

Caritas Housing - planning application 138910/FO/2023

Public Engagement update

Caritas has carried out additional public engagement events since the planning documentation was submitted. The following is a brief summary to support original information provided.

1. Abbott Community Primary school

The Caritas Director invited the Head Teacher and Deputy Head to a meeting at Caritas House on Friday 1st March. They raised concerns about information that they had received about the type of residents who would be accommodated in the scheme and the potential impact on their school and pupils. Caritas provided further information about how people would be referred to and assessed for the scheme confirming that potential residents would be selected on the basis that they represent a low risk/low need profile. This would be based on the person's history and recent occupancy of other accommodation operated by Manchester City Council and other commissioned providers. Further details about the management and operation processes, CCTV, and staffing arrangements were also discussed in relation to how these mitigate any potential risks to the school and its pupils.

Caritas extended the invitation to the public engagement event at Caritas House on Sunday 3rd March, via the head teacher to parents, teachers, and governors of the school. 5 parents and 1 member of staff attended.

At the request of the school, Caritas attended another consultation event at Abbott Community Primary on Monday 11th March. The invitation was extended to pupils, staff, and governors. The meeting was attended by 5 parents/family members, the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head, and June Hitchen, the local ward councillor.

At these meetings people raised questions about who the scheme would be for, the type of people who would be accommodated, how people would be assessed, how the project would be managed, how any problems would be dealt with, staffing levels, and CCTV coverage. Caritas provided verbal reassurances to those present, and this was accompanied by written information given to those present. Most comments related to people not wanting serious offenders or people with drug or alcohol addictions to be accommodated due to the potential risk to children at school or coming to and from school. Comments were also presented regarding the migration status of the resident, how long a person may have been settled in the UK, and the extent to which prior personal history in other territories can be considered. The low risk/low need admission criteria, (i.e. people who are not drug/alcohol dependent, people who have a low risk of criminal activity, people who do not pose a risk of causing anti-social behaviour in the local area, people who have a residential history in Manchester) was explained along with the management measures that would be in place. Reassurances were given, however, it is important to acknowledge that some residents and the school leadership continue to have concerns.

2. Local Community

On Monday 26th February Caritas welcomed the chair and a representative of the Collyhurst Big Local which is a partnership of residents, businesses, schools, and agencies, with a vision to improve the quality of life in Collyhurst and supported by the National Lottery. Caritas had previously been invited to attend meetings with the group to discuss the problem of homelessness affecting the people of Manchester and specifically issues in the council ward area. The Director and Head of Homelessness were able to present the intentions for the scheme, referral, and acceptance of residents, management, and staffing arrangements. Recognising the broad range of housing issues in the area and having visited the facilities the representatives gave their personal support for the scheme and agreed to feedback to their community partnership.

The parish priest of St Patrick's and St Malachy's who, along with other clergy, reside in the adjacent property (2 Nobby Stiles Drive) where access and parking to their premises is maintained. Though

relatively recently appointed, the parish priest and clergy have quickly connected with all members of the diverse community and have a good understanding of the social and economic challenges for the area including the lack of available housing. They have an obvious connection to and long-held understanding of the various forms of charitable support that Caritas deliver not only in Manchester but across Greater Manchester and Lancashire, and welcome and support the proposals put forward.

The religious community of Presentation Sisters have been present on / around Livesey Street since the 1820's and occupy the Presentation Convent adjacent to the church. The Director attended a meeting with a representative of the community who consulted the wider group of sisters and subsequently provided a written statement confirming their support for the scheme.

Dialogue with the adjacent St Patrick's school and their support is covered in the original planning submission.

A community engagement event was hosted at Caritas House on Sunday 3rd March with invitations sent to various community groups. Additionally, local residents and worshippers at St Patrick's church were also invited, worshippers being invited personally following a verbal presentation at the Masses over the course of the weekend attended by around 220 people. 55 people attended the engagement event, including 35 members of the D/deaf community who also meet in the community facilities in the church on weekdays due to the particular mission of welcome. Written information was provided along with sign language interpreters.

People asked questions about who would be accommodated, how they could access the accommodation for friends/family who might need it, how it would operate, if there would be volunteering and employment opportunities, how it would affect the deaf club and other activities at St. Patrick's Church. These questions were answered, and the vast majority of people left reassured about the positive benefits of the scheme