

Report of: Head of Oxford City Homes
To: City Executive Board
Date: 11 June 2008 **Item No:**
Title of Report: Rose Hill Lettings Plan Review

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report back to the Board following the review of the Local Letting Plan for Rose Hill flats.

Key decision: No

Board Member: Councillor Ed Turner.

Report Approved by:-
Board Member: Councillor Ed Turner
Strategic Director: Tim Sadler
Legal: Jeremy King
Finance: David Higgins

Policy Framework: More housing, better housing for all

Recommendation(s): That the City Executive Board agrees that the Local Lettings Plan for Rose Hill and Ashurst Way flats should be fully implemented for a further period of two years to continue the development of a balanced and diverse community.

Background

1. At Housing Scrutiny on 3rd April 2007 it was recommended to implement a Local Letting Plan for the Rosehill Flats, Rosehill & re-designate elderly person flats in Ashurst Way.
2. This recommendation was ratified at the Executive Board meeting held on 14th May 2007.

3. As part of the process it was agreed that an evaluation of the scheme would take place and be presented to the Housing Scrutiny Committee in April 2008.
4. The purpose of the plan was to:-
 - Stabilise the scheme following de-designation of elderly properties by having tenants who want to live in the environment of the scheme and who value the property as their settled home.
 - Build a sustainable community within the scheme by having a mix of tenants and offering a range of management initiatives to reduce the number of tenancies that end.
 - Improve the quality of life for all tenants living in Rose Hill Flats.
5. The Lettings Plan was comprised of the following criteria:-
 - Tenants must usually be at least 18 years old (although younger tenants may be considered with a guarantor).
 - No children allocated as part of the household for the flats in the scheme.
 - Introductory Tenancies are offered to all new tenants (only as allowed in legislation).
 - Up to 25% of all vacancies can be offered specifically to applicants in employment to prevent a polarised area of deprivation.
 - All prospective tenants who have identified support needs must only be allocated to the scheme if they have an on-going and effective support package/plan in place, which is standard allocations practice for any single accommodation.
 - Careful consideration must be made before making an offer to anyone with a history of being vulnerable to exploitation by others.
 - No cats or dogs will be allowed in the scheme.

Review

6. As of 3rd April 2007 the profile of the properties was as follows;
 - 32 properties in total were affected by the proposed Local Lettings Plan.
 - 14 people in these properties were over 55 (all were offered the opportunity of a move).
 - 9 people requested a move (of which 3 later pulled out).
 - 5 people (of the 32 properties) were in employment.
 - 25 people (of the 32 properties) were not in employment.
 - 2 properties (of the 32) were empty.
7. At the time of writing this report (March 2008) the profile is as follows;

- 5 of the 6 people who requested a move have now been re-housed (or are in the process of being re-housed) into appropriate accommodation (either through the Choice Based Lettings Scheme, or prior to Jan 2008 through direct allocation).
 - 1 remaining person who wants to move is currently bidding under the Choice Based Lettings Scheme.
 - 5 new people have moved into the flats.
 - 2 of those people are over 55 years of age.
 - 3 of those people are less than 55 years of age.
 - A total of 8 people are now in employment.
 - None of the 5 new people are allowed pets in the flats.
8. The Estate Manager has liaised with Local Beat Officers from Thames Valley Police and it is felt that the problems encountered prior to the introduction of the Local Lettings Plan have now diminished. To build on the improvements, it is now proposed to continue the plan for a further two years.
9. It is worth noting that this can be attributed not only to the introduction of the Local Lettings Plan but also a successful eviction of an anti-social behaviour perpetrator.

Proposals for Further De-designation of Elderly Person Properties.

10. At the time of writing this report there are no further proposals to de-designate elderly person properties.
11. There is currently a piece of work being undertaken by the Oxford City Homes Tenancy Sustainment Officer investigating the merit of a Local Lettings Plan for Riverside Court and it is proposed that a report be submitted to Housing Scrutiny in due course as part of the consultation exercise.

Financial implications

12. There are no financial considerations to take into account with regard to the Local Lettings Plan.

Legal implications

13. The plan should be time limited and it is recommended that it should be for a period of two years. Lettings plans are provided for in the Council's allocations policy.

Environmental implications

14. There are no specific environmental implications although the fact that anti-social behaviour has diminished has resulted in an overall improvement for the local community.

Recommendation.

15. It is recommended that the Local Lettings Plan for Rosehill Flats and Ashurst Way (as detailed in the previous report at Appendix 1) be fully implemented for a period of two years to continue the development of a balanced and diverse community.

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Background papers: None