



Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)

Time and Date

2.00 pm on Wednesday, 19th March, 2014

Place

Committee Rooms 2 and 3 - Council House

Public Business

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

3. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 8)

(a) To agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2014

(b) Matters Arising

2.10 p.m.

4. **Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy** (Pages 9 - 100)

To consider the revised Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy.

(Briefing Note of the Executive Director, People)

(Note: Councillor Sandy, the Chair of the Homefinder Task and Finish Group and a representative of the Whitefriars Housing Group, have been invited to attend the meeting for this item.)

2.40 p.m.

5. **Tourism Strategy for Coventry** (Pages 101 - 122)

To receive an update on the progress on a Tourism Strategy, including Vision Statement and Terms of Reference

(Briefing Note of the Executive Director, People)

3.20 p.m.

6. **Events Budget** (Pages 123 - 126)

To receive a briefing providing a breakdown of the City Council's events budget and details of projects, including measured outcomes against expenditure.

(Briefing Note of the Executive Director, People)

3.50 p.m.

7. **Outstanding Issues**

Outstanding Issues are included in the Work Programme below.

8. **Work Programme 2013/14** (Pages 127 - 130)

Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator

9. **Meeting Evaluation**

To evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting.

10. **Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

Private Business

Nil

Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House Coventry
Tuesday, 11 March 2014

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Michelle Salmon, Governance Services Tel: 024 7683 3065, Email: michelle.salmon@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillors F Abbott, M Auluck, D Galliers, M Hammon, L Kelly (By Invitation), K Maton, E Ruane (By Invitation), T Skipper (Chair), K Taylor, S Walsh and D Welsh

By invitation:

Councillor L Kelly (Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment))

Councillor E Ruane (Cabinet Member (Housing and Heritage))

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting
OR if you would like this information in another format or
language please contact us.

Michelle Salmon

Governance Services

Telephone: (024) 7683 3065

e-mail: michelle.salmon@coventry.gov.uk

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Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 12 February 2014

Present:

Members: Councillor T Skipper (Chair)
 Councillor F Abbott
 Councillor M Auluck
 Councillor D Galliers
 Councillor M Hammon
 Councillor K Maton
 Councillor S Walsh
 Councillor D Welsh

Other Members Councillor L Kelly
(By Invitation):

Employees (by Directorate):

Place D Cockroft, K Gallagher, R Moon, L West

Resources K Larsen, G Paddan, A West

Other Attendees Eva Pascoe, Co-author of Grimsey Review
(By Invitation): Neel Pattni, Local Data Company
 Peter Burns, President of Coventry and Warwickshire
 Chamber
 Linsey Luke, Federation of Small Businesses
 Andy Talbot, Chair of the Business Investment District

Apologies: Councillor K Taylor

Public Business

39. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

40. Minutes

- (a) The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2014 were signed as a true record.

(b) Matters Arising:

- (i) Minute 32/14 (Financial Accountability of CWLEP) – Members requested that the Briefing Note providing a breakdown of funding allocation and details of the projects/schemes funded, be circulated to all Elected Members.
- (ii) Minute 43/14 (Events) – It was noted that Representatives of CWLEP were liaising with Imagineer Productions Limited.

41. The Grimsey Review

The Scrutiny Board received a presentation from the invited guests, which provided an overview and highlighted the key recommendations of the Grimsey Review 'An Alternative future for the High Street'.

The presentation emphasised that the town centre/high street plans must encompass a complete community hub solution and they must embrace radical change if they are to survive in the future. Detailed information on the future and challenges faced by local authorities, high streets and businesses was presented:

- Mobile phone/tablet as a 'platform' location is everywhere and these provide a service which included a location-based element, whether it was to help you find a nearby restaurant or minicab, or simply to push local promotions your way. The space-satellite-based global positioning system (GPS) is the key enabler.
- The growth of online shopping has changed the way people shop and this in turn has had an impact on the cities, towns and shopping centres/retail parks. Large retailers are withdrawing their presence from the high street. It has been recognised that there is already too much retail space in the UK and that bricks and mortar retailing can no longer be the anchor to generate prosperous high streets.
- 'Libraries will need to reinvent themselves in light of future communication/connectivity capabilities as well as being internet access providers they could have work hubs, health centres, and cafes as part of their offer.
- High Street to have residential or other uses within the agreed high street plan with the provision of relocating the successful independent retailers into the main commercial centre.
- Issues surrounding car parking in town centres – reasons why retailers have moved to 'out of town areas'. Parking charges and spaces within centres were reviewed.
- Incentives and discounts for pedestrian and cycle users.
- Business rates and alternative use of empty properties.

The Board discussed a number of matters arising from the presentation including:

- Change of use of empty shops and offices in the City Centre.
- More mutual connections between the network participants (retail, local government and job centres) to strengthen the high street.
- Coventry's new leisure centre – the need to increase footfall; encourage people to come into the centre for shopping and leisure.
- Landlords are required to apply for a change of use and make the premises more productive in the community e.g. housing, health and education facilities.
- Can business rates be used to stimulate economic prosperity and generate more income?
- Pop up shops – short term lease; a starter base for entrepreneurs.
- Investment in Coventry – future events; need of hotels, eateries and meeting spaces. Lifestyle change.
- Shopping hours are currently restricted – the need to move away from the 9-5 shopping hours.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Board (3) notes the presentation

42. City Centre Task Force

The Board received a presentation on the City Centre Task Force; this group was formed by Councillor Kelly in response to Coventry Telegraph's 'Save Our Shops' campaign. It was noted that the City Centre Task Force was linked to Coventry BID, the Meantime Strategy and Corporate Property Management.

The presentation provided a summary of the issues that were being studied and the progress to date:

- Key trends for the City Centre were declining. Footfall was down compared to the previous year, voids up.
- Changes made so far – flags and banners, Coventry in Bloom 2013, events held and farmers markets.
- Window dressing to improve the appearance of vacant units. The number of void units – 22 Council owned and 43 privately owned units.
- Christmas pop up shop and the Charity Shop Tour Shop, together with the Theatre Absolute.
- The need to improve the retail offer, in terms of quality and range.
- The Task Force had a stakeholder workshop session in January 2014 and an action plan had been drawn up for the next twelve months.
- Press release on the work of the Task Force.
- The need to boost tourism in the City.

The Board commented on a number of matters arising from the presentation, in particular the need to protect small independent retailers, possibility of a discount

scheme for residents of Coventry, to encourage people to spend in Coventry, an example was the 'Bristol Pound'. Pop-up shop ability to be explored to support start-up of new businesses.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) The Scrutiny Board notes the presentations.**
- 2) The Scrutiny Board makes the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) to progress with partners:**
 - i. Investigate opportunities to promote more residential use of properties in the City Centre
 - ii. Explore ways the Council can protect existing retailers as well as encouraging more independent retailers to locate in the City Centre.
 - iii. Look into opportunities for protecting the funding provided for, as well as enhancing the cultural offer in the City Centre
 - iv. Consider using innovative ways to engage with people about the City Centre.

43. Outstanding Issues

The outstanding issues were included in the Work Programme.

44. Work Programme 2013/14

The Board noted the Work programme items for the next meeting 19th March 2014.

45. Meeting Evaluation

The Board commented that having external guest presenters had been very useful and evaluated the meeting commenting that the presentations had been very informative. Comments given by members would be used to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of future meetings.

46. Any Other Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at: 4.30 pm)



Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)

19th March 2014

Subject: Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 For the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) to consider the draft Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy following the re-write requested by the Cabinet Member for Housing & Heritage at his meeting on 11th April 2013, before it is presented to Cabinet at the meeting on 15th April 2014.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Consider the draft Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to the Briefing Note, and forward any comments to the Cabinet for their consideration, together with the report, at their meeting on 15th April 2014.
- 2.2 Request that, subject to approval of the Policy by the Cabinet, a review of the impacts of the Policy is carried out following the first full year of implementation and the outcome of the review be presented to the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) for consideration.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 Coventry Homefinder is the Choice Based Letting system by which the majority of social housing in Coventry is allocated. The Coventry Homefinder Policy was established in September 2007 and has since undergone a number of changes (due to changes in government policy, operational improvements etc).
- 3.2 The Council no longer owns any housing following the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of all the former Council housing to Whitefriars Housing Group in September 2000. The local authority is still required to have an allocation scheme for determining how allocations are made in order that those who have the greatest need for housing are prioritised. Coventry Homefinder is therefore a partnership between Coventry City Council and Registered Providers of social housing (mostly Housing Associations).
- 3.3 In June 2012, the Department for Communities and Local Government issued new statutory guidance on allocations following the enactment of the Localism Act 2011, which included legislative changes to social housing allocation. Secondary legislation has also been enacted regarding special provisions for former members of the Armed Forces. As a result, many local authorities are re-writing their allocations policies.

- 3.4 The main change brought in by the Localism Act 2011 is that local authorities now have more freedom to determine who is a 'qualifying' person – what groups of people are permitted to join the housing register and be considered for an allocation. This is in addition to the statutory eligibility criteria (which are based mainly on immigration status and habitual residence in the UK). Some local authorities are restricting access to their register based on whether the applicant has a housing need, whether they have a local connection and/or whether they have a high income.
- 3.5 The Government guidance states “we expect social homes to go to people who genuinely need them”.
- 3.6 A Task & Finish Group was set up by the Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board (6) to examine these issues, which then made recommendations to the Cabinet Member (Neighbourhood Action, Housing, Leisure & Culture). The Cabinet Member requested that the current Coventry Homefinder Policy be rewritten at his meeting on 11th April 2013.
- 3.7 The full recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board to the Cabinet Member were:
- *The current Coventry Homefinder Nominations and Lettings policy be re-written and named Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy.*
 - *The policy should retain:*
 - *The current banding system.*
 - *The current policy on dealing with customers who turn down successful bids.*
 - *The current annual review of registration, to ensure those on the list still require housing.*
 - *All information in the policy should be available to customers in a user-friendly summary document on the website.*
 - *The new policy should ensure the Council is meeting its statutory duties, including those regarding the military covenant.*
 - *The current 75:25 split for allocation is changed to 100% of the properties on Homefinder are prioritised to those with a housing need (bands 1 and 2).*
 - *Access to registration should remain open to enable those without a housing need to register should they wish to.*
 - *There should be links on the website to information about Housing Associations' other properties out of city, to increase choice.*
 - *There should be clear and easy to find information on the website about the different partner Housing Associations' policies for accepting or refusing tenants, such as rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.*
 - *The Cabinet Member should also consider including links on the Homefinder website to a Council endorsed website providing information about private tenancies, such as the Kirklees model www.letshelpyou.co.uk to increase choice for the customer.*
 - *That any operational or procedural changes to Homefinder be delegated to the Assistant Director (Public Safety and Housing) in consultation with the Cabinet Member providing they are in line with the priorities and strategic approach identified above in the recommendations from the Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board Homefinder Task and Finish group.*

The full report of the Task and Finish Group is available at:

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s9529/Homefinder%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf>

3.8 Consultation was then undertaken with other key stakeholders, following which a new draft Policy was developed. This was subject to an 8 week public consultation from October to December 2013.

3.9 Following this consultation, a final draft Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy has been developed and is attached at Appendix 1.

3.10 **Changes made in the new draft Coventry Homefinder Policy:**

3.11 The main changes that have been made to the Homefinder Policy following the Task & Finish Group recommendations and the further consultation are detailed in the table below.

3.12 The biggest change from the current policy that was proposed, is that all properties that become available will have their shortlists prioritised by band (giving priority to those in housing need) rather than the present situation that 25% of properties have their shortlists prioritised by registration date alone (regardless of housing need). This was a recommendation from the Task & Finish Group. Despite the high demand for social housing, the high number of applicants on the register and the direction given in the statutory guidance, approx. 500-550 properties are currently allocated each year with no consideration of housing need.

3.13 However, during the consultation, concern was expressed by Whitefriars Housing Group that this would negatively affect their tenants that had an aspiration to move, and have been on the waiting list for several years, but do not have an assessed housing need under the legislation. They would find it more difficult to move through the Homefinder system.

3.14 Following further discussions, it is now proposed that all properties advertised through Homefinder have their shortlists ordered by Band but that for up to 10% of properties advertised, the Partner Registered Provider can state that priority will be given to applicants that are current tenants of theirs.

3.15 This would ensure that the majority of properties are prioritised for those with housing need, but would also ensure that current tenants would have the chance to move between properties in their landlord's stock. The Registered Provider would have greater control of a proportion of their lettings and would be able to prioritise their tenants that wish to transfer. The applicant moving would then free up a social housing property to be re-let.

Issue	Current Policy	New draft Policy
Priority bands	See separate table below	See separate table below. CHANGES have been made to some priority bands following consultation with stakeholders, to ensure that the policy meets the legislative requirements, and also to provide greater clarity on some circumstances that result in priority bands being awarded.

Issue	Current Policy	New draft Policy
Shortlisting priority	75% of properties have their shortlists ordered based on the priority band of the bidders who expressed an interest, 25% have their shortlists ordered based on registration date alone.	CHANGE – The proposal was for all properties advertised to have their shortlists ordered based on the priority band (and therefore, relative housing need) of the applicants that have bid. This would mean that applicants would not be prioritised for housing based on registration date alone (the amount of time they have been on the register). This was recommended by the Task & Finish Group and would ensure that applicants with a housing need are prioritised for housing above those that are already adequately housed. However, further discussions with Whitefriars (following their expression of concern at this policy change during consultation) have considered another option. As a result, the recommended Policy change is for all shortlists to be prioritised by band, but for Partner Registered Providers to be able to specify that priority be given to their current tenants for up to 10% of the properties advertised.
Registration date/effective date	The original date of registration is used to prioritise shortlists where more than one person in the same band has placed a bid.	CHANGE - Shortlisted bids in the same band will be prioritised based on the 'effective date' which will be the date that the band was awarded, rather than just the date that the applicant first registered. This will reflect how long the household has been in housing need rather than just how long they have been on the register. Applicants that have been in housing need for a longer period will be prioritised.
Offers of accomm. for Statutorily Homeless households	Statutorily homeless households are placed in Band 1A for one bidding period to place their own bids. If they are unsuccessful, the Housing Assessment Officer places bids in future bidding rounds until a successful match means that the main housing duty can be discharged.	CHANGE – Statutorily homeless households will be placed in Band 1A as an extreme urgent case, but bids will be placed by the Housing Assessment Officer from the outset to maximise the chance of a successful match. Housing Assessment Officers also have the option of discharging the main housing duty with an offer of a suitable private rented property/ tenancy.

Issue	Current Policy	New draft Policy
Advertising adapted properties	Adapted properties are categorised based on the level of adaptation and a brief description of adaptations provided. Applicants who are eligible place bids and shortlists are created in the same way as for all other properties.	CHANGE – adapted properties will be offered directly to people on the register who require the specific adaptations in the property. This may mean that properties are not offered to the applicant with the highest band/earliest date, but will ensure that the best fit is found between the adaptations provided and the needs of the household.
Armed forces personnel	There are no additional priorities for former members of the armed forces over other applicants.	CHANGE - The Policy complies with new legislation by providing additional preference for former members of the armed forces that also have a reasonable preference housing need (priority band).
Refusal of offers	Applicants that refuse 10 or more offers without good reason are requested to attend interview and their application may be closed	CHANGE - Applicants that refuse 5 offers may have their application suspended whilst the reasons for refusal are explored and the application may be closed if the refusals are found not to be reasonable.
Eligibility and qualification	Certain applicants are not eligible to join the register based on immigration status, habitual residence, and behaviour which makes them 'unsuitable to be a tenant'.	TECHNICAL CHANGE – eligibility criteria based on immigration status and/or habitual residence remains the same. The Localism Act 2011 introduced the ability for councils to decide who 'qualifies' to join the register. The draft policy considers those 'unsuitable to be a tenant' as not qualifying to join the register. Home owners do not qualify unless there are specific housing needs/ circumstances. The Task & Finish Group recommended keeping an 'open' register therefore no additional qualifying criteria have been included.
Social Housing Tenants with no housing need	Current social housing tenants who have no housing need under the Policy are registered in the same way as all other applicants.	TECHNICAL CHANGE – social housing tenants with no housing need are no longer subject to Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (following changes made in the Localism Act 2011). This has been stated in the draft Policy however we will continue to assess these applicants under the same Policy in the same way as all other applicants.
Requesting priority	Applicants are automatically registered in Band 3A or 3B, and must contact the Homefinder Team to request priority banding if they have a housing need.	NO CHANGE – applicants are still required to directly contact the Homefinder Team to request priority banding, however the process and evidence required have been clarified in the Policy.

3.16 The legislation on social housing allocation (Part VI of the Housing Act 1996) states that 'reasonable preference' must be given to households experiencing various housing needs. Local Authorities can decide the relative priority of households in these groups.

3.17 Coventry Homefinder provides this relative priority using a banding system. This system has been retained, on recommendation from the Task & Finish Group; however some changes have been made to the banding and relative priority of certain groups. The Banding system from the new draft Coventry Homefinder Policy is shown in the table below:

Level of Need	Band	Housing Need Category
Exceptional	1A	Statutorily Homeless Households (including National Witness Mobility Scheme)
		Exceptional housing needs due to health difficulties
		Severe Overcrowding – require an additional 2 or more bedrooms
		Tenants of partner housing providers who need to move to enable a redevelopment scheme to go ahead
		Tenants of partner housing providers who are under-occupying a property by 3 or more bedrooms
	1B	Tenants of partner housing providers who are moving to release specialist disabled persons accommodation
		People fleeing violence, harassment or abuse
		Tenants of partner housing providers who are under-occupying a property by 2 bedrooms
		People with an urgent medical need who are also overcrowded
		Extreme Unsanitary conditions causing severe health and safety hazards in the household
Urgent	2A	Urgent housing needs due to health difficulties
		Short term hostel dwellers
		Housing needs arising from Social and Welfare issues
		Overcrowding – require an additional 1 bedroom
		Housing needs as a result of being a “Looked After Child”.
		Unsanitary/unsuitable conditions affecting the health of the household or causing health and safety hazards
		Tenants of partner housing providers who are under-occupying by one bedroom
		Review of Band 1A applicants
Non-Urgent	2B	Low level housing needs due to health difficulties
		Households who need to move to a particular locality, where failure to achieve this would cause hardship to themselves or to others.
		Homelessness Prevention
		Review of Band 1B applicants
	2C	Intentionally Homeless Households
		Homeless households who do not have a priority need
		Households where a main housing duty has been discharged due to the refusal of an offer of suitable accommodation
No/low priority	3A	No housing need with a local connection
		Housing need but no local connection
	3B	No housing need with no local connection

3.18 Changes to categories of housing need in the bands include:

- 3.19 An additional category has been added to Band 1A – households who are under-occupying a social home by three or more bedrooms. This is to encourage and enable very large properties to be released for large households who may be overcrowded. It may also assist tenants who are affected by the ‘bedroom tax’ and have had their housing benefit reduced due to under-occupation. Households under-occupying by two bedrooms remain in Band 1B and households under-occupying by one bedroom remain in Band 2A
- 3.20 Applicants who need to move as part of the National Witness Protection Scheme have been placed in Band 1A alongside households who are statutorily homeless.
- 3.21 People fleeing violence, harassment or abuse will be placed in Band 1B. This is an increase from the current policy which would place them in Band 2B.
- 3.22 People who cannot stay in their current home due to extreme unsanitary conditions causing severe health and safety hazards will be placed in Band 1B.
- 3.23 The category for applicants experiencing housing needs arising from social and welfare issues has been separated from those that have housing needs due to medical/health difficulties, for clarity.
- 3.24 Applicants who are living in certain short-term hostels will have their priority increased to Band 2A (from the current Band 2B). This is to enable rapid move-on from short term supported hostel accommodation into independent living.
- 3.25 Households that need to move to a particular locality to avoid hardship will be placed in Band 2B. This is one of the ‘reasonable preference’ categories in the legislation and has been separated for clarity.
- 3.26 Regarding the other recommendations made by the Task & Finish Group, the annual review has been retained to ensure that all details on the register are up to date, and work is continuing on a regional basis regarding a private sector rental website. The West Midlands private sector rental website will be developed by Localpad, who won the regional tender to offer this service.

3.27 Local Connection as qualifying criteria:

- 3.28 On 31st December 2013, the Department for Communities and Local Government released additional statutory guidance, strongly encouraging local authorities to include local connection as a qualifying criteria. This would mean that applicants without a local connection to an area, would not be able to register for social housing in that area.
- 3.29 The guidance suggests that applicants should be required to have lived in the area for at least two years. Local connection would also include those with close family or permanent employment in the area, along with exceptions such as the Armed Forces and those fleeing violence.
- 3.30 This is guidance but the underlying legislation has not been changed. The Council has discretion whether to apply this new guidance in its allocations policy.
- 3.31 The Task & Finish Group recommended retaining an ‘open’ register and did not support including restrictive qualifying criteria based on local connection. The Coventry Homefinder Policy does not prevent people registering who do not have a local connection, but those

without a local connection are placed in lower priority bands. They would only be considered for an allocation after those with a local connection who had expressed an interest.

- 3.32 The Coventry Homefinder Policy considers local connection to include applicants that have lived in the city for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years, who have close family members in the city, or are employed in the city. This is in line with the local connection criteria which are applied in a homelessness assessment under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
- 3.33 All applicants for social housing are already subject to strict criteria around eligibility (mainly based on immigration status and habitual residence in the UK, and for certain EU citizens, whether they are exercising their treaty rights).
- 3.34 The Coventry Homefinder online registration system allows automatic registration – once an applicant has completed the online registration form, they are immediately placed in Band 3A/3B, given a registration number and able to place bids on properties (provided they meet eligibility criteria). If an applicant then believes they should be placed in a higher band due to their housing needs, they contact the Homefinder Team directly and their circumstances are assessed. Introducing qualifying criteria based on local connection would require every application to be checked and verified before the applicant could be registered and start bidding. This would require additional resources (including staff) and would introduce a delay to the applicant before they were able to use the system.
- 3.35 Therefore, additional qualifying criteria based on a new definition of local connection have not been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy attached for consideration.
- 3.36 **Results of consultation undertaken**
- 3.37 A full Equality and Consultation Analysis has been completed and is attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.38 **Previous Reports and other useful documents**
- 3.39 Previous reports to Scrutiny Boards and the Cabinet Member regarding the redevelopment of the Homefinder Policy can be accessed:
- ‘Coventry Homefinder – Future development and direction’ - Report to the Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board (6), 25th September 2012.
<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s5157/04%20-%20Coventry%20Homefinder%20Future%20Development%20and%20Direction.pdf>
 - ‘Report back from Homefinder Task & Finish Group’ – Report to the Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board (6), 13th March 2013.
<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s9529/Homefinder%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf>
 - ‘Recommendations from the Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board (6) on the Coventry Homefinder Nominations and Lettings Policy’ – Report to Cabinet Member (Neighbourhood Action, Housing, Leisure and Culture), 11th April 2013.
<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s9979/Homefinder%20Cabinet%20Member%20Report%20-%2027032013.pdf>

Ayaz Maqsood,
Head of Housing, Strategy and Communities
People Directorate
Tel: 024 7683 1958 or E-mail: Ayaz.maqsood@coventry.gov.uk

DRAFT
Coventry
Homefinder
Policy



Coventry
HOMEFINDER

Letting you choose

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Section 1 – Introduction to Coventry Homefinder

1.1 Background

This Policy provides a framework for the delivery of choice based lettings services and the allocation of social housing in Coventry through the Coventry Homefinder system.

The Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England 2012 states “we expect social homes to go to people who genuinely need them”. In applying this principle and in consideration of the high demand for social housing in Coventry, the allocation of social housing will be prioritised to customers who have an assessed housing need.

The Council no longer owns any housing following the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of all the former Council housing to Whitefriars Housing Group in September 2000. The local authority is still required to have an allocation scheme for determining how allocations are made in order that those who have the greatest need for housing are prioritised.

The term used throughout the document for providers of social housing is ‘Registered Provider’. This is a term used to describe a provider of social housing who is registered with the Homes and Communities Agency. These are usually Housing Associations. The term ‘Partner Registered Provider’ is used for Registered Providers who are partners in the Coventry Homefinder Partnership.

1.2 The Coventry Homefinder Partnership

The Coventry Homefinder Partnership (referred to as “the partnership” throughout this document) was established in 2007 between Coventry City Council and Registered Providers (providers of social and affordable housing – usually housing associations) to provide a choice based lettings service for the allocation of social housing.

Coventry City Council is the lead organisation for administering the statutory duties of social housing allocation in Coventry. Nominations are made to the Partner Registered Provider landlords in accordance with this policy.

Partner Registered Providers participating in Coventry Homefinder include:

- Ashram Housing
- Asra Housing Group
- Bromford Group
- Guinness Northern Counties
- Jephson Housing Association Group
- Mercian Housing Association
- Midland Heart
- Nehemiah and United Churches Housing Association
- Orbit Heart of England

Starley Housing Co-operative
Whitefriars Housing

Coventry Homefinder also has a partnership board to co-ordinate the choice based lettings scheme which includes:

Coventry City Council
Whitefriars Housing
Midland Heart
Orbit Heart of England
Jephson Housing Association Group (representing all of the smaller housing associations)
Advice Services Coventry

The role of the partnership board is to:

- Monitor the effective running of the choice based lettings service
- Discuss issues of concern that may impact on the provision of social housing
- Consider changes that are made to the policy and the operating system
- Highlight challenges that organisations are independently experiencing in delivering services
- In special circumstances, the partnership board will also consider individual customer cases that might require consideration of priority banding or specific resources outside of the normal policy framework

1.3 Aims of the Coventry Homefinder Policy

This policy aims to provide a transparent social housing allocation service which:

- Complies with the legal framework in which social housing allocations are made
- Ensures that those in the greatest housing need are given appropriate “reasonable priority preference” and/or “additional priority preference”
- Offers realistic, informed choice for all applicants through choice based lettings
- Makes the best use of the limited affordable housing provision in the city
- Creates sustainable communities where people want to live and work, and where they feel safe
- Provides information and guidance regarding the use of the operating system to deliver the service
- Ensures that every application is dealt with fairly and consistently.

1.4 Statement on Choice

The partnership is fully committed to enabling applicants to play an active role in choosing where they want to live, whilst continuing to prioritise those people in the greatest need, making the best use of the available housing stock and complying with all relevant legislation.

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

The Coventry Homefinder Scheme allows people to see the Partner Registered Providers' properties that are available and place a bid on (express an interest in) those properties they are eligible for and would like to be considered for during each bidding period.

Applicants will be informed of their relative position on the shortlist for that vacancy at the time of making the bid. This enables an applicant to make an informed choice when deciding which property to express an interest in/bid on and whether to consider alternative housing options. Feedback on lettings of previously advertised properties is also available.

1.5 The Legal Framework

This document sets out the Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy, which determines the priorities and procedure for nominating applicants to Registered Providers in accordance with Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011.

The Policy ensures that reasonable preference is given to applicants who fall within the reasonable preference categories in accordance with section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996. More detail on reasonable preference is set out in section 3.

This Policy also sets out the priorities and procedures for nominations of existing social housing tenants who do not fall into the groups to whom reasonable preference must be given, in line with Section 145 of the Localism Act 2011. These will be considered for allocation under the same policy framework.

All nominations will be made in accordance with this Policy.

This Policy has been developed with regard to the statutory guidance issued to local housing authorities in England (Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England, Department for Communities and Local Government, issued June 2012).

In addition, the Policy reflects the wider strategic aims of Coventry City Council, including those contained in the Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy, the Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy and the Coventry Tenancy Strategy.

1.6 Equality and fairness

In framing this Policy, the Council has had regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Policy seeks to ensure that each application is dealt with fairly and consistently, irrespective of race, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, and to comply with all relevant legislation.

1.7 Advice and information

A clear summary of this scheme is available to all applicants. The full copy of this policy will be available to view on request from the Coventry Housing and Benefits Advice Centre or it can be downloaded from the website: www.coventryhomefinder.com

The Council has a duty to people in its area to ensure that:

- Advice and information about the right to make an application for housing is available free of charge
- Assistance is given free of charge to those who are likely to have difficulty in making an application for housing without such assistance.

Applicants also have the right to the following general information:

- Information that will enable them to assess how their application is likely to be treated under the authority's allocation scheme and in particular, whether they are likely to fall within the reasonable preference categories.
- Information about whether accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available and, if so, how long it is likely to be before such accommodation becomes available.

Information about previous lettings and previous availability of properties is published on the Homefinder website (see section 4.15 for more detail).

Section 2 – Joining the Register

2.1 Who can register with Coventry Homefinder?

Anyone over 16 years of age, who is eligible and who meets the qualifying criteria may apply to Coventry Homefinder. (See below for eligibility and qualifying criteria).

Partner Registered Providers have different policies in dealing with persons under the age of 18. Registered Providers will not normally allow an allocation of accommodation to anyone under the age of 18 years. However there may be exceptional circumstances where a tenancy can be held in trust by a guarantor (for example where a young person leaving care is referred by childrens' social care services, where they agree to hold the tenancy in trust and where a suitable support package is in place).

2.2 Who cannot register with Coventry Homefinder? - Eligibility Criteria

An applicant may be ineligible for an allocation of accommodation under Section 160ZA of the Housing Act 1996. A person will be ineligible for a housing allocation if they are:

- a person from abroad who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 (defined as a person that requires leave to enter or remain in the UK), unless he or she comes within a class prescribed in regulations by the Secretary of State.
- a person who is not subject to immigration control but who is not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).

Citizens of the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man who have returned following a period of living abroad will have to pass the Habitual Residence test in order to be eligible.

Eligibility will be considered at the time of application and at the time of an offer of allocation to a property. Applicants must inform Coventry Homefinder of any change in their immigration status.

If an applicant is found to be ineligible, they will be notified of the decision and the reasons for it in writing and informed of their right to request a review.

The guidance above is not wholly prescriptive nor is its intention to fully explain the law. More detail is available in Chapter 3 and Annex 2,3 and 4 of the guidance document "Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England" (DCLG 2012). It is important that applicants seek the advice of the authority or independent advice if necessary

2.3 Who cannot register with Coventry Homefinder? - Qualification Criteria

The Localism Act 2011 gave local authorities the power to determine what classes of persons are (or are not) persons *qualifying* to be allocated social housing in their area.

Homeowners will not normally be entitled to an allocation of social housing and therefore would not qualify to register on Coventry Homefinder. In exceptional circumstances, homeowners may register and be awarded priority where this is required (see section 2.12).

Applicants that have been assessed as being guilty of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make them 'unsuitable to be a tenant', will not be considered as a qualifying person.

This is defined as behaviour which would, if an applicant or a member of their household was a secure or assured tenant, entitle a landlord to possession in the Courts, under Grounds 1-7 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985. This can include:

- Owing serious rent arrears.
- Failing to comply with a current or previous tenancy agreement with a Council or Registered Provider.
- Conviction for using a property (or allowing it to be used) for illegal or immoral purposes.
- Legal action taken against them in connection with violence, harassment, racial harassment, threatening behaviour or any other forms of anti-social behaviour.
- Knowingly or recklessly providing false information to obtain a tenancy.

This list is not exhaustive and cases will be considered on an individual basis.

All applicants will be treated as suitable (and therefore qualifying to join the register) at the point of application. The application will be closed if the applicant is subsequently found to be unsuitable to be a tenant. The decision that an applicant does not qualify for an allocation of accommodation may be taken at any point during the life of the application. The decision that an applicant does not qualify to join the register on these grounds will be made by a member of the Coventry Homefinder Team after consideration of available evidence.

Applicants who are assessed as not qualifying under this section of the policy will normally not be allowed to register for a period of 2 years. However, applicants may make a fresh application if there has been a factual change in the applicant's circumstances and/or the applicant can prove a change in their behaviour.

If an applicant is found not to qualify, they will be notified of the decision and the reasons for it in writing and informed of their right to request a review.

There may be instances where an applicant's behaviour is not serious enough to mean that they do not qualify to register, however, their conduct may mean that individual Registered Provider partners would not consider them for a tenancy. This is described in more detail in section 4.7.

2.4 How to Register

Applicants can register by:

- Completing the online application form on the Coventry Homefinder website; www.coventryhomefinder.com
- Completing a paper application form, available from the Housing & Benefits Advice Centre or by contacting the Coventry Homefinder Team.

Online registration is fully automated and applicants are able to access the bidding system as soon as their application is completed. Applicants are automatically placed in Band 3A or 3B

2.5 Requesting Assessment for Priority Banding

Applications made to Coventry Homefinder will always be initially placed in Band 3A or Band 3B through the automated registration process.

If an applicant believes that they or a person in their household has a priority housing need, they must apply directly to Coventry Homefinder to have their housing needs assessed for consideration of priority banding (see section 3 for more detail).

2.6 Keeping your Application Up to Date

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is kept up to date.

It is important for applicants to ensure that any changes in personal circumstances, household members, contact details or household needs are updated in a timely manner. This ensures that:

- Applicants are able to bid on appropriately sized properties
- Applicants are provided with the correct priority for their household needs
- Housing providers are able to contact applicant quickly to make an offer of accommodation

Applicants do this by logging in to Coventry Homefinder and updating their social housing application, which must be submitted by clicking 'submit' at the end of the application form. These details will then be automatically sent to the Homefinder team to verify the changes.

Vulnerable customers who cannot access the system and do not have any other support available to them can contact the Homefinder Team for assistance to update their details.

2.7 Keeping the Register Up to Date (Annual Renewals)

All applicants are required to review their application each year to ensure that their details are correct and to confirm that they wish to remain on the Coventry Homefinder register.

The annual renewal process takes place on:

1. The first anniversary of their initial application date; and then
2. Subsequently the anniversary of their renewal date each year.

Applicants will receive a notification that their application is due for renewal through the messaging service on their Coventry Homefinder account and by email, if an email address has been provided on their application. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they respond to the notification and carry out the review. Applicants will have 125 consecutive days to review their application – if this is not completed then their application will be closed.

Only in exceptional circumstances, where the applicant has demonstrated that they have been unable to review their application due to circumstances beyond their control (for example, due to prolonged hospitalisation), will the application be reopened by the Coventry Homefinder Team.

If an application has been closed following the 125 day period and there are no exceptional circumstances, the applicant must make a fresh application. This will result in a new registration date.

Where the Homefinder Team have been informed that the applicant is vulnerable, cannot use the system and does not have any other support available to them, the Homefinder Team will contact the applicant directly using other contact details provided.

IT resources are available in the Housing and Benefits Advice Centre and public Libraries to facilitate this renewal process for applicants who don't have readily available access to computers.

2.8 Cancelling/Closing Applications

An application will be cancelled/closed in the following circumstances:

- If the applicant has requested that the application is cancelled/closed.
- The applicant has not responded to the annual review message (see 2.7).
- If the applicant household has been housed through Coventry Homefinder.
- If the applicant household has been otherwise housed in any suitable social housing for example as a result of a managed move or out of the Coventry area.
- If the applicant household has undertaken a 'mutual exchange' with another social housing tenant.
- If the applicant has refused **5 or more** offers of accommodation, it may be assumed that they no longer require housing through the Coventry Homefinder scheme. The application will be suspended for a period of 28 days, during which time the applicant

can provide reasons for continued refusals. If these are reasonable, the application will be re-opened, if not it will be closed.

- The applicant is found to have provided false information (or withheld relevant information) relating to their housing application.
- The applicant is found to have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour that would make them 'unsuitable to be a tenant' and therefore they do not meet the qualifying criteria for registration (see section 2.3).

2.9 Joint Applications

Two people may make a joint application to Coventry Homefinder if they are eligible and qualify to register.

Where both applicants are under 18 they may not be considered for a registered provider tenancy until the oldest applicant reaches 18 years of age.

Joint applicants are both responsible for the security of their application and must ensure that the log in details and password are kept safe.

2.10 Multiple Applications

A person may only register one application as a main applicant.

In order to prevent duplication of applications the household must provide their National Insurance number to register. Once a National Insurance number is registered on Coventry Homefinder no further registrations can be made for that National Insurance number.

- Applicants will keep the same Coventry Homefinder registration number for life, this is linked to the registered National Insurance number
- If the application is closed (for example, once an applicant is housed) any subsequent applications made under the same applicant's name will have the same registration number.

A person may have their own application whilst also being a household member on another application (for example, a young person aged 16+ may be a household member on their parents application but also have an application in their own right). If this young person is subsequently housed independently, they will be removed from the application where they are a household member.

2.11 Applications from employees linked to Coventry Homefinder

Applications can be accepted from Coventry City Council employees connected to Coventry Homefinder, employees of Partner Registered Providers connected to Coventry Homefinder, elected members, board members and their close relatives, provided they are eligible to apply and meet the qualifying criteria. Applicants must disclose any such relationship at the

time of application and/or at the time that an offer of accommodation is made. Any application for priority for employees linked to Coventry Homefinder must be verified by the Housing Options Service Manager or the Head of Housing.

The allocation of accommodation to an employee linked to Coventry Homefinder as part of their work is a decision to be made by the Partner Registered Provider and will be based on the shortlisting criteria, the shortlisted position and any relevant tenancy checks that the Registered Provider would normally carry out.

2.12 Home Owners

Homeowners will not normally be entitled to an allocation of social housing. In exceptional circumstances, Coventry Homefinder may assess that priority preference is required for Homeowners; this might include:

- Serious medical issues where the present housing is impacting on the health needs and it is not possible to undertake adaptations to meet the needs of the household.
- Statutory overcrowding as defined in Part X of the Housing Act 1985.
- Other exceptional situations may be considered based on individual circumstances.

The *Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England (2012)* states in section 3.23:

“The Government believes that authorities should avoid allocating social housing to people who already own their own homes. Where they do so, this should only be in exceptional circumstances; for example, for elderly owner occupiers who cannot stay in their own home and need to move into sheltered accommodation.”

Registered Providers may consider an allocation of social housing in these circumstances, providing that the home owner undertakes to sell the property within 12 months of allocation. Social housing will only be allocated as an applicant's 'only and principal home'. Where it is found that a social housing tenant is renting out a property they own, the Registered Provider may take steps to end the social housing tenancy.

In cases where the applicant is a homeowner with no housing need as described above, the Registered Provider will not offer the property and the bid will be 'skipped' (see section 4.7)

For the purposes of this policy, “home owners” are defined as:

- Owner Occupiers
- Persons who own a property either jointly or outright, even if they do not presently live in the property, where they have (or could gain) a legal right to occupy that property (for example, if they own a property that is rented out to others).

2.13 Assistance for those that cannot use the system

Coventry Homefinder aims to ensure equal access to all and has developed a number of ways by which those who are unable to use the system themselves and don't have support otherwise available to them, are not disadvantaged.

This includes:

- Sending details of vacant properties to people who are unable to access the property adverts through the online Homefinder system.
- Contacting applicants when there is a property being advertised that matches their specific requirements.
- Placing bids for vulnerable households based on pre-agreed criteria of location and property type.

To access this support applicants or their advocates (with written approval to represent them) should contact the Homefinder Team on 024 76 834024 or by emailing coventryhomefinder@coventry.gov.uk to discuss what assistance can be provided.

2.14 Deliberately giving false information

It is a criminal offence for an applicant to try to obtain social housing accommodation by knowingly or recklessly providing false information or withholding information relating to their housing application.

An applicant who has deliberately withheld or misrepresented any information which would be relevant to the assessment of his or her housing circumstances and their priority banding on the register, will be considered to have been guilty of such behaviour and may be assessed as being unsuitable to qualify for an allocation (see section 2.3).

Registered Providers may seek possession of a tenancy that was granted as a result of a false statement and may also attempt to recover any costs incurred.

Following investigation, if an applicant is found to have knowingly provided false information or withheld information and is consequently removed from the register, they will be notified of the decision and the reasons for it in writing and informed of their right to request a review.

2.15 Notification of decisions and a right to review

Applicants will be advised in writing if their application has been refused or closed due to not meeting the eligibility or qualifying criteria, and informed of their right to request a review of the decision. More information on reviews is available in section 5.1.

Section 3 – How your Application is assessed

3.1 Local Connection

All applicants that are eligible and that meet the qualifying criteria can register, regardless of local connection. However, applicants without a local connection will be placed in a lower priority band.

Applicants can demonstrate a local connection if:

- They have lived within the Coventry local authority area for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years (such time periods being continuous in each case).
- Their regular place of work is within the Coventry local authority area (not including casual or seasonal work with daily pay rather than contracted work).
- They have close family connections with someone currently living in the Coventry local authority area and who has lived within the local authority area for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years (such time periods being continuous in each case). This includes parents, siblings and children.

3.2 Property size and household size

When assessing the size of property that a household will be eligible for, Coventry Homefinder will use the Bedroom Standard.

The Coventry Homefinder Policy will allocate a separate bedroom to:

- Each married or cohabiting couple (including civil partners).
- Each adult aged 21 years or more, not in a couple.
- Any two children/adolescents of the same sex under 21.
- Any two children of opposite sex under 10.
- Any other child who cannot be paired with another as above.
- A carer who does not live as part of the household but provides the applicant or a member of the household with overnight care on four or more nights per week.

Access to children:

Where a parent does not provide the principal home of a child or children (under 18), but has access arrangements which include overnight stays on three or more nights per week ('staying access'), they will be eligible to bid for a property with one additional bedroom.

If an applicant has a shared residence order, they may not automatically be entitled to bedrooms for their children. Coventry Homefinder will adopt the principle that the children need one home of an adequate size. If one home already provides adequate accommodation, the application is treated as if the person has 'staying access' to the children (as above).

The applicant must provide verification of the shared residence or custody of the children.

Applicants that require assistance with housing costs through Housing Benefit must ensure that they are aware of the size criteria applied during the housing benefit assessment before they place bids for properties that allow for an additional bedroom. Applicants must be able to show, through an affordability assessment, that they are able to cover the full rental costs of the property. If they cannot, the Registered Provider may not make an offer of accommodation for the property.

3.3 Registration Date/Effective Band Date

All applications will be given an effective date which reflects the time that they have been registered and the time they have been experiencing a housing need recognised under the banding priorities.

This date will be used when shortlisting to determine how long the applicant has been assessed as requiring priority in the band and/or has been registered with Coventry Homefinder.

- For applicants with a housing need recognised in Bands 1A to 2C – the effective date will be the date that the priority band was applied for.
- For applicants placed in Bands 3A or 3B – the effective date will be the date of registration.
- Any time which elapses whilst the applicant is deemed not to be a qualifying person due to their behaviour making them unsuitable to be a tenant, or has had their application closed due to refusal of offers, will not count towards their eligible date and the date will be adjusted accordingly.

When applicants move to a different band due to a change in their circumstances, the following will apply:

- Moving to a higher band: the effective date will be the date that the higher band priority was applied for.
- Moving to a lower band, within the housing needs priority Bands 1A – 2C: the effective date will be the earliest date that a priority need band was applied for.
- Moving to Band 3A or 3B: the effective date will be the original date of registration.

3.4 Reasonable Preference

This Policy must ensure that reasonable preference is given to the following categories of people, under Section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended):

- People who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (including those who are intentionally homeless and those not in priority need).
- People who are owed a duty under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3).
- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds related to a disability.
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

The Policy is framed so as to give reasonable preference to applicants who fall into these categories, over those who do not, through a priority banding system. This is described below.

3.5 How Priority Is Given – Summary Table of Bands

Coventry Homefinder uses a banding system to provide priority for applicants who fall into the reasonable preference categories listed in Section 3.4.

Coventry Homefinder has 7 bands that reflect the extent of housing need experienced by the household. The table below shows the different levels of need that are recognised in this policy.

Level of Need	Homefinder Band	Housing Need Category
Exceptional need	1A	Statutorily Homeless (including National Witness Mobility Scheme)
		Exceptional housing needs due to health difficulties
		Severe Overcrowding – require an additional 2 or more bedrooms
		Tenants of partner housing providers who need to move to enable a redevelopment scheme to go ahead
		Tenants of partner housing providers who are under-occupying a property by 3 or more bedrooms
	1B	Tenants of partner housing providers who are moving to release specialist disabled persons accommodation
		People fleeing violence, harassment or abuse
		Tenants of partner housing providers who are under-occupying a property by 2 bedrooms
		People with an urgent medical need who are also overcrowded
		Extreme Unsanitary conditions causing severe health and safety hazards in the household
Urgent need	2A	Urgent housing needs due to health difficulties
		Short term hostel dwellers
		Housing needs arising from Social and Welfare issues
		Overcrowding – require an additional 1 bedroom
		Housing needs as a result of being a “Looked After Child”.
		Unsanitary/unsuitable conditions affecting the health of the household or causing health and safety hazards
		Tenants of partner housing providers who are under-occupying by one bedroom
		Review of Band 1A applicants
Non-Urgent need	2B	Low level housing needs due to health difficulties
		Households who need to move to a particular locality, where failure to achieve this would cause hardship to themselves or to others.
		Homelessness Prevention
		Review of Band 1B applicants
	2C	Intentionally Homeless Households
		Homeless households who do not have a priority need
No priority need	3A	No housing need with a local connection
		Housing need but no local connection
	3B	No housing need with no local connection

3.6 Requesting Priority Band Assessment (detail)

Applications made to Coventry Homefinder will initially be placed in Band 3A or Band 3B through the automated registration process. **If an applicant believes that they or a person in their household has a housing need they will need to apply directly to Coventry Homefinder to have their needs assessed for consideration of priority preference.**

Priority is only awarded when the current property is having an impact on the household needs, not where a household member has a particular need but the housing remains adequate.

Applicants will be assessed for priority banding only when a request is made which details the housing need experienced by the household. Applicants should provide the evidence required as shown in the table below:

Type of housing need	Information to be provided
Housing need due to health difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Assessment Form – (found on the Homefinder website – link to be inserted upon finalisation) • Address History form - (found on the Homefinder website)
Overcrowding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowding priority information details - (found on the Homefinder website – link to be inserted upon finalisation) • Address History form - (found on the Homefinder website– link to be inserted upon finalisation)
Redevelopment or refurbishment of social housing property	Supporting confirmation from the Registered Provider (current landlord)
Tenants of social housing property releasing specialist disabled persons accommodation	Supporting confirmation from the Registered Provider (current landlord)
Fleeing Violence or Harassment	Supporting confirmation from landlord, police and/or other support agencies
Short term hostel dwellers	Referral template provided through the hostel support agency
Under-occupation of existing social housing property	Supporting confirmation from the Registered Provider (current landlord)
Unsanitary conditions	Supporting request from Coventry City Council Housing Enforcement service following inspection

Type of housing need	Information to be provided
Housing need as a result of being a “looked after child”	Referral template provided through the aftercare/leaving care agency
Social and Welfare Priority	Social and Welfare Assessment Form – (found on the homefinder website – link to be inserted upon finalisation) or Through specific support services working with the customer

The requests for priority received will be considered against this policy framework. Where additional information is required to provide a full understanding of the applicants’ situation, this will be requested and may include contacting other agencies that the Council considers appropriate, such as:

- support agencies
- health care professionals
- the existing or previous landlords
- enforcement agencies including the police, council enforcement teams
- other Council departments
- other Local Authorities

3.7 Verification of information

The final part of the assessment process is to ensure verification documents have been received. These will then be scanned onto the applicants’ electronic file on Coventry Homefinder which will be retained in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. The Verification documents requested may include (where relevant):

- Proof of income/benefits ie. Wage slip or Bank statement
- Proof of current address
- Address history for the last 5 years
- Proof of receipt of child benefit
- Passport or other form of identification for all household members
- Copy of current tenancy agreement
- Letter from current Landlord to confirm the size of the property

3.8 Review of Priority

Applicants who have been awarded Band 1A or 1B will have their application reviewed after 6 months of their effective date. If the housing needs of the applicant’s household have changed, they will be placed in the relevant band for their current situation. If the applicant has not bid on suitable properties that have been advertised their band will change to either Band 2A or 2B respectively.

Applicants who have been awarded Band 2A, 2B or 2C will have their priority re-assessed at the annual review verification process. If the housing needs of the applicant's household have changed, they will be placed in the relevant band for their current situation.

Banding priorities may also be reviewed if the applicant informs Homefinder of changes to their circumstances that affect the housing needs of the household.

3.9 Further Information on Priority Housing Needs

The following sections provide greater detail and clarification of the priorities that can be awarded through Coventry Homefinder

3.10 Homelessness

Homelessness is assessed under the provisions of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Homelessness is represented in this policy at different levels depending upon the assessed need of the household. This includes:

1. Statutorily Homeless Households – Applicants assessed by Coventry City Council as statutorily homeless will be made one offer of suitable accommodation. Within the Coventry Homefinder system applicants will receive Band 1A priority, however bids for available properties will be made by the Housing Assessment Officer responsible for the applicant's case.

Applicants who are supported through the National Witness Mobility Scheme will also be provided with this priority and their support worker from the scheme will bid on their behalf. This process will be a closely managed, confidential situation between the scheme and the Housing Options Service Manager.

2. Homelessness Prevention – Applicants who have been prevented from becoming homeless through the Housing Assessment service, by negotiation with the present landlord, enabling them to remain in their tenancy for a minimum period of 6 months; or applicants who have accepted a fixed term tenancy through the Access to Private Rented Properties Scheme as homelessness prevention; or applicants who are required to leave tied accommodation due to the end of their employment (unless employment has been terminated due to disciplinary action or the applicant is required to leave the accommodation due to arrears or other breach of tenancy or licence conditions); or applicants who are living in excluded tenancies - sharing a property with an unrelated landlord e.g. lodgers who share facilities with the main home occupier
3. Homeless Households who do not have a priority need – Applicants who are assessed by the Housing Assessment Officers as being eligible and homeless but who do not have a priority need under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

4. Intentionally Homeless Households – Applicants who have been assessed by the Housing Assessment Officers as having, by reason of act or omission, caused the homelessness intentionally.
5. Households who have refused a suitable offer of accommodation resulting in the Authority discharging the main homeless duty.

More detail about the homelessness assessment process and how the Authority can discharge its duty towards homeless households is provided in Appendix 1

3.11 Overcrowding

Applicants who request priority because they believe that they are overcrowded are assessed against the bedroom standard (see section 3.2).

There are two levels of overcrowding priority:

- Households who are in need of an additional 2 or more bedrooms
- Households who are in need of 1 additional bedroom

In assessing this priority Coventry Homefinder will consider:

- The number of bedrooms in the property
- The number of people in the household, including ages and genders of household members to determine sharing arrangements.
- The length of time that the household have been overcrowded – applicants must have lived in the property for a minimum of 6 months before this priority can be assessed.
- Single person households (over 18) will only be considered for this priority if:
 - They are living with family and their sleeping arrangements are creating overcrowded circumstances.
 - By having their own Coventry Homefinder application and gaining their own tenancy they would alleviate the overcrowding in the family home.
- Applicants requesting an assessment where a household member is pregnant will need to provide the relevant documents confirming pregnancy in order to be considered for a larger property, if this is required. Once this is verified the number of bedrooms required will be amended on the application. Only when the baby is born can the applicant then request priority for overcrowding based on the bedroom standards.

Coventry Homefinder will require an address history for the last 5 years and verification from the present landlord regarding the number of bedrooms in the property to award overcrowding priority.

3.12 Housing Need due to health difficulties

The assessment of priority due to health difficulties is not based on the seriousness of the applicant's condition but it is solely based on the seriousness of the impact that their current type and location of the housing is having on that condition and whether this would improve significantly through a move to alternative accommodation.

Assessments for priority due to medical need will normally relate to the physical circumstances in the property but location can be considered, for example where medical evidence has shown that the environment in general is having an impact on the mental health of the applicant.

To ensure assessments are accurate and resources are fully considered an assessment of the present accommodation by an Occupational Therapist or other health professional will be required for all applicants before priority is considered. It may be more appropriate to consider the provision of aids and adaptations for the applicant to remain in their current property instead of moving to other accommodation. Priority will not be awarded if it is reasonable to provide aids and adaptations. Priority will be awarded if aids and adaptations cannot be provided.

Priority due to medical need is represented at 3 levels in this policy:

1. Exceptional housing need due to health difficulties – where the applicant or a household member has very severe health needs that are seriously affected by their current type of accommodation making the accommodation completely unsuitable.

For example, if an applicant is unable to be discharged from hospital or a care environment as their current property has become unsuitable due to their immediate medical needs.

This priority will also be considered for applicants who are subject to legal conditions relating to health treatments and where the present accommodation cannot meet these conditions (for example, Community Treatment Orders under the Mental Health Act 2007). Supporting Information from relevant health care professionals must be provided.

Coventry Homefinder would expect that customers with this level of need would normally be in receipt of disability related benefits.

2. Urgent housing need due to health difficulties – where the applicant or household member occupies accommodation that is unsuitable due to severe health needs and the housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on the health condition.

For example, this might refer to being unable to access the kitchen or bathroom and adaptations cannot be provided; this also might refer to applicants who suffer with severe mental health conditions that are exacerbated by perceptions of threats, noise or isolation in the general environment/location that they are living in.

Coventry Homefinder would expect that customers with this level of need would normally be in receipt of disability related benefits.

3. Low level housing need due to health difficulties – where the applicant or household member occupies accommodation that makes it difficult but not impossible to make full use of the current accommodation.

For example access to the property may require negotiating some steps that the applicant finds difficult but once over this threshold they are able to access all other elements of the accommodation; this may also refer to customers who have some mental health difficulties where the general environment/location that they are living in is having some impact on the treatment and daily management of their health.

Applicants who have a medical need will be required to complete a medical form and an address history form. Supporting documents from hospital consultants, family doctors, specialist nurses and other health care professionals, should be provided to support the application.

Medical priority will not be awarded when an applicant gives up accommodation voluntarily, that was suitable for their health condition and then seeks priority re-housing because of the same health condition, unless they have lived in the property for a period of 6 months (see section 3.26).

3.13 Social and Welfare Priority

There are some circumstances where the provision of alternative accommodation is required due to the social and welfare needs of the household. These cases will all be assessed according to their own individual circumstances and priority will be considered based on the impact of the present housing on the needs of the household members.

Examples of Social and Welfare priority include:

- Applicants who require significant support (daily care) from a relative and a move will help them to receive that support. The applicant will be required to ensure that they seek properties within 1 mile of the person providing the support and this person must demonstrate that travel around Coventry is a serious problem for them. A letter from the relative is required to demonstrate the support that they are providing and will continue to provide in the alternative property. Confirmation will be required from the appropriate Coventry City Council social care service that they support the request.
- Similarly the Applicant can be the supporting relative providing the care as detailed above and a move closer to the person receiving the support is necessary. The applicant will be required to ensure that they seek properties within 1 mile of the person receiving

the support and to demonstrate that travel around Coventry is a serious problem for them. A letter from the relative is required to demonstrate the support that they are providing and will continue to provide in the alternative property. Confirmation will be required from the appropriate Coventry City Council social care service that they support the request.

- Applicants who require alternative accommodation to carry out child caring responsibilities supported by Coventry City Council. This might include approved foster carers; family members who have been approved as appropriate carers for children who might otherwise be required to be 'looked after' by the Local Authority.
- Applicants who have experienced a level of abuse in a specific area and need to relocate in order to overcome this due to the lasting psychological impact of remaining in the home or area in which the abuse took place. This differentiates from priority for reasons of violence and harassment as the perpetrator no longer presents a physical risk to the applicant.

3.14 Hardship

This priority can include applicants who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

For example, this might include the need to move to undertake a prolonged period of education or training, where this is linked to employment and failure to undertake the training would lead to the loss of employment.

3.15 Unsanitary/Unsuitable Property

An Unsanitary/Unsuitable Property is defined as a property which has one or more of the following:

- Lacks essential facilities
- Is detrimental or hazardous
- Poses a serious risk to the health and safety of the applicant or members of the household

In all cases the property would need to be assessed by the Coventry City Council Environment and Housing Enforcement Service and priority will only be given if action that they have taken has been unable to resolve the situation.

This priority is represented in 2 levels in this policy:

1. Extreme Unsanitary/unsuitable conditions causing severe health and safety hazards in the household

This would include properties subject to closing or demolition orders or dangerous, ruinous or dilapidated buildings, as identified by the Council.

2. Unsanitary/unsuitable conditions affecting the health of the household or causing health and safety hazards

This might include:

- Lacking cold or hot water supplies, electricity, gas or adequate heating
- Lacking inside WC
- Property in serious disrepair
- Households with dependent children who are sharing living room/ kitchen/ bathroom/ WC with other unrelated households
- Lacking bathroom or kitchen facilities

3.16 Specific Priorities for Tenants of Partner Registered Providers – Under-occupation of properties

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 initiated a number of changes to the way benefits were paid. One of these is the reduction of housing benefit to households in social housing who are under-occupying their present tenancies. In addition to this the demand for larger properties in Coventry is high and Coventry Homefinder would encourage households to consider the size of property that they require. However, households will not be able to bid on properties that are too small for the number of people in their household.

To support households to live in appropriately sized accommodation, tenants of partner housing providers, who currently live in Coventry, will be able to apply for under-occupation priority. Coventry Homefinder will confirm the number of bedrooms a tenant is occupying with the housing provider and award the appropriate priority. The number of bedrooms required will be assessed using the bedroom standard (see section 3.2).

There are 3 levels of priority for under-occupation of a registered housing provider tenancy that can be found in the table in section 3.5.

3.17 Specific Priorities for Tenants of Partner Registered Providers – Tenants of Partner Registered Provider who need to move to enable a redevelopment scheme to go ahead

Applicants who live in Coventry and are required to move by a partner registered provider to enable the redevelopment or refurbishment of housing and the surrounding area will be awarded this priority when the registered provider makes representation to Coventry Homefinder.

3.18 Specific Priorities for Tenants of Partner Registered Providers – Tenants of Partner Registered Providers who are moving to release specialist disabled person's accommodation

Applicants who are occupying purpose built or adapted social housing accommodation that makes it particularly suitable for occupation by a disabled person and that is located in Coventry, but where household no longer needs such accommodation. Applicants will be awarded this priority following confirmation from the housing provider.

3.19 Other Priorities - People fleeing violence, harassment or abuse

This priority will be awarded where the household is experiencing violence, harassment or abuse and is able to provide supporting and substantial evidence through the landlord, police and other support agencies to demonstrate that the issues cannot be resolved and there is an urgent need for rehousing.

In addition, existing Registered Provider tenants will need to provide a completed risk assessment from the Landlord and provide substantial information relating to the actions that have been taken by the landlord and details of why the situation cannot be resolved.

3.20 Other Priorities - Short term hostel dwellers

Applicants who are living in short term accommodation (less than 6 months tenure or have been in specialist hostel accommodation and are assessed as being ready to move on to independent accommodation within the next 6 months) in a scheme that has been identified by the Council as contributing towards the objectives of the Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy. Such schemes must provide supported accommodation, with active support from the managing agent to assist with issues impacting on the service user including: benefit support, health issues; employment and training opportunities; budgeting and move on assistance to access settled accommodation in either the private rented or social housing sector.

This priority will only be awarded to households if they are accessing accommodation in such a scheme and have a local connection to Coventry. Applicants that are living in single person's hostel accommodation will only receive priority for the single household member living in the hostel accommodation. Applicants in hostels do not qualify for overcrowding priority.

If it is found that the applicant has left suitable accommodation to move into a hostel this priority will not be awarded.

3.21 Other Priorities - Housing need as a result of being a “looked after child”

Applicants who are “looked after” by the authority, where Coventry City Council children’s services are supporting the request for housing and providing a package of support to assist in sustaining future tenancies. This priority will be awarded when the young person is not already adequately or suitably accommodated.

This priority will only be awarded to house the applicant for the first time and not for any subsequent moves that they may wish to make.

Applications can be made for this priority when the young person reaches 17 years and 6 months old. Once the application is assessed and priority has been agreed the effective date of the application will be back dated to the applicants 16th birthday. This priority no longer applies once the applicant has reached 25 years of age.

3.23 Band 3A and 3B definitions

The allocation of social housing will be entirely prioritised to customers who have an assessed housing need within this Policy. Applicants in band 3A or 3B will only be considered for a property they have bid on after all other applicants who have an assessed priority need and have also bid for that property (see section 4.6).

No housing need with local connection (3A)

Applicants who have a local connection to Coventry as described in section 3.1, but have no housing need as recognised in the priorities for bands 1A – 2C.

Housing need but no local connection (3A)

Applicants who have a housing need detailed in the priorities for bands 1A – 2C but have no local connection as described in section 3.1.

No housing need, No local connection (3B)

Applicants who have no housing need detailed in the priorities for bands 1A – 2C and have no local connection as described in section 3.1

3.24 Further Information – Armed Forces

Additional preference must be given to an applicant that has an urgent housing need (under the reasonable preference categories) **and** who:

- Is a former member of the armed forces, or
- Is serving in the armed forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability as a result of the person’s service, or

- Is a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the armed forces who is leaving services family accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner in service, or
- Serving or former members of the reserve forces suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability as a result of their service.

If an applicant requests additional priority on these grounds, following assessment they will be placed in one band above the band that they would have been placed in had their application been based on reasonable preference housing needs alone. This will award them additional preference over others with the same urgent housing needs and meet the provisions set out in The Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012.

Applicants that meet the above criteria that have an exceptional housing need that would place them in Band 1A will remain in Band 1A, as this is the highest priority that they can receive, however the effective date will be adjusted to give 1 additional year of priority.

(Example: an applicant is a former member of the armed forces whose household is overcrowded and needs one additional bedroom. The household would ordinarily be placed in Band 2A due to overcrowding, but will be placed in the band above - Band 1B - due to their overcrowding **and** the fact that they were formerly serving in the armed forces).

Applicants with no reasonable preference housing need that would otherwise result in them being placed in Bands 1A to 2C will be placed in Band 3A or 3B on the same criteria as other applicants.

Local housing authorities are also required to frame their policies so that local connection is not taken into regard when deciding whether someone is a qualifying person (is able to join the register) if they are a member or former member of the Armed Forces (and certain family members under certain circumstances). The Coventry Homefinder Policy does not restrict any applicants' ability to register (to 'qualify') based on local connection, and as such it complies with these provisions in The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012.

3.25 Exceptional Circumstances

For some customers, there may be exceptional circumstances that create housing needs which are not recognised in the Coventry Homefinder Policy. In these circumstances a panel from the Partnership Board, consisting of senior officers from the Council and Partner Housing Providers, will consider the individual case and make an award of priority banding outside of the normal categories if it is determined that this is required.

The arrangements with respect to exceptional circumstances are not intended to form a second review process. Where a case has already been reviewed it cannot, at a later stage, be brought to the Partnership Board panel for further consideration.

The Choice Based Lettings Officer will be required to take the case to the Partnership Board panel to present the needs of the household and the reasons why exceptional circumstances need to be considered.

Exceptional circumstances may also include the requirement for existing housing stock to be amended or altered to facilitate the needs of the household. This may have specific resource implications.

3.26 *Deliberately worsening circumstances*

Applicants that have requested priority need assessments must provide an address history. Priority banding will not normally be awarded when an applicant has given up accommodation that was suitable for their needs, but then seeks priority re-housing because of those needs.

The request for reasonable priority preference in this case will only be considered when the applicant and their household have lived in the property for a minimum of 6 months.

For example, if the household has become overcrowded due to moving into their current property, from a previous property that was available and reasonable for them to continue to occupy without being overcrowded, this priority will not be awarded for a period of 6 months from the day that they moved in to the current property.

Section 4 – The Choice Based Letting Scheme

4.1 The Choice Based Lettings Model

A choice based lettings scheme allows applicants to express an interest in available properties, which are advertised each week. Expressing an interest in a property is known as 'bidding' or 'placing a bid'.

At the end of the bidding period, those applicants that have expressed an interest in a property are shortlisted in line with this Policy. These processes are explained in more detail in this section.

4.2 The Bidding Cycle

The bidding cycle runs from midnight (00.00am) on Thursday morning to 11.59pm on the following Tuesday night, each week (with the exception of the Christmas period when the bidding cycle usually runs for two weeks).

Properties are not advertised on Wednesday and bids cannot be placed on a Wednesday.

4.3 How properties are advertised

Available properties are advertised on the Coventry Homefinder website during each bidding cycle. A property list is also available each week from the Housing & Benefits Advice Centre and partner Registered Provider offices. Copies are also available from Libraries on request.

Vulnerable customers who cannot access the system and do not have any other support available to them can contact the Coventry Homefinder Team for assistance (see section 2.13).

4.4 How properties are labelled

Each of the partner Registered Providers has responsibility for preparing the property description and advertising their vacancies on Coventry Homefinder.

Adverts will be clearly labelled to show the main property features, and the types of households that are eligible to bid for the property. A photograph will normally be included with the advert.

All properties advertised will include details of:

- The landlord of the property.
- The location of the property (including the street name, area and a location map).

- The type of property (house, flat etc).
- The number of bedrooms that the property has and the maximum number of occupants.
- The rent amount and any other relevant charges.
- The types of households that can bid for the property (for example, any age restrictions).
- Whether priority will be given to specific groups such as current social tenants.
- Tenancy type (Starter tenancy, Assured, Fixed Term)
- The mobility assessment category of the property and details of any specific adaptations that have been made to the property.

Applicants must consider all of these factors carefully when deciding whether to express an interest in (bid on) a property.

4.5 How to Place a Bid

Applicants must express an interest in a property by placing a 'bid' in order to be shortlisted and considered for an allocation of that property.

Applicants may express an interest ('bid') on up to three properties in each bidding period.

In order to express an interest in a property that is being advertised, the applicant can use one of several methods:

- Online bidding – applicants can log on and see which properties they are eligible to bid on. Bids can then be placed by following the on screen instructions.
- Telephone bidding – bids can be placed by telephone by calling 0845 270 1274. Applicants will need their registration number, password and the reference number/s of the properties they wish to bid for.
- Assisted bidding – where an applicant has given consent, bids may be placed on behalf of an applicant by a support agency. Vulnerable applicants who cannot access the system themselves and have no other support available to them, can also request that bids are placed on suitable properties by the Coventry Homefinder Team. Applicants should contact the Team to request this service.

Applicants can withdraw a bid at any point during the bidding period and may then place that bid on an alternative property.

4.6 How Applicants are Shortlisted

At the end of each bidding period, expressions of interest for a property (bids) are shortlisted in the following way:

- Expressions of interest (bids) for properties will be placed in the order of priority band – Band 1A highest priority, then Band 1B, Band 2A etc.
- If two or more applicants from the same band have expressed an interest for the same property, the 'effective date' that they entered their current band will be used to determine the higher priority (see section 3.3). The applicant with the earliest effective date will be shortlisted first.
- If two or more applicants with the same band and the same effective date have expressed an interest in a property, the date of original registration will be used.

Registered Providers may advertise up to 10% of their available properties with priority given to their own current tenants. This will mean that the shortlist is arranged as described above, but they may prioritise their own tenants above other applicants within the shortlist.

There may be occasions that Registered Providers do not offer properties to the highest shortlisted applicant, for example if they do not meet local lettings criteria. Any local lettings criteria will be explained in the property advert.

Properties that have been adapted for people with disabilities may be allocated based on the 'best fit' of requirements of bidders rather than in shortlist order – this is described in more detail in section 4.8.

Please note:

- Expressions of interest are shortlisted at the **end** of the bidding period based on priority banding and the effective/registration date of all applicants that have expressed an interest. There is no advantage to placing bids early in the bidding period.
- When applicants express an interest in a property, they are informed of their current position in the shortlist. However, as more people place bids throughout the bidding period, this position may change. Applicants are advised to check their bid positions near to the end of the bidding period, in order to make best use of their bids.

4.7 Bids that may be overlooked (Skipping)

Applicants who are assessed as being 'unsuitable to be a tenant' may not qualify to register with Coventry Homefinder (see section 2.3). However, there are circumstances where a Registered Provider may not offer a property to an applicant who is shortlisted, even if their behaviour is not serious enough to mean that they do not qualify to be registered. This is known as 'skipping' the bid. Each Provider has their own detailed criteria/policy for offering a tenancy, but common reasons why an applicant's bid may be overlooked include:

- The applicant has a current tenancy, or has had a previous tenancy with a Registered Provider or Local Authority, and has a housing debt outstanding to that organisation. This can include rent arrears, rechargeable repairs and court costs.

- The applicant has committed acts of anti-social behaviour or has allowed members of the household or visitors to their home to commit acts of anti-social behaviour, and legal action has taken place as a result.
- The applicant is a current tenant of a Registered Provider or Local Authority and the maintenance or decorative condition of the property has been assessed as not meeting their obligations in the Conditions of Tenancy.
- The applicant or a member of their household has assaulted or harassed an employee or agent of one of the partner Registered Providers or Coventry City Council.
- The applicant cannot demonstrate that they can afford to pay the rent. Consideration will be given to the welfare benefits that may be paid to the applicant.
- The applicant or their household do not meet local lettings criteria.
- The advert specified that priority will be given to current tenants of that Registered Provider, and the applicant is not currently a tenant of that organisation.
- The property is specialist or has been adapted and the applicant does not require these adaptations.
- The applicant requires specific adaptations that cannot reasonably be provided in that property.

In the first instance, Registered Providers will notify the applicant in writing when a bid has been skipped, and the reasons for the bid being skipped. This will include details of how the applicant can resolve any issues to prevent further skipped bids (if possible).

Applicants may then continue to be skipped until they can demonstrate that the reason for skipping has been resolved (for example, if the applicant has been skipped due to rent arrears, they may have to demonstrate that the arrears have been paid off or a re-payment plan has been adhered to for a certain period of time).

The decision to overlook a shortlisted bid is taken by the partner Registered Provider and it is the individual criteria/policy for each Provider that will be applied in all cases of allocating a property or skipping a bid. Appeals against a decision to skip a bid should be addressed to the Registered Provider that made the decision.

4.8 Adapted properties

Accommodation for households that need specific adaptations is in high demand with limited supply available. In order to make the best use of available accommodation that is either a purpose built disabled persons property or has substantial adaptations installed, a separate allocation process will be used:

- Applicants with needs requiring adapted properties must have an assessment from an occupational therapist to determine the type of property or adaptations required; this information will then be compiled to a common 'register'. The register will include the following information:
 - Applicant name; registration number; priority band; effective date
 - Applicants specific housing need
 - Specific location required
 - Restrictions in the location – e.g ground floor
 - Description of the type of property required
 - Specific adaptations required
- Initially, all property that becomes available that is purpose built or adapted will not be advertised through Coventry Homefinder; instead the property details will be matched against the housing needs of those customers assessed as requiring this type of accommodation to ensure a 'best fit' of the applicants needs to the property resources.
- As the property matched is on a 'best fit' basis this may mean that offers made are not prioritised in order of priority band or effective date.
- If a property is not let through this process, it will be advertised on Coventry Homefinder in the usual way but may be listed as a 'general needs' (Category 6) property. The exception to this will be purpose built disabled persons properties (Category 1), that must always be allocated to those in need of this type of accommodation.
- Properties that are adapted will be available in the first instance only to those that have been assessed as requiring adaptations. However, applicants that require adaptations will be able to bid on all properties and if they are shortlisted, the landlord will consider whether it is reasonable to provide adaptations in the property to ensure that it is suitable for the households needs.

Properties are categorised as below:

Mobility Assessment Category	Category description	Applicants assessed as being eligible for these categories
Category 1 Purpose built wheelchair housing	Disabled persons Bungalow, flat or house which has been adapted to be fully wheelchair accessible on the ground floor.	People with severe disability who are unable to stand or walk unassisted i.e. people who need to use a wheelchair both indoors and outdoors

Mobility Assessment Category	Category description	Applicants assessed as being eligible for these categories
Category 2 Partly Adapted House	House with a through floor lift or stair lift Access to the property will be level, ramped or step lift Other adaptations may include changes to bathroom/ kitchen	People who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may be a wheelchair user outdoors or use walking aids • are not able to climb stairs and need a through floor lift or stair lift • require assistance to access bathrooms/kitchen • have dependent children (under 16) in the household
Category 3 Partly Adapted Flats	Flats with level access into the property and with some adaptation(s) This would include adapted flats in high rise blocks which have a communal lift	People who do not use a wheelchair indoors but have mobility needs and cannot climb stairs or steps.
Category 4 Ground floor accommodation	Ground floor flats Bungalows	Flats - People who have a mobility needs or other health concerns and need accommodation on the ground floor Bungalows - People over the age of 55 who are applying to live on the ground floor
Category 5	Above ground floor flats and maisonettes	Any household that does not have specific need as detailed in category 1-4 Applicants with access to children but who do not live with them on a permanent basis
Category 6	General Housing – All other general housing stock	Any household that does not have specific needs as detailed in categories 1-4

4.9 Viewing Properties and Receiving Offers

All applicants, other than those assessed as statutorily homeless and waiting for an offer to discharge the main housing duty (see Appendix 1 for details of offers for these applicants), will be contacted by the Landlord if they are successful in bidding for a property.

The Housing provider will arrange for the successful bidder to view the property at a jointly agreed time. If the Housing provider is unable to contact the successful bidder they may be skipped and a viewing will then be arranged with the next successful bidder in the shortlist. It is therefore important that the applicant ensures that all contact details on their application are kept up to date (see section 2.6).

Following the viewing, offers will be made based on the pre-tenancy checks in the individual allocation policies of the Registered Providers. Tenancy checks may include:

- an assessment of household income to ensure that the tenancy can be afforded;
- provision of documents confirming the identity of the household members
- Police checks if a declaration of conviction or antisocial behaviour has been made

Once these checks have been completed and both parties are happy to continue with the offer of a property, the Housing Provider will arrange for the applicant to sign a tenancy agreement, at which point the keys to the property will be provided.

Multi-Views

Some Housing Providers will arrange a multi-view for a property. A multi-view is a single viewing but a range of applicants in the top bidding positions will be invited to view the property.

The offer of the property will still be made first to the applicants in order of their bidding positions, however it serves to confirm those who are genuinely interested and will make the process quicker in letting the property.

4.10 Multiple Refusals

Applicants who refuse 5 or more offers made to them following successful bids may have their application suspended and will be informed of this in writing. The applicant will be required to contact Coventry Homefinder within 28 days to show that the refusals were reasonable in order for their application to be reopened. If they do not, the application will be closed.

Coventry Homefinder will consider the individual circumstances of each case.

Not responding to contacts made regarding the offer of a property, failing to attend a viewing or refusing a property following a viewing will all be considered to be a refusal.

It will not be considered reasonable to refuse a property on grounds that were made clear in the property advert (for example, the location of the property) unless there are exceptional

circumstances. Applicants must consider all factors carefully when deciding whether to express an interest in (bid on) a property.

4.11 Local Lettings Plans

Partner Housing Providers may agree local lettings plans for managing the allocation of particular properties in certain areas. Examples include:

- Restricting the age ranges of certain tower blocks
- Limiting the number of children in a particular area if resources such as schools, health provision or play facilities are not available

Reference to any local lettings plans will be made in the property advert which will detail the specific requirements for the allocation of that property.

Some Housing Providers have restrictions on the maximum income and savings an applicant can have to be eligible for their properties because of their charitable status. When considering an applicant for an offer of accommodation they will check the details of income and savings and notify the applicant in writing if they are not going to make the offer of accommodation. If the applicant does not agree with the decision the applicant has the right to request a review of their decision from the Housing Provider.

4.12 Age Restricted Properties

Partner Housing Providers have certain properties that are 'age restricted'. This refers to properties that have a minimum age set for tenancies of a property or group of properties. The restrictions relating to age will be included in the advertisement details.

Most Housing Providers will only let one bedroom bungalows to people over the age of 55 or over the age of 60. If an age restriction applies, it will be clearly stated in the advertisement details.

4.13 Eligibility for Houses

Landlords may restrict the allocation of houses to households that have children under the age of 16. Households made up entirely of household members aged 16+ would not normally be considered for the allocation of a house. Where this applies, it will be specified in the advert.

4.14 Properties excluded from Coventry Homefinder

Some properties are excluded from being advertised on Coventry Homefinder; in these instances the property will not be advertised; these include but are not exclusive to:

- **Emergency moves**
If a property is required by a Housing Provider as an emergency move to safeguard their tenant or due to fire/flood/gas explosion.
- **'Housing with Care'**
These properties are generally in schemes specifically for older people with a range of care or welfare needs. Access to these properties generally follows an adult social care assessment. Further details can be gained from Adult Community Start Team on 024 76 833003
- **Hostel accommodation and other 'supported housing'**
All forms of supported accommodation are not provided through Coventry Homefinder.

4.15 Feedback/Lettings Results

Applicants are informed of their current shortlist position as they bid for properties, but are also notified that this may change throughout the bidding period as other applicants place bids. The shortlist position of individual applicants for previous bidding periods is also available on their own 'Bid History' page once the applicant has logged in.

Following the bidding period, information is published on the Coventry Homefinder website showing the outcome of previously advertised properties. This will include the number of bids received, and the band and effective date of the successful bidder. Direct matches made outside of the Homefinder Policy (see section 4.14) will also be listed.

This information will allow the applicant to assess the potential likelihood of them being allocated a property in light of their own priority banding and effective date. The applicant will then be able to make a more informed decision as to whether they want to consider other property types, other areas of the city, or other housing options.

Section 5 – Further Information

5.1 Notification of decisions and a right to review

Notification of decisions and a right to review – the choice based lettings service

The Housing Act 1996, Part 6 requires that a right to a review of the following categories of decision made by a local authority relating to an applicant are included in this allocation scheme:

1. A decision that he or she is not eligible for an allocation;
2. A decision concerning the fact of his or her case which are likely to be, or have been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate accommodation; this might include:
 - a. The type of property for which an applicant will be considered;
 - b. The extent of the applicant's household to be considered for housing with him or her;
 - c. The applicant's medical condition or other welfare needs;
 - d. Other facts used to determine whether the applicant is entitled to a reasonable preference;
 - e. Whether the applicant should receive additional preference on the grounds of urgent housing needs or otherwise; and
 - f. Determining the applicant's priority, including his or her financial resources, behaviour (or that of his or her family), and local connection where the scheme renders any of these relevant.
3. A decision by a local housing authority in England that he or she is not within a class of persons qualifying for an allocation.

Coventry Homefinder will notify the applicant in writing of any decisions that are made concerning an applicant's eligibility, qualifying requirements and priority band assessment. The letter notifying the applicant of the decision will also contain details regarding their rights to request a review if they disagree with the decision made.

The following procedures will be used in administering the review process:

1. Applicants will be notified that they will have 28 days in which to request a review from the date of the notification letter
2. Requests for a review should be made in writing by the applicant or a person nominated by the applicant in writing as acting on their behalf; the applicant should provide details and further independent information to support their disagreement with the decision that has been made

3. The review will be carried out by an officer who was not involved in the original decision and who is senior to the original decision maker
4. The review will be considered on the basis of Coventry City Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme and the application of the criteria for eligibility and qualifying; the priorities included in the scheme and the categories of accommodation defined in the policy; and any additional information the applicant is able to provide that may be relevant to the decision being made.
5. Reviews will be completed, with a full written response to the applicant detailing the outcome of the review. In exceptional circumstances, the applicant will be notified of any extension to this deadline and the reasons for this.

Notification of decision and a right to review – the offer of accommodation

Where an applicant has 'bid' and has subsequently been skipped for that property, the applicant has a right to raise a complaint through the housing providers' complaint process if they believe it was unreasonable for their bid to be skipped with the outcome of no offer being made.

The applicant is required to make written representation to the Housing provider within 28 days of them being skipped for the property; The applicant would expect to receive a response within 8 weeks of the complaint being raised.

5.2 Monitoring

To ensure that the aims of this Policy are met and that overall, priority for accommodation is given to applicants in the reasonable preference categories set out in legislation, robust monitoring will be carried out to monitor lettings outcomes.

The impact of the Policy will be monitored to ensure lettings are fair, transparent and in accordance with the allocations scheme, to ensure that the system is accessible to all, and does not discriminate on the grounds of: race, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief.

5.3 Information sharing, confidentiality and data protection

Section 166(4) of the Housing Act 1996 prohibits housing authorities from divulging to other members of the public that a person is an applicant for social housing, unless they have the applicant's consent.

As part of the application process, applicants consent to the information provided on their application being shared with Coventry Homefinder Partner Organisations (Registered Providers) for the purposes of shortlisting and allocation of a property under this Policy.

The application form includes a fair obtaining clause. It is assumed that by completing the online application form applicants agree to the terms regarding the processing and sharing

of information. If the applicant requests an assessment for priority banding, other agencies may be contacted to provide supporting evidence.

The details provided by applicants will be used in connection with their Homefinder application and for research, analysis and statistical purposes regarding the need for and future development of housing in Coventry.

There may be circumstances where Coventry City Council is required to make disclosures to other organisations (for example, law enforcement agencies) if there is a valid and lawful reason. Information will not be released to other organisations that are not part of the Coventry Homefinder Partnership unless they are entitled to it by law.

Abritas Limited has a contract with Coventry City Council to host the Web-based system that holds the information that applicants provide.

The Homefinder partners may wish to contact Homefinder applicants in future when undertaking customer satisfaction and Homefinder usage surveys. These will be undertaken by Coventry City Council or its nominated agents.

5.4 Situations not covered by the Coventry Homefinder Policy

This policy also does not cover mutual exchanges, reviews of Fixed Term Tenancies, assignments or successions as these are not allocations or nominations under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996.

5.5 Complaints

Coventry City Council's complaints procedures should be followed if an applicant is not happy with the way that the Coventry Homefinder Team has dealt with their application relating to:

- the administration of this Policy regarding whether an applicant is eligible or qualifies to join the Coventry Homefinder register
- the way that an assessment has been carried out to determine whether an applicant has a reasonable preference housing need and should be placed into a priority band
- the right to request that such decisions be reviewed

Details of the Council's Complaints procedure are available on request, or can be found on the Council website www.coventry.gov.uk.

The Registered Provider's own complaints procedure should be followed if an applicant is not happy with the way that the landlord has dealt with their application relating to:

- The advertisement of a property
- The decision as to whether to accept the Council's nomination

- The decision as to whether to allocate a property to the applicant.
- The right to request that these decisions are reviewed.

Details of each Registered Provider's complaints procedures are available on request from the appropriate provider.

These procedures are available when an applicant feels that errors or omissions have been made in the way that their application has been administered. They are not intended to provide further reviews of decisions that have been taken – this is dealt with under the review process described in section 5.1.

5.6 Other Housing Options

This Policy aims to ensure that those in the greatest housing need are given appropriate priority for social housing allocation whilst offering informed choice and making the best use of the limited social housing availability in the City.

There is very high demand for social housing in Coventry and applicants should consider other housing options alongside their Coventry Homefinder registration.

The Coventry Homefinder website includes a 'Housing Options Toolkit' which suggests potential alternative housing options based on the applicant's circumstances.

Some examples of other housing options to consider include:

Housing Options	Brief details	Contact
Renting from a Private Landlord	Private landlords may be able to offer the type or location of accommodation required, especially if you want accommodation in popular areas where there is little social housing. However, your tenancy rights will be different to those under a social landlord, so you should take advice about this. If eligible, you may be able to claim Local Housing Allowance (benefit) to cover the rent costs.	Contact estate and lettings agencies, look for properties advertised for rent in local papers, use property websites such as www.rightmove.co.uk Advice about different tenancy types can be found on the Shelter website www.shelter.org.uk
Mutual Exchange	If you are currently a tenant of a social landlord, you may be able to exchange your property with another tenant.	Contact your landlord or use websites such as www.homeswapper.co.uk or www.houseexchange.org.uk or www.lets-swap.org

Housing Options	Brief details	Contact
Homes Direct	Midland Heart Housing Association has set up a choice based letting system for properties across the West Midlands area. Several landlords with properties in Coventry advertise properties through this system. This gives additional options, especially if you are considering moving out of the Coventry area.	http://www.midlandheart.org.uk/homesdirect
Affordable Home Ownership	There is a range of products designed to allow people to access more affordable home ownership, for example 'shared ownership'. These schemes are administered by a Help to Buy agency. The Coventry area is covered by Orbit Help to Buy and more details on available properties and products are available from them.	Contact Orbit Help to Buy on 03458 50 20 50 (option 2) Or their website: www.orbithelptobuy.co.uk
Open Market Home Ownership	Dependent on income and savings levels, home ownership on the open market may be a suitable option.	Contact estate agents, look for properties advertised for sale in local papers, use property websites such as www.rightmove.co.uk
Short term accommodation - Hostels	Short term accommodation is available from direct access hostels in the city. This may also include support to access permanent accommodation.	Contact the hostels directly – The Chace 024 7630 2694 and The Salvation Army Lifeshouse 024 7601 1770

5.7 Garages

Garages owned by Whitefriars Housing Group are advertised through the Coventry Homefinder website and applicants can register for garages as well as for social housing; however the allocation of garages is not subject to legislation relating to allocations of social housing and is not covered by this Policy.

Applicants should contact Whitefriars Housing Group directly for details of their policy on letting garages.

5.8 Contact Details (Homefinder and partner Registered Providers)

The Coventry Homefinder Team can be contacted:

- By Phone on 024 7683 4024
- By writing to Coventry Homefinder
1st Floor, Spire/Christchurch House
New Union Street
Coventry
CV1 2PW
- By emailing coventryhomefinder@coventry.gov.uk
- Customers who have already made an application can log into their account and use the online messaging system.

Applicants can also visit the Housing & Benefits Advice Centre, Spire House, New Union Street, Coventry CV1 2PW. Opening hours are:

Monday	9.00am – 4.30pm
Tuesday	10.00am – 4.30pm
Wednesday	9.00am – 4.30pm
Thursday	9.00am – 4.30pm
Friday	9.00am – 4.00pm
Saturday and Sunday.	Closed.

Please note:

Changes to contact details, household or circumstances must be updated by the applicant. This is done by following the instructions in section 2.6.

Contact details for the Coventry Homefinder Partner Registered Providers:

Organisation	Address	Telephone number
Coventry Homefinder	1 st Floor, Spire/Christchurch House, New Union Street, Coventry, CV1 2PW	024 7683 4024
Ashram Housing Association	178 Birmingham Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands B70 6QG	0300 111 7000
Asra Housing Group	3 Bede Island Road Leicester LE2 7EA	0116 257 6716

Organisation	Address	Telephone number
Bromford Group	1 Exchange Court Brabourne Avenue Wolverhampton Business Park Wolverhampton WV10 6AU	0330 1234 034
Guinness Northern Counties Housing Association	Unit 2 Holmewood Business Park, Chesterfield Road, Holmewood, Derbyshire, S42 5US	0845 605 9000
Jephson Housing Association	Jephson House, Blackdown, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 6RE	01926 339311
Mercian Housing Association	Gee Business Centre Holborn Hill Aston, Birmingham, B7 5JR	0121 322 7373
Midland Heart Housing Association	20 Bath Row, Birmingham, B15 1LZ	0345 6020540
Nehemiah Housing Association	5 Beacon Court, Birmingham Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6NN	0121 358 0966
Orbit Heart of England Housing Association	Garden Court, Harry Weston Road, Binley Business Park, Coventry, CV3 2SU	0345 8 500 500
Starley Housing Co-operative	17A Starley Road, Coventry, CV1 3JU	024 7622 3111
Whitefriars Housing Group	9 Little Park Street, Coventry, CV1 2UR	024 7676 7000

Appendix 1 – Statutorily Homeless Households

Statutory Homeless Households

Statutory homeless households are those that have been assessed under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as:

- Eligible for housing assistance – not subject to immigration control and habitually resident in the common travel area.
- Homeless, or threatened with homelessness within 28 days – there is no property available to them that they have a legal right to occupy and that is reasonable for them to occupy.
- Unintentionally Homeless - the homelessness has occurred through no fault of their own and was not caused by act or omission on behalf of the applicant.
- Having a priority need as defined in the Housing Act 1996 part VII, s 189(1), which includes:
 - A pregnant woman or a person with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;
 - A person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside;
 - A person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or mental handicap or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside; and
 - A person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster.

A further 6 additional categories were added to the priority need groups as a result of the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002; these are:

- A child aged 16 or 17
 - A young person under 21, who has been looked after, accommodated or fostered, but who is not a student in full-time education;
 - A person over 21 who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered;
 - A person who is vulnerable as a result of having served in the armed forces;
 - A person who is vulnerable as a result of having been imprisoned; and
 - A person who is vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of actual or threatened violence.
- Having a local connection to the area. If the applicant does not have a local connection with Coventry but does with another area then a referral will be made to the other local housing authority. The conditions for referral are:
 - Neither the applicant nor any person who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant has a local connection with the district of the local

housing authority to which the application for homelessness assistance was made; and

- Either the applicant or a person who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant has a local connection with the district of another local housing authority in England, Wales or Scotland; and
- Neither the applicant nor any person who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant will run the risk of domestic violence in that other district; and
- Neither the applicant nor any person who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant has suffered violence in the district of that other local housing authority; or,
- If violence has been suffered, it is not probable that a return to that district will lead to further violence of a similar kind against that person

Statutorily homeless households will be made **one offer** of suitable accommodation to discharge the main housing duty under Housing Act 1996, Part VII. This offer of accommodation may be in the social rented sector or it may be in the private rented sector. For the purposes of this policy the information in this appendix relates to the social rented sector. Please see the policy "Discharging the homeless duty into the private rented sector - 2013" for details of private sector offers.

The particular aspects that relate to suitability are:

- Location – a suitable offer will be located within the Coventry district, unless the household would be at risk of violence in accommodation secured in the district
The following four factors relating to location must be taken into account:
 - Where the accommodation is situated outside of the local housing authority's district, the distance of the accommodation from its district;
 - The significance of any disruption which would be caused by the location of the accommodation to the employment, caring responsibilities or education of the applicant or of members of the applicants household;
 - The proximity and accessibility of the accommodation to the medical facilities and other support which are currently used by or provided to the applicant, or used by or provided to members of the applicant's household, and which are essential to the applicant's well-being or to the well-being of members of the applicant's household; and
 - The proximity and accessibility of the accommodation to local services, amenities and transport.
- Duration of likely occupation - the offer of accommodation through Coventry Homefinder will be a part VII offer of settled accommodation that would be available on a longer term basis if there were no breaches in the tenancy agreement. It would therefore not be unreasonable for the local authority to expect the applicant to change schools, doctors etc.

Where a child is in their final exam year at school the Housing Options team will endeavour to find a suitable offer of accommodation that is within easy travelling distance of the school to avoid changing schools.

Temporary Accommodation under Part VII will not be made through Coventry Homefinder.

- Space and arrangement – The accommodation must be suitable for the number of household members and needs of the household members. For example, a property would be unsuitable if it was not accessible for a household member who was a wheelchair user or if there were insufficient bedrooms for the family members causing it to be overcrowded.
- Standard of accommodation – The accommodation must be of a standard that does not contravene the Housing Act 1985 in the definition of 'Slum Clearance' and 'Overcrowding' and must meet the decent homes standard
- Medical Needs – Consideration must be given to the medical needs of the applicant and their household when determining if a property is suitable. Where medical needs have been identified the risks regarding these needs must be assessed in order to determine if the applicant would suffer any detriment in the provision of the offer of accommodation.
- Terms and Tenure – The offer of a property through Coventry Homefinder to discharge the main housing duty will be an offer of social Housing and will normally be an assured, introductory or secure tenancy.
- Applicants views – the decision on suitability of a property under part VII Housing Act 1996, offered in the provision of the main housing duty is for the local authority to make, however due consideration will be given to all of the previous points in determining suitability. Applicants will have the opportunity to view the accommodation before being required to accept or refuse it.

If the applicant believes that the property is unsuitable, but the Council maintains that it is suitable the applicant has a right to request a review of the offer on the grounds of suitability.

Discharging the main housing duty

When an offer of suitable accommodation has been made to statutory homeless households the Council will discharge its main housing duty. The events that can cause the duty to end by the provision of are:

- 1) The refusal by an applicant of suitable accommodation secured in performance of the main housing duty;
- 2) The applicant ceasing to be eligible for assistance;
- 3) The applicant becoming homeless intentionally from his or her main housing duty accommodation;
- 4) The applicant accepting an offer of a tenancy made under HA 1996, part VI;
- 5) The applicant accepting an offer of an assured, but not an assured shorthold, tenancy from a private landlord, including a private registered provider in England or registered social landlord in Wales;

- 6) The applicant voluntarily ceasing to occupy his or her main housing duty accommodation as his or her principal home;
- 7) The applicant refusing a final offer of suitable accommodation made under HA 1996, part VI;
- 8) For applicants whose applications were made on or after 9 November 2012 to a local housing authority in England, the applicant accepting a private rented sector offer;
- 9) For applicants whose applications were made on or after 9 November 2012 to a local housing authority in England, the applicant refusing a private rented sector offer;

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Equality and Consultation Analysis Template (ECA)

Guidance for completion

- Equality analysis is a way of considering the effect on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010, during the Council's decision making processes. These processes are:
 - Cabinet/Cabinet Member reports
 - Fundamental Service Reviews
 - Policy and Strategy Development
 - Human Resource Policies
 - Commissioning & Procurement
 - Other Service Reviews/Restructures
- These 'protected groups' are those defined by race, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, pregnancy, maternity or breastfeeding and vulnerable communities for example Looked After Children, Homeless etc
- Remember to think about children and young people as a specific group that you may need to consider the impact on and engage with during this analysis.
- Equality analysis will help you to consider whether the decision you want to take:
 - Will have unintended consequences for some groups
 - If the service or policy will be fully effective for all target groups
- The Council also has a statutory duty to consult
- This ECA template will enable the Council to demonstrate how equality information and the findings from consultation with protected groups and others, have been used to understand the actual or potential effect of your service or policy on the protected groups and to inform decisions taken. Hence, it is an evidence trail to show how the Council has met statutory equality and consultation duties
- The template should summarise key issues arising from information that has been collected, analysed and included in other key documents eg. Needs Analysis, Baseline Reports etc
- This form should be completed on an on-going basis at each stage of any formal decision making process. Failure to comply with this will put the Council (and specifically the elected member or officer making the decision) at risk of judicial review.
- The Council also has a statutory duty to consider social value (Social, Economic and Environmental) when commissioning and procuring services

A simple guide to statutory consultation and equality duties sets out what the Council needs to do to comply with the **equality and consultation duties** and will help to deliver the best possible outcome for the City Council and its stakeholders. This can be found on http://beacon.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/507/simple_guide_to_statutory_consultation_and_equality_duties

For further help and support please contact Helen Shankster on 7683 4371 (Consultation Advice), Sheila Bates on 7683 1432 (CLYP Consultation Advice), Jaspal Mann 7683 3112 (Equalities Advice) Mick Burn 0247683 3757 (Social Value Advice).

Equality and Consultation Analysis

Context

Name of Review	Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy (review and re-write 2013-14)
Service Manager	Ayaz Maqsood
Officer completing analysis	Kimberley Fawcett
Date	January 2014

Scoping area of work

1. Briefly describe the area of work this analysis relates to:

Coventry City Council no longer owns or manages council housing stock, following the large scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) of all council housing to Whitefriars Housing Group in 2000. However, the Council still has a duty to produce a policy on how social housing

is allocated in the City which sets out how applicants are prioritised and how allocations are made, and which complies with Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Housing Act 2004 and the Localism Act 2011). The Policy must have regard to the guidance document 'Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England' (DCLG 2012).

As the Council no longer holds its own housing stock, allocations under the policy are carried out through nominations from the Council to Registered Providers of social housing.

The Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy sets out the policies and processes by which applicants will be prioritised for an allocation of social housing, and how available social housing vacancies are advertised and let.

Public Sector Equality Duty

2. Which, if any, parts of the general equality duty is the service relevant to? Please mark with an 'X'

	Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
x	Advance equality of opportunity between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not
	Foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not

Gathering Information and Data

3. Who are the key groups that could be impacted by this work/service, including service users both existing and potential and stakeholders?

The key groups who may be affected by the Coventry Homefinder Policy include:

- Applicants for social housing in Coventry (this may include applicants who currently live outside of Coventry).

- Potential applicants for social housing in Coventry (this may include newly forming households, existing households, and those that currently live outside of Coventry).
- Members/former members of the Armed Forces who wish to apply for social housing in Coventry (and certain members of their families).
- Registered Providers of social housing in Coventry.

4. From the list above, which of these constitute protected groups or vulnerable communities (e.g. those experiencing deprivation)?

Within the groups identified in section 3, there are applicants/potential applicants with specific needs who may be affected by the Homefinder Policy, including:

- Applicants or members of their households who have a disability or medical need and whose current home is not suitable to meet the medical or disability needs of the household.
- Homeless people/households.
- Care leavers
- Applicants aged 16-17.
- Older applicants requiring sheltered housing.
- Households experiencing harassment or violence.

5. Which of the key protected groups and stakeholders representatives will need to be kept informed, consulted or actively involved in this area of work?

Key Stakeholder	*Type of Involvement	Method(s) used
Applicants who are currently registered with Coventry Homefinder	Informing and consulting	Formal 8 week public consultation on the draft policy – published on the Coventry Council website and the Coventry Homefinder website. Also publicised using Facebook and Twitter. Targeted emails to applicants that are currently registered (were an email address has been given on their application).

Potential applicants not yet registered with Coventry Homefinder	Informing and consulting	Formal 8 week public consultation on the draft policy – published on the Coventry Council website and the Coventry Homefinder website. Also publicised using Facebook and Twitter.
Homeless people/households	Informing and consulting	Formal 8 week public consultation on the draft policy – published on the Coventry Council website and the Coventry Homefinder website. Also publicised using Facebook and Twitter. Targeted emails to applicants that are currently registered (were an email address has been given on their application).
Disabled people with specific housing needs	Informing and consulting	Formal 8 week public consultation on the draft policy – published on the Coventry Council website and the Coventry Homefinder website. Also publicised using Facebook and Twitter. Targeted emails and contact with partnership and representative groups.
Registered Providers (social landlords) who are partners in Coventry Homefinder	Informing, consulting and involvement	<p>Informal focus group meetings on potential policy changes carried out prior to draft being prepared for public consultation.</p> <p>Homefinder Partnership Board meetings.</p> <p>Formal 8 week public consultation on the draft policy – published on the Coventry Council website and the Coventry Homefinder website. Targeted emails informing of the consultation.</p> <p>The final draft (following public consultation) will be circulated for comment.</p>
Advice agencies	Informing and consulting	<p>Focus group meetings carried out prior to draft being prepared for public consultation.</p> <p>Formal 8 week public consultation on the draft policy – published on the Coventry Council website and the Coventry Homefinder website. Targeted emails informing of the consultation.</p>

Providers of housing and homelessness services (eg hostels,	Informing and consulting	<p>Focus group meetings carried out prior to draft being prepared for public consultation.</p> <p>Formal 8 week public consultation on the draft policy – published on the Coventry Council website and the Coventry Homefinder website. Targeted emails informing of the consultation.</p>
Other council departments (eg Housing Benefit, Community Safety, Occupational Therapy)	Informing and consulting	<p>Focus group meetings carried out prior to draft being prepared for public consultation.</p> <p>Formal 8 week public consultation on the draft policy – published on the Coventry Council website and the Coventry Homefinder website. Targeted emails informing of the consultation.</p>
Elected members - Councillors	Inform, consult and involve.	<p>Task & Finish group set up by Scrutiny Board made recommendations on changes to the policy.</p> <p>Cabinet Member heard these recommendations and instructed officers to review and re-write the policy.</p> <p>Scrutiny Board will review the final draft policy before it is presented to Cabinet for approval.</p> <p>Also informed of the 8 week public consultation through email and members' bulletin.</p>

* *Information, Consultation or Involvement*

Analysis

6. What information is currently available to be used as part of this analysis including data on current and potential service user, workforce etc?

Comprehensive data is available from the current Homefinder register including:

- Ethnic origin of main applicant.
- Age group of main applicant.
- Applicants who require properties with mobility-related adaptations.
- Applicants who consider themselves to be vulnerable.
- Applicants who are unable to use the Homefinder system and require assisted bidding.

Data is also available on applicants who have been assessed as Statutorily Homeless (under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996) and who are owed the main housing duty – the Council must secure an offer of suitable accommodation for them. This can be done with an offer of accommodation under Part 6 of the 1996 Act (and therefore done through the Homefinder Policy). The information held about statutorily homeless households includes:

- Ethnic Origin of main applicants
- Age group of main applicant
- Whether the household contains dependent children or a pregnancy
- Household composition (including gender if the applicant is a single person or a single parent household)
- Whether the household is considered vulnerable due to a disability, due to being 16-17, due to being a former care leaver or due to old age.

7. What are the information gaps?

At the time of registration, applicants are requested to answer questions regarding:

- Their religion
- Their sexual orientation
- Their employment status and income level

However, these questions are not mandatory on the application form and many applicants choose not to complete them. As a result, the information that we hold is incomplete.

This information is not collected for Statutorily Homeless households.

There is currently no information collected about gender reassignment.

8. How are you going to address the gaps?

It would be possible to amend the application form/IT system to make the questions relating to protected characteristics mandatory. However this information is not required in order to assess an applicant's housing needs or to make an allocation of social housing. Therefore it is felt that applicants should have the option not to respond to these questions.

A further field will be added to the application form allowing applicants to identify if they have undergone gender reassignment but it is not proposed that this will be a mandatory question.

Summary of Data

9. Please provide a summary of what the data is telling you and what key issues the data is telling you.

Data from Coventry Homefinder regarding registered applicants for social housing (as at 1st April 2013):

Ethnic Origin:

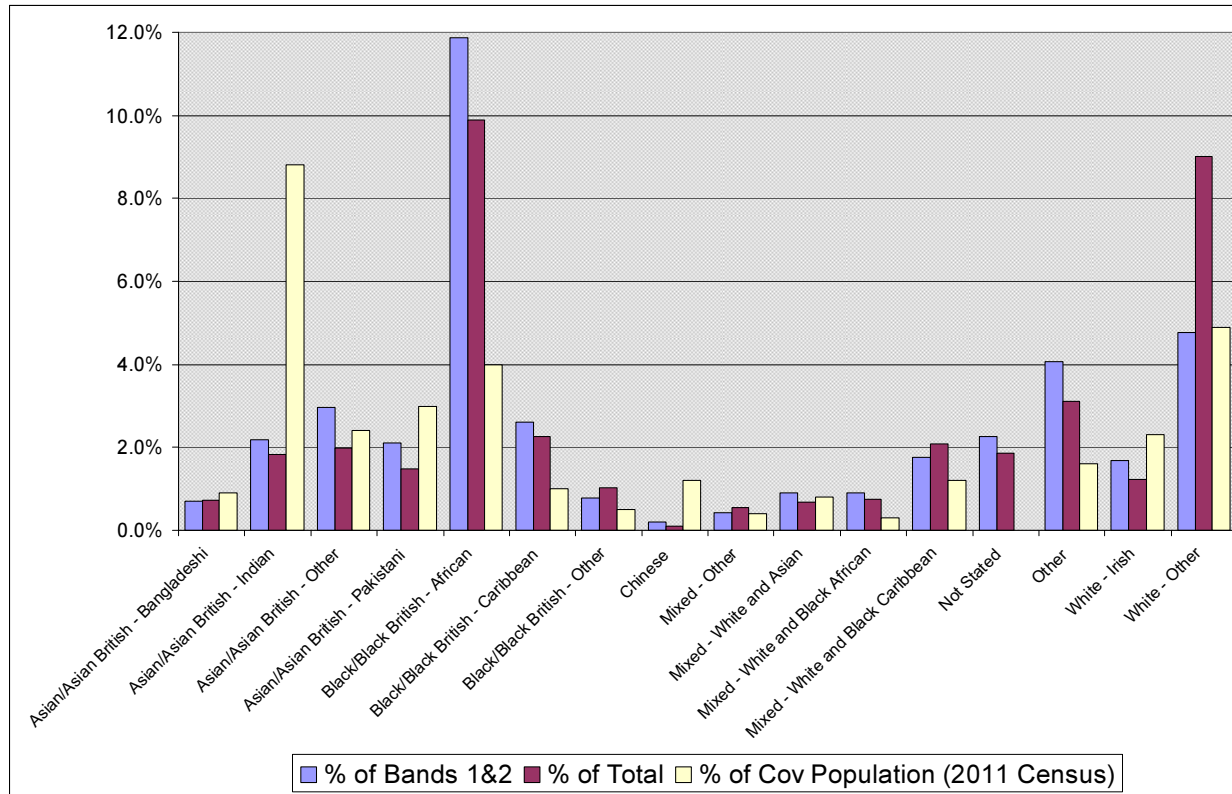
Most of the applicants on the Homefinder register (60%) identify themselves as White British. This is below the percentage of the population of Coventry who identified themselves as White British in the 2011 Census (67%).

There is considerable variation in other ethnic groups on the Homefinder register. 12% of households in priority bands, and 10% of the overall register, identify themselves as 'Black/Black British – African'. This is compared to 4% of the total city population in the 2011

Census. Other groups where the representation on Homefinder is higher than the city's population include: the other Black/Black British groups; the Mixed groups; and 'White – Other'.

Conversely, only 2% of applicants on the Homefinder register identify themselves as 'Asian/Asian British – Indian', compared to 9% of the total city population in the 2011 Census. This trend has been consistently identified in previous analysis. Other groups where the representation on Homefinder is lower than the city's population include: the other Asian/Asian British groups, White- Irish; and Chinese.

NB – a small proportion of applicants on the Homefinder register (2%) chose not to state their ethnic origin.



Age - The majority of Homefinder applicants are aged between 18 and 45 years (77% of the total register). Those aged over 65 make up a small proportion of the overall register (3.3% of the total) but a larger proportion of those over 65 have a housing need which has resulted in them being placed in a priority band. 21% of those registered who are over 65 are in a priority need band, compared to 11.8% of the overall register in a priority need band.

Disability - Disability is recorded on the Homefinder register when an applicant requires a property with specialist adaptations. The number of applicants with a disability that requires specially adapted housing is low (less than 1% of the register). However, of those that are registered and that require adapted housing, 70% are in a priority band due to their housing needs.

Data from P1E regarding statutorily homeless households in Coventry (2012/13):

Main points:

Race - Where race was stated, 63% of statutorily homeless people were White, 16% Black, 8% Asian and 4% mixed ethnicity. The demographics of Coventry (Census 2011) show 5.6% of the city's population identify themselves as Black/Black British and 16.3% identify themselves as Asian/Asian British. This shows a complex situation where some ethnic groups are over-represented and some are under-represented in homelessness statistics compared to the general population of the city. This is a long term trend that has been identified.

Age – 29% of statutorily homeless people were aged between 16 and 24. The largest age group affected are people aged between 25 and 44, these account for 61%.

Gender - Many of the statutorily homeless households were family units, but gender is only recorded for single applicants and lone parents. There were 303 single people with dependent children – 17 of these were male applicants, 286 were female. There were 108 single people with no dependents, of which 62 were female and 46 male. 121 Households were couples with dependent children.

Disability – 8% of statutorily homeless households were in priority need due to a disability – 19 due to a physical disability and 24 due to a mental illness or disability.

Generating and evaluating options

10. What are the different options being proposed to stakeholders?

The process of developing the draft Homefinder Policy involved several stages of consultation. Some changes are necessary due to changes in legislation; some are possible due to the provisions in the Localism Act 2011. The proposed changes are detailed in the table at section 11.

11. How will the options impact protected groups or vulnerable groups e.g. those experiencing deprivation?

There are several major changes proposed as part of the Homefinder Policy re-write. These have different impacts on protected/vulnerable groups.

Applicants who have a housing need which is recognised in the legislation and in the Homefinder Policy will be positively affected by proposed changes to the Policy – this group may include applicants in any of the protected characteristic groups, but as the data in section 9 shows, certain groups are more likely to be registered with Coventry Homefinder and/or are more likely to have a housing need.

As a result of these options, the Council will be able to offer a service which is better able to meet the housing needs of applicants on the register and there will more properties available to those customers in housing need.

The tables below detail the proposed changes to the Coventry Homefinder Policy and the potential impacts:

Issue	Current Policy	Proposed Change to Policy	Impacts of implementing this change
Priority bands	See separate table below	See separate table below. CHANGES have been made to some priority bands following consultation with stakeholders, to ensure that the policy meets the legislative requirements, and also to provide greater clarity on some circumstances that result in priority bands being awarded.	Certain categories of housing need specified in legislation (Part VI of the Housing Act 1996) must be given ‘reasonable preference’ for social housing allocations. It is then for the Authority to determine relative priority between these categories.

Issue	Current Policy	Proposed Change to Policy	Impacts of implementing this change
<p>Shortlisting priority</p>	<p>75% of properties have their shortlists ordered based on the priority band of the bidders who expressed an interest, 25% have their shortlists ordered based on registration date alone.</p>	<p>CHANGE - All properties advertised would have their shortlists ordered based on the priority band (and therefore the relative housing need) of the applicants that have bid. This would mean that applicants would not be prioritised for housing based on registration date (the amount of time they have been on the register) alone.</p>	<p>This was recommended by the Task & Finish Group and will ensure that applicants with a housing need are prioritised for housing above those that are already adequately housed.</p> <p>Statutory guidance from DCLG states very clearly ‘we expect social homes to go to people that genuinely need them’</p> <p>This group may include applicants in any of the protected characteristic groups, but as the data in section 9 shows, certain groups are more likely to be registered with Coventry Homefinder and/or are more likely to have a housing need.</p> <p>Applicants:</p> <p>On 31st December 2013, there were a total of 14,287 applicants/households registered on Coventry Homefinder. Of these, 1857 (13%) were in priority bands 1A to 2C, and 12,430 (87%) were in Bands 3A and 3B.</p> <p>29% of applicants in Band 3A and 3B have never placed a bid. Only 48% have placed a bid in the last 6 months.</p> <p>Properties during 2013:</p> <p>Overall, 2100 properties were let during calendar year 2013 (‘offer accepted’ during 2013). 574 were shortlisted based on date alone (27%).</p> <p>The nature of the stock (almost half of properties that become available are studio or 1bed properties) means that more people from Band 3 are housed than the 25% that would be expected from the 75/25 split – not all properties shortlisted by band go to an app in a priority band. (apps in priority bands are more likely to be families, lots of singles/couples in</p>

Issue	Current Policy	Proposed Change to Policy	Impacts of implementing this change
			<p>Band3)</p> <p>During 2013, 45% of applicants that accepted a property were from Bands 3A & 3B.</p> <p>Of those that were successful from Bands 3A & 3B, 17% were already tenants of a housing association, 28% were living with family or friends, and 34% were in private rented accommodation.</p> <p>Tenants that are under-occupying and affected by the 'bedroom tax' are prioritised in the Homefinder system. A move to 100% by priority would increase the number of properties available to people who have priority due to under occupation.</p> <p>528 households were assessed as Statutorily homeless during the calendar year 2013. 358 were housed as stat homeless through Homefinder.</p> <p>There would be a negative impact on applicants who have no assessed housing need under the Policy – they would have less chance of being allocated a property as the priority for all properties would be given to those with significant housing needs. However, this needs to be balanced against the alternative negative impact on applicants with housing needs who may not receive an allocation of a property under the current policy where the property goes to someone who has been registered for longer, but is already adequately housed.</p>

Issue	Current Policy	Proposed Change to Policy	Impacts of implementing this change
<p>Registration date/ effective date.</p>	<p>The original date of registration is used to prioritise shortlists where more than one person in the same band has placed a bid.</p>	<p>CHANGE - Shortlisted bids in the same band will be prioritised based on the 'effective date' which will be the date that the band was awarded, rather than just the date that the applicant first registered. This will reflect how long the household has been in housing need rather than just how long they have been on the register. Applicants that have been in housing need for a longer period will be prioritised.</p>	<p>This will have a positive impact on applicants in housing need, ensuring a fair and transparent way to prioritise between applicants in the same band.</p> <p>This group may include applicants in any of the protected characteristic groups, but as the data in section 9 shows, certain groups are more likely to be registered with Coventry Homefinder and/or are more likely to have a housing need.</p> <p>On 31st December 2013, 1857 applicants were in priority bands 1A to 2C.</p>
<p>Offers of accomm. for Statutorily Homeless households</p>	<p>Statutorily homeless households are placed in Band 1A for one bidding period to place their own bids. If they are unsuccessful, the Housing Assessment Officer places bids in future bidding rounds until a successful match means that the main housing duty can be discharged.</p>	<p>CHANGE – Statutorily homeless households would be placed in Band 1A as an extreme urgent case, but bids would be placed by the Housing Assessment Officer from the outset to maximise the chance of a successful match. Housing Assessment Officers also have the option of discharging the main housing duty with an offer of a suitable private rented property/ tenancy.</p>	<p>This would have a positive impact in ensuring that statutorily homeless households receive an offer of suitable accommodation as soon as possible. However, there may be a perceived negative impact that stat homeless applicants no longer get one week of 'choice' where they are able to place their own bids.</p> <p>This group may include applicants in any of the protected characteristic groups, but as the data in section 9 shows, certain groups are represented to a greater extent in the number of applicants assessed as statutorily homeless (and owed the main housing duty by the Council).</p> <p>During 2012/13, 540 households were assessed as statutorily homeless and owed the main housing duty by the Council. 440 households were housed through Coventry Homefinder as their offer of accommodation to discharge the main housing duty (the others will have rejected their offer and gone on to secure housing for themselves)</p>

Issue	Current Policy	Proposed Change to Policy	Impacts of implementing this change
Advertising adapted properties	<p>Adapted properties are categorised based on the level of adaptation and a brief description of adaptations provided. Applicants who are eligible place bids and shortlists are created in the same way as for all other properties.</p>	<p>CHANGE – adapted properties will be offered directly to people on the register who require the specific adaptations in the property. This may mean that properties are not offered to the applicant with the highest band/earliest date, but will ensure that the best fit is found between the adaptations provided and the needs of the household.</p>	<p>This will directly affect households/applicants that have a disability or illness that means that they require properties with specific adaptations. The adaptations required are specific to the household, yet the range of adaptations in a property can be from full wheelchair accessibility to a basic stair lift.</p> <p>There will be a positive impact on these households. Currently there is only a small amount of information in the property advert about the adaptations that are provided and it is difficult for applicants to determine whether the adaptations would meet their requirements. This leads to applicants placing bids on properties that are not suitable and then having to refuse the property, and also instances where Registered Providers have been unable to let the property and have had to remove adaptations.</p> <p>Given the shortage of adapted properties and the high proportion of applicants who need an adapted property that are also in housing need/priority band, this proposal will make better use of the adapted properties that become available by ensuring that they are matched to applicants that require those types of adaptations. Applicants will benefit as they will receive more information about the adaptations in the property and be more informed as to whether the property will be suitable.</p> <p>Advice will be taken from medical professionals and an assessment will be carried out by an Occupational Therapist, where appropriate. It will be important to ensure that the records of adaptations required are kept up to date to ensure that appropriate offers are being made.</p> <p>Applicants will still be able to place bids on non-adapted</p>

Issue	Current Policy	Proposed Change to Policy	Impacts of implementing this change
			<p>properties through the Homefinder system in the same way as other applicants. If they are successful in placing a bid for a property, the landlord must then consider whether it is possible and reasonable for the property to be adapted to meet their needs.</p> <p>On 31st December 2013, there were 126 households registered on Homefinder that required a property with specific adaptations. Of these, 89 (71%) were in a priority band (Bands 1A to 2C).</p> <p>These households are also more likely to be older – 24% of the applicants that require an adapted property are over 55, compared to 9% of the overall register over 55.</p>
<p>Priority band due to health/medical needs</p>	<p>Medical priority is assessed by the Coventry Homefinder Team based on a medical assessment form and additional information from medical professionals (where appropriate)</p>	<p>CHANGE – requests for priority banding based on health/medical grounds will usually require an assessment from an Occupational Therapist (except when this is not appropriate) in addition to the medical assessment form and evidence from doctors etc.</p>	<p>This will have a positive impact on people with disabilities and older people.</p> <p>Medical priority is given when the current property is unsuitable and is having a negative impact on the medical condition of the applicant. An Occupational Therapist will be able to carry out an expert assessment of what impact the property is having on the applicant and what the requirements of the applicant's household are. The Homefinder Team will then be more informed as to whether medical priority on Homefinder is appropriate.</p> <p>The OT will also be able to carry out an assessment as to whether the applicant's situation can be alleviated with the provision of adaptations or equipment in their existing property. This will be positive as it could ensure that the applicant's needs are met in their current home and remove the requirement to move, or if this is not possible, could</p>

Issue	Current Policy	Proposed Change to Policy	Impacts of implementing this change
			<p>improve their situation whilst awaiting a move.</p> <p>On 31st December 2013, there were 16 applicants who had been placed in Band 1A due to exceptional medical needs, 3 had been placed in Band 1B due to medical needs and overcrowding, 186 had been placed in Band 2A due to urgent medical needs, and 57 had been placed in Band 2B due to low level medical needs (262 in total).</p>
Armed forces personnel	There are no additional priorities for former members of the armed forces over other applicants.	CHANGE - The Policy complies with new legislation by providing additional preference for former members of the armed forces that also have a reasonable preference housing need.	<p>This change is required by legislation. It is unclear how many applicants this will affect and whether there will be any equality impacts arising from it. This will be monitored.</p> <p>There will be a positive impact on members/former members of the Armed Forces that have housing needs arising from a disability or injury.</p>
Refusal of offers	Applicants that refuse 10 or more offers without good reason are requested to attend interview and their application may be closed	CHANGE - Applicants that refuse 5 offers may have their application suspended whilst the reasons for refusal are explored and the application may be closed if the refusals are found not to be reasonable.	<p>This group may include applicants in any of the protected characteristic groups, but as the data in section 9 shows, certain groups are more likely to be registered with Coventry Homefinder and/or are more likely to have a housing need.</p> <p>In the 12 months to 31st December 2013, 1537 applicants rejected offers of an allocation of a property. Of these, 36 rejected five or more offers within the year.</p> <p>Officers will need to be aware of particular issues or requirements arising from protected characteristics (such as a disability or medical condition) which may mean that a property is not suitable and therefore it is reasonable for the applicant to refuse. Detailed procedures and robust monitoring will ensure that applicants are not unfairly penalised for refusing properties.</p>

Issue	Current Policy	Proposed Change to Policy	Impacts of implementing this change
<p>Eligibility and qualification</p>	<p>Certain applicants are not eligible to join the register based on immigration status, habitual residence, and behaviour which makes them 'unsuitable to be a tenant'.</p>	<p>TECHNICAL CHANGE – eligibility criteria based on immigration status and/or habitual residence remains the same. The Localism Act 2011 introduced the ability for councils to decide who 'qualifies' to join the register. The draft policy considers those 'unsuitable to be a tenant' as not qualifying to join the register. Home owners do not qualify unless there are specific housing needs/ circumstances.</p> <p>The Task & Finish Group recommended keeping an 'open' register therefore no additional qualifying criteria have been included.</p>	<p>The eligibility criteria are set in legislation and are based mainly on immigration status and habitual residence in the UK. The Council has no discretion to change this.</p> <p>Keeping an 'open' register will mean that anyone who is eligible will be able to register for social housing in Coventry. This has a positive equality impact as no groups are excluded from registering.</p>
<p>Requesting priority</p>	<p>Applicants are automatically registered in Band 3A or 3B, and must contact the Homefinder Team to request priority banding if they have a housing need.</p>	<p>NO CHANGE – applicants are still required to directly contact the Homefinder Team to request priority banding, however the process and evidence required have been clarified in the Policy.</p>	<p>The Council has a duty to people in its area to ensure that assistance is given free of charge to those who are likely to have difficulty in making an application for housing without such assistance.</p> <p>Coventry Homefinder aims to ensure equal access to all and has developed a number of ways by which those who are unable to use the system themselves and don't have support otherwise available to them, are not disadvantaged. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending details of vacant properties to people who are unable to access the property adverts through the online Homefinder system. • Contacting applicants when there is a property being advertised that matches their specific requirements. • Placing bids for vulnerable households based on pre-agreed criteria of location and property type.

Issue	Current Policy	Proposed Change to Policy	Impacts of implementing this change
			<p>To access this support applicants or their advocates, with written approval to represent them, can contact the Homefinder Team.</p> <p>The automatic registering system means that applicants can immediately access and start to use the system.</p>

Specific changes to band priorities:	
Band change	Impacts of implementing this change
<p>Applicants that need to move as part of the National Witness Mobility Scheme will be placed in Band 1A (this is an increase from Band 2B).</p>	<p>This would have a positive impact on applicants that need to move urgently due to being placed on the National Witness Mobility Scheme. The number of applicants affected by this is small and it is not clear if there are any direct equalities impacts – this would be monitored.</p>
<p>Tenants of social landlords who are under-occupying their home by three or more bedrooms will be placed in Band 1A (this is an additional category – the policy currently places those under-occupying by two bedrooms in Band 1B and those under-occupying by one bedroom in Band 2A)</p>	<p>This would have a positive impact on applicants that require a move from a large family property (4 or more bedrooms).</p> <p>It would assist those affected by the ‘bedroom tax’ welfare reforms to move to a more suitably sized property.</p> <p>This would also have a positive impact on households on the register that require large family housing which is in very short supply, as the household moving out will free up a property for a household that may be overcrowded.</p> <p>It is unclear how many applicants that this would affect but the number is likely to be small – there are 52 applicants on the Homefinder register that are in Band 1B due to under-occupation by two or more bedrooms (as at 31st December 2013).</p>
<p>People fleeing violence, harassment and abuse would be placed in Band 1B. This is an increase in priority from Band 2B.</p>	<p>This would have a positive impact by increasing the priority for people who are fleeing violence, harassment and abuse.</p> <p>This would benefit applicants with protected characteristics who may be experiencing violence, abuse or harassment based on those protected characteristics (for example, homophobic</p>

Specific changes to band priorities:	
Band change	Impacts of implementing this change
	violence/abuse, racist violence/abuse and other hate crimes).
People living in extreme unsanitary conditions causing severe health and safety hazards will be placed in Band 1B. This is an increase in priority for extreme cases – the current policy places all unsanitary condition cases in Band 2A (regardless of severity).	<p>This would have a positive impact by increasing the priority for people who need to move from extreme unsanitary conditions. There are not likely to be any equality impacts arising from this change.</p> <p>The number of applicants affected is likely to be very small.</p>
People living in short term hostels would be placed in Band 1B. This is an increase in priority from Band 2B	<p>This would have a positive impact by increasing the priority for people who are living in short term hostel accommodation. It will improve the likelihood of the applicant securing accommodation within the 12-16 week period that they are living in the hostel.</p> <p>On 31st December 2013, there were 230 applicants with hostel priority.</p> <p>Whilst there are a small number of hostel spaces for single females, the majority of hostel dwellers are single males. This group is less likely to be in a priority need group under the homelessness legislation (Part VII Housing Act 1996) therefore it is necessary to provide priority banding under the allocations policy.</p>
Households who need to move to a certain locality to avoid hardship would be placed in Band 2B. This has been separated out from other categories for clarity.	This would have a positive impact by increasing the priority for people who need to move to avoid hardship. There is considerable overlap with other housing need priority categories (especially social/welfare and medical) but the hardship category also includes people who need to move to take up or maintain employment and long term training.
Households that need to move to prevent homelessness would be placed in Band 2B (certain circumstances – see draft Policy document)	<p>This would have a positive impact by increasing the priority for households at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>This group may include applicants in any of the protected characteristic groups, but as the data in section 9 shows, certain groups are more likely to be registered with Coventry Homefinder and/or are more likely to become homeless.</p>

Specific changes to band priorities:	
Band change	Impacts of implementing this change
<p>Single non-dependent/adult children would be given the overcrowding priority banding on their own application if they are currently living in the family home and that home is overcrowded, where the overcrowding would be relieved by them moving into their own separate accommodation.</p>	<p>This would have a positive impact by increasing the options available to households that are experiencing overcrowding.</p> <p>There is a severe shortage of large family housing (especially 4+ bedrooms) and families that are overcrowded can unfortunately have to wait for a very long time for a suitable property to become available. During 2012/13, only 38 properties with 4 or more bedrooms became available, whereas on 31st December 2013 there were 454 households on the register requiring a minimum of 4 bedrooms – of these 146 were in urgent housing need (Bands 1A to 2C).</p> <p>There are 522 households who are currently in Band 2A due to overcrowding who require one additional bedroom, and 21 households in Band 1A as they require two or more additional bedrooms. A proportion of these households will contain a non-dependent adult child who may be willing to move out to relieve the overcrowding. (31st December 2013)</p>
<p>Children who have been 'looked-after' by the local authority and who are ready to move to independent accommodation will be placed in Band 2A and the effective date will be backdated to their 16th birthday.</p>	<p>This would have a positive impact by increasing the possibility for looked after children with a suitable support package to secure independent accommodation by their 18th birthday.</p> <p>There are 24 applicants that currently have priority banding due to being a looked-after child (as at 31st December 2013).</p>

12. Please detail how you could mitigate any negative impacts

There will be a negative impact on applicants who have no assessed housing need under the Policy – they will have less chance of being allocated a property as the priority for all properties will be given to those with significant housing needs. However, this needs to be balanced against the alternative negative impact on applicants with housing needs who may not receive an allocation of a property under the current policy where the property goes to someone who has been registered for longer, but is already adequately housed.

The information in section 9 shows that applicants with a housing need are more likely to be in a group with a protected characteristic.

13. Identify which stakeholders would be positively/negatively affected by the options (consider contractors/service users/employees).

Coventry Homefinder is a partnership between Coventry City Council and Registered Providers (mostly Housing Associations) and would be affected by the options put forward. Whitefriars Housing Group expressed opposition to the proposal to prioritise all property shortlists by Band rather than keep 25% of shortlists prioritised by registration date (see key findings and final option sections for more detail and response).

Formal Consultation

14. Who took part in the consultation? Please also specify representatives of any protected groups for example service users, employees, partners etc.

A Task & Finish Group was set up by the Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board (6) The group met four times between 1st November 2012 and 31st January 2013. They heard evidence from Council officers from Housing, three housing associations in the city and two advice and support agencies that support Coventry residents in their housing needs.

The Scrutiny Board then made recommendations to the Cabinet Member arising from the Task & Finish Group. Following this, the Cabinet Member for Housing instructed officers to undertake a full review and re-write of the Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy.

Consultation was then carried out in July 2013 with a range of representatives in a series of focus groups, including Registered Providers, advice agencies, other Council teams (housing benefit, social care, community safety etc), outside organisations including those that work with homeless and/or vulnerable people, the Coventry Homefinder Partnership Board and the Housing Options and Coventry Homefinder teams. Questionnaires were also sent out with the main discussion points/questions to a wide range of people who were not able to attend.

Taking the recommendations from the Task & Finish Group and the focus group discussions, a draft Coventry Homefinder Policy was produced which was then released for public consultation for 8 weeks, from 21st October 2013 to 15th December 2013.

The draft Policy and an accompanying online survey were placed on the Council website. This was also advertised to the public through the Council's Facebook and Twitter announcements. A link was also placed on the Coventry Homefinder website (the vast majority of applicants access Homefinder using the website). Applicants that have registered, have been placed in a priority band (Bands 1A to 2C), and who have provided an email address on their application were also notified by email (1029 in total). Key contacts and stakeholders, including those that were invited to the focus groups, were also notified by email. Councillors were informed of the consultation with an email and a notice in the Members weekly bulletin. Other Council staff were informed on the staff intranet site and the Beacon daily round-up email.

Applicants that were registered, in a priority need band (Bands 1A to 2C) and had provided an email address on their application were emailed to inform them of the consultation and invite them to take part. The characteristics of these applicants were:

[Please note – these are the characteristics of the applicants in priority bands that had provided an email address, it is not the characteristics of all the applicants in the priority bands]

Age group of main applicant	Percentage
18 to 25	13%
26 to 35	32%
36 to 45	26%
46 to 55	16%
56 to 65	9%
66 to 75	3%
Over 75	1%
Total	100%

Gender of Main Applicant	Percentage
Female	60%
Male	40%
Total	100%

Ethnicity of Main Applicant	Percentage
Asian/Asian British	8%
Black/Black British	17%
Chinese	0%
Mixed	4%
Not stated	1%
Other	3%
White British	61%
White Irish & Other	6%
Total	100%

Disability	Percentage
No	94%
Yes	6%
Total	100%

Sexual Orientation	Percentage
Bisexual	1.9%
Gay	1.0%
heterosexual	65.2%
Lesbian	0.4%
Not stated	31.5%
Total	100.0%

Religion	Percentage
Buddhist	0.2%
Christian	41.9%
Hindu	0.7%
Islam	12.1%
Sikh	0.4%
Not stated/Other	44.7%
Total	100.0%

In terms of **those that responded** to the public consultation by completing the online survey, many chose not to complete the equality data questions. Of the 84 responses received, 61 identified that they were responding as an individual (as well as 2 on behalf of a group/organisation, 1 as an elected member, 3 representing a Registered Provider and 17 that skipped the question).

How old are you?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 16	0%	0
16 - 24	7%	4
25 - 34	18%	11
35 - 44	30%	18
45 - 54	23%	14
55 - 64	20%	12
65 - 74	2%	1
75 - 84	0%	0
85+	0%	0
answered question		60
skipped question		24

What is your gender?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	25%	15
Female	75%	44
answered question		59
skipped question		25

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	18%	11
No	82%	50
answered question		61
skipped question		23

What is your ethnic background?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
White - British (includes English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish)	88%	52
White - Irish	2%	1
White - Gypsy/Irish Traveller	0%	0
White - Other	0%	0
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0%	0
Mixed - White and Black African	0%	0
Mixed - White and Asian	0%	0
Mixed - Other	2%	1
Asian/ Asian British - Indian	0%	0
Asian/ Asian British - Pakistani	3%	2
Asian/ Asian British - Bangladeshi	0%	0
Chinese	0%	0
Asian/ Asian British - Other	2%	1
Black/ Black British - African	2%	1
Black/ Black British - Caribbean	2%	1
Black/Black British - Other	0%	0
Arab	0%	0
Any other ethnic group	0%	0
answered question		59
skipped question		25

15. Are there any protected groups that you have not consulted with? If so, why not?(Some groups might not be relevant)

Invitations to participate in consultation were made with a wide range of customers including those from protected groups.

Invitations to take part in the consultation were also sent to all the contacts on the Corporate Research equalities groups and network contacts list, covering all the main protected groups.

16. What are the key findings of the consultation?

The key findings of the final 8-week public consultation were:

Consultation Question	Agree	Disagree	Additional Comments	Outcome
1. Do you agree that the shortlists for all properties should be prioritised by Band (based on housing needs)?	63%	33%	The majority of respondents agreed with this policy change, however there were concerns about balanced communities and people with no housing need still having 'a chance' to get a property.	Whitefriars Housing Group in particular was opposed to this policy change. However, there was clear direction from the Task & Finish Group and Cabinet Member that this policy change should be brought in. Following further discussion, an alternative proposal has been included in the draft Policy – that all properties have their shortlists prioritised by Band, but that Registered Providers can specify that priority will be given to their own current tenants for up to 10% of the properties that are advertised.
2. Applicants that need to move as part of the national witness mobility scheme would be placed in band 1A. This is an increase from band 2A	62%	18%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
3. Tenants of social landlords who are under-occupying their home by 3 or more bedrooms would be placed in band 1A	77%	17%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
4. People fleeing violence harassment and abuse would be placed in 1B, this is an increase in priority from band 2B	83%	7%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
5. People living in extreme unsanitary conditions causing severe health and safety hazards would be placed in band	76%	12%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.

Consultation Question	Agree	Disagree	Additional Comments	Outcome
People living in short term hostels would be placed in band 1B, this is an increase from band 2B	46%	33%	There were concerns that this level of priority was too high – particularly as this group generally requires bedsit or one-bedroomed accommodation for single people, and would receive a higher band than applicants that may be affected by the ‘bedroom tax’ welfare reforms and needing to down-size.	Following the consultation this proposal was changed. The draft Policy which will be put forward for recommendation to Cabinet will place the hostel priority in Band 2A.
7. Household who need to move to a certain locality to avoid hardship will be placed in band 2B.	37%	24%	There were a large proportion of respondents who replied ‘neither agree nor disagree’ and some comments received suggested that this category was not well understood.	<p>This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.</p> <p>This is one of the priority need categories in the legislation, but there is considerable overlap with the social/welfare need category. The category has been specified separately to ensure that applicants falling into this group are assessed properly.</p>
8. Households who need to move to prevent homelessness will be placed in band 2B	57%	16%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
9. Unintentionally homeless people who are not in a priority need group will be placed in band 2B, this is an increase from band 2C	66%	13%	There are five ‘tests’ that are applied when carrying out a homelessness assessment – the ‘test’ for priority need group comes before the ‘test’ for intentionality therefore we cannot determine whether a homeless applicant without a priority need is intentionally homeless or not.	<p>This proposed change has not been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.</p> <p>Applicants who have had a homelessness assessment/decision and have been found not to be statutorily homeless (not owed the main housing duty) will be placed in Band 2C.</p>

Consultation Question	Agree	Disagree	Additional Comments	Outcome
10. Do you agree that the effective date should be used to prioritise applications in the same band	69%	27%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
11. Do you agree with the proposed change to the way that statutorily homeless households are given access to Homefinder?	65%	22%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
12. Do you agree with the proposed change to the way that adapted properties are let through Homefinder?	78%	8%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
13. Do you agree that applicants who request medical priority should have an OT assessment?	76%	11%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
14. Do you agree that this is an appropriate way to give additional priority to former members of the armed forces that also have a housing need?	71%	13%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
15. Do you agree that children looked after by the authority should be awarded priority earlier so that they can be accommodated by their 18th birthday	66%	20%		This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
16. Do you agree with the proposed change from 3 bids per week to 2 bids per week	53%	34%	There was some concern that it would be more difficult to secure a property with only 2 bids per week. Properties may also be more difficult to let on the first advert if there are fewer applicants on the shortlist.	This proposed change has not been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet. The current policy of each applicant being able to bid (express an interest) on up to 3 properties per week has been retained.

Consultation Question	Agree	Disagree	Additional Comments	Outcome
17. Do you agree that applicants who refuse 5 offers should have their applications closed?	62%	25%	Comments included ensuring that the Policy is clear on what is/is not a 'reasonable' reason for refusing a property.	This proposed change has been included in the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.
18. What are your views on the local connection criteria and proposed changes to government guidance?	<p>This was a free text box and 55 comments were received. 80% of respondents agreed that there should be some form of local connection test, 42% specifically stated that they agreed with the stricter Govt definition.</p> <p>The Coventry Homefinder online registration system allows automatic registration – once an applicant has completed the online registration form, they are immediately placed in Band 3A/3B, given a registration number and able to place bids on properties (provided they meet eligibility criteria). If an applicant then believes they should be placed in a higher band due to their housing needs, they contact the Homefinder Team directly. Introducing qualifying criteria based on local connection would require every application to be checked and verified before the applicant could be registered and start bidding. This would require additional resources (including staff) and would introduce a delay to the applicant before they were able to use the system.</p>		<p>There was clear direction from the Scrutiny Board and Cabinet Member that Homefinder should retain an 'open' register and not restrict people being able to make an application (apart from the statutory eligibility criteria).</p> <p>The Coventry Homefinder Policy gives lesser priority to applicants that do not have a local connection. The local connection definition in the Policy is the same as the definition used to assess local connection in a homelessness application assessment.</p> <p>No change has been proposed for the draft Coventry Homefinder Policy put forward for recommendation to Cabinet.</p>	

17. Following the consultation, what additional equality issues have emerged (if any)?

These additional equality issues emerged:

- There must be sensitive and robust guidelines regarding the assessment of whether it is 'reasonable' for an applicant to refuse a property. There may be reasons related to a protected characteristic which mean that refusal of a particular property is reasonable. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.
- Suitable information must be available and monitoring must be put in place to ensure that applicants with a housing need are aware of the need to request priority banding by contacting the Coventry Homefinder Team, and are able to do so by ensuring that contact methods are accessible and that support is provided to those that require it.

18. Have any of the options, service models etc changed following consultation? If so, please provide details of the changes made:

Changes have been detailed in the table in section 16.

The biggest change that was proposed in the original options was for all properties to have their shortlists prioritised by band (giving priority to those in housing need) rather than the present situation that 25% of properties have their shortlists prioritised by registration date alone (regardless of housing need). This was a recommendation from the Task & Finish Group. Given the high demand for social housing, the high number of applicants on the register and the direction given in the statutory guidance, it was felt that allocating approx. 500-550 properties each year with no consideration of housing need, to households who were already adequately housed, was no longer justifiable.

However, during the consultation, concern was expressed by Whitefriars Housing Group that this would negatively affect their tenants that had an aspiration to move, and have been on the waiting list for years, but do not have an assessed housing need under the legislation. They would find it more difficult to move through the Homefinder system.

Following further discussions, it is now proposed that all properties advertised through Homefinder have their shortlists ordered by Band but that for up to 10% of properties advertised, the Partner Registered Provider can state that priority will be given to applicants that are current tenants of theirs.

This would ensure that the majority of properties are prioritised for those with housing need, but would also ensure that current tenants would have the chance to move between properties in their landlord's stock.

19. Please confirm below which option has been chosen for implementation.

The [draft] Coventry Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Policy 2014 has been produced and will be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 15th April 2014. This draft contains all changes that have been made to the policy. The table at section 16 details the consultation outcomes and the options chosen to be put forward to Cabinet.

20. Following consultation, please indicate which of the following best describes the equality impact of this analysis.

- There will be no equality impact if the proposed option is implemented.
- There will be positive equality impact if the proposed option is implemented.
- There will be negative equality impact if the preferred option is implemented, but this can be objectively justified. Please state clearly what this justification is and what steps will be taken to ameliorate the negative impact.

21. How will the changes be monitored for equalities over the next 6 – 12 months?

Analysis of the Homefinder register and properties that have been advertised is carried out by the Housing Strategy Team each quarter. An annual report is also produced. This analysis includes monitoring equalities issues.

22. What is any will be the impact on the workforce following implementation of the final option? Please make reference to the relevant equality groups (as protected under the Equality Act).

There will be no impact on the workforce.

Social Value

23. Please state how the social value outcomes have been considered in making this decision.

The changes proposed to the Coventry Homefinder Policy will not involve the procurement of new goods or services. Changes will be required to the existing IT system which is provided by Abritas Ltd.

Formal decision-making process

Please detail below the committees, boards or panels that have considered this analysis.

Name	Date	Chair	Decision taken
The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)	19-03-14	Councillor Tony Skipper	
Cabinet	15-04-14	Councillor Ann Lucas	

Approval

Approval required from Director and Cabinet Member

Director Name	Signature	Date
Cabinet Member Name	Portfolio	Approval Date

**Note: Failure to comply with duties on equalities and consultation will put the Council (and specifically the elected member or officer making the decision) at risk of judicial review.*

Monitoring and Review

This section should be completed 6-12 months after implementation

- a) Please summarise below the most up to date monitoring information for the newly implemented service, by reference to relevant protected groups.

(Click and type here)

- b) What has been the actual equality impact on service users following implementation?

Analyse current data relating to the service and think about the impact on key protected groups: race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment.

It may help to answer the following questions: Since implementation

- Have there been any areas of low or high take-up by different groups of people?
- Has the newly implemented service affect different groups disproportionately?
- Is the new service disadvantaging people from a particular group?
- Is any part of the new service discriminating unlawfully?

- c) What have been the actual equality impacts on the workforce since implementation?

(Click and type here)

Please send a copy of the completed form to your Directorate Corporate Equality Officer and a copy to the Corporate Equalities Team, Room 66, Council House, Earl Street, Coventry CV1 5RR.



Coventry City Council

Briefing Note

To: **Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)**

Date: **19 March 2014**

Subject: **Tourism Strategy for Coventry**

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 On 12 September 2013, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a presentation considering the need for the development of a Tourism Strategy for Coventry. Scrutiny Board further reviewed proposals for tourism products that were in development through, and with the support of, the new, consolidated Council service for sports, arts, heritage, business relationships, tourism and events.
- 1.2 This briefing note provides the background to a presentation and discussion at the meeting of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) on 19 March 2014 concerning the development of a Tourism Strategy, and the recommended structures and tools to deliver the Strategy.

2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) review the proposed strategic objectives and recommended processes for delivering a Tourism Strategy for Coventry, and recommend to Cabinet Member (Business Enterprise and Economy) key priorities, partnerships and outcome measures for the emerging Strategy.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 On 12 September 2013, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a presentation considering the need for the development of a Tourism Strategy for Coventry. Scrutiny Board further reviewed proposals for tourism products that were in development through, and with the support of, the new, consolidated Council service for sports, arts, heritage, business relationships, tourism and events.
- 3.2 Tourism cuts across many strategic themes such as regeneration, inward investment, culture and enterprise. Subsequent to the above meeting, in developing the Heads of the proposed Strategy, officers have undertaken desktop research and engaged with key partners within the business, cultural and tourism sectors.
- 3.3 The service has hosted a Visit England partnership lunch event (in collaboration with Warwick Conferences and key sector partners), supported a FAM (familiarisation) visit to the city for group tour operators in partnership with the City's cultural agencies and destinations, and has supported Cabinet Member Advisory Panel discussions concerning

the merits of Coventry applying to be a UK City of Culture and/or European Capital of Culture.

Work undertaken to date on the Strategic Heads of Tourism Strategy for Coventry are summarised in the document 'Coventry 2014-2024 – An Emerging Vision for Tourism'.

In March 2014, the Service will be hosting an International Confex 2014 delegation and partnership event in London. On 20 March 2014, Cabinet Member (Business Enterprise and Economy) will also launch the new Coventry App and Visitor Guide, supported by the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Coventry and Warwickshire Place Board and Coventry Business Improvement District.

Further to the above launch, the Service will engage partners in shaping and supporting consultation on the new vision and landscape for tourism in the City.

Officer Contact Details

David Nuttall
Service Manager (Sports and Arts)
Tel: 024 7683 2362
Email: David.Nuttall@coventry.gov.uk

Deirdre Fitzhugh
Business Relationships and Tourism Team Manager
Tel: 024 7683 1228
Email: Deirdre.Fitzhugh@coventry.gov.uk

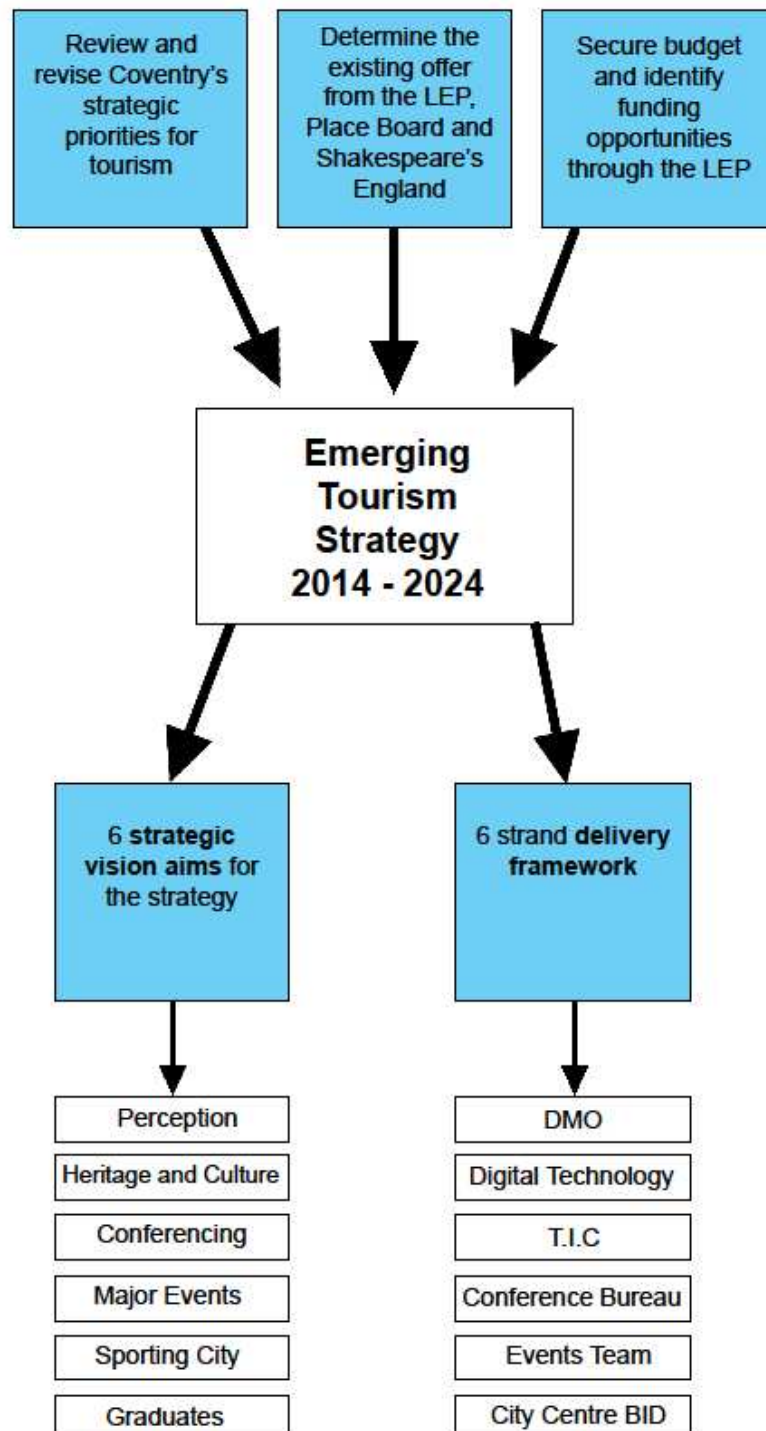
Coventry
2014 – 2024

An Emerging Vision for Tourism

DRAFT - FOR DISCUSSION

APPENDIX A

The following diagram outlines the proposed process to deliver an emerging tourism strategy for Coventry:



Our Vision for 2014 - 2024

“By 2024 Coventry will be internationally recognised as a compelling tourism destination of distinction; renowned for the quality and depth of its visitor experience across its diverse cultural, heritage, sports and events offer. Championing a successful and thriving tourism economy, Coventry’s approach will showcase effective and sustainable partnership working that combines to provide a rich and captivating experience, increasing visitor levels, spend and ultimately jobs.”

Planned outcomes by 2024 include:

1. Change the negative perceptions of Coventry, locally, nationally and internationally to that of the city which offers a vibrant, diverse and quality experience and that is open for business.
2. Solidify a strong network of private, public and third sector bodies to enhance the visitor experience and maximise on regional overnight trips, spend levels and job creation.
3. Coventry to establish itself in the Top 20 UK Towns and Cities.
4. Increase total visitor trips to Coventry by 2024 to 9,000,000, an increase of over 30% from the 6,867,000 reported in 2012.
5. Increase total visitor related spend in Coventry by 2024 to £447,533,000, an increase of 30% from the £344,256,000 reported in 2012.
6. Increase overnight business trips in Coventry.
7. Increase number of tourism related jobs in Coventry to 8,417, an increase of over 30% from the 6,324 reported in 2012.
8. Secure 10 major 4,000+ delegate conferences or events in Coventry by 2024.
9. Improve Coventry City Centre weekly footfall figures from 42% in 2013 to 60% in 2024 and monthly footfall visitor numbers from an average 1.4 million (December 2012 - December 2013) to 1.9 million by 2024.
10. Increase ‘Visit Coventry and Warwickshire’ website numbers to 200,000 visitors per month by 2024, an increase of over 40% from the 140,000 reported in 2012.

Headline Tourism Statistics

£97bn – the value of the visitor economy in England, supporting **2.7 million jobs**.

By 2020, expected growth of **£50bn**, supporting an additional **225,000 jobs**.

Tourism is the **third largest** employer in the UK.

July 2012 - June 2013 figures for Great Britain:

Trips - 0.6% Bed nights + 1.5% Expenditure + 3.7%

Business Trips - 5.4% Bed nights - 4.3% Expenditure - 6.8%

Top five markets for holiday visits to West Midlands: Ireland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland..

July 2012 - June 2013 figures for the West Midlands:

Trips + 5.8% Bed nights + 8.7% Expenditure + 15.2%

Business Trips + 5.8% Bed nights + 8.7% Expenditure + 15.2%

2012 Tourism Economic Impact figures for Coventry

- **6.9 million** trips undertaken in Coventry: **6.2 million** day trips and **0.7 million** overnight visits (**2.4 million** nights).
- Visitors spent **£344 million** in the city in 2012.
- This spend supported **8,718 jobs**.
- Spend for day trips was **£200,364,000**.
- Spend for overnight trips was **£143,893,000**.

Purpose of overnight visits to Coventry (January – December 2012)						
	Domestic	%	Overseas	%	Total	%
Total Holiday	121,000	23%	38,000	21%	159,000	23%
Business	182,000	35%	82,000	46%	264,000	38%
VFR	201,000	39%	46,000	26%	247,000	35%
Other	18,000	3%	8,000	5%	26,000	4%
Study	0	0%	4,000	2%	4,000	1%
Total	521,000	100%	177,000	100%	698,000	100%

The above table includes rounding adjustments.

Total Expenditure associated by Trip (January – December 2012)						
	Accommodation	Shopping	Food & Drink	Attractions	Travel	TOTAL
UK tourists	£25,768,000	£10,891,000	£19,378,000	£7,672,000	£16,391,000	£80,100,000
Overseas tourists	£20,429,000	£16,742,000	£13,071,000	£7,631,000	£5,919,000	£63,792,000
Total %	32%	19%	23%	11%	16%	
Total day visitors	£0	£87,772,000	£74,497,000	£19,400,000	£18,695,000	£200,364,000
Total %	0%	44%	37%	10%	9%	

The above table includes rounding adjustments.

Coventry in the Great Britain Tourism Survey 2011

Coventry **is not recognised** in the Top 20 Towns for All Trips. (Benchmark: Birmingham 3rd with 18% increase in spend, Nottingham 13th up 30% on spend).

Coventry **is recognised** in the Top 20 towns for Business Trips (ranked 13th) **BUT** with a 13% decline in spend (Benchmark: Birmingham 3rd with a 20% increase in spend; Nottingham 8th with a 63% increase in spend; Derby 20th with a 20% decline in spend).

Funding

Why important?

Funding is required in order for us to deliver on the strategic objectives outlined further on in the document. As an example:

- Liverpool LEP – Sector Development for Visitor Economy in Liverpool city region = £3,203,743 (ERDF), secured to help deliver a new tourist economy 2011 – 2012.
- Liverpool LEP Partnership – tourism growth £6 million (ERDF) 2011 – 2012.
- Regional marketing culture and heritage Cumbria tourism £2.5 million (ERDF) secured to deliver tourism strategy 2011 - 2012

Where are we now?

- Coventry and Warwickshire LEP: Tourism is not currently a key priority and the Partnership is not therefore geared towards securing tourism funding.
- Coventry does not have a recognised, official Destination Management Organisation (DMO) in its own right. Therefore:
 - There is no invitation to attend official national tourism steering groups (VisitEngland)
 - There is limited access to resources and no official industry status.
- Austere times are leading to many private sector partners having more limited finances/resources
- Business Relationship and Tourism Team – The team has no operational base budget for tourism. The approved budget for 2012/13 was £31k from central communication funds.
- ✓ SBRI Government Technology Strategy Board innovation application submitted for up to £100k feasibility stage grant for 6 months June-November 2014, with opportunity to apply for up to £1.2 million in funding to help reignite the Coventry high street using state of the art technology. Application submitted 5 March 2014.
- ✓ Increase in sponsorship support for C & W presence at International Confex (£19,000 partnership support for 2014).
- ✓ Partnership support in delivering a Visit Britain partner video all about key attractions in Coventry. The video has generated over 100,000 unique views online.

Coventry 2024 - Where do we want to get to?

- ✓ The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership to adopt tourism as a key priority sector. Work with Shakespeare's England to encourage support for local tourism bodies.
- ✓ Consortia established and processes in place to secure vital funding via Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England, World Monuments Fund etc.
- ✓ Coventry and Warwickshire attending national and international steering groups alongside Visit England and Visit Britain as an official DMO.
- ✓ By 2015, representation on the LEP business group.

Key Objective 1: Perception

To change perception of the city and cultivate and communicate Coventry's unique identity as a compelling city break destination to visitors; increasing trips and spend and improving quality of life.

Why important

- ✓ Visitor numbers will not increase unless perception of the city is changed.
- ✓ Perception of a place matters a great deal. Visitor opinion forms the basis of all future decision making
- ✓ Capture visitors at the very beginning. Target pre-visit – Encourage getting here and getting around – Offer extended stay – Visit and enjoy – Post-visit.

Where are we now?

- Perpetual circle – If visitors don't visit and spend, economy does not grow.
- Post WWII architecture 'Concrete city' perception is now dated and tired.
- Visitors unaware of the close proximity of the historic heart of the city centre.
- Voted 7th in the Crap Towns Returns 2013 publication.
- 'Sent to Coventry' – lingering negative connotations.
- Limited relationship with Visit England/ Visit Britain due to the fact we are not an official DMO.
- Perceived as an underdog in the West Midland region.
- ✓ Major city centre developments creating new transformational spaces,
- ✓ Friargate development is the biggest regeneration development opportunity in the West Midlands.
- ✓ Produced a 'GREAT Britain' Visit Britain supported video to promote Coventry and Warwickshire – over 100,000 unique views already.
- ✓ Familiarisation trip (Fam) co-ordinated and hosted as a partnership with shared costs - feedback very positive
- ✓ New Coventry and Warwickshire App, Visitor Guide and Websites are all consistent with one brand – joined up unity/continual message of improving the look and feel of our marketing and communication offer not just the physical landscape which supports this tourism vision. Coventry is delivering!
- ✓ Tourism vision launch at Coombe Abbey Hotel March 20 inviting political leaders, tourism stakeholders and VIP's.

Coventry 2024 - Where do we want to get to?

- Recognised by Visit England and listed in the Top 20 Towns in the UK.
- Coventry to be strong enough to stand on its own as a city break destination.
- The perception and ideological expectations of Coventry to have changed from 'Concrete City' to 'City of Culture, Sport and Innovation'.
- Recognised as the most centrally connected city for inbound tourists coming to the UK from Europe, Americas and Asia.
- Coventry's diverse offer to be seen as an equal 'partner' to Warwickshire's established rural offer, with a fully-fledged city DMO.

Key Objective 2: Heritage & Culture

To strengthen the city's heritage and culture offers, unlock new visitor experiences and develop a contemporary cultural quarter that facilitates a greater engagement with inbound tourists from the UK and overseas.

Why important?

- ✓ 45% of overseas visitors to the West Midlands cite famous monuments and buildings as the main reason for their visit – Coventry has a fantastic offer.
- ✓ There are 400 listed buildings in Coventry alone.
- ✓ 9% of overseas visits to West Midlands include theatre going – the highest of any region outside of London.
- ✓ Warwick Arts Centre's economic value to Coventry alone is £27.7 million.
- ✓ Unlocking our rich and unrivalled history to inform and educate the world is vital to the economic stability of the city and region.

Where are we now?

- Many international and domestic visitors do not know where Coventry is located on a map.
- Coventry is not listed in the Top 20 Towns in England.
- Visitors are often unaware of the heritage and cultural offers in the city.
- Trails, building open days and heritage events are underused/undervalued.
- The current location of the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) is limiting commercialisation opportunities.
- ✓ Visitors are more aware of the heritage and cultural offer of Warwickshire.
- ✓ Lady Godiva and Coventry Cathedral are both internationally recognised.
- ✓ Heritage Lottery Fund has been consulted at national/regional level re the Charterhouse Initiative and is a funder of a number of Coventry's venues.
- ✓ Culture Coventry now operational – managing Coventry Transport Museum, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Lunt Roman Fort and Priory Visitor Centre.
- ✓ Coventry celebrates Heritage Open Days annually and heritage trails do exist.
- ✓ The Belgrade Theatre and Warwick Arts Centre are award-winning venues.

Coventry 2024 - Where do we want to get to?

- Coventry is recognised for its cultural offer, including the development of an established cultural quarter with cafes, bars, open visitor attractions and a thriving Tourist Information Centre
- Coventry's heritage and cultural offer has been 'unlocked and is thriving and being promoted internationally alongside recognised heritage treasures, trails and Fam trips.
- Coventry to be listed in the Top 20 Towns in England.
- The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership to adopt tourism as a key priority – in recognition of the importance and potential of the sector.
- Coventry to have secured significant external funding through consortia and partnerships.

Key Objective 3: Conferencing

Secure major conference and exhibitions for Coventry and gain competitive advantage over other UK cities, enhance the economic profile of business tourism and invest in new hotels and conference centres to attract larger political, academic and blue chip conferences.

Why important?

- ✓ West Midlands (2012-13) business trips up 5.8%. Bed nights up 8.7%. Expenditure up 15.2%.
- ✓ £55 million spent on overnight business trips in Coventry in 2012 (38% of overall overnight visitor spend).
- ✓ Current data shows less people stay overnight in Coventry, but those that do spend almost 6 times more than day trippers.
- ✓ The economic impact of one major event in the city (Plantworx 4,500 delegates) is £3 million.

Where are we now?

- ✓ CCC inherited an established Coventry and Warwickshire Convention Bureau.
- ✓ Bureau offers an online accommodation booking facility supporting major conferences and attracting larger events – key selling point for the Bureau.
- ✓ An established partnership enabling a Coventry and Warwickshire presence at International Confex 2014 (£19,000 sponsorship secured).
- Currently no CCC operational budget allocated to support business tourism.
- In Top 20 towns for Business 2010-2011, Coventry is 12th. However, the survey is recording trips are 19% down and spend is 13% down.
- No single event diary for the city and/or bidding document that is off the shelf.
- Tendency to be reactive and not proactive in bidding for conferences.
- No staff/resource to find new conference business.
- No consistent Economic Impact Assessment carried out on major conferences.
- No city centre conference and events centre close to the train station.

Coventry 2024 - Where do we want to get to?

- Coventry to be recognised as the UK destination for major international conference and exhibitions due to our central locality and experience in delivering successful multinational events.
- By 2016, Coventry to have established a conference ambassador programme that will help to procure new conferences and events.
- Coventry to collaborate with academics from both universities to win major association conferences to the area.
- Coventry to have established a consortia to win major conferences and events such as UKRC, Multiplay, Trade Only and Party Political Conferences etc.
- By 2015, the Bureau to have a dedicated resource to target and secure conferences.

Key Objective 4: Major Events

To attract, secure and maintain a regular high profile events programme for the city of Coventry, gaining competitive advantage over other destinations and enhancing the economic profile of the region with a variety of multicultural, historical and innovative cultural events.

Why important?

- ✓ Coventry Godiva Festival attracts over 125,000 visits in a weekend and is the UK's biggest free family festival.
- ✓ Economic impact of one major live event in the city such as Bruce Springsteen or Take That generates millions of pounds worth of investment for the city and region.
- ✓ Multiplier Effect – 'establish the destination as able to deliver'.

Where are we now?

- ✓ Coventry has prime venue space (Top Three of UK Live Venues).
- ✓ Developing a partnership approach to secure and deliver major events.
- ✓ Home to the Midlands largest free family festival – Godiva – 125,000 visits.
- ✓ Events such as the Coventry Peace Festival, Heritage Open Days and Festival of Motoring are regular events that boost the local economy.
- Coventry's retail offer perceived to be limiting the benefits realised from hosting events in the city centre.
- Trend of 'they come, they go, we never see them again'. Limited post-event data gathering or repeat communication to attract visitors back again.
- Ricoh Arena is undervalued as a venue for major events – primarily due to the perception of the city.

Coventry 2024 - Where do we want to get to?

- Coventry is recognised as the most accessible destination for major events in the UK.
- A consortium to be established and an event bidding process put in place to secure major events for the city.
- Coventry and the sub-region to be known for its collective international and culturally diverse events programme with international marketing campaigns (e.g. Coventry Godiva Festival, Coventry Peace Festival, Coventry Festival of Motoring).
- All major events have a linked programme of city centre and/or fringe events running alongside them to encourage spend and city centre footfall.

Key Objective 5: A Sporting City

Coventry to be known as a ‘City of Culture, Sport and Innovation’ by 2024, attracting high profile sporting events to the City and celebrating sporting achievement.

Why important?

- ✓ The West Midlands is one of the most popular regions for watching sport for inbound tourists according to Visit England.
- ✓ By attending Olympic Football in the city, 73,220 visitors in 2012 improved their view of the local area (estimated equivalent worth of £1.5million).

Where are we now?

- The current city centre sports facilities are out dated and not ‘fit for purpose’.
- Limited history of working collaboratively with National Governing Bodies of Sport to attract major sports events to the city.
- ✓ The Sports Strategy 2014-2024 has been launched for consultation, which would see a £36 million destination facility built in the city centre with a water park, 25m pool, gym, activity slides, indoor climbing wall etc.
- ✓ The economic impact of London 2012 on the city of Coventry generated £4million pounds to the local economy.
- ✓ Ricoh Arena, Sky Dome, universities and other venues continue to play key roles in hosting a wide range of international and sporting events.
- ✓ Solid track record for ability to host major events - Olympic Football, Davis Cup, Corporate Games, International Children's Games, Taekwondo World Championship, Heineken Cup, World Snooker Championships etc.

Coventry 2024 - Where do we want to get to?

- Sport to play a key role in the events and tourism strategies of the city.
- To establish a collective and collaborative sponsor package for key sports venues to attract major international sporting events to the city.
- An enhanced and revitalised Coventry city centre leisure offer.
- Secure and solidify major sporting events via consortia bids.
- Become a ‘City of Culture, Sport and Innovation’ and be recognised for delivering a legacy of international sporting achievements.

Key Objective 6: Graduates

Retain the skill base, maximise the contribution of spend to the local economy and cultivate innovation, enterprise and learning for the city.

Why important?

- ✓ Over 11,000 graduates live in the city, with a high level of disposable income.
- ✓ There are 58,000 students in Coventry across both universities.
- ✓ £351 million total expenditure in Coventry and Warwickshire - £222 million in Coventry.
- ✓ Future skills base - retaining graduate skills helps attract future organisations to the city and the region.
- ✓ Over 8,000 international students at the University of Warwick – strong buying power with international links and relationships.

Where are we now?

- Pull of rural Warwickshire to University of Warwick students, away from more urban Coventry.
- Limited track record of the universities and CCC working in partnership on joint marketing initiatives.
- ✓ University of Warwick is ranked 8th in the Russell University Group.
- ✓ Coventry University has a long and prestigious automotive engineering heritage.
- ✓ Coventry is The Modern University of the Year 2014.
- ✓ Example of spending power – Student Lock-In – £17,000 spent in three hours in one store in Coventry city centre as part of a national scheme.
- ✓ Study Inn attracts foreign students to Coventry encouraging spend with disposable income.

Coventry 2024 - Where do we want to get to?

- Coventry to create a combined programme offer to engage graduates from both universities to visit the city centre with incentivised packages/events.
- Retain the graduate skill base and maximise spend into the local economy.
- Create a sustainable infrastructure of targeted marketing activity.
- A renowned graduate ambassador programme to cultivate innovation, enterprise and learning and to inspire students and graduates to share their experiences of the city nationally and internationally.

Bibliography

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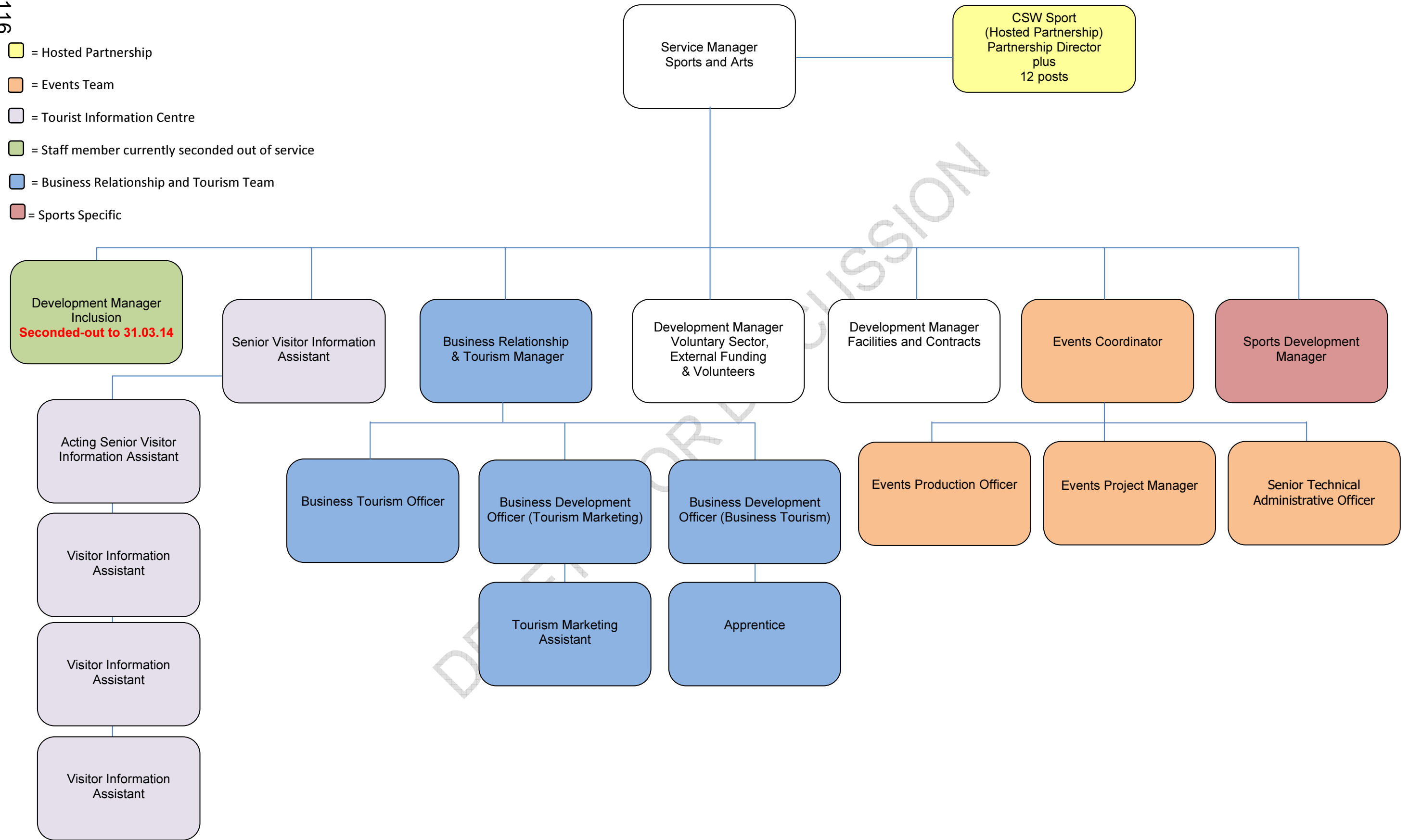
Sub Regional Trend Data Visit 2012 – VisitBritain

Coventry Tourism Economic Impact Assessment 2012

DRAFT - FOR DISCUSSION

Sports and Arts Service Structure

- = Hosted Partnership
- = Events Team
- = Tourist Information Centre
- = Staff member currently seconded out of service
- = Business Relationship and Tourism Team
- = Sports Specific



APPENDIX C

Memorandum of Understanding

Establishment of Coventry's Tourism Steering Group

To identify an appropriate steering group to inform and advise on:

- The development of a new Tourism Strategy for Coventry.
- The Council's overall approach to tourism and marketing of the City.
- Establishing a Destination Management Organisation for Coventry.

Considerations

1. To review and ascertain if one of the following two existing partnership groups can be the conduit of the above

(a) CW LEP Culture and Tourism Business Group

The CW LEP's Culture and Tourism Business Group was formed in January 2014 and is chaired by Catherine Mallyon, Executive Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company. The Group's purpose is to encourage businesses to compete nationally and internationally and to encourage cultural activity and tourists to visit. It brings together the former 'big eight' attraction group which includes the eight key attractions from the across the region.

(b) CW Place Board

A variety of businesses and organisations came together in 2012 to create an agenda for putting Coventry and Warwickshire on the map and drive growth locally. That initiative became the Coventry and Warwickshire Place Board, which is chaired by Les Ratcliffe, Head of Community Relations at Jaguar Land Rover.

2. To identify a new steering group

Coventry's Tourism Steering Group

To establish a public/private sector partnership with direct responsibility for overseeing a step-change in the way that tourism and City marketing services are delivered and to establish a Destination Management Organisation for Coventry.

Process

Commissioning of stakeholder workshops

- (a) Structured facilitated workshops to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats currently facing the city.
- (b) Shape the proposed tourism landscape for the city.
- (c) Encourage a partnership approach for bidding for events and funding opportunities.

Establish the vision

- (d) Consultation and engagement with stakeholders.

Establish Key Objectives

- (e) *Develop the DMO's key objectives, infrastructure and resources.*

Establish Structure

- (f) Establish a planned operational integration of new and existing resources to achieve economies of scale, with commensurate benefits to the tourism community. The industry and its partners/stakeholders.
- (g) Determine set KPI's to measure performance.

DRAFT - FOR DISCUSSION

APPENDIX D

What is a Destination Organisation - Visit England

Destinations are the places that people want to visit and experience; destinations are the heart and soul of England's Visitor Economy.

Destinations are multifaceted places containing a number of stakeholders with their own specific needs. Experience shows that without collaboration, coordination and a continued focus, places do not evolve with a common purpose. To create a successful and sustainable visitor economy in an area, all the components that make a successful destination need to be managed in an integrated and long-term way, with a clear focus on the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

Those with responsibilities for tourism locally vary in form, function, governance and size but essentially take a lead role for the development of tourism in a destination. These may be a single organisation, such as a local authority; a legal entity, such as a community interest company or company limited by guarantee, or an informal partnership. These are England's Destination Organisations.

Destinations that are well managed will be more likely to maximise the benefits of growth in the long term including additional income and jobs. The best managed destinations are also likely to excel in attracting new investment, in keeping value-added jobs, in bringing in new talent and in stimulating innovation.

Effective management of the visitor economy at a destination level not only contributes to a positive visitor experience but can enhance and protect the environment while supporting the interests of the communities and businesses.

Successful destinations make the most of their appeal to deliver benefits to the whole community, and they do this by having a clear, strategic sense of why their place attracts visitors and what investment it needs to sustain or enhance that appeal. Successful destinations have a destination development and management plan, and mechanisms in place to deliver that plan.

Visit England's suggested steps to create a Coventry Destination Management Organisation

- Establish the vision.
- Establish a planned operational integration of new and existing resources to achieve economies of scale, with commensurate benefits to the tourism community. The industry and its partners/stakeholders.
- Establish the DMO's missions and objectives.
- Develop the DMO's infrastructure and resources to provide early benefits to members. Things like establishing a marketing plan including one single website (DMS) destination management system, develop a holistic tourism strategy, collate tourism statistics to set future objectives and create member packages that cross-promotes services.
- Detailed market research, business development and support, determine set KPI's to measure early performance and on-going performance.
- Establish a governance or structure for the organisation (e.g. Company Limited by Guarantee) that's administered by a Chair and Board of Directors and determines roles in the organisation.
- Relationship with core funders and other regional tourism organisations and bodies.
- Over the three years, outline the income and expenditure projection for the DMO.
- Next steps, timescales and vision for the future.

Example of a Destination Management Organisation

Shakespeare's England

Shakespeare's England is private public sector partnership and our board members include the following organisations; Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Royal Shakespeare Company, Warwick Castle, Stratford-upon-Avon, More than PR, Bicester Village, Birmingham Airport, English Heritage, Menzies Hotels, Eden Hotel Collection and the National Trust.

Shakespeare's England is supported by Stratford District Council, Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council and Operation Footfall.

Shakespeare's England is recognised by Visit England and Visit Britain as the official tourism body for the area.

Source: <http://shakespeares-england.co.uk/about-us>

Oxford and Oxfordshire

The DMO would be a public-private partnership agency responsible for the development and delivery of the visitor offer across the county. It would provide strategic leadership for the sector, backed up with marketing expertise and resources to support and promote a sustainable visitor economy. Its scope would include not only UK domestic and international visitors, but also residents who spend and travel within the county and indulge in retail spend.

The DMO would play a leading role in tourism delivery and promotion, working closely with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. It would champion the sector and seek to influence all aspects of the visitor experience in order to nurture a thriving tourism industry; and it would employ tangible outputs to measure improvements in the value of the county's visitor economy.

Source: <http://www.oxfordpartnership.org.uk/PDF/OCTOBER/Paper6-DMO-Vision-Document.pdf>

DRAFT - FOR DISCUSSION



Coventry City Council

Briefing Note

To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)

Date: 19 March 2014

Subject: Events Budget

1 Purpose of the Note

On 15 January 2014, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) requested a briefing note providing a breakdown of the City Council's events budget for 2013/14 and details of the projects and programmes funded, including the measured outputs and outcomes for each area of expenditure

This Briefing Note provides the background to a presentation and discussion on the Events Budget at a meeting of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) of 19 March 2014.

2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) review the budget allocations, outputs and outcomes for the City Council's Events Budget 2013/14 and recommend to Cabinet Member (Business Enterprise and Economy) priorities and outcome measures for the City Council's investment in events for 2014/15.

3 Information/Background

The City Council Events Team, comprising four members of staff, manages an overall net budget of circa £691,000 per annum and has responsibilities for the direct delivery of specific mass participation events (e.g. the Coventry Godiva Festival) and the coordination of a varied programme of both funded and unfunded partner events across the city.

The following table provides an overview of the City Council's events budget allocation for 2013-14, with a brief commentary on the output and outcome measures for key events:

Event	CCC Events Net Contribution	Output and Outcome Measures
Festival of Motoring	£20,000	The event is delivered by Culture Coventry and is currently held annually in August at Stoneleigh Park. The Festival includes a 'parade' drive through the city of Coventry and highlights the Coventry Transport Museum as a premier visitor destination to the circa 25,000 visitors in attendance.

Event	CCC Events Net Contribution	Output and Outcome Measures
Heritage Open Days	£4,057	Heritage Open Days is a national, annual event that takes place in September, supported in Coventry by a range of partners and heritage venues. Around 8,450 people attended the event in Coventry in 2013, with attendance at St. Mary's Guildhall alone up 69.3% on the previous year. Sample information was collected from 91 visitors, relating to 37 venues. 95.5% of the visitors sampled rated the event as excellent or good. 70.3% of visitors sampled were from the city. 45.1% had not attended the event before.
Imagineer Productions	£75,000	<p>In 2013, the Imagineer Productions event supported by the City Council was 'Godiva Awakes – The Homecoming'. The event was aligned to the city's new cycling programme and the Coventry on the Move campaign, with cycling events taking place on one side of the Ring Road which was closed to traffic. The Ride the Ring Road Event had 211 cyclists in the Advanced Wave, 463 in the Leisure Wave and 347 cyclists (and 150 walkers) in the Cavalcade. The 'Man vs Bike' invitational event had 24 cyclists and 29 runners. Circa 3,000 people attended 'Coventry on the Move' aspects of the programme with circa 1,000 people participating in the Broadgate events. 300 people took part in the cultural programme.</p> <p>Footfall in Broadgate between 12pm and 4pm was 15% up on the previous year. The advertising value was evaluated at £61,058 and PR value (with three national and five regional sources of coverage) was evaluated at £288,650.</p>
Coventry Peace Festival	£19,997	Coventry Peace Festival 2013 took place between the 1 st and 14 th November 2013. The Festival comprised a diverse programme of events and activities focused around the themes of peace and reconciliation in venues across the city including Foleshill Women's Centre, Coventry Cathedral, Artspace, Theatre Absolute, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and the Priory Visitor Centre.
General Events	£166,159	<p>Client funded activity (small grants and payments) accounts for circa 24% of the net General Events budget. This includes support for events such as St. George's Day, Armistice Day and Lifestyle (food and fashion). Circa 67% is committed to core staffing costs and the remainder relates to core operational costs of equipment, materials, licensing and power.</p> <p>Coventry Live Site - the 'big screen' at Millennium Place initially installed as part of London 2012 - broadcasts news headlines, details of upcoming events, films by local film-makers, and public campaigns and information 16 hours every day. Additionally, selected TV broadcasts, sporting</p>

Event	CCC Events Net Contribution	Output and Outcome Measures
		events and live streamed cultural performances are screened, and live events taking place at Millennium Place (e.g. the Coventry Half Marathon) are enhanced by use of the screen.
Coventry Godiva Festival	£295,705	<p>The Coventry Godiva Festival is currently the UK's biggest free family festival and has been running for 16 years. The festival showcases three days of live music, comedy, family entertainment, international food and drink, craft villages and performance.</p> <p>The 2013 Festival attracted a record attendance of 125,000 visits, with a diverse audience, of which 15% were aged 16-24; 21% were 25-34; 27% were 35-44 and 22% were aged 45-54. Nearly 30% of attendees in 2013 were from outside the city. 92% of respondents rated the event excellent or good. 77% of event attendees were more inclined to visit Coventry and surrounding area more often as a result of attending the event. 78% of attendees rated the area as a good place for arts and culture. 88% of attendees rated Coventry as a good place for events and festivals.</p> <p>The total estimated economic impact of the 2013 festival was £973,473, with the total economic activity figure generated as a result of the festival being £4,522,592.</p>
Christmas Lights	£111,021	<p>The Coventry Christmas programme of events commenced with the Christmas lights switch-on in Broadgate on 24th November 2013. Attended by an estimated 8,000 people at its peak, the event culminated with a performance by Kingsland Road from the X-Factor.</p> <p>A month of city centre performances then followed the lights switch-on, focused around a temporary stage at the Precinct Cross and activities in the key surrounding retail areas. Impact is measured in partnership with the Business Improvement District, based around footfall and commercial performance.</p>

Officer Contact Details

David Nuttall
Service Manager (Sports and Arts)
Tel: 024 7683 2362
Email: David.Nuttall@coventry.gov.uk

Lee House
Senior Event Officer
Tel: 024 7683 2352
Email: Lee.House@coventry.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 8

Last updated 19th February 2014

Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) Work Programme 2013/14

For more details on items, please see pages 2 onwards

5th June 13

Job Strategy Update

10th July 13

Coventry City Centre

11th Sept 13

Tourism Strategy

Research report – Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Skills

13th Nov 13

Promoting small and medium enterprises (SME'S) - business start-ups, growth potential businesses and social enterprises

Coombe Abbey (Private Report)

15th Jan 14

Financial accountability of CWLEP

CWLEP Strategic plan consultation

Events – Coventry Carnival/Parade

12th Feb 14

Presentation - The Grimsey Review

Presentation on the City Centre Task Force

19th March 14

Tourism Strategy

Events Budget

Homefinder Policy

16th April 14

The Rail Story

Friargate – business case

Carried over to next work programme

Core Strategy/ Coventry Development Plan

Jobs Strategy Update

MIPIM outcomes (briefing note only)

City of Culture Bid

Creative Industries

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
5 th June 13	Job Strategy Update	Rebecca Young	An update on progress on the action plan and the new action plan	
10 th July 13	Coventry City Centre	David Cockroft/Nigel Clews	This is an opportunity to look at a variety of different policy areas that affect the city centre, such as empty shops, commercial property, tourism, residential developments etc. The Board will also hear from businesses in the city centre and other interested parties.	
11 th Sept 13	Tourism Strategy	David Cockroft/ David Nuttall	The Board will consider how the Council promote business, conference and leisure tourism in the city. Particularly looking at the staffing and location of facilities such as the Priory Visitors Centre and the Tourist Information Centre. The Board will look at the links with the cultural and heritage offer and the cultural strategy as well as the role of events in promoting the city. The Board will need to consider links with the Cabinet Member Advisory Panel (Sports Vision and Strategy, Tourism and City Wide Events).	
	Research report – Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Skills	Paula Deas	The Board are interested to know the outcomes of the research and how this will be used to influence future work by the Council alongside the LEP.	
13 th Nov 13	Promoting small and medium enterprises (SME'S) - business start-ups, growth potential businesses and social enterprises	David Cockroft	The Board are interesting at looking at the links between the Council and small businesses, in particular the links with the Chamber and the Federation of Small Businesses. The Board will also consider the fact that the Council has a political commitment to support social enterprise but no explicit strategy on how to do this.	
	Coombe Abbey (Private Report)	Parminder Mudhar	This item was referred by Council to SB3 on 10/9/13	

Business, Economy and Enterprise (3) Work Programme 2013/14

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
15th Jan 14	Financial accountability of CWLEP	Martin Yardley/Paula Deas	The Council is the accountable body for the funding that is managed and distributed by the LEP. The Board will look at how the funding is contributing to and supporting the CWLEP strategic plan and progress.	
	CWLEP Strategic plan consultation	Martin Yardley/Paula Deas	The CWLEP will need to publish a strategic plan that will need a wide consultation process. The Board will feed into the consultation process on the strategic plan.	
	Events – Coventry Carnival/Parade	David Nuttall/Lee House	Discussion of Godiva Festival/Carnival	Meeting 12/12/13
12th Feb 14	Presentation - The Grimsey Review	Kristi Larsen	Overview of the Grimsey Review and the key recommendations and their relevance to Coventry.	
	Presentation on the City Centre Task Force	David Cockroft	Following their meeting on 10 th July the Board requested further information on progress on the development of a strategy for the city centre, including contributions from both the City Council and partner organisations. The Chair also requested a response to the recommendations identified in the Grimsey Review.	Meeting 10/7/13
19th March 14	Tourism Strategy	David Nuttall	Following their meeting on 11/9/13 the Board requested a further update on progress on a Tourism Strategy - Vision Statement and Terms of Reference	Meeting 11/9/13
	Events Budget	David Nuttall	The Board are interested in looking at the costs of all events and any evaluations/impact reports in terms of increased footfall/spend etc	Meeting 15/01/14
	Homefinder Policy	Ayaz Maqsood	Following a task and finish group last municipal year, the Homefinder Policy is being re-written. The Board are interested in seeing the report before it goes to Cabinet for final decision.	Meeting 20/01/14
16th April 14	The Rail Story	Mike Waters/Cllr McNicholas	The Board will look at the progress and developments or various rail projects in the region, including NUCKLE and HS2.	

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
	Friargate – business case	David Cockcroft/Martin Vickery	The Board requested a report including information on the financial sustainability for the Council and proving the private sector approach, what work is being done to encourage the private sector and also about the robustness of the business case and ensuring that it is good use of public money.	Meeting 10/7/13
Carried over to next work programme	Core Strategy/ Coventry Development Plan	Jim Newton	As part of the new core strategy, the links with Social Housing need to be considered, including links with other policies.	All Members briefing 26/6/13
	Jobs Strategy Update	Rebecca Young/Cllr Howells	To look at the progress of the action plan in the Jobs Strategy, in particular the specific work being undertaken by the Deputy Cabinet Member (Education) on NEETS and the research that was commissioned by the LEP on skills.	
	MIPIM outcomes (briefing note only)	Deidre Fitzhugh	A conference report to be presented for MIPIM 2014 and Board requested an update briefing note on the outcomes and progress made on the follow ups from the MIPIM 2013 conference.	Meeting 5/11/13
	City of Culture Bid	David Nuttall	The Board requested this to be added to the programme for next year	Meeting 15/01/14
	Creative Industries	David Cockcroft/Business Improvement Team	The Board are interested to know what work is being done in the city to promote, develop and nurture the creative industries in the city.	Meeting 10/7/13