total Preceptors £	Total 2019/20 Council Tax £
A	171.63	1,067.00	1,238.63
B	200.23	1,244.82	1,445.05
C	228.84	1,422.66	1,651.50
D	257.44	1,600.49	1,857.93
E	314.65	1,956.16	2,270.81
F	371.86	2,311.82	2,683.68
G	429.07	2,667.49	3,096.56
H	514.88	3,200.98	3,715.86

The council tax for each category of dwelling by parish is as follows.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Amersham	1,259.47	1,469.37	1,679.29	1,889.20	2,309.03	2,728.85	3,148.67	3,778.40
Ashley Green	1,216.39	1,419.11	1,621.85	1,824.58	2,230.05	2,635.51	3,040.97	3,649.16
Chalfont St Giles	1,236.71	1,442.81	1,648.94	1,855.05	2,267.29	2,679.52	3,091.76	3,710.10
Chalfont St Peter	1,231.93	1,437.23	1,642.56	1,847.88	2,258.53	2,669.16	3,079.81	3,695.76
Chartridge	1,200.70	1,400.80	1,600.93	1,801.04	2,201.28	2,601.50	3,001.74	3,602.08
Chenies	1,227.14	1,431.65	1,636.18	1,840.70	2,249.75	2,658.79	3,067.84	3,681.40
Chesham	1,269.03	1,480.52	1,692.03	1,903.53	2,326.54	2,749.54	3,172.56	3,807.06
Chesham Bois	1,222.89	1,426.69	1,630.51	1,834.32	2,241.95	2,649.57	3,057.21	3,668.64
Cholesbury	1,204.13	1,404.80	1,605.50	1,806.18	2,207.56	2,608.93	3,010.31	3,612.36
Coleshill	1,212.93	1,415.08	1,617.24	1,819.39	2,223.70	2,628.01	3,032.32	3,638.78
Great Missenden	1,221.27	1,424.80	1,628.35	1,831.89	2,238.98	2,646.06	3,053.16	3,663.78
Latimer & Ley Hill	1,216.88	1,419.68	1,622.50	1,825.31	2,230.94	2,636.56	3,042.19	3,650.62
Little Chalfont	1,240.76	1,447.54	1,654.34	1,861.13	2,274.72	2,688.30	3,101.89	3,722.26
Little Missenden	1,223.35	1,427.23	1,631.13	1,835.02	2,242.81	2,650.59	3,058.37	3,670.04
Penn	1,208.56	1,409.97	1,611.41	1,812.83	2,215.69	2,618.53	3,021.39	3,625.66
Seer Green	1,216.91	1,419.72	1,622.54	1,825.36	2,231.00	2,636.63	3,042.27	3,650.72
The Lee	1,214.61	1,417.04	1,619.48	1,821.91	2,226.78	2,631.65	3,036.52	3,643.82

5. Determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2019/20 is not excessive, in accordance with principles approved

**under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and thus there is no need to hold a Council Tax referendum.**

- 6. No changes are made to the Council's current Council Tax Support scheme in respect of 2019/20 apart from applying annual uprating.**

**153 CAPITAL STRATEGY, CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20 - 2023/24 AND REPAIRS & RENEWALS PROGRAMME 2019/20 - 2023/24**

The Deputy Leader introduced a report on the Capital Programme and Repairs & Renewals Programme 2019/20 to 2023/24 which was reviewed as part of the Council's budget process in order to assess, as part of the overall financial strategy of the Authority, what the scale and composition of the programme should be and the consequential funding implications for the financial strategy.

It was moved by Councillor M Stannard, seconded by Councillor I Darby and

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Capital Strategy, including the Capital Programme for 2019/20-2023/24 (Appendix A), be approved.**
- 2. That the Repairs & Renewals Programme for 2019/20 – 2023/24 (Appendix B) be approved.**

**154 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2019/20**

The Council was required to formally review its treasury management policies each year as part of determining what level of returns will be achieved from investments. The format of the treasury management policies is defined by the Code of Practice adopted by the Council, and is required to be approved by the Council on recommendation from the Cabinet. As such, the Cabinet agreed at the meeting held on 5 February 2019 to recommend that the Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20, including its appendices, be adopted by the Council.

It was moved by Councillor M Stannard, seconded by Councillor I Darby and

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20 including the following appendices to the Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix 1) be adopted by the Council:**

- Appendix 1A - Annual Investment Strategy Policies**
- Appendix 1B - Prudential Indicators including the borrowing limits**
- Appendix 1C - the MRP method to be used in 2019/20.**



**155 REPORT ON SPECIAL URGENCY**

As set out in section 12.4 of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of Council, together with the reasons for urgency. Urgent items were considered by Extraordinary Cabinet meetings held on 9 January 2019 and 24 January 2019. Details of the decisions and reasons for urgency were set out in the report.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the report be noted.**

**156 VERBAL REPORTS FROM THE LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS OR CHAIRMAN OF A COMMITTEE****a) Councillor I Darby – Leader of the Council**

Councillor I Darby reported that Councillor L Walsh would take over as the Council's appointed representative on the Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board and wished her success in the role. Councillor Darby said that she had been proud to have been the Council's appointed representative on the Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board since the Board had started in its Shadow form.

Along with the Chief Executive, Councillor Darby advised that she had attended the District Councils Network annual conference which showcased the work of District Councils across the country. At the conference, informative addresses were given by the Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Rishi Sunak, the Minister for Local Government, Liz Truss, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Bill Grimsey, who spoke on the challenges faced by High Streets. Councillor Darby reported that she had the privilege of chairing a session on 'enhancing the quality of life' which had been a productive session looking at public health and the methods of innovation District Council's and the NHS planned to put in to practice.

In relation to the ongoing Local Government re-organisation, Councillor Darby reported that discussions with MHCLG and all of the existing Buckinghamshire Councils continued to progress. Along with the other District Councils in Buckinghamshire, the Council was committed to creating a new unitary authority that was fit for purpose and was the very best it could be for all residents.

**b) Councillor P Martin – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development**

Councillor P Martin reported that the draft Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan would be presented and discussed at two upcoming meetings of the Joint Planning Policy Members Reference Group and all Members were welcome to attend. The first meeting would be taking place on 19 March 2019 at 6 pm in the Council Chamber at Chiltern District Council with the second taking place on 20 March 2019 at 6 pm in Room 6 at South Bucks District Council.

Councillor Martin added that the results from the Government's Housing Delivery Test had been published, this test analysed Local Authorities delivery of houses compared to houses required. Councillor Martin was pleased to announce that the Council had overachieved and delivered 132% of its requirement.

Members were advised of an upcoming HS2 Community Liaison Forum which provided an opportunity to hear from and question senior representatives from HS2 along with contractors who would provide an update on the work schedule. The meeting was scheduled for Monday 25 March at 6 pm in the Council Chamber.

**c) Councillor L Walsh – Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities**

Councillor L Walsh reported that the Council's Youth Awards ceremony would be taking place on 14 March 2019 at the King's Church in Amersham and Members were encouraged to attend to show appreciation to the young people of the district. A high number of nominations had been received and it had been particularly difficult to choose winners. The Council was proud of the young people in Chiltern who had volunteered to help others and made significant positive impacts on their communities.

Further, Councillor Walsh advised that Operation Gauntlet, the Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire scam awareness and prevention campaign was being launched on 5 March 2019. Operation Gauntlet was a joint scheme with Thames Valley Police, the Council's Community Safety Team and Trading Standards. Two sessions had been scheduled for members of the public to raise awareness of current scams and to receive advice on how to avoid becoming a victim of fraud. Members were encouraged to promote the sessions to residents. Details of the sessions were provided, both being held at the Council Offices:

Tuesday 5 March, 4 pm to 5.30 pm  
Tuesday 5 March, 7 pm to 8.30 pm

**d) Councillor I Darby, on behalf of Councillor F Wilson – Portfolio Holder for Customer Services**

Councillor I Darby on behalf of Councillor F Wilson reported that there would be two opportunities for Members to attend demonstrations of the 'My Account' functionality as part of the ongoing Customer Experience Programme. The session details were provided:

28 February 2019 at 6.30 p.m. at Chiltern District Council offices  
4 March 2019 at 6 p.m. at South Bucks District Council offices

**157 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE (IF ANY)**

There were no questions.

**158 PETITIONS (IF ANY)**

There were no petitions.

**159 JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS (IF ANY)**

There were no reports.

**160 MOTIONS (IF ANY)**

No Motions had been received.

**161 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2019/20**

It was moved by Councillor J MacBean, seconded by Councillor G Harris and

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Calendar of Meetings for 2019/20 be agreed.**

**The meeting ended at 7.33 pm**



<b>CHAIRMAN'S DIARY</b>	
<b>18 FEBRUARY 2019 – 8 APRIL 2019</b>	
21 February	Chiltern & South Bucks Mini Club Games, Chesham Leisure Centre
22 February	SBDC Chairman's Annual Reception, Stoke Park
23 February	Military Band of the RAF, Kings Church, Amersham
24 February	Celebration of Community Life in Chesham, Chesham - Attended by Chairman and Vice Chairman
25 February	CDC Chairman's Annual Reception, CDC - Attended by Chairman and Vice Chairman
6 March	Talk by Patrick Derham OBE, Beacon School – Attended by Vice Chairman
14 March	CDC Youth Awards, Kings Church
22 March	Opening Class of the new Spin Bike System, Chalfont Leisure Centre – Attended by Vice Chairman
5 April	AVDC Chairman's Charity Dinner, Aylesbury



<b>REPORT SUBJECT</b>	Refreshed Joint Business Plan 2019 - 2020
<b>RELEVANT MEMBER</b>	Councillor Isobel Darby
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	Bob Smith, Chief Executive
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Ani Sultan (01494 586 800)
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	Report applies to whole district

## 1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the refreshed Joint Business Plan 2019 – 2020. The report and attached Joint Business Plan was considered by Cabinet on 19 March 2019, Services Overview Committee on 20 February 2019 and Resources Overview Committee on 5 March 2019.

### RECOMMENDATION

That full Council approve the refreshed Joint Business Plan 2019 – 2020.

## 2. Executive Summary

This report seeks approval for the following document attached as Appendix A: Refreshed Joint Business Plan 2019 -2020

## 3. Reasons for Recommendations

The Joint Business Plan is reviewed every year to reflect the changing needs of the locality and the communities that live and work within Chiltern and South Bucks, as well as the service planning process.

## 4. Content of Report

4.2 The proposed refreshed Joint Business Plan 2019-2020 is attached as Appendix 1.

4.3 This year, further to the overhaul last year, the Business Plan continues to take the same format, with the majority of changes being made to pages 7 and 8 of the document, where the purposes of the districts have been updated.

## 5. Consultation

The refreshed Joint Business Plan has been circulated to Leaders and their respective Cabinets for comment.

## 6. Options

Failure to refresh the plan annually will soon render it out of date and out of touch with residents' priorities.

## 7. Corporate Implications

7.1 Financial – The Joint Business Plan complements the budgeting process and has close links to the medium-term financial strategy. It affects the budget planning process by setting the priorities for the future.

7.2 Legal – No legal implications have been identified.

7.3 Risks issues – Business planning helps to alleviate risk through ensuring each service unit is aware of how their work fits into the work of the Councils and is closely linked to the needs of the community.

7.4 Equalities – An integrated impact assessment, including equalities, was conducted on the Joint Business Plan and showed no adverse impacts.

7.5 Others – None.

#### **8. Links to Council Policy Objectives**

The Joint Business Plan sets the aims and priorities of the Councils for the next year.

#### **9. Next Step**

The Joint Business Plan will be uploaded onto the Council websites. It will be updated again next spring to reflect the new service plans for 2019/20 and their actions, which support the Councils' aims and objectives.

<b>Background Papers:</b>	Not applicable.
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# Business Plan 2019 - 2020



CHILTERN  
District Council



SOUTH BUCKS  
District Council

Stronger in partnership

Page 26



# Contents

Foreword	3	Your District - South Bucks	11-12
Looking forward & our priorities	4	Your Cabinets - Chiltern	13
What is the Business Plan?	5	Your Cabinets - South Bucks	14
The Medium-Term Financial Strategy	5	Elected Members - Chiltern	15
The Joint Local Plan	5	Elected Members - South Bucks	16
Service Plans	5	Executive Management Team	17
Challenges facing the Councils	6	How we work	18
Chiltern District - our purpose	7	Partnership Working	19
South Bucks District - our purpose	8		
Your District - Chiltern	9-10		

## Foreword

Welcome to Chiltern and South Bucks' Joint Business Plan for the coming year.

The purposes of the Councils are set out in more detail within the following pages. We review these annually, updating priorities as needed. This is based on feedback, customer and community need, Government guidance and targets, and our commitment to provide best value services for our residents.

We hope you find the following pages informative and interesting.

Please feel free to contact one of us if you have any feedback.



**Bob Smith**  
Chief Executive of  
Chiltern and South  
Bucks District Councils



**Cllr Isobel Darby**  
Leader of Chiltern  
District Council



**Cllr Nick Naylor**  
Leader of South Bucks  
District Council

## Looking forward & our priorities

We have three main areas of focus in terms of aims, objectives and priorities for the coming years. The aim is to position both Chiltern and South Bucks as districts that deliver great value, customer-focused, sustainable services to its residents, whilst enhancing both districts as desirable places to live, work and visit.

We will:

1. Provide best value for money services by listening to our customers to ensure the provision of excellent services across all areas of the Councils;
2. Work towards safer, healthier and more cohesive communities by improving community safety and promoting and supporting local communities;
3. Strive to conserve the environment, whilst also promoting sustainable economic growth.



## What is the Business Plan?

The Business Plan is a key element within our strategic decision-making process.

Our aims, objectives and priorities are outlined, providing a focus for service delivery and performance.

## The Medium-Term Financial Strategy

This is our key financial policy, which considers financial implications and provides a framework to ensure we manage our money in the most cost-effective way. The strategy feeds into the annual budget-setting process.

Since embarking on a project of shared services in 2012, the Councils have made joint savings of £7.6million. However, we will continue to face budgetary challenges, and as funding from central Government reduces, we will identify further efficiencies whilst maintaining core services. This has been

considered in the planning and management of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

## The Joint Local Plan

The emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Local Plan will outline policies for determining planning applications, site allocations, or proposed new developments, as well as other land designations (including Green Belt areas). This joint local plan will replace an assortment of current documents and will span 2020-2036.

## Service Plans

Our service plans set out how individual teams will be delivering their objectives.

Service plans stem directly from the Business Plan's aims, objectives and priorities, describing the key objectives and activities for each area, as well as highlighting performance indicators and risks that will be used to assess progress.

## Challenges facing the Councils

- Acute shortage of affordable housing and temporary accommodation
- Putting in place an up to date Local Plan to the Local Development Scheme timetable and to maintain this, with reviews every 5 years
- Uncertainty around the future funding model for Local Government
- Assisting businesses to support the local economy and the economies of the Thames Valley and Oxford to Cambridge Arc to help create new local job opportunities and increase prosperity
- Managing the transition and implementation of the new Unitary District Council with the best intentions for residents.



# Chiltern District - our purpose: to enhance Chiltern District as a desirable place to live, work, visit and enjoy



## We will deliver cost-effective, customer-focused services

### 1. Provide great value services

- Optimise the effectiveness of our assets and resources
- Better use of ICT to drive through savings

### 2. Listen to our customers

- Consult and respond to you on key issues
- Communicate widely and embrace social media
- Implement the Customer Services Programme to fit the best needs of residents

### 3. Provide excellent services

- Agree a vision for outstanding service delivery
- Managing the transition and implementation of the new Unitary District Council with the best intentions for residents
- To ensure all decisions are taken with regard to legal requirements and counsel opinion



## We will work towards safer and healthier local communities

### 1. Improve community safety

- Work with partners to:
  - safeguard children and vulnerable adults
  - reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

### 2. Promote healthier communities

- Address the needs of the elderly and vulnerable
- Plan our leisure provision for the future, including the re-development of the Chiltern Pools site
- Continue partnership working to improve air quality and target pollution hotspots

### 3. Provide excellent services

- Support the voluntary sector
- Engage with Parish and Town Councils and local neighbourhoods
- Work to support the local community and businesses through broadband roll-out
- Provide increased off street car parking to help meet future needs



## We will strive to conserve the environment whilst also promoting sustainable economic growth

### 1. Conserve the environment

- Conserve the Green Belt through the planning process, whilst balancing the need for housing
- Safeguard our heritage for future generations whilst balancing the need for housing
- Minimise the impact caused by major infrastructure projects
- Conserve our valuable heritage including the AONB and Conservation Areas
- Support residents to reduce waste and increase recycling

### 2. Promote sustainable economic growth

- Promote a healthy, sustainable and safe environment
- Continue the Joint Local Plan process to help meet local development and affordable housing needs
- Assisting existing businesses to grow and be successful
- Work to encourage new businesses to locate in the area
- Play an active role in the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Growth Board

# South Bucks District - our purpose: to enhance South Bucks District as a desirable place to live, work, visit and enjoy



## We will deliver cost-effective, customer-focused services

### 1. Provide great value services

- Optimise the effectiveness of our assets and resources
- Better use of ICT to drive through savings

### 2. Listen to our customers

- Consult and respond to you on key issues
- Communicate widely and embrace social media
- Implement the Customer Services Programme to fit the best needs of residents

### 3. Provide excellent services

- Continue delivering outstanding services
- Attract, retain and develop dedicated staff
- Managing the transition and implementation of the new Unitary District Council with the best intentions for residents
- To ensure all decisions are taken with regard to legal requirements and counsel opinion



## We will work towards safer and healthier local communities

### 1. Improve community safety

- Work with partners to:
  - safeguard children and vulnerable adults
  - reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

### 2. Promote healthier communities

- Address the needs of the elderly and vulnerable
- Work with communities affected by closure of services to redeliver in alternative ways
- Continue partnership working to improve air quality and target pollution hotspots
- Work with partners to prevent and relieve homelessness
- Bring forward local schemes

### 3. Provide excellent services

- Support the voluntary sector
- Engage with Parish and Town Councils and local neighbourhoods
- Work with local MP, voluntary & community groups to inform the South Bucks Community & Wellbeing Plan
- Provide increased off-street parking to meet future needs



## We will strive to conserve the environment whilst also promoting sustainable economic growth

### 1. Conserve the environment

- Conserve the Green Belt through the planning process
- Safeguard our heritage for future generations whilst balancing the need for housing
- Minimise the impact caused by major infrastructure projects
- Develop a master plan for the Ivers to address current issues with excessive HGV movements and other environmental issues including working with partners to secure provision of a relief road
- Support residents to reduce waste and increase recycling

### 2. Promote sustainable economic growth

- Promote a healthy, sustainable and safe environment
- Continue the Joint Local Plan process to help meet local development and affordable housing needs
- Assisting existing businesses to grow and be successful
- Work to encourage new businesses to locate in the area
- Play an active role in the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Growth Board
- To use the Council's wholly owned property company, Consilio Ltd, to invest in the local and wider economic area to increase prosperity and benefiting local residents



# Your District - Chiltern

Chiltern has a population of

# 95,103



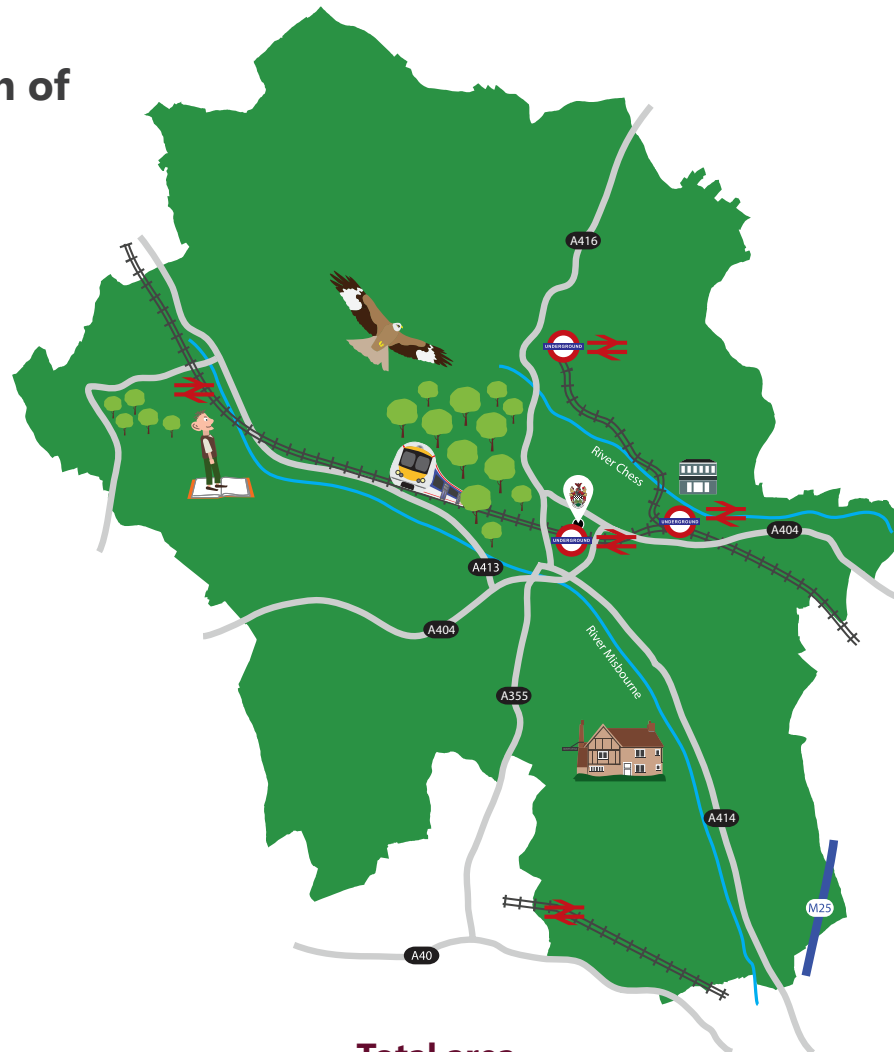
# 49,012

 51.5%

# 46,091

 48.5%

**3** neighbourhood areas made



Total area **196km<sup>2</sup>**



**17**  
Car Parks



**5**  
Railway Stations



**2,630**  
Businesses



Almost **1 million**  
Visits to leisure centres in 2017/18

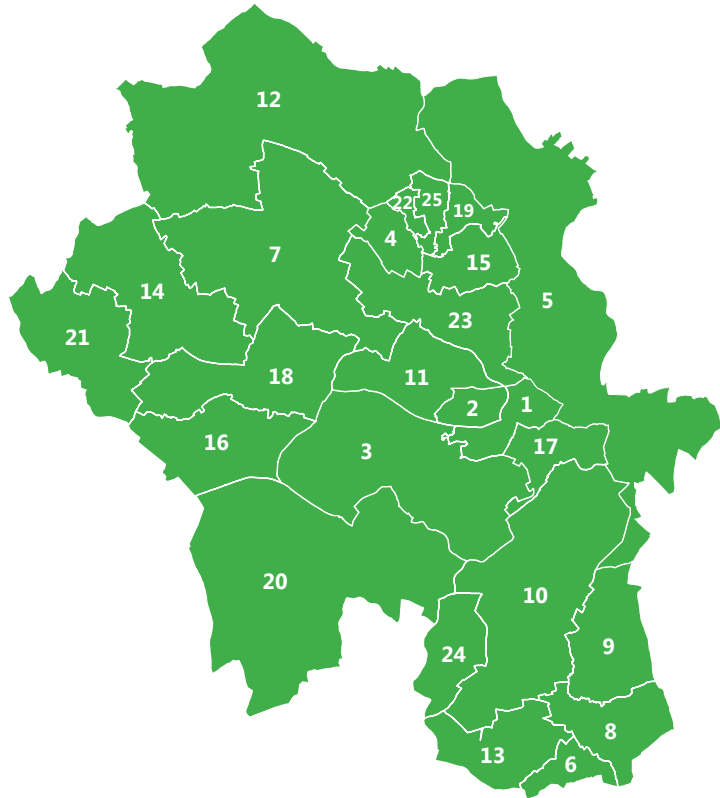


**72%**  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

**80%** of the district is Green Belt



**19**  
Conservation Areas



1	Amersham Common	14	Great Missenden
2	Amersham-on-the-Hill	15	Hilltop and Townsend
3	Amersham Town	16	Holmer Green
4	Asheridge Vale & Lowndes	17	Little Chalfont
5	Ashley Green, Latimer & Chenies	18	Little Missenden
6	Austenwood	19	Newtown
7	Ballinger, South Heath & Chartridge	20	Penn and Coleshill
8	Central (Chalfont St Peter)	21	Prestwood & Heath End
9	Chalfont Common	22	Ridgeway
10	Chalfont St Giles	23	St Mary's & Waterside
11	Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill	24	Seer Green
12	Cholesbury, The Lee & Bellingdon	25	Vale
13	Gold Hill		

there are  
**40**



elected Councillors  
representing 25 wards



each year we empty  
**5,000,000**  
waste & recycling bins

for every £1 you paid in  
**Council tax in 2018/19**  
**Chiltern District Council**  
received 10p



in 2018/19 we held **101**  
**council meetings to make**  
**decisions regarding your**  
**district**

# Your District - South Bucks

South Bucks has a population of

# 69,636



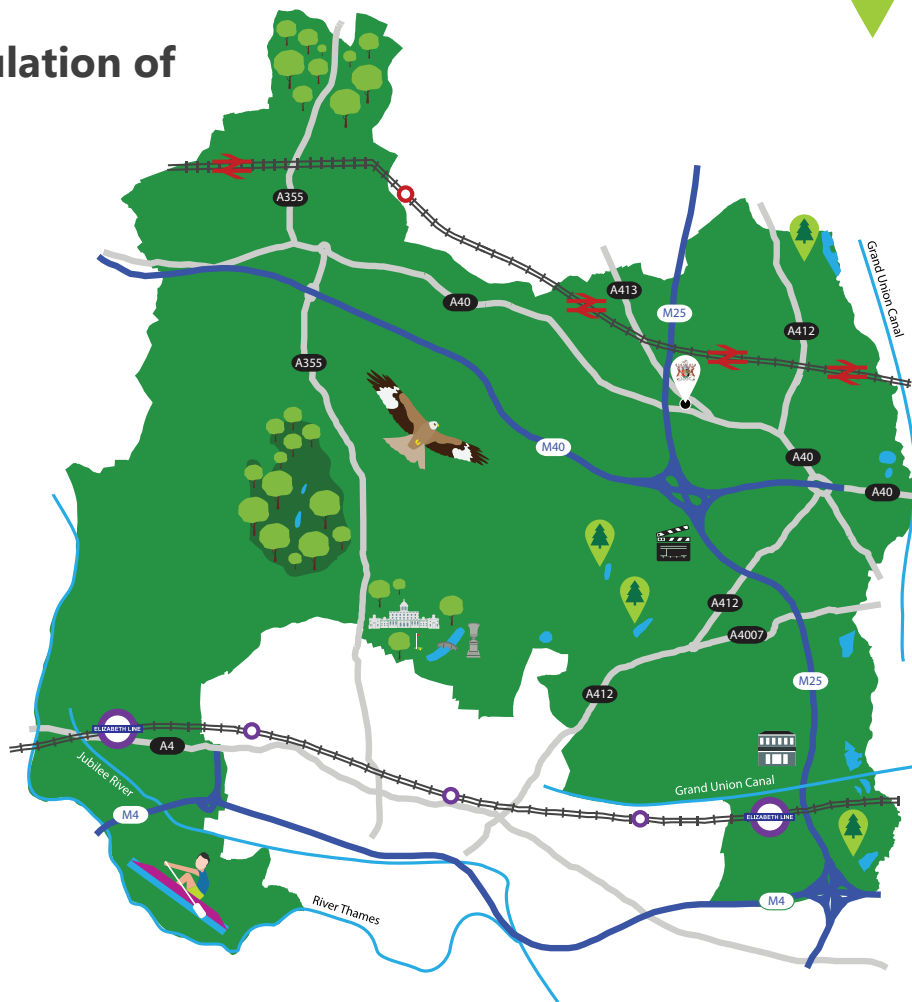
**36,013** 51.7%



**33,623** 48.3%



**5** neighbourhood areas made



Total area **141km<sup>2</sup>**



**4** Country Parks



**10** Car Parks



**6** Railway Stations



**2,000** Businesses



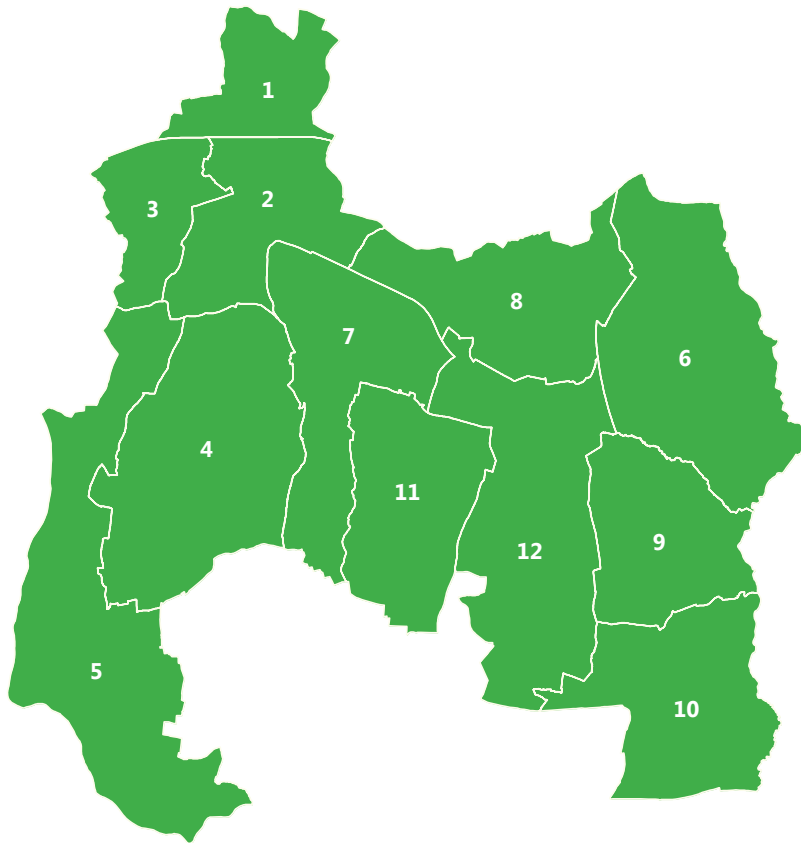
**20** Conservation Areas

Almost **200,000** Visits to leisure centres in 2017/2018



**3%** Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)  
**87%** of the district is Green Belt





- 1 Beaconsfield North
- 2 Beaconsfield South
- 3 Beaconsfield West
- 4 Burnham Church & Beeches
- 5 Burnham Lent Rise & Taplow
- 6 Denham

- 7 Farnham & Hedgerley
- 8 Gerrards Cross
- 9 Iver Heath
- 10 Iver Village & Richings Park
- 11 Stoke Poges
- 12 Wexham & Fulmer

there are  
**28**



elected Councillors  
representing 12 wards



each year  
we empty almost  
**4,000,000**  
waste & recycling bins

for every £1 you paid in  
Council tax in 2018/19  
South Bucks District  
Council received 9p



in 2018/19 we held 98  
council meetings to make  
decisions regarding your  
district

## Your cabinets

Following local elections every four years, the Leader and Cabinet are formed by the majority party.

The Leader then appoints the other members of their Cabinet. Decisions are either taken by the Cabinet as a whole, or delegated to individual Members. These decisions can also be scrutinised by other councillors sitting on the Scrutiny Committees.

## Chiltern District Council Cabinet



**Councillor  
Isobel Darby**

Leader of the Cabinet



**Councillor  
Michael Stannard**

Deputy Leader of the Cabinet and  
Cabinet Member for Support Services



**Councillor  
Peter Martin**

Cabinet Member for Planning  
and Economic Development



**Councillor  
Michael Smith**

Cabinet Member for Environment



**Councillor  
Liz Walsh**

Cabinet Member for  
Healthy Communities



**Councillor  
Fred Wilson**

Cabinet Member for  
Customer Services

## South Bucks District Council Cabinet



**Councillor  
Nick Naylor**

Leader of the Cabinet



**Councillor  
John Read**

Deputy Leader of the Cabinet and Cabinet  
Member for Planning and Economic Development



**Councillor  
Barbara Gibbs**

Cabinet Member for Resources



**Councillor  
Patrick Hogan**

Cabinet Member for  
Healthy Communities



**Councillor  
Duncan Smith**

Cabinet Member for Customer  
Services and Business Support



**Councillor  
Luisa Sullivan**

Cabinet Member  
for Environment

# Introducing your councillors - Chiltern District Council

**Amersham Common**



Caroline Jones

**Amersham-on-the-Hill**



Liz Walsh



Nigel Shepherd

**Amersham Town**



Jules Cook



Mark Flys

**Asheridge Vale & Lowndes**



Alan Bacon



Jane MacBean

**Ashley Green, Latimer & Chenies**



Andrew Garth

**Austenwood**



John Wertheim

**Ballinger, South Heath & Chartridge**



Peter Jones

**Central (Chalfont St Peter)**



Jonathan Rush



Murray Harrold

**Chalfont Common**



Isobel Darby



Linda Smith BEM

**Chalfont St Giles**



Des Bray



Carl Jackson



Caroline Rouse

**Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill**



Mimi Harker OBE



Graham Harris

**Cholesbury, The Lee & Bellingdon**



Nick Rose

Page 39

**Gold Hill**



Chris Ford

**Great Missenden**



Vanessa Martin

**Hilltop & Townsend**



Emily Culverhouse



Fred Wilson

**Holmer Green**



Michael Smith



Mark Titterington

**Little Chalfont**



Don Phillips



Peter Martin

**Little Missenden**



Diana Varley

**Newtown**



Mark Shaw

**Penn & Coleshill**



Julie Burton



Jonathan Waters

**Prestwood & Heath End**



John Gladwin



Robert Jones



Heather Wallace

**Ridgeway**



Nick Southworth



Siddharth Patel

**Seer Green**



Peter Hudson

**St Mary's & Waterside**



Mike Stannard

**Vale**



Nick Varley

Appendix A

**Beaconsfield North**



Damian Saunders

**Beaconsfield South**



Jacquetta  
Lowen-Cooper



John Read

**Beaconsfield West**



Philip Bastiman



Patrick Hogan

**Burnham Church & Beeches**



Lin Hazell



Paul Kelly



Nick Naylor

**Burnham Lent Rise & Taplow**



Matthew  
Bezzant



David Pepler



George Sandy

**Denham**



Barry Harding



Guy Hollis



Roger Reed

**Farnham and Hedgerley**



David Anthony



Dev Dhillon



Marlene Lewis

**Gerrards Cross**



Santokh  
Chhokar



Barbara Gibbs



Duncan Smith

**Iver Heath**



Ray Sangster



Luisa Sullivan

**Iver Village & Richings Park**



Paul Griffin



Jilly Jordan



Dr Wendy  
Matthews

**Stoke Poges**



Ralph Bagge



Trevor Egleton

**Wexham & Fulmer**



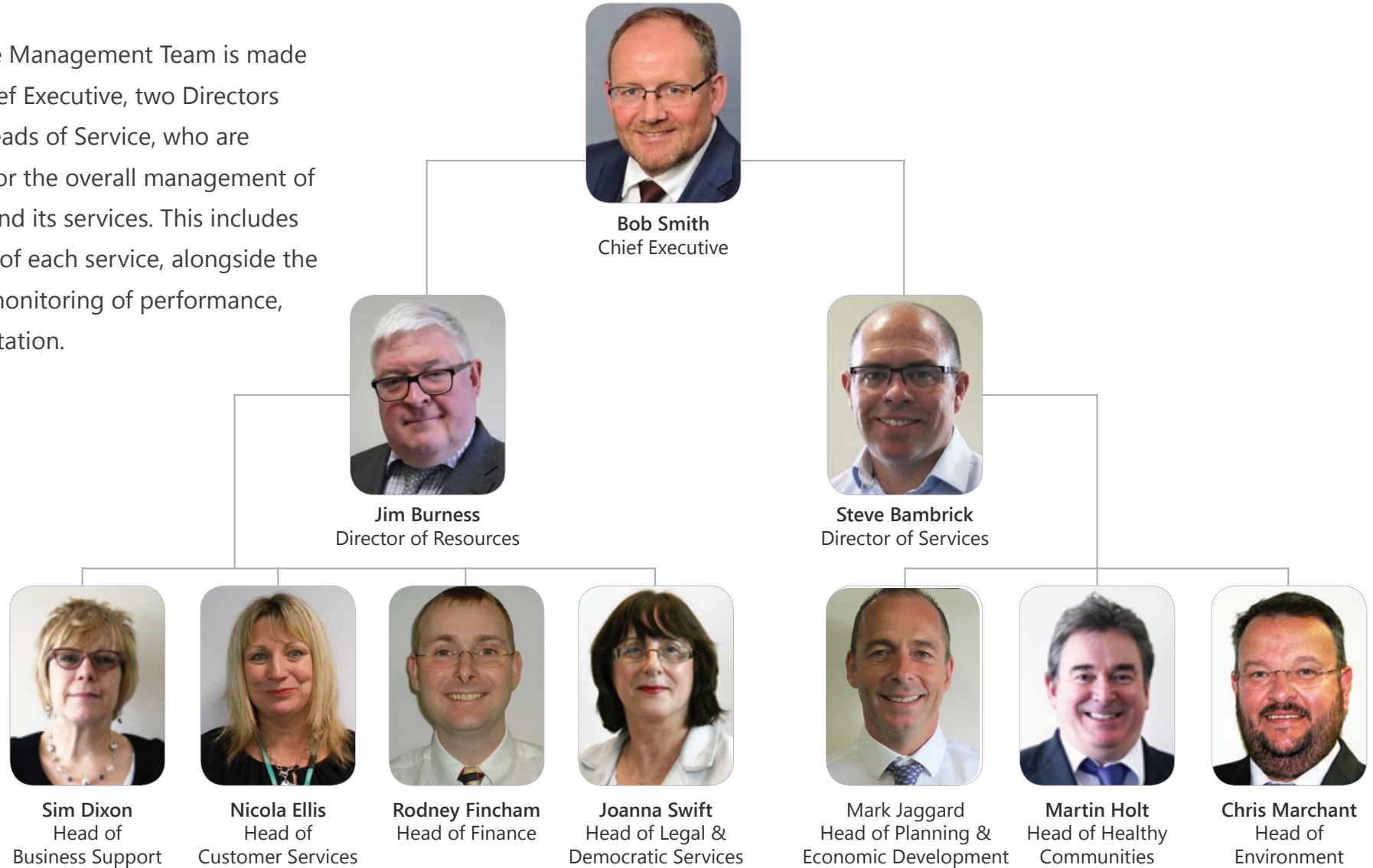
Malcolm Bradford



# Executive Management Team

The Executive Management Team is made up of the Chief Executive, two Directors and seven Heads of Service, who are responsible for the overall management of the Council and its services. This includes the direction of each service, alongside the setting and monitoring of performance, risk and reputation.

Page 41



Appendix A

# How we work

## Values and Behaviours

In order to achieve our vision, our staff embrace the set values and behaviours, known as the five C's.

- Courteous
- Committed
- Collaborative
- Challenging
- Customer Focused

These embody the culture of our organisations, and have been created through collaborative working across the Councils.



# Partnership Working

Both councils work in partnership with organisations from the public, private voluntary and community sectors. These include:

## Neighbouring authorities

- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Wycombe District Council
- Town & Parish Councils

## Emergency services

- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority
- Thames Valley Police

## Private sector companies / contractors

- Biffa
- Greenwich Leisure Limited
- Northgate Public Services
- Serco

## Charitable / not-for-profit, voluntary & community organisations

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Community Impact Bucks
- Connection Support
- English Heritage
- Local Authority Building Control
- Padstones

## Housing associations

- London & Quadrant
- Paradigm

## Public bodies

- Natural England
- Food Standards Agency
- Environment Agency
- Public Health England



<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Bucks Home Choice - Revisions of Allocations Policy
<b>RELEVANT MEMBER:</b>	Councillor L Walsh, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	Head of Healthy Communities – Martin Holt
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Housing Manager – Michael Veryard
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	All Wards

### 1. Purpose of Report

The report seeks authority to adopt and implement the revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy following consideration by the Healthy Communities Policy Advisory Group, the Services Overview Committee and the Cabinet.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

- 1. That full Council approves the revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy**
- 2. That the Head of Healthy Communities be delegated authority to make any final amendments and to agree and adopt the final version of the revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy in consultation with the Healthy Communities Portfolio Holder and subject to Aylesbury Vale, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils also adopting the revised policy.**

### 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Following a report to Cabinet in October 2018 a consultation exercise has now taken place on the proposed revisions to the Bucks Homes Choice Allocations Policy.
- 2.2 The majority of respondents to the consultation were in favour of the proposed revisions with the exception of the proposal that same sex siblings should be expected to share a bedroom until the older child reaches the age of 21.
- 2.3 A final draft of the proposed revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy has now been prepared with minimal changes to the version that was previously reported to Members and issued for consultation. The four District Councils (Aylesbury Vale DC, Chiltern DC, South Bucks DC and Wycombe DC) are now seeking to adopt and implement this revised policy.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To secure the approval and adoption of the revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy.

#### 4. Content of Report

4.1 Bucks Home Choice is the choice based lettings scheme that is operated jointly by Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils for the allocation of social housing tenancies. Under the scheme, the Councils operate a common allocations policy for:

- assessing who qualifies for Bucks Home Choice,
- prioritising applicants based on their housing needs (using four priority bands ranging from A to D) and
- allocating vacant social housing tenancies.

The Councils also share a common database and IT system for recording applications, advertising tenancies and making allocations. However, within this common allocation policy and database each Council still operates its own housing register (i.e. Chiltern District Council operates its own housing register for applicants who qualify to be re-housed in Chiltern)

4.2 On 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018, Cabinet received a report on proposed revisions to the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy. These revisions were being proposed in response to new national legislation and guidance, court judgements, ombudsman decisions and the experience of the four District Councils in managing the allocations process. Members were advised of the main revisions and changes that were being brought forward and were given an opportunity to comment on the draft revised policy ahead of the formal consultation.

4.3 The consultation subsequently commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and closed on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019. A total of 308 responses were received. The majority of those who responded were in favour of the proposed changes that were being put forward with the exception of the proposal that children of the same sex should be expected to share a bedroom up the age of 21 years (compared to 16 years in the current policy). The key findings from the responses were:

- 76% agreed that someone with sufficient resources or who owns a property (or have purchased social housing in the past under the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire) should not qualify for Bucks Home Choice
- 71% agreed that someone who has sold a property within the last 5 years (with no regard for sourcing alternative accommodation from the proceeds of sale) should not qualify for Bucks Home Choice
- 59% agreed that applicants over the age of 55 seeking age-restricted accommodation should not qualify for Bucks Home Choice if they currently own or have an interest in a home and/or have assets, savings or income to secure their own accommodation:
- 75% agreed that someone who had previously broken the terms of their tenancy and/or whose household includes someone who is subject to any anti-social behaviour action or order should not qualify for Bucks Home Choice
- 60% agreed that someone with an identified housing need and previous rent arrears should be placed into the lowest priority band for re-housing until they have cleared the outstanding rent arrears in full.
- 40% agreed that same sex siblings should be expected to share a bedroom until the older child reaches the age of 21.
- 91% agreed that someone who is under-occupying social housing should be given the highest priority banding so that they can move to a smaller home and release their current property for re-letting to a family who need it.

- 
- 83% agreed that households who are severely overcrowded or living in housing assessed as being insanitary and/or in a state of significant disrepair (and which cannot be remedied within a reasonable timeframe) should be awarded higher priority for rehousing in order to prevent homelessness.

- 4.4 The Bucks Home Choice Management Board (comprising the four District Councils) has reviewed the draft revised policy following the consultation. The main proposed policy revisions remain unchanged from those that were reported to Cabinet in October 2018.
- 4.5 The one proposed revision that has been amended relates to the maximum age at which same sex siblings should be expected to share a bedroom. This forms part of the assessment of the size of property that a household requires and helps to determine whether or not the household currently has insufficient bedroom space for the number of members (i.e. if a household is deemed to be lacking 1 or more bedrooms then it will potentially qualify to register with Bucks Home Choice for rehousing). The draft policy issued for consultation had proposed that the maximum age at which same sex siblings would be expected to share a bedroom should be raised from 16 years to 21 years. This was intended to reflect the current demands on social housing (and family housing in particular) meaning that households should expect same sex siblings to share rooms for longer rather than expect to be able to move on the larger accommodation. This also reflected the guidance on overcrowding in the Government's "Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Housing Authorities". However, as shown in Paragraph 3.5 above, the majority of respondents to the consultation disagreed with this approach. Respondents cited practical and welfare problems that can arise from older siblings sharing. They also highlighted that the proposed policy would be inconsistent with the bedroom standards applied by the welfare benefits system (e.g. Housing Benefit) and by individual Registered Providers in their own letting policies (e.g. a Provider may not allow older same sex siblings to share a room when allocating a property). Having reviewed this, the Bucks Home Choice Management Board has amended this revision so that the that the maximum age at which same sex siblings would be expected to share a bedroom should be raised from 16 years to 18 years and not 21 years as originally proposed. The partners will monitor the impact of this change following implementation and consider further amendments as and when required in the future.
- 4.6 The Bucks Home Choice Management Board has now drafted a final version of the revised Allocations Policy following the consultation exercise. A copy of this is in Appendix 1. A reminder of the main revisions and changes being made to the Policy is in Appendix 2. This final draft policy is being reviewed by the Council's Principal Solicitor in consultation with the Legal Services at the other District Councils to confirm that it satisfies all legal requirements set down in the Housing Acts and associated guidance.
- 4.7 The final adoption of the policy will be subject to the four District Council's in the Bucks Home Choice partnership (Aylesbury Vale DC, Chiltern DC, South Bucks DC and Wycombe DC) all confirming that they agree to adopt the final version of the policy. Cabinet is asked to consider the final draft of the revised draft policy and recommend to Council that the Head of Healthy Communities be delegated authority to make any final amendments and to agree and adopt the final version of the revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy in consultation with the Healthy Communities Portfolio Holder and subject to Aylesbury Vale, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils also adopting the revised policy

## 5. Consultation

5.1 The revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy has been subject to a formal consultation exercise (see paragraph 4.3).

## 6. Options (if any)

- 6.1 The Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy could be left in its current form. However, this would create significant risks for Council:
- It would leave the Council vulnerable to legal challenge on some aspects of the Policy which have not been formally updated to reflect changes brought forward by legislation, guidance, case law and Ombudsman decisions.
  - The current policy is no longer compatible with the Council's statutory homelessness duties following the implementation of the Housing Act 1996. Without the proposed revisions, the Council will face increasing challenges in meeting its statutory homelessness duties and preventing homelessness wherever possible (avoiding the need to provide costly temporary accommodation).
  - Other aspects of the policy which would benefit from updating will be left unchanged.
- 6.2 The proposed revisions will mean that the Policy will be more robust in responding to any challenges and fit for purpose in meeting the current legislative housing requirements.
- 6.3 It is recognised that the district and countywide arrangements for social housing allocations and the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy will be subject to wider review in due course as part of the transition to a unitary authority. However, in view of the issues highlighted in paragraph 6.1 it would not be appropriate to postpone the proposed revisions to the policy.

## 7. Corporate Implications

### 7.1 Financial

There will be costs associated with implementing any changes to policy (including IT changes) as and when the final policy is adopted. These costs will be shared across the four District Councils and provision for these costs has been included in the Council's budgetary estimates.

### 7.2 Legal

It is a statutory requirement for the Council to have an Allocations Policy for social housing. The policy has also been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

## 8. Links to Council Policy Objectives

This report links to the following key objective:

Working towards safe and healthier local communities



**9. Next Step**

The Council will formally adopt and implement the revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy in partnership with Aylesbury Vale District Council, South Bucks District Council and Wycombe District Council.

<b>Background Papers:</b>	None, other than those referred to in this report
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# Bucks Home Choice

## Allocation Policy



Home Choice

Draft Post - Consultation Copy  
4.2  
14-01-2019

**Changes to Consultation Version Highlighted in Yellow**

**Section 1 – Introduction**

Page 5

- 1.1 Introducing Bucks Home Choice
- 1.2 Members of the Bucks Home Choice Partnership
- 1.3 Aims of the Bucks Home Choice Partnership
- 1.4 Equality Statement
- 1.5 Legal Background
- 1.6 Policy Contents

**Section 2 – Eligibility and Qualification**

Page 8

- 2.1 Registering on Bucks Home Choice
- 2.2 Eligibility for an allocation of housing
- 2.3 Qualification – Classes of People who do not qualify for Bucks Home Choice
  - 2.3.1 Non Priority
  - 2.3.2 Local Connection
  - 2.3.3 Owner Occupiers
  - 2.3.4 Rent Arrears
  - 2.3.5 Unsuitable for Tenancy
  - 2.3.6 Right to a Review of a Decision of a Non Qualifying Person

**Section 3 – Applying and Registering for Bucks Home Choice** Page 15

- 3.1 Applying to Bucks Home Choice
  - 3.1.2 Applications from staff, elected council members or family members
- 3.2 Registration form and supporting information
- 3.3 Person to be included in an application
  - 3.3.1 Carers
  - 3.3.2 Separated Parents and Dependent Children

3.3.3 Other Family Members and Dependent Relatives

3.3.4 Split Families

3.3.5 Support Needs

3.4 False or Withheld Information

3.5 Giving applicants advice and information

3.6 Renewal/Change of Circumstances

3.7 Suspension and Cancellation

**Section 4 – Assessment and Prioritisation of Applications** Page 19

4.1 Priority Bands

4.2 Medical Needs

4.3 Welfare Needs

4.4 Review of Welfare and Medical Priority Banding

**Section 5 – Advertising** Page 23

5.1 How vacancies will be advertised

5.2 Advertising criteria

5.3 Properties advertised within the District council areas

5.4 Properties advertised across the partnership

5.5 Size and type of property for which applicants are eligible

5.6 How applicants bid on a property

**Section 6 – Prioritising and Letting** Page 26

6.1 Determining priority between shortlisted applicants

6.2 Local Lettings Policies

6.3 Direct Allocations

6.4 Applicants subject to duty under Section 193 of Housing Act 1996  
(Homelessness)

Classification: OFFICIAL

6.5 Verifying an application

6.5.1 Verifying

6.5.2 Nomination

6.5.3 Withdrawal of a Nomination

6.6 Temporary suspension

**Section 7 – Review of decisions and complaints** Page 32

7.1 Asking for a decision to be reviewed

7.2 Making a complaint

**Section 8 – Monitoring and Policy Review** Page 33

8.1 Monitoring

8.2 Policy Review

8.3 Right to Move

**Section 9 – Data Protection and Information Sharing** Page 33

9.1 Data Protection

9.2 Information Sharing without consent

**Appendix 1** Page 35

Priority Bands

**Appendix 2** Page 39

Bedroom Standard

**Appendix 3** Page 42

Reasonable Preference

**Appendix 4** Page 43

Terms used in the policy

**Appendix 5** Page 45  
Policies

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introducing Bucks Home Choice

Section 166(A) of the Housing Act 1996 requires that every local housing authority in England must have an allocation scheme for determining priorities (and the procedure to be followed) in allocating housing accommodation.

Bucks Home Choice is the scheme that is used to allocate affordable housing in four local housing authority areas – Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe.

As the demand for affordable housing exceeds availability, Bucks Home Choice prioritises applicants so properties that become available are offered fairly and transparently. This document describes the policy in detail including who qualifies to apply for housing and how we give priority to different applicants based on their housing need.

Bucks Home Choice operates on the following basis:-

- Applicants register with the scheme
- Applicants are prioritised for re-housing based on their circumstances
- Available properties will be advertised
- Applicants can bid on properties they qualify to move to
- Bids on a property will be shortlisted in priority order
- The property will be offered in accordance with 6.1 of the policy.

### 1.2 Members of the Bucks Home Choice Partnership

The following District Councils are members of and Managing Partners of the Bucks Home Choice partnership:-

- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Chiltern District Council
- South Bucks District Council
- Wycombe District Council

The four District Councils have chosen to jointly operate Bucks Home Choice and a common Allocation Scheme in order to:-

- Deliver value for money by operating a shared scheme and IT system
- Allow good practice and knowledge to be shared across the four districts
- Provide the opportunity for properties to be advertised across the Partnership allowing applicants to move from one district to another

The scheme applies to all properties in the Bucks Home Choice districts that are owned and/or managed by a Registered Provider and the Councils have the right to nominate to.

The term “Senior Housing Officer” and “Senior Officer” has been used in this policy for ease of reference only. The exact titles of the officers within each organisation vary and may be subject to change from time to time. Each organisation within the Partnership will have designated officers responsible for the operation of the Bucks Home Choice Scheme and Allocation Policy and details of these officers are available from each organisation on request.

The term “Managing Partner” means the relevant District Council who is dealing with the applicant and application.

### **1.3 Aims of the Bucks Home Choice Partnership**

#### **The aims of the Partnership are:**

- a) To meet the District Councils’ statutory requirements and ensure that priority for housing is given to those with the highest level of housing need.
- b) To give applicants as much choice as possible having regard to the statutory requirements and the availability of housing stock.
- c) To provide a common framework for allocations of affordable housing within the Partnership.
- d) To facilitate a degree of mobility within the Partnership.
- e) To help and encourage sustainable communities.
- f) To make the best possible use of all available housing stock.
- g) To allocate housing resources in a way that is as fair as possible.
- h) To make the process of allocating tenancies as open and transparent as possible.

#### **The Partnership is also committed to:**

- i) Preventing households from becoming homeless.
- j) Providing applicants with sufficient information to enable them to make the right choices about where they wish to live.
- k) Providing applicants with information on a variety of housing options to enable them to make informed decisions about their housing application.
- l) Ensuring that vulnerable people are able to make the most of Bucks Home Choice to meet their housing needs.
- m) Acting sensitively and treating all personal information as confidential.
- n) Ensuring customers are advised of their right to a review of decisions.

### **1.4 Equality Statement**

This policy has been drafted in compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and it has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment. Applicants will be asked to complete an equalities monitoring questionnaire. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence



## 1.5 Legal Background

This policy has been drafted to give due regard to the requirement to give Reasonable Preference to those categories of person set out in section 166A (3) of the Housing Act 1996.

In framing the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy, we have had regard to:

- The Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England (DCLG – June 2012)
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012/2989 and the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012/1869
- Providing Social Housing For Local People: Statutory Guidance on Social Housing Allocations for Local Authorities in England” (DCLG – December 2013)
- The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015/967)
- The Bucks Tenancy Strategy and each of the District Councils’ Housing and Homelessness Strategies (see Appendix 5 for details).
- The Homeless Reduction Act 2017

The Policy may be subject to minor amendments from time to time (e.g. when there are changes to relevant legislation) When minor amendments are necessary, these will be authorised by the Partnership’s Senior Housing Officers or relevant Heads of Service and subject to the agreement of all four Managing Partners

## 1.6 Policy Contents

This policy sets down:

- How applicants can apply to the Bucks Home Choice scheme
- Who is a qualifying person to join Bucks Home Choice
- Who is eligible to join Bucks Home Choice
- How an applicants’ priority is assessed.
- How members of the Partnership will determine priorities in allocating housing accommodation.
- How properties are advertised and let.
- How applicants can ask for a review of a decision.
- How the policy will be monitored and reviewed.
- How the Partnership will comply with the Data Protection Act.

This policy does not cover offers of licences, non-secure, or assured shorthold tenancies granted to homeless households in pursuance of any member of the Partnership’s homelessness duties under Part 7 of the 1996 Act. This policy does not cover offers of tenancies excluded from an allocation scheme by virtue of S.159 (4A) and s.160 of the 1996 Act.

This policy is available, on our website [www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk](http://www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk) or applicants can request for a copy of the policy to be sent to them.

## **2. Eligibility and Qualification**

### **2.1 Registering on Bucks Home Choice**

In order to register for Bucks Home Choice, an applicant must:-

- Be aged 16 years or over (upon allocation of a property an applicant aged 16 or 17 years of age will be required to have an adult who can hold a tenancy as a trustee until they are 18.)
- Be eligible for an allocation of housing under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, and
- Qualify for the Bucks Home Choice scheme.
- Where two persons apply jointly for housing, at least one of the applicants must be eligible. A joint tenancy cannot be granted when one of the applicants is not eligible. The application will be made in the name of the applicant who is eligible and a sole tenancy will be granted.
- Must be residing in the United Kingdom

### **2.2 Eligibility for an allocation of housing**

Under Section 160ZA of the Housing Act 1996, an applicant will not be eligible for an allocation of housing if he or she is:

- A person subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 (unless he is of a class prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State).
- A person who falls within a class of persons from abroad who have been prescribed by the Secretary of State as being ineligible to be allocated housing accommodation by a local housing authority.
- A person who falls into any other class of person prescribed by the Secretary of State as not qualifying to be allocated housing accommodation by a local housing authority.

An applicant who is not eligible for an allocation of housing under Section 160ZA of the Housing Act 1996 cannot register with Bucks Home Choice regardless of the applicant's personal circumstances.

### **2.3 Persons who do not qualify to join the Bucks Home Choice scheme**

Under Section 160ZA (7) a local housing authority may decide what classes of persons are, or are not, qualifying persons for an allocation of housing accommodation.

### **2.3A Persons deemed not to qualify for Bucks Home Choice**

The following classes of person are deemed not to qualify for the Bucks Home Choice scheme:

- A person whose circumstances do not meet the criteria of any of the Priority Bands set down in Appendix 1 (see 2.3.1)
- A person who is an applicant or a member of the applicant's household and is considered guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant and at the time of the application for housing and they are still considered unsuitable to be a tenant by reason of that behaviour (see 2.3.2).

### **2.3B Persons deemed not to qualify for Bucks Home Choice unless they are deemed to have a Reasonable Preference**

The following classes of person are deemed not to qualify for the Bucks Home Choice scheme unless they are deemed to have a Reasonable Preference in accordance with Section 166A of the Housing Act 1996 (see Appendix 3)

- A person who does not meet the local connection criteria (see Section 2.3.3)
- A person who is an owner occupier of a property (See 2.3.4)
- A person with current or former tenancy rent arrears owed to a Registered Provider or private landlord unless the Council is satisfied that action is being taken to resolve the arrears (See 2.3.5)
- A person whose income, assets or savings are sufficient to enable the person to source accommodation in the private sector.
- A person who formerly owned a property within the last five years and who failed to use the capital receipt from the property disposal to secure adequate alternative housing arrangements (see 2.3.4).
- A person who has previously purchased a property under the statutory Right to Buy or Right to Acquire schemes (see 2.3.4)
- A person who has been re-housed in a social housing tenancy and who wishes to apply to be re-housed again (unless there has been a change of circumstances since the person was re-housed in which event the application will be assessed as a new application under the Bucks Home Choice policy)
- A person who has any outstanding related housing debt with the Managing Partner's housing department. A housing related debt could be former tenant arrears whilst in temporary accommodation, former tenant arrears whilst holding a previous tenancy or outstanding repayments on loans provided by the local authority to help the applicant to secure accommodation.
- A person whose household is considered to be adequately housed as detailed in 'size and type of property for which applicants are eligible' (5.5) but who is not using the bed spaces within their property to its optimum capacity. This includes taking account of an additional

reception room or dining room that could be reasonably used as a bedroom.

The Bucks Home Choice Partnership reserves the right in exceptional circumstances to register a household with the scheme even if the household falls into one of the non-qualifying classes set down above. Any decision to register a non-qualifying household will be subject to authorisation by the Senior Housing Officer of the partner Council receiving the application and will be based on the individual circumstances of the household concerned. In event of a decision being made to register a non-qualifying household, the partner concerned will record full details of the reason for the decision.

Further information on some of the classes of person deemed to be non-qualifying for Bucks Home Choice is given below in the remainder of Section 2.3

### **2.3.1 Non-Priority**

Those persons who do not fall into any of the priority bandings set out in Appendix 1 are considered to be adequately housed and therefore not qualifying persons.

### **2.3.2 Unsuitable for Tenancy - Unacceptable Behaviour**

Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour that renders the applicant unsuitable to be offered a tenancy.

If an applicant or any member of the applicant's household is considered to be guilty of unacceptable behaviour or considered to be causing or involved in activities that may be considered unacceptable behaviour, that is serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant at the time of the application for housing, then they will be considered unsuitable to be a tenant by reason of that behaviour.

Any decision made in respect of the applicant's behavior making an applicant unsuitable to be considered a tenant, will consider the timing, pattern and seriousness of the behavior and an applicant's engagement with appropriate services.

#### **Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour could be and are not limited to:**

- a) Having been evicted for anti-social behaviour or rent arrears on a previous tenancy, either with a Registered Provider or Private Landlord in the last 5 years.
- b) Conviction for illegal or immoral purpose.
- c) Causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or visitors.
- d) Committing certain criminal offences in or near the home and still posing a threat to neighbours or the community
- e) Being violent towards a partner or members of the family.

- f) Being verbally or physically abusive towards a member of one of the partnership's staff
- g) Allowing the condition of the property to deteriorate.
- h) Allowing any furniture provided by the landlord to deteriorate due to ill treatment.
- i) Obtaining a tenancy by deception, for example, by giving false or misleading information.
- j) Paying money to illegally obtain a tenancy.
- k) Having lost accommodation provided in connection with employment due to conduct making it inappropriate for the person to reside there.
- l) Subject to an Anti-Social Behaviour Order
- m) Breaking the terms of a tenancy agreement and a notice to quit has been issued.

If an applicant is accepted onto the Housing Register and is subsequently found to be guilty of unacceptable behavior (including one or more of (a) to (m) above) then the Managing Partner of the Partnership will review the application and may remove the applicant from the Housing Register.

### **2.3.3 Local Connection**

An applicant must have a local connection to at least one of the following District Councils in order to qualify for Bucks Home Choice;

- Aylesbury Vale
- Chiltern
- South Bucks
- Wycombe

An applicant is deemed to have a local connection with a district if the applicant:

- Is living and has lived in a district continuously for at least 2 years immediately preceding the date of the application. If an applicant has lived out of the district for a single period of up to 4 calendar months whilst registered they will retain a local connection. If an applicant has lived outside of the district for a single period exceeding 4 calendar months (or for multiple periods) and the applicant does not meet the Reasonable Preference categories set down in Appendix 3, their housing register application will be cancelled.
- If an applicant is working and has been in continuous employment in a district for at least 2 years immediately preceding the date of the application and has worked for a minimum of 24 hours per week throughout that period. Employment is described as having a permanent contract, or working under contract as temporary member of staff. Location of work is determined by an applicant's main place of work. If an employee's head office is in the area but the location of work is outside the actual area when it is carried out, this cannot be

considered as being the main place of work.

- If an applicant has changed employer within the district, or their hours have reduced, to below 24 hours per week, for no more than 4 calendar months, they will retain a local connection. Any applicant who no longer retains a local connection and does not meet the reasonable categories set down in Appendix 3 will have their housing register application cancelled.
- A person who has found accommodation in a supported housing unit within the Bucks Home Choice Partnership will retain a local connection with the area they were living in before moving into supported accommodation.

**Exceptions – Applicants who are deemed to qualify even if they do not meet the above Local Connection criteria**

If an applicant does not meet criteria above, then the applicant will not be a qualifying person for Bucks Home Choice. The only exceptions to this are applicants who:

- a) Are aged 55 or more and seeking accommodation designated solely for person aged 55 or more and the household's income, assets or savings are not sufficient for the household to source accommodation in the private sector.
- b) Are subject to the main housing duty under Section 193 of Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996 by Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks or Wycombe District Councils (in this event the applicant will qualify solely to go onto the Housing Register administered by the District Council that has accepted the duty)
- c) Are serving in the armed forces or who have served in the armed forces within the five year period immediately preceding the application
- d) Have recently left ministry of defence accommodation because of the death of a spouse, who served in the regular forces
- e) Are serving or have previously served in the reserve forces and are suffering from a serious injury as a result of this service
- f) Persons who were required to live outside of the district for reasons out of their control (i.e. placed in care,) and who had a local connection to the district immediately prior to moving away.
- g) Prisoners who have been released from prison and had a local connection to the district immediately prior to going to prison.
- h) Persons who meet the criteria as set out in the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015/.
- i) Persons who do not meet the local connection criteria but meet the criteria for one or more of the Reasonable Preference categories set out in Appendix 3

If an applicant meets any of the criteria listed in (a) to (i) above they will be deemed to qualify for Bucks Home Choice regardless of whether or not the applicant has a local connection to a district.

For the purposes of determining a local connection the following living arrangements will not be taken into account:

- Occupation of a mobile home, caravan, motor caravan, or houseboat which is not placed on a residential site; or
- Occupation of a holiday letting which includes a permanent building, hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation for the purposes of a holiday letting.
- Applicants placed in an institution, prison, hospital or in one of the districts who otherwise have no local connection.

#### **2.3.4 Current and Former Owner Occupiers.**

A person is considered to be a current owner-occupier for the purpose of this policy if they are the owner or joint owner of any residential property regardless of location. They will not be a qualifying person unless;

- The person falls into one of the statutory Reasonable Preference categories (see Appendix 3) or
- It is not possible for the person to remain in their current address (e.g. because adaptations are required and cannot be undertaken) and the person does not have sufficient financial resources available to secure other accommodation without the Council's assistance.

In considering the issues raised in this section, the District Council managing the application will take specialist advice as required (e.g. from an Occupational Therapist).

If an applicant has a legal, financial or beneficiary interest in a property, the full circumstances will be investigated. If the applicant is able to realise his/her interest in the property and it would be sufficient to secure alternative accommodation without the Council's assistance, the applicant will be considered to be an owner occupier.

If the applicant is not a current owner occupier and has formerly owned a property within the last five years, the applicant will be asked to provide evidence of the sale and details of any capital receipt arising from the sale. If the applicant subsequently disposed of any capital receipt without making adequate housing arrangements then the applicant will be deemed not to qualify for Bucks Home Choice (unless the applicant falls into one of the statutory Reasonable Preference categories (see Appendix 3))

An applicant who has previously purchased a property under the statutory Right to Buy or Right to Acquire schemes will be deemed not to qualify for Bucks Home Choice (unless the applicant falls into one of the statutory Reasonable Preference categories (see Appendix 3))

### **2.3.5 Rent Arrears**

- a) An applicant who has been evicted from a previous tenancy on the grounds of rent arrears within the five year period preceding the date of application (or who voluntarily surrendered a tenancy in advance of a warrant for possession being executed on rent arrears grounds) will not be a qualifying person for Bucks Home Choice unless the arrears have been cleared in full or the applicant falls into one of the statutory Reasonable Preference categories (see Appendix 3).
- b) Where an applicant or a member of his household owes rent arrears to a current or former landlord, at the time of the application or at any period during the application they will be placed in a Band E until such times as they provided evidence that the arrears have been cleared. Once confirmation has been received the application will be reassessed in line with the Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy.

Where the rent arrears have arisen due to exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant's control the Council may depart from this policy and the decision will be referred to a Senior Officer.

Registered Provider tenants transferring who have accrued rent arrears solely through a shortfall in housing benefit due to under-occupying their property may apply to the housing register. Each case will be looked at on an individual basis by a Senior Officer; the tenant must be able to demonstrate that they are trying to resolve the situation at an early stage by seeking a smaller property and making an attempt to cover any shortfall.

The provisions in (a) will not apply if the District Council has accepted a main housing duty under Section 193 of Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996. The Council will contact the current or former landlord of the applicant or any member of his or her household to confirm the facts.

### **2.3.6 Right to a Review of a Decision of a Non Qualifying Person**

If the Managing Partner has made a decision that an applicant is not a qualifying person and cannot join Bucks Home Choice, the applicant will have the right to request a review of this decision within 21 days of being notified of the decision. The review will be undertaken by a Senior Housing Officer who was not involved in the original decision. The review decision will be made within a 56 day period.

## **3. Applying and registering for Bucks Home Choice**

### **3.1 Applying to Bucks Home Choice**



An applicant for Bucks Home Choice must apply to go on to one of the four District Housing Registers. The applicant must have a local connection to the District concerned in order to qualify for the District Housing Register (e.g. an applicant for the Aylesbury Vale District Housing Register must have a local connection with Aylesbury Vale). The full definition of what constitutes a Local Connection is in Paragraph 2.3.3.

Where an applicant has a local connection to more than one District, the application will be managed and maintained by the district where the applicant has a residential local connection (i.e. where the applicant has lived for at least 2 years).

An applicant who does not have a local connection but is still a qualifying person can apply to go on to the Housing Register of any of the four Districts.

### **3.1.2. Applications from staff, elected council members or their family members**

A person who is a member of staff of the Managing Partner, their close family and elected members in the Managing Partner may apply for housing in the same way as other applicants. A close family member is a parent, sibling or adult child. Their status should be disclosed on the application form at the time of applying. Any applicant making a successful bid for a property and subsequent letting must be approved by the appropriate Senior Housing Officer of the Managing Partner.

### **3.2 Registration form and supporting information**

To apply to go on the Housing Register, applicants are required to complete an on-line application process at [www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk](http://www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk). Assistance from staff will be made available to applicants needing to make an on-line application. There are two stages to an application;

**Stage 1** – This is a pre-assessment process which takes details from the applicant and determines what housing options are available to them. This will include the option of making a Bucks Home Choice application if the information provided indicates that the applicant is eligible and will qualify for scheme.

**Stage 2** – If the Stage 1 pre-assessment indicates that the applicant is eligible and qualifies for Bucks Home Choice, the applicant will then have the option of making a formal application to the Bucks Home Choice scheme.

After assessment, if the applicant is accepted onto the register they will receive written confirmation of the following information:

- Their unique reference number, which allows them to express interest via Bucks Home Choice.
- The Priority Band in which the application has been placed.
- The date that the application was registered.

- The size of the property for which the applicant is likely to be able to bid for.

Applicants must also provide the information and evidence that is required to enable the Partnership to check and assess their eligibility and housing need. If an applicant fails to provide the requested information within 28 calendar days their application will be cancelled.

The Partnership will make any enquiries necessary in order to determine an applicant's eligibility to join the Housing Register and their level of priority for housing. When completing an on-line application and declaration, applicants are authorising the Partnership to make reasonable and relevant enquiries as are required to complete the assessment. When signing the application, applicants are also authorising the Partnership to disclose information to other parts of the Council and other agencies in order to verify the application.

If the applicant does not give authority to make reasonable and relevant enquiries and to disclose information to other parts of the Council or other agencies, then this may affect the assessment and final outcome of the application.

Applications will normally be assessed, once all the required information has been provided, within 10 working days.

If an applicant is ineligible or does not qualify to join the Housing Register they will be informed of the reasons for this decision and advised of the review process.

### **3.3 Persons to be included in an application**

An application for the Bucks Home Choice scheme will comprise of the lead applicant and any members of the applicant's household who require re-housing with the applicant. For the purposes of Bucks Home Choice, the applicant's household will normally comprise the applicant together with his/her partner (if applicable) and any dependent children (if applicable) who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant.

In assessing an application, the Managing Partner will assess who reasonably requires re-housing with the applicant. This will include consideration of the circumstances below.

Any non-dependent adult over the age of 18 and not in full time education may not be considered as part of the household and are able to make an application in their own name.

Household members who have always been living as one household will only be considered as part of the household if they are unable to live independently which will require an assessment from Adult Social Care and or medical professionals to support the request at the time of application.

For the purpose of assessing an application, dependent children are expected to share rooms with other children in the same extended family regardless of whether they are siblings.

### **3.3.1 Carers**

If an applicant wishes to include a carer in the application, then in all cases the carer must have been identified by the applicant as the person who is primarily responsible for providing the applicant with care and the carer must need to live with the applicant to provide this care.

Even if a carer is in receipt of Carer's Allowance this does not mean that it is necessary for them to reside with the person who is being cared for. Many carers provide over 35 hours a week support whilst living in their own home. An application to include a carer in a housing application will be considered if the applicant has been assessed by Social Care as needing to receive overnight support and the persons Care Package that they would supply supports overnight care. In these circumstances a copy of the Care Package will be required.

### **3.3.2 Separated Parents and Dependent Children**

If an applicant is a separated parent and wishes to include his/her child in the application, the Managing Partner will assess whether or not the child resides with the applicant. This assessment will consider all circumstances including:

- Residence Order for the child
- Which parent is the recipient of Child Benefit and Tax Credits
- The existing residence arrangements for the child (i.e. where does the child currently stay with each parent?)
- Any other relevant information

In the case of children, the test of normal residence as a member of the family will require residence as opposed to 'staying' or 'staying access' even in cases of joint custody or joint residence or similar orders. The Council in applying the residence test will consider whether there is a sufficient degree of permanence or regularity to constitute normal residence as a member of the family. Account may be taken of whether the child is dependent upon the applicant. The Council may also take account of the supply and demand for accommodation, the general housing circumstances within the district and any under-occupation that may result where a child spends part of a week with one parent and part of a week with another.

### **3.3.3 Split families**

Where the family unit is not currently residing together and they have previously lived together as a family unit and there is a reasonable expectation that they should reside together the family will be considered as a

split family. Assessment of priority band will consider the accommodation currently available by the different parts of the family and will be based on the accommodation that better suits the family's needs at the time of the application.

### **3.3.4 Support Needs**

Where an applicant has been assessed as having support needs they will not be offered accommodation until they can demonstrate that they have engaged with the appropriate services and have a continuing support plan for tenancy sustainment. This is to ensure that an applicant with support needs will be able to manage a tenancy and reduce the risk of repeat homelessness. The partner that is managing the application will consult partner agencies as required and in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GPDR 2016.

### **3.4 Right to Move**

In order to meet the criteria to qualify to join Bucks Home Choice under Right to Move the applicant must:

- be a social housing tenant
- have Reasonable Preference because of a need to move to the Local Authority's district to avoid hardship
- need to move because the tenant works or has been offered work in the district of the authority
- and has a genuine intention to take up the offer of work.

The Managing Partner must be satisfied that the tenant needs, rather than wishes, to move for work reasons. As well as other factors the Managing Partner will take into consideration the nature of work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home.

### **3.5 False or withheld information**

Under section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 it is an offence for an applicant to knowingly or recklessly give false or misleading information or knowingly withhold information relevant to their application. Under the Act, the Local Authority has the power to take action against an applicant which could result in a fine of up to £5000.

An offence is also committed if the applicant allows a third party to provide false information on his or her behalf, or at his or her instigation.

If an applicant, or a person acting on his or her behalf, has given false information or withheld information it could:

- Affect an applicant's eligibility to join the Housing Register;
- If appropriate, result in the applicant not being given preference at all.
- If appropriate, be taken into account in prioritising applicants who have Reasonable Preference

Where there is an allegation or suspicion that a person has given false information, or has withheld information, the application will be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation. If it has been established that an applicant has provided false information the person will be deemed not to be a qualifying person.

### **3.6 Giving applicants advice and information**

The Partnership will provide advice and information to help applicants to make the most of Bucks Home Choice to meet their housing needs. This will include:

- How to apply to join the Housing Register and what supporting information applicants will be required to provide.
- Help to fill in the housing registration form (by prior appointment).
- The meaning of the priority bands and how this affects the time individual applicants are likely to have to wait.
- Advice on how to bid on a property, and how to obtain help to bid.
- Advice on other options for housing such as private renting or shared ownership.

Where an applicant is assessed as being a non-qualifying person, the applicant will be given advice and information on the other housing options open to them.

### **3.7 Renewal of applications and changes of circumstances**

Applicants must renew their applications once a year and they will receive a reminder and information on how to do this on the anniversary of the date of their application.

Applicants must also notify the member of the Partnership with which they are registered of any changes in their circumstances, such as a relationship breakdown, an older child leaving home or a baby being born.

### **3.8 Suspending or Cancelling an Application**

#### **An application will be suspended if:**

- An applicant has been asked for information to support an application and a reply is awaited.
- An applicant has changed address and not provided a change of circumstances form.
- An applicant has been asked to provide information from their support agency or worker to support their application and a reply is awaited.

If suspended, an applicant will not be able to bid for properties.

#### **An application will be cancelled if:**

- The applicant has asked for it to be cancelled.

- The applicant has been rehoused via Bucks Home Choice.
- The applicant has exchanged a property with another tenant and is now deemed to be adequately housed.
- The applicant has moved and not told us of their new address.
- A Partner has written or emailed the applicant about the application and there has been no response within 28 days.
- An applicant has not provided within 28 days all the information that has been requested and is reasonably required to support the application.
- A Partner has evidence that the applicant no longer qualifies for housing.
- The applicant has not responded to an offer of housing within the timescales required.
- The applicant has given false or misleading information.
- The applicant's circumstances have changed and the applicant no longer has a housing need or local connection under this policy.

In the event of an application being cancelled the partnership reserves the right to re-instate an application at its discretion.

#### **4. Assessment and Prioritisation of Applicants**

The Partnership will assess the relative priority of applicants in two stages:

##### **Stage One – Banding (See 4.1)**

This assessment takes place when an applicant applies to join the Housing Register and his or her eligibility and priority are assessed.

The assessment of an application will take into account any accommodation that the applicant is currently entitled to occupy and any medical and welfare needs. When assessing for lacking bedrooms a second living room that is suitable to be used as sleeping accommodation will be treated as a bedroom,

An applicant is entitled to occupy accommodation:

- As an owner, lessee, leaseholder or tenant or by virtue of a court order.
- Express or implied license to occupy i.e. as a lodger or living with relative.
- Any other enactment or rule of law giving a person the right to remain in occupation or restricting the right of another person from recovering possession.

##### **Worsening of housing circumstances.**

An applicant must not do (or fail to do) something for the purpose of worsening their housing circumstances. When such a situation arises, the Managing Partner will carefully assess the change of circumstances and consider the facts of the case. The assessment of an application in these circumstances will take into account the applicants circumstances prior to the act.

Classification: OFFICIAL

For an applicant to have worsened their circumstances there must be evidence that it would have been reasonable for the applicant to have remained in their previous accommodation.

Examples of an applicant undertaking an act for the purpose of worsening housing circumstances are set out below;

- Abandoning a previous suitable tenancy.
- Moving without good reason to accommodation which is more overcrowded or is considered more unsatisfactory or insanitary than their previous accommodation.
- Selling a property or giving notice on a tenancy without having alternative accommodation available to them.
- Allowing a property to become overcrowded by inviting additional households to move in.
- Moving out of a property when housing advice has been provided for the applicant to remain in their existing accommodation.
- Moving out of an adapted property into an unsuitable or un-adapted property.
- Moving out of a property due to financial reasons when the property has been assessed as being affordable by the partnership.
- Having sufficient funds available to purchase or to rent suitable accommodation in the private sector and choosing not to do so.
- Refusing an offer of private rented accommodation in order to get a banding on BHC.
- A statutory homeless household refusing a suitable final offer
- Collusion with landlord or family member to obtain notice to quit.

If an applicant is assessed as having worsened their housing circumstances, and they qualify to join the scheme, they will be placed into band E for a period of 12 months. An applicant can then request that their application be re-assessed after this period. All relevant facts and information available will be considered in the re-assessment process.

## **Stage Two – Shortlisting** (See 6.1)

This assessment takes place when an applicant has bid on a property.

If more than one applicant bids on a property, they will be placed on a shortlist. The policy states how the relative priority of applicants on a shortlist will be determined.

### **4.1 Priority Bands**

Classification: OFFICIAL

Applicants will be placed in a Priority Band, taking into account the information they have provided with their housing application. The criteria for the Bands are given in Appendix 1.

When a change of circumstances results in a change of banding to a higher band the priority date of the banding will be amended to the date of acceptance onto the new band. Should a change in circumstances result in the band being lowered the date of application will remain.

#### 4.2 Assessment of Medical Needs

Members of the Partnership have appointed a qualified Medical Advisor whose advice may be sought when assessing whether to place an applicant in a higher priority band on medical grounds.

Applicants with serious medical problems may complete a self-assessment form. A Housing Officer will consider the information provided and make an assessment as to whether any medical priority should be awarded. In some cases the Managing Partner will seek the medical advisor's opinion before reaching a decision. They will consider the medical advisors opinion along with all other relevant information in order to determine whether a priority band should be given and also any recommendation for the type of housing required (e.g. ground floor or adapted accommodation).

If applicants have been assessed as having a medical need they will be advised of the type of property that would be considered as suitable. Bids placed by the applicant on properties not meeting the criteria recommended will not be considered for the property.

When making a decision whether to award a priority on medical grounds, the Housing Officer will look at:-

- How the current accommodation is causing or affecting the medical condition.
- How social housing would improve it.
- The severity of the effect that housing is having on the medical condition.
- The duration of the condition and any expected recovery time.
- The severity in comparison to the housing needs of other applicants.
- Whether other options are viable that could improve the situation.

Following the assessment a decision will be made whether to award a priority banding. The bandings are below:-

- **Band B "Severe"** – The current housing is having a severe impact on the applicant's (or family members) health and their health will deteriorate if the applicant is not moved to a suitable property.
- **Band C "Adverse"** – The current housing is having an adverse impact on applicant's (or family member's) health. Their health will not



deteriorate in current accommodation, but the adverse impact will be reduced if the applicant moves to more suitable accommodation.

An applicant has a right to request a review of a decision not to award medical priority. Following the outcome of that review, the Managing Partner will not undertake any further assessment for 12 months unless there is a significant change in circumstances.

Applicants who have been awarded a medical priority to take into account difficulty with stairs and the need for ground floor accommodation will not usually be considered for a property with either internal or external stairs unless there are appropriate adaptations in place.

Medical bandings will not be awarded to those households in temporary accommodation provided by the District Council in pursuance of their homelessness duty. Any request for a review of suitability of temporary accommodation will be dealt with outside of the Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy and via the current homelessness legislation.

#### **4.3 Assessment of welfare needs**

Some applicants may need to move on welfare grounds that are not related to a medical condition.

It is not possible to state all the circumstances that will justify Reasonable Preference on welfare grounds, and each case will be assessed individually. A panel of officers of the Managing Partner will assess each application, and will record their decisions to ensure equality and consistency is maintained.

The panel will comprise of at least two senior officers of the Managing Partner who will consider the following factors to ensure consistency when assessing welfare cases:

- Is the applicant's current housing situation having an adverse effect on their welfare?
- If so, can the adverse effect on the applicant's welfare be resolved without the need to move?
- If the adverse effect cannot be resolved in the applicant's current housing situation, can it be resolved by re-housing elsewhere? (Consideration will be given by the panel to ensure that, where there is a risk to the applicant's safety and well-being, any move will reduce that risk. This may require a move away from the applicant's current district).
- Will the applicant suffer hardship if they do not move to a particular location in the local authority district? (Where an applicant is applying to move to live near a relative to give/receive support, the panel will consider if there is evidence to support the application. These may include confirmation from support services, evidence of carers Allowance and any other information that the Partnership feels is relevant to the application).

In the event that the panel accepts that:

- An applicant needs to move on welfare grounds, but
- The Bucks Home Choice scheme cannot deliver a suitable move (e.g. because the applicant needs to move out of the partnership area).

The Managing Partner will liaise with the applicant and relevant agencies to identify a suitable course of action to address the welfare needs.

#### **4.4 Reviewing of Welfare and Medical Priority Banding**

The Managing Partner reserves the right to review the applicant's priority banding on an appropriate periodic basis. Applicants are expected to be actively looking for and bidding on available properties on Bucks Home Choice. In certain circumstances the Partnership may make a direct allocation of an appropriate property. Any reviews will take into account bids that have been made by an applicant, offers made and refused, along with the particular circumstances of the case.

If an applicant has been placed in Priority Band A (Welfare) or B or C (Medical grounds) and has failed to bid for any properties or accept a direct offer of accommodation, the Partnership reserves the right to review the Priority Band.

In conducting the review the Managing Partner will take into consideration the following:

- Have there been any properties advertised that would have met the applicant's needs?
- If so did the applicant apply for them?
- Why were the bids unsuccessful?
- Did the applicant receive appropriate support in accessing the bidding cycle?
- Are the applicant's circumstances the same?

On completion of the review a decision will be made whether the priority banding continues to apply. This may result in the application being removed where, without this priority banding, they would not otherwise qualify to join the housing register.

## **5. How properties will be advertised and let**

### **5.1 How properties will be advertised**

Properties will be advertised weekly in a variety of formats and locations.

- On the Bucks Home Choice website
- In the offices of members of the Partnership

- Personalised property lists may be posted to applicants who are housebound or cannot use any of the other methods

The Partnership may choose to vary the timing of the cycle for advertising properties. Any such variation will be subject to the agreement of all partners.

## **5.2 Advertising criteria**

Each property advert will have information on the location, size and type of Property and any criteria that applicants must satisfy in order to be eligible for shortlisting.

Some properties may have letting restrictions for example no pets or age restrictions

Priority for family sized accommodation of two bedrooms or more with access to a garden will be given to households with children under the age of 16 unless medical evidence of the need for a property with a garden exists.

Properties that have two reception rooms may be considered as having an additional bedroom to assist where necessary with housing larger families where larger accommodation is not available.

Any restrictions will be explained in the advert and applicants who do not meet the criteria will not be nominated for the property.

## **5.3 Properties advertised within the District Council areas**

An applicant will only be able to bid for a property that is:

- Advertised via a Partner where the applicant has a local connection with the Partners' district or,

Advertised across the Partnership and is available to all Bucks Home Choice applicants who require the size and type of property concerned (regardless of which District(s) the applicant has a local connection with).

## **5.4 Properties advertised across the Partnership**

One of the aims of Bucks Home Choice is to enable some applicants to move within the Partnership. In order to achieve this, properties that do not have a high local demand will be advertised as being available for any applicants who are registered with Bucks Home Choice, regardless of the District(s) with which they have a local connection.

The Partnership will monitor how many properties are advertised, and how many are let in this way. It will also monitor how many properties are let to applicants who do not have a local connection. This monitoring will enable the Partnership to assess whether applicants are finding some flexibility in

where they can choose to live, whilst ensuring that the District Councils continue to be able to meet their Statutory Duties.

Where a property has been advertised for three advertising cycles and the property has received no appropriate bids the Partnership reserve the right to consider allocation of the property to people outside of the Bucks Home Choice scheme.

### **5.5 Size and type of property for which applicants are eligible**

In order to make the best use of the available housing stock, it is essential to let properties to those who need that size and type of property to:

- Avoid creating overcrowding or under-occupation when letting a property
- House families with children under the age of 16 into properties with gardens.
- Minimise the risk of the applicant being unable to afford rent payments on the property that is being let
- Prioritise large families with four or more children for properties with two reception rooms

When deciding the size and type of property that an applicant is entitled to bid for, the Bedroom Standard will normally be used as 1 bedroom for each of the following:

- a) Adult or adult couple
- b) Two children of the same sex aged under 18
- c) Two children of different sexes when the eldest is aged under 10
- d) Any other child

More information is available in Appendix 2.

In exceptional circumstances the Senior Housing Officer may exercise discretion in deviating from the Bedroom Standard. In all cases applicants will need to demonstrate the property is affordable at the time of offer. Examples are:

- Where applicants require larger accommodation on health grounds, the Senior Housing Officer will consider this on a case by case basis, taking into account the advice of a qualified medical advisor appointed by the Partnership.
- Where there is little or no demand for a particular property.
- Where the applicant has been approved as a foster carer by Buckinghamshire County Council, and so will need a larger property than normally required by the household.
- Where the applicant or a member of the household needs the support of a carer who will need to sleep in the home and cannot reasonably be expected to share a bedroom with another member of the household. (See section 3.3)

## **5.6 How applicants bid on a property**

Applicants may bid on up to three properties for which they are entitled in any one advertising cycle, this can be done;

- On the Bucks Home Choice website
- In person at one of the Partnership's Customer Service Centre
- Telephone bidding by contacting relevant partner

Applicants who find it difficult to bid may ask an advocate or support worker to do so on their behalf. Help will also be available via the Partners and special arrangements will be made for vulnerable applicants who are unable to bid without help.

It is not possible for an applicant to view a property before making a bid.

## **6. Prioritising and Lettings**

### **6.1 Determining priority between shortlisted applicants**

Where more than one applicant bids on a property, they will be placed on a shortlist. Any applicant who bids on a property where they do not satisfy the advertised criteria will not be included on the shortlist. The reasons for this could include, but not be exclusive to, the following:

- a) The applicant's household size does not meet the Bedroom Standard.
- b) The applicant does not satisfy the age limit or mobility level as advertised.
- c) Has failed to meet any other advertising criteria.

The details of how applicants are awarded a Priority Band are given in Appendix 1.

For each property the applicants' bids will be ranked in the following order:-

- a) Local Connection
- b) Priority Band (Band A applicants will have a higher priority than Band B, and so on)
- c) Date of priority Banding
- d) Date of Registration

If the applicant with the highest priority on a shortlist refuses the offer, the property will then be offered to the next applicant on the shortlist. Age limited restrictions will be clearly indicated in the advert, if the applicant does not meet the specified restrictions, any bid placed on such a property will not be considered.

It should also be noted that:-

- a) If an applicant bids for a property and has rent arrears, then the bid will not be accepted and the application will be placed into a band E until the arrears have been cleared (see section 2.3.4). Once the arrears are cleared the application will be re-assessed and a banding awarded. The banding date will take effect from the date of the re-banding.
- b) Some advertised properties may be subject to a Local Lettings Policy (see section 6.2)
- c) The prioritisation of short-listed applicants will be based on the priority banding of each applicant as it stood at the point when the advert cycle closed.
- d) The prioritisation and allocation process will take account of any additional criteria set down by the landlord for the occupation of the property. Where a property has specific adaptations (e.g. wheelchair access, ramps, level access shower), priority will be given to applicants who require the adaptation in the property.

The District Councils do not own any housing stock and will make nominations to the Registered Provider who is advertising the vacancy. On some occasions nominations may be refused by the Registered Provider as they will have their own Allocations Policy which may differ from Bucks Home Choice.

In most cases the Registered Providers will undertake a financial assessment of your finances to ensure that you can afford the property before making you an offer of affordable accommodation.

## **6.2 Local Lettings Policies**

Section 166A(6) of the 1996 Act enables housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the Reasonable Preference categories.

Local Lettings Policies may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and other housing policy objectives. So for example, Local Lettings Policies may be used to lower the proportion of older children/young adults on an estate to reduce the incidences of anti-social behaviour; or to deal with concentrations of deprivation by setting aside a proportion of vacancies for applicants who are in employment.

Local Lettings Schemes (LLS) will be designated by Registered Provider's following detailed consultation with the relevant District Council and an assessment on the impact of a LLS. Once agreed these schemes will have their own allocation criteria. LLS will be put in place for a specific area or estate and will be set up in response to particular local circumstances. The aim of LLS is to work towards more balance within local communities to result in outcomes that reflect the wider community and address issues such as child density and the proportion of households in employment in one area or estate.

Working towards more balanced communities may mean a housing mix of:

- Different household types/client groups
- Households of different ages and/or with children of different ages
- People who are in paid employment and those who are not in paid employment
- Families which have one child and those that have two children.

The precise approach to be adopted will reflect the particular problems/issues of an area, estate or development of new build properties.

From time to time a member of the Partnership may adopt a Local Lettings Policy that will apply to a proportion of the properties that it advertises. All such local lettings policies will be published on the Bucks Home Choice website and will be available by request. The Local Lettings Policy will state clearly the justification for its adoption and operation.

In some cases, a housing scheme may be subject to planning conditions that restrict who is permitted to occupy the accommodation (e.g. a rural housing scheme where occupancy is limited to people with a local connection).

When a property is subject to a Local Lettings Policy or planning conditions, the advertisement will state the restrictions and which applicants are permitted to bid.

### **6.3 Direct allocations**

In certain circumstances members of the Partnership reserve the right not to advertise a property and allocate it directly to an applicant, or to allocate a property that has been advertised directly to an applicant. The following are examples of circumstances where a direct allocation may be made.

- a) Where a person has been assessed as needing an urgent move as a result of violence or threats of violence or through the National Witness Protection Service.
- b) Where a sensitive letting has to be made, for example for a vulnerable person, or a sex or violent offender and is subject to MAPPA., or to deal with a severe housing management problem, where the Council considers that a direct allocation is more appropriate than requiring or allowing the applicant to bid on a property.
- c) Where the applicant is a homeless person and the Council has accepted a full Housing Duty under Section 193 of Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996 and the applicant has failed to regularly participate in bidding for properties which the District Council in question considers suitable. This means that applicants should bid for the maximum permitted (and available) properties regardless of the property type (for example flats/houses).
- d) Where an applicant demonstrated an urgent need to move due to serious imminent personal risk or severe harassment.
- e) Where the applicant is a homeless person where the Council has accepted a full housing duty under Section 193 of Part 7

(Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996 and the applicant is:

- in temporary accommodation,
  - has bid on a property or properties,
  - has not been successful, and
  - there is a strategic need to move that applicant from the temporary accommodation to make way for another homeless applicant.
- f) Where a property is identified as having adaptations or suitable adaptations a Direct Allocation may be made.

In c) and e) above, if the applicant is in accommodation secured under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 and the applicant refuses a suitable offer of accommodation then the District Council that is securing the accommodation under Section 193 will discharge its duty and will take possession proceedings to bring an end to the accommodation. When making a direct allocation, the preferences of the applicant will be taken into account as far as possible.

#### **6.4 Applicants subject to duty under Section 193 of Housing Act 1996 (Homelessness)**

Where a Bucks Home Choice applicant has also made an application for assistance to the District Council under Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996 then the priority awarded to the applicant will be based solely on the status of their homelessness application in accordance with the relevant category set down in the Priority Bands in Appendix 1.

In these cases, the assessment of the priority band will not consider any factors set down in the other Reasonable Preference categories. Any issues relating to the suitability of the applicant's temporary accommodation will be addressed by the relevant District Council in accordance with the requirements of Part 7 of the housing Act 1996 and the associated guidance.

Further details of specific arrangements for applicants who have also submitted an application for homelessness assistance are set down below.

##### **6.4.1 Priority Banding of applicants deemed to be subject to duty under Section 193 of Housing Act 1996 (Duty to persons with priority need who are not homeless intentionally)**

Where a Bucks Home Choice applicant:

- has also made an application for assistance to the District Council under Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996 and
- has been deemed to be eligible for the duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 (Duty to persons with priority need who are not homeless intentionally),

then the applicant will be placed in Priority Band D in order to give the applicant a reasonable opportunity of securing suitable long term settled accommodation.



#### **6.4.2 Re-assessment of Priority Banding when applicant ceases to be subject to duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996**

If the District Council ceases to be subject to a duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 then this will be deemed to be a change of circumstances and the applicant's qualification and priority under Bucks Home Choice application will be re-assessed accordingly.

If the reassessment finds that:

- (a) the applicant continues to qualify for Bucks Home Choice (see Section 2.3) and
- (b) the duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 ceased because the applicant:
  - (i) refused a suitable offer of accommodation that was offered in performance of the Section 193 duty,
  - (ii) voluntarily ceased to occupy accommodation that was offered in performance of the Section 193 duty,
  - (iii) has become homeless intentionally from accommodation that was offered in performance of the Section 193 duty,
  - (iv) has refused a suitable final offer of accommodation made under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 , or
  - (v) has refused a suitable private rented sector offer

then the Bucks Home Choice application will be re-banded and placed in Priority Band E unless the applicant has suitable accommodation in which case they will cease to qualify.

The above approach aims to assist homeless applicants by giving them reasonable priority for re-housing while also recognising the scarcity of accommodation and the need for such applicants to make full use of the assistance provided under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996. This assistance is not available to other applicants on Bucks Home Choice and, therefore, it is expected that a homeless applicant will accept all assistance offered through the Section 193 duty in order to secure accommodation.

If an applicant fails to make use of this assistance and the duty under Section 193 ceases, then the Bucks Home Choice scheme considers that it is unfair to continue to give the applicant a high priority banding (i.e. Band D) compared to the other applicants on the scheme. Therefore, the Bucks Home Choice application will be re-banded to the lowest Priority Band, Band E.

If a homeless household has not been bidding on a regular basis the Bucks Home Choice Partners reserve the right to make bids on applicant's behalf or make a direct offer of accommodation.

### **6.5 Verifying and nominating an application**

#### **6.5.1 Verifying**

Before any offer of accommodation is made, the Managing Partner will contact the successful applicant to verify all relevant information on their housing application. Unannounced home visits will, where appropriate, be carried out to verify applications. Applicants will be expected to provide the required documentary proof to confirm the statements on their housing application.

The purpose of this verification is to check that the details provided by the applicant are correct, and in particular to confirm that the applicant is:

- Eligible and qualify for housing under the Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy, and
- Suitable for the size and type of property concerned (see Appendix 2), and
- Has been placed in the correct Priority Band, based on his or her circumstances (see Appendix 1).

If an applicant does not provide the necessary information or if the verification shows that the housing application is not correct the application will be suspended and a re-assessment will be made reflecting the current circumstances. This includes where the applicants rent account is not up to date and it does not meet an exception category, the offer will be withdrawn (see Paragraph 2.3.4). The next person on the shortlist will be contacted with a view to making an offer.

If the Managing Partner is unable to contact the applicant and verify circumstances within the next working day following a home visit the applicant will not be nominated for the property.

### **6.5.2 Nomination**

If an applicant is shortlisted for a property, then the Registered Provider will contact the applicant to set down the timescales for a viewing of the property concerned and for the acceptance of any offer that is subsequently made. It is the responsibility of the applicant to attend the viewing at the stated time and to respond to the timescales set down by the Registered Provider. In the event of the applicant failing to do so, the Registered Provider will have the option to withdraw the offer of the tenancy.

In the event of the Registered Provider refusing a nomination the Partnership will require clear written reasons for the refusal. If the Partnership considers the reason for refusal as being incorrect, unjust or subjective then the Partnership will submit a written request to the Registered Provider to review their decision.

### **6.5.3. Withdrawal of a nomination**

In very exceptional circumstances, the Registered Provider may withdraw an advert/ offer of accommodation, these circumstances may include but not be limited to:-

- Where an error has been made in the advertising criteria.
- When it has been established that the property needs extensive works.
- When the property has been advertised, but the existing tenant has withdrawn their notice.
- When the property has been advertised but withdrawn for a direct let for an urgent case.
- When the nominee does not qualify under their Allocation Policy

## **6.6 Temporary suspension from bidding**

An applicant will be suspended from bidding on a temporary basis when:

- They are placed under offer for a property the application will be suspended until the applicant decides if they will take the property or not.
- They have accepted a property as it will be considered their housing requirements have been met. Once the property has been let to the applicant the application will be removed from Bucks Home Choice
- They have refused three offers of accommodation that they have bid on and the Partnership considered suitable for the applicant's needs. The application will be suspended for 6 months and the applicant will be advised in writing of this decision. During this period an applicant will not be permitted to bid on any advertised properties.

## **7. Review of decisions and complaints**

### **7.1 Asking for a decision to be reviewed**

Applicants have rights under the Act to ask for the review of a decision. The following decisions are subject to the right to request a review:

- a) The applicant's housing application has been refused on the grounds they are not eligible or qualifying person.
- b) The applicant is removed from the housing register on the grounds they are no longer eligible or qualifying person.
- c) An applicant's Priority Banding (i.e. the applicant disagrees with the banding that they have been awarded and wishes to have their banding reviewed).
- d) Any decision about the facts of a particular application which have been taken into account to assess whether an allocation should be made.
- e) Any decision to suspend an application due to the applicant having refused three offers of a tenancy (see section 6.6).

Applicants should request a review within 21 days of being notified of a decision.

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The review will be carried out by the Managing Partner that made the decision in respect of (a) to (e) above. Reviews will be carried out by a Senior Officer who was not involved in the original decision.

The applicant will be notified of the review decision in writing within a 56 day period of the review being requested.

Once a review has been completed and the applicant has been notified of the decision on review, the applicant cannot request a further review on the same decision unless there has been a factual change in his/her circumstances.

## **7.2 Making a complaint**

Each member of the Partnership has a published procedure for customer complaints which can be found on their website or a hard copy is available upon request.

## **8. Monitoring and policy review**

### **8.1 Monitoring**

The Partnership will monitor the outcomes of lettings through Bucks Home Choice, to assess whether it is meeting the aims stated in section 1.3 and the Equality Statement in section 1.4.

### **8.2 Policy review**

The results of monitoring will be used to review this Policy. Reviews will be carried out annually, but the Partnership may carry out an earlier review if monitoring shows that this is necessary.

The Policy may also be subject to minor amendments from time to time, for example, when there are changes to relevant legislation. When this is necessary, changes will be authorised by the Partnership's Senior Housing Officers or relevant Heads of Service and will be subject to the agreement of all four Managing Partners.

## **9. Data Protection and information sharing**

### **9.1 Data Protection**

9.1.1 All information held by the Partnership is subject to the Data Protection Legislation (including the Data Protection Act 2018 ("DPA") and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 2016 ("GDPR"). Information will be used in accordance with each Managing Partner's Privacy Notice which can be found on their websites.

9.1.2 In order to deal with an application the Applicants personal data will be used and the Managing Partner will contact third parties to obtain and share information in order to comply with the statutory obligation of processing the Applicants housing and/or homelessness application.

The processing of such personal data is necessary for the partners to comply with their legal obligations under the law on housing and homelessness.

## **9.2 Information Sharing**

9.2.1 Information about the Applicants relating to their housing options, homelessness and/or threatened homelessness may be shared with third parties including but not limited to private sector landlords, **Registered Providers**, lettings agents, health services, children, family and adult services, education services, Department of Work and Pensions, Housing Benefit and Council Tax services, the Police, prisons, probation and youth offending services, Citizens Advice and voluntary sector organisations.

9.2.2 Each Managing Partner will on an annual basis publish lettings information including the age, sex, ethnicity and nationality of applicants and new tenants. This information will be statistical only and will not identify individual applications or tenants.

## **9.3 Councillor or MP enquiries on behalf of Applicants.**

9.3.1 The Managing Partner will give its Councillors and MPs personal data about the Applicant if the Applicant asks it to or if the Councillor or MP reasonably needs it to carry out their duties, but the Councillor and/or MP must not use it for other purposes.

## **9.4 Enquiries made on behalf of applicants by an advocate organization.**

Where an enquiry is received by an advocate/ organisation on your behalf, the District Council may release your “personal data” in response to their queries; this may include information on your age, marital status, housing history, household type, economic status, benefits, income, support services received and medical history.

A Managing Partner will only release information and discuss an applicant's case with an advocate agency if the applicant has given written consent to do. The applicant will be asked to sign a data release consent form.

## APPENDIX 1

### ***Priority Bands***

**This Policy assesses the relative priority of Bucks Home Choice applicants by placing them in a Priority Band that best reflects the applicant's current housing circumstances and level of housing need.**

**The Priority Bands take account of the requirement of Section 166A (3) of the Housing Act 1996 which states that a local housing authority's allocation scheme must be framed so as to secure that Reasonable Preference is given to the categories of household listed in Appendix 3 of this policy.**

**The Priority Bands are listed below.**

<b>Band A</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Applicants or a member of his or her household who are living within one of the Partnership Districts and <b>have demonstrated an urgent need to move due to serious imminent personal risk</b> or severe harassment and rehousing is the only option. The Partnership reserves the right to make a Direct Let of accommodation. As determined by a Senior Officer.</li> <li>2. Applicant or a member of his or her household whose health or disability is so severely affected that they physically cannot access their current home and/or essential facilities within their current home and it is not possible for adaptations to be carried out to the property to provide this access.</li> <li>3. Applicants who cannot leave hospital because they have no suitable accommodation elsewhere and require specially adapted accommodation.</li> <li>4. Social Housing tenants with a Registered Provider within the Bucks Home Choice Partnership area who are under-occupying family accommodation and are wishing to downsize to a suitable size property as set down in appendix 2.</li> <li>5. Families living in accommodation where there are two or more bedrooms short or the property is statutory overcrowded.</li> <li>6. Social Housing tenants within the Partnership area with a Registered Provider and are living in a property that has been built or adapted for a person with a disability and this is no longer needed.</li> <li>7. Applicants as assessed by the Safeguarding Board and a more suitable property is essential to reduce the risk.</li> </ol>

**Band B**

1. Applicants living in supported housing who have been nominated to the Housing Register as being ready for move on and where there is an agreed move on protocol in place between the landlord/support provider and the District Council with which the applicant is registered.
2. Applicants who are due to leave care of the Children and Families services (Aftercare Team) and who are ready for independent living. Priority band B will only be awarded where the move is being undertaken in accordance with the Buckinghamshire Leaving Care Protocol between Bucks County Council, Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils'.
3. Applicants who need to move on medical grounds because their current home is having a severe impact on the health of a member of the household and re-housing to more suitable accommodation will help to reduce this impact and his/her health will deteriorate if the household is not moved to more suitable accommodation. Priority band B will only apply where the applicant is bidding on properties that will reduce the impact on the health of the member of the households.
4. Households living in accommodation where the household is lacking one bedroom.
5. Living in insanitary or unsatisfactory conditions which would include properties affected by lack of amenities or services, severe damp. Major structural defects, flooding, collapse of roof or statutory nuisance and the conditions cannot be rectified within a reasonable period. As assessed by the partner district council against the relevant legislation including housing standards and relevant safety rating systems.

**Band C**

1. Applicants that need to move on welfare grounds as agreed by the Bucks Home Choice Partnership. Applicants who need to move on medical grounds because their current home is having an adverse impact on the health of a member of his or her current accommodation and their health will not deteriorate in their current accommodation but the adverse impact will be significantly reduced with a move to more suitable accommodation. The recommendation of the medical advisor may be taken into consideration when deciding what level to priority to award and the type of accommodation necessary to alleviate the impact.
2. Applicants who may need assistance in finding their own accommodation such as adults with a learning disability/ mental health grounds who are ready to leave the family home and who are currently receiving a care package/support package from Bucks CC.
3. Families living within another household where there is sufficient bedrooms to accommodate both families e.g. adult children with their own families living in the parental home
4. Armed Forces applicants who have been discharged due to serious injury in the past five years

**Band D**

1. Applicants who are subject to the main housing duty S193(2) under the Housing Act 1996 Part VII and have been accepted as homeless, in priority need and unintentionally so by:-  
 Aylesbury Vale District Council  
 Chiltern District Council  
 South Bucks District Council  
 Wycombe District Council
2. Singles/Couple with no dependent children sharing where there is no overcrowding. (For the purpose of this policy sharing accommodation means sharing the use of the kitchen, bathroom and toilet facilities)
3. Singles/Couples who are living in HMOs (House in Multiple Occupation). (For the purposes of this policy, a HMO is a building which is lived in by more than one separate household who share basic facilities such as kitchen, bathroom or a toilet. People are treated as being part of the same household if they are related to each other (family members) or live together as a couple)
4. Sofa surfers, single person households without a fixed address who rely upon friends and family for accommodation for limited periods (also known as Sofa Surfers) and verified rough sleepers. (Verified by the Council's partner agencies)
5. Singles or couples who are over 55 and seeking designated aged persons accommodation for persons 55 and over and whose circumstances do not fall into bands A-C and do not hold any form of social housing tenancy within the partnership.
6. Applicants living in Supported Housing who do not qualify under a



move on protocol.

7. Applicants who are in care of Children and Families who wish to register prior to being 18 under the Buckinghamshire Leaving Care Protocol.
8. Applicants who are serving in the armed forces (or have served in the armed forces with the five year period immediately preceding their Bucks Home Choice Application) and who do not satisfy any of the Reasonable Preference categories listed in Appendix 3.
9. Applicants who have recently left ministry of defence accommodation because of the death of a spouse, who served in the regular force and whose circumstances do not fall in Priority Bands A,B or C.

### **Band E**

1. Applicants who are homeless within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and who have been assessed as being owed a relief duty by one of the members of the partnership.
2. Applicants who are homeless within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and who have been assessed as being owed a prevention duty by one of the members of the partnership(unless a higher priority banding applies).
3. Applicants who have applied for assistance to one of the four District Councils' belonging to the Bucks Home Choice Partnership under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 where the Council has reached a decision that they are homeless and in priority need but have been determined to be homeless intentionally s191(3).
4. Applicants who have applied for assistance to one of the four District Councils' belonging to the Bucks Home Choice Partnership under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 where the Council has reached a decision that they are homeless but not in priority need.
5. Applicants who have applied for assistance to one of the four District Councils' belonging to the Bucks Home Choice Partnership under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and have ceased to be subject to a duty under S193 and who meet the circumstances set down in 6.4.2
6. Applicants who have been assessed as having worsened their circumstances.
7. Applicants who are subject to Reasonable Preference under Section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996 (see Appendix 3) and who fall within one of the classes of person listed in Section 2.3B of the Policy (i.e. applicants who are deemed not to qualify for the Bucks Home Choice scheme unless they are deemed to have a Reasonable Preference)
8. Applicants accepted under the Right to Move (see Paragraph 3.4)

## Appendix 2

### Bedroom Standard and Type of Accommodation

When deciding the size of property for which applicants will be eligible, the following Bedroom Standard will be used.

Bedroom Standard				
Household Size	Number of bedrooms			
	1 *	2	3	4
Single Person	✓			
Couple wishing to live together	✓			
In exceptional cases e.g. where there are care needs adult siblings wishing to live together		✓		
Parent(s) with one child		✓		
Parent(s) with two children of the same sex both aged under 18 years		✓		
Parent(s) with two children of opposite sex both aged under 10 years		✓		
Parent(s) with two children of the same sex and the oldest is aged 18 years or more			✓	
Parent(s) with two children of opposite sex where the older child is aged 10 years or over			✓	

Parents with three children where two children can share (because they are (i) same sex both under 18 or (ii) different sex both under 10)			✓	
Parents with four children where it is possible for two pairs of children to each share a bedroom (because they are (i) same sex both under 18 or (ii) different sex both under 10)			✓	
Parents with three children where none of which can share (same sex over 18 or different sex over 10)				✓
Parents with four children where only two can share (same sex both under 18, or different sex both under 10)				✓
Parents with five or more children				✓

\*For the purposes of this policy a bedsit/studio is considered suitable for either a single person or a couple.

In all cases, where children meet the criteria to share a bedroom, the applicant will only be considered for a property which meets the families need, based on the above bedroom standard.

- When deciding whether an applicant and his or her household is under-occupying accommodation, or lacks one or more bedrooms, the lower number of bedrooms shown against each size of household will be used as the “standard” number of bedrooms required. For example, a family with two children who is living in a relative’s home and has the use of one bedroom will be deemed to lack one bedroom.

Where a bedroom can accommodate bed/beds in line with Housing Benefit rules, this is deemed adequate. There may be exceptions to this i.e. Sloping ceiling under stair or eaves, where it may be relevant to reconsider.

A bedroom being used for storage will still be considered to be available as a bedroom

Where a property has two reception rooms it may be considered that one of the reception rooms can be used as a bedroom.

Type of accommodation

- Age restricted housing will normally be available for applicants over 55.

Classification: OFFICIAL

- Accommodation that is designated as supported housing will be available only for applicants who are eligible for that particular accommodation. For example, some supported housing is provided exclusively for people with learning difficulties, or for young people leaving care.

Where accommodation is available only for applicants who satisfy such special criteria, this will be made clear in the advertisement of the property

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### Appendix 3 Reasonable Preference

The Housing Act 1996 requires that the Bucks Home Choice scheme must give Reasonable Preference to certain groups of people.

The Reasonable Preference groups are listed in Section 166A (3) of the Housing Act 1996 as follows:

- People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act);
- People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996 because they are:
  - Homeless and in priority need but homeless intentionally;
  - Homeless and in priority need and not intentionally homeless;
  - Threatened with homelessness and in priority need and not intentionally homeless;
  - Not intentionally homeless but not in priority need;
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to disability).
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or others.

The specific categories in the Priority Need bandings (see Appendix 1) take account of these Reasonable Preference categories. However, in deciding how one applicant should be prioritized compared to another with similar needs, the Bucks Home Choice scheme will also take account of factors such as local connection, behaviour and the financial resources available to each applicant.

For example, an applicant who;

- (i) falls into one of the Reasonable Preference categories and
  - (ii) who has a local connection to the Managing Partner's district
- will be placed in a higher priority band than an applicant with similar needs who does not have a local connection.

Further information on the qualification and prioritising of applicants can be found in Section 2 of this Policy

### Appendix 4

<b>Explanation of the terms used in this policy</b>	
Applicant	The term “applicant” includes single people and couples.
Household	The term “household” includes all eligible adults and dependent children included in the applicant’s application. Short term sharing arrangements or temporary part time arrangements will not normally be classified as a household member (see Section 3.3)
Reasonable Preference category	. See Appendix 3.
The Act	The Housing Act 1996 as amended
Child	A person under 16
Housing Register	A database of applicants for Bucks Home Choice
Change of Circumstances	A change in household circumstances (e.g. address/accommodation, addition of an adult household member) that may affect BHC qualification and/or priority banding
Registered Provider	A private non-profit making body that is registered and regulated by Government to provide and manage affordable housing (also known as a Housing Association)
Definition of Social and Affordable Housing	Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

## Appendix 5

### Policies

In accordance with Section 166A (12) of the Housing Act 1996, the Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy has been prepared with regard to the following Strategies:

Bucks Tenancy Strategy (Adopted January 2013)

Aylesbury Vale District Council Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2014-2017

Chiltern and District Council and South Bucks District Council Joint Housing Strategy (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) 2018-2021

Wycombe District Council Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019





**Appendix 2– Bucks Home Choice – Review of Allocations Policy**

**Summary of key revisions to the Policy**

Para	Proposed Revision	Reasons
<p><b>2.3A</b> <b>2.3B</b></p>	<p><b>Additional categories of non-qualifying persons</b></p>	<p>This will exclude persons who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-have sufficient available resources to secure their own accommodation privately</li> <li>-have previously owned their own home and disposed of the capital from any sale without making other housing arrangements</li> <li>-have previously been social housing tenants and exercised the right to buy or right to acquire</li> <li>-have outstanding housing related debt with the local authority</li> </ul> <p><b><i>This will not apply if the applicant deemed to fall into one of the statutory reasonable preference categories (S. 166A(3) of Housing Act 1996)</i></b></p>
<p><b>2.3.3</b></p>	<p><b>Amendments to local connection criteria</b></p>	<p>This continues the current requirement that applicants must have a local connection of at least 2 years residence or employment in district (and clarifies how any periods of absence or change of jobs are taken into account in assessing this). It will meet statutory and legal requirements by formally adding the following to the list of those persons exempted from local connection requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-persons who meet the national Right To Move criteria (i.e. social housing tenant needing to move areas to take up work) and</li> <li>-persons who fall into one of the statutory “reasonable preference” categories.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.3.4</b></p>	<p><b>Remove exemption for owner occupiers who are aged 55 or more and are seeking accommodation specifically designated for persons aged 55 or more</b></p>	<p>This is a response to the experience of some allocations under the existing policy which has seen owner occupiers selling their accommodation and then moving into age designated or sheltered schemes. This is not considered an appropriate use of social housing tenancies which should be targeted at persons who cannot secure accommodation on the private market.</p> <p><b><i>This will not apply if the applicant is deemed to fall into one of the statutory reasonable preference categories (S. 166A(3) of Housing Act 1996)</i></b></p>

2.3.5	<b>Tightening of restrictions on applicants how have current or previous rent arrears</b>	This is intended to ensure that applicants must clear any rent arrears in full before being prioritised for re-housing (with exceptions allowed for cases of hardship or other mitigating circumstances)
3.3	<b>Clearer guidance on who can be included in a Bucks Home Choice application</b>	Where a household with adult children is re-housed via Bucks Home Choice, there is a risk that the accommodation soon becomes under-occupied because the adult children move on. The policy revision will mean that adult children aged over 18 will not normally be considered as part of the household making an application. There will be exceptions in cases of adult children with support needs etc. Siblings of the same sex will be expected to share a bedroom until the older sibling reaches 18 years of age.
3.4	<b>Additional paragraph on "Right to Move"</b>	This has now been formally included to meet the requirements of the national "Right to Move" scheme which supports social housing tenants to re-locate when they obtain employment in other areas.
4.2	<b>Expansion of section on "Assessment of Medical Needs"</b>	This clarifies that applicants requiring level access accommodation will not normally be considered for properties with internal or external stairs.
5.2	<b>Expansion of section on "Advertising Criteria"</b>	This gives added guidance on ensuring that we make the best use of family sized accommodation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- prioritising properties with gardens for those with younger children and</li> <li>- allowing that in larger properties (with two reception rooms) one of the reception rooms can be used as a bedroom</li> </ul>

6.1	<b>Expansion of section on “Determining priority between shortlisted applicants”</b>	This now includes additional wording to clarify that the Registered Provider landlords may also apply their own assessment and qualification criteria to a potential tenant when receiving a nomination via the scheme
6.4	<b>Amendment to section dealing with applicants who are subject to the Council’s statutory homelessness duties (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996)</b>	This is being amended to reflect the changes in the Council’s homelessness duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The revision is intended to ensure that homeless persons receive a reasonable preference under the Allocations Policy but that this does not outweigh the level of priority awarded to other applicants with different housing needs (e.g. living at home with family). This will support the Council in providing advice and assistance to applicants who may be facing homelessness and avoid a situation where a person may feel that they will be in a better position on the Bucks Home Choice scheme if they become homeless (rather than working with the Council to remain where they are or make other housing arrangements).
App	<b>Appendix 1- Amendments and additions to Priority Bands (Note – There are currently 4 Priority Bands – from the highest priority Band A to the lowest priority Band D)</b>	<p>The main changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Applicants who are severely overcrowded (any tenure) or who are under-occupying social housing have been moved from Band B to the highest Band A. This improves the chances of severely overcrowded household securing a social housing tenancy (rather than become homeless) and increase the prospect of under-occupiers being able to downsize.</li> <li>- Applicants living in insanitary conditions or significant disrepair have been moved from Band C to Band B (if the problems cannot be rectified). Again this improves the prospect of securing another tenancy rather than becoming homeless because the problem persists in the long term.</li> <li>-Applicants with care needs who are ready to move on with care and support packages are in Band B and C (depending on the individual circumstances)</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Appendix 1- Amendments and additions to Priority Bands (continued)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Homeless households (including those in temporary accommodation) are now banded as Band D and Band E (see Reasons column for paragraph 6.4 for further explanation)</li>   <li>- An additional Band E has been added which will become the lowest Priority Band. This will allow the scheme to meet the requirements of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 by allowing the registration of households subject to the relief duty and other households who have been deemed non-priority, intentionally homeless etc.</li>   <li>- The additional Band E will also allow the scheme to meet the statutory requirements to register non-local connection Right to Move and “reasonable preference” applicants while ensuring that they are not awarded a higher priority than applicants who do have a local connection</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Appendix 2 – Bedroom Standard and Type of Accommodation</b></p>	<p>Siblings of the same sex will be expected to share a bedroom until the older sibling reaches 18 years of age (this is 16 years of age in the current policy)</p>

**Motions require written notice, signed by at least 2 Members, to the proper officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting. They must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the District or a part of it.**

### **Motion for Full Council – 17 April 2019**

This Council proposes that the Leader should write to Government to request that all enabling works for HS2 in Buckinghamshire should be paused until the Notice to Proceed to main works contractors has been approved. As required by the Department of Transport, Notice to Proceed should not be given until management capability, affordability of contracts and robustness of revised business case have all been proven. We see no reason why the District or County should suffer significant disruption and long term environmental destruction until detailed design and cost has been approved. We also ask that HS2 Ltd significantly improves the effectiveness of its community engagement with those impacted by the line.

Proposed by Councillor N Rose

Seconded by Councillor P Martin

Office use:	
Date Received	5 April 2019
Proper Officer	Mat Bloxham
Entered in Book of Motions	5 April 2019

