



LSC: 18th January 2023

CABINET: 24th January 2023

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
12th January 2023

Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Pryce-Roberts

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SUBJECT: DRAFT GARAGE ALLOCATIONS & MANAGEMENT POLICY

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider and agree the Garage Allocations & Management Policy

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

2.1 That the Garage Allocations & Management Policy attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved

2.2 That the Head of Housing, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to make minor updates and changes as required to this policy.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3.1 That the contents of the policy be considered by the committee.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Council owns and manages 1554 garages and several garage sites where tenants rent the site and are able to erect their own garage structure on the plot.

4.2 Historically, garages have been allocated to applicants based on the length of time that the applicant has been on the garage waiting list.

5.0 CURRENT SITUATION

5.1 The Council currently has approximately 350 empty garages. The Draft Garage Allocations & Management Policy outlines our approach to how these will be allocated and how garage applications will be processed.

5.2 Whilst many areas have an oversupply of garages and therefore there is low demand for the vacancies, there are also some areas where garage stock is very low so when a vacancy arises it can be very sought after. It is therefore important to have a clear, fair and balanced policy in place.

5.2 Whilst the primary aim of the policy is to outline the Allocations criteria, the draft policy incorporates our existing approach to the management of garages.

5.3 Prior to formulating the draft policy a consultation took place with existing garage tenants and applicants currently on the garage waiting list.

6.0 HIGHLIGHTS FROM CONSULTATION

6.1 Whilst 79.1% of respondents felt that the way we currently advertise garages was fair, when asked to rank the factors they held most important when allocating a garage the proximity of the applicants home to the garage was important. The table below shows the Average ranking

Currently we allocate garages based on length of time people have waited. We want to understand what factors you think are most important when allocating a garage. (Rank (1) being the most important to (8) being the least important)

OPTIONS	AVG. RANK
The applicant lives in the same street as the garage	2.61
The length of time an applicant has waited for a garage	2.73
The applicant lives in the same area as the garage. e.g., applicant lives in Ormskirk and wants to rent a garage in Ormskirk	3.63
The applicant is a resident of West Lancashire	4.52
The applicant intends to use the garage to keep a car in	4.97
The applicant has a diagnosed mobility issue	5.04
The applicant is a Council tenant	5.66

The applicant operates a business in the area	6.84
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- 6.2 Only 16.4% felt that we should continue to administer garage allocations through the Homefinder system, while 76.1% of respondents would prefer the Council to identify the applicant next in line for a garage in that area and contact the customer direct.

7.0 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

- 7.1 The Draft Policy moves away from prioritising applicants purely based on the length of time that they have waited for a garage and recognises the importance of giving preference to those who live in close proximity to a vacant garage. Waiting time would still be used to prioritise those within each of the Priority groups.
- 7.2 The Policy aims to develop a system which customers see as being fairer, whilst retaining its simplicity to understand and to operate.
- 7.3 As part of the implementation of the new policy it is intended to move away from the current system of advertising garages via the Homefinder website which requires applicants to complete a detailed registration process before submitting a garage application, with the applicant then needing to check the website on a regular basis and place bids. In response to customer feedback the new process would involve the Lettings team contacting applicants when they are next in line for a garage to make an offer. This means that once the applicant has submitted their original application, they do not need to do anything further.

9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The introduction of this Policy will create a more flexible, proactive approach to letting empty garages. A reduction in the number of empty garages will discourage antisocial behaviour and crime and improve the appearance of our housing estates.

10.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Any reduction in the number of empty garages will generate income and support the HRA Business Plan.

11.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant risk registers.

12.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Background Documents

*There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

* There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

Appendices

1. Draft Garage Allocations & Management Policy
2. Equality Impact Assessment