



Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods)

Date: 13 May 2008

Subject: Inquiry into Housing Lettings Pressures – Draft Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following a discussion with the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing on 25 July 2007, the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) agreed to undertake an inquiry to review the lettings policy and process of the Council, looking specifically at the Choice Based Lettings system.
- 1.2 In order to progress drafting the terms of reference for such an inquiry, a working group was established to discuss the parameters of the inquiry. As a result, specific terms of reference were presented and agreed at the Scrutiny Board meeting in October 2007.
- 1.3 In broad terms, the agreed terms of reference focused the inquiry on understanding the nature of the pressures on the lettings system in general and identifying some of the issues with the Choice Based Lettings system in particular.
- 1.4 The Working Group has met on three separate occasions, with Members receiving a range of evidence and hearing from a series of witnesses, including the Strategic Landlord, the Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO) and each of the three Leeds Homes Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs).
- 1.5 A report has been drafted to reflect the evidence presented and the subsequent discussion at the Working Group meetings, and is attached at Annex 1.
- 1.6 At the Scrutiny Board meeting in March, Members expressed a view that there were more issues still to be considered as part of the inquiry into Housing Lettings Pressures. As such, Annex 1 is presented as an interim report. Members will have an opportunity to continue with other aspects of this inquiry during the 2008/09 municipal year.

2.0 REPORT ISSUES

- 2.1 The draft report was issued to all members of the Board for comment, on 17 April 2008. To date, no comments have been received. The draft report is now presented for the Board's formal consideration.
- 2.2 The Board's inquiry has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules and with specific reference to 14.3, advice on the draft recommendations has been sought from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods. At the time of writing this report, such advice was not available but will be supplied at the meeting. It is important that the Board considers any Director advice prior to concluding this inquiry and agreeing the final report.
- 2.3 It should be noted that in the event of any Member(s) disagreeing with the content of the Board's agreed report, there is provision for them to produce a Minority Report that sets out their findings and recommendations.
- 2.4 In line with the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules Guidance Notes, the intention to submit a minority report should be declared at the meeting (i.e. at the time when the majority report is agreed) and subsequently submitted to the Scrutiny Support Unit within 5 working days after the Board meeting.
- 2.5 In the event of a minority report being submitted, this will be reflected in the majority report and appended thereto.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That, taking into account any Director advice received, the Board considers, amends and/or agrees the draft report attached at Annex 1.
- 3.2 That, subject to any agreed amendments, the report attached at Annex 1 be referred to the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing and the Director Environment and Neighbourhoods for consideration at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.3 That, the Board considers the response to its report and recommendations at an appropriate time.