
REPORT TO:	COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	6 TH SEPTEMBER 2004	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	DAWN DAWSON (EXT 5797)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICES	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: CS02

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That members note the report.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To inform Members of the progress made in relation to the delivery of the Vision for the Sheltered Housing Service.

2.2 To inform Members of the Supporting People Review of the Sheltered Housing and CareLine Services.

3.0 Detail

Sheltered Housing Vision

3.1 Members will recall that following the Best Value Re-Inspection of the Sheltered Housing Service in December 2002, a residual criticism remained the lack of a 'vision' for the service. In response to this issue, a Task and Finish Group, comprising of representatives from the Council, Social Services, Tenants, PCT and the Voluntary Sector was established. This group was charged with drafting a vision for the service, along with standards for the accommodation provided by the service.

3.2 The Group also commissioned an 'Older Persons Needs and Market Demand Survey' aimed at identifying current and future demands and aspirations. This survey was completed in July 2003. Following analysis of this survey, a report detailing the draft Vision, standards of accommodation and standards of service was presented to and agreed

by Housing and Community Services Committee on 20th November 2003. Consultation with Sheltered Housing tenants regarding the vision and standards was also carried out in the spring of this year. Some 201 responses were received and of these, 195 supported the vision and standards.

- 3.3 A significant element, critical to the delivery of the Vision (detailed at Annex 1. Please note - this annex is also referred to as Appendix 1 in the Housing and Community Services Report detailed at Annex3) are the Standards of Accommodation (detailed at Annex 2. Please note - this annex is also referred to as Appendix 2 in the Housing and Community Services Report detailed at Annex3). Annex 2, page 19, details the physical environment aspired to across existing Sheltered Housing. The service currently has some 1100 properties that need to be considered on an individual basis in light of the standards of accommodation. It is anticipated that this exercise, including managing the decanting of tenants to other more suitable accommodation where necessary, will need to be phased over a period of at least five years.
- 3.4 This process has already commenced, with the flats at the following locations being identified as unsuitable for sheltered housing. All but the flats at Hatton are in blocks of four with stairs making them unsuitable for adaptation;

Scheme	No of properties involved
• Belvoir Crescent, Newhall	30
• Pine Grove (flats), Newhall	16
• Honeysuckle, Meadow Lane, Newhall.	16
• Four Lane Ends, Newhall	12
• Bloomfield Close, Hilton	20
• Foston Close / Field Avenue, Hatton	10

The report of 20th November 2003 to Housing and Community Services Committee is at Annex 3, and lists in more detail, the issues associated with these properties.

- 3.5 At Housing and Community Services Committee of 20th November 2003, Members approved the de-classification of the schemes, subject to consultation with the relevant tenants, and the proviso that all existing tenants could remain and still receive the sheltered housing service, or they would be prioritised for a move to permanent sheltered housing and qualify for a grant of £250 to assist with moving costs. Committee also directed that where existing tenants chose to stay, despite de-classification, that declassification be undertaken in two phases as follows;

40 years of age. Any exceptions to this policy will need the express prior approval of the Housing Manager.

Phase Two

Where no original sheltered tenants remain resident within a block of flats then vacant dwellings will be let in accordance with the standard allocations procedure.

- 3.6 This consultation has now been completed and with effect from 9th August 2004, properties within the schemes detailed in 3.4, have been de-classified with lettings being made to those aged 40 years and above.
- 3.7 In relation to the physical attributes for those properties which are to remain as Sheltered Housing, there are a number of initiatives that will help to achieve the aspirational standards.
- 3.8 Planned Maintenance - A number of the Planned Maintenance programme elemental specifications have been altered to take account of the agreed requirement for the accommodation standards. For example, lever taps are now specified for all new kitchens and bathrooms and the non-slip flooring is the agreed specification for bathroom floors.
- 3.9 Capital Funding - Since the Best Value Re-Inspection of the service, some £185,000 has been awarded to fund both initial improvements required to meet some of the original recommendations of the Best Value Review of 2001, and on-going improvements, some of which are noted in the standards document. This capital allocation has funded a number of initiatives, including the replacement of soft furnishings in communal areas to ensure fire safety standards are adhered to, the installation of door entry systems to communal schemes and communal lounges. A number of other improvements have been planned and are in the process of being implemented that will further improve the communal facilities throughout the sheltered housing stock, including upgrading of kitchens and laundries and improvements to access to help meet Disability Discrimination Act access requirements.
- 3.10 Members will appreciate that the Sheltered Housing Service has come a long way since it's crisis point in 2001/02. Whilst there has been some initial investment, more will be required in order to continue to improve the service and meet the standards the Council has now committed itself to. The table below details current progress against standards of accommodation to date;

Criteria	Progress
Paths - minimum width 900mm	Outstanding

Paths - non slip surface	Outstanding
Paths - handrails fitted	Outstanding
Lifts available for 1 st floor and above properties	Outstanding
Two way electrical switches in communal areas	Outstanding
Central Heating installed	Programmes underway
Hot water is thermostatically controlled	Programmes underway
All dwellings have a warden call system	Complete
Smoke detector is installed	Complete
CO2 Detector is installed	Outstanding
Kitchen is in a separate room	99.9% Complete
Kitchens have a minimum 1.5 workspace	Programmes underway
All taps are lever taps	Programmes underway
Floor coverings in kitchen and bathroom are slip resistant	Programmes underway
Suited locks fitted	Programme underway
All wheelchair dwellings have min. 1.8x1.4 turning area	Complete

Supporting People Review

- 3.11 Members will be aware that the majority of revenue funding for the Sheltered Housing and CareLine Services is now received via the Supporting People funding stream, which is administered by the Social Services Department at Derbyshire County Council (Administering Authority).
- 3.12 In brief, the Supporting People Programme which was introduced on 1st April 2003, was developed by Government and seen as a way to properly join up support services to vulnerable people, and to ensure that those services were actually meeting the needs of service users. Those organisations delivering the services, including the Sheltered Housing Team, are known as 'providers'.

- 3.13 When the programme went live in April 2003, South Derbyshire District Council, along with other existing providers, was given an interim contract to continue delivering the Sheltered Housing and CareLine Services. At that time, it was understood that following a successful inspection by the Supporting People Team, a 'Steady State' contract would be issued, authorising the Council to continue to deliver the services for the following 3 years.
- 3.14 Unfortunately, the Supporting People funding stream is over subscribed nationally, which has led to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) requesting each Administering Authority to submit proposals for efficiency savings. These proposals have been submitted, and the ODPM has advised that each Administering Authority will be notified of it's funding level in the autumn of 2004. This means that no steady state contracts will be issued in Derbyshire until the funding level is known.
- 3.15 The Sheltered Housing and CareLine Services have now undergone their Supporting People Review. The Review comprised of the submission of a Strategic Relevance document, two Quality Assessment Framework documents (QAF's), and an on site inspection on 15th July 2004.
- 3.16 The Quality Assessment Framework is a tool that has been specifically designed for Supporting People service reviews. The QAF covers service delivery and empowerment issues, and has two principle purposes, namely;
- To provide a standardised means for administering authorities to assess the quality of services and;
 - To encourage and facilitate the raising of standards within the support services sector.
- 3.17 The on site inspection was carried out by two inspectors. The inspectors undertook visits with a warden, spent time within the CareLine Centre and carried out validation exercises, to satisfy themselves that the statements made in the QAF documents were correct and that all supporting information was in place. Strategic partners including Social Services and Health were also contacted by the inspection team to confirm partnerships were in place and working.
- 3.18 Some initial feedback was given on the inspection day, in which the inspectors advised that they were confident that the service was valued by it's customers, and that staff and managers alike were knowledgeable and professional. The formal notification will not be issued until after the ODPM announces funding levels in the autumn of this year.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 To achieve the standards, including further updating of equipment and initiatives mentioned in Annex 3, a sum likely to be in excess of £1 million will need to be invested.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The adoption of a strategic vision for the Sheltered Housing Service is a significant development for the Council, which has demonstrably employed partnership working to achieve this.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The adoption of a clear strategic vision and standards of accommodation for the Sheltered Housing Service will be an effective tool to continually improve the housing and services provided to older persons across the District.