

Subject:	Sheltered Housing – Service Offer		
Date of Meeting:	4 March 2015		
Report of:	Geoff Raw - Executive Director, Environment, Development & Housing		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 Following a review of the sheltered housing service conducted in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Housing in 2013, recommendations are being made to better define the aims and purposes of the sheltered housing service by having a clear service offer for residents. Furthermore a name change is being proposed to reflect the new offer.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Committee agrees the following recommendations:

- The service offer is agreed.
- The name of the service be changed from 'Sheltered housing' to 'Seniors Housing – Independent and Community Living'.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 Nationally and locally, the population is ageing and living longer. Within Brighton & Hove the number of people aged 65 or above is projected to increase by 12% between 2011 and 2021. Within this, there is a projected 48% increase of people aged 90 and above. Life expectancy at 65 is currently 18.6 years for men and 21.1 years for women. However, healthy life expectancy is currently 63.6 for men and 66.5 for women meaning that many older people might expect to live into older age with a limiting long-term illness or disability.
- 3.2 Although the largest proportion of sheltered tenants are aged between 65 and 74 (32%) those who are very old (those aged 85 and over) now account for 20% of the sheltered population.
- 3.3 There are currently 2500 people over 60 registered on the council's housing register for housing - of these about 700 have expressed an interest in sheltered housing. Research carried out by the housing Policy and Performance team in December 2013 indicated that some older applicants had not considered this housing option or didn't know how to apply for it.

3.4 This demographic change, with an expected increase in demands upon health and social care services, is happening against a continuing background of austerity within the public sector. The council has to save £102m over the period 2015/16 to 2019/20, around 30% of the net budget. Around £62m is a result of reducing government grant whilst the remaining £40m comes from increases in the cost and demand for services, particularly a pressure on social care services.

3.5 There is a local and national emphasis on a more preventative approach to health and social care. This report is therefore set within the following strategic context:

- The Health & Social Care Act 2012 transferred the responsibility for delivering public health from the NHS to local government and highlighted that more needed to be done to prevent ill health.
- The council's Corporate Plan 2011-15 identified a priority to tackle inequality by supporting vulnerable people to live healthy, independent lives and to provide decent, affordable housing.
- The council's Sustainable Community Strategy identified a priority to maximise the use of housing to provide a basis for delivery of health, care and support services to vulnerable people.
- The council's Sustainability Action Plan identified a principle (as one of its ten 'One Planet Principles') to encourage active, sociable living to promote good health and wellbeing.
- The council's market position statement for Adult Social Care 2014 identified a commissioning priority for preventative services that delay or reduce the need for social care. Sheltered housing was identified as having a significant role as a preventative service.
- The Housing Strategy 2015-2020 identifies that that sheltered housing has an important role in improving social networks and wellbeing and that it should develop better links with neighbouring communities.

3.6 Given the changing context in which the sheltered housing service operates, a major review was commissioned in March 2013. The review, conducted in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), aimed to ensure that the service not only retained its strategic relevance, but also delivered one which would be most beneficial and welcomed by older people. One of the main objectives of the review was to better define the aims and purpose of the service. This objective was shared by the Senior Housing Action Group who requested that the council set a clear policy for the service.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 Following the service review, the findings have been used to better define the aims and purpose of the council's sheltered housing service. The revised offer is included as an appendix.

- 4.2 The revised offer takes a more positive approach to ageing, recognising an 'asset' approach in which older people build upon their strengths, skills, capacities and abilities to keep or remain as well and happy as possible. This replaces a largely 'deficit' approach to ageing which focuses on problems, needs and deficiencies – with staff working to see how gaps can be met. It is recognised that a deficit approach can result in disempowerment and dependency whilst an asset approach encourages the active involvement and co-operation of service users as equal partners. This shift in emphasis towards active ageing not only reflects the findings of the review in providing more opportunities to participate, but also the wider strategic commitment to developing a more age friendly city.
- 4.3 The revised offer strengthens the role of its staff supporting and encouraging residents to stay well rather than predominately focusing on intervening when someone falls unwell. This focus on prevention not only reflects the finding of the review in working more closely with health and social care, but also reflects the wider strategic shift towards preventative services.
- 4.4 The revised offer makes explicit the community aspect of sheltered housing and encourages the development of sociable communities. One of the key benefits of sheltered housing has been its communal facilities and the opportunities for residents to live in a more sociable and neighbourly way. This focus not only reflects the recommendations of the review with regards to developing social activities but also wider strategic shifts towards tackling loneliness and isolation in the city.
- 4.5 The revised offer highlights a commitment to being more explicit about the outcome and benefit of the service. Although not expressed within the review or by tenants, it is essential, given the national and local financial context, that as well as setting out what the purpose of the service is, the offer also makes a commitment to being clearer on cost and value by introducing an annual value statement and reviewing the current performance framework.
- 4.6 The revised offer continues to support the role of the site-based scheme manager. A proposal had been made by the council in 2008 to change the delivery of the sheltered service from site-based scheme management to a more team-based approach. This proposal was rejected by the Senior Housing Action Group and resulted in a petition of 750 sheltered residents formally requesting the retention of site-based scheme managers. A similar proposal made by the CIH in their final report to cluster scheme managers and develop a floating support service has been considered but rejected as it is inconsistent with a model of delivery favoured by senior residents and expressed by the Senior Housing Action Group. The service offer therefore retains the site-based scheme manager as a key element of its service and through a remodelling of the charging mechanisms in April 2014 is increasing the numbers of full time scheme managers from 21 to 25 employees.

5 REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

- 5.1 As well as the findings providing the basis for the service offer, the recommendations of the CIH have also been used by the service to make a range of improvements:
- 5.2 The review recommended that the current allocation system for sheltered housing be improved. As a result, a project is currently underway reviewing the process for letting sheltered housing to see where it can be more efficient and improve customer focus. Getting the letting process right was identified by the Senior Housing Action Group as a priority for the service and comments from the Area Panels also echo this concern.
- 5.3 The review recommended a comprehensive asset review and commented on the high number of studio flats with the poor living space this provided. As a result, a comprehensive asset review was undertaken by the Asset Review Manager with a recommendation to remodel the current studio flats into one bedroom flats. These recommendations were agreed by Housing Committee in January 2015 and a programme for works is now under development. A pilot to remodel studio flats into one bedroom flats has already been successfully carried out at Sanders House and is currently underway at Evelyn Court.
- 5.4 The review recommended that the council improve the way in which communal areas are decorated to make them more vibrant. As a result, a decorating programme has already improved a number of our sheltered schemes during 2014 to 'Rainbow Standard' ensuring a better environment for those with a visual impairment. A recommendation for a cyclical programme to improve communal areas was agreed by Housing Committee in January 2015 as part of the Asset Review. The service is also working closely with the Fabrica Art Gallery and other local arts groups to improve the visual arts within the schemes.
- 5.5 The review recommended that the service develop a city wide approach to opportunities for tenants to participate in activities. The service now hosts over 70 regular activities each month including exercise classes, art and singing groups, coffee mornings, bingo and community support groups. The service sees over 400 attendances at such events each week and over 100 attendances from those who don't live in the scheme where the event is being hosted. As well as combatting loneliness, events can help keep older people physically active and the service sees at least 100 attendances each week in activities where exercise is an element such as gentle exercise, boccia, bowls, line dancing and tai-chi. The improvements to the communal areas (including progressive security where required) agreed at Housing Committee in January 2015 as part of the Asset Review will help encourage further use of these facilities for social activity.
- 5.6 The review recommended a consistent approach to older people engaging in the wider community and that a post be funded to co-ordinate this. At the time of the review, Adult Social Care had commissioned the Fed to take on a co-ordinating role across the city to improve social connectivity amongst older people. Rather than duplicate a co-ordinating role, the service now sits on the Citywide Connect Partnership Board alongside The Fed ensuring that sheltered schemes work closely with other agencies to improve relationships and address loneliness. The

revised offer strengthens the role of sheltered housing in developing sociable and compassionate communities.

- 5.7 The review recommended that sheltered housing develop and deliver a wide range of services including health checks, screening and health promotion activities. As a result the service now works closely with Public Health and sits on the Age Friendly Steering Group. In 2014 the service worked with the NHS to promote smoking awareness and winter flu vaccination, and with the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership to promote the healthy weight service. The revised offer strengthens this preventative health role.
- 5.8 The review highlighted a concern about a lack of consistency in front line staffing. Following a remodelling of the charging mechanism for the service in agreed by Budget Council on 5 March 2014, the number of scheme managers within the service staffing structure has been increased from 21 to 25 employees. New staffs have been recruited with tenant representation on the recruitment panel.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Older Persons Housing Manager and the Chair of the Senior Housing Action Group gave a joint presentation at the Housing Management Sub-Committee in March 2013 setting out why a review was required.
- 6.2 The review of sheltered housing was undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) between April and December 2013.
- 6.3 The CIH carried out group discussions at 17 sheltered schemes on 15 and 16 May and 27 and 27 June 2013. Individual discussions were offered for those who wished to have a more private conversation with the CIH.
- 6.4 The CIH carried out a survey delivered to all sheltered residents between June and July 2013. There were 160 replies to the survey.
- 6.5 The CIH met with representatives of Adult Social Care, Supporting People, Public Health and Age UK Brighton, Hove & Portslade on 19 September 2013.
- 6.6 The CIH held an 'appreciative inquiry day' on 24 October 2013 involving both tenant representatives and sheltered staff enabling them to consult jointly with both groups on proposals for a future sheltered service.
- 6.7 The initial findings of the review were presented to the Seniors Housing Action Group on 8 January 2014 with a further presentation once the final report had been received on 12 March 2014. A tenant only meeting of the Seniors Housing Action Group was held in April 2014 to discuss the findings of the review.
- 6.8 The findings of the review were presented to the Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee on 11 February 2014.
- 6.9 The revised service offer was discussed and agreed by the Senior Housing Action Group on 14 May 2014.

6.10 The proposal to change the name of sheltered housing was raised by sheltered representatives at the Senior Housing Action Group meeting on 9 July 2014. Representatives consulted with their members and held a tenant only meeting in August 2014 to further discuss the proposal. A formal vote was made at the Senior Housing Action Group Annual General Meeting on 10 September 2014 with the recommendation that the name be changed to 'Senior Housing – Independent and Community Living'. The name of the group was also formally changed from 'Sheltered Housing Action Group' to 'Senior Housing Action Group' by majority vote at the same meeting.

6.11 The revised service offer was presented to the four Area Panels during January and February 2015. All panels welcome the report.

6.12 The East Area Panel had no comment on the report.

6.13 The Central Area Panel made the following comments:

- The panel welcomed the focus on housing for older people rather than a service that accommodated a wider range such as younger people and/or those with higher need (vulnerable). However, there was also a concern about the adequate provision of accommodation for younger and vulnerable people living in the city.
- There was a request for more information on the redevelopment of studios into one-bed accommodation.

6.14 The West Area Panel made the following comments:

- There were concerns that some sheltered residents still faced difficulties in moving within their own scheme when needed despite a local letting plan aimed at making this an easy process.
- There were concerns about the health inequalities noted within the report.

6.15 The North Area made the following comments:

- There were concerns that younger people with complex needs could present a potential risk to older people if housed in sheltered housing.
- It was felt 50 was too young to be considered a 'senior' when considering suitability for sheltered housing.
- The report was welcomed, but concern that it might be difficult to recover a sense of community in some sheltered communities where this had been lost.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The report recommends that a new service offer for residents be agreed and that the name of the service be changed to 'Senior Housing – Independent and Community Living' to reflect the revised aims and purposes. These recommendations are based on a substantial service review and tenant consultation.

8. **FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

8.1 Financial Implications:

The Service offer document describes the service offered to our residents in Sheltered Accommodation. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget 2015/16 is calculated to ensure that this level of service can be maintained in our 23 schemes.

Finance Officer: Monica Brooks Consulted: Date: 6 February 2015

8.2 Legal Implications:

As the Housing Committee has overall responsibility for the council's housing functions, approval of the proposed changes to the service offer are within its powers. Where changes to a service are proposed, proper consultation with those affected is necessary. The consultation had been appropriate.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Consulted: Date: 5 February 2015

8.3 Equalities Implications:

A health and wellbeing and inequalities screening tool and an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) have been completed. There are opportunities to work more closely with Public Health in improving the health, wellbeing and connectivity of older people. The EIA identifies the need to provide a service more reflective of the diversity of older people, and the offer highlights this. However, the service will need to ensure that it is able to listen and respond effectively to the BME, LGBT and some under-represented faith communities. The service will also need to work closely with carers, both those who support residents and residents who are carers themselves. The EIA identifies that better promotion of housing options is required to ensure that people are housed in the most appropriate accommodation for them.

8.4 Sustainability Implications:

The revised aims and purposes have been designed to better align the sheltered service with the One Planet Principles., in particular the need for the council to encourage active, sociable and meaningful lives that promote good health and wellbeing.

8.5 Crime and Disorder Implications

There has been a significant impact on some sheltered communities due to anti-social behaviour, particularly where alcohol dependency issues or very complex need have been a significant factor. This may stem from a misunderstanding of the role of the sheltered service, with some equating it with high level supported housing provision such as a hostel or resettlement accommodation. The service offer re-establishes sheltered housing as a form of retirement housing. In line with the draft housing strategy it is anticipated that the right people are housed and that the risk of inappropriate allocation or referral are minimised.

8.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

The service offer establishes more opportunity for the sheltered service to align itself with a wider strategic context, particularly in its preventative role. In keeping older people well and promoting healthier living, it is hoped that this will delay the need for more intensive and costly health and social care intervention.

The Frontier Economic Ltd Report 'Financial benefits of investment in specialist housing for vulnerable and older people' commissioned by the Homes & Communities Agency in 2010 sets out the evidence to demonstrate that there is a cost benefit for older people living in specialist housing as a result of this preventative role. The opportunity is therefore for such costs benefits to be realised within the city. The risk is that benefits won't be realised or properly evaluated.

The service offer and the recommendations of the assert review provide a more aspirational housing offer for older people. There is an opportunity that more older people will see sheltered housing as a positive option for them to 'age in place' rather than as an institution to move to as a result of a crisis. This may encourage more older people to benefit from sheltered housing at an earlier stage. It may also encourage greater take up of sheltered housing, particularly from those wishing to downsize from larger council accommodation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Service Offer

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

- 1.Senior Housing Service Offer Equalities Impact Assessment
- 2.Senior Housing Service Offer Health and Wellbeing Screening Tool