Moving House Discovery Project and Business Case

Prepared by	Sunderland City Council (as Lead Council) in collaboration with Newcastle, Watford, North East Lincolnshire and Kirklees Council
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Version Control History	

Version	Overview of changes Made
Draft	Following draft business case walk through with Collaborating Councils and MHCLG on 17.4.19 are reflected therein as follows:

Section	Change(s) Made
Executive Summary	• Updated to reflect changes throughout document.
Moving House – Discovery Project & Business Case Introduction	• Introduction updated to reflect context of Moving House.
Hypothesis 1	• Updated quotes.
Hypothesis 3	• Including missed opportunities around safeguarding where data is shared across multiple departments. • Difficulties in extracting data / common data sets.
Hypothesis 4	• Local Authorities commercial experience/opportunities.
Moving House Summary – the case for change	• Updated Business Case imperatives, • Additional reason for change included.
Preferred option / recommendation	• Option 4 recommendations for next steps.

Executive Summary

Moving House can be a stressful experience and more so, for the most vulnerable that engage with a wider range of Council services e.g. elderly. Some may move many times as transient renters, continuously having to tell their story to a range of departments to change their address and circumstances.

Sunderland City Council (as the lead Local Authority) was successful in receiving funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to deliver a Discovery project on a 'tell-us-once moving-in process'. The objectives of the project were:

- To understand the problem and its impact on residents and on Local Authorities.
- To explore and consider potential digital solutions to address the problem.
- To create a business case (if the case for change is proven).

The five Local Authorities involved in the project were:

- Sunderland and Newcastle City Councils – urban unitary authorities in the north-east.
- Watford Borough Council – suburban district council in a large county in the south-east.
- North East Lincolnshire Council – a small coastal unitary authority combining rural and urban.
- Kirklees Council – a metropolitan borough council combining urban and rural areas

We essentially had four parts of a hypothesis that we wanted to test, and what the research told us, to identify whether these hypothesises were proven or unproven:

	Hypothesis to test	What the research told us – whether proven or unproven[1]
1	The process for residents to inform the Council that they have moved house is repetitive, unwieldy and confusing	Proven
2	Councils are having to process the same information multiple times within different departments	Proven
3	Not sharing the information with other departments / partners when we first receive it means Councils are missing the opportunity to prevent / avoid further issues (e.g. debt occurring, parking tickets being issued then having to be cancelled and increasing safeguarding risks etc)	Proven
4	Councils are potentially missing the opportunity to promote and / or sell other services	Unproven[2]

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[1] Details of how it was proven or unproven is contained within the findings of this report
[2] Although we anecdotally still believe that this hypothesis to be true, recognising that Local Authorities are often not commercially wired in marketing ourselves and opportunities

We recognised that when a person moves house, they often do not know who in the Council they should inform, when and how. Once they start the process, they need to make multiple contacts, provide the information several times, and often do it over the phone or face-to-face. The process is complex, time consuming, inconvenient and repetitive for the resident and Local Authority, leading to a poor customer experience and avoidable costs for the Council. It can also lead to future problems and negative impacts for the resident and the Local Authority.

Research shows that on average 12% of the population had a different address, to that of the previous year – equating this to a single address change across the five councils amounted to a minimum of 145,814 change of addresses each year. We then further identified that if we extend this across the population size of the UK; would equate to 7.5 million minimum change of addresses to be processed across Local Authorities each year.

The discovery work concluded that there is a compelling case to change the current process for informing the Council of a change of address.

Six potential options were identified, though it was identified that Option 4 would be the preferred option:

Option	Overview of Option	Key Constraints
1 – Do nothing	Leave the current processes as they are and do nothing to change the information provided to residents, and the way in which they are expected to report that they have moved house	Doesn't provide any improvement and misses opportunity to create efficiency.
2 – Create a whole new system that provides an end-to-end solution	This would be the creation of one system that would span all public sector organisations and deal with all 'moving house' notifications. There would be one web page providing all relevant advice and guidance. Information would be captured once, verified, used for all services, and the system would issue notifications. It would automate all processes meaning new Council Tax bills, parking permits, blue badge applications etc would be issued immediately via digital means. The new one system would have the capability within it to deal with the array of service requests	There isn't one such system and it appears cost prohibitive to create one. We'd need buy-in from all public sector organisations. The time factor would also prove a challenge.
3 – This solution is as above in Option 2 but without the need to create a new system that does everything (including the platform)	This solution is as above in Option 2 but without the need to create a new system that does everything (including the platform)	We don't think integration for all systems would prove value for money.
Preferred Option: 4 – Create a 'platform' to capture information; the platform would then integrate with systems that provide APIs / methods of integration	This solution is as above in Option 3 but only integrates with systems where possible/relatively straight forward/proven/cost effective. A form would be created to notify the back-office of the change where systems integration is not to be progressed	Not integrating for all services means there will still be some manual processing for some services.

Option	Overview of Option	Key Constraints
5 – Create a 'platform' to capture information once, then create a form that informs the back-office of the change	This Option is as Option 4 without any integration	Doesn't provide an ideal solution but does deliver some improvement. Low level of spend but low level of benefit.
6 – Provide a different Information and Guidance web-page and improve all the different separate forms that capture customers information	This option does not create any integration or replace the numerous existing forms with one information capture	Doesn't provide an ideal solution but does deliver some improvement. Low level of spend but low level of benefit.

Option 4 gives us the opportunity to deliver four of six core functions (as outline in the image below) and is the recommendation from our discovery stage.
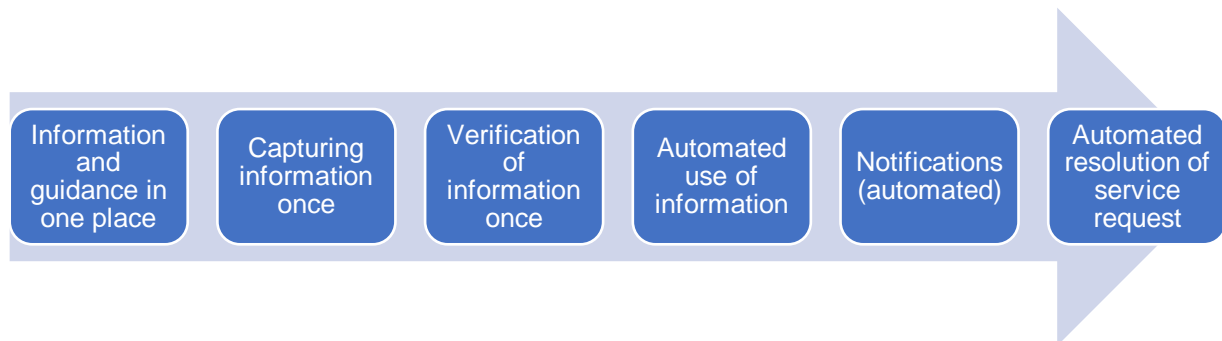
It is acknowledged that without the funding from MHCLG for the discovery exercise, this catalyst for change would have not be prioritised, proving the project with national drive and attention and the ability to access skill sets/training and collaborative working has been invaluable. This transference of skills and experience is now being used to transition to a more active and effective agile environment.

Moving House – Discovery Project and Business Case Introduction

Moving House can be a stressful experience and more so, for the most vulnerable that engage with a wider range of Council services e.g. elderly. Some may move many times as transient renters, continuously having to tell their story to a range of departments to change their address and circumstances.

The proposal agreed across a range of partner Local Authorities was to discover and test a number of hypotheses and understand if there was indeed a business case to invest in making change to the way we support our residents to tell their story once when they move.

Sunderland City Council (as the lead Local Authority) was successful in receiving funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to deliver a Discovery project on a 'tell-us-once moving-in process'. The objectives of the project were:

- To understand the problem and its impact on residents and on Local Authorities.
- To explore and consider potential digital solutions to address the problem.
- To create a business case (if the case for change is proven).

The five Local Authorities involved in the project were:

- Sunderland and Newcastle City Councils – urban unitary authorities in the north-east.
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- Kirklees Council – a metropolitan borough council combining urban and rural areas

In Scope Services

An exercise was carried out between the five collaborating councils to establish the common services across the councils where residents reported a change of address. These in-scope services were agreed as:

- Council tax
- Electoral registration
- Council Tax support / benefit
- Bins (new bins / assisted collections / garden waste collections)
- Library membership
- Parking permits
- Existing Blue Badge holders
- Older persons concessionary travel passes
- Disabled persons concessionary travel passes

This document is in two parts:

1. **Moving House – Discovery Project.** Details the Discovery work we have undertaken, in order for us confirm and define the Problem Statement.
2. **Moving House – Business Case.** Details the Business Case for making a change, in relation to the Problem Statement.

Moving House – Discovery Project and Case for Change

Hypothesis creation and research approach

We essentially had four parts of a hypothesis that we wanted to test:

1. The process for residents to inform the Council that they have moved house is repetitive, unwieldy and confusing.
2. Councils are having to process the same information multiple times within different departments.
3. Not sharing the information with other departments / partners when we first receive it means Councils are missing the opportunity to prevent / avoid further issues (e.g. debt occurring, parking tickets being issued then having to be cancelled and increasing safeguarding risks etc)
4. Councils are potentially missing the opportunity to promote and / or sell other services.

To research this hypothesis, we conducted the following types of Discovery:

User research and engagement

There were some key research goals which were to; identify the different resident groups, what they are and what they are trying to do and why, whilst understanding what they currently do and learn from their experiences. It was particularly important to understand their pain points and what their needs are and how they could be met.

We spoke to a series of 18 users, with a mixture of interviews, facilitated by the user researcher. These included semi structured face to face and telephone interviews and a focus group. All the users answered the same questions with affinity sorting used to uncover themes and insights.

The presentation below sets out the user research plan in more detail:

User Research
Plan.pptx

An example of the letter that was circulated to identified users, that sets out the objective of the user interviews, can be found in Appendix A.

Data and statistics fact finding

From a national to a local level fact finding and data collection took place. The results are captured throughout this document and all research included in the report are referenced for traceability of source data.

Process mapping

Process mapping took place across all the collaborating councils. The aim was to understand the process from each council's perspective in terms of how and where a change in circumstances is captured and processed.

These maps were then further analysed to identify commonality and patterns of activity so that a baseline of data could be collected.

'A Day in The Life Of'

To understand from the customers perspective how the journey felt for moving house and the varying interactions with the local authority; we took a combination of the personas identified from the user research and overlaid these with the journey of the multiple interactions/forms that were required to be completed and what the pain points were – in particularly linking these to direct quotes from the users identified. This then provided a customer journey on a page that brought together all key information to inform decision making.

Hypothesis review – what our Discovery work has told us

This section looks at each of the four hypothesis statements, the research we have done for each area, and whether we have proved, disproved, or the hypothesis remains unproven.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis we tested	The impact we thought it would have (before we did any research)
(1) The process for residents to inform the Council that they have moved house is repetitive, unwieldy and confusing.	- Time impact – both on the customer and the Council - A poor customer experience / journey - There are multiple / repetitive processes for customers to use and navigate. - Customers are unsure about which journey they should take. - There is a disjointed approach between Council departments - The process could negatively impact resident's mental health.

In Sunderland, a 'day in the life of' customer journey was mapped (as shown below) to illustrate the steps involved in the customer journey; bringing together the user research and testing the journey on the personas identified and the quotes and pain points that were experienced by the users:

Moving Home - As Is Customer Journey

The process map below summarises the typical number of contacts that a resident has to make to inform the Council of a change of address. This process also contained copies of the forms/screen shots of the systems that are updated in the process (the numbering on the process map refers to the screen shot/form that is used). This is a Sunderland process but is typical of the other four Local Authorities.

The different forms captured in the process map below, also show that the resident is required to provide the same, or very similar information, to different Council departments to collect 66 separate pieces of data across 6 departments. This is again a Sunderland City Council process but is typical of the other collaborating Councils.

Service	Name of Form(s) completed	Overview of Form	Process map / Forms and Screen shots
Council Tax	Change of Address – Moving In	- Standard customer name and address - CTAX specific - Bank Details	 Sunderland Moving Home Process Maps
Housing Benefit	Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support Claim	Standard customer name Benefits and CTAX specific Bank details	

Service	Name of Form(s) completed	Overview of Form	Process map / Forms and Screen shots
Refuse collection	• Wheeled Bins & Caddies	• Standard customer name and address • Refuse specific fields • Payment Details	
Elections	• Internal – Register Someone to Vote • External – GOV.UK – Register to vote	• Standard customer name and address • voting and register specific	
Blue Badge	• Customer Details	• Standard customer name and address	
Parking Permit	• Web Self Service Online Form	• Standard customer name and address fields • Permit Details • Payment Details	

These forms and screen shots of Sunderland's systems have been analysed along with the key data collected from across the departments and the results are shown below:

Data Collected	Council Tax	Housing Benefit	Refuse collection	Elections	Blue Badge	Parking Permits	Total No of times Data type collected
Title	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
First Name	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Surname	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
New address	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Previous address	x	x					2
Postcode	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Contact number	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Contact email	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Preferred method of contact		x	x	x			3
NI Number		x		x			2
DOB				x			1
Nationality				x			1
New property purchased / rented	x						1
Date moved in	x	x					2
Date property purchased	x						1
Date tenancy commenced	x	x					2
Name and address of solicitor	x						1
Name and address of landlord	x	x					2
How much is your rent?		x					1
Vehicle Registration						x	1
Vehicle Make						x	1
Vehicle Model						x	1
Do you live in HMO property						x	1
Blue Badge reference					x		1
Total data collected by department	**14**	**14**	**8**	**11**	**8**	**11**	**66**

As part of the research we wanted to understand from the context of a user, that when moving house, where the starting point could possibly be. We initially explored going into google and typing in 'notifying council of change of address'. A series of responses were returned, and when analysed identified that there was no single gateway or standardisation of who they need to inform, when they need to inform them and how to inform them. The first response returned was

*"You will **need to inform** the Local Authority of where you are moving from and where you are moving to around a month before you move. You will find a '**change of address**' page on your Local Authority's website"[3]*

As collaborating councils and investigating whether this guidance is indeed correct, a search was undertaken to test this theory. The response was that there was no single page/platform that a user is directed to, that contains a joined-up checklist on who to inform, what about and when.

Council	What is returned when enter 'change of address' on the Councils web page:	Web Link
Sunderland City Council	A series of search results – though there was no single page to signpost a user from and to.	https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/12026/Search?q=change+of+address&go.x=0&go.y=0
Newcastle City Council		https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/search-results?keyword=change%20of%20address
Watford Borough Council		https://www.watford.gov.uk/site_search/results/?q=change+of+address
North East Lincolnshire Council		https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/?s=change+of+address
Kirklees Council		http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/search/default.aspx?q=change+of+address&btnG=Search&entqr=0&output=xml_no_dtd&sort=date%3AD%3AL%3Ad1&site=Website&ie=UTF-8&client=Website

A series of searches were then undertaken, searching for 'moving home', to determine whether there were any exemplar checklists that could be reused. Whilst there were vast amounts of checklists available on the internet (primarily from private companies). One of the most concise checklist of who to inform and when was Which.uk[4] , though even then, there was no other information than to refer the reader to 'inform your local authority'. Further analysis identified that there was no single, government signposting area for moving home/change of address, illustrating just how disparate services are, and the frustrations residents face.

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[3] First response when entering 'notifying council of change of address' into Google
https://www.comparemymove.com/planning-moving-day/council-tax-moving-house
[4] Which.co.uk – Moving Home checklist https://www.which.co.uk/money/mortgages-and-property/home-movers/moving-house/moving-house-checklist-ap7pv6c6t74x#headline_2

The results of what was searched on 'gov.uk' and local.gov.uk' are shown below:

Government Site	What is returned when enter 'change of address' on the web page:	Web Link	What is returned when enter 'council change of address' on the web page:	Web Link
Gov.uk	A series of search results – though no single page of all the different departments to inform, to signpost a user to and from	https://www.gov.uk/search?q=change+of+address	A series of search results – though no single page of all the different departments to inform, to signpost a user to and from	https://www.gov.uk/search?q=council+change+of+address
Local Government Association (LGA)	No relevant search responses returned	https://www.local.gov.uk/	Only one relevant search response returned and the link was broken.	https://www.local.gov.uk/search/all/council%2Bchange%2Bof%2Baddress

The user research undertaken also proved this part of the hypothesis. The comments below illustrate some of the frustration that residents feel.

All user research is captured in the document below:

Moving House User
research report.docx

On the repetitive, difficult and confusing nature of the process:

- "One place, one time, one person"
- "Repetitiveness of the process was frustrating"
- "Don't waste people's time"
- "I want to get all I need to move home, first time, when I contact the council"
- "Make it easy to get the information to the council when you need to move"
- "Would be easier if I had notice of what I had to do before the move-I didn't have any idea"
- "Nobody told me that I needed to contact the council before moving home"
- "I didn't know I have to phone every Tom, Dick and Harry to let people them know that I am moving home"
- "I think when you need to move home, there should be some sort of list/guide that will tell you the things you need to do, when you need to them and how you can do them, the time scale you need to do them for the area you moved to"
- "I was given the information in bits as I went along trying to move home"
- "Change of voting information, council tax, blue badge, should have been sorted out in one process"
- "I don't know what information I will be asked if I managed to get through to someone on the phone- that really frustrated me"
- "Just an email will do to communicate and keep us informed of changes, keep people updated on what is happening and will stop people calling or visiting the council-it will nip a lot of things in the bud"
- "Even a text message from the council to say to they have my document(s) would be good"

On channel choice and overall experience:

- "I think when you need to move home, you should be able to just get on with it and do your change of circumstance in your time without hanging on the phone to the council. It's waste of time, it's very clerical and manual"
- "I want do the things I needed to do in my own time without waiting on someone from the council"
- "The only option I had was to phone, when I phoned, I thought it was a really long process to do what I would classify as a quick change of circumstances"
- "I had to do the phone calling within my working hours because that was the only time frame open to me - it felt old fashioned, I felt restricted, that really got on my nerves"
- "I don't want to be restricted to any time frame to get things done or when I can ring people - online give me that flexibility"
- "In an ideal world, would be nice to have something set up that you could go and complete the form and notify the change of circumstance in your own time – 24/7"

The user-research undertaken with 6 Customer Service Advocates at Sunderland City Council also echoed some of the feelings outlines above, with 100% stating the process for residents to inform the Council that they have moved is repetitive, unwieldy and confusing. Some of the key quotes from the Customer Service Advocates:

- "I wish I could do as much as possible first time".
- "I wished I had one place, one form, one system and one call, to help the customer meet their needs".
- "I don't feel like I helped the customer first time".
- "I wish I didn't have to pass them over to another team"

In conclusion, we feel all this evidence unequivocally **proves Hypothesis 1**, that the process for residents to inform the Council that they have moved house is repetitive, unwieldy and confusing.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis we tested	The impact we thought it would have (before we did any research)
(2) Councils are having to process the same information multiple times within different departments.	• Duplication of effort within the Council, therefore inefficient • Avoidable cost and expense • A poor customer journey as customers have to provide the same information multiple times.

As outlined for Hypothesis 1, our user research along with our process mapping and fact finding has overwhelmingly provided evidence that there is a poor customer experience with one resident quoting "*you just keep repeating yourself, you repeat the same information to different people, different services, different places, it can seem very lengthy*".

As also mentioned above, we analysed contact data across all five local authorities and found repetition of process across individual departments; we also found that the process is typically manual, with very little online collection of data, and / or automated processing of information.

The volumes captured by the different councils are broken down under Appendix B which details the number of change of address related reports and time spent handling reports by Councils. In some areas it proved difficult to collect this information – either this information wasn't held/recorded or the process wasn't isolated from general change in circumstances process (such as Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support). However, what this analysis did highlight was that it was extremely difficult to baseline the data to cost up the process across the collaborating councils. As the majority of the data could be further interrogated by Sunderland City Council; our costing model was used as an indication of costs. In terms of how much this is costing Local Authorities, we have used Sunderland's end to end contact handling and processing data and estimated the annual processing time equating to 638,248 minutes, equating to 5.53 FTE at a cost of £103,350. This relates to contact handling and processing change of address information for the services in scope within the discovery exercise, which is further broken down along with the assumptions used in Appendix C.

In conclusion, we feel this evidence **proves Hypothesis 2**: that Councils are having to process the same information multiple times within different departments which is leading to Council inefficiency and customer frustration.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis we tested	The impact we thought it would have (before we did any research)
(3) Not sharing the information with other departments / partners when we first receive it means Councils are missing the opportunity to prevent / avoid further issues (e.g. debt occurring, parking tickets being issued then having to be cancelled and increasing safeguarding risks etc)	• Resulting in a negative impact on the customer • Customer complaints • Reputational damage – makes Council's look like they are disjointed across departments • Council's data being incomplete = data quality issues, and therefore impacts on our business intelligence • Missing opportunities around safeguarding where data is shared across multiple departments

We found evidence of this when we undertook our user research with residents, as illustrated from the quotes below:

- "Information relating to council tax is still lacking, make the council tax clearer - between Novembers and now, I must have paid different amounts of council tax"
- "Tried to sort out change to voter's information, council tax and blue badge during a move is terribly hard. I had to go to one department and then to another department, all at different times and yet, still been asked the same question and providing the same documentation".
- "Would be nice to have all the Council services talking to each other, for example, the library; I have to tell the library separately that I have moved".
- "The library services, bin services, parking permit; I have to tell them separately".
- "I wasted my time, repeatedly notifying every council service that I have moved home".
- "I wish they had systems that shared information across other council services".

The user-research undertaken with the Customer Service Advocates at Sunderland City Council also echoed some of the feelings outlined above, as the following quotes show:

- "I don't have access to other services, other systems, other Council services, for example, the library, to quickly help the customer".
- "Our ways of working, in silos, our processes, our teams, are not joined up to collaborate, so we have prolonged delays before the customer gets the help they need".
- "We have many different systems that don't talk to each other, they're not joined up, not interconnected".
- "I wish we had systems that shared information across other Council services".

We considered formal customer complaints to see whether this issue arose and identified an example which was raised within Sunderland City Council due to the process involved in updating change in circumstances.

We identified that whilst there was data available, and the benefits in sharing, it was difficult to extract this, accompanied by no common data sets for person and property identifiers across the systems in use, to therefore making it meaningful to extract and share.

In conclusion, while there is not as much clear-cut and abundant evidence in relation to this part of the hypothesis, we still believe we have gathered enough to **prove Hypothesis 3:** that not sharing moving house information across other departments when it is first received means that Councils are missing the opportunity to prevent / avoid further issues.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis we tested	The impact we thought it would have (before we did any research)
4) Councils are potentially missing the opportunity to promote and / or sell other services.	• Potentially missing extra revenue stream opportunities (e.g. bulky waste, green waste etc.) • Customer go elsewhere • Reputational damage – makes Council's look like they are disjointed across departments

We have been unable to find compelling evidence to support this hypothesis. Although we anecdotally still believe that this hypothesis to be true, whilst recognising that Local Authorities are often not commercially wired in marketing ourselves and opportunities, we have currently concluded that **Hypothesis 4** (Councils are potentially missing the opportunity to promote and / or sell other services) is **unproven** and therefore will not form part of the business case at this point.

Our Problem Statement

Testing our hypothesis through the Discovery work we have done has enabled us to refine our Problem Statement:

When a person moves house, they often do not know who in the Council they should inform, when and how.

Once they start the process, they need to make multiple contacts, provide the information several times, and often do it over the phone or face-to-face. The process is complex, time consuming, inconvenient, and repetitive for the resident and the Local Authority, leading to a poor customer experience and avoidable costs for the Council.

It can also lead to future problems and negative impacts for the resident and the Local Authority.

The size of the problem

The census population data[5] was used to obtain a baseline of data of the collaborating councils with results showing that 12% of the population had a different address, to that of the previous year. On analysing this data across the collaborating councils with the numbers outlined in the table below, it illustrates the vast numbers of contact for a single change of address.

This coupled with evidence of residents having to provide this information separately to up to 6 different departments within a Council, including at a minimum, Council Tax, Housing Benefit, Refuse Collection, Elections, Blue Badge and Parking Permits. The total amount of changes to be processed across the collaborating council could be 874,884 each year. In addition to these contacts, some collaborating authorities may also provide additional services such as Libraries, Leisure and Concessionary Travel where there could be up to 9 change of addresses to be processed.

Council	2011 census population	How equated to 12% of single change of addresses	Total number of change of addresses (with 6 different departments)
Sunderland City Council	275,506	33,061	198,366
Newcastle City Council	268,064	32,168	193,008
Watford Borough Council	90,300	10,836	65,016
North East Lincolnshire Council	159,616	19,154	114,924
Kirklees Council	422,458	50,595	303,570
Total in scope for Discovery	**1,215,944**	**145,814**	**874,884**

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[5] Census 2011 Population Data:
https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/articles/internalandinternationalmigrationfortheunitedkingdomintheyearpriortothe2011census/2014-11-25

Taking the 2011 census population data, where there was a population size in the UK of 63.2 million – this would equate to 7.5 million minimum change of addresses to be processed. If we then equate this to updating as a minimum across 6 departments per local authority, this figure could rise to 45 million change of address items to be processed across local authorities in the UK each year.

The severity of the problem

We have seen evidence of formal complaints from each Local Authority about this problem. The 'Day in the Life of' process maps show that this is a problem that affects many services and processes. And the user research we have done has proven that the process is very frustrating for residents.

Whilst sharing information amongst departments and partners maybe beneficial, especially in the context for providing information once and updating many, we also recognise the legal implications of data sharing. Within Sunderland City Council, we ensure to abide by data protection[6] in that, the law tells us how to ensure that the information we create and hold is processed in accordance with our customer's individual rights. The Act places a legal responsibility on councils to make sure that all data collected, obtained and processed receives the right level of protection and is protected from loss and unauthorised use. We will always gain explicit consent from customer's at the point of data collection and explain clearly how the information they give us will be used. Privacy notices will be used as standard to describe how we use customer's personal data.

That said, not addressing the problem would not have a serious or significant negative impact on most residents or Councils. The cost-saving opportunity and the number of people this impacts would be the most compelling reason to address this problem, not the severity or potential negative impact of it.

Moving House Summary – the case for change

Our Discovery work has led us to conclude that there is a compelling case to change the current process for informing the Council of a change of address. This is summarised in the table below:

	Reason for change	Business case imperative
1	The customer experience is confusing, repetitive, and frustrating	STRATEGIC case for change – all Councils are seeking to improve the customer experience and to enable residents to do more for themselves
2	There is a poor current digital offer which limits user accessibility and choice	STRATEGIC case for change – all Councils are seeking to increase the amount of digital services they provide; MHCLG are seeking improved digitalisation – designing services with users that meet their needs that are intuitive and simple to use and this becomes their preferred method
3	It is inefficient for Councils; there are cost savings that could be made if the process is changed	FINANCIAL case for change – all Councils are seeking to reduce costs and realise efficiencies by reducing touch and pain points in customers journeys
4	The current process creates future issues and costs for customers and Councils	STRATEGIC case for change – improving the customer experience and preventing crisis FINANCIAL case for change – cost avoidance (for the customer and the Council)

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[6] Sunderland City Council Data Protection statement: https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/data-protection

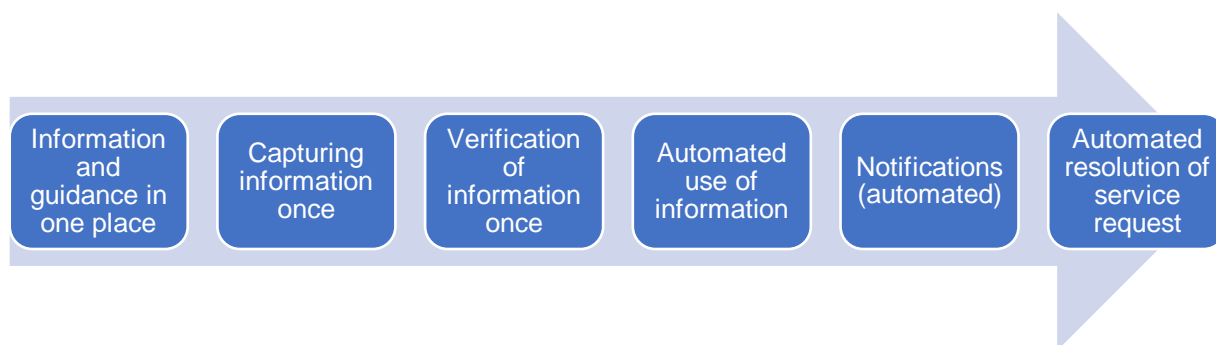|	Reason for change	Business case imperative
5	The current process maintains a reputational damage risk for Councils	STRATEGIC case for change – risk mitigation for Councils
6	The current processes increase the risks in safeguarding where information is not shared across departments	STRATEGIC case for change – high profile consideration for all councils both reputationally and financially

Moving House – Business Case

Options

Our Discovery Project has proven the STRATEGIC and FINANCIAL case for change. We have then considered what options could address the Problem Statement (reiterated below for ease of reference):

When a person moves house, they often do not know who in the Council they should inform, when and how.

Once they start the process, they need to make multiple contacts, provide the information several times, and often do it over the phone or face-to-face. The process is complex, time consuming, inconvenient, and repetitive for the resident and the Local Authority, leading to a poor customer experience and avoidable costs for the Council.

It can also lead to future problems and negative impacts for the resident and the Local Authority.

We feel that the solution would contain a number of core functions and components as illustrated below, with the ideal solution providing all of these elements digitally and in an automated manner:

| Information and guidance in one place | Capturing information once | Verification of information once | Automated use of information | Notifications (automated) | Automated resolution of service request |

We have identified 6 potential options; they are:

1. **Do nothing.** Leave the current processes as they are and do nothing to change the information provided to residents, and the way in which they are expected to report that they have moved house.

2. **Create a whole new system that provides an end-to-end solution.** This would be the creation of one system that would span all public sector organisations and deal with all 'moving house' notifications. There would be one web page providing all relevant advice and guidance. Information would be captured once, verified, used for all services, and the system would issue notifications. It would automate all processes meaning new Council Tax bills, parking permits, blue badge applications etc would be issued immediately via digital means. The new one system would have the capability within it to deal with the array of service requests.

3. **Create a 'platform' to capture information; the platform would then integrate with all relevant back office systems.** This solution is as above in Option 2 but without the need to create a new system that does everything (including the platform).

4. **Create a 'platform' to capture information; the platform would then integrate with systems that provide APIs / methods of integration.** This solution is as above in Option 3 but only integrates with systems where possible/relatively straight forward/proven/cost effective. A form would be created to notify the back-office of the change where systems integration is not to be progressed.

5. **Create a 'platform' to capture information once**, **then create a form that informs the back-office of the change.** This Option is as Option 4 without any integration.

6. **Provide a different Information and Guidance web-page and improve all the different separate forms that capture customers information**. This option does not create any integration or replace the numerous existing forms with one information capture.

We would expect the 6 options to deliver against the core functions and components in the following way:

Option:	Core functions – provided digitally, efficiently, and automated						Ranking
	Information & guidance in one place	Capturing information once	Verifying information once	Automated use of information	Notifications (automated)	Automated Resolution of service request	
1 – do nothing	N	N	N	N	N	N	6
2 – whole system	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	1
3 – platform plus full integration	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	2
4 – Platform plus patial integration	Y	Y	Y?	Y?	Y?	Y?	3
5 – platform plus informing back-office	Y	Y	Y?	N	N	N	4
6 – New web page plus better forms	Y	N	N	N	N	N	5

The table above shows that the ideal solution in terms of outputs would be **option 2.**

Economic case

We have considered the options against the key economic factors, and while Option 2 may be the ideal solution in terms of outputs, the table below shows that it may not be achievable or affordable.

Longlisted options	Critical Success Factors				Notes	Ranking
	Strategic fit	Achievability and deliverability	Affordability	Potential VFM		
1 – do nothing	N	Y	Y	N	Constraints: Doesn't provide any improvement and misses opportunity to create efficiency.	6
2 – whole system	Y	N	N	N	Constraints: There isn't one such system and it appears cost prohibitive to create one. We'd need buy-in from all public sector organisations. The time factor would also prove a challenge.	5
3 – platform plus integration	Y	N?	N?	N	Constraints: we don't think integration for all systems would prove value for money.	4
4 – Platform plus partial integration	Y	Y	Y	Y	Constraints: Not integrating for all services means there will still be some manual processing for some services.	1
5 – platform plus informing back-office	Y?	Y	Y	Y?	Constraints: doesn't provide an ideal solution but does deliver some improvement. Low level of spend but low level of benefit.	2
6 – New web page plus better forms	Y?	Y	Y	Y?	Constraints: doesn't provide an ideal solution but does deliver some improvement. Low level of spend but low level of benefit.	3

Preferred option / recommendation

Given our analysis, our preferred option is option 4; platform plus partial integration (reiterated below for ease of reference):

> Option 4: **Create a 'platform' to capture information; the platform would then integrate with systems that provide APIs / methods of integration.** This solution is as outlined in Option 3 but only integrates with systems where possible/relatively straightforward/proven/cost effective. A form would be created to notify the back-office of the change where systems integration is not to be progressed.

This option gives us the opportunity to deliver four of six core functions and components of an ideal solution, as well as being achievable, affordable and providing value for money, in the context that we integrate where possible. This is the recommendation from our discovery stage.

Our analysis and experience in Local Authorities tells us that commercially the cost of integrations may make platform integration unaffordable and why we need to ensure that, should we progress with this as our preferred option, we do so by extending the discovery exercise to understand all current systems in use, what methods of integration are available, how much these systems cost (including licencing), what other dependency these systems have/are used by and where they are in their contract renewal lifecycle, capacity required to maintain these integrated systems and the required common data sets, will help us to determine at a more granular level where and when we can phase rolling out integration.

We also recognise, that whilst there is a will to integrate at a political level, this may not be possible with the systems currently in place (for example a stand-alone system in Elections) or due to the processes and will of the local service areas, or where there are no common data sets in place.

It is acknowledged that without the funding from MHCLG for the discovery exercise, this catalyst for change would have not be prioritised, proving the project with national drive and attention and the ability to access skill sets/training and collaborative working has been invaluable. This transference of skills and experience is now being used to transition to a more active and effective agile environment.

Appendix A: Template letter to Users to engage in User Research

Dear……….

I am contacting you today because I would like to find out if you recently moved home and have requested help from Sunderland City Council to get the things you need when you moved home.

Sunderland City Council and its partners are currently running a Moving House Project. The project is looking at new ways to support residents when they move home.

We therefore want to conduct user research which will help us to design the new moving house digital service. In these informal research sessions, we will have a conversation with you and gather your feedbacks on your experiences when you moved home

Our request is that you allow us to run 1-2-1 research sessions with you to look at the new ways that Sunderland City Councils and its partners can meet the needs of residents when they move home.

Initially we would like to run the first research session week beginning **25th Feb – 1st March, 2019 for Sunderland Residents only. The venue for the research session will be Sunderland City Council.** If you would like to participate, please let us know

However, we will be running follow up sessions, so if you are unable to make these dates, or we are unable to fit you into this round, we will try to fit you into subsequent rounds of research.

What will happen on the day

- We will ask you questions about when you moved home and how you think Sunderland City Council helped you with the things you need.
- We will gather your feedback and use that feedback to come up with design ideas.
- The informal interview sessions will last for 30 to 40 minutes
- Your participation is voluntary

Next steps

If you are interested in participating please, get in touch with the researcher **Francis Ojei** on **francis.ojei@sunderland.gov.uk**, please let us know:

(a) If you recently moved home
(b) If you are about to move home

Please note we welcome people with disabilities and limited digital skills.

Kind regards

Francis Ojei

If you have any further question, you may contact:

Gary Williamson,
Lead Manager/Customer Service Network
01915614934
Email: Gary.williamson@sunderland.gov.uk

Appendix B: Number of change of address related reports and time spent handling reports (by Council)

Sunderland City Council

	Digital (Customer Self Serve)		Non-digital		Average processing time	Estimated or actual data
	Number of reports	Average handling time	Number of reports	Average handling time		
Council Tax	0	0	25218	05:00	16:00	Actual data
Electoral Services	16,644	04:00	1858	03:38		Estimated data
Refuse / recycling	245	04:30	261	03:38		Estimated data
Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support	0		1723	04:58	05:00	Actual data
Libraries			360	0.3		Estimated data
Leisure						
Existing Blue Car Badge Holders	1	02:00	1	03:00	03:00	Estimated data
Older persons concessionary travel						
Disabled persons concessionary travel						
Residents Parking Permits	3086	0	0	0	01:00	Estimated data

Supplementary information on data that was unable to be collected *(as shaded out in table above)*
- **Leisure**: Service not delivered by Sunderland City Council.
- **Older persons concessionary travel**: Service delivered by NEXUS on behalf of all Tyne and Wear Councils.
- **Disabled persons concessionary travel**: Initial assessment carried out by Sunderland City Council but change of address reports dealt with by NEXUS.

Newcastle City Council

	Digital (Customer Self Serve)		Non-digital		Average processing time	Estimated or actual data
	Number of reports	Average handling time	Number of reports	Average handling time		
Council Tax			19,500		15.00	Estimated data
Electoral Services		04:00				
Refuse / recycling						
Housing Benefit (HB) / Council Tax Support (CTR)			35853 (HB) 113,938 (CTR)		20.00	Estimated data
Libraries					5.00	Estimated data
Leisure						
Existing Blue Car Badge Holders	1,928				2.00	Estimated data
Older persons concessionary travel						
Disabled persons concessionary travel						
Residents Parking Permits	12,758				9.00	Estimated data

Supplementary information on data collected/unable to be collected *(as shaded out in table above)*

- **Council Tax**: Average based on 3 separate months statistics - both digital and non-digital. Processing time is based on 1 account for which we have all the information for, officers work on end to end processing so if they deal with 1 account they work on all accounts affected which averages 5, so the figure is higher in reality.
- **Refuse / recycling**: No data available
- **Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support**: Process isn't isolated from general change in circumstances process. Total change in circumstances performed against caseload of 10,000 HB Claims, changes for CTR are captured under council tax.
- **Libraries**: Information isn't captured - amends made ad hoc by librarian on a system when person informs Library
- **Existing Blue Car Badge Holders**: Total number of review/repeat applications
- **Older persons and Disable persons concessionary travel**: Data not available
- **Residents Parking Permits**: Includes both resident and visitor permit, if you move you start with a new permit process

Kirklees Borough Council

	Digital (Customer Self Serve)		Non-digital		Average processing time	Estimated or actual data
	Number of reports	Average handling time	Number of reports	Average handling time		
Council Tax	39168		15072	5.00		Actual data
Electoral Services (App to register to vote)	21272	2-5mins	11039	4.00		Partial Estimates
Electoral Services Canvas Responses	53691		15816			Actual ...... Handling partial estimate
Refuse / recycling	503	0	1748	5.50		Estimated data
Refuse / recycling - Tip Permits	916	0	17	2.50		Estimated data
Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support	3106	22.00	9	22.00	34265 mins	Estimated data
Libraries			760	2.50		Estimated data
Leisure						
Existing Blue Car Badge Holders						
Older persons concessionary travel						
Disabled persons concessionary travel						
Residents Parking Permits	2895	5.00				Actual data

North East Lincolnshire Council

	Digital (Customer Self Serve)		Non-digital		Average processing time	Estimated or actual data
	Number of reports	Average handling time	Number of reports	Average handling time		
Council Tax	6884	5.00	nil		average end to end process from form submission to customer feedback - up to 5 weeks depending what has to be actioned.	
Electoral Services	Total since 26/7/18. Via IERDS 5484	3.00	Total since 26/7/18. Paper forms 3601 Telephone 831 - team submissions on system , Change of names 135	5.00	unable to provide	Actual data
Refuse / recycling	108 garden waste only	5 days for full process to take place	nil			Actual data
Housing Benefit	2502	5.00	nil		average end to end process from form submission to customer feedback - up to 5 weeks depending what has to be actioned.	Actual data
Libraries outsourced						
Leisure - outsourced						
Existing Blue Car Badge Holders	Unable to provide data		Unable to provide data			
Older persons concessionary travel - outsourced						
Disabled persons concessionary travel - outsourced						
Residents Parking Permits _ partner working	0		193	30 mins to several days depending on initial info.		Actual data

Watford Borough Council

	Digital (Customer Self Serve)		Non-digital		Average processing time	Estimated or actual data
	Number of reports	Average handling time	Number of reports	Average handling time		
Council Tax			1500		15.00	Estimated data
Electoral Services	10253		3130		5.00	
Refuse / recycling						
Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support			376			Actual data
Libraries			150		5.00	Estimated data
Leisure						
Existing Blue Car Badge Holders			75		3.00	Estimated data
Older persons concessionary travel			75		3.00	Estimated data
Disabled persons concessionary travel						
Residents Parking Permits	500	0				Estimated data

Supplementary information on data collected/unable to be collected *(as shaded out in table above)*

- **Council Tax**: Good estimate based on extrapolation of a report
- **Electoral Services**: This is the number of new registrations per year. Not possible to identify if these are associated with moves. Additional benefit of process though - up ER rates as may trigger people to register who otherwise wouldn't.
- **Refuse / recycling**: No information available as currently no need for a "service" for a move in unless there are no bins, which is mixed with replacement bin data. No record of requests for info re bin day etc.
- **Libraries**: Not possible to get data, as accurate address data is not necessarily held if people move they won't ask or know. Project may provide a cleaner database of addresses, though unclear of benefits as majority of communications (inc newsletters) are electronic. Approx 10,000 active borrowers across Watford so if same assumption is made as parking permits vs total residents this is around 10% of the resident base therefore if 1500 moves per year could assume 150 library address changes.
- **Leisure**: Information not available - for Watford this is a signposting requirement rather than a transactional join-up
- **Disabled Persons concessionary travel**: In Older persons above - not possible to differentiate
- **Residents Parking Permits**: Process is 100% digital already

Appendix C: Sunderland City Council Staffing Costs for services in scope to process change in circumstances

Service Area that has been Process Mapped (AS IS) in SCC	Salary Grade within SCC	SCC Annual wage for Grade (inc on-cost) @ top of minimum band	@ top of maximum band	As is time minimum per e-2-e process (in minutes)	maximum per e-2-e process (in minutes)	Frequency per year	Where Actual (A) or Estimated (E)	Annual time Minimum As Is Time (annual mins)	Minimum FTE	Maximum As Is Time (annual mins)	Maximum FTE	Annual cost minimum per year	maximum per year
Council Tax	Grade 3/4	£25,869.00	£29,252.00	5	5	25218	A	126,090	1.09	126,090	1.09	£28,255.56	£31,950.66
Council Tax (Processing)	Grade 4		£29,252.00	16	16	25218	A	403,488	3.5	403,488	3.5	£0.00	£102,242.13
Elections (Digital)	Customer			4	4	16644	E	66,576	0.58	66,576	0.58	£0.00	£0.00
Elections (Non-Digital)	Grade 3/4	£25,869.00	£29,252.00	3.63	3.63	1858	E	6,745	0.06	6,745	0.06	£1,511.39	£1,709.04
Blue Car Badges (Digital)	Customer			2	2	1	E	2	0	2	0	£0.00	£0.00
Blue Car Badges (Non-Digital)	Grade 3/4	£25,869.00	£29,252.00	3	3	1	E	3	0	3	0	£0.67	£0.76
Parking Permit (Digital)	Customer			4	4	3086	E	12,344	0.11	12,344	0.11	£0.00	£0.00
Parking Permit (Processing)	Grade 3/4	£25,869.00	£29,252.00	1	1	3086	E	3,086	0.03	3,086	0.03	£691.54	£781.98
New Bin (Digital)	Customer			4.5	4.5	245	A	1,103	0.01	1,103	0.01	£0.00	£0.00
New Bin (Non-Digital)	Grade 3/4	£25,869.00	£29,252.00	3.63	3.63	261	A	947	0.01	947	0.01	£212.31	£240.07
New Bin (Printing off Ticket)	Grade 3		£25,869.00	1	1	506	E	506	0	506	0	£0.00	£113.39
Housing Benefits/Council Tax Support (Non-digital)	Grade 3/4	£25,869.00	£29,252.00	4.97	4.97	1723	A	8,563	0.07	8,563	0.07	£1,918.96	£2,169.91
Housing Benefits/Council Tax Support (Processing)	Grade 4		£29,252.00	5	5	1723	A	8,615	0.07	8,615	0.07	£0.00	£2,183.00
Libraries (Non-Digital)	Grade 3/4	£25,869.00	£29,252.00	0.5	0.5	360	E	180	0	180	0	£40.34	£45.61
								638,248	5.53	638,248	5.53	32,631	141,437

Average Annual cost to be realised: 103,350

SCC - Sunderland City Council

Digital - where the customer is able to self serve