



Environment and Community Panel
Tuesday, 8th July, 2025 at 4.30 pm
in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market
Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

Reports marked to follow on the Agenda and/or Supplementary Documents

1. **Cabinet Report - Changes to Social Housing Allocations Policy - Presentation** (Pages 2 - 13)

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REVISION OF HOMECHOICE POLICY FOR THE ALLOCATION OF SOCIAL HOUSING

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Presentation to Environment and Community Panel
8 July 2025



Outline

- What is HomeChoice – and how does it work?
- Why are we making changes – and what are we changing?
- Consultation Process
- Next Steps



What is HomeChoice?

- Online Housing Register for social and affordable housing
- Managed by BCKLWN on behalf of 12 housing providers
- Introduced in 2004; last revised in 2013

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How does HomeChoice work?



Why are we making changes?

- Changes in legislation
- Changes in demand
- Changes in the borough's overall approach to homelessness
 - Commitment in 2024-2029 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (action point 3.8)
- Feedback from internal and external stakeholders



What's changing?

4 bands: emergency, high, medium, low

1

Introduction of fifth “no priority” band – allows people who are adequately housed to be placed below those in some need.

Priority for every 10th family-type vacancy to those in employment

2

Removal of priority.
Current policy has good intentions but impossible to implement fairly.

What's changing?

Homelessness prevention cases (owed legal duty) placed in lowest band

3

Introduction of 'no priority' band means that prevention cases will have priority – improving chances of homelessness prevention

8
Separate welfare and medical criteria for assessment of applications

4

Welfare and medical elements to be combined - allowing greater flexibility and a wider range of priority

What's changing?

Medium priority for households: (1) Lacking a bedroom, (2) in a 1st floor flat with a child under 12, (3) in a flat with no garden

5

Lacking bedroom* remains medium priority; other factors moved to low priority (alongside homelessness prevention cases and others)

Applicants in supported hostel** accommodation given high band when ready to move on

6

High band retained if no other option but social; otherwise, medium (same as HMO residents)

*Housing Act 1985 defines statutory overcrowding

**such as Sanctuary Supported Living, Purfleet Trust Pathways Houses



What's changing?

Armed forces are considered to have local connection for 5 years after leaving the military



Removal of time limit – legal requirement and in line with Armed Forces Covenant

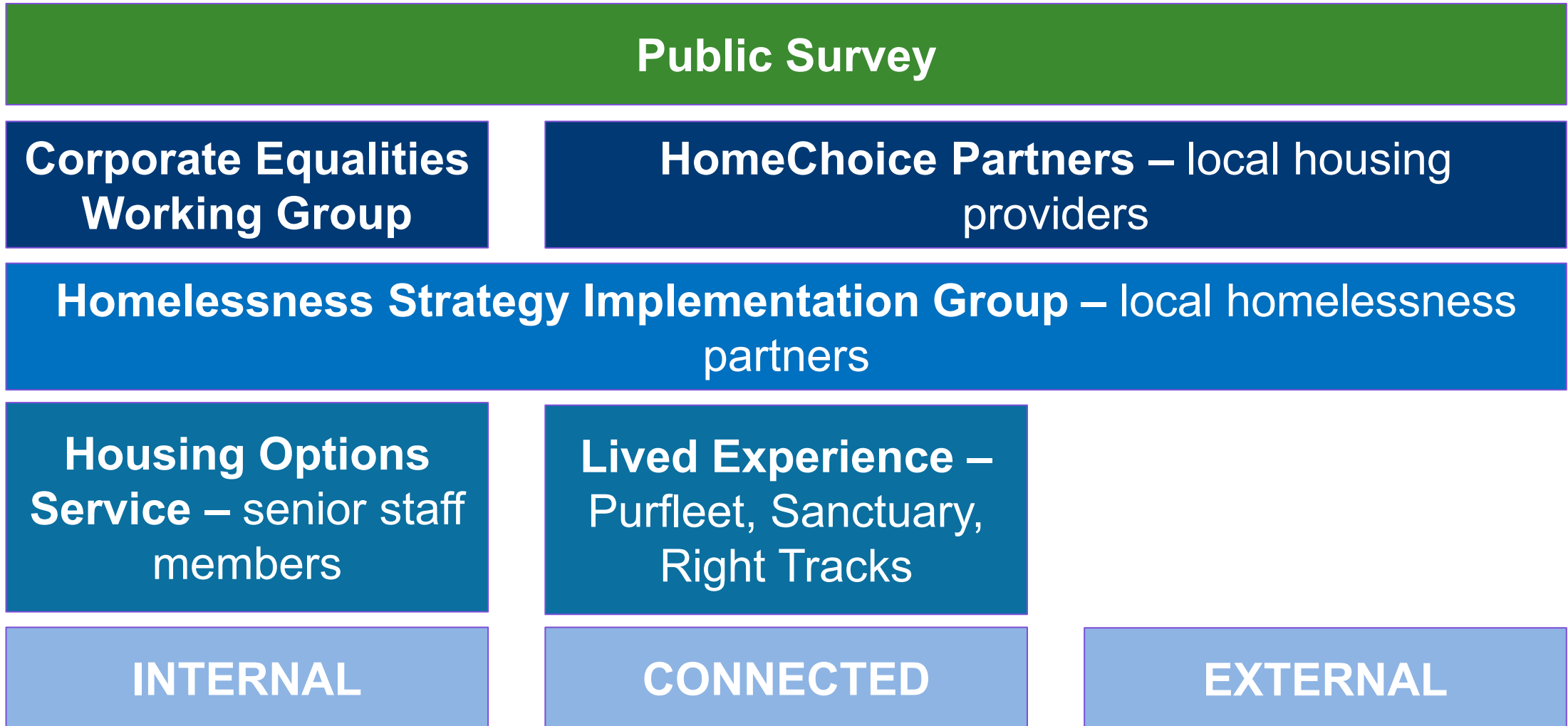
Care leavers – interim arrangements giving high band subject to conditions



Confirmation of arrangements as permanent – in line with Care Leavers Covenant

Consultation

11



261 contributors including at least 99 with lived experience of homelessness



Public Survey

- Widely promoted (online, word of mouth, lived experience)
- 212 respondents
 - 43% with lived experience of homelessness
 - 33% with long-term health condition or disability
- 12 ● All but one of the changes supported through the public survey
- Employment – 103 against, 80 for, 29 unsure
 - Weighed mixed public opinion against partner / lived experience opinion.
 - Considered equalities impact – overall positive impact.



Next Steps

