

THE BIG QUESTION

- Why are there blockages in accessing permanent accommodation for homeless households in Glasgow ?

THE CONTEXT

- Estimated backlog of 3,900 households awaiting permanent accommodation
- 10,640 new homelessness presentations during 2009/10 (5% increase on 2008/09)
- More positive decisions expected as new GCC Homelessness Policy implemented and priority need distinction phased out by 2012

AREAS TO COVER

- The Easy Answer ?
- RSLs in Glasgow
- Other Possible Answers
- RSLs Legal Duties
- A Local Example
- Moving Towards 2012
- Group Exercise
- The Next Question

THE EASY ANSWER ?

- Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) do not provide enough lets to homeless households via the Section 5 referral process.

THE RSL PICTURE IN GLASGOW

- The Scottish Housing Regulator RSL Annual Performance and Statistical Returns (APSR) 2009/10
- GHA Stock (31/03/2010) : 63,385 (57%)
Other RSLs Stock (31/03/2010) : 47,100 (43%)
Total : **110,485 (100%)**
- Effect of Second Stage Transfers
- Other RSLs will be the majority landlords by 2012
- Focus on Community Controlled Housing Associations (53 operating in Glasgow, 16 regional / specialist HAs)

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Lack of supply

- 9,885 total lets by all RSLs in Glasgow during 2009/10
- Above figure includes 784 new build completions by all RSLs in Glasgow during 2009/10
- Lack of particular properties

Excessive demand

- 100,495 applicants on all RSL housing lists (31/3/10)
- 7,282 households were assessed as being in priority need and entitled to permanent accommodation during 2009/10
- Range of other city-wide and local demands

OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- Protracted assessment process
- Loss of contact
- Poor matching of homeless households to suitable properties
- Range of issues around individual support needs

FUNCTIONING OF THE PROTOCOL

- Planning framework
- Formal review meetings
- Monitoring of outcomes
- The Protocol Working Group

NEW ALLOCATIONS GUIDANCE

- Social Housing Allocations: A Practical Guide
- Currently out to consultation
- No changes to legislation
- Wide ranging guidance – 95 page document

RSL's LEGAL DUTIES

- all.....RSLs must give reasonable preference
 - a) To persons who
 - i) are occupying houses which do not meet the tolerable standard; or
 - ii) are occupying overcrowded houses; or
 - iii) have large families; or
 - iv) are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions; and
 - b) to homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness

RSL's LEGAL DUTIES(contd)

“You have to decide how much weight to give to each reasonable preference group. You could give equal weight to each group. Landlords may, however, wish to take into account local pressures and give more priority to groups that will address these pressures”.

“When you draw up your policies you need to take into account the law, but you also need to reflect the unique nature of your local housing system. There is no “one size fits all” allocations policy”.

A LOCAL EXAMPLE: NGHA LETS 2009/2010

- Total No of Lets : 265
- Re-provisioning Programme : 39
- Available Lets : 226
- 153 new build lets
- Section 5 Referrals : 45(20%)

NGHA LETS 2009/2010 (contd)

- 43 lets to transfers (19%)
 - 7 down-sizing from larger sized family housing
 - 9 overcrowded
 - 26 moving for medical reasons
- 25 additional households subject to clearance (11%)

NGHA LETS 2009/2010 (contd)

- 113 lets to the housing list (50%)
 - 54 living as c/o, households within a household or with insecure tenure
 - 10 homeless but not in priority need
 - 13 fleeing domestic violence
 - 10 fleeing serious harassment (predominantly racial harassment)
 - 87 out of 113 potentially entitled to a positive homelessness assessment (76%)
 - Other 26 cases more general and covering medical, overcrowding and social reasons for re-housing

NGHA PREVENTION ACTIVITIES AND JOINT WORKING

- Gorbals Law Centre
- Glasgow South Credit Union
- Employability Project
- Welfare Rights Officer
- Mortgage to Rent Scheme
- Supported Housing Projects

MOVING TOWARDS 2012

- Proven track record of supporting, developing and managing sustainable communities
- History of joint working and innovation
- The Community Controlled model is successful, popular and expanding in Glasgow
- Recognise the overall contribution to the alleviation and prevention of homelessness

MOVING TOWARDS 2012 (contd)

- Strategic and operational input
- Review of Protocol and other structures (e.g. Essential Connections Forum)
- Invest in managing, monitoring and improving on communication and existing working relationships
- No easy answer to a complex question
- Vital part of the solution in moving towards 2012 and reducing the blockages in access to permanent lets

GROUP EXERCISE

- Raise awareness of competing demands for housing faced by Community Controlled HAs
- Highlight legal duties and local responsibilities
- Facilitate discussion
- Reach a group consensus

THE NEXT QUESTION

TRUE OR FALSE ?

Even given their legal duties and local responsibilities, it is easy for a Community Controlled Housing Association to significantly increase the number of permanent lets it makes to homeless households via the Section 5 referral route.