

Management Committee

Tuesday 11th December 2018

Licensing of Private Rented Sector Housing in Melcombe Regis

For Decision

Portfolio Holder(s)/ Briefholder

Cllr G Taylor

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

S Hill, Strategic Director

Report Author:

G. Joy, Housing Improvement Manager

Statutory Authority

Housing Act 2004

Purpose of Report

- 1 a) To advise members of work undertaken in response to a proposal from the Melcombe Regis Board to consider a Housing based intervention to address issues identified within the ward of Melcombe Regis.
- b) To provide details of a proposed Selective Licensing scheme for private rented housing within a defined area of the ward, and to review the process leading to its drafting.
- c) To seek support to progress to wider consultation on the proposed scheme as required by the Housing Act 2004, including the release of funding to facilitate the consultation exercise.

Recommendations

2. Authority be given to the Head of Housing to commence a formal consultation exercise on proposals to designate a 'Selective Licensing' scheme, which will cover those parts of the Melcombe Regis ward detailed in Appendix IV and V of this report.

Reason for Decision

3. Selective Licensing of the private rented sector is considered to be the most appropriate intervention available to address issues of deprivation and crime (including anti-social behaviour) within the ward, and when combined with other measures taken in the area by the local housing authority, or by other persons together with the local housing authority, will contribute to the improvement of the social or economic conditions in the area.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

4. The Melcombe Regis Board was formed in 2016 with the aim of delivering a strategic response to the long term issues affecting the ward. 'Housing' was identified as one of six priorities, and the Housing department was asked to consider the options for a Housing based intervention that might deliver on key objectives for the ward.
5. Evidence was gathered to provide an insight into the characteristics of the Melcombe Regis ward, its housing, health, crime levels, community satisfaction and the demographic profile of the area. That evidence is presented in the paper attached as Appendix II.
6. Salford City Council were subsequently commissioned to review the Evidence base and advise the council on the Board's preferred option for intervention which was that of a 'Selective Licensing' designation for the ward. Salford City Council has considerable experience of licensing of the private rented sector having introduced seven such schemes in their own area and being recognised as a trailblazer authority by the MHCLG.
7. A report to the Management Committee on 17th September 2017 considered the evidence and the initial observations from Salford City Council. The committee authorised the Head of Housing to progress work to develop a licensing scheme and requested that details of any proposal be presented at a future meeting.
8. Officers from Salford City Council have worked with officers in the Housing Improvement Team to develop a proposal that meets all statutory requirements for a designation; addresses identified objectives; and will, when combined with other measures taken in the area by the local housing authority, or by other persons together with the local housing authority, contribute to the improvement of the social or economic conditions in the area. The proposal has subsequently been reported to the Melcombe Regis Board and considered by the Policy Development Committee. Letters of support for the proposal have been received from key partner agencies including Dorset Police, Dorset County Council, Dorset and Wilts Fire and Rescue Service and Dorset Waste Partnership and are attached as Appendix III.
9. The scheme proposal is contained within a report from Salford City Council attached as Appendix I. Officers from Salford will be in attendance to present their report to the committee.
10. Should members agree to progress this proposal to the statutory ten week consultation exercise, Salford City Council will assist the council with planning of stakeholder events and the production of suitable consultation material.

Implications

Corporate Plan

- 11 The proposal is consistent with the following corporate priorities
 - Building a Stronger Local Economy
 - Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities

- Improving Quality of Life

Financial

12. The Management Committee authorised the release of funding from the Housing reserve to meet the cost of resourcing scheme development work. The services of Salford City Council and Dorset CC have been commissioned to assist with this work. The contract with Salford City Council includes advice on the statutory consultation process. The full consultation process will require additional funding which the Strategic Director has indicated can be funded from existing budgets.

The cost of implementing any scheme, including the consultation stage, should be covered by the licence fee should a designation be eventually confirmed.

Equalities

13. The scheme is designed to address inequalities within the ward.

Environmental

14. The scheme will not directly deliver environmental improvements but will operate in conjunction with other initiatives aimed at delivering those improvements.

Economic Development

15. The scheme will address deprivation within the ward and seek to encourage investment.

Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

16. This report requests approval to proceed to a consultation exercise only. A risk assessment will accompany any future report seeking to designate an area for Selective Licensing. See App VII.

Human Resources

17. Any additional resource found necessary to facilitate the consultation exercise will most likely be on a casual employment basis. Additional resource will be required to administer the licensing process and policing of the scheme should a Selective Licensing designation be eventually approved.

Consultation and Engagement

18. There is a statutory ten week consultation stage required before designation is permitted.

Appendices

19. App I. Report from Salford City Council.
App II. Evidence case dated May 2017.
App III. Letters of support from key statutory agencies.
App IV. Map of proposed area for designation.
App V. List of streets within proposed designation area.
App VI. Draft Licence Conditions
App VII. Example of a scheme risk assessment.

Background Papers

20. a) Reports to Management Committee dated 8th Nov 2016 and 19th September 2017.
- b) Reports to Melcombe Regis Board dated 14th June 2016; 30th Mar 2017; 15th May 2017; and 5th Oct 2018.
- c) Housing Act 2004
- d) The Selective Licensing of Houses (Specified Exemptions)(England) Order 2006.
- e) The Selective Licensing of Houses (Additional Conditions) (England) 2015
- f) DCLG Selective Licensing in the Private Rented Sector: A guide for Local Authorities (March 2015).

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information related to the decision is included within the report.

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