

Housing Committee

Choice Based Lettings change of system

Victoria May

Service Manager for Housing Options

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KentHomechoice

- Kenthomechoice is the partnership of local authorities and Housing associations that provide social and affordable housing in Kent. The partnership began in 2008 and has been a county delivery since.
- The system offers a front system called KentHomeChoice to customers and a back-office system called Locata where we manage the housing register and also homelessness case work conducted under the Homelessness Reduction Act
- Available social homes are advertised on the system and customers place bids and we manage shortlists.
- The Locata contract comes to an end in July 2023
- Dover District Council (lead LA) undertook a Procurement process in early 2022 which included nominated senior officers from 6 of the 13 Council partners including the Service Manager from Gravesham.
- Huume Ltd won the contract on both price and quality.

Huume Ltd

- Huume Ltd are a micro company (and have only been trading for a relatively short period) additional financial due diligence was completed as their Dunn & Bradstreet Credit Report showed them to carry a moderate business risk (but with a high likelihood of continued operations).
- Huume provide the Homechoice System for Dorset www.dorsetcouncilhomechoice.org.uk
- To mitigate the moderate risk, the partnership have recommended
 - putting in place robust Escrow agreements to enable swift access to our data
 - keeping a budget reserve of £150/200K for a new system provider

The Huume System

- Provides easy to build, cross module reporting tools with automatic exports to excel
- Ability to customise and develop the system ourselves without asking developers to assist i.e we can build sub forms, tasks, amend our own forms, set rules
- Inbuilt HTML communications system
- Dashboards for each team
- Clear customer login homepage
- Simple change of circumstance process
- Improved customer experience, one single access points, improved communication tools including a customer preferred property

Current position

- Cabinet report went to DDC on 4 July 2022 and the report also went to Overview and Scrutiny
- Tenderers were notified on 6 July 2022
- New Partnership Agreements have been sent out to all local authorities
- The contract to provide the KentHomechoice system was issued to Huume on 14th September 2022.
- Gravesham has pulled together a small project team to support the lead officer for Gravesham and the partnership manager. This includes Information Governance, ICT and digital team.
- Communications team will also be involved to ensure we are providing key messages to residents of Gravesham.
- The Homelessness & Allocations Team manager is the system lead for Gravesham

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How does this affect the housing register?

- Kent senior managers discussed and evaluated the management of services to customers whilst also considering the transition and it agreed that KentHomechoice **will close to new applications on 1st June 2023.**
- We will continue to advertise new properties on Locata until 16th June 2023 (adverts will close on that date) and after this date, all data will be taken from Locata and stored on a SQL server and data will be migrated from there to Huume. **The new system will go live on 1st July 2023**
- We will be working with our own ICT/digital services to move our own Council's historic data from the SQL server to Gravesham's own SQL server where we can then configure it so that it can be used for any reports/FOIs that are required in the future.
- Adverts can be prepared on the Huume system ready for a go live of 1st July 2023
- New applications to the register can be made directly onto Huume from 1st July 2023

Housing Advice/Homelessness

- All housing options/homelessness applications from 1st April 2018 will be moved from Locata to Huume on or **just after Friday 16th June 2023**
- We will go live with housing options/homelessness on or before **1st July 2023**.
- There will be a very short period (less than a week) where data on cases will need to be keyed into both systems. The details of this will still need to be worked on and will be clearer once we have completed the data migration trials which will happen earlier in 2023.
- The Service will run as 'business as usual' and the service will do all they can to ensure minimal disruption to customers.

Thank you for listening



Any questions?