

CABINET - 3 MARCH 2004**CHURCHILL COURT, GORE ROAD NEW MILTON****1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 NFDC has 26 sheltered housing schemes and linked bungalows / flats offering 755 units of accommodation, specifically designed for independent living. The schemes offer different levels of assistance and support. The schemes offering bedsit accommodation have undertaken a planned programme of refurbishment. In spite of this refurbishment some of the schemes remain hard to let. One such scheme is Churchill Court which was built in 1965 and comprises of 31 bedsits with shared facilities.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the options that are available for Churchill Court.

2. CURRENT USE AND FUTURE DEMAND FOR SHELTERED HOUSING

2.1 It has been identified that there is an over provision of sheltered housing in the District. Evidence for this comes from the number of hard to let dwellings and the time it takes to relet the properties after they become vacant. In 2001 it was identified that 5% of sheltered schemes were hard to let. In addition to 5 voids at Churchill Court, at the end of Dec 2003, 9 sheltered properties were waiting re allocation, with a void period of 1 – 6 weeks. (This figure does not include the 10 properties awaiting refurbishment / 4 new flats at Barfields Court).

2.2 Where refurbishment has been carried out, some of the schemes still remain hard to let. The lifestyle expectations of older people now mean they expect accommodation with their own facilities. Hard to let schemes can also be due to prospective tenants preferring to remain in their own home, with the services being brought to them e.g. community alarm, home care etc.

2.3 Churchill Court is classed as a hard to let property and requires extensive work to bring it to the standard of other accommodation within the area. Approximately 8 years ago the tenants were consulted regarding refurbishment and based on their views it was decided to leave it as it was.

2.4 During the last five years some of the void properties at Churchill Court have been allocated to households with a low level of need and to households from outside the area.

3. THE DISTRICT'S HOUSING NEEDS

3.1 The need for affordable housing in the District is increasing. Recent years have seen an upward trend in the size of the Homeseach Register. Currently there are 2911 households registered as being in housing need.

- 3.2 The Council's *Housing Needs and Market Assessment* undertaken in 2001 indicated an annual need for 879 new affordable dwellings a year until 2006 in order to remove the backlog and meet newly arising need.
- 3.3 The vast majority of the need is for general needs affordable housing to house single people, couples and families, with only 9% of the households on the Homesearch Register requiring sheltered housing. Of these, very few would accept bedsit accommodation.

4. OPTIONS

- 4.1 There are a number of options for the future of Churchill Court

Option	Comment
1. Do nothing.	The existing bedsits are proving unpopular and they will not provide suitable accommodation in the longer term.
2. Re-model scheme as self contained flats.	This would result in the reduction of the number of dwellings to 15. While this would provide better quality accommodation there is still a question mark over future demand and, importantly, there is strong evidence that indicates the needs for other forms of affordable accommodation are more pressing. Furthermore the cost of remodelling is likely to be between £750,000 and £1m.
3. Re-model the scheme as general needs affordable housing.	Again 15 single bed flats could be provided, however the approach does not maximise the site's capacity for providing housing.
4. Demolish the existing building and redevelop the site for general needs affordable housing	This offers the opportunity to maximise the number of dwellings that could be provided on the site. An initial appraisal suggest around 20 dwellings (mixture of houses and flats) could be accommodated. Such an approach would also allow the dwellings to be targeted at applicants to the Homesearch Register who are greatest in number.

5. CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Considering the future of a sheltered housing scheme raises a number of sensitive issues, not least the health and welfare of existing residents.

- 5.2 These issues must, however, be balanced with current and future demand for sheltered accommodation on this site, and in the District, and the District's other housing needs.

6. EXISTING TENANTS

- 6.1 Should members agree to options 3 or 4 careful consideration will need to be given to how existing tenants are re-housed. A suggested course of action is set out below.
- 6.2 Current tenants at Churchill Court will be given a choice as to whether or not to be placed on the list for rehousing. Tenants will not be forced to move, but it is expected that a majority of residents will decide to move and, as the number of residents declines, it is likely that all of the residents will, at some stage, elect to be transferred.
- 6.3 Those tenants who decide to be placed on the list will be given an urgent priority for a transfer and will be given choice over which vacancy they move to. Assistance in applying for vacancies will be provided by a Lettings Officer. The existing Sheltered Housing Manager will remain on site throughout the process to ensure maximum support and assistance is given to all the existing residents. Removal costs, up to a reasonable amount, will be paid by the Council.
- 6.4 In terms of timescale, it is expected that a process of re-housing residents could take as long as 5 years. Redevelopment could not commence until re-housing has been completed

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING'S COMMENTS

- 7.1 "Having met with the residents I am concerned that they need to fully understand the options regarding Churchill Court. I am well aware that we are dealing with vulnerable persons and discussing their homes, consequently I am well aware of the anxiety and uncertainty that this issue is having on them.
- 7.2 I accept that the districts housing needs are pressing, however, I am also aware of the personal needs of the present occupants. At present I do not have a preferred option, and as far as I am concerned all options are open.
- 7.3 My preliminary view of the options subject to further consultation is to progress outline details of options 2 and 4. I do not consider that option 3 producing 15 units for affordable housing is maximising the use. If the site is subsequently earmarked for general housing needs option 4 produces more units. I would like to see further work on options 2 & 4, in respect of costings and design. I would like the residents to be consulted again once these options are explored further. Although officers have had meetings with the residents from my contact with them, I am not currently satisfied that the residents fully understand the proposed options. I have no criticism of officers but I consider that the residents having a broad outline of the options as detailed in this paper is insufficient. I would wish to hear the residents views once they have studied all the options herewith along with detail of option 2 & 4."

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 To avoid the issue of the future of Churchill Court causing undue worry to the existing residents a number of meetings have been held at the Scheme to broach the subject of the possible future uses of the Scheme. The Portfolio Holder for Housing was present at two of these meetings. As a result of these meetings a draft of this report has been given to tenants and they have subsequently made written comments. These are attached at Appendix 1 together with a petition at Appendix 2 signed by residents and their families. Residents have particularly asked that these documents be made available to the Cabinet.
- 8.2 Ward members have been informed of the proposals.
- 8.2 The broad issues surrounding each option have been discussed with the existing residents and they have been advised of the implications of each option on their future residency. There is naturally concern amongst the residents and some of them are clearly worried and uncertain as to their future. All residents have been assured that if the closure were to be planned they may remain in the Scheme as long as they wish but they have also been advised that they will be given priority should they decide that they wish to move as a result of the current uncertainties.
- 8.3 If and when a decision on the future of Churchill Court is taken then further detailed consultation will need to be undertaken with the residents and support given to ensure the process is sympathetically dealt with.
- 8.3 Should closure be planned consultation would be undertaken with Unison in relation to the future role of the existing Sheltered Housing Manager if and when the Scheme is finally vacated. At this stage, in view of the likely timescale of any closure it is expected that the Sheltered Housing Manager would be able to relocate to another of the Council's Sheltered Schemes.
- 8.4 The Tenant's Consultative Group have also been consulted on these proposals and agree that the options contained within this report should be further investigated to ensure that any decision takes full account of all factors including the well being of the existing residents.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The financial implications depend on the option adopted. Details will be presented to Cabinet when they are asked for a decision.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The environmental implications depend on the option adopted. Details will be presented to Cabinet when they are asked for a decision.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The crime and disorder implications depend on the option adopted. Details will be presented to Cabinet when they are asked for a decision.

12 CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1 The quality of accommodation at Churchill Court is not up to current standards, where self-contained flats rather than bedsits are demanded. There are a range of pressing housing needs in the District, however it is also necessary to consider the needs of current residents. It is important that there are further discussions with residents and that a more detailed option appraisal is carried out before a final decision is made.

13. RECOMMENDATION

- 13.1 That members note this report and that further details of options and residents' views are brought back to a future meeting for a decision to be taken on the preferred option.

Background Papers:

Development Scheme File & Sheltered Housing Scheme File: contains some exempt information

Further Information:

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**Regarding the Report: Cabinet – 3 March 2004
Churchill Court, Gore Road, New Milton**

Having read this Report, the Tenants and their families consider this to be an unfair, biased and at times, factually very inaccurate assessment of the situation.

The Introduction.

1. (1.1) states that *'The schemes offering bedsit accommodation have undertaken a planned programme of refurbishment. In spite of this refurbishment, some of the schemes remain hard to let. One such scheme is Churchill Court which was built in 1965 and comprises of 31 bedsits with shared facilities'*.

This would lead the reader to assume that Churchill Court has already undergone a refurbishment programme – it has not.

Also, it does not comprise of 31 bedsits, but it has 7 double flats with lounge, bedroom, kitchen, toilet with share bathroom and shower facilities one self-contained double flat with two bedrooms (ex-warden's flat) and 23 bedsits.

Bedsit is an abbreviation of bedroom/sitting room that may also include the kitchen.

Regarding 2. Current Use and Future Demand for Sheltered Housing

This states *'that there is an over provision of sheltered housing in the district'*. We do not agree that this is the case in our area – otherwise there would be vacancies at Gore Grange, Barfields (Lymington) etc., and there are not. The bedsits may be harder to let here at Churchill Court because of shared bathroom facilities, but should refurbishment take place, as it has done very successfully at Barfields, there would be no problem letting the properties. Indeed, at St. Deny's New Milton (rented sheltered accommodation) there is a long waiting list of people hoping to be allocated these self-contained flats.

Also, as we all know, people are living longer, so we see a great demand for these types of living accommodation now and in the future.

Regarding 2.3

The Report states that *'Churchill Court is classed as a hard to let property'*. Again, it is only the bedsits that are difficult to let, whereas the flats in this block are very popular.

The Report states that *'Approximately 8 years ago the Tenants were consulted regarding refurbishment and based on their views, it was decided to leave it as it was'*. Actually, only about 3 or 4 Tenants objected at that time, so it was very much a minority view that this decision was based on.

Should refurbishment take place at Churchill Court, we think the flats would prove very popular, in actual fact, we believe more older single or couples would relinquish their family council homes, thereby freeing up more family accommodation in the area.

Regarding the OPTIONS

Option 1

Do nothing. The Reports states the existing bedsits are proving unpopular, but more existing tenants are living quite happily there and the double flats are popular. Again, the Report leads the reader to believe the building is made up of solely bedsits.

Option 2

We do not believe there would be a question mark over future demand should the scheme be re-modelled as discussed above. Also, putting grossly exaggerated costs of £750,000-£1m in this Report without accurate costings biases the Report against this option.

At the recent meeting called by the Tenants of Churchill Court, a petition, signed by the residents and over 120 relatives, was handed over to Mr Dave Brown, Assistant Director, Housing.

At this meeting another Option was discussed, which was to refurbish existing accommodation and build new accommodation – there is plenty of room on site. We would like this Option to be investigated and included in the Report for Cabinet.

Existing Tenants (para 6.2)

This states *'Tenants will not be forced to move, but it is expected that a majority of residents will decide to move'*.

Anyone who has attended the meetings at Churchill Court would know that the majority of Tenants firmly wish to stay put and would not move out of choice.

We wish to conclude that we are fully opposed to Churchill Court being closed. As we do not wish to move out of the New Milton area, a lot of us having close family nearby, we would strongly urge the Cabinet to consider Option 2 and also the new Option 5 discussed at the meeting on Wednesday 14th January, mentioned above, when the Tenants met with David Brown and Peter Greenfield.

To date there are no other comparable vacancies in sheltered accommodation in the New Milton area and clearly there is a demand for self-contained flats near to amenities for older people. As mentioned above, there is a long waiting list for St. Deny's in New Milton, which is also a sheltered accommodation scheme (Housing Association). We are living longer, as discussed above and whilst we are not ready for the 'Rest Home', we do like the security and companionship such accommodation provides.

At Churchill Court we have a pedestrian crossing right outside the building and a Recreation Centre, which many of us use for swimming etc.

We are also within walking distance of the Library, local churches and the town.

We do not consider this site suitable for young families, as it is right on the main road.

10: The Head of Housing Department,
New Forest District Council

PETITION FROM THE RELATIVES OF THE RESIDENTS OF CHURCHILL COURT, NEW MILTON, REGARDING THE PROPOSED RELOCATION.

We, the undersigned, fully support our relations in their wish not to be relocated from their homes at Churchill Court.

Signature	Print Name
A. J. Hillier	A. J. HILLIER.
J. Hillier	Joë L Hillier
B. J. Hillier	STEVEN HILLIER.
S. Gunnell	SJ GUNNELL
J. Hooper	I. G. HOOPER.
T. Rawlings	T RAWLINGS
P. Johnson	P. JOHNSON
S.	S. WITHERS
C. Booker	C BOOKER
A. Withers	A WITHERS.
S. Thompson	S THOMPSON
Tina Beard	TINA BEARD
Roy Tunbridge	ROY TUNBRIDGE
	G. G. GRACE
	M. Conliver
M. Wearin	M WEARIN
M. Maiden	M MAIDEN
D. Heridge	D HERIDGE
M. Russel	M. RUSSEL
Rita Scott	RITA SCOTT
I. Booth	I BOOTH
D. Hodson	D HODSON
G. Sloper	G SLOPER
B. Hayward	B HAYWARD
P. Wilkins	P WILKINS
A. Perrett	A PERRETT
Mrs MRS J. HESLOP	BESSIE & JOHN HESLOP
C. I. Taylor	C. I. TAYLOR
S. R. Hannant	S R HANNANT

P.T.O

Alcock	D HANNAH
Avril Spencer	A. SPENCER
J M Hunter	J. M. HUNTER
J W Hunter	J. W. HUNTER
Mr Mrs Scott	MR / MRS SCOTT
C. B. PULLINGER	C B Pullinger
G E PULLINGER	G E Pullinger
L. CONWAY	L. Conway
M Griffiths	M GRIFFITHS
D Court	D GAUNT.
P. Robinson	P. ROBINSON.
P. Robinson	P. ROBINSON
m WKB	MWEBB
P. Thorne	P. THORNE
E Thorne	E THORNE.
L Thorne	L HORNE
K Thorne	K HORNE

To: The Head of Housing Department,
New Forest District Council

PETITION FROM THE RELATIVES OF THE RESIDENTS OF CHURCHILL
COURT, NEW MILTON, REGARDING THE PROPOSED RELOCATION.

We, the undersigned, fully support our relations in their wish not to be relocated from
their homes at Churchill Court.

Signature	Print Name
<i>J.H. Dickson</i>	MRS. L.M. DICKSON
<i>M. Dickson</i>	MICHAEL DICKSON
<i>Stuart Dickson</i>	STUART DICKSON
<i>Russell Dickson</i>	RUSSELL DICKSON
<i>J.H. Durant</i>	MRS J. DURANT
<i>R. Durant</i>	MR R DURANT
<i>A. Durant</i>	MISS A DURANT
<i>Julian Pocock</i>	MR JULIAN POCKE
<i>L. Durant</i>	MISS L DURANT
<i>Ben Farwick</i>	CLER BEN FARWICKER
<i>L & B Robant</i>	LYNET BRIAN ROBANT

*CAUTION:
24 4000 RD
MILTON WARD*

(MILTON WARD)

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Signature	Print Name
E. Fields	BRIAN FIELDS
J. DRIVER.	JENNIFER DRIVER
G. Driver.	GEORGE - DRIVER.
B. Woodhouse	B Woodhouse
R. Bishop	R. Bishop.
M. Hiscotte	M. Hiscotte
M.E. Maidment	ME MAIDMENT.
BRIAN Maidment	BRIAN MAIDMENT.
DIANA maidment	DIANA MAIDMENT
G. Buckle.	CYRIL BUCKLE
F. White	FRO WHITE
S. Pidgeley	S. Pidgeley
C. Pidgeley	C. Pidgeley
Christopher Pidgeley	Christopher Pidgeley
Molly Wearn.	MOLLY WEARN.
I. Kummer	I KUMMER
P. Kummer	P. KUMMER
S. Kummer	S. KUMMER
M. Cole	M COLE
M. Kummer	M KUMMER
B. Tusler	B TUSLER
G. Pittley	G PITTLEY
M. Shopier	M SHOPIER.
S. Shopier	S. Shopier
G.R. Perrett	G. R. PERRETT
D.S. Perrett	D.S. PERRETT.
P. Palmer	P PALMER
B. Palmer	B PALMER
S. Perrett	S PERRETT
K. Perrett	K Perrett
J. Long	J. LONG
J. Long	J. LONG
N. Long	N. LONG

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Signature	Print Name
H. Deacon	H. DEACON
D Wilson	D Wilson
F. Tosdivine	F. TOSDIVINE
D. Deacon	D. DEACON
J Taylor	J. TRAYLOR
R L Vibert	R L VIBERT
M Hendry	M HENDRY
K Vibert	K VIBERT
B Woodruff	B WOODRUFF
T Hendry	T Hendry
K Tosdivine	K TOSDIVINE
K Deacon	K DEACON
E Mc CAW	E MCCAWE
A Woodford	A WOODFORD
M Woodford	M WOODFORD
K Woodford	K WOODFORD
J Guillaume	J. GUILLAUME
J. G. Singas	J. G. SINGAS
F. R Taylor	F. R. TAYLOR
L A McCaw	L A MCCAWE
L Hodson	L HODSON
F Hodson	F HODSON
S Hodson	S HODSON
M James	M JAMES
S James	S JAMES
L. J. Harris	L. J. HARRIS
K. J. Harris	K. J. HARRIS
Michelle Harris	Michelle Harris
Beverley Harris	BEVERLEY HARRIS
Craig Harris	CRAG HARRIS

