

CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr George Clements,
Deputy Leader, Promoting Prosperity

LEAD OFFICER: Liam Murphy, Chief Executive

REPORT AUTHOR: Lorraine Thornley,
Housing Services Project Manager, Home

Summary and Recommendation: The purpose of this report is to bring to Executive's attention the progress of Choice Based Lettings in Cumbria and to seek approval for Copeland to act as the accountable body for the project and to agree to contribute towards the set up costs of introducing a Cumbria wide scheme alongwith other partners. The total cost for the 2 year set-up and implementation is £555k with a 2 year Copeland contribution of £10k per annum. These costs are net of a grant application to DCLG.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Communities and Local Government Department (CLG) is committed to ensuring that social housing tenants have more choice and control over where they live. They believe that this is the best way to build communities that are stable, viable and inclusive. They have indicated that they wish schemes to be developed which span local authority boundaries and bring together all social landlords in an area to offer the widest possible housing choices for tenants and applicants.
- 1.2 Choice Based Lettings (CBL) schemes are a way of allocating social housing through giving tenants a greater say over where they live. The schemes allow people to apply for advertised social housing vacancies – often in the local press or through an inter-active website. Applicants can apply for any home to which they are matched. The successful candidate is the person with the highest priority for the property which they have bid for and the earliest date of application.
- 1.3 The Government's housing policy outlines its preference for choice and responsibility. Their strategy for Choice Based Lettings was outlined in "Sustainable Communities: Homes for all – A Five Year Plan from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister" published in January 2005.

The outline of the strategy is:

"We will maintain our existing target for all local authorities to operate choice based lettings systems by 2010, and extend this target to include all social rented housing, shared ownership and low cost home ownership options.

We will encourage the extension of CBL schemes to cover the private rented sector, and make it as easy as possible for tenants to move between local authority, housing association and privately owned accommodation.

We want to see CBL schemes developing on a regional or sub-regional basis."

- 1.4 Since 27th February 2006, representatives from local authorities and housing associations have been meeting, looking at the possibilities of introducing a choice based lettings scheme across Cumbria, involving as many partners as possible. Home Group made a proposal, to lead on the project, carry out research on choice based lettings and prepare a bid for funding from the CLG. Liam Murphy, Chief Executive at Copeland Borough Council agreed to be the Project Sponsor.
- 1.5 At present all local authorities in Cumbria, with the exception of Barrow, have expressed an interest in being involved in a choice based lettings scheme. This includes acting as partners, along with seven housing associations, in bidding to the CLG for funding, of up to £100,000, with Copeland Borough Council as the accountable body.

2.0 FUNDING

- 2.1 CLG have announced the final round of funding for choice based lettings schemes. There is £1.7 million available. The Government will fund up to 60% of the set up costs of a scheme up to a maximum of £100,000 to successful bidders. The closing date for bids is 12 October 2007; the successful bidders will be notified in late November with the money awarded by late December 2007. To qualify, the bid must be made by a local authority and at least three local authorities must agree to work in partnership to set up a choice based lettings scheme. A draft copy of the bid is attached in appendix A
- 2.2 This round of funding by Communities and Local Government is likely to be the last for choice based lettings. The government announced three rounds in 2004 and two have already been held.
- 2.3 A preliminary cost benefit analysis has been prepared based on information provided by the partners. These costs are based on the best information available to date, however as the scheme progresses, they will need to be reviewed. These indicate that in the region of £555,000. would be required to establish and implement a sub regional choice based lettings scheme in Cumbria.
- 2.4 If the funding application to the CLG is successful, up to £100,000 may be available to support the implementation of the scheme in Cumbria. A summary of the estimated implementation and running costs is attached in appendix B. This breaks costs down by local authority and registered social landlord partners.

3.0 CASE STUDY FROM ELSEWHERE

- 3.1 The City of Leeds has been operating a successful Choice-Based Lettings scheme for a number of years. Annex C illustrates the mode of operation of the scheme as explained through the FAQs section of the CBL website. In annex D, examples of the feedback on the outcome of 'bidding' illustrates how

homeseekers learn about their opportunities and chances of applying for homes.

3.2 Full details of the Leeds scheme is available at www.leedshomes.org.uk

4.0 FINANCIAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 The project would be managed by the Home Group and the project sponsor would be the Chief Executive of Copeland Borough Council. Copeland BC would also be the accountable body.

4.2 The majority of the total cost of the project would be met by the Registered Social Landlords, with the Strategic Landlords contribution split according to the CLASB cost-sharing protocol. For Copeland BC this would work out as approximately £10k per annum over 2 years.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Executive is asked to discuss the report and approve future involvement with the scheme, subject to costs, and in principal agree to contribute 40% of the set up costs distributed among local authorities using the agreed cost sharing formula.

List of Appendices

- A** Outline bid for DCLG Grant
- B** Indicative Costs for CBL Project
- C** FAQs section from Leeds Homes Website
- D** Bidder Feedback Report from Leeds Homes Website

List of Background Documents: None

List Of Consultees: Executive
Copeland Councillors on Copeland Homes Board

| CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES | |
|--|--|
| Impact on Crime and Disorder | CBL ensures prompt turnover of a wider range of social housing than the allocation system and therefore reduces the number of voids and potentially derelict properties. |
| Impact on Sustainability | CBL provides a strong market approach to the allocation of housing and therefore reduces maintenance costs. |
| Impact on Rural Proofing | CBL would allow tenants or homeseekers to move home across Cumbria (except for Barrow) and across urban and rural areas. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Health and Safety Implications | No direct implications. |
| Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues | CBL is a fairer and more transparent allocation of available social housing. |
| Children and Young Persons Implications | CBL gives families and younger people a greater chance of finding a home quickly. |
| Human Rights Implications | Housing is a significant human rights issue and CBL is a robust way of demonstrating that these rights are being met in housing. |
| Monitoring Officer Review | This is a key decision. |
| s.151 Officer Review | If approved, the available funding needs to be transferred from the Chief Executive budget to housing. |

DRAFT 19th September 2007

Development of Cumbria Sub -Regional choice-based lettings scheme

Bid Document:

Partners:

| | |
|--|--|
| Copeland Borough Council | Eden Housing Association |
| Allerdale Borough Council | Derwent and Solway Housing Association |
| Carlisle City Council | Impact Housing Association |
| Eden District Council | Two Castles Housing Association |
| South Lakeland Council | Home Group |
| Cumbria County Council (Supporting People) | Carlisle Housing Association |
| | South Lakes Housing |

A. The local authority to whom the grant funding would be made payable is Copeland Borough Council. The nominated officer for contact purposes is Liam Murphy tel: 01946 598320 (liam.murphy@copeland.gov.uk)

B - F Of the 6 local authorities in the Cumbria region 5 will be involved in developing the bid. The partners to the scheme are indicated on the table below:

Cumbria Local Authority & registered Social Landlord position statement

| Partner | Proposed level of involvement | Stock in scheme | Experience of CBL | % of stock to be included | Brief description of current/planned CBL scheme |
|---|---|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--|
| <u>Local Authorities:</u> Copeland, Allerdale, Carlisle, and Eden | No stock but will help develop and monitor the scheme | | No | | NA |
| South Lakeland ALMO | Full partners, helping to develop and monitor the scheme | 3226 | No | 75-100% | NA |
| Cumbria County Council (SP) | No stock but will help develop and monitor the scheme. | | No | | NA |
| <u>RSLs</u> Eden HA | Full partners, helping to develop and monitor the scheme. | 1,471 | No | 75- 100% | NA (Home Buy Agent) |
| Derwent & Solway HA (Harvest Group) | As above | 3500 | No | 75-100% | Harvest Group have nationwide experience in various schemes |
| Impact HA | As above | 1942 | Yes | 75-100% | Scheme launched April 07. Housing Register, single county wide advert. Banding system with three bands |
| Two Castles HA | As above | 1747 | No | 75-100% | NA |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|--------|-----|---------|---|
| Home Group | As above | 10,028 | No | 75-100% | Nationwide experience in various schemes |
| South Lakeland | As above | | No | 75-100% | NA |
| Carlisle HA | As above | 6,200 | Yes | 75-100% | Implemented Riverside Group CBL 28 th August 2007 pending the outcome of the Cumbria CBL project. All empty properties are included in the scheme. |

Total properties: 28,114

G. 1) Key objectives of the scheme

- To modernise the allocation process to provide a clear, transparent, cost effective, fair and accountable service to all of our customers. This will include a common assessment criterion. The lettings process will promote greater choice and help sustain our communities.
- As part of modernising the process, we will encompass a range of housing options as discussed in section 6.
- To use information, from the register and the number of bids obtained for each area, to indicate the popularity of different neighbourhoods. This will assist the partners in identifying where future homes need to be built.
- To provide consistent services for the customer through information sharing protocols. This would include the development of a vulnerable persons register and shared systems for verification checks and exclusions.
- The scheme will aim to provide support, according to individual needs, to vulnerable people. The support will help them to make the appropriate housing choices and access care and support services as necessary.
- To implement a scheme that addresses local and regional equality and diversity agendas.
- To reduce void turnaround times.
- To improve mobility across the sub region.
- To reduce property turnover and increase tenancy sustainment.
- To reduce the use of temporary accommodation for homeless applicants.
- To meet local housing needs.

2) The scheme would offer greater choice to applicants in the following ways:

- More accessible, easier to apply – only one registration rather than lots of housing providers forms to complete.
- Applicants will be able to use feedback to inform their choices of bids
- We would aim to reduce the use of temporary accommodation as homeless people will benefit from the larger pool of accommodation.
- Applicants requiring properties that are adapted will be able to see all properties that have adaptations or that could be adapted. Links will also be provided to inform how funding can be accessed.

- The use of housing options to inform customers of the range of available options and provide them with alternatives to address their housing need, such as deposit guarantee schemes and the use of mediation.

(3) It is proposed that the Choice Based Lettings Scheme will be implemented across the five local authority areas at the same time.

(4) A number of the partners currently operate shared ownership schemes and low cost home ownership options. The scheme would incorporate these and will build on the experience the partners have in this area.

Eden Housing Association, a partner of the scheme, is the local Home Buy agent. The scheme would promote this through Housing Options.

(5) A private landlord accredited scheme is run by one of the partners in Eden and there are some private landlord forums which exist throughout the region. Further work is being carried out to establish new forums. While there is no county wide accredited landlord list at present, it is envisaged, that by extending the current good practice of Eden and South Lakes in awarding grants to private landlords if they accept nominations, that we will build on and enhance relationships to encourage these landlords to take part in the scheme. We would aim to build a countywide accredited list within 2 years of introducing choice based lettings. Advice and assistance in finding private rented accommodation would be provided through Housing Options.

(6) Housing Options

A number of partners currently offer advice or support in a number of areas, but are not fully engaged in a housing options approach. It is envisaged that the partners will work towards establishing a housing options team and offering advice to;

1. Stay in current accommodation

- ◆ Advice to private tenants on legal rights, harassment and repairs.
- ◆ Advice on financial issues, rent and mortgages- signposting to relevant agency.
- ◆ Family disputes – mediation and or help and support to find own home.
- ◆ Floating support provided to applicants who require it.
- ◆ Support in dealing with housing issues relating to domestic violence and abuse
- ◆ Adaptations, and how to access funding
- ◆ Accessing support to victims of crime, enabling them to stay in their homes
- ◆ Advice on Telecare services
- ◆ Benefits advice and income/benefits maximisation

2. Making a planned move to a new home

- ◆ Help and support in finding accommodation to those leaving care, armed forces or custody in line with locally agreed protocols.
- ◆ Homebuy Scheme.
- ◆ RSL affordable rented housing.
- ◆ Private rented housing.
- ◆ Mutual exchanges.
- ◆ Sheltered housing options.
- ◆ Right to Buy and Right to Acquire.
- ◆ Low cost / shared ownership schemes.
- ◆ Special needs housing –for a variety of clients including resettlement support.
- ◆ Rent deposit scheme.
- ◆ Rent in advance scheme.

(7) Common Housing Register

No common housing register exists at present with any of the partners. It is envisaged that the scheme will produce a common housing register.

(8) At present, no partner operates an accessible housing register. It is intended that all properties advertised that are suitable for adaptations will be advertised as such. Preference will be given to applicants with a disability for properties that have already been adapted. Applicants with specific requirements will be directed for assessment to the appropriate agency. Their housing need and support need will be determined to ensure that any property is right to meet their physical living needs and that adequate support is in place in order to maintain independent living. We will work with social services who are currently developing a register of housing need for young people with disabilities. Housing options and a link on the website will advise of funding, help and support that are available for adaptations to homes advertised.

(9) Initially a common prioritization criterion will be agreed between the partners, based on a banding system. We will work to produce the best common allocation agreement and explore the possibility of a common allocations policy, within 2 years of choice based lettings going live.

(10) Within the region, a difference exists on eligibility criteria for applicants who have no local connection; some partners have open waiting lists, while others are more restrictive due to a shortage of affordable housing. It is proposed that a minimum of 10% of each partners lettings be available to bids from across the sub region, although it is recognized that some organizations may wish to continue with an open waiting list. Local connection eligibility criteria will not apply to any short-term Supporting People Funded Services.

(11) To promote social inclusion, we will work with Social Services and Cumbria Supporting People teams together with other specialist agencies across the region to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to people with support needs accessing the full range of housing options. A high priority will be given to ensuring that systems are in place to assist those who require help, to access the choice based lettings system and we would include a wide range of service users to help identify what measures would need to be in place to ensure that it was as accessible as possible. We would look to identify applicants who require assistance at an early stage through voluntary and statutory agency input and through well developed procedures within the partnership and look to provide the appropriate support. At the registration stage a number of "trigger questions" will allow officers to highlight potential issues. An assisted list of applicants who require support in the process will be kept and an offer to make "proxy" bids on their behalf will be made to the most vulnerable applicants. We would seek to make the bidding process as simple as possible.

Training on the Choice Based Lettings scheme would be provided to stakeholders who are in contact with potential applicants.

Through monitoring of applicants who are not making bids, contact would be made to these applicants and advice, support or assistance would be provided where required.

A pilot scheme currently in place in Teesside, providing specialist support, through Stonham, to vulnerable applicants is to be explored in further detail. Initial discussions with Supporting People on the feasibility of the scheme taking place in Cumbria have taken place.

Home visits to explain the letting system will be available and we will ensure that advert information meets the needs of other language users, people with a disability, and people with sight or hearing impairment, through working in partnership with the relevant agencies and through the appropriate use of technology.

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out to assess the effects that the proposed processes are likely to have on customers depending on factors such as race, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation and age.

(12) To ensure that vulnerable groups are accessing the scheme, monitoring of the numbers of homeless, BME and other vulnerable groups who are registered and bidding will be made respectively. Monitoring of cases that are registered and making no bids or inappropriate bids will be monitored and the information used to highlight those applicants who may need further support. The successful bands and dates of registration will be monitored to help provide meaningful feedback to applicants. To ensure transparency, the numbers and reasons for exclusions will be

monitored closely along with cross LA boundary moves. The number and type of housing advice provided will also be monitored and feed back given to the relevant local authority.

Where there is a homeless duty, information will be fed back to the relevant local authority on lettings and refusals.

Monthly customer satisfaction surveys will take place which will allow problems and successes to be identified which can be used to develop the scheme further.

It is envisaged that a project team, made up of representatives from the partnership and relevant stakeholders, would meet on a bi-monthly basis to analyse monitoring and feedback to develop the scheme further.

(13) The Cumbria Housing Strategy 2006/2011 identifies five important housing issues in line with the Regional Housing Strategy: Shortage of affordable housing; creating decent homes and environments; housing the homeless; regeneration; and homes with additional facilities or support. The Choice Based Lettings scheme aims to make the best use of affordable housing and provide advice and support to inform applicants of their choices. By providing reasonable preference to homeless applicants and support to the vulnerable the scheme will complement the Cumbria Housing Strategy. It also complies with the Sub Regional "fit for purpose" housing strategy.

H. Elected members and RSL Boards have given full support on exploring the options of providing a Sub Regional Choice Based Letting Scheme **from all the Partners**. Formal approval will be required by all partners following a full cost analysis carried out as part of the formal partnership agreement scheduled for August 2008.

Consultation

The partnership recognises the importance of consulting with stakeholders on any proposed scheme. Some partners have already begun to talk about choice based lettings to their tenants forums and discussions have taken place with Shelter, Social Services and supported housing providers.

It is intended to invite tenants and residents to join the project team to help determine the best way to involve and consult tenants and residents. Cumbria Supporting People are a partner in the scheme and choice based lettings will be discussed in their existing forums and user groups. It is envisaged that we will link into the wide range of groups that already exist to obtain maximum input into the scheme. Essential groups to consult with are: Cumbria Tenants and Residents Participation Forum, Age Concern, Connexions, Shelter, Citizens Advice Bureau, Disability Forums, Outreach Cumbria, West Cumbria Society for the Blind, Community Law Centre, Cumbria Action for Social Support, Cumbria Alcohol and Drug Advisory Service, West Cumbria Diversity Group, Equality and Diversity Officer at Cumbria County Council, AWAZ, Probation and Social Services.

I We would be willing to provide any information and good practice, relating to developing and running a sub regional CBL scheme, to any relevant party.

J Outline timetable for the project

| Item | Estimated completion date |
|---|----------------------------------|
| DEVELOPMENT | |
| Cumbrian local authorities and registered social landlords meeting to discuss regional scheme | Ongoing since November 2006 |
| Bid submission | 12 th October 2007 |
| Appoint Project Manager | March 2008 |
| Consultation plan | April 2008 |
| Communication plan | April 2007 |
| Design of CBL model, policy, procedure and protocols | June 2008 |
| Stakeholder seminar | July 2008 |
| Negotiation of partnership agreement including full | August 2008 |

| | |
|---|------------------|
| cost analysis. | |
| Determination of ICT requirements and potential suppliers | August 2008 |
| IMPLEMENTATION | |
| Procurement and implementation of ICT | February 2009 |
| Banding the housing register | February 2009 |
| Staff/partner training programme | April 2009 |
| Other organizations' and members' briefings | April / May 2009 |
| Testing process | May 2009 |
| Final part of communication programme | May 2009 |
| Publicity campaign leading to: | May 2009 |
| LAUNCH OF CBL SCHEME | |
| Go Live | June 2009 |
| initial 2 weekly reviews by project group to ensure successful introduction | |
| EVALUATION | |
| Review of performance | September 2009 |
| Implement minor changes as required | November 2009 |
| ENHANCEMENT | |
| Customer satisfaction survey | January 2010 |
| Full review of scheme successes and failures | June 2010 |
| Major changes if required | September 2010 |
| Analyze future developments and possible enhancements | September 2010 |
| Implement on-going monitoring of outcomes | October 2010 |
| Implement a common allocation policy | June 2011 |
| Establish an accredited private landlord list | July 2011 |

K Detailed costings and funding applied for

See Annex B

Implementation Costs

| | Year 1 £000 | Year 2 £000 |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Purchase and Installation of Lettings Software | 109.4 | |
| Telephone System | 10 | |
| Project Manager Salary | 43.1 | 21.6 |
| Project Manager Travel | 8.0 | 4.0 |
| Service Launch - PR costs | 5 | |
| Total Implementation Costs | 175.5 | 25.6 |
| Less Capital Grant | 60.0 | |
| Net Costs | 115.5 | 25.6 |

50:50 split Local Authorities to RSLs

| | | |
|-----------------|------|------|
| Local Authority | 57.8 | 12.8 |
| RSL | 57.8 | 12.8 |

40:60 split Local Authorities to RSLs

| | | |
|-----------------|------|------|
| Local Authority | 46.2 | 10.2 |
| RSL | 69.3 | 15.3 |

Costs to RSLs**50:50 split Local Authorities to RSLs**

| | | Year 1 £000 | Year 2 £000 |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Home North West | 10,028 | 20.6 | 4.6 |
| Two Castles | 1,747 | 3.6 | 0.8 |
| Eden Housing | 1,500 | 3.1 | 0.7 |
| South Lakes | 3,226 | 6.6 | 1.5 |
| Carlisle HA | 6,200 | 12.7 | 2.8 |
| Derwent and Solway | 3,500 | 7.2 | 1.6 |
| Impact HA | 1,942 | 4.0 | 0.9 |
| Total | 28,143 | 57.8 | 12.8 |

40:60 split Local Authorities to RSLs

| | | Year 1 £000 | Year 2 £000 |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Home North West | 10,028 | 24.7 | 5.5 |
| Two Castles | 1,747 | 4.3 | 1.0 |
| Eden Housing | 1,500 | 3.7 | 0.8 |
| South Lakes | 3,226 | 7.9 | 1.8 |
| Carlisle HA | 6,200 | 15.3 | 3.4 |
| Derwent and Solway | 3,500 | 8.6 | 1.9 |
| Impact HA | 1,942 | 4.8 | 1.1 |
| Total | 28,143 | 69.3 | 15.3 |

| | Year 1 £000 | Year 2 + £000 |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Bidding Manager Salary | 26.8 | 26.8 |
| Call Handler Salary x 4 | 73.6 | 73.6 |
| Total Emoluments | 100.4 | 100.4 |
| Travel | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| Total Staff Overheads | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| Premises Costs | 22 | 22 |
| Repairs, Replacement, & Maint. | 0 | 0 |
| Cleaning Costs | 1 | 1 |
| Stationery | 0 | 0 |
| Printing Costs | 0 | 0 |
| Postage | 5 | 5 |
| Telephones | 2 | 2 |
| Health & Safety | 0 | 0 |
| Facilities Other | 0 | 0 |
| Total Facilities Costs | 31.5 | 31.5 |
| Software Maintenance | 36.3 | 36.3 |
| Advertising Costs | 73.4 | 73.4 |
| Total Other Admin Costs | 109.7 | 109.7 |
| Total Running Costs | 246.6 | 246.6 |
| Less Revenue Grant | 40.0 | 40.0 |
| Net Costs | 206.6 | 206.6 |

Based on NW call centre
budget for 2007/08

50:50 split Local Authorities to RSLs

| | | |
|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Local Authority | 103.3 | 103.3 |
| RSL | 103.3 | 103.3 |

40:60 split Local Authorities to RSLs

| | | |
|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Local Authority | 82.7 | 82.7 |
| RSL | 124.0 | 124.0 |

Costs to RSLs

50:50 split Local Authorities to RSLs

| | | Year 1 £000 | Year 2 £000 |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Home North West | 10,028 | 36.8 | 36.8 |
| Two Castles | 1,747 | 6.4 | 6.4 |
| Eden Housing | 1,500 | 5.5 | 5.5 |
| South Lakes | 3,226 | 11.8 | 11.8 |
| Carlisle HA | 6,200 | 22.8 | 22.8 |
| Derwent and Solway | 3,500 | 12.8 | 12.8 |
| Impact HA | 1,942 | 7.1 | 7.1 |
| Total | 28,143 | 103.3 | 103.3 |

40:60 split Local Authorities to RSLs

| | | Year 1 £000 | Year 2 £000 |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Home North West | 10,028 | 44.2 | 44.2 |
| Two Castles | 1,747 | 7.7 | 7.7 |
| Eden Housing | 1,500 | 6.6 | 6.6 |
| South Lakes | 3,226 | 14.2 | 14.2 |
| Carlisle HA | 6,200 | 27.3 | 27.3 |
| Derwent and Solway | 3,500 | 15.4 | 15.4 |
| Impact HA | 1,942 | 8.6 | 8.6 |
| Total | 28,143 | 124.0 | 124.0 |

Based on 07/08 budgeted posts - local authority posts and conditions may well vary

| Post | Hours | Basic | NI | Pension | PRP | Total |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Project Manager | 35 | 35,000 | 3,550 | 3,634 | 948 | 43,132 |
| Bidding Manager | 35 | 21,604 | 1,700 | 2,848 | 648 | 26,800 |
| Call Centre Handler | 35 | 15,540 | 1,000 | 1,404 | 466 | 18,410 |

Based on Housing Officer post



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A guide to help you find the home of your choice

How do I become a member of Leeds Homes?

Just fill out a registration form.

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Click if you would like us to post you a form

You can also pick up a form from your local Housing Office or by telephoning (0113) 247 6313. Or you can email us at leeds.homes@leeds.gov.uk and we will post you a form.

Who can apply?

Anyone who is over 16 years of age.

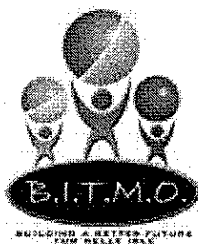
If you've had rent arrears, committed anti-social behaviour or are subject to immigration control, we may not be able to rehouse you.

Where can I find out which homes are available?

All our available homes are advertised on this website. They are also advertised each Wednesday in the Leeds Homes property flyer.

This is included in the Yorkshire Adtrader publication which is available at most news agents.

You can pick up a free copy of the Leeds Homes property flyer at Leeds Housing Advice Centre, all Council Housing Offices, One Stop Centres and participating Housing Association Offices.



Each week you can express your interest in up to three properties that are suitable for you.

How do I make an expression of interest?

- Online by using this website
- By telephoning us on (0113) 247 6313 (between 8.30am - 5pm Mon-Fri)
- By emailing us at leeds.homes@leeds.gov.uk
- By calling into any Council Housing Office or participating Housing Association Office.

What should I do if I need help making expressions of interest?

If you would like to give your permission to a relative or support worker or agency to be able to express an interest in homes on your behalf, you will need to download the Advocate consent form. Once you have completed the form please return it to any One-stop centre or housing office.

How long will I have to make an expression of interest?

One week. Every Wednesday morning (except some bank holiday periods) we update this website with new vacancies. We also publish the Leeds Homes property flyer each week on Wednesday which advertises the same homes as this website.

Each new advertising week we publish a new deadline date.

This means that you will be able to express your interest in properties from the Wednesday when they are first advertised until 5.00pm the following Tuesday.

We will process any expressions of interest that you have made after 5.00pm or during the weekend, after 9.00am the following working day (Monday to Friday). Postal expressions should be mailed by last post on

Saturday.

Note: All properties are removed from this website after 5pm each Tuesday (at the close of the weekly deadline). Property searches will not produce any results on Tuesday evenings, as the website is not updated until the Wednesday morning.

What is a Priority Band?

When you register with us we will assess your housing needs and your application will be put in one of the following categories:

1. General Needs

- All customers who are not in a Priority Band fall into our "General Needs" category.

2. Priority

If you:

- Are homeless but the council does not have a legal duty to make you an offer of permanent accommodation.
- Need to move on medical grounds.
- Are living in housing with poor conditions, severe overcrowding or a lack of facilities.
- Are in Urgent Need. This is where we have, for example, established that you are vulnerable or that you need to move to give support to a member of your family.

3A. Priority Extra

If you:

- Are homeless and in priority need according to the law.
- Have an urgent medical need, for example, if you are confined to one room in your home and your home is unsuitable for adaptations.

- Your home is unfit to live in, for example, if your home has been assessed as being uninhabitable or you are a council tenant living in a clearance area.
- Have an "Additional Need" more serious than priority. This applies to customers who are not legally Homeless but have a very serious reason to move home.

3B. Priority Extra Plus

Some customers in the Priority Extra band will be awarded Priority Extra Plus.

This is when a customer has two (or more) different types of urgent priority extra housing needs, for example, if you have an urgent medical need and you are statutory homeless.

You can also be awarded Priority Extra Plus if you and another member of your household are both in urgent housing need. For example, if you are homeless and another member of your household has a severe disability.

When we have processed your registration we will write to tell you which category your application is in.

What is Priority Limit?

Leeds City Council have now introduced a time limit on priority bands.

If you have been awarded a priority band (such as Priority or Priority Extra) your priority will now be limited to 90 days.

How will I know when my 3 month Priority Limit starts and ends?

We will write to all customers telling them when their Priority Limit will start and end.

Why are we starting to limit how long you will keep your Priority?

A number of other Councils have introduced

schemes to limit how long their customers keep their priority . We have introduced this scheme because it helps us to ensure that we are :

- Providing a fair and consistent approach to the way we assess customers individual circumstances and work towards rehousing them as quickly as possible.
- Encouraging more people to express their interest in homes outside their area of choice.
- Giving all our customers a better chance of being rehoused.

Can my Priority Limit be extended?

Extension requests should be made to the local housing office where your registration form is held. All extension requests are considered on an individual basis.

What should I do if I'm unhappy about a decision not to extend my Priority?

Customers who are unhappy about a decision not to extend their Priority Limit have the Right to Review. To find out more about the Right to Review process please contact the Leeds Homes Team on 0113 247 6313

Who do we decide to make an offer to?

The customer in the highest priority band will, except on rare occasions, be offered the home. If two or more customers have the same housing need, generally the person who was awarded their housing need first will be made the offer. We offer homes to customers in the general needs category based on the longest date of registration.

All of the homes we advertise feature a **suitable for** section. This tells you what kind of customer would be suitable for the home. For example, a two bedroom house could be suitable for a customer with one child. We generally won't offer you a home if your

requirements are different from the suitable for criteria, except in exceptional circumstances.

If you're successfully shortlisted for a home the landlord, such as an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) or Housing Association will contact you directly. Leeds Homes don't let the properties. The landlord will then arrange for you to view the home.

However, the home may not be offered to you if you have rent arrears or if you have caused nuisance to neighbours through Anti-Social Behaviour.

Examples of cases where we would find a customer unsuitable to be re-housed include having:

- A high level of rent arrears where possession action could be taken
- An existing injunction for Anti-Social Behaviour or a current Anti-Social Behaviour Order

This can be applied to people who have had these issues as a tenant of Leeds City Council or other landlords.

Customers who are found to be unsuitable have the right of appeal. The decision to find someone unsuitable is not permanent. It is the responsibility of the person found unsuitable to demonstrate that they would now be suitable to be re-housed by us, by for example regularly paying off rent arrears.

What are first come first served properties?

Some of our homes are advertised as first come first served.

These are homes that have been advertised before and are now available to be let to the first Leeds Homes member to express an interest in the home, providing they meet the advertised property criteria. Email or internet expressions can be delayed so please

telephone the Leeds Homes Call Centre with your expression of interest for first come first served properties.

What is the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme?

The Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAS) is setting the pace for safer more secure homes to rent in Leeds. If you are looking to rent from a private landlord why not choose an LLAS member in order to be assured of quality accommodation that is healthy, safe and where the landlord will be professional and respectful. The Council monitors the LLAS- bad landlords are not allowed to join.

If you would like further information about the LLAS check the councils' website at www.leeds.gov.uk/llas

If you express your interest in a private rented home you are consenting Leeds Homes to pass on your details to the landlord.

What will happen if I'm offered a home but decide not to accept it?

If you are in a Priority band and we make you an offer of a home because you have expressed an interest in that home and you then decide to refuse that offer, you may lose your Priority status and your application will be moved to the 'General Needs' category.

If we offer you a home because we have a legal duty to re-house you (because you are Statutory Homeless) and you decide not to accept the offer, we may no longer have a legal duty to rehouse you.

What if I don't hear anything about a home that I have expressed my interest in?

If the Landlord does not contact you after the deadline, assume you have not been

successful and try again the following week. Details of previous lettings are published in the Yorkshire Adtrader Leeds Homes section, in our free weekly flyer and on the "Lettings results" page of this website.

What if I am homeless?

Homeless Advice and Prevention aims to prevent homelessness by offering advice and assistance on housing and accommodation to those in housing and/or homelessness related need such as council, registered social landlords and private rented tenants. The Homelessness Advice and Prevention service offers a face to face service and also responds to queries via the telephone.

Homeless Advice and Prevention, Leeds City Council, 1st Floor, 2 Great George Street, LS2 8BA

Tel: (0113) 247 6919

email: hap@leeds.gov.uk

What are Direct Lets?

We advertise most of our available homes except for 'Direct Lets'. These are used to rehouse customers we generally have a legal/contractual duty to rehouse. More information about who is eligible for a direct let can be found in our lettings policy. We publish feedback about homes we have let as direct lets on this website and in our property flyer.

Why do we publish results on the homes that we have let?

In our weekly property flyer and on the 'Lettings results' page of this website we publish details of how many expressions of interest were made for each home we have advertised.

We also publish the priority band and date of registration of each Leeds Homes member

who has been offered one of our homes, except where a direct let has been made.

This informaton will help you to decide which homes you would like to express your interest in. It also helps us to make things as fair and transparent as possible to our members.

What should I do if I feel that a wrong decision has been made?

You have the right to a review if you are unhappy about a decision that we have made, or if you have expressed an interest in one of our homes that you feel you should have been offered.

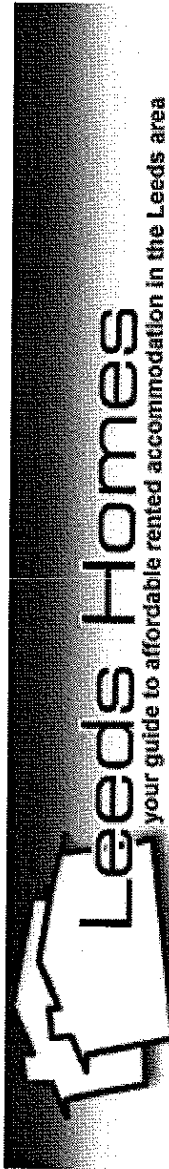
To find out more about the Right to Review process please contact the Leeds Homes Team on 0113 247 6313

For more information on Leeds Homes telephone 0113 247 6313

Write to us at Leeds Homes Team,
Neighbourhoods and Housing Department,
Leeds City Council, 5th Floor West, Merrion
House, Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8BB

Or email us at leeds.homes@leeds.gov.uk

For statistics on the Leeds Homes website see [SiteImprove](#)



High contrast

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Lettings results

We publish lettings results to provide details of how many expressions of interest we have recieved for each property we have advertised.

We also publish the priority band and date of registration of each customer who has been offered one of our homes, except where a direct let has been made.

This will help you to decide what homes you would like to express an interest in. It also enables us to make our lettings fair and transparent. This information is also published in our weekly property flyer.

Search for results for the previous twelve months by Property reference or address.

Search letting results

Property ref:

or Address:

Search

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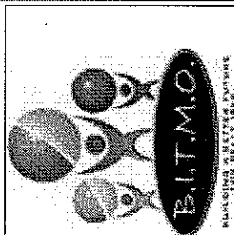
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Most recent letting results

| Housing office | Property ref | Address | No. of Bids | Member's Registration Date* | Priority of Member | Date Advertised | Property Type |
|------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Armley NHO | 26911 | 9 Clyde Court, Armley | 28 | 07/06/2007 | General needs | 20/06/2007 | 1 Bed Multi Storey Flat |
| Armley NHO | 26962 | 15 Kitson Gardens, Wortley | 27 | 13/12/2006 | Priority extra | 20/06/2007 | 1/2 Bed Flat |
| Armley NHO | 27014 | 26 Cedar Place, Armley | 43 | 04/06/2007 | Priority extra | 20/06/2007 | 2 Bed House |
| Armley NHO | 26656 | 35 Wortley Towers, Armley | 41 | 13/03/2007 | Priority extra | 06/06/2007 | 2 Bed Multi Storey Flat |
| Armley NHO | 26581 | 24 Westerly Croft, Armley | 56 | 01/06/2007 | Priority extra | 23/05/2007 | 1 Bed Multi Storey Flat |
| Armley NHO | 26808 | 24 Cedar Mount, Armley | 58 | 04/04/2007 | Priority extra | 13/06/2007 | 2 Bed House |
| Armley NHO | 27569 | 15 Thornhill Place, Upper Wortley | 0 | | Direct let | | 1/2 Bed Flat |
| Belle Isle - TMO | 26144 | 6 Larshaw Crescent, Belle Isle | 103 | 02/05/2007 | Priority extra | 02/05/2007 | 1 Bed Flat |
| Belle Isle - TMO | 27223 | 102 Aberfield Drive, Belle Isle | 53 | 06/06/2007 | Priority extra | 04/07/2007 | 2 Bed Flat |
| Belle Isle - TMO | 26251 | 110 Aberfield Drive, Belle Isle | 37 | 11/09/2006 | Priority | 02/05/2007 | 2 Bed Flat |
| Belle Isle - TMO | 26906 | 70 Aberfield Drive, Belle Isle | 89 | 18/04/2007 | Priority extra | 13/05/2007 | 2 Bed House |



| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|-----|------------|----------------|------------|-------------------------|
| Belle Isle - TMO | 26904 | 28 Winrose Crescent, Belle Isle | 73 | 06/06/2007 | Priority extra | 13/06/2007 | 1 Bed Flat |
| Belle Isle - TMO | 26908 | 46 Broom Place, Belle Isle | 104 | 31/01/2007 | Priority extra | 13/06/2007 | 1 Bed House |
| Belle Isle - TMO | 26909 | 167 Belle Isle Road, Belle Isle | 191 | 22/03/2007 | Priority extra | 13/06/2007 | 2 Bed House |
| Bramley NHO | 26208 | 8 Broadlea View, Bramley | 59 | 27/04/2007 | Priority extra | 02/05/2007 | 3 Bed House |
| Bramley NHO | 27209 | 59 Broadlea Crescent, Bramley | 71 | 21/03/2007 | Priority extra | 04/07/2007 | 1 Bed Flat |
| Bramley NHO | 27302 | 29 Church Hill Green, Stanningley | 0 | | Direct let | | 1/2 Bed Flat |
| Bramley NHO | 27214 | 41 Snowden Walk, Bramley | 80 | 18/04/2007 | Priority extra | 04/07/2007 | 1 Bed Flat |
| Bramley NHO | 26466 | 150 Broadlea Terrace, Bramley | 133 | 15/02/2007 | Priority extra | 16/05/2007 | 2 Bed House |
| Bramley NHO | 26574 | 6 Broadlea Grove, Bramley | 38 | 28/07/2004 | General needs | 23/05/2007 | 4 Bed House |
| Bramley NHO | 27041 | 12 Astor Street, Bramley | 121 | 30/11/2006 | Priority | 27/06/2007 | Sheltered - 1 Bed Bung. |
| Bramley NHO | 27130 | 3 Stanningley Court, Stanningley | 22 | 31/05/2007 | Priority extra | 04/07/2007 | Sheltered - 1 Bed Flat |
| Bramley NHO | 26787 | 32 Snowden Road, Bramley | 0 | | Direct let | | 3 Bed House |
| Bramley NHO | 27272 | 7 Wyther Park Terrace, Armley | 33 | 26/02/2007 | Priority extra | 04/07/2007 | 1 Bed Flat |
| Bramley NHO | 26859 | 51 Cockshott Lane, Armley | 31 | 18/05/2007 | Priority extra | 20/06/2007 | 1 Bed Flat |
| Bramley NHO | 26712 | 34 Fairfield Close, Bramley | 26 | 08/06/2007 | Priority extra | 06/06/2007 | 1 Bed Flat |