

Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing)

Inquiry into Affordable Housing 2005/06 – Monitoring of Recommendations

Recommendation	Comment from department
<p>RECOMMENDATION 1</p> <p>That the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing takes forward the proposal to promote moves for people under occupying council properties, and also that possible management incentives for ALMOs to promote the policy sensitively are considered.</p>	<p>Following the debates held at the Scrutiny Board, a revised Lettings Policy was implemented in April 06. It sets out a number of incentives for customers living in council or Housing Association homes who are under occupying their homes to move. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awarding Priority Extra where appropriate; • greater promotion and support from ALMO staff for those moving; • Allowing ALMOs to consider making financial payments to help customers move. <p>The department will give further consideration to incentives to help ALMOs deal with under occupation.</p> <p>The number of council tenants moving to smaller accommodation rose from 63 in 2004/5 to 175 in 2005/6. This increase is partly due to the introduction of the revised Lettings Policy, and partly to rehousing those displaced by clearance schemes. In these circumstances, many customers are let homes based upon their housing need, and rehoused in smaller properties.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 2</p> <p>That mutual exchange marketing is further developed by the Strategic Landlord and ALMOs.</p>	<p>Mutual Exchanges have been advertised weekly in the Leeds Homes flyer and on the Leeds Homes website since 2005. In addition, Housing Associations also advertise their mutual exchanges through Leeds Homes.</p> <p>Update</p> <p>No.of exchanges completed in the last 5 years;</p>

2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
420	347	321	266	303

Customers accessing the Leeds Homes website exchange service have seen an improvement since May 2007 due to an enhancement that more accurately matches exchanges in their respective locations and property size requirements.

Further planned improvements in the coming year include;

- Completion of a tenant exchange request on-line added to the Leeds Homes website which will form part of the Archouse Plus rollout in Orchard
- Further promotion of the scheme on ALMO websites and their periodical tenants newsletters
- Promotion of the scheme by Leeds Homes Team to coincide with the print run of exchange request forms
- Matching tenants being contacted directly by ALMOs about potential exchanges
- Training to ALMO staff
 - to improve use of IT by ALMO staff to identify potential exchanges
 - legal process for exchanges

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the Neighbourhoods and Housing department encourage Registered Social Landlords to advertise their available properties through the choice based lettings scheme.

Leeds Federated HA and Unity HA advertise almost all their properties through the Leeds Homes choice based lettings scheme. In quarters 1-3 of 2006/7, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) advertised 131 properties. Negotiations are ongoing with 10 other RSLs to advertise their properties.

RECOMMENDATION 4

<p>That the Neighbourhoods and Housing department develops stronger links with RSLs, particularly in establishing nomination agreements.</p>	<p>The Council re-launched the need for nominations in 2006 by developing new strategic and operational monitoring structures. Officers meet each RSL monthly to discuss their nominations performance. Strategic Landlord Group monitors this.</p> <p>All RSLs are expected to sign an agreement stating that they will let a minimum of 50% of their properties to council nominations. 19 RSLs have signed agreements, covering 85% of RSL stock in the city.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 5</p> <p>That a profile of the housing register is made to find the average length of time a customer waits for rehousing, and the sizes of households who need rehousing.</p>	<p>Strategic Landlord group can now give ALMOs the average length of time taken to rehouse customers by priority band, and homeless customers. This information will also be useful for customers, so that they can make informed decisions on where to bid for a home.</p> <p>In addition, reports are now available giving the average length of wait by ethnicity and age.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 6</p> <p>That the Affordable Housing Task Group develops further affordable housing schemes in Leeds, and takes note of key research findings and best practice being established nationally.</p>	<p>The Chief Housing Services Officer, on behalf of the Affordable Housing Task Group, submitted a report to Executive Board in November 2006. This gave details of the Affordable Housing Strategy, and the mechanisms that should be considered to deliver affordable housing in the public and private sectors.</p> <p>The Housing Market Assessment, including the needs assessment for affordable housing across the city (based on national guidelines set out by the Department of Communities and Local Government), is nearing completion. It was carried out under procurement rules by Outside UK. Since the last assessment in 2003, the need for affordable homes has increased on a year by year basis from 480 to 1889 units. These figures, together with the final report, have yet to be formally agreed. However, it is unlikely that the need figure will be lower than this, given the pressures on all</p>

	<p>sectors of the housing market.</p> <p>Research is also being carried out to understand why customers are increasingly seeing social housing as a route into the housing market. The research, which should be completed early in 2007, seeks to understand whether new groups of customers wish to be rehoused to social housing, or whether the increase in demand is due to a combination of reducing housing stock due to right to buy applications, and stock investment appraisals.</p> <p>Both the Assessment of Need and the research are fundamental to the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan that has been agreed by Executive Board.</p> <p>Update Housing Market Assessment The final report and Executive Summary have now been published as a key City Council document. The need to deliver an additional 1889 units of affordable housing on a year-on-year basis for the next fifteen years has been confirmed.</p> <p>In addition to the outcomes of this assessment discussions are taking place with representatives from this authority and representatives from the regional assembly in relation to the amendment upwards in relation to the target figures within the Regional Spatial Strategy that the authority will be expected to achieve across all housing markets</p> <p>Demand for Social Housing The research has been completed and the final draft of the report and the Executive Summary have been completed and are now subject to discussion with leading Members of the administration and the Chief Housing Services Officer in order to consider the implications of the research.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 7	The Affordable Housing Delivery Plan that has been agreed by Executive Board set Out a broad strategic framework to develop the criteria for access to affordable

<p>That clear criteria for access to affordable housing is developed for all schemes, maintaining local links, and giving priority to those who have been displaced through regeneration schemes.</p>	<p>housing. Neighbourhoods and Housing and the Development Department are working closely to develop standardised section 106 agreements. They are also working to ensure that affordable housing requirements in new and existing planning applications are met in line with the Supplementary Planning Guidance, and that local needs are met.</p> <p>With the current pressures on social housing from decanting secure tenants and residents, work is ongoing to see how additional affordable housing, developed either by public or private sector funding, can assist with regeneration schemes and rehousing of those displaced.</p> <p>Strategic Affordable Housing Partnership Following the agreement in November 2006 by the Executive Board of the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan a further report was considered in March 2007 that recommended the creation of a Strategic Affordable Housing Partnership that would be responsible for setting the future strategic direction of affordable housing delivery across the city. Approval was also given for the transfer of 77 acres of council owned land to be transferred to the Partnership. This will be used to create a range of affordable housing choices in order to meet the challenging housing targets within the Housing Market Assessment.</p> <p>The Partnership will be chaired by Councillor Andrew Carter. The membership of the partnership will include key players from within the Council, including the Chief Regeneration Officer and Chief Housing Services and and the representatives from the Corporate Centre, Government Office of Yorkshire and Humber, the Housing Corporation, English Partnerships and the Chair of the Leeds Housing Partnership. The first meeting will take place in either late July or early August.</p>
<p>Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>The final report of the Housing Market Assessment will inform and advise on housing need across all tenures. Development Department and Neighbourhoods and Housing</p>

	<p>are working to ensure a co-ordinated approach towards the marketing of affordable housing. Neighbourhoods and Housing are also working closely with RSLs, who will be either managing or marketing properties, taking local requirements into account.</p> <p>The publication of the PPS3 and the updated Housing Market Assessment will inform the new supplementary planning document which will be produced within the next 18 months following the necessary planning consultations.</p> <p>As the SPD development forms part of planning legislation a formal timetable for consultation is being developed by the Development Department that will be supported by the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 9</p> <p>That the appropriate Scrutiny Board receives a progress report on the Golden Triangle Partnership</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 10</p> <p>That the future target attached to BVPI</p>	<p>A report on the activities of the Golden Triangle Partnership will be developed and reported to the appropriate scrutiny board in May 2007.</p> <p>An update report is being prepared to be presented to scrutiny</p> <p>The Empty Property Strategy has been revised and updated to cover the period 2006</p>

<p>64 is high enough to ensure that it drives continued improved performance.</p>	<p>– 2010, and stretched targets were incorporated and agreed at Executive Board on 15th November 2006.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 11</p> <p>That the department considers future funding arrangements for the Empty Property Team.</p>	<p>Environmental Health Services intend to apply for an extension of the NRF funding to support the Empty Property Team over 2007/08. They will submit a further bid for another EHO post to help with the high level enforcement actions that are required in the existing target areas at Cross Green, East End Park, Harehills, Chapeltown, Beeston and Holbeck. Discussions have taken place with the Chief Regeneration Officer about relaxing the current boundaries the team are working in, so that they can work in the traditional student accommodation areas of Headingley, Hyde Park, Meanwood and Kirkstall, which are beginning to show signs of un sustainability in this particular niche of the housing market.</p> <p>Environmental Health Services successfully applied for an extension of the NRF funding to support the Empty Property Team over 2007/08. However, the bid for an additional EHO post to help with the high level enforcement actions that were planed within the existing target areas at Cross Green, East End Park, Harehills, Chapeltown, Beeston and Holbeck was not forthcoming.</p> <p>A report / business case has been drafted for DMT consideration. Within the report it is proposed that the Empty Property Team should be established as a permanent resource and have a city wide remit instead of the currently specified targeted areas. The report also proposes that the team should be funded from the Environment and Neighbourhoods Department’s central staffing budget thereby ensuring that the vital and beneficial work they undertake continues throughout the city and is not future dependant upon short term funding regimes such as NRF.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 12</p>	

That the department reports to the appropriate Scrutiny Board on the Housing Market Assessment once this is complete.

A report on the outcome of the Housing Market Assessment will be reported to the appropriate scrutiny board in April 2007.
Due to a delay in the final production of the report, it is anticipated that a report will be taken to Scrutiny in September 2007.