

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

PERFORMANCE & REGULATORY
COMMITTEE

12 AUGUST 2008

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF
HOUSING SERVICES

HOMELINK, ALLOCATIONS QUARTERLY MONITORING & SCRUTINY REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give a position statement on the Allocations Service for the first quarter 2008/2009. The report also informs the Committee on the outcomes as a result of scrutiny of the service carried out by the Director and Assistant Directors Housing Services.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee note the report.

3 REPORT

3.1 HomeLink Register

A breakdown of the HomeLink register is given in **Appendix 1**.

At 30th June there were 15,526 applications within the six bands on the HomeLink register. This breaks down into 199 homeless applicants (1%), 3596 NCC/NCH transfer applicants (23%) 1349 Other Social Landlord Tenants (9%) and 10,382 general applicants (67%).

There are 11074 (71%) applications from singles/couples who do not have dependent children to be housed with them. 4452 (29%) applications registered are from families with dependent children.

BME applicants make up 27.6% of the Housing Register. 3.9% of applicants have a disability and 12.3% of applicants are over the age of 60 (although only 10.3% of those 12.3% are active applications).

A separate waiting list is maintained for applications for the Victoria Centre flats. There are 252 applicants on this list. A local lettings policy is in place outside of the banding structure.

3.2 Review of the Housing Register

A robust review of the waiting list began at the end of May 2008. The objective of this review is to ensure that all the applications are current,

that we have accurate and up to date information, that every application has been re- assessed and is subsequently placed in the correct band on the register. The review will be completed by the end of September and a summary of the outcomes of the review will be presented to the Performance and Regulatory Committee in October 2008.

3.3 **HomeLink Lettings Quarter 1 2008/2009**

In the first quarter there have been 683 lettings in total. This includes HomeLink partner RSL properties. 572(84%) of the lettings were to properties managed by NCH. Approximately 55% of the NCH properties are single accommodation and 45% family type. Larger maisonettes and flats are however let to families due to the limited supply of houses. Of the lettings made in this period, only 228 houses became available, (40% of the total of NCH properties let).

A detailed breakdown of the lettings information is given in **Appendix 1**.

During the same period 6 flats were also let in the Victoria Centre.

3.4 **Bidding Patterns**

There have been 42,072 bids made during the quarter. 65% were made via the website, 26% via the telephone system and 9% via the local offices.

38% of bids were made by BME applicants which compares favourably with the percentage of BME applicants on the waiting list. 3.6% of bids were made by applicants with a disability which compares similarly to the percentage of applicants on the Housing Register with a disability. 5.6% of bids were made by applicants over the age of 60. This is, however, considerably lower than the percentage of applicants over the age of 60 on the Housing Register. This analysis has highlighted the need to be more pro-active with this group of applicants. A new case-work support system has recently been introduced to ensure that individual vulnerable people are supported in using the HomeLink service. Intense support will therefore be given to individuals within this group and an update will be given on the situation at the next meeting.

3.5 **Manual Offers**

The target for lettings made as a result of manual offers is a maximum 5% of all lettings. 19 (3.3%) NCH properties were let as a result of a manual offer between 1st April and 30th June. **Appendix 1** gives a breakdown of the numbers and reasons.

All manual offers are reconciled with the offer approval as part of the monthly monitoring of Allocations. Details of the reconciliation monitoring between 1st April and 30th June are shown in **Appendix 1**.

3.6 HomeLink Support Casework

Analysis of the waiting list and bidding patterns has indicated that there are applicants who are either not bidding, making ineligible bids or who are making high numbers of bids but are not yet successful in being made a suitable offer. An increased and proactive casework system has recently been implemented for HomeLink Officers so that support reaches applicants who may need further advice or guidance. This includes targeted support to particularly vulnerable applicants including those under 25 and those over 60 years of age, those with disabilities and those applicants who have an urgent need for a move.

This casework system is presently being embedded within the service. Since implementing the system the number of people not bidding in the urgent and moderate needs bands has reduced by 7%. The comprehensive review underway also identifies support needs and will feed into the new casework system.

3.7 Monitoring and Scrutiny

Results of the monitoring of the Allocations Service are shown in **Appendix 2**.

Since April 2008 monthly meetings have been held with the Director and Assistant Directors of Housing Services. All cases referred to the Allocations and Tenancy Management Panel and the decisions which are made are scrutinised. Consideration is also given to:-

- exception reports in relation to any breaches of policy or practices;
- reconciliation of all new tenancies to the appropriate level of approval;
- Related Party allocations comply with Standing Orders;
- Reconciliation of manual offers with the approval to make an offer.

These meetings have also identified the need to amalgamate the Allocations Panel and Tenancy Management Panels that are currently held separately and weekly. Joint Panels are now in operation and **Appendix 3** provides a detailed Terms of Reference and procedures for the newly formed Panel.

In addition an individual performance framework has been developed for the monthly meetings in order to monitor adherence to policy and consistency of application. Within this framework both individual and team development needs are identified and addressed.

4 FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS (DOF010)

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

4.2 Effective maintenance, management and controls of the key risks of the allocations service is a Company requirement.

5 IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES

5.1 Monitoring and scrutiny of this service ensures a quality service is provided at all times and that the need for improvements is highlighted. Carrying out the monitoring and scrutiny therefore meets the Company's objective to deliver excellent services.

6 VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENCY ISSUES

6.1 Monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the allocations service ensures that value for money considerations are being made.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Monitoring, profiling and scrutiny of the service ensures that there is equality of service delivery to all service users.

8 BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 Nottingham City Homes performance reports

Contact officers: Sue Taylor
4 Hounds Gate,
Nottingham,
NG1 7BA
Tel: 9157194
E-mail: susan.taylor@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk

Sue Lomax
Hyson Green Housing Office
117-119 Radford Road
Nottingham
Tel: 9150170
E-mail: sue.lomax@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk

Date: 16th July 2008