

Agenda Item: 10

Housing Review Board

25 June 2009

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Review of Sheltered Housing – interim report

Summary

This report provides the Board with details of the review of sheltered housing being progressed by a Task and Finish Forum (TaFF). This is an interim report in response to a request from Board members.

The TaFF group have completed a significant amount of work on the review of sheltered housing in a short period of time and have established the attributes of each sheltered housing scheme. To do this they have been presented with a range of site specific information to assess and this has proved to be a very worthwhile exercise, and one which has been supported by the sheltered housing staff. The process has identified where the Council can make some significant improvements to its housing stock by applying the de-commissioning criteria to ensure that our sheltered housing will meet the requirements of the Supporting People regime and residents expectations.

We must also ensure that our properties which remain as sheltered housing will be able to have any improvements made to them to enable all current and future residents to have their accommodation modernised. We aim to provide sustainable homes which allow tenants their continued independence, supported by the staff who visit them, ensuring that the environment within the property is accessible and safe for their continued use.

Linked to this the managed transition from accommodation based housing related support services (Warden/Scheme Manager) to floating support services is on-track to meet the Supporting People deadline of April 2010, when our support services should offer 100% floating support for sheltered housing residents. This will ensure that we are in a strong position to be awarded future contracts by Supporting People for a further three years.

The necessity to separate the cost of the support charge from the rental charge for all residents who are in receipt of support services and who currently live in sheltered accommodation will commence in September 2009, as there is no clear distinction between the two costs. Furthermore, the charges are not consistent across the district and this will be changed from 2010 with one common charge to all residents in sheltered housing, and the cost of the alarm monitoring service from Home Safeguard clearly defined within a single service charge.

From April 2010 anyone moving into supported accommodation will have a contract offered to them which allows them the choice to subscribe to the support services at different levels, and this can be for support services, or just the alarm services at a reduced cost within their support charge.

Recommendation

That the final TaFF Group recommendations regarding the points scoring exercise for proposed de-commissioning sheltered housing schemes be presented to the Housing Review Board in September 2009, with recommendations for any schemes which have re-development potential to also be presented to the Housing Review Board for consideration.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that Council owned sheltered housing meets the needs and expectations of our residents and complies with the requirements of the Supporting People contracts.

b) Alternative Options

These are explained in the report.

c) Risk Considerations

The decommissioning of sheltered housing is unlikely to be popular with many of our sheltered housing tenants.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The policy implications have been explained in the preceding reports and the budgetary implications are not known at this stage of the review process.

e) Date for Review of Decision

Once the Sheltered housing Task and Finish Forum has completed its work.

1 Background

- 1.1 On 1 May 2008 the Housing Review Board was presented with a report on the need to consider identifying within our sheltered housing stock an element of our accommodation which could be considered suitable for de-commissioning. This approach would show that East Devon District Council has recognised the need to optimise the use of our housing stock to cater for all client groups in housing need, and to acknowledge the financial pressures of continuing to providing support services for those tenants occupying sheltered housing who do not wish to subscribe to the housing related support options on offer.
- 1.2 The report also highlighted the changes being forecast by Supporting People for continued funding of the staffing levels to meet the needs identified of residents requiring support in their homes, coupled with the details of the expected criteria for sheltered housing in the future to meet customer expectations. The standards described needed to be measured against our sheltered properties to identify whether they all meet the criteria, or which homes needed to be improved to bring them up to standard, or be de-commissioned from being used for sheltered housing for older persons. We also identified the need to explore other uses for these properties for client groups where housing needs were not being met elsewhere in the allocation system.
- 1.3 The on-going changes being made to our staffing levels in relation to how the staff deliver the support services to our tenants is now well on the way to being able to satisfy the target date set by Supporting People for 2010, whereby the service is delivered by floating support based staff. EDDC housing related support services are now almost all Mobile Support Officer Staff, with only two remaining staff members who do not carry out mobile support duties, due to their personal circumstances. By April 2010 we will meet the deadline set by Supporting People, and this will

guarantee the award of a further contract, and ongoing financial support, from Supporting People for the next contract period 2010-2013.

- 1.4 In May 2008, the Council was aware there were many people in sheltered housing not subscribing to the support services the Scheme Managers and Mobile Support Officers were able to offer, and this prompted the Board to ask that a Task and Finish Forum (TaFF) be set up to steer, support and oversee a project reviewing sheltered housing. The recommendation was that the Group members should include Cllr Ash, Cllr Knight, Cllr Humphreys and Tenant representatives Ann Bickham, Sue Saunders and Christine Morrison.

2. TaFF project progress to date.

- 2.1 In December 2008 a report was presented to the newly formed TaFF with a comprehensive approach on how to move forward on the recommendations of the Housing Review Board with regard to their expectations on de-commissioning of our sheltered housing services, including recommendations that:
1. The completion of the transition to a fully Mobile Support Officer housing related support service by April 2010 is implemented.
 2. The separation of the housing related support charge from the tenancy agreement the introduction of a 'stand alone' housing related support agreement is introduced by April 2010.
 3. A review of the housing related support provided to each sheltered housing scheme in accordance with a range of criteria, and make a decision on future levels of support to be provided.
 4. Agree the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Forum.
- 2.2 The TaFF was presented with numerous documents detailing the principles of de-commissioning and how best to address this taking into account the requirements of the Supporting People guidelines on re-modelling existing sheltered housing schemes. It also looked to establishing a weighted scoring system to be applied when assessing each scheme having regard to location, popularity and size of property criteria. Further criteria were considered taking into account the views and opinions of the residents and stakeholders who would be affected by any de-commissioning decisions made at a later date after a scoring assessment process had taken place.
- 2.3 At the first meeting it was also accepted that the draft terms of reference for the TaFF to work within and abide by were implemented. The first meeting also considered a document provided by Supporting People on how to implement the expectations of their strategic review of older services. The TaFF needed to ensure that the Council is working towards being fully compliant with the reports requirements and to continue to be a major provider of older persons support services up to and beyond April 2010.
- 2.4 Since December 2008 regular monthly meetings for the TaFF have taken place, all in different locations in community centres on sheltered housing schemes. Each meeting has achieved significant progress in carrying out the point's assessment process in respect of each sheltered housing scheme. The TaFF have also had the input from the staff responsible for providing the support services for each scheme being assessed in attendance. Their input has been vital in assisting the TaFF members identify additional information about each scheme and establishing whether it would be feasible to consider for de-commissioning, taking into account factors like location, elevation, current support take up from residents, local facilities, and the infrastructure supporting the scheme.

- 2.5 This process of involving the staff has given the TaFF members the facility to ask additional questions which may not have been fully clear from the maps and information provided for their assessment exercise, therefore the points scoring process has proved to be an accurate approach to addressing the initial identification of the schemes that should be considered for de-commissioning at this first stage of the project.
- 2.6 For each meeting a short 'walkabout' of the sheltered schemes has taken place whereby members of the TAFF have been invited to walk around a scheme, also to have the opportunity to see inside several properties some of which were occupied. This has given the TaFF the opportunity to talk to the residents, and some of the properties which were vacant to see the layout of some of the smaller properties we have within our stock. .The TaFF members taking part also benefitted from seeing for themselves some of the challenges many of the schemes experience with the lack of access to local shops or services, or the elevated area in which some of the schemes are located proving them difficult to access for those with mobility problems.
- 2.7 The TaFF have so far completed the following tasks:
- Worked within the terms of reference agreed in December 2008 for the TaFF.
 - Agreed an Action Plan timetable of meetings from March 2009 – September 2009 and set tasks to be achieved at each meeting.
 - Assessed and point scored all presented sheltered housing schemes taking into account all of the information provided for them, and included the staff in the decision making process.
 - Identified **439** properties so far for possible de-commissioning, and made recommendations as to whether a 1, 3 or 5 year programme is preferable for each identified scheme.
 - Agreed and contributed to the development of the content and layout of the resident and stakeholders questionnaires and leaflet.
- 2.8 The points scoring exercise is now almost complete, with the last remaining few schemes being points assessed on 28 July 2009. Point scores are shown below.

Possible sites for decommissioning

| SCHEME ADDRESS | No. of Units |
|--|---------------------|
| Albion Court | 23 |
| Arcot Park, Sidmouth | 16 |
| Brookfield Road, East Budleigh - 4 bungalows on the hill | 4 |
| Capel Lane | 6 |
| Chapel Street | 20 |
| Clystside | 2 |
| Cooks Mead - remaining properties (10, 11, 16, 17) | 4 |
| Coombe Orchard | 2 |

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|---|----|
| Country House | 14 |
| Custance House, Honiton | 28 |
| Dog Village | 3 |
| Elm Orchard | 1 |
| Furzehill | 10 |
| Glebe Close, Upton Pyne, Exeter - 1 bed bungalows | 15 |
| Glebelands, Lympstone - flats | 4 |
| Harepath, Seaton | 23 |
| Huntley Close, Axminster - flats | 8 |
| Jerrards Crescent , Honiton - No.34 | 1 |
| Kemps Lane | 3 |
| Lawrence Close | 8 |
| Links Close & Parkway | 9 |
| Liverton Close | 22 |
| Lower Brook Meadow | 10 |
| Lymebourne Park, Sidmouth: | |
| Area 1 - Bedsits | 16 |
| Area 3 - Lymebourne House | 6 |
| Manor Close, Seaton | 16 |
| Midway | 8 |
| Millmoor Vale, Newton Poppleford - Nos. 1&15 | 2 |
| Millwey Avenue, Axminster - Nos. 39- 54 | 14 |
| Mountain Close | 3 |
| Northfields, Musbury - houses | 4 |
| Old Farm Bungalows | 4 |
| Poplar Mount | 18 |
| Powell Close, Seaton | 20 |
| Ridgeway Court | 24 |
| Roseway | 5 |

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|--|----|
| Salterton Road | 4 |
| St Andrews Drive, Axminster | 1 |
| Stooks Close | 15 |
| The Crescent | 3 |
| Tucker Court, Honiton | 15 |
| Village Close, Exmouth - flats only | 10 |
| Westcott Way, Honiton - first floor | |
| Whitton Court, Sidmouth | 10 |
| York Street | 5 |

TOTAL 439

- 2.9 The next TaFF meeting will be presented with the results of the questionnaire survey being sent to residents living on the schemes, which have so far been identified as possibly suitable for de-commissioning. The questionnaire for tenants (**annex 1**) will be accompanied by a leaflet (**annex 2**) designed to give some information about what de-commissioning means at this first stage of the project. There is also a questionnaire for stakeholders to go out at the same time (**annex 3**).
- 2.10 The leaflet has been designed to take into account the views of the TaFF and has also been given to staff and independent tenants for their comments and suggestions before finalised. This leaflet will also be sent to stakeholders who will be individuals and organisations who carry out their roles in the communities where it has been identified by the TaFF some of the de-commissioned properties will be situated. These stakeholders will include GP surgery's, Social Services representatives, and local support groups who visit our residents living in sheltered accommodation, and who provide care and enabling services to residents and to those living in the wider community.
- 2.11 It is envisaged that once the meeting in July has looked at the final scoring process, and the resident and stakeholders feedback comments have been scrutinised and applied to the scoring system, then the TaFF's work will be almost complete.
- 2.12 The final task will be to agree all the outcome information to be reported back to the Housing Review Board for September 2009 to enable the next stage of the decommissioning project to proceed. The next stage of the decommissioning project will be to implement a proposed 1, 3 or 5 year programme approach, to start the decommissioning programme of the properties identified for reuse, and this will require another group of staff, tenant representatives, and members to be established to oversee how this will be implemented and progressed. Also at that stage we will need to inform the Devon Supporting People team of the Council's intention to decommission the agreed properties, and the timeframe, in order for the contract due to be agreed for the period April 2010 – 2013, to reflect the changes.

- 2.13 During late September -December 2009, once the identified decommissioned schemes have been agreed, there will take place a range of consultation approaches for all sheltered housing residents who will be living on the proposed decommissioned schemes. All residents will be able to have the process of decommissioning explained to them in full and with an opportunity to have their say on the process, and to receive support and advice on how it will affect them in the future.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications set out within the report requiring comment.

Financial Implications

The financial implications cannot be determined at this stage.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

None.

Background Papers

- Strategic Review of older persons housing and support services by CIVIS for Devon Supporting People – June 2008.
- Housing Review Board report – 4 September 2008.
- Sheltered housing TaFF agenda papers, various dates.

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Housing Review Board
25 June 2009