

Area Panels: January 2015

Briefing Paper: Sheltered Housing Service Offer

Background

Brighton & Hove City Council has 23 schemes providing homes for over 850 older people. Following a comprehensive review of the service in 2013 and in consultation with the Senior Housing Action Group, a detailed service offer has been drafted, setting out the revised aims and purpose of the service.

Why we reviewed the service

The service had not been comprehensively reviewed for over ten years. With an anticipated increase in the demand upon health and social care due to an ageing population, and with continuing pressures on public funding, the service was keen to ensure that it could continue to make a valuable contribution in supporting older people.

There had been a shift at a national and local level towards more 'preventative' services – services that keep people well as well as treat them when they become unwell. The service was keen to ensure that its policy better reflected this wider strategic change.

Our tenants, through the Senior Housing Action Group, also asked us to be clearer on the aims and purposes, and for the council to set a policy for the service. The review therefore sought to set a clear direction and to ensure that the service we delivered was one which our tenants said that they wanted and valued.

What the new offer means

Given the benefits of living in a scheme, the service wanted its 'offer' to older people to be both positive and appealing – for the service to encourage and support ageing well. This 're-thinks' the service as something less institutional and more aspirational.

Within the new offer, the aims and purposes of the service are to:

- Provide well-designed and maintained housing enabling residents to live comfortably as they age.
- Enable residents to live and age well so they can keep well and remain independent, safe and happy at home.
- Offer opportunities for residents to comfortably maintain or improve their health, care, resilience and wellbeing.
- Build vibrant, sociable and compassionate communities so residents can sustain friendships and feel a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Create opportunities for residents to enjoy using their own personal skills, creativity, interests, knowledge and abilities.

- Intervene in a timely and sensitive way where someone isn't thriving so they receive the help, care and/or support they need to enable them to do so.
- Work collaboratively and creatively with a wide range of people and organisations to improve the lives of people and the communities in which they live.
- Ensure that the most vulnerable residents are properly supported, and particularly those at risk from harm or those who feel socially isolated and lonely.

Although the offer relates to the service provision, this more aspirational approach also dovetails with the asset management review (presented to Area Panels in November and December 2014) which recommends how the building stock can be improved.

Feedback so far

There has been comprehensive consultation with our residents and tenant associations, and the draft service offer has been agreed by majority vote by representatives at the Senior Housing Action Group.

In agreeing the draft service offer, the Senior Housing Action Group has also proposed that the name 'Sheltered Housing' be replaced with 'Seniors Housing – Independent and Community Living'. The Senior Housing Action Group believe this name better reflects

Why these recommendations have been brought to Area Panels

To seek the Area Panel representatives comments prior to the report being presented to Housing Committee in March 2015.

Next steps

All feedback will be considered and summarised in the report being presented to Housing Committee

If agreed the changes

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AREA PANELS

Agenda Item

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Sheltered Housing Service – Revised Offer		
Date of Meeting:	26, 28, 29 and 30 January 2015		
Report of:	Geoff Raw -Executive Director, Environment, Development & Housing		
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Wards(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Following a review of the sheltered housing service conducted in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Housing in 2013, recommendations are being made to better define the aims and purposes of the sheltered housing service by having a clear service offer, and for this to be adopted as policy. Furthermore a name change is being proposed to reflect the new offer.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Area Panels comment on the following recommendations:
- The revised service offer for sheltered housing to be adopted as policy.
 - The name change of the service from ‘Sheltered housing’ to ‘Seniors Housing – Independent and Community Living’.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 Nationally and locally, the population is ageing and living longer. Within Brighton & Hove the number of people aged 65 or above is projected to increase by 12% between 2011 and 2021. Within this, there is a projected 48% increase of people aged 90 and above.
- 3.2 There are currently 2500 people over 60 registered on the council’s housing register for housing - of these about 700 have expressed an interest in sheltered housing. Research carried out by the housing Policy and Performance team in December 2013 indicated that some older applicants had not considered this housing option or didn’t know how to apply for it.

- 3.3 This demographic change, with an expected increase in demands upon health and social care services, is happening against a continuing background of austerity within the public sector. The council has to save £102m over the period 2015/16 to 2019/20, around 30% of the net budget. Around £62m is a result of reducing government grant whilst the remaining £40m comes from increases in the cost and demand for services, particularly a pressure on social care services.
- 3.4 There is a local and national emphasis on a more preventative approach to health and social care. This report is therefore set within the following strategic context:
- The Health & Social Care Act 2012 transferred the responsibility for delivering public health from the NHS to local government and highlighted that more needed to be done to prevent ill health.
 - The council's Corporate Plan 2011-15 identified a priority to tackle inequality by supporting vulnerable people to live health, independent lives and to provide decent, affordable housing.
 - The council's Sustainable Community Strategy identified a priority to maximise the use of housing to provide a basis for delivery health, care and support services to vulnerable people.
 - The council's Sustainability Action Plan identified a principle (as one of its ten 'One Planet Principles') to encourage active, sociable living to promote good health and wellbeing.
 - The council's market position statement for Adult Social Care 2014 identified a commissioning priority for preventative services that delay or reduce the need for social care. Sheltered housing was identified as having a significant role as a preventative service.
 - The draft Housing Strategy 2015 identifies that that sheltered housing has an important role in improving social networks and wellbeing and that it should develop better links with neighbouring communities.
- 3.5 Given the changing context in which the sheltered housing service operates, a major review was commissioned in March 2013. The review, conducted in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), aimed to ensure that the service not only retained its strategic relevance, but also delivered one which would be most beneficial and welcomed by older people. One of the main objectives of the review was to better define the aims and purpose of the service. This objective was shared by the Senior Housing Action Group who requested that the council set a clear policy for the service.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Following the service review, the findings have been used to better define the aims and purpose of the council's sheltered housing service. The revised offer is included in appendix 1.

- 4.2 The revised offer takes a more positive approach to ageing, recognising an ‘asset’ approach in which older people build upon their strengths, skills, capacities and abilities to keep or remain as well and happy as possible. This replaces a largely ‘deficit’ approach to ageing which focuses on problems, needs and deficiencies – with staff working to see how gaps can be met. It is recognised that a deficit approach can result in disempowerment and dependency whilst an asset approach encourages the active involvement and co-operation of service users as equal partners. This shift in emphasis towards active ageing not only reflects the findings of the review in providing more opportunities to participate, but also the wider strategic commitment to developing a more age friendly city.
- 4.3 The revised offer strengthens the role in its staffs supporting and encouraging residents to stay well rather than predominately focusing on intervening when someone falls unwell. This focus on prevention not only reflects the finding of the review in working more closely with health and social care, but also reflects the wider strategic shift towards preventative services.
- 4.4 The revised offer makes explicit the community aspect of sheltered housing and encourages the development of sociable communities. One of the key benefits of sheltered housing has been its communal facilities and the opportunities for residents to live in a more sociable and neighbourly way. This focus not only reflects the recommendations of the review with regards to developing social activities but also wider strategic shifts towards tackling loneliness and isolation in the city.
- 4.5 The revised offer highlights a commitment to being more explicit about the outcome and benefit of the service. Although not expressed within the review or by tenants, it is essential, given the national and local financial context, that as well as setting out what the purpose of the service is, the offer also makes a commitment to being clearer on cost and value by introducing an annual value statement and reviewing the current performance framework.
- 4.6 The revised offer continues to support the role of the site-based scheme manager. A proposal had been made by the council in 2008 to change the delivery of the sheltered service from site-based scheme management to a more team-based approach. This proposal was rejected by the Senior Housing Action Group and resulted in a petition of 750 sheltered residents formally requesting the retention of site-based scheme managers. A similar proposal made by the CIH in their final report to cluster scheme managers and develop a floating support service has been considered but rejected as it is inconsistent with a model of delivery favoured by sheltered residents and expressed by the Senior Housing Action Group. The service offer therefore retains the site-based scheme manager as a key element of its service and through a remodelling of the charging mechanisms in April 2014 is increasing the numbers of full time scheme managers from 21 to 25 employees.

5 REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

- 5.1 As well as the findings providing the basis for the service offer, the recommendations of the CIH have also been used by the service to make a range of improvements:
- 5.2 The review recommended that the current allocation system for sheltered housing be improved. As a result, a project is currently underway reviewing the process for letting sheltered housing to see where it can be more efficient and improve customer focus.
- 5.3 The review recommended a comprehensive asset review and commented on the high number of studio flats with the poor living space this provided. As a result, a comprehensive asset review has been undertaken by the Asset Review Manager with a range of recommendations to ensure that the schemes remain fit for purpose into the future. A recommendation to remodel studio flats into one bedroom flats has already been successfully carried out at our Sanders House and Evelyn Court sheltered schemes.
- 5.4 The review recommended that the council improve the way in which communal areas are decorated to make them more vibrant. As a result, a decorating programme has already improved a number of our sheltered schemes during 2014 to 'Rainbow Standard' ensuring a better environment for those with a visual impairment. A 10 year cyclical programme for upgrading internal decoration, furnishing and fittings has also been recommended as a result of asset review. The service is also working closely with the Fabrica Art Gallery and other local arts groups to improve the visual arts within the schemes.
- 5.5 The review recommended a consistent approach to older people engaging in the wider community and that a post be funded to co-ordinate this. At the time of the review, Adult Social Care had commissioned the Fed to take on a co-ordinating role across the city to improve social connectivity amongst older people. Rather than duplicate a co-ordinating role, the service now sits on the Citywide Connect Partnership Board alongside The Fed ensuring that sheltered schemes work closely with other agencies to improve relationships and address loneliness. The revised offer strengthens the role of sheltered housing in developing sociable and compassionate communities.
- 5.6 The review recommended that sheltered housing develop and deliver a wide range of services including health checks, screening and health promotion activities. As a result the service now works closely with Public Health and sits on the Age Friendly Steering Group. In 2014 the service worked with the NHS to promote smoking awareness and winter flu vaccination, and with the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership to promote the healthy weight service. The revised offer strengthens this preventative health role.
- 5.7 The review highlighted a concern about a lack of consistency in front line staffing. Following a remodelling of the charging mechanism for the service in agreed by Budget Council on 5 March 2014, the number of scheme managers within the service staffing structure has been increased from 21 to 25 employees. New staff have been recruited with tenant representation on the recruitment panel.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Older Persons Housing Manager and the Chair of the Senior Housing Action Group gave a joint presentation at the Housing Management Sub-Committee in March 2013 setting out why a review was required.
- 6.2 The review of sheltered housing was undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) between April and December 2013.
- 6.3 The CIH carried out group discussions at 17 sheltered schemes on 15 and 16 May and 27 and 27 June 2013. Individual discussions were offered for those who wished to have a more private conversation with the CIH.
- 6.4 The CIH carried out a survey delivered to all sheltered residents between June and July 2013. There were 160 replies to the survey.
- 6.5 The CIH met with representatives of Adult Social Care, Supporting People, Public Health and Age UK Brighton, Hove & Portslade on 19 September 2013.
- 6.6 The CIH held an 'appreciative inquiry day' on 24 October 2013 involving both tenant representatives and sheltered staff enabling them to consult jointly with both groups on proposals for a future sheltered service.
- 6.7 The initial findings of the review were presented to the Seniors Housing Action Group on 8 January 2014 with a further presentation once the final report had been received on 12 March 2014. A tenant only meeting of the Seniors Housing Action Group was held in April 2014 to discuss the findings of the review.
- 6.8 The findings of the review were presented to the Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee on 11 February 2014.
- 6.9 The revised service offer was discussed and agreed by the Senior Housing Action Group on 14 May 2014.
- 6.10 The proposal to change the name of sheltered housing was raised by sheltered representatives at the Senior Housing Action Group meeting on 9 July 2014. Representatives consulted with their members and held a tenant only meeting in August 2014 to further discuss the proposal. A formal vote was made at the Senior Housing Action Group Annual General Meeting on 10 September 2014 with the recommendation that the name be changed to 'Senior Housing – Independent and Community Living'. The name of the group was also formally changed from 'Sheltered Housing Action Group' to 'Senior Housing Action Group' by majority vote at the same meeting.

7. CONCLUSION

The report sets recommends that a new service offer be agreed and proposed as the council's policy for sheltered housing. Furthermore, that the name of the service be changed to 'Senior Housing – Independent and Community Living' to reflect the revised aims and purposes. These recommendations are based on a substantial service review and tenant consultation.

8. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 Financial Implications:

The report sets out the revised service offer and there are therefore no direct financial implications of this report. However, it is noted that the findings of the review have influenced the charging mechanism to tenants. The introduction of an intensive housing management charge to replace a support charge was approved by Budget Council on 5 March 2014 and introduced as a rental charge in April 2014. This new mechanism has provided the income for four new scheme manager posts within the sheltered service.

Finance Officer Consulted: Date:

8.2 Legal Implications:

Lawyer Consulted:

Date:

8.3 Equalities Implications:

A health and wellbeing and inequalities assessment is included and a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be submitted for Housing Committee.

8.4 Sustainability Implications:

The revised aims and purposes have been designed to better align the sheltered service with the One Planet Principles., in particular the need for the council to encourage active, sociable and meaningful lives that promote good health and wellbeing.

8.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

There has been a significant impact on some sheltered communities due to anti-social behaviour, particularly where alcohol dependency issues or very complex need have been a significant factor. This may have stemmed from a misunderstanding of the role of the sheltered service, with some believing it to be a form of high level supported housing provision such as a hostel or resettlement accommodation. The service offer re-establishes sheltered housing as a form of retirement housing. In line with the draft housing strategy it is anticipated that the right people are housed and that the risk of inappropriate allocation or referral are minimised.

8.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

The service offer establishes more opportunity for the sheltered service to align itself with a wider strategic context, particularly in its preventative role. In keeping older people well and promoting healthier living, it is hoped that this will delay the need for more intensive and costly health and social care intervention.

The Frontier Economic Ltd Report '*Financial benefits of investment in specialist housing for vulnerable and older people*' commissioned by the Homes &

Communities Agency in 2010 sets out the evidence to demonstrate that there is a cost benefit for older people living in specialist housing as a result of this preventative role. The opportunity is therefore for such costs benefits to be realised within the city. The risk is that benefits won't be realised or properly evaluated.

The service offer and the recommendations of the assert review provide a more aspirational housing offer for older people. There is an opportunity that more older people will see sheltered housing as a positive option for them to 'age in place' rather than as an institution to move to as a result of a crisis. This may encourage more older people to benefit from sheltered housing at an earlier stage. It may also encourage greater take up of sheltered housing, particularly from those wishing to downsize from larger council accommodation.

8.7 Public Health Implications:

The revised aims and purposes have been designed to better align the sheltered service with the aims and objectives of the council's Public Health team. A health and wellbeing and inequalities screening tool recommended by Public Health has been used to assess the impact of these changes and is included with the appendix.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 8.8 The revised aims and purposes have been designed to better fit alongside national and local strategic direction as set out within section 3.3.

Appendices

1. Sheltered Service Offer.
2. Health and wellbeing and inequalities screening tool assessment.

