

Responses to Inquiry into Housing Conditions: Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People)

| <b>Recommendation</b>   | <b>Response</b>  |
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| <p><b>Recommendation 1</b><br/>That the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing urgently and vigorously pursues a more strategic approach to increasing and improving the supply of appropriate and affordable family accommodation across the rented and owned housing sectors.</p>   | <p>An affordable housing working group has been established with senior representatives from Development Dept and Neighbourhoods and Housing. The group is tasked with securing additional affordable housing and ensuring that increased levels and appropriate types of affordable housing are secured. The group is developing an overarching 'Affordable Housing Plan' the remit of which is to 'maximise the supply of affordable housing provision in Leeds and improve access to housing for all groups within the community'. The plan sets in a strategic context the target groups, the types of affordable housing available, access routes available to individuals including families, policy issues and how the delivery can be improved.</p> <p>In addition, the Homeless service have housed approx. 400 families in private rented accommodation as a means of preventing their homelessness.</p> |
| <p><b>Recommendation 2</b><br/>That the Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities) takes forward these issues and the monitoring of progress on our behalf.</p>  | <p>Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing) will receive updates in the regular monitoring reports, along with progress being made on recommendations following the inquiry into Affordable Housing.</p>  |
| <p><b>Recommendation 3</b><br/>That the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing takes forward the proposal to promote moves for people under occupying council tenancies, and also that possible management incentives for ALMOs to sensitively promote the policy are considered.</p> | <p>See response to Affordable Housing Inquiry (Thriving Communities)</p>   |
| <p><b>Recommendation 4</b><br/>That the Directors of Neighbourhoods</p>   | <p>Departments and partners are seeking to expand the councils Signpost service to</p>   |

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| <p>and Housing and Children's Services consider the introduction of a protocol for tracking children and young people who are part of a family that is evicted from or judged unsuitable for a council tenancy, and/or is assessed as homeless.</p>  | <p>provide coverage in each of the five area wedges. This service works with those families which demonstrate the most difficult anti-social behaviour and seeks to ensure that behaviour improves and that they maintain their tenancies in an acceptable manner. In addition the service is currently exploring the potential to develop a dispersed tenancy scheme for families who are about to be, or are homeless as a result to their ASB. This will provide families with an Assured Short hold tenancy and considerable support and encouragement as a last opportunity to improve their behaviour. Those that fail to improve their behaviour will be evicted. Their behaviour will continue to be subject to supervision and monitored through the ASB team.</p> <p>Jane Hall, Team Leader Attendance Strategy is currently leading on developments regarding the Children Missing Education Protocol (CME) for Education Leeds and Children's Services.<br/>Children of compulsory school age will be included in CME protocol as a 'vulnerable group'.</p> |
| <p><b>Recommendation 5</b><br/>That the Directors of Neighbourhoods and Housing and Children's Services consider further action which could be taken, in relation to housing, to protect continued parental contact in line with court decisions about the best interests of children and young people whose parents have split up, and review the allocation policy as appropriate.</p> | <p>From September there will be a series of workshops between operational staff in ALMOs and Social Services in the geographic area that they work within to support families where there are vulnerable children where the family has split up.</p>  |
| <p><b>Recommendation 6</b><br/>That the Director of Development, in consultation with the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing, develops</p>   | <p>The Scrutiny Board report recognises legislative restrictions in this area (para 3.3). Current national guidance is set out in Circular 6/98 which states that the seeking of affordable housing as part of development schemes, decisions about what types of housing to be provided should reflect local housing need as demonstrated by a rigorous</p>  |

a comprehensive and systematic strategy aimed at ensuring that the need for affordable family accommodation is an integral consideration in the department's working, especially in relation to the planning and development functions, and ensures that wherever possible an adequate number of affordable homes is included in, or funded via, all major housing developments prior to applications for planning permission being submitted to Plans Panels.

and realistic assessment of local need (para 15). Draft PPS3 states that sub-regional housing market assessments should help determine whether affordable housing is needed and guide the level, size, type and location of affordable housing (para 23). So, planning policy and practice for seeking affordable housing cannot insist upon provision of family housing without a demonstrable need for such accommodation. Current local policy, Supplementary Planning Guidance Number 3 (SPG3), states that the mix of types/sizes of affordable housing should be informed by housing need information, but that where information is not available, developments should provide a pro-rata mix of affordable dwellings to reflect the mix of dwellings proposed on the development as a whole (para 3.8). At present, the Housing Need Assessment carried out in 2003 has little detail about need for different sizes of affordable housing in different parts of Leeds. Nevertheless, the SPG Housing Need Annex (July 2005) states that in the Outer Areas & Outer Suburbs of Leeds there is a stronger need for family housing & flats of 2 bed minimum size. Also, the Department, in collaboration with N&H Dept, has commissioned a Housing Market Assessment which should provide better details of the sizes of affordable dwellings needed in different parts of Leeds. This will help inform new plans & policy documents prepared under the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the negotiations with developers on individual development schemes.

An affordable housing working group which includes senior representatives from Neighbourhoods and Housing Dept has been established to develop a comprehensive strategy in relation to securing affordable housing from a variety of sources including via the planning system. Current arrangements are being reviewed and areas of improvement identified. A consistent and streamlined approach between housing and planning will be adopted to ensure that the appropriate type and tenure of affordable housing is requested on all major housing developments. It is also envisaged that a joint monitoring tool will be established to track and oversee the progress of the affordable units.