

**SPECIAL NEEDS  
AND SUPPORTED HOUSING**

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**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING  
GUIDANCE**

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**APPROVED 8TH APRIL 1998**

## SPECIAL NEEDS AND SUPPORTED HOUSING

### DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES ADOPTED BY COUNCIL AS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE ON 8TH APRIL 1998

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#### NEW CORPORATE OBJECTIVE

To provide a short, strategic context for the new policies for special needs and supported housing, an addition to the corporate objectives is proposed as follows :

"Ensure that the various communities which go to make up the City remain, or become more, self-sustaining in economic and social terms".

#### NEW STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY

The following proposed strategic policy sets out the city-wide approach of the Council to the provision of special needs and supported housing.

#### **POLICY**

The Council wishes to ensure that the City's various communities remain, or become more, sustainable in economic and social terms. In this respect, whilst generally welcoming housing developments which will provide accommodation for people with special needs in appropriate locations, the Council will seek to avoid an over-concentration of such provision in any one area. The criteria which the Council will apply in assessing applications for special needs housing are set out in Development Control Policies below.

#### **REASONED JUSTIFICATION FOR THE POLICY**

People with special needs may include the single homeless, the elderly, those with mental health problems, women who have experienced domestic violence, people with a long term debilitating illness, people who suffer drug or alcohol addiction, young people with specific support needs, and travellers *and people with learning or sensory disabilities*. The Council is aware of the special housing needs of these groups and is concerned that they should be adequately provided for in appropriate locations.

The Council welcomes the development of appropriately designed accommodation which enables people with special needs to maintain an independent lifestyle, and supports the work of housing associations and other agencies in this respect. However, the Council wishes to maintain an appropriate balance between different kinds of residential uses within local areas and will seek to use its powers as local planning authority to assist in achieving the corporate objective of ensuring that the various communities which go to make up the City remain, or become more, sustainable in economic and social terms. The concept of a "sustainable community" is not a simple one, and will vary over time and from one area to another. Nonetheless, the Council has a general objective of seeking to ensure that the physical renewal and improvement of the City goes hand in hand with social regeneration. There is

therefore a need to ensure that individual communities are in a position to meet most of their day to day needs locally - for example, in relation to housing, shopping, recreation, education and primary health care. The Council recognises that, at least in part, the social and economic *balance* of a community is achieved by avoiding an over concentration of special housing provision in any one area *because, for example, of changes in spending power or in the general mix population so that local facilities such as shops and services may suffer from reduced demand from certain groups. It also recognises that in some cases there are strong arguments for not locating accommodation for vulnerable people in areas which are highly unsustainable.*

The Council will keep under review the question of which areas of the City might give rise for concern in this respect and will from time to time issue Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in order to give detailed effect to this policy.

N.B. The proposed areas of constraint are defined in the last section of this document.

## NEW DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES

The following two new development control policies are proposed :

### DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICY I

In giving local effect to the above strategic city-wide policy, the Council will have regard to the following objectives for the City's local communities :

- (i) to ensure *a more* even spread of "special needs" accommodation within local areas and across the City as a whole, in order to encourage provision closer to where needs arise and avoid the need for people to move from their local community to find the accommodation they require;
- (ii) to ensure the protection of the residential character and amenity of family housing within established communities;
- (iii) to avoid the unnecessary loss of the bigger dwelling houses available for larger and extended families;
- (iv) to help local communities accommodate a range of special needs without the risk of social stress;
- (v) to avoid stigmatising a particular neighbourhood or a particular type of accommodation;
- (vi) to create and retain a positive perception of all areas of the City as a contribution towards the goal of maintaining stable and self-sustaining communities;
- (vii) to attempt to sustain the vitality and viability of local economies, by encouraging a wide diversity of social groups to live within all parts of the City;
- (viii) to avoid creating disproportionate stress on local services, such as health and education.

- (ix) *to avoid additional pressure on primary and secondary health care provision in parts of the City where there are already identified concerns about adequacy of services.*

## **REASON**

The reasons for this policy are set out in the above strategic city-wide policy. In addition, it is important that the diversity of the housing stock is maintained at the local level, and that the quality of the residential environment is protected. The Council wishes to ensure that there are no areas of the City which, because of the nature of local activities and amenities, or because of the quality of the physical environment, are viewed negatively by those who already live there, or who might consider living there.

## **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICY 2**

In deciding whether or not to grant planning permission for the kinds of housing accommodation described in the above proposed strategic city-wide policy the Council, in consultation with other competent agencies, will from time to time assess whether or not localised parts of the City have already reached their effective capacity to accommodate further special housing needs, in the terms set out above.

In addition to the social and economic criteria set out above, the Council will have regard to the local effect of this kind of housing provision in relation to :

- (i) displays of signs and notices;
- (ii) additional car parking space involving the loss of mature trees and landscaping, especially in front gardens;
- (iii) design of vehicular cross-overs to parking spaces in front gardens;
- (iv) provision of external fire escapes and lift shafts;
- (v) positioning of paladin bins;
- (vi) construction of links between what would otherwise be separate dwellinghouses;
- (vii) additional comings and goings from officials and professional visitors;
- (viii) more intensive use of upper floors, which become main living accommodation. This can reduce privacy to adjoining gardens and lead to noise transmission problems through party walls;
- (ix) the quality and maintenance of external areas.

## **REASON**

The reasons for this policy are set out in the above strategic city-wide policy. This policy lists a range of physical characteristics which, experience shows, are commonly associated with the more specialised kind of accommodation. Where the Council considers that the principle of an application for a special needs or supported housing scheme is acceptable, attention will be

given to these visual and local amenity considerations in order that the quality of the physical environment for all local residents is protected.

## **CHANGES TO EXISTING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES**

In addition to the above new policies, changes are proposed to two existing development control policies in the Manchester Plan.

### **CHANGE TO POLICY DC2 - REST HOMES AND NURSING HOMES (CLASS C2)**

Two additional criteria are proposed for Policy DC2.1, as shown below :

- the desirability of avoiding an over-concentration of special needs or supported housing in any one area of the City; and
- the desirability of broadly maintaining the existing character of a residential street or group of adjoining streets.

[The existing Policy DC2 is as follows :

In determining planning applications for rest homes, nursing homes and other uses within Class C2 of the Use Classes Order, the Council will have regard to :

- (a) the effect of the operation of the business on the amenity of neighbouring residents;
- (b) the standard of accommodation for the intended occupiers of the premises, including the availability of private outdoor amenity space;
- (c) the effect of the proposals on visual amenity;
- (d) the availability of adequate, safe and convenient arrangements for car parking and servicing; and
- (e) the ease of access for all, including disabled people].

### **CHANGE TO POLICY DC4, BED AND BREAKFAST ESTABLISHMENTS C1**

The policy now also applies to Hostels, which are "sui generis". Two additional criteria are proposed for Policy DC4.1, as shown below :

- the desirability of avoiding an over-concentration of special needs or supported housing in any one area of the City; and
- the desirability of broadly maintaining the existing character of a residential street or group of adjoining streets.

[The existing Policy DC4.1 is as follows :

In determining planning applications for developments involving the use of the premises for bed and breakfast accommodation (Class C1), the Council will have regard to :

- (a) the general location of the proposed development;
- (b) the effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents;
- (c) the standard of the accommodation for the intended occupiers of the premises;
- (d) adequate private outdoor amenity space;
- (e) the availability of adequate, safe and convenient arrangements for car parking and servicing; and
- (f) the ease of access for all, including disabled people].

### IDENTIFYING AREAS OF CONSTRAINT

The approach takes into account two broad factors :

- (a) the current level of provision of special needs and supported housing in different areas of the city;
- (b) the social and economic circumstances of the population resident in those areas, in particular those which give an indication of their "sustainability".

Neighbourhood Areas have been used for this analysis. There are 50 of these. They have the advantage that their boundaries attempt to reflect local perceptions of neighbourhoods, though they vary considerably in size.

#### **Mapping provision**

Information about current provision was taken from the Supported Housing Data base (maintained by Manchester Housing), as it stood in January 1997. Across all types of provision there were about 10,400 bedspaces in just over 1000 schemes throughout the city. The rate of provision for each area was established by comparing the number of bedspaces to the resident population, for total provision, and for each client group.

Analysis of total provision shows a very uneven pattern, as expected. It ranges from 103.3 bedspaces per thousand population in Miles Platting South to 1.0 per thousand in Burnage South. Map 1 shows all areas that are above the city average (27.4 bedspaces per thousand) in terms of overall provision, and also those that fall into the top two deciles (which equates to the "top ten", with over 35.5 per thousand). It would be helpful to compare this to a Greater Manchester average, but this is not yet available.

#### **Mapping sustainability**

The social and economic "sustainability" of an area is of great relevance to the amount of supported housing it can reasonably be expected to contain. There is no one definition of "sustainability", but its use usually implies a concern about both the economic and social circumstances of an area. This might include income levels, the number of people who are economically inactive or unemployed, the area's "stability" in terms of population turnover; the mix of population that it contains; its popularity as a place to live, and issues of security.

By adding further concentrations of supported housing or by locating large numbers of schemes for particular client groups in certain areas, both the economic and social balance of neighbourhoods can be altered. This may be through, for example, changes in spending power or in the general mix of the population so that local facilities such as shops and health services may suffer from either reduced demand (or in some cases disproportionate increases in demand) from certain groups.

As far as possible, provision should be made close to where clients already live (or, if they are returning to the community from an institution, the area of the city from which they originated), which would help to ensure that family and social support networks are maintained.

Not only is sustainability difficult to define unambiguously, but there are also no commonly agreed indicators. For the analysis, two were used ; -

- (a) households receiving Council Tax rebate, as an indicator of low income. This is available to households in all tenures (unlike Housing Benefit), is easy to update, and is able to be analysed for neighbourhood areas;
- (b) the number of properties that have changed Council Tax payer in the previous year, as a measure of population turnover in an area. This is derived from the Council Tax system.

Other indicators of concern about social and economic circumstances are available (for example, vacancy rates, population characteristics, health, welfare benefits), and other data will become available in the future (e.g. recorded crime and HMOs). Whilst the addition of more variables may produce more sophisticated measures, it is felt that the two defined in Paragraph 8 provided a valid basis for this work.

Map 2 combines these two indicators to arrive at a view about the sustainability of different neighbourhoods. It shows areas which are characterised by "high unsustainability", where over a third of households received Council Tax rebates, and where the population turnover was above the city average. These are coloured light blue.

It also shows areas (coloured dark blue) where over a third of households received Council Tax rebates, but which had lower than average population turnover. The remaining areas (uncoloured) are those where less than a third of households received rebates and where population turnover was lower than average. Using the criteria set out above, these areas can be regarded as more "sustainable", particularly the latter grouping.

### **Combining provision and sustainability**

Map 3 combines Maps 1 and 2. It shows:

\* areas with above average Special Needs and Supported Housing Provision and high unsustainability (A).

\* areas with above average Special Needs and Supported Housing Provision, but not high unsustainability (B)

\* areas with below average Special Needs and Supported Housing Provision, but high unsustainability (C).

\* the remaining areas which have below average Special Needs and Supported Housing Provision, and which are not high in terms of unsustainability (D).

Map 4 shows areas in the last category, but which nonetheless have higher than average provision of a particular category of supported housing. For example, Northern Moor neither has above average overall provision, nor is it categorised as "high unsustainability", but it already contains higher than average provision for elderly people and for people with learning disabilities, and therefore provision for these particular groups would be discouraged.

## APPLICATION OF THE POLICIES

As a general rule, additional schemes in Category A areas would not be supported. Where a local unmet need is identified, change of use of an existing project *may be appropriate but only exceptionally would a new project be supported.*

Schemes in category B or C areas would be given careful consideration in the light of local circumstances (taking into account criteria such as type, size, and whether occupancy is permanent or temporary), but could still be supported where there is clear evidence of unmet need.

Schemes in category D areas are most likely to receive support and may, in relevant locations, meet either local or city wide needs where the overall demand for such provision is low or very specialist services are required.

Other major considerations which will be examined in every case are:

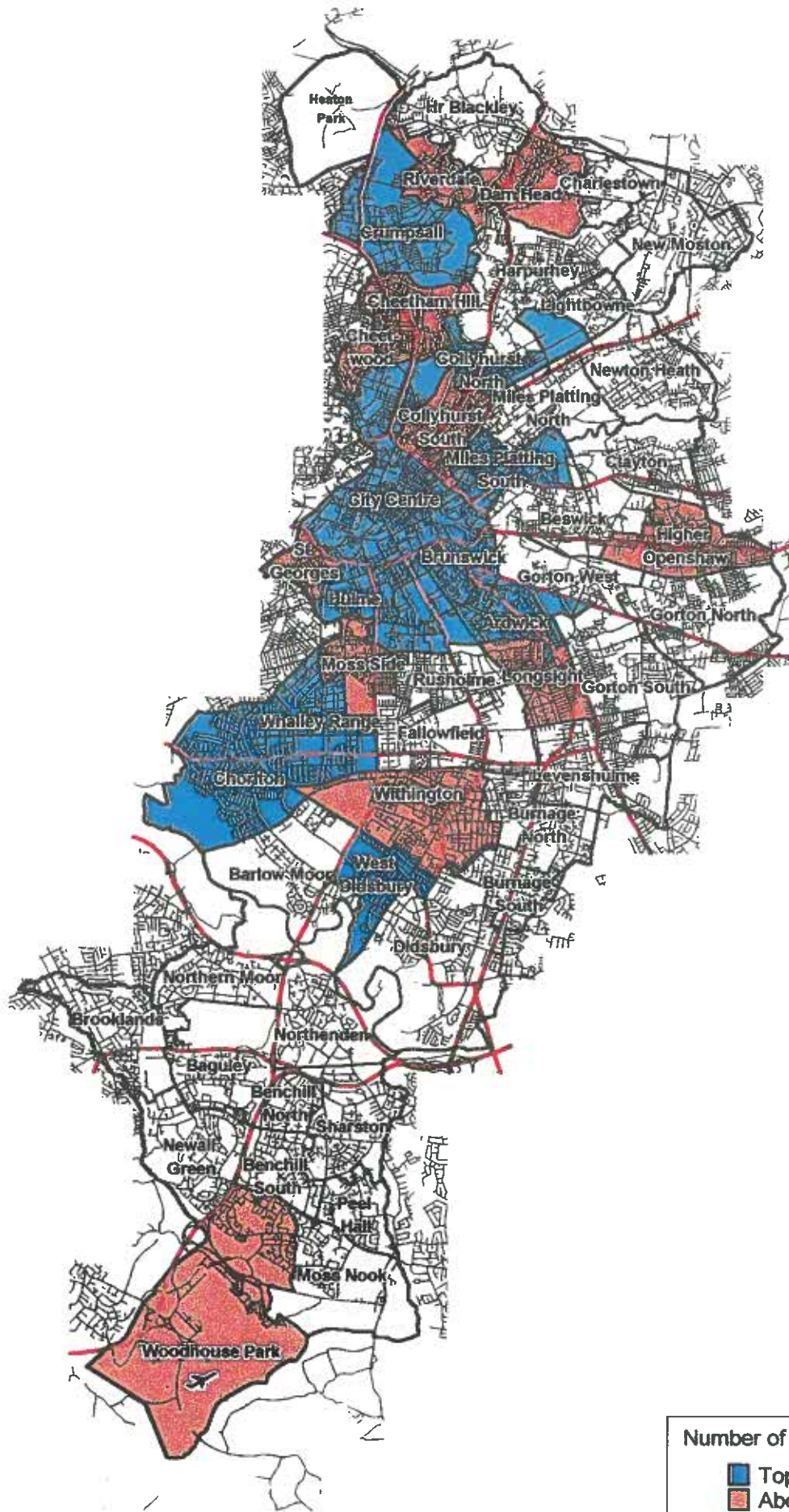
\* Is the scheme proposed for an area which already has above average provision for that particular client group? If this is the case then support may not be given even if the overall levels of provision are low and the indicators for the area do not show high unsustainability (i.e. category D areas).

\* Is the actual site/location appropriate? For example, large schemes of ten or more units would have a major impact if developed in a small cul-de-sac, especially if it involved high levels of staff or visitor arrivals and departures. Whilst the general area may be able to sustain the scheme, the particular street or road may not.

\* Within neighbourhoods where there are generally no problems with over-provision of supported housing schemes, or high unsustainability, there can be small pockets which, if examined outside the broader picture, would cause them to be categorised under A to C above. Proposals for schemes within these specific sub-areas would be treated as proposals for schemes in the category A to C areas.



Map 1 Total Provision of Supported Housing (all Categories) by Neighbourhood Area



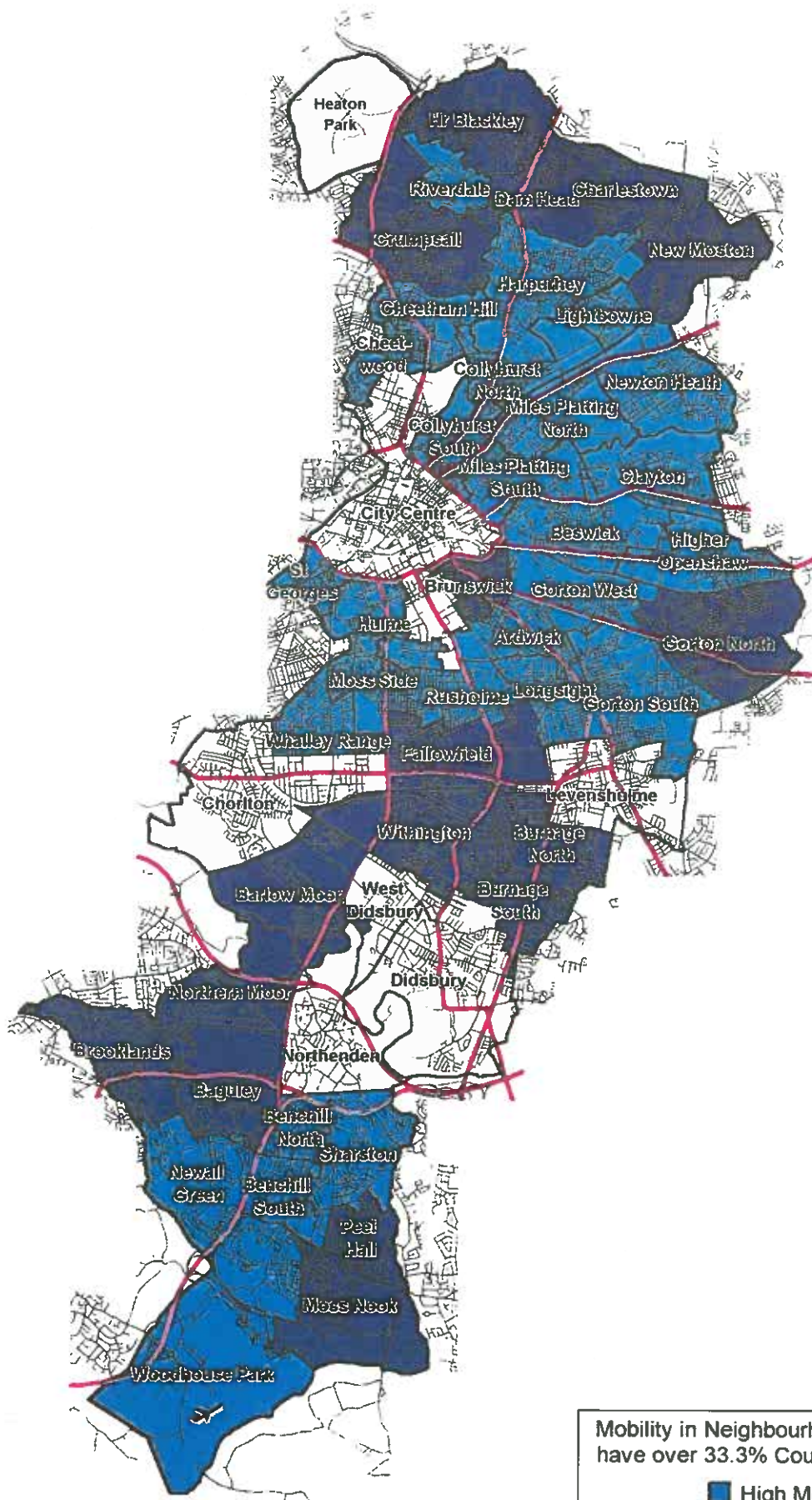
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Number of Bedspaces / 000

- Top 2 deciles
- Above average

City Average = 25.74

## Map 2 Sustainability Indicators by Neighbourhood Area



Mobility in Neighbourhood Areas which have over 33.3% Council Tax Rebates

- High Mobility
- Low Mobility

Average Mobility = 8.5%