

COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Proposed redevelopment of Aylesbury Estate

Introduction

The Aylesbury New Deal for Communities Partnership has been asked to scope out a Community Impact Statement (CIS) as a means of explicitly assessing the impact that the redevelopment option will have on the Aylesbury community. The following paragraphs outline how local groups of people will be affected; results of consultations with residents, how redevelopment will affect local people as well as how any adverse impact may be limited, and monitoring and evaluation procedures that will be put in place to continually assess this.

Aylesbury Estate – A Diverse Community

The Aylesbury is a very diverse community with 67% of people belonging to a minority ethnic group, one third of who are African and African Caribbean. The NDC Equalities Strategy and Action Plan describe young people, elderly people, women, people with disabilities and people from the BME community as disadvantaged (ie, in receipt of less than average services). There are also a high number of faith groups. People who fall into more than one category are likely to suffer from disproportionate disadvantage.

The NDC Programme

The ANDC social and economic programme recognises this and incorporates diversity and engagement into all five themes which are Community Safety, Health, Education, Economic Activity and Physical Environment. The aim of the social and economic programme is to reverse the disadvantage residents experience in the receipt of services with explicit recognition that some communities are more disadvantaged than others (as above). Examples of good practice include investing in a local refugee employment project (under Economic Activity theme) to specifically address local refugee needs such as ESOL classes, work experience placements, training, jobs etc. Under the Health theme, the ANDC also funds projects to deliver support to the black and minority ethnic community which includes advice and workshops on healthy eating, exercise classes, advocacy especially local interpreting and translation services delivered by the Multi Lingual Community Rights Shop and social events which emphasise the importance of healthy living.

The NDC Board, which has a resident majority, recognise that it will take many years to turn round the effect of past poor services on the lives of the target groups in the community. They also accept that these interventions will only become really meaningful if the poor housing and physical environment is comprehensively addressed.

Consultation

At an Away Day for NDC board members in July 2005 the board accepted that

the only viable option for delivering the much needed improvements at Aylesbury would probably be the complete demolition and redevelopment of the entire estate. This way forward would be acceptable to most residents, they believed, if they could be reassured that their principal concerns about redevelopment could be met, in particular, security of tenure and rent levels under a Housing Association, and the size and quality of the new properties. These recommendations will be addressed in Stage 2 of the Equalities Impact Assessment.

The NDC had engaged residents in an estate wide exercise in July 2005. The exercise was to make residents aware of the options which the Council Executive would need to consider for the future of the estate, and to gauge their reaction to the options. A team of doorknockers, mainly estate residents, knocked on every door on the estate (2760) between 10.00am and 8.00pm over a ten day period. Over 1200 (46%) residents were engaged, 53% said that they preferred the redevelopment option, 25% said that they preferred refurbishment, 17% said that they were not sure or required more information. 5% said that they were not interested.

Disadvantaged Groups in current situation

Many groups are disproportionately affected by the current poor housing. For example, the constant breaking down of lifts in some blocks effect the elderly, disabled and mothers with young children far more than young able bodied people. While the latter group may be inconvenienced the former will only be able to access or leave their home with real difficulty.

The district heating system which has suffered major failures affects everyone but will impact more on those with illnesses, the elderly and families with babies and young children. Overcrowded homes is a problem which affects BME communities disproportionately.

With regards to Community Safety (which is greatly affected by the present design of the estate), the MORI survey 2004 shows that young people from BME communities are more likely to be the victims of crime. Faith groups, BME women and gay people are also the likely targets of hate crime.

Positive Benefits of Redevelopment

The comprehensive regeneration of the Aylesbury estate has the potential to address many of the existing problems. For example the new homes will have high quality thermal and sound insulation with up to date heating systems. Community safety concerns will be central to the design of a new estate so that crime and the fear of crime are 'designed out' as far as possible. For many BME families who live in overcrowded homes the distinction between 'large' and extended families is important, as the former will need a single large house while other more flexible options such as re-housing younger families into smaller dwellings near each other need to be considered.

Special attention will particularly need to be given to the elderly, a number of whom have lived on the estate since it was built. For many of these people any kind of change is unwelcome and the inevitable uncertainty about how they will be rehoused will be a major problem for them, which must be addressed as a priority in the programme.

What the NDC programme can do that many previous programmes could not is try to ensure that the positive impact of physical changes can be reinforced by a programme of social and economic interventions aimed at specifically meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged communities. The use of NDC funds and locally responsive processes can be used to assist in the review of local service provision thereby ensuring that the impact of these issues on all groups within the local community can be examined in the round.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The NDC already has a comprehensive system for monitoring the users of its services and funded activities - with very fine distinction possible for BME community groups and other targeted groups. This system can be adapted and updated to monitor the impact of the proposed redevelopment to ensure that no community is adversely affected or to identify where this may inadvertently happen in order that compensatory actions can be taken.

Summary

The proposed redevelopment of the Aylesbury estate will have a huge impact on the lives of all local residents. To ensure that this proposal does not have any adverse impact to any group, Equalities and Diversity issues will need to be considered, assessed and monitored throughout the demolition and redevelopment process.

Will this issue/policy/service require an Equality Impact Assessment? (If one has not already been completed)?

YES | **NO**

Please state the reasons for your answer

Yes an Equalities Impact Assessment will be needed. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires local authorities to conduct an assessment of the impact that intended policies, programmes and service delivery for any differential experiences or outcomes of Black and Minority Ethnic groups and to take action to remove any inequalities which may occur. The principles it embodies can and should be applied to other aspects of equalities and diversity such as age, gender, disability etc.

Lead Officer.....

Departmental Chief Officer.....

Date.....