

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	10.
Date:	8 th March 2010	Status	Open
Category	Decision within the functions of Executive		
Subject:	Local Letting Policy – Springfield Crescent, Bolsover		
Report by:	Head of Housing		
Other Officers Involved	Housing Enforcement Manager Housing Needs Manager		
Director	Director of Neighbourhoods		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor K. Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Housing Management Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

COMMUNITY SAFETY – Ensuring that communities are safe and secure
CUSTOMER FOCUSED SERVICES – Providing excellent customer focused services
ENVIRONMENT – Promoting and enhancing a clean and sustainable environment
REGENERATION – Developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities
SOCIAL INCLUSION – Promoting fairness, equality and lifelong learning.
STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Continually improving our organisation by ensuring services are flexible to cope with changing local conditions

TARGETS

None directly

VALUE FOR MONEY

None directly

THE REPORT

The area of Springfield Crescent in Bolsover has been subject to high levels of ASB for a number of years. This is a mixed tenure area, with both council tenants and properties that are let privately.

As a result of this behaviour the appearance of the area had deteriorated and properties are attracting interest from people who are themselves a greater risk and more likely to be involved with issues of ASB.

The Council, through anti-social behaviour and housing powers have taken enforcement actions against a number of tenants. This has resulted in one problem family leaving the area other modifying their behaviour to improve the area.

We are aware that a number of families in this area are now receiving additional support and have modified their behaviour accordingly.

With the agreement of the Portfolio holders for Housing and Community Safety there are a number of Council owned properties that have not been relet in this area as there was a high risk of them becoming involved with, or victims of, ASB.

Although action has been taken against the main perpetrators the area still retains a 'reputation'. There is a concern that if these properties are let to people who are vulnerable there is a risk that ASB will continue in this area.

Although the area has now 'quietened down' there is a real risk that an inappropriate allocation may reignite the problems. This may be caused by either new tenants becoming involved in ASB or vulnerable new tenants providing an opportunity for bullying or harassment from some of the remaining perpetrators.

In order to minimise this risk it is proposed to introduce a local letting policy in the area for a period of 6 months and let properties only to people who are less likely to cause ASB or to become victims of ASB. Specifically this will:

- Exclude people who are rehoused through the homelessness legislation (who are, by definition vulnerable)
- Exclude people who have been involved with ASB or criminal activity (applicants will be asked additional questions about this).
- Include people who can make a positive contribution to the area (applicants will be asked what they can bring to the area).

To ensure this is a transparent process all properties in this area will be allocated through the HARP panel for the 6 month period. In effect, the points system will be set aside for this period. The portfolio holder will be provided with anonymous information on the allocations.

This flexibility may result in allocating some properties to applicants who would not normally qualify for these properties. For example a family with one child could be offered a three bed property.

Officer will also offer to work with private sector landlords to encourage them to take similar steps when reletting these properties.

ISSUES/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Whether or not a local lettings policy for Springfield Crescent is appropriate in the circumstances.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Difficult to determine. There may be a slight loss of income through increase void times, however this is likely to be offset by a decrease in damage and/or rent arrears from unsuitable tenants.

Legal: Part VI of the 1996 Housing Act means the authority must only allocate properties following the published allocations scheme. This proposal, in effect, introduces a new time limited scheme for this area. Without this agreement any allocation must follow the council wide scheme.

Human Resources: None directly

RECOMMENDATION(S) that;

1. Members agree the local lettings policy for Springfield Crescent, Bolsover for a period of six months,
2. All allocations for the area are made through the HARP Panel during this period.

REASON FOR DECISION TO BE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

To introduce a local letting policy in the Springfield Crescent area which has experienced high levels of anti-social behaviour

ATTACHMENTS: None
FILE REFERENCE: L:Housing\PC\Reports\local.lettings-springfield
SOURCE DOCUMENT: None