

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 78

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Proposed extension to Local Lettings Plan for people aged 50 plus		
Date of Meeting:	6 January 2010		
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care and Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Helen Clarkmead	Tel: 293271
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 In October 2009, The Cabinet Member for Housing agreed a Local Lettings Plan that restricts lettings of flats that do not meet mobility standards in certain blocks to people aged 50 years or older.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Member for Housing asked that consideration be given to extending this Local Lettings Plan to other suitable blocks.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing agrees for Clarke Court to be designated as an over 50s block. All new lettings, except those of flats meeting the council's mobility standard, would be to people aged 50 years or older.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY VENTS:

- 3.1 The Local Lettings Plan was agreed by the Cabinet Member for Housing in July 2009. This was in order to meet resident aspirations, and to make best use of the council's housing stock by encouraging people to down size, releasing family homes.
- 3.2 During the consultation process, some residents of other blocks expressed an interest in their block becoming designated as an over 50s block.
- 3.3 Officers undertook a feasibility exercise that considered residents opinion,

Equality impact and the likely impact on lettings performance in respect of Malthouse Court, 385 Kingsway and Clarke Court.

3.4 Malthouse Court

Although residents expressed an interest in this block becoming designated for people over 50, this is a three storey development without lift. Ground floor flats are of mobility standard, and would therefore be excluded from any age restricted lettings plan. Where similar property has been designated for people over 50, there have been problems letting second floor flats, resulting in poor turnaround performance and increased rent loss. It is likely, if this development were designated for people over 50 that lettings performance would suffer considerably. It is therefore not recommended for this development to be designated for people over 50 years of age.

3.5 385 Kingsway

Although residents expressed an interest in this block becoming designated for people over 50, property in this block is often difficult to let at present. This is likely to become a greater problem if the pool of people eligible to bid for property in this block was restricted to people over 50. The council's Accessible Housing Coordinator does not feel this block is suitable for designation as an over 50s block. It is therefore not recommended for this to be designated as a block for people over 50 years of age.

3.6 Clarke Court

Residents very strongly support the proposal to designate this as a block for people over 50 years of age. There is a lift to all floors and the flats are generally easy to let. The design of this block results in some noise transmission problems, and is not as such suitable for families. It is therefore recommended that Clarke Court is adopted as a block for people over 50 years of age. This would mean that in future all vacant flats that do not meet the council's mobility standard would be let to people over 50 years of age.

3.7 Norwich Crescent

Although there are noise related issues in this area, this is a very young community, and the transition to a predominantly over 50s environment would be lengthy. This area is not generally popular with people over 50s seeking to downsize, who tend to prefer more centrally located property. There is a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom flats, three storeys with no lift. It is therefore likely that designating these flats for over 50s use would have significant detrimental impact in respect of lettings turnaround and rent loss performance. It is therefore not recommended for this development to be designated for people over 50 years of age.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 This report was presented to presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee and welcomed by the majority of delegates by indicative vote. The issues have been discussed with tenants over a period of months.
- 4.2 Residents have been consulted. Residents of Clarke Court strongly support the proposal to designate the block for people over 50. The Westbourne ward Councillors also support this proposal. Residents of Malthouse court and 385 Kingsway have expressed an interest in their blocks being designated for over 50s.
- 4.3 The council's Accessible Housing Coordinator and Homemove Manager were Consulted, and their views taken into account.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations in this report. The feasibility exercise showed that there was strong support for Clarke Court to be designated as an over 50's block, therefore should not affect rental income into the Housing Revenue Account.

The changes to the LLP will be made within the existing 2009/10 Housing Revenue Account Budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen, Principal Accountant *Date:* 3 November 2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 By virtue of section 169 Housing Act 1996, the Communities Secretary is entitled to issue guidance to local housing authorities in connection with the exercise of their powers under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 - allocation of housing accommodation. Local Authorities are required to have regard to this guidance when exercising their allocation functions. In pursuance of this section, in August 2008 CLG issued a guide entitled, "Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings - Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities." The guidance includes a section on local lettings policies. The recommendations in the report are compatible with that section."

Lawyer Consulted:

Liz Woodley

Date: 20/11/2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 This proposal will not significantly benefit or disadvantage any specific group, as Clarke Court represents only 0.15% of the council's general housing stock.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are none

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are none

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are none

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 There are none

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 It was considered if it was feasible to further extend this scheme to other blocks, this was rejected for the reasons detailed at 3.3 to 3.6 above.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To formally add Clarke Court to the existing Local Lettings Plan for 50 plus blocks

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents In Members' Rooms

None.

Background Documents

1. Local Lettings Plans – Lettings restricted to persons over 50 years of age and bungalows - Housing Cabinet Member 11 November 2009