

HMB

Allocations Review Overview

October 2021

Housing Options – Paul Sylvester

Business Innovation : Projects

Slide 1



Reason for the Project

Home Choice Bristol is used by Bristol City Council to allocate social housing. It is a common housing register with a single set of qualification criteria, a guiding policy, priority banding system and arrangement for advertising properties (choice-based system). It is used by BCC and 18 housing associations.

The current lettings approach does not address the following problems:-

- It does not help create mixed and balanced communities - In fact, it appears to concentrate the numbers of households facing poverty, with disadvantaged backgrounds, ill health and support needs etc in social housing areas and estates
- Households in bands three and four receive few offers
- It does not make best use of currently adapted homes
- There are rising numbers of statutorily homeless households and this is likely to increase
- Some housing associations have introduced additional letting criteria, outside the HCB policy arrangements, particularly concerning financial capacity, to deal with perceived risk when offering (or not) housing to low-income households

What we aim to achieve

To deliver a future vision for the service that:

- Supports more mixed, balanced and sustainable communities
- Houses those in the greatest need
- Is more efficient and user friendly for applicants, the council, housing associations and other partner organisations
- Give realistic expectations about being housed to those who have joined the HCB register



Criteria for success

It was envisaged that this might affect:

- **Processes** – application, assessment and allocation processes and the underpinning policy
- **Organisational structure** – How we are organised to deliver i.e. changes to team structure and roles
- **Technology** – i.e changes to the current ABRITAS system or potential procurement of an alternative IT system in support of the revised approach
- **Information** – data cleansing, possible data migration, new performance measures

Mandate

The is to conduct a review of the allocations scheme to attempt to address these issues.

Areas under review:

- Common register and allocation policy
- Choice based approach vs. a managed list
- Open register/ qualification criteria
- Banding system
- Priority for specific groups
- Flexibility: local lettings, landlord agreed transfers, letting policies or priority for positive behaviours (asset based approach)

It was decided that the work was to be carried out in a way that enlisted community participation and involvement to identify and understand community needs and priorities.



Status & Proposed timeline

Completed to date:

Between Nov 2019 and March 2020, internal stakeholders were engaged and an online survey was conducted.

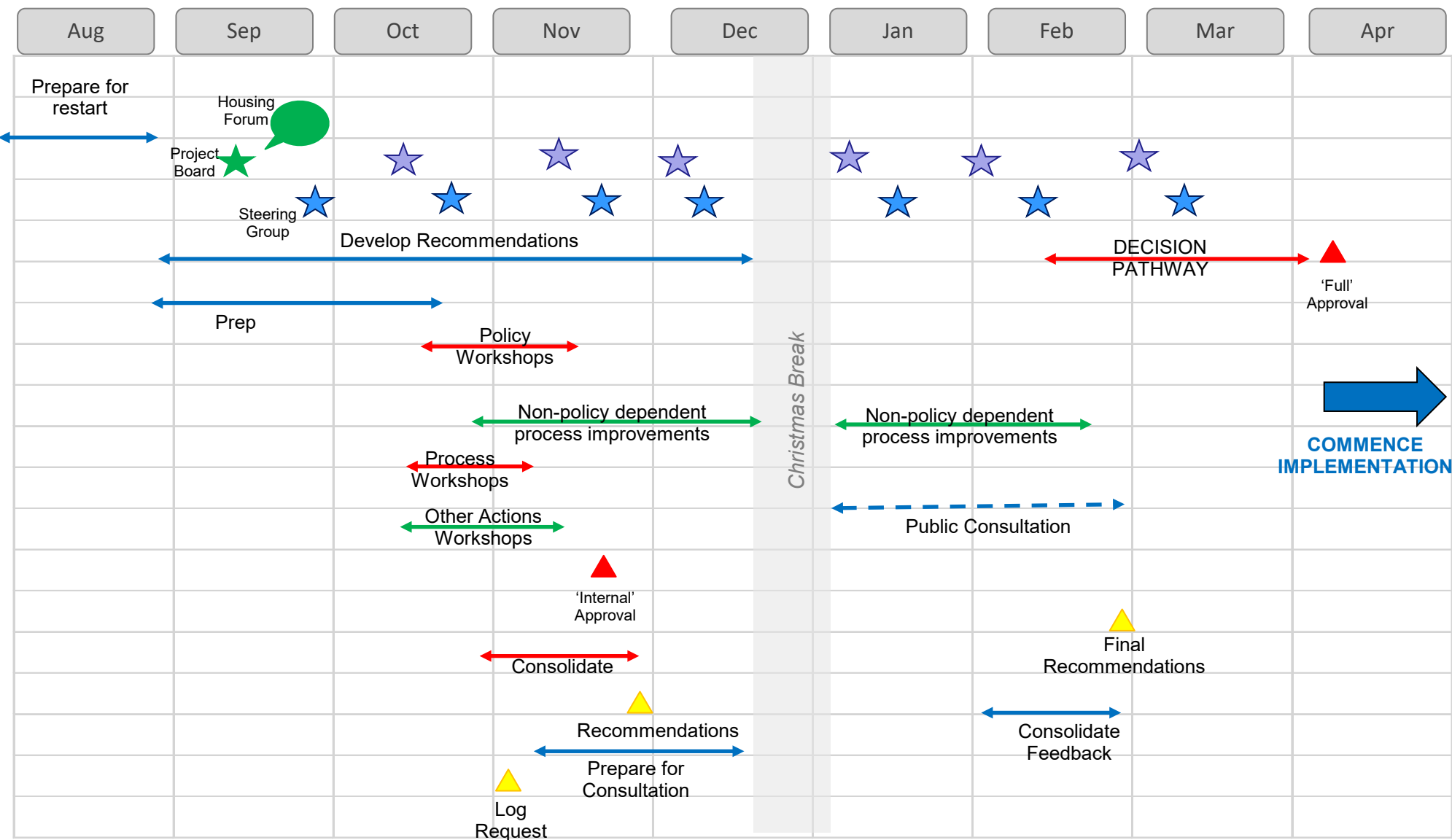
A series of Community based engagements was conducted, however COVID prevented concluding event. A Report was produced by Locality who facilitated these events.

Report attached to meeting request

Additional research was undertaken into the allocations policies of other Core Cities and elsewhere (which needs to be updated with significant changes that have taken place since March 2020 e.g. Manchester have introduced a new Allocations Scheme)

All of this forms input to the review.

- June to August: Pre-planning
 - Reconstitute Project Board & Steering Group (*Numerous changes*)
 - Evaluate Locality Report on Community Engagement outputs (Confirm scope)
 - Confirm timeline expectations
- Start work again September
 - Reconvene Project Board (Internal Delivery Management)
 - Reconvene Steering Group (Direct / Guide / Enable)
 - Constitute a Member Group and a Residents Working Group (Input, Co-design)
 - Housing Management Board briefing and steer (Influence/ Advise)
 - Autumn Housing Forum (Inform / Engage)
 - Additional Consultation (Advice/ Adults & Children's/Members etc)
 - Reconvene Community Groups & Housing Providers to review consultation output & action plans
 - Refresh Mandate and priorities
- Sept - Jan:
 - Formalise proposals (Amendments to policy, process, communication, teams, systems...)
 - Develop associated delivery plans (for the above)
 - Prepare for public consultation
- Jan/Feb: Commence Public consultation (6 weeks)
- April 2022 onwards – Deliver the change



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Current Status

- Project Board and Steering Group have reconvened
- Member Working Group has been established but not yet engaged on this project
- Resident Working Group is WIP (To be broadly representative of those on the Housing Register including BAME, those with disabilities, the elderly, Care Leavers etc)
- Work has started on Policy proposal development
- Work has started on Communications Review
- We are planning a collective Journey Mapping exercise to review the process end-to-end to really understand the current customer experience
- We have some resourcing challenges (no official budget for the project in this financial year but it is deemed to be a priority under the Big Housing Conversation and will be running as an initiative under that banner)

Thank You

