

Ladywood District Housing Panel: Next Steps

Note for consideration

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Background

Ladywood District Committee first considered Cabinet proposals for the establishment of District Housing Panels at its meeting on 12 March 2013. The District further considered this matter further at a Member Briefing held on 26 June 2013 and established a working group to review the options and make recommendations about the way forward.

At the District Committee meeting held on 12 November 2013 it was agreed to establish a District Housing Panel to develop a shared understanding of strategic housing issues amongst local stakeholders and provide a means of securing support for strategies to address these. The focus of the Forum would be on:

- Understanding the District demographic profile and scoping out housing needs;
- Assessing current stock condition and investment requirements; and
- Reviewing housing growth requirements and opportunities within the District

Following this, approaches were made to a number of interested stakeholders and an initial meeting was held on 5 August 2014. The meeting included representatives from Trident Reach and Midland Heart housing associations, as well as BCC officers from housing strategy team, planning and development, housing development and private rented sector team.

That meeting agreed to take forward an agenda for the work of the District Housing Panel including:

- Mapping and focussing on hot spots (with particular reference to Soho and Aston Wards)
- Homeless prevention
- Opportunities provided by RSLs
- Mapping land ownership and identifying opportunities arising from this

A further meeting was held on 2 February 2015 and this paved the way for a well-attended workshop looking at Decent, Affordable Housing held as part of the Ladywood District Convention on 7 March 2015.

Recent Developments

A number of policy developments make it appropriate to re-visit the arrangements for a Ladywood District Housing Panel. These include, but are not limited to:

- Changing role for District Committees in the light of recommendations from Kerslake Review and Improvement Panel
- Emerging role of Place Management and role of housing management in supporting the approach
- Continuing resource reductions impacting across Birmingham City Council general funds
- Emerging context of resource reductions for social housing providers arising from year on year 1% rent reductions
- Review of housing Allocation Scheme
- Changing tenure patterns with increases in Private Rented Sector housing stock (PRS)
- Emerging approaches towards regulation of PRS
- Continuing pressures to plan for and meet housing need in the context of population growth projections

Proposed Objectives for District Housing Panel

The discussion on Decent, Affordable Housing held at the District Convention on 7 March 2015 provides a useful framework for taking forwards the work of the Ladywood District Housing Panel. Broadly, the concerns raised fell into the following areas:

- Meeting housing need – in particular the need for ‘affordable’ housing meeting the specific needs of local people
- Managing the impact of PRS/hostel accommodation and in particular considering how effective regulation might reduce negative impacts on neighbourhoods
- Considering how planning policy can be used to support the development of balanced communities including meeting requirements for local services, leisure, recreation and education
- Relationship between housing management and wider environmental and neighbourhood management

Next steps

It is proposed to strengthen the local partnership approach to address these issues with leadership provided by the District Committee lead for Housing, Cllr Carl Rice. In the first instance officers are asked to:

- Scope the range of Registered Social Housing Providers across the District and work with Birmingham Social Housing Partnership to engage with them appropriately
- Scope opportunities for involvement by private sector landlords
- Assess how local residents can best contribute to taking forward this agenda
- Ensure up to date information is available about current and future housing need, tenure types and demographics for Ladywood District with a view to informing the work of the Panel
- Convene an initial meeting of the Panel