

**Joint report of: Oxford City Homes and Oxford Community Housing Business Managers**

**To: Executive Board**

**Date: 14 May 2007**

**Item No:**

**Title of Report : Proposal to change the allocation criteria for the Rose Hill flats, Rose Hill, Oxford and designated elderly two flats on Ashurst way**



### Summary and Recommendations



**Purpose of report:** To seek approval to change the allocations criteria for the Rose Hill flats and to put in place a local lettings plan for the flats

**Key decision:** No

**Portfolio Holder:** Patrick Murray

**Scrutiny Responsibility:** Housing

**Area(s) affected:** Rose Hill and Iffley

#### Report Approved by

**Portfolio Holder:** Patrick Murray

**Legal:** Jeremy Thomas

**Finance:** Suzan Smart

**Strategic Director:** Michael Lawrence



**Policy Framework:** Allocations Policy



#### Recommendation(s):

That the process for this pilot project is approved  
to approve the proposal that subject to consultation being carried out with  
agents at the scheme the allocation criteria for the Rose Hill flats will be  
changed by removing the restriction of letting to over 40s only.  
to recommend the attached local lettings plan, to Full Council, for the flats  
once these have been de-designated



## Background

1. The review of older people's services carried out in 2006 looked at the need to rationalise the allocation of housing for older people. This report recommended that;

*In 2006 a pilot appraisal is undertaken in line with the proposal above with three schemes (approximately 100 units) These are units at the Rose Hill flats, Pegasus Road and Brome Place. Only one of the schemes will be de-designated in the first instance.*

And:

*That a rolling programme of appraisals and de-designations is developed for a further 270 identified units once the pilot has been evaluated.*

This recommendation forms one of the action points in the Older People's housing strategy.

2. The reasons to de-designate some of the properties currently allocated to people over 40 are:
  - To ensure older people who choose to live in accommodation with other older people are offered housing of a suitable design and location.
  - That such schemes are managed as specialist schemes and tenants can be easily identified for support and advice.
  - That the numbers of properties offered to younger single people are increased. There is evidence of a shortage of properties for single people and having a greater pool of properties will allow for more sustainable lettings whilst still meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.
3. A process has now been designed for this pilot project and having been through the first stage of this process it has been decided that Rose Hill Flats should be the first scheme to be de-designated as older people's housing.

## The process to de-designate elderly schemes

4. A process has been designed which aims to take full account of the wishes of residents in schemes being considered for de-designation.
5. This process has several stages

- A desk top appraisal of the scheme carried out by the Estate Manager to consider how suitable the scheme is in terms of design and location for older people, to outline any management problems at the scheme and to assess the likely impact of de-designation on the tenants currently living at the scheme.
- This appraisal is considered by a group of members (including ward councillors) and managers to decide if the scheme is suitable for de-designation.
- If the scheme is considered suitable, a letting plan for the scheme is recommended to Council members.
- A consultation is carried out individually with current tenants at the scheme to gain their views.
- A final decision is made and if this is to de-designate the property any residents aged over 55 will be offered a move to specialist older people's accommodation should they wish this. They will be offered a package of financial and practical support with a move in line with decanting of sheltered housing schemes.
- That on de-designation a local lettings plan is introduced for the flats to ensure a more balanced community.

### **Appraisal of the Rose Hill flats**

6. The desktop appraisal of the Rose Hill flats highlighted their unsuitability for letting to older people due to poor access and lack of security features. The flats have also had a number management issues arising from the current mix of tenants. The decision was taken by the Allocations Manager, the Tenancy Operations Manager and the ward councillors that tenants should now be consulted on the removal of the age criteria for letting the flats.

### **Recommendations**

7. We recommend Board to approve the process for this pilot.
8. We recommend that Board approve the proposal that the scheme is de-designated subject to our consultation with tenants at the scheme and let according to the local lettings plan as outlined in the attached appendix.
9. That Board recommend the management and local lettings plan, to Full Council, for the scheme in line with the attached appendix.
10. That Board note the recommendation of Housing Scrutiny:
  - (a) To endorse the proposed pilot local lettings plan for the Rose Hill flats once they have been de-designated subject to the following amendments in the lettings criteria:

- (i) The removal from the criteria that up to 25% of all vacancies be offered specifically to applicants in employment to prevent a polarised area of deprivation;
- (ii) That 75% of all prospective tenants should have an identifiable support need and must only be allocated to the scheme if they have an identifiable, on-going and effective support/care package/plan in place, which is standard Allocations practice for any single accommodation.

But do not act upon it as not all applicants on welfare benefits have, or need, a support package.

**Name and contact details of author:** Simon Price, Tenancy Operations Manager (T: 335720 E: [sprice@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:sprice@oxford.gov.uk))

Marianne Upton, Allocations Manager (T: 252633 E: [mupton@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:mupton@oxford.gov.uk))

**Background papers:** None

