



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY COMMISSION  
MONDAY 1 OCTOBER 2007

# ITEM 10

## Housing Allocations Monitoring Report

### BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting of 2 April 2007, the Community Commission resolved to receive regular monitoring reports on Housing Allocations.
- 1.2 This report details the allocations made during the first six months of operating the new Abritas system.

### RELEVANT ISSUES

- 2.1 The Housing Options Centre are now responsible for processing all new housing applications except those from Council tenants, which are processed by Derby Homes. Previously, some Housing Associations did process some applications. This has led to greater uniformity in relation to verification of information.
- 2.2 Partner providers have confirmed that they welcome the new Abritas system. Anecdotal feedback from customers suggests that the new system is easier to understand and is more user-friendly than its predecessor. During the changeover from the old system to the new, we did see an upturn in queries and complaints, but these have now reduced considerably.
- 2.3 Low-level telephone enquiries about Derby Homefinder have now been transferred to Derby Direct as a way of improving the service customers receive.
- 2.4 Training on the new Allocations Policy has recently been provided to Councillors and Derby Homes Board members.

### STATISTICS

- 3.1 The following statistics show the position as at 31 August 2007:
  - a) there are 8,293 active applications on the register, of which:
    - 355 are in the Emergency Band – homeless families
    - 1,967 are in Band A
    - 4,533 are in Band B
    - 1,435 are in Band C

- b) since 1 April 2007, 831 properties have been advertised, of which:
  - 566 are Derby Homes properties
  - 265 are Registered Social Landlord – RSL – properties
- c) of the 831 properties advertised, only 253 are houses, the rest are flats, bed sits or apartments
- d) 364 properties were advertised to applicants aged 60 or over
- e) 4,991 applicants on the register have not bid for properties over the last six months
- f) since 1 April 2007, 134 homeless approaches have been prevented
- g) of properties let:
  - 30% have been let to the Emergency Band – target 30%
  - 39% have been let to Band A – target 35%
  - 28% have been let to Band B – target 30%
  - 3% have been let to Band C – target 5%
- h) 23% of all applicants are from BME households, and 24% of lets have been made to BME households.

<b>ACTIONS</b>
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- 4.1 There is a tendency for providers to advertise to more than one Band. This makes it difficult to control the quota system. The Housing Options Centre has written to providers requesting the practice to stop apart from in difficult to let cases, such as sheltered housing, where the providers are keen to maximize their potential for letting.
- 4.2 There are issues emerging in relation to a mismatch between the types of property advertised to a Band, particularly the Emergency Band, and the household size that make up that Band. This is being addressed by issuing further guidance to the housing providers.
- 4.3 We need to review the 4,991 applicants that are not using Derby Homefinder, and this will be done before the end of December.
- 4.4 We are beginning to monitor the performance of RSL's to make sure they are putting the maximum number of properties through Derby Homefinder, to maximize our nomination rights. If necessary, poor performance will be addressed through meetings with individual RSL's.
- 4.5 The verification process for applicants is often resource intensive and, for many applicants on the register, the reality is that they will not ever receive an offer of housing. We are, therefore, reviewing our processes with a view to 'risk-assessing' applications against the likelihood of them receiving an offer, and only verifying

these applications. For all others, they will be advised of their alternative housing options.

- 4.6 A new Mutual Exchange module is planned to be implemented in January 2008, which will allow applicants to advertise their properties on the system.

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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- 5.1 To note the report.
- 5.2 To consider any other information the Commission would like to monitor.