



# Housing Engagement Board

Quarterly Meeting

24 March 2022 – 13:00 to 15:00

Agenda Pack

# Housing Engagement Board Agenda

Date: **Thursday, 24 March 2022**

Time: **13:00 – 15:00**

Venue: **Zoom (Virtual Meeting)**

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1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair will welcome all present and apologies will be noted.

2. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of 50% of members.

3. Minutes of previous meeting – 20 December 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2021 are included for approval.

## Housing Engagement Board

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting held on Monday, 20 December 2021 from 13:00 to 15:00 via Zoom

<b>Attendees:</b>	<p>Cllr John Batchelor – Chair          Dave Kelleway – Vice Chair          Cllr Mark Howell          Cllr Claire Daunton          Peter Campbell (Head of Housing)          Les Rolfe          Margaret Wilson          Peter Tye          Bronwen Taylor (Resident Engagement Officer) – Minute taker          Gina Manderson (Housing Communications Officer)</p>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<p>John Taylor          Wendy Head          Jennifer Perry (Resident Involvement Team Leader)</p>

Item	Subject	Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed the members to the meeting at 13:01.            Apologies were received from Jennifer Perry.</p>	-
2.	<p><b>Quorum</b></p> <p>The meeting was quorate.</p>	-

Item	Subject	Action
3.	<p><b>Minutes of previous meeting – 21 September 2021</b></p> <p>The Chair referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and asked for approval.</p> <p>Margaret Wilson referred to the second bullet point in item 5.4 and said the word “with” should read “without”.</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor said she would amend the minutes.</p> <p>The Chair asked, that subject to the change, if the minutes could be approved.</p> <p>The board approved the minutes.</p>	B Taylor
4.	<b>Matters Arising</b>	-
4.1	<p><b>Terms of Reference (Item 4.2) – Point 4.7</b></p> <p>The Chair referred to the document drawn up by Dave Kelleway and asked him to explain the need for the document.</p> <p>Dave Kelleway said that a more thorough explanation was needed in respect of the co-option process and in the event a co-option was needed, it was done fairly. He explained that it was vital to maintain the principle of election by fellow tenants, over selection by others, to ensure the credibility to the tenant electorate, and that should it be needed, all bases should be covered.</p> <p>The Chair said that it was comprehensive and he found no problems with the document. He asked if the document could be adopted.</p> <p>Dave Kelleway proposed and the Chair seconded the proposal. The Board agreed to adopt the document and for it to be included in the Terms of Reference document.</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor said she would reference the Co-option Policy document under point 4.7 in the Terms of Reference document.</p>	B Taylor

Item	Subject	Action
	<p><b>Terms of Reference (Item 4.2) – Point 4.9</b></p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the word “consecutive” had been added before the word “meetings” in Point 4.9 of the Terms of Reference document.</p>	
<p><b>4.2</b></p>	<p><b>Policy Process (Item 5.3)</b></p> <p>The Chair confirmed that as requested, the following changes were made to the Policy Process document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An arrow from the “Major Changes” box back to the HEB” box in the main structure had been added.</li> <li>• The words “Lead Member at” was removed from the box under the “Minor Changes” box.</li> <li>• The box with the words “Public Consultation” was removed.</li> </ul>	<p>-</p>
<p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p><b>Sheltered Housing (Item 5.4)</b></p> <p>The Chair confirmed that Margaret Wilson’s email with a list of the issues raised was received on 6 October 2021 and forwarded to Peter Campbell, who provided a response on 2 November 2021. Margaret Wilson said that she would like the issue of Sheltered Housing to be added to the agenda of a future meeting, in order to properly discuss this issue, however, she said it could wait until some of the policies were introduced. She thanked Peter Campbell and Geoff Clark for going to see the tenant and resolving one of the issues.</p>	<p>-</p>
<p><b>4.4</b></p>	<p><b>Previous minutes – 9.1 – Repairs Presentation (Item 6.1)</b></p> <p>The Chair confirmed that a copy of Richard Medley’s report relating to the repairs contract appraisal was uploaded to the Google drive in the HEB General folder on 15 October 2021.</p>	<p>-</p>

Item	Subject	Action
5.	<b>New Matters</b>	-
5.1	<p><b>Asset Management Strategy 2021 – 2026</b></p> <p>Peter Campbell referred to the Executive Summary included in the pack which highlighted the changes made. He said that the word “void” had been removed and replaced with the word “relet”. He advised that the document had been considered and well received by the scrutiny panel, and that it would be presented to Cabinet in February 2022.</p>	Peter Cambell
5.2	<p><b>Training – Basic Policy Training</b></p> <p>Bronwen Taylor advised that the Basic Policy training had been postponed from 14 December 2021 to 17 January 2022 as a number of people were unable to attend due to illness.</p>	-
5.3	<p><b>Update on Tenant Satisfaction Survey Project (STAR)</b></p> <p>Bronwen Taylor referred to the document included in the pack and advised that Julie Fletcher and Grace Andrews met with Wendy Head and Patti Hall on 10 December 2021 to go through the scoping of the project and to agree on the survey questions and design.</p> <p>Claire Daunton asked for (the parameters of the project) further details on the survey.</p> <p>Peter Campbell said that the survey was anonymous and was a general approach to the council, and that there used to be a requirement in that every landlord had to conduct a survey with a standard set of questions which allowed comparisons with others and ourselves over time, however, it was no longer compulsory. He said HouseMark now had the STAR survey which had taken the place of the old status survey. He said it was a standard set of questions, however, with additional defining questions to measure local issues. He said that this would enable the</p>	

council to focus on things that made a difference to our tenants. He said that once the final set of questions had been agreed, they would be sent to the board before being sent out to all residents. He added that it would be sent out every two or three years.

Margaret Wilson referred to the cost of £16k for the survey and asked if:

- 1.) we had a breakdown of how this figure was made up and would this board get sight of the figures, and
- 2.) what were the reasons for one of the contractors not meeting the brief?

Bronwen Taylor said that the quote with the breakdown of costs had been sent to Wendy Head and Patti Hall who were the 2 tenant volunteers involved in this project.

Margaret Wilson asked if the paperwork involving appointing M E L Research would be made available to this board.

Peter Campbell said the difficulty with that was that some of the information of the tender document was commercially sensitive.

Margaret Wilson said that her understanding was that members of this board would see matters that were confidential and be confidential about them.

Peter Campbell said that other members of this board were involved in the appointment and we were trusting that group to follow all the guidance and to make an appointment. He added we cannot be re-visiting every decision made by that group.

Margaret Wilson said that she was not calling their decisions into question but was thinking of the transparency of the decisions made, which were, how the cost was made up and why one of the contractors did not meet the brief.



	<p>Peter Campbell agreed that there should be transparency and said that Wendy Head and Patti Hall could provide an update at the next meeting on these issues at the next meeting.</p>	<p>W Head / P Hall</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	-
<b>6.1</b>	<p><b>Projects</b></p> <p>Claire Daunton asked which projects were currently being conducted.</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor said the Tenant Satisfaction Survey and the Repairs Contract were the two projects currently being worked on.</p> <p>Margaret Wilson said that she was involved in the Doubling Nature project and said that they had not received any correspondence about it.</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor said that the project was scheduled to start in February 2022 and that Geoff Clark would be contacting her and Les Rolfe closer to the date. She added that a schedule of the dates had been included in the booklet handed out at the Planning Away Day in September, and that the next project planned would be the Tenancy Review – Tenure. She said an update on the projects would be included in the agenda pack for each meeting.</p>	-
<b>6.2</b>	<p><b>Complaints</b></p> <p>Dave Kellaway said that a few tenant representatives had raised concerns on what to do with complaints they received from tenants. He suggested a training session from officers so that all tenant representatives were aware of what process to follow and that officers could listen to the concerns of tenants representatives.</p> <p>Peter Campbell agreed that this was a good idea. He said that SCDC had introduced a system which allowed members to log complaints, make sure they were dealt with and receive the relevant feedback. He</p>	

	<p>said that he would like this system to run for a short while and then introduce a light service for the housing department.</p> <p>Dave Kelleway said that was a positive start and said that there was a need for training on the systems, etcetera, for the tenant representatives.</p> <p>Les Rolfe referred to the issues that were raised at the Estate Inspections with Housing Officers and said that they never received the results of the issues raised, specifically those issues that were reported to a third party, example, County Council.</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor said that Geoff Clark had undertaken to look at the Estate Inspection Reporting process and would provide feedback at the HPP meeting in March 2022.</p> <p>Claire Daunton asked if these issues would be covered in general terms in the Asset Management Strategy document.</p> <p>Peter Campbell said that document had high level issues and that these issues would be included in the action plan of the strategy.</p> <p>Margaret Wilson said her concern was that when complaints were sent through official channels nothing happened, however, when the same complaint was reported directly to senior SCDC officers, they were resolved very quickly.</p> <p>Dave Kelleway said that the key aspect was developing a relationship between the housing officers and the tenant representatives. He added that this would help in learning about each other's roles in the Council.</p> <p>Margaret Wilson said that this was a learning curve for everyone, however, HEB elections were conducted in September 2020 and it would be good to have these types of structures in place before the next election in 2 years-time.</p>	<p>B Taylor</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> 24 March 2022 at 13.00 (Zoom / venue tbc)</p>	<p>-</p>

<b>8.</b>	<b>Closing</b> There being no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone and wished them a Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year. The meeting ended at 13:44.	-
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## 4. Matters Arising

### 4.1 Minutes of previous meeting – 21 September 2021 (Item 3)

**Actions:** Margaret Wilson referred to the second bullet point in item 5.4 and said the word “with” should read “without” and asked for it to be amended.

**Report back:** Bronwen Taylor has amended the minutes as requested.

For noting.

### 4.2 Terms of Reference (Item 4.2)

**Action:** Bronwen Taylor to include reference to the Co-option Policy document in the Terms of Reference document.

**Report back:** Bronwen Taylor included a reference to the above document at the end of point 4.7 in the Terms of Reference document, as follows:

“See the Co-option Policy document for the procedure to follow.”

For noting.

### 4.3 Asset Management Strategy (5.1)

**Action:** Peter Campbell advised that the Asset Management Strategy would be taken to Cabinet in February 2022.

**Report back:** Julie Fletcher to provide an update on the Asset Management Strategy.

#### 4.4 Update on Tenant Satisfaction Survey Project (STAR) (5.3)

**Action:** Margaret Wilson referred to the cost of £16k for the survey and asked if:

- 1.) we had a breakdown of how this figure was made up and would the board get sight of the figures, and
- 2.) what were the reasons for one of the contractors not meeting the brief?

**Report back:** Julie Fletcher to provide an update under item 5.2 of the agenda.

#### 4.5 Complaints (Item 6)

**Action:** Les Rolfe referred to the issues that were raised at the Estate Inspections with Housing Officers and said that they never received the results of the issues raised, specifically those issues that were reported to a third party, example, County Council.

**Report back:** Geoff Clark met with the Housing Officers on 9 February 2022 to discuss these issues and to agree on the report back process.

Geoff Clark to provide an update.

## 5. Standing Items

### 5.1 Update on Repairs Contract

Eddie Spicer to provide an update on the Repairs Contract.

### 5.2 Update on Projects – Tenant Satisfaction Survey (STAR)

Julie Fletcher to provide an update on the Tenant Satisfaction Survey (STAR) Project. Included in the pack is the quote from MEL Research.

## Update on Tenant Satisfaction Survey

**Project Group set up:** includes Julie Fletcher, Grace Andrews, Patti Hall (tenant rep) and previously Wendy Head (tenant rep).

MEL appointed contractors following council procurement rules.

- Invitation to quote issued: 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021 – Description of services sought:
  - SCDC is looking for a suitably qualified and experienced supplier to provide a satisfaction survey of all our tenant's/leaseholders, checking our performance as a landlord against benchmarked metrics.
  - SCDC are responsible for approximately 5,700 homes in South Cambridgeshire including 45 sheltered schemes. The successful supplier will need to contact all residents and sheltered schemes, recording survey results and providing SCDC with both metrics and a summary report confirming the results of the survey, providing commentary and insight into the statistics.
  - Looking for a range of contact methods.
- Return date: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021
- Two quotes received
  - 1<sup>st</sup> quote – totalling £9,970 but did not meet the brief because telephone surveys only to be undertaken for up to 720 telephone interviews.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> quote – MEL (appointed) – totalling £16,978. See specification attached as to cost breakdown.
  - Procurement scores:
    - Quote 1 – 52
    - Quote 2 – 71.49. Scoring was based on 40% for cost and 60% for quality (which is standard practice).
- Draft questions proposed based on Core and Recommended industry standard questions which are aligned with recommendations coming out of the White Paper.
- Proposed questions reviewed with tenant rep and at the Housing Management Service Team meeting.
- Trial run of on-line questionnaire undertaken with members of the HEB and comments fed back to MEL.
- Anticipate survey to go live week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022.

- Project slightly behind original timelines due to staff sickness, GDPR and data sharing issues, and the Christmas break.
- Final report likely to be received middle of April.
- Verbal update to be given at the next Housing Engagement Board meeting.

15 February 2022



## Section 3: Questionnaire

### PART A

To: South Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire Hall,  
Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, CB23 6EA

Quotation for: Tenant & Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey

I / We the undersigned, having examined the specifications are willing to execute the whole of the work required to carry out the surveys: £16,978 +VAT

Explanation of your pricing:  
Please provide a full breakdown of all costs.

<b>SCDC Tenant &amp; Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey 2021-22</b>									
<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Rate £</i>	<i>Project mgmt..</i>	<i>Design</i>	<i>Field</i>	<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Report</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total days</i>	<i>£ Pricing</i>
Simon Maydew (Project Director)	750	0.5							375
Adam Knight-Markiegi (Research Director)	675	0.5	0.25			0.5	1		1519
Sam Jones (Senior Researcher)	400	2.5	1	0.5	2	2.5	1		3800
Tahira Mahmud (Fieldwork Supervisor)	325			1					325
Leigh Eden (Data Analyst)	325		1.5	0.5	2				1300
<b>Consultant days subtotal</b>									
<b>Direct Cost</b>									<b>£7,319</b>
<b>Cost</b>									
Printing and postage									6867
Online data collection costs (SMS etc)									1047
Data entry cost									1114
Respondent support (language line helpline etc)									631
<b>Direct Cost subtotal</b>									<b>£9,659</b>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL EX. VAT</b>									<b>£16,978</b>

Company Name M·E·L Research

Company Address Somerset House, 37 Temple Street, Birmingham, B2  
5DP

Company Registration No 3000946

Telephone No 0121 604 4664

Email Address simon.maydew@melresearch.co.uk

Employee Name            Simon Maydew

Date                        18/10/2021

Signature                 *S t maydew*

The following is recorded for statistical analysis only:

Is your company an SME? Yes/No

(for instance, are your accounts submitted to Companies House recorded as either micro, abridged or total exemption full accounts).

Does your company have a Local Office based in Cambridgeshire? Yes/No

(South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge, Huntingdonshire, Peterborough, Fenland, East Cambridgeshire)

Does your company have an Office based in one of the following bordering authorities? Yes/No

(Cambridge, Huntingdonshire, Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, West Suffolk, Central Bedfordshire, North Hertfordshire, East Hertfordshire, Uttlesford, Braintree)

Postcode of the Local or office based in the bordering authority? \_\_\_\_\_

## PART B: Questions

The following items match the award criteria specified in the ITQ Bidding Instructions hyperlinked at the start of this document. A typed attachment is acceptable providing it does not exceed the 2500-word limit. Brochures should not be included in the submission.

Method Statement - Written statements are required	Marks	Score 0-5
Please provide a typed response (not exceeding 2500 words) about your organisation's understanding of the brief and your proposals to undertake and complete the services required to meet the requirements of the Invitation to Quote.	60%	
<p>M·E·L Research has worked with housing providers, public service agencies, local and national government for 35 years. As a Market Research Society (MRS) Company Partner we're committed to delivering projects to the highest standards, following the MRS Code of Conduct. We adhere to the principles of the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. We are one of the leading social research companies that carries out STAR surveys for housing providers across the country - with the experience and understanding of the rigours needed when running one, which is why we are used repeatedly by many councils and housing associations.</p> <div data-bbox="367 985 1212 1747" data-label="Diagram"> </div> <p>We have significant experience in delivering customer experience and resident satisfaction surveys across the UK, including the policy context regarding the White Paper and best practice on tenant insight/engagement (TPAS, HACT and HouseMark). The following video summarises our organisation, our vision and the range of solutions we provide: <a href="https://melresearch.co.uk/media/upload/files/Housing-and-Customer-Experience.mp4">https://melresearch.co.uk/media/upload/files/Housing-and-Customer-Experience.mp4</a></p>		

Method Statement - Written statements are required	Marks	Score 0-5
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**Approach**



**Stage 1: Inception meeting**

We understand the value of a detailed inception meeting to fully explore your needs, key challenges, and project risks. It will provide an opportunity to:

- Ensure a shared understanding of the project aims, method and key deliverables;
- Agree project management, key contact and on-going liaison arrangements;
- Discuss the key themes to include in the survey;
- Discuss and agree sampling;
- Discuss timetable and key milestones;
- Discuss and agree analysis & reporting requirements;
- Discuss data protection requirements and any limitations.

We will produce a short report summarising the discussion and setting out the final project timetable and deliverables.

**Stage 2: Sampling**

We understand you have a total stock size of 5,706 properties and would like to carry out a census approach. Given your previous response rates of 25-34%, we are confident we will achieve a margin of error well within the HouseMark guidance ( $\pm 4\%$  at the 95% confidence level), which would require 544 responses. We expect a much greater response, providing a robust sample for further analysis by sub-groups.

We will take receipt of your database using a secure FTP site, applying quality checks before we use it (e.g. duplicates, empty properties). All personal data is stored in dedicated project folders using Office 365 SharePoint architecture and access control and user authentication is only granted to project staff. All our IT solutions providers use data centres located in the UK and comply fully with the DPA 2018.

After taking receipt of your database we can look at the distribution of stock by area and other characteristics. We can then set interlocking targets to achieve spatially, by geographic parameters such as ward, housing management area/patches, for example. This will be discussed with you at the inception meeting.

Method Statement - Written statements are required	Marks	Score 0-5
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**Stage 3: Design**

A major strength of M·E·L Research’s approach is our strong commitment to high quality, clear and well thought out questionnaire design. We are fully conversant with HouseMark’s STAR framework and the Regulator for Social Housing’s latest Tenant Service Measures.

We will work with you to develop the questionnaire based around the HouseMark core and recommended questions. We can also advise on the best way of tailoring questions based on tenure, and your relationship with residents.



We’re pleased you want to involve your Tenant Working Groups in this work; this helps to get buy-in and focuses questions on the key issues for residents. We did exactly this with Slough Borough Council last year, holding an online discussion with their Resident Board to help shape the design of their tenant survey, including influencing specific questions. They reviewed the draft questionnaire before it was finalised and helped promote the survey. The results were subsequently presented back to them in another session.

**Stage 4: Fieldwork**

In terms of methodology, we would suggest a digital-first approach before undertaking a wider postal survey. Where mobile and email contact details are present we will initially send the survey via email and telephone (SMS link to the online survey). We will also send two to three reminders electronically. Following this, all non-respondents to the digital first approach and those without these details will be invited to complete a postal survey. This ‘blended’ approach is fully aligned with the latest STAR guidance and recommended by HACT, and also reduces our environmental impact.

We will design, print and despatch an attractively laid out version of the questionnaire. We have costed for a 4 page (8 sides of A4) survey. We envisage 25-30 mostly closed scaled questions with some open questions to give residents the opportunity to comment on the service received and issues affecting them.

We will send all residents an original mailing that will include a colour covering letter and B&W survey on recycled paper, with a freepost reply envelope. Each questionnaire will have a unique reference number. This is the only element we outsource, to one of two trusted print and delivery companies. We recommend giving at least 2 full weeks for returning the survey back to us before the reminder mailing is sent; including another copy of the covering letter and questionnaire.

Method Statement - Written statements are required	Marks	Score 0-5
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Within the covering letter we shall include a link to the online survey and a QR code, encouraging people to complete the survey online, thus overcoming any discrepancies in email addresses and giving two different approaches to complete the survey.



Before the survey goes live we will undertake an internal pilot and share the draft survey with you.

**Improving Response Rates** - Our key recommendations would be as follows:

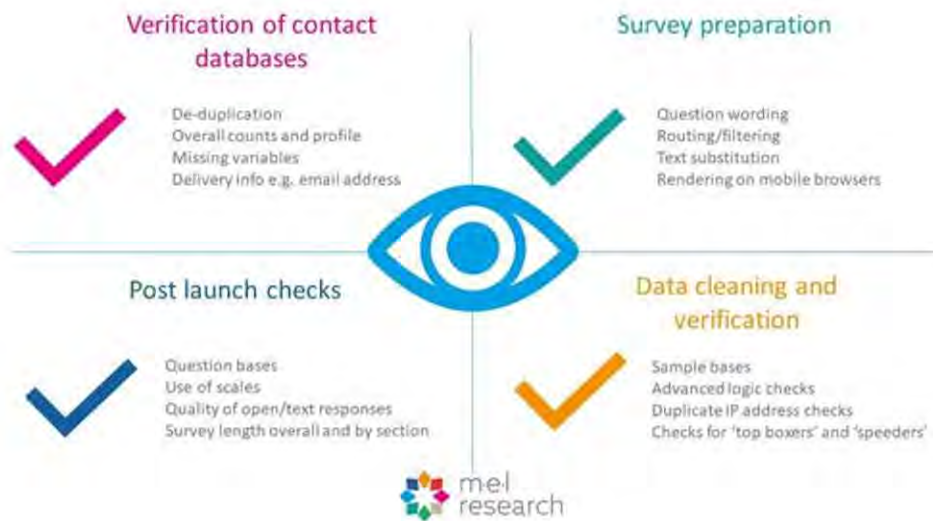
- Publicising the survey in advance and fully brief staff so they can promote the survey.
- Create a communication plan to promote the survey via internal communications. We've also costed to include a prize draw which can be a great incentive for residents.
- We shall provide an animated video outlining the objectives of the survey, made available to managers and residents with a link in the cover letter.
- All aspects of data protection and confidentiality will be stressed along with details of our privacy notice, GDPR, MRS Fair Data Accreditation and how their data is handled.
- We shall keep the survey simple and uncluttered, with your logo on the letters and front of the questionnaires. Online questionnaires will have a contemporary feel using Confirmit, our survey software, which is fully compatible with all major browsers and on mobiles/tablets.
- We also have the following recommendations for improving response rates amongst vulnerable, seldom heard and older tenants:
  - We shall provide email and freephone telephone helpline details where residents can request copies of the questionnaire in large font or to complete the survey over the phone. We have made provision in our costs for up to 100 of each.
  - We can adapt our approach based on language requirements (we cover many languages through our call centre and work with many BME landlords) and hearing using Text Relay or online to Web Accessibility Initiative level 3.

<b>Bengali</b> এই তথ্য অন্য কোনো ভাষায় আপনার প্রয়োজন হলে অনুগ্রহ করে ফোন করুন 0800 073 0348	<b>Spanish</b> Si desea esta información en otro idioma, rogamos nos llame al 0800 073 0348
<b>French</b> Si vous souhaitez ces informations dans une autre langue veuillez nous contacter au 0800 073 0348	<b>Polish</b> Aby otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innej wersji językowej, prosimy o kontakt pod numerem 0800 073 0348
<b>Portuguese</b> Se desejar esta informação noutro idioma é favor telefonar para 0800 073 0348	<b>Somali</b> Haddii aad jecleaan lahayd in aad warbixintan ku hesho luqad kale, fadlan annaga nagala soo xiriir lambarka 0800 073 0348
<b>If you would like this information in large print, in Braille, on audio tape or in another language, please contact us on 0800 073 0348.</b>	

**Stage 5: Analysis & reporting**

There are numerous standard checks throughout our core processes to ensure data quality, summarised below.

Method Statement - Written statements are required	Marks	Score 0-5
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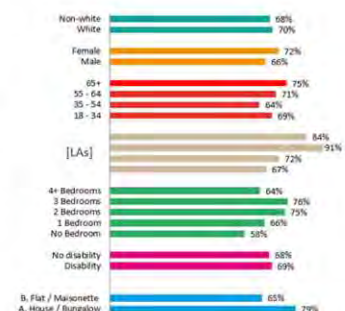
Returns and data entry will be handled by our internal Field and Data team. Returned questionnaires are logged on an ongoing basis, giving direct access to response rates, and can scan in and email you with any resident's comments / concerns so urgent issues can be dealt with promptly, providing a service recovery loop and boosting resident satisfaction.

All data entry will take place at our Covid-secure offices in Birmingham to ensure high quality standards and data security. As an MRS Company Partner, we are required to meet the highest standards of quality assurance. We carry out double data entry verification checks on a 5% sample of completed questionnaires. Questionnaires are re-entered and the two data files compared against each other to check for errors.

Following these checks, we will provide the raw (anonymised) data and cross-tabulated data tables in Excel, SPSS or another agreed format. The data will be weighted at this stage to ensure it is representative of your total stock.

Gathering the data is the first step. Analysing it is where the insight begins, driving action. We will meet all reporting requirements set out in your ITQ.

Our standard data analysis includes counts and percentages for all questions as well as sub-group (crosstab) analysis. Sub-group analysis is a key technique to start telling the story of the data, particularly when including existing data (e.g. demographics, behavioural, property details). This pulls out which groups stand out – using robust statistical significance testing (Z tests).

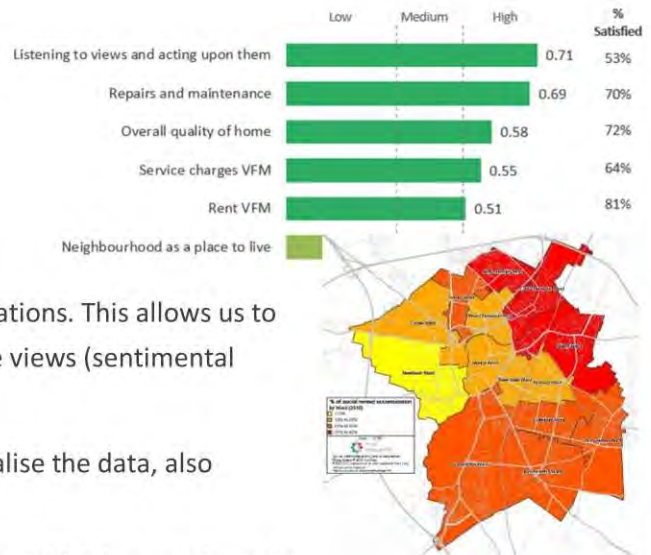


We'll then move onto producing the draft report which will deliver robust conclusions based on the evidence collected. We pride ourselves on a visual reporting style, with clear messages and recommendations.

Method Statement - Written statements are required	Marks	Score 0-5
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**Adding value:** We can add value in several ways which are built into our core offer:

- **Benchmarking**, such as the five HouseMark core questions, adds deeper context.
- **Trend analysis**, showing how you compare to previous survey results.
- **Key driver analysis** looks for correlations between variables, showing what drives (dis)satisfaction. We'll include this within our core offer, to help draw out insight and make recommendations.
- **Coding responses to free-text answers** helps quantify qualitative responses. Our team does this, so you get human input, not machine estimations. This allows us to draw out themes, compare positive and negative views (sentimental analysis) and highlight concerns.
- **GIS analysis** and mapping are great ways to visualise the data, also helping to tell the story.
- **Infographics:** will produce a one-page infographic, which is a great way to share results with Councillors or residents.



- **Bespoke segmentation analysis:** This enables us to cluster and segment customers based on shared observed characteristics. For example: "At One" customers who are engaged with the organisation and satisfied. This analysis is very helpful in targeting customer segments and geographic locations where you need to allocate and prioritise resources.



Method Statement - Written statements are required	Marks	Score 0-5
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- Animated video:** To raise awareness of the findings, provided free of charge. This can aid transparency and get results out quickly. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHd1KCb2jmA>



- Data fusion techniques:** To enrich the insights generated, we can tag to each record other datasets such as: Index of Multiple Deprivation, stock condition or income arrears data. We have full access to CACI data and therefore we can add ACORN/ONS neighbourhood level information to the survey data to identify segments of your customer base where focus is needed.
- Presentation** of findings, drawing out the key insight from the results.
- Additional consultancy advice** provided as part of our added value, that can be used after the survey has finished and drawn down over the course of the year. We'd be happy to provide advice about any forthcoming policy papers, customer journey mapping and implementation of customer engagement processes such as real time transactional surveys and dashboards.



**Project team**

**Simon Maydew (Commercial Strategy Director)** will be account lead over the entire relationship. Simon joined M·E·L Research from BMG Research in 2020 where he was UK divisional head for housing research and public sector consultation. Simon has led on over 100 customer satisfaction surveys across the UK, working with many of the largest landlords including Riverside Housing, Metropolitan, Thames Valley Housing and Wheatley Housing Group.

**Adam Knight-Markiegi (Housing Consultant: Research Director)** will support Simon. Adam joined M·E·L in 2017 and has delivered research, consultancy, and training to the housing sector for 15+ years. This includes as Senior Consultant at HouseMark, where he led the Tenant Insight Discovery project, working with 11 housing providers to make more of their data, draw out insight and help tailor and improve services. Adam will oversee the project, ensuring the quality of research tools and outputs, and pulling out actionable insight.

Method Statement - Written statements are required	Marks	Score 0-5
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Adam will be supported by **Sam Jones (Senior Researcher)**, who will be your day-to-day contact. In 2018, Sam graduated from Aston University with a 1st class honours degree. Since joining M·E·L Research, Sam has successfully managed numerous projects including a wide range STAR surveys for Cambridge City Council, Colne Housing and Barrow, Slough and Great Yarmouth councils.

**Project management**

We operate a PRINCE2 approach to project management and believe in strong planning, programme management, leadership, and governance. The stages adopted in our approach ensure we implement effective management of projects to ensure key milestones are met, which includes:

- a) Project inception
- b) Project planning, involving the identification of tasks, stages and milestones and the allocation of resources
- c) Risk assessment
- d) Monitoring and controlling the different stages of the project through project meetings, reviewing project plans and monitoring progress
- e) Managing successful delivery of research reports and
- f) Ensuring final completion of projects, including end of project reviews and final client 'sign-off'.

To further aid planning, we hold weekly resource meetings to review internal capacity across our organisation and the performance of all contracts is monitored in line with our ISO:9001 and ISO:20252 quality management system..



The Gantt chart below illustrates our plan for this project. The timetable will be finalised during the inception meeting.

ACTIVITY / TASK	November					December				January					February				March				
	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	7	14	21	28	
Inception meeting			■																				
Project design and sampling			■	■	■																		
Survey setup						■	■																
Finalise questionnaire and sign off								■															
First SMS / emailing										■													
Reminder SMS / emailing										■													
First postal mailing											■												
Reminder postal mailing												■											
Fieldwork ends															■								
Quality assurance data checks											■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Data analysis/tabulations and charts																■	■	■	■				
Produce draft report																	■	■	■				
Client review draft report																		■	■				
Final report																				■	■		
Presentation																						■	■

**Risk management:** All projects are prepared and planned through reference to a standard risk assessment and mitigation plan. This is reviewed, assessed, and updated periodically considering changes that may arise.

Method Statement - Written statements are required	Marks	Score 0-5
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The Project Lead will be responsible for ensuring all possible risks are identified, and all possible mitigations are put in place to address each risk. Progress on all projects is also reviewed weekly by M.E·L’s Client Implementation Director, allowing us to assess risk on an ongoing basis and act swiftly with contingencies.

**Social purpose and credentials**

Our vision is to make a positive difference to organisations, employees, customers and wider society. We believe all businesses have a duty to be socially responsible to re-invest in society, be active contributors to the local community and minimise their environmental impacts. Like you, we are also values-driven, with five key values:



As a business we have made a commitment to annually **donate 5% of our net profits to designated charities aligned to our social purpose**. A CSR working group within the company was established in mid-2021 to identify recipients that align with our values. The group are also embedding opportunities for staff to make a direct impact on communities through volunteering days. Our training programmes are also aligned to help support our social purpose. For example, our head of housing research Adam Knight-Markiegi has recently gained accreditation as a [Social Value International](#) Level 3 Advanced Practitioner.

For us, a large part of being socially responsible is accepting our corporate environmental responsibilities and M·E·L Research is committed to minimising its environmental impacts and maximising its contribution to sustainable futures and a healthy environment. We will conduct our activities and operations to reflect best practice and seek innovative ways of improving our environmental performance. To achieve these aims we will meet and, where possible, exceed all relevant UK, EU and international legislative and regulative requirements and agreements. As an MRS Company Partner, we also support the steps the sector is taking to be part of the solution to the growing climate emergency.

We can confirm we have the following insurances:

- Employers’ Liability Insurance
- Public Liability Insurance
- Professional Indemnity

## PART C: References

Note the Councils will check 3 references and assess based on the feedback provided by previous clients. Please provide a minimum of 3 references. These will be assessed on a pass or fail nature on the actual feedback from the referee as well as how comparable the services provided to the referee are to the brief.					Pass/ Fail Only
Name of Client(s) Address:	Telephone:	Email and Name of person to contact:	Description of services provided	Contract dates (From – To)	Annual Value of Contract (£)
Cambridge City Council  The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge CB2 3QJ	01223 458323	Emily Watts, Resident Engagement Officer Emily.Watts@cambridge.gov.uk	City Homes (Cambridge City Council) commissioned M·E·L Research to carry out a STAR survey to gather feedback from residents. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the levels of satisfaction residents have with their homes and the associated services provided. M·E·L Research supported project	July 2020 - December 2022	£24,000

			design, handled all data collection, analysis and reporting. This exercise will be repeated in 2022, as part of a bi-annual contract.		
Slough Borough Council  Observatory House, 25 Windsor Rd, Slough SL1 2EL	01753 477220	Anita Jan, Locality Participation Officer Anita.Jan@slough.gov.uk	Slough Borough Council's Housing Services commissioned M·E·L Research to carry out a tenant and leaseholder satisfaction survey to gain an understanding of the levels of satisfaction residents have with their homes and the associated services provided to them. M·E·L Research supported project design,	June 2020 - March 2021	£23,000

			handled all data collection, analysis and reporting.		
Folkestone and Hythe District Council  Civic Centre, Castle Hill Ave, Folkestone CT20 2QY	07395 258433	Loren Paine – Tenant Liaison Specialist loren.paine@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk	Baseline STAR survey among tenants and leaseholders following the return of stock to the Council from ALMO management. M·E·L Research supported project design, handled all data collection, analysis and reporting.	October 2020 - December 2020	

## 6. New Matters

### 6.1 Resignation of Wendy Head – Co-option process

Wendy Head has resigned from the HEB as she moved out of a South Cambridgeshire property.

The co-option process was started at the beginning of February 2022 and the closing date for applications was 1 March 2022.

Three applications were received from tenants and emailed to the tenant representatives on 7 March 2022.

Bronwen Taylor to provide an update.

### 6.2 Update on Projects – Evaluation of Tenant Engagement Projects

The following documents, which are included in the agenda pack, have been designed and are being trialed by the volunteers on the Tenant Satisfaction Survey project.

- Project Initiation Document
- Project Evaluation Form

Copies of the documents were sent to Peter Tye and Brian Burton, the two volunteers working on this project, on 19 January 2022 for their comments and input.

For noting.

## Project Initiation Document

Project Name			
Lead Officer			
Project Group			
Other Participants / Stakeholders			
Project Purpose			
Goals of the Project			
Role of Tenant Representatives			
Requirement from Tenant Representatives			
Reporting of Project			
Implementation Plan of Project	Date	Activity	Tenant Representative Input



Affected Parties and Processes or Systems	
Duration and Expected Completion Date	
Cost (if any)	£

## Project Evaluation Form

Upon the completion of the project, evaluate its success. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the project and list any ideas that may be helpful.

Name of project: \_\_\_\_\_

Project date: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee responsible for the project: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Location of project: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate the project overall?

Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>

What were the goals of the project? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Were the goals of the project achieved?      Yes       No

Which one (s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What could be improved? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Participation

Who did you expect to participate in the project? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who actually participated in the project? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Percentage of participants? \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments / feedback

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Finances

Budget \_\_\_\_\_

Total cost \_\_\_\_\_

### **6.3 Update on Projects – Doubling Nature**

Geoff Clark to provide an update on the Doubling Nature Project.

### **6.4 Forward Plan**

Julie Fletcher to discuss the Forward Plan document included in the agenda pack.

## Housing Engagement Board – Forward Plan

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Decision Route</b>
24 March 2022	Project Initiation Document and Evaluation	Update on Project Initiation Document and Evaluation	Bronwen Taylor	No decision
24 March 2022	Tenancy Policy	Update on Tenancy Review / Policy	Geoff Clark	Cabinet
24 March 2022	Doubling Nature Project	To update the HEB on the Doubling Nature Project	Geoff Clark	No decision
24 March 2022	Tenant Satisfaction Survey	Update on project to undertake the Tenant Satisfaction Survey	Julie Fletcher	No decision
24 March 2022	Small Land Sales (HRA) Policy	To provide comments on the draft Small Land Sales Policy and procedures	Julie Fletcher	Cabinet – 22 March 2022 Final approval following HEB comments by Lead Member for Housing
24 March 2022	Council Stock Condition Survey	To establish a small working group to work with officers to design a specific survey and procure contractors	Eddie Spicer	No decision
Special Meeting in April 2022	Service Plan	To provide comments on the Service Plan for the Housing Service for 2022 / 2023	Peter Campbell	Sign off by Lead Member for Housing
Special presentation by MEL April / May 2022	Tenant Satisfaction Report	To note the findings of the Tenant Satisfaction Report and agree actions to take forward	Julie Fletcher	Housing Engagement Board

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Decision Route</b>
June 2022	Asset Management Strategy Action Plan	Prioritising the actions and monitoring progress in the Asset Management Strategy	Peter Campbell	No decision
June 2022	Contract for Repairs / Maintenance	To provide an update of the appointment of the new contractor and transitional arrangements	Peter Campbell	No decision
September 2022	Communal Areas Review	To note findings from the Communal Areas Review and discuss actions for improvement	Debbie Barrett	Housing Engagement Board
September 2022	Garage and Land Review	Update of findings of the Garage and Land Review, and recommend actions	Lands Officer	Cabinet
September 2022	Policy Review	To provide an overview of current policies – identify gaps and programme for reviews	Policy Officer	Housing Engagement Board
TBC	Together with Tenants Charter	Review what actions are required to achieve the Together with Tenants Charter	Julie Fletcher	Cabinet

## **6.5 Tenancy Review Policy**

Geoff Clark to discuss the Tenancy Review Policy.

## **6.6 Small Land Sales (HRA) Policy**

Julie Fletcher to discuss the Small Land Sales (HRA) Policy.

## Report for

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>
Informal Cabinet	14 February 2022
Scrutiny & Overview Committee	N / A
Cabinet	23 March 2022
Housing Engagement Board	24 March 2022

<b>Report to:</b>	Housing Engagement Board	24 March 2022
<b>Lead Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor John Batchelor – Housing	
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing	

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## Policy on Small Land Transactions (HRA)

### Executive Summary

1. To determine a policy for the potential purchase or lease by individuals for small areas of land held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The policy also includes other land transaction requests, such as easements and rights of way on HRA land.

### Recommendations

2. Following any recommendations made by Cabinet on 22 March 2022; that the Lead Member for Housing approves the final Policy subject to minor amendments, if any, arising from the Housing Engagement Board meeting held on 24 March 2022.

### Reasons for Recommendations

3. To determine an appropriate framework for the consideration of requests by individuals for small land transactions for land held within the HRA.

### Details

4. There is a need to establish an open, transparent and robust policy and procedure to enable each application received relating to HRA land transactions to be assessed fairly based on a set criteria and charging framework.
5. The adoption of the Policy and Procedure would provide a consistent and transparent approach and, as a consequence, demonstrate justification as part of its decision-making process.



## Options

6. The option of not adopting the Policy for small land transactions (HRA) is not considered to be appropriate. The Policy ensures that there is a consistent and fair approach in terms of its management of HRA assets and its decision-making.

## Implications

7. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

### Financial

8. Overall, it is not expected that the net revenue financial implications of the policy will be material to the Council. The Council will seek to recover all costs incurred for the administration of any small land transaction and any disposal will be at market value.
9. Any income from the sale of land would be a Capital receipt to the HRA unless it is below £10,000, in which case it would be treated as Revenue under the Capital receipt de-minimus rules.

### Legal

10. Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 provides the power to Local Authorities to dispose of land save that S123 imposes a requirement for local authorities to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable. Best consideration can be achieved by
  - Marketing the property;
  - Obtaining an appropriate independent valuation; or
  - Both of the above.
11. However, in order to discharge the duty under section 123(2) there is no absolute requirement to market the land being disposed of, or to obtain an independent valuation. For the purposes of this policy the Council will accept a valuation to discharge the duty.
12. The Department for Communities and Local Government has issued the General Housing Consents 2013. The consents, which came into force on 11 March 2013:
  - Set out the situations where the specific consent of the Secretary of State is not required before a local authority disposes of council housing land and associated assets.
  - Extend the freedom of local authorities in relation to the granting of leases and the disposal of reversionary interests.

## **Staffing**

13. No staffing implications have been identified. The policy will set out a clear and transparent framework to which officers will operate in.

## **Risks / Opportunities**

14. The proposed policy seeks to protect the Council from the risks associated with any land transaction within the HRA and includes measures to ensure a proper legal framework for an agreed transaction and to mitigate future losses that may arise (example, covenants to protect the Council from future uplift in the value of assets).

## **Equality and Diversity**

15. The Policy is an operational document which will ensure that all residents are treated in a consistent and fair way. The policy does not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics.

## **Climate Change**

16. No climate change implications have been identified in the development of this policy.

## **Health & Wellbeing**

17. Within the criteria set out in the Policy for small land transactions (HRA), the health and wellbeing of residents is a consideration for the approval of requests.

## **Consultation responses**

18. The draft policy will also be considered by the Housing Engagement Board.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in**

19. Ensuring that the Council's housing assets are managed in a transparent and appropriate way.

### **A modern and caring Council**

20. The policy provides a clear and consistent approach to any requests for land transactions held within the HRA.

## **Background Papers**

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: Policy on Small Pieces of Land Sales

### **Report Author:**

Julie Fletcher : Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Telephone: (01954) 713 352

## Draft

### Policy for small land transactions (HRA)

#### 1. Scope of Policy

- 1.1. This Policy is aimed at providing guidance to Members and officers in relation to requests by individuals to purchase or lease small areas of land and other land transactions (for example easements and removal of a restriction covenant) on land held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It sets out the criteria that will be applied in assessing applications, the charging framework involved, and the process. For ease this policy refers to all transactions as sales or purchases, but this intention is that it applies to all transactions, including temporary permissions.
- 1.2. The policy applies to requests by individuals to purchase small areas of land held within the HRA. It does not cover requests to purchase larger areas of land with development potential, or requests for transfer of ownership to communities which is covered within the Council's Transfer of Community Assets Policy.
- 1.3. For the purposes of this policy an area of land will not be considered to be a Small Land Sale if it has the potential for social housing development; if the size, shape and area of the land would allow the development of one or more homes; or the land has the potential to open up an additional piece of land (i.e. a ransom strip), and the size, shape, area of the additional piece of land opened up would allow the development of one or more homes.
- 1.4. Any request to purchase a piece of land which it is felt could fall into one of the categories identified in paragraph 1.3 above will be referred to the Head of Housing for consideration. This may include garages or land on garage sites.
- 1.5. This policy does not apply to land that is within the curtilage of properties that are being sold through the right to buy scheme, or within the curtilage of properties that are being sold under shared ownership schemes.
- 1.6. The Asset Management Section will hold and maintain a database of requests to purchase Small Land Sales. Information held in the database will be controlled in compliance with the General Data Protection Legislation.

## 2. Legal Context

- 2.1. This policy has been developed within the context of the following legislation:
- 2.2. The general power of disposal (Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972) gives a local authority the power to dispose of land held by it in any manner it wishes provided that the local authority achieves the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained except where the disposal is for a short tenancy (the grant of a term not exceeding seven years or the assignment of a term which has not more than seven years to run) or the local authority has the consent of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has issued a general consent for disposals of land under section 123 for less than best consideration. This allows a local authority to dispose of land for less than best consideration if it considers that the disposal will contribute to the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area and the extent of the undervalue is no more than £2 million.
- 2.3. Best consideration can be achieved by:
  - Marketing the property;
  - Obtaining an appropriate independent valuation; or
  - Both of the above
- 2.4. In order to discharge the duty under section 123(2) there is no absolute requirement to market the land being disposed of, or to obtain an independent valuation. For the purposes of this policy the Council will accept a valuation to discharge the duty.
- 2.5. The Department for Communities and Local Government has issued the General Housing Consents 2013. The consents, which came into force on 11 March 2013:
  - Set out the situations where the specific consent of the Secretary of State is not required before a local authority disposes of council housing land and associated assets.
  - Extend the freedom of local authorities in relation to the granting of leases and the disposal of reversionary interests.

## 3. Criteria for assessing requests to buy Small Land Sites

- 3.1. Housing Land, including land that forms the gardens of council houses, is “public property” and is not usually for sale to benefit private individuals. Unlike private and commercial landowners, who are free to buy and sell land at whatever price they choose, a local authority is in the position of a trustee in relation to the land that it holds on behalf of the community. Therefore, it has a statutory duty to sell land at the best price reasonably obtainable.

- 3.2. Applications from private individuals to buy small land sites will normally be refused unless:
- There is a broader community benefit to the disposal, for example a rationalisation of small parcels of land, that either rarely used or often misused, or
  - There are management issues in relation to the parcel of land concerned – for example, they are difficult or very costly to maintain or there are issues regarding the use of the land for anti-social behaviour, or
  - There are extenuating circumstances in relation to the applicant requesting the purchase of the land – for example, there are health grounds in relation to the applicant and the sale of the land would improve their quality of life and would not adversely affect the quality of life of others in the neighbourhood.
- 3.3. In all these cases, evidence would be required to support and justify the application to buy. This may include information from professionals, as well as information from the Council's own records and information from neighbouring properties.
- 3.4. Before any sale is approved the local community will be consulted on the proposal to dispose of the land. This will include consulting with immediate neighbours, including current tenants, District Ward Councillors and the relevant Parish or Town Council. This will usually be written communication, where the Council explains the proposal and the rationale for sale and requests feedback and comments from the consultees.
- 3.5. Officers would also consider whether the sale would have implications for long-term strategic uses for the land in question. For example, to allow access for future development of adjacent sites or where the site may form part of a land assembly project to allow a larger development. In such cases permission to purchase will usually be refused (see paragraph 1.3 above).
- 3.6. Small Land Sales will include restrictive covenants that limit the future use of the land. Usually this will be as garden land. The Council will not consider lifting this covenant unless either there has been a change in circumstances and one of the exceptions listed in 3.1 (above) is met, or the applicant pays to the Council the uplift in land value if the land had been treated as development land. For avoidance of doubt, the value of this uplift (for example, the difference between the value as garden land compared to the value as development land) will be determined by a suitably qualified RICS surveyor and will apply on the date the 'uplift survey' is completed, rather than the difference in original value. The applicant will be charged for the costs incurred by the Council in gaining this valuation.

3.7. As the overriding principle is that there is no obligation to sell HRA land, this should be communicated to the customer to avoid unnecessary staff administration or unrealistic expectations. Reasons for refusing to sell a piece of land may include but are not limited to:

- There is no community benefit from the sale
- Issues relating to either public access or access for services (for example, grounds maintenance);
- The land may have potential for future development.
- The land is of value to the local community.

This list is not exhaustive.

3.8. There needs to be a clear rationale for disposing of any HRA asset, and any disposal should be based on full market value. This must be covered in the officer report prior to sign off.

3.9. The Council will charge fees to recover the costs of all services and officer time involved in processing applications. We will publish a list of standard fees alongside the procedure for dealing with such requests. No application will be progressed until the Council receives a completed expression of interest form, and payment of the initial fees.

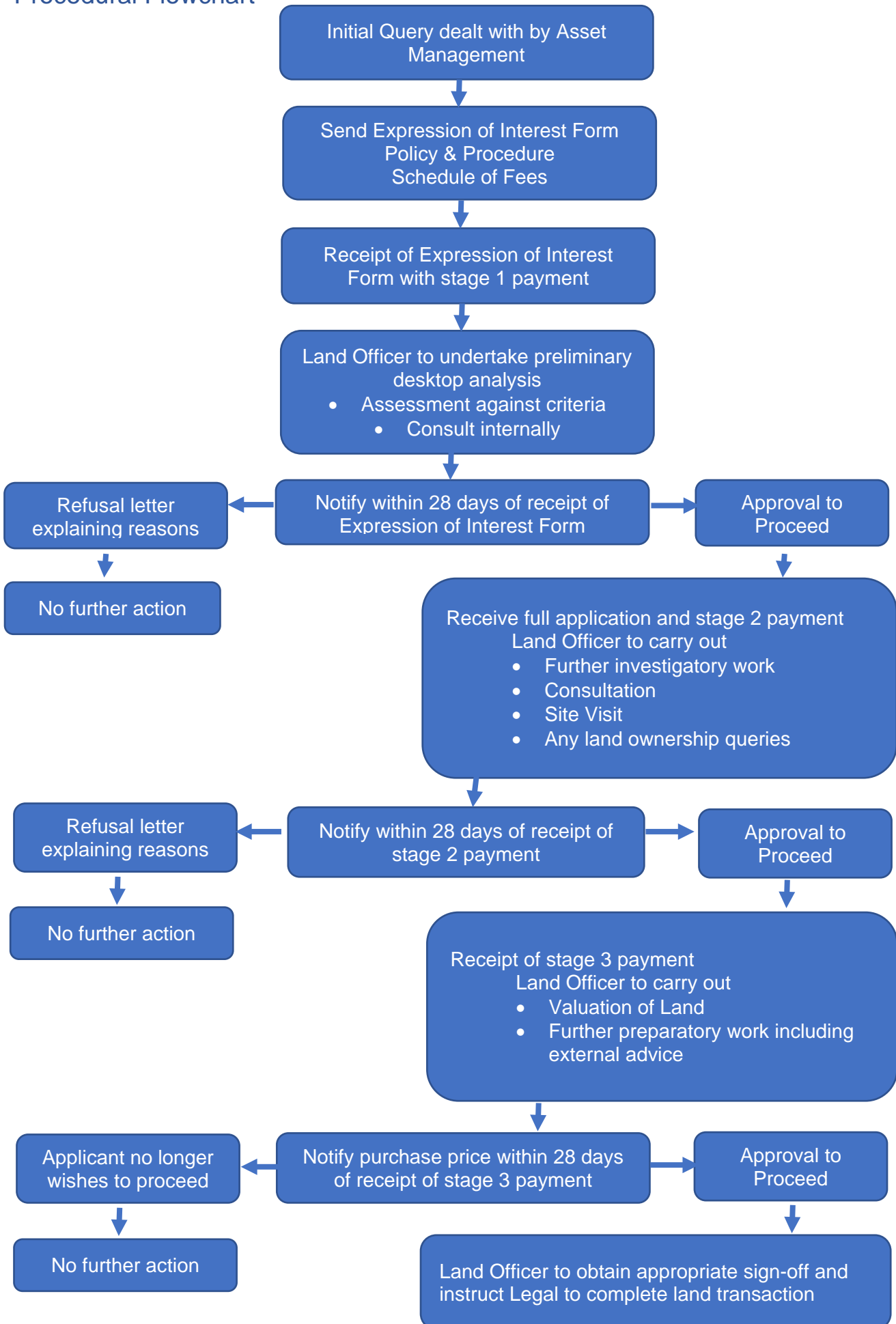
## 4. Procedures

- 4.1. Initial queries will be dealt with by Asset Management who will inform the applicant of potential costs, including legal costs and explain the length of time to deal with the application. At this point it will be made clear that the Council will potentially make a series of charges based on the charging schedule.
- 4.2. If the applicant wishes to pursue their land transaction request, they must complete an expression of interest form, together with the relevant administrative fee.
- 4.3. On receipt of the completed expression of interest form and payment, the Land Officer will undertake a preliminary desktop analysis. This will involve assessing the application against the criteria set out within the policy, consulting with the housing officer and discussed with the Line Manager. At this point, if the request is to be refused, the applicant will be notified in writing providing reasons for refusal or they will be informed that the application can proceed and the likely costs and timescales involved.
- 4.4. The applicant will be notified of the preliminary decision within 28 days of receipt of the expression of interest.
- 4.5. If the applicant wishes to proceed following a positive outcome from the expression of interest, they must confirm this in writing by completing a full application to the Council accompanied by the appropriate non-refundable fee.
- 4.6. The Land Officer will undertake further investigation which will include consultation with neighbours and the local ward member(s). Other agencies to be consulted at this time include:
  - Highways (County Council)
  - Pathways and Rights of Way
  - Economic Development.
  - Housing Staff.
  - Parish Council
- 4.7. A site visit will always be required, the cost of this will be included within the fees. If there is any concern about land ownership, the Land Officer will check this with Legal Services. The customer may also want to make their own enquires which will be at their own expense.
- 4.8. Following the consultation and investigatory works, the Council aims to inform the decision in writing within a further 28 days.



- 4.9. Applications that are refused will be provided with an explanation of the reasons for refusal, except in cases where such information is commercially sensitive, or the provision of information would breach confidentiality. Complaints will be dealt with under the Council's Complaints Procedure.
- 4.10. If an application is refused, any new application from the same person will be regarded as a new application and they will be required to pay all council fees prior to any new application being considered.
- 4.11. Where the decision to proceed is agreed, a third payment will be required from the applicant to undertake a land valuation and any legal fees.
- 4.12. The Land Officer will use a suitably qualified RICS surveyor appointed by the Council to value the land for sale. The cost of the valuation will be included within the fee charged.
- 4.13. Legal Services will be engaged to act on behalf of the Council and will prepare the necessary title information pack.
- 4.14. Small Land Sales will include restrictive covenants that limit the future use of the land.
- 4.15. Proposals to sell land up to the value of £10,000 shall be signed by the Lands Officer and authorised by a Service Manager in the Housing Department. These shall be collated and reported to the Head of Housing and Lead Member for Housing each quarter for information.
- 4.16. Proposals to sell land of a greater value should be authorised by the Head of Housing (or in their absence a member of Leadership Team) and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing (or in their absence another member of Cabinet).
- 4.17. The Land Officer will inform the applicant that they will remain responsible for meeting any requirements for planning permission in relation to any land sold, including paying any fees required in relation to planning enquiries and planning applications.
- 4.18. The Land Officer will also remind applicants that they must undertake their own investigations to assess whether the ground is suitable for the intended use. As part of this, applicants are advised to seek their own independent professional advice. The Council will not contribute to the cost of this advice.
- 4.19. Following signed approval by the responsible officer (see paragraphs 4.15 and 4.16 above) and confirmation that the applicant wishes to proceed based on the valuation, the Lands Officer will instruct Legal to complete the transaction.

Procedural Flowchart



## Schedule of Fees

Payment Stage	Detail	Amount
Stage 1	Preliminary Desktop Analysis (to be accompanied with expressions of interest form)	£25.00
Stage 2	Further investigatory work (to be accompanied by full application)	£250.00
Stage 3	Valuation of land and further preparatory work including external advice	Approximately £1,140 + VAT (current cost to be confirmed at Stage 1)
Stage 4	Sale of land and associated legal and transactional costs including applicable tax	Purchase price dependent on valuation + Legal and transactional costs = up to £700

Note: any separate legal costs incurred by the applicant or costs associated with any planning permission sought by the applicant will be additional and separate to the land transaction.

## **6.7 Council Stock Condition Survey**

A small working group is to be established to work with officers to design a specific survey and procure contractors. Eddie Spicer will lead the project.

Eddie Spicer to report.

## 7. Any other Business (AOB)

Any additional issues to be raised.

## 8. Proposed meeting dates for 2022 / 2023

- 22 June 2022 (Zoom / venue tbc)
- 21 September 2022 (Zoom / venue tbc)
- 21 December 2022 (Zoom / venue tbc)
- 23 March 2023 (Zoom / venue tbc)

## 9. Closing