

Board

26 May 2009

Riverside Dene (Cruddas Park) rehousing plan

Report by Director of Tenancy Services

| Decision | Area Implications | Elswick |
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| Executive Summary | <p>This report updates Board on the planned programme of work with regards to lettings of the refurbished flats in Riverside Dene the name chosen for the regeneration scheme of the Cruddas Park multi storey blocks. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in partnership with Newcastle City Council and other partners to create long term sustainability of the housing stock in the area This report also seeks Board's approval to establish a Local Lettings Plan to allocate the refurbished flats and to the designation of a block for a specific age group | |
| Recommendations | <p>Board is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the approach to the allocation of refurbished flats for rent Approve the designation of the Larches as block for those aged 55 years and over | |

| Business Implications | |
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| YHN Mission and Strategic Objectives | <p>The proposals support YHN strategic objectives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and care to communities Three star excellent services Refurbishing and building homes |
| Value for Money/Efficiencies | <p>This underpins work being undertaken to ensure that we continue to deliver better and bespoke services to our customers using existing resources.</p> |
| Resources (financial, property, technological or human) | <p>It is envisaged that the majority of the work will be delivered within existing budgets.</p> <p>Additional resources may be required to support changes to documentation and IT systems due to the planned changes in numbering of flats.</p> |

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| | The revenue collected from rent will be in direct proportion to the speed that the blocks are allocated. |
| Impact on Services/Performance | Existing tenants already displaced as part of the regeneration scheme will be offered a bespoke service by our Relocation Officers and offered considerable choice in relation to both location and design of chosen accommodation. |
| Outcomes for tenants/leaseholders | New and existing residents will have a fair system recognising those who have lived in the Cruddas Park community for considerable years, those in the greatest need for housing and ensures that they continue to have choice and opportunity to meet their needs. |
| Risk (reputation, relationship) | <p>Failure to ensure that the rehousing of those already displaced as well as new applicants to the area meets current legislation and good practice will damage YHNs reputation.</p> <p>Any decision made to move existing residents from the first two private blocks in phase 1 and 2 i.e. the Cedars and the Willows in the current housing market carries a variety of risks, e.g. rental loss, security of the tenants remaining as well as the security and maintenance of partially emptied blocks.</p> |
| Environmental | There are no direct environmental implications. |
| Legal Implications | Failure to ensure that the plan complies with legislation, guidance and good practice may open the organisation up to challenge. |
| Equality and Diversity | Any changes to block designations will be subject to an Equality Impact Needs Assessment (EINA). |
| Stakeholder Involvement/Consultation (planned or already carried out) | <p>All residents already displaced and those to be affected by future phases have had individual meetings with YHN's Relocation officers. This approach is supported by the city council.</p> <p>Specific consultation was carried out with the Quality of Life partnership regarding the possibility of designating the Larches as an older persons block.</p> |

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| Background papers | Cruddas Park report to Board 24 th June 08 |
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Riverside Dene (Cruddas Park) rehousing plan

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report gives an update on the work being carried out with regards to the proposed lettings in the Riverside Dene regeneration scheme. This includes:
- Working in partnership with Newcastle City Council and other partners to create a sustainable community with increase choice for residents.
 - The proposed arrangements for the allocation of flats in the scheme

2 Background

- 2.1 The regeneration of Cruddas Park is a key priority for
- Your Homes Newcastle
 - Newcastle City Council
 - Newcastle New Deal for Communities
 - Bridging Newcastle Gateshead

Getting the rehousing plan right will address the communities needs and aspirations.

- 2.2 The Cruddas Park area has been one of the City's priorities for regeneration for a number of years. It is a highly visible example of a post-war tower block estate. The estate comprises 11 multi-storey blocks of two and one bedroom flats. The age distribution of the residents includes elderly residents, middle age singles and couples and young singles and couples.

Work began in stripping out the first of the social blocks in 2008 and the refurbishment began on site in March 2009.

After a period of consultation residents were ask to vote for a new name and chose the name Riverside Dene. The new name was launched in a well publicised event on site on 2nd April.

3 Refurbished flats – Local Lettings Plan Proposal

- 3.1 Due to the long lead in time before work actually commenced on site, some 80 households were decanted from the blocks in the first phase to other parts of the Cruddas Park neighbourhood as well as other parts of the city with the intention of returning to the area when works were complete. Officers from the Relocation team have ensured contact with these households and newsletters have provided updates on the schemes progress to date.
- 3.2 Recent contact now indicates that nearly half of those have either moved on again or decided to stay in their new home usually as a result of a change in circumstances.

29 of those moved have expressed an interest in being rehoused in

the Sycamores, the first block due for handing over to YHN in April 2010.

Home visits have recently been completed to discuss kitchen choices etc allowing the contractor as much time as possible to order the materials and programme the internal works. By mid June 2009 it is anticipated that those already decanted will have been made advance offers for the new tenancies.

3.3 Moving into a typical block

Attached in Appendix 1 is a schedule of how it is intended to move residents into each of the refurbished blocks. Each block is serviced by two lifts serving alternate floors.

It is planned to try and move three households in per day in morning, lunchtime and afternoon slots and move in by floor from the top floor down. However this will be subject to some flexibility to meet individual household's needs.

We are exploring the possibility of being able to facilitate weekend move ins which would help shorten the time scale for completing the full occupation of each block. This will have implications for the utility companies as well as Neighbourhood Services who have responsibility for connections. There will also be a financial impact on YHN if we have to pay higher rates at weekends.

To move in 74 households will therefore take approximately 5 weeks based on 3 moves per day, whereas completing only 2 moves per day would make that period extend to 8 weeks.

3.4 The allocation of the refurbished flats gives YHN an opportunity to meet a number of objectives. These include:

- Supporting community sustainability and community cohesion
- Creating opportunities for customers likely to be affected by later phases of the regeneration scheme

The City Councils Lettings Policy sets out provision for YHN Area Boards to agree Local Lettings Plans. Given the pressing need to complete home visits and the fact that the area boards are to be dissolved, the Board is being asked for approval.

3.5 When there is more than one applicant for a duplex apartment or for a flat on a particular floor with a particular aspect then a tiebreaker will be used. The proposed tiebreaker in Phase 1 will be the combined length of residency the tenant has resided in the decanted property added to the length of residency in the property they were originally decanted from within the area. After Phase 1 the tiebreaker will return to the existing YCH tiebreaker (i.e. length of residency) at the time of move in.

It is proposed that all first preference applicants are to be rehoused as Housing Management Lets. This means that the properties will not be advertised.

It is proposed that the following selection criteria will apply.

- First preference for all the properties in Phase 1 i.e. the

Sycamores, the Hawthorns and the Larches to be offered in the first instance to those 41 eligible tenants already decanted from existing multi storey flats within the Cruddas Park regeneration scheme. This includes 14 residents in the Cedars one of the proposed first private blocks in phase 1.

- Second preference will be given to eligible tenants from the remaining occupied 6 blocks within the regeneration scheme. This is ultimately dependant upon the phasing of the scheme which will be influenced by prevailing housing market conditions.
- Third preference will be given to any YCH eligible customer for flat accommodation.

3.6 From the earliest days of the planned regeneration of the area discussions have been held with a residents and a number of stakeholders about designating one of the blocks being retained for rent as a designated block with an age restriction. The block identified has consistently been the Larches which is in the first phase.

As part of the local lettings plan Board are also asked to agree to the designation of the Larches as block for those aged over 55.

Such a designation would be regularly reviewed to ensure it was still relevant and meets the needs of YHN and the city, our customers and stakeholders including existing residents of the designated block.

4 Implications

4.1 Agreeing to the designation of the Larches as a block for those aged over 55 years of age could have implications for the wiring installed in the block as the intention would be provide for the future use of assistive technology to support frailer residents to remain in their homes.

4.2 The regeneration of the area will have implications for the level of Concierge provided in the area and this is being considered separately as part of the citywide review of concierge services.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Board is recommended to

- Approve the approach to the allocation of refurbished flats for rent
- Approve the designation of the Larches as block for those aged 55 years and over

6 Next Steps

Should Board endorse the rehousing plan the following next steps would be required:

- Officers to complete visits on all those wishing to be rehoused in

the Hawthorns, Sycamores and Larches to agree choices for kitchens etc.

- Officers need to work with the small number of ineligible tenants who are expecting to return to the refurbished blocks. Some have been made ineligible for rehousing due to rent arrears and court action is ongoing against some of these. Others are making strides to reduce their outstanding debt and we expect these debts to be paid at the time of taking up a new tenancy. A smaller number again have other complex needs and officers are working closely with these individuals and various support agencies to ensure a package of support is available to them.
- Officers need to re canvass those residents in the Cedars to find out their choices
- Options regarding the wiring for the Larches will need to be examined with Consultants appointed to oversee the Electrical and Mechanical works in the regeneration scheme.

Appendix 1

Typical Move Schedule (The Sycamores)

| Day | Scheduled Moves | | | | | | Completions |
|---------------------|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------------|
| 1 Monday | 14.1 | 14.2 | 14.3 | | | | |
| 2 Tuesday | | | | 14.4 | 14.5 | 14.6 | Floor 14 complete |
| 3 Wednesday | 13.1 | 13.2 | 13.3 | | | | |
| 4 Thursday | 12.1 | | | 13.4 | 13.5 | | Floor 13 complete |
| 5 Friday | | 12.2 | 12.3 | 12.4 | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 6 Monday | 11.1 | 11.2 | | | 12.5 | | Floor 12 complete |
| 7 Tuesday | | | 11.3 | 11.4 | 11.5 | | Floor 11 complete |
| 8 Wednesday | 10.1 | 10.2 | 10.3 | | | | |
| 9 Thursday | 9.1 | | | 10.4 | 10.5 | | Floor 10 complete |
| 10 Friday | | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 11 Monday | 8.1 | 8.2 | | | 9.5 | | Floor 9 complete |
| 12 Tuesday | | | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.5 | | Floor 8 complete |
| 13 Wednesday | 7.1 | 7.2 | 7.3 | | | | |
| 14 Thursday | 6.1 | | | 7.4 | 7.5 | | Floor 7 complete |
| 15 Friday | | 6.2 | 6.3 | 6.4 | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 16 Monday | 5.1 | 5.2 | | | 6.5 | | Floor 6 complete |
| 17 Tuesday | | | 5.3 | 5.4 | 5.5 | | |
| 18 Wednesday | 4.1 | 4.2 | | | | 5.6 | Floor 5 complete |
| 19 Thursday | | | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.5 | | |
| 20 Friday | 3.1 | 3.2 | | | | 4.6 | Floor 4 complete |
| | | | | | | | |
| 21 Monday | | | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.5 | | |
| 22 Tuesday | 2.1 | 2.2 | | | | 3.6 | Floor 3 complete |
| 23 Wednesday | | | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.5 | | |
| 24 Thursday | 1.1 | 1.2 | | | | 2.6 | Floor 2 complete |
| 25 Friday | | | 1.3 | 1.4 | | | Block complete |
| | | | | | | | |