



Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Focus Group

Held on Tuesday, 20th April 2010 at 4pm
In the Boardroom, Southgate House

Present: **Becky Hayward**
Sally Howell
Louise Inchley

Neighbourhood Services Manager
Leasehold and Home Ownership Manager
Repairs and Maintenance Officer

Attendees: A.A. Caldwell
Drew Dombrowski
Sean Wareing
M. Agar
S.Cripps
J Mortimer

Item	Action
1 Apologies	
None	
2 Introduction and health/safety issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BH outlined evacuation procedures as per instructions in boardroom and advised where facilities are. 	
3 Identifying cost of service	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BH advised that Gloucester City Council pay GCH to be involved in the choice based lettings process. She advised that she could give an indication of how much Neighbourhood Services Team cost but this would not be a true reflection of the cost of CBL. Attendees accepted this. BH outlined the service, as it is still relatively new. She advised: 5 Local Authorities joined together CBL opens up areas of choice across those local authority areas 	

- CBL is a purely web based service
- 1st round of bidding went live on 26th October 2010
- Gloucester is currently attracting in the region of 300 applications per month
- 152 properties have been let through the new system since October 2009

November	38
December	29
January	26
February	28
March	31

- It took the authorities involved 4 years to plan, has been implemented with few issues but it is recognised that we are all learning as we go.
- Void turnaround figures are good
- Demand is exceeding supply in this area
- It was noted that Gloucester City Homes and Gloucester City Council were the only authority of the 6 to offer assistance to their tenants to register on the CBL system
- The group were advised that Housing Officers now have mobile equipment to allow them to assist tenants in their own homes; we have 2 computers for tenant use at Southgate House, a computer at each Sheltered Scheme and at Matson One Stop Plus and Poets Corner in Podsmead.
- S.Cripps asked what happens when the bid is unsuccessful. BH and the group advised S.Cripps that they are notified on the system that this is the case.
- Experiences of the CBL system were shared; Agar/ Caldwell reported that they had been waiting 5 months before getting a successful bid; D.Dombrowski advised that he was successful on his 2nd bid, as was S.Wareing.
- S.Wareing advised that he didn't even know how to turn a computer on but was assisted the first time and found the

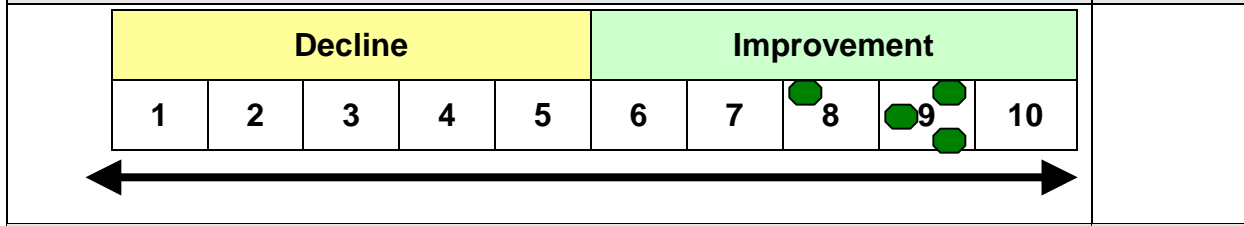
process easy to do.

- D.Dombrowski questioned if the system was biased for those who have Internet access at home as they will be able to bid from Midnight, whereas those who do not have access will have to wait for the following day. BH confirmed that the bids are assessed on need and not on who gets in first.
- S.Cripps suggested that there may be some resentment from those who have been waiting on the list for a long period prior to CBL being implemented and then new people on the list are successful 1st. BH explained that now people can see what properties are popular, that there is an equal split of bronze, silver and gold allocations (otherwise bronze would sit on the list forever).
- BH explained the banding and advised that the criteria for emergency or medical priority are now very strict.

4 Rating the service

BH introduced the exercise. A couple of people abstained from this exercise, as they have not directly experienced the process.

5 Service Improvement/Decline



6 Reviewing Service Standards|

7 Summary	
<p>Suggested improvements/ Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The group shared stories of experiences with other Authorities and Gloucester came out favourably.• M.Algar feels that the process now is a lot better than the previous system.• BH advised that with CBL, children are taken into consideration from birth and not from 12 months old, as was the case previously.• BH advised that in the case of shared custody of children, as long as a parent has custody for 50% or more of the time, they count on that parent's application. This was not the case previously.• It was clarified that the Neighbourhood Services Team were available to assist Tenants with CBL.• D.Dombrowski stated that he likes the "up my street" application on the system.• BH explained about the assisted bid, and auto bid system.• The group agreed that the current CBL system was more accessible and you can get more feedback from it.• It was agreed that the main issue or concern was the IT literacy of our tenants. SH pointed out that the Resident Involvement Team run courses on IT or can signpost anyone wanting to learn to community colleges.• It was suggested that it was sometimes difficult to get onto the computers at Southgate House. It was suggested that tenants might be able to pre-book time on one of the PC's and the other to remain available for those dropping in to use it on an ad-hoc basis.• D.Dombrowski advised that he found the system easy to use and advised that he would be open to assisting others to use it. He suggested that we get together a panel of tenants who would help those who were less capable.• J.Mortimer advised that the system was quite awkward to navigate the first time and maybe the information on the 2nd	

<p>page should be available on the 1st page. A.Caldwell advised that she found the age restrictions frustrating and not clear. BH advised that the system itself was being reviewed after 12 months use and issues like this will be addressed at this stage.</p>	
<p>8 Any other business</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your views count cards were given out for the FOCUS group. 4x excellent, 2x good scores obtained. <p>BH thanked everyone for attending what was an enjoyable session.</p>	
<p>End of meeting: 17.00</p>	