

CABINET

18 MARCH 2009

SHELTERED HOUSING - PROPOSED SERVICE REMODELLING

REPORT OF HEAD OF LANDLORD SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Hampshire County Council has recently undertaken a strategic review of older persons' support services, and has modified the contracting arrangements in accordance with the recommendations of the review. The new funding arrangements are due to commence in April 2009. Winchester City Council will be retained as a provider of choice for services in Winchester District, but the service requires extensive remodelling in order to comply with the Supporting People requirements. This report provides some background to the strategic review, and provides details of the proposed service remodelling, including information about consultations with staff and service users. The Supporting People Strategic Review and the Council's proposed response have been fully discussed by the Supported Housing Informal Member/Officer Working Group.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. The designations of the sheltered housing properties are revised in accordance with the proposals outlined in Appendix 1.
2. The working arrangements of the staff that provide support to older people be revised to operate in community hubs as set out in the report and the appendix, extending support services provided to the wider community.
3. That the Head of Landlord Services be authorised to enter into an appropriate agreement with the County Council to secure funding for the three years from April 2009.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report deals with the proposals of the Head of Landlord Services to remodel the sheltered housing service in line with the requirements of Hampshire Supporting People Team which provides the grant funding for the staffing.
- 1.2 It recommends amendments to the classification of certain sheltered housing properties, where it is currently a requirement that tenants should receive and pay for support regardless of their need for it.
- 1.3 The report also deals with proposals to amend the operational staffing arrangements which exist to deliver support services for older people.
- 1.4 Proposals are also made for the extension of the floating support service into other tenures.

2 Background

- 2.1 Between September 2007 and July 2008, Hampshire Supporting People Team undertook a Strategic Review of the support provision for older people throughout the County.
- 2.2 In Winchester, the review involved a detailed analysis of all accommodation-based and floating support services for older people, followed by an extensive consultation with service-users and with service-providers.
- 2.3 As a result of the review, the County Council formulated a Development Plan for each district, which contained a number of recommendations. The Development Plan was formally adopted by the County Core Group in July 2008.
- 2.4 The following key themes and recommendations were identified:
 - a) The ability of certain sheltered housing properties to meet changing aspirations. It was recommended that certain schemes should be considered for decommissioning as sheltered housing, but could be retained exclusively for people over 55 if sufficient demand exists (The Council has already introduced a number of "over 40s lettings to these schemes).

- b) There remains a role for Sheltered Housing. Through the consultation the County Council accepted that there is a continuing demand for this service model, with 'core' support and alarm service being retained, albeit that greater flexibility and consistency is needed in how services are delivered, and choice being offered to customers.
 - c) There is a need for support to older people living in the wider community to be extended and not limited to those living in council's own housing stock. The City Council already provide "lifeline" support to private residents, although this is only available to those able to pay for the service. Supporting People are keen to extend their funding to cover private residents currently receiving benefits. Existing sheltered schemes could be viewed as a 'hub' and base for provision of all-tenure community support. Many older people living in other tenures could benefit from access to support services. Under the funding arrangements, the existing sheltered service will remain the core function for the Supported Housing team. However, the extension into the private sector will help provide a consistent service across the community, meet Government aspirations of retaining people in their own homes where possible and in the long term reduce unit costs for Supported Housing.
 - d) The role of social alarms and telecare was recognised as a means by which users can feel more secure and confident, and therefore more able to continue to live independently. It was further recognised that a full responding service is a vital part of an effective alarm service.
 - e) Extra care sheltered housing offers an increasingly vital option for older people who require a personal care service in order to maintain their independence. The County Council's Wellbeing team is looking to extend the provision of Extra Care, and we are currently in discussions to identify suitable opportunities within the District.
- 2.5 Hampshire is revising its standards for support services in response to the outcomes of the strategic review, and will be issuing new conditions to grant recipients (service providers) with effect from April 2009. Landlord Services needs to respond to the new requirements in order to meet the qualifying conditions for a new three year grant, and this has given rise to the proposed remodelling of the sheltered housing service.

3 Proposed Remodelling

- 3.1 Officers have given careful consideration to the new Supporting People requirements for older persons' support services in the context of Winchester District. Proposals have been developed in conjunction with the Council's Supported Housing Informal Member/Officer Working Group, which seek to meet the expectations of the funding body, including the introduction of community-based services, whilst retaining the essential elements of an effective sheltered and support service. The proposals seek to offer a range of support options to customers, thereby offering choice, particularly to new applicants.

- 3.2 Support services are currently provided by resident scheme managers, non resident scheme managers and mobile wardens. All perform similar roles in relation to providing support to tenants. Resident managers offer no benefit to tenants over and above non resident managers as they are not available outside of working hours anyway. Also, most sheltered schemes are simply too small to allow the cost of a full time resident manager to be kept within the unit costs per tenant that Supporting People are prepared to fund. Therefore, proposals in this report seek to provide a solution that provides a consistent level of support to all supported tenants, no matter which scheme they live in by merging the roles of the three staff groups. As stated above, the nature of the work is very similar and it is not proposed to change terms and conditions. In effect, the biggest change is that staff will operate across more than one location.
- 3.3 The District will be divided into four community hubs. Each hub will have a designated operating base, and be staffed by 4 or 5 officers, all directly employed by the City Council. Operating hours are likely to be from 8am to 5pm. During operating hours, staff in each hub will be responsible for the full range of older peoples' support functions. This will include day to day visiting; housing-related support including preparation and monitoring of support plans; daytime responding to alarm calls; lifeline and telecare service assessments, installation and maintenance and assessment visits prior to property allocation. The costs of delivering this service across all tenures will be met by Hampshire County Council through the payment of Supporting People funding, and through fees collected from self-funders.
- 3.4 The boundaries of the hubs are shown in Appendix 1 attached to this report. In establishing the hub boundaries account is being taken of population and scheme densities; location of existing housing; distances involved in covering a "patch"; and both current and predicted levels of demand from individuals requiring support services including the provision and monitoring of lifeline alarms and telecare services.
- 3.5 The community hubs will be supplemented by an out of hours responding service. This service offers a very effective and timely response to service users when they seek assistance via their alarm. However, any staff hours which could be freed up from this part of the service would supplement the resources available during the day, and officers will give further consideration to how best to apportion staff time, although there are no immediate plans to change the out of hours service.
- 3.6 It is proposed that the designations of the sheltered housing stock be amended to reflect the new way of working. The proposed designations are shown in Appendix 1. These designations allow for the retention of a number of wholly sheltered housing schemes. Those schemes already designated as "over 40" schemes will be subject to further re-designation, with tenants currently receiving support being given the choice to opt in or out of the service. This will reduce demand on the Community hubs which in turn will free resource to extend services across other tenures in the locality as demanded by the Supporting People team. Funding from Supporting People

will be based upon an allowance of half an hour per person per week for support. Staff who are currently based at a specific sheltered scheme will continue to operate in the same locality to help with continuity of service for tenants, and there is likely to be a staff presence on those schemes for three to four hours every day between Monday and Friday.

4 Staffing Issues

- 4.1 The new working arrangements affect the existing job roles of Sheltered Scheme Managers, Older Persons' Community Support Officers and Mobile Wardens. A new job description has been drawn up for a new generic role of Older Person's Support Officer.
- 4.2 The role will continue to be one in which the staff provide support services tailored to the needs of each individual service user. Whilst there will be changes to some working practices and locations, those changes will not materially affect the terms and conditions of employment. All the functions to be carried out under the new arrangements are already undertaken within the service. However, not every function is currently carried out by every team member, so some changes in working practice will be required in some instances. Staff have also been assured that, wherever possible, their work will continue to be based in the same locality.
- 4.3 Two full consultation meetings have been held with the staff team, including a representative from UNISON and Human Resources Advisor. The consultation has been supplemented by written materials and by the offer of one-to-one meetings with every staff member who wished to take up the option.
- 4.4 No redundancies are required as a result of these proposals, as all existing posts are incorporated into the new structure, and, as set out in the "Resource Implications" section below, the funding by Hampshire County Council for 2009-10 is proposed to be similar to the current level
- 4.5 Those staff who are resident in accommodation at their sheltered scheme have been reassured that they will be allowed to continue to reside in their homes for as long as they remain in post, and will be eligible for rehousing upon retirement, or in the event that they elect not to make the transition to the new job role.

5 Tenant Consultation

- 5.1 The proposals have been discussed at the Sheltered Housing Tenants' Forum and with TACT through their representatives on the Supported Housing Informal Member/Officer Group. It will also be discussed in detail with TACT at their March meeting. TACT's comments are recorded below.
- 5.2 Subject to the views of Cabinet, it is also proposed to write to all sheltered tenants to advise them of the proposed changes to the way the service will be delivered.

- 5.3 Where applicable, tenants will be invited to indicate whether they would like the opportunity to “opt-out” of the support service. However, where there is a hard-wired alarm system, a charge would continue to be payable for that element of the service.

6 Right to Buy Issues

- 6.1 There is an exception to the “Right to Buy” for council tenants who occupy “sheltered” housing. De-designation of a sheltered scheme would remove that exception, although the Council has continued to refuse some applications in those schemes already housing “over 40”s when the property complied with the definition set out in paragraph 6.3 below. As this report in effect de-designates those schemes further, power to refuse future applications would be reduced. In effect, these schemes will normally fall within the “general needs” designation and be subject to “Right to Buy”.
- 6.2 There may nevertheless be circumstances under which, should the Council wish to refuse an application under the “Right to Buy” provisions, there would be grounds upon which to do so.
- 6.3 The Right to Buy cannot be exercised if it can be shown to be
- a) particularly suitable for occupation by elderly persons, taking into account its location, size, design, heating system and other features,
 - b) was let to the current tenant for occupation by a person aged 60 or over, whether they were the tenant or not; and
 - c) was first let before 1 January 1990

7 RELEVANCE TO CORPORATE STRATEGY

- 7.1 Providing effective support to assist residents maintain a degree of independent living works towards the Council’s commitment to Health and Wellbeing. The 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy for the Winchester seeks to ensure that older people enjoy healthy, fulfilling and active lives. The Strategy seeks to promote the wellbeing of older people in the Winchester District by delivering positive outcomes, both now and planning for the future, against the seven key dimensions of independence i.e. housing and home, neighbourhood, social activities, social networks, keeping busy, getting out and about, income, information, and health and healthy living.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Supporting People funding for 2009-10 has been set at £675,560 (including Supporting People grant and income from “self payers” but excluding the Extra Care service), which is the same as the projected revised income for 2008/09. There has been no loss of income as a result of Hampshire’s Strategic Review.

- 8.2 Whilst there will be some minor additional costs in relation to IT/phone set up, and a small increase in car allowance costs, these can be accommodated within existing budgets and where appropriate will be built into resident service charges. Overall, the changes recommended in this paper will have no net impact on existing budgets.
- 8.3 S11A Housing Act 1985 allows the Council to provide welfare services to its tenants. The current proposal provides an extension of services to people in private sector accommodation - funded either by Supporting People or charges to the individuals. S2 Local Government Act 2000 is the general well-being power and would allow joint working with the County Council to provide welfare services to private residents. S2 allows the Council to do anything which is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of the area. Before exercising the power the Council has to consider how it relates to the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy, set out above. There is nothing in other legislation or in the statutory guidance which would prevent the use of the power in connection with the proposed arrangements and this is an activity currently being provided by a large number of local authority landlords in conjunction with their Supporting People teams.

9 TACT Comment

- 9.1 TACT representatives have been involved in the Supported Housing Informal Member/Officer Working Group and are in agreement with the proposed course of action.
- 9.2 TACT have submitted the following comment for inclusion in the report:
- 9.3 "TACT, have been unable at this stage to present this paper to the TACT Committees, due to the restricted nature of this paper, at this point of the proceedings. The TACT members on the committee Shelia Greaves, Judith Steventon Baker, and myself Alan Rickman, have been fully involved in the Informal Member/Officer Working Group. Any concerns we have had have been fully discussed and in most cases have been sorted out to our satisfaction.
- 9.4 Like any changes there will need to be a run in period, to iron out any small problems, however due to tight budgets all round TACT members at the meeting feel that the Council are doing the best they can under the circumstances, to provide a good service and reliable one.
- 9.5 When it is possible to bring the full information to TACT then Steve Tong will be invited to do so. I will also have the chance for further comment when the paper is presented at Cabinet.

10 Trade Union Comment

- 10.1 Consultation with staff and the Trade Union has commenced and is ongoing.
- 10.2 UNISON have made the following comments on the proposals:

- 10.2.1 UNISON notes that Winchester City Council will be retained as the “provider of choice” and feels that this is a reflection of the excellent quality of the service that is provided by the current staff.
- 10.2.2 The allowance of “half an hour per person per week for support” (see 3.6) may be inadequate. UNISON has received anecdotal reports from staff that increasing numbers of tenants currently in Cat 2 accommodation are on waiting lists for a move to Cat 2.5 Extra Care schemes. These tenants are placing an increased burden on the current Scheme Managers time.
- 10.2.3 a) Reducing staff presence on site to “three to four hours every day between Monday and Friday” (see 3.6) will inevitably impact on the delivery of social events such as Bingo, Meals, Day Trips etc. Where tenants have become accustomed to Scheme Managers running these events there will need to be a careful ‘management of expectations’. The job description for the Older Persons’ Service Manager (Job Description section 4. Tenant Participation) makes reference to “assist tenants to organise social events” and to “facilitate events”. Realistically this is likely to be a low priority task under the remodelled service.
- 10.2.3. b) Anecdotal reports from tenants and Scheme Managers does not support the statement in 3.2 that “Resident managers offer no benefit to tenants over and above non resident managers as they are not available outside of working hours anyway.” Whilst we understand that the provision of resident managers may not be financially viable under the funding arrangement with Supporting People, Unison feels that this statement does not truly reflect the positive impact on quality of life provided by resident managers.
- 10.2.4 There is no detail as to the facilities that will be provided at each Hub. IM&T links, Computers, Furniture, Welfare Facilities, Parking etc need to be in place to ensure that staff are able to work effectively and efficiently. Costs for Car Allowances etc are mentioned in 8.3 but no cost provided.
- 10.2.5 Will the Older Persons’ Service Manager post have Essential Car User status? This appears to be the case as per 8.3.
- 10.2.6 a) The Job Description (Job Description section 1. Service User Support) makes reference to “attending case conferences”, “liaise with the relevant other agencies as necessary” etc. Anecdotal reports from staff indicate that this is taking up a significant amount of staff time (see 10.2.2). The enhanced professional status of our care team staff, who are providing an essential part of delivering a quality service to our tenants, does not seem to be adequately reflected in the current grading of Scale 3.

10.2.6 b) The nature of the work carried out will change in so much as each member of staff will be required to carry out the full range of tasks to deliver care packages. There will also be a change from individual to team working. There will need to be careful management of the teams to ensure a fair distribution of work load.

10.2.6 c) Staff training and development costs have not been specifically identified in 8.3.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - PROPOSED SHELTERED HOUSING CLASSIFICATION

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HUBS (Suggested Hub base shown in bold)	TOTAL NUMBER OF TENANCIES	NUMBER OF TENANTS CURRENTLY RECEIVING SUPPORT	SELF- FUNDERS	STAFFING NUMBERS
HUB 1 - CITY EAST				4 FTE
<u>SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR OVER 60s ONLY</u>				
CHESTER COURT	36	36	10	
GODSON HOUSE	38	34	12	
LAWN HOUSE	36	36	5	
MILDMAY COURT	33	33	7	
FIRMSTONE RD UPPER	20	12	2	
<u>ACCOMMODATION WITH OPTIONAL SUPPORT (de-designated from Sheltered to General Needs)</u>				
FIRMSTONE RD LOWER	24	20	2	
COLSON CLOSE	21	4	2	
PENTON PLACE	37	20	6	
HUB 1 - TOTAL 345 SERVICE USERS INCLUDING LIFELINE AND TELECARE				
HUB 2 - CITY WEST				4 FTE
<u>SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR OVER 60s ONLY</u>				
RICHARD MOSS HOUSE	49	49	15	
DANEMARK COURT	35	35	11	
EASTACRE	35	35	13	
KING HAROLD COURT	32	32	10	
<u>ACCOMMODATION WITH OPTIONAL SUPPORT(de-designated from Sheltered to General Needs)</u>				
DRUMMOND CLOSE	36	20	5	
LISLE COURT	28	12	2	
AIRLIE CORNER	17	12	3	
THE VALLEY	36	17	1	
HUB 2 - TOTAL 430 SERVICE USERS INCLUDING LIFELINE AND TELECARE				
HUB 3 - DISTRICT NORTH				3.7 FTE
<u>SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR OVER 60s ONLY</u>				
MAKINS COURT	41	41	3	
HYDE GATE	25	25	11	
SIMONDS COURT	30	30	8	
HYDE LODGE	37	37	14	

<u>ACCOMMODATION WITH OPTIONAL SUPPORT (de-designated from Sheltered to General Needs)</u>				
BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE	16	14	6	
MONKS ROAD	8	6	2	
CHILTERN COURT	25	18	10	
WONSTON CLOSE	25	25	10	
STONEY LANE	16	16	6	
HARWOOD PLACE	39	11	5	
SOUTHBROOK COTTAGES	17	17	6	
HUB 3 - TOTAL 483 SERVICE USERS INCLUDING LIFELINE AND TELECARE				
HUB 4 - DISTRICT SOUTH				5 FTE
<u>SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR OVER 60s ONLY</u>				
WHITEWINGS	18	18	4	
NORMANDY COURT	36	36	9	
GREENS CLOSE	37	36	10	
SPRING HOUSE CLOSE	36	36	9	
<u>GENERAL NEEDS ACCOMMODATION (SUPPORT OPTIONAL) (de-designated from Sheltered to General Needs)</u>				
PINE ROAD	25	25	9	
SPRINGVALE	39	39	14	
NORTHFIELDS	27	27	12	
HUB 4 - TOTAL 539 SERVICE USERS INCLUDING LIFELINE AND TELECARE				