

Title: **Updates on the Council's Housing Register and the new Homes4Wiltshire Choice Based Lettings Scheme**

Portfolio holder: **Councillor Virginia Fortescue**

Reporting officer: **Angie Rawlins, Housing Needs Manager**

Key decision: **No**

Purpose

To update Cabinet on the current position and number of applicants on the Council's housing register and to give an update on the new Homes4Wilts Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

Background

As at 11 February 2009, the Council had 5,432 active applications on the current housing register. For the past two months we have focussed on ensuring that all our applicants have been given the opportunity to re-register on the new scheme. We have done this by carrying out a mailshot to all our applicants and, from this, we have already received over 1,000 returned/not known at this address.

The 5,432 active applicants are split as follows and examples of bandings given:

Band A	167
Band B	1812
Band C (appropriately housed)	3160
Band D (ineligible to bid)	293

Explanation of Band A

Applicants in this band will have an urgent need to seek affordable accommodation as a result of statutory requirements or due to a serious risk to their health, safety and well being.

Band A: Homeless/threatened with homelessness
Under-occupation
Accommodation immediately dangerous to the occupier
Statutorily overcrowded
Supported accommodation
Right to succession
Medical emergency
Harassment
Exceptional circumstances (reviewed on a case by case basis)

Explanation of Band B

Applicants in this band will have a genuine need to seek affordable accommodation but there is not a serious risk to their safety, health and well being and they do not meet statutory requirements.

Band B: Other homeless
High priority medical needs
Serious disrepair
Children under the age of 10 living in flats above ground floor
Applicants sharing accommodation
Separated households
Employment
Non-statutory overcrowding
Support and welfare

Key issues

- We continue to input West Wiltshire applications as we receive them on a daily basis. As at 11 February 2009, 1,165 West Wiltshire applicants had been registered on the new system.
- To ensure West Wiltshire applications are 'Active' and applicants are able to bid from 12 March 2009, we have employed temporary staff to input and assess application forms.
- We continue to focus heavily on Band A applicants, all clients currently residing in our temporary accommodation and clients receiving housing advice and assistance.
- We are also aware of vulnerable clients who require our assistance and those who are registered disabled and have taken steps to ensure that these clients are offered assistance.
- On 13 February 2009, Laura Young, currently Register and Support Team Leader at West Wiltshire, has been appointed Head of Homes 4 Wiltshire by the County Council.

Risk management Implications

All risks for this project are being managed by the Regional Choice Based Lettings Project Manager and they are reviewed regularly by the Housing Service Director. The main risk, identified as medium, is failure to introduce the Choice Based Lettings system on time.

Finance and performance implications

There are no financial or performance implications.

Legal and human rights implications

There are no legal or human rights implications.

Recommendations

That Cabinet note the report.