

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Agenda Item 13

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Sheltered Housing Focus Group update
Date of Meeting: 22 July 2008
Report of: Director of Adult Social Care & Housing
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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Housing Management Consultative Committee on the work of the Sheltered Housing Focus Group looking at issues raised by tenants concerning council owned sheltered housing in the City.
- 1.2 The work of the Focus Group is ongoing and it is proposed that the full report of the Group is considered by Housing Management Consultative Committee in September.
- 1.3 In particular, we wish to reflect the outcomes of the informal scheme based sheltered housing consultation events in the full report. These scheme based consultation events were set up at the request of the tenant representatives on the Focus Group. The scheme based consultation events are currently ongoing.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC) notes the progress of the Sheltered Housing Focus group to date and that a full report on the conclusions of the Focus Group will be brought back to HMCC in September.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Housing Management Sub Committee 15th January 2008 considered reports from the initial Chairman's Working Groups. At the Housing Management Sub-Committee on 11 March 2008 the Chairman announced the creation of a Working Group for Sheltered Housing to operate in a similar way to those already reviewing other areas.
- 3.2 Following this meeting, a focus group consisting tenant representatives and officers was set up to work with the Head of Housing Strategy to undertake a review of issues arising concerning council owned sheltered housing in the City.

- 3.3 In line with other previous groups the Sheltered Housing Focus Group consists of members (and deputies) drawn from each Area Panel, the High Rise Action Group and the Sheltered Housing Action Group. Details of attendees are included in the appendix.
- 3.4 The Focus Group used the points arising from the Sheltered Housing Action Group Tenants only meeting on 13 February 2008 to frame meeting topics and the Group's Work Plan.
- 3.5 The first meeting of the Focus Group took place on 11 April 2008. There have now been four subsequent meetings.
- 3.6 Topics considered in the meeting included: Supporting People Strategy; Communication between the Council and residents; Accessible housing and allocations; Housing Management services; Asset management.
- 3.7 A number of key themes emerged from the meetings which tenant representatives wish to see addressed. These are captured in the attached draft work plan under points raised. This draft work plan is work in progress and has been appended to this update report by way of illustration of what the Group has been looking at to date.
- 3.8 A full work plan with actions taken and further action required will be presented with the full report to Housing Management Consultative Committee in September.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 As part of the work of the Sheltered Housing Focus Group and at the request of tenant representatives on the Group, informal tenant consultation events organised by Supporting People and Housing Management are currently taking place across all the sheltered housing schemes owned by Brighton & Hove City Council.
- 4.2 A report on the outcomes of the scheme based consultation events will be incorporated into the full report of the Sheltered Tenant Focus Group.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 *The work plan attached as an Appendix is a draft document listing the themes currently under discussion. Most issues raised will have financial implications. When the final work plan is presented to the Housing Management Consultative Committee in September, the financial implications of each issue will be considered and reported as part of the plan.*

Finance Officer Consulted:

Monica Brooks

Date: 9/7/08

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 As the report is for noting there are no significant legal implications. Further no individual's human rights are adversely affected.

Lawyer Consulted:

Liz Woodley

Date: 9/7/08

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Any policy or strategy development arising from the work reported above will be subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report. Housing is one of the 12 key objectives in the Council's Sustainability Strategy which aims 'to ensure that everyone has access to decent affordable housing that meets their needs'.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Any policy or strategy development work arising from the work of the Focus Group will be undertaken with due regard to appropriate risk assessment requirements.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The work of this Focus Group reflects the priorities and aims of the 2020 Community Strategy and Council's strategic goals of improving housing in the City and ensuring that residents have a healthy living environment.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Work Plan

Background Documents

None

Sheltered Housing Focus Group draft Work Plan

Tenant Representatives:

Charles Penrose (Sheltered Housing Action Group); Ted Kitchen (North and East); Kath Davis (Brighton East); John Melson (High Rise Action Group); Ray Freeman (Central); Julie Fosberry (West); Ted Harman (Brighton East – Deputy for Kath Davis).

Points raised	Action taken	Further Action required
<p>Tenants recommend a Sheltered Housing Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That works for tenants, the council and staff. • That is clear and transparent and easily understood. • That outlines future and strategic thinking. • That provides consistency in service delivery. • That has clear and consistent guidelines about “service charges”. • That has clear and consistent guidelines / protocols/ agreements in place about the hiring of common rooms, across all schemes. 	<p>To be considered as part of the work of the Focus Group.</p>	
Asset management / procurement		
<p>Are there any plans to address the issue of shared facilities in sheltered housing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a scheme is under occupied - surely it is not Value for Money? • Some schemes have empty 2 bedroom flats is this 	<p>Request for breakdown of extent of shared facilities and demand profile for these properties arose from initial discussion. As did the suggestion of</p>	

Points raised	Action taken	Further Action required
loss of revenue?	visiting some of these individual schemes.	
<p>Common rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes common areas are used for day centres / groups during the day, tenants recommend that protocols / policies / agreements be put in place e.g. a consistent charging policy in place for hiring of rooms. • There may be a security risk as people have access to the whole buildings once they are in and some tenants may leave their front doors open especially if they have a carer / visitor arriving. • Tenants recommend that any income generated from room hire should go into the social fund. • Tenants recommend that room hiring is monitored and agreed with tenants before hiring agreements take place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address issues on a scheme by scheme basis • Supporting People scheme based consultation events. 	
<p>Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the past there was a specific budget for sheltered housing improvements. Tenants would like to know about any future investment plans. 		
<p>Out of hours services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to clarify the remit of care link services. • Further discussions are needed regarding the use of electric doors and safety. 		

Points raised	Action taken	Further Action required
<p>Communication</p> <p>All agreed that the issue of communication keeps being raised.</p> <p>Need to be confident that everyone involved is kept up to date with any changes to avoid rumours and speculation and ensure that information is consistent.</p>	<p>Meetings could be organised in a way that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures representation at all levels; • Balances formal meetings with more informal settings; • Information updates / minutes should show what has been agreed, why and how people can get more involved; • All information should be produced in a clear, concise and accessible format. 	
<p>Service charges</p> <p>General Principal – all tenants should be aware of what they have to pay for and how charges are broken down. The tenants recommend that information about service charges should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear and consistent detailing a breakdown of services charged for; • A copy in large print, laminated should be put in communal areas; • Information about service charges should be on the back of / attached to people's rent books; • Information about service charges should be in an accessible format. 	<p>Peter Huntbach / Nick Hibberd attended the meeting on 09.06.08</p> <p>Explore best practice on producing more accessible information formats.</p>	<p>Peter to take recommendations forward</p>
<p>Service Delivery / 24 hour cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants would like to know when Job descriptions / 	<p>Peter Huntbach / Nick Hibberd attended the meeting on 09.06.08</p>	

Points raised	Action taken	Further Action required
<p>scheme management processes were last reviewed and checked for consistency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There needs to be a balance between people's time and involvement in meetings due to the impact this may have on schemes. 	<p>Peter explained current workforce development issues and the difficulties recruiting site based staff.</p>	
<p>Involving tenants in recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants stated that they would like to be more involved in staff recruitment. 	<p>Seven tenants have been trained to make up a pool of tenants that can be called upon for staff recruitment.</p>	<p>No further action – on going</p>
<p>THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS – Allocations and Adult Social Care</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants would like to know how allocations to sheltered housing fit in with the general allocation policy. Tenants recommend a robust assessment procedure looking at people's needs and their suitability for sheltered housing is the age limit of 60 always appropriate. Tenants recommend looking at other local authorities housing and support models of delivery e.g. Extra care Housing. Tenants recommend that people be given enough time to think about what they may or may not need in relation to a new property. Tenants recommend that they be involved in the advertising and viewings of schemes they 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestion that a pre move interview / checklist should be drawn up to help people. 	<p>From the previous working groups an assessment process is to be put in place. This assessment process addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheltered Housing High need levels / residential care housing Information from Accessible Housing Officer (Tabitha Cork) and Under occupation Officer (Mark Richardson) Links with other resources e.g. care link and telecare services.

Points raised	Action taken	Further Action required
<p>represent.</p> <p>Supporting People</p>		
<p>Tenant representatives fed back their concerns about lack of consultation and how the proposals in the strategy development may impact on services.</p> <p>Tenant representatives fed back that people are very worried by rumours of some services being withdrawn and whether this will affect them.</p>	<p>Diana Bernhardt (Head of Supporting People) attended the meeting dated 25.04.08 and Sheltered Housing Action Group 14th May 2008.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting people confirmed that no start or finish dates for implementation and clarified that nothing will be done without full consultation with tenants in sheltered accommodation schemes 2. Supporting People and Housing Management have organised scheme by scheme consultation events. 3. The consultation events have been set– Charles circulated these dates to all present in this focus group. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Adaptations</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to ensure that all the tenant focus groups work gets linked together. • Need to make the best use of stock and resources- £750K Council housing adaptations budget. • There are demand / cost implications for adaptations. • Councils must have an accessible housing register. • Question – why is Occupational Therapist 	<p>Tabitha Cork (Accessible Housing Officer) attended the meeting 16.05.08.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12,000 properties being assessed for their mobility group. • Questionnaires and letters have been sent out, examples shared. • Tabitha has been meeting with teams, accompanying housing officers on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabitha is aiming to have the symbols move next to the actual description of the property. This is to be actioned. Tabitha will share a draft version with the group. • On going discussions needed regarding scooters and buggies. • Need buy in of general procurement

Points raised	Action taken	Further Action required
<p>involvement always necessary? E.g. Minor Adaptations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could the council bulk buy adaptations? 	<p>visits, training housing officers and assisting people with the paperwork.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility Symbols have been added to the Homemove magazine. • Tabitha is proof reading the Homemove magazine re mobility write ups. • Tabitha is currently visiting all the sheltered housing schemes. • Occupational Therapist's are training staff in the Council and Housing associations in mobility and disability awareness and was this means. • Tabitha confirmed policy that adaptations should not be taken out of a property unless the equipment / adaptation have reached its natural end of life. 	<p>process to ensure more existing council properties move towards lifetime homes and move away from reliance on the relatively small adaptations budget.</p>