

To: The Housing Panel

Date: 9th March 2016

Report of: Allocations Manager

Title of the Report: De-designation Review (2015/16)

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To review the lettings to one-bedroom de-designated flats and bungalows during 2015/16 and to receive approval for the final phase of de-designation to continue in 2016/17

Policy Framework: Meeting Housing Needs

Recommendation(s):

- (1) To note the lettings performance to de-designated properties during 2015/16
- (2) Subject to the approval by the City Executive Board of the proposed Local Lettings Plan for the one-bedroom flats at Salter Close and Whitehouse Road that these flats are also de-designated in 2016
- (3) To note that the other flats listed in Appendix 1 are to be de-designated from 1/4/16

Appendix I: Properties due to be de-designated from 1/4/16

Background

1. In October 2009, the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a Panel to consider the number and type of properties that were currently designated to only be let to those persons aged 40 years and over. The scope of the Panel excluded sheltered accommodation, which has been reviewed separately. The review was necessitated by the large, and growing, mismatch between the low amount of one bedroom council accommodation that was available to singles and couples under 40 years of age, and the large number of such households in housing need.
2. Following approval by the City Executive Board (CEB) on 12/1/11 of the phased implementation of the de-designation of most of the Council's designated elderly properties over a 5 year period; this began on 1/4/11.
3. In order to attempt to minimise the potential impact on any existing tenants the CEB approved the request for the process to be reviewed annually. To consider any impact of the de-designation process, and to recommend whether the de-designated phasing of properties in Years 2 to 5 should be brought forward (to de-designate at a faster pace) or be delayed (to be de-designate at slower pace).
4. The reviewing group is to include councillors and tenant representatives, working with officers, to objectively review new age profiles in the properties/blocks concerned; allocations made to de-designated blocks over the past year; whether those tenancies have been sustained without issue; and any specific actions that have been required in order for impacts to be mitigated. The review group can report to the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee should it wish to receive such a report.

Summary of the Changes Introduced by De-Designation

5. No existing tenants in any of the blocks of flats or bungalows affected will be asked to move as a result of the changes introduced. Only properties becoming available to re-let will be affected by the changes.

Bungalows

6. The 267 bungalows formerly designated as elderly and restricted to applicants aged 40 years or older will be allocated as follows from 1/4/11:
 - First preference to anyone requiring a level access property (mobility 1) regardless of age.
 - If there is no-one suitable, in any band, then the second preference will be to anyone suitable over 55 years of age.
 - If this does not result in a successful letting, the property will be re-advertised without any eligibility restriction on mobility needs or on age.

7. This changed on 12/12/13 following the introduction of the new Allocations Scheme approved by the CEB and Full Council. Bungalows are now normally only be allocated to:
- Applicants aged 55 years or older
 - Applicants under 55 who have been assessed by the Housing Needs Team as requiring a ground floor level access property (or an adapted property if the bungalow is adapted)
 - Existing Council or Registered Provider tenants on the Transfer List seeking to downsize from their current accommodation.
8. When allocating bungalows preference is given to housing applicants requiring, or who would benefit from, a ground floor property (or adaptations if the bungalow has for example a level access shower, wet room or is suitable for a wheelchair user).

Flats

9. A total of 777 flats (designated elderly 1 and 2) formerly restricted to applicants aged 40 years or older would be incrementally de-designated over a five year period (or a longer if required), in accordance with the phasing shown in the report. This phasing represented the de-designation of properties, considered to have the lowest risk of any resulting housing management issues first.
10. At the end of the 5th year (originally this planned to be 31/3/16) this would leave 185 Designated Elderly Two units of accommodation, at the end of the programme. These properties will continue to be allocated to suitable single people or couples aged 55 years or older, in the first instance (or if there is no-one suitable, in any band, then the second preference will be to anyone suitable over 40 years of age).

Review of Lettings from 1/4/15 to 31/1/16

11. From 1/4/15 to 31/1/16 a total of 43 formerly designated elderly flats and bungalows were re-let. These were 12 one-bedroom bungalows and 31 one-bedroom flats. Around 40% have been let to existing Council Tenants or Registered Provider (Housing Association) tenants within the City on the Transfer List, 50% to housing applicants on the General Register List in housing need and 10% to the Homeless List.

Bungalows

12. Table 1 below shows that from 1/4/15 to 31/1/16 only 2 housing applicants aged under 40 were allocated a bungalow, both were over 25 and had health issues requiring this type of accommodation. The remaining 10 were allocated to housing applicants aged 40 years or older.

Table 1

Re-lets to One-Bed Bungalows During 2015/16	
Aged 18 to 24	0
Aged 25 to 39	2
Aged 40 to 49	2
Aged 50 to 59	5
Aged 60 to 69	0
Aged 70+	3
Total	12

13. The Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team (ASBIT) and Tenancy Management Team have confirmed that no issues have been reported regarding either of the two younger tenants aged under 40 since they moved into their new homes.

Flats

14. Table 2 below and Table 3 overleaf show that of the 31 one-bedroom flats re-let from 1/4/15 to 31/1/16, the majority, around 70% of the flats becoming available were allocated to housing applicants aged 40 years or older and only 30% to those aged under 40. The youngest person housed was aged 20.

Table 2

Re-lets to One-Bed Flats To Applicants Aged Under 40	
Aged 18 to 24	3
Aged 25 to 29	2
Aged 30 to 34	3
Aged 35 to 39	2
Total Lets To Applicants Aged Under 40	10

Table 3

Re-lets to One-Bed Flats To Applicants Aged 40+	
Aged 40 to 49	11
Aged 50 to 59	7
Aged 60 to 69	3
Aged 70+	0
Total Lets To Applicants Aged 40+	21

15. The ASBIT and Tenancy Management Team have confirmed that with the exception of one new tenant, there have been no issues reported regarding any of the tenants aged under 40 moving into the flats. The incident reported related to noise nuisance and the local Community Response Team Officer and Tenancy Management Officer are working with the tenant currently.

De-designation in 2016

16. The one-bedroom flats listed in Appendix 1 are the last properties due to be de-designated, and with the with the exception of the one-bedroom flats at Salter Close and Whitehouse Road, they are all due to be de-designated from 1/4/16.
17. There are on-going and historical issues in and around the vicinity of Salter Close and Whitehouse Road relating to noise nuisance and other anti-social behaviour. The Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team has been working with local residents and others agencies including the police to address these issues. In order to help reduce the impact of any new lettings on existing residents and to help address these issues it is proposed that a Local Lettings Plan(LLP) is put in place, for the 41 one-bedroom flats owned by the Council in Salter Close and Whitehouse Road.
18. A report on the proposed LLP is being submitted to the CEB on 14/4/16 and is proposed that the flats at Salter Close and Whitehouse Road are not de-designated until after a LLP has been approved by the CEB. So the Housing Panel are being asked to agree that the flats at Salter Close and Whitehouse Road are de-designated but this will only take place after the LLP is agreed by CEB.
19. While the ASBIT and Tenancy Management Teams have confirmed that as with any blocks of flats there are sometimes issues reported regarding individual tenants in properties across the City including some of the blocks proposed to be de-designated in they are isolated issues and they do not feel this should hold up the de-designation of these properties.

20. This is the final year of the de-designation process and although since 1/4/11 there have been isolated issues with a couple of younger tenants they have been largely down to isolated lifestyle issues and dealt with. The vast majority of allocations to housing applicants aged under 40 have had no impact on the existing residents. Indeed it is felt that in some cases by allowing younger applicants to apply for these properties that it may well help with the dynamics of the properties and reduce some of the problems that can sometimes occur. The Allocations Team has continued to treat lets to the de-designated properties as particularly sensitive lets and will continue to complete thorough checks before considering any housing applicants for an offer in the future.

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