

## INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	PLANNING COMMITTEE	14 NOVEMBER 2018	10
<b>MYHOMECHOICE FYLDE COAST REVISED CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT POLICY</b>			

### PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

### SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

MyHomeChoice is the Choice Based lettings (CBL) system across the Fylde Coast authorities of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. It provide a portal where all vacancies for social housing are advertised in one place and households can placed bids for this accommodation. Properties are then allocated using a Consistent Assessment Policy for prioritising the housing need of applicants.

A review was undertaken of MyHomeChoice in 2015/16 which focussed on addressing issues of concern with the current Consistent Assessment Policy (CAP) raised by Registered Providers. The last such review of the Choice Based lettings Scheme (CBL) was undertaken in 2013, following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011. A number of changes were proposed to the current Consistent Assessment Policy to help alleviate delays in the current system for applicants, by bringing in an element of flexibility in ways households can access affordable housing.

This report summarises the six proposed changes that were approved by Environment Health and Housing Committee on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018, with an update required in 12 months in relation to allocation of accommodation and applicants registered for rehousing. The changes are to be implemented in the Autumn of 2018.

### SOURCE OF INFORMATION

A review was undertaken by the Fylde Coast Housing Providers Group, attended by Senior Strategic Staff within each partner organisation that work in partnership to manage and operate the Choice Based letting Scheme across the three Fylde Coast Local Authorities.

### LINK TO INFORMATION

<https://fylde.cmis.uk.com/fylde/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/956/Committee/19/Default.aspx>

<https://fylde.cmis.uk.com/fylde/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1025/Committee/19/Default.aspx>

### WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

Fylde BC does not own or manage social housing stock, however the local authority still has a role to assess and plan for housing needs across all tenures, make best use of existing stock to meet need, and to plan and facilitate new housing supply to meet identified need. The local authority also has a role to improve access to social housing, for all households, and this is achieved through a single application process.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Contact Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager 01253 658569

# **MY HOME CHOICE FYLDE COAST REVISED CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT POLICY**

## **1 Revised local connection requirement**

The proposed change to the system was to enable local connection (and thereby access to the Fylde Coast housing register) to be established through connection to any of the three boroughs, so that people do not fall out of the system if they move from one part of the Fylde Coast to another.

This would mean that residents who have moved between the three Fylde Coast boroughs will now be able to get onto the housing register when previously they may not have met the local connection requirement. However priority will still be given to Blackpool residents for Blackpool homes, Fylde residents for Fylde homes, and Wyre residents for Wyre homes.

## **2 Introduction of two ways of letting**

The new system will offer at least 50% of homes, including those in the shortest supply, only to people in Bands A-C, each of these homes will be offered to the "bidder" with the highest priority. The rest of the homes will be available to everyone on the list and offered on a first come first served basis. This is designed to ensure that people in the greatest need still have access to the most homes, while offering opportunities to everyone who needs to move to move quickly to find a suitable home as soon as it is available.

## **3 How applicants are awarded a priority band**

The proposal is to simplify the priority bands for people with a legally defined housing need so that there are only three bands, with the current bands C and D becoming a single band C. There will be no bands given to everyone else, making application simpler, while still allowing everyone to bid on first come first served homes. Households who do not have a housing need defined in law and were previously in Bands E and F are now placed on the housing register without a formal priority band.

## **4 Restrictions on the use of the system by existing social housing tenants**

The proposal is that existing social housing tenants should not be able to register for a new social housing property unless they have a housing need (including current under occupancy). The purpose is to prioritise new applicants who are not already housed in social housing.

## **5 Priority to people in paid or voluntary work**

The proposal slightly increases the chances for access to social housing for working applicants, in a similar way that Band E does under the existing system. The proposal is that 20% of homes made available on a first come first served basis will be offered with priority to people in paid or voluntary work. The proposed new policy seeks to strike a balance between meeting the needs of people in the greatest housing need, with providing opportunities for people who are working and often struggling to afford good quality market accommodation

## **6 Flexibility in the sizes of properties that applicants can bid for**

Under the current CAP the number of bedrooms for which applicants are eligible is determined by the size of their households and in line with DWP regulations. Instead of allowing applicants to express an interest in a home that meets their household's minimum needs, the new proposal will allow households, as long as the rent is affordable, to be able to get a homes that has one extra bedroom. The intention is to make social housing attractive to a wider range of people.