

Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.4

Meeting Date: 11th July 2013
 Portfolio: Communities and Housing
 Key Decision: Not Applicable:
 Within Policy and
 Budget Framework YES
 Public / Private Public

Title: RIVERSIDE CARLISLE
 Report of: The Director of Community Engagement
 Report Number: CD 38/13

Purpose / Summary:

This report provides Members of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel with an update on joint working between Riverside and Carlisle City Council.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel note the report and its contents.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Affordable Homes Programme 2011-15

Carlisle City Council and Riverside continue to work together to bring forward affordable housing schemes in Carlisle.

Riverside has planning permission for affordable housing at Borland Avenue in Botcherby, and is looking to develop at Arnside Court in Harraby and Thomlinson Avenue at Raffles with the support of the City Council and the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA). The schemes will deliver at least 42 units of affordable housing for the district, with Riverside looking to obtain further properties in the Raffles area. It is anticipated that all these developments will be completed by autumn 2014.

1.2 Disabled Facility Grants

Riverside continues to fund DFGs for their tenants when the value of the grant is less than £7,000, unless it is a second assessed referral within a 12 month period. There are a small number of DFGs to Riverside properties that are referred to the City Council. There are currently six such properties within the DFG programme, of which three have already been completed. The referral process works well and regular communication continues with Riverside throughout the course of the work.

1.3 Homelessness

Carlisle City Council's homelessness team continue to work with Riverside's allocation team on the administration of the Cumbria Choice allocation scheme, and meet regularly to discuss nominated Council-accepted homeless clients. In the last financial year, the City Council accepted duty to 78 people, 52 of which were housed by Riverside. In this financial year thus far, Riverside has housed three of the 13 people to whom the City Council has accepted a homeless duty.

1.4 Land Assets

The City Council will work with Riverside and other RPs to try to develop a pipeline scheme of development sites, with a focus on securing funding from the HCA. There is a continuing need to work together to unlock land for market and affordable housing, and other types of development.

1.5 Welfare Reform

Following the implementation of reforms to the welfare system in April, the City Council and Riverside have continued to work together in order to fully understand the consequences for local people. Representatives from Riverside attend the

Carlisle Welfare Reform Board, which is chaired by the Portfolio Holder and brings key partners around the table to monitor and address the impacts of welfare reform.

It has been calculated that many Riverside tenants will need to find an additional £11 a week in order to make up the shortfall in rent created by the changes, and other tenants, especially those with two or more spare bedrooms, will face making up a larger shortfall.

As part of the preventative approach within Carlisle City Council's Homelessness services, negotiations are currently underway to develop a pilot project with Riverside and the Credit Union to identify those people who have been affected by welfare reform and who can be assisted with a one-off payment from the City Council's homeless prevention fund to facilitate a move to a smaller property. Initially the project would be for those people who are under-occupying by two or more bedrooms and who are unable to move due to rent arrears. These arrears would be reduced to enable this move to happen, which would involve a one off payment from the City Council, a loan from the Credit Union and Riverside writing off a proportion of the arrears.

The City Council has a discretionary housing payment (DHP) fund, which can be utilised to mitigate some of the negative effects of welfare reform; as expected, applications from local people for DHP has increased. The City Council received 92 applications for DHP in 2011/12 and 171 applications in 2012/13, with 51 and 108 awards being made respectively. In the year so far, the City Council has received 178 applications for DHP, with 83 awards being made so far.

4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1** It is recommended that Members of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel note the report and its contents

5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

- 5.1** This reports provides information about work associated with Riverside Housing Association. It is linked to the City Council's priority to meet Carlisle's Housing need

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Community Engagement –

Economic Development –

Governance –

Local Environment –

Resources -