

APPENDIX II

The implication of leaving the CBL scheme

Background

The implementation of CBL systems was driven by tenants and the Chartered Institute of Housing who wanted more choice for homeseekers.

Implementing CBL has brought about an immense change in the way social housing is allocated. The benefits are:

- Increase in choice for housing register and transfer applicants
- Gives feedback to applicants
- Gives applicants the opportunity to make well informed choices
- Gives more certainty on waiting times
- Is more transparent in operation
- Allows for greater socio-economic mix and more sustainable communities
- Increases the links with registered social landlord partners, other local authorities
- Gives homeseekers a greater say over where they live
- Applicants more likely to settle in the area of their choice
- Applicants have greater buy-in in the property they have chosen

Why is CBL good practice? (from the CIH good practice document)

- Addresses the concern about unfair, bureaucratic systems of allocation of social housing
- Adopts lettings system that homeseekers can understand
- Provides more choice and involvement to customers in selecting a new home
- Transforms applicants from passive subjects into active participants in the letting process
- Offers customers a greater role in deciding where they wish to live and when they want to move
- CBL schemes give due weight to offering reasonable preference to applicants with priority housing needs
- Improves the effectiveness and performance of the letting system
- Contributes to an improvement in the relet times and rental income and reduction in void loss, and security and vandalism costs
- Reduces early tenancy breakdown and turnover
- Creates a more stable tenancy (low turnover) and contributes to creating sustainable communities provides detailed information to inform the local housing strategy, customers and housing managers

- helps landlords to plan and prioritise modernisation, adaptation or demolition of existing properties, the building of new properties, and neighbourhood regeneration
- CBL schemes have generated renewed interest in social housing
- breakdown artificial boundaries and recognises existing housing and labour markets
- reduces costs by enabling partners to share Central Processing Unit, Set up, running etc costs
- brings together a larger pool of available housing giving tenants more choice and helping to ease localised problems of high demand
- empowers customers (*prospective and transfer tenants*) to choose their new homes
- dependency to empowerment
- pointhunting to homehunting

Leaving the current scheme

Uttlesford currently operate CBL in partnership with 5 other authorities. To pull out of CBL would be costly and a retrograde step for applicants and tenants. If Uttlesford were to pull out of the existing contract the other members of the consortium would have to absorb the Council's percentage costs of the ongoing support charges. This would put a huge financial strain on our partners and would not only damage the Council's reputation but would jeopardize any future partnership working for the authority. It may also lead to compensation being sought.

If the Council left CBL what would it put in its place?

The Council could not afford to set up its own CBL system as there would be no economies of scale with software/advertising/user guides etc. These costs are currently shared with the other members of the consortium.

To leave the consortium and revert to the old scheme, when the Council selected tenants would not comply with current statutory guidance and equality duties. This would expose the Council to legal challenge.

"Customers like choice and say that they are satisfied because it is better than the council selecting tenants."