

Community Impact Assessment

Part 1 – Details

What Policy/ Procedure/ Strategy/Project/Service is being assessed?	Incentive to Move Policy (ITM) and Mutual Exchange (ME)	
	Both of these are part of the housing allocations policy	
Date Conducted	November 2024	
Name of Lead Officer and Service Area	S Finnegan	
Commissioning Team (if applicable)		
Director Responsible for project/service area	Rob Barnes, Executive Director	
Who are the main stakeholders	Council housing tenants Applicants on the housing register Tenant Consultative Group (TCG) Internal departments	
Describe what consultation has been undertaken. Who was involved and what was the outcome	Discussion with TCG who supported both updated policies	
Outline the wider research that has taken place (E.G. commissioners, partners, other providers etc)	A consultant prepared papers on (i) national policy on ITM and ITM and (ii) a review of local ITM and ME policy.	
What are you assessing? Indicate with an 'x' which applies	A decision to review or change a service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	A Strategy/Policy/Procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A function, service or project	<input type="checkbox"/>
What kind of assessment is it? Indicate with an 'x' which applies	New	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Existing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Being reviewed	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Being reviewed as a result of budget constraints / End of Contract	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 2 – Summary of Assessment

Give a summary of your proposal and set out the aims/ objectives/ purposes/ and outcomes of the area you are impact assessing.

Our incentive to move policy and mutual exchange policy need to be updated to meet the requirements of the Social Housing Regulation Act. In particular, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in its consumer standards that came into effect in April 2024 expect social housing landlords to have a satisfactory mutual exchange policy.

The incentive to move policy was formally approved in 2010 and its associated procedural guide was last updated in 2018. The mutual exchange policy has been incorporated into the allocations and lettings policy for many years and the Tenancy management policy 2014. (This is currently being reviewed) But it has not been formally approved as a specific policy.

Incentive to move policy (ITM), which is also sometimes referred to as 'downsizing', focuses on addressing the issue of (i) under-occupation of larger council homes and (i) households in adapted properties that no longer need the adaptation.

There is a major concern as large families on the housing register frequently have to wait many months if not years before a property of a suitable size becomes available. There are only 88 four or five bedroom properties owned by the Council.

Similarly we need to make more efficient use of adapted properties.

We are aware that some households that are under-occupying are struggling to manage their home.

The policy will cover three situations:

- Households in four or five bedroom properties who will be able to bid for one or two bedroom properties
- Households in three bedroom properties who will be able to bid for one - two bedroom properties
- Households in adapted properties who no longer need the adaptation – they will be able to bid for properties that reflect the size of the household.

The 'incentives' are that (i) households will be awarded band 1 on the housing register and (ii) a financial incentive of up to £1,000 subject to a number of criteria's.

Mutual exchange (ME) is a customer-led approach to help existing tenants who are in a low band on the housing register or who have no banding who wish to move.

Because of the shortage of council housing, existing tenants have little likelihood of being able to move through ‘finding your own home’ unless their health deteriorates, or their personal situation worsens.

Tenants using ME can exchange with tenants of the council or other social housing landlords locally or nationally.

Our data indicates that 85% of successful MEs involving our tenants are local moves. There are a series of conditions that determine whether tenants can use ME.

Who will be affected and how?

Council tenants who wish to downsize from three or more bedroom properties or who are in an adapted property and no longer need the adaptation – ITM will help households wishing to do so through the incentives

Households on the housing register who need a three or more bedroom property – Property vacated through ITM will improve the likelihood of obtaining a property

Households on the housing register who need an adapted property - Property vacated through ITM will improve the likelihood of obtaining a property

Council tenants who have a low or no banding on the housing register who wish to move – they will be able to use ME to help meet their housing requirements

Are there any other functions, policies or services linked to this impact assessment?

Yes No

If you answered ‘Yes’, please indicate what they are?

Housing allocations and lettings
Tenancy Management policy

Part 3 – Impact on the Community

Thinking about each of the Areas below, does or could the Policy function, or service have a direct impact on them?

Impact Area	Yes	No	Reason (provide brief explanation)
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Age	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITM will help under-occupying council tenants who wish to move – under-occupying households are mainly older households
Disability	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITM will help households on the housing register who need an adapted property by helping to create vacancies where an existing council tenant no longer requires an adapted property
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Gypsy/Travelling Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Those with caring/dependent responsibilities	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITM may help in situations where a household that is under-occupying with care needs and struggling to manage the property
Those having an offending past	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Children	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITM will help families with three or more children who may be overcrowded by creating vacancies in properties with three or more bedrooms
Vulnerable Adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Families	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITM – as above re Children ME will help existing council tenants to move to property and neighbourhoods which better meet their needs
Those who are homeless	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Those on low income	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Those with drug or alcohol problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Those with mental health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Those with physical health issues	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITM will help those who need an adapted property by creating vacancies in the adapted stock

Social inclusion Please include refugees and asylum seekers,	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Social inclusion: Armed Forces The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge that together we acknowledge and understand that those who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect and any impact should be considered	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
Health and Wellbeing	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both ITM and ME provide an opportunity for households to improve their housing situation – research has shown that this can improve health and well-being
Climate Change	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	

Part 4 – Risk Assessment

From evidence given from previous question, please detail what measures or changes will be put in place to mitigate adverse implications. this includes climate change considerations

This is the section in which to please outline any actions to mitigate negative or enhance positive impacts in terms of economic, environmental or wider societal considerations, and actions to review and monitor the overall impact of the change accordingly.

Impact Area	Details of the Impact	Action to reduce risk
ITM: Band 1 incentive	Households using ITM are placed in band 1 on the housing register – this does not guarantee that a suitable property as households must use 'finding your home' to bid for properties	Households will be reminded weekly about the bidding process and help / support will be offered
ITM: Financial incentive of up to £1,000	Households may consider that this is insufficient to cover the costs of moving into a different	The Council will highlight at the start of the ITM process about the limited nature of the financial incentive

	property	
ME: Finding a tenant with a suitable property that wishes to exchange	Inability to find a suitable property and a tenant willing to exchange may result in dissatisfaction with the policy	ME is customer-lead. It is the responsibility of the tenant to use a specific independent website to search for a mutual exchange. This is highlighted to tenants who are considering ME.

Part 5 - Action Plan and Review

Detail in the plan below, actions that you have identified in your Community Impact Assessment, which will eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations.

If you are unable to eliminate or reduce negative impact on any of the impact areas, you should explain why

Impact (positive or negative) identified	Action	Person(s) responsible	Target date	Required outcome
	Outcomes and Actions entered onto Pentana			
There are no actions identified to mitigate the positive impacts in the revised document.				

Date of Review (If applicable)

Guidance and form updated July 2023 following CMT approval.

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