

FOR PUBLICATION

PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPORT SERVICES AT SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES

MEETING: 1. CABINET
2. CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

DATE: 1. 9 FEBRUARY 2016
2. 1 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT BY: SERVICE MANAGER – HOUSING CUSTOMER DIVISION

WARD: ALL

COMMUNITY FORUM: ALL

KEY DECISION REFERENCE (IF APPLICABLE): 600

FOR PUBLICATION

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR PUBLIC REPORTS: NONE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to recommend changes to the way in which services are provided at Sheltered Housing schemes in order to manage and mitigate loss of funding from Derbyshire County Council and to take the opportunity to make service improvements.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the changes are approved and that the implementation process begins immediately in order that the majority of the changes are in place by April 2016.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Derbyshire County Council (DCC) currently fund support for older people in sheltered housing schemes who are in receipt of state benefits.
- 3.2 This funding is paid directly to the service provider and CBC currently receives around £77,000 per year, (this would have potentially increased to around £92,000 per year when Parkside re-opens).
- 3.3 As part of the Derbyshire Challenge and following consultation, and despite strong representations made by CBC and others, DCC have withdrawn the funding for this support service with effect from April 2016, which will mean a significant loss of income for the Council.
- 3.4 As part of DCC's consultation regarding their proposals, meetings were held at all of CBC's sheltered housing schemes. An extract of DCC's Cabinet report which includes the responses to the consultation, including a letter from CBC is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.5 Discussions are still taking place between Officers from the Council and Officers from DCC regarding this decision and how it can be managed without reducing services to some of our most vulnerable tenants, however DCC have made it clear that there is no additional money, and any support we provide will need to be provided from the funding we receive for providing floating support, so the impact in terms of the funding reduction will remain unchanged.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 A number of measures have been identified in order to manage and mitigate the effect of this and other funding cuts on this service.
- 4.2 These measures include identification of areas where savings and efficiencies can be made and increasing income by increasing charges and attracting new business.
- 4.3 Some of these measures, for example changes to the staffing structure and increased charges are dealt with in separate reports.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 A Scheme Manager is currently based at each of the sheltered schemes and works Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5pm. They are

responsible for the following tasks, a daily visit to all tenants, co-ordination of social activities within the scheme, cleaning of communal areas, basic property checks and reporting repairs.

5.2 It is proposed that these services are delivered in a different way in order to mitigate the funding shortfall whilst still delivering a service, albeit a different one. The changes are detailed below.

5.3 **Staffing**

5.3.1 It is proposed that the role of Sheltered Scheme Manager is deleted and the tasks they currently undertake are provided either in a different way, or by other means.

5.4 **Support**

5.4.1 It is proposed that the support element to tenants in Sheltered Housing Schemes is provided by the existing Support Officers who currently provide support to customers receiving floating support. This will ensure consistency and standardisation across the whole of the support service for older people.

5.4.2 Support will be provided on the basis of an individual needs and risk assessment with a person centred approach, rather than the current 'one size fits all' approach.

5.4.3 Tenants will be assessed as to the package of support needed and a tailored support package will be put in place to meet individual needs, as opposed to the standard one visit per day, which some tenants do not want or indeed need.

5.4.4 However, as a minimum, tenants will receive a visit every week if they want one and in addition, tenants will receive a daily reassurance call from Careline to check that they are well.

5.4.5 It is acknowledged that with the existing tenants of sheltered schemes there will need to be some management of expectations as we move from one method of service delivery to another, and visits will be tailored off at a frequency to suit individuals as we move towards the new arrangements.

5.4.6 A named Support Officer will be assigned to each sheltered housing scheme to ensure constancy in that all of the tenants in the scheme see the same Officer.

5.4.7 These will also be value in that the same officer visiting a scheme regularly will pick up any building related issues.

5.5 **Cleaning**

5.5.1 The cleaning of the communal areas will be carried out by the in-house communal cleaning team as a variation of the contract for the cleaning of communal areas of flats.

5.5.2 The cost of this will be recharged to tenants as part of a re-profiled service charge – all of which housing benefit is payable on.

5.6 **Activities**

5.6.1 The activities currently provided in the schemes vary from scheme to scheme and generally consist of activities such as bingo, craft sessions or coffee mornings with varied levels of activity from scheme to scheme and levels of attendance.

5.6.2 It is proposed that a new post of Social Inclusion Officer is created with one of the main duties being to organise, facilitate and co-ordinate activities across the schemes and in the outlying community rooms managed by the Housing Service. We will be looking to re-energise and modernise this area of service provision and will work with volunteers to assist with activities. We will also be aiming to form and support groups to provide activities themselves.

5.6.3 Providing activities in this way will enable us to provide activities which would not be viable for an individual scheme, for example guest speakers, book clubs, special interest groups.

5.6.4 We are also aiming to look at extending the activities to elderly tenants living close to schemes who may be socially isolated, looking to forming membership clubs which they can be part of.

5.7 **General building checks, repairs etc.**

5.7.1 These duties will be carried out by the Careline/Response Officers within their planned activities on a monthly visit to each scheme. With some of the more technical functions for example Legionella testing carried out by Housing Technical Officers.

6.0 **CONSULTATION**

6.1 Meetings with tenants at each of the sheltered housing schemes to outline and discuss the proposed changes began on 9 December

and all were attended by Cllr Tom Murphy, Cabinet Member for Housing.

- 6.2 Attendance at the meetings varied from scheme to scheme, some tenants were accompanied or represented by relatives at the meetings. A total of 88 tenants or relatives attended (57.5% of tenants based on current occupancy) and the table below shows the attendance at each of the respective schemes.

Name of scheme	number of properties	number let	number attended meeting
Aston Court	28	28	15
Brocklehurst Court	22	21	9
Catherine Court	22	22	7
Duewell Court	27	16	11
Glebe Court	28	28	17
Mallard Court	25	21	14
Markham Court	20	17	15
Totals	172	153	88

- 6.3 At the meetings a handout was given to all who attended highlighting the proposed changes and copies were left for the Scheme Manager to distribute to those tenants who did not attend. A copy of this is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 6.4 A variety of questions were asked at the meetings. These were noted from each of the respective meetings and are attached at **Appendix 3**.
- 6.5 At the meetings and in the handout, tenants were given the opportunity to make written representation should they wish, regarding the proposals and by 3rd January, 4 responses were received.
- 6.6 Copies of these and the responses are attached at **Appendix 4**.
- 6.7 On 11 January 2016 a letter was sent to all tenants inviting any further questions and comments and answering some of the questions and concerns already raised as part of the consultation process. A copy of this letter is attached at **Appendix 5**.
- 6.8 No further comments have been received as a result of this letter.

6.9 Summary of Comments

6.9.1 There was an air of resignation at most schemes regarding the proposed changes, as following the consultation meetings held by DCC, tenants understood that the loss of funding and subsequent changes to the support service were likely.

6.9.2 However this did not stop concerns being raised with the major concern being the loss of the Scheme Manager being on site at the scheme from Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.00pm.

6.9.3 Other issues raised including the following

- Reduced security with no-one on site
- Poorer standard of cleaning
- Supervision of laundry areas
- Concerns re letting properties in schemes to younger people
- Changes the concept of a sheltered scheme and why tenants came into the scheme
- Increased social isolation – Scheme Manager encourages tenants to participate
- Reduced levels of activities at schemes

6.9.4 Whilst we have an answer for all of the above, in terms how we will manage and mitigate the effects of the proposed changes as set out in this report, it must be accepted that the proposed new service will not be the same as the current one, and therefore will not in respect of some aspects of the service, deliver the same levels of service.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Charges

7.1.1 The service charge and the support charge have been re-profiled to take into account the way in which the proposed new service will be delivered and represent a much fairer reflection of the costs of delivering the respective parts of the service.

7.1.2 The proposed new charge will be £20.57 per week, (which is made up of a support charge of £8 per week to include careline and response, plus a service charge of £12.57 which covers the heating of communal areas, cleaning of communal areas, maintenance of communal areas etc.). This represents a total reduction of £1.25 per week.

7.2 Savings

7.2.1 The deletion of the posts of Sheltered Scheme Managers will result in a saving of £138,976 per year, (without on costs) this saving will be offset by the recruitment of an additional Support Officer to enable the support of the tenants in the sheltered housing schemes to be undertaken by this staff group, making a net saving of £116,764.

7.3 Costs

7.3.1 It is proposed that for 2016/17, the Council will not charge tenants who are on benefit and who were previously funded by DCC to receive the support service (this element is not eligible for housing benefit), and will stand this cost, which will equate on current figures, and taking into account increased income from the increased service charge, to around £58,000. This has been built into the base budget for 2016/17.

7.3.2 However, this will be reviewed in 2017/18 and it may at that point be necessary to levy some form of nominal charge.

7.4 Summary

The costs and expenditure for sheltered housing are part of the total budget for Careline and Support Services and as such, the charges, savings and costs referred to above are part of the projected £300,000 savings outlined in the Review of Careline and Support Services Report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 An Equalities impact assessment has been completed and is attached at **Appendix 6**.

9.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Redundancies of sheltered scheme managers	High	Medium	Implementation of councils policies and procedures regarding	Medium	Medium

			staffing restructures		
Inability to let properties in sheltered housing schemes due to changes in service	High	Medium	Adverts make clear what new service will deliver Monitor and review of new arrangements Re-profiled service charges	Medium	Low

10.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 It is recommended that the changes are approved and that the implementation process begins immediately in order that the majority of the changes are in place by April 2016.

11.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 The recommendations are made in order to manage and mitigate the cuts in funding to this service area and to still continue to provide a good, financially viable service.

JULIE MCGROGAN
HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER – CUSTOMER DIVISION

Further information on this matter can be obtained from Julie McGrogan, extension 5135.

Officer recommendation supported.



Signed:

Cabinet Member

Date