

Overview and Scrutiny 2

Choice Based Lettings

11 September 2007

Choice Based Lettings

- National Policy Requirement.
- Sub regional element.
- What changes are needed to the current allocation policy to deliver CBL.
- Possible implementation challenges.

How does CBL work?

It aims to give applicant:

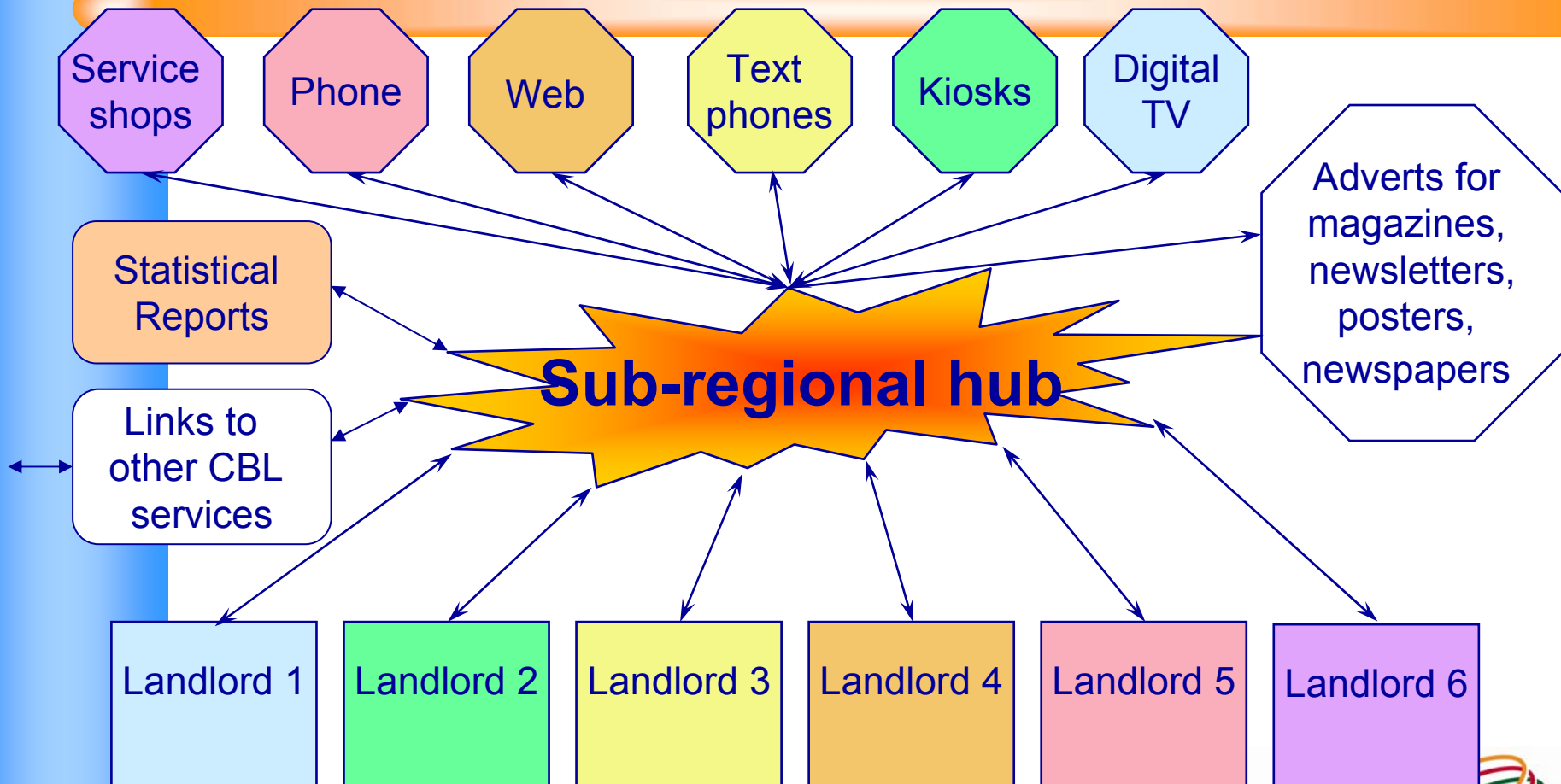
- Greater choice.
- More transparent allocation policy.
- Removes the system of the council making an offer to an applicant.

It is replaced by applicants applying for a property that is available....

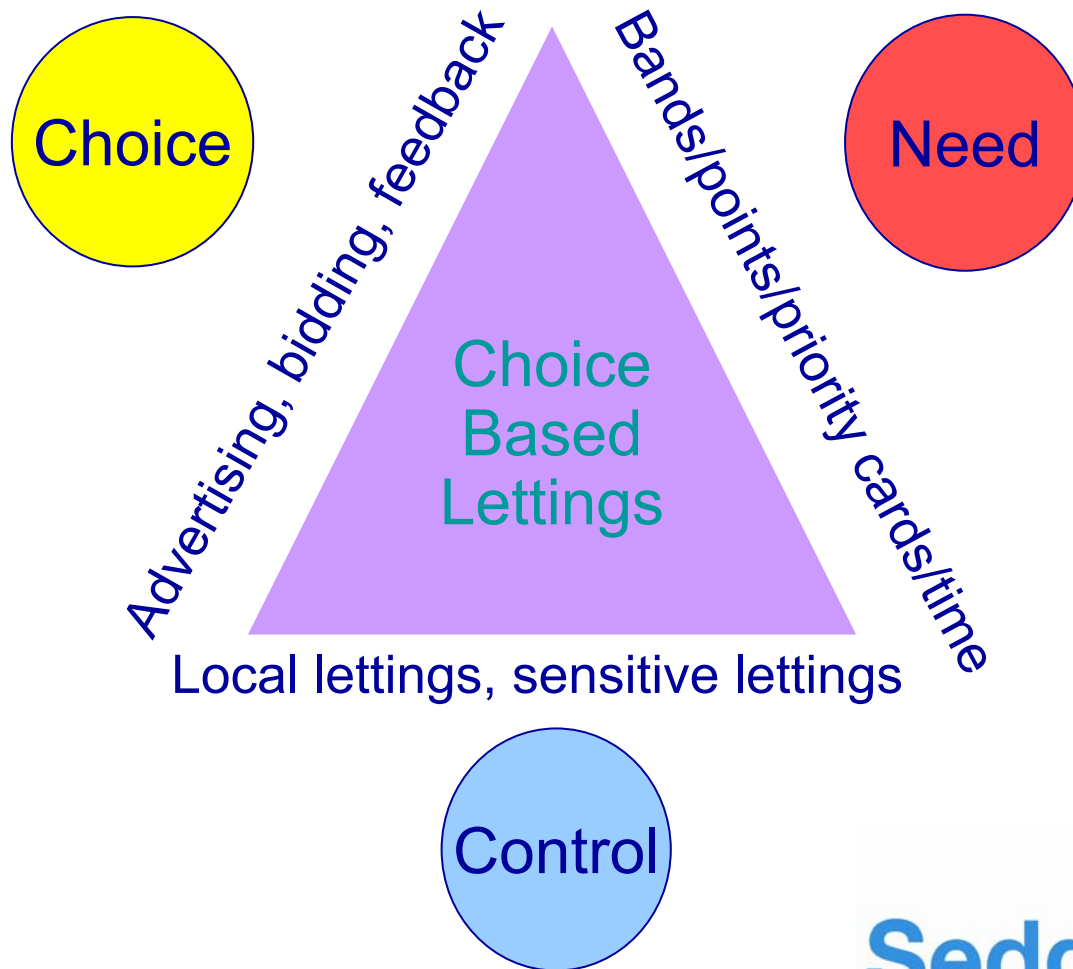
CBL & Sub-Regional CBL

- Choice Based Lettings (CBL)
 - Vacancies openly advertised.
 - Property & area information published.
 - Home seekers browse, choose & 'bid'.
 - Bids ranked & offers made **according to prioritisation policies**.
 - Results & demand feedback published.
 - Customer right to refuse an offer generally accepted.
 - Accessible information & support available to customers (especially vulnerable groups).
- Sub-Regional CBL (SRCBL)
 - CBL operated as a LA/RSL partnership across a sub-region.
 - Benefits for partners & customers.

Home seekers



Choice in Context



Current Position

- Target
 - CBL in place in all 354 English local authorities by 2010
 - SRCBL is preferred approach
- Progress
 - At April 06, 32% LAs and 40% of large RSLs
 - Fewer than 10% LAs currently have no plans
- Regional Challenge Fund
 - Over 100 LAs in 24 SR schemes funded in rounds 1 & 2
 - Oversubscribed
 - 2007 is final round

CBL Draft Statutory Guidance

- Issued for consultation on 15 Jan –consultation.
- Ends 10 April.
- Main topics covered
 - Reconciling choice, simplicity & need
 - Considerations when designing a banding scheme
 - Providing choice to those owed the main homelessness duty & to disabled applicants
 - Information, advice & support – for potentially disadvantaged
 - Partnership working with RSL's
 - Implementing CBL in a sub/regional context.

So why do it?

- Greater customer satisfaction.
- Improve home seeker perception of landlords from the start.
- Business efficiency.
- Performance improvements.
- Works everywhere – urban, rural, high & low demand.
- Mutual benefits of partnership working.
- More sustainable neighbourhoods.

Performance & Cost

- DCLG commissioned Heriott-Watt long-term impact report.
- Performance benefits
 - The end of hard to let
 - Lower refusal rates
 - Faster void times
 - Better tenancy sustainment
 - Cycle & shortlists support improved administration

Transparency

For CBL transparency means:

- Clear general ‘rules’ for eligibility, prioritisation & offers.
- No nasty surprises for customers.
- Eligibility restrictions are advertised upfront, not applied retrospectively.
- Feedback – live, personalised, tabular, aggregate.
- Forecasts – illustrative based on historic data.
- Feedback on any properties let outside of CBL.

Funding

- Regional Challenge Fund Round 2 now closed
- Round 3 in 2007
- Critical RCF success factors
 - Full political support
 - Sub-regional scale, minimum of 3 LAs
 - RSLs & private sector involvement
 - Housing Options approach

Funding

- Inclusive customer & stakeholder consultation
- Commitment to accessibility & non-discriminatory outcomes
- Value for money
- Commitment to mobility & commonality
- Innovation

Challenges of introducing CBL

- Need to develop a new allocation policy based on guidance to be issued shortly.
- Change existing Orchard system.
- Implement a new CBL software system to allow bidding.
- Consider bidding rounds and adverts.
- Consider other implications.

Challenges of implementing CBL

- CBL systems often require increased resources to set up and for IT support etc.
- Most CBL schemes use a specialist team
- Most CBL schemes require suitable office facilities to advertise and manage the process.

Challenges of implementing CBL

There will be a need to:-

- Review current staffing structures.
- Review impact of staffing of CBL scheme on current service delivery.
- Review existing budget provision.

Next steps

- Project plan for SBC to be developed.
- Officer project team to be established.
- Evaluation of applications of UBC on service delivery to be carried out.
- Timetable for implementation to be established.
- Regular reports and briefings to members to be carried out.
- Consultation.

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