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David Marrs B.Sc  
**Executive Director**

Ref: PN

24 June 2008

To: The Mayor and Members of the **COUNCIL**

Dear Sir/Madam

I hereby summon you to attend a Meeting of the **COUNCIL** to be held in the Town Hall, Durham, on **Monday 30 June 2008, at 5.30 pm.**

### **BUSINESS**

1. Prayers.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. To approve as a correct record, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 May 2008.
4. Mayor's Announcements (if any).
5. Previous Questions under Council Procedure Rule No. 9.2.  
[Questions by Members – See Appendix 'A']
6. Notices of Motion
  - (a) Notice has been given by Councillor Simpson of his intention to move the following Motion:

“That the Council agree to invite Sir Bobby Robson to be admitted as an Honorary Freeman of the City of Durham, for services to sport, charity and his ongoing commitment and support to the local communities of Durham, and that, subject to his acceptance, a meeting of the Council be specially convened in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, for the purpose of such submission.”

Councillor Hopgood will second.
  - (b) Notice has been given by Councillor Pitts of her intention to move the following Motion:

“That the Council agree to invite Mr Fenwick Lawson to be admitted as an Honorary Freeman of the City of Durham, for his dedication to the Arts and his contribution to the cultural heritage of the City of Durham, and that, subject to his acceptance, a meeting of the Council be specially convened in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, for the purpose of such submission.”

Councillor Young will second.

- (c) Notice has been given by Councillor Woods of her intention to move the following Motion:

“That the Council agree to invite Dr Bill Bryson to be admitted as an Honorary Freeman of the City of Durham, for his services to the Arts and Tourism, and his international commitment and support to the City of Durham, and that, subject to his acceptance, a meeting of the Council be specially convened in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, for the purpose of such submission.”

Councillor Simmons will second.

7. Report of the Director of Financial Services.  
(Draft) Statement of Accounts 2007/2008.  
(Circulated under Separate Cover)
8. Report of the Director of Strategic Services.
9. Report of the Head of Legal and Strategic Services.

Yours faithfully

**Executive Director**

COUNCIL  
30<sup>th</sup> June, 2008

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9.2  
PREVIOUS QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

**Council – 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2008**  
**Min 500 (b)**

**Question to the Portfolio Holder for Communities**

“Could the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Cllr. Thompson, please tell us how many applications there have been under the new housing band system. Could he also provide details of the allocation of these applications by band; the number of appeals against the first allocated bands; the percentage of appeals that result in a successful re-allocation of band; the number of applications received from outside the District of Durham and the percentage of applications from outside the district who are allocated to either band A or B. Lastly could he also again pass on this Council's thanks to the officers who have dealt with this request.”

**Written Response to Councillor Taylor**

The Council's new Allocation Policy was introduced in August 2007. The main recommendation for introducing the Policy was to ensure that the City Council's Housing Allocations Policy met current legislation, Codes of Guidance and good practice.

The Policy is a Banding Policy and the structure and format of bands is based on reasonable preference as defined in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). The City Council has to ensure that, when allocating housing, reasonable preference is given to certain groups of applicants.

Since the introduction of the new policy 3308 applications have been registered for re-housing. These are allocated to each of the Bands in the following proportions:

Band A 3%    Band B 15%    Band C 20%    Band D 22%    Band E 40%

Although it is not a requirement under legislation the Council gives applicants the opportunity to request a review of the decision to place their application in a particular band. To date 170 applicants (5% of all registered applicants) have requested this. Of these:

- 57 appeals (33%) have resulted in a band change
- 72 appeals (42%) have remained in the same band
- 8 applicants (6%) withdrew their requests, some due to being re-housed
- 33 (19%) are still outstanding at present (some of these are awaiting medical assessments)

The 57 appeals that have resulted in a successful outcome have been due to a variety of reasons, i.e. medical assessment, incorrect date entered (with regards to time on previous waiting lists) and applicants failing to fill their application form in correctly i.e. not providing all the relevant information.

Other applications may also have changed band whilst being registered but this is not always the result of a request for a review of the band. A change of Band can also occur because a new medical assessment has taken place or other circumstances have changed, for example, a child has reached a certain age or other household or property changes have taken place since the application was registered.

Of the total applicants registered since the introduction of the new policy 546 applications were from applicants living outside of the district of City of Durham. Of these, 4 applicants (1%) were allocated to Band A and 31 (6%) applicants to Band B.

Under the Government's Guidance for the Allocation of Housing all eligible applicants can register regardless of whether or not they live within or outside the local authority area. The Authority can, however, give preference to those applicants that have a connection with the district.

Our Allocations Policy uses the definition regarding connection with the district given in the Government Guidance and places those applicants who do not have a connection with the district in Band E. There are currently 110 applicants in this band for this reason.