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(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness
Subject:	Special Lettings Plan - Review Doyle Avenue
Date of meeting:	30 th September 2022
Report by:	James Hill - Director for Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services
Report Author(s):	Jo Bennett, Assistant Director Housing Needs and Supply, Nicki Blackburn, Operational Support Manager
Wards affected:	None

1. Requested by Councillor Darren Sanders, Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness

2. Purpose

2.1 To review the implementation of the special lettings plan for allocations to the new council housing development at Doyle Avenue.

3. Information Requested

3.1 Background

3.1.1 The Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services approved, on the 11th March 2022, the implementation of a special lettings plan for the allocation of general needs properties at Doyle Avenue. (Appendix 1).

3.1.2 This lettings plan was prepared to assist in the allocation and letting of properties by creating a balanced and sustainable community whilst directly responding to existing housing pressures.

3.1.3 By using the special letting plan we also wanted to understand if the new development could be used as a catalyst for movement within social housing stock supporting our existing tenants to be rehoused in accommodation suitable for their needs and to understand the impact of this action on homeless families.

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3.1.4 All moves and subsequent resolution of housing need were and are being tracked to understand the full impact of the special lettings plan.

3.2 Publication of Special Lettings Plan

3.2.1 The special lettings plan for Doyle Avenue was posted on the Portsmouth City Council website for a period of 3 weeks prior to the properties being allocated.

3.2.1 During the three-week period PCC received no responses relating to the arrangement.

3.2.2 Allocations commenced on the 18th April 2022.

3.2.3 Ward members and housing portfolio members were briefed on the 25th March 2022.

3.3 Aims of the lettings plan implemented:

3.3.1 To maximise the number of moves made possible for people with a housing need registered on the Portsmouth housing register.

3.3.2 To assist as many existing social housing tenants as possible to be rehoused into accommodation suitable for their needs.

3.3.3 To assist existing social housing tenants who are under occupying their current properties to move into the right size home, positively impacting their financial circumstances and freeing up their home for a new right size household.

3.3.4 To assist social housing tenants currently living in overcrowded households, positively impacting on their health and well-being whilst freeing up their property for another household.

3.3.5 To build a sustainable community at Doyle Avenue, enabling local residents to maintain their connections to the local area.

3.3.6 To re-dress the imbalance of number of lettings to transfer households as opposed to applicant households on the housing register.

3.3.7 All moves and subsequent resolution of housing need were tracked to understand the full impact of the special lettings plan.

3.4 Impact of the special lettings plan

3.4.1 Reviewing the previous housing circumstances of those allocated property and also understanding the property released and how this is utilised provides an insight into the positive impact of the special letting plan.

3.4.2 The following case studies highlight the impact of the special lettings plan.

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- 3.4.3 Family 1 (exceptional band) no longer needed their 4 bed accessible home and wanted to downsize. This move enabled another family registered for a 4 bed accessible home to be rehoused as their current home could unfortunately not be adapted to meet the accessibility and bed need.
- 3.4.4 Family 2 (low band) have lived in their overcrowded 2 bed home for over 5 years. They have tried to find alternative accommodation via an exchange during this time but have been unsuccessful. Their move then created an opportunity for a homeless family to be rehoused and leave PCC temporary accommodation.
- 3.4.5 Family 3 (low band) had been overcrowded for over 5 years in their 2 bed flat. Their move to Mycroft Terrace enabled another tenant to downsize from her 3 bed social housing property to a 2 bed.
- 3.4.6 Family 4 (low band) overcrowded for over 4 years in a 2 bed flat. They had been trying to exchange during this time across all our estate areas but had been unsuccessful. Their previous property enabled the housing of a homeless family who were able to leave PCC temporary accommodation where they have lived for several months.

3.5 Housing stock released

- 3.5.1 It was expected that the lettings arrangement would initially deliver 13 empty properties within PCC stock. This was reduced to 11 as a decision to reconsider the transfer only policy was made, as allowed for in the special lettings plan, due to the circumstances of two homeless families. The reversion to the standard allocation policy for these two properties then enabled one family to leave PCC supported family accommodation and another to move from PCC homeless accommodation.

3.6 Summary

- 3.6.1 The evidence shows that the use of a Special lettings plans for the allocation of this new development has allowed us to create a balanced and sustainable community whilst directly responding to existing housing pressures.
- 3.6.2 The lettings work and the impact of the special lettings plan will continue to be monitored as part of our post occupancy work. This work will cover a 12-month period and will include resident feedback visits which commenced in June 2022.
- 3.6.3 The purpose of the post occupancy work is to understand directly from the family's perspective how the new development meets both housing need and

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lifestyle against the property build, fixtures, fittings and services contained within the homes.

- 3.6.4 Learning from the post occupancy evaluation will continue and special lettings plans will be considered for all new developments where appropriate.

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Signed by James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Special Lettings Plan

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location