



Civic Centre,  
Arnot Hill Park,  
Arnold,  
Nottinghamshire,  
NG5 6LU

# Agenda

## Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 28 January 2021**

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Time: **2.00 pm**

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Place: **Virtual Meeting**

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For any further information please contact:

**Caroline McCleary**

Democratic Services Officer

0115 901 3910

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# Cabinet

## Membership

**Chair** Councillor John Clarke

**Vice-Chair** Councillor Michael Payne

Councillor Peter Barnes  
Councillor David Ellis  
Councillor Gary Gregory  
Councillor Jenny Hollingsworth  
Councillor Viv McCrossen  
Councillor Henry Wheeler

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## **AGENDA**

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## **MINUTES CABINET**

**Thursday 10 December 2020**

Councillor Michael Payne

Councillor Peter Barnes  
Councillor David Ellis  
Councillor Gary Gregory

Councillor Jenny Hollingsworth  
Councillor Viv McCrossen  
Councillor Henry Wheeler

Absent: Councillor John Clarke

### **62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Clarke due to his attendance on other Council business.

### **63 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2020**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the above meeting, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record.

### **64 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None.

### **65 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT**

The Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Monitoring Officer introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, updating Members on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Infrastructure Funding statement for 2019/20.

#### **RESOLVED to:**

- 1) Note the report; and
- 2) Agree to the publication of the Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2019/20 as detailed at Appendix A to the report, subject to a minor typographical amendment in paragraph 5 at table 15; removing reference to Lambley Lane changing rooms.

**66 FORWARD PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report of the Service Manager, Democratic Services, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, detailing the Executive's draft Forward Plan for the next four month period.

**RESOLVED:**

To note the report.

**67 ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

Councillor Gregory updated Members on the programme for town centre activity over the Christmas period. He praised staff for their hard work and different approach in organising activities, in line with current government legislation relating to Covid-19.

The meeting finished at 2.25 pm

Signed by Chair:  
Date:



## Report to Cabinet

**Subject:** Prudential Code Indicator Monitoring 2020/21 and Quarterly Treasury Activity Report for Quarter ended 31 December 2020

**Date:** 28 January 2021

**Author:** Director of Corporate Resources and S151 Officer

### Wards Affected

All

### Purpose

To inform Members of the performance monitoring of the 2020/21 Prudential Code Indicators, and to advise Members of the quarterly Treasury activity as required by the Treasury Management Strategy.

### Key Decision

This is **not** a key decision.

#### Recommendation

That:

1. Members note the report, together with the Treasury Activity Report 2020/21 for Quarter 3 at Appendix 1, and the Prudential and Treasury Indicator Monitoring 2020/21 for Quarter 3, at Appendix 2.

## 1 Background

- 1.1 The Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to report on its Prudential Code indicators and treasury activity. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

1.2 For 2020/21 the minimum reporting requirements are that the Full Council should receive the following reports:

- An annual Treasury Strategy in advance of the year (the TMSS, considered by Cabinet on 13 February 2020 and subsequently approved by Full Council on 5 March 2020);
- A mid-year treasury update report (considered by Cabinet on 24 November 2020);
- An annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the Strategy.

In accordance with best practice, quarterly monitoring reports for treasury activity are provided to Members, and this exceeds the minimum requirements.

1.3 The regulatory environment places responsibility on Members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report provides details of the position at 31 December 2020 and highlights compliance with the Council's policies.

## **2 Proposal**

### **2.1 Economic update - UK**

#### **General:**

As expected, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept bank rate unchanged at its meeting on 5 November 2020, however it revised its economic forecasts to take account of a second national lockdown from 5 November to 2 December, which would clearly do further economic damage and put back economic recovery. It therefore decided to implement a further £150bn tranche of quantitative easing (QE) to start in January 2021 when the existing programme of £300bn ended.

The Bank's forecasts in November expressed optimism in three areas:

- The economy would recover to reach pre-pandemic levels in Q1 2022;
- There would be excess demand in the economy by Q4 2022;
- CPI inflation was therefore projected to be a little above its target 2% by the start of 2023 and the inflation risks were judged to be balanced.

Significantly, there was no mention of negative interest rates in the MPC minutes or report, suggesting that it remained some way from being persuaded of the case for such a policy, at least for the next 6-12 months. However, rather than saying it stands ready to adjust monetary policy, the MPC this time said that it would take whatever additional action was necessary to achieve its remit – which seems stronger and wider and may indicate the Bank's willingness to embrace new tools.

One key addition to the Bank's forward guidance in August was a new phrase in the policy statement, namely that "it does not intend to tighten monetary policy until there is clear evidence that significant progress is being made in eliminating spare capacity and achieving the 2% target sustainably". That seems designed to say, in effect, that even if inflation rises to 2% in a couple of years' time, action from the MPC to raise Bank Rate should not be expected until it can clearly see that level of inflation is going to be persistently above target if it takes no action to raise Bank Rate. Link's Bank Rate forecast currently shows no increase, (or decrease), through to Q1 of 2024, but there could well be no increase during the next five years as it will take some years to eliminate spare capacity in the economy, and therefore for inflationary pressures to rise to cause the MPC concern. It is expected that inflation will peak briefly at just over 2% towards the end of 2021, but this is a temporary short-lived factor and so is not considered a concern.

### **Covid-19:**

Hopes grew that several COVID-19 vaccines would be cleared as safe and effective for administration to the general public, and the Pfizer announcement on 9 November was encouraging as its 90% effectiveness was much higher than the 50-60% rate of effectiveness of flu vaccines, which might otherwise have been expected. However, this vaccine demands cold storage at minus 70c, which impairs the speed of application to the general population. It has therefore been particularly welcome that the Oxford University/AstraZeneca vaccine has also now been approved, and this is much cheaper, and only requires fridge temperatures for storage. The Government has ordered 60m doses and is aiming to vaccinate at a rate of 2m people per week - starting in January, though this rate is currently restricted by bottlenecks in production. A new UK production facility is due to be completed in June).

These announcements, plus expected further announcements that other vaccines could be approved soon, have boosted confidence that life could largely return to normal during the second half of 2021, with activity in the still-depressed hospitality sector returning to its pre-pandemic levels – and this would help to bring the unemployment rate down. Household saving rate have been exceptionally high since the first lockdown in March, therefore there is pent-up demand and purchasing power stored up for these services. A comprehensive rollout of vaccines might take until late 2021 or further to fully complete, but if these vaccines prove to be highly effective, there is a possibility that some restrictions might be eased, from Q2 of 2021 - once more vulnerable, and front-line workers, have been vaccinated. At that point, there would be less reason to fear that hospitals might become overwhelmed. Effective vaccines would radically improve the economic outlook once they have been widely administered, and may allow GDP to rise to its pre-virus level a year earlier than otherwise, meaning that the unemployment rate might peak at 7% in 2021 instead of 9%.

Overall, the pace of recovery is not expected to be in the form of a rapid V shape, but more elongated and prolonged. Initial recovery was sharp after Q1 saw growth at -3.0%, followed by -18.8% in Q2, and then an upswing of +16.0% in Q3; but this still left the economy 8.6% smaller than in Q4 of 2019. It is likely that the one-month national lockdown that started on 5 November will have caused a further contraction of 8% in November, so the economy may have then been 14% below its pre-crisis level.

Since November, there has been a backtracking on the easing of restrictions, due to the spread of a new mutation of the virus, and more severe restrictions were imposed across all four nations. These restrictions were tightened further on 5 January 2021 to national lockdowns of various initial lengths in each of the four nations, as the NHS was under extreme pressure. It is now likely that wide swathes of the UK will remain under these new restrictions for some months, meaning that the near-term outlook for the economy is grim. However, the distribution of vaccines and the expected consequent removal of COVID-19 restrictions, should allow GDP to rebound rapidly in the second half of 2021 so that the economy could climb back to its pre-pandemic peak as soon as late in 2022. Provided that both monetary and fiscal policy are kept loose for a few years, it is still possible that in the second half of this decade the economy may be no smaller than it would have been if COVID-19 had never happened. The significant caveat to this is if another mutation of the virus that defeats the current batch of vaccines. However, now that science and technology have caught up with understanding the virus, new vaccines may be developed more quickly to counter such a development, and vaccine production facilities are being ramped up around the world.

### **Brexit:**

The final agreement reached on 24 December 2020 has eliminated a significant downside risk for the UK economy. The initial agreement only covers trade so there is further work to be done on the services sector where temporary equivalence has been granted in both directions between the UK and EU - that now needs to be formalised on a permanent basis. As Link's forecasts have been based on the assumption of a Brexit agreement being reached, there is no need to amend these forecasts.

### **MPC meeting of 17 December 2020**

All nine Committee members voted to keep interest rates on hold at +0.10% and the QE target at £895bn. The MPC commented that the successful rollout of vaccines had reduced the downsides risks to the economy, however they were still sufficiently concerned that they voted to extend the availability of the Term Funding Scheme, (cheap borrowing), with additional incentives for small and medium size enterprises for another six months from 30 April 2021 until 31 October 2021. The MPC too had assumed that a Brexit deal would ultimately be agreed.

## 2.2 Economic update – Rest of the World

US - The Democrats won the presidential election in November, and now that they have won two Senate seats in Georgia in early January, they have effective control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate, although power is more limited in the latter. This is likely to enable the Democrats to provide more fiscal stimulus to the economy and so help the speed of economic recovery. The economy had been recovering quite strongly from its contraction of 10.2% in 2020 due to the pandemic, however the rise in new virus cases during Q4 to the highest level since mid-August suggests that the US could be in the early stages of a fourth wave, posing a threat that economic recovery could stall. The restrictions imposed to control the spread of the virus are once again weighing on the economy with employment growth slowing sharply in November and retail sales dropping.

The Federal Reserve's (Fed) meeting on 16 December 2020 adjusted the guidance for its monthly asset QE easing purchases with new language, which implied that such purchases could continue for longer than previously believed. However, with officials still projecting that inflation will only get back to 2.0% in 2023, the vast majority expect the Fed funds rate to be still at near-zero until 2024 or later.

EU – In early December, figures for Q3 GDP confirmed that the economy staged a rapid rebound from the first lockdowns, providing grounds for optimism about growth prospects for the next year. In Q2, GDP was 15% below its pre-pandemic level but in Q3, the economy grew by 12.5% leaving GDP down by “only” 4.4% - considerably better than had been expected earlier in the year. However, growth is likely to stagnate during Q4 and in Q1 of 2021, as a second wave of the virus has affected many countries. It is likely to hit hardest those countries more dependent on tourism.

With inflation unlikely to rise much above 1% over the next two years, the European Central Bank (ECB) has been struggling to get inflation up to its 2% target. It is currently unlikely that it will cut its central rate even further into negative territory from -0.5%, although it has stated that it retains this as a possible tool to use. The Bank's forecast for a return to pre-virus activity levels was pushed back to the end of 2021, but stronger growth is projected in 2022.

## 2.3 Interest rate forecast

The Council's treasury advisers, Link Asset Services (LAS) provided a forecast of interest rates on 9 November 2020, and amended this following the conclusion of the HM Treasury review of PWLB margins over gilt yields on 25 November. Rates in the table below include the 1% reduction in the certainty rate, which is now gilts plus 80 basis points.

Link Group InterestRate View		9.11.20											
These Link forecasts have been amended for the reduction in PWLB margins by 1.0% from 26.11.20													
	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
BANK RATE	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
3 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
6 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
12 month ave earnings	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
5 yr PWLB	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
10 yr PWLB	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30
25 yr PWLB	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80
50 yr PWLB	1.30	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60

The Covid-19 pandemic has done huge economic damage to the UK, and to economies around the world. After the Bank of England's emergency action in March to cut Bank Rate, first to 0.25% and then to 0.10%, it remained unchanged at the meetings in August and September - although some forecasters had suggested that a cut into negative territory was possible. The Governor of the Bank has made it clear that he currently considers that such a move would do more damage than good, and that more quantitative easing is the favoured tool if further action becomes necessary. As shown in the forecast table above, no increase in Bank Rate is expected within the forecast horizon ending on 31 March 2024, as economic recovery is expected to be only gradual.

## 2.4 Investment strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2020/21, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by Council on 5 March 2020, and sets out the Council's investment priorities as:

- Security of capital;
- Liquidity;
- Yield.

Whilst the Council will always seek to obtain the optimum return (yield) on its investments, this will at all times be commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. In the current economic climate it is considered appropriate either to keep investments short term to cover cash flow needs, or to extend the period up to 12 months with highly rated financial institutions, selected by the use of the LAS creditworthiness methodology (see below) which includes consideration of sovereign ratings.

Investment counterparty limits for 2020/21 are generally **£3m** per individual counterparty, however a higher limit of **£4m** per Money Market Fund is considered prudent since such funds are already by definition highly diversified investment vehicles. There is no limit on Investment with the Debt Management Office (DMO) since this represents borrowing from central government. The Chief Financial

Officer has delegated authority to vary these limits as appropriate, and then to report any change to Cabinet as part of the next quarterly report.

Members are advised that on 27 November 2020, the CFO approved an extension of the limit with Santander from £3m to £4m, making it equivalent to the limits in place for the MMFs. This was carefully considered and judged to be prudent, since rates with the three MMFs were just 0.01%, 0.035% and 0.056% and short-term rates with the DMO were **negative** – meaning that it would cost the Council to place its own funds. There is inevitably a balance to be struck between security and yield and Santander offers the Council preferential rates of 0.4% and 0.58% respectively on its 95 and 180 day notice accounts, and has to give a 60 day notice period of any change. The Link Asset Services methodology currently indicates that investment with Santander for up to 6 months is appropriate, indicating a satisfactory level of risk for the significantly higher return.

Members are also advised that the CFO has approved a reduced limit of £3m with the CCLA PSDF money market fund in recognition of the existing £1m investment in the CCLA LAPF property fund. This ensures that the overall counterparty exposure remains at only £4m, to include both specified and non-specified investments.

Limits with investment counterparties have not exceeded the prevailing levels approved by the CFO during the period 1 April to 31 December 2020.

Credit ratings advice is taken from LAS and the Chief Financial Officer has adopted the LAS credit rating methodology for the selection of investment counterparties. This employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from all three of the main rating agencies to give a suggested maximum duration for investments. Accordingly it does not place undue reliance on any one agency's ratings.

The methodology subsequently applies an “overlay” to take account of positive and negative credit watches and/or credit outlook information, which may increase or decrease the suggested duration of investments. It then applies a second overlay based on the credit default swap spreads for institutions, the monitoring of which has been shown to give an early warning of likely changes in credit ratings. It also incorporates sovereign ratings to ensure selection of counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries. The current Treasury Strategy permits the use of any UK counterparties subject to their individual credit ratings under the LAS methodology. It also permits the use of counterparties from other countries with a minimum sovereign rating of AA. For information, the UK currently has a rating of AA minus.

The LAS modelling approach combines all the various factors in a weighted scoring system and results in a series of colour coded bands which indicate the creditworthiness of counterparties. The colour bandings are as follows:

- Yellow 5 years (UK Government debt or its equivalent)
- Dark pink 5 years for Ultra Short Dated Bond Funds (credit score 1.25)
- Light pink 5 years for Ultra Short Dated Bond Funds (credit score 1.50)
- Purple 2 years
- Blue 1 year (nationalised or semi nationalised UK banks only)
- Orange 1 year
- Red 6 months
- Green 100 days
- No colour not to be used

Although the credit rating agencies changed their outlook on many UK banks from stable to negative outlook during the quarter ended 30 June 2020, due to upcoming risks to banks' earnings and asset quality during the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, the majority of ratings were affirmed due to the continuing strong credit profiles of UK banks. However, during Q1 and Q2 of 2020, banks did make provisions for "expected" credit losses and the rating changes reflected these provisions. During the quarters ahead, more information will emerge on "actual" levels of credit losses (quarterly performance is normally announced in the second half of the month following the end of the quarter.) This has the potential to cause rating agencies to further revisit their ratings in due course. These adjustments could be negative or positive, although it should also be borne in mind that UK banks went into this pandemic with strong balance sheets. Indeed, the Financial Policy Committee (FPC) report on 6 August revised down their expected credit losses for the banking sector to "somewhat less than £80bn". They stated that, in their assessment, "banks have buffers of capital more than sufficient to absorb the losses that are likely to arise under the MPC's central projection". The FPC stated that for real stress in the sector, the economic output would need to be twice as bad as the MPC's projection, with unemployment rising to above 15%.

All three of the major rating agencies have reviewed banks around the world, with similar results in many countries of most banks being placed on negative watch, but with a small number of actual downgrades.

At the outset of the pandemic Link conducted stress testing on their credit methodology-based list of counterparties to test for the results of a 1-notch downgrade to all long-term ratings from all agencies. Under such a scenario, only a very small number of potential counterparties moved from Green (100 days) to No Colour (not to be used). While there were a further 17 drops in other entities' suggested durations, these entities still remained potentially available for use.

Credit ratings are monitored weekly and the Council is also alerted to interim changes by its use of the LAS creditworthiness service, however ratings under the methodology, including sovereign ratings, will not necessarily be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution. Other information sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to

the banking sector in order to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.

The ultimate decision on what is prudent and manageable for the Council will be taken by the Chief Financial Officer under the approved scheme of delegation.

## 2.5 Treasury Activity during Quarter 3 of 2020/21

The Treasury Activity Report for the quarter ended 31 December 2020 is attached at Appendix 1, in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy.

Members will note that investment interest of £79,710 was generated from MMF activity, term deposits with banks and building societies, and the property fund, during the period from 1 April to 31 December 2020. This represents an overall equated rate for the Council of 0.47% and outperforms the benchmark 7 day LIBID rate, which averaged negative 0.06% for the same period. In cash terms this represents additional income to the General Fund of around £89,900 and was achieved by positive investment management, and in particular a favourable return on the property fund (see below). Performance in respect of the longer 3 month LIBID rate, which averaged 0.04%, still represents additional income of £72,900.

During the period from 1 April to 31 December 2020, significant use was made of the Council's three Money Market Funds (MMFs). These are AAA rated investment vehicles which allow the pooling of many billions of pounds into highly diversified funds, thus reducing risk. The current rates of return on these funds are between Nil and 0.04%, which whilst exceptionally low, remain for two of the funds higher than overnight treasury deposit rates, and the rate obtainable from the Debt Management Office (DMO), which for most durations is currently 0.01%, and indeed negative for overnight and very short term deposits.

The Council made an investment of £1m in the CCLA Local Authority Property Fund (LAPF) on 1 December 2017. The LAPF is a local government investment scheme approved by the Treasury under the Trustee Investments Act 1961 (section 11). Dividends are treated as revenue income and have in previous years averaged around 4%. However, in the current economic conditions it was initially anticipated that returns would be only around 70-75% of the previous level, ie approximately 2.8-3.0%, for at least the first two quarters of 2020/21. So far the fund has performed relatively well, and the Q1 and Q2 dividends paid were approximately 3.55% and 3.9% respectively. The confirmed dividend for Q3, due to be paid on 29 January is 4.7%, however economic conditions remain challenging, especially in the light of the latest lockdown.

This investment allows the Council to introduce a property element into its investment portfolio without the risks associated with the direct purchase of assets. It should be noted however that the capital value is **not** guaranteed and can fall as well as rise, as was the case in 2019/20 when the certificated value of the

investment fell from £971k to £936k. The capital value has continued to fall and stood at £910k at 31 December, having improved from £895k at 31 August 2020. CCLA fully expect this position to recover, however it serves to demonstrate that the investment must be seen as a long-term commitment (see 2.9 below).

Interest rates in the market remain exceptionally low, and this is likely to continue in view of the pandemic, as well as the ongoing uncertainty surrounding Brexit and the ending of the transition period. As loans mature every effort is made to replace them at favourable rates, however security and liquidity will always be the overriding factors in the Council's treasury management. LAS currently forecast that Bank Rate is unlikely to rise again until at least mid-2024, however there is much uncertainty and interest rates are then expected to rise only gradually, and not significantly.

It is still anticipated that the outturn for investment interest will be broadly in line with the current approved estimate of £95,000 for 2020/21. Whilst rates in the market are below those used in the estimates, the level of cash balances for short term investment has remained significantly higher than that estimated, and every effort has been made to maximise use of the most favourable rates available. In particular, two fixed term deposits made in February 2020 at 1.05% are making a significant contribution, along with the property fund and the extension to the counterparty limit with Santander.

## 2.6 New borrowing

At 31 December 2020 no new borrowing had been undertaken, and it is not anticipated that any will be required before 31 March. The projected outturn for PWLB interest payable is £341,300, which is in line with the current approved estimate.

Members are aware that the Council previously approved a Commercial Property Investment Strategy (CPIS) aimed at the generation of funding to replace central government support, which had been withdrawn. Significant additional borrowing would be required to support this commercial programme, supported by individual business case assessments and appropriate budget approvals, to demonstrate that each project generated a return sufficient to cover any borrowing costs.

HM Treasury has now concluded its consultation with regard to the use of PWLB for commercial investment and as anticipated, it is now clear that the Council's CPIS programme is no longer viable. Accordingly, it is proposed that the CPIS is withdrawn (Quarter 3 Budget Performance Report elsewhere on this agenda) and the budget of £5m for commercial property investment removed from the capital programme. More details of HMT's conclusion are given at 2.9 below.

Advice will be taken from LAS with regard to the amount and timing of any additional borrowing, and should conditions become advantageous, some borrowing in advance of need will also be considered by the Chief Financial

Officer. The Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) represents its underlying need to borrow to finance capital investment. Due to favourable interest rates, borrowing in advance of need is sometimes desirable, with the result that the CFR can differ to the actual borrowing planned in the year. Investment guidance issued in February 2018 reaffirmed that Councils may not borrow in advance of need purely to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed, rather than prudent early borrowing for a demonstrable service objective, which is permitted.

Whilst HMT's review removed the possibility of using PWLB to finance commercial property investment, it also reduced interest rates by 1% across the board from 26 November 2020. However, investment rates remain exceptionally low, and serious consideration must be given to the cost of carrying any additional borrowing during the period prior to it being required for the financing of capital expenditure since this places a further burden on the General Fund.

## 2.7 Debt rescheduling

When the current day PWLB rate for the same term is higher than that being paid on an existing loan there is the potential for a discount to be receivable if the loan is repaid prematurely.

However, debt rescheduling opportunities are limited in the current economic climate, and due to the structure of PWLB interest rates. Advice in this regard will continue to be taken from LAS. No debt rescheduling has been undertaken during the period from 1 April to 31 December 2020.

## 2.8 Compliance with Prudential and treasury indicators

It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limit. The Council's approved Prudential and Treasury Indicators (affordability limits) are included in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) approved by Full Council on 5 March 2020.

During the financial year to date the Council has at all times operated within the treasury limits and Prudential Indicators set out in the Council's TMSS, and in compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices. The Prudential and Treasury Indicators as at 31 December 2020 are shown at Appendix 2.

### A) Prudential Indicators:

These indicators are based on estimates of expected outcomes, and are key indicators of "affordability". They are monitored on a quarterly basis, and Appendix 2 compares the approved indicators with the projected outturn for 2020/21, and shows variances on the indicators, as described below:

a. Capital Expenditure

The capital programme previously included both service related expenditure and commercial property investment, however as discussed at 2.6 above and 2.9 below the budget for commercial property investment has now been removed.

The latest projected outturn shows that total capital expenditure is expected to be £3,970,900. This differs to the approved indicator of £11,225,600 due to the inclusion of approved carry-forward requests from 2019/20 and variations on the current year's capital programme. These variations include the removal of £5m in respect of commercial property investment.

b. Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The CFR represents the historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from capital or revenue resources, and is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need. The CFR does not increase indefinitely since the minimum revenue provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge for the economic consumption of capital assets.

The projected closing CFR for 2020/21 is £10,506,700. This differs to the approved indicator of £17,353,900, due to savings and deferrals on the 2019/20 capital programme, as well as to variations to the current year's capital programme. Again, these variations include the removal of £5m in respect of commercial property investment.

c. Gearing ratio

The concept of "gearing" compares the total underlying borrowing need (the CFR) to the Council's total fixed assets and the gearing ratio can provide an early indication where debt levels are rising relative to long term assets held.

The projected gearing ratio at 31 March 2021 is 30%, which is lower than the approved indicator of 37% but remains broadly comparable with the average gearing ratio for councils of a similar size.

d. Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream – service related and commercial property

These indicators identify the trend in the cost of borrowing net of investment income against the net revenue stream. Financing costs represent the element of the Council's budget to which it is committed even before providing any services.

The projected outturn of 11.50% for service related expenditure differs to the approved indicator of 18.61% due to a reduction in MRP arising from savings and deferrals on the capital programme in 2019/20 and reduced PWLB interest payable in 2020/21 due to the timing of new borrowing. In addition, variations to

the 2020/21 capital programme including slippage to 2021/22 have associated reductions in requirement for direct revenue financing.

The projected outturn in respect of commercial property is Nil. This differs to the approved indicator of 0.72% because no commercial investment activity was undertaken in 2019/20, and hence no MRP falls due in 2020/21, and similarly no PWLB interest will now be attributable to commercial activities in 2020/21 following the proposed withdrawal of the CPIS (see 2.6 above and 2.9 below).

e. Ratio of commercial property income to net revenue stream

This indicator seeks to demonstrate the extent to which the loss of commercial property income would impact on the Council, ie. to measure the “proportionality” of commercial activity.

No commercial property acquisitions had been made at 31 December 2020, and as noted at 2.6 above, it is now proposed that the CPIS programme be withdrawn and the £5m budget removed from the 2020/21 capital programme. The projected outturn for this indicator is therefore now Nil, which differs to the approved indicator of 1.41%.

f. Maximum gross debt

The Council must ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the opening capital financing requirement, plus estimates of any additional CFR for 2020/21 and the following two financial years. This allows flexibility for early borrowing for future years, but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes. The Council’s gross debt at 31 December 2020 was £9.812m, which was within the approved indicator.

g. Ratio of internal borrowing to CFR

The Council is currently maintaining an “internal borrowing” position, ie. the underlying borrowing need (CFR) has not yet been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council’s reserves and balances is being used as a temporary measure.

The projected outturn for internal borrowing is 7%, which is lower than the approved indicator of 26% due to variations to the capital programme - which in turn reduce the projected outturn for CFR and hence the difference between CFR and projected external borrowing.

B) Treasury Management Indicators:

These indicators are based on limits, beyond which activities should not pass without management action. They include two key indicators of affordability and

four key indicators of prudence.

Affordability:

a. Operational boundary for external debt

This is the limit which external debt is not “normally” expected to exceed. In most cases, this would be a similar figure to the CFR, but it may be lower or higher depending on the levels of actual debt, and must allow for unusual cashflow movements.

b. Authorised limit for external debt

This limit represents a control on the “maximum” level of borrowing. It is the statutory limit determined under s3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003 and represents the limit beyond which external debt is prohibited. The Authorised Limit must be set, and revised if necessary, by Full Council. It reflects a level of external debt which, while not desirable, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils’ plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.

Prudence:

c. Upper limits for the maturity structure of borrowing

These are set to reduce the Council’s exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing.

d. Maximum new principal sums to be invested during 2020/21 for periods in excess of one year (365 days)

All such investments are classified as “non-specified”. This indicator is subject to the overall limit for non-specified investments set out in the TMSS, and to the overall limit per counterparty.

e. Interest rate exposure

The latest Treasury Management Code requires a statement in the TMSS explaining how interest rate exposure is managed and monitored by the Council, and this is repeated below:

*The Council has a general preference for fixed rate borrowing in order to minimise uncertainty and ensure stability in the charge to revenue, however it is acknowledged that in certain circumstances, some variable rate borrowing may be prudent, for example if interest rates are expected to fall. The Council’s investments are generally for cashflow purposes and accordingly a mix of fixed and variable rates will be used to*

*maximise flexibility and liquidity. Interest rate exposure will be managed and monitored on a daily basis by the Chief Financial Officer.*

Local indicators for the proportions of fixed and variable rate loans, have been retained by the Council for information purposes.

Appendix 2 shows the actual position as at 31 December 2020, and demonstrates that all activities are contained within the currently approved limits.

## 2.9 Other Issues

### a. PWLB Consultation by HM Treasury (HMT)

Over recent years there has been a significant rise in commercial property investment by local authorities, generally financed by huge amounts of PWLB borrowing. The level of this indebtedness for commercial reasons had become a major concern for HMT and accordingly it undertook a consultation with local authorities with a view to tightening the rules. The outcome of this consultation was published in November 2020.

Put simply, HMT will no longer allow local authorities to borrow money from the PWLB to purchase commercial property if the aim is primarily to generate an income stream (ie debt for yield).

- To access PWLB funds the Council must provide a high level description of its capital spending plans for the next 3 years including expected use of PWLB;
- As part of this the CFO must confirm there is no intention to buy investments assets primarily for yield at any point in the next 3 years;
- This restriction is on a whole plan basis – ie even if the Council intends to buy investments assets primarily for yield at any point in the plan and to finance them other than by borrowing or alternative funding sources, the PWLB will not lend to it;
- When applying for a new loan the Council will have to confirm that the plans they have submitted remain current and that the assurance on investments assets primarily for yield remains valid;
- HMT do not intend to routinely review individual loans but if it has concerns it may contact the Council to gain a fuller understanding. Access to PWLB could be suspended if deliberate misuse is found. In extreme cases full repayment of loans made may be imposed, although this is thought unlikely.

The Council's current Commercial Property Investment Strategy (CPIS) makes clear that its key objectives are to acquire property that provides a "net income return", to "maximise returns whilst minimising risk" and to "prioritise properties that yield

optimal net income return”. It is also clear that the Council could only undertake commercial property investment if PWLB (or other) borrowing was used. It is therefore impossible to conclude that anything other than “debt for yield” would be undertaken, and that in the light of the HMT review this would preclude the Council from accessing any PWLB borrowing.

In addition to the above issues, the Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised the risks of property investment, and the ease with which Councils can expose themselves to unacceptable levels of risk. The current economic conditions simply do not make commercial property investment a prudent option.

Accordingly, it is proposed that the Commercial Property Investment Strategy (CPIS) is withdrawn (Quarter 3 Budget Performance Report elsewhere on this agenda) and the budget of £5m removed from the capital programme for 2020/21.

On a more positive note, PWLB interest rates are linked to gilt yields, and on 9 October 2019, HM Treasury (HMT) imposed an additional margin of 1% over gilts to all PWLB rates across the board with no prior warning. Following the HMT consultation with local authorities and the imposition of a curb on lending for commercial debt-for yield projects, this increase was reversed, and the certainty rate for which the Council qualifies, fell by 1% from 9am on 26 November 2020. This should allow access to cheaper borrowing for service investment where necessary.

b. Suspension of the LAPF Property Fund

As discussed at 2.5 above, the Council has an investment of £1m in the CCLA Local Authority Property Fund (CCLA LAPF). Notice was received from CCLA in March 2020 that the LAPF would be suspended, and that no subscriptions or redemptions could be made. Such suspension is a normal course of action in exceptional market conditions such as those experienced due to the coronavirus pandemic. Valuers could not be confident that their valuations truly reflected prevailing conditions, and where there is a material risk of disadvantage to either party, all transactions must be suspended until the required level of certainty is re-established.

Dealing in the Fund recommenced on 30 September, on the basis that conditions in the property market were deemed to have stabilised, and valuation clarity and certainty had improved. A 90-day notice period for redemptions from the property fund was introduced in order to align the dealing terms of the fund with the liquidity of the underlying assets, and to ensure resilience during periods of market stress.

The property fund is viewed as a long-term investment and the recent suspension should not cause undue concern. The latest valuation at 31 December shows a slight improvement to £910k from a low of £895k in August, and the confirmed dividend for Q3 was better than expected, due to a number of factors including one-off receipts and continued success with rent collections.

c. Negative investment rates

While the Bank of England has indicated that it is unlikely to introduce a negative Bank Rate, at least in the next 6-12 months, some deposit accounts are already offering negative rates for shorter periods. As part of the response to the pandemic and lockdown, the Bank and the Government have provided financial markets and businesses with plentiful access to credit, either directly or through commercial banks. In addition, the Government has provided large sums of grants to local authorities to help deal with the Covid crisis. This has caused some local authorities to have sudden large increases in investment balances searching for an investment counterparty, some of which was only very short-term until those sums were able to be passed on. A glut of money, which was particularly acute in the run up to the end of 2020, led to some financial entities offering yet deeper negative yields - or simply closing their books to new money until 2021 began.

Money market fund (MMF) yields have continued to fall. Fund managers have resorted to trimming fee levels to ensure that net yields for investors remain positive wherever possible and practical, however at the time of writing the Blackrock fund is paying 0%. This is not universal, and some MMFs are still offering a marginally positive return, as are a number of financial institutions.

Inter-local authority lending and borrowing rates have also declined due to the surge in the levels of cash seeking a short-term home at a time when many local authorities are probably having difficulties in accurately forecasting when disbursements of funds received (for business support grants etc) will occur or when further large receipts will be received from the Government. In addition, the impact of the change in the PWLB margin has had a marked impact on the rates being offered.

No other significant treasury management issues have arisen since approval of the TMSS on 5 March 2020 that should be brought to the attention of Members.

**3 Alternative Options**

An alternative option is to fail to present a quarterly Prudential Code Indicator Monitoring and Treasury Activity Report, however this would contravene the requirement of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS).

**4 Financial Implications**

No specific financial implications are attributable to this report.

**5 Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

There are no carbon reduction/environmental sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **8 Appendices**

1. Treasury Activity Report 2020/21 for Quarter 3 (31 December 2020).
2. Prudential and Treasury Indicator Monitoring 2020/21 for Quarter 3.

## **9 Background Papers**

None identified.

## **10 Reasons for Recommendation**

To comply with the requirements of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

**Statutory Officer approval:**

**Approved by:** Chief Financial Officer

**Date:** 19.01.21

**Approved by:** Monitoring Officer

**Date:** 20.01.21

## For Quarter ended 31 December 2020

	<u>Position @ 1 Oct 2020</u>	<u>Loans Made During Q3</u>	<u>Loans Repaid During Q3</u>	<u>Position @ 31 Dec 2020</u>
	£	£	£	£
<b><u>Long Term Borrowing</u></b>				
PWLB	9,811,577	0	0	9,811,577
<b>Total Long Term Borrowing</b>	<b>9,811,577</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,811,577</b>
<b><u>Temporary Borrowing</u></b>				
Local Authorities	0	0	0	0
Central Government	0	0	0	0
Banks & Other Institutions	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Temporary Borrowing</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL BORROWING</b>	<b>9,811,577</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,811,577</b>
<b><u>Long Term Investment</u></b>				
CCLA LAPF Property Fund	(1,000,000)	0	0	(1,000,000)
<b>Total Long Term Investment</b>	<b>(1,000,000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,000,000)</b>
<b><u>Short Term Investment</u></b>				
Aberdeen Standard MMF	(4,000,000)	(240,000)	240,000	(4,000,000)
Bank of Scotland	(3,000,000)	0	0	(3,000,000)
Barclays	(1,300,000)	(2,650,000)	1,300,000	(2,650,000)
Blackrock MMF	(920,000)	(8,510,000)	5,430,000	(4,000,000)
CCLA PSDF (MMF)	(3,000,000)	0	0	(3,000,000)
Close Brothers	(2,000,000)	0	0	(2,000,000)
Debt Management Office	0	(9,500,000)	7,600,000	(1,900,000)
Goldman Sachs	0	0	0	0
HSBC Treasury	(2,100,000)	(10,535,000)	9,635,000	(3,000,000)
Local Authorities & Other	0	0	0	0
Nationwide	0	0	0	0
Santander	(3,000,000)	(1,000,000)	0	(4,000,000)
<b>Total Short Term Investment</b>	<b>(19,320,000)</b>	<b>(32,435,000)</b>	<b>24,205,000</b>	<b>(27,550,000)</b>
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENT (See below)</b>	<b>(20,320,000)</b>	<b>(32,435,000)</b>	<b>24,205,000</b>	<b>(28,550,000)</b>
<b>NET BORROWING / (INVESTMENT)</b>	<b>(10,508,423)</b>	<b>(32,435,000)</b>	<b>24,205,000</b>	<b>(18,738,423)</b>

**Temporary Borrowing & Investment Statistics at 31 December 2020****Investment:**

Fixed Rate Investment	(8,400,000)	(22,685,000)	18,535,000	(12,550,000)
Variable Rate Investment	(11,920,000)	(9,750,000)	5,670,000	(16,000,000)
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENT</b>	<b>(20,320,000)</b>	<b>(32,435,000)</b>	<b>24,205,000</b>	<b>(28,550,000)</b>

Proportion of Fixed Rate Investment	43.96%
Proportion of Variable Rate Investment	56.04%
Temporary Investment Interest Receivable	£ 79,710
Equated Temporary Investment	£ 16,787,309
Weighted Average Interest Rate Received (Interest Receivable / Equated Investment)	0.47%
7 Day LIBID (Benchmark)	(NB Negative) -0.06%
3 Month LIBID	0.04%

**Borrowing:**

Temporary Borrowing Interest Payable	£ -
Equated Temporary Borrowing	£ -
Weighted Average Interest Rate Paid (Interest Payable / Equated Borrowing)	n/a
7 Day LIBOR (Benchmark)	0.06%

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## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Quarterly Budget Monitoring and Virement Report – Quarter 3  
December 2020

**Date:** 28 January 2021

**Author:** Senior Leadership Team

### **Wards Affected**

Borough-wide

### **Purpose**

- To update Cabinet on the forecast outturn for Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2020/21. The budgets include all approved carried forward amounts from the 2019/20 financial year.
- To request approval from Cabinet for the changes to the budget as set out in this report.
- To request approval for the withdrawal of the Commercial Property Investment Strategy.

### **Key Decision**

This is a key decision.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**Members are recommended to:**

- 1) approve the General Fund Budget virements set out in Appendix 1;**
- 2) approve the amendments to the Capital programme set out in Appendix 3;**
- 3) note the use of reserves and funds and virements approved during quarter three as detailed in Appendix 2;**
- 4) agree the withdrawal of the Commercial Property Investment Strategy as detailed in paragraph 2.7 and recommend it to Council for approval.**

## 1. Background

1.1 The Council has made a commitment to closely align budget and performance management. This is in line with accepted good practice.

1.2 To deliver this commitment, systems to monitor performance against revenue and capital budgets, improvement activity and performance indicators have all been brought together and are now embedded in the way the Council works. Whilst the budget and performance information is presented in 2 separate reports, they are reported to Cabinet together and will appear on the same agenda.

## 2. Proposal

### 2.1 General Fund Revenue Budget Summary

The following table summarises the overall financial position of the General Fund Revenue Budget and the expected total spend for the year. This information has been compiled using the best information made available to Financial Services by the relevant spending officers as at 31 December 2020.

In summary the Council's General Fund outturn is projected to be in line the approved budget of £11,602,700, including an overall contribution from earmarked reserves of £2,278,300. Members will recall approving at Quarter 1, the use of £420,600 of earmarked reserves to ensure the budget was maintained at its maximum due to the forecast budgetary impact of Covid-19. The position at quarter 2 included an approved transfer back to earmarked reserves of £100,000 enabled by the receipt of a fourth tranche of emergency Covid-19 grant funding announced by the Government. The latest position for quarter 3 includes further net budget pressures due to the continued Covid-19 related restrictions of £142,400. However, this has been contained within savings identified across portfolios.

### General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/21 – Change Analysis

	£
<b>Net Council Budget for 2020-21 approved by Council on 5 March 2020 and Cabinet's Maximum Budget is:</b>	<b>11,602,700</b>
Up to the end of December 2020 expenditure less income totalled	6,746,856
In the remaining 3 months of year we expect net expenditure to be	4,855,844
<b>Total net revenue spend for the year is expected to be</b>	<b>11,602,700</b>
<b>Total Projected Revenue (Under) / Overspend 2020/21</b>	<b>0</b>

Appendix 1 outlines how the General Fund Revenue budget is divided between the Portfolios of the Council and includes a detailed variance analysis

identifying the current proposed changes for quarter one against the approved budget for each Portfolio area. Cabinet is recommended to approve these changes.

The major variances detailed in Appendix 1 include:

**Expenditure Variances:**

- Additional Covid-19 related pressures of £14,500 as set out in paragraph 2.2;
- Deferrals of the 2020/21 efficiency programme of £44,600 not related to the Covid-19 pandemic, as listed in the efficiency table in section 2.3;
- Vacancy savings of (£63,000) across Environment and Resources and Reputation.

**Income Variances:**

- Net income reduction across portfolios of £561,900 due to the further Covid-19 related restrictions as set out in paragraph 2.2, partly offset by additional Income Compensation Scheme grant income of (£200,000), primarily related to the closure of leisure centres;
- Additional Government Job Retention Scheme Grant (Furlough) income (£234,000), primarily related to the closure of leisure centres;
- Additional lease income at Richard Herrod Leisure Centre for use as a national vaccination centre for Covid-19 of (£84,400);
- Rent Allowance - reduced overpayment recoveries partly due to suspension of activity due to Covid £134,000.

Details of the budget virements authorising the usage of Earmarked Reserves and Revenue Budget Funds as approved by the Chief Financial Officer and relevant Corporate Director in accordance with Financial Regulations are set out in Appendix 2. Virements approved by Portfolio Holders for amounts of £50,000 or less during quarter three are also set out in Appendix 2.

## 2.2 Budget Implications arising from the Covid-19 Pandemic

- 2.2.1 The financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is significant, as highlighted in the report to Cabinet on 18 June detailing the Council's response work and the subsequent on-going impacts of two further lockdowns.

In addition to the amounts reported to Cabinet in the Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report, estimated additional expenditure pressures of £14,500 are expected bringing the total estimated Covid-19 related additional expenditure to £541,600 for the full financial year.

Quarter 2 reported estimated income losses for the full year of £2,750,400. The table below shows a further reduction in income from that previously reported totalling (£561,900) mainly relating to Leisure Centres, Waste Services and Planning resulting in a total expected income reduction for 2020/21 of £3,312,300.

The total estimated budget impact for 2020/21 is £3,853,900. These pressures are presented net of any related savings.

<b>Covid-19 related expenditure at Quarter 3</b>	
	<b>£</b>
<b>Covid-19 related expenditure reported at Quarter 2</b>	<b>527,100</b>
<b>Quarter 3 Expenditure</b>	
Street Care - Additional Staff	3,000
Parks - Additional Staff toilet cleaning	17,000
Increased External Audit Fees for additional COVID19 requirements	4,500
Savings on Postage costs due to less reminders and demand notices	(10,000)
<b>Additional Expenditure at Quarter 3</b>	<b>14,500</b>
<b>Total Additional Covid-19 Related Expenditure</b>	<b>541,600</b>

*Note: Key budget pressures included in quarter 1 and 2: agency staffing and IT costs to maintain service delivery; protective equipment; homeless accommodation; deferred efficiencies.*

<b>Covid-19 related Income losses at Quarter 3</b>	
	<b>£</b>
<b>Covid-19 Related Income Losses reported at Quarter 3</b>	<b>2,750,400</b>
<b>Quarter 3 Position</b>	
Additional Net Income Reductions:	
Leisure Centre Closures	474,400
Community Centres Closures	20,400
Car Park permits and pay and display	35,000
Land Charges	21,500
Taxi Driver Training	5,000
Civic Centre room hire	3,600
Arnold Market Stalls (income recovered)	(8,000)
<b>Income losses on Deferred Efficiencies</b>	
Details set out in efficiency table	10,000
<b>Quarter 3 Covid-19 impact on Income</b>	<b>561,900</b>
<b>Total Covid-19 Impact on Income for 2020/21</b>	<b>3,312,300</b>

## 2.2.2 Central Government Funding Covid Related Pressures

During the course of the pandemic, the Government has announced various sources of grant funding to support local authorities in responding to the pandemic and cover the Council's expenditure pressures, income shortfalls and employee expenses relating to enforced closures. The table below sets out these funding streams:

	£
Emergency Funding (4 Tranches)	1,570,000
Income Compensation Scheme	1,600,000
Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme	268,000
<b>Total Estimated Grant Funding 2020/21</b>	<b>3,438,000</b>

The income compensation scheme, recognises the impact the pandemic has had on income from sales, fees and charges. This scheme provides compensation for unforeseen losses that are irrecoverable during 2020/21, and is to be extended to include the first three months of 2021/22. The scheme operates on a principles-based approach and includes a 5% deductible rate based on the 2020/21 approved budget, with the government providing compensation for 75p in every pound of relevant loss of eligible income thereafter. The scheme is restricted to compensating irrecoverable net losses, specifically from those customer and client receipts, which are charged in return for a service, where demand has been reduced due to Covid, but excludes commercial revenues, including property rents.

The grant is accessed by completing three financial returns each covering a four-month period. Two claims have been submitted covering income lost from April through to November totalling £1,200k. The Government have paid £683,000 to date, from the first claim for the period of April – July. Whilst we have not yet had confirmation of the amount of grant that will be paid for the period August – November it is anticipated that for the full year we should receive c**£1,600k** (which has been adjusted to include the impact of the latest lockdown).

The MCHLG have confirmed that any grant awards from the income compensation scheme will be in addition to the **£1,570k** emergency grant detailed in the table above, for which there is no scope for clawback in the grant conditions, and so can be used for all other pressures.

The Council have also made a claim for funding under the Government's Job Retention Scheme (Furlough), to cover for the cost of furloughing casual staff at the Leisure Centres and Community Centres, currently estimated at **£268k** for the year.

2.2.3 The current estimate of the total net budget impact of the Covid-19 pandemic compared to that previously reported at quarter 3 is:

Budget Implications Covid-19	Quarter 2 £	Quarter 3 £	Movement £
Expenditure Pressures 2020/21	527,100	541,600	14,500
Income Losses 2020/21	2,750,400	3,312,300	561,900
<b>Total Budget Pressure 2020/21</b>	<b>3,277,500</b>	<b>3,853,900</b>	<b>342,400</b>
Total Grant Funding 2020/21	(3,004,000)	(3,438,000)	(434,000)
<b>Net Total 2020/21 Budget Impact</b>	<b>273,500</b>	<b>415,900</b>	<b>142,400</b>
<i>Note For Information: see note below Collection Fund</i>			
<i>2020/21 Collection Fund Losses with budget impact in 2021/22</i>	<i>280,000</i>	<i>230,000</i>	<i>(50,000)</i>
<i>Local Tax Income Guarantee Grant (75%) receivable 2021/22</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>(172,500)</i>	<i>(172,500)</i>
<b>Estimated Net Collection Fund Losses</b>	<b>280,000</b>	<b>57,500</b>	<b>(222,500)</b>
<b>Total Covid-19 2020/21 Related Net Budget Impact</b>	<b>553,500</b>	<b>473,400</b>	<b>(80,100)</b>

In summary, the 2020/21 net budget impact of Covid-19 now reported at quarter 3 is £415,900, an increase in net costs of £142,400 compared to that previously reported due to the impact of further restrictions and now included in Appendix 1. (Note: This does not include expenditure incurred during 2019/20 of £34,500 funded by the Council).

In addition to the above Covid-19 related budget pressures the Council has also received further grant funding during 2020/21 to recognise the additional workload being faced by the Council. This includes: Business Grants, Business Rates and Council Tax Relief Administration, and Test & Trace Support Administration Grant totalling £238,000; Compliance and Enforcement Grant £48,500; Contain/Outbreak Management Grant of £248,800; and Winter Assistance Grant of £40,800; which are all currently expected to be fully offset by expenditure.

### Note: Estimated 2020/21 Collection Fund Losses

In addition to the 2020/21 immediate income losses, an increased deficit on the Council's Collection Fund is expected due to irrecoverable council tax and business rates. Gedling's share of the increased deficits is currently forecast at £230,000 but due to the technical accounting treatment of the Collection Fund deficit, this does not need to be funded until next year, 2021/22. The government announced that it will extend the period over which these 2020/21 shortfalls in local taxation are accounted for, from 1 to 3 years and regulations came into force on 1 December 2020 to enable this. This is intended to ease immediate pressures when budget setting for 2021/22. The actual deficit amounts will not be fully understood until the Collection Fund outturn position and likely bad debts have been assessed.

In December 2020, the Government announced a Local Government Covid Support Package for 2021/22 to complement the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. The package is currently subject to consultation and the full details will be reported to Cabinet in February as part of the General Fund 2021/22 Budget report. A Local Tax Income Guarantee was included as part of the Covid Support Package which intends to compensate local authorities for 75% of irrecoverable losses in council tax and business rates income in respect of 2020/21. An indicative estimate of the grant amount is included in the table above but this is subject to confirmation of the final methodology for the scheme.

2.2.4 There remains a significant amount of uncertainty around the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020/21 with key risks including:

- the resurgence of the virus requiring further response activity. A second national lockdown commenced on 5 November, and a third lockdown announced for 5 January 2020/21 requiring service closures, with expenditure/income impacts and funding not yet fully clear;
- uncertainties surrounding the capacity of, and the future demand for, our chargeable services. The key risk issue is leisure centre income.
- the continuing impact of the economic downturn on the tax collection and demand for our services for those most directly affected e.g. by predicted job losses.

### 2.3 **Efficiency programme – Progress Update**

Since 2014/15 the Council has approved four separate budget reduction programmes totalling £6.5m net of risk provision. Previous progress has been positive and budget reductions achieved have been in line with the profiled estimate. Of the total programme, £1.705m net of risk provision remains to be delivered over the period 2020/21 to 2022/23.

In terms of 2020/21, the net programme due for delivery was £808,000. Quarterly monitoring indicates the following:

<b>Movements on Efficiencies 2020/21</b>	
	<b>£</b>
<b>Approved Efficiency Programme 2020/21</b>	(808,000)
<b>Quarter 1 Deferrals</b>	256,500
<b>Quarter 2 Deferrals</b>	88,800
<b>Application of Risk Provision</b>	(100,000)
<b>Revised programme for 2020/21</b>	<b>(562,700)</b>
<b>Removal of Efficiencies at Qtr. 3</b>	
Digital efficiency unallocated	20,000
Customer Services staffing delivered in 19/20	13,900
<b>Deferred Efficiencies to 2021/22 at Qtr. 3</b>	
Econ Dev - staffing (part delivery in year)	10,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,600</b>
<b>Deferred efficiencies due to Covid-19</b>	
Land Charges income	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Quarter 3 Deferrals</b>	<b>54,600</b>

<b>Revised 2020/21 Efficiency Programme</b>	<b>(508,100)</b>
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The £54,600 quarter 3 budget impact of these projects is included in Appendix 1. £10,000 of this due to Covid-19 and has been included in the Covid impact table above for completeness. The budget impact is only accounted for once in Appendix 1.

The cumulative deferred and removed projects at quarter 3 are £399,900 which have been partially offset by the use of the Budget Reduction Risk Provision for 2020/21 of £100,000 in quarter 1.

Delivery of the 2020/21 programme will continue to be monitored and updated. The whole programme is being reviewed as part of budget process for 2021/22 to identify any risk issues and ensure new efficiency proposals are developed to replace any projects that are considered high risk of non-delivery e.g. commercial property income is proposed for deletion after the results of the PWLB consultation imposing restrictions on project requiring debt for yield (see paragraph 2.7).

## 2.4 Capital Programme

Appendix 3 details the current projected position on the Capital Programme and its financing for 2020/21, analysed by Portfolio, and this is summarised in the table below. Cabinet is recommended to approve these changes.

Quarter 3 amendments to the current Capital programme of (£6,286,700) are presented in the table below.

<b>Capital Budget 2020/21 - Change Analysis</b>	
	<b>£</b>
<b>Original 2020/21 budget approved by Council on 5 March 2020</b>	<b>11,225,600</b>
Approved Carry Forwards from 2019/20	1,507,100
Amendments Approved in Quarter 1	(86,000)
Amendments Approved in Quarter 2	(2,523,300)
<b>Approved budget for 2020/21 at Quarter 2</b>	<b>10,123,400</b>
<b>Schemes Approved in Quarter 3 by Report to the Leader</b>	<b>134,200</b>
<b>Current Approved budget for 2020/21</b>	<b>10,257,600</b>
<b>Proposed Amendments to the Programme at Quarter 3</b>	
<b>Additions to existing schemes:</b>	
Disabled Facilities Funded by Additional Grants	194,000
<b>Removals from the Programme</b>	
Commercial Investment Programme	(5,000,000)
<b>Savings on Existing Schemes:</b>	
Play Area Development - Onchan Park	(25,000)
Civic Centre Toilets	(8,000)
<b>Schemes proposed for Deferral:</b>	
Arnold Leisure Centre - Replacement Theatre System	(35,000)
Vehicle Replacement Programme	(98,000)
Gedling Country Park	(16,600)
Provision of Public Toilets	(90,000)
Play Area Development – Onchan Park	(74,500)
Arnold Market Development	(783,600)
Lambley Lane Pitch & Changing Rooms	(160,000)
Carlton Square Development	(125,000)
Hazleford Way Drainage	(65,000)
<b>Total Proposed Amendments</b>	<b>(6,286,700)</b>
<b>Proposed Revised Capital Programme 2020/21</b>	<b>3,970,900</b>
Actual Expenditure to Quarter 3 2020/21	1,676,495
Estimated Expenditure Quarter 4 2020/21	2,254,605
<b>Projected Outturn</b>	<b>3,970,900</b>

Total schemes proposed for deferral are (£1,480,700), and (£5,000,000) for removal, details of major schemes are as follows:

- Commercial Property Investment remove (£5,000,000) – see paragraph 2.7 below;
- Arnold Market Development (£784,600) – the scheme is to commence in January 2021 with spend during 2020/21 of £200,000 expected. The remainder of the budget is proposed for deferral into 2021/22.
- Lambley Lane Pitch and Changing Room development (£160,000) – the expected start date of the pitch renovations is Feb 2021 to be completed

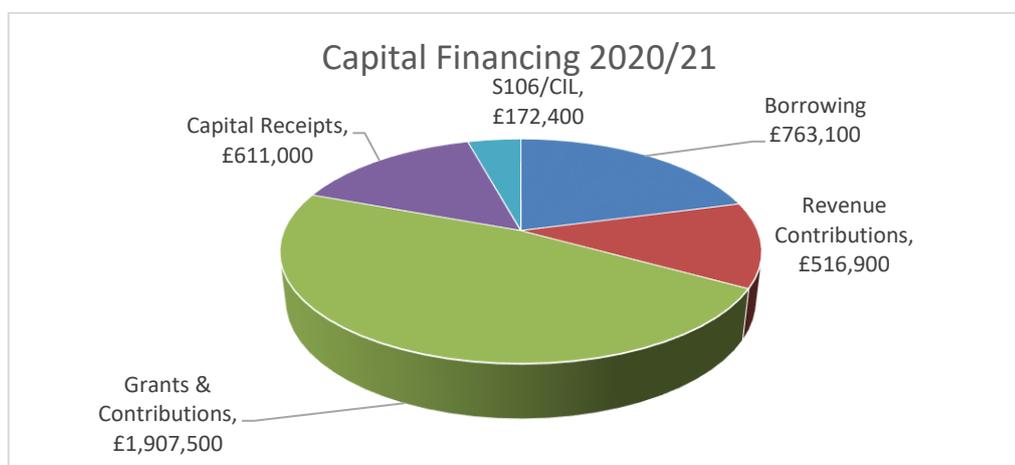
by early spring. The changing room renovation is currently being tendered with the project expecting to commence in the spring of 2021;

- Provision of Public Toilets (£90,000) – option appraisal underway. The scheme is expected to commence early in the 2021/22.
- Carlton Square Development (£100,000) – the project will commence early in 2021 with completion expected in 2021/22;
- Carlton Square Service Yard (£25,000) – scheme will commence early in the 2021/22;
- Vehicle Replacement Programme (£98,000) – due to COVID19 there are significant delays in the supply chain for new vehicles resulting in a number of replacements being deferred until 2021/22. The maintenance cost associated with the retained vehicles will be accommodated in current budgets;
- Play Area Development (£74,500) – construction for Onchan Park will commence in March 2021 and will be completed in May 2021;
- Hazleford Way Drainage (£65,000) – project design solution being finalised;
- Arnold Centre Leisure Centre Replacement Theatre System (£35,000) – a number of different options are being considered for a replacement system, which can be specifically tailored to the Theatre. The project is now expected to commence in 2021/22.
- Gedling Country Park (£16,600) – proposed for allocation to Sand martin Bank project in 2021/22

Capital schemes are monitored on a quarterly basis, meetings are currently held between finance officers and service/project officers.

## 2.5 Capital Programme Financing

The projected method of financing the current capital programme requirement of £3,970,900 is detailed in Appendix 3 and summarised in the chart below.



## 2.6 **Capital Receipts Monitoring**

When the Council sells General Fund assets it is permitted to use this income to fund capital expenditure. The initial capital receipts estimate for 2020/21 projects that £611,000 will be generated and used to finance the capital programme in 2020/21. There is no change to the capital receipts estimate projected at quarter 3 monitoring.

## 2.7 **Commercial Property Investment Strategy**

As detailed in paragraph 2.4 it is proposed that the Commercial Property Investment Scheme of £5,000,000 be removed from the capital programme.

The scheme was approved under the scope of the Commercial Property Investment Strategy (CPIS) which was approved by Council on 24 April 2019, of which key objectives included:

- Acquire properties that provide a net income return to GBC;
- Maximise returns whilst minimising risk;
- Prioritise properties that yield optimal net income and long-term capital growth.

The £5,000,000 investment was introduced as part of the Council's efficiency programme which was intended to generate a net return of £100,000 of revenue income per annum which will not now be achievable.

The capital financing of the scheme was planned through borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB).

The Government offers low-cost loans through PWLB to support Local Authorities to enable capital investment in their communities. Over recent years there has been a significant rise in commercial property investment by local authorities, generally financed by huge amounts of PWLB borrowing. The level of this indebtedness for commercial reasons had become a major concern for HMT and accordingly it undertook a consultation with local authorities with a view to tightening the rules. The outcome of this consultation was published in November 2020.

Put simply, HMT will no longer allow local authorities to borrow money from the PWLB to purchase commercial property if the aim is primarily to generate an income stream (i.e. debt for yield).

- To access PWLB funds the Council must provide a high level description of its capital spending plans for the next 3 years including expected use of PWLB;
- As part of this the CFO must confirm there is no intention to buy investments assets primarily for yield at any point in the next 3 years;

- This restriction is on a whole plan basis – ie even if the Council intends to buy investments assets primarily for yield at any point in the plan and to finance them other than by borrowing or alternative funding sources, the PWLB will not lend to it;
- When applying for a new loan the Council will have to confirm that the plans they have submitted remain current and that the assurance on investments assets primarily for yield remains valid;
- HMT do not intend to routinely review individual loans but if it has concerns it may contact the Council to gain a fuller understanding. Access to PWLB could be suspended if deliberate misuse is found. In extreme cases full repayment of loans made may be imposed, although this is thought unlikely.

The Council's current Commercial Property Investment Strategy (CPIS) makes clear that its key objectives are to acquire property that provides a "net income return", to "maximise returns whilst minimising risk" and to "prioritise properties that yield optimal net income return". It is also clear that the Council could only undertake commercial property investment if PWLB (or other) borrowing was used. It is therefore impossible to conclude that anything other than "debt for yield" would be undertaken, and that in the light of the HMT review this would preclude the Council from accessing any PWLB borrowing.

In addition to the above issues, the Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised the risks of property investment, and the ease with which Councils can expose themselves to unacceptable levels of risk. The current economic conditions simply do not make commercial property investment a prudent option.

Accordingly, it is proposed that Cabinet recommend to Council that the Commercial Property Investment Strategy (CPIS) be withdrawn.

On a more positive note, PWLB interest rates are linked to gilt yields, and on 9 October 2019, HM Treasury (HMT) imposed an additional margin of 1% over gilts to all PWLB rates across the board with no prior warning. Following the HMT consultation with local authorities and the imposition of a curb on lending for commercial debt-for yield projects, this increase was reversed, and the certainty rate for which the Council qualifies, fell by 1% from 9am on 26 November 2020. This should allow access to cheaper borrowing for service investment where necessary.

#### 4. **Alternative Options**

Option – Not to amend the original Council approved budgets during the year to reflect the latest projected outturn position.

Advantages:

- The final outturn position of the Council can be easily compared to its

original intentions when the budget was set and areas of budget risk identified.

Disadvantages:

- Budgets not aligned to current budget pressures resulting in increased likelihood of budget overspend and emerging Council priorities not being addressed;
- Restrict the effectiveness of medium term planning process and preparation of the forward budget if pressures and areas of efficiency are not readily identifiable during budget preparation;
- Budget not reflective of latest performance information.

Reason for rejection – the option is not likely to result in the best outcomes in financial management or support delivery of priorities.

## **5 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The nature of the report is such that it has significant resource implications across the Council. The report itself demonstrates how resources are being managed.

## **6 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **7 Equalities Implications**

- 7.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **8 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **9 Appendices**

Appendix 1 - General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/21 – Budgetary Control Report

Appendix 2 - Use of Reserves and Revenue Fund Budgets and Portfolio Holder Virements Approved During Quarter 3

Appendix 3 - Capital Programme 2020/21 – Budgetary Control Report

## **10 Background Papers**

- 10.1 Detailed Quarterly Budgetary Control Exception Reports
- 10.2 The Commercial Property Investment Strategy

10.3 Public Works Loan Board: future lending terms – Response to the consultation

## **11 Reasons for Recommendations**

11.1 To align the budgets to the current pressures and priorities and ensure the delivery of Council objectives is supported.

### **Statutory Officer Approval**

**Approved by: Chief Financial Officer**  
**Date: 20 January 2021**

**Approved by: Monitoring Officer**  
**Date: 20 January 2021**

**Grand Summary**

Revenue Quarterly Budgetary Control Report

Quarter 3 2020/21

	<b>Current Approved Budget</b>	<b>Profiled Budget</b>	<b>Actual to date</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Projected Outturn</b>	<b>Projected Annual Variance</b>
	£	£	£	£		£	£
Community Development	1,507,000	825,950	699,605	-126,344	-15	<b>1,527,400</b>	<b>20,400</b>
Housing, Health & Well-being	4,327,600	2,115,807	2,903,431	787,624	37	<b>4,613,500</b>	<b>285,900</b>
Public Protection	1,604,600	628,458	449,716	-178,742	-28	<b>1,604,600</b>	<b>0</b>
Environment	5,617,900	2,441,154	2,184,889	-256,265	-10	<b>5,626,300</b>	<b>8,400</b>
Growth & Regeneration	1,077,700	492,750	533,000	40,250	8	<b>1,121,900</b>	<b>44,200</b>
Resources & Reputation	-182,200	1,694,400	-23,785	-1,718,185	-101	<b>-612,700</b>	<b>-430,500</b>
<b>Total Portfolio Budget</b>	<b>13,952,600</b>	<b>8,198,519</b>	<b>6,746,856</b>	<b>-1,451,663</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>13,881,000</b>	<b>-71,600</b>
<b>Transfer to/ -from Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>-2,349,900</b>		<b>29,262</b>	<b>29,262</b>		<b>-2,278,300</b>	<b>71,600</b>
<b>Net Council Budget (Cabinet's General Fund Maximum Budget)</b>	<b>11,602,700</b>					<b>11,602,700</b>	<b>0</b>

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO****BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020****REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED**

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable £'000	Adverse £'000	
<b><u>Community Grants</u></b>	£'000	£'000			
Supplies & Services	198.6	193.2	5.4		Saving on OAP Concessionary Grant due to COVID19 related closures, offset by income in Community Centres below.
<b><u>Community Centres</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	133.4	128.7	4.7		Due to continued COVID19 related closures vacancies have not been filled.
Premises Related Expenses	49.5	47.1	2.4		Savings on utilities due to extended COVID19 related closures.
Revenue Income	(80.8)	(44.9)		30.5	Reduced income due to additional COVID19 related closures.
				5.4	OAP Concessionary Use will not be received as OAP groups haven't attended, offset by saving in Community Grants
<b><u>Community Relations</u></b>					
Supplies and Services		40.8		40.8	COVID19 Winter Assistance Grant offset with related project expenditure
Revenue Income		(40.8)	40.8		
<b><u>Democratic Mgt &amp; Representation</u></b>					
Supplies & Services	326.2	323.2	3.0		Reduced programme of mayoral events due to COVID19.
<b><u>All other budget heads</u></b>					
Including items previously reported	880.1	880.1			
<b>PORTFOLIO TOTAL</b>	<b>1,507.0</b>	<b>1,527.4</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>76.7</b>	<b>Net Portfolio Total £20.4K Adverse</b>

**HOUSING, HEALTH & WELLBEING PORTFOLIO****BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020****REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED**

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable £'000	Adverse £'000	
<b><u>Housing Needs</u></b>	£'000	£'000			
Supplies and Services	464.4	482.5		18.1	Additional expenditure related to the provision of temporary accommodation, partially offset with additional income below.
Revenue Income	(437.4)	(443.5)	6.1		Additional income from Housing Benefits partially offsets additional expenditure above.
<b><u>Leisure Centres</u></b>					
Premises Related Expenses	835.4	775.2	60.2		Savings on utilities due to COVID19 related closures.
Supplies & Services	589.1	459.2	129.9		Savings on operational costs due to COVID19 related closures.
Revenue Income	(1,463.7)	(883.9)		664.5	Additional income loss at Leisure Centres due to COVID19 related closures.
Grant Income	0.0	(234.0)	234.0		Furlough of Leisure staff due to additional COVID19 related closures.
Revenue Income			84.7		Additional lease income at Richard Herrod for use as a Vaccination Centre.
<b><u>Housing Benefit Administration</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	467.1	461.1	6.0		Temporary reduction in hours worked.
Supplies and Services	90.4	84.4	6.0		Underspends on Subscriptions, Printing and Stationery.
Revenue Income	0.0	16.3		16.3	Test and Trace support discretionary payments offset with Government Grant.
		(16.3)	16.3		
<b><u>Council Tax Benefits</u></b>					
Revenue Income	(10.0)	(4.0)		6.0	Lower income from overpayments
Revenue Income	(481.8)	(492.6)	10.8		New Burdens grant for Gateway and Accuracy Initiative offset by contribution to reserves.

**HOUSING, HEALTH & WELLBEING PORTFOLIO****BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020****REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED**

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable £'000	Adverse £'000	
<b><u>Rent Rebates</u></b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>			
Transfer Payments	138.0	175.0		37.0	Additional Rents Rebates offset with government subsidy
Revenue Income	(133.0)	(169.0)	36.0		
<b><u>Rent Allowances</u></b>					
Transfer Payments	19,723.0	19,712.0	11.0		Reduced net overpayment recoveries partially due to suspension of activity during COVID19.
Revenue Income	(19,792.0)	(19,647.0)		145.0	
All other budget heads Including items previously reported	4,338.1	4,338.1			
<b>PORTFOLIO TOTAL</b>	<b>4,327.6</b>	<b>4,613.5</b>	<b>601.0</b>	<b>886.9</b>	<b>Net Portfolio Total £285.9 Adverse</b>

**ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO**

**BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020**

**REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED**

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable	Adverse	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b><u>Car Parks</u></b>					
Revenue Income	(144.9)	(109.9)		35.0	Lower income from Long Stay permits and Pay & Display due to ongoing effects of COVID19.
<b><u>Waste Management</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	1,696.1	1,658.1	38.0		Vacancy savings
<b><u>Street Care</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	608.7	601.7	10.0		Vacancy savings.
				3.0	Additional expenditure on HGV Agency staff due to COVID19
<b><u>Parks</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	637.9	651.7		16.4	Additional expenditure on Overtime and Agency staff offset by underspending on Apprentices and Training.
			19.6		
				17.0	Additional costs of agency staff for more frequent cleaning of public toilets due to COVID19.
Third Party Payments	52.9	57.9		5.0	Additional expenditure on work in parks that required a specialist External Contractor.

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020

REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable	Adverse	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b><u>Cemeteries</u></b>					
Third Party Payments	4.0	11.6		7.6	Tree Cutting work required for Health & Safety reasons at Redhill Cemetery. Additional income from burials
Revenue Income	(490.0)	(498.0)	8.0		
<b><u>All other budget heads</u></b> (including items previously reported)	3,253.2	3,253.2			
<b>PORTFOLIO TOTAL</b>	<b>5,617.9</b>	<b>5,626.3</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>84.0</b>	<b>Net Portfolio Total</b> <b>£8.4K Adverse</b>

**GROWTH & REGENERATION PORTFOLIO****BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020****REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED**

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable £'000	Adverse £'000	
<b><u>Development Management</u></b>	£'000	£'000			
Employees expenses	490.2	502.2		12.0	Additional agency costs to cover vacant post..
<b><u>Land Charges</u></b>					
Revenue Income	(82.1)	(60.6)		21.5	Further loss of income due to impact of COVID19.
<b><u>Economic Development</u></b>					
Employees expenses	222.6	233.3		10.7	Deferred efficiency from delayed staffing restructure.
<b><u>All other budget heads</u></b> (including items previously reported)	447.0	447.0			
<b>PORTFOLIO TOTAL</b>	<b>1,077.7</b>	<b>1,121.9</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>44.2</b>	<b>Net Portfolio Total £44.2K Adverse</b>

**RESOURCES & REPUTATION PORTFOLIO****BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020****REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED**

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable	Adverse	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b><u>Elections</u></b>					
Supplies and services	0.0	14.0		14.0	Printing costs incurred relating to cancelled police commissioners offset Government Grant.
Revenue Income	0.0	(14.0)	14.0		
<b><u>Organisational Development</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	235.2	232.2	3.0		Savings on corporate training. Savings due to in year reduction on Occupational Health referrals.
Supplies and Services	25.2	23.2	2.0		
Revenue Income	(21.1)	(16.1)		5.0	Reduced income from training due to the impact of COVID19.
<b><u>Registration of Electors</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	89.1	83.6	5.5		Savings due to reduced canvassing during the year.
<b><u>Corporate Management</u></b>					
Supplies & Services	182.9	187.4		4.5	Increased audit fees for additional requirement of COVID19.
<b><u>Health &amp; Safety &amp; Emergency Planning</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	64.6	60.6	4.0		Savings due to less training courses attended.
Revenue Income	0.0	(17.0)	17.0		MHCLG grant for flooding offset with a contribution to the severe weather reserve.

**RESOURCES & REPUTATION PORTFOLIO****BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020****REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED**

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable	Adverse	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b><u>Estates &amp; Valuation</u></b>					
Supplies & Services	28.5	61.5		33.0	Carbon Reduction Review offset by contribution from the Asset Management Fund below and a contribution from the Asset Management reserve.
<b><u>Public Land &amp; Buildings</u></b>					
Revenue Income	(120.1)	(124.0)	8.0	4.1	Reduction in rental income due to sale of premises. Recovery of Arnold Market income from previous reduction expected due to COVID19.
<b><u>Corporate Officers</u></b>					
Supplies & Services	5.0	2.5	2.5		Savings on marketing expenditure.
<b><u>Business Units</u></b>					
Premises Related Expenses	110.4	87.6	22.8		Reduced Partnership payments due to loss of rental income at Qtr.1 and a 'rent free' incentive period for new tenancy.
Revenue Income	(159.6)	(156.8)		2.8	Reduced rental income for 'rent free' incentive period on new lease.
<b><u>Public Offices</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	155.1	143.5	11.6		Vacancy savings.
Supplies & Services	32.7	27.7	5.0		Savings due to delayed vending machine delivery.
Revenue Income	(326.1)	(325.5)	3.0	3.6	Lower income on Civic Centre room hire due to effects of COVID19, offset by CPI rent increase and new room hire lease.

**RESOURCES & REPUTATION PORTFOLIO****BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020****REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED**

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable	Adverse	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b><u>Postages</u></b>					
Supplies & Services	50.2	40.2	10.0		Saving on postage due reduced recovery action during COVID19.
<b><u>Information Technology</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	326.9	311.9	15.0		Vacancy savings.
<b><u>Customer Services</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	785.9	765.9	20.0		Vacancy savings
<b><u>Central Provisions Account</u></b>					
Supplies & Services	278.2	248.2	30.0		Contribution to the Carbon Reduction Review in Estates above.
	0.0	20.0		20.0	Removal of Digital Efficiency
		198.2		198.2	COVID 19 Outbreak Contain Management Expenditure partially offset with Government Grant.
Revenue Income		(248.8)	248.8		COVID19 Outbreak Contain Management Funding
		(41.0)	41.0		New Burdens Grant for COVID19 related Business Grants Administration
	0.0	(200.0)	200.0		Additional Income compensation grant expected.

**RESOURCES & REPUTATION PORTFOLIO****BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020****REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED**

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable	Adverse	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b><u>Revenues - Local Taxation</u></b>					
Supplies and Services	1,025.7	1,027.6	3.4	5.3	Council Tax relief for Care Leavers partly offset by underspending on Stationery and Conference Expenses.
		11.7		11.7	Administration to support Covid19 related work on Business Rates Relief and Council Tax Relief offset with Government Grant income below.
		11.8		11.8	
Revenue Income	(1,206.3)	(1,276.6)	17.5		Support Grant for Business Grants Administration offset with a contribution to New Burdens Reserve
			11.7		Additional Support Grant for Council Tax Covid Relief
			11.8		Additional Support Grant for Business Rates Covid Relief
			29.3		Additional Business Rates Pool Surplus offset with contribution to reserves
<b><u>Non Distributed Costs</u></b>					
Employee Expenses	254.6	247.0	7.6		Reduction in Pension Increase Act payments.
<b><u>All other budget heads</u></b> (including items previously reported)	(1,999.2)	(1,999.2)			
<b>PORTFOLIO TOTAL</b>	<b>(182.2)</b>	<b>(612.7)</b>	<b>744.5</b>	<b>314.0</b>	<b>Net Portfolio Total £430.5K Favourable</b>

**EARMARKED RESERVES****BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2020****REVENUE ITEMS TO BE REPORTED**

Budget Head	Current Approved Budget	Latest Projected Outturn	Net Budget Variance		Reason for Variance (New Items Only)
			Favourable	Adverse	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b><u>Transfer to/from Reserves</u></b>					
<b><u>Estates &amp; Valuation</u></b>					
Contribution from AMF Reserve	0.0	(3.0)	3.0		Contribution to the Carbon Reduction Review & Plan.
<b><u>Health &amp; Safety &amp; Emergency Planning</u></b>					
Contribution to Severe Weather Reserve	0.0	17.0		17.0	MHCLG Flood Recovery Grant.
<b><u>Housing Benefits - Admin</u></b>					
Contribution to New Burdens Reserve	0.0	10.8		10.8	Grants received for admin of Housing Benefit Gateway and Accuracy Initiative
<b><u>Revenues - Local Taxation</u></b>					
Contribution to NNDR Pool Reserve	0.0	29.3		29.3	Additional NNDR Pool Surplus 2019/20
Contribution to New Burdens Reserve	0.0	17.5		17.5	Grant received - Business Grants
<b><u>Central Provisions</u></b>					
<b><u>All other budget heads</u></b>					
Including items previously reported	(2,349.9)	(2,349.9)			
<b>RESERVES TOTAL</b>	<b>(2,349.9)</b>	<b>(2,278.3)</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>74.6</b>	<b>Net Reserves Total</b> <b>£71.6K Net Contribution to Reserves</b>

**Virements Approved for the use of Earmarked Reserves  
Quarter Ended December 2020**

Usage of Earmarked Reserves		
		£
<b>1</b>	<b>Housing, Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	
	Arnold Town Centre North Project consultancy	50,000
	Contribution from Transformation Reserve	-50,000
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£50,000</b>
	<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>-£50,000</b>

**Virements Approved by Portfolio Holders  
Quarter Ended December 2020**

Revenue		
		£
<b>1</b>	<b>Housing, Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	
	B&B (Homelessness) - Block booking B&B contract	£20,000
	Enhanced private sector offer, homelessness, as part of the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)	£22,500
	Contribution from Rough Sleeping grant received	-£42,500
<b>2</b>	<b>Growth &amp; Regeneration</b>	
	Employment Land Study - Joint project with other authorities	£38,500
	Contributions from partnering authorities	-£38,500
	<b>General fund Total</b>	<b>£81,000</b>
	<b>General fund Total</b>	<b>-£81,000</b>

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Quarter 3: Detailed Capital Monitoring by Portfolio

Appendix 3

Project	Original Capital Programme	Carry F/wds	Approvals to December	Approvals During Qtr3	Quarter 3 Proposals	Revised Capital programme
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Aid to parishes		3.7				3.7
<b>Community Development</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>3.7</b>
Burton Road - Affordable Housing	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0
Station Road Carlton	165.3	2.9	-165.3	0.0	0.0	2.9
AMF - CLC Changing Rooms	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
ALC Replacement Theatre System	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-35.0	0.0
AMF - ALC Lift Repairs	0.0	25.0	23.0	0.0	0.0	48.0
ALC Steel Pillar Work	180.0	0.0	-64.0	0.0	0.0	116.0
<b>Health &amp; Housing</b>	<b>392.3</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>-206.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-35.0</b>	<b>188.9</b>
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,000.0	83.0	0.0	0.0	194.0	1,277.0
DFG staff salaries	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Conway Road Rec CCTV			15.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
<b>Public Protection</b>	<b>1,000.0</b>	<b>83.0</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>194.0</b>	<b>1,292.0</b>
Council Chamber parking spaces	0.0	15.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Vehicle Replacement Programme	503.0	35.0	-244.0	0.0	-98.0	196.0
Gedling Country Park	0.0	16.6	0.0	0.0	-16.6	0.0
Haywood Park Play Area			0.0	4.0	0.0	4.0
Cinder Path Netherfield	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PASC Trees/Landscaping equipment	83.0	0.0	-83.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Community Garden - Georgia Drive Redhill	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Conway Road Recreation Ground	0.0	91.8	9.7	0.0	0.0	101.5
Gedling Country Park Seating Area	107.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	107.8
Gedling Country Park Viewing Platforms	0.0	42.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.8
Thackeray's Lane Nature Trail Lighting	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Provision of Public Toilets	90.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-90.0	0.0
Play Area Development	333.0	0.0	-111.0	0.0	-99.5	122.5

AMF - GCP Car Park Extension	0.0	102.6	19.0	0.0	0.0	121.6
AMF - Lambley Lane Changing Room & Pitch	95.0	0.0	70.0	0.0	-160.0	5.0
Carlton Cem - Expansion/Car Park	278.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	278.9
<b>Environment</b>	<b>1,500.7</b>	<b>303.8</b>	<b>-334.3</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>-464.1</b>	<b>1,010.1</b>
Calverton Enterprise Units	1,370.0	0.0	-1,370.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hazelford Way Industrial Units	350.0	0.0	-350.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Arnold Market	983.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	-783.6	200.0
Carlton Square Development	600.0	0.0	-150.0	0.0	-100.0	350.0
Carlton Square Service Yard			25.0	0.0	-25.0	0.0
<b>Growth &amp; Regeneration</b>	<b>3,303.6</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-1,845.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-908.6</b>	<b>550.0</b>
Civic Centre Public Toilets	0.0	72.0	0.0	0.0	-8.0	64.0
Depot security barriers/signage	0.0	40.0	11.0	0.0	0.0	51.0
Carbon Reduction Initiatives	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Customer Service Improvements	100.0	0.0	-100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
IT Licences - Microsoft Office	112.0	65.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	177.0
Commercial Property	4,100.0	900.0	0.0	0.0	-5,000.0	0.0
Arnold Drainage Works	0.0	0.0	39.0	0.0	0.0	39.0
Asset Management Fund	50.0	0.0	-44.7	-4.0	0.0	1.3
On Street Charge Points	0.0		0.0	134.2	0.0	134.2
AMF - Footpath Resurfacing	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
AMF - Hazelford Way	65.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-65.0	0.0
AMF - Sound System Civic Centre	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
AMF - Car Park Resurfacing	110.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	110.0
AMF - Boundary Druids Car Park	25.0	0.0	-10.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
AMF - Roadway Resurfacing	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
AMF - Civic Centre Window Replacement	134.0	0.0	-134.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
AMF - Civic Centre Toilet Replacement	83.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	83.0
<b>Resources &amp; Reputation</b>	<b>5,029.0</b>	<b>1,078.7</b>	<b>-238.7</b>	<b>130.2</b>	<b>-5,073.0</b>	<b>926.2</b>
<b>Total Programme</b>	<b>11,225.6</b>	<b>1,507.1</b>	<b>-2,609.3</b>	<b>134.2</b>	<b>-6,286.7</b>	<b>3,970.9</b>

Capital Programme Expenditure & Resourcing  
Quarter 3 December 2020

Appendix 3

Capital Expenditure	Original Budget	Carry Forwards	Approvals to December	Approvals During Qtr3	Quarter 3 Proposals	Revised Capital programme
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Community Development	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7
Health & Housing	392.3	37.9	-206.3	0.0	-35.0	188.9
Public Protection	1,000.0	83.0	15.0	0.0	194.0	1,292.0
Environment	1,500.7	303.8	-334.3	4.0	-464.1	1,010.1
Growth & Regeneration	3,303.6	0.0	-1,845.0	0.0	-908.6	550.0
Resources & Reputation	5,029.0	1,078.7	-238.7	130.2	-5,073.0	926.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,225.6</b>	<b>1,507.1</b>	<b>-2,609.3</b>	<b>134.2</b>	<b>-6,286.7</b>	<b>3,970.9</b>

Capital Financing	Original Budget	Carry Forwards	Approvals to December	Approvals During Qtr3	Quarter 3 Proposals	Revised Capital programme
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Borrowing	6,458.9	1,217.4	-1,643.9	0.0	-5,269.3	763.1
Revenue Contributions	1,321.2	10.4	-6.1	0.0	-808.6	516.9
Capital Receipts	611.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	611.0
S06/CIL	194.8	69.2	47.4	0.0	-139.0	172.4
Grants & Contributions	2,639.7	210.1	-1,006.7	134.2	-69.8	1,907.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,225.6</b>	<b>1,507.1</b>	<b>-2,609.3</b>	<b>134.2</b>	<b>-6,286.7</b>	<b>3,970.9</b>

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## Report to Cabinet

**Subject:** Gedling Plan Quarter 3 2020/21 Report

**Date:** 28 January 2021

**Author:** Senior Leadership Team

### Wards Affected

Borough-wide

### Purpose

To inform Cabinet in summary of the position against Improvement Actions and Performance Indicators in the 2020-23 Gedling Plan at the end of 2020/21 quarter 3.

### Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

### Recommendation

**THAT:**

The progress against the Improvement Actions and Performance Indicators in the 2020-23 Gedling Plan for the end of 2020/21 quarter 3 be noted.

## 1 Background

- 1.1 The Council has made a commitment to closely align budget and performance management. This is in line with accepted good practice.
- 1.2 To deliver this commitment, systems to monitor performance against revenue and capital budgets, improvement activity and performance indicators have all been brought together and are now embedded in the way the Council works. Whilst the budget and performance information are presented in two separate reports, they are and will be reported to Cabinet together and will appear on the same agenda.
- 1.3 In addition, performance reports now focus more directly on the Council's priorities and offer an "early warning" system of instances where targets may not be secured.

- 1.4 As usual, comprehensive details about current performance against the Gedling Plan can be accessed through the following link on the Council's website:-

<http://www.gedling.gov.uk/council/aboutus/prioritiesplansandperformance/howwere/doing/>

Members are recommended to view this document which provides valuable background detail to this summary paper. It provides a more in-depth review of indicators, actions and outcomes for 2020/21 quarter 3.

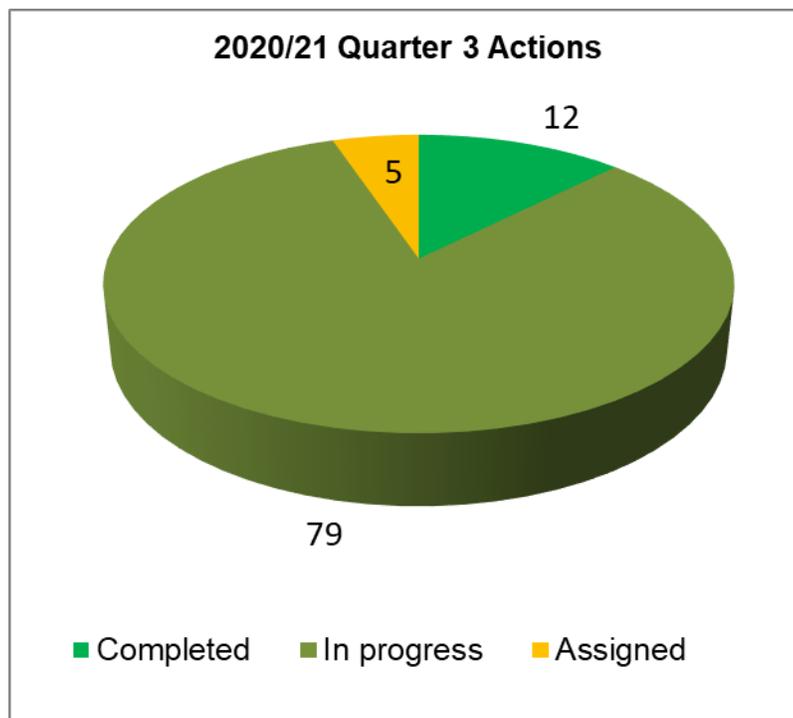
- 1.5 A full set of papers that appear on the website have been printed and these reports are available in the Members' Room. They contain explanations of variances from expected performance together with trend arrows for all the performance indicators within the Gedling Plan (note that an upward arrow indicates improved performance, irrespective of whether improvement is represented by a higher or lower value) and progress bars for all Gedling Plan actions showing progress made against project milestones.
- 1.6 The assessment criteria used for actions and indicators is based on red, amber and green traffic light symbols. To be assessed as green performance indicators must be in line with their expected performance at this stage of the year, whilst actions must be on target against the "completed" or "in progress" milestones determined within the performance management system, Pentana.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that Cabinet note the performance information for the Gedling Plan 2020-23 at the end of 2020/21 quarter 3 as set out below.

## Actions

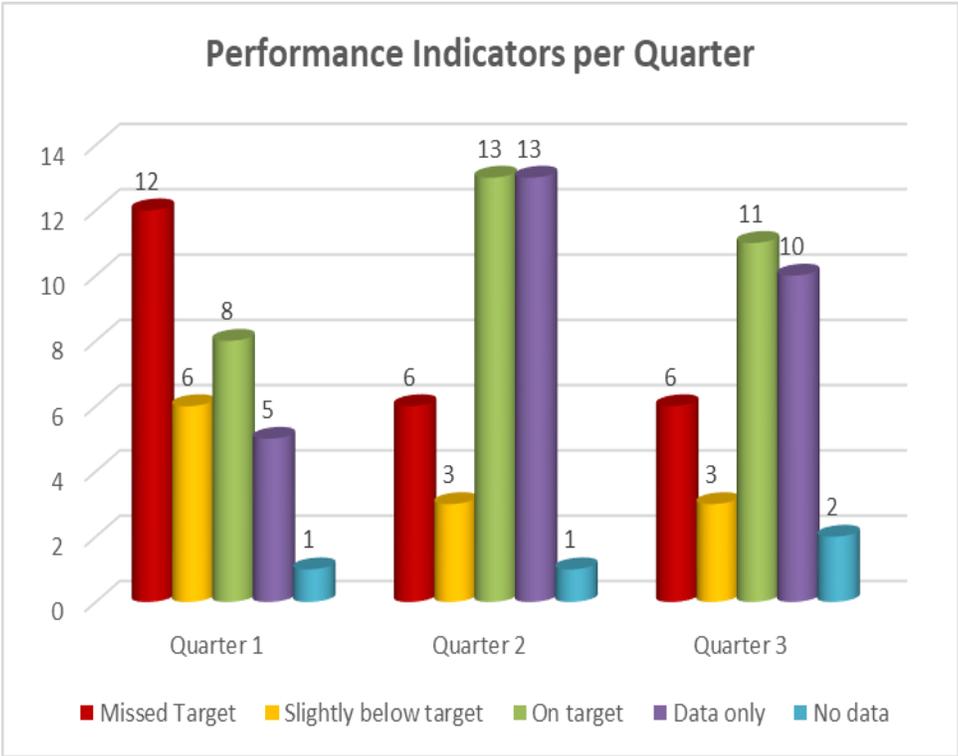
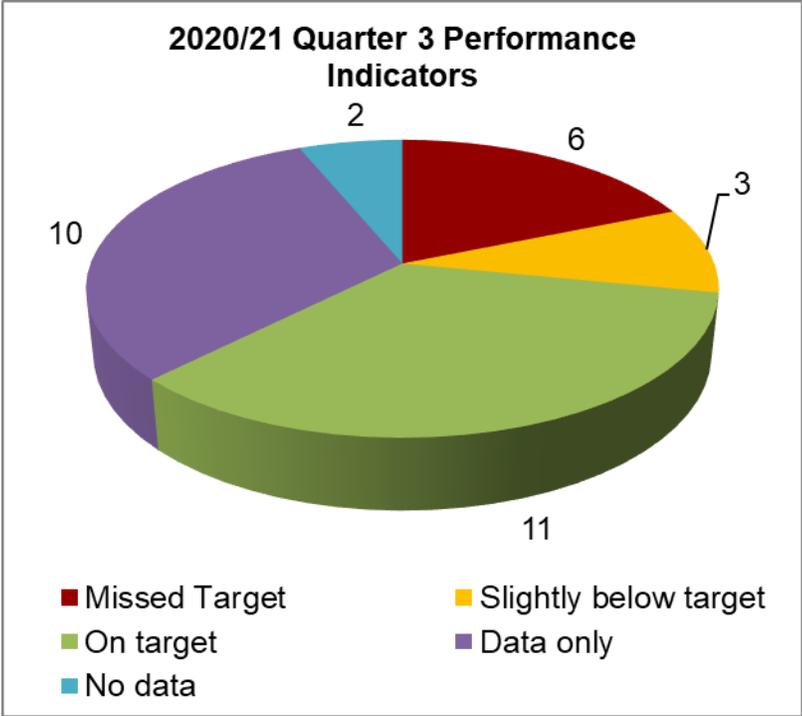
- 2.2 At this stage of the 96 actions included in the Gedling Plan 2020-23, twelve are complete, the rest are either in progress or assigned to an Officer. Members will be aware that a number of actions are due to be delivered across the 3 years of the Plan, some are expected to be started and completed in year 1, whereas other actions are not due to commence until years 2 and 3. It must be noted that the data in this report refers to quarter 3 of 2020/21 and it is expected that the majority of the actions identified for the year will be met.



## Indicators

- 2.3 Overall indicator performance at the end of quarter 3 shows that out of a total of 32 indicators, 11 were on or above target, 3 were slightly below target and 6 indicators missed their target. Ten indicators are for tracking purposes only. This has increased significantly due to the impact of Covid resulting in a number of Performance Indicators moving from target led to tracking only as agreed.

At the time that this report was produced no data was available for the indicators NI 191 Residual household waste per household in Kg and NI 192 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting. This data is provided by the County and wasn't available at this time.



2.4 Examples of particularly positive performance for quarter 3 include:

- 99.7% of fly tipping incidents removed within 4 working days
- Average time to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances (in calendar days) is 3.3 days against a target of 4 days
- 97.3% of calls to the contact centre answered (or call back made) against the target of 94.0%
- The number of Keep Me Posted email newsletter subscribers has continued to increase to 34,777
- 13 long term empty homes in the Borough returned to use as a result of Gedling Borough Council intervention against a target of 10
- 21 affordable homes delivered in Q3
- 97% of food premises scoring 4 or 5 in the national food hygiene rating scheme against a target of 90%

2.5 Heads of Service have highlighted that the following indicators are unlikely to meet their target by year end:

- Net additional homes provided
- Residual household waste per household
- Average length of time spent in temporary accommodation (in weeks)
- Percentage of Business Rates Collected
- Percentage of Council Tax collected
- Percentage of Minor planning applications processed within 8 weeks
- Working Days Lost Due to Sickness Absence (rolling 12 month total)

2.6 The following performance indicators missed their target at the end quarter 3 and are worthy of note. However from a Senior Leadership Team perspective there are no specific performance concerns to raise.

Housing

A further 62 Net additional homes were built in quarter 3, but this was below the target of 120. This Construction during this period has been affected by lockdown restrictions which resulted in development pausing on many large and small sites within the Borough. To address why the target has been missed a Housing Delivery

Action Plan was published 13<sup>th</sup> August 2020, <https://www.gedling.gov.uk/media/gedlingboroughcouncil/documents/planning-policy/documents/HDAP%202020.pdf>, this analyses the key reasons for the under delivery of the Council's housing requirement and identifies measures the Council intends to undertake to increase delivery of new housing.

The Action Plan looks at the planning policy context, provides an analysis of past housing delivery (with regards to past performance, progress on Local Plan housing allocations, engaging with developers and viability and infrastructure issues) and identifies a number of key actions which aim to improve housing delivery. A number of the actions identified in the Action Plan fall within the remit of the Council, whilst other actions will need to be supported by other stakeholders involved in delivering housing, in particular landowners and house builders.

#### Homelessness and Welfare Support

The average length of time spent in temporary accommodation (in weeks) was 22 weeks against a target of 15 weeks. The department is still experiencing high numbers of households in priority need presenting as homeless. In comparison, the amount of suitable social housing becoming available continues to decline and is not proportionate to the demand for housing in particular for larger families. We are working with the private sector to secure accommodation but this continues to be difficult.

#### Sickness absence

Long-term absence accounted for almost half of all days lost in December (122 full-time equivalent days out of 231). Three large teams all had very high levels of absence. Coronavirus sickness absence only accounted for 34 days lost out of a total of 268 days in December. The amount of days lost in December last year (231 FTE days) was almost the same as December this year (243 FTE days) although the number of days lost per employee was larger as the total number of employees in the workforce has reduced (354 FTE this year against 370 FTE in December 2019). As such, sickness absence hasn't really worsened between periods which is encouraging bearing in mind the current pandemic. Active management of long-term cases still remains perhaps the key focus and with a sustained effort to help these employees return to work as early as possible (and where possible).

#### **Achievements**

- 2.7 A separate report has been produced highlighting additional key achievements delivered during quarter 3, focusing on areas where the Council has made a real difference to people's lives. This is attached as Appendix 1 and is available on the Council's website and in hard copy in the Members' Room. The following outcomes are identified for particular attention:

**Feeding Gedling Fund – Festive Parcels** - In response to footballer Marcus Rashford's campaign around children's food poverty launched in the October half term, GBC Elected Members had raised just over £10,000 to support food for vulnerable families and children in the Borough. The Humanitarian Team worked with NCC Children's Services, ABL Health, Gedling Play Forum, GBC Customer Services, the RHC Hub and Church and Food Bank Leaders Group to identify and provide healthy, festive food parcels to the 600 most vulnerable families in the Borough in the week leading up to Christmas.

**Staff Awards** - The first ever staff virtual staff award ceremony, organised and presented by the employee engagement group ("Our Gedling"), took place in December and was attended by over 100 employees from across the Council. The award ceremony was also made available on our employee Facebook page for employees unable to attend on the day.

**APSE Award 2020** – Our Parks and Street Care team won the APSE Annual Service Award 2020 for "Best Service Team: Street Cleansing and Streetscene Service (Public Realm)." Faced with pressure on 'Street Cleansing Services', especially in the Top Valley/Warren Hill Estate area of Gedling Borough, both in terms of finances, and escalating complaints, a solution was required to resolve the situation. By establishing a 'Clean Streets Partnership' working together with neighbouring authorities and local resident groups in a dynamic relationship, Gedling Borough Council Street Cleansing Services managed to raise standards of delivery and added social value to ensure tidier streets and better integrated waste and recycling.

**ABL partnership** - ABL (A Better Life) is a commissioned service who support the population to maintain healthy lifestyles and make healthier choices. The service support they offer includes weight management, stopping smoking, intensive personalised support and well-being to name just a few. ABL will be going into partnership with Gedling Borough Councils Leisure Service department utilising the leisure facilities as a base to hold their client assessments and activity sessions. Redhill and Carlton Forum leisure facilities are the agreed venues to start with in 2021. ABL work together with partners to reduce costs across health economies delivering outcomes to clients, reduce GP appointments, mental health waiting lists and prescribing costs. Gedling Borough Council will play a part in this by providing up to date, clean and safe facilities with the latest fitness equipment and having friendly knowledgeable staff on hand to help local residents on their journey.

**Gedling Country Park** –Work was completed on a new outdoor seating area adjacent to the visitor Café 1899 at GCP. This is a new canopied seating area for 20 people plus, which will enable dog walkers to sit in shelter and drink a coffee in the inclement months ahead. The project was completed in December and opened by Portfolio Holder Cllr Barnes and the Leader.

**Business Grants (Covid Support)** - The Business Grants team continues to administer the ever changing business grants throughout the varying tiers and lockdowns. Currently 12 different grants are being administered with a combined grant value of around £11m. The Revenues Services team and the Financial Services team are administering these grants whilst still meeting statutory deadlines and maintaining performance in their day to day functions.

**Launch of the Armed Forces Membership** - On the 11<sup>th</sup> November the Armed Forces Membership was launched to residents of Gedling Borough who are retired or serving members of the armed forces. The membership gives unlimited free access to the borough's 3 fitness suites, as well as motivational sessions with the gym team and personal programme settings. Since its launch there have been over 100 applications to the scheme and lots of positive comments from eligible customers.

**One Step at a Time** - The need for "One Step at a Time" has been identified directly from the voluntary and statutory sectors reporting that the numbers of people now feeling isolated and lonely has increased as their normal networks of support have decreased or have gone digital (which they cannot or do not want to readily access). Due to shielding and increased risk factors older and vulnerable members of our communities have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic resulting in increased social isolation and reduced opportunities for physical activity. Not connecting via digital technology has left them feeling even more isolated and anxious.

The Council has supported Jigsaw Homes to deliver a pilot of the One Step at a Time project. Pilots are also being delivered by other organisations in Nottingham City, Mansfield, Ashfield and Bassetlaw and there is a group made up of all delivery partners which reports to the LRF. Volunteers have been connected to tenants of Jigsaw Homes who would benefit from a short walk in their local area to increase their self-confidence in getting out and about and improving levels of physical activity in a safe and managed way.

To date, five tenants have been identified with varying levels of need. Eight volunteers have been referred to Jigsaw Homes for matching with tenants and they are being taken through an induction process and associated checks to enable them to start speaking with and meeting tenants in person.

### **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Not to present an update on quarterly performance, in which case Executive members will not be aware of performance against the Gedling Plan 2020-23.

### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

## **5 Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

6.1 There are no equalities implications arising out of this report.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications**

7.1 There are no carbon reduction/sustainability implications arising out of this report.

## **8 Appendices**

8.1 Appendix 1 – Examples of Achievements and Activities achieved during Quarter 3 2020/21.

## **9 Background Papers**

9.1 None identified.

## **10 Reasons for Recommendations**

10.1 To ensure Members are informed of the performance against the Gedling Plan 2020-23.

### **Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by the Chief Financial Officer**

**Date: 14 January 2021**

**Approved by the Monitoring Officer**

**Date: 15 January 2021**

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**GEDLING**

**PLAN**

**2020-2023**

**Examples of Achievements and  
Activities**

**During**

**Quarter 3 - 2020/21**

# Cohesive, Diverse and Safe COMMUNITIES

## Promote and encourage pride, good citizenship and participation

**Pride of Gedling Awards** - The first ever virtual Pride of Gedling Awards took place in November. It was very popular with a very much larger audience than would be possible in a purely physical event and the feedback from attendees has been very positive.

**Gedling Youth Council** reconvened on Teams on 23rd November for the first time since February. Youth Service colleagues and Youth Councillors were able to input into question design for the Young Peoples Survey, which was launched in early December. Young people also reviewed the NCC Children and Young People Board MH2K peer led Mental Health consultation, highlighting issues for boys and young men in accessing help and support. Members were informed of their successful Lord Lieutenants Award for Volunteering, which was confirmed back in March/April 2020, pending a formal celebration planned at the Lord Lieutenant's residence in Summer 2021.

The Meeks Sisters, local residents presented their 'Kids Against Plastic' Charity and set out their aims to sign up Gedling and Countywide Primary Schools. As a result, the NCC Youth Service is rolling out sign up to the Charity and EcoToolkit by all of its Youth Centres, and the Youth Mayor is backing the campaign in Gedling primary schools, all of which have been sent the pledge and link.

Members also received a presentation from Public Health Commissioned ABL on their 'Your Health Your Way' young people's lifestyle initiative, and a short wellbeing survey was circulated to members after the meeting for completion.

**Gedling Seniors Council** reconvened on Teams on 11<sup>th</sup> December. Twelve members attended, most using Teams for the first time. Members enjoyed a mindfulness / safe aerobic exercise session delivered by a local practitioner, shared their Covid -19 experiences and hopes for the new year, and made plans for a Newsletter and a Seniors Council resilience building/constitutional development project, for which funding will need to be secured.

**NHS Volunteer integration and learning** - Gedling has been selected as a pilot for the integration of NHS Volunteer Responders following a successful bid submitted to 'NHS Good Sam' Funding opportunity. The £30,000 allocation will help integrate NHS registered volunteers at the local level, with a view to extending roles, engage in learning with a view to developing a sustainable partnership and local volunteer resource.

**Volunteers** - The Community Relations team have continued to support the recruitment and deployment of volunteers with a resurgence in interest in registering to volunteer during Lockdown 2. Volunteers continue to be signposted to One Step at a Time (through Jigsaw Homes) and Rushcliffe CVS as part of the South Notts Befriending service. In addition to this 5 volunteers assisted with the distribution of festive Good Neighbour Guides to community hubs around the borough. A further 6 volunteers assisted staff at the Richard Herrod Centre packing festive food parcels for local families. The Community Relations team maintains a database of around 50 volunteers who are active and responsive to new opportunities as they arise. An assessment of spontaneous community groups took place in advance of Lockdown 2 to ascertain if they were continuing to offer the same support to local residents as had been established earlier in the spring. Many reported that relationships had been formed between volunteers and local residents which were ongoing, and so new support requests were minimal. Further support from volunteers was available in many cases should it be needed and contact will be maintained with these groups should they require assistance from the Council.

**Gedling Christmas Projects** - Given the Covid-19 restrictions the Council coordinated Christmas promotion and celebration in a Covid-19 secure manner in December. This included an Arnold Covid-19 secure Festive Market and synchronised virtual Light switch on, production and distribution of Festive Good Neighbour Guide by GBC Volunteers, engagement of Church and Food Bank Leaders Group in promoting a safe Christmas and encouraging residents to keep an eye on older and vulnerable neighbour.

The Community Relations Team reproduced 25 children's entries to the Mayors Christmas Card competition for display in Arnold Market Place.

An artist created reusable lanterns which were displayed in Arnold Library and the Civic Centre. An instruction sheet on producing lanterns from recycled materials was produced and distributed to local schools. Carlton Digby School produced 20 lanterns which were displayed in the Civic Centre Foyer.

### **Reduce poverty and inequality and provide support to the most vulnerable**

**Feeding Gedling Fund – Festive Parcels** - In response to footballer Marcus Rashford's campaign around children's food poverty launched in the October half term, GBC Elected Members had raised just over £10,000 to support food for vulnerable families and children in the Borough. The Humanitarian Team lead worked with NCC Children's Services, ABL Health, Gedling Play Forum, GBC Customer Services, the RHC Hub and Church and Food Bank Leaders Group to identify and provide healthy, festive food parcels to the 600 most vulnerable families in the Borough in the week leading up to Christmas.

**Development of Family Food Clubs and Social Eating Opportunities** - The Council has submitted a bid to the NCC Emergency Assistance Fund for £55,000 for the rollout of up to 5 ultimately self-sustaining Family Food Clubs in Children's Centres in priority localities in Netherfield, Killisick, Newstead, Calverton and Arnbrook, as well as 'Cook and Eat' social eating sessions in community hubs in Netherfield, Newstead, Calverton, Bestwood, and in Youth Centres across the Borough.

### **Reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime**

**Selective Licensing Scheme progress** - A successful phase 2 selective licensing public consultation was held. This included engagement with landlord associations, press releases and Nottingham Post coverage. Leaflets were delivered together with an article to all residents in the Contacts magazine. Two live virtual consultation briefings were held online and recordings were made available on the council's website. Over 100 consultation responses have been received and the feedback from stakeholders is currently being considered.

**Covid compliance and enforcement work** has been ongoing. Covid Marshalls have been patrolling high footfall areas of the borough and engaging with businesses and the community to encourage compliance. Officers from the Public Protection Service have been investigating over 20 requests for service each week. The majority of cases are resolved informally but where necessary enforcement powers are used.

**Successful closure order** - Public Protection Officers, the council's Legal Team and Nottinghamshire Police worked in partnership to address a café and bookshop that continued to operate in breach of the restrictions. The business was closed after council officers successfully obtained a closure order after presenting evidence to the courts supported by Nottinghamshire Police.

# High Performing COUNCIL

## Provide efficient and effective services

**Annual Bulky Waste Collection** - In December, we launched our [annual Bulky Waste Collection](#) with over 700 online free collection bookings placed on the first day! This scheme helps out residents get rid of unwanted items, reduces fly tipping and in a bleak winter, every little helps.

**RESET** - Along with other teams the OD team has supported unplanned work related to Covid19 and in particular in relation to the placement of almost 160 contracted employees and casual workers across two teams (Leisure and Community Services) onto furlough when services were closed during “tier 3” restrictions.

## Maintain a positive and supportive working environment and strong employee morale

**An on-line programme of mental health awareness** has been launched and has been made available to as many employees across the council as possible. Although only just released the feedback has been very positive. This is in addition to the existing support programmes that include our Employee Assistance Programme.

**Staff Awards** - The first ever staff virtual staff award ceremony, organised and presented by the employee engagement group (“Our Gedling”), took place in December and was attended by over 100 employees from across the Council. The award ceremony was also made available on our employee Facebook page for employees unable to attend on the day.

## Improve use of digital technologies

**Projects and Upgrades** - A number of projects and upgrades have been completed within IT including; completing the implementing forms and zoom, the Civica OpenPortal Migration, the Mitel Contact Centre Upgrade and installing the Konica Data Collection Agent.

# Vibrant ECONOMY

## Ensure a robust strategic development framework is in place

**Authority Monitoring Report** - The National Planning Practice Guidance states that local planning authorities must publish information at least annually that shows progress with Local Plan preparation, reports any activity relating to the duty to cooperate and shows how the implementation of policies in the Local Plan is progressing.

The Authority Monitoring Report for GBC is there prepared annually and an updated version has now been published which covers the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. The monitoring report contains information on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which the policies contained in the Aligned Core Strategy and the Local Planning Document are being successfully implemented. The report also provides a baseline of information for the Borough.

To view the updated AMR, visit

<https://www.gedling.gov.uk/media/gedlingboroughcouncil/documents/planningpolicy/amrand5yhsa/FINAL%20AMR%202019-20.pdf>

## Drive business growth, workforce development and job opportunities

**Recruitment Academy** - Gedling Leisure department are working with Swim England to develop local volunteers and local residents that have shown an interest in swimming into Qualified Swimming Teachers. Swim England help to identify and train local residents to give them the skills to come and work with us at Gedling Borough Council. We have a recruitment drive upcoming and we hope that the fruitful partnership continues to provide talented and skilled staff for Gedling Borough Council.

**Supported Internship Programme** - Despite the restrictions placed on services due to Covid19, the Organisational Development Team has worked hard to push forward on two pieces of work to enable other teams to offer places through the Supported Internship Programme (PASC and Waste Services Admin) and KickStart (PASC and Waste Services). The Supported Internship Programme is run with partners at Notts County Council and West Notts College and provides meaningful work experience placements over a prolonged period of time for young people with learning difficulties. Our first placements start in January. The KickStart scheme is a programme just introduced by the Government to help unemployed young people on Universal Credit to gain paid work experience to help improve their chance of permanent employment after the six-month placement comes to an end.

**Apprenticeship Programme Success** - Our apprenticeship programme continues to be a success with 50% of the learners from cohort 1 having completed and the other 50% almost at the finish line. We have 4 more apprentices from cohort 2 on track to finish by April 2021. We are incredibly proud to be a part of this success and are working hard to get the other learners over the finishing line by April 2021.

**Business Grants (Covid Support)** - The Business Grants team continues to administer the ever changing business grants throughout the varying tiers and lockdowns. Currently 12 different grants are being administered with a combined grant value of around £11m. The Revenues Services team and the Financial Services team are administering these grants whilst still meeting statutory deadlines and maintaining performance in their day to day functions.

# Sustainable ENVIRONMENT

## Provide an attractive and sustainable local environment that local people can enjoy

**APSE Award 2020** – Our Parks and Street Care team won the APSE Annual Service Award 2020 for “Best Service Team: Street Cleansing and Streetscene Service (Public Realm).” Faced with pressure on ‘Street Cleansing Services’, especially in the Top Valley/Warren Hill Estate area of Gedling Borough, both in terms of finances, and escalating complaints, a solution was required to resolve the situation. By establishing a ‘Clean Streets Partnership’ working together with neighbouring authorities and local resident groups in a dynamic relationship, Gedling Borough Council Street Cleansing Services managed to raise standards of delivery and added social value to ensure tidier streets and better integrated waste and recycling.

**Gedling Country Park** –Work was completed on a new outdoor seating area adjacent to the visitor Café 1899 at GCP. This is a new canopied seating area for 20 people plus, which will enable dog walkers to sit in shelter and drink a coffee in the inclement months ahead. The project was completed in December and opened by Portfolio Holder Cllr Barnes and the Leader.

**Gedling Country Park Tree Trail** - The artists ‘Instar’ have been appointed by the Council and the Friends of GCP to create a piece of art work to enhance the tree trail, funded by the Coop Community fund.

**Carlton Cemetery Remembrance Garden Extension** - Work to develop a derelict area within the Carlton Cemetery grounds adjacent to the existing Cemetery Remembrance garden, as a cemetery Remembrance garden extension, has taken place during October/November at Carlton Hill Cemetery. The official opening for this new facility was attended by the Portfolio Holder Peter Barnes and area ward member Cllr Gregory.

**Netherfield Community Activity Intensification Plan** - A ‘Partnership’ 5 days of Community Activity in Netherfield, titled the Netherfield Community Activity Intensification Plan is taking place over 5 weeks starting at the end of September and going on into October to include internal, (PASC Street Cleansing, Community Safety Wardens), and external, (Police), partners. This planned activity involves responsive and reactive activity for a wide range of issues, including fly-tipping, Graffiti, refuse bins on streets and litter due to parked vehicles. It involves leaflet letterbox drops and ‘knocking on doors’ as well as intensive Street Cleaning Operations to remove graffiti and fly-tips and to cleanse dense urban housing area streets and Netherfield Town Centre. It is hoped this initiative will support local residents and help to improve their environment whilst getting the message out about enviro-crime and the need to recycle.

**Grant Award for Killisick Recreation Ground** - Another FCC Communities Foundation grants bid has been successful for Killisick Recreation Ground which will see the refurbishment of the children’s play area. Tenders for this will be prepared in the New Year and work will start late Spring 2021.

**RESET** - Following the Covid-19 lockdown which ended 2<sup>nd</sup> December, all the Borough’s football matches resumed. Seating adjacent to the Kiosk in AHP and GCP Café remain closed as Tier 3 requirements dictate. Regular cleaning of the toilets and play areas is taking place to ensure Covid-19 compliance.

## **Conserve, enhance, promote and celebrate our heritage**

**Conservation in Bestwood and Lambley** - Reviews have been carried out of conservation area appraisals for Bestwood and Lambley. These appraisals identify the architectural and historic interests of the conservation areas and highlight the specific qualities that contribute to the need for them to be protected and enhanced. The updated appraisals provide a framework against which decisions about future development can be made. The purpose of a conservation area is not to prevent development but instead manage any changes in a way which preserves and enhances the conservation area without harming its special character and appearance. As part of the review, the boundaries of both conservation areas have been reassessed and a number of changes made. The updated appraisals have been created with valuable input from Bestwood and Lambley parish councils and Lambley Local History Society and take into account comments received from the local communities as a result of a consultation carried out in July and August. To view the updated appraisals, visit [www.gedling.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.gedling.gov.uk/conservation)

# HEALTHY lifestyles

## Improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities

**Good Boost** - Gedling Leisure department have secured a free trial of an innovative new scheme called Good Boost, which is an activity programme delivered in the swimming pools to help improve the health and fitness of residents with musculoskeletal conditions. The scheme will launch in the New Year at Carlton Forum Leisure Centre.

**ABL partnership** - ABL (A Better Life) is a commissioned service who support the population to maintain healthy lifestyles and make healthier choices. The service support they offer includes weight management, stopping smoking, intensive personalised support and well-being to name just a few. ABL will be going into partnership with Gedling Borough Councils Leisure Service department utilising the leisure facilities as a base to hold their client assessments and activity sessions. Redhill and Carlton Forum leisure facilities are the agreed venues to start with in 2021. ABL work together with partners to reduce costs across health economies delivering outcomes to clients, reduce GP appointments, mental health waiting lists and prescribing costs. Gedling Borough Council will play a part in this by providing up to date, clean and safe facilities with the latest fitness equipment and having friendly knowledgeable staff on hand to help local residents on their journey.

**Social Prescribing and “Your Health, Your Way”** - The Council’s Community Development Coordinator has linked up with Your Health Your Way and other wellbeing services with the local NHS social prescribing system. The collaboration with these three initiatives will expand referral opportunities for link workers. They offer in quitting smoking, weight management, move more, drink less, falls prevention to mention but five.

## Reduce levels of loneliness and isolation

**Launch of the Armed Forces Membership** - On the 11<sup>th</sup> November the Armed Forces Membership was launched to residents of Gedling Borough who are retired or serving members of the armed forces. The membership gives unlimited free access to the borough’s 3 fitness suites, as well as motivational sessions with the gym team and personal programme settings. Since its launch there have been over 100 applications to the scheme and lots of positive comments from eligible customers.

**One Step at a Time** - The need for “One Step at a Time” has been identified directly from the voluntary and statutory sectors reporting that the numbers of people now feeling isolated and lonely has increased as their normal networks of support have decreased or have gone digital (which they cannot or do not want to readily access). Due to shielding and increased risk factors older and vulnerable members of our communities have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic resulting in increased social isolation and reduced opportunities for physical activity. Not connecting via digital technology has left them feeling even more isolated and anxious. The Council has supported Jigsaw Homes to deliver a pilot of the One Step at a Time project. Pilots are also being delivered by other organisations in Nottingham City, Mansfield, Ashfield and Bassetlaw and there is a group made up of all delivery partners which reports to the LRF. Volunteers have been connected to tenants of Jigsaw Homes who would benefit from a short walk in their local area to increase their self-confidence in getting out and about and improving levels of physical activity in a safe and managed way. To date, five tenants have been identified with varying levels of need. Eight volunteers have been referred to Jigsaw Homes for matching with tenants and they are being taken through an

induction process and associated checks to enable them to start speaking with and meeting tenants in person.

**Thriving Communities ‘Out of the Blue’** - A bid to the Thriving Communities fund managed by Arts Council England has been submitted by a partnership led by City Arts and including the Council, the Wildlife Trust, Jigsaw Homes and Age Concern. The proposal is for a project, ‘Out of the Blue’, which will use One Step at a Time as a starting point but which will offer guided walks in local green spaces and incorporate creative and heritage themed activities. The project will also link with the South Notts Volunteer Befriending project in terms of developing connections with people in advance of them accessing sessions. The project will create a resource of some kind which can be shared more widely and this will take the form of creative activities to take away and do, resources to assess online or walking guides. A decision on whether the bid has been successful is expected on around 15<sup>th</sup> March.

City Arts have been allocated £27k from Arts Council England for projects addressing loneliness and isolation and the Council intend to work with them on allocating this funding locally, most likely in a similar way as outlined in the ‘Out of the Blue’ proposal.

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## Report to Cabinet

**Subject:** Gedling Borough Council Housing Allocation Policy

**Date:** 28 January 2020

**Author:** Head of Regeneration and Welfare

### Wards Affected

Borough wide

### Purpose

To update Cabinet on the feedback of the two rounds of public consultation on the proposed amendments to the Council's Housing Allocation Policy and to seek approval to adopt the new Housing Allocation Policy in response to the public consultation.

### Key Decision

This is a key decision, as it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.

### Recommendations

#### THAT Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the revised Housing Allocation Policy (shown in Appendix A), in light of the public consultation undertaken, as detailed in this report.

## 1 Background

### Context

- 1.1 Gedling Borough Council transferred its housing stock to Gedling Homes in 2008, and so is no longer stock holding. However, the statutory duty to manage the allocation of social housing was retained by the Council and this includes the need to have an allocations policy (the "Council's Housing Allocation Policy") in accordance with the Housing Act 1996.

- 1.2 The current allocation policy was approved in 2013 and describes the mechanisms by which the Council assesses applications to join the housing register. A housing register is a record all the applicants who have applied to the council to be considered for housing in either a council owned home, or a home owned by another registered landlord. The register enables the relevant housing provider to allocate the properties from a shortlist of potential applicants. This is done through an electronic Choices Based lettings system. Applicants are asked to “bid” for a property when it becomes available to show their interest. Each property has a unique reference number, and applicants have up to 3 bids to place on each weekly bidding round.
- 1.3 The Council’s Housing Register is divided into three priority bands, as follows
- **Band 1** - Accepted homeless case, serious medical need, is delaying hospital discharge, management move etc., or someone who is downsizing by two bedrooms.
  - **Band 2** – High level of medical need, fleeing harassment, in the process of being assessed as homeless (6 weeks), a care leaver, someone who is ready to move on from supported accommodation, overcrowding or downsizing by one bedroom, and freeing up adapted properties.
  - **Band 3** - Moderate level of need, i.e. medical or, harassment grounds, accepted as homeless but without a local connection or priority need, general overcrowding or someone who wants to move to sheltered housing.
- 1.5 As at 10 December 2020, there were 629 households on the housing register, split into the bands as follows:
- Band 1 – 63
  - Band 2 – 220
  - Band 3 – 346
- 1.6 As at 10 December 2020, there were 629 households on the housing register. Of those applicants, their waiting time is listed below:
- 383 up to 1 year
  - 153 up to 2 years
  - 38 up to 3 years
  - 55 over 3 years
- 1.7 At 10 December 2020, 99 households had not bid for a property before, and there are proposals further on in the report on how this can be addressed.

- 1.8 The actual number on the waiting list changes on a daily basis due to:
- New applications being accepted;
  - Decisions which change applicants banding- both increasing and decreasing;
  - People being rehoused; and
  - Applicants being removed from the register e.g. not responding to the annual review.
- 1.9 The current allocations policy has been in operation since 2013. However, in light of new legislation, recent guidance and operational issues, a review of the policy is required. Legislation and guidelines to be taken into account include:
- **The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** - This is one of the biggest changes to the rights of homeless people in England for 15 years. It effectively bolts two new duties to the original statutory rehousing duty: the duty to prevent homelessness and the duty to relieve homelessness. The Act extends the entitlements to help, places a renewed focus on the prevention of homelessness and local joint working, and has the potential to provide more client-focused, personalised statutory homelessness services. This means that we are required to prepare a Personal Housing Plan for everyone who presents as homeless under this Act.
  - **The new Code of Guidance 2018** - Provides operational guidance and interpretation on the above act, in response to the HRA2017, and provides detailed information on 25 separate areas, plus additional guidance on the habitual residence test.
  - **The 'Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Authorities in England' 2012** - Drawing on the greater flexibilities offers to local authorities via the Localism Act 2011, this enabled LA's to award additional preference to certain identified groups, such as Armed Forces Personnel and to grant such groups additional priority. The document also included the option for LA's to set their own criteria for issues such as income, behaviour, to achieve sustainable and mixed communities, bedroom standards, overcrowding, under-occupation, the right to move and support for adopters and foster carers, all of which will be revised in the new allocations policy.
  - **The Housing Act 1996** - Under **Part 6** the Council has a legal duty to check whether an applicant is eligible to be allocated accommodation, or whether he or she is to be excluded as being ineligible due to serious unacceptable behaviour under **section 160(a)(7)** of the 1996 Housing Act, in addition, this Act, and regulations made under it, provide detail as to what must be included in an allocations policy as well as where the Council

has discretion as to what to include.

- **MCHLG correspondence** from the Minister for Housing & Homelessness relating to out of area placements July 2019 - This placed a requirement of LA's to have a policy in place for assessing the use of out of area placements
- **Armed forces covenant** (2020) – is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly.
- **The Immigration and Social Security Coordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020 and legislation related to Brexit** - Additional guidance and legislation relating to the eligibility of individuals to access social housing, with specific reference to Brexit. This Act amends current immigration legislation to introduce immigration control in relation to individuals from Europe residing in England. Individuals from Europe who were not previously restricted from the Housing Register may now be impacted depending on their immigration status and right to remain in England. Further training and guidance on the impact of this change on the administration of the Housing Register is expected in early February.

### Consultation

#### 1.10 **Initial Consultation 1: 12 week public consultation**

In October 2019, officers received Cabinet approval to undertake a 12 week public consultation on the revised housing allocation policy. The revisions were to reflect legislative requirements and also to:

- Continue to house those in the greatest need within Gedling;
- Support stable and vibrant communities;
- Reflect local priorities;
- Make the best use of limited housing stock available;
- Have a clear system in place setting out a framework of eligibility, qualification and priority to social housing;
- Fulfil the Councils' obligations under the legislation;
- Deliver the principles of demand management;
- Not raising unrealistic expectations;
- Reduce the Councils use of temporary accommodation, including B&B; and
- Comply with good practice for B&B use.

1.11 The revised housing allocation policy was consulted on for a 12 week period (see Appendix B for the full consultation summary report). During this time, the Council received 69 comments and these were generally

supportive. The following is a summary of these responses.

- How the Council prioritises homeless applicants - 91% of respondents agreed to the changes.
- Use of the housing register auto bid System - 82% of respondents agreed to the changes.
- Local Connection Criteria - 89% of respondents agreed to the changes.
- Additional grounds for exclusion from the housing register - 94% of respondents agreed to the changes.

### **Second Consultation: 4 week public consultation**

1.12 A further matter was identified during internal consultations with officers. This was a historic matter linked to people who are over 55 and who did not have a local connection, but were only bidding for sheltered accommodation and who were allowed on the housing register. This criteria was in place in direct response to the very low demand for sheltered properties at the time and high void rates. As sheltered properties are more desirable now (largely down to improvements in their condition and growing demand for them), Officers identified the need to remove this criteria from the policy, to ensure such properties were available to those with a local connection.

1.13 In response to this issue being identified, Officers sought to undertake a further 4 week period of consultation to remove this criteria from the allocation policy. Approval was granted by the Portfolio Holder on 11 September to commence a further round of consultation. The consultation ran from 22 September to 19 October 2020.

1.14 A total of 20 responses were received to the second consultation (see Appendix B). Broadly, these were in favour of the proposed changes with many recognising the challenges of housing people with a local connection and the need to prioritise those with a local connection for the limited supply of affordable housing.

## **2 Proposal**

### Revised Allocation Policy

2.1 As outlined above (and detailed in Appendix B), responses to consultation on changes were overwhelmingly supportive of the proposed changes to the Allocation Policy. Officers are therefore proposing to amend the Allocation Policy as shown in Appendix C (key

changes) and to adopt the revised Allocation Policy (Appendix A). The main changes to the allocation policy are as detailed below.

### **How the Council prioritises homeless applicants**

- 2.2 In order to fully comply with legislative requirements of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and the revised Code of Guidance 2018, changes are proposed to the banding of homeless applicants as follows:
- 2.3 Accepted homelessness applicants awarded the main duty to rehouse will be placed straight in band 1. Those applicants will be placed on the auto bid system, which allows bids to be placed on behalf of the applicants in recognition of their urgent housing requirements. The auto bid facility will place bids on those properties where the applicant is most likely to be successful. It is also important to note that the auto bid facility works on the number of bedrooms as opposed to the property type, for example, someone who is eligible for a 2 bedroom property could have bids placed on 2 bedroomed, houses, flats and bungalows.
- 2.4 Where applicants make a homelessness application and are found not to have a priority need (under the homeless duty), they would be placed as band 3. The applicant will be awarded an extra 6 months “waiting time” (i.e. their application date would be back dated by 6 months), in accordance with the need to give them “beneficial preference” (under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017), if they demonstrate a local connection to Gedling Borough Council.

### **Use of the housing register auto bid system**

- 2.5 Officers are proposing to place all applicants in band 1 on the auto bid system in view of their urgent need for housing. The exception to this is where applicants are downsizing by 2 or more bedrooms and are placed in band 1. In view of the need to incentivise households to free up larger properties, the Council considers it appropriate to give such households choice of the type and location of properties they bid for.

### **Local connection criteria**

- 2.6 Due to the limited supply of Social Housing in the Borough, the Council is proposing to increase the local connection criteria from one to three consecutive years. This means that in order to be accepted onto the Housing Register, it is necessary to have a local connection for the last three consecutive years. This is in line with neighbouring local authorities. There are some exceptions to this, for example, that the applicant has served in the armed forces, or is fleeing from another area. The definition of ‘local connection’ is included as Appendix D.

## **Additional grounds for exclusion from the housing register**

2.7 The draft policy identifies certain situations where applicants could be removed from the Housing Register, for example:

- Not actively bidding;
- Have deliberately providing misleading / inaccurate information on their application form;
- Advises that in addition to the annual review, further checks will be undertaken, which could result in either a change in banding or the applicant no longer being eligible to remain on the Councils housing register; or
- Post application, if the applicant(s) have behaved in a way which would make them ineligible to be on the Councils Housing Register, e.g. if a current applicant was evicted from their current tenancy as a result of anti-social behaviour, or found guilty of arson, then their application would be ineligible and therefore removed.

2.8 It should be noted that all applicants have the right of appeal to any decision made about their housing application, either their eligibility to join the scheme or their priority banding, as well as their removal from the waiting list.

## **Additional updates included within the draft policy**

2.9 The proposed draft policy has also been updated with specific reference to:

- a) Transgender applicants / households
- b) Human trafficking and those exiting modern slavery
- c) Asylum seekers
- d) GDPR
- e) The new complaints procedure
- f) The Council's Corporate Offer for Care Leavers
- g) The change from a common allocations policy with Broxtowe BC and Rushcliffe BC, to a stand-alone policy and operating system in compliance with the requirements of GDPR.
- h) There are other small amendments and these are shown in Appendix C.

## **Removal of households over the age of 55 with no local connection from the housing register**

2.10 The current allocation policy allows people who are aged over 55 and do not have a local connection and are only interested in sheltered housing to apply for housing in the Borough and to be placed in Band 3.

In reality, very few properties become available to this group, it therefore raises unrealistic expectations that households will be offered accommodation in the Borough. There is also the associated work load, in terms of registering applications and responding to enquiries etc. It is therefore proposed to remove this from the allocation policy. Approximately 140 applicants will be affected by this change.

### **Implementation**

- 2.11 If approved, the new policy will not be implemented until we have made the necessary amendment to the software which is used for maintaining the housing register. The proposed date is 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 (subject to the works being completed in time). After this time, those who are no longer eligible will be notified that they are being removed at the earliest opportunity, but definitely at their annual review. Those that bid for properties that are no longer eligible (and have not been picked up yet by the annual review) will not be allowed to accept a property.
- 2.12 Officers are therefore seeking Cabinet approval to amend the Council's Housing Allocation Policy (as shown in Appendix A), in line with the consultation feedback received (as shown in Appendix B) and as detailed above.

### **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Alternative options would include not revising the allocations policy in light of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and other guidance, but this is not recommended as the Council would be unable to comply with the legislation and the policy would not be fit for purpose.
- 3.2 Equally, as the current document is seven years old it is timely to review it to improve working practices and to ensure that the housing register prioritises those applicants in the greatest need and with a substantial local connection to the borough. There is also the need to manage applicants' expectations and support the principles of demand management, and lastly to better match the number of people on the waiting list to the likely number of available properties each year.
- 3.3 The proposed changes to the allocations policy will also bring the Council in line with the local connection criteria requirements contained in the allocations policies of neighbouring local authorities.

### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The cost to change the IT system is currently being evaluated and it is anticipated that the costs will have to be covered from existing revenue budgets.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Council, as a local housing authority is required to have a housing allocation scheme by virtue of Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, and the scheme must comply with that, and other relevant legislation, as detailed in this report. The Housing Act 1996 requires any changes to the scheme or policy to be consulted on with social housing providers with which the authority has nomination rights. In addition, the Housing Act 1996 requires any changes to the allocation scheme to bring the effect of the alteration to the attention of those likely to be affected. Given the implications of this amended policy and its significance, it is correct, in accordance with the Council's public sector equality duty to consult more widely on amendments to the allocations policy. Any consultation responses should be given consideration prior to final approval of the policy changes.

- 5.2 In amending the policy regard must be had to relevant statutory guidance and the amendments should reflect the current legislative position. In order to comply with legislative changes, the Council needs to update the Housing Allocation policy to ensure that there is a robust structure in place for the allocation of social housing.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is included as Appendix E. Due to the nature of the changes proposed, there are some identified positive impacts to certain groups (for example, namely to applicants who are pregnant or have children and Armed Forces personnel), whilst others will be negatively impacted (those over 55s without a local connection applying for sheltered accommodation and generally those without a local connection). These implications have been considered as part of the process.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 No implications

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix A – Draft Allocation Policy
- 8.2 Appendix B – Summary of consultation responses

- 8.3 Appendix C – Proposed change document
- 8.4 Appendix D – Local Connection Information
- 8.5 Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment

**9 Reasons For Recommendations**

- 9.1 To enable the Council to publish a Housing Allocation Policy which fully complies with legislative requirements and make best use of stock.
- 9.2 To ensure that any changes to the housing location policy can be made, which are legally required as part of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

**Statutory Officer Approval**

**Approved by:**

**Date:** 19/01/2021  
**Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved by:**

**Date:** 19/01/2021  
**Monitoring Officer**

## Appendix D: Local Connection – Definition and Exclusions

<b>LIST 2</b>	<b>Local connection, or exemption</b>
2a	Currently living in the borough and have done so consistently for the last 5 years. Unless you have been housed in either a temporary tenancy or to receive support by Gedling Borough Council's Housing Needs team outside the borough.
2b	Currently be working in permanent paid employment in the Gedling Borough area for 16 hours per week or more, and have been employed in Gedling Borough for at least 5 years. Or is a social housing tenant who needs to move to Gedling Borough, to take up an offer of employment in the borough.
2c	The applicant provides or receives personal care from a parent, sibling or adult child who has lived in Gedling for the last five years and they need to move so that care arrangements can continue. Care must be provided for at least 3 hours per day and for at least 5 days per week. A Community Care Assessment and/ or confirmation of the arrangements by the Adult Services Department must be provided to evidence this plus evidence of carers allowance etc. A letter from a GP is not sufficient.
2d	Have been accepted by Gedling Borough Council under the homelessness legislation. Applicants will be made one offer anywhere either within the borough or surrounding areas. Those applicants accepted as homeless under S195 and S189(b) who do not have a local connection or who are unlikely to be owed the Main S.193 Duty and / or are likely to be found intentionally homeless may only be offered a private rented property to end the homelessness duty.
2e	Have been accepted for priority re-housing as a reciprocal arrangement with another Council or Registered Provider (RP).
2f	Have been placed in care as a child outside the area, but wish to return to Gedling (and previously lived in Gedling) and are still classed as a care
2g	Be a former care leaver aged 25 or younger who has been placed in care as a child in the Nottinghamshire County Council area, and wishes to live in
2h	Have been accepted as part of a witness protection recommendation by the police. (NB supporting evidence will be required)
2i	Have been living in temporary/supported accommodation provided by a local housing authority outside Gedling, but have had a local connection to Gedling (2a, 2b) before you were placed there. Or have been placed in supported housing by GBC anywhere as part of their prevention / relief work to prevent homelessness. NB Time spent in supported accommodation in the borough, for example Framework etc. will not give the applicant a connection to the borough. Their local connection will be determined by where they lived before they moved into the temporary / supported accommodation.

2j	The applicants is serving in the regular Armed Forces, Reserve Forces or Territorial Army, or have left those forces in the last five years, unless dishonorably discharged.
2k	Comprise of a household where the applicant is aged 50 or over and there are no children in the household and are willing to move into a sheltered living.
2l	Have no children but at least one person in your household is receiving the medium or high rate of the care element of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment and you are willing to move into a sheltered living property

# **Housing Allocation Policy**

## **Consultation Summary Report**

**November 2020**

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## **1.0 Background to the consultation**

- 1.1 This report details the consultation mechanisms used regarding the Housing Allocation Policy. The main purpose behind this consultation was to provide residents and partner organisations with the opportunity to make comment regarding proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Policy.
- 1.2 Gedling Borough Council transferred its housing stock to Gedling Homes in 2008, and so is no longer stock holding. However, the statutory duty to manage the allocation of social housing was retained by the Council and these obligations include the need to have an allocations policy.
- 1.3 The current allocation policy was approved in 2013 and describes the mechanisms by which the Council assesses applications to join the housing register. This will enable the relevant housing provider to allocate the properties from a shortlist of potential applicants.
- 1.4 As reported to Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019, the proposed changes to the Allocation Policy are being made to reflect legislative requirements and also to:
- Continue to house those in the greatest need within Gedling
  - Support stable and vibrant communities
  - Reflect local priorities
  - Make the best use of limited housing stock available
  - Have a clear system in place setting out a framework of eligibility, qualification and priority to social housing
  - Fulfil the Councils' obligations under the legislation
  - Deliver the principles of demand management
  - Not raising unrealistic expectations
  - Reduce the Councils use of temporary accommodation, including B&B.
  - Comply with good practice for B&B use
- 1.5 Following this approval, a full 12 week consultation was held from January to April 2020 was undertaken.
- 1.6 Following this, a historic matter was identified during internal consultations, linked to people who are over 55 and do not have a local connection and are only bidding for sheltered accommodation can be included on the waiting list. This was a policy decision made previously, when demand for sheltered accommodation was very low and suffered from high voids rates. As this is no longer the case, Officers sought to undertake a further 4 week consultation to remove this from the allocation policy. This consultation was undertaken during October 2020.
- 1.7 A total of 89 responses were received through both consultation processes.

## **2.0 Consultation**

2.1 As stated, the consultation process included a full statutory 12 week consultation and a further 4 week consultation.

### **Initial Consultation: 12 week public consultation**

2.2 A range of mechanisms were utilised over a 12 week period to gain feedback from residents, partner organisations and other stakeholders regarding proposed changes to the Allocation Policy. The image below shows the information used for consultation purposes:



2.3 There were a number of methods used, including:

- Utilisation of an online SnapSurvey which has been widely publicised
- Contacting all households on the housing register. Where an email address was registered on the housing register, residents were alerted to the consultation via email. Where there was no email registered or the email bounced back, residents were contacted via letter. Over 600 households were contacted by email or letter;
- Utilisation of the screens in the Civic Centre to advertise the consultation period and where to find the information;

- Presentations at a range of partner forums, this included the Nottinghamshire-wide homelessness executive, attended by Adult Social Care, Children and Young People Services, Public Health, neighbouring local authorities and health colleagues; the Nottinghamshire Youth Homelessness Forum, attended by a range of partners and stakeholders with an interest in youth homelessness and the South Nottinghamshire Homelessness Forum, attended by stakeholders with an interest in homelessness in the Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe areas;
- Utilisation of the Have Your Say web pages;
- Dedicated phone line and email address for queries;
- Dedicated web page which included the proposed draft allocation policy, proposed changes, the Cabinet paper and a link to the online survey;
- Where residents were unable to respond online or did not understand the consultation, support was available; and
- Utilisation of an article in Contacts Magazine.

2.4 Whilst residents, partner organisations and other stakeholders were able to make any general comments on the changes to the Allocation Policy, a focus for soliciting responses was in relation to the key proposed changes to the Policy. As reported to Cabinet in October 2019, these were in relation to changes in:

- How the Council prioritises homeless applicants
- Use of the housing register auto bid system
- Local Connection Criteria
- Grounds for exclusion from the housing register

#### **How the Council prioritises homeless applicants**

2.5 In order to fully comply with new legal requirements and guidance relating to homeless applicants, we are proposing to place applicants who we assess as homeless and in priority need of housing in band 1 of the housing register (the highest priority) once the Council has accepted a full duty to rehouse to accommodate applicants as soon as possible. We are also proposing to use the auto bid system which allows bids to be placed on behalf of such applicants in recognition of their urgent housing requirements. The auto bid facility will place bids on those properties where the applicant is most likely to be successful. It is also important to note that the auto bid facility works on the number of bedrooms as opposed to the property type, for example, someone who is eligible for a 2 bedroom property could have bids placed on 2 bedrooled, houses, flats and bungalows.

2.6 Where applicants make a homelessness application and are found to not have a priority need for housing but have a local connection to the Gedling Borough Council area, they will be awarded an extra 6 months waiting time, in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018.

### **Use of the housing register auto bid System**

- 2.7 The housing register auto bid system will place bids automatically on behalf of the households on the register. We propose to place all applicants on band 1 on the auto bid system in view of their urgent need for housing. The exception to this is where applicants are downsizing by 2 or more bedrooms and are placed in band 1. In view of the need to incentivise households to free up larger properties, the Council considers it appropriate to give such households choice of the type and location of properties they bid for.

### **Local Connection Criteria**

- 2.8 Due to the limited supply of Social Housing in the Borough, the Council is proposing to increase the local connection criteria from one to three consecutive years. This means that in order to be accepted onto the Housing Register, it is necessary to have a local connection for the last three consecutive years. This is in line with neighbouring local authorities. There are some exceptions to this, for example, that the applicant has served in the armed forces, or is fleeing from another area.

### **Additional grounds for exclusion from the housing register**

- 2.9 The draft policy identifies certain situations where applicants could be removed from the Housing Register, for example:
- Not actively bidding
  - Have deliberately providing misleading / inaccurate information on their application form
  - Post application have behaved in a way which would make them ineligible to be on the Councils Housing Register, e.g. anti-social behaviour

### **Second Consultation: 4 week public consultation**

- 2.10 On 2<sup>nd</sup> September, a Portfolio Holder report was presented to update the Portfolio Holder on the outcome of the Council's public consultation on the Council's revised draft Housing Allocation Policy and to seek approval to consult for a period of 4 weeks on a further revision to the Housing Allocation Policy.
- 2.11 The reason for the additional short consultation was that initial consultation identified the potential to remove the element from the current allocations policy which allows people who are aged over 55 and do not have a local connection and are only interested in sheltered housing to apply for housing in the Borough. Officers then sought further feedback from Registered Providers on this emerging matter separate to the first round of the consultation. The comments received suggested that housing providers had housed relatively few people as a result of this specific criterion, and there is a concern that it unrealistically raises people's expectations that they will be

offered accommodation in the Borough. There is also the associated work load, in terms of registering applications and responding to enquiries etc.

2.12 Advice received from the Council's legal services team recommended that to seek to enact this change, a further consultation period covering 4 weeks would be required to seek the views of stakeholders and, in particular, those on the housing register. All applicants on the housing register were contacted as part of this consultation process.

2.13 There were a number of methods used, including:

- Contacting all housing applicants to make them aware of the consultation. This was done via email where an email was registered on the application or by mail where no email was registered or where the email bounced.
- Use of the Have Your Say pages of the Councils website.
- An on-line SNAP survey
- Presentation at housing liaison meetings with partners where these were held, including with Jigsaw Homes.

### **3.0 Feedback**

#### **Initial Consultation: 12 week public consultation**

3.1 Overall, there were 69 comments received as part of this first consultation by 60 respondents (see Appendix A) and the proposed changes have been well received. The following is a summary of the responses received.

#### **Online survey consultation**

3.2 There were 69 responses. Respondents were given the option to state whether they were currently Gedling residents; currently residents in another area or responding on behalf of another organisation. Of the 60 respondents who responded to this question, 73% (44) were Gedling residents; 23% (14) were residents of another areas and 3% (2) were responding on behalf of a partner organisation.

2.3 The feedback received was generally positive, with the changes being well received. The following is a summary of these responses.

- How the Council prioritises homeless applicants - 91% of respondents agreed to the changes.
- Use of the housing register auto bid System - 82% of respondents agreed to the changes.
- Local Connection Criteria - 89% of respondents agreed to the changes.
- Additional grounds for exclusion from the housing register - 94% of respondents agreed to the changes.

2.4 Those respondents who did not agree were asked to comment on the reasons why. These comments are summarised as follows.

#### **How the Council prioritises homeless applicants**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response/ amendment</b>
Factors should be on a case by case basis	Whilst there is some discretion based on individual circumstances and a right of appeal, it is essential to have in place a policy to define how social housing is allocated

#### **Auto bid system**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response/ amendment</b>
Generally that auto bid takes away choice	Auto bid does remove choice, however it places bids on those properties that the applicant has the greatest chance of being offered.

#### **Local Connections criteria**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response/ amendment</b>
Too long for continuous local connection	In line with other LA's and the need to better match demand to supply, hence we acknowledge that we are reducing the number of people who will be eligible. However, this is balanced against limited supply of affordable housing

**Additional grounds for exclusion from the housing register**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response/ amendment</b>
Anti-Social Behaviour needs to be better defined	For someone to be excluded on the grounds of ASB, there would need to be clear evidence of ASB, such as a court order or similar, or having lost a previous tenancy due to ASB, it cannot be just allegations.
Issues around being excluded for not bidding and lack of suitable properties to bid on	Each case is assessed on its own merits, and that applicants would be contacted prior to their application being removed from the register. We should also advise that we need to maintain an accurate and up to date housing register, and this is part of that process, as often, we find that people have moved, and therefore no longer need to be on the waiting list. Lastly applicants always have the right of appeal.

**Additional comments**

2.5 Further comments were received which reinforced earlier comments made in the consultation. The exception to this was as follows:

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response/ amendment</b>
Domestic Violence policy needs 'tightening up'	There is guidance in place, and supporting evidence is requested, however due to the nature of DV not always available, and cases need to be determined on a case by case basis.

**Additional stakeholder consultation**

2.6 As part of the consultation, there were a number of stakeholders actively targeted to secure their feedback through the online survey. This included housing providers; government advisors; housing needs team and other local authorities. The feedback was generally positive, but there were a number of matters that required further consideration, including a view from the MHCLG advisor that the policy was comprehensive and well written, MHCLG asked the Council to consider two elements as part of the allocation policy. Firstly, to consider use of part 6 and 7 of homelessness legislation to address incidences of anti-social behaviour also to consider additional preference to those homeless applicants without a priority need but who are both

eligible and homelessness through the awarding of an additional 6 months priority. The Council considers that this has now been address via the awarding of an additional 6 months waiting time.

### **Summary**

- 2.7 In summary, the overwhelming response to the proposed changes in the first round of consultation were positive. Where consultees responded that they disagreed with the changes or further clarity was required, this was considered further. A summary of these considerations is included in points 2.4 and 2.5.

### **Second Consultation: 4 week public consultation**

- 2.8 A total of 20 responses were received to the second consultation (see Appendix B), of which 16 were completed through the electronic SNAP survey. Broadly, these were in favour of the proposed changes with many recognising the challenges of housing people with a local connection and the need to prioritise those with a local connection for the limited supply of affordable housing.
- 2.9 Two questions were asked to consultees. Firstly, specifically relating to the proposed amendment to the eligibility of those aged 55+ with no local connection and secondly to ask for any other comments.
- 2.10 Relating to question 1 (comments on the proposed change), 9 comments were received. Of these, 7 were positive and 2 were neutral or unclear as to supportive.
- 2.11 Relating to question 2 (overall comments), 7 comments were received as shown in Appendix B.

## **4.0 Summary and next steps**

- 4.1 In summary, feedback from both consultation were very positive. As a result of the comments received, there are no further changes planned to the Housing Allocation Policy.
- 4.2 The revised Housing Allocation policy will be updated and taken back to Cabinet for approval to be amended and published.

## Appendix A: Consultation 1 feedback received

Housing\_Allocation\_Policy\_2020

Page:1

This report was generated on 04/05/20. Overall 69 respondents completed this questionnaire. The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

The following charts are restricted to the top 12 codes.

In order to fully comply with new legal requirements and guidance relating to homeless applicants, we are proposing to place applicants who we assess as homeless and in priority need of housing in band 1 of the housing register (the highest priority) to seek to accommodate applicants as soon as possible. We are also proposing to use the auto bid system which allows bids to be placed on behalf of such applicants in recognition of their urgent housing requirements.

Where applicants make a homelessness application and are found to not have a priority need for housing but have a local connection to the Gedling Borough Council area, they will be awarded an extra 6 months waiting time. (Do you agree? )



### Please explain why:

It should depend on the case circumstances.

People are already abusing the system using domestic violence claims to jump the waiting time. Homelessness is increasing due to people not paying their rent from their benefits, this change will encourage this as it awards a higher priority for social housing

People need to bid first of all and chose the place where to live.

99 percent of people only go into homeless hostels to get a property faster however dont really use the hostel and just get s higher pioraty into housing coasting the government more money while in a hostel . While being homeless at home dose not give any piorates to people who have issues with living and bringing there children up in a hostel setting .

Severe medical conditions should always get the very highest priority! Homeless people should be placed in private rented homes and then go on to get a council home, don't see any point in giving them an extra 6 months waiting time if the council are giving them the very highest priority, seems silly.

The housing register auto bid system will place bids automatically on behalf of the households on the register. We propose to place all applicants on band 1 on the auto bid system in view of their urgent need for housing. The exception to this is where applicants are downsizing by 2 or more bedrooms and are placed in band 1. In view of the need to incentivise households to free up larger properties, the Council considers it appropriate to give such households choice of the type and location of properties they bid for.

(Do you agree? )



**Please explain why:**

I feel that all people should be treated equally where possible and I feel it should be a choic that you can have auto bids in band 1 or choose as those in band 2 do at present . This is because if you put someone in band 1 in a property that you feel is suitable but they don't you are increasing the chance of them becoming homeless again or being isolated or in accommodation they don't like which could lead to anxiety and depression.

I think that people who are under occupied by more than 2 bedrooms should have auto bid because they may take years to find somewhere they like when people are in need of bigger accommodation

I don't feel that such applicants should get band 1 placing simply by downsizing. If they are downsizing, but have no health or other urgent requirement, they should be assessed on their other circumstances like I have been. Otherwise the system is unfair to those on the register who are moving from one property to the same type of property.

Every person should be able to decide which area they want to be in. A lot needs to be considered, culture, religion and race etc. If you place them in an area that could be a racist area. Causing further problems then a need to move again.

give such households choice of the type and location of properties they bid for

Unfair process there should be houses selected seprattly for priority need band ones

I get that there is a need for large houses but everyone should have a fair chance of getting accommodation so it should be a level playing field.

Yes, downsizing is fair if they don't need the extra bedrooms, in fairness it's good that these folks are being honest and giving families the chance to housing but putting these people above everyone else waiting for a one bedroom property isn't fair. Those that are over 60 already have priority on homes with age restrictions, but those of us who are just over 50, are disabled and have been waiting and waiting shouldn't be pushed aside coz of downsizing folks. The whole point of having an 'urgent' band 1 is to help urgent cases..folks who are either on the street or those who are crippled and have to move etc...not those who are already comfy in their home but just need a smaller place!

Due to the limited supply of Social Housing in the Borough, the Council is proposing to increase the local connection criteria from one to three years. This means that in order to be accepted onto the Housing Register, it is necessary to have a local connection for the last three years. There are some exceptions to this, for example, that the applicant has served in the armed forces. This is outlined in further detail on pages 12-13 of the draft policy.

(Do you agree? )



Please explain why:

Within a year children will be settled into schools and friendships made thus support networks. Some families may have had an unsettled lifestyle so to settle should be encouraged.

This risks excluding a much larger number of people who have moved between the City area and Gedling, and depending on other allocation policies, it might mean that people do not have a local connection to any of the areas they have previously lived in. This change would maybe be more appropriate in areas which are self-contained, and which is not part of a larger urban urban area.

How is this fair

Sofa surfing from friend to man I have sex with to sleep over odd occasions

Due to the amount of people homeless in Nottingham we need house to live in I myself live with my sister in 3 bed room house with my 6 nephews 4 girls and 2 boys the reason I can't go on homeless is because she doesn't want me to live in the street and I have a family who are living abroad in Portugal 2 years old son and I have 2 adults one with 16th years and s girl 18th years old I can't afford to rent a 3 bed on private property so I have this option and I would do anything to be accepted to shortlist

This strict policy doesn't allow for people born in the area who move away for a few years and then return, automatically dismissing their connection to the area

The draft policy identifies certain situations where applicants could be removed from the Housing Register, for example:

Not actively bidding for a property

Have deliberately providing misleading or inaccurate information on the application form  
Following having being accepted onto the housing register to have behaved in a way which would make the applicant ineligible to be on the Councils Housing Register, e.g. anti-social behaviour.

(Do you agree? )



**Please explain why:**

---

The definition of anti social behaviour is too wide and discriminatory, it doesn't take into account individual circumstances

---

I would only disagree with people being removed for not bidding. We can only bid if there is a suitable property. For example, very often there are only 2 bedroom properties available, which I am not allowed to bid on. I do agree that those who provide false information, or have anti social behaviour reports should be considered for removal.

---

Just because a person doesn't actively bid doesn't mean they do not look. It may be that due to domestic violence, schools or work they need to be in a certain area and the houses are not available. This is Completely unfair and should be if people log on and actively look and should not be penalised for not bidding.

---

people bid in them on time.

**Do you have any other comments regarding the proposed changes to the Allocation Policy? If so, please state below:**

---

Test survey completed by Ally Bennett

---

3 years is a bit too long when it comes to consider social connection

---

Only having 6 weeks to choose before going onto auto I'd was very stressful and unfair. Why should you have less rights as a homeless person than someone who is already housed.

---

Please do we still have a chance with illness

---

Thier should b a section relating to families supporting each other. Eg family supporting daughter with long term condition and then farther needing support due to death of partner leaving a child under 16

---

I imagine the first question on 'homelessness' is going to cause some controversy as it depends on what people's interpretation of that is! Without sounding cruel, someone from the UK that has been paying into the system all their lives and have fallen on bad times for whatever genuine reason, like veterans, disabled, elderly and infirm or those who are suffering domestic violence and are 'at risk' or evicted for no reason of their own who have been waiting a period of time for Social Housing in band 1 or 2 shouldn't be discriminated against and made to wait even longer and be brushed aside by those who have just come into the UK and been given 'priority!'. I also think the system is incredibly 'flawed' when it comes to those who are already in Social Housing and have occupied a house for years with regards to a change in their financial situation! For example: A couple that are occupying a Social Housing property and paying for example £78 per week in rent, who's situation has changed over the years and the pair now bring in over £40k! But lying about their income! And please do not tell me that this doesn't happen, because there's a couple down the road from me that are loving this arrangement! He is a full time bus driver and she is a Duty Manager in a local well known frozen food store! The pair of them bring in over 40 thousand pounds, can afford a a mortgage or private rent, yet have no intention of perusing this, for obvious reasons! Because of this abhorrent behaviour, the poor sods who should be entitled to Social Housing are never offered anything, because of people like the bus driver and his Mrs! So those that cannot afford private rent and have no other choice are often stuck in badly managed, unsuitable properties, paying over the odds to greedy Landlords who are getting away with it! So you can see how twisted and unfair the situation is. Hope this has helped!

---

Yeah, house families with young children that live with a parent quicker

---

The domestic violence policy needs tightening up, I'm aware of at least one person who has abused this to get themselves immediately housed multiple times. I have made the council aware of this but as nothing was done I'm assuming this person knows someone in the council? Other staff and councillors wont step in

---

**Do you have any other comments regarding the proposed changes to the Allocation Policy? If so, please state below:**

I feel that there should be people already in social housing should be in band 2. If we are bidding on a property and we are already in social housing we are vacating a property as well as occupying a new one. Therefore the number of available properties remains unchanged and more people can be housed. This would make it easier for people to be removed from the register, by being rehoused, which would further reduce the need for properties.

I don't agree with forcing people to live where you tell them. I have been put in an area where we face racism and I am bidding for other properties however there are no houses in the area I can go. So does that mean I am to be kicked off the register. Unfair. I look every single day for properties and I will be penalised for not bidding. Absurd

Im in band 3 and find it hard to get anywhere near the front of the que also barely any property comes up in my area

I believe all people should get what they need but things cud be done more fast .Thank you.

Priority needs to be given to disability people,when the property they live in becomes inaccessible

I have been on the housing list since October 2019 in Band 3 and have only been able to apply for one property. I check on a daily basis and there are always 0 houses to bid for!

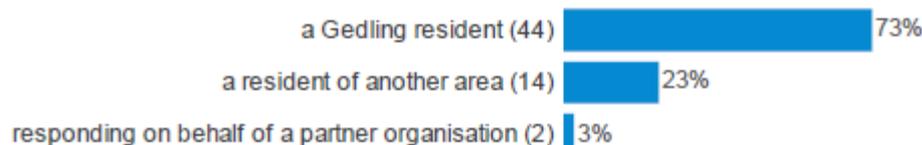
I have been on the list for 4 years. I am in private renting in Basford. Have to stay with gedling borough. And only see bidding for way out. When asked for gedling or Carlton areas. As my daughter is in gedling and she takes me to all hospital and doctors appointments. Due to having health issues and requires no stairs. That's my worries.

No but mental health issues need to be taken more seriously. My 21 year old son has been suicidal due to us having to go into temporary accommodation, and I also have mental health issues, but none of this has been acknowledged or support offered.

Don't always assume that because people have not placed a bid that they are not looking to be rehoused! It could be that the homes advertised are not to their liking or in the area they want.

Stop advertising what 'number' people are at on the waiting list! Unless they are in position 1, 2 or 3 as it is pointless having folks at No 53 on the list as you and I both know they have no chance what so ever of securing a council tenancy! It's like dangling a carrot in front of someone! It's cruel and should stop. There must be a better way of letting folks know they have no chance at the moment! Allocations policy clearly states that the person at position No1 will be offered the property, and if they don't want it, it goes to No2 and so on...so if No 52 suddenly gets offered a place, if I was No52, I'd start asking questions why! Is this place dangling on the edge of a cliff or something?! Plus, I've noticed that over 2/3 of all the properties in my area advertised on Homesearch are for over 60's! I would have been housed 6 months ago if I was over 60! It's fantastic that the elderly are being looked after, I applaud you on that, but not enough of the housing trusts are taking into consideration folks that are in their 50's and disabled and could very easily be put into one of these over 60 places if they are not taken by the over 60's. Gedling Borough Council should be changing the rules on that and insisting that if a property isn't taken by someone within the age group advertised, it should consider offering it to someone a little younger with a disability etc. Yes, some do, but not enough and folks like me are left in limbo being told that 'there isn't a suitable property' as we slip through the gaps!

**Are you:**



**Additional emailed comments**

A number of responses were received on the dedicated allocation policy email address specifically relating to individual cases rather than the allocation policy consultation. These were forwarded to the Housing Needs Team.

## Appendix B: Consultation 2 feedback received

Housing\_Allocation\_policy\_\_amendments\_2020

Page:1

Housing Allocation policy amendments 2020

### Housing Allocation policy amendments 2020

This report was generated on 20/10/20. Overall 14 respondents completed this questionnaire. The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

The following charts are restricted to the top 12 codes.

**If you have any comments on this proposed change, please state below:**

After being in this situation myself I think this is a fantastic idea and hopefully will go ahead

i think its a good idea for people of this age

I believe that this is suitable for the over 55s and families due to having more opportunities to get a housing association property and private rented. However with young people choices are limited especially if they have no family to rely on for extra support when it comes to private rented properties.

I think we should remove this aspect of the policy.

This aspect of the policy should be removed.

I'm glad no change for 55+ with a local connection

I have noted the changes raised in the draft paper. The findings in regard to over 55's housing surely highlight a need for the borough to invest in the building and supply of new housing to applicants in this age group thus freeing up under occupied properties in other boroughs co-joined under the Homesearch Scheme. M Miller, aged 64 current

Good idea

I think locals should come first. Especially if the applicant is not a UK resident.

**If you have any other comments regarding the housing allocation policy please state below:**

I don't think that people with drug habits should be housed with elderly people. Or screaming kids.

no

I think that if someone has lived in a house for longer than 10 years they should be able to move (if they need to) to a new house of their choice in the area.

I think that if someone has lived in a house for longer than 10 years they should have a right to move if the need to.

No other comments

na

Until all UK citizens are fully housed in suitable accommodation, housing to asylum seekers cease.

### Additional emailed comments

A number of responses were received on the dedicated allocation policy email address specifically relating to individual cases rather than the allocation policy consultation. These were forwarded to the Housing Needs Team.

## Appendix E: Amendment to Housing Allocation Policy Revisions - Equality Impact Assessment

Further Revisions to the Allocations Policy					
The main objective of the Housing Allocation Policy revisions):		To determine the eligibility criteria to join the Councils housing register, and then to define the criteria for each of the 3 priority bands, as required by Part VI, Housing Act 1996 and by statutory guidance.			
<p>What impact will this revised Housing Allocation Policy have on the following groups? Please note that you should consider both external and internal impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External (e.g. stakeholders, residents, local businesses etc.)</li> <li>• Internal (staff)</li> </ul>					
Please use only 'Yes' where applicable		Negative	Positive	Neutral	Comments
Gender	External			X	
	Internal			X	
Gender Reassignment	External		X		There is now reference within the policy for the need for transgender households member to have their own bedrooms.
	Internal			X	
Age	External	X			This specific amendment only applies to people over 55s who do not have a local connection and is seeking to remove their right to access sheltered accommodation.
	Internal			X	
	External			X	

Marriage and civil partnership	Internal			X	
Disability	External			X	
	Internal			X	
Race & Ethnicity	External			X	
	Internal			X	
Sexual Orientation	External			X	
	Internal			X	
Religion or Belief (or no Belief)	External			X	
	Internal			X	
Pregnancy & Maternity	External		X		Acknowledgement is given in terms of both eligibility and bedroom size to those applicants who are pregnant or have children, in acknowledgement of the reasonable preference with must be considered for pregnant applicants, families and other household members who would normally reside with the applicant.
	Internal			X	
Other Groups (e.g. any other vulnerable groups, rural isolation, deprived areas, low income staff etc.). Please state the group/s:	External		X		Gedling Borough Council adopted an Armed Forces covenant to acknowledge those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and ensure that those individuals and their families, are treated fairly. This means that Armed Forces personnel are not required to have a local connection, and are awarded additional waiting time in view of their special circumstances.  There may be other groups impacted in light of the Immigration and Social Security Coordination (EU

					Withdrawal) Act 2020. These will be considered if and when the changes are made.
	Internal			X	

Is there is any evidence of a high disproportionate adverse or positive impact on any groups?	Yes		Only those applicants who meet the eligibility standard are able to join the register. This is in accordance with the relevant legislation and also the need to prioritise social housing for those applicants with the greatest need who have a local connection to the borough, as it is a scarce resource.
Is there an opportunity to mitigate or alleviate any such impacts?		No	The eligibility requirements contained in the legislation are specific. With regard to the wider powers granted to Councils as part of the localism agenda, the decision here is to prioritise those applicants in the greatest need due to the limited availability of social housing in the borough.
Are there any gaps in information available (e.g. evidence) so that a complete assessment of different impacts is not possible?		No	Consideration has been given to those currently on the waiting list and those who may have been able to go on the waiting list, as part of the consultation and subsequent assessment of the proposed changes.

In response to the information provided above please provide a set of proposed action including any consultation that is going to be carried out:

Planned Actions	Timeframe	Success Measure	Responsible Officer

Authorisation and Review

Completing Officer	A Bennett
Authorising Service Manager	J Davies
Date	13/01/2021
Review date ( if applicable)	

# **Gedling Borough Council**

## **Choice Based Lettings and Housing Allocations Policy**

**January 2021**

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## 1.0 Introduction

### Gedling Choice Based Lettings scheme

- 1.1 Applications for and allocations to social housing, including both social and affordable rent, in Gedling are administered through a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme known as **Homesearch**. The allocations policy, that outlines how the scheme works, sets out how properties are advertised, who can bid, how bids are made and how lettings and offers of accommodation are made.
- 1.2 This policy does not cover the allocations of social housing made by Housing Associations outside the Homesearch system, for example mutual exchanges, Right to Buy or temporary decants to another property etc.
- 1.3 The policy contains an appendix to describe when the Council will make a “private rented offer” in discharge of its homelessness duties under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) (see Appendix A).
- 1.4 The policy also details to process for Out Of Area Placements (see Appendix B).
- 1.5 The Gedling Allocations Policy (‘the Policy’) sets out who can apply for social housing in Gedling and how priority is given to different applicants. It is worth noting here that by joining the register, it does not guarantee an offer of social housing.
- 1.6 If you need to contact us, you can do so by:
  - Online at [www.home-search-gedling.org.uk](http://www.home-search-gedling.org.uk)
  - By email to [homesearch@gedling.gov.uk](mailto:homesearch@gedling.gov.uk)
  - By letter addressed to the Civic Centre, Arnot Hill Park, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 6LU
  - In person by coming to the Civic Centre at Arnot Hill Park during usual business hours.
  - By telephone on 0115 901 3651 or 0115 901 3803

**If you would like a copy of this document in another format such as large print, Braille, audiotape or translated into a different language, please contact us on 0115 901 3681 or email [Homesearch@gedling.gov.uk](mailto:Homesearch@gedling.gov.uk)**

### Aims and objectives

- 1.7 The Council will aim to make the best use of the social housing stock in the borough to meet the needs of residents. The aims of the policy are:
- To ensure that all regulatory and legal requirements are met;
  - To set out the requirement for considering eligibility and qualification;
  - To ensure that applicants are given 'reasonable' choice;
  - To set out the categories of applicants who will be given reasonable preference;
  - To set out the categories of applicants who will be given additional preference;
  - To confirm when local lettings policies and direct lets may be used;
  - To set out the legal framework for reviews.
  - To ensure that applicants on the housing register are ready to move and actively bidding for properties
  - To ensure the accuracy of the housing register

### Regulatory code and legal framework

- 1.8 The 'Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Authorities in England' is the statutory guidance issued in 2012 to Local Authorities in England under Section 169 of the Housing Act 1996. Housing authorities are required to have regard to it in exercising their functions under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996.
- 1.9 Section 166A of the Housing Act 1996 provides that authorities must have regard to their homelessness strategies when framing their allocations policy.
- 1.10 Additional guidance 'Providing Social Housing for Local People.' was issued in 2013 to assist housing authorities to make the best use of their flexibilities within the allocations legislation to better meet the needs of their local residents and their communities.
- 1.11 This policy has also been reviewed to comply with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and the new Code of Guidance 2018.
- 1.12 The policy identifies the groups that will be given preference for social housing. The policy applies to existing tenants wishing to transfer from one tenancy to another and to new applicants, including people who are homeless. When we refer to an "applicant" in this document, it will refer to both new applicants including homeless people and tenants wishing to transfer (unless otherwise stated).
- 1.13 The policy will be effective from **(?? to be completed once confirmed)** and will be kept under regular review to reflect changes in legislation or local housing priorities.

- 1.14 The Housing Act 1996, Part 6 states a housing authority allocates accommodation when it:
- Selects a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of accommodation held by that authority
  - Nominates a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of accommodation held by another housing authority
  - Nominates a person to be an assured tenant of accommodation held by a private Housing Association
- 1.15 For the purposes of this policy an allocation will be considered to be a nomination if the property has been advertised and shortlisted through the Homesearch Choice Based lettings Scheme, or with the agreement of both the Housing Association and a senior Gedling Borough Council officer.

### Direct Matches

- 1.16 Direct matches can be used for those applicants whose Prevention or Relief Homeless Duty has been accepted or if a property has been advertised on several occasions, and there has been no or low interest expressed in the property, then the property could be directly matched to someone on the waiting list.

## 2.0 Equality and Diversity

- 2.1 We will promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practices when providing services. Communities thrive and prosper where individuals and groups are treated fairly and with respect, and are given equality of access to services.
- 2.2 The aim of the Policy is to ensure that you and all applicants for housing are treated fairly. In implementing this policy, people who can join this scheme will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, age, disability, gender re-assignment, gender, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex or sexual orientation as per Equality Act 2010.
- 2.3 We have carried out an Equalities Impact Assessment and this will be kept under review.

### **3.0 Statement on offering choice**

- 3.1 The Council is committed to enabling applicants to play an active role in choosing where they wish to live. However, the housing pressures faced by the Council will limit the degree of choice that the Council is able to offer along with the legal responsibility the Council has to ensure that those in greatest housing need are given priority for social housing, therefore in certain circumstances choice may need to be restricted.
- 3.1 It must also be recognised that there is very high demand for affordable housing in Gedling Borough and that this demand cannot be fully met from the current social housing stock.
- 3.2 Applicants who have been in a high priority band may have their application reviewed at the Council's discretion. This may result in you being placed in a lower band. We will notify you of any changes which are made to your application.
- 3.3 For any applicant owed a homelessness duty under S.195, 189B, 193(2) or 193c(4) of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) the Council may make a direct offer of suitable accommodation at any time in order to resolve a threat of homelessness or homelessness itself. An offer of suitable accommodation could be made in an area either inside or outside the Borough that the Council consider is suitable for the applicant to live in where the need to offer suitable housing is more important than the need to respect the applicant's preference for the location where they wish to live.
- 3.4 Suitable offers can be either a private rented or social tenancy (see Appendix A).

### **4 Confidentiality**

- 4.1 You will be asked on the application form to give permission for us to share the information provided with other members of the Choice Based Lettings scheme (such as Housing Associations) and other relevant agencies. We can also request specific information such as information from the Police or Probation service relating to convictions.
- 4.2 Sometimes, information must be shared even without your consent, e.g. to the police to prevent and/or detect crime (Crime and Disorder Act 1998, section 17 Safeguarding).

- 4.3 Subject to limited exceptions, you have the right to access the personal information we hold about you. This includes information we hold as paper and electronic records. If you would like to access the information we hold about you, please contact the Data Protection Officer at Gedling Borough Council.

### General Data Protection Regulation GDPR

- 4.4 We will use the information provided by you to progress your application to join the Choice based Lettings Scheme. The basis under which the Council uses personal data for this purpose is that this is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest by the Council or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Council, as per General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR). The information provided by you may include information regarding your health, this is a special category of personal data and this information is used by the Council on the basis that it is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest and in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 4.5 The Data Controller is Gedling Borough Council, Civic Centre, Arnot Hill Park, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 6LU. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at the above address or by email at [dataprotectionofficer@gedling.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@gedling.gov.uk)
- 4.6 The information provided by you may also be used for the purpose of any other function carried out by the Council. Information about these functions and further information including how long we retain your data, who we share with and your rights can be found at <http://www.gedling.gov.uk/council/aboutus/policies/privacypolicies/>

## 5 How the housing allocation scheme will operate

- 5.1 We will offer properties through Homesearch, a Choice Based Lettings scheme, which provides people searching for housing more choice in where they live. The scheme is designed to be simple to use and easy to understand, but some words have a special meaning as follows:

**Register** – to register you need to complete an online application form.

**Qualify** – we will decide whether you qualify for social housing in Gedling Borough when you have provided all the necessary information (see section 7 for details).

**Bid** – you need to look at the weekly property adverts on the Homesearch website and tell us about the properties you are interested in by placing a bid on the Homesearch website. This is known as bidding.

- 5.2 When you apply to join the scheme, we will process your application and assess whether you qualify for social housing. If you do, we will give it a priority band (see section 14), which reflects your level of housing need. We will also explain any limitations on the size and type of property you can bid for. Once we have received your application form and all supporting information, we will process your application as soon as possible.
- 5.3 The majority of applications will be determined by the Homesearch section, however if a decision is required, for example on whether or not to allow someone to join due to:
- The applicant being under 18 years old;
  - The applicant having committed criminal and or anti social behavior;
  - The applicant being an owner occupier;
  - Financial circumstances;
  - Applications made under “exceptional circumstances;”

This will be made by a senior officer. In addition, appeals against either exclusion from the scheme or the banding priority which you have been awarded will also be considered by a senior officer.

- 5.4 Properties are advertised every week, from Thursday at 00:01 to Tuesday at 23:59. This is known as the “advertising cycle”. The advertisements can be found on the Homesearch website and can be accessed by all devices. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Homesearch Team. The advertisements give information about each property, such as the number of bedrooms, location, rent, property type, and whether pets are allowed. The advertisements also say who is eligible to bid for the property. This is at the Housing Association’s discretion, not the Council’s.
- 5.5 Once you have found a property that you are interested in that you are eligible to bid for, you can let us know, via the website, by phone or in person (contact details in section 1.6). Bidding does not involve any money (It is an expression of interest, not a financial offer.) You can bid for up to three properties in each cycle.
- 5.6 During the bidding cycle, you can check your position in the queue for that property, and move your bids to different properties where you are better placed, to increase your chances of being offered a property.
- 5.7 Once the advertising cycle closes, all the bids received for each property are drawn together in a shortlist, and the property is normally considered for the person at the top of it (see section 21 for more details.) However, there may be instances where the property is offered to an applicant lower down the list, for example, to avoid under-occupation (where the household moving in has more bedrooms than they need) or to

make the best use of the property i.e. when the household has medical needs or requires a property which has been adapted. Note: that it is the Housing Association (NOT the Council) who makes the decision about who the property is offered to. Please also note that if you have any arrears of rent/mortgage then a Housing Association may decide not to offer to you, but to offer to someone who is lower on the shortlist.

- 5.8 The property is usually offered to the applicant who is in the highest priority band, has been waiting the longest and who meets the criteria of any local lettings policy of the Housing Association. If that applicant refuses, the property is offered to the next highest placed applicant and so on, working down the short list until the property is let. If the property is subsequently refused and a long period has passed since the property was advertised, it may be re-advertised, or offered as a direct match.
- 5.9 Each week, you can see feedback from properties that have previously been let through Homesearch, including how many people bid for them, which band the successful applicant was in, and how long they had been waiting. This can help you to decide what type of properties to bid for in future, and see how likely you are to be successful.

## **6 Eligibility**

- 6.1 There are certain groups of people who are eligible for social housing.
- 6.2 Accommodation will not be allocated to persons from abroad who are ineligible for housing if:
- They are subject to immigration control unless he or she comes within a class prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State;
  - They are to be treated as ineligible for an allocation of accommodation as prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State;
  - The term 'person subject to immigration control' is defined in S.13(2) of the Asylum and Immigration Act as a person who under the Immigration Act 1971 required leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom (whether or not such leave has been given);
  - The applicant is ineligible due to changes contained in the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020:  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/20/contents/enacted/data.htm>
- 6.3 However most Housing Associations will only offer tenancies to applicants with indefinite leave to remain.

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

- British citizens;
- Certain Commonwealth citizens with a right of abode in the UK;
- Irish citizens, who are not subject to immigration control in the UK because the Republic of Ireland forms part of the Common Travel Area within the UK, which allows for the free movement of people. (The Common Travel Area is the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland);
- Persons who are exempt from immigration control under the Immigration Acts.

6.5 Not all potential circumstances can be included in the policy. The UK Border Agency provides a service to housing authorities to confirm the Immigration Status of an applicant from abroad. If there is any uncertainty regarding eligibility, enquiries will be made before accepting an application.

6.6 A joint tenancy, for two or more people, will not be granted if any of the applicants are ineligible. However, if one of the applicants is eligible then the tenancy may be offered to that applicant only. Ineligible family members may be taken into account in determining the size of accommodation which is allocated.

6.7 If you are not sure whether you are eligible, you should contact the Homesearch Team for advice.

## **7 Qualification**

7.1 To join the register, applicants must; Be aged over 18, unless the following circumstances apply:

- Young people accepted under the homelessness legislation;
- Care Leavers with a recommendation from Children Services;
- People referred and placed in specialist or supported accommodation by the Council who are ready to move on to independent living;
- Teenage parents;
- Exceptional circumstances following an assessment by the Housing Needs Team and where a guarantor will be available.

7.2 Any tenancy granted to a person under the age of 18 will be held in trust for them by a responsible adult, appointed to act on their behalf. Most Housing Associations will only consider granting a tenancy to 16 and 17 year olds if a suitable support package is in place. However the majority of Housing Associations will only consider applicants who are 18 years or older.

7.3 The Localism Act 2011 has given local authorities greater freedom to set their own policies about who can apply for social housing in their area. This means that we now have more freedom over how we operate our allocations scheme and can now set

criteria for who *qualifies* to join the housing register. If you do not qualify, then we will not register your application.

7.4 The Council has therefore decided to restrict applications to people who have a defined need for re-housing, and that people who are adequately housed but have a desire to move will not qualify for social housing. The only exceptions to this are:

- a) Applicants willing to downsize to a smaller social housing property, and/or
- b) Older applicants who would be eligible for Sheltered living property, and/or
- c) Applicants who are in receipt of the medium or high rate of the care element of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, who are willing to move into a sheltered living property. This is because the supply of sheltered living properties is closer to the demand for that type of housing, whereas demand for “general needs” social housing greatly outweighs the supply.

7.5 To qualify to join the housing register, you must have a local connection to Gedling Borough Council, or fall into an exception category, and you must also meet at least one criterion from list 1, and at least one criterion from list 2.

<b>LIST 1: Need for housing , or exception</b>	
1a	Demonstrate your need for re housing by meeting the criteria set out for Bands 1, 2 or 3 (see section 14).
1b	Occupy a social housing property in Gedling Borough and have one or more spare bedrooms, and be willing to move to a smaller property.
1c	A household with no children who have one member in the household aged over 50 <sup>1</sup> , and be willing to move into a sheltered living property.
1d	A household with no children but you or at least one person in your household is receiving the medium or high rate of the care element of Disability Living Allowance or in receipt of a Personal Independence Payment, and you are willing to move into a sheltered living property subject to any age restriction determined by the Housing Association.

<b>LIST 2: Local connection, or exemption</b>	
2a	Currently living in the borough and have done so consecutively for the last 3 years.
2b	Currently be working in permanent paid employment in the Gedling Borough area for 16 hours per week or more, and have been employed in Gedling Borough for at least 3 years or is a social housing tenant who needs to move to Gedling Borough, to take up an offer of employment in the borough, which would usually

<sup>1</sup> This is at the discretion of the Housing Association, who may have different age restrictions.

2c	The applicant provides or receives personal care (paid or unpaid) for/ from a parent, sibling or adult child who has lived in Gedling for the last five years and they need to move so that care arrangements can continue. Care must be provided for at least 3 hours per day and for at least 5 days per week. A Community Care Assessment and/ or confirmation of the arrangements by the Adult/ Children's Services Department must be provided to evidence this, and <del>proof of any carers allowance etc. A letter from a GP is not sufficient</del>
2d	Have been accepted by Gedling Borough Council under the main homelessness duty legislation. Applicants will be made one offer anywhere either within the borough or surrounding areas. Those applicants accepted as homeless under S195 and S189(b) who do not have a local connection or who are unlikely to be owed the Main S.193 Duty and / or are likely to be found intentionally homeless may only be offered a private rented property to end the homelessness duty.
2e	Have been accepted for priority re-housing as a reciprocal arrangement with another Council or Housing Association
2f	Have been placed in care as a child outside the area, but wish to return to Gedling (and previously lived in Gedling) and are still classed as a care leaver. Be a former care leaver aged 25 or younger who has been placed in care as a child in the Nottinghamshire County Council area, and wish to live in Gedling.
2g	Have been accepted as part of a witness protection recommendation by the police. (NB supporting evidence will be required)
2h	Have been living in temporary/supported accommodation provided by a local housing authority outside Gedling, but have had a local connection to Gedling (2a, 2b) before you were placed there. Or have been placed in supported housing by GBC anywhere as part of their prevention / relief work to prevent homelessness. NB Time spent in supported accommodation in the borough, for example Framework etc. will not give the applicant a connection to the borough. Their local connection will be determined by where they lived before they moved into
2i	The applicants is serving in the regular Armed Forces, Reserve Forces or Territorial Army, or have left those forces in the last five years, unless dishonorably discharged.
2j	Another special reason. This will only be awarded by a senior manager, where the applicants can demonstrate a special reason for needing to reside in the Borough that is not covered under any other local connection category.
2k	The applicants' circumstances require them to live close to a special medical facility or support service which is only available in the Borough.

7.6 If you do not qualify to join the scheme, we will give you advice about other housing options that may be available to you, such as renting a home in the private sector.

7.7 You also have the right of appeal.

## **8 Who cannot join the scheme?**

### **8.1 People under 18**

You must be at least 18 years old or over at the time of applying, unless the criteria detailed at 7.1 applies.

### **8.2 People living outside the Common Travel Area**

You must be resident in the Common Travel Area at the time of applying. Further information and a definition of the Common Travel Area is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-travel-area-guidance/common-travel-area-guidance>

### **8.3 People who are not 'habitually resident' in the UK**

If you have lived outside the Common Travel Area within the last two years, you may not be classified as 'habitually resident', even if you are a UK citizen. People who are not 'habitually resident' are not eligible for re-housing. We will assess each case on its own circumstances.

### **8.4 People subject to immigration control**

If you are subject to immigration control, as defined by the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, you are not eligible for social housing. These groups of people are set out by regulations. Please see further information at section 6.

### **8.5 People who have committed criminal or anti-social behaviour**

We will assess each case on its circumstances as to whether applicants with a history of criminal or anti-social-behaviour qualify for the scheme. Details are set out in section 9.

### **8.6 Homeowners**

If you own part or all of a home you will not be able to join the scheme unless. The only property you own is outside the United Kingdom, and it is not reasonable to expect you to occupy it;

- You are an older or disabled owner-occupier living in poor housing conditions or in unsuitable accommodation. The resources available to you would be taken into account (including grants available for repairs etc. and the capital value of the property) before a decision is taken about whether you would qualify to register on the scheme;
- The decision about whether a homeowner is able to join the scheme is at the Council's discretion.

### **8.7 Financial Circumstances**

If it is considered that you have sufficient resources/equity in your home to resolve your housing situation, then you will be excluded from the housing register. We will

take into account a range of factors, based on your ability to access either the private rented sector or owner occupation. As guidance we would usually consider that a property is affordable that equated to one third of your income taking into account issues such as family size. Usually if an applicant has assets/ savings which are valued at £6,000 or over they would be excluded from the scheme. This figure is in line with the maximum assets/savings for a household to be eligible for Housing Benefit.

## 8.8 Sanctuary Scheme

People who have been approved or had Sanctuary measures installed in their properties within the last 12 months, and where there has not been a change in their circumstances, will not usually qualify to join or remain on the Homeseach Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

## 9 Criminal and anti-social behaviour

9.1 Some people's behaviour means that they are unsuitable to become social tenants. If you or anyone in your household who is on the application with you, have behaved or are currently behaving anti-socially then you may not be allowed to join the scheme. Examples of behaviour that may disqualify you are as follows:

- If you (either in your current tenancy or in a previous one) have been in serious breach of your tenancy conditions due to anti-social behaviour;
- If you have been served with an injunction;
- If you have been or are currently subject to another court order (such as a suspended possession order) on the grounds of anti-social behaviour;
- If you have been evicted by your landlord because of anti-social behaviour;
- If you (or anyone in your household or any of your visitors) have caused willful damage to a council or Housing Association property.
- If you have a history of, or are currently perpetrating, serious anti-social behaviour and/or criminal behaviour.

NB these requirements apply to the applicant, and any household members or visitors.

9.2 Behaviour likely to be considered as serious anti-social behaviour, for example :

- Physical assaults (such as domestic, racial and homophobic violence);
- Severe damage to property (including buildings, cars etc.)for example, arson attacks;
- Threats of violence and/or damage, including threats to kill (this includes perpetrators of domestic violence);
- Persistent and offensive verbal abuse, due to a person's religion, ethnicity, sexuality, disability or other reason;
- The use of dwellings for the cultivation, supply or use of drugs;
- The use of the dwelling for illegal or immoral purposes;
- Persistent/wide spread criminal activity such as burglaries or vehicle crime;
- Violence to or threatening behavior towards the staff of Gedling Borough Council,

a Housing Association, another previous landlord, the Police, Councillors, Emergency Services Personnel, or NHS workers etc. either in person, via correspondence or social media;

- Persistent noise nuisance continuing for long periods of time; and
- Stalking, harassment and coercive behaviour

- 9.3 **Additional information – disclosure of spent convictions** The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 allows most convictions (and cautions) to be considered ‘spent’ after a specified period of time. Once a caution or conviction is spent the person is considered rehabilitated and the ROA treats the person as if they had never committed an offence.
- 9.4 The Act aims to rehabilitate offenders by not making their past mistakes affect the rest of their lives. This includes individuals’ ability to access housing from local Housing Associations.
- 9.5 Probation providers make regular referrals to local authorities and housing providers, as part of the support provided to an individual to enable them to secure suitable accommodation. Often, as part of that process, Local Authorities will ask for information relating to the individuals criminal record. A recent High Court ruling ([2016] EWHC 1850 (Admin)) found that Local Authorities must not take spent convictions into account when making decisions relating to housing allocations or entering an individual onto the housing register.
- 9.6 Local Authorities may disqualify people, on the basis of past conduct, such as anti-social behaviour or Arson offences. However, if the applicant is convicted of an offence relating to antisocial behaviour or arson the authority must be careful to comply with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- 9.7 Guidance on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974)
- 9.8 All applications will be considered on their individual circumstances before a decision is made whether they will qualify for the scheme. We will take into account the nature and severity of the criminal or anti-social behaviour, how long ago the incidents occurred, and anything you tell us about them. A manager or senior officer will decide if you qualify. If their decision is to dis-qualify the application, the applicant will be advised of this and for how long the exemption will be applied. You will also have the right to appeal the decision.
- 9.9 If at any time after you have been accepted onto the scheme, we or a partner in the Homeseach scheme, obtain evidence that you have exhibited unacceptable behaviour

as outlined above, then your application may be suspended or cancelled. You will be informed in writing of this, and will have the opportunity to appeal against this decision, in accordance with the appeals procedure (see section 16 about appeals).

## 10 Application requirements

### Assessment criteria

10.1 This section contains the assessment criteria.

### 10.2 Family Applications

You will be considered as a family household if you have at least one dependent child living permanently within your household. Dependent children are defined as children aged up to 18 and who must be living with you as their main home. This includes children who are adopted or fostered on a long-term basis. Children aged over 18 but still living at home are regarded as adult members of the household. Proof is required of child benefit, child tax credits or Universal Credit. Some children can receive child benefit up to the age of 20, and as such they would be considered as a dependent.

10.3 Children who do not live permanently in your home, or who have their main home elsewhere (for example, due to access arrangements) are not considered as permanent members of the household and will not be counted for bed spaces.

### 10.4 Joint Applications

Joint applications can be accepted from couples and people who are not couples but have a long term commitment to live together, up to a maximum of four people, all of whom must meet the requirements of the allocations policy and local connection criteria. If this applies to you then you and all the other applicants must agree that you are applying together.

10.5 You may make a joint application if the following applies:

- Partners who want to share a home;
- Relatives wishing to live together where there is a long term commitment to a shared home;
- One of the parties is a carer for another.

### 10.6 Applicants no longer wishing to apply jointly

If you and any other applicants in a joint application no longer wish to apply jointly, then you can all have separate applications. When a request to split the joint application is received, each applicant's circumstances will be reassessed separately and an appropriate band awarded from the original application date. However, if the reassessment results in a higher band for one applicant, then the waiting time will only be effective from the date of their single application assessment.

### 10.7 **Pregnant Applicants**

If you are pregnant you will be considered as a family applicant, requiring appropriately sized accommodation, as soon as your pregnancy has been confirmed. It is the choice of the Housing Association if they will include your pregnancy in the household size calculation, prior to the children being born.

### 10.8 **Members of HM Forces**

If you are a serving or former member of

- The Regular Armed Forces;
- The Reserve Forces;
- The Territorial Army; or
- You have left those forces in the last five years and you have not been dishonorably discharged.

10.9 You will qualify for housing if you meet the criteria from list 1 in section 7 (recognised need for housing, or exception). You do not need a local connection to Gedling Borough in order to qualify. If you do qualify for housing then you will be given an additional 9 months waiting time.

10.10 However, if you do not have a housing need, or do not meet the criteria set out in list 1 in section 7, then you will not qualify to join the scheme, even if you are a serving or former member of the Forces listed above.

10.11 We define former and serving members of the Armed Forces as:

- People who left the regular Armed Forces, Reserve Forces or Territorial Army within the last 5 years, except those dishonorably discharged;
- Serving members of the regular Armed Forces, Reserve Forces or Territorial Army who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service;
- Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces, Reserve Forces or Territorial Army, leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.

### 10.12 **Prisoners**

If you are a prisoner serving a custodial sentence then you will not have your application considered until you have been released. This is because it would not be fair for you to apply for the scheme and build up waiting time while you are serving a custodial sentence and are in no position to move. The release date must be verified by probation or prison staff. Your last settled address will be used to establish whether you have a local connection. NB please provide the information requested at section 11 to enable us to assess your eligibility to join the scheme.

### 10.13 Applicants with rent/ mortgage arrears

If you have current or former rent arrears from a private, Council or Housing Association tenancy or related to a mortgage then you may join the scheme, but only if you have made arrangements to pay the arrears and adhered to the arrangement for a minimum period of 6 months (supporting evidence will be required). If your rent/mortgage account was in arrears for over 6 months you may be ineligible to join the scheme. All arrears must be declared. This is at the discretion of the housing provider, whether or not to offer someone with arrears a tenancy.

### 10.14 Foster Carers

If you have been approved as a foster carer and need an additional bedroom to commence a placement then you will be placed in Band 2 as soon as we have confirmation from Social Care or a Fostering agency.

### 10.15 Homeless Applicants

The definitions of the stages of the Councils homeless duty are:

- **Duty** - To provide assistance/ advice to all eligible applicants who are homeless.
- **Prevention** – applicant is facing homelessness within 56 days and is eligible to help prevent them from becoming homeless
- **Relief** - Where the local authority is satisfied that the applicant is both homeless and eligible, assistance will be provided to help the applicant to secure accommodation that will be available for at least 6 months
- **Main** - To secure ongoing accommodation for priority need applicants

### 10.16 The Main Section 193(2) Homeless Duty

Applicants who are homeless and are owed the Main Duty when the Relief Duty comes to an end because they have been assessed as being in priority need, eligible, have a local connection and are unintentionally homeless will be placed in Band 1.

10.17 All applicants who are owed this duty will be placed on auto-bid and made one suitable offer either within or outside the borough, regardless of the areas requested by the applicant (unless the applicant(s) are fleeing in which case only areas considered to be safe will be offered) in order to prevent or relieve homelessness successfully.

10.18 Applicants have the right of appeal, further details are contained in section 16.

10.19 The duty may be ended with any accommodation that is not social housing that is suitable and offered or secured for a 12 month minimum 'Fixed term Tenancy'.

### 10.20 The Section 189(b) Relief of Homelessness Duty

Applicants who are homeless and are owed a relief duty and would be likely to be owed the Main Duty and would be, or would likely be found to be in priority need and un-intentionally homeless, will be placed in band 2, and placed on auto bid.

10.21 Applicants owed a Relief Duty but where they would not be owed or are unlikely to be owed the Main Duty when the Relief Duty comes to an end, or non-priority applicants with a local connection, assessed as unintentionality homeless where they have been issued with a decision that the relief duty has ceased and no further duty is owed despite the applicant still be being homeless, will be placed in Band 3, and awarded an additional 6 months waiting time.

**10.22 The Section 195 Prevention of Homelessness Duty**

Applicants with a local connection who are owed a Prevention Duty and who would be likely to be owed the Main Duty if the Relief Duty were to end unsuccessfully will be placed in band 3.

10.23 Applicants who are owed this duty will be placed on auto-bid and made one suitable offer either within or outside the borough regardless of the areas requested, ( unless the applicant(s) are fleeing in which case only areas considered to be safe will be offered) by the applicant in order to prevent or relieve homelessness successfully. The duty may be ended with any accommodation that is not social housing that is suitable and secured or offered with a reasonable prospect of being available for at least 6 months.

10.24 Applicants without a local connection who are owed a Prevention Duty but where they would not be owed or are unlikely to be owed the Main Duty (i.e. non-priority and intentionally homelessness) when the Relief Duty comes to an end will be placed in Band 3, autobid. In these instances, applicants will only be offered one suitable offer, secured or offered with a reasonable prospect of being available for at least 6 months either within or outside the borough, regardless of the areas requested by the applicant, (unless the applicant(s) are fleeing in which case only areas considered to be safe will be offered. Please see section 16 for further information) in order to prevent or relieve homelessness successfully. NB applicants are unlikely to be offered a social tenancy.

10.25 If the homeless applicant refuses this offer and they are in Band 1 or Band 2 and have a local connection as defined in List 2, section 7 they will be moved to Band 3. Applicants in Band 3 with no local connection who refuse this offer will no longer be eligible for the housing register, but would be able to reapply after 1 year.

**10.26 Failure to Co-operate**

193C(4) – A deliberate and unreasonable failure to co-operate is defined within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as when an applicant refuses to cooperate when s/he does not take a step (or steps) in her/his Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) This might be a step which:

- the applicant agreed to

- the authority identified as a step which the applicant was required to take

In such cases, the concern will be raised with the applicant, and may result in their application being closed.

### Accepting the property offered

- 10.27 You will be able to request a review if you do not believe the property is suitable for your needs. However, you will be advised to accept the tenancy while awaiting the outcome of this review as, if it proves unsuccessful, we will have discharged our main homelessness duty and you will be required to leave any temporary accommodation provided. No further accommodation will be offered. By accepting the offer, if your appeal about the suitability of the property is unsuccessful, you will still have somewhere to live.
- 10.28 Properties cannot be held pending a review, and therefore our advice is to accept the tenancy, but you will need to sign for the tenancy and move in immediately pending the outcome of the review. If the offer is refused then no further offers of social housing will be made.
- 10.29 If you are homeless with no fixed abode then you must provide a 'care of' address where you can receive post. This could be a friend, a relative or a support agency's address.

## 11 Information you need to provide

- 11.1 To accompany your application form, you will need to provide some information about you and your household. Your application cannot be registered without this information, so please make sure you have provided the following:
- 11.2 **Identification** – Proof of identity for all members of your household is required, such as a current passport, driving license or birth certificate. All documents must be in date.
- 11.3 **If you are a current tenant of a Homesearch member, and you are struggling to supply proof of identify, please contact your housing provider.**
- 11.4 **Children** – You will need to provide recent proof for all children who live permanently at your address. This could be a letter confirming Child Benefit; Tax Credits or Universal Credit for each child living with you permanently
- 11.5 **Immigration status** - If you are not a UK citizen you will need to provide proof that you are eligible for social housing in the UK, such as Home Office documentation

- 11.6 **Residency Checking** - The Council has to confirm that you are living at the address you state on your application form. The Council may use credit reference agencies to do this. If you are not registered for Council Tax or are not on the electoral roll, you will need to provide some other proof that you live at the address on your application form (such as a utility bill in your name, a NHS medical card, benefit letters etc.). These addresses must prove a minimum of 3 years consistent residency in Gedling Borough. NB bank statements are not sufficient
- 11.7 You must also give full information about any criminal and/or anti-social behaviour as detailed in section 9 above. An applicant who has a conviction may still be accepted, but this is at the Council's discretion. Before an offer of a property is made further checks may be completed, such as Disclosure and Barring Service – (DBS) checks which would need to be provided at the applicant's expense
- 11.8 You must also provide full details relating to any rent or mortgage arrears as detailed at section 10. Partner Housing Associations may wish to include former arrears in the terms of their tenancy agreement. Please see the "Supporting Documentation Check list" in the application form, which will tell you the information required. For applicants with additional support needs assistance is available from the Housing Needs Team to provide the necessary information. Equally, there are independent advice and support services such as CAB.

## **12 Assessing applications**

- 12.1 When an application is received it will be assessed by a member of the Homesearch Team who will contact the applicant to request any further supporting evidence which is required. Applicants will only be accepted, awarded a band and allowed to bid once all the evidence has been received. The registration date for allocation purposes is the date that application was activated following all verifications being completed.
- 12.2 **Medical Need**  
If you are applying to move because you have a medical condition, a mobility problem or a permanent physical disability, you will need to provide information about your condition and how your condition is affected by your current housing (e.g. if you need to move following a stroke which has affected your mobility to such an extent that you can no longer manage stairs and require ground floor accommodation).
- 12.3 We may need further information regarding your need to move home. This could be a letter from your GP, Social Worker, Occupational Therapist or other health or social care professional who knows about your condition, and proof of any disability benefits that you are in receipt of.
- 12.4 **Welfare Need**

You should provide as much information as possible about why you need to move. Examples of a need to move on welfare grounds could include because you need to provide or receive essential care to or from a relative, please see section 2C. A Community Care Assessment and / or confirmation of the arrangements by the Adult/ Children's Services department must be provided to evidence this; or because you need to be near essential services that you could not access without moving. You may also need to provide proof of your need from your GP, social worker or other registered social care provider.

#### **12.5 Threatened with loss of accommodation**

If you have been asked to leave your home, you will need to provide proof, such as a copy of your notice to quit; possession order or letter from your employer or family member (if you live in tied accommodation). Enquiries will be made with your landlord to verify the grounds for serving the notice, and also to try to mediate to save your tenancy.

#### **12.6 Collusion**

If following these enquiries with your landlord and where there is evidence that you have colluded with your landlord in the issuing of a notice to quit, you will be excluded from joining the scheme for 1 year in line with other grounds for exclusions.

#### **12.7 Deliberate worsening of circumstances**

Deliberate worsening of circumstances arises where the Council decides that you have given up accommodation that was suitable for your needs where there was no requirement or obligation to do so. To reduce the likelihood of people moving into poorer accommodation in order to qualify more quickly for re-housing. If you are found to have deliberately worsened your circumstances, you will not normally qualify for housing based on this situation for 12 months after you deliberately worsened your own circumstances. Examples of deliberate worsening of circumstances might include:

- Selling or giving up any property that was affordable and suitable for your household's needs;
- Moving from a secure or assured tenancy to insecure or overcrowded accommodation with family or friends, where there is no good reason for this move;
- Where there is evidence that it was reasonable that you could have remained in your original accommodation;
- Arranging for another person to move into your home, creating an overcrowded situation, where there was no good reason for this move.

12.8 Where you have little or no control over your move to alternative accommodation, this will not normally be considered as a deliberate worsening of circumstances.

## 13 False statements and withholding information

13.1 Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, states:

*“A person commits an offence if, in connection with the exercise by a local housing authority of their functions under the Act: a) he knowingly or recklessly makes a statement which is false in a material particular, or b) he knowingly withholds information which the authority has reasonably required him/her to give in connection with the exercise of those functions.”*

13.2 This means that it is an offence for which you may be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court to give false information or knowingly withhold information you have been asked for regarding your housing application.

13.3 If you are found to have given false information, you may be excluded from registering with Homesearch for a period of 1 year. If you have given false information and have obtained a property through Homesearch, the Housing Association may bring proceedings for possession of the property.

## 14 Allocations policy and banding scheme

14.1 Once an application has been processed and determined to be eligible, the Council will place the application in one of three bands:

- **Band 1 – Urgent** This is the highest band and is for applicants who are in urgent need of housing e.g. have been accepted as homelessness or cannot be discharged from hospital. In view of their urgent need for re-housing they will be placed on auto bids and matched to the next suitable property, as opposed to other applicants on lower bands who can bid for properties of their choice.
- **Band 2 – High** This band is for applicants who have a clear need to move, for example if they are fleeing harassment or are ready to move on from supported accommodation, but who will be allowed to bid for properties.
- **Band 3 – Moderate Need** This band is for people with an acknowledged housing need, but who's housing situation is not urgent, for example, applicants who are receiving homeless prevention advice or are interested in moving into sheltered living housing.

### Band 1 – Urgent priority

14.2 All applicants receiving a band 1 priority, with the exception of under occupation, will be placed on autobid. This means that applicants cannot place their own bids, but the system will place bids for them on the most suitable properties which they are most

likely to be matched to. Suitability is determined by the number of bedrooms not the property type, i.e. a two bedroomed flat as opposed to a two bedroomed house.

#### **14.3 Urgent Medical Priority**

This applies if you have a permanent (life-long or terminal) or chronic medical condition, illness or disability and as a result of this condition you are unable to continue to occupy your current accommodation. Your current home must be assessed by a housing, health or social care professional or medical practitioner as no longer being accessible or suitable. You will only be awarded an Urgent Medical Priority where rehousing is the only realistic option. Examples include:

- If you cannot be discharged from hospital to your present home; or
- If you are unable to access essential parts of your home e.g. bathroom, kitchen.

#### **14.4 Urgent Property Factors**

This applies to you if:

- You are a tenant of a partner Housing Association and live in the Gedling Borough but are required to leave your home as a result of a regeneration scheme, major repair order demolition/ clearance; or
- Your home is subject to a demolition order; or
- Your home is subject to Environmental Health action, such as statutory overcrowding, or has a Category 1 hazard (as defined by the Housing Act 2004) which cannot be resolved, in the near future and is likely to lead to homelessness, or which presents an immediate risk to your health and safety (until the remediation works have been carried out by the satisfaction of the Environment Health team); or
- You live in the Gedling Borough area, and are unable to return to your home due to extensive works required following a fire or flood etc. This would need to be confirmed by Environmental Health Officers and/or other supporting evidence.

#### **14.5 Statutory Overcrowding**

This applies to you if your current accommodation has been assessed as being statutorily overcrowded by an Environmental Health Officer, as defined in Part 6 of the Housing Act 1985. This assessment will take into account the number, ages, and gender of your household members living with you in the property along with the number and sizes of rooms.

14.6 A claim of overcrowding is usually only considered where it arises as the product of natural growth (i. e. when a new child is born, adopted or fostered). Overcrowding caused by people of any age coming (back) to live in the property would not usually be awarded this priority, unless there is proof that the person causing the overcrowding had no other option but to move into the property. In this case, the application will only be placed in this band once the situation has existed for 12 months. We will determine over-crowding after considering the best use of all the rooms available to the

household. An Environmental Health referral could be made for a home visit / inspection.

#### 14.7 **Urgent management cases**

This applies if you are a tenant of a partner Housing Association and currently live in Gedling Borough, and your Housing Association has made a firm recommendation that you should move urgently. This is called an 'urgent management move' and an award of Band 1 will only be granted following approval by a senior officer at the Council.

#### 14.8 **Under occupation by two or more bedrooms**

This applies if you are a tenant of a partner Housing Association and live in Gedling Borough and your current home is too big for the needs of your household by two or more bedrooms.

14.9 You will only be considered for this category if you are willing to move to a one-bedroom home or give up two bedrooms. The property you bid for must have at least two bedrooms fewer than the property you currently live in. For example, if you live in a three bedroom house and are accepted in this category you will only be able to bid for zero to one bedroomed properties.

#### 14.10 **Care Leavers**

Accepted applications from care leavers who, if after 8 weeks on band 2 have not secured a property, will have their priority increased to band 1 and placed on auto bid, as per the Local Offer to Care Leavers, agreed across Nottinghamshire.

#### 14.11 **Homelessness**

This band will be awarded where the Council has accepted a Main Homelessness Duty i.e. eligible for assistance, have a priority need and not be homeless intentionally. The applicant will be placed on auto-bid from the date accepted, and directly matched to the next available suitable property in any area either within or outside the borough regardless of the areas requested by the applicant in order to prevent or relieve homelessness successfully. The applicant may also have a duty ended with any accommodation that is not social housing that is suitable and secured or offered for a 12 month minimum 'Fixed Term Tenancy'.

14.12 In terms of the size of property you will be offered, in recognition of the impact of welfare reform and also the practice of avoiding under occupation by Housing Associations in the borough, the following table will determine the number of bedrooms. This means that children will be expected to share a bedroom until

- Two children of the same sex when one reaches 18 years old
- Two children of different sex when one reaches 10 years old.

## Band 2 – High priority

### 14.13 Homelessness Relief

This band will be awarded where an applicant is owed a Relief Duty and who would be likely to be owed the Main Duty if the Relief Duty were to end unsuccessfully. The applicant will be placed on auto-bid in this band from the accepted date and directly matched to the next suitable available property either within or outside the borough regardless of the areas requested by the applicant in order to prevent or relieve homelessness successfully. The applicant may also have the duty ended with any accommodation that is not social housing that is suitable and secured or offered with a reasonable prospect of being available for the next six months.

14.14 Housing Associations will be advised not to skip or accept refusals from the applicant without referring to the Housing Needs Team first. Where refusals are deemed to be unreasonable the band may be reduced to band 3 whilst still in the Relief of Homelessness stage.

14.15 Please note: Applicants owed a Relief Duty but where they would not be owed or are unlikely to be owed the Main Duty when the Relief Duty comes to an end will be placed in band 3 and awarded an additional 6 months waiting time. Equally where enquiries are being made to ascertain a local connection prior to a formal referral being made to another Council, applicants will be placed in band 3.

### 14.16 No Local Connection

If an applicant were to become homeless the new local connection section referral power under:

- Section 198a(1) would allow for a referral of the Relief Duty to be made at this point, and would mean an applicant would then be no longer owed a reasonable preference because the prevention duty would have ended, and the Relief Duty would not be owed as the authority has exercised its power to refer the 198b Relief of Homelessness Duty to another LA in England, where the applicant does have a local connection. The referring LA does not owe the applicant a section 198b Relief Duty once the referral is made.
- Section 189b(2) Unless the authority refer the applicant to another local housing authority in England (see section 198(A1), the authority must take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that suitable accommodation becomes available for the applicants occupation.
- Section 198(A1) If the local authority would be subject to the duty under section 198B (initial duty owed to all eligible persons who are homeless) but consider that the conditions are met for a referral of the case to another local housing authority in England, they may notify that authority of their opinion.
- Section 189B(2) and 198 (A1) confirm that when the Relief Duty has been referred

the referring local authority does not owe the applicant the Relief Duty S.189b. They would only owe the relief duty if the authority considering the referral rejected that referral and the referring authority accepted the reasons for the rejection.

14.17 This priority will only be awarded to you following an interview with a Housing Needs Officer. You may come in this category if:

- You are a private tenant and have been served with a valid notice to quit through no fault of your own and you do not have the available resources to secure further private accommodation.
- You are an owner-occupier faced with repossession through no fault of your own, where other options are not viable, and you do not have available resources to secure accommodation in the private sector
- You have been asked to leave by other members of your current household and you do not have available resources to secure accommodation in the private sector  
**OR**
- You are a tenant of tied accommodation (for example, a care-taker in a school) retiring through age or ill health, or you are being made redundant, and you do not have available resources to secure accommodation in the private sector.

#### 14.18 **Failure to Co-operate**

193C(4) –A deliberate and unreasonable failure to co-operate is defined within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as when an applicant refuses to cooperate when s/he does not take a step (or steps) in her/his Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) This might be a step which:

- the applicant agreed to
- the authority identified as a step which the applicant was required to take

In such cases, the concern will be raised with the applicant, and may result in their application being closed.

#### 14.19 **Personal Protection/Harassment**

If you are at risk in your current home in the Gedling Borough area because you are experiencing harassment which may be racial and /or homophobic harassment, domestic violence or other threats of violence, and where all housing options have been explored, then you will be allocated to this category. You will need to provide evidence from the police, anti-social behaviour unit or other relevant agency and will only be offered accommodation which is considered a safe distance from the threat (i.e. at least 5 miles away). If you are a current tenant of a Housing Association we will require supporting evidence from your landlord, such as confirmation that they would consider you for an urgent management move.

14.20 If you are fleeing to the borough from another area, we will assess your situation by taking a homeless application.

**14.21 Succession**

Applicants who have succeeded to the tenancy of a property in Gedling owned by one of the partner Housing Associations, where the property is unsuitable for the successor, because, for example, it is too big, or has special adaptations, and suitable alternative accommodation is being sought, will be placed in this band. A referral to an Environmental Health Officer could be made.

14.22 Applicants who are occupying a property owned in Gedling by one of the partner Housing Associations where the landlord has not agreed to a non-statutory right of succession.

**14.23 Move-on from supported accommodation where referred by Gedling**

If you are ready to move from supported accommodation which you were placed in by Gedling Borough Council staff, then you will be awarded this category. We will need confirmation from the support provider that you are ready to move on. This band is a referral arrangement between the support provider and the Council.

14.24 Different criteria apply to leaving care applicants. Please see section 14.10, 28, 29 and 30.

**14.25 Severe Overcrowding**

If your household is subject to severe overcrowding, and is assessed as being two bedrooms short of the number of bedrooms required or where there is gender overcrowding, then you will be placed in Band 2. An Environmental Health referral could be made for a home inspection as part of this process. Gender overcrowding is defined as:

- Where a child aged 10 or over has to share a bedroom with a child or adult of the opposite sex;
- Where a child aged 10 or over has to share a bedroom with their parent or parents.

Household Member	Bedroom Eligibility
Couple/single person	1 bedroom
Single adult (age 18+)	1 bedroom
Person with confirmed medical need for own bedroom	1 bedroom
1 child or 2 children of the same sex until one is 18 years old.	1 bedroom
2 children of different sexes, until the eldest is 10 years old	1 bedroom
2 children of different sexes where one is aged 10+ years old	2 bedrooms
The needs of transgender household members to have their own room will be included.	1 bedroom

#### **14.26 Under-occupation**

If you are a tenant of a partner Housing Association, and live in Gedling Borough, and your present home is too big for the needs of you and your household by one bedroom, and you wish to move to smaller accommodation, you will be placed in Band 2. The property you bid for must have 1 bedroom less than your current home.

#### **14.27 High medical priority**

If you or a member of your household has a serious medical condition, illness or disability which is made worse by your current accommodation, and as a result of this condition a move is essential as it is not reasonable to continue to occupy your current accommodation on a long term basis, and it cannot be adapted in a reasonable timeframe you will be placed in Band 2. The supporting evidence required would be a report from an Occupational Therapist, or Social Care report.

#### **14.28 Foster Carers**

If you have been approved as a foster carer and need an additional bedroom to commence a placement (when confirmed in writing by the Social Care or Foster Agency) you will be placed in Band 2.

#### **14.29 Care Leavers**

Those care leavers aged under 25 years old who are either moving on from care or who's current accommodation arrangements have broken down are able to approach the Council for assistance. Supporting information will be required from Social Care.

14.30 Accepted applications from care leavers will be placed in band 2 for 8 weeks. If after 8 weeks a property has not been secured, the applicants banding will be increased to band 1 and they will be placed on auto bid for all areas within Gedling.

14.31 Please see the local connection criteria at 2F.

#### **14.32 Human Trafficking / Exiting Modern Slavery**

Those individuals who have been trafficked/placed in slavery and who have subsequently been awarded leave to remain will be assessed with reference to the homelessness person's legislation.

#### **14.33 Seeking Asylum**

Those applicants who are seeking asylum and have been granted leave to remain will be assessed with reference to the homelessness person's legislation.

#### **14.34 Social housing tenants who no longer require adaptations**

If you are a tenant of a partner Housing Association currently living in an adapted property with significant adaptations in Gedling Borough (for example, a stair lift,

through floor lift or a level access shower) which are no longer required (when confirmed by for example an Occupational Therapist) then you will be placed in Band 2.

### Band 3 – Moderate priority

#### 14.35 **Move-on from supported accommodation where not referred by Gedling**

If you are ready to move from supported accommodation and the support provider confirms you are ready to move on.

#### 14.36 **Homelessness Prevention with a Local Connection**

This Band will be awarded with an additional 6 months waiting time where an applicant with a local connection is owed a Prevention Duty and would be likely to be owed the Main Duty if both the Prevention Duty and the Relief Duty were to end unsuccessfully. The applicant will be placed on auto-bid in this band from the date accepted, and could be directly matched to the next suitable available property, either within or outside the borough, regardless of the areas requested by the applicant in order to prevent or relieve homelessness successfully. The applicant may also have the duty ended with any accommodation that is not social housing that is suitable and secure and offered with a reasonable prospect of being available for at least 6 months.

#### 14.37 **Homelessness Prevention Other Circumstances**

This band will be awarded where an applicant is owed a Prevention Duty but where they would not be owed a Main Duty when the Relief Duty comes to an end because they have been assessed, as or are likely to be:

- Not in a priority need;
- Intentionally homelessness;
- Have refused an offer of suitable accommodation as discharge of the Council's Main, Prevention or Relief Homelessness Duties, after being suspended for 1 year;
- Your case will be closed if you do not co-operate or engage with the team or if we lose contact with you;
- Do not have a local connection or where enquiries are being made to ascertain a local connection prior to a formal referral being made to another Council.

14.38 In these instances, the prevention duty will only be ended with a suitable and secured offer of a private rented property with a reasonable prospect of being available for at least 6 months.

#### 14.39 **General Overcrowding**

If your household is overcrowded by one bedroom then you will be placed in Band 3.

#### 14.39 **Moderate Medical Priority**

Applicants whose household includes a person whose illness or disability is made worse by their present home, and who need to move to improve their condition, but a move is not essential.

#### 14.40 **Social Hardship**

Applicants who experience hardship in their current accommodation and who need to move to improve their situation, but a move is not essential. This could include:

- People who need to be close to specialist educational facilities
- Other special reason

#### 14.41 **Applicants aged under 50<sup>2</sup> with no children and with no other housing need**

If there are no children in your household, but you or another applicant is receiving the medium or high rate of the care element of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, and are willing to move into a sheltered living property, you will be placed in Band 3, for sheltered living accommodation.

#### **Additional preference groups**

14.42 We have decided that we wish to give additional preference to applicants from certain groups. We will achieve this by applying additional waiting time to these applicants, so that if this applies to you, then you will be placed higher within a single band than you would otherwise be.

#### 14.43 **Armed Forces applicants**

We support the principles of the Armed Forces Community Covenant. The aims of the Community Covenant are to:

- Encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces community in their area and vice versa;
- Nurture public understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces community;
- Recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces community;
- Encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces community into local life; and
- Encourage the Armed Forces community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.

14.44 In order to further these aims, if you qualify for housing (see section 7) and you are a serving member of the regular Armed Forces, Reserve Forces or the Territorial Army, or you have left those forces in the five years prior to your application, you will be awarded an additional nine months' waiting time, unless dishonourably discharged.

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<sup>2</sup> This is at the discretion of the Housing Association, who may have different age restrictions.

This means that your effective date will be nine months earlier than the registration date on your housing application form.

## **15 Renewals**

15.1 Your application will be reviewed every 6 – 12 months, and we will ask you to tell us if your circumstances have changed in any way and ask you to provide evidence of your current housing need. It is important to respond to your letter, phone call or email. If we do not hear from you within 14 days, we will assume that you no longer need housing and will remove you from the housing register.

### **15.2 Priority Reviews**

If you are placed in Band 1 or Band 2, this represents an urgent housing need, so you are expected to place bids for any properties that match your needs. Your application will be reviewed to check whether your circumstances still warrant that level of priority. This may result in your banding being reduced. This does not apply if you have been awarded Band 1 or Band 2 priority because you are under-occupying your current home.

15.3 As well as the annual review, we may review your application at any time in order to confirm that we still have the correct information. If we are not able to contact you, via letter, email or phone call then we may suspend your application. If we do this, we will write to inform you. If we still do not hear from you, we may cancel your application. It is important therefore that you tell us if your address, email or telephone number has changed after you completed the forms.

### **15.4 Changes in circumstances**

You should let us know about any changes in your circumstances immediately. For example, someone moves in or moves out, or there is a change to your income. Changes will mean that we have to review your application and your priority banding may change, or mean you no longer qualify to remain on the housing register.

15.5 If you are moved to a lower band, because your need for housing has reduced, you will keep the same “effective date” to determine how high up that band you will be. However some changes may mean you no longer qualify to remain on the housing register.

15.6 If you are moved to a higher band, because your need for housing has increased, your “effective date” will change to the date your change of circumstances request was approved.

15.7 This is so that applicants who have been in this high level of need for a long time will remain above applicants who have recently joined this band.

- 15.8 If you bid for a property successfully, and it is later found that your housing situation was different from the most recent details you provided to us, then this is an offence (please see section 13) for which you could be prosecuted and the offer might be withdrawn or the landlord may take action to recover possession of the property. You could also be excluded from the housing register for 1 year.

## **16 Reviews and appeals**

### **16.1 Reviews against qualification and banding decisions**

If you disagree with the band you have been placed in, or have been advised that you do not qualify to join the scheme, you have the right to ask for your application to be looked at again. You should submit any relevant additional information you feel will support your application. Your request for a banding review should be sent in writing within 21 days of your original registration or banding notification letter. The request for a banding review can either be made by the applicant or their representative. A senior officer will review your application and write to you to tell you the outcome of the banding review, usually within 21 working days.

- 16.2 If your banding review is accepted, and your application is placed in the higher band, your “effective date” will be backdated to the date the new information was provided, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

### **16.3 Appeals against non-qualification or anti-social behaviour**

If you have been notified that you do not qualify to join the scheme, because of criminal or anti-social behaviour, you have the right to appeal against the decision. All banding reviews should be made within 21 days of you receiving the letter confirming that you are not able to join the scheme in writing.

- 16.4 If you can provide evidence that your behaviour has improved and you are suitable to become a tenant (perhaps following a successful private tenancy or stay in supported accommodation) you may be allowed to reapply to join the scheme. The time needed to demonstrate a change in behaviour will depend on the circumstances of each case and is at the Councils discretion, though usually for 1 year. If accepted onto the register, any offer of a property will still be at the discretion of the Housing Association.

- 16.5 **Appeals against suitability of accommodation as a final offer** (accepted main homelessness duty only).

If you are offered accommodation in discharge of our homelessness duty, you have the right to request a review of the offer if you think the accommodation offered is not suitable. However, if you intend to request a review of this type, we strongly advise you to accept the offer pending the outcome of the review so that you will have somewhere to live in the mean time, and also as the Council may no longer have a

duty to provide you with temporary accommodation. The request must be made, ideally in writing, within 21 days of you receiving the offer letter, giving clear reasons for the request, and any supporting evidence. The appeal can be made by either the applicant or their representative. Appeals against the suitability of a property are usually determined within 56 days. Whilst your appeal is being considered, your application will be suspended pending the outcome.

## 17 Choosing a home

17.1 Properties are advertised every week. The adverts are available on the website at [www.home-search-gedling.org.uk](http://www.home-search-gedling.org.uk).

## 18 Choosing the right property

18.1 The advertisements contain details of the property type, who the landlord is, where the property is and how much the rent is. The advertisements contain a range of symbols which give you more details about the property and help you to bid for the right property for your household.

	How many bedrooms the property has		Wheelchair accessible or adapted for disabled use
	Property has a garden		No pets normally allowed unless at discretion of the Housing Association.
	Sheltered living accommodation		Off-road parking

### 18.2 Property Types

The property advertisement will tell you who is allowed to bid for each property. The table below shows who is eligible for what type and size of property. Here are some general guidelines:

	Single person	Couple	Single pregnant/ couple and pregnant	Family with 1 child	Family with 2 children	Family with 3 or more children	Single person over 50	Couple both over 50	Single person with overnight carer
Studio flat	✓								
1 bed flat	✓	✓							
2 bed flat Without garden	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
2 bed flat With garden			✓	✓	✓				
3 bed flat			✓	✓	✓				
1 bed maisonette	✓	✓							
2 bed maisonette			✓	✓	✓				✓
3 bed maisonette					✓				
1 bed house	✓	✓							
2 bed house			✓	✓	✓				
3 bed house			✓	✓	✓	✓			
4+ bed house						✓			
1 bed bungalow (general)	✓	✓					✓	✓	
2 bed bungalow (general)			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
1 bed bungalow (age restricted)							✓	✓	
2 bed bungalow (age restricted)							✓	✓	✓
Group/ alarm linked or Retirement Living							✓	✓	

### 18.3 Note : Resident Carers

- An extra bedroom will be allocated for those households with resident carers.
- Note: Proof of overnight care every night is required, and could be provided by, for example, an Occupational Therapist or Social Care officer or receipt of Carers Allowance
- \*Many different housing providers participate in Homesearch, and each may have different age restrictions for their sheltered living or retirement accommodation. The advertisement will state what the minimum age requirement for any property is.
- Enquiries should be directed towards the housing provider.
- Enquiries about specific properties should be raised directly with the Housing Association

## **19 Restrictions**

### **19.1 Age**

Some properties are only suitable for people over a particular age. The property advertisement will tell you if there is any age restriction.

### **19.2 Local Lettings Policies**

These are policies that have been agreed with the Housing Association, or for a designated area to help create sustainable communities. Local Lettings Policies are restricted to particular areas or estates and have set criteria written to meet the objectives of each scheme. The property advertisement will tell you if there is a local lettings policy in place and what the criteria are.

### **19.3 Sensitive Lets**

There will be occasions where certain properties are advertised on Homesearch as “sensitive lets”. These will generally be properties where it has been identified that it is in the best interest of the community for them to be allocated to a particular type of household, for instance, to persons of a certain age. Each Housing Association will have their own procedures for identifying properties that will be subject to “sensitive lets”, and this information will be contained in the property advertisement.

### **19.4 Direct Lets**

A direct let is where a property is let to a registered applicant without it being advertised, or when a property has been previously advertised but not allocated. All members of the Homesearch partnership have the ability to undertake direct lets under certain circumstances. This may include but is not limited to:

- Lets to homeless applicants who have not secured a property within a reasonable timescale;
- Emergency re-housing when requested by the Police or other statutory organisation (only by the agreement of the senior officer);
- In other exceptional circumstances (by agreement of the senior officer);
- Where a property has previously been advertised on Homesearch but there have been no suitable applicants.

### **19.5 Hard to Let Properties**

Where no bids have been placed on a property for three consecutive weeks and a direct let is not suitable, the Housing Association will be able to advertise for a tenant by methods other than Homesearch (for example, in the local press).

## **20 How to bid (express your interest)**

- 20.1 Expressing your interest (also known as bidding) on a property lets the Council know which properties you would like to be considered for. Bidding doesn't involve any money (except the cost of a telephone call if you choose to bid that way). If you bid on line it's completely free.
- 20.2 You can bid for up to **THREE** properties in each advertising cycle.
- 20.3 Bidding for a property is simple. Make a note of the Property Reference Number (at the top of each advert) for the properties you are interested in.
- 20.4 **Online**  
Logon to the website at [www.home-search-gedling.org.uk](http://www.home-search-gedling.org.uk) and follow the "How to Express Your Interest" instructions.
- 20.5 **In Person**  
You can also bid in person at the Civic Centre on the self-serve computers.
- 20.6 **By Proxy**  
Someone can place bids on your behalf if you wish. This could be a family member, support worker, social worker or someone else. This may be useful if you do not have a computer, or if you will struggle to use the methods above. Please let us know if you want someone to bid on your behalf.
- 20.7 **If you do not express your interest**  
If you do not bid for suitable properties, we may review your priority on the housing register and it may be suspended or closed (see section 16).
- 20.8 **Automatic Bidding**  
This is when the Council make bids on your behalf. Automatic bids will be placed on the accommodation that best suits your situation, based on available properties and the general housing circumstances of the borough.
- 20.9 Automatic bidding may be used in circumstances such as:
- Where the Council has accepted either a Main Homelessness Duty, a Relief Homelessness Duty or Homelessness Prevention Duty
  - If you are vulnerable and ask Homesearch to make bids on your behalf.
- 20.10 If you think you may need extra help to use Homesearch, or if you need this information in a different format (for example, another language), please contact us. If you require any assistance with your on line application, help is available from the One Stop and appointments can be booked via 0115 901 3901

## **21 What happens next?**

### **21.1 Short listing**

Once the advertising cycle closes, Homesearch creates a short list of applicants who have bid for a property. The short list sorts all the bids by:

- Priority band (i.e. Band 1, then Band 2, then Band 3)
- Local connection
- The date you were placed in the band (effective date)

The Housing Association normally offer the property to the applicant who has a local connection, from the highest band who has been registered for the longest time. If you are made an offer and refuse it, the property will then be offered to the next person on the shortlist.

21.2 However, there are some exceptions to this general rule, such as where local lettings policies apply, or where the Housing Association will not allow any under-occupation of the property, or where you have rent/mortgage arrears and the landlord has decided that he does not wish to let to anyone with rent/mortgage arrears. If it is because the landlord does not want under occupation, then he may offer the property to the highest-placed applicant whose household will make the most efficient use of the property within the band they are placed. For instance, this means that on a shortlist for a three bedroom house, a family with one child, or two young children, may be by passed in favour of a lower-placed but larger family within that band that needs all three bedrooms. This is at the discretion of the Housing Association. Full details will be advertised with the property.

### **21.3 Offers**

If you have been successful with your bid, the landlord that owns the property will contact you with details of the potential offer. Each landlord may have a different process that they follow when offering a property.

21.4 All Housing Associations participating in the Homesearch scheme reserve the right to:

- Give preference to applicants who specifically need the services or facilities that are part of the property;
- Carry out checks on the information you provided as part of your application;
- Carry out further checks with statutory agencies on the applicants that have been successfully shortlisted for a sensitive let property;
- Carry out a property inspection;
- Withdraw an offer if you have provided inaccurate information;
- Withdraw an offer if the property becomes unavailable for letting;
- May not make an offer to anyone who has rent/ mortgage arrears;
- May not make an offer to anyone with a history of criminal or anti-social behavior.

## 21.5 Viewing

Each Housing Association may have a different process for viewings, but you should have the opportunity to view the property before deciding whether you wish to accept an offer.

## 21.6 Refusing Offers

If you refuse or do not respond to offers, we will review your priority and may suspend your Homesearch application pending a review that may result in your application being cancelled.

21.7 Different rules apply to applicants who have applied as homeless to the Council. See section 10.15 for more details.

## 22 Complaints

22.1 If you are not satisfied with the way we have dealt with your application, or how we have considered your request for a review or appeal, then you can make a complaint to the Council in a number of ways:

- By using the online complaint form at [www.gedling.gov.uk](http://www.gedling.gov.uk)
- By email to: [housingneeds@gedling.gov.uk](mailto:housingneeds@gedling.gov.uk)
- By letter (to Civic Centre, Arnot Hill Park, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 6LU)
- By telephone on 0115 901 3901
- Or in person at the Civic Centre, Arnot Hill Park, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 6LU.

22.2 Gedling Borough Council's complaints procedure is available on-line at <https://www.gedling.gov.uk/council/aboutus/complaintsandcompliments/complaintsprcedure/>

22.3 If an applicant is not satisfied with the review decision, they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not consider certain matters, for example, if 12 months has passed since the cause for the complaint occurred or when matter is, or could be, subject to court proceedings.

22.4 The Ombudsman will consider a complaint if an applicant believes they have been treated unfairly as a result of maladministration. Examples include where the Council may have:

- Delayed taking action without good reason;
- Taken into account irrelevant considerations or ignored relevant considerations;
- Not followed rules (legal or local procedures);
- Given the wrong decision;
- Not reached a decision in the correct way.

Any correspondence received from/sent to the Ombudsman will be handled by the Council's Service Manager: Legal Services on behalf of the Council's Monitoring Officer who will enter the referral on to the LGO system. The actual referral will also be sent to the relevant Service Manager for their comments.

To contact the Local Government Ombudsman

Call 0300 061 0614 for help making a complaint

- Text 'call back' to 0762 481 1595
- Lines are open Monday to Fridays 8.30am to 5.00pm (Except public Holidays)
- Website: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk) using the online form

The Local Government Ombudsman has a leaflet called "Complaint about the Council? How to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman." You can get a copy by telephoning or writing to the address above, or you can download it from the Ombudsman's website.

If you contact the Local Government Ombudsman without giving us the opportunity to resolve the issue first, then your complaint will be judged as premature and passed to us to resolve.

### County Court Appeals

- 22.5 An applicant can appeal to the County Court on any point of law for one of the following reasons:
- If they feel the review decision is legally incorrect; or
  - If the Council has not met the time limit to complete the review process
- 22.6 All appeals must be made to the County Court within 21 days of the review decision.
- 22.7 Applicants considering an appeal to the County Court are advised to obtain independent legal advice e.g. from the Citizens Advice Bureau or Shelter etc.
- 22.8 The Council is not legally obliged to provide the applicant with accommodation during the appeals process.

## **23 Accommodation options during and after a review decision**

- 23.1 During the review process, the Council is not legally obliged to provide the applicant with temporary accommodation. Applicants will be advised to accept the final offer of accommodation whilst the review is being considered. This is because the applicant will have somewhere to stay during the review process and there is no guarantee of a further offer of accommodation following the outcome of the review.

## **24 Reviewing the Allocation Policy**

- 24.1 The new policy will be reviewed annually or in line with any changes in legislation or Government guidance.

## **GLOSSARY**

### **Adapted properties**

Property that has been adapted for an applicant with disabilities: for example a Stair lift, through floor lift or level access shower.

### **Allocation policy**

The document setting out the rules that determine how the Council and Housing Associations allocate social housing properties.

### **Autobid**

A feature in the Homesearch system that checks for any properties an applicant is eligible to bid for and automatically places bids on them just before the letting cycle closes each week.

**Bid** (also known as expressing an interest).

The way to let us know you are interested in an advertised property, which can be done via the website, by telephone, text message, post or in person.

### **Band**

The category of need an applicant will be placed on, based on their current housing situation.

### **Category 1 Hazard**

The meaning of Category 1 Hazards is set out in section 2 of the Housing Act 2004. Properties are assessed against prescribed hazards and an assessment of the level of risk associated with the hazards found is undertaken. If the risk is serious enough, this would be classed as a Category 1.

### **Choice Based Lettings**

A way of allocating housing through an advertising scheme, rather than by direct nominations.

### **Direct let**

When a property is offered to a household without it having been advertised.

### **Effective date**

The date an application is placed in a priority band, used as the effective date when shortlisting.

### **Eligibility**

The term used to describe who is able to apply for housing and what type of property they are eligible to bid for.

**Expressing an interest** (also known as bidding)

The way to let us know you are interested in an advertised property, which can be done via the website, by telephone, post or in person.

**Nomination**

The term used when a local housing authority provides the name and details of an applicant from its housing register to a Housing Association for an offer of housing.

**Qualification**

The Council has to assess who qualifies for social housing in Gedling. If you do not qualify, your application will not be accepted.

**Housing Association**

A Housing Association other organisation registered with Homes England (formerly, the Homes and Communities Agency) to provide social housing. Also known as a Registered Social Housing Association; RSL or Registered Provider.

**Retirement Housing**

Retirement housing (also known as sheltered living housing) is a group of flats or bungalows where all the residents are older people.

**Social Services**

Services provided by the local Children's / Adults' services authority or local adult social care authority as appropriate (which for Gedling is Nottinghamshire County Council in both cases).

## Appendix A: Private Rented Offer (Homelessness) Policy

When the Council is working with people who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, properties in the private rented sector will be considered, as detailed in the national guidance (detailed below).

### Purpose

To set out when we will make a private rented offer, within the meaning of Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) to a homelessness applicant.

To set out the factors we will take into account when assessing the suitability of a private rented offer, in relation to the condition of a property and its location.

To set out what steps an applicant can take if they do not believe that accommodation offered is suitable.

This approach will also be used to appraise out of area placements.

### Background

For any applicant owed a homelessness duty under section 195, 189B, 193(2) or 193C(4) – deliberate and unreasonable failure to co-operate, of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 the Council may make a direct offer of suitable accommodation at any time in order to resolve a threat of homelessness or homelessness itself by means of an offer of suitable private rented housing, where the applicant is being offered a tenancy of a least twelve months (s.193(2)) or 6 months (s.195, S189B)

We understand that many people would prefer to live in social housing than the private rented sector, because the rent can be lower and social tenants normally enjoy greater security of tenure via an assured tenancy. However, there is much greater demand for social housing than there is supply in Gedling. There are over 620 applications on the Housing register as at November 2020, and only around 320 lettings of social (including sheltered living housing) housing per year. Each social housing property advertised attracts an average of 15 – 45 bids, of which only one can be successful.

Most private rented properties are ready immediately and there is a wide range of choice available, although some or all of that choice may be outside Gedling. Whilst we provide good-quality accommodation, it is only a temporary solution, and so it is in the interests of all parties to minimise the time that applicants have to spend in temporary accommodation, often by using the private rented sector. We will also look to the private rented sector for those applicants who have been accepted, but who are currently not staying in temporary accommodation, for example those who are staying with family or friends.

### Policy aims and objectives

The policy will ensure comprehensive and consistent needs and risk assessments are carried out for each statutory homeless household. This approach will ensure applicants' needs are appropriately met and risks to personal safety and that of staff and the community are minimised. This policy and the needs assessments procedure will ensure there is no discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, religion or belief, race or ethnicity, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity sex or sexuality and gender re-assignment.

Each case will be assessed on an individual basis to avoid blanket policies. The policy will comply with:

- The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002;
- The Localism Act 2011;
- Equality Act 2010;
- The Homelessness (Suitability of accommodation) (England) Order 2012;
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017;
- The Homelessness code of Guidance 2018.
- Ministers letter regarding Out Of Area Placements.

### Assessment procedure

When we make a decision to accept a main homelessness duty to an applicant. We will assist applicants to find accommodation; this might include searching for properties, liaising with landlord and arranging incentives such as the Discretionary Housing Benefit and use of the Council's prevention fund.

We will place bids on behalf of homeless applicants on any suitable social housing that becomes available, via auto-bids on the CBL scheme and assist applicants to search for private rented properties that may be suitable.

A private rented offer will be considered for all homeless households owed a duty under section 195, 189B, 193(2) duty initially, but a thorough assessment process will be undertaken to ensure that this type of accommodation is appropriate.

Private rented accommodation must meet the requirements of Article 3 of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012, if it is to be considered as suitable when offered:

- To bring to an end the s103(2) Main Duty;
- As a final accommodation offer made in the 189B relief stage; or
- To an applicant who has a priority need in order to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

Article 3 does not apply to accommodation secured for households that do not have a priority need, or to accommodation that the Council helped the applicant to secure (for example through a deposit Guarantee or financial assistance) but which the applicant

identified themselves. However, Councils will need to make reasonable efforts to ensure that private rented accommodation is safe and in reasonable condition and that applicants have sufficient guidance for them to consider the standards of the accommodation.

Where the landlord confirms they are willing to offer a tenancy to the applicant, this will constitute a private rented offer and a final offer letter will be sent to the applicant. If the applicant does not accept this offer of accommodation then the Council will consider that it has discharged its duty in full to secure accommodation for the applicant, and no further offers of accommodation will be made. Equally, this will also end the duty to provide temporary accommodation.

When assessing the suitability of accommodation, the Council will also take into account:

- Bedroom eligibility under the Local Housing Allowance rates;
- Financial circumstances and affordability;
- Physical mobility / health needs;
- Mental and emotional health needs;
- Practical support needs;
- Cultural or faith related needs;
- Risks to personal safety;
- Risk to self (e.g. substance misuse / self-harming);
- Recent housing history;
- Ability to manage finances and maintain a tenancy;
- Ability to manage personal health and hygiene;
- Whether school children are due to sit final exams;
- Distance / journey to place of employment;
- Other relevant issues raised by the applicant.

### Suitability of accommodation

When assessing whether a property is suitable, the Council will use the criteria set out by the Government. We will normally regard a property as suitable unless, in our opinion:

- It is not in a reasonable condition;
- Any electrical equipment supplied does not meet safety regulation standards;
- Reasonable fire safety precautions have not been taken;
- The landlord has not taken reasonable steps to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning;
- The landlord is not a fit and proper person;
- It is a House in Multiple Occupation subject to licensing (either mandatory or discretionary), and has not been properly licensed;
- It does not have a valid Energy Performance Certificate;
- It does not have a gas safety record;
- An adequate written tenancy agreement has not been provided.

We will also take into account the circumstances of the applicant and their household (for instance, disability or health needs) and make sure that any property offered as a private rented offer is suitable for their particular needs.

#### Affordability of Accommodation

We will also take into account whether the accommodation is affordable to the applicant in the long term, or whether the rent would be excessive given their income (including any Housing Benefit or Universal Credit they would be entitled to) and their essential household expenditure.

Applicants should note that if they need to claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to pay their rent, they will only be eligible for the Local Housing Allowance rate for the size of property they require. For instance, a couple with two children under 10 would be eligible for the two bedroom rate, not the three bedroom rate.

Single applicants who need to claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to pay their rent and are under 35 years old should note that they will normally be eligible for the Local Housing Allowance shared room rate, not the higher 1 bedroom rate. We will normally try to assist these applicants to find shared accommodation, as this may be more affordable for them.

#### Location of Accommodation

So far as possible, we will aim to find accommodation within Gedling so that applicants do not need to move out of the borough. However, Gedling has higher house prices and higher rents than many of its surrounding areas and very few properties advertised in the private rented sector are priced to be affordable under the Local Housing Allowance rates. This is particularly the case for family sized properties.

We will therefore look for properties located outside Gedling, which may be suitable for a private rented offer. When deciding whether a property is suitable, we will take into account:

- The distance of the property from Gedling Borough Council;
- The significance of any disruption to the employment, caring responsibilities or education of any member of the applicant's household;
- The proximity and accessibility to medical facilities or other support which are essential to any member of the household's wellbeing ( and whether they could access alternative facilities or support in the area they were moving to);
- The proximity and accessibility to local services and transport.

When we discharge our duty by securing that applicant a property that is in a different local housing authority's area, we will notify that authority of the name of the applicant, the people who form part of their household, the fact that we have discharged our homelessness duty, and that the duty will reoccur on us should they become homeless again (except if intentionally) within the next two years. If the household becomes

homeless again after two years of our duty being discharged, they should normally approach the Council where they now reside for advice and assistance.

### Reviews on the suitability of accommodation offered

As part of the offer process and in accordance with the Allocation Policy and Procedures, applicants will be advised of their right to request a review on the suitability of the accommodation offered. Applicants will also be advised of the advice services, for example: Citizens Advice Bureau or Shelter etc. who could support them in this matter.

### Review process

Applicants can request a review within 21 days once we consider an offer to be suitable and that the Council's duty under the homeless legislation can be discharged. Review requests must be made in writing to the senior manager. Review requests can either be made by the applicant or their representative. We will advise the applicant of the full procedure and process for completing a review of the suitability of the accommodation offered. A senior manager will consider review requests received after 21 days, but is not obliged to agree to carry out the review. Once a review request has been received, the Housing Needs Team will write to the applicant to:

- Acknowledge the request
- Provide details of the review procedure

A senior manager, will complete the review within 56 days of receiving the applicant's review request (unless a longer period is agreed, by the applicant and the Council).

The review will be carried out by a Senior Officer so long as they have not been involved in the original decision. If they have been involved in the original decision, the review will be carried out by another senior manager.

### Review outcomes

The review outcome can be:

- Unsuccessful – in this situation the Council's original decision will stand.
- Successful – in this situation the Council will amend the original decision.

Once the review has been completed, the Senior Officer will write to the applicant informing them of the review decision. The letter will be sent to the applicant or will be available for collection from the Council offices.

The outcome letter will explain the review decision, how the Council reached this decision and the right to appeal the review decision to the County Court if the applicant believes the decision is legally incorrect. An appeal must be made within 21 days of being notified of the review decision.

## **Appendix B: Out of area placements**

In accordance with the Code of Guidance, whilst the Council will endeavour to rehouse applicants in the borough, due to the pressure for housing, and the issues around securing affordable housing, it may be necessary to secure accommodation outside the borough. In such instances the same checks as those used for accessing accommodation in the private sector, detailed at Appendix A will be followed. In addition, a Section 208 will be sent to the relevant local authority.

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## Appendix C: Summary of key changes in the draft allocations policy

Change Reference	Paragraph number	Description of the Change	Reason for the Change
1	1.3	Added paragraph – Private rented offer	Further clarification
2	1.16	Added a section on direct matches	Further clarification
3	3.3	Inclusion of a paragraph detailing the approach to be taken for the HRA.	To comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
4	3.3	Added suitable offers can be a private or social tenancy. Please see section 26.	Clarification.
5	4.4	Added GDPR clause.	To be compliant with GDPR.
6	5.3	Explained how and by whom decisions on applications will be made.	Further clarification.
7	6.2	Added The applicant is ineligible due to changes contained in the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020: <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/20/contents/enacted/data.htm">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/20/contents/enacted/data.htm</a>	Need to reference the changes in legislation
8	7.1	From 16 – 18 years old.	Under 18 year olds can only be offered tenancies in exceptional circumstances.
9	7.5	Included in the first paragraph the need for applicants to have either a local connection or an exemption	Further clarification.
10	7.5	Local Connection criteria: increased from one year to three years.	To better manage the limited supply of social housing within the borough, and demand management.
11	7.5	Added “or is a social housing tenant who needs to move to Gedling Borough.”	Further clarification.

12	7.5	2d Definition of homeless applicants banding.	To comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
13	7.5	2g Extension of the local connection criteria for Care Leavers.	To comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act.
14	7.5	2h Inclusion of people who are moving as part of the witness protection scheme.	Clarification.
15	7.5	2.i Clarification that applicants placed in any supported housing by GBC as part of the Councils' homeless duty are eligible to join the scheme.	Clarification.
16	7.5	2m Another special reason determined by a senior manager.	Gives necessary flexibility to the policy.
17	7.5	2n Added "The applicants circumstances require them to live close to a medical facility or support service which is only available in the Borough."	Further clarification
18	7.5	2o Added "Those individuals who have been awarded leave to remain."	Further clarification
19	7.5	Added "Applicants who fall in this band will remain on band 3 unless a local connection can be demonstrated."	Further clarification
20	8.2	Link provided for a definition of the Common Travel area.	Policy clarification.
21	8.6	Enhanced description of the exceptions which would enable homeowners to join the scheme.	Policy clarification.
22	8.6	The decision about whether a homeowner is able to join the scheme is at the Council's discretion.	Clarification.
23	8.7	Definition given on how applicant's finances would be assessed.	Policy Clarification.
24	8.9	Definition given on how applicants who had benefitted from Sanctuary Schemes property modifications would be assessed.	Policy Clarification.
25	9.2	Included social media to the last bullet point.	Updating.

26	9.2	Stalking, harassment and coercive behaviour.	Policy clarification
27	9.3	Policy explains that the decision will be made by a senior manager.	Policy clarification.
28	9.3	Provide guidance on spent convictions	Policy clarification.
29	10.12	Old policy advised prisoners could apply 8 weeks before their release date, proposed change is that they can only apply once they have been released.	Unfair policy as prisoners can accrue waiting time, when they would not be physically able to move.
30	10.13	Expanded to include mortgage arrears and expanded the definition to determine a timeframe for arrears which is set at 6 months. This is because using a financial value would be unfair on those applicants who do not receive any HB as for those in receipt of HB their rent could be as little as a few pounds each week, were as someone who was not claiming HBs rent would be around £80 and therefore to set a financial limit would be unfair.	Unfair to only ask for rent arrears.
31	10.15	4 new sections added to explain how the various stages of working with potentially homeless applicants will be assisted.	To comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
32	10.17 The main Section 193(2) Homeless Duty	Added "All" to the section advising all homeless applicants will be placed on band 1 auto bid once their application has been processed and the Council accepts a duty to rehouse.	To make clear to applicants how their accepted homeless application will be prioritised.
33	10.25 The main Section 193(2) Homeless Duty	If the homeless applicant refuses this offer and they are in Band 1 or Band 2 and have a local connection as defined in List 2, section 7 they will be moved to Band 3. Applicants in Band 3 with no local connection who refuse this offer will no longer be eligible for the housing register, but would be able to reapply after 1 year.	To make clear to the applicant the repercussions of refusing their offer of accommodation and provide advice about how they can appeal against the decision.
34	14.18	193C(4) – Failure to Co-operate . Unreasonable failure to co-	Clarification about the potential for people to be

		<p>operate is defined within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as when an applicant refuses to cooperate when s/he does not take a step (or steps) in her/his Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) This might be a step which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the applicant agreed to</li> <li>• the authority identified as a step which the applicant was required to take</li> </ul> <p>in such cases, the concern will be raised with the applicant, and may result in their application being closed. NB ALSO ADDED AT 14.18</p>	removed from the housing register of they fail to co-operate.
35	11.7	Advising that DBS checks may be undertaken	Clarification.
36	11.8	Reference to the check list	Clarification.
37	14.0	Introduction of auto bidding for all applicants. Bar those who are downsizing.	To ensure that people are more quickly rehoused and do not wait for specific property types. i.e. bungalows as opposed to ground floor flats, of flats as opposed to houses.
38	14.4	Added "In the near future."	Clarification.
39	14.5	Added "An Environmental Health referral could be made for a home visit / inspection."	Clarification
40	14.7	Added clarity on who makes the decision.	Clarity on decision making.
41	14.10	New category proposed in response to the provisional actions of the corporate responsibility to care leavers. Which is to include a defined approach within the allocations policy	In response to the Councils' Corporate Parenting Responsibilities.
42	14.11	New section defining how homeless applicants will be assisted.	To comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
43	14.14	Added a one year exclusion if people refuse their offer.	Clarity.
44	14.16	New section defining how homeless applications will be assisted and explaining the role of a local connection.	To comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act.

45	14.18	<p>193C(4) – Failure to Co-operate . Unreasonable failure to co-operate is defined within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as when an applicant refuses to cooperate when s/he does not take a step (or steps) in her/his Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) This might be a step which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the applicant agreed to</li> <li>• the authority identified as a step which the applicant was required to take</li> </ul> <p>in such cases, the concern will be raised with the applicant, and may result in their application being closed. NB ALSO ADDED AT 10.26</p>	Clarification about the potential for people to be removed from the housing register of they fail to co-operate.
46	14.19	Added a definition of at least 5 miles away.	Clarity.
47	14.19	Added “If you are a current tenant of a registered housing provider we will require supporting evidence from your landlord, such as confirmation that they would consider you for a management move.”	Clarity.
48	14.20	Added: “If you are fleeing to the borough from another area, we will assess your situation by taking a homeless application.”	Clarity.
49	14.23	Added: “For those applicants who have been placed in supported housing by the Council as part of the Council’s prevention role they will be placed in band 3.”	Clarity.
50	14.29	Added: “The needs of transgender household members will be included. Evidence will be required of support/ counselling.”	Equality.
51	14.29	New category proposed in response to the Council’s Corporate parenting responsibility to care leavers.	To assist Care Leavers and in response to the Councils’ Corporate Parenting Responsibility.
52	14.30	Definition included.	To define how those affected will be assessed.
53	14.32	Section added Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery	To define how those affected will be assessed.

54	14.33	Section added Seeking Asylum	To define how those affected will be assessed.
55	14.33	Definition included.	To define how those affected will be assessed.
56	14.36	New section defining how homeless applications will be assisted. Included the awarding of an additional 6 months waiting time	To comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
57	14.37	New section defining how homeless applications will be assisted. Band 3 homeless also placed on auto bid.	To comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
58	14.41	Eligibility criteria expanded to include Personal Independence Payment.	Policy updated to include additional benefits.
59	15.1	Now just referred to as reviews and timeframe changed to 6 – 12 months	Clarification.
60	16.5	Added: "Whilst the appeal is being considered, your application will be suspended pending the outcome of the appeal.	Clarification.
61	16.1	Defined that it would be a manager who would review the application.	Clarification of roles and responsibilities. Links back to point 5.3.
62	18.1	Added - No pets normally allowed unless at discretion of the Housing Association.	Clarification.
63	18.3	Section added explaining how residents carers will be included in the occupancy standard calculation.	Clarification of policy.
64	22	Added the new complaints policy.	Need to include the updated policy.
65	Appendix A	Clarification provided on the use of the private sector to accommodate homeless applicants.	Clarification of the policy.
66	Appendix B	Added details about the assessment process for out of area placements.	Compliance with the Code of Guidance.

### Additional amendment

67	8.8	Removal of section 8.8	See below
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The Allocation Policy initial consultation in Spring identified the need to reconsider an aspect of the policy which enables applicants aged over 55 without children or a local connection to be considered only for sheltered housing. There are very few people in this category and in reality very few properties become available and this raises false expectation for those people and also impacts on the capacity of housing needs staff to support other customers. Therefore, the Council is proposing to remove this aspect of the policy

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## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Forward Plan

**Date:** 28 January 2021

**Author:** Democratic Services Manager

### **Wards Affected**

All

### **Purpose**

To present the Executive's draft Forward Plan for the next four month period.

### **Key Decision**

This is not a Key Decision.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT:**

**Cabinet notes the contents of the draft Forward Plan making comments where appropriate.**

#### **1 Background**

- 1.1 The Council is required by law to give notice of key decisions that are scheduled to be taken by the Executive.
- 1.2 A key decision is one which is financially significant, in terms of spending or savings, for the service or function concerned (more than £500,000), or which will have a significant impact on communities, in two or more wards in the Borough.
- 1.3 In the interests of effective coordination and public transparency, the plan includes any item that is likely to require an Executive decision of the Council, Cabinet or Cabinet Member (whether a key decision or not). The Forward Plan covers the following 4 months and must be

updated on a rolling monthly basis. All items have been discussed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 The Forward Plan is ultimately the responsibility of the Leader and Cabinet as it contains Executive business due for decision. The Plan is therefore presented at this meeting to give Cabinet the opportunity to discuss, amend or delete any item that is listed.

## **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Cabinet could decide not agree with any of the items are suggested for inclusion in the plan. This would then be referred back to the Senior Leadership Team.
- 3.2 Cabinet could decide to move the date for consideration of any item.

## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 There are no carbon reduction/sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Forward Plan

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 None identified

## **10 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 10.1 To promote the items that are due for decision by Gedling Borough Council's Executive over the following four month period.

**Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by:**

Chief Financial Officer

**Date:**

31/8/2020 (report content)

**Approved by:**

Monitoring Officer

31/8/2020 (report content)

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# Gedling Borough Council

## FORWARD PLAN

### FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 FEBRUARY 2021 TO 31 MAY 2021

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key and non-key decisions which the Executive Cabinet, individual Executive Members or Officers expect to take during the next four month period.

The current members of the Executive Cabinet are:

Councillor John Clarke – Leader of the Council

Councillor Michael Payne – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources and Reputation

Councillor Peter Barnes – Portfolio Holder for Environment

Councillor David Ellis – Portfolio Holder for Public Protection

Councillor Gary Gregory – Portfolio Holder for Community Development

Councillor Jenny Hollingsworth – Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration

Councillor Viv McCrossen – Portfolio Holder for Young People and Equalities

Councillor Henry Wheeler – Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing.

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each key decision, within the time period indicated.

	Date decision is expected to be taken and who will take the decision?	Responsible Officer	Documents to be considered by the decision maker	Cabinet Portfolio	Open / Exempt (and reason if the decision is to be taken in private)  Is this a Key Decision?
<b>Temporary Accommodations Strategy</b> To approve a new strategy for the Council's use of temporary accommodation.	<b>11 Feb 2021 Cabinet</b>	Joelle Davies, Head of Regeneration and Welfare	Officer Report	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Wellbeing	Open  Yes
<b>Gedling Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Assessment 2020</b> To note the Five Year Housing Land Supply Assessment 2020	<b>11 Feb 2021 Cabinet</b>	Jo Gray, Service Manager, Planning Policy	Officer Report	Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration	Open  No
<b>Prudential and Treasury Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22</b> To present for Members' approval the Council's Prudential Code Indicators and Treasury Strategy for 2021/22, for referral to Council.	<b>11 Feb 2021 Cabinet</b>  <b>4 Mar 2021 Council</b>	Sue Healey, Principal Accountant	Officer Report	Portfolio Holder for Resources and Reputation	Open  Yes
<b>Capital Programme and Capital Investment Strategy</b> To approve the capital investment strategy and capital spending programme for the next financial year.	<b>11 Feb 2021 Cabinet</b>  <b>4 Mar 2021 Council</b>	Tina Adams, Principal Finance Business Partner	Officer Report	Portfolio Holder for Resources and Reputation	Open  Yes
<b>General Fund Budget 2021/22</b> For Cabinet to recommend to Council the revenue budget for the next financial year.	<b>11 Feb 2021 Cabinet</b>  <b>4 Mar 2021 Council</b>	Tina Adams, Principal Finance Business Partner	Officer Report	Portfolio Holder for Resources and Reputation	Open  Yes
<b>Gedling Plan 2021/22</b> To approve the priorities, objectives and top actions for the Council for the forthcoming year.	<b>11 Feb 2021 Cabinet</b>  <b>4 Mar 2021 Council</b>	Mike Hill, Chief Executive	Officer Report	Leader of the Council	Open  Yes
<b>Station Road and Burton Road Regeneration Sites</b> Approval is being sought to progress with the next steps for the Station Road and Burton Road regeneration sites	<b>18 Mar 2021 Cabinet</b>	Joelle Davies, Head of Regeneration and Welfare	Officer Report	Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration	Open  Yes