

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD**

**23 February 2009**

**Report of the Director of Health and Housing**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Information**

**1 UPDATE ON CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

**Summary**

**All local housing authorities and social housing landlords are required by Government to introduce Choice Based Lettings (CBL) by 2010. This report identifies the steps that need to be taken prior to the implementation of CBL in Tonbridge and Malling at the end of April.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Members will recall that CBL is being delivered in Kent by *Kent Homechoice*. This is a partnership of the twelve district, borough and city councils, and the majority of the county's stock-holding Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

1.1.2 The service has been implemented across the county in phases since July 2008. It will go live in Tonbridge and Malling on 27 April 2009 as part of the final implementation phase, along with Maidstone, Dartford and Gravesham.

**1.2 Next Steps**

1.2.1 A communication strategy [**Annex 1**] has been developed in consultation with colleagues in the media and customer service teams which identifies the steps to be taken in the run up to implementation. This includes briefings for staff, members, customers and other stakeholders, a CBL Open Day and training for front-line staff. The staff and residents of Russet Homes will also be closely involved. Posters will also be displayed at various locations across the borough detailing where further information can be obtained about CBL.

1.2.2 It has also been necessary to identify the distribution points across the borough that will supply the *Kent Homechoice* free sheets, and further information on these locations will be found in the paper attached at [**Annex 2**]. It should be noted however that whilst they are felt to be the most appropriate locations initially, they may be subject to some adjustment as the service becomes established and access patterns monitored and reviewed.

**1.3 Legal Implications**

1.3.1 All local housing authorities and social landlords are required to introduce CBL by 2010.

#### **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.4.1 The development of CBL through *Kent Homechoice* has been significantly more cost-effective than developing a Tonbridge and Malling specific scheme, which would have resulted in far higher development and running costs.

#### **1.5 Risk Assessment**

1.5.1 Failure to implement CBL could risk future funding opportunities, and also the reputation of the Council.

Background papers:

contact: Janet Walton

Nil

John Batty  
Director of Health and Housing