



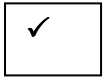
Report of the Director of City Development

Executive Board

Date: 22 June, 2011

Subject: Response to deputation by Leeds Student Unions (6th April, 2011).

Electoral Wards Affected:



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The following report has been prepared in response to the recent deputation presented to Council by representatives of the Leeds Student Unions on 6th April, 2011. Concerns were raised regarding the proposed Article 4 Direction and the effects it would have on groups of people reliant on rented shared accommodation, particularly students, young people, those on modest incomes and migrant workers.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report aims to respond to the concerns raised by Leeds Student Unions. It will first address the main points within the deputation and then answer the specific questions asked by Leeds Student Unions in turn.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The deputation was presented to Members on 6th April, 2011.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 **An Article 4 Direction will have no effect on existing numbers of HMOs or areas of high concentration and will limit social mobility exacerbating problems facing these areas.**

- 3.2 The aim of the Article 4 Direction is to make it necessary for the change of use of a family home into a house of multiple occupation within the proposed area to require planning consent. It is not intended, nor would its scope permit, to have any impact on properties falling under the C4 use class (HMOs) before an Article 4 Direction came into effect. Furthermore, the Direction is not a justification to refuse planning permission, rather it will be used in conjunction with new local planning policy in order to manage HMOs within Leeds more effectively. This new local planning policy, in the form of a Local Development Framework Core Strategy policy and a Supplementary Planning Document will be subject to a full public consultation period where comments will be encouraged from all interested parties. Leeds Student Unions will be consulted on this process and their input will be welcomed.

- 3.3 **With 5000 bed spaces available in the Area of Housing Mix how is it justified?**

- 3.4 The figure of 5,000 surplus student bed spaces in Leeds relates to a recent Unipol study and is the estimate for the period 2012 / 2013, this figure is understood to include all student accommodation in Leeds, rather than just HMOs within the Area of Housing Mix. The figure is not considered directly relevant to the Article 4, as this is not being introduced to regulate supply and demand of HMO occupation. Nor does it give planning powers to limit the amount of student bed spaces throughout the Headingley region. Rather it is designed to help achieve balance in local neighbourhoods.

- 3.5 **Shouldn't let problems facing small areas dictate policy across the whole of Leeds.**

3.6 The size of the proposed Article 4 Direction and its boundary have been designed to look at both the current provision and any potential future growth where high concentrations of HMOs may form. An area that is too concentrated may need to be revised in the future and this could result in uncertainty for developers and growth. Leeds City Council is conscious of the city wide need for HMOs and the need to set policy targets which do not unduly constrain supply.

3.7 **The Direction implies there is something wrong with HMOs, there is no need for a blanket restriction, what is needed is greater management of existing housing stock rather than a control tool.**

3.8 As stated above the Article 4 Direction is intended to be used as one part of a new policy towards HMOs with its aim to effectively manage these concentrations to ensure balanced communities. It will not result in a blanket restriction on HMOs throughout the whole area. It is recognized that HMOs are an important part of the housing stock within Leeds, and that demand for this form of shared housing will grow in the future. HMOs are necessary and will be acceptable within areas covered by the new direction based on future criteria. This is not a blanket ban, rather an aid to ensure that a mixed type of housing is available and is balanced throughout Leeds.

4.0 Specific questions raised by Leeds Student Unions

4.1 Who benefits from this Direction?

4.2 The Direction is part of an over all approach to help create more sustainable and balanced communities throughout Leeds. It is not intended to benefit a specific section of society.

4.3 Who benefits from depriving people of affordable housing at a time when they most need it?

4.4 In this context it is understood that the term affordable housing refers to HMOs. The Direction is not designed to be used to reduce existing numbers of HMOs nor will it be used to deprive people of affordable housing. This is not its aim.

4.5 Who benefits from the demonization of HMO occupiers?

4.6 As discussed HMOs are an important part of the housing mix of Leeds.

4.7 **Who benefits from the Council enforcing a narrow-minded view of what constitutes a ‘balanced community’ drawn along age and socio-economic lines?**

4.8 There isn't one broad definition of a 'balanced community' and it is accepted that this can be interpreted in different ways. This issue is one that will be looked at in more detail, in full consultation with interested parties, during the preparation of further planning guidance on HMOs.

5.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

5.1 The preparation of Development Plan Documents (including the Local Development Framework Core Strategy), is identified as a priority within the Council's Policy Framework.

6.0 Legal And Resource Implications

6.1 There are no legal or resource implications arising from the information in this report.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 This report is in response to external consultation of the proposed Article 4 Direction.

7.2 Leeds Student Unions, Ward Councillors and other interested parties were contacted during the formal consultation process for the proposed Article 4 Direction and will also be invited to participate in the preparation and consultation for any related emerging planning policy.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 The Executive Board is asked to note the contents of this report in response to issues raised by the Leeds Student Unions in relation to the proposed Article 4 Direction.

8.2 Members are asked to note that a future report will be submitted to the Executive Board which outlines the response to the Article 4 Direction consultation in due course.

9.0 Background Papers

9.1 Deputation by Leeds Student Unions (6th April 2011).