



To: Executive Councillor for Housing (and Deputy Leader): Councillor Catherine Smart
Report by: Liz Bisset, Director of Customer & Community Services
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 17/1/2013
Wards affected: All Wards

**THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:
CONSOLIDATED EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
Not a Key Decision**

1. Executive summary

1.1. The affordable housing development programme began in 2008. Four separate equality impact assessments have been carried as the programme has progressed to implementation and understanding of equality issues has evolved. Following the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 11th October 2012, where the Executive Councillor for Housing agreed to progress the Water Lane and Aylseborough Close sites for redevelopment, concerns were raised about the equalities impact of the proposals. This has prompted two further reports to this committee. The first – this report - brings together a consolidated and updated Equalities Impact Assessment for the Affordable Housing Development Programme, (appended). This report also makes recommendations to clarify or amend aspects of current procedure that could be improved. The second, separate report, also included on this agenda, reviews the decisions relating to Water Lane and Aylesborough Close to consider whether they remain sound.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- a. To agree the Equalities Impact Assessment for the Affordable Housing Development Programme.
- b. To bring an EQIA on each new scheme considered for redevelopment to Community Services Scrutiny Committee, prior to a final decision being made to go ahead

- c. To hold a public meeting with residents at each new scheme proposed for redevelopment, at least 1 month prior to the Scrutiny Committee, and to incorporate views into the final report.
- d. To endorse the composition of the steering group, as set out in para 3.10. to include additional membership to that agreed by Council in October 2012.

3. Background

Updating the Equality Impact Assessment

3.1. The Council, as a public sector organisation, has a duty under section 149 of the Equalities Act to have due regard to equalities issues and impacts in policy and decision making. The Act does not state that Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) must be used to achieve proper consideration of equalities; nevertheless the Council has chosen to continue to use EQIAs for this purpose. Guidance from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission stresses that assessing the impact on equality is an ongoing process, to be reviewed in the light of experience gained through implementing policy.

3.2. The four previous EQIAs carried out to date covering different dimensions of the AHDP are detailed on first page of the consolidated EQIA, appended to this report. The consolidated and updated EQIA covers the issues more comprehensively than before, using the Council's newly formatted template. It considers equalities issues on two dimensions;

- i) The objectives of the programme as a whole in meeting housing need for the city, including those covered by the equalities act as having protected characteristic;
- and
- ii) The impact on individual tenants and leaseholders affected by the redevelopment programme, either because they are resident in properties considered for redevelopment, or because they have unmet housing need.

3.3. The protected characteristics within the Council's policy, compliant with the Equalities Act, are age, disability, gender, pregnancy and maternity, transgender, marriage and civil partnership, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation. Not all characteristic will be relevant to all policies or practice. In the case of the AHDP age, disability, pregnancy and maternity are most relevant to the policy overall, and age and disability

including mental health (described as mental impairment in the Act), are most relevant to the impact on residents of individual schemes.

Engaging tenants and leaseholders

3.4. We have recognised from the start of the programme that it is important to keep tenants and other stakeholders informed about proposals for potential redevelopment of their homes. Two reports in 2008 to Community Services Scrutiny Committee (in July and November) said that there would be “Detailed consultation on Council housing sites included for consideration with all stakeholders including ward members, tenant representatives and any tenants affected on a scheme by scheme basis, prior to final decision on a scheme”. This has been interpreted as written correspondence with residents, typically informing them that a site will be considered for redevelopment and that feasibility work will need to be carried out. If the scheme is assessed as feasible to come forward for development residents are written to again, and in most cases invited to a meeting on site or near to where they live.

3.5. Detailed consultation on the individual needs of residents has been carried out after the decision to develop is taken to establish their wants and needs and to provide intensive support to tenants, where needed, to explore their future housing options. This is an area where in the light of the experience of Water Lane and Aylesborough Close we could improve on our current procedures. There is no doubt that we carry out detailed assessments of each individual resident affected by the AHDP, and seek to provide alternative accommodation that takes into account any vulnerabilities they may have. I am proposing that we bring this part of the process forward and carry out the detailed individual assessments, and then present this in an EQIA for each scheme prior to the final decision. This is likely to need to be considered as a confidential appendix to preserve the anonymity and privacy of individual tenants. This will mean that we will need to be clear with residents that a decision has not yet been taken at this initial stage of assessing their housing needs. There will always be a balance between giving sufficient time for consultation and not overly prolonging a period of uncertainty.

3.6. This period of consultation should also seek to capture more generally the views of affected residents. I am therefore also proposing that we allow a period of at least 4 – 6 weeks prior to the decision for the first collective meeting with residents of an affected scheme, prior to a report coming to scrutiny committee. This period of time should allow for residents or tenants to put forward their views on the proposals. These can then be noted and incorporated into a final report. These will need to be considered in the context of the overall objective of the AHDP which is a citywide policy to meet the housing needs within the city overall.

Involving other agencies and support services

3.7. At a strategic level we liaise with various sections of the County Council as they are organised to support older people, adults with learning disability, and adults with physical disability and sight impairment. Some services including many for people experiencing mental health issues are jointly commissioned and delivered by the County Council and Primary Care Trust. The strategy for the provision of 'Extra Care Housing' for older people is an example where a strategy has been developed between the County Council, the Primary Care Trust and district housing authorities across the County. The Supporting People Commissioning Board has been a forum where many of the statutory agencies have come together to manage housing-related support for vulnerable people to sustain their independence. This Board has included representatives from the probation services and drug and alcohol support services. Data to direct new or changed supported or specialist housing provision is captured in various strategic documents such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the Supporting People Strategy, and the County-wide Extra Care Strategy.

3.8. The strategic planning of the inter-relationship between housing, care and health services is currently the subject of significant change with the advent of the Health and Well-being Board, Local Health Partnerships, public health becoming a function of the County Council, and general practitioners leading on the commissioning of local health services. Council officers, including senior housing officers, recently met with GP representatives and others from the Local Health Partnership to improve dialogue about individual cases.

3.9. At an operational level we liaise with social workers, social care and older peoples services, Community Psychiatric Nurses for those open to the Mental Health Services, the Learning Disability Partnership, AddAction and Inclusion for those with Drug and Alcohol Issues and the Street Outreach team, the Probation Service and the Family Intervention Project. We also work alongside the housing related support services offered by the Circle Group. We also have experience of working with residents who have non-statutory appointees, for example, relatives with Power of Attorney.

3.10. A motion to Council on 25 October 2012 agreed "...that a steering group is set up to over-see the development of the programme: the group would consist of the Executive Councillor for Housing, the Chair of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee, the opposition Spokesperson on

the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and an elected Tenant or Leaseholder representative”. This original proposal has been enhanced with one additional member from the Liberal Democrat party and the Labour party, and with both a tenant and a leaseholder representative. The Executive Councillor for Housing will not be a member of the steering group but will attend the steering group , ex-officio, to be advised in her decision making role. The first meeting of the steering group has been held to agree terms of reference and to consider the reports coming to this committee.

3.11. The Equalities Panel considered the updated EQIA on 12th December 2012. The views and comments of both the bodies have been taken on board for this report.

3.12. Other agencies and support services will continue to be engaged as now, in the evaluation of the needs of individual tenants. In many cases the residents permission will be needed to share information about their personal circumstances between agencies. Thus it is not considered appropriate to engage with other agencies about individuals prior to a decision on the future of a scheme.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

4.1. The financial provision for the delivery of the Affordable Housing Development Programme is set out in the report on the “Housing Revenue Account (HRA) mid-year business plan” to Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 11th October 2012, appendix F. Individual scheme financial implications are reported as project appraisals are submitted to Committee See also section 4(b) below.

(b) Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

4.2. Additional staff time has been allocated to support residents this year and budget bids have been made for the cost of this support to become part of the baseline budget for 2013.14 and 2014.15. The additional capacity bid for over the next two years is the equivalent of 1.5 full time staff at an estimated cost of £50,000 per annum. This cost will be included as part of the capital cost of delivering the programme.

(c) Equal Opportunities Implications

This is appended in full

(d) Environmental Implications

4.3. The environmental implications of the delivery of the Affordable Housing Development Programme are considered when schemes are brought forward for approval. The Council has a commitment to deliver housing that meets at least code level 4 for sustainable homes, and in the case of the Council's own land holding at Clay Farm, code level 5.

(e) Procurement

4.4. The procurement implications of the delivery of the Affordable Housing Development Programme were set out in the report to Community Services Scutiny Committee 25th March 2010 entitled "Affordable Housing Development Partnership:500 Partnership". This brought forward proposals to procure a housebuilder/developer partner for delivery of the programme.

(f) Consultation and communication

4.5. This is covered in the body of the report.

(g) Community Safety

4.6. The community safety implications of the delivery of the Affordable Housing Development Programme is considered on a scheme by scheme basis. This includes considering where current design makes management of anti-social behaviour difficult; and secure by design standards for new build.

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

If an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken please include details in the background papers

Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making . Equality and Human Rights Commission. January 2012

6. Appendices

Equality Impact Assessment

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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