

## **Choice Based Letting**

Choice based letting will make the allocating of social housing properties simpler and more transparent. It also allows applicants to make a choice about where they live.

### **Introduction**

Later this year, St Albans District Council plans to change the way in which it allocates properties to applicants waiting to be housed or re-housed. The new system known as Choice Based Lettings (CBL) is part of a wider Government aim of enabling people to have more choice in where they live. The Government has set a target for all local authorities to operate Choice Based Lettings systems by 2010 and many councils have already done so.

### **What is Choice Based Lettings?**

The key characteristics of CBL are that properties which become available for let are advertised in a variety of ways such as on the internet and in a magazine that will be published fortnightly.

Advertisements will contain photographs of properties with useful information such as the rent details, Council Tax banding and neighbourhood facilities. Applicants interested in particular properties can then register their interest in these properties by making a 'bid' (no money is involved).

There will be simple rules for bidding, and various ways to bid including:

- Telephoning
- Text message
- By post, or
- Through the website

The property will then be allocated to the person with the highest priority according to the Councils Allocation Policy.

## **What are the benefits of Choice Based Lettings?**

Choice Based Letting will make the allocating of social housing properties simpler and more transparent. It also allows applicants to make a choice about where they live.

As well as giving you the opportunity to choose which properties you want to be considered for, we will also provide you with feedback on:

- the successful bids
- the number of bids received for each property, and
- the priority of the successful applicant.

*No personal details about applicants will ever be published*

Also by working with other local authorities we hope to be able to offer applicants the opportunity of moving to neighbouring areas.

## **What are the limits of Choice Based Letting?**

Although Choice Based Lettings will give applicants more choice about where they live - it won't increase the amount of housing available via the council or where it is allocated. However, by advertising all our vacant properties you will be able to see how many properties each week we have available for letting.

## **Where are we now?**

St Albans District Council is working as part of the Herts Choice Homes Consortium, which consists of Watford Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council and Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council-Hertsmere and Three Rivers went live in December 2008. The Consortium has successfully secured funding from the Government to implement Choice Based Lettings.

We are working with the other partners of the Herts Choice Home Consortium

and introducing an allocation policy that is consistent in all core aspects, but can be modified to take into account the nature of each councils geographical uniqueness and current housing stock.

### **What do you need to do now?**

If you are currently on our Housing register you do not need to do anything at the moment. We will be continuing to allocate properties as per our current policy. However, if you have any concerns or queries contact our Housing Options team on 01727 866100.

### **Where can I get more information about Choice Based Lettings?**

If you want to find out more information about this government initiative, visit the [Department of Communities and Local Government](#) .