

## UPDATE ON THE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report is to update the Cabinet on the progress of the Review of Council's Sheltered Housing.
  - 1.2 A report was presented to the Housing Review Panel in June 2009 outlining NFDC's process for the provision of new "Older Persons Services" from 1 April 2012. This was then followed by a further report to the Panel on 16 June 2010 outlining the processes and outcomes involved in the first stage of the review. The Panel considered the matter again at a meeting on 11 January 2011 and supported the ongoing work. The proposals are intended to meet the increase in demand in the future for older person's accommodation and services and to also meet the developing requirements of the older person's agenda in terms of personalisation and the promotion of independence and choice as well as meeting support and care needs when necessary.
  - 1.3 The first phase of the proposals focused primarily on changes to accommodation and the decommissioning of a number of our existing sheltered housing schemes.
  - 1.4 The second phase of implementing the necessary change is now well underway and further visits have been made to all Sheltered Housing Schemes to inform residents of the proposed new service. The visits were undertaken by Dave Brown (Head of Housing), Pauline Lewis (Housing Estates Manager), Jane Wheeler (Sheltered Housing Service Manager), also attending many of the meetings were Councillor Jill Cleary (Housing Portfolio Holder) and Councillor Penny Jackman (Chairman of the Housing Review Panel). All local ward members were also invited to attend each meeting.
  - 1.5 The purpose of the visits was to inform the tenants directly of the new older person's service and, in some cases the changes to the status of their existing accommodation. A fact sheet, tailored to the proposals for the particular scheme, was left at each scheme after the visit answering many of residents' the commonly asked questions and detailing the impact of any changes on their scheme. A generic example of the Fact Sheet is attached at Appendix 1.
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- 1.6 Many tenants are understandably concerned by how the new service delivery will affect them individually. However, Officer's experience from the meetings held at the schemes is that once the changes proposed were explained in more detail, many of their concerns were alleviated.

### 2. THE PROPOSED OLDER PERSON'S SERVICE

- 2.1 New Forest District Council's Sheltered Housing Service will, from 1 April 2012, become known NFDC's Older Persons Housing & Support Service. The name "Sheltered Housing" will no longer be used and the service will be provided in a different way. Currently Sheltered Housing is managed by 14 Sheltered

Housing Managers each of whom carry out a generic role supporting older people in their homes. This role includes housing related support, tenancy and landlord functions and organising and encouraging social events and activities.

2.2 83% of the role of the Sheltered Housing Managers is funded by Hampshire County Council's Supporting People grant for an accommodation based service for housing related support. From 1 April 2012 NFDC's older person's service will move more towards meeting the personalisation agenda and direct the funding for housing related support to the individual rather than simply to older people just because they live in sheltered housing. This is in line with Hampshire County Council's direction for older person's support across the whole of Hampshire.

2.3 From 1 April 2012 a new older person's service will be launched whereby the existing generic role of the Sheltered Housing Manager will be split into 3 distinct and specialist areas of:-

- Community Support Officers
- Tenancy & Scheme Support Officers
- Involvement, Events & Activities Coordinators

It is anticipated that the existing Sheltered Housing Managers will be assimilated into these new roles. Their existing skills, knowledge and expertise mean that they have easily transferable skills which will allow them to transfer into one of the newly identified specialist roles. These changes will mean that the Council can focus very clearly on positive outcomes for individuals rather than providing a service to older people who happen to be fortunate enough to live in a sheltered housing scheme.

2.4 The Community Support Officers will be funded by the Supporting People Subsidy and will undertake only the housing related support service whereby they will assist with signposting and assisting clients to the relevant agencies. They will be managed within the new Older Persons Support Service.

2.5 The Tenancy & Scheme Support Officers will be moved into the existing Neighbourhood & Tenancy Management Team within the Housing Estates Service and deal with the management of the schemes, and all landlord and tenancy issues such as accompanied viewings and repairs and maintenance. These posts will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account.

2.6 The Involvement, Events & Activities Coordinators will also be funded by the Supporting People Subsidy and will be based within the Resident Involvement Service with the responsibility of delivering more events and activities for Older Persons by using our retained schemes as "hubs" to involve not only tenants but members of the community.

2.7 Tenants will have a choice of whether or not they wish to receive support when the new service launches and a new needs assessment will be undertaken with all tenants 6 months prior to the launch of the new service which will enable a schedule of regular visits and appointments to be made to suit the needs of the individual.

- 2.8 Early negotiations with the existing Sheltered Housing Managers have identified concerns from their point of view and discussions to try to resolve these concerns are still on-going. However, until the future is clearer regarding the likely impact of any government cuts on the Supporting People Budget discussions have been temporarily suspended.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no immediate financial implications as a direct result of this report. However, until the full implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review are known, it is not possible to quantify any future financial implications. It can, however, be confirmed at this time that there are not anticipated to be any increased costs arising from the new older person's service. A further report will be presented to the Panel during 2011 setting out the new staffing structure and any financial implications arising.

### **4. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications as a result of this report, but it is well known that many older people have a fear of crime and sheltered and designated older persons' accommodation which is properly designed and secure can go some way to reducing this fear of crime.

### **5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no environmental implications as a direct result of this report.

### **6. TENANTS' COMMENTS**

- 6.1 The Tenants Housing Policy and Report Focus Group representatives supported the proposals.

### **7. HOUSING REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS**

- 7.1 The Housing Panel at their meeting on 11 January 2011 supported the review process for the Sheltered Housing service and agreed the ongoing changes.

### **8. HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COMMENTS**

- 8.1 I believe that the new older person's support service for New Forest residents whether they live in our older person's accommodation or in the community will provide a fairer and a more personalised service for many older people. I am aware that the New Forest has an increasing older population and I am confident that in making the changes as detailed in this report we will position our service in such a way that we can meet the increasing demands for older person's support services and ensure scarce resources are focused where they are needed.

## 9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 The Cabinet is asked to support this review process and note the arrangements underway to achieve the changes.

### **For Further Information Please Contact:**

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### **Background Papers:**

Review Panel Reports  
June 2009  
June 2010

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Will there still be Sheltered Housing Managers on Site every day?**  
No there will no longer be a Sheltered Housing Service therefore there will no longer be Sheltered Housing Managers on site on a daily basis.
- 2. How will the new service be provided?**  
The generic role of the Sheltered Housing Manager will be split into 3 new roles:

  - Community Support Officers
  - Tenancy & Scheme Support Officers
  - Involvement, Events & Activities Coordinators
- 3. What will the new service be called?**  
The name for the new service has yet to be decided. Competitions have been advertised and tenants and staff have been asked to submit suggestions.
- 4. Who will deliver the new roles**  
The new roles will be undertaken and delivered by the existing Sheltered Housing Managers who will move from the generic role to specialist roles as shown in question 2.
- 5. If a tenant lives in a scheme which is being “decommissioned” what does this mean?**  
All schemes which are to be decommissioned will from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 become general needs accommodation for allocation to people over the age of 45 years old.
- 6. Will tenants still be able to receive support if they remain in a decommissioned scheme?**  
Yes, they will still receive support wherever they live if they need it.
- 7. Will tenants still have an alarm service in the schemes and flats?**  
Yes. All tenants who need an alarm service will retain it.
- 8. Who will deal with housekeeping and tenancy issues in the schemes?**  
The tenancy and scheme support officers will deal with all landlord functions.
- 9. What is the difference with the schemes which are being “retained.”?**  
The schemes which are being retained will have a higher age limit for allocation and only people over the age of 65 years old with a support need will be permitted to apply to live in these schemes.
- 10. If a tenant is under 65 years at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 and lives in a scheme which is being retained will they have to move out?**  
No. Any tenant who currently lives in one of our schemes which is being retained may remain there for as long as they wish.

**11. Will there be any “presence” on site at the schemes if there are no longer going to be Sheltered Housing Managers?**

Yes there will be presence on site from the Community Support Officers who will be undertaking scheduled visits with clients as well as presence on site by the tenancy and scheme support officers who will be undertaking Health & Safety checks , Fire Checks, viewings, sign ups and all other landlord functions.

**12. How much time will Officers be present on site?**

This will depend on the number of tenants at each scheme and their individual support needs, however it is envisaged that there will be slightly more presence at the retained schemes than the decommissioned units.

**13. What happens to tenants who currently live in a scheme which is to be decommissioned and they wish to move to a “retained” scheme?**

Tenants will be offered the choice of staying where they are or moving to a retained scheme and financial assistance will be given to accommodate these moves. A priority transfer list will be set up and existing tenants will have priority to move.

**14. Will tenants still be able to have scheme meetings?**

Yes. Scheme meetings will be very important and undertaken in consultation with tenants on the frequency they would prefer.

**15. What will happen to tenants who live in Sheltered Housing who choose not to have support under the new service?**

These tenants will have the choice to opt out of a support service which means they will not pay for this part of the service charge. Tenants will only pay for the services they want apart from the general service charge which covers utilities etc for communal areas.

**16. Will tenants have to pay more for the new support service?**

The support service is funded by Supporting People therefore all tenants who currently receive the service via the Sheltered Housing Manager and who are on benefits will not have to pay for the service.

If new tenants or older persons in the community wish to receive support it will depend on their individual financial circumstances. We are able to offer this service to people who self fund as well as people on benefits.

**17. How is the funding from Supporting People administered?**

The funding is given through a contract which lasts for 3 years. The contract states how many clients it will fund and how many hours of support each client can receive. Clients will receive support based on their individual needs.