

**Decision Session: Executive Leader
(incorporating Housing and Safer
Neighbourhoods)**

23 January 2017

Report of the Assistant Director - Housing and Community Safety

**The Future of Customer Focussed and Sustainable Housing
Management in Sheltered Housing.**

Summary

1. This briefing note provides an update on the way in which tenants in sheltered housing, and sheltered with care housing, will be affected by the proposed housing re-structure.
2. The report seeks approval to proceed with the proposed changes as part of the wider changes in the approach to housing management across the council owned stock.

Recommendation

3. The Executive Leader (incorporating Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods) is asked to:
 - approve the proposal for providing housing management services to tenants in sheltered housing as part of a re-focussed housing landlord service.
 - To change the on site service provision in Gale Farm Court and Barstow House, following appropriate consultation with tenants, to bring them in line with other sheltered housing schemes.

Reason: to bring these schemes in line with the other sheltered schemes and support the proposals to restructure the landlord service.

Background

4. There are 11 sheltered and sheltered with care schemes, 365 tenancies in total, which provide self contained accommodation with access to communal areas and an element of on-site staffing. The purpose of the schemes is to provide safe, appropriate and sustainable homes for those who need supported housing due to a combination of age and health and wellbeing needs. The schemes are primarily for the over 60's, although those under 60 are considered on a case by case basis where there are relevant health and wellbeing needs.
5. Sheltered Housing: There are 7 sheltered housing schemes with a housing officer on site for 24 hours per week. Tenants' access sheltered housing through North Yorkshire Home Choice, and complete an additional form to self-identify a need for sheltered housing. If tenants require care this will be assessed and commissioned by social services through a private care provider or arranged by the individual through a personal budget.
6. Sheltered with extra care: There is one scheme (Glen Lodge) with pre-planned care available 24/7 on site, and plans to extend this provision to Marjorie Waite Court during 2017. A housing officer is on site 37 hours a week, there is also a care team based on site offering pre-planned care commissioned through social services, and able to respond to emergency unplanned care needs subject to availability. Properties in sheltered with extra care housing are allocated by a panel made up of social workers, housing and care providers. Referrals are considered on the basis of need, with the purpose of helping people to live at home as long as possible and preventing the need for residential care admissions.
7. Sheltered housing with a care team on site: There are 2 sheltered housing schemes (Barstow House and Gale Farm Court) with a scheme manager on site for 37 hours per week. If tenants require care this will be assessed and commissioned by social services through a care provider or arranged by the individual through a personal budget. There is a council care team (PSS) based on site at each of these locations between around 8am and 10pm. The PSS care team is the preferred provider in these schemes, subject to their service capacity and tenant choice. This team provides planned care, not reactive, emergency or overnight care. If a tenant needs more support this is provided through their commissioned

care package, by the scheme manager or through Be Independent out of hours.

8. All sheltered housing properties are connected to an emergency alarm system, and all tenants are provided with a pendant or wrist alarm. When the scheme manager is on site they answer all emergency alarm calls, out of hours this is provided by Be Independent, who will respond in person or take other action as appropriate. The cost of the Be Independent service is currently covered by the council General fund and not passed on to tenants, a separate report proposes changes to this funding approach.
9. An average of 80% scheme manager time is spent on intensive housing management, with an average of 20% of time spent on support.
10. Tenants currently pay £16.71 towards the cost of a scheme manager on site, which is pooled across all 365 sheltered scheme tenancies, so that the same charge applies regardless of the number of properties in a scheme. This equates to approximately 20 hours of on site presence per scheme.
11. The scheme managers provide a service which includes the following:
 - a. Regular building checks including fire alarm testing.
 - b. Equipment checks in properties on warden call equipment.
 - c. Responding to emergency calls from tenants in scheme hours
 - d. Give all new tenants information on the scheme and local community amenities and services.
 - e. Make check calls Mon-Fri on tenants who have requested this
 - f. Co-ordinate and encourage tenants to join in social activities.
 - g. Ensure that tenants complete relevant Housing Benefit forms.
 - h. Quickly address any issues relating to breach of security or health and safety issues in the building.
 - i. Manage the voids and letting process.

- j. Respond to low level tenancy issues such as low level anti-social behaviour, disputes between tenants, or inappropriate behaviour in the communal areas.
12. As well as a scheme manager based on site each sheltered housing scheme is part of a wider housing patch, with an estate manager, income estate manager and tenancy housing assistant responsible for the site as part of their patch. There is therefore duplication with different housing officers being involved with the tenant in regard to different tenancy issues such as rent, anti-social behaviour or mutual exchange.
 13. A Housing service restructure is currently being consulted on, the principle behind this is to deliver tailored, proactive, holistic management of tenancies, dovetailing with and complementing council and other services for the benefit of tenants and their families. By providing advice, early help and low-level preventative work in disciplines outside the 'traditional' housing boundaries, the Housing Management Service will help tenants maintain their tenancy, health and wellbeing and reduce their need for more costly interventions.
 14. Within the new 'Housing Management Service' this will develop an integrated patch-based model, creating a single role rather than the current plethora of different roles, providing named officers for all tenants. Staff would work with all households in their patch as a single point of contact. There will be an emphasis on more contact with tenants in their own homes across the housing stock. All households will receive a periodic visit, to discuss their tenancy and wider needs. The level of intervention / support to tenants will be based on their profile / needs.
 15. In terms of sheltered housing, this will mean that a housing officer will be on site for an average of 24 hours per week, in addition they will have a small patch that extends beyond the scheme, using the scheme as their main base to work from. Tenants will see the same number of hours provided on site, and rather than needing to speak to different staff members tenants will get a full housing management service provided by one staff member that they know.
 16. In sheltered housing with a care team on site (Gale Farm Court and Barstow House) there are currently 37 on site hours. This is a result of the historic provision of on-site care in the scheme, however the care provision now is delivered in the same way as in sheltered

housing schemes, as only planned care is delivered. The proposal is to provide a housing officer on site 24 hours a week, in line with other sheltered housing schemes, to provide a holistic housing management service including regular welfare checks and emergency response. Tenants needing more intensive support will be referred through the single access point for floating support tailored to their needs. The floating support service provides a comprehensive offer of support, including focussed outcome based support flexibility supporting tenants with activities or tasks both at home and outside the scheme.

17. The proposed changes support the overall approach of Landlord services, as well as the adult social care agenda to prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal social care or health interventions. This will be achieved through protecting those elements of the service which contribute most to reducing the need for formal care, including emergency response and regular checks. In addition the proposed changes will strengthen community links and resilience, within the schemes and with the wider community. This will include actively working to involve local people in volunteering or participating in social activities in order to reduce social isolation and develop strong communities.
18. In order to support this approach across the whole housing stock it is proposed that the housing officer working on site in sheltered housing schemes will not have the same role as currently in relation to social activity. Instead, a new 'Active Communities Officer' role will be created. The purpose of this role will be to develop volunteering, community activity and community cohesion across the housing stock, with particular reference to sheltered housing schemes. A dedicated role will mean that more focussed attention can be given to this important function, and ensure that good practice is duplicated across different locations. This will deliver a benefit to tenants, as well as to older or more vulnerable people across the housing stock.
19. In 24/7 extra care housing schemes (Glen Lodge currently, Marjorie Waite Court by end 2017) the tenants typically have a high level of care and support need, which has resulted in their referral into the scheme. Whilst care needs are met by the on-site care team there are a higher number of emergency calls which the scheme manager currently responds to whilst on site. It is anticipated that this need will continue, and is likely to increase when the extension to the scheme is completed as it is likely that the number of tenants living

with dementia will also increase significantly over time. This is still a relatively new service and the proposal is to continue to provide 37 hours on-site housing officer at least until the model is fully embedded.

20. There are a number of sheltered housing schemes provided through social landlords and charities. As part of the re-tender of housing related support services the council general fund will not provide any funding for external sheltered housing schemes from January 2017. All tenants with a need for support will be referred to the floating support service commissioned through Yorkshire Housing. This change in approach ensures older people can access housing related support regardless of tenure type.

Consultation

21. Consultation has not been undertaken with tenants, pending approval for this approach. If this approach is agreed then consultation will begin, this will include group and 1-1 meetings, as well as written information.
22. Consultation has been undertaken with the adult social care commissioning team. They are in support of this direction, which is consistent with external providers and is more equitable in terms of treating all tenants the same regardless of the tenancy they live in.
23. Consultation has been undertaken with the lead officers for the Personal support service and the older persons' accommodation project lead. They are in support of this approach.

Options

24 **Option 1**

- To change the on site service provision in Gale Farm Court and Barstow House, following appropriate consultation with tenants, to bring them in line with other sheltered housing schemes.

25. **Option 2**

- To continue to provide 37 hours of on site staffing in Gale Farm Court and Barstow House.

Analysis

26. **Option 1:** This would support the wider aims of the restructure, by supporting the move towards smaller patch sizes, reducing duplication, and providing a holistic service. The tenants in these schemes would receive a high quality of support:

- Emergency alarm calls: The housing officer will respond when on site, and Be Independent will respond at all other times. Performance monitoring shows that where an in person response is required from Be Independent the average response time is 12 minutes.
- 1-1 support needs: Yorkshire Housing will provide support through single access point referrals. This is an outcome focussed flexible support service which works in a personalised way with all tenants.
- Social activities: the new 'Active Communities Officer' role, will ensure this need continues to be met.
- Early intervention and prevention: This will continue to be met by the housing officer in line with the new.
- Safety and security of the scheme: This will continue to be met by the housing officer.
- Community involvement: The housing officer will have a patch which extends beyond the scheme, this will help to promote community integration especially with older people living nearby to increase opportunities for social contact.

27. **Option 2:** This will create a challenge in delivering the wider aims of the restructure:

- The housing officer working from these schemes will have a patch restricted to the scheme, which will mean other patches have to be larger.
- It will restrict the opportunities to enlarge the role of the scheme in the local community, through the housing officer linking other local older people into the scheme, or attracting local volunteers into the scheme.
- The general fund will no longer be applied to this part of the service delivery, as functions such as the emergency response will be classed as an ancillary part of the housing officers role, and funded through the HRA. If the service continues to provide 37 hours on site this will increase the cost to the HRA and will make the model financially unviable.

Council Plan

28. This proposal will fit with the council plan in focussing on frontline Services, it will also contribute towards the need to prevent, reduce and delay the need for health or social care interventions.

Implications

29. Financial

The proposals in the report will have no financial impact on tenants. They will continue to receive all the on site hours that they pay for through the service charge, and no additional charges will be made to them. The cost of the new Active Communities Officer post will be met from existing resources as a result of the overall restructure of Landlord Services.¹ This proposal makes better use of staff resources, and enables the housing service to continue to improve the quality of service to tenants, rather than delivering a financial saving.

- **Human Resources (HR)**

There are human resources issues in relation to front line staff affected by the restructure. Human resources are involved in providing advice and guidance throughout the restructure process. It is not anticipated that there will be any compulsory redundancies.

- **Equalities**

There are no equalities issues.

- **Legal**

There are no legal issues

- **Crime and Disorder**

There are no crime and disorder implications.

- **Information Technology (IT)**

There are no IT implications

¹ This does not entail an additional cost. Community engagement and activity is an ancillary HRA function, and in this case it is appropriate to roll this up into one post, rather than as a small part of many posts, to achieve efficiency and effectiveness.

- **Property**

There are no property implications.

- **Other**

Risk Management

30. There is a risk of tenant complaints or adverse publicity if the consultation is not managed sensitively, therefore this will be key.

Contact Details

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**Report
Approved**



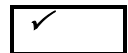
Date 12.12.16

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial Implications:
Isobel Jones
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Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Reports:

None

Annexes

None