



Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SBDC)

Monday, 8 October 2018 at 6.00 pm

Room 6, Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham

A G E N D A

Item

1. Evacuation Procedure
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes (*Pages 5 - 12*)

To approve the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 June 2018

4. Declarations of Interest
5. Performance Report Quarter 1 2018-19 (*Pages 13 - 16*)

Appendix A: Priority Pls Q1 2018-19 (Pages 17 - 18)

Appendix B: Corporate Pls Q1 2018-19 (Pages 19 - 22)

Appendix C: Data Pls Q1 2018-19 (Pages 23 - 24)

6. Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy (*Pages 25 - 28*)

Members are asked to consider and comment on the attached Cabinet report.

Review of Allocation Policy Appendix 1 Summary of Key Changes (Pages 29 - 32)

Review of Allocation Policy Appendix 2 BHC draft policy (Pages 33 - 78)

7. Approval of the Joint Chiltern and South Bucks Housing (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) Strategy (*Pages 79 - 82*)

Members are asked to consider and comment on the attached Cabinet report.

CDC/SBDC Joint Housing Strategy Final 2018 (Pages 83 - 142)

8. Chiltern and South Bucks Playing Pitch Strategy (*Pages 143 - 148*)

Members are asked to consider and comment on the attached Cabinet report.

The Strategy has been added as a Supplement.

9. Chiltern and South Bucks Open Space Strategy (*Pages 149 - 154*)

Members are asked to consider and comment on the attached Cabinet report.

The Strategy has been added as a Supplement.

10. Cabinet Response to Task and Finish Group recommendations on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (*Pages 155 - 160*)

11. Freedom of Information Management and RIPA Annual Report (*Pages 161 - 170*)

Appendix (Pages 171 - 174)

12. Sickness Absence Update (*Pages 175 - 180*)

13. Bucks Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (*Pages 181 - 186*)

To receive:

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 July 2018

14. Bucks Children's Select Committee (*Pages 187 - 192*)

To receive:

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2018

15. Members Questions and Answers

An opportunity for Members to raise questions about items:

- during the meeting
- written questions submitted previously
- raised by information items

16. Work Programme (*Pages 193 - 194*)

To agree the work programme timetable.

17. Exclusion of the Public (if required)

The Chairman to move the following resolution:-

“that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in part 1 of Schedule 12A to 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.

Membership: Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SBDC)

Councillors: M Bradford (Chairman)
P Bastiman (Vice-Chairman)
M Bezzant
D Dhillon
T Egleton
M Lewis
D Saunders
P Kelly

Date of next meeting – Tuesday, 29 January 2019

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SBDC)**Meeting - 19 June 2018**

Present: M Bradford (Chairman)
P Bastiman, M Bezzant, T Egleton, M Lewis, D Saunders and
P Kelly

Also Present:

Apologies for absence: D Dhillon

55. MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 March 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

57. VIABILITY ASSESSMENTS

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report which set out the current arrangements on viability assessments. It also anticipated future arrangements as the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced later this year. Viability was an important part of the planning system. The existing NPPF identifies that development proposals should be capable of implementation and that local planning authorities should not impose significant burdens that would cause the proposal to become unviable.

Several larger developments in recent years have been accompanied by viability assessments. In their different ways these assessments have identified unusual site or development costs and how these costs impact on the ability of the scheme concerned to meet the usual developer contributions. Where appropriate, the Council engages specialist consultants to assess and challenge the viability assessments submitted by the developer. The District Valuer has traditionally been the Council's consultant on such matters. In certain specialist cases the Council will use planning consultants to test the cases being put forward by developers.

The emerging updates to the NPPF highlight the importance of viability in the planning process. The emerging updates to the NPPF bring a sharp focus to delivery in general and to the delivery of housing in particular. This has been compounded by the recent High Court judgment on the Parkhurst Road Limited case (London Borough of Islington) which provides greater comfort for local planning authorities on the importance of developers pursuing policy-compliant schemes.

A Member made reference to a development in his area where planning permission has been approved subject to a condition that affordable housing was made available. However, this was an expensive road in the area and it was unlikely that any families would be able to afford to live there. In response to this Members noted that once the updated NPPF has been published, a further report would be submitted to this Committee.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that a further report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee once the updated NPPF had been published.

58. **REFRESHED JOINT BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2020**

Members received the refreshed Joint Business Plan 2018-2019 at Appendix 1 of the report. Members expressed their thanks to the Performance and Policy Officer for the new user friendly presentation of the business plan.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the refreshed Joint Business Plan be approved.

59. **2017/18 END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee received a report outlining the annual performance of Council services against pre-agreed performance indicators (PIs) and service objectives for Quarter 4 (end of year 2017-18).

The Quarter 4 Priority and Corporate PIs were at Appendices A and B respectively. Members noted that priority PI relating to household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting was slightly under the target of 53% at 52.7%. Further, that some of the long-term absence cases detailed at 4.2.1 had been resolved. Through the survey feedback, it is apparent that the Licensing team were working hard to provide good customer service. However, as the response level to the survey was low officers would do more to publicise the survey the following year. Availability of ICT systems to staff was under target because of issues with vWorkspace, however these issues have now been resolved.

The Committee were advised that following the previous meeting it was being proposed that Members would receive the performance reports informally prior to committees to ensure that they received the figures in a more timely manner.

Members were pleased to note the new format of the Annual Report at Appendix C of the report.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

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- A Member referred to the Homelessness performance indicators and was pleased to see that there were now regular updates to this Committee following the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group.
- In the Annual Report information had been provided on the 3,542 tonnes of garden waste collected in Chiltern and Wycombe and this would be amended to refer to South Bucks.
- Reference was then made to the development at Pinewood which was the highest business ratepayer in the Districts.
- A Member commented that it was difficult to control long term sickness absence but this was being managed by managers, with support from HR and occupational health. Another Member commented that there were higher sickness levels in the public sector than the private sector. The Director of Resources reported that comparative figures with other Councils of similar size were presented to the Joint Staffing Committee for consideration. A suggestion was made to revisit the sickness policy. The Director of Resources stated that the current policy was fit for purpose but that they were working with Managers to ensure that the policy was enforced effectively, for example training was being provided on this area. Another Member made reference to the health and wellbeing of staff and the importance of analysing this through the staff survey. The Director of Resources reported that manager training was also in place for this area and recent mental health sessions had been held for all staff which had been organised through MIND. A Member suggested that it would be helpful to have a further discussion on this area including what improvements were being made since the new process had been implemented and more detail on the sickness management policy.

RESOLVED that the performance reports be noted and that a further report be submitted to the Committee on the management of the sickness policy.

60. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP - DRAFT REPORT ON MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Committee received the draft report of the Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group and suggested the following amendments :-

Slide 5

The Inquiry Group was set up to review the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in order to provide the Cabinet with the Group's views, following discussion with officers on how to bridge the funding gap currently identified by the Strategy. They considered the following elements and the basis of the assumptions underpinning them:-

The Group considered if any material expenditure pressures have been omitted and if other savings options could be explored.

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1. Cabinet should review opportunities to bring in revenue from advertising across all Council assets

Slide 8

1. Cabinet need to closely monitor the cost of homelessness as this is the most significant key cost pressure going forward. Measures are already in place to address historic issue.
2. Cabinet need to ensure that appropriate resources are put into preventing homelessness, as this avoids SBDC having to house families that are homeless in nightly paid accommodation. There needs to be clarity and responsibility for purchasing properties for this purpose outside existing arrangements with Housing Associations.
3. Cabinet need to address the volume of affordable housing stock by looking at opportunities through the Local Plan, and the housing numbers in the Plan. It will be important to ensure that they deliver appropriate numbers of affordable homes.

Slide 9

1. All non-statutory fees and charges should be reviewed annually, to ensure that they fully cover the Council's costs, and are in line with the average charge or higher from neighbouring authorities.
2. Cabinet should review the green waste fee, to see if there is scope to increase this.
3. Cabinet should consider having a single long term joint waste contract with all three District councils to obtain economies of scale – CDC currently have lower costs than SBDC because of the nature of their contract, which SBDC could benefit from in the future.
4. Actively explore scope to increase cemetery charges and burial capacity, including facilities for the non Christian communities and marketing these outside of the area and the use of Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens

Slide 10

4. Cabinet should review underutilised car parks e.g Burnham as these assets could be more effectively used for the Council's objectives.
5. Cabinet should review the use of recycling facilities in car parks as this space could generate extra income. In addition removal of these facilities would reduce the amount of flytipping.

Slide 12

1. That further planning income should be identified through the Proceeds of Crime and administration of Section 106 agreements and CIL if introduced.
2. Once the Local Plan has been finally submitted, the Head of Planning should critically review the size of the planning policy team to ensure it is appropriately resourced to meet the (hopefully reduced) requirements going forward.

Slide 13

1. That Cabinet responds in writing to each of the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group by the beginning of September to allow the response to be considered at the October meeting of the Committee.
2. One of the recommendations relates to a challenge/scrutiny session with Portfolio holders. This could be achieved by the Portfolio Holders discussing with O&S members their draft budgets that will be presented to the PAGs. Part of this process could include the extent to which they have taken on board the recommendations of this Task and Finish Group.
3. That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee establish a Work Programme which could include a review of all Joint Service arrangements to clarify whether the project outcomes have been achieved and to monitor new joint working programmes e.g. Customer Experience Strategy and ICT Strategy.

Members asked that a slide be added on medium term financial projections.

RESOLVED that the report be submitted to Cabinet for consideration with the changes outlined above.

61. **PRESENTATION BY NHS CHILTERN CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP**

Dr Sian Roberts, GP Dementia Lead and Maxine Foster Commissioning Manager, from Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) (Aylesbury and Chiltern formally merged in April 2018) gave a presentation on dementia.

During the presentation the main points were noted by Members:-

- Dementia was defined as a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities.
- There are 850,000 living with dementia and this was expected to rise to over 1 million by 2025.
- The Prime Minister challenge on dementia 2020 is to maintain a diagnosis rate of at least two thirds, increase the numbers of people receiving a dementia diagnosis within six weeks of a GP referral and improve the quality of post-diagnosis treatment and support for people with dementia and their carers.
- A dementia diagnosis will aid the understanding of care workers, family members and friends, leading to better support of the person with dementia. It can lead to more appropriate care and support, may give the person with dementia the opportunity to plan for the future and depending on the type and stage of dementia specific treatments or interventions may be available.
- 6,500 people over 65 in Bucks are probably living with dementia.
- Diagnosis can be undertaken through the Memory Clinic at Amersham Hospital, memory assessment closer to home (Denham Medical Centre) or screening in care homes.

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- A Memory Support Service was offered via Alzheimers Society. There was also support from Carers Bucks, GPs, Older Adults Community Mental Health Teams and the Dementia road map.
- There was a my life my memories project which was focusing on dementia in the different communities within the Buckinghamshire area.
- There was a mobile virtual dementia tour and living with joy workshops.

Members discussed the following points:-

- A Member referred to a local example where it was very difficult to get a referral. Another Member referred to another example and also commented that the trigger mechanism for a referral did not work. Having clarified the timescale for these issues Dr Roberts reassured Members that dementia services had changed significantly and it was much easier to get a referral. GPs now had received training on dementia diagnosis and with the help of the screening tool, the memory clinic and accessibility of services across localities this should no longer be an issue.
- In answer to a question on monitoring, Dr Roberts informed Members that the CCG commission Oxford Health Foundation Trust (OHFT) to provide Memory Assessment Services. The contract with OHFT was monitored monthly with key performance indicators (KPIs).
- They received detailed information for monitoring purposes, including on providers of services such as Older Adults Community Mental Health Teams and also looked at patient choice. Referrals were prioritised according to need but they worked towards the target of six weeks. Innovative work was being undertaken to get people to ask for help. If a patient was having difficulty in obtaining a referral they should contact their GP.
- A Member expressed concern about carers receiving information from GPs because of confidentiality. GPs were able to confirm what services had been put in place but could not disclose any personal information without the patient's consent. Reference was made to the need to obtain power of attorney in certain situations.
- In terms of the Government campaign there was recognition around the difficulties with dementia and to destigmatise the illness and raise awareness. Ideally dementia would be diagnosed and supported from an early stage – assessment was key. If patients had to be hospitalised this was undertaken locally where possible. A Member referred to the Annual Review carried out by GP surgeries and the opportunity to help identify any issues at this appointment.
- Reference was made to a project on dementia partnered by Carers Bucks which looked at the impact of their unique family intervention service on carers and families of those suffering from dementia.
- GPs in the past had felt helpless in treating dementia however there was now an education programme and support available so GPs were more confident in diagnosing dementia and referring to support services.

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- BME patients were less likely to be diagnosed as some families in different cultures were more reluctant to ask for help.
- A Member referred patients not being able to attend an appointment and there being a difficulty in rebooking appointments. There could sometimes be a disconnect between hospital and GP services and it was important that one organisation took ownership of the patient's care. Dr Roberts reassured Members that hospital appointments could be rebooked online but would clarify the rebooking of appointments with the Mental Health teams.

Members thanked Dr Roberts and Maxine Foster for attending the meeting and welcomed the excellent presentation and discussion. They asked Dr Roberts to attend a future SBDC Council meeting so that all Members could hear the presentation.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

62. BUCKS HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE

Members received the Minutes of the meeting(s) of the Buckinghamshire County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee held on 20 March, 24 April and 22 May 2018

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Buckinghamshire County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee be noted.

63. BUCKS CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE

Members received the Minutes of the meeting(s) of the Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee held on 27 March and 15 May 2018.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee be noted.

64. MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

There were no questions.

65. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be agreed.

The meeting terminated at 8.10 pm

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REPORT SUBJECT:	<i>South Bucks District Council Performance Report Q1 2018-19</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Leader of the Council – Councillor Nick Naylor</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Chief Executive – Bob Smith</i>
REPORT AUTHOR	<i>Ani Sultan (01494 586 800)</i>
WARD(S) AFFECTED	<i>Report applies to whole district</i>

1. Purpose of Report

This report outlines the annual performance of Council services against pre-agreed performance indicators and service objectives for Quarter 1 of 2018-19.

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is asked to note the performance reports.

2. Executive Summary

Overview of **Quarter 1 2019-19** performance indicators (PIs) against targets across the Council:

Portfolio	No of PIs	PI on target □	PI slightly below target □	PI off target □	Not reported this quarter/ not used	Awaiting data
Leader's	3	3	0	0	0	0
Resources	4	4	0	0	0	0
Healthy communities	10	5	0	1	4	0
Planning & Economic development	15	10	0	0	5	0
Environment	4	2	0	1	1	0
Customer & Business Support	9	5	1	0	3	0
Total PIs	45	29	1	2	13	0

3. Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. This report details factual performance against pre-agreed targets.

3.2. Management Team, Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee receive regular updates detailing progress towards service plan objectives, performance targets and strategic risks, in line with our Performance and Improvement Framework.

3.3. Three detailed performance tables accompany this report:

- **Appendix A – Priority PIs Quarter 1 2018-19**
- **Appendix B – Corporate PIs Quarter 1 2018-19**
- **Appendix C – Data Only PIs Quarter 1 2018-19**

4. Key points to note:

4.1. All PIs data has been received.

4.2. All priority PIs are on target.

4.2.1. **Leaders:** All Priority and Corporate PIs within the Leader's portfolio are on target.

4.2.2. **Resources:** All PIs for this portfolio are on target.

4.2.3. **Healthy Communities:** SbEH1 - Percentage of food hygiene inspections of category A – D food businesses achieved against the inspections due by quarter – was under target of 91%, at 80.4%. During quarter 1, officers have had to undertake significant enforcement for poor standards of hygiene at a number of premises. One case was successfully heard by the Magistrates' Court, with fine and costs awarded in excess of £2,000. Further cases are pending. Due to time spent on these cases, resources have been depleted within day-to-day work.

4.2.4. **Planning & Economic Development:** The PIs are on target for this portfolio, with performance above the target set.

4.2.5. **Environment:** Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting is above target of 53%, at 58%. SbWR1 – household refuse collections, number of containers missed – is over target of 100 at 135: the increase in temperature has led to the crews working more slowly, meaning that rounds have been taking longer. Crew holidays, and the use of agency staff has further contributed to this.

4.2.6. **Customer & Business Support:** all PIs in this portfolio are above target, excepting the Corporate PI JtBS2, percentage of calls to ICT helpdesk resolves within agreed timescales (by period), which is slightly under the target of 95% at 93.5% (improved from previous quarters), due to resources being pulled from the team to cope with vworkspace rollout.

5. Consultation

Not applicable.

6. Options

Not applicable.

7. Corporate Implications

7.1 Financial - Performance Management assists in identifying value for money.

7.2 Legal – None specific to this report.

7.3 Crime and Disorder, Environmental Issues, ICT, Partnership, Procurement, Social Inclusion, Sustainability – reports on aspects of performance in these areas.

8. Links to Council Policy Objectives

Performance management helps to ensure that performance targets set through the service planning process are met, and that any dips in performance are identified and resolved in a timely manner.

This report links to all three of the Council's objectives, listed below:

Objective 1 - Efficient and effective customer focused services

Objective 2 - Safe, healthy and cohesive communities

Objective 3 - Conserve the environment and promote sustainability

9. Next Step

Once approved, this report and appendices will be published on the website.

Background Papers:	N/A
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Appendix A - Priority PIs 2018-19 - SBDC

Code	Title	Target 2017/18 (YTD)	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Traffic Light	Target 2018/19	Comments
Leader's portfolio																	
JtHR1	Working days lost due to sickness absence	10	5.76	6.3	6.28										☑	10	152.50 working days lost for June + 310.50 days lost (April - May) = 463 days lost. 463 / 295.50 (average FTE figure) = 1.57 / 3 x 12 = 6.28 average working days lost to sickness absence (cumulative). These figures relate to absence days from 30 employees
JtHR12	Working days lost due to short term sickness absence (up to 20 working days)	5	2.76	2.7	2.36										☑	5	40.50 working days lost for June + 132.50 days lost (April - May) = 173 days lost. 173 / 295.50 (average FTE figure) = 0.59 / 3 x 12 = 2.36 average working days lost to short term sickness absence (cumulative). The figures related to absence from 24 employees
JtHR13	Working days lost due to long term sickness absence (more than 20 working days)	5	3	3.6	3.92										☑	5	112 working days lost for June + 178 days lost (April - May) = 290 days lost. 290 / 295.50 (average FTE figure) = 0.98 / 3 x 12 = 3.92 average working days lost to long term sickness absence (cumulative). This absence relates to 6 employees
Resources																	
SbRB1	Speed of processing - new HB/CTB claims (cumulative)	19	17.87	17.74	17.88										☑	18	Target achieved.
SbRB2	Speed of processing - changes of circumstances for HB/CTB claims (cumulative)	8	6.22	6.05	6.01										☑	8	Target achieved.
SbRB3	Percentage of Council Tax collected (cumulative)	98%	11.4%	20.8%	30%										☑	98.0%	Quarter 1 target is 25%, therefore target has been achieved.
SbRB4	Percentage of non-domestic rates collected (cumulative)	98.8%	12.2%	21.1%	30.1%										☑	98.8%	Quarter 1 target is 25%, therefore target has been achieved.
Healthy Communities																	
SbHS1	Number of applicants with/expecting children who have been in B & B accommodation for longer than 6 weeks (snapshot figure at end of month)	18	3	2	2										☑	18	1 of these households has subsequently had B&B placement cancelled. The other household is being moved to a PSLS (Private Sector Leasing Scheme) property.

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Appendix A

Code	Title	Target 2017/18 (YTD)	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Traffic Light	Target 2018/19	Comments
SbHS7	Number of households living in temporary accommodation (snapshot at the end of the month)	68	60	57	55										☑	68	This includes 5 household in PSLS (Private Sector Leasing Scheme). More clients being moved from nightly booked to PSLS accommodation as well as working to reduce overall TA figure. Since this end of quarter snapshot, total number in TA has reduced to 50 (at 12/7/18) with further 8 of these clients due to move onto social housing tenancies or PSLS.
Planning and Economic Development																	
SbPED9	Processing of planning applications: major applications processed within 13 weeks (cumulative)	90%			100%										☑	90%	1 out of 1 application determined cumulatively.
SbPED10	Processing of planning applications: minor applications processed within 8 weeks (cumulative)	85%			93.67%										☑	85%	74 out of 79 application determined cumulatively.
SbPED11	Processing of planning applications: other applications processed within 8 weeks (cumulative)	85%			93.61%										☑	85%	205 out of 219 application determined cumulatively.
Environment																	
SbWR2	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (cumulative)	55%	52.44%	55.25%	58.18%										☑	53%	This figure is provisional as still waiting on data from BCC and waste contractors and others

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Appendix B - Corporate PIs 2018-19 - SBDC

Code	Title	Target 2017/18 (YTD)	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Traffic Light	Target 2018/19	Comments
Leader's Portfolio																	
Customer and Business Support																	
JtBS1 (C)	Availability of ICT systems to staff from 8am to 6pm (by period)	99.5%			99.8%										✓	99.5%	Crematorium down for 8 hours this Quarter.
JtBS2 (C)	Percentage of calls to ICT helpdesk resolved within agreed timescales (by period)	95%			93.5%										⚠	95%	An increase in calls - mainly regarding Vworkspace being down - plus the team attempting to rectify the Vworkspace situation, meant less capacity to answer calls.
SbBS3	Percentage of responses to FOI requests sent within 20 working days (by month)	90%	98.5%	98.4%	97.6%										✓	90%	On target.
SbCS1	Number of complaints received (cumulative, quarterly)	80			9										✓	80	On target.
SbCS2	New measure for compliments - t.b.a.	TBA	NA	NA	NA										NA	TBA	Placeholder for PI for when Customer Experience Strategy is implemented
JtLD1 (C)	Client satisfaction with the shared service. Percentage satisfied or very satisfied.	98%													NA	98%	Reported 6-monthly.
SbLD1	Percentage of canvass forms returned	94%													NA	94%	Yearly PI.
SbLD2	Standard searches carried out within 5 working days (cumulative)	100%	100%	100%	100%										✓	100%	Target achieved.
SbLD3	Standard searches carried out within 10 working days (cumulative)	100%	100%	100%	100%										✓	100%	Target achieved.
Healthy communities																	
SoCL1a	Customer satisfaction rating at the Beacon Centre.	83%													NA	84%	Yearly PI.
SoCL1b	Customer satisfaction rating at the Ereham Centre.	80%													NA	82%	Yearly PI.
JtLI1 (C)	Percentage of customers satisfied with the licensing service received (annual)	89%													NA	80%	Yearly PI.
JtLI2 (C)	Percentages of licences received and issued/renewed within statutory or policy deadlines (cumulative).	97%			98.6%										✓	97.0%	Target achieved.
SbEH1	Percentage of food hygiene inspections of category A – D food businesses achieved against the inspections due by quarter	91%			80.4%										✗	91%	During Q1, officers have had to undertake significant enforcement for poor standards of hygiene at a number of premises. One case was successfully heard by the Magistrates' Court during Q1 with fine and costs awarded in excess of £2,000. Further cases are pending. The time spent by officers on these cases meant that less resources were available for inspections.
SbHS2	Number of affordable homes delivered by (i) new build (ii) vacancies generated by local authority scheme (iii) acquisition of existing properties for social housing (cumulative)	22			13										✓	22 5.5/qtr	Total comprises (i) 12 x Taplow new build properties (Housing Solutions) (ii) 0 and (iii) 1 x acquisition by L&Q
SbHS3	Average Length of stay in B & B temporary accommodation for all households (snapshot at end of period)	22			12										✓	22	Total of 7 B&B placements ended during quarter. Overall average stay inflated by one long term complex case which required a longer stay in B&B
SbHS4	Number of private sector dwellings vacant for more than 6 months and returned to occupation following local authority intervention	15													NA	15	Yearly PI.
Planning and Economic Development																	
JtBC1 (C)	Applications checked within 10 working days (cumulative)	92%	100%	98.4%	98.2%										✓	92%	Target achieved.

Appendix B

Code	Title	Target 2017/18 (YTD)	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Traffic Light	Target 2018/19	Comments	
JtBC2 (C)	Customer satisfaction with the building control service. (cumulative)	92%	100%	100%	100%										☑	92%	Target achieved.	
SbPED1	Percentage of planning applicants who are satisfied or very satisfied with the planning service	80%			NA										NA	85%	Survey has not been carried out - looking to make survey more relevant to service.	
SbPED2	Planning appeals allowed (cumulative)	35%			33.3%										☑	35%	3 allowed or part allowed of 9 appeals decided (cumulative total) Note: How this indicator is calculated has been revised. This includes, all appeal types. Appeals against -Refusal of planning permission, -Imposition of conditions -Non-determination -Enforcement notices All applications that have development types that are reported to the Government on the PS2 return and PS1, questions 6 and 7 and all appeals against enforcement	
SbPED41	2019 Majors speed of planning decisions - special measures 2 year assessment period ending Sep 2018 (cumulative monthly)	60%	87.1%	87.1%	87.1%										☑	60%	This is a measure of our performance on major applications for the two year period 1/10/16 - 30/9/18 and is this is therefore 21 months through the 24 month period (27/31)	
SbPED42	2019 Non-Majors speed of planning decisions - special measures 2 year assessment period ending Sep 2018 (cumulative monthly)	70%	90.0%	90.3%	90.4%										☑	70%	This is a measure of our performance on major applications for the two year period 1/10/16 - 30/9/18 and is this is therefore 21 months through the 24 month period (1918/2122)	
SbPED43	2019 Majors quality of planning decisions - special measures 2 year & 9 month assessment period ending Dec 2018 (cumulative monthly)	9.99%	7.89%	7.89%	7.89%										☑	9.99%	This calculation is based on the number of major appeals lost between 1/4/16 - 31/12/18 on major applications decided between 1/4/16 - 31/3/18 (3/38). Please note that the denominator is now fixed.	
SbPED44	2019 Non-Majors quality of planning decisions - special measures 2 year & 9 month assessment period ending Dec 2018 (cumulative monthly)	9.99%	1.12%	1.12%	1.12%										☑	9.99%	This calculation is based on the number of non-major appeals lost between 1/4/16 - 31/12/18 on non-major applications decided between 1/4/16 - 31/3/18 (28/2499). Please note that the denominator is now set.	
SbPED45	2020 Majors speed of planning decisions - special measures 2 year assessment period ending Sep 19 (cumulative monthly)	60%															60%	Figures have started to be recorded, will be entered in next quarter.
SbPED46	2020 Non-Majors speed of planning decisions - special measures 2 year assessment ending September 2019 (cumulative, monthly)	70%															70%	Figures have started to be recorded, will be entered in next quarter.
SbPED47	2020 Majors quality of planning decisions - special measures 2 year and 9 month assessment period ending December 2019 (cumulative monthly)	9.99%															9.99%	Figures have started to be recorded, will be entered in next quarter.
SbPED48	2020 Non-Majors quality of planning decisions - special measures 2 year and 9 month assessment period ending December 2019 (cumulative, monthly)	9.99%															9.99%	Figures have started to be recorded, will be entered in next quarter.
Environment																		
SbWR1	Household refuse collections, number of containers missed per month (calculated by P&C team on weekly basis)	100	129	100	135										☒	100	Increase in temperature has led to the crews working more slowly, meaning that rounds have been taking longer. Crew holidays, and the use of agency staff has further contributed to this.	

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Appendix B

Code	Title	Target 2017/18 (YTD)	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Traffic Light	Target 2018/19	Comments
SbWR4	No of missed assisted containers (monthly)	NEW PI	47	26	30										<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	35	On target.
SbSE1	Cumulative CO2 reduction from local authority operations from base year of 2008/09	NEW PI												NA	12%	Yearly PI.	

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Appendix C - Data Only PIs - SBDC

Code	Title	Target 2017/18 (YTD)	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Trend	Comments
Leader's Portfolio																
SbCP1 (C)	Number of unique visitors to the main website (monthly by period and annual)	Data Only	84463	82821	71933											
JtHR2 (C)	Voluntary leavers as a % of workforce (extrapolated for the year)	16%			6%											
Healthy Communities																
SbCmSf1 (C)	Percentage reduction in burglaries from dwelling, rolling year on year (quarterly)	Data Only			15%											South Bucks saw a 15% reduction in burglary offences when compared to the previous year. (51 compared to 60)
SbCmSf2 (C)	Percentage reduction in violent offences against a person, year on year (quarterly)	Data Only			-79.4%											South Bucks saw an increase in recorded violence against a person offences. This increased to 384 from 214 the previous year. It is expected that the number of offences recorded will continue to increase with the improvement in recording standards
SbCL3a (C)	Total attendance at Evreham Centre (quarterly)				12,906											
SbCL3b (C)	Total attendance at Beacon Centre				36,893											
Planning and Economic Development																
JtENF1(C)	Number of new enforcement cases received (monthly)	NEW PI	23	30	25										^	
JtENF2 (C)	Number of closed cases (monthly)	NEW PI	5	215	45										^	
JtENF3 (C)	Number of PCNs (or S330s) issued (monthly)	NEW PI	0	0	0										-	
JtENF4 (C)	Number of notices served (monthly)	NEW PI	0	0	0										-	

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SUBJECT:	<i>Bucks Home Choice - Review of Allocations Policy</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Cabinet Portfolio: Healthy Communities</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Head of Healthy Communities – Martin Holt</i>
REPORT AUTHOR	<i>Housing Manager – Michael Veryard (01494 732200 E-mail:mveryard@chiltern.gov.uk)</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>Not Ward Specific</i>

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to allow Members to view and comment on the proposed revisions to the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy ahead of the full consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That Members consider the proposed revisions to the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy and comment as appropriate.**
- 2. That the final version of the draft revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy for consultation is agreed by the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Healthy Communities Portfolio Holder and subject to the agreement of Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council and Wycombe District Council.**

2. Executive Summary

Not required

3. Reasons for Recommendations

To allow Members to comment on the first draft of the revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy (which has been reviewed and updated to take account of current legislation, guidance and case law) and to then proceed to consultation once agreed by all four District Councils.

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. South Bucks District Council operates its own housing register for applicants who qualify to be re-housed in South Bucks).

- 4.2** Bucks Home Choice has been operating since 2009 and the last major revision to the Allocations Policy was in 2014. The Scheme Management Board (which comprises representatives from all four districts) is now recommending a number of revisions to the Allocations Policy in response to:
- case law and ombudsman decisions relating to allocations policies,
 - new national legislation and guidance (particularly the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) and
 - the experiences of the four Councils across the county in applying the Policy and managing the allocations process
- 4.3** The Scheme Management Board has reviewed the policy and made a number of proposed revisions. A table summarising the main revisions, the changes being proposed and the reasons for them is in Appendix 1.
- 4.4** A copy of full draft revised Allocations Policy is in Appendix 2. At the time of writing the draft policy was being reviewed by the Council's Principal Solicitor in consultation with the other District Councils and a further update will be given at the meeting.
- 4.5** The views of Members are sought on the proposed revisions to the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy. Following this, the draft policy will be finalised in agreement with the other three District Council partners and will then be subject to a formal countywide consultation process. This will consist of a 6 week consultation period whereby key stakeholders and partners (including applicants) will have the opportunity to consider the proposed changes and comment. Once the consultation process is completed, a final draft of the revised policy will be prepared and presented to Members to consider the consultation responses and draft for final approval and adoption.

5. Consultation

The proposed revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy will be subject to a formal countywide consultation process.

6. Options

- 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 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. 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

7. Corporate Implications

7.1 Financial

There will be costs associated with undertaking the consultation on the proposed revisions to the Policy and 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 will also be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment

7.3 Equalities Act 2010

An Equalities Impact Assessment of the policy will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.

8. Links to Council Policy Objectives

1. Delivering cost-effective, customer-focussed services
2. Working towards safe and healthier communities

9. Next Step

The draft revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy will be finalised and issued for consultation.

Background Papers:	None other than the legislation, policies and guidance referred to in this report.
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Appendix 1– Bucks Home Choice – Review of Allocations Policy

Key proposed revisions to the Policy

Para	Proposed Revision	Reasons
2.3	Additional categories of non-qualifying persons	<p>This will exclude persons who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -have sufficient available resources to secure their own accommodation privately -have previously owned their own home and disposed of the capital from any sale without making other housing arrangements -have previously been social housing tenants and exercised the right to buy or right to acquire -have outstanding housing related debt with the local authority
2.3.2	Amendments to local connection criteria	<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).</p> <p>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"> -persons who meet the national Right To Move criteria (i.e. social housing tenant needing to move areas to take up work) and -persons who fall into one of the statutory “reasonable preference” categories.
2.3.3	Remove exemption for owner occupiers who are aged 55 or more and are seeking accommodation specifically designated for persons aged 55 or more	<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>

2.3.4	Tightening of restrictions on applicants how have current or previous rent arrears	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	Clearer guidance on who can be included in a Bucks Home Choice application	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 21 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.
3.4	Additional paragraph on “Right to Move”	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	Expansion of section on “Assessment of Medical Needs”	This clarifies that applicants requiring level access accommodation will not normally be considered for properties with internal or external stairs.
5.2	Expansion of section on “Advertising Criteria”	This gives added guidance on ensuring that we make the best use of family sized accommodation by: - prioritising properties with gardens for those with younger children and -allowing that in larger properties (with two reception rooms) one of the reception rooms can be used as a bedroom
6.1	Expansion of section on “Determining priority between shortlisted applicants”	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

<p>6.4</p>	<p>Amendment to section dealing with applicants who are subject to the Council’s statutory homelessness duties (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996)</p>	<p>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).</p>
<p>App</p>	<p>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)</p>	<p>The main changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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. - 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. -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) - 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) - 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

		<p>homeless etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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
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Bucks Home Choice

Allocation Policy



Home Choice

DRAFT

Draft Copy
July 2018

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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 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” 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.

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. The allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for the Armed Forces) (England) Regulations “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 (SI 2015/967)” (DCLG – March 2015),
- The Bucks Tenancy Strategy and each of the District Councils’ Housing and Homelessness Strategies (see Appendix 5 for details). Homeless Reduction Act 2017

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 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 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.

The following classes of person are not qualifying persons 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.

- A person who does not meet the local connection criteria set down in Section 2.3.2.
- A person who is an owner occupier of a property (See 2.3.3)
- 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 2.3.4)
- 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 2.3.5).
- A person is not a qualifying person if the household's income, assets or savings are sufficient to enable them to source accommodation in the private sector..
- A person who formerly owned a property within the last five years will be asked to provide evidence of the sale and details of any capital gained from the sale to determine their qualification. If applicants disposed of capital without making adequate housing arrangements, they will not qualify.
- An person who has previously purchased a property under the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire will not be able to join the housing register
- To promote tenancy sustainability, applicants who have been housed into a social rented property will not be able to re-apply for housing unless there has been a change of circumstances and the applicant now falls into reasonable preference category A-C.
- A person who has any outstanding related housing debt with the local authority's housing department to whom you are applying to will be non-qualifying. A housing related debt could be former tenant arrears whilst in temporary accommodation, former tenant arrears whilst holding a previous tenancy or you have failed to repay loans provided to you by the local authority when providing you with accommodation.
- A person who has deliberately provided false information
- A person who is considered to be adequately housed as detailed in 'size and type of property for which applicants are eligible' (5.5) but are not using the bed spaces within their property to its optimum capacity. This includes where there is 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.

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 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.

Classification: OFFICIAL

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 sufficient for them to source accommodation in the private sector. See Appendix 6
- 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 Right to Move Regulations.
- 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.

2.3.3 Owner Occupiers.

A person is considered to be an 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;

- 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.

2.3.4 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.
- 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.

2.3.5 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 behavior.

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 Behavior 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 of (a) to (m) above) then the managing member of the Partnership will review the application and may remove the applicant from the Housing Register.

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 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 2.3.2.

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 Partnership, their close family and elected members in the Partnership 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 officers.

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. 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.

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 21 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.

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.

Local authorities must be satisfied that the tenant needs, rather than wishes, to move for work reasons. As well as other factors the authority should 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.
- 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. This policy ensures that reasonable preference is given to applicants who satisfy one or more of the categories listed in Appendix 1. It also seeks to ensure that the landlords in the Partnership are able to make the best use of their stock, and deal effectively with housing management issues.

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.

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.
- Refuse 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 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 partnership 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 partner managing the application 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 Partnership 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 all 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 21
- 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 167(2E) 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 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.

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.

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 a member of the Partnership is unable to contact the applicant and verify circumstances within the next working day following a home visit the applicant will not be put 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:

- The applicant's housing application has been refused on the grounds they are not eligible or qualifying person.
- The applicant is removed from the housing register on the grounds they are no longer eligible or qualifying person.
- 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).
- Any decision about the facts of a particular application which have been taken into account to assess whether an allocation should be made.
- 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.

The review will be carried out by the Member of the Partnership that made the decision in respect of (a) to (e) above. Reviews will be carried out by a senior member or member of staff who was not involved in the original decision.

The applicant will be notified of the Partnership's 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.

9. Data Protection and information sharing

9.1 Data Protection

All information held by the Partnership is subject to the Data Protection Act 2018. Each member of the Partnership will seek the express consent of applicants joining their housing register to share personal information about the applicant, and any member of the household.

9.2 Information sharing without consent

Information can be shared with the other members of the Partnership and Registered Providers to whom nominations are to be made and, where relevant to organisations' providing support services in supported housing.

Information may be shared about the individual and their history irrespective of whether their consent has been obtained in exceptional circumstances which will include:

- In accordance with the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 115).
- Where there is a serious threat to the other party's staff or contractors.
- Where information is relevant to the management or support duties of the proposed landlord or support organisation to ensure the health and safety of the applicant, a member of his or her household, or a member of staff.

Each Council will on an annual basis publish lettings information including the age, sex, ethnicity and nationality of applicants and new tenants.

9.3 Councilor or MP enquiries on behalf of applicants.

Where an enquiry is received by a ward Councilor or an MP on behalf of their constituents, 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.

By contacting your Councilor or MP they are investigating your case as part of their democratically elected role and you are giving them permission for the District Council to disclose this personal data.

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.

We will only discuss your case with an advocate agency if we have your written consent to discuss your case with them and you may be asked to sign a data release 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 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.

Band A
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicants or a member of his or her household who are living within one of the partnership districts and have demonstrated an urgent need to move due to serious imminent personal risk 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. 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. 3. Applicants who cannot leave hospital because they have no suitable accommodation elsewhere and require specially adapted accommodation. 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. 5. Families living in accommodation where there are two or more bedrooms short or the property is statutory overcrowded. 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. 7. Applicants as assessed by the Safeguarding Board and a more suitable property is essential to reduce the risk.

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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 district council

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 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).
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 but not in priority need.
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 and have ceased to be subject to a duty under S193 and who meet the circumstances set down in 6.4
5. Applicants who have been assessed as having worsened their circumstances.
6. Households who have a reasonable preference but no local connection (see Appendix 3)
7. 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 21 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 21 years or more			✓	
Parent(s) with two children of opposite sex where the older child is aged 10 years or over			✓	

Classification: OFFICIAL

Parents with three children where two children can share (because they are (i) same sex both under 21 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 21 or (ii) different sex both under 10)			✓	
Parents with three children where none of which can share (same sex over 21 or different sex over 10)				✓
Parents with four children where only two can share (same sex both under 21, 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

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

Section 166A (3) of the Housing Act 1996 states that a local housing authority's allocation scheme must be framed so as to secure that reasonable preference is given to

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.

Appendix 4

Explanation of the terms used in this policy	
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	Description of those applicants to whom the District Councils must give “a head start” in their housing application. 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 is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate

Affordable Housing	housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.
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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 District Council Homelessness Strategy 2009-2011 (Update pending)
Chiltern District Council Strategic Housing Framework 2013-2014

South Bucks District Council Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

Wycombe District Council Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019

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SUBJECT:	<i>Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council Joint Housing Strategy 2018 - 2021</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Cabinet Portfolio: Healthy Communities</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Head of Healthy Communities – Martin Holt</i>
REPORT AUTHOR	<i>Housing Manager – Michael Veryard – 01494 732200 (mveryard@chiltern.gov.uk)</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>All</i>

1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks authority to publish and implement the finalised version of the Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council Joint Housing Strategy (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) 2018-2021

RECOMMENDATIONS to Cabinet

- 1. That Members consider the final Joint Housing Strategy (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) 2018-2021 document and make any comments**
- 2. That Cabinet recommends that Full Council approve the final Joint Housing Strategy (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) 2018-2021 document**
- 3. That the Head of Healthy Communities be authorised to make any final amendments to the document agreed by members and to publish it in consultation with the Healthy Communities Portfolio Holder**

2. Reasons for Recommendations

The current Housing and Homelessness Strategies for Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council need to be reviewed and updated in view of the current housing situation across the two districts and new statutory requirements that have come into force.

3. Content of Report

3.1 The Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council Joint Housing Strategy (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) 2018-2021 provides an overview of the work and duties of both authorities in:

- responding to affordable housing need and
- meeting statutory homelessness duties.

The strategy will sit alongside the Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy that was formally adopted in 2017.

3.2 The draft Joint Housing Strategy was first reported to Members last year. The Councils did not proceed to full consultation at that time because the Homelessness Reduction Bill was published soon after and local authorities were advised that they may be subject to new requirements relating to Homelessness Strategies. A new Code of Guidance on Homelessness was subsequently issued in February 2018 and the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force from April 2018.

3.3 The draft Joint Housing Strategy was revised and updated to reflect the new Homelessness Code of Guidance and Act and other updated information. The revised version was approved for consultation by the Healthy Communities Portfolio Holders and further amendments have been made following consultation (see Section 4 below). The draft strategy has also been updated to reflect the recent developments at national Policy level including the newly revised National Planning Policy Framework, Rough Sleeper Strategy and Housing Green Paper (A new deal for social housing).

3.4 The final version of the draft Joint Housing Strategy is in Appendix A. Following the consultation and final amendments, it is now proposed that the Joint Housing Strategy is published and implemented.

4. Consultation

4.1 A 6 week consultation period on the draft strategy ran from 26th June 2018 to 6th August 2018 via the Council websites. All Members were directly notified of the consultation by e-mail (dated 26th June 2018). Direct notifications were also sent to all Town and Parish Councils and key external partner agencies inviting them to submit comments.

4.2 There were 8 responses to the consultation. The draft strategy has been amended to reflect the consultation feedback. The main amendments are:

- Update of the position regarding the emerging Joint Local Plan
- Inclusion of references to Neighbourhood Plans in connection with working with Town and Parish Council
- Increased emphasis on working jointly with Registered Providers on matters such as homelessness prevention, supporting downsizing etc.
- Reference to making representations to Government as and when appropriate on the resources that are required to meet national expectations and regulatory requirements.
- Update and expansion of the statistics in Appendix A.

5. Options (if any)

5.1 The Council has a specific statutory duty to publish a Homelessness Strategy. Therefore, if the Council does not proceed with preparing and authorising this Joint Housing Strategy document then it will still have to draft a Homelessness Strategy.

5.2 The Council could choose instead to continue to operate its own separate Housing strategy and policies. However, operationally, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council are facing many of the same housing issues and there are efficiencies in the authorities taking a joint approach to addressing these issues. If the Council was to continue to operate a separate strategy, this would be out of step with the single shared housing service and other strategy documents which have been published including the Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 **Financial** – The Strategy highlights the potential resources available to support service delivery, but it does not propose any formal funding allocations or additional spending. Individual schemes or funding proposals to meet strategic objectives will be brought forward for consideration on a scheme by scheme basis.

6.2 **Legal** – The Council has a range of statutory housing responsibilities and legal duties and this strategy provides a clear framework for the activities required to meet these duties and responsibilities.

7.Links to Council Policy Objectives

This report relates to the following Aims and Objectives:

- Working towards safe and healthier local communities
- Striving to conserve the environment and promote sustainability

8.Next Step

Following approval by Full Council the finalised Joint Housing Strategy will be published and implemented.

Background Papers:	None other than the legislation, policies and guidance referred to in the report
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CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL
AND
SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

JOINT HOUSING STRATEGY
(AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND
HOMELESSNESS)

2018-2021

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL AND SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL**JOINT HOUSING STRATEGY 2018-2021****(AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS)**

This Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council have a range of statutory and legal housing duties including:
- Assessing current and future need for affordable housing and supporting the delivery of affordable housing to meet local needs
 - Securing that advice and information is available to prevent and reduce homelessness
 - Assessing applications for homelessness assistance and providing advice and support (including the provision of emergency and long term accommodation where appropriate)
 - Operating an allocations scheme to allocate social housing vacancies
 - Tackling poor housing conditions
 - Licensing HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation)
 - Supporting households to improve and maintain their homes and install adaptations when necessary
- 1.2 Since April 2014, the Councils have operated a single shared housing service to deliver many of these duties across the two districts. This service is facing significant challenges as it moves forward. The Chiltern and South Bucks districts have some of the highest housing costs in the country (outside London) for buying and renting. This is placing increasing pressure on the Shared Housing Service as more people seek help from the Councils because they cannot afford to secure housing in the private sector. In particular, there is a high demand for homelessness assistance in both districts with a large number of households in temporary accommodation (including bed and breakfast). There is also the increased risk of more landlords letting poor quality accommodation to exploit a market where low income households have no other housing options available to them.
- 1.3 Alongside this, opportunities to secure additional new affordable housing across both districts are being restricted by limited site availability, high land values and some private developers challenging the viability of delivering any affordable housing on site. Government subsidy for affordable rented housing is very limited and many

Registered Providers (the traditional providers of affordable housing for rent and sale) have reviewed their business plans and are re-assessing what type of housing they develop and who they house. Many Registered Providers will no longer develop affordable homes for rent without significant support and incentives from local authorities and some are now refusing to re-house clients perceived to be "high risk". Meanwhile, welfare reforms continue to progress with increasing restrictions on the level of benefits available to support low income and workless households to meet their housing costs.

- 1.4 This Joint Strategy Document sets down how Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council are addressing these challenges as both authorities move forward. It should be read in conjunction with the Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy which addresses the Council's work around monitoring and enforcing standards in the private sector (including HMO licensing) and in delivering financial assistance including Disabled Facilities Grants.

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2. BACKGROUND TO JOINT HOUSING STRATEGY

2.1 Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council share three headline aims:

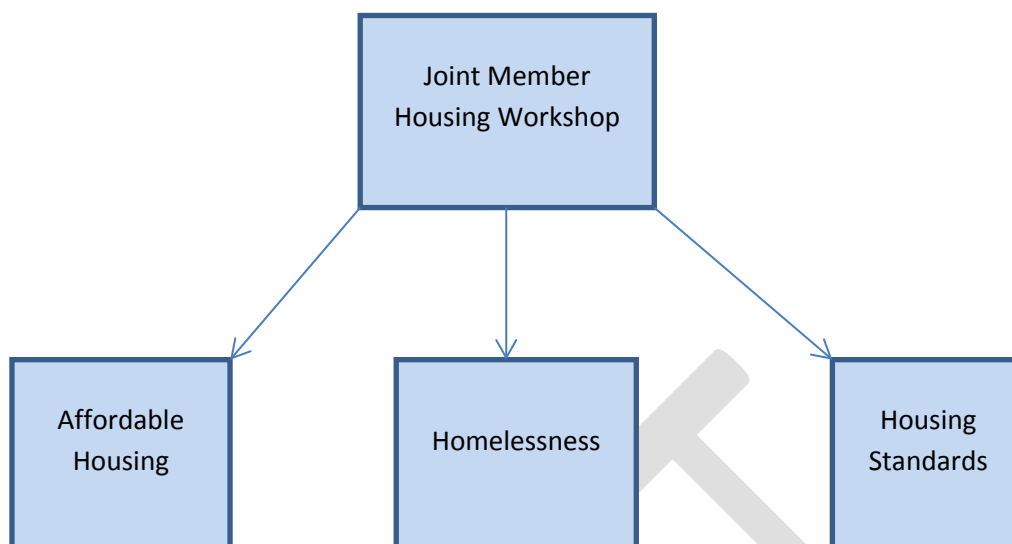
1. Delivering cost-effective, customer-focused services
2. Working towards safe and healthier local communities
3. Striving to conserve the environment and promote sustainability

2.2 The Joint Business Plan 2017-2020 (Stronger in Partnership) sets a number of actions for the Housing service to deliver in order to deliver the shared Aims 2 and 3 of the two Councils:

Aim 2 – We will work towards safe and healthier local communities	
<p>Objective: Promote Healthier Communities</p>	<p>Actions (Housing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Monitor effectiveness of Bucks Home Choice policy -Design and implement a robust Housing Strategy -Develop a joint housing and homelessness strategy to best meet statutory responsibilities and maximise affordable housing provision.
<p>Objective: Promote local communities</p>	<p>Actions (Housing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work with partners to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants through the Better Care Fund
Aim 3 – We will strive to conserve the environment and promote sustainability	
<p>Objective: Conserve the Environment</p>	<p>Actions (Housing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a joint Local Plan and manage development through the terms set out in it (<i>Housing service will support the development of the Plan in respect of the policies relating to affordable housing</i>) - Improve energy efficiency in dwellings – address fuel poverty and affordable warmth through partnership actions

<p>Objective: Promote sustainability</p>	<p>Actions (Housing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with landowners/prospective developers to secure high quality proposals for development opportunity sites -Maintain focused monitoring of homelessness trends and provide feedback to Members and Management Team -Support those residents affected by Housing Benefit reforms in order to limit the impact on homelessness -Facilitate the provision of new affordable housing commensurate with Development Plan projections -Replenish the stock of social and affordable rented property through a targeted programme of acquisition to enable re-letting -Use the Council's property assets for affordable housing where consistent with the Development Plan and supported by local communities - Encourage towns and parishes to come forward with proposals for affordable housing and facilitate their implementation -Use maximum leverage on S106 monies to provide for the needs of local families
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- 2.3 This Joint Housing (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) Strategy Document and the joint Private Sector Housing Strategy set down the activities being undertaken across both Councils to deliver the housing requirements of the shared Joint Business Plan.
- 2.4 The development of this Strategy has its origins in the joint Housing Member Workshop held at South Bucks District Council on Wednesday 3rd February 2016 and attended by over 30 Members from both authorities. The workshop comprised briefings and discussions looking at three key areas of the Housing service:



- 2.5 The workshop produced a wide range of issues and ideas to be taken forward in developing a Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council Joint Housing Strategy. Some specific points were directly incorporated into the Joint Business Plan (see above).
- 2.6 Following on from the workshop, the issues and ideas raised for the Housing Standards service area have informed the development of the **Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy 2017-2021** which was formally adopted by both Councils in 2017.
- 2.7 For the other two areas of the service covered at the workshop, Affordable Housing and Homelessness, the development of a formal Joint Strategy was held back while officers considered the implications for the Councils of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and subsequently the Homelessness Reduction Bill. However, a number of tasks and initiatives have moved forward in the meantime in response to the issues and tasks highlighted in the Workshop and Business Plan. These include:
- Affordable Housing Members Working Group established in Chiltern District Council
 - Joint Temporary Accommodation Framework agreed and put in place
 - Reviews of Council-owned sites undertaken by both Councils
 - Acquisition of Gerrard's Cross Police Station site by South Buck DC and leasing of former police house to Bucks HA as for use as temporary homelessness accommodation
 - Development of modular temporary housing scheme at Bath Road Depot site to provide temporary homelessness accommodation
 - Development of Emerging Joint Local Plan
 - Joint working between Housing and Revenues Teams and key partner agencies to manage impact of welfare reforms on local residents

- Funding support for specific affordable housing developments
- Implementation of a Private rented sector housing leasing scheme with Paradigm Housing
- Agreement to acquire properties in South Bucks subject to business case for the delivery of affordable housing

2.8 After the Homelessness Reduction Bill received Royal Assent on 27th April 2017, a draft Joint Housing Strategy was reported to the Cabinets at Chiltern District Council (27th June 2017) and South Bucks District Council (28th June 2017) with the intention of being issued for wider consultation. However, the Councils did not proceed to full consultation at that time because the advice accompanying the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 highlighted that local authorities may be subject to new requirements relating to their Homelessness Strategies. Consequently, the draft strategy has been revised and updated to reflect the homelessness strategy requirements set down in the new Code of Guidance on Homelessness (MHCLG February 2018) and other developments since the original draft.

2.9 This new draft now also incorporates the revised and updated version of the Joint Temporary Housing Framework.

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3. HOUSING SERVICE – THE FIVE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR 2018-2021

At the time of drafting this strategy document, the key affordable housing and homelessness issues facing the Council Housing Service as it moves into the 2018-2021 period can be grouped into five main challenges.

3A. Homelessness Reduction Act

3B. Housing White Paper and National Strategy and Policy

3C. Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households

3D. Affordable Housing Supply

3E. Other issues impacting on affordability

A brief summary of the each challenge is given below in order to provide some broader context for the Action Plans that follow:

3A. Homelessness Reduction Act

3A.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act was implemented from 3rd April 2018. The Act made significant changes to the Council's statutory homelessness duties within Part 7 of the Housing Act as follows:

- Councils has a duty to provide advice and assistance within 56 days of a household being threatened with homelessness (this was previously 28 days)
- Councils has formal legal duties to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible households (regardless of questions of priority need and intentionality)
- Advice services must in particular meet the needs of people released from prison, care leavers, former Armed Forces members, domestic abuse victims, people leaving hospital, those suffering from a mental illness and anyone else identified as particularly at risk of homelessness
- Other public agencies have a statutory duty to refer homeless clients to the Council (from October 2018)

3A.2 It is anticipated that the new Act will see a 26% increase in the homelessness caseload for local authorities (DCLG – New Burdens Funding Assessment – October 2017). Chiltern DC and South Bucks DC need to ensure that the shared housing service has sufficient capacity to meet the new statutory requirements set down in the Act and that its policies and procedures are revised to meet the Act's requirements. Alongside this, they will need to be pro-active in developing more affordable housing options and more support for households in order to prevent or relieve homelessness as much as possible.

3B. Housing White Paper and Nation Strategy and Policy

- 3B.1 The Government's Housing White Paper "Fixing Our Broken Housing Market" was published in February 2017 and has been followed up in 2018 by the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018). The revised NPPF and the move to a standardised methodology approach to housing needs assessment both impact specifically on the Emerging Chiltern and South Bucks District Council Local Plan (2014-2036). They also impact on the Council's strategic role in supporting new affordable housing delivery with the new NPPF Affordable Housing definition encompassing a wider range of potential affordable housing models including both affordable and social rent, build to rent, discounted market sale and other home ownership. Together with the NPPF requirement that 10% of major residential developments should affordable home ownership, this presents a challenge for Chiltern and South Bucks where high local market costs mean that any form of discounted home ownership or shared ownership will normally be too expensive for households who are homeless or seeking rehousing via the Bucks Home Choice scheme.
- 3B.2 Alongside this, the Government has also putting forward major housing policy announcements in the national Rough Sleeping Strategy (August 2018) and the Housing Green Paper "A New Deal For Social Housing" (August 2018) which both have implications for the Council and its key partners. The Councils needs to consider the impact these and other policy announcements on service delivery and respond accordingly. This includes making representations to Government as and when appropriate on the resources that are required to meet national expectations and regulatory requirements.

3C. Temporary Accommodation

- 3C.1 Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996 places a statutory duty on the Council to secure that temporary accommodation is available to homeless households in a range of circumstances. Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Councils are both facing significant pressures on temporary accommodation provision caused by the demand for homelessness assistance and the lack of alternative affordable housing options in both the social and private housing sectors (see statistics in Appendix 1). This has impacts on the welfare of clients and is a major financial cost to both Councils. Alongside this, Statutory Instrument 2003/3326 places a duty on Councils that a household with (or expecting) children should not be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation unless no other accommodation is available and, in any event, the period in B&B should not exceed 6 weeks. The Council is at risk of legal challenge if it breaches this requirement.

3C.2 Against this backdrop, the new Homelessness Reduction Act could potentially see an increase in the number of households that the Councils have to place in temporary accommodation. Going forward, the Councils need to develop more temporary accommodation options in order to reduce the need to utilise bed and breakfast accommodation and minimise the cost. It also needs to ensure wherever possible that it can prevent or relieve homelessness in order to prevent the need for clients to be placed in temporary accommodation. The revised and updated Temporary Accommodation Framework is in Appendix B.

3D. Affordable Housing Supply

3D.1 To date, additional affordable housing properties in Chiltern and South Bucks have been delivered by:

- Planning system (Section 106 agreements requiring that a new development includes a proportion of affordable housing)
- Registered Provider new development programmes
- Street property purchases and equity loans partially funded by commuted sums

3D.2 For the Council's housing service, the key demand is for affordable rented housing. Most households who approach the Council for homelessness assistance or for re-housing via Bucks Home Choice will be unable to afford the cost of shared ownership (i.e. part-buy/part-rent) or other discounted home ownership products.

3D.3 The delivery of additional housing properties in Chiltern and South Bucks has been limited in recent years (see Appendix A) by a range of factors including:

- high land and property values,
- limited development opportunities due to green belt/AONB restrictions,
- viability challenges (whereby developers challenge Section 106 affordable housing requirements by citing that the scheme will be unviable as a result) and
- changes in the Registered Provider sector.

3D.4 On the last point, the combination of limited Government grant funding for rented housing, rent reductions (affecting income streams) and continued welfare reforms means that all Registered Providers are continually reviewing their Business plans and making significant decisions on their future direction and development strategies. In recent years, some Providers shifted their focus onto developing discounted home ownership properties rather than rented housing. There are indications that they are moving back towards delivering more rented housing again following Government

funding announcements which sought to deliver a higher level of affordable rented and social rented housing. However, Registered Providers continue to be heavily reliant on private finance rather than public subsidy and they need to ensure that they are generating sufficient income to cover loans and other costs. This means that many providers have to charge higher rents in order to service loans and some are also becoming more risk averse with regard to who they re-house. They are applying stricter allocation criteria and refusing some nominees on the grounds of affordability, anti-social behaviour or previous poor tenancy history etc.

- 3D.5 The lack of additional affordable housing delivery has significant knock-on effects with homeless households facing longer periods in temporary accommodation (and the consequent cost to the Council) and others facing long periods waiting on the Bucks Home Choice scheme.
- 3D.6 There is also the demand for accommodation for people with care and support needs. This includes older people, people with diagnosed mental health conditions (children and adults), people with disabilities (children and adults) and looked after children and care leavers. These people have a range of care and accommodation needs which are set down in the Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Market Position Statement (Housing Accommodation Solutions) 2018 – 2022 (published by Bucks Clinical Commissioning Group and Bucks County Council). This will include people with care and support needs who need affordable housing either from within the existing social housing stock or through new provision.

3E. Other Issues Impacting on Affordability

- 3E.1 The problems caused by the restricted amount of additional affordable housing delivery (see above) are exacerbated by the lack of alternative affordable housing options in Chiltern and South Bucks. High private sector rent levels and the continued welfare reforms mean that many low income households simply cannot afford to rent privately within the two districts. The Local Housing Allowance (the cap on Housing Benefit payable on a private sector tenancy) is £400 to £500 below the average market rent for a family home and this gap is likely to grow as LHA rates remain frozen. Some larger families are also impacted by the household Benefit Cap (£20,000 per annum for a family).
- 3E.2 Further impacts will arise from the roll out of UC (Universal Credit) across Chiltern and South Bucks districts from 2018. There will be an increase over time in the proportion of households that receive assistance with their housing costs via UC rather than Housing Benefit. Experience to date in other parts of the country has found that private landlords can be reluctant to let properties to persons claiming UC. It is possible that some of the changes made to UC in late 2017/early 2018 (including changes to the Alternative Payment Arrangement to allow more direct payments to

landlords) may help to mitigate this perceived risk amongst landlords, but the position is uncertain and may make it even harder for low income households to secure private rented housing.

- 3E.3 The outcome of this is that many landlords in Chiltern and South Bucks are unwilling to consider letting tenancies to households on low or even average incomes. This will become even more challenging with the roll-out of Universal Credit across both districts during 2018
- 3E.4 In addition, across Buckinghamshire as a whole we are seeing an increasing number of homeless households being placed in private rented tenancies by other local authorities (predominantly London boroughs) who are making incentive payments direct to landlords. Currently, this is predominantly taking place in other districts within Buckinghamshire with only a small number of recorded placements in Chiltern or South Bucks. However, this will be a growing challenge as other local authorities increasingly use "out-of-borough" accommodation to meet their housing duties. This will directly impact on the private rented market and on landlord expectations on what level of support and payments they will require from us in return for providing a tenancy for a client.
- 3E.5 The ability of the Councils to secure alternative housing for clients in the private rented sector and elsewhere has become even more important in light of the new Homelessness Reduction Act. As stated above, the Act places a clear duty on the Councils to take steps to prevent or relieve homelessness and to secure alternative housing options for clients who are seeking assistance. Without these alternative options being available, the Councils will struggle to fulfil this duty. The outcome of this will be more households having to be placed in temporary accommodation if the Council is unable to source any alternative housing options.

4. FUNDING

The table below gives an overview of some of the funding streams available to the Councils in responding to the challenges highlighted in Section 3 and in taking forward the actions set down in Section 5

FUNDING	CHILTERN DC	SOUTH BUCKS DC
Housing Revenue Budgets	Details in Annual Budget Book	Details in Annual Budget Book
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DHP is available to alleviate financial hardship where a tenant needs additional help to meet rent payments - 	Annual allocation managed by Revenues and Benefits Team	Annual allocation managed by Revenues and Benefits Team
Capital Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section 106 Affordable Housing Contributions - Affordable Housing Capital Reserves - Agreement to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board 	Ongoing	Ongoing
MHCLG Flexible Homelessness Support Grant The grant is intended for use by authorities to support a full range of homelessness prevention and support services.	2017/18 = £95,226.02 2018/19 = £109,566.78 2019/20 = £121,905 (No announcement of grant availability 2020/21)	2017/18 = £113,007.38 2018/19 = £130,025.97 2019/20 = £181,783 (No announcement of grant availability in 2020/21)
MHCLG New Burdens Funding – Support to Implement Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 Funding to support authorities to implement the requirement of the new Act	2017/18 = £16,359 2018/19 = £14,985 2019/20 = £15,840	2017/18 = £16,692 2018/19 = £15,233 2019/20 = £16,102

<p>Community Housing Fund</p> <p>In 2016/17 and 2017/18 the Councils received funding to support local communities to develop their capacity and skills in order to be able to lead and deliver new housing schemes for local people. From 2018/19 Homes England operates the fund centrally and invites applications from community groups and others for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - revenue funding for capacity building and predevelopment costs, including revenue grants to local authorities to support community groups and -capital bids for associated infrastructure costs which will support community housing development 	<p>2016/17 = £14,596</p> <p>2017/18 = £14,596</p> <p>From 2018/19, this fund is being administered by Homes England</p>	<p>2016/17 = £12,834</p> <p>2017/18 = £12,834</p>
<p>MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer</p>	<p>MHCLG awarded £625,998 to support a Trailblazer project in Bucks following the successful County-wide bid led by AVDC. The County-wide "Building Resilience" scheme is being delivered from 2017 to 2019 by Connection Support who will work with statutory agencies (including CDC and SBDC) to deliver early intervention support to prevent homelessness.</p>	

5. HOUSING SERVICE ACTION PLANS 2017-2021

This section contains a series of Action Plans setting down the objectives and associated actions for the Councils in respect of:

- Affordable Housing Delivery
- Homelessness

Each of these two areas has been sub-divided into separate Action Plans for Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council. A number of the objectives and actions are common to both districts and in these situations we will explore opportunities for shared working across the two districts to deliver the outcomes that we are seeking.

The objectives and actions within the Plans have been drawn from a range of sources including:

- The outcomes and recommendations of the joint Member Housing Workshop held on 3rd February 2016
- Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council Joint Business Plan 2016-2020
- The Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council joint Temporary Accommodation Framework document
- Chiltern District Council AHMWG (Affordable Housing Members Working Group) Action Plan
- South Bucks District Council Affordable Housing Action Plan (approved by Cabinet)
- Recommendations of South Bucks District Council Homelessness Task and Finish Group
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Homelessness Code of Guidance
- Housing White Paper (Fixing our Broken Housing Market) – (Feb 2017)
- National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018)
- Rough Sleeping Strategy (MHCLG - August 2018)
- A New Deal For Social Housing - Green Paper (MGLHG – August 2018)
- Market Position Statement – Housing and Accommodation Needs for People with Care and Support Needs (Bucks CCG and Bucks CC – August 2018)

These Action Plans are specifically referring to objectives and actions for the Council's Housing Service. Some of these objectives and actions will overlap with other services (e.g. Planning, Estates, Finance, Revenues and Benefits etc.) and the Housing Service will work jointly with the services concerned in taking these forward.

To assist in distinguishing the Plans, the numbered actions in the Chiltern District Council Plans are prefaced with the letter C (e.g. C1) and the numbered actions in the South Bucks District Council Plans are prefaced with the letter S (e.g. S1)

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL – AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY – ACTION PLAN

	OBJECTIVE	Status at August 2018	Actions	Monitoring
C1	Ensure that CDC works corporately to maximise affordable housing delivery	AHMWG (Affordable Housing Member Working Group meeting bi-monthly since July 2016	AHMWG to continue to meet bi-monthly	AHMWG meetings and minutes
C2	Support development of the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan addresses affordable housing requirements	Development of Emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan is ongoing and next step is the publication of the Draft Local Plan for consultation prior to submission for an examination. This will set down the Council’s corporate position on affordable housing delivery via the planning system. The Council is awaiting the outcome of the Government’s consultation on a standard methodology for councils to work out housing Objectively Assessed Need (OAN). Chiltern and South Bucks will be affected by the transitional arrangements to the new OAN Methodology subject to the outcome of the consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Housing service to continue to support development of Local Plan -Local Plan to fully address district affordable housing requirements -Secure agreement of cross-district delivery of affordable housing in accordance with Bucks Memorandum of Understanding 	Reports to Joint Planning Policy Member Reference Group

<p>C3</p>	<p>Work with Paradigm Housing to maximise affordable housing delivery on PHG-owned sites and other opportunities</p>	<p>Principles of Co-operation Agreement being put in place between CDC and PHG and grant funding support for some developments on scheme by scheme basis.</p> <p>The Estates Renewal Assessment workshop undertaken with Paradigm identified and review PHG owned sites.</p>	<p>-Implement Principles of Co-operation Agreement</p> <p>-Joint assessment (by CDC and PHG) of opportunities on sites identified by Estates Renewal workshop (including adjacent CDC and PHG owned sites)</p>	<p>AHMWG</p> <p>PAG</p>
<p>C4</p>	<p>Work with Registered Providers to maximise affordable housing delivery</p>	<p>Grant funding support for some developments on scheme by scheme basis</p>	<p>-Assess if Principles of Co-operation Agreement with PHG could be applied to other Registered Providers</p> <p>- Positively encourage and support RPs to bring forward schemes for consideration including opportunities to deliver affordable housing within wider regeneration projects.</p>	<p>AHMWG</p> <p>PAG</p>
<p>C5</p>	<p>Review CDC-owned sites to identify and take forward affordable housing opportunities</p>	<p>Sites reviewed during 2016/17 by AHMWG. Those sites assessed as presenting opportunities are being progressed.</p>	<p>Continue to review sites and bring forward opportunities</p>	<p>AHMWG</p> <p>PAG</p>

C6	Make best use of capital funds from commuted sums and reserves to derive the maximum return from supporting affordable housing delivery (e.g. site assembly, match funding etc.)	Capital funds being allocated on a scheme by scheme basis in accordance with the terms of the Affordable Housing SPD (Supplementary Planning Document)	Continue to identify opportunities for funding and allocate funds as appropriate Identify and review ways to secure other forms of subsidy to support affordable housing delivery.	Quarterly monitoring reports to PAG AHMWG
C7	Work with other public sector bodies who have land and property in Chiltern/South Bucks to explore opportunities to deliver affordable housing	No specific opportunities identified to date.	Liaise with other public sector bodies to review opportunities from land/property in their ownership (by April 2019)	AHMWG PAG
C8	Explore options for Council to lease land and/or property to other agencies (while retaining ownership and receiving an income)	No models identified to date,	Keep under review	AHMWG PAG
C9	Undertake or support a targeted programme of acquisitions and lettings to replenish the stock of social and affordable rented property	Most recent programme of acquisitions was undertaken by Paradigm in 2014.	Keep under review in joint working with Registered Providers (see C3 and C4)	AHMWG PAG

<p>C10</p>	<p>Work with Town and Parishes to promote and support affordable housing schemes targeted at local people</p>	<p>Officers have promoted affordable housing to Town and Parish Councils. National Community-Led Housing Adviser gave a full presentation on the options and support available on 9/10/17. Interest has been limited to date.</p>	<p>Continue to promote opportunities via Town and Parish Council Forum and work with individual councils that want to bring forward schemes and proposals.</p> <p>Target support at Towns and Parishes whose emerging neighbourhood plan policies include meeting identified local affordable housing needs.</p>	<p>AHMWG PAG</p>
<p>C11</p>	<p>Assess opportunities to return empty homes back into use as affordable housing</p>	<p>Council Tax empty property database reviewed by Capacity Grid in 2017. Most long term empty homes present no opportunities (e.g. second homes, beyond repair or are subject to legal processes to resolve ownership)</p>	<p>Review options for targeted work on long term empty homes after Capacity Grid completes review of Council Tax database in 2018.</p> <p>Monitor availability of national funding to support empty homes work and support bids for funding as appropriate.</p>	<p>AHMWG PAG</p>
<p>C12</p>	<p>Assess possibilities of additional/expansion of current Park Home sites</p>	<p>No action to date. Expansion opportunities limited as Park Home Sites are in the Green Belt and would require very special circumstances to justify planning permissions.</p>	<p>Review position by April 2019</p>	<p>AHMWG PAG</p>

C13	Support provision of housing and accommodation solutions for people with care and support needs	Supported development of CCG/Bucks CC Market Position Statement	Identify opportunities to deliver solutions for people with care and support needs within both existing and new housing provisions	AHMWG PAG
C14	Support existing social housing tenants to downsize from family housing	Bucks Home Choice policy prioritises downsizers	<p>Work with RPs to assess extent of under-occupation in social housing tenancies</p> <p>Identify schemes and method that will actively encourage and support under-occupiers to downsize into existing or new social housing</p>	AHMWG PAG
C15	Ensure that CDC and its partners meet the requirements arising from the Housing Green Paper “A New Deal for Social Housing”	Green Paper published in August 2018	<p>Respond to consultation on Green Paper (by 6/11/18)</p> <p>Respond to final policies arising from Green Paper and work with partners to ensure that they are meeting policy requirements</p>	PAG

SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL – AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY – ACTION PLAN

	OBJECTIVE	Status at August 2018	Actions	Monitoring
S1	Ensure that SBDC works corporately to maximise affordable housing delivery	<p>Affordable housing delivery is embedded in Joint Business Plan 2017-2020</p> <p>Cross departmental Project Groups for specific schemes (e.g. Gerrards Cross Police Station re-development, Bath Road development etc.) ensuring corporate approach to delivery.</p>	<p>-Continued cross-departmental working on new schemes and initiatives</p> <p>-Ensure Joint Business Plan updates continue to reflect affordable housing needs</p>	PAG Updates
S2	Support development of the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan addresses affordable housing requirements	<p>Development of Emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan is ongoing and next step is the publication of the Draft Local Plan for consultation prior to submission for an examination. This will set down the Council’s corporate position on affordable housing delivery via the planning system. The Council is awaiting the outcome of the Government’s consultation on a standard methodology for councils to work out housing Objectively Assessed Need (OAN). Chiltern and South Bucks will be affected by the transitional arrangements to the new OAN Methodology subject to the outcome of the consultation.</p>	<p>-Housing service to continue to support development of Local Plan</p> <p>-Local Plan to fully address district affordable housing requirements</p> <p>-Secure agreement of cross-district delivery of affordable housing in accordance with Bucks Memorandum of Understanding</p>	Reports to Joint Planning Policy Member Reference Group

<p>S3</p>	<p>Work with L&Q (London and Quadrant) to maximise affordable housing delivery on L&Q owned sites and other opportunities</p>	<p>Grant funding support for some developments on scheme by scheme basis.</p> <p>Ongoing discussions on bringing forward garage and green space sites for development.</p> <p>The Estates Renewal Assessment workshop undertaken with L&Q identified and review PHG owned sites.</p>	<p>-Joint assessment (by SBDC and L&Q) of opportunities on sites identified by Estates Renewal workshop (including adjacent SBDC and PHG owned sites)</p> <p>-Work with L&Q to maximise affordable housing opportunities arising from sheltered housing redevelopment programme</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p> <p>Quarterly liaison meetings between SBDC and L&Q</p>
<p>S4</p>	<p>Work with Registered Providers to maximise affordable housing delivery</p>	<p>Grant funding support for some developments on scheme by scheme basis</p>	<p>-Assess and support schemes on site by site basis</p> <p>- Positively encourage and support RPs to bring forward schemes for consideration including opportunities to deliver affordable housing within wider regeneration projects.</p>	<p>PAG updates</p>
<p>S5</p>	<p>Review SBDC-owned sites to identify and take forward affordable housing opportunities</p>	<p>Sites reviewed in conjunction with Savills during 2016/17.</p> <p>Modular temporary accommodation scheme being developed SBDC-owned former Depot site off Bath Road.</p>	<p>Continue to review sites and bring forward opportunities.</p>	<p>PAG updates</p>

<p>S6</p>	<p>Make best use of capital funds from commuted sums and reserves to derive the maximum return from supporting affordable housing delivery (e.g. site assembly, match funding etc.)</p>	<p>Capital funds being allocated on a scheme by scheme basis in accordance with the terms of the Affordable Housing SPD (Supplementary Planning Document)</p>	<p>Continue to identify opportunities for funding and allocate funds as appropriate</p> <p>Identify and review ways to secure other forms of subsidy to support affordable housing delivery.</p>	<p>Quarterly monitoring reports to PAG</p>
<p>S7</p>	<p>Assess potential for SBDC to acquire and assemble sites for affordable housing</p>	<p>SBDC acquired former-Gerrards Cross Police Station site in April 2017 and has used 8 houses on site to deliver temporary homeless accommodation (via leasing arrangement with Bucks HA) pending site re-development. Re-development now being brought forward for new housing scheme including policy compliant 40% affordable housing.</p> <p>Other potential site acquisitions considered on a scheme by scheme basis</p>	<p>-Redevelopment of Gerrards Cross Police Station site to include 14 affordable homes for rent.</p> <p>-Continue to assess other site acquisition possibilities on scheme by scheme basis (including options to assemble sites in partnership with RPs (see S3 and S4) and acquisition of properties which can help unlock potential sites)</p> <p>-Identify options for Housing Company (Consilio) to support affordable housing delivery</p>	<p>PAG updates</p>
<p>S8</p>	<p>Work with other public sector bodies who have land and property in Chiltern/South Bucks to explore opportunities to deliver affordable housing</p>	<p>No specific opportunities identified to date.</p>	<p>Liaise with other public sector bodies to review opportunities from land/property in their ownership (by April 2019)</p>	<p>PAG updates</p>

<p>S9</p>	<p>Explore options for Council to lease land and/or property to other agencies (while retaining ownership and receiving an income)</p>	<p>SBDC leasing 8 houses (ex-Gerrards Cross Police Houses) to Bucks Housing Association to let as temporary accommodation for homeless households.</p> <p>SBDC is developing options for applying leasing model to other schemes (e.g. proposed temporary accommodation development on Bath Road)</p>	<p>-Agree standardised leasing models that could be applied to different scenarios (e.g. new build, acquisitions, existing SBDC-owned properties etc.)</p> <p>-Assess options to applying leasing models on scheme by scheme basis and implement when appropriate.</p>	<p>PAG updates</p>
<p>S10</p>	<p>Undertake or support a targeted programme of acquisitions and lettings to replenish the stock of social and affordable rented property</p>	<p>SBDC supporting L&Q to acquire properties and let them to SBDC nominees (averaging 3 purchases per annum)</p> <p>SBDC bringing forward proposals to explore options to acquire properties and lease/rent them out (including acquisition of 3 properties by Bucks HA for temporary accommodation)</p>	<p>-Review L&Q purchase programme and confirm if programme should continue (subject to SBDC-funding being available)</p> <p>-Finalise options appraisal and business cases for SBDC to undertake direct acquisitions and implement scheme if agreed.</p>	<p>PAG updates</p>
<p>S11</p>	<p>Work with Town and Parishes to promote and support affordable housing schemes targeted at local people</p>	<p>Officers have promoted affordable housing to Town and Parish Councils. National Community-Led Housing Adviser gave a full presentation on the options and support available on 9/10/17. Interest has been limited to date.</p>	<p>-Continue to promote opportunities via Town and Parish Council Forum and work with individual councils that want to bring forward schemes and proposals (Target support at Towns and Parishes whose emerging neighbourhood plan policies include meeting identified local affordable housing needs)</p>	<p>PAG updates</p>

<p>S12</p>	<p>Assess opportunities to return empty homes back into use as affordable housing</p>	<p>Council Tax empty property database reviewed by Capacity Grid in 2017. Most long term empty homes present no opportunities (e.g. second homes, beyond repair or are subject to legal processes to resolve ownership)</p>	<p>Review options for targeted work on long term empty homes after Capacity Grid completes review of Council Tax database in 2018.</p> <p>Monitor availability of national funding to support empty homes work and support bids for funding as appropriate.</p>	<p>PAG updates</p>
<p>S13</p>	<p>Support provision of housing and accommodation solutions for people with care and support needs</p>	<p>Supported development of CCG/Bucks CC Market Position Statement</p>	<p>Identify opportunities to deliver solutions for people with care and support needs within both existing and new housing provisions</p>	<p>AHMWG PAG</p>
<p>S14</p>	<p>Support existing social housing tenants to downsize from family housing</p>	<p>Bucks Home Choice policy prioritises downsizers</p> <p>SBDC has operated incentive schemes to encourage downsizing (funded from commuted sums) but take up has been limited.</p>	<p>Work with RPs to assess extent of under-occupation in social housing tenancies</p> <p>Identify schemes and method that will actively encourage and support under-occupiers to downsize into existing or new social housing</p>	<p>AHMWG PAG</p>
<p>S15</p>	<p>Ensure that SBDC and its partners meet the requirements arising from the Housing Green Paper "A New Deal for Social Housing"</p>	<p>Green Paper published in August 2018</p>	<p>Respond to consultation on Green Paper (by 6/11/18)</p> <p>Respond to final policies arising from Green Paper and work with partners to ensure that they are meeting policy requirements</p>	<p>PAG</p>

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL – HOMELESSNESS - ACTION PLAN

	OBJECTIVE	Status at August 2018	Actions	Monitoring
C1	Monitor effectiveness of Bucks Home Choice policy and ensure social housing stock is being used as effectively as possible	<p>CDC/SBDC leads both the BHC Management Board and the Practitioner Group which regularly reviews the operation of the Bucks Home Choice scheme.</p> <p>Allocations Policy being reviewed in light of latest legal judgements and the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</p>	<p>-Complete review of BHC Allocations and agree proposed amendments</p> <p>-Secure approval to adopt revised policy across the four district councils</p> <p>-Implement revised policy and monitor impact</p>	<p>BHC Management Board and Practitioners Group</p> <p>PAG Updates</p>
C2	Optimise current temporary accommodation provision through Temporary Accommodation Framework	<p>Joint CDC/SBDC Temporary Accommodation Framework agreed in 2017</p>	<p>Revised and updated Temporary Accommodation Framework incorporated into Strategy document</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p>
C3	Ensure all necessary procedures and documentation in place to implement the provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	<p>New homelessness procedures in place and being kept under review alongside training for all staff and partner agencies and implementation of new upgraded IT system.</p>	<p>-Complete and implement new procedures</p> <p>-Monthly monitoring of implementation against requirements of HR Act and procedures amended as required</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p> <p>Homelessness Pls</p>

<p>C4</p>	<p>Prevent or relieve homelessness wherever possible to minimise the demand for temporary accommodation</p>	<p>As part of the implementation of the new HR Act (see C3) officers are reviewing the measures available to prevent homelessness and identifying what could be done to increase successful preventions. This will include assessing how we can make best use of the financial resources available to support this, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CDC Homelessness Prevention Fund (within Housing budget) and Discretionary Housing Payments (administered by Benefits team) - MHCLG Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and New Burdens Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Utilise Locata Toolkit (developed by Andy Gale) and other good practice to inform development of prevention and relief measures -Complete review of available measures and agree toolkit of prevention and relief measures available to officers and partners in working with clients. -Review CDC website and ensure updated, appropriate and realistic homelessness information and advice is available at first point of contact 	<p>PAG Updates</p>
<p>C5</p>	<p>Work with Registered Providers to secure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -additional temporary accommodation and - more private rented tenancy options. 	<p>CDC works with Registered Providers to maximise the use of temporary self-contained accommodation within their existing housing stock (including the 20-unit Tom Scott House owned by Paradigm Housing). CDC will continue to look at more temporary accommodation opportunities with Paradigm and other providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Agreement between CDC and Paradigm to commence Private Sector Leasing Scheme to deliver temporary accommodation (minimum of 10 units initially) -Review existing temporary accommodation agreement between CDC and Paradigm - Work with RPs to continue to explore other TA options 	<p>CDC/Paradigm monitoring meetings</p> <p>PAG Updates</p>

<p>C6</p>	<p>Working with the private rental sector to secure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - temporary accommodation and - private rented tenancies for clients to prevent or relieve homelessness 	<p>CDC has secured an increased supply of self-contained nightly-booked accommodation to provide alternative options to B & B. However, the ability to secure private rented tenancies for clients remains challenging due to high local rent levels and welfare benefits restrictions.</p>	<p>-As part of HR Act implementation, officers are reviewing ways to assist more clients to secure private rented accommodation (linked to C3 and C4 above) including looking at options such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - payments/guarantees to help meet the cost of deposits and rent in advance - funding the shortfall between rent levels and benefit levels - rent guarantees - incentive payments to landlords - use of Credit Union to support clients to meet up front tenancy costs <p>-Any new models can potentially be funded from the resources highlighted in C4 above.</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p>
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<p>C7</p>	<p>Look for opportunities to develop additional temporary accommodation on CDC-owned land (including possible low cost development using off-site construction, pre-fab, mobile homes etc.)</p>	<p>No opportunities have been identified as yet. Any potential scheme will be assessed on an “invest to save” basis looking at an initial investment generating subsequent savings through reduced B&B costs and the possibility of some level of ongoing income generated by the accommodation</p>	<p>Potential schemes to be assessed on an “invest to save” basis looking at an initial investment generating subsequent savings through reduced B&B costs and the possibility of some level of ongoing income generated by the accommodation</p>	<p>PAG Updates AHMWG Corporate Asset Management Group</p>
<p>C8</p>	<p>Explore options to work with South Bucks District Council and other statutory partners to secure additional temporary accommodation provision</p>	<p>Temporary Accommodation Framework makes provision for temporary accommodation provision in CDC to be utilised by SBDC and vice versa (subject to local demands within the host district)</p>	<p>CDC will continue to assess opportunities for the shared housing service to deliver joint provision that can support both authorities. It will also consider any opportunities that arise for joint working with other partners (including Wycombe District Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council) to deliver additional temporary accommodation provision.</p>	<p>PAG Updates AHMWG</p>

<p>C9</p>	<p>Support those residents affected by Housing Benefit reforms in order to limit the impact on homelessness</p>	<p>CDC operates a joint forum between the Housing and Revenues Team and Paradigm Housing to share information, monitor tenants affected by Housing Benefit changes and target intervention as required.</p>	<p>CDC will continue to support clients to mitigate seek to mitigate the impact of Housing Benefit changes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - providing appropriate advice and assistance, - utilising DHP (Discretionary Housing Payments) and other funding (see C4) to support clients as appropriate, and - signposting and referring clients to partner agencies to deliver welfare benefits and debt advice (see C10) 	<p>Quarterly Housing/Revenues meetings</p> <p>PAG Updates</p>
<p>C10</p>	<p>Work in partnership with other agencies to secure suitable advice and support to prevent and relieve homelessness</p>	<p>CDC has Service Level Agreements in place with certain partner agencies (CAB, Housing Interaction Trust, Connection Rough Sleeper Outreach etc.)</p> <p>Partner agencies attended HR Act event on 02/04/18. Database of partner agencies, services and referral routes is being compiled. SLA being reviewed and revised as required</p>	<p>-Work with Registered Providers to ensure early referrals are made to support service to avoid tenants becoming homeless.</p> <p>-Opportunities for further funding of specific services and schemes by CDC to be considered based on needs of district</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p> <p>One to one working with partner agencies (including monitoring against SLA requirements)</p>

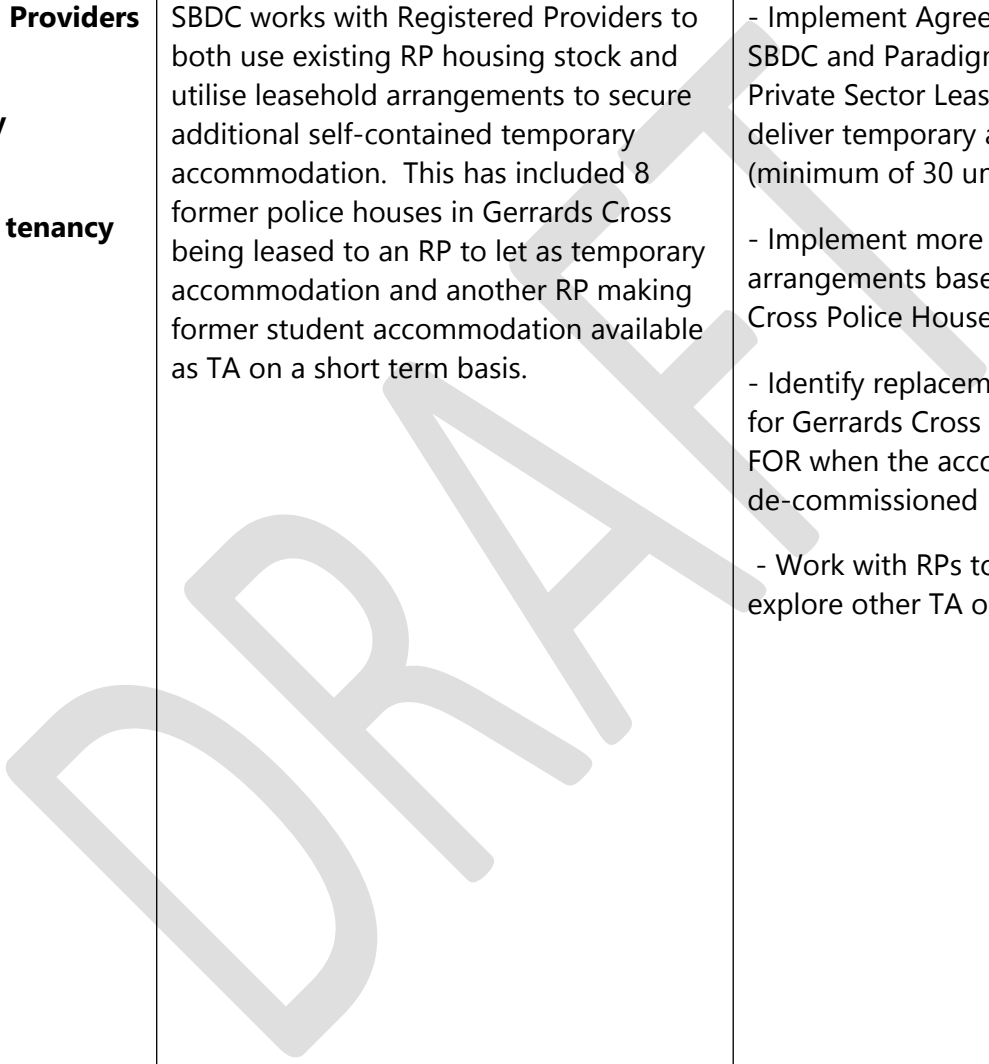
<p>C11</p>	<p>Work with the Connection Support Resilience Service to ensure that early intervention is targeted as effectively as possible in the District.</p>	<p>Connection Support Resilience Service operating since June 2017 funded from MCHLG Homelessness Trailblazer programme. Service delivers early one-to-one intervention with clients to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>CDC part of service Steering Group and monitoring delivery</p>	<p>-Continue to monitor service and ensure referrals being made from Chiltern area (both self-referrals and agency referrals, including CDC). Implement changes as required to maximise intervention and prevention</p> <p>-Work with Bucks CC and other DCs to plan exit strategy for end of MCHLG 2 year funding.</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p> <p>Resilience Service Steering Group</p>
<p>C12</p>	<p>Provide targeted support to resolve or prevent rough sleeping</p>	<p>CDC part-funds the countywide Rough Sleeper Outreach Service which provides one-to-one support to identified rough sleepers</p>	<p>Respond to requirements of MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy in including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing annual Rough Sleeper Action Plan - Updating Homelessness Strategy in 2019 as "Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy" 	<p>PAG Updates</p>

SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL – HOMELESSNESS - ACTION PLAN

	<u>OBJECTIVE</u>	<u>Status at August 2018</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Monitoring</u>
S1	Monitor effectiveness of Bucks Home Choice policy and ensure social housing stock is being used as effectively as possible	<p>CDC/SBDC leads both the BHC Management Board and the Practitioner Group which regularly reviews the operation of the Bucks Home Choice scheme.</p> <p>Allocations Policy being reviewed in light of latest legal judgements and the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</p>	<p>-Complete review of BHC Allocations and agree proposed amendments</p> <p>-Secure approval to adopt revised policy across the four district councils</p> <p>-Implement revised policy and monitor impact</p>	<p>BHC Management Board and Practitioners Group</p> <p>PAG Updates</p>
S2	Optimise current temporary accommodation provision through Temporary Accommodation Framework	<p>Joint CDC/SBDC Temporary Accommodation Framework agreed in 2017</p>	<p>Revised and updated Temporary Accommodation Framework incorporated into Strategy document</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p>
S3	Ensure all necessary procedures and documentation in place to implement the provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	<p>Full review of homelessness procedures is underway alongside training for all staff and partner agencies and implementation of new upgraded IT system.</p>	<p>-Complete and implement new procedures</p> <p>-Monthly monitoring of implementation against requirements of HR Act and procedures amended as required</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p> <p>Homelessness PIs</p>

<p>S4</p>	<p>Prevent or relieve homelessness wherever possible to minimise the demand for temporary accommodation</p>	<p>As part of preparation for new HR Act (see S3) officers are reviewing the measures available to prevent homelessness and identifying what could be done to increase successful preventions. This will include assessing how we can make best use of the financial resources available to support this, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SBDC Homelessness Prevention Fund (within Housing revenue budget) and Discretionary Housing Payments (administered by the Revenues and Benefits team) - MHCLG Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and New Burdens Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Utilise Locata Toolkit (developed by Andy Gale) and other good practice to inform development of prevention and relief measures -Complete review of available measures and agree toolkit of prevention and relief measures available to officers and partners in working with clients. -Review SBDC website and ensure updated, appropriate and realistic homelessness information and advice is available at first point of contact 	<p>PAG Updates</p>
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<p>S5</p>	<p>Work with Registered Providers to secure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -additional temporary accommodation and - more private rented tenancy options. 	<p>SBDC works with Registered Providers to both use existing RP housing stock and utilise leasehold arrangements to secure additional self-contained temporary accommodation. This has included 8 former police houses in Gerrards Cross being leased to an RP to let as temporary accommodation and another RP making former student accommodation available as TA on a short term basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement Agreement between SBDC and Paradigm to commence Private Sector Leasing Scheme to deliver temporary accommodation (minimum of 30 units initially) - Implement more TA leasehold arrangements based on Gerrards Cross Police Houses model - Identify replacement TA provision for Gerrards Cross Police Houses FOR when the accommodation is de-commissioned - Work with RPs to continue to explore other TA options 	<p>Monitoring meetings with RP partners</p> <p>PAG Updates</p>
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<p>S6</p>	<p>Working with the private rental sector to secure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - temporary accommodation and - private rented tenancies for clients to prevent or relieve homelessness 	<p>SBDC has secured an increased supply of self-contained nightly-booked accommodation to provide alternative options to B & B. However, the ability to secure private rented tenancies for clients remains challenging due to high local rent levels and welfare benefits restrictions.</p>	<p>-As part of HR Act implementation, officers are reviewing ways to assist more clients to secure private rented accommodation (linked to S3 and S4 above) including looking at options such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - payments/guarantees to help meet the cost of deposits and rent in advance - funding the shortfall between rent levels and benefit levels - rent guarantees - incentive payments to landlords - use of Credit Union to support clients to meet up front tenancy costs <p>-Any new models can potentially be funded from the resources highlighted in S4 above.</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p>
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<p>S7</p>	<p>Look for opportunities to develop additional temporary accommodation on SBDC-owned land (including possible low cost development using off-site construction, pre-fab, mobile homes etc.)</p>	<p>SBDC currently owns and leases former former-Police Houses at Gerrards Cross to RP to let as temporary accommodation (see S5 above)</p> <p>SBDC bringing forward planning application to develop temporary accommodation on former depot site on Bath Road, Taplow, using off-site modular construction.</p>	<p>-Develop TA scheme on former depot site in Bath Road (subject to planning permission)</p> <p>-Continue to explore potential schemes using SBDC-owned land or properties (or site acquisition)</p> <p>-Develop standard model to allow proposals to be assessed on an “invest to save” basis looking at an initial investment generating subsequent savings through reduced B&B costs and the possibility of some level of ongoing income generated by the accommodation</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p>
<p>S8</p>	<p>Explore options to work with Chiltern District Council and other statutory partners to secure additional temporary accommodation provision</p>	<p>Temporary Accommodation Framework makes provision for temporary accommodation provision in SBDC to be utilised by CDC and vice versa (subject to local demands within the host district)</p>	<p>SBDC will continue to assess opportunities for the shared housing service to deliver joint provision that can support both authorities. It will also consider any opportunities that arise for joint working with other partners (including Wycombe District Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council) to deliver additional temporary accommodation provision.</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p>

<p>S9</p>	<p>Support those residents affected by Housing Benefit reforms in order to limit the impact on homelessness</p>	<p>SBDC operates a joint forum between the Housing and Revenues Team to share information, monitor tenants affected by Housing Benefit changes and target intervention as required.</p>	<p>SBDC will continue to support clients to mitigate seek to mitigate the impact of Housing Benefit changes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - providing appropriate advice and assistance, - utilising DHP (Discretionary Housing Payments) and other funding (see C4) to support clients as appropriate, - signposting and referring clients to partner agencies to deliver welfare benefits and debt advice (see S10), and - secure attendance of L&Q at Housing and Revenues Team review meetings. 	<p>Quarterly Housing/Revenues meetings</p> <p>PAG Updates</p>
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<p>S10</p>	<p>Work in partnership with other agencies to secure suitable advice and support to prevent and relieve homelessness</p>	<p>SBDC has Service Level Agreements in place with certain partner agencies (CAB, Connection Rough Sleeper Outreach, Padstones etc.)</p> <p>Partner agencies attended HR Act event on 02/04/18. Database of partner agencies, services and referral routes is being compiled. SLA being reviewed and revised as required</p>	<p>-Work with Registered Providers to ensure early referrals are made to support service to avoid tenants becoming homeless.</p> <p>-Opportunities for further funding of specific services and schemes by SBDC to be considered based on needs of district</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p> <p>One to one working with partner agencies (including monitoring against SLA requirements)</p>
<p>S11</p>	<p>Work with the Connection Support Resilience Service to ensure that early intervention is targeted as effectively as possible in the District.</p>	<p>Connection Support Resilience Service operating since June 2017 funded from MCHLG Homelessness Trailblazer programme. Service delivers early one-to-one intervention with clients to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>SBDC is part of service Steering Group and monitoring delivery</p>	<p>-Continue to monitor service and ensure referrals being made from Chiltern area (both self-referrals and agency referrals, including SBDC). Implement changes as required to maximise intervention and prevention -Work with Bucks CC and other DCs to plan exit strategy for end of MCHLG 2 year funding.</p>	<p>PAG Updates</p> <p>Resilience Service Steering Group</p>
<p>S12</p>	<p>Provide targeted support to resolve or prevent rough sleeping</p>	<p>SBDC part-funds the countywide Rough Sleeper Outreach Service which provides one-to-one support to identified rough sleepers</p>	<p>Respond to requirements of MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy in including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing annual Rough Sleeper Action Plan - Updating Homelessness Strategy in 2019 as "Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy" 	<p>PAG Updates</p>

APPENDIX A**BACKGROUND STATISTICS****A1. - SOCIAL HOUSING LETTINGS**

Social housing tenancies are allocated via the Bucks Home Choice scheme (for more details please go to www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk)

Number of households seeking a social housing tenancy:

As at 20th August 2018, the number of applicants registered for re-housing on the Bucks Home Choice scheme were as follows:

Property size required	Number of Applicants	
	CDC	SBDC
1 bedroom	311	266
2 bedrooms	54	84
3 bedrooms	100	73
4 bedrooms	4	6
Not known	11	8
Total	469	437

Availability of social housing tenancies (Summary of lettings in 2017/18):

Chiltern District Council – Lettings via Bucks Home Choice 1/4/17 to 31/03/18		
Property Type	Number of lettings	Average time spent on Housing Register for applicant offered tenancy
Sheltered	37	15 months
Studio	3	7 months
1 bedroom general needs	78	9 months
2 bedroom flat/maisonette	68	7 months
2 bedroom house	37	15 months
3 bedroom flat/maisonette	7	8 months
3 bedroom house	22	31 months
4 bedroom or more	0	No lettings
TOTAL LETTINGS	252	

South Bucks District Council – Lettings via Bucks Home Choice 1/04/17 to 31/03/18		
Property Type	Number of lettings	Average time spent on Housing Register for applicant offered tenancy
Sheltered	25	8 months
Studio	4	8 months
1 bedroom general needs	55	18 months
2 bedroom flat/maisonette	48	20 months
2 bedroom house	18	22 months
3 bedroom flat/maisonette	3	20 months
3 bedroom house	20	22 months
4 bedroom or more	0	0
TOTAL LETTINGS	173	

Total Lettings via Bucks Home Choice in previous years		
Year	Chiltern DC	South Bucks DC
2016/17	264	119
2015/16	234	133
2014/15	269	186

Headlines:

- The level of lettings in CDC and SBDC is dependent on turnover in the existing social housing stock (i.e. re-lets) and the provision of additional properties (via new building or buying existing dwellings)
- The average time spent on the Housing Register is broad indicator based on the overall lettings during the year. The Bucks Home Choice scheme prioritises applicants for vacancies based on a combination of factors taking account of housing need, time spent on the Register and the type of property required. Therefore, some households will wait considerably longer than the average waiting time before they have any opportunity to secure a tenancy.
- The availability of larger family-sized housing (i.e. 3 or more bedrooms) across both districts is particularly limited in comparison with demand. This has a particular impact on the ability of both Councils to secure long term accommodation for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness (with a consequent knock-on effect on the length of time that larger families have to spend in temporary accommodation).

A.2 - HOMELESSNESS**(a) Total Number of Homelessness Applications for Assistance**

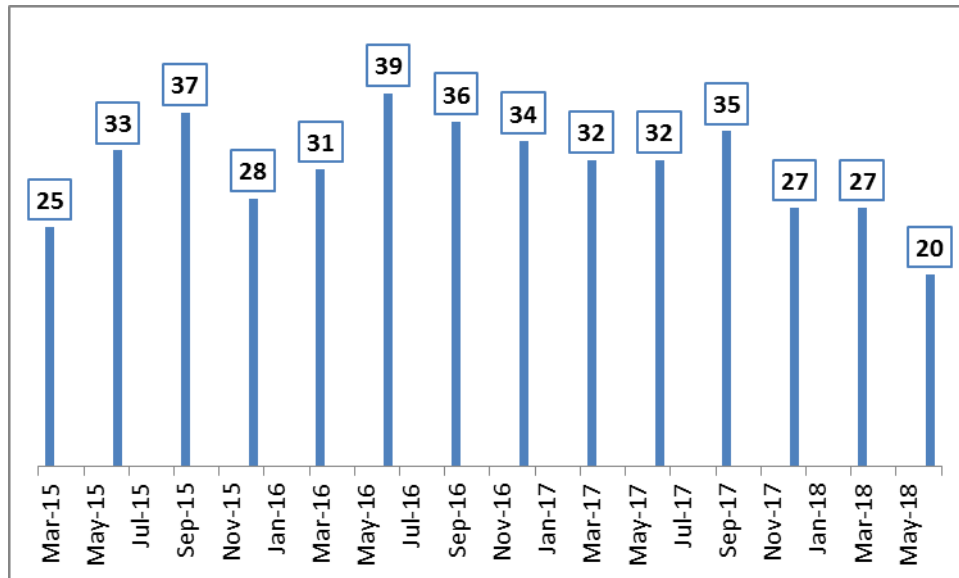
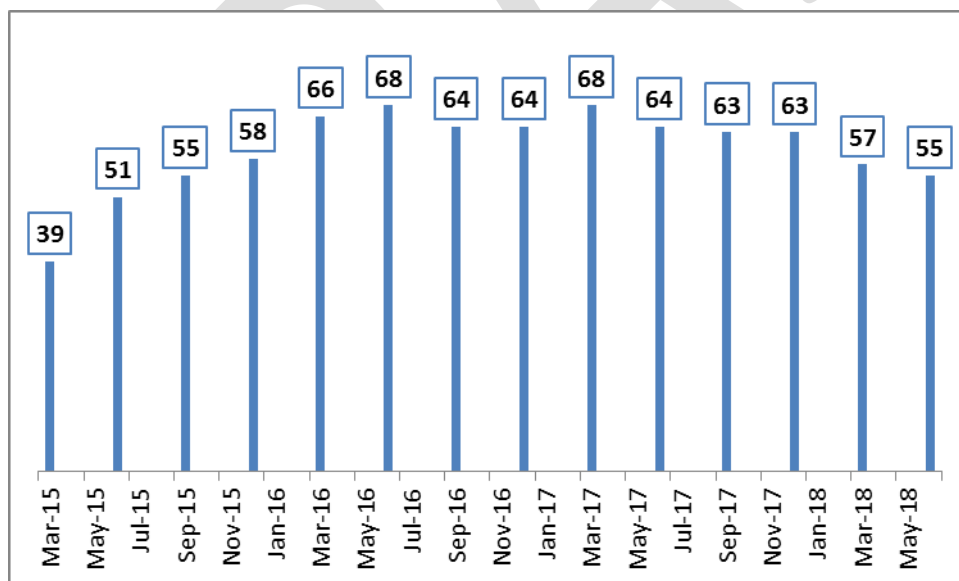
	Year									
	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	CDC	SBDC	CDC	SBDC	CDC	SBDC	CDC	SBDC	CDC	SBDC
Total number of homeless applications for assistance	56	59	87	75	95	88	80	102	90	102

(This table shows the number of homelessness applications where the Council issued decisions during the year concerned. These were determined prior to the introduction of the new duties in the Homelessness Reduction Act from 3rd April 2018.)

(b) Accepted Homelessness Applications & Reasons

Out of the total number of applications in Table (a) above the following applications were accepted as being subject to the Council's main housing duty to secure accommodation.

Homeless Cases Accepted as Duty to Secure Accommodation										
Reason for Homelessness	Year									
	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	CDC	SBDC	CDC	SBDC	CDC	SBDC	CDC	SB	CDC	SB
Parents/Family not willing to accommodate	3	25	24	19	21	30	14	27	21	30
End of Tenancy by Landlord	10	14	21	17	22	15	17	18	14	18
Domestic Violence	2	4	7	3	7	6	8	8	8	9
Other Violence/Harassment	1	0	0	1	7	3	0	3	4	5
Rent/Mortgage Arrears	5	0	4	0	1	2	6	2	3	1
Other	3	1	3	7	5	11	5	9	10	11
Total	24	44	59	47	63	67	50	67	60	74

(c) Number of Homeless Households in Temporary Accommodation**Chiltern DC - Quarterly Snapshot of Number of Households in TA****South Bucks DC - Quarterly Snapshot of Number of Households in TA****Headlines:**

- Both Chiltern and South Bucks saw a significant increase in applications for homelessness assistance in 2013/14. The annual rate of increase has subsequently differed between the two districts. South Bucks showing a continued annual upturn until levelling off in in 2017/18 while the position in Chiltern has been more erratic year on year.

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- The main reasons for homelessness across both districts in recent years have been exclusion by family or friends or the ending of a tenancy by a landlord.
- The ongoing demand for temporary accommodation has been considerable higher in South Bucks compared to Chiltern. This is primarily because South Bucks has seen a higher level of homelessness applications and a lower level of turnover in its social housing stock. This means that many homeless households have to spend longer periods in temporary accommodation due to the limited availability of affordable accommodation to move on to.

Future Demand for Homelessness Services

The MHCLG (formerly DCLG) has estimated that the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 could see a 26% increase in the homelessness caseload for local authorities (DCLG – New Burdens Funding Assessment – October 2017). If this increase is applied to the 2017/18 caseload levels, this will result in anticipated levels as follows:

Council	Caseload per annum (Total homelessness cases)		Demand for Temporary Accommodation	
	Current level (2017/18)	Estimated demand (2018/19)	Current demand (Average number in TA during 2017/18)	Estimated demand (2018/19)
Chiltern DC	102	129	34 units	42 units
South Bucks DC	90	114	65 units	82 units

(The above estimates are based on a 26% upturn on the average number of TA placements at any one time during 2017. However, other factors including homelessness prevention levels under the new Act's provisions and new affordable housing developments will impact on this figure).

Rough Sleepers

Chiltern DC and South Bucks DC have generally recorded low levels of rough sleeping within the districts. The figures from the last 4 annual rough sleeper counts/estimates are:

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Chiltern	3	1	1	1
South Bucks	0	0	4	1

However, these are snapshot figures collected once a year as part of the national rough sleeper estimate. There is evidence to suggest that there are regular reported instances of rough sleeping in the two districts. The Rough Sleeper Outreach Service operated by

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Connection Support received 53 reports of rough sleepers in Chiltern or South Bucks during the 12 month period from July 2017 to June 2018 and the service subsequently verified 10 of these.

The Councils will be reviewing the extent of rough sleeping across the districts and the support services that are in place as part of the response to the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy.

A3 - DELIVERY OF ADDITIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Number of additional affordable homes (rented or shared ownership) delivered since 2011/12

The table below summarises the number of additional affordable homes delivered by Registered Providers in Chiltern and South Bucks since 2011/12:

YEAR	DISTRICT							
	CHILTERN				SOUTH BUCKS			
	New Build Rent	New Build S/Owners	Purchases	Other	New Build Rent	New Build S/Owners	Purchases	Other (Equity Loan)
2011/12	26	3	0	0	15	0	9	9
2012/13	57	35	0	0	7	17	4	8
2013/14	6	0	8	0	12	3	4	3
2014/15	34	0	7	0	6	0	10	0
2015/16	18	4	0	0	0	0	2	3
2016/17	26	9	0	0	4	0	5	2
2017/18	56	24	0	0	21	7	1	0

Headlines:

- The level of new build rented affordable housing has fluctuated from year to year and has been particularly limited in South Bucks in recent years. This is due to a range of factors including (i) limited development opportunities coupled with high land values, (ii) changes in the funding arrangements for Registered Providers and (iii) increasing numbers of housing developers challenging the viability of delivering affordable housing on site and instead paying an affordable housing contribution (or no contribution)
- The purchase of existing properties by registered providers has contributed to delivering additional affordable homes across both districts. However, this has declined in recent years due to rising house prices and the increasing levels of subsidy required to make such schemes viable.

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APPENDIX B**Chiltern District Council****and****South Bucks District Council****TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FRAMEWORK****CONTENTS**

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Chiltern District Council**and****South Bucks District Council****TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FRAMEWORK 2018/19****1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this framework is to:
- 1.1.1 Ensure that each Council fulfils its statutory duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to secure temporary accommodation and
 - 1.1.2 Provide a clear and transparent framework for each Council for securing and allocating temporary accommodation

2. Background

- 2.1 Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996 places a statutory duty on the Council to secure that temporary accommodation is available to homeless households in a range of circumstances. Details of the relevant statutory duties and related guidance are summarised in **Appendix B1**.
- 2.2 The Council must secure sufficient temporary accommodation to meet its statutory duty. This accommodation must be utilised and allocated correctly.
- 2.3 The Supreme Court in the case of *Nzolameso v Westminster City Council* (2015) (UKSC 22, (2015) HLR 22) advised that each local authority should have a clear statement on how it procures and allocates temporary accommodation.
- 2.4 In light of the above, this framework has been drafted to provide a clear statement to Members, officers, clients and partner agencies on how the Council secures and allocates temporary accommodation.
- 2.5 Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council operate a shared housing service which includes a shared housing options and homelessness service. Therefore, this Framework has been drafted as a joint document to be shared by both Councils. Any reference to "the Council" in this Framework document should be taken to mean both Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council and their respective duties.

3. Principles of the Framework

The Council will:

3.1 Secure temporary accommodation in compliance with its statutory duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996

3.2 Secure self-contained temporary accommodation wherever possible and only secure B&B (Bed and Breakfast) accommodation when no other suitable self-contained temporary accommodation is available

3.3 Minimise the length of time that any household with family commitments has to spend in B&B accommodation

3.4 Secure temporary accommodation within the district whenever possible

3.5 Ensure that temporary accommodation meets appropriate standards of suitability and fitness

3.6 Minimise the cost of temporary accommodation provision to the Council and maximise income to offset costs where possible

4. Temporary Accommodation – Current Provision

4.1 Appendix B1 lists the temporary accommodation that is currently utilised by Chiltern District and South Bucks District Council.

5. Temporary Accommodation – Current and Future Demand

5.1 Appendix A2 in this Strategy document (Pages 39 to 41) shows the demand for temporary accommodation in Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council since 1st April 2014 and the projections for future demand following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 from 3rd April 2018. It is estimated that the Councils will need to ensure that the following levels of temporary accommodation are available at any one time during 2018/19:

Chiltern DC	=	Maximum of 42 units
South Bucks DC	=	Maximum of 82 units

6. Use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

- 6.1 The Council recognises that B&B (Bed and Breakfast) is not suitable as temporary accommodation for households with family commitments (i.e. households who have or are expecting dependent children). Where possible, it will avoid placing such a household in B&B. However, the high demand for temporary accommodation means that there will be occasions when the Council has no option other than to secure B&B in order to meet its statutory duty.
- 6.2 When the Council has to place a household with family commitments in B&B, it will take full account of the provisions in Statutory Instrument 2003/3326 that the period in B&B should not exceed 6 weeks. The Council will seek to move the household on to alternative self-contained accommodation as soon as possible. These households will be prioritised for a move from B&B as and when suitable self-contained temporary accommodation becomes available for occupation. The process for this is summarised in Appendix B3.

7. Location of Accommodation

- 7.1 The Council will aim to secure temporary accommodation within its district. However, the high demand for temporary accommodation means that it may be necessary for the Council to secure accommodation that is located in another district. In this event, the Council will aim to minimise the distance between the district and the location of the temporary accommodation.

8. Allocation of Temporary Accommodation

- 8.1 Self-contained temporary accommodation will normally be allocated on the day that it becomes available and using the process summarised in Appendix D
- 8.2 When self-contained temporary accommodation becomes available, existing households with family commitments in B&B will be prioritised over households who have not yet been placed in temporary accommodation.
- 8.3 If no self-contained temporary accommodation is available for a household on the date that the household becomes homeless then the Council will secure bed and breakfast accommodation (see 6.1 above) subject to availability. If no bed and breakfast accommodation is available on the date concerned then the Council may have to utilise hotel accommodation on a short term basis until bed and breakfast or other alternative temporary accommodation becomes available.
- 8.4 The Council will make every effort to secure temporary accommodation that is a suitable size, type and location for the household concerned. In doing so, the Council will have regard to the relevant statutory requirements and guidance (see Appendix B1). However, this must be balanced against the demands on the Council's service for homelessness assistance and the pressures on temporary accommodation. The Council's primary focus

is to secure accommodation that meets its duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 even if the household concerned considers that it may not be suitable.

8.5 A household may request a review of the suitability of the temporary accommodation secured by the Council if a review is permitted under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

8.6 In exceptional circumstances, the Council may depart from the allocation process set down in this Framework. This may arise because of reasons such as:

- safeguarding issues,
- personal safety concerns,
- medical issues,
- household size, or
- the household has been deemed intentionally homeless and/or has a review or appeal pending into the Council's decision.

Any exceptional allocation will be subject to the agreement of the Senior Housing Options Officer (or the Housing Manager in the absence of the Senior Housing Options Officer).

9. Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council – Cross District Provision

9.1 Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council operate a shared housing service. Each Council retains its own separate statutory responsibility to fulfil its duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

9.2 There may be occasions where one of the Councils (Chiltern District Council or South Bucks District Council) has available capacity within its temporary accommodation while the other authority is facing significant pressures to secure sufficient accommodation. In this situation, the Council with available capacity may make its temporary accommodation available to the other authority to utilise in order to fulfil its Part 7 duties (i.e. Chiltern DC would make its temporary accommodation available to be utilised by South Bucks DC or vice versa).

9.3 The provisions in paragraph 9.2 would be subject to:

- consideration of current and future temporary accommodation demands for both Councils,
- confirmation that the Council which makes the temporary accommodation available will not suffer any detriment to its service delivery or budget as a result, and
- the placement being reviewed on a weekly basis and ending as and when the temporary accommodation is again required by the Council which has made it available.

10. Charging for Temporary Accommodation

10.1 The Council reserves the right to require a household to pay a reasonable charge in respect of the temporary accommodation that has been secured for them. In making any charge, the Council will have regard to the statutory requirement that the temporary accommodation must be affordable to the household concerned.

11. Maintaining and Increasing the Supply of Temporary Accommodation

11.1 The Council will explore the following options over the next 12 months to help maintain and increase the supply of temporary accommodation to meet the current and future needs highlighted in Section 5.

11.1.1 Prevent Homelessness wherever possible to minimise the demand for temporary accommodation

The Council continues to review its housing options service to ensure that all available options are explored to help prevent or relieve homelessness before a client becomes homeless. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has placed increased emphasis on this.

11.1.2 Optimise current temporary accommodation provision

The Council will ensure that it makes the best use of the available temporary accommodation by making appropriate allocations, minimising the time spent by households in B&B and ensuring that households are moved on in a timely and efficient manner to longer term accommodation when possible.

11.1.3 Secure temporary accommodation from Registered Provider stock

The Council will continue to work with Registered Providers to maximise the use of temporary self-contained accommodation from within their existing housing stock and through other initiative and schemes (e.g. new build, private sector leasing etc.)

11.1.4 Explore options for new developments to incorporate new temporary accommodation provision.

The Council will monitor development opportunities on its own land and elsewhere

11.1.5 Explore options for working with the private rental sector to secure temporary accommodation

The Council will review its work with private landlords and letting agents and assess opportunities for partnership working to deliver temporary accommodation and tenancies to help prevent or relieve homelessness.

11.1.6 Explore options for Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council to work jointly to secure additional temporary accommodation provision

The Council will assess opportunities for the shared housing service to deliver joint provision that can support both authorities.

11.1.7 Explore options to work with other statutory partners to deliver additional temporary accommodation

The Council will assess opportunities for joint working with other partners including Wycombe District Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council to deliver additional temporary accommodation provision.

12. Review of Framework Document

12.1 This document will be reviewed annually

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APPENDIX B1**DUTY TO SECURE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION****1. SUMMARY OF STATUTORY DUTIES AND POWERS**

1.1 Under **Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996** the Council has a statutory duty to secure that accommodation is available to homeless persons who meet certain criteria and requirements set down in the Act and associated Statutory Instruments and guidance.

1.2 The specific statutory duties set down in Part 7 are broadly summarised below:

(i) *Section 188 – Interim duty to accommodate in case of apparent priority need*

When the Council receives an application for assistance under Part 7 then the Council will have a duty to secure temporary accommodation while it assesses the application if it considers that the applicant is homeless and may be in priority need (in accordance with the priority need categories set down in Section 189 of the Act)

(ii) *Section 190 – Duties to persons becoming homeless intentionally*

When the Council has assessed an application and determined that the applicant is homeless and in priority need, but is homeless intentionally, then it will have a duty to secure that accommodation is available for a period to give the applicant a reasonable opportunity to find other housing.

(iii) *Section 193 – Duty to persons with priority need who are not homeless intentionally*

When the Council has assessed an application and determined that the applicant is homeless and in priority need and not homeless intentionally (and the initial Homelessness Relief Duty has come to an end), then it will have a duty to secure that accommodation for occupation by the applicant. There is no time limit on this duty. Section 193 sets down the specific circumstances in which this duty can come to an end.

(iv) *Section 199A – Accommodation pending the outcome of a referral to another local authority*

In some cases when the Council has assessed that the conditions are met for a referral to another local housing authority and applicant is homeless and in priority need, the Council will have a duty to secure that accommodation is available pending the outcome of the referral.

1.3 In respect of (i) to (1v) above, Section 208(1) of the Act states that so far as reasonably practicable the Council shall secure that suitable accommodation is available for occupation within its district.

1.4 In addition to the statutory duties summarised above, the Council also has the **power to secure accommodation pending a review or appeal**. Under Sections 188 and 204 of the Act, the Council has the power to secure accommodation for an

applicant pending the outcome of a review or appeal on the Council's decision on a homelessness application. This is a power and not a duty and the Council will assess requests for accommodation in these circumstances on a case by case basis. In assessing whether or not to exercise its power to secure accommodation, the Council will have regard to the applicant's circumstances and the relevant guidance and case law.

- 1.5 Under Section 192 (3) of the Act, the Council also has ***the power to secure accommodation for an applicant who is homeless, not homeless intentionally and is not in priority need***. Again, this is a power and not a duty. In considering whether or not to use this power, the Council must take into account the demands on local housing and the need to secure accommodation for homeless households who are subject to the statutory duties summarised in (i) to (v) above. The current demands on housing stock in Chiltern and South Bucks and the ongoing demands from homeless households who are subject to statutory accommodation duties means that the Councils are highly unlikely to exercise the power under Section 193(2) of the Act. However, any requests will be assessed on a case by case basis.

2. GUIDANCE ON EXERCISING STATUTORY DUTIES

- 2.1 When exercising a statutory duty in accordance with (i) to (v) above, the Councils will have full regard to the relevant law, statutory instruments and guidance in assessing whether or not the accommodation concerned is suitable. This includes:

- a) **Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (February 2018)**
- b) **SI 1996/3204 Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 1996**

This requires that the accommodation must be affordable.

- c) **SI 2003/3326 Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)(England) Order 2003**

This highlights that B&B accommodation is not to be regarded as suitable accommodation for an applicant with family commitments and should only be used (i) where no other accommodation is available and (ii) for no more than 6 weeks in total.

- d) **SI 2012/2601 Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)(England) Order 2012**

This highlights a range of factors that the Council must take into account including:

- distance from district (if placed out of area)
- significance of disruption to employment, caring responsibilities or education

- proximity and accessibility of medical facilities
- proximity and accessibility of local services, amenities and transport

e) **S. 11 of the Children Act 2004**

This requires that where the applicant's household includes children, then the Council's decision on suitability must identify the needs of the children (individually and collectively) and have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the children's needs. However, it is not required that the children's welfare should be given paramount or even primary consideration by the Council in making the decision on the suitability of accommodation.

f) **Equality Act 2010**

This requires that the Council assesses whether or not the applicant has a disability (or another relevant protected characteristic) and, if so, the extent of the disability and whether or not this impacts on suitability of the accommodation.

- 2.2 Overall, the Councils will always aim to minimise disruption to the applicant's household and have full regard to the relevant law and guidance when securing temporary accommodation. However, this will always need to be balanced against the overall demands on the housing and homelessness service and the availability of accommodation. This means that it may not always be possible to avoid disruption to the household concerned. The Council's primary focus will be to ensure that it secures accommodation for the applicant in accordance with its statutory duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

END

APPENDIX B2**TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – CURRENT PROVISION**

This Appendix lists the temporary accommodation that is currently secured by each Council to fulfil its duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

CDC - Current Provision – Self Contained Accommodation (No facilities shared with other households)		
Accommodation	Number of Units	Details
Tom Scott House, Pearce Road, Chesham	12 x 1 br flats 8 x bedsits	Scheme owned and managed by Paradigm Housing
Other Registered Provider accommodation	No fixed number	Properties in general needs stock utilised as temporary accommodation as and when required
Nightly booked self-contained accommodation	No fixed number	Properties secured from private provider and subject to a nightly rate. The main providers are located in Slough, High Wycombe, Hemel Hempstead and Chiltern.
Private Sector Leasing Scheme	Minimum of 10 units	Properties to be leased by Paradigm Housing and let to CDC nominees to meet temporary accommodation duty.

CDC - Current Provision – Non-Self Contained Accommodation (Facilities shared with other households)		
Accommodation	Number of Units	Details
Nightly booked non-self contained accommodation (e.g. Bed and Breakfast)	No fixed number	Rooms are booked as and when required and charged on a nightly rate. The main providers are located in Slough, High Wycombe and Hemel Hempstead.
Hotels	No fixed number	Hotel rooms are booked when no other options are available. (Normally emergency out-of-hours placements placements).

SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

SBDC Current Provision – Self Contained Accommodation (No facilities shared with other households)		
Accommodation	Number of Units	Details
Oxford Road, Gerrards Cross (Former Police Houses)	8 x Houses	Properties leased by Bucks Housing Association from SBDC (Due to be decommissioned in December 2018)
Private Sector Leasing Scheme	Minimum of 30 units	Properties to be leased by Paradigm Housing and let to SBDC nominees to meet temporary accommodation duty.
Other Registered Provider properties	No fixed number	Properties in general needs stock owned by other Registered Providers (e.g. L&Q, Bucks HA) and made available to SBDC to use as temporary accommodation on an interim basis.
Nightly booked self-contained accommodation	No fixed number	Properties secured from private provider and subject to a nightly rate. The main providers are located in Slough, High Wycombe, Hemel Hempstead and Chiltern.

SBDC Current Provision – Non-Self Contained Accommodation (Facilities shared with other households)		
Accommodation	Number of Units	Details
Nightly booked non-self contained accommodation (e.g. Bed and Breakfast)	No fixed number (18 x placements as at 26/02/16)	Rooms are booked as and when required and charged on a nightly rate. The main providers are located in Slough, High Wycombe and Hemel Hempstead.
Hotels	No fixed number	Hotel rooms are booked when no other options are available. (Normally emergency out-of-hours placements placements)

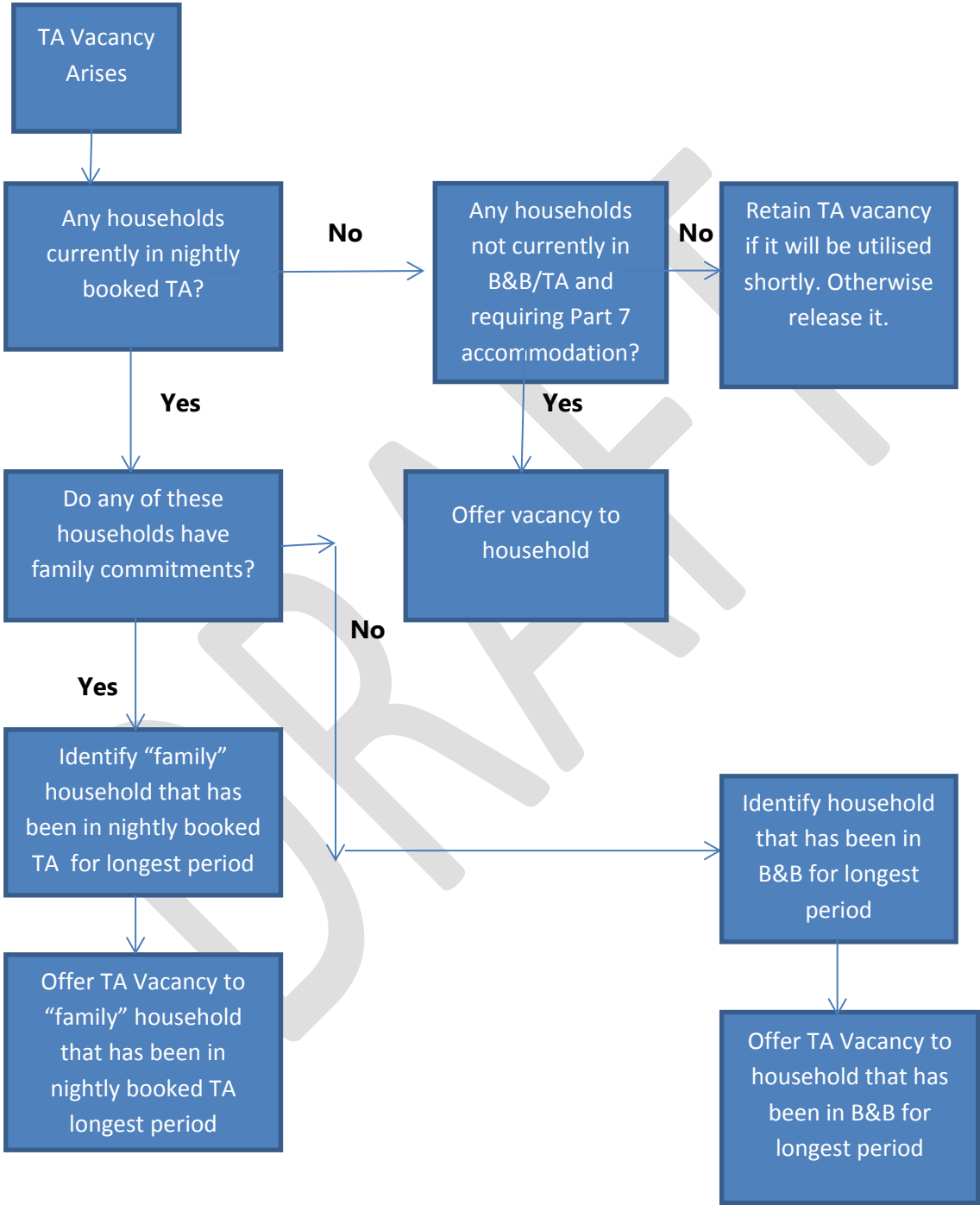
SBDC – Pipeline Provision - Temporary Accommodation Schemes being developed as at August 2018		
Accommodation	Number of Units	Details
Development of former Depot Site on Bath Road, Burnham	12 units	Development of temporary emergency accommodation using off-site manufacturing. Due for completion in 2018/19.

Acquisitions	3 units	Programme of 3 acquisitions by Bucks Housing Association for use as temporary accommodation (supported with SBDC funding)
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APPENDIX B3

PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING SELF-CONTAINED TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION (NOT NIGHTLY BOOKED)



Note – In some cases the Council will have to place a household in accommodation located outside of the district (see Paragraph 7.1 of the Temporary Accommodation Framework).

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17th October 2018

SUBJECT:	<i>Chiltern and South Bucks Playing Pitch Strategy</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Director of Services – Steve Bambrick</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Head of Healthy Communities - Martin Holt</i>
REPORT AUTHOR	<i>Leisure & Community Manager - Paul Nanji Tel: 01494 732110</i> paul.nanji@southbucks.gov.uk
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>All</i>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Improving the quality and access to sports local playing pitches directly contributes to improving the health and wellbeing of residents. The attached Chiltern and South Bucks Playing Pitch strategy helps support this by providing an up to date audit of South Bucks' existing sports playing pitches as well as identifying current and future shortfalls in provision.
- 1.2. On 12th June 2018 the completed draft Chiltern and South Bucks Playing Pitch Strategy was presented to the Healthy Communities Policy Advisory Group (PAG) detailing its key findings and recommendations in relation to the quality and provision of playing pitches across the district.
- 1.3. To verify the strategy's accuracy, PAG Members requested that it be subject to an additional further round of public consultation with the district's Town and Parish Councils, sports clubs and the appropriate sports governing bodies.
- 1.4. The attached updated strategy reflects the feedback captured through the additional consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That Cabinet approve the proposed 2018-2036 Chiltern and South Bucks Playing Pitch Strategy and it be submitted to Sport England for external accreditation.**

2. Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The strategy helps inform the newly emerging Local Plan by providing a comprehensive evidence base to withstand public scrutiny.
- 2.2 The strategy provides a joined-up approach with clear localised priorities to develop sustainable facilities that support increased participation.

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2.3 The strategy provides a robust evidence source to support local sports clubs, Town and Parish Councils and other community groups to access external funding.

3. Content of report

3.1 In March 2016 Chiltern and South Bucks Councils jointly commissioned a specialist consultant, Strategic Leisure, to undertake the development of a new Playing Pitch Strategy covering the period 2018 to 2036.

3.2 The Strategy's key aims were to:

- Inform and support the newly emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan.
- Improve health and wellbeing by increasing levels of sports and physical activity.
- Support community groups and others to access external funding.

3.3 The types of playing pitches covered within the scope of the study are detailed below with sports pitches within South Bucks having both a qualitative and quantitative assessment:

- Football 3G rubber crumb pitches
- Football (grass pitches)
- Cricket
- Hockey
- Rugby Union
- Golf

3.4 The methodology employed to reach the strategy's conclusions included a number of actions, all of which are detailed below:

- Review of national, regional and local strategies and policy documents relevant to the exercise.

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- Creation of a strategic working group to scrutinise, evaluate, challenge and finally approve the strategy's key findings (Sport England, Football Association, English Cricket Board, English Rugby Union, English Hockey Union and England Golf)
- Creation of a qualitative template to include key elements of design and maintenance.
- Qualitative on-site assessment of playing pitches located throughout Chiltern and South Bucks in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the principles contained in the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17 companion guide.
- Use of the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator to ascertain the required number of sports specific playing pitches to meet current and future needs.
- Drafting key conclusions relating to the current state of playing pitches in Chiltern and South Bucks.

3.5 Following the site visit assessments and applying the Sport England playing pitch demand analysis a range of key findings were drawn up and are detailed in the tables 1 below.

Table 1 - South Bucks Key Findings

Sport	Current demand shortfall 2018	Future demand shortfall 2036 using ONS Sub National Population Projections 2018 - 2036
Football 3G Rubber Crumb Pitches	After taking into account current existing 3G rubber crumb provision there is a shortfall of 3 full size 3G rubber crumb pitches based upon the FA training model.	After taking into account current existing 3G rubber crumb provision there is a shortfall of 5 additional full size 3G rubber crumb pitch based upon the FA training model by 2036.
Football (grass pitches)	Adult 11 v 11 – current demand is being met for adult match equivalent sessions.	Adult 11 v 11 – future demand can be met from existing secured community use pitches. Junior 11 v 11 shortfall of 23 junior

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Sport	Current demand shortfall 2018	Future demand shortfall 2036 using ONS Sub National Population Projections 2018 - 2036
	Junior 11 v 11 – shortfall 14 match equivalent sessions based on home and away play each week. Junior 9 v 9 – currently Shortfall 5 match equivalent sessions. Mini Soccer 7 v 7 – current shortfall of 1 match equivalent session. Mini Soccer 5 v 5 – current Demand is being met for mini 5 v 5 match	11 v 11 match sessions based on home and away play each week. Junior 9 v 9 – shortfall 14 match equivalent sessions. Mini Soccer 7 v 7 – shortfall 6 match equivalent sessions. Mini soccer 5 v 5 – demand can be met from current supply.
Cricket	Current demand is being met with over play at Farnham Royal CC (14 match equivalent sessions),	Future demand can be met with current capacity. Additional non-turf pitches will assist with meeting demand from junior cricket teams.
Hockey	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met from existing facilities.
Rugby Union	Current short fall of 7.25 match and training equivalent sessions weekly.	Future shortfall of 11.25 match and training equivalent sessions weekly.
Golf	Current demand is being met.	Future demand is for adventure golf.

4. Consultation

4.1 A Sports Playing Pitch Strategy forum was established to inform, support and verify the strategy including the relevant sport's national governing bodies (football, hockey, cricket, rugby and golf), Sport England and Strategic Leisure.

4.2 Internally, the Council's Planning and Economic Development department has supported the strategy throughout out its developments advising on key issues such as population growth, planning issues and settlement sizes.

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4.3 There have also been two rounds of public consultation with local Town and Parish Councils, schools, sports clubs and other community organisations. Collectively these have provided invaluable information in improving the accuracy of the strategy.

4.4 This has included updating and incorporating the correct site names of the sports facilities, capturing any recent improvements which had not been captured when the site audit was undertaken, updating any inaccuracies in the strategy's findings for specific sites and ensuring the population data used to identify any shortfall and over supply was accurate.

4.5 Looking ahead given the ongoing changes to sports playing pitches, local schools, sport clubs, Town and Parish councils will be encouraged to provide information of any improvements so that the strategy can be regularly updated and accurately reflect local needs.

5. Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial – There are no direct financial implications to the Council arising from the report. There may be indirect costs arising from the use of Section 106 agreements or the implications of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to generate funding to cover costs of open space facility development

5.2 Legal – Recommendations arising from the strategy come from a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch facilities in accordance with Sport England's PPS Guidance: (An Approach to Developing and Delivering a PPS 2013)

5.3 Planning policies in the emerging Local plan should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for sports and open spaces. Studies should identify specific needs shortfalls in supply and or quality of supply. The evidence should be used to inform the local plan – National Planning Policy Framework para 73

6. Links to Council Policy Objectives

6.1 Sustainable Environment – The strategy will help protect the district's playing pitches and facilitate improved provision for residents to access both now and in the future.

6.2 Safe, Healthy and Active communities - Council has a duty to consider the health and wellbeing of its community, enabling improved access and provision of playing pitches would directly support this as well as strengthen partnership working with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector.

7. Next Steps

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- 7.1 Once adopted following consultation the strategy will be presented to key stakeholders including Town and Parish Councils, sports clubs and local environmental community groups so that they are aware of its key findings and recommendations.
- 7.2 Following this the strategy will be promoted on social media and made available on the Council's website to support stakeholders in funding bids to improve provision in their local communities.
- 7.3 The document will form an important part of the emerging Local Plan evidence base and will be used to support the councils emerging Local Plan policies

Background Papers:	Appendix 1 – Chiltern and South Bucks Playing Pitch Strategy
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South Bucks District Council

Healthy Communities Policy Advisory Group 2nd October 2018

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 8 October 2018

Cabinet 17th October 2018

SUBJECT:	<i>Chiltern and South Bucks Open Spaces Strategy</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Director of Services – Steve Bambrick</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Head of Healthy Communities - Martin Holt</i>
REPORT AUTHOR	<i>Leisure & Communities Manager - Paul Nanji Tel: 01494 732110 paul.nanji@southbucks.gov.uk</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>All</i>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 On 12th June 2018 the draft Chiltern and South Bucks Open Space Strategy was presented to members. The report detailed the strategy's key findings and recommendations in relation to the quality and supply of open spaces/parks across the district.
- 1.2 To verify the strategy's accuracy, Healthy Communities Policy Advisory Group requested that it be subject to an additional further round of public consultation with the district's Town and Parish Councils and other key stakeholders.
- 1.3 The attached updated strategy reflects the feedback captured through the additional consultation.
- 1.4 Cabinet is requested to formally adopt the strategy so that it can be used to inform the emerging Local Plan and support local Town and Parish Councils and other community groups improve facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That Cabinet formally approve the South Bucks and Chiltern Open Space Strategy and utilise its findings to support the implementation of the new Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan.**

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The South Bucks and Chiltern Open Space Strategy is a key document in helping inform the new Local Plan.
- 2.2 Improving access and the quality of open space provision contributes directly to improving the health and wellbeing of residents. Also an up to date audit of South Bucks existing open space provision will enable Parish Councils, Town Councils and

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local community groups to attract inward investment by providing robust evidence of existing shortfalls in provision.

3. Content of report

3.1 In March 2016 Chiltern and South Bucks Councils jointly commissioned a specialist consultant, Strategic Leisure, to undertake an Open Space Strategy. The Strategy's key aims were to:

- Inform and support the newly emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan to provide a concise, robust and comprehensive evidence base that enables both Councils to develop planning policies which are sufficient to withstand scrutiny at an Examination in Public.
- Increase participation in by bringing together key community organisations to develop a co-ordinated approach to effectively manage recreational and open space provision.
- Achieve a joined-up strategy with localised priorities to develop sustainable facilities that support increased participation.
- Support community groups and others to access external funding.

3.2 The scope of the open space assessment criteria is detailed below with each site visit involving both a qualitative and quantitative assessment:

- Public parks and gardens
- Amenity greenspace
- Provision for children and young people
- Allotments and community gardens
- Recreation grounds (where applicable)
- Accessible areas of countryside on the urban fringe
- Cemeteries
- Civic Spaces

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- Natural and semi-natural greenspaces

3.3 The methodology employed to reach the strategy's conclusions included a number of elements which are detailed below:

- Review of national, regional and local strategies and policy documents relevant to the exercise.
- Use of quantitative standards in accordance principles contained in the PPG17 Companion Guide (i.e. by applying a local standard based on new Fields in Trust standards to different types of open spaces grouped in accordance with the PPG17 typology in terms of ha per 1,000 population).
- Division of open spaces into typology consisting of a number of different and discrete amenity "types".
- Creation of a qualitative template to include key elements of design and maintenance.
- Qualitative on-site assessment of open spaces distributed throughout Chiltern and South Bucks in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the principles contained in the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17 Companion Guide.
- Analysis of results to qualitatively assess the condition of open spaces.
- Use of accessibility standards as defined by the Fields in Trust Guidance Document.
- Defining of a parish questionnaire, distribution to all parishes within Chiltern and South Bucks and analysis of questionnaire results.
- Drafting key conclusions relating to the current state of open spaces in Chiltern and South Bucks.
- Drafting recommendations relating to the significance of open space Chiltern and South Bucks and Chiltern in relation to the Local Plan.

3.4 Following the site assessments a range of key findings were identified. These included evidence of:

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- A very large supply of parks and gardens in the district, largely due to sizeable accessible land-holdings such as Burnham Beeches, Black Park and Cliveden.
- Open spaces in the district being clean and well-maintained at the time of audit, particularly parks and gardens.
- Play sites needing new safety surfacing to avoid risk in future, with some unconnected to footpaths or vehicle parking, resulting in a long walk across grass
- Signage needs improvement to make open spaces of all types more welcoming, and to create a "sense of place."
- A shortage of play sites, partially owing to a lack of available informal space (kick a bout, picnic areas, etc.). The Fulmer area in particular is deficient.
- The district having healthy quantities of natural and semi-natural greenspace which is accessible to residents and other visitors.
- Amenity greenspace being well-provided, with some large open spaces such as Gerrards Cross Common.
- All settlements with the exception of Gerrards Cross having large quantities and good distribution of accessible natural and semi-natural greenspace.
- Adequate provision of allotments.
- More use of tree planting and natural landscaping in the form of floral or managed grass meadow would improve biodiversity, provide shade, and improve appearance.

4. Consultation

4.1 Following completion of the draft strategy it was agreed by the Healthy Communities Policy Advisory Group that there should be an additional round of consultation with key stakeholders to verify the accuracy and content of the document. Town and Parish Councils were given an additional month to report back issues specific to their respective localities. Collectively these two rounds of consultation provided invaluable information which has been used to improve the accuracy of the strategy.

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4.2 This has included updating and incorporating the correct site names of all the assessed sites, capturing any improvements which have recently been undertaken, updating any inaccuracies in the strategy's findings for specific sites and ensuring the population data used is accurate to identify any shortfall and over-supply in provision.

4.3 Looking ahead given the ongoing changes to open space provision Town and Parish councils along with local community groups will be encouraged to provide information of any improvements to the district councils. This will allow the strategy to be regularly updated and accurately reflect local needs.

4.4 Internally, the Council's Planning and Economic Development Department has supported the strategy throughout its development, advising on key issues such as population growth, planning issues and settlement sizes.

5. Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial – There are no direct financial implications to the Council arising from the report..

5.2 Legal – NPPF guidelines require local authorities to

- Avoid any erosion of recreational function and maintain and enhance the character of open spaces
- Ensure that open spaces do not suffer from encroachment (from traffic flows, etc.)
- Protect and enhance rights of way
- Consider the impacts of development on biodiversity and nature conservation.

6. Links to Council Policy Objectives

6.1 Sustainable Environment – The strategy will help protect the district's green infrastructure and facilitate improved provision for residents to access both now and in the future.

6.2 Safe, Healthy and Active Communities – South Bucks District Council has a duty to consider the health and wellbeing of its community, enabling improved access and

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provision of open spaces would directly support this as well as strengthen partnership working with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1 Once adopted the strategy will be presented to key stakeholders including Town and Parish Councils and local environmental community groups so that they are aware of its key findings and recommendations.
- 7.2 Following this the strategy will be promoted on social media and made available on the Council's website to support stakeholders in funding bids to improve provision in their local communities as well as help inform the new Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan.

Background Papers:	Appendix 1 – Chiltern and South Bucks Open Space Strategy
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CABINET RESPONSE FOR O&S COMMITTEE

The Cabinet would like to thank the members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their very thorough and insightful work related to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Cabinet, having reflected on the recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee sets out its response in the accompanying appendix.

Portfolio Holders will be following through with their Heads of Service recommendations specific to their areas, and these will be highlighted in budget papers.

The Cabinet believes most of the points raised by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee are ones that need to be followed through in future years' budget work, and not just be limited to 2019/20. To enable this, officers will be requested to identify in the formal report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 2019/20 budget, how the recommendations have been addressed and what future work will be undertaken.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Response
<p>Cabinet need to consider the opportunity to maximise income from the New Homes Bonus / Business Rates Retention scheme, and in particular whether the Council should adopt a more enabling approach to encouraging housing and business growth in the district.</p>	<p>The Cabinet is fully cognisant of the need to maintain and maximise the council tax and business rate taxbases and income. In relation to the New Homes Bonus it recognises this as a risk area in the Government’s plans to revise the mechanism for funding local authorities. As the Government strategy is to increase the financing of local authorities from local taxation it is in the Council’s interest to encourage housing development in the context of the Local Plan, and business growth through work with partners and the work of the recently appointed economic development posts.</p>
<p>The Council need to put forward a case to Government regarding the Non Domestic Rate tariff payments as part of the Fair Funding consultation</p>	<p>The Cabinet has instructed officers to respond to Government consultations on the Fair Funding review. This will be directly and through supporting representations for bodies such as DCN, LGA, SDCT.</p>
<p>Cabinet to note the importance of maintaining the Council Tax base, including regularly reviewing the properties where Single Person Discounts are being.</p>	<p>As the O&S Cmm has correctly identified it is very important to do everything to maintain the council taxbase. To this end it has confirmed with officers that we will be undertaking work in the current year to review all properties classed as empty as this impacts on the NHB calculations. The authority is committed to doing a full review of Single Person Discounts every other year. With the bringing in-house of the council tax service from Northgate later this year it is expected that the shared service will have more capacity for property inspections to impact on the taxbase.</p>
<p>Cabinet should review opportunities to bring in revenue from advertising across all Council assets http://communitypartners.co.uk/</p>	<p>This is an area to explore and officers will be asked to do some assessment work, but it is unlikely to be a significant income opportunity given the options available to the Council. We would be mindful of issues such as planning requirements for as billboards etc. The assessment would enable the Council to understand what could reasonably be achieved and the</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Response
	resources required.
As part of the budget process O&S Members undertake challenge/scrutiny sessions with Portfolio Holders on their draft budget proposals	The Cabinet welcomes the suggestion of increased Overview & Scrutiny involvement in the budget process. They will ask officers to advise how this may most efficiently be achieved by enhancing the PAG budget meetings so they focus on the areas raised by the O&S Cmm and that the PAG reports are drawn to O&S members attention so that they can raise questions and issues..
Cabinet need to closely monitor the cost of homelessness	This recommendation is strongly supported. The Cabinet now receives monthly updates on temporary accommodation and the progress with plans to provide alternatives to nightly paid accommodation.
Cabinet need to ensure that appropriate resources are put into preventing homelessness, as this avoids SBDC having to house families that are homeless in nightly paid accommodation.	As part of drafting the housing budget for 2019/20 the resourcing of the housing service to 1) cope with the requirements of the Homelessness Prevention Act and 2) manage clients in temporary accommodation, will be explicitly addressed. This issue will be highlighted in the PAG budget report for members to discuss.
Cabinet need to address the volume of affordable housing stock by looking at opportunities through the Local Plan, and the housing numbers in the Plan	The Head of Healthy Communities will be requested to produce a paper for the PAG on the potential medium term impact of the draft Local Plan on affordable housing supply.
Cabinet need to actively progress with delivering alternative less expensive options for housing homeless families	The monthly monitoring of temporary accommodation by the Cabinet enables them to judge the effectiveness of current plans. As part of the budget process officers will be reporting on the position of the supply and cost of temporary accommodation and options to further expand the supply if forecast demand indicates this is necessary.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Response
All non-statutory fees and charges should be reviewed annually, to ensure that they fully cover the Council's costs, and are in line with the average charge or higher from neighbouring authorities.	This will be explicitly built in to the budget process for all non-statutory charges where the income exceeds a minimum amount. PAG reports will set out the outcome of these reviews.
Cabinet should review the garden waste fee.	This will be done as part of the budget work and the results and proposals included in the budget report to the Environment PAG.
Cabinet should consider having a single long term joint waste contract with all three District councils to obtain economies of scale	This has been agreed by the Joint Waste Collection Committee and the Council has agreed funding towards the joint procurement process.
Actively explore scope to increase cemetery charges and burial capacity, including facilities for the non-Christian communities and marketing these outside of the area and the use of Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens	As part of the budget process a report(s) will be produced for the Environment PAG identifying the income potential for the three aspects, i.e. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Charges for out of area customers 2. Provision of spaces for non-Christian funerals, and related charges 3. SPMG income
Cabinet should review the car park charging strategy, particular focusing on whether evening and Sunday charges would be appropriate.	Review of car parking charges will be undertaken and a report brought to the Environment PAG as part of the budget process.
Cabinet should support the progression of car parking expansion, where there is a clear service need and a business case for doing so, including additional car parking such as the one proposed for Gerrards Cross	The Cabinet welcomes the support for expanding car park provision to meet service demand. Any proposed changes need to be carefully planned and supported by a sound business case addressing parking need and benefits to residents.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Response
Cabinet should review underutilised car parks e.g Burnham as these assets could be more effectively used for the Council’s objectives.	The O&S Committee is right in advising that the effectiveness of Council assets need to be kept under review and it will be appropriate to review those in the Burnham area and officers will undertake work on this subject in the Autumn. This is likely to have implications for the Council’s medium term position rather than the 2019/20 budget.
Cabinet should review the use of recycling facilities in car parks as this space could generate extra income.	This will be done as part of the budget work and the results and proposals included in the budget report to the Environment PAG. This will also include any implication for the Waste service, as there needs to be consideration around potential consequences for fly tipping.
Cabinet should closely monitor the progress with the Customer Experience / R&B service / ICT strategy as these are key projects to help improve and deliver savings including:-	The Cabinet fully agrees with this point, and this is something that needs to be included in the forward work programmes for the Joint Committee and the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
Cabinet should support the LGA with its efforts to lobby the Government to allow local authorities to set their own planning fees.	The Cabinet will support all efforts made by the LGA and other bodies on this subject.
That further planning income should be identified through the Proceeds of Crime Act and administration of Section 106 agreements and CIL if introduced.	This piece of work will be undertaken by the new Enforcement Manager. There is believed to be potential for additional income via this route as part of the improvements planned for the Enforcement service and an initial view will be brought to members as part of the 2019/20 budget process.
Once the Local Plan has been finally submitted, the Head of Planning should critically review the size of the planning policy team to ensure it is appropriately resourced to meet the (hopefully reduced) requirements going forward.	The Joint Local Plan is currently anticipated to be submitted in 2019. Following submission officers will be asked to review resourcing requirements and report to the Joint Committee.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Response
<p>The T&F group supports the development of Consilio, subject to appropriate safeguards being put in place to oversee its operation such as supporting the employment of a part time investment professional, the need to take considered risks to increase returns and the need to take advantage of market opportunities.</p>	<p>An investment adviser is now in place to give more focus to Consilio's development plan, and this will include how to establish the Council's risk appetite for funding different investment opportunities. This will be done in collaboration with a member sounding board and made transparent in formal reports to members on the investment activity with Consilio.</p>

SUBJECT	<i>Freedom of Information Management and RIPA Annual Report</i>
REPORT OF RESPECTIVE CABINET MEMBER/ CHAIRMAN	<i>The Chairman of the Joint Information Governance Group</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Director of Resources jburness@chiltern.gov.uk Head of Business Support sdixon@chiltern.gov.uk
REPORT AUTHOR	Rachel Morrey, Information Systems Professional rmorrey@chiltern.gov.uk Zoë Bloomfield, Corporate Information Manager zoe.bloomfield@southbucks.gov.uk
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>All</i>

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the public engagement with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, the Data Protection Act 2018 / General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the Transparency Code of Practice, the INSPIRE Regulations, RIPA, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012,

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note the report.

2. Executive Summary

This report is a reflexive analysis of the past year's FOI and EIR progress and activities in response to requests processed by the Council.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

This report is to inform Members about the number of requests received and the response rate.

4. Freedom of Information Requests

The service areas that received the most FOI requests were Business Support and Healthy Communities. The majority of requests are for commercial information that would be useful for businesses and many of the Business Support requests are ones where the requestor is re-directed to another organisation such as Bucks County Council.

The busiest months of the year for FOIs were:

January and March

The quieter months of the year for FOIs were:

August and September

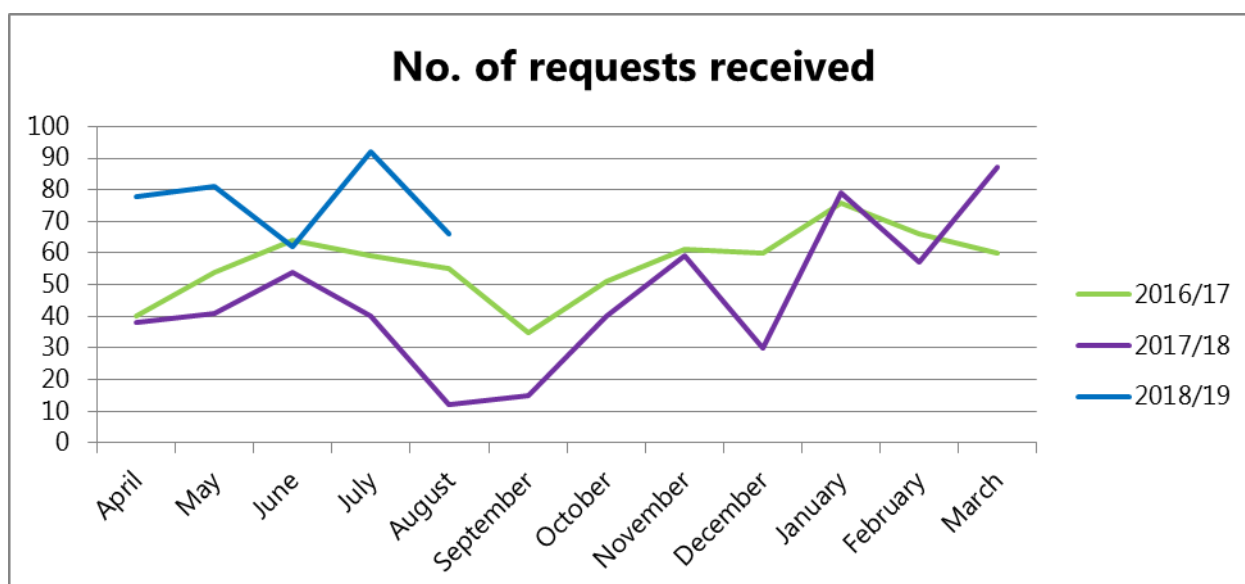
CDC FOI REQUESTS RECEIVED OVER THE LAST FINANCIAL YEARS

CDC	Financial Year 2016-2017 Nbr of Requests	% requests Within 20 Working Days	Financial Year 2017-2018 Number Requests	% requests Within 20 Working Days	Financial Year 2018-2019 Nbr of Requests	% requests Within 20 Working Days
April	40	60%	38	94.75%	78	100%
May	54	87%	41	90.24%	81	98.75%
June	64	95%	54	88%	62	100%
July	59	95%	40	77.78%	92	98.86%
August	55	100%	12	91.67%	66	
September	35	86%	15	100%		
October	51	84%	40	97.44%		
November	61	87%	59	94.83%		
December	60	98%	30	96.55%		
January	76	54%	79	94.67%		
February	66	100%	57	91.07%		
March	60	97%	87	98.84%		
Year Totals	681	82% Average	552	92.98% Average		

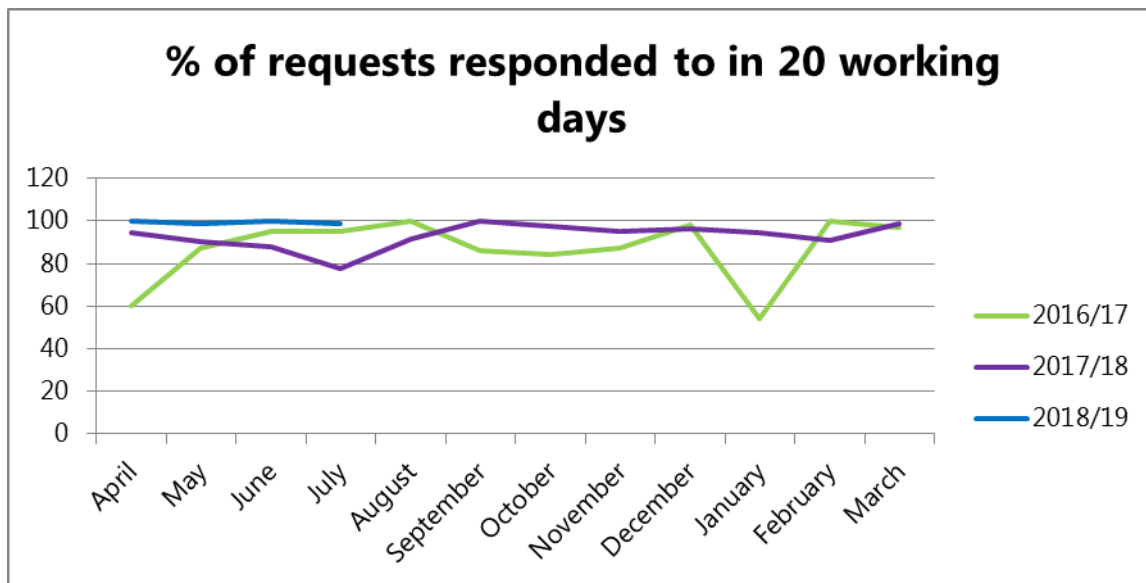
Requests received equals 18.94% decrease between 2016-17 and 2017-18

N.B the statistics for 2018/19 won't be available until April 2019.

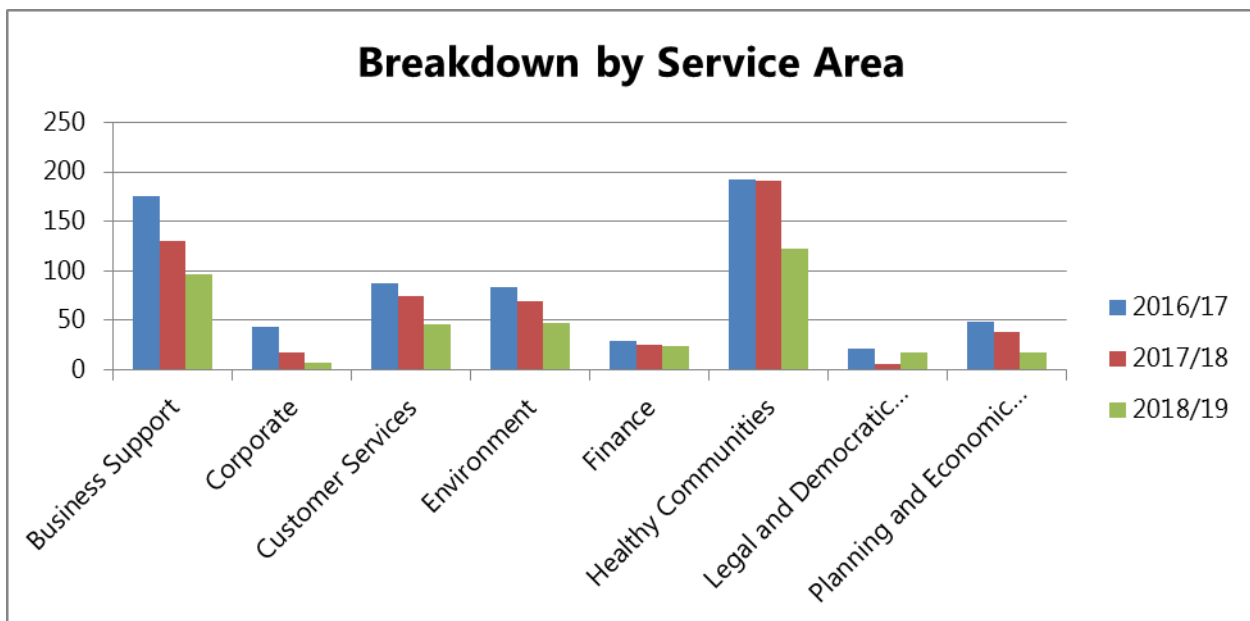
Chiltern District Council Number of Requests Received



Chiltern District Council % response within 20 working days



Chiltern District Council Breakdown of volumes received by service area



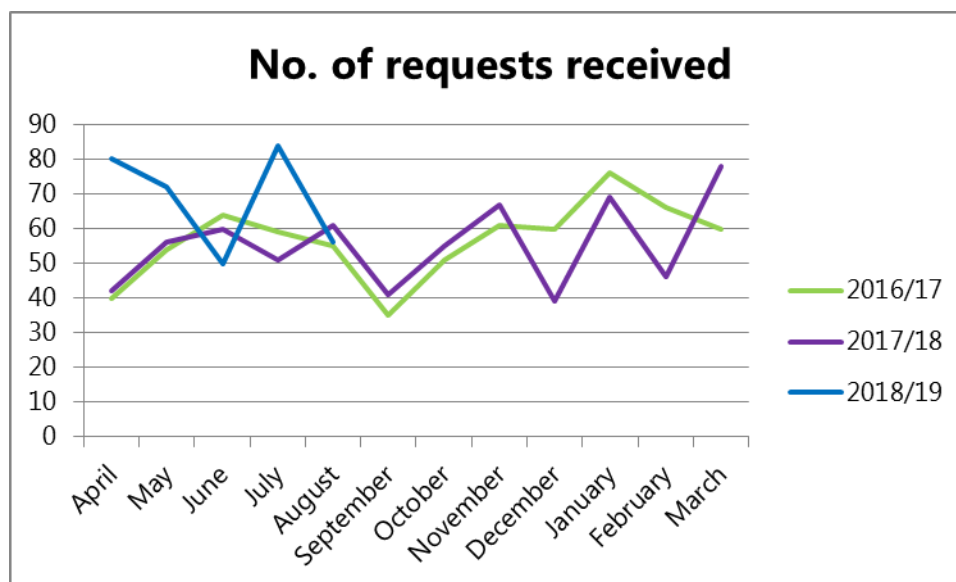
N.B 2018/19 is based only on months April – August.

SBDC FOI REQUESTS RECEIVED OVER THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR

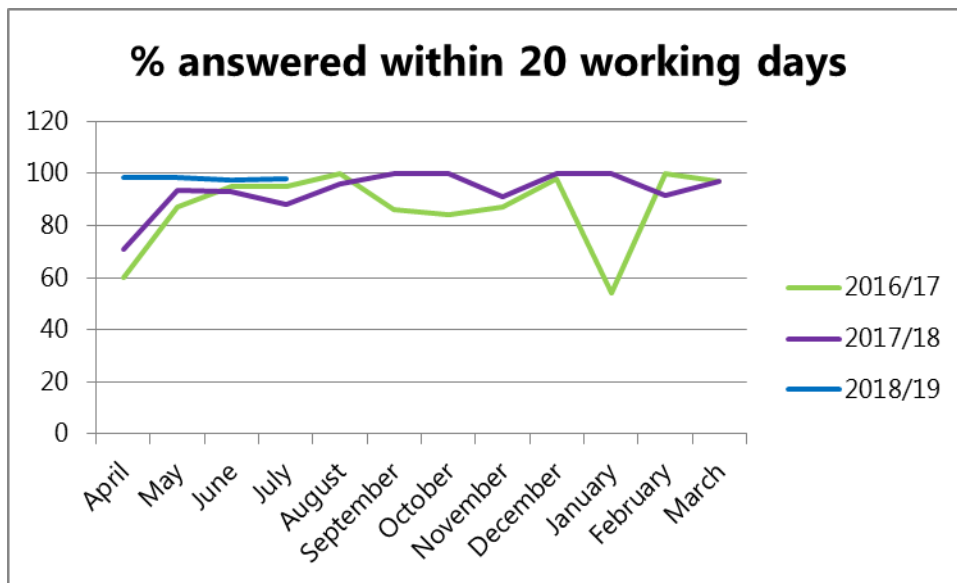
SBDC	Financial Year 2016-2017 Number Requests	% requests Within 20 Working Days	Financial Year 2017-2018 Number Requests	% requests Within 20 Working Days	Financial Year 2018-2019 Number Requests	% requests Within 20 Working Days
April	45	93%	42	70.97%	80	98.46%
May	57	84%	56	93.75%	72	98.41%
June	56	88%	60	92.86%	50	97.62%
July	58	94%	51	88%	84	97.78%
August	46	100%	61	96%	56	
September	42	95%	41	100%		
October	46	96%	55	100%		
November	53	100%	67	90.91%		
December	50	100%	39	100%		
January	73	82%	68	100%		
February	74	98%	46	91.43%		
March	53	100%	78	97.14%		
Year Totals	653	94% average	665	93.42% average		

Requests received equals 1.83% increase between 2016/17 and 2017/18

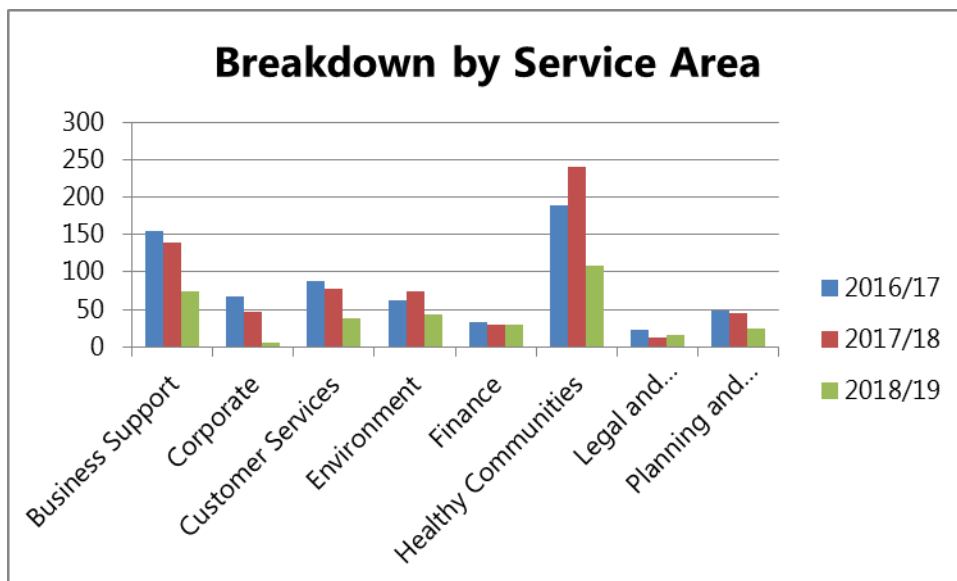
South Bucks District Council Number of Requests Received



South Bucks District Council % response within 20 working days



South Bucks District Council Breakdown of volumes received by service area



N.B 2018/19 is based only on months April – August.

Healthy Communities receive many requests for housing, licencing, environmental health, community safety and leisure. Business Support Officers encourage all service areas to publish and make available data sets that are frequently asked for on each Council's website. For example Licensing data is now available in electronic format and open for public inspection.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has been promoting and supporting digital transformation and transparency. The Council accordingly is increasingly publishing its data sets, to enhance proactive transparency and by making more information publicly available and to promote the effective operation of FOI in the public interest. This work is on-going.

The new [FOI Section 45 Code of Practice](#) was issued on 4 July 2018. The ICO has published the guidance for practitioners on its website. There is more emphasis on openness about certain types of information and withholding information will be harder to justify. The code provides guidance on the practice it would be desirable for public authorities to follow to meet their obligations under FOIA. Adhering to the code will result in positive benefits for an authority, and in practical terms offer good customer service.

5. Subject Access Requests (SARs)

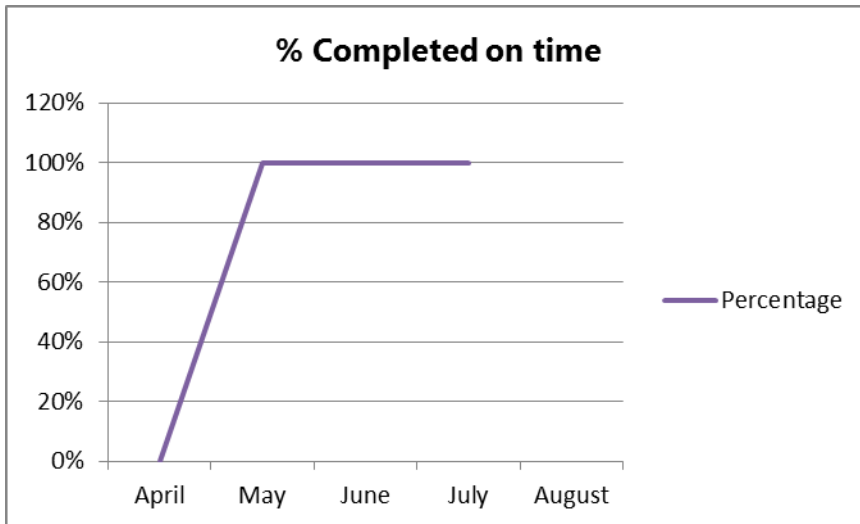
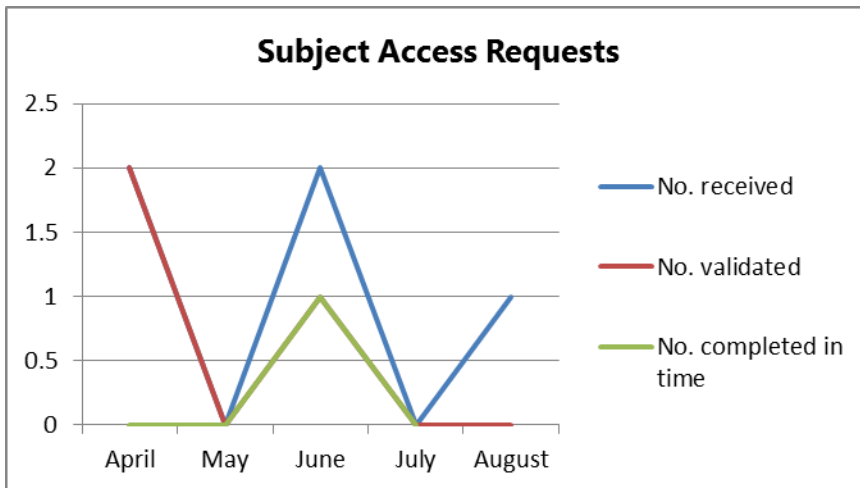
The data protection legislative changes that were introduced in May 2018 have heightened public awareness about their information rights and as a result more individuals are submitting SARs to the authority. This is the first time SARs have been reported to committee.

Chiltern District Council

2018/19	No. Received	No. Validated	No. Completed on time*	% Completed on time
April	2	2	0	0%
May	0	0	0	100%
June	2	1	1	100%
July	0	0	0	100%
August	1	0		

Notes - * The time frame required for requests to be completed changed on 25th May 2018 from 40 days to 30 calendar days. Therefore all April requests should have been completed within 40 days. All subsequent months the time frame is 30 days.

Validated requests mean that the requester has submitted ID which is valid and has been verified. The request has to be validated before it is processed any further.

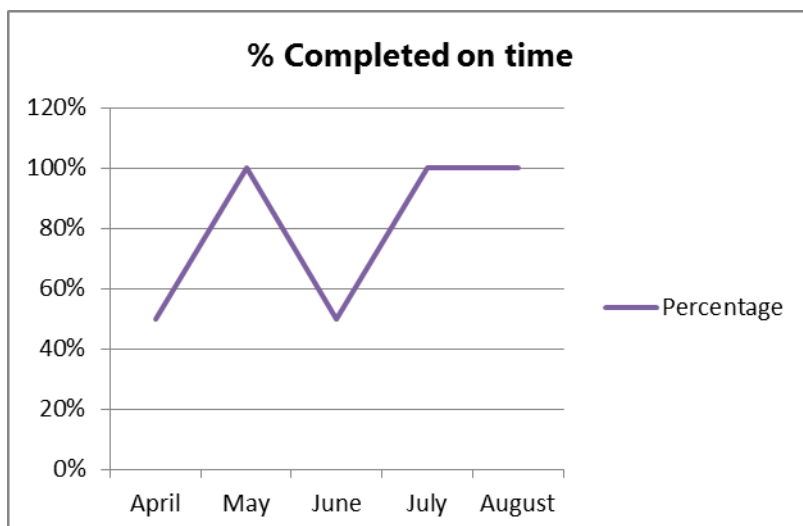
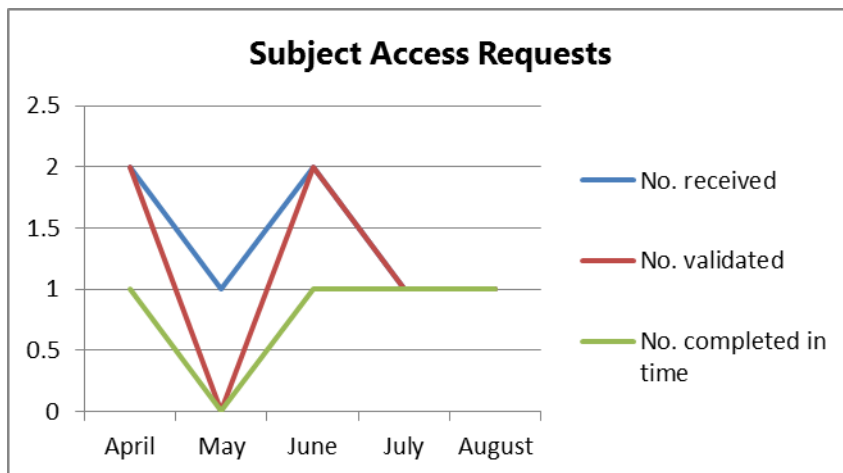


South Bucks District Council

2018/19	No. Received	No. Validated	No. Completed on time*	% Completed on time
April	2	2	1	50%
May	1	0	0	100%
June	2	2	1	50%
July	1	1	1	100%
August	1	1	1	100%

Notes - * The time frame required for requests to be completed changed on 25th May 2018 from 40 days to 30 calendar days. Therefore all April requests should have been completed within 40 days. All subsequent months the time frame is 30 days.

The second request from June has had the time frame extended by up to another 2 months so the new deadline is 01/10/2018. The requestor was advised of the extension due to the complexities of the request before the end of the initial 30 calendar days' deadline.



6. RIPA

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) addresses human rights issues arising from the carrying out of surveillance and the accessing of communications data by local authorities and other law enforcement agencies. On the 1st September 2017, The Office of Surveillance Commissioners, The Intelligence Services Commissioner’s Office and The Interception of Communications Commissioner's Office were abolished by the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. The Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) is now responsible for the judicial oversight of the use of covert surveillance by public authorities throughout the United Kingdom.

An updated Corporate Policy & Procedures Note was published on the intranet and is based upon the requirements of The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('RIPA'), The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, the Home Office's Codes of Practice on Covert Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Communications Data) and (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Orders 2010 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. The Council takes responsibility for ensuring that the RIPA procedures are applied in practice.

Relevant staff will receive training in October 2018. There were no Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) investigations conducted for the year 2017-18 at SBDC.

7. Links to Council Policy Objectives

7.1 The aim is to support corporate information management policy, information governance procedures and strategy.

7.2 The objective is to inform Members and senior management of the response to statutory duties that aligns with the code of Corporate Governance ensuring openness and transparency, encouraging better community engagement and supporting economic activities, thus empowering citizens through increased access to information.

<p>Background Papers:</p>	<p>ICO Model Publication Scheme 2013 The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (POFA) Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000(RIPA) Home Office Codes of Practice on Covert Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Communications Data) and (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Orders 2010 Investigatory Powers Act 2016 Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</p>
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	<p>Human Rights Act 1998 INSPIRE Regulation 2009 PSN Local Data Handling Guidelines (August 2014) Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 (ROPSI) Local Government Transparency Code 2015 Strengthening Local Government Transparency Consultation on changes to the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 S45 FOI Code of Practice</p>
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APPENDIX

Explanatory Background information for the applicable legislation

(a) The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) give rights of access to information held by public authorities. All requests are dealt with irrespective of who has sent them and why they want the information.

EIR gives access to information and there is an express presumption in favour of disclosure. The EIR is invoked when the request is for information about the environment, specifically

- The state of the elements of the environment, such as air, water, soil, land and biological diversity;
- Emissions and discharges, noise, energy, radiation, waste and other such substances;
- Measures and activities such as policies, plans, and agreements affecting or likely to affect the state of the elements of the environment;
- Reports, cost-benefit and economic analyses used in these policies, plans and agreements;
- The state of human health and safety, contamination of the food chain and cultural sites and built structures (to the extent they may be affected by the state of the elements of the environment).

Thus, requests for planning and environmental health fall under the EIR conditions.

(b) The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 establishes a legal framework of rights and duties which are designed to safeguard personal data. [Under Part 3 Chapter 3 Section 45 of the Act](#) a data subject has right of access to information held about them and not to information relating to other people. It provides a right to see the information contained in personal data, rather than a right to see or have copies of the documents that include that information.

These requests are more commonly referred to as subject access requests (SARS). A data controller has 30 calendar days in which to provide the requested data. The data controller is allowed to ask for proofs of identity. Processing can only begin once the identity is validated. These requests take an average of 10 working days of officer time to process, (ie £1,800 cost). They are very time intensive to process, which includes the retrieval, collation, and redaction of third-party data. If the requester is not happy with the response they can make a complaint to the ICO.

(c) The INSPIRE Regulation 2009 provides a technical standards framework to publish geospatial information. The INSPIRE Regulations confer a statutory duty on councils to provide access to its geographical information systems (GIS) and make available via the GIS mapping technology spatial data sets relating to environment and society within its district area under the provision of the INSPIRE Regulations.

The European INSPIRE Directive requires that Member States provide public access to location based data related to the environment. Council data sets will be uploaded Data.Gov.uk to support the UK location infrastructure data. The public will be able to find, share and reuse, location data, including all data published under the INSPIRE Directive.

INSPIRE is based on a number of common principles:

- Data should be collected only once and kept where it can be maintained most effectively.
- It should be possible to combine seamless spatial information from different sources across Europe and share it with many users and applications.
- It should be possible for information collected at one level/scale to be shared with all levels/scales; detailed for thorough investigations, general for strategic purposes.
- Geographic information needed for good governance at all levels should be readily and transparently available.
- It should be easy to find what geographic information is available, how it can be used to meet a particular need, and under which conditions it can be acquired and used.

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is the lead Department in the UK for implementing the INSPIRE Directive, which they propose to do in conjunction with the UK Location Strategy. DEFRA have set up a cross-government governance body – the UK Location Council. Its responsibilities in relation to INSPIRE will include:

- Co-ordinating implementation and ongoing operations;
- Providing contact point for the European Commission;
- Compiling and submitting 3-yearly monitoring reports to EC;
- Co-ordinating UK representation to INSPIRE Committees and working groups;
- Collating material on costs and benefits of the Implementing Rules;
- Responsible for central communications;
- Providing policy and technical guidance to support public authorities in meeting their obligations;
- Promoting skills development.

(d) Local Government Transparency Code 2015 from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) has established the Local Government Transparency Code. This code has been issued using the powers in section 2 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 to issue a Code of Recommended Practice requiring local authorities to publish specific information and the code sets out requirements for the following categories of information which must be published:

- Spending on corporate GPC cards on quarterly basis including:

date of the transaction

local authority department which incurred the expenditure beneficiary amount

Value Added Tax that cannot be recovered

summary of the purpose of the expenditure, and merchant category (eg computers, software, etc)

- Expenditure exceeding £500 on a quarterly basis

- Procurement information

The council is required to publish details of every invitation to tender for contracts to provide goods and/or services with a value that exceeds £5,000. For each invitation, the following details must be published: reference number; title; description of the goods and/or services sought; start, end and review dates; and local authority department responsible.

The council must also publish details of any contract, commissioned activity, purchase order, framework agreement and any other legally enforceable agreement with a value that exceeds £5,000

- Detail of money raised from parking charges
- Information in relation to trade unions including 'facility time'
- Information on council contract and tenders to make it easier for small and medium firms to bid for work
- Property assets
- Local authority land

The council must publish details of all land and building assets including all service and office properties occupied or controlled by user bodies, both freehold and leasehold; any properties occupied or run under Private Finance Initiative contracts; all other properties they own or use, for example, hostels, laboratories investment properties and depots garages unless rented as part of a housing tenancy agreement; surplus,

sublet or vacant properties; undeveloped land; serviced or temporary offices where contractual or actual occupation exceeds three months; all future commitments, for example under an agreement for lease, from when the contractual commitment is made.

Information to be published annually:

- Local Authority land
- Social housing assets
- Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Organisation chart
- Trade union facility time
- Parking account
- Parking spaces
- Senior Salaries
- Constitution
- Pay multiple
- Fraud
- Contracts register

SUBJECT:	Sickness Absence Performance Indicator Update
REPORT OF:	Bob Smith, Chief Executive
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Bob Smith, Chief Executive
REPORT AUTHOR	Louise Cole, HR Manager, lcole@chiltern.gov.uk , louise.cole@southbucks.gov.uk , 01494 732015
WARD/S AFFECTED	All

1. Purpose of Report

To provide the committee with an update and analysis of staff sickness absence within the Councils.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the report.**

2. Content of Report

At its meeting on 19th June 2018 the committee asked for a report giving some analysis of sickness absence within the councils.

2.1 Sickness Absence Reporting

Sickness Absence figures are reported and discussed in detail at each meeting of the Joint Staffing Committee as part of the HR Update report. Joint Staffing Committee consider:-

- the current years/quarters absence figures;
- how this compares to previous quarters/years;
- how this compares with national figures in the private and public sectors;
- what the reasons for absence are and if there are any trends;
- what actions are being taken by managers and senior managers and the HR team to effectively manage sickness absence.

This information is now provided here for this Committees consideration.

2.2 Comparative Figures

- The Chartered Institute for Professional Development (CIPD) publishes an annual survey on sickness absence in the private and public sectors. The May 2018 survey published the findings for 2017. This reported that on average public sector employees had 8.5 days of absence in 2017 and the same in 2016. Absence rates were considerably lower in the private sector with 2017 showing an average of 5.6 days per employee. Although the public sector is the only sector not to report an increase in average absence compared to 2016.

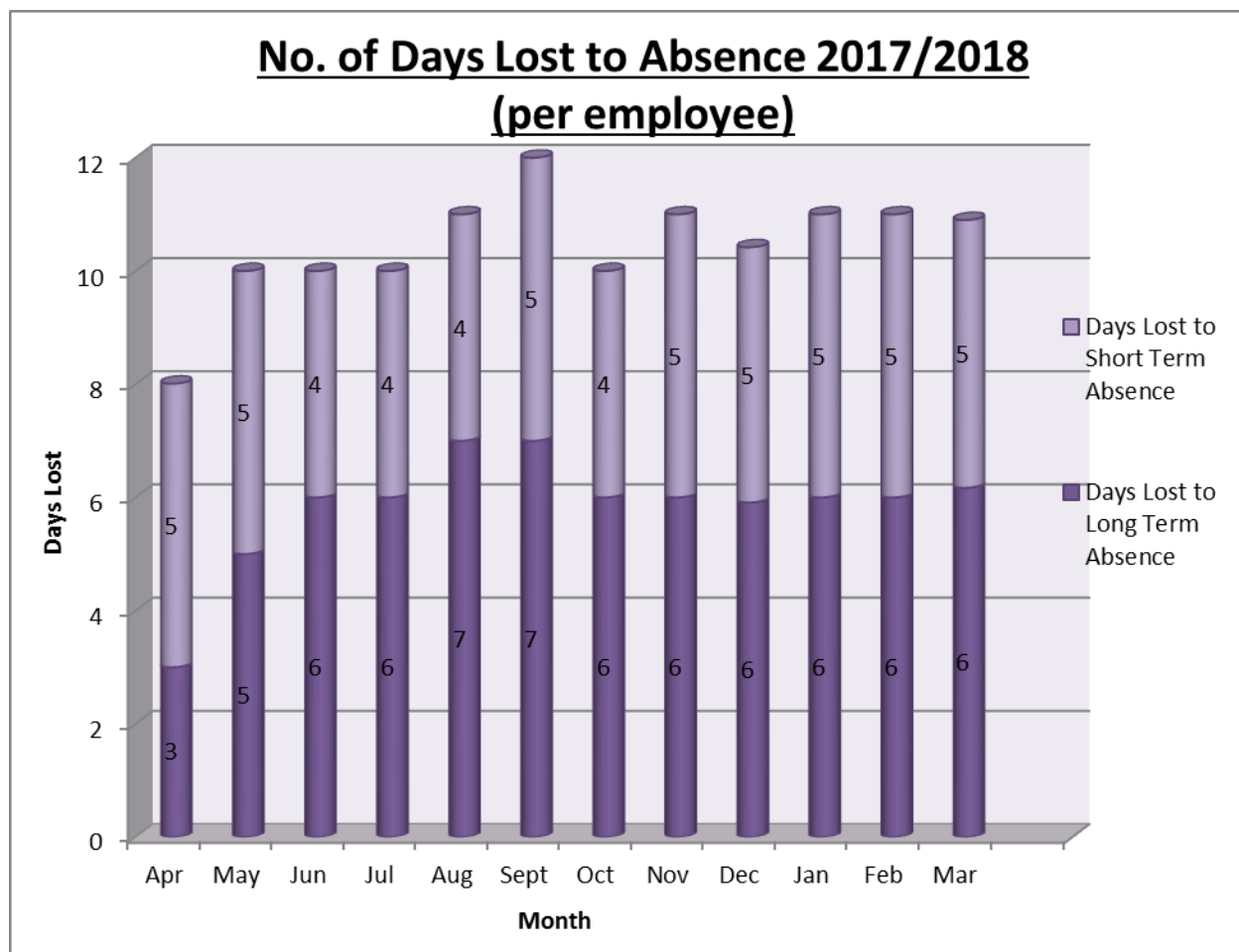
2.2.2 In 2017/18 WDC 6.81 on average a year per employee. AVDC are currently producing their figures and these have not been made available at the time of writing this report.

2.3 2017/18 Sickness Absence Figures

2.3.1 In 2017/18 the Councils moved from reporting on sickness absence separately to joint reporting. The sickness absence performance indicator is a maximum of 10 days on average per employee a year. From August 2017/18 this target was exceeded.

2.3.2 An analysis of the breakdown of the figures for 2017/18 showed that the rise in sickness absence levels from 2016 was largely due to an increase in a small number of employees on long term sick absences. However, these figures had also been affected by the Councils' practice to record staff as absent when undertaking phased returns to work. This practice, in line with usual practice elsewhere, has now been ended and the Sickness Absence Policy amended accordingly.

2.3.3 The table below shows a breakdown of the number of days lost due to absence per employee per month for the year 2017/2018 broken down into long term and short term sickness.



2.3.4 Short term absence is defined as “up to and including 20 working days absence” and long term absence is “over 20 working days absence”.

2.4 2018/19 Sickness Absence Figures

2.4.1 In 2018/19 sickness absence levels have fallen. I can report that in April, May, June and July the average number of days absent per employee, across the two Councils was as follows:-

	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>
Short-term	2.76	2.70	2.36	2.10	
Long-term	3.00	3.60	3.92	4.05	
Total	<u>5.76</u>	<u>6.30</u>	<u>6.28</u>	<u>6.15</u>	

2.5 Actions taken to reduce sickness absence and support health and well-being

2.5.1 The Councils have taken a strategic and integrated approach to sickness absence and health and well-being. The objective has been to ensure robust and fair management of sickness absence and at the same time promote a health and well-being programme.

2.5.2 Sickness Absence Management: In the last 8 months the HR team and line managers have made a concerted effort to manage sickness absence to ensure a robust and consistent approach is taken. Sickness absence monitoring has become a regular part of day to day management practice which helps to ensure that the approach taken is sustained over time. This includes the following:-

- The HR Advisers are holding regular meetings with line managers and Heads of Service to support them in monitoring absence and taking the appropriate action to follow the Sickness Absence Policy and to ensure staff are aware of the support available to help them achieve good attendance;
- HR Advisers have run a series of workshops on “Promoting a Positive Attendance Culture” which all team leaders, supervisors and managers have been required to attend. To date 70 line managers have signed up and feedback from these has been positive. One of the key objectives of the workshops is to inform managers of the steps in the policy they must take e.g.:-
 - conduct return to work interviews after every absence,
 - hold informal absence meetings when staff hit absence trigger points
 - move to the formal stages of the policy if attendance is not sustained or improved
 - agree attendance targets and monitoring periods.
- HR Advisers provide regular reports to Management Team on all sickness absence cases (informal and formal) so that these can be monitored at a senior level;

- Absence management has become a regular item on all managers/team leaders meetings;
- Managing sickness absence has been supported by the ongoing provision of an OH service, Employee Assistance Programme, Mental Health First Aiders etc.

2.5.3 Health and Well-Being: In June 2018. The launch coincided with Mental Health Awareness Week and each day of that week we promoted different health and wellbeing initiatives e.g. Cycle to Work scheme, the choir, managing finances and debt advice.

2.5.4 In May we launched a workshop for all staff on mental wellness run by MIND called "It starts with you". Approx. 200 staff and managers attended these. This led to the introduction of Wellness Action Plans (WAPs). A WAP can actively help employees support their own mental health by reflecting on the causes of stress and poor mental health, and taking ownership of practical steps to help address these triggers. This process can also help manager to open up dialogue with employees, understand their needs and experiences and ultimately better support their mental health.

2.5.5 We have set up a Health and Wellbeing forum which will:-

- Annually review the Council's Health and Wellbeing Statement and agree an action plan to support this, ensuring this is focused on the right areas and is sufficiently challenging to deliver tangible and sustainable health improvements.
- Decide how we are going to evaluate the success of any new health or wellbeing before it is introduced. Effective measures will help identify what is, or isn't, working.
- Review progress against the action plan.
- On an agreed cycle, review Council data such as rates and reasons for sickness absence, Occupational Health referrals, participation in Council health and wellbeing activities etc. and identify any areas or staff groups that may need more targeted health and wellbeing interventions.

3 Consultation

N/A

4 Options

N/A

5. Corporate Implications

Good management of resources including employees leads to efficient and effective use of council finances and improved delivery of council services.

6. Links to Council Policy Objectives

Monitoring staff turnover, recruitment and sickness absences and ensuring all Council policies, procedures and practices are current, underpin the delivery of the Council's aims and management principles and ensure legislative compliance and best practice.

7. Next Step

Continue to monitor and update Committee Members on a quarterly basis.

Background Papers:	None.
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Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee
 Health and Adult Social Care

Minutes

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 24 July 2018, in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 12.45 pm.

This meeting was webcast. To review the detailed discussions that took place, please see the webcast which can be found at <http://www.buckscc.public-i.tv/>
 The webcasts are retained on this website for 6 months. Recordings of any previous meetings beyond this can be requested (contact: democracy@buckscc.gov.uk)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Buckinghamshire County Council

Mr B Roberts (In the Chair)

Mr R Bagge, Mr W Bendyshe-Brown, Mrs A Cranmer, Mr N Hussain, Mr S Lambert, Mr D Martin and Mr G Williams

District Councils

Ms T Jervis
 Mr A Green
 Ms C Jones
 Dr W Matthews

Healthwatch Bucks
 Wycombe District Council
 Chiltern District Council
 South Bucks District Council

Members in Attendance

Lin Hazell, Buckinghamshire County Council

Others in Attendance



South Bucks
 District Council



1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from:

- Mrs L Clarke
- Mr C Etholen
- Julia Wassell
- Ms S Jenkins
- Mrs M Aston

The following change of membership was confirmed:

- Mr C Etholen would replace Mrs I Darby on the Committee.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr N Hussain declared an interest on items where transportation was discussed as he was involved with local transport companies.

Mr G Williams declared an interest where Children's short breaks were under discussion as he was the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22 May 2018 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A public question had been received on 20 July, too late for consideration for this meeting.

The question had been sent to the relevant health organisation for a response which would be sent to the member of the public and circulated to the Committee on receipt.

There were no further public questions.

5 ADULT SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION PLANS

The Chairman welcomed officers Ms T Ironmonger, Assistant Director of Public Health, Ms K Jackson, Service Director for Adult Social Care (ASC) Operations, and Ms J Bowie, Service Director for Integrated Commissioning. Lin Hazell, the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing joined part way through the item.

An overview of the presentation circulated with the agenda was given by officers.

The following issues and questions were raised by the Committee:

- In response to a question about how adult social care works with the NHS to improve delays in transfer of care out of Hospital, the Cabinet Member and officers confirmed that they work very closely as a system to minimise delays. The number of delays due to adult social care was relatively low compared to the national figures.
- A Member asked whether the regular ASC six monthly update to Cabinet could provide more specific and informative details on the transformation plans, including evidence of improved outcomes and delivery timeframes. Members enjoyed client case studies but wanted to understand the impact of change on the different tiers from how the service was now delivered to how it will be delivered in future. In response to a question about the new Integrated Care Service (ICS) User Group, Ms

- Jackson agreed to share more information on this Group.
- A Member asked whether the ageing population had been reflected in the plans for more care homes in future. The officers confirmed that modelling had taken place to ensure predicted growth was reflected in the plans.
 - A Member asked whether other local authorities had been going through similar transformation and whether information sharing had taken place. The officers confirmed that they had spoken to, and visited a number of other authorities, including Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire and discussions were also taking place at a national level through the Association of Directors in Adult Social Services Group. In response to a question about whether the workforce was trained to take on this new approach and whether the Service was working with local universities and colleges to provide the right level of training for the future, the officers confirmed that this was happening and 94% of the current workforce had received training,
 - There were £5.2million projected savings linked to the transformation plans. The officers confirmed that they were confident that these savings would be made. The slide in the presentation highlighting the new social care contacts and established client base shows percentages for “now” and “in the future”. The Committee asked to see the raw data behind these percentages in order to understand the proposed shifts in the different tiers in terms of actual numbers of clients.
 - A Member commented on the heavy reliance on IT in order to successfully deliver the transformation plans and asked how the IT system integrates with the health sector; Ms Bowie explained that significant progress had been made in IT. Mention was made of the Airedale model which uses Assistive technology in care homes and this was currently being looked at.
 - A Member raised concern about the pressures being placed on the community and voluntary sector and asked whether work had been undertaken to establish the sustainability of this sector. Ms Ironmonger explained that the Council had been selected to be part of a project around “Prevention at scale” and a number of stakeholder meetings had already taken place. The Council works closely with many organisations and would continue to do so.
 - Transport was identified as an integral part of the transformation plans and the Committee would like to see transport solutions included in future presentations. The Committee would like more detail around the Assistive technology service, including how technology was being used to continually improve what was available and how other innovations are being developed, the costs associated with this, the number of clients using the service and details on how future demand will be met.
 - The Committee continued to have concerns around Transitions and would like to receive regular updates on the development of the proposed 14-25 service as well as evidence that planning was starting earlier in the process.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member and the officers for their time and confirmed that a letter would be sent to the Cabinet Member requesting a response to the points raised above.

A new joint health and social care IT Director would be joining the Council in September and it was agreed to invite them to a future meeting.

6 ADULT SHORT BREAKS STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing introduced the item and Ms Bowie, Service Director for Integrated Commissioning provided details on the current Adult Short Breaks Strategy consultation.

The Chairman highlighted a recent newspaper article which made reference to the importance of unpaid carers and the estimated cost savings to the health and social care sector.

- The following issues and areas of concern were highlighted by Members: A single approach and principles for children services through to adults to improve user experience.
- A Member expressed concern about the wording in paragraph 1.2 of the strategy document and felt it would benefit from more explanation about the role of the community sector.
- It was felt that the lack of reference to young carers in both the Children's and the Adult's Short Breaks strategies needed to be addressed and the views of young carers should be included in the evaluation of the consultation so that an informed decision could be taken.
- A Member felt that the objectives outlined in the strategy needed to be re-focused to reflect what was fundamentally what carers wanted which was a break from caring.
- Comments were made about the use of Plain English and the readability of the strategy and asked that future documents were reviewed in light of this.
- A Member commented on the benefits of forging closer links with organisations representing the Armed Forces, particularly as the County Council had signed the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Transport was identified as an integral part of the success of a short break and the Committee would like to see this issue reflected more as the strategy develops.
- A Member expressed concern about the tight deadline between the end of the strategy consultation and the development of the short breaks policy and asked for reassurance that enough time had been allocated for the evaluation of the strategy. Ms Bowie confirmed that the timings were tight and the timelines might need to be reviewed in light of the feedback from the strategy consultation.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member and officer for their input and confirmed that he would send a letter on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet Member for consideration as part of the first phase of the consultation.

ACTION: Ms Wheaton

7 CHILD OBESITY INQUIRY REPORT

The Chairman introduced the draft report and asked Members for their feedback ahead of the report being presented to Cabinet in October.

Members made the following comments :

- The aim of the Inquiry was to look at how Buckinghamshire was doing at tackling child obesity which was acknowledged as a national issue.
- The issue was recognised as requiring a whole system approach and improvements would be gradual but change needed to happen as obesity had underlying complex health issues.
- The new sugar tax had raised less money than expected and therefore the funding available to promote physical activities in schools would need to be undertaken in a co-ordinated way in order to gain the maximum benefit.
- A Member commended the recommendation about using the Local Area Forums priorities budget to support local initiatives. The important role of planning was acknowledged by the Members. The report highlights the importance of lobbying Government for legislation to restrict the applications for unhealthy food outlets and also the need to include more green spaces as part of new developments.
- A Member commented that using local celebrities to endorse healthy lifestyles was very powerful and something which could be considered as a number of celebrities live in Bucks.

- Healthy Lifestyle would be a mandatory subject in schools from 2020.

The Committee thanked Mrs Wheaton, Committee & Governance Adviser, for her high quality and effective support throughout the Inquiry.

RESOLVED: The Committee AGREED the report which would now be presented to Cabinet in October and then circulated more widely to all interested parties.

8 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman reported the following:

- Bucks Healthcare Trust's (BHT) Annual Quality Accounts were included in the agenda pack and the Committee's response to the Accounts was included.
- BHT's Board meeting was taking place on Wednesday 25th July 10am-1pm, Wycombe Hospital
- Healthwatch Bucks Annual Report launch was taking place on Wednesday 25th July at 5.30pm at Wycombe Wanderers Football Stadium, Adams Park, High Wycombe
- BHT's and the CCGs Annual General meeting and family fun day was on Saturday 28th July from 11am, Stoke Mandeville Hospital

9 COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ms T Jarvis, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Bucks, presented the key highlights from the Healthwatch Bucks Annual Report.

The report had been compiled by talking to a large number of service users accessing a wide range of different health services and made a number of recommendations.

The priority from 2018/19 remained focused on social care, mental health, primary care, rehabilitation. There would also be a focus on GP access for those with no fixed abode and a street campaign targeting people's views on access to urgent care.

The annual report was being formally launched at Wycombe Wanderers Football Stadium, Adams Park, High Wycombe 25 July, at 5.30pm.

The Chairman thanked Ms Jarvis

10 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman confirmed that the issues raised at this meeting would be included in the Work Programme. There were no further comments from the Committee.

ACTION: Ms Wheaton

11 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was due to take place at 10am on Tuesday 2 October 2018 in Mezz Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury

CHAIRMAN

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Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee
Children's Social Care and Learning

Minutes

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 10 July 2018, in Mezzanine Room 1 - County Hall, Aylesbury, commencing at 10.35 am and concluding at 12.10 pm.

This meeting was webcast. To review the detailed discussions that took place, please see the webcast which can be found at <http://www.buckscc.public-i.tv/>. The webcasts are retained on this website for 6 months. Recordings of any previous meetings beyond this can be requested (contact: democracy@buckscc.gov.uk)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mrs P Birchley, Mr A Collingwood, Mrs I Darby, Mr D Dhillon (Chairman), Mr M Hussain, Mr S Lambert, Mrs W Mallen, Mr B Roberts and Ms J Ward (Vice-Chairman)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT

GUESTS PRESENT

Mr M Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Mr W Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr T Vouyioukas, Executive Director, Children's Services
Mrs M Moss, Interim Head of Commissioning for Children
Mr G Morgan, Head of Early Help
Mrs S Hawkswood, Committee & Governance Adviser



1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Mr D Dhillon be elected as Chairman of the Children's Select Committee for the ensuing year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Mrs J Ward is appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Children's Select Committee for the ensuing year.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from:

Mr D Babb
Mrs M Aston

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs J Ward and Mr S Lambert declared an interest in item 11 as they are members of the Early Help steering group.

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15th May 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions received.

Committee Members discussed the importance of public questions and encouraged members of the public to submit their questions.

7 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman thanked Mrs I Darby and Mr G Williams on their work on the Permanent Exclusions Inquiry.

The Chairman went on to thank Mrs S Hawkswood, Committee & Governance Adviser, for her contribution to the Committee and wished her well.

8 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

There were none.

9 CABINET MEMBER QUESTION TIME

The Chairman welcomed Mr M Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to the meeting.

Mr Appleyard briefed the Committee on the issues of the outsourced public service delivery for transport between Marlow and Wycombe. The service provider informed parents they had considered terminating their service without informing the Council beforehand which caused unnecessary concern. Mr Appleyard advised that the Council would communicate the business requirements of the Council with the service provider.

Mr W Whyte informed the Committee that the current week was the start of Private Fostering Week. Following his appointment in March 2018, our commissioner, John Coughlan has completed his 3 month review of Children's Services. The commissioner has submitted his recommendations to the Department for Education and the outcome will be shared once received. In addition, OFSTED had visited the Council to complete the first monitoring visit following the November 2017 inspection and will publish their findings in early August. .

The following questions were asked and responses provided.

- A Member asked whether the Council paid the bus contractors and then collected the fares from the parents. The Cabinet Member responded by confirming that parents paid the transport supplier directly.
- In response to a question about how the side-by-side project would engage with the existing teaching school structure, the Executive Director explained that schools were collaborating and would share expertise. A report went to Cabinet recently and the Executive Director agreed to provide further information for the Committee at a future meeting.

ACTION: Mr Vouyioukas

- A Member asked about the current staffing position within the Service to which the Executive Director confirmed that most of the senior appointments had been filled and were permanent positions.
- In response to a question about the issues raised from the previous Children's home visits, the Executive Director confirmed that the moral and ambience at the home had improved. Additional support staff had been provided where necessary,
- In response to a question about whether the Council was responsible for paying travel costs for agency staff, the Executive Director explained that the Council was not responsible and that a fixed cost was paid for agency staff.

10 PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 2017-18

During the discussion around the performance indicators, the following issues were raised.

- £2million had been allocated to residential homes to support the Council in placing more looked after children locally. The four homes will be located across the County.
- Recognition that improvements were needed across the system which would need all safeguarding partners working together.

11 EARLY HELP PROJECT - PROGRESS REPORT (VERBAL ITEM)

The Chairman welcomed Mr Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Mr G Morgan, Head of Early Help, who provided a verbal update on the report.

Mr Whyte informed the Committee that the pre-consultation phase of the Early Help Review had been launched. The results of this research activity would be used to inform and develop the details presented during public consultation, which would be launched in the autumn. The Early Help steering group would monitor the results of the pre-consultation.

During discussion, the following questions were asked and responses provided:

What has been learnt from the previous consultation and how can the public be reassured that their concerns have been addressed?

- The Cabinet Member commented that the launch of the pre-consultation phase had been well publicised through the local media. A firm proposal would be offered to ensure the public understood the consultation when it is launched in October. A service user's workshop was scheduled to take place shortly to ensure their views were captured and bring together initial thoughts.
- The Cabinet Member commented that accessible terminology would be important to help support understanding of the whole range of Early Help services which include Children Centres which are just one constituent part of the Early Help offer.
- The Cabinet Member confirmed the project was focusing on redirecting resources into areas which needed it most rather than saving £3.3m. The Children's Services budget had gone up from last year and Early Help had a budget of approx. £7million for 2018/19 which would be spent on delivering primarily non-statutory services.

Mr Whyte re-confirmed that this was the pre-consultation stage and the public consultation would be launched in October 2018.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member and his officers for their update.

12 CHILDREN'S SHORT BREAKS DRAFT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services was joined by Mrs M Moss, Interim Head of Commissioning for Children, who presented the report.

During discussion, the following questions were raised and responses provided:

- The Committee were seeking reassurance that the proposed strategy would not affect the quality and variety of services available to service users. The Cabinet Member explained that the draft strategy sets out an ambition to increase flexibility and choice in the short breaks offer. It also emphasises the importance of ensuring families know where to go in order to find out about the services and understand what services are available to them
- The officer explained phases of the consultation. The first phase will be a 6 week consultation on the draft Short Breaks Strategy which sets out the general direction of travel. This consultation will include children, young people and their families as well as wider stakeholders.. There will then be a second phase of consultation In the autumn which will consider the offer for children and families..

The Chairman thanked Mr Whyte and his officers for their update.

13 WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS FROM SCHOOL - DRAFT REPORT FOR AGREEMENT

The Committee discussed the draft inquiry report, including the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee AGREED the Inquiry report which would be presented to Cabinet on 10th September 2018

14 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members were reminded that the Voice of the Child Inquiry would be revisited at the next meeting.

ACTION: Committee & Governance Adviser

The Chairman advised the Committee Members to send their suggestions for the work programme to the Committee & Governance Adviser.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 4th September 2018 at 10:30 in Mezz Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.

CHAIRMAN

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2018-19

		2018		2019	
		June	October	January	March
Performance Indicators/Service Plans	Ad hoc				
Revenue Budget Proposals	Annual				
Capital Strategy & Capital Programme	Annual				
Treasury Management Strategy	Annual				
Housing Developments - Viability Assessments	Ad hoc				
Report of T&F Group on MTFS	Ad hoc				
Open Spaces & Playing Fields Strategy	Ad hoc				
Housing Strategy	Ad hoc				
Annual Review of FoI/DP /GDPR	Annual				
Frimley Park Trust Update (Wexham Hospital)	Annual				
Ambulance Service	Annual				
Local Health Providers (CCG)	Annual				
Bucks Health & Adult Care Select Cmm Minutes	Every Meeting				
Bucks Children’s Social Care & Learning Select Cmm Minutes	Every Meeting				

Notes

1. All Members will receive notification of the publication of the 28 Day Forward Plans and can raise with the Chairman of O&S any items to be added to an O&S meeting agenda.
2. Budget monitoring reports will be circulated to Members of O&S Cmm in advance of Committee to allow any matters to be raised if necessary.

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