



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 21 March 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

That the Committee:

Notes 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Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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? (All Wards)

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 of the new service has been undertaken with existing resources.

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

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report.

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

2. Background to the Report

2.1 As the Committee is aware, 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 As reported at the previous Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, we have since received a large number of Housing Register applications and the team are continuing to work to assess these applications as quickly as possible. Guidance

states that we would like to work to a 10 day lead time for housing register assessments.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 Please see below the latest statistics as of 4th March 2024 to demonstrate the work done so far on the implementation.

	Total (January 2024)	Total (March 2024)
Applications received	2095	2858
Applicants who have applied and do not qualify/closed applications	961	1007
Applications incomplete (waiting further info)	428	156
Pre assessment completed (not taken further by applicant)	179	236
Applications pending assessment	252	200
Active applications	548	806
Of these: Band 1:	109	161
Band 2	159	241
Band 3:	234	320
Band 4:	46	84
Housed:	28	83
Of these: Band 1	10	46
Band 2	12	26
Band 3:	4	9
Band 4:	2	2

3.2 As discussed at the previous Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a key priority since going live with this system is to ensure that we are assessing applications in a timely manner.

3.3 The oldest application pending assessment is 17th January 2024. So we are currently working on a 6 week lead time for housing register assessments.

3.4 This currently a longer wait than we would like and work will continue to improve this waiting time.

3.5 Since my last report for January's committee, a further 763 applications have been received which shows the volume of work we are having to manage at present.

- 3.6 In addition to the housing register assessments, is the vast number of phone calls received by the team. This is understandable when a new system is implemented, however there is a lot of guidance available on or website which includes a frequently asked questions section which we would encourage all customers to check prior to calling the team.
- 3.7 We have managed to bring the number of assessments waiting down to 200, however again, there is still room for improvement.
- 3.8 Our team continues to grow, with 2 housing options assistants starting recently and over the coming weeks, another assistant will join the team. We will also welcome an allocations officer to replace a member of the team who moved to another role within the Council.
- 3.9 Overall, feedback from customers remains positive and understanding of the system continues to grow. We have had a few customers query the positioning in shortlists of properties as they assume they position will improve for each property. This is not necessarily the case and it is important to remember that each property holds its own shortlist and therefore positioning can vary from one property to another.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The report is for noting, however, the Committee may consider any further action necessary as part of considering this item.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 This report is for noting.