

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Housing Portfolio Holder

15 February 2012

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director, Operational Services / Corporate Manager, Affordable Homes

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### SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW UPDATE

#### **Purpose**

1. To seek the approval of the Housing Portfolio Holder for a restructuring of the sheltered housing service.
2. This is a key decision because it affects more than one ward within the District.

#### **Recommendations**

3. That the Housing Portfolio Holder:
  - a) approves the structure set out in in table 1, and
  - b) approves the move to regularise charges for use of the sheltered housing communal rooms by outside groups.

#### **Background**

4. The housing support element of the Council's sheltered housing service is funded by Supporting People. Supporting People is a national scheme and is administered as part of Cambridgeshire County Council's budget by the County's Supporting People Team. The Council's contract for the sheltered housing support service runs out in March 2012.
5. The County Council needs to reduce spending on its Supporting People budget and has therefore embarked upon a series of projects to identify where reductions can be made. As part of this process the contract sum payable to the Council for sheltered housing is to be reduced from July 2012 from around £14 per person (per week) to £9 per person. In addition the contract will be subject to a competitive tender process during 2012 with the new contract starting in April 2013.
6. The Housing Portfolio Holder agreed in January 2010 that future options for the sheltered housing service would be considered by a member led task and finish group. It was also agreed that a survey of sheltered housing residents' housing support needs should be undertaken.
7. A task and finish group that also included tenant representatives from the Sheltered Housing Forums was subsequently set up by the Scrutiny Committee in July 2011. This group reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 6 February 2012.

#### **Considerations**

8. A full housing support needs survey was carried out with all sheltered housing residents during 2011 and the results reported to the Scrutiny Task and Finish group in July 2011. 91% of the residents were successfully interviewed.

9. It is expected that the Supporting People procurement process will commence in August 2012 with the new contract to start from April 2013. The restructuring of the service proposed in this report would therefore only be operational for the period July 2012 to March 2013, nine months.
10. The reduction in Supporting People funding for sheltered housing for 2012/13 means that it is no longer possible to offer the same type of service based on 26 sheltered housing officers. The reduction in funding requires a reduction in staff numbers and the remaining staff would not be able to offer an effective service to residents. In particular the housing support aspects of the service will need to be targeted to ensure that those that need the support will still receive it.
11. A consequence of this proposed change is that it will no longer be appropriate to charge all residents for the housing support element of the service as not everyone will now receive this. To only charge those people that do receive the service will be administratively cumbersome and expensive and could be viewed as inequitable. It is therefore proposed that the service charge for housing support be removed for all tenants apart from the £3 per week charge for the alarm service. This will result in an overall reduction in charges to sheltered housing residents of around £6 per week. This proposal was approved by the Portfolio Holder on 18/1/12 and will form part of the recommendations to full Council on 23 February 2012.
12. The reduction in staff numbers requires at least 6 redundancies from within the sheltered housing service. An appropriate allocation of money has been included within the financial estimates being presented to full Council on 23 February.
13. The Portfolio Holder gave an in principle agreement to these changes on 16/11/11 to allow staff consultation to proceed as the changes could not be achieved in time otherwise. The timetable in Appendix A, sets out the decisions needed both for the long term proposals for the sheltered housing service and the short term arrangements needed to prepare for the reduction of funding in 2012/13.

### **Options**

14. The Task and Finish group identified a number of core values, which the service should seek to address. The Group also made some recommendations with regard to service delivery options, which were felt to address these core values.
15. The principle behind the restructure is to separate the current staff team into two teams one funded by the Housing Revenue Account the other funded by Supporting People contract This proposal is set out in table 1.

16. **Table 1 Proposed new sheltered housing structure**

<b>Proposed Element</b>	<b>Possible team size</b>	<b>Matters arising</b>
<p>The establishment of a visiting support team providing a targeted visiting support service to elderly and vulnerable people, within the sheltered schemes</p>	<p>9 officers and one team leader</p>	<p>Helping to prevent falls and ill health and promoting older people's welfare,</p> <p>Supporting independence and promoting dignity</p> <p>The support will be focused and targeted to residents assessed as needing it rather than to everyone who happens to live on that sheltered scheme.</p> <p>Better able to respond flexibly to individual's crisis, e.g. hospital discharge etc if officers not undertaking other routine duties, visits or social activities.</p>
<p>Establish a team of officers to undertake estate management of a number of sheltered schemes within these same three areas, including the management of the communal facilities, testing of alarms and letting of sheltered properties.</p>	<p>12 staff and one team leader</p>	<p>Supporting independence and promoting dignity</p> <p>Promoting mutual support</p> <p>Providing links to the wider community</p> <p>Working with residents to ensure best use of the communal rooms, encouraging social interaction within the scheme and the wider community, including facilitating activities and events.</p> <p>This retains the current local knowledge and familiarity</p>

Proposed Element	Possible team size	Matters arising
Establishing 3 hub offices within in the district based on the current 3 team areas – north, east and west	Each hub will have officers from each service team	<p>Maintains strong communication links between the two service areas, including sharing of information about the schemes</p> <p>Ensures residents are receiving a flexible customer focussed service</p>

17. The advantage of splitting the service into two teams is that it enables the Council to preserve an HRA funded service to the sheltered schemes that is under its own control. Residents will continue to see a 'familiar face' on their schemes during the week whatever the outcome of the supported housing contract tender which has the potential to be won by an outside agency.
18. In addition the Council will continue to develop the use of assistive technology. This provides valuable and increasingly sophisticated support that compliments the staff based services.
19. Developments within the Ageing Well project have indicated the potential value in expanding the coverage of community or village wardens for the elderly. At present around 12 villages have this service. Village wardens are able to provide a wider range of personal services that help to maintain independent living. The Task and Finish group recommend that the Council continue to explore this option alongside the sheltered housing restructuring.
20. A summary of the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and how they have been addressed in this report is attached at Appendix B.
21. The Sheltered Housing Forums will monitor the impact of these service changes and will be able to feed back to officers at their regular meetings or via the Tenant Participation Group. In addition the Portfolio Holder may wish to reconvene the Task and Finish group in February 2013 to reflect upon the transitional restructuring and to consider the outcome of the contract tender process, which should have been completed by then.
22. A separate review of sheltered housing communal rooms has also commenced. This review will now be completed after the restructuring changes have been implemented as the proposed Sheltered Estate Officers will have a new role to play with regard to the use of communal rooms.
23. The initial review has shown that there is a wide disparity between the charges made to outside groups for the use of the communal rooms. It is proposed that a new scheme of charges is put in place that will regularise this and provide an income stream that will help to sustain these assets.

## Implications

24.	Financial	<p>The proposed reduction in funding has the effect of reducing the income to the sheltered housing service by around 50%. This is a combined effect of a drop in grant and the subsequent loss of fee income from self-funding residents.</p> <p>The overall service charge to sheltered housing residents will decrease as a result of these changes.</p> <p>Any redundancies will also have a financial cost to the Council and provision has been made in the Financial Estimates.</p> <p>The revised scheme of charges for the use of communal rooms will serve to further reduce the service charges paid by sheltered housing residents.</p>
	Legal	The redundancy process will need to comply with employment law.
	Staffing	<p>The potential reduction in funding cannot be met without a reduction in the staff team who deliver the sheltered housing service. As this means potential redundancies a formal consultation process was begun in November.</p> <p>A minimum of 6 redundancies are required.</p>
	Risk Management	<p>The staff restructuring will need to be carried out in accordance with employment law.</p> <p>There is a risk that the Council will lose the sheltered housing support contract to an external provider when the competitive tender is run.</p>
	Equality and Diversity	An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and does not indicate any anticipated adverse effects on sheltered housing residents.
	Equality Impact Assessment completed	Yes
	Climate Change	None

## Consultations

25. Sheltered housing residents and staff were consulted on the proposed changes during November 2011. Formal consultation on potential redundancy also commenced with staff in November in order that statutory timeframes are adhered to. Further formal consultation has taken place with tenants and staff in February 2012.

## Consultations with Children & Young People

26. None.

## **Effect on Strategic Aims**

27. ***Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.*** The sheltered housing service plays an important role in maintaining the health and safety and wellbeing of around 1,500 elderly residents in the district.

## **Conclusions / Summary**

28. This report sets out proposed restructure of the sheltered housing service. The restructure is designed to ensure continuity of service to the sheltered housing schemes and to allow the best use of resources in targeting those residents that need housing support.
29. **Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Task & Finish Group report to Scrutiny Committee 6/2/12.

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## Sheltered Housing Review Timetable

Date	Lead	Activity
February – March 2012	Corporate Manager Affordable Homes	Completion of work required to restructure service including where necessary redundancies
July 1 2012	Corporate Manager Affordable Homes	Start of new sheltered housing service structure
May – June 2012	Supporting People Team	Consultation on outcome of Task & Finish group work and preparation for tender process
August 2012	Supporting People Team	Anticipated start of tender process
December 2012	Supporting People Team	Conclusion of tender process and contract award
January – March 2013	Corporate Manager Affordable Homes	Mobilisation phase for new contract including TUPE if required.
February 2013	Scrutiny Task & Finish Group	Review of impact of changes and outcome of tender process
April 2013		Start of new support contract

## Summary of Task &amp; Finish Group recommendations

Task & Finish Group Recommendations	Response
A The quality of the support service provided to sheltered housing residents must be preserved in any new structure that is adopted.	The core values have been identified and cross-matched with the proposed new structure.
B. Work should continue towards increasing efficiency and value for money in the sheltered housing support service.	This will form part of the ongoing performance management of the service.
C. Before the change to the Supporting People funding is formally implemented by the County Council, or changes to the service are made by SCDC, the portfolio holder and relevant director should attend a formal meeting with the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Housing Portfolio Holder to pursue the case for a reversal of the decision, stressing the concerns of the task and finish group.	Representations were made by the Council and a formal response has been received from the County Council and included within the Scrutiny Committee papers on 6/2/12.
D. Any redesign of the sheltered housing service should encompass the core values of community links, dignity, human contact, local hub, mutual support, and prevention.	The core values have been identified and cross-matched with the proposed new structure.
E. If a service redesign is necessary it should build on the model presented at section 4 of this report, and incorporate the best features of the existing model. It should seek to correct any shortcomings in the existing system and improve the overall quality and effectiveness of service.	The proposed model in Table 1 of this report mirrors that with the Task and Finish Group report.
F. The Portfolio Holder should consider developing a menu of options for paid-for support services to residents, whether living in sheltered accommodation or not. These would be in addition to services already provided and could be delivered by for example increasing the Council's support of those village warden schemes who can meet the required standard.	This work is being taken up by the Ageing Well project as noted in point 19 in the report.
G. Cambridgeshire County Council should publish a full assessment of the impact on the residents of the District of the reduction in Supporting People funding.	An Equality Impact Assessment has now been published.



H. Cambridgeshire County Council should fully consult with residents, SCDC and other organisations on future funding proposals before decisions are taken.

The County has noted the recommendation.