

## **CROWDING AND SPACE HAZARDS**

Report of the Head of Housing Management and Housing Options

### **1. SUMMARY**

This report updates the Operational Board on progress in dealing with known overcrowding cases. It explains that the existing procedure has been split to provide separate Procedure and Policy documents and that the procedure has been amended to take account of changed working practices with the Council.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

Operational Board is asked to

1. Note the progress made in dealing with known overcrowding cases
2. Approve the draft policy Crowding and Space Hazards in our properties
3. Note the amended procedure

### **3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 On 10 April 2014, a report was presented to City Board outlining the development of a Crowding and Space Hazard procedure, following the serious case review which examined the factors leading up to the fire at 18 Victory Road, in which 6 children were killed.
- 3.2 Since the procedure was agreed, we have been working through a list of identified cases. There have also been some changes in how we assess Crowding and Space Hazards through Derby City Council's Housing Standards Team, and some minor changes to our processes to make them more efficient.
- 3.3 The original procedure document contained quite a lot of detail which would sit better in a policy document so we have created a separate policy document (Appendix 1) which clearly states our intent when dealing with overcrowded families and separates a lot of the legal framework and background out of the procedure document, making it purely operational.
- 3.4 The procedure document (Appendix 2) has been simplified and amended. The important change to make Operational Board members aware of is that previously we would ask Derby City Council's Housing Standards Team to carry out a detailed assessment under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to determine if there is a serious crowding and space hazard where the property lacked more than 3 bedspaces for the family.

- 3.5 At the moment Derby City Council has indicated that they are unable to carry out these checks. Nevertheless, where Derby Homes feels that a check is necessary we will still make the referral. We will allocate such cases the same level of allocations priority needs that they would get if the HHSRS assessment was carried out and assessed as a category 1 hazard in any case so we can be sure that the tenants have not been exposed to any additional risk as a result of the assessments not being carried out
- 3.6 We initially identified 88 cases by running reports from our Housing Management and Allocations IT systems, which were lacking 3 or more bed spaces. Of these 88 cases, a number were just cases where our systems needed updating with the correct information. However since implementing the policy, we have resolved 57 identified cases where families are lacking 3 or more bed spaces, we are in the process of dealing with a further 32 cases, and continue to identify new cases on an ongoing basis through regular reporting and through our normal management activities.
- 9 have been resolved through rehousing
  - 2 have had their homes altered or extended with a further 17 alterations or extensions approved
  - 7 have been resolved by other means
  - 19 households have reduced in size, meaning they are no longer classed as overcrowded
  - 8 are still in progress.
- 3.7 In addition to the initial 88, we have since identified a further 18 cases and are working through those systematically. Any new cases that are identified are progressed through a regular monitoring meeting involving a range of Derby Homes staff

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Consultation  
Financial and Business Plan  
Legal and Confidentiality  
Council  
Personnel  
Environmental  
Equalities Impact Assessment  
Health & Safety  
Risk  
Policy Review

If Board Members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact:

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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None