



Home Choice Plus and rural housing schemes

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Home Choice Plus

What I am covering today

- Introduction to Home Choice Plus
- How we compare housing needs
- Registration process
- s106 agreements
- Local occupancy
- Local Lettings Plans
- Allocations Process



Home Choice Plus

- District Council's housing register since 2008
- Access to social/affordable housing in the District, including sheltered and extra care
(Properties owned by Housing Association partners)
- Mechanism for prioritising different levels of housing need



Home Choice Plus

- Home Choice Plus **Partnership Area:**
- Stratford on Avon District
- Wychavon District
- Wyre Forest District
- Bromsgrove District
- Malvern Hills District
- Worcester City



Home Choice Plus

Features of the Scheme

- Banding system (housing needs)
- Available properties advertised weekly
- Applicants can choose properties by placing bids
- Up to 3 bids per week



Home Choice Plus

- Eligibility
 - Determined by local connection to the **Partnership Area** AND
 - Housing need
- c.150 - 200 applications each month



Home Choice Plus

Bandings (*measure of housing need and District local connection*)

- **Priority** – homeless (accepted duty)
- **Gold Plus** – very high need + District connection
- **Gold** – high need + District connection
- **Silver Plus** – very high need/no District connection
- **Silver** – high need/no District connection
- **Reduced Preference**
- **Bronze Plus** – low need/District connection
- **Bronze** – low need/no District connection



Home Choice Plus

Household numbers in each band @30/5/2019

- **Priority**62
- **Gold Plus**672
- **Gold**439
- **Silver Plus**29
- **Silver**32
- **Reduced Preference**136
- **Bronze Plus**3190
- **Bronze** 97
- **TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS** 4657

- **97% have a District connection**



Home Choice Plus

- Registration process
 - Online application form
 - Assessed by Housing Options Team
 - Are they eligible?
 - What is their Housing Need?
 - Application processed
 - If eligible, banding awarded/parish connection recorded
 - With higher bandings, additional information usually required



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- Development of properties
- Section 106 agreements
 - Local occupancy criteria described
 - Requirement for Local Lettings Plan
- District Council has 100% nomination rights



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- Section 106 agreements – local occupancy

Local connection criteria – qualifying connections

- Born in the parish
- Currently resident in the parish for 12 months or more
- Currently employed in the parish for 12 months or more and at least 16 hours per week
- Previously resident in the parish for at least 3 years
- Current residence of a close family member for at least 3 years
- **Documentary evidence obtained to confirm connection**



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- Section 106 agreements – cascade mechanism

Qualifying connections considered for:

- Preference to Parish (1st tier) in first instance
- Adjacent parishes (2nd tier)
- The rest of the District (3rd tier)

Then, in some cases

- Designated housing market area (eg Coventry/Warwickshire) (4th tier)
- The rest of England (5th tier)



Home Choice Plus

- Section 106 agreements

Local Lettings Plans

- Sustainable communities
 - To ensure new community is well managed
- Parish housing need surveys
 - To ensure allocations match the profile of need as indicated by parish survey (if any)



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- Allocation process 1
 - Properties are advertised on Home Choice Plus
 - 7 day bidding cycle
 - Shortlisting once advert closes



Home Choice Plus

- Allocation process 2
 - Shortlisted by parish connection
 - Then by Housing Need
 - In accordance with Local Lettings Plan (if there is one)



Home Choice Plus

- Allocation process 3
- Council nominates eligible households to landlord
- Landlord carries out pre allocation checks
- Property offered
- Tenant signs up

- 2018/19 – 620 nominations
- 2017/18 – 703 nominations
- 2016/17 – 896 nominations



Home Choice Plus

- Why properties might not be allocated to local people
- Property does not have a s106 agreement (no local connection required for ex SDC stock)
- Insufficient qualifying households with parish connection (cascade would then apply)
- Number of qualifying households exceeds number of units developed



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