

### Cottsway Housing Association Feedback on CBL

The following letter has been received, from Cottsway Housing Association, in support of the new approach and Choice Based Lettings as a general concept.

It should be noted that Cottsway Housing Association have been incredibly supportive in implementing and operating the new approach; to the extent that they provided £14,000 to fund a support officer (employed by WODC) to assist in the registering of customers on the Homeseeker Plus system.



18<sup>th</sup> August 2017

Dear Michelle

As you will undoubtedly recall, Cottsway Housing Association was very supportive of West Oxfordshire District Council's move to a Choice Based Lettings approach to allocation. As the anniversary of the implementation approaches we are aware that you will soon be required to review the trial. We are therefore please to offer our feedback.

We are satisfied that the predicted benefits around transparency and choice for our prospective tenants have been very satisfactorily achieved.

We were very pleased, along with other local Registered Providers to be involved in the set up and implementation processes associated with the project. This ensured a seamless transition for our customers, and prospective customers, and helped to deliver a tailored local solution.

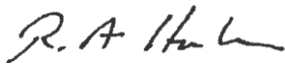
We have, in particular, noted four significant and tangible outcomes as a result of the implementation:

- A reduction in the number of offer refusals. Our tenants tell us that this is as a result of having detailed property information (and photographs) before they even bid on a new home and are therefore much less likely to turn down an offer upon first viewing.
- The streamlined process has contributed to the reduction in our average void period over the last year.
- Neighbourhood officers have noted improved Tenant satisfaction for those that have secured accommodation through the Choice Based Lettings system. Officers put this down to customers having the feeling of choice, rather than having something 'allocated to them'. Time will tell on this but we anticipate that this will lead to a reduction in early-tenancy transfer requests.

- CBL has helped with the preparedness of cases. At the point we carry out pre tenancy checks, the CBL journals allows us to have information readily available to enable us to process customers quicker. In the old system this would have meant delays waiting to gather information, lots of contact with colleagues at West Oxon DC and the applicant bouncing between the two organisations leading to frustrations and sometimes mis-communications. Less time wasted leading to better value for money for Cottsway, the Council and the customer.

We are very supportive of the new approach and would be very disappointed to lose the benefits that the Homeseeker Plus approach has had for us and, more importantly, our tenants. We welcome the opportunity that you have offered to continue working together to improve systems and processes and would be happy to offer any more detailed feedback as required.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. A. Hawkins'.

Rob Hawkins  
Head of Housing  
Cottsway Housing Association