



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 January 2024

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet
Member for Housing and Planning

Choice Based Lettings update

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to give an update on the progress of the implementation of Choice Based Lettings allocations system.

Recommendations

The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the update on the progress of the implementation of Choice Based Lettings allocations system.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Housing that meets the needs of all residents Healthy and strong communities
Which wards are impacted?	N/A

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The implementation costs of this system in the 2023/24 budget so there are no financial implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no legal or governance implications arising from this report, which is for noting.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Choice based lettings was launched in October 2023 following a full registration process. All applicants on our existing housing register were contacted and invited to reapply for our new system with assistance offered where required.

2.2 Please see below statistics to demonstrate the work done so far on the implementation.

	Total
Applications received	2095
Applicants who have applied and do not qualify/closed applications	660
Applications incomplete (waiting further info)	428
Pre assessment completed (not taken further by applicant)	179
Applications pending assessment	252
Active applications	548
Of these: Band 1:	109
Band 2	159
Band 3:	234
Band 4:	46
Housed:	28
Of these: Band 1	10
Band 2	12
Band 3:	4
Band 4:	2

2.3 A key priority now is the number of applications waiting to be assessed. We have seen a huge increase in applications in January, 87 received in just 1 week. The allocations team have been tasked with assessing as many applications as possible.

2.4 We know however that all who applied from the old housing register have been assessed and notified of the outcome. As mentioned previously all were contacted via email (with a read receipt to know that they saw the message) or via post.

2.5 With it being a new system, we expected a high number of applications in the first few months and the dedicated team have been working on this task and we have seen the number drop significantly in the past few weeks.

2.6 The funding for the implementation team is now coming to an end with the expectation that Choice Based Lettings is fully implemented.

2.7 With this in mind, the task of managing the housing register will now move over to our allocations team.

- 2.8 Overall, feedback from customers is positive. We have had a few customers unclear of the change of policy and thinking that their banding has changed when in fact it has remained the same (the removal of the band entitled 'Emergency band' has resulted in Band 1 being the highest. Previously Band 1 was in fact the 2nd Band).
- 2.9 There has not been any stage one complaints raised about the Choice Based Lettings process as a whole.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The update is contained within section 2 above.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 N/A

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 Update on Choice Based Lettings was requested as part of the agenda for the Housing OSC.