

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 18 MARCH 2010
title: CHOICE BASED LETTING SCHEME
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: STEVEN EARNSHAW

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide Committee with information from the Department of Communities and Local Government on Choice Based Lettings that the Council must adopt before the end of 2010.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions – In liaison with Ribble Valley Homes, to introduce a Choice Based Letting Scheme that offers a wider range of housing options to residents within the borough.
- Community Objectives – Housing.
- Corporate Priorities – Housing.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Ribble Valley Borough Council presently falls within 3% of all local authorities that have not yet introduced a choice based letting scheme. We are presently working with Ribble Valley Homes in identifying a scheme that will best serve the housing needs of our communities.

3 ISSUES

3.1 It is the responsibility of the local authority to introduce a choice based letting scheme before the end of the year.

3.2 Discussions have taken place between the Council, Ribble Valley Homes and the Department of Communities and Local Government regarding our plans to introduce a scheme. The Department of Communities and Local Government favour a sub-regional scheme, we have made it clear to them that we feel this would not be appropriate for a small rural authority such as ourselves. In partnership with Ribble Valley Homes we are working to achieve a simple, yet fair letting system, that meets the Department of Communities and Local Government's requirements solely for Ribble Valley.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – the introduction of a choice based letting scheme will have some financial implications.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – Liaison with Ribble Valley Homes to identify an acceptable scheme that will ultimately offer a wider range of housing options.
- Political – None.
- Reputation – None.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Note the requirement of the Council to introduce a choice based letting scheme before the end of 2010.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Steven Earnshaw, extension 4567.



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community, opportunity, prosperity

Choice Based Lettings

Caroline Keightley
Special Adviser Choice Based Lettings



What is CBL?

An approach to letting social housing that:

- Openly advertises properties becoming available
- Invites homeseekers to browse & apply for available properties
- Ranks applications for each property according to a published allocations policy
- Publishes feedback on properties previously advertised
- Ensures support is available for homeseekers to participate



Local Authority Progress

- 260 LAs now offer live CBL
- 57 LA schemes in development
- 34 sub-regional schemes live
- 20 more sub-regional schemes in development
- *Number of LAs without plans for CBL reducing – i.e. less than 3%*

3

Research findings

Most comprehensive study* to date identifies benefits

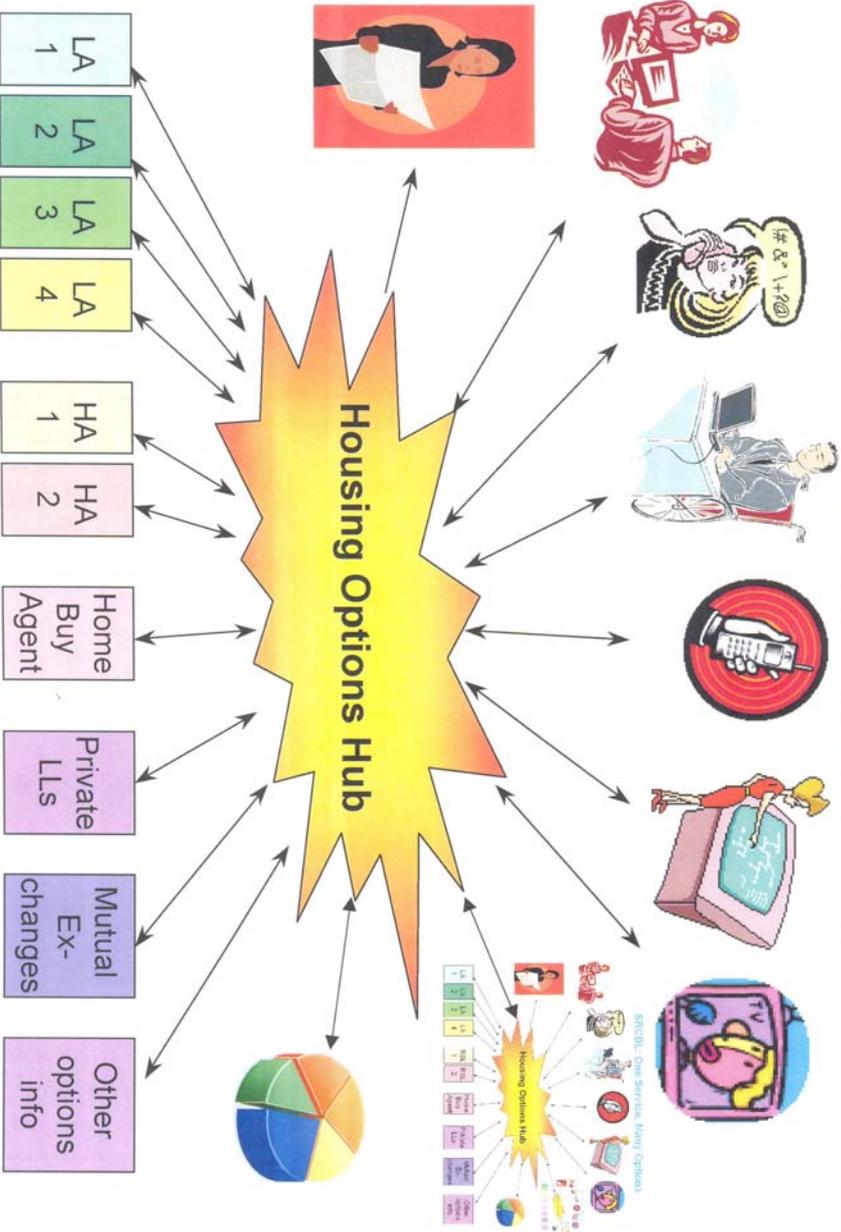
- Can generate financial savings that outweigh extra costs
- Encourages clients to think more flexibly about solutions
- Reduces ethnic segregation
- Works in rural & urban, low & high demand settings
- Helps with hard-to-let properties
- Lowers refusal rates & improves void times
- Better tenancy sustainment
- Better outcomes for homeless people

* Monitoring the Longer Term Impact of Choice-based Lettings, Heriot Watt & British Market Research Bureau for CLG, Oct 2006
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/monitoringlonger>

Addressing concerns

- Being clear that CBL cannot create additional supply
- Offering a wider range of housing options
- Better more personalised feedback & nudges
- Better monitoring of engagement & outcomes
- **Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) guide**
<http://icn.csip.org.uk/independentLivingChoices/Housing/Topics/browse/LearningDisabilities/?parent=992&child=3433>
- Good practice guide commissioned by CLG
- Equalities Impact Assessments locally & nationally
- Making rules “simpler” a theme within new draft Code of Guidance

One Service, Many Channels



Trends

Features of recently launched sub-regional services

- Most classify need using bands not points
- Opportunities for mobility
- Successful use of electronic channels
- Retention of paper based advertising as a safety net
- Many feature strong housing association involvement
- Increasing numbers offer a range of other housing options



Resources

- **CLG Website**
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingmanagementcare/choicebasedlettings/>
- **Choice & Housing newsletter, register at:**
<http://haveyoursay.communities.gov.uk/user/CreateUser.aspx?ReturnUrl=/content/HaveYourSay.aspx>
- **CBL Adviser Caroline Keightley 01260227485**
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- **De-Montfort University CBL website:** www.choicemoves.org.uk
- **Live CBL services**