

Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods & Housing Department

Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 29th June 2006

Subject: Shared Housing Action Plan and Research Project Update

<p>Electoral Wards Affected:</p> <p>Headingley Hyde Park & Woodhouse Kirkstall Weetwood</p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Ethnic minorities <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Women <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disabled people <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Function <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Executive Summary
 This report provides an update on the Shared Housing Group including the development of the Shared Housing Action Plan. It also provides an update on the research that is being undertaken into student housing and a summary of the key issues that have been identified through the research.

- 1.0 Purpose of the report**
- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work of the Shared Housing Group and the Research Project into student housing.
- 2.0 Background Information**
- 2.1 The Area Manager's report to the February Area Committee included an update on the Shared Housing Group and a proposed schedule of reports from the group to the Area Committee. The February Committee also received reports on To Let Boards and the Housing Act 2004.
- 2.2 The Shared Housing Group has continued to meet on a bi-monthly basis. An Action Plan has been developed and research into student housing has been progressed.

3.0 Shared Housing Action Plan

- 3.1 Appendix 1 is the current draft of the Shared Housing Action Plan.
- 3.2 The Plan identifies a series of actions and key outputs for 2006-07 which are currently being finalised. It is a working document, which will evolve as work progresses. It will be reviewed on an annual basis, with a new series of outputs developed for future years.
- 3.3 Key actions include:
- Managing the social and environmental impacts of high concentrations of students including crime, anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance and the impact on the environment and community relations
 - Encouraging the development of student housing outside Inner North West Leeds.
- 3.4 Key partners in delivering these actions include the universities, Unipol, community representatives, landlords, Re'new, Environmental Health, Planning and Streetscene services. Activities to reduce the impact of concentrations of students in the area include the improvement of street cleansing and bulky waste collection especially around key times such as the end of summer term, the promotion of noise nuisance initiatives, and enforcement of the restrictions on To-Let boards in the area.

4.0 Research into Student Housing

- 4.1 Re'new has been working in partnership with North West Area Management to review existing research on student housing in Leeds and to undertake new research.
- 4.2 The purpose of the research is to assess:
- likely trends in student numbers, current concentration of students in LS6 and its impact;
 - the adequacy of current housing provision;
 - student demand/preferences for shared housing 'in the community' and/or for purpose built 'en suite' accommodation;
 - prospects for diversifying the student population.
- 4.3 A series of meetings to inform the above have taken place with the Universities, Unipol, Leeds HMO Lobby, LS6 Landlords and the larger developers including Unite, Parklane Properties and Liberty Living.
- 4.4 Key issues identified are:
- Student numbers – there has been a 39% increase in students with residential requirements in Leeds, since 1994 (from 28,000 to 39,000). This has led to an increased density of the student population in Headingley and other parts of inner North West Leeds.
 - Student accommodation – during the period of growth in numbers the 2 universities increased their accommodation by 30% from 7,946 to 10,350 bedspaces. Private developers such as Liberty Living, Unite, Opal and Park Lane Properties are providing purpose built student accommodation. A total of 5,000 private sector bedspaces are expected to have been developed by 2009.

- Surplus bedspaces – Unipol have calculated that there are approximately 2,500 current surplus bedspaces and estimate that this could eventually rise to around 5,000.
- The effect of increased costs of studying - including top up fees payable from September 2006 and the cost of rent in new developments, approximately £70-£80 per week compared to £55 per week in a shared house.
- The impact of HMO licensing on the estimated 5,000 licensable properties in inner North West Leeds. Preliminary research with landlords suggests that some may 'downsize' their properties from 5 to 4 bedrooms to avoid licensing. Others may sell up licensable properties, particularly in the fringe areas such as Burley and Kirkstall, where landlords are unsure that demand exists for their properties to justify the additional investment.
- The movement of significant amounts of teaching to the LMU Becketts Park site, and the closure of halls of residence on that site created a demand for shared housing in the immediate vicinity and in central Headingley.

4.5 There are a number of variables affecting demand and supply of housing for students, and it will not be possible to achieve an absolutely clear picture of likely future needs and trends at this stage. The research will provide the basis for a Strategy for Housing Students in Leeds and will provide baseline information for charting future change in both the composition of the population of inner North-West Leeds and its housing mix. It will also assist in developing and refining approaches to neighbourhood management in inner North West Leeds.

4.6 Further research will be needed in 12 to 18 months time to assess the impact of the completed and fully open purpose-built student accommodation; the characteristics of students moving into those facilities and the potential impact on shared housing in inner North West Leeds; and the impact of the requirements of HMO licensing and any potential decision to introduce additional discretionary licensing.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Area Committee is requested to note the contents of the report.