

Central Bedfordshire Council

Social Care Health & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee

17 September 2018

Homelessness Enquiry

Report of: Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Housing & Customer Services,
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Responsible Director(s): Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health & Housing,
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This report relates to a decision that is Non-Key

Purpose of this report

1. To investigate how Housing is responding to Homelessness and to make recommendations including any key actions and for improvements to the customer experience that could be made. Whilst also acknowledging areas where the Service is good in the opinion of the Tenants Scrutiny Panel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. **To receive and support the report on homelessness and its associated recommendations and action plan resulting from the work of the Tenants Scrutiny Panel. In particular the need for more social and affordable housing.**

Issues

2. The TSP noted that whilst historically new developments would include up to 30% of new developments being for affordable housing, that current developments and the proposed local plan indicate that they will not meet that

percentage of social housing and affordable housing, at least not in Dunstable. With indications from developers that this was due to economic feasibility.

Council Priorities

1. As a landlord, the Housing Service is responsible for providing good quality homes and services to the Council's tenants, many of these tenants are vulnerable. Tenant scrutiny provides a means of ensuring that the Council has sound financial and service management and the report focusses on practical help for those who are deemed homeless and supports the Council's priority to protect the vulnerable; improve wellbeing.

Corporate Implications

There are no additional implications

Legal Implications

2. There are no additional implications, no comments.
3. Note in April 2012, the Localism Act changed parts of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and established standards that social housing providers are expected to achieve. As part of this revised regulatory framework for social housing providers standards under the 2011 and 2008 acts, in particular require registered providers to comply with specified rules about methods of enabling tenants to influence or control the management of their accommodation and environment.
4. The Council is expected to give tenants a wide range of opportunities to influence, and be involved, in scrutinising their landlord's performance and recommending how performance might be improved. Whilst there is no prescriptive solution as to what methods are used to achieve this, a Tenants Scrutiny Panel provides a good local vehicle.

Financial and Risk Implications

5. Clarification on funding is provided in the Housing Service response. There are no additional implications.

Equalities Implications

6. To ensure that any decision does not unfairly discriminate, public authorities must be rigorous in reporting to Members the outcome of an equality impact assessment and the legal duties.
7. Whilst an equalities impact assessment was not undertaken the TSP acknowledge this limitation in their report as providing a customer perspective only. The National Standard for housing providers on Tenant Involvement requires that the Council understands and responds to the diverse needs of tenants. The Tenants Scrutiny Panel assists in progress on meeting this aim.

Conclusion and next Steps

8. As the report indicates the action plan has been agreed and the need for more social and affordable Housing noted.
9. **Following the presentation by the TSP report to the Chairman of SCHH OSC, further clarification was sought. It was noted that the TSP had not investigated the exact numbers and preferred location of additional social and affordable housing. It was possible that Housing could supply additional information on this from its research. Also, it was noted that the tenants' investment panel had commented on the local plan and that no additional social housing had been planned for the Dunstable area. Finally, it was noted that the Dukeminster development had not provided any additional social housing, with the exception of Priory View, and were not aware of other current developments where 30% of properties would be built for social use. Although outside the scope of the TSP remit, this issue would be explained and addressed.**

Appendices

Appendix A: TSP Homelessness report

Appendix B: Housings Service review response

Background Papers

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