

Minutes of draft Housing Renewal Policy consultation event
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Housing Renewal Policy and Empty Homes Strategy Consultation Event

Thursday 19th May 2011

Attendees

Martin Brown (MB)	Housing Initiatives Manager – Private Sector Housing
Maxine Mawson (MM)	Unit Administrator (Minutes)
Clive Mozley (CM)	Empty Homes
Craig Keen (CK)	Derby Community Safety Partnership
Janet Dean (JD)	First Contact & Age UK Derby and Derbyshire (AUKDD)
Jeremy Mason (JM)	Housing Strategy
Brian Salt (BS)	Empty Homes
Linda Selvey (LS)	DASH
Richard Murrell (RM)	Derby Home Energy Advice Service
Rachel Porter (RP)	Adult Services
John Massey (JM _{sy})	Customer Services
Don Smith (DS)	Regeneration Projects
Alex Ward (AW)	Estates
Simon Fogell (SF)	Policy & Strategy

Item	Issue	Action / Follow up by
1.	Apologies: Ian Fullagar Henry Cipcer	
2.	Introductions: MB did general introductions.	
3.	Policy and Housing Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derby Homes is not part of what Empty Homes do. • Discussed what Empty Properties do and what has been achieved. Made big impacts and proud of what has been achieved. • The main objectives of the day: Fit for purpose, scope for improvement and equality issues. • There are issues as a result of the budget being cut. The service has to fit the budget that has been given for this year. 	

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4.	<p>DASH – Linda Selvey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted by Derby City Council. Works with 40 Local Authorities. • Aim – increase Housing Standards across Derby. • Split between: Landlord Service, Local Authority Officers, Literature and Share Information. • Project currently running; Local Letting Agency; matching good landlord with good tenants, working with vulnerable tenants. • Launched Oct 2010, 50 landlords have referred, 21 matched with tenants. <p>Q: Does this tie in with Social Care? A: Yes, work with Deventio Property Management Trust. Q: Anything special for older people? A: Not at the moment, currently working with Action Housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age Group are currently working with the Derby City Council, possibly co-ordinate working together? • Mark Evans works 30 hrs per wk walking the street looking for homeless – liaise with him. • Main aim is to grow the scheme on the Landlord side. <p>Q: Do you have a large portfolio of Landlords? A: Normally the landlord would give us 1 property to work with and if a good service is provided they would pass on more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to Nick Ebbs – Blue Print re: Aviva. • Possibly look at providing a business model for Aviva, work with DS. • East Midlands Landlord Accreditation Scheme – rewarding good landlords, 1000 landlord members across East Midlands and there are a large proportion across Derbyshire. DASH team provides free training, access to benefit loans and support from the team. • If you would like to receive information on EMLAS please contact Linda (Linda.selvey@derby.gov.uk) • Subject to funding not offering any loans or funding. The key areas where Landlords fell down were Fire Safety. • Accredited Property Assistance – not likely to happen this year or next year. 	<p>LS / JD</p> <p>LS</p> <p>LS</p> <p>LS / DS</p> <p>ALL</p>
5.	<p>Derby Home Energy Advice Service – Richard Murrell:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In previous years partly delivered through Regeneration work and Decent Home Standards. • Focused on vulnerable households. • Key areas; reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions for business and households. • Currently working on Green Deal and the Energy Companies Obligation. • This is a free service provided by the Council working 	

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closely with Derby Homes and RSLs.

- Warm Front Scheme grant is the one mostly used and last year 1500 homes were helped. This scheme will no longer exist in 2 years.
- Other schemes: Insulation for Private Sector households (Dyson Insulations). A list of current schemes running was available on a handout.
- Developing an Eco / Retro house in Arboretum Square, deadline Oct 2011. This house will be monitored for 1 year.
- Green Deal – This will replace all other schemes that are currently running. Government currently looking at this. The work will be done and it will be paid through coming years through fuel bills. Should be in place by the end of 2012.

Q: Will this target new build?

A: It covers cavity walls, loft insulations. If you move the charge stays with the property not the person.

Q: Targeted at private sector accommodation?

A: Yes.

Q: Will this cover solar panels?

A: Not covered by Green Deal.

- CESP (Community Energy Saving Programme) – Henry Cipcer is leading on this. A brief overview was given.
- DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant – Henry Cipcer is leading on this. A brief overview was given.
- Mandatory grant – budget = £1.9m. Once the grant money is given DCC can register a charge. The charge gets registered when the property has received an extension and the property is then sold on. But DCC could claim up to £10,000 on adaptations charge that is not currently done. What are the views of the group on registering this charge?

Views received from the group:

- What happens to the charge does it come back into DFG pot? MB to check with HC.
- It was suggested that if the money goes back into the Council pot it would not be worthwhile to put on the charge.
- What would the cost and the time process be for charging this back?
- The people that apply for this work are not given it easily, it would then be very harsh to go and claim this money back.
- It does affect the sell ability of the property when they have received adaptations.
- The family will have a double cost to have the adaptations put in and then taken out.
- The charge is put onto properties that have extensions that add property value. AW raised the issue that who decides

MB/HC

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	<p>on this because he hasn't seen anything coming through to Estates. MB to check with HC who determines valuations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What criteria is given to what adds value to properties, what is the situation with this? • Sarah Newton – Crime Prevention Team; have been installing locks, this is not classed as added value. • This charge seems to be referring to people dying but this could also refer to people re-locating. Adaptation doesn't stay with the property unlike an extension, so this would be very unfair to add the charge in this circumstance. • The general view from the group would be to not make a claim for this charge it would create a very bad impression. Feedback from the group to be fed back to Henry Cipcer. 	<p>MB/HC MB/HC</p>
	<p>Q: What is happening on funding? A: NHS contribute Glenys Crookes Associate Director Rehabilitation and Care for Derby Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (I/C 4 wards for 'frail elderly', discharge teams coordinate with Adult Social Care, provide intermediate care for 7 wks when they come out of hospital. HC to get in touch with GC glenys.crooks@derbyhospitals.nhs.uk.</p>	<p>MB/HC</p>
	<p>Glenys Crookes Associate Director Rehabilitation and Care for Derby Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (I/C 4 wards for 'frail elderly', discharge teams coordinate with Adult Social Care, provide intermediate care for 7 wks when they come out of hospital. HC to get in touch with GC glenys.crooks@derbyhospitals.nhs.uk.</p>	<p>HC</p>

Discretionary Adaptations Assistance:

- Very rarely used, on occasions do need to top up.

Discretionary Relocation Assistance:

- Housing Panel ensures it runs ok. This is used when someone wants a lot of adaptations and it would cost too much money and it would appear cheaper to move.

Q: What is the maximum that can be used?

A: Not sure.

- MB to arrange for SF, JM, IF to meet to discuss Equalities Impact Assessment and timing of reports going to cabinet.

Q: Has any funding been lost from this policy?

A: Approx £5.5 m was last years budget, this policy is over a 3 year period and is based on an £8 m across the 3 years. So there have been big impacts, for example Group Repair has been stopped and other initiatives have had budgets significantly reduced.

Handy person:

Q: Does this cover garden maintenance?

A: No, this is mainly to keep people in their own homes. The money available £120,000 this yr £250,000 last yr. Maximum of 2 – 2.5hrs per job.

House Proud:

- This will be pushed more this year and advertised.

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- This could possibly link in with Age UK, JD and HC to look at ways or working together.

HC / JD

Hi4EM:

- Run by David George, Bio House. Data gathering.

Housing Standards Team:

- Responsible for ensuring people feel safe and be safe.
- Major issues tracing landlords other issues of tenants not working with landlords.

Concerns around the Policy:

- It doesn't address the impacts that budget cuts are having on wider housing renewal. It is understood that nothing can be done about this immediately but it should be reflected in the policy. MB to add.
- It would be beneficial if Landlords lost their entitlement to benefit / rents if they dropped below a certain standard.
- Home Condition Certificate – Property should be checked and meet a certain criteria before it claim any rent on that property. MB has been informed that this is not likely to happen.

MB

Empty Homes Strategy:

- Aim is to get properties back into use.
- Aim of today: To refresh the strategy in light of current council aims, introduction of New Home Bonus and the development of a new performance measure.

Empty Homes Assistance:

- In previous years there has been a large amount of money to refurbish properties and bring them back into use to be paid back over 5 years. This yr = £150,000, maximum of £10,000 per property payable over a 3 yr period. The figure was set at this in order to be able to help as many properties as possible.

Home Relocation Assistance:

This has only been used once and helps with removal expenses.

Enforcement Options:

- This would be a last resort option, always try and use the voluntary approach, but compulsory purchase and enforced sale remain an integral part of the strategy.

New Homes Bonus (NHB):

- This is based on council tax data as submitted to CLG. Equation is: number of properties in the City minus the number of long term empty homes. This gives the number of properties paying full council tax and those that are exempt. If this number is higher than the previous year, NHB will be payable, if it is lower, NHB will not be payable.
- Example: 2010: 100,000 properties in Derby, 2000 of which are long term empty homes. *Baseline figure is therefore: 100,000 – 2,000 = 98,000.* 2011: 101,000 properties in Derby, 1500 of which are long term empty homes. Baseline figure is therefore 101,000 – 1,500 = 99,500. The number of properties either occupied or exempt from council tax has increased by 1500. NHB would therefore be payable on 1500 properties.
- NHB payment from Government is equivalent council tax income for the property paid each year for six years.
- Previously concentrated on problem properties – NHB equalises all interventions as reward is the same.
- Empty Homes Service now looking at every property on council tax empty homes list rather than just problem ones. A balance needs to be found between complex cases dealing with dilapidated properties and ‘quick hit’ advice and assistance or data cleansing.
- Performance measure changing to reflect new emphasis of empty homes work and to create a reporting framework that is Empty homes Service specific, rather than council-wide as was the case with BVPI64

Issues Raised:

- Age UK Derby & Derbyshire has run a successful project working with older people to look at options of moving from their home. Strategy document partnership working is excellent about funding partnerships, what about including partners who could help people with the skills of making decisions, provide ‘honest brokerage’ – free, confidential and independent advice enabling the Derby Citizen choice.
- Work with Derby College / Derby Uni for apprenticeship work. Prince’s Trust is very keen to do this work.
- The biggest problem that is faced is owner apathy. Currently working with the YMCA on property maintenance project.
- Age UK has an on line directory of trustworthy traders and businesses www.aubd.co.uk or people can visit or be directed to the AUKDD advice centre at the Morledge (Tel: 343232) Age UK 50+ Centre in the Eagle Centre Market.
- Council Tax exemption for empty – There is currently a 6 month exemption for empty properties, thereafter, 90% council tax is payable. There is discretion on hardship grounds, the owner would have to demonstrate financial hardship and provide evidence that they are taking active

ALL / JD

steps to sell the property.

- Some owners of Empty Homes still pay full council tax for some reason. Currently on the register there is an owner who owns 5 properties and they are paying full council tax on all 5 properties – none of them are listed as empty.
- Adding properties that are not registered as empty, but in fact are empty, to the council tax register has an adverse effect on New Homes Bonus.
- £600,000 NHB income is forecast for 2011/12 and has been committed to the general budget, but this situation may change
- Empty Homes team need to show what impact they can have on this bonus – positive impacts through returning empties to use and maximising payments (or minimising losses) of NHB

Q: Is New Homes Bonus payable if a new home is added to the Council Tax list?

A: If the property is new and exempt from council tax – ie, empty for less than six months, it would count as a new unit of accommodation and be eligible for NHB payments. However, once the six month exemption has expired, if the property has not been occupied it would count as a long term empty home and therefore have a negative impact on NHB.