

## **REPORT OF CABINET**

**(Meeting held on 5 August 2009)**

### **1. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF SHELTERED HOUSING ACCOMMODATION (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 21)**

The Cabinet has agreed proposals for changes to the provision of older people's accommodation in the district to meet changing demand in the future. The proposals will ensure that the provision of accommodation and support will meet the developing requirements of the older people's agenda in terms of personalisation and the promotion of independence and choice, as well as meeting support and care needs when necessary.

Following a County-wide strategic review of sheltered housing a number of issues were identified in relation to some of the existing sheltered housing schemes within the District that required works to bring them up to modern day standards for sheltered housing and to meet the current requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. The review also identified some schemes that were considered to be poorly located in terms of access to shops, transport links and other amenities for the older residents.

Currently, funding is received from 'Supporting People' for the Council's sheltered housing schemes. All district sheltered housing schemes will continue to be funded for the next 3 years, until April 2012. However, beyond that time, the issues raised in the review need to be addressed or those schemes identified will not be eligible for designation as sheltered housing and therefore no longer be eligible for funding.

The changes proposed will ensure that the work that is done in the New Forest will continue to meet the residents' needs and at the same time contribute to the wider Hampshire older people's strategy. A greater range of older persons' accommodation will be provided and will offer older residents choice in the accommodation and support they need, as well as ensuring that when care is necessary it can be provided in accommodation with the full support of Hampshire County Council Adult Services.

In addition to the proposed accommodation-based changes described in detail at Appendix 1 to Report A to the Cabinet, further work is also being carried out to review other support provided to older people in the district. The emphasis will be on support being provided more generally to older people wherever they live, rather than simply because they are living in designated sheltered housing.

The Cabinet agreed that the ultimate aim will be to ensure that whatever type of accommodation an older person lives in, they will be entitled to a support package of a type that meets their needs.

The needs of the residents are paramount and addressing their individual requirements is the most important aspect of the process. The Council will ensure that all tenants understand that if they require support or assistance in any form then this can and will still be provided for them. There will be no timing gaps in service provision during the changes and residents will be consulted on every aspect of a proposal as it affects them. As decisions are made on individual sheltered housing schemes they will be considered by the Housing Review Panel. Local members will also be consulted on individual scheme decisions.

The new proposals will give many older people the opportunity to elect to remain in their own homes for longer as they will have the support that they need rather than having to move to other forms of care or support based accommodation.

The changes will be assessed over the next 3 years and will not be implemented to take effect until April 2012. This will give time for the necessary consultation with residents of existing sheltered schemes, older people more generally and the staff who may be affected by any changes.

## **2. ST ANTHONY'S HOSTEL, LYNDHURST ROAD, ASHURST (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 22)**

The Cabinet has agreed to the sale of St Anthony's Hostel, Lyndhurst Road, Ashurst with the proceeds from the sale being used to make provision for an alternative hostel in a more suitable location, either by purchasing an existing property or by providing a purpose built new hostel.

As a result of a strategic review of the Council's existing hostel accommodation and housing need it has become clear that some of the Council's hostel accommodation is no longer suitable for the changing demands of the housing needs the Council now face.

Work has been undertaken to forecast the work needed on all the Council's hostels and to quantify the expenditure necessary to bring this type of accommodation to a level that meets the changing requirements.

The use of hostels by the housing service has changed over the years as a direct result of the pressures on affordable rented housing. When originally designed, St Anthony's and the Council's other remaining hostels were used as temporary accommodation for homeless families awaiting permanent accommodation. This was usually only for a matter of weeks at a time. Unfortunately, the serious shortage for affordable rented housing now means that people can be housed in hostels for as long as two years.

Properties like St Anthony's are old, outdated and bed/sit rooms are some distance away from bathrooms and kitchens. To rectify these conditions will require considerable investment to make them suitable as reasonable temporary accommodation for homeless families. This will not be a good use of scarce resources. The sale of St Anthony's hostel will release funds that will provide a better replacement hostel facility, in a more convenient town location and in better repair.

Repair works to the rest of the Council's hostels will be undertaken on a prioritised basis and incorporated into the Planned Maintenance programme of work over the next five years.

## **3. CONSULTATION ON PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH EAST : PROVISION FOR GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE (REPORT C) (MINUTE NO. 23)**

In 2006/07 the Government introduced new rules requiring all local authorities to allocate sufficient legal stopping places for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people.

Following work done in September 2008 on the total amount of provision required, the Cabinet, in November 2008 supported an option based on the Council's own needs assessment which proposed that NFDC should have 5 pitches for gypsies and travellers and 5 pitches for travelling show people for the period 2006-2016. A formal response was made to then South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) on this basis.

However, in March 2009 SEERA formally agreed to recommend an option for a level of redistribution across the region in order to seek a more 'balanced' pitch distribution.

This now means a requirement for New Forest District, including the National Park, for 9 additional pitches for gypsies and travellers and 11 pitches for travelling show people. However, since the Local Development Framework looks beyond the 2016 end date for that provision to 2026, the total additional provision for the period 2006-2026 will amount to 26.5 pitches for gypsies and travellers, and 17 pitches for travelling show people.

The Cabinet agree that the proposed option, with the consequent increase in pitch numbers for the district, does not take account of the needs in the area nor the environmental issues and would be detrimental to both local people and the local environment. The Cabinet has therefore agreed a response to the partial review of the South East Plan on provision for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people as set out in Report C to them, explaining that the Council does not support the redistributive approach to the distribution of pitch provision.

**Cllr B Rickman  
CHAIRMAN**