

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 16 June 2010

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Adults and Community

SUBJECT: Castlefields Village Square – Local Lettings Policy

WARD(S): Halton Castle

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek the Boards views on a proposal by Plus Dane Housing Association to introduce a local lettings policy to allocate the new properties being constructed as part of the Castlefields Village Square redevelopment.

2.0 RECOMMENDED – that the Board support the introduction of a local lettings policy as set out in the report and appendices, and that the Board’s view be reported to the Executive Board Sub in considering the Council’s formal response.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 As part of the regeneration of the Castlefields area, plans include for the demolition of the existing local shopping centre and the creation of a new village square comprising shop units, a new health centre, new community centre and 16 flats above the shops. This represents a significant financial investment by a range of partners, with the intention to offer a vibrant new focus to the local community.

3.2 Plus Dane is the developer of the shops and flats. Mindful of the need to do everything possible to protect this investment and the new facilities for the long term benefit of the community, and of the anti social behaviour problems often associated with local centres and flats over shops particularly, Plus Dane is proposing to introduce a local lettings policy. This would apply only to the 16 new flats due to be constructed above the new shops, and not the wider estate.

3.3 Local lettings policies are widely used by social landlords, operating under formal guidance issued by the former Housing Corporation, as one of a range of tools used to stabilise problem areas and create sustainable neighbourhoods. Appendix 1 is a copy of Plus Dane’s overarching policy framework governing the use of local lettings policies and sets out the consultation, implementation and monitoring process, and the safeguards in terms of regular monitoring, analysis and review.

- 3.4 Appendix 2 sets out the local context of why Plus Dane wants to introduce a local policy for the Castlefields village square area, and the proposed criteria to be used to select new tenants. Essentially it introduces two additional criteria on top of the normal qualifications, in that applicants must be over 25 years of age and must either be working or engaged in voluntary work within the community.
- 3.5 On this occasion the proposal to introduce a local lettings policy is not so much a response to an existing problem, but a risk based approach to prevent a problem from occurring given their experience of problems with other flats over shops.
- 3.6 Plus Dane has asked the Council to comment on its proposals as part of a wider consultation exercise, to inform any decision ultimately taken by the Association's Senior Management Team.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None for the Council.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None identified.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None identified.

6.4 A Safer Halton

If Plus Dane's risk assessment is correct, the proposal for a local lettings policy should reduce the potential for anti social behaviour in the locality.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The successful redevelopment of the Castlefields local shopping centre is key to the regeneration of the area, and a proportionate approach to reducing the risk of crime has to be weighed against the inequality created by a local lettings policy.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 N/A.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.0 As in 6.5.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document

Place of inspection

Contact Officer

None