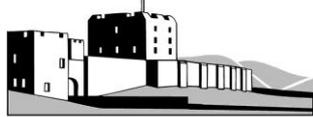


**CARLISLE
CITY COUNCIL**



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COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Panel Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 9th February 2012

Title: RIVERSIDE CARLISLE PARTNERSHIP

Report of: The Director Community Engagement

Report reference: CD10/12

Summary:

This report updates Members on the work under the Partnership Agreement with Riverside Carlisle Housing.

Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:

Input relating to the updated information provided within the report.

Recommendations:

That the content s of the report be noted.

Contact Officer: Keith Gerrard

Ext: 7350

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

1. Background

- 1.1 The housing stock of Carlisle City Council was transferred to the Riverside Housing group in 2002 following a ballot of tenants. Following on from the five year post-stock transfer period in December 2007, Riverside Carlisle (formerly Carlisle Housing Association) and Carlisle City Council set up a Partnership Agreement, which contained an action plan covering a number of key areas of work.
- 1.2 In July 2011 Members were updated on the ongoing work to reform how the key areas of work were being taken forward between the two organisations. These are:
- Place - This covers the work areas associated with estate management and the environment.
 - Property – This covers the work areas associated with development and investment.
 - People – This covers the work areas associated with housing options, lettings, homelessness and vulnerability.
- 1.3 Through the work undertaken within the partnership, challenges and opportunities have arisen that require a short review and analysis. A SWOT analysis looks at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of a project, situation or relationship / partnership. The table below sets out a SWOT analysis of the current partnership between Carlisle City Council and Riverside Carlisle.

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Joint work programmes: people place property that provide a platform for moving forward housing stock</p> <p>Shared commitment in both organisations in strong and resilient communities</p> <p>Complementary skill base and responsibilities – technical, planning, environmental</p> <p>Both organisations are committed to the area and are ‘in it for the long haul’</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Different sources of policy and financial pressure , different roles in relationship to direct service provider of housing and regulatory role of the authority (strategic tenancy strategy) and different customer requirements</p> <p>That important funding opportunities and development projects for the city are not taken forward</p> <p>That the work areas to be developed and realistic targets set are not clarified, defined or clearly understood</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>To build shared strategic vision around e.g. growth, health improvement (to be agreed)</p> <p>Partnership working to secure funding</p> <p>Common aspirations for development and affordable homes</p> <p>To build on the successful joint work areas to enable funding and development opportunities to be taken forward</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Risk of strategic drift in absence of shared strategic vision working in parallel</p> <p>That the positive work done to date through the work of both organisations is not fully recognised</p>

2 Current situation

2.1 Progress in regard to the three work areas has varied in the past six months and needs to be reviewed to take stock of the current position of the partnership. An update of work to-date is as follows:

- Place

Officers have met and positive actions that have come from the group include an agreed timetable of ward and estate walks.

- Property

Officers have met a number of times to progress specific areas of work including aids & adaptations and land mapping. With regards to aids & adaptations, work has been undertaken to seek the best approach in dealing with applications for adaptations within the context of reducing resources. Riverside took part in the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel Task Group that looked at adaptations and are working with Carlisle City Council on the Integrated Pilot Working Group for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). A meeting has taken part between key officers from each organisation to begin jointly mapping land assets, with a mind to explore potential joint development opportunities. Further work on this is timetabled. City Council officers have provided strategic support for a number of successful funding bids from Riverside for the development of further affordable housing in Carlisle.

- People

Officers from the City Council's homelessness service and the lettings section of Riverside have met monthly since the stock was transferred in 2002. Meetings are ongoing and are vital to a consistent approach to the re-housing of accepted homeless households, and the implementation of Cumbria Choice, the choice-based lettings scheme. City Council officers and Riverside staff conduct joint inspections of properties in order to deal proactively and efficiently with any housing complaints made to the City Council.

- 2.3 A representative from Riverside will provide Members with an update on their request for information reported in July's minutes.

3. Moving Forward

- 3.1 In moving forward, there are a number of important challenges that need to be addressed. Riverside's development objectives are challenged by recent changes in the Home and Communities Agency (HCA)'s funding framework.

At a time of increased affordable housing need, the City Council and Riverside must ensure they work effectively together to delivery of more affordable housing in Carlisle. The future of a jointly-run Private Sector Leasing scheme is being considered. The City Council and Riverside did not submit a bid for HCA funding to bring empty homes back into use.

The City Council and Riverside will have to work strategically together for the benefit of Carlisle residents as part of the upcoming policy review of Cumbria Choice, the choice-based lettings scheme, and as part of the development of the City Council's Strategic Tenancy Policy, which will set out a joint strategic approach on the allocation of affordable housing tenancies in the district.

Moving forward into the new financial year, building a shared strategic vision is seen as the next step in the development of the partnership. Both the City Council and Riverside recognise that the City and Carlisle's communities can benefit from a strong progressive partnership. To effectively respond to the challenges Riverside and Carlisle City Council face, there is a commitment from both organisations to develop stronger partnership working arrangements going forward.

A facilitated event within a reviewed schedule of bilateral meetings, attended by key representatives from both organisations, is proposed. Further information will be presented to Community Overview and Scrutiny in due course.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 Both organisations recognise the challenges that lie ahead but we are proactively working towards achieving our mutual aims and objectives.

Impact assessments

Does the change have an impact on the following?

Equality Impact Screening	Impact Yes/No?	Is the impact positive or negative?
Does the policy/service impact on the following?		
Age	Yes	positive
Disability	Yes	positive
Race	Yes	positive
Gender/ Transgender	Yes	positive
Sexual Orientation	Yes	positive
Religion or belief	Yes	positive
Human Rights	Yes	positive
Health inequalities	Yes	positive
Rurality	Yes	positive

If you consider there is either no impact or no negative impact, please give reasons:

.....

.....

.....

If an equality Impact is necessary, please contact the P&P team.

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

Proposed criteria of when major adaptations are unlikely to receive Landlords consent with reasons and alternatives. (Unlikely as it is always accepted that there are exceptions that do occur).

Consent is unlikely to be given	Reasons	Alternative
When a property is under-occupied. Excepting when the tenant has a live-in carer.	Under-occupancy by two or more bedrooms. Not sustainable in the long-term.	Move to more suitable accommodation to meet their needs. Ensure applicant is registered on CBL.
When the applicant is not registered as an occupant of the property.	Applicant should be registered as an occupant of the property and reside in the property as their main home.	Applicant to register as an occupant of the property with proof of residency for a period of at least 6 months.
Stair lifts in communal stairwells.	Can present a health and safety risk to other occupants in the block owing to means of escape and fire obstruction	Move to more suitable accommodation to meet their needs. Ensure applicant is registered on CBL.
Level access showers in an upstairs flat.	Can lead to problems with leaks into property below. Query if level access shower is required, how does the applicant manage the stairs to access the flat?	Move to more suitable accommodation to meet their needs. Ensure applicant is registered on CBL.
Extensions to ground floor flats (especially where leaseholders are in pre existence).	Requires S20 consultation with Leaseholders and other tenants. Increases structural liability costs for Leaseholders and decreases communal space.	Move to more suitable accommodation to meet their needs. Consider whether adaptation needs can be met within existing property structure.
Extensions to houses.	Normally requires maximum grant funding. Can prove to be unsustainable for future use.	Explore alternatives options including transfer with support package or contribute up to £7,000.

<p>Level access shower in a house.</p>	<p>Not sustainable in the long-term. Query if level access shower is required, will the applicant require a stair lift.</p> <p>Will be refused if the bathroom space does not allow for a level access shower to be accommodated.</p>	<p>Explore alternative options including transfer with a support package.</p> <p>Consideration will be given if there is a stair lift installed.</p>
<p>No Application for major adaptations considered on a starter tenancy</p>		<p>Look at temporary options and advise accordingly.</p>
<p>Stair lifts in a house.</p>	<p>Dependant on occupancy of the property- exception being severe dementia.</p>	<p>Move to more suitable accommodation to meet their needs.</p>
<p>Through-floor lifts in non-lifetime homes.</p>	<p>Dependant on occupancy of the property</p>	<p>Move to more suitable accommodation to meet their needs</p>
<p>Adaptations will not be fitted to a new build home, after allocation, within the first 12 months of completion (excepting unforeseen circumstances).</p>	<p>Any alteration to the property within the first 12 months impacts and undermines the defect liability with the original developer.</p>	<p>Trialling allocating new build properties prior to completion to give the new tenants choice of kitchens/colour etc. Applicants with adaptation needs that came through CBL must have an OT report, before agreeing tenancy and a "property sustainability assessment" carried out.</p>
<p>Through floor lifts in a lifetime home when the size request is larger than the aperture provided within the Rowntrees standard</p>	<p>Lifetime homes are built to a pre-determined specification and the ability to install a lift is therefore less disruptive to accommodate. Increasing the size of the aperture would interfere with the structural integrity of the building.</p>	<p>Further discussion with the applicant to determine how their needs can be met via other properties (relocation) or other adaptations</p>

Any adaptation where the combined cost is in excess of £7,000 including VAT.		Is there an alternative, less expensive, solution? Request additional funding from DFG. Move to more suitable accommodation.
Additional adaptation request made within 12 month of a previous adaptation being fitted (excepting unforeseen circumstances).	OT's should have assessed for long-term needs of client and requested all necessary works to meet needs at the outset.	Customer has right of appeal.
When an applicant has a RTB/RTA application pending?		Refusal
When a property is earmarked for disposal/demolition or remodelling.		Refusal
Adaptation application not considered within 6 months of new tenancy if not on a starter tenancy for an existing property.	Prevention of unsuitable lettings and a property that meets needs at time of allocation is maximised.	Refusal
Transfer of applicant from a property that has been adapted to meet their needs to an unadopted property.	To maximise asset use and prevent wastage of DFG/RC Funds.	Advise of condition and for customer to re-apply look at alternative solutions.

Agenda Item 9

RIVERSIDE CARLISLE

REPORT TO THE BOARD MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY 23 JANUARY 2012

AIDS AND ADAPATIONS

FOR DECISION

Executive Summary

This report provides a progress report on the steps that are being taken to improve the service in delivery of aids and adaptations for people with a range of disabilities.

Implications

Riverside houses a very high proportion of people with disabilities (over 40% compared to national average of 17%). This provision is essential to enable them to live independently and sustain their tenancies.

Recommendation

The Board are asked to approve new criteria for the delivery of aids and adaptations.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This paper reports on the progress that has been made on changes to Riverside Carlisle's approach to delivering our major aids and adaptations process for people with a range of disabilities.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 12 September 2011 a workshop was held with the Board to discuss the progress which has been made on improving performance for the aids and adaptations service. The combined accumulative performance for both minor and major adaptations has improved from 59% in March 2010 to 86.6% in March 2011. During the 2011/12 financial year, performance is forecast to come closer to the revised Group target of 92%.
- 2.2 At the workshop Board members discussed proposed changes to the way in which the major aids and adaptations service is delivered in Carlisle. The project has five key drivers:
- to continue to improve on the Audit Commission recommendations from 2009
 - improve performance
 - improve value for money
 - make better use of our assets
 - ensure choice

- 2.3 The workshop recommended the following proposals were piloted:
- Closer working relationship with the Occupational Therapists
 - Applying criteria (attached) to requests
 - Some adaptations automatically approved
 - List adaptations which are unlikely to receive landlords consent and offer alternatives
 - Limit Riverside's contribution for more costly adaptations to £7,000 or seek alternatives
- 2.4 At the Board meeting on 15 September 2011 approval was given to pilot the above new processes and report back to the Board in January 2012.

3 PROGRESS

- 3.1 A summary of the activity to date is as follows:
- 65 requests for major adaptations received since 22 September 2011
 - 8 historical applications for over bath showers transferred to Riverside from Carlisle City Council Disabled Facilities Grants Department
 - 4 possible relocations pending avoiding costly extension works
 - 1 relocation package completed
 - 11 requests rejected (alternative options to be considered)
- 3.2 The criteria (attached) which have been trialled have had the following consultation:
- Carlisle City Council Disabled Facilities Grants Department
 - Cumbria County Council Occupational Therapists (OTs)
 - Focus Group of Riverside Carlisle's Tenants
- There has been a varied response to this.
- 3.3 The City Council agree that the proposed changes could be beneficial to the clients if adaptations are installed quicker.
- 3.4 The Tenant Focus Group were supportive of the proposals and understood the need to utilise our assets better and achieve value for money, which should mean that more clients are assisted. Members of the Focus Group were insistent that Riverside should enter into dialogue with applicants for major adaptations. Clients don't always agree with OT recommendations. This dialogue helps to ensure that individual needs are met appropriately.
- 3.5 The City Council is leading a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Integration Project. This group involves multiple stakeholders including Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Health and Social Care, Cumbria NHS and Riverside. The aim of the Group is a county wide strategic review of the major adaptation service whereby given the reductions in funding and the ageing population, previous methods are no longer sustainable. If approved, we will be advocating the adoption of Riverside's criteria as standard. Participation in this group also provides opportunities to promote the linked benefits of providing assistive technologies via Careline.
- 3.6 If approved, adoption of the proposed criteria will require the development of a revised Service Level Agreement with Carlisle City Council. It is likely to have

the impact of reducing the amount of work the Council does on our behalf, and bringing more of this important activity in house.

4 RISK

4.1 The risks which have been previously highlighted are:

- Challenge for non-compliance with disability discrimination provisions contained in the Equality Act
- Challenge for not meeting the terms of the County-wide Choice Based Lettings Scheme

4.1.1 There is also a further risk that due to the reduction in DFG funding this year and the priority points system applied that:

- The performance target of 92% will not be met.

4.2 Legal advice has been obtained with regard to disability discrimination. As a landlord we have a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments in response to a request from a disabled client. The feedback from the Solicitor is positive and providing each application is considered on its own merits using the criteria the process would be compliant with the law. It is also essential to ensure a paper trail of evidence is kept to demonstrate compliance.

5 VFM

5.1 During the pilot use of the criteria has demonstrated the potential value for money benefits to be obtained. For example, one of the new homes at Etterby is to have an extension built at a cost of around £ 40,000. Riverside has only had to contribute £7,000. In another case contributing £4,500 towards the costs of a move saved £8,000 on a proposed adaptation.

6 RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to approve the new criteria (attached) for the delivery of aids and adaptations.

KIM DORAN
HEAD OF ASSET MANAGEMENT

LORNA YOUNG
PROJECT COORDINATOR

Patch Walks 2011/2012

	PATCH	DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION	CITY
1	Central East	07.04.11	Thursday	10am	M.C. Gardens	Yes
2	Upperby	13.04.11	Wednesday	2pm	Lamb Street	Yes
3	Raffles	05.05.11	Tuesday	10am	Shadygrove Rd	Yes
4	Old Harraby	11.05.11	Wednesday	2pm	Community School	Yes
5	Denton Holme/ Longsowerby	19.05.11	Wednesday	2pm	Sowerby Court	
6	Currock	25.05.11	Wednesday	2pm	Leabourne Road	Yes
7	Central West	02.06.11	Thursday	10am	Dowbeck Road	
8	Botcherby	07.06.11	Tuesday	10am	11 Merith Ave	Yes
9	Longtown	15.06.11	Wednesday	2pm	Ladyseat	Yes
10	Morton	22.06.11	Wednesday	10am	Newlathes Ave	
11	Belah	30.06.11	Thursday	10am	Community Centre	
12	Brampton	06.07.11	Wednesday	2pm	Moot Hall	Yes
13	W. Bridge	13.07.11	Wednesday	2pm	Mill Riggs	
14	Yewdale	21.07.11	Thursday	10am	Community Centre	Yes
15	Harraby	10.08.11	Wednesday	2pm	Central Avenue	Yes
16	Old Harraby	17.08.11	Wednesday	2pm	Community School	Yes
17	Dalston	07.09.11	Wednesday	10am	Barras Close	Yes
18	Currock	14.09.11	Wednesday	2pm	Leabourne Road	Yes
19	Central East	22.09.11	Thursday	10am	M.C. Gardens	
20	Botcherby	27.09.11	Tuesday	10am	11 Merith Ave	Yes
21	Upperby	05.10.11	Wednesday	2pm	Lamb Street	Yes
22	Central West	13.10.11	Thursday	10am	Dowbeck Road	Yes
23	Longtown	19.10.11	Wednesday	2pm	Ladyseat	
24	Raffles	03.11.11	Thursday	10am	Shadygrove Rd	Yes
25	Morton	09.11.11	Wednesday	10am	Newlathes Ave	Yes
26	Denton Holme/ Longsowerby	17.11.11	Thursday	10am	Sowerby Court	Yes
27	Old Harraby	23.11.11	Wednesday	2pm	Community School	
28	Belah	08.12.11	Thursday	10am	Community Centre	Yes
29	Brampton	14.12.11	Wednesday	2pm	Moot Hall	
30	Currock	11.01.12	Wednesday	2pm	Leabourne Road	Yes
31	Yewdale	19.01.12	Thursday	10am	Community Centre	
32	Botcherby	24.01.12	Tuesday	10am	11 Merith Ave	Yes
33	Dalston	01.02.12	Wednesday	10am	Barras Close	
34	Central West	09.02.12	Thursday	10am	Dowbeck Road	Yes
35	W. Bridge	01.03.12	Wednesday	2pm	Mill Riggs	Yes
36	Harraby	07.03.12	Wednesday	2pm	Central Avenue	
37	Raffles	15.03.12	Thursday	10am	Shadygrove rd	Yes
38	Central East	22.03.12	Thursday	10am	M.C. Gardens	Yes

