

Overview & Scrutiny Committee **2**

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT



Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People

TASK AND FINISH GROUP

March 2010



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Foreword

The objective of this Task and Finish Group was:-

- To establish whether the Sheltered Housing Service provides a value for money service and how it can be improved.
- To establish residents' satisfaction levels and understanding of Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People
- To determine a better understanding of the complex nature of Sheltered Housing

The Task and Finish Group was made up from members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Housing and Environment:- Councillors David Garlick, Irene Markham, Tess Scott and myself, together with other non-Executive Councillors Jean Hawkins, Malcolm Mildren and Lee Mason. County Councillor Gina Ogden, Chair, Adult and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, Northamptonshire County Council and Fiona Seymour, Head of Adult and Social Care, Northamptonshire County Council were co – opted onto the Task and Finish Group.

The Task and Finish Group visited various sheltered housing schemes throughout the borough and compared the Council's services against those of Milton Keynes Council by site visit and Cambridge City Council and Eastbourne Borough Council by desktop research.

A number of sheltered housing tenants attended a meeting of the Task and Finish Group, forwarding their comments and issues of concern, which informed the evidence stage, as did the outcome of a meeting with representatives of the Disabled People's Forum and Older People's Forum. The Task and Finish Group also visited the Council's Call Centre and Northamptonshire County Council's Telecare Office.

The Task and Finish Group held interviews with the Portfolio Holder, Senior Staff at Northampton Borough Council and external expert witnesses. Desktop research was carried out by Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer.

The Task and Finish Group was made very welcome on all of its visits and the Group was generally impressed with what it saw however, there are some areas that need attention and recommendations are contained in the report.

The Review took place between October 2009 and March 2010.

I would like to thank everyone who took part in this piece of work.



Councillor Christopher Malpas

Chair, Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People Task and Finish Group

Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review: -

- Councillors David Garlick, Jean Hawkins, Lee Mason, Malcolm Mildren, Irene Markham, Tess Scott and County Councillor Gina Ogden and Fiona Seymour, Head of Adult Social Care, Northamptonshire County Council, co-opted members, who sat with me on this Review and attended various site visits obtaining valuable evidence to support the final report
- Councillor Sally Beardsworth, Portfolio Holder (Housing) for providing a response to the Task and Finish Group's core questions
- Fran Rodgers, Head of Housing Need and Support and Chris Murray, Independent Living Manager for their support to this Review
- Call centre staff, and Sheltered Housing Co-ordinators, NBC, for spending time with the Task and Finish Group on its site visits
- Gill Keeling, Telecare Officer, Northamptonshire County Council, for spending time with the Task and Finish Group on its site visits
- Helen Butler, and Richard Catherall, Sheltered Housing Managers, Milton Keynes Council, for spending time with the Task and Finish Group on its site visit
- Tracey Chapman, Supporting People Manager, Milton Keynes Council, for providing expert evidence to inform the Review
- Geoffrey Ferres, SITRA, for providing expert evidence to inform the Review
- Representatives of the Older People and Disabled People's Forums for attending a meeting of the Task and Finish Group and providing information to inform the Review
- Lindsey Ambrose, Community Engagement and Equalities Officer, for arranging for representatives of the Older People and Disabled People's Forums to meet with the Task and Finish Group
- Sheltered Housing Tenants for attending a meeting of the Task and Finish Group and providing information to inform the Review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Review is

- To establish whether the Sheltered Housing Service provides a value for money service and how it can be improved.
- To establish residents' satisfaction levels and understanding of Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People
- To determine a better understanding of the complex nature of Sheltered Housing

This Review has been part of the Committee's Work Programme for some time and it was agreed that it was timely for the Review to commence in October 2009.

A Councillor Task and Finish Group was established comprising Councillor Christopher Malpas (Chair); Councillor Malcolm Mildren (Vice Chair), Councillors Lee Mason, Irene Markham, Jean Hawkins and David Garlick. Two Co-opted members joined the Group, Councillor Gina Ogden, Chair, Adult and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, Northamptonshire County Council and Fiona Seymour, Head of Adult Social Care, Northamptonshire County Council.

The Task and Finish Group agreed that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:

- A synopsis of all information available
- Results of surveys undertaken
- Performance Indicator Statistics
- Evidence from the Portfolio Holder (Housing)
- Best practice Council – Nottingham and Cambridge
- Visits to internal Sheltered Housing accommodation – observing process and speaking to employees and tenants:-
- Visit to the Call Centre – observing process and speaking to employees
- Evidence from tenants – meetings, as part of the site sites, written evidence
- Evidence from:-
 - SITRA
 - Northamptonshire County Council
 - Northants Health
 - Age Concern

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

A significant amount of evidence was heard, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence the Task and Finish Group established that: -

- 4.1.1 The Task and Finish Group recognised that traditional sheltered housing is provided in a variety of forms and that Northampton, similar to other towns, has built and/or adapted accommodation as sheltered housing over the last fifty years.
- 4.1.2 The financial costs of providing support to older people are significant. It is important that services demonstrate value-for-money, maximise their impact and deliver positive outcomes that contribute and complement the other support that older people receive (i.e. family, health service etc.)
- 4.1.3 It was acknowledged that people are now living longer and the older population is growing. There are now more people aged over 60 than under 25 in the general population. The Task and Finish Group realises that this is a huge issue that needs to be addressed in order to understand the impact on Northampton.
- 4.2.1 Further discussions are taking place with Supporting People regarding preventative services and it was acknowledged that it needs to adapt to the changing environment or risk losing Supporting People funding.
- 4.2.2 There is not one single solution of housing options for older people and that it must be about choice with a range of options available. Detailed at Appendix D is population comparison data for Northampton Borough Council and Milton Keynes Council.
- 4.2.3 A lot of elderly people live in general needs accommodation but cannot access support, therefore there is a need to review the situation and look more widely at a joined up approach with partners, which will assist greater numbers of people to live independently.
- 4.2.4 After hearing all the evidence the Task and Finish Group agreed that the current set number of scheduled visits to sheltered housing tenants is not flexible enough and should be based on needs.
- 4.3.1 The Task and Finish Group noted the importance of the benefits of the Telecare System but was concerned to hear that not all of the Telecare system was compatible with the Lifeline system currently operated by Northampton Borough Council. This system assists residents to live as independently as possible in their own homes. There are several 'add ons' to the system, which includes a medication dispenser, memo reminder and a plug to prevent flooding. The Task and Finish Group felt that with the Call Care Service, based at Exeter Place and the Telecare Scheme at Gladstone Centre there appeared to be some overlap in the assessment process and the Task and Finish Group supported discussions taking place regarding how this could be combined.

- 4.3.2 The Task and Finish Group commended the excellent job that staff based at Exeter Place were doing but was concerned about the lack of office space and recommended that alternative office space be considered such as John Dryden House.
- 4.3.3 The Task and Finish Group supported the investigations that are taking place into widening the provision of the Lifeline system, for example to individuals living on their own. It was acknowledged that this would create further income to the Council but may also require additional resources.
- 4.3.4 The Task and Finish Group felt that it would be beneficial for dialogue to take place with Private Sector Housing Providers and to encourage the co-ordination and widespread use of the Lifeline System.
- 4.4.1 There is a need to assist communities to help each other, and to invest in prevention initiatives that support independent living.
- 4.4.2 The Task and Finish Group felt that some of the community rooms located within Sheltered Housing are poorly managed and under used and that discussions should take place how they could be better used.
- 4.4.3 The Task and Finish Group noted the integrated system that is in operation within the Mental Health Service, which was brought in around eight years ago, works very well. Support is dependent upon the individual's needs. It was felt that this emphasised the need for a joined up approach of all Agencies for the service of sheltered housing and housing options for older people.
- 4.5 The Schemes Review is scheduled to complete by April 2010 and it was noted that this Review is likely to see a recommendation for a decrease in sheltered housing properties across the borough.
- 4.5.1 Currently ward Councillors are not made aware of the Sheltered Housing Coordinators are for each ward and the location of sheltered housing within each ward. The Task and Finish Group felt that it would be beneficial for Councillors to be provided with such a list. It would be useful for Councillors to be furnished with this information in case of a problem.
- 4.5.2 The Task and Finish Group felt that the sheltered housing coordinators' role should be clarified.
- 4.6.1 The Task and Finish Group noted the concerns raised by some residents regarding the loss of resident wardens and the replacement with floating support. Many residents realised that this was not the best way to deliver services, created dependency and was campaigned for by a vocal minority. The Task and Finish Group was therefore minded not to support the campaign for the return to traditional resident wardens.
- 4.6.2 It was recognised that there is a need to understand what is driving the requests for an on site warden. There is also a need to understand what people want so that issues such as the number of staff required can be understood; there may also be competition from the private sector. It was

further realised that the Council was unable to continue with the old system and further consultation with residents and stakeholders would be required.

- 4.6.3 The Task and Finish Group was pleased to note that 86% of service users were relatively satisfied with the service following a user survey.
- 4.6.4 It was important however to understand the issues of the 14% who were not satisfied and work to make changes to improve services to this significant minority.
- 4.7 Northampton Borough Council has 47 Sheltered Housing Coordinators, which is equivalent to 37 and a half full time equivalent (FTE). It was noted that this is considered adequate to deliver the service contracted for. The Sheltered Housing Coordinators visit the 2,100 properties that are designated as sheltered housing in accordance with the three levels of support – daily, three times a week or monthly. The Task and Finish Group noted that Milton Keynes Council has 26 full time and two part-time Sheltered Housing Officer that cover 29 Sheltered Housing Schemes, around 800 households. Each Sheltered Housing Officer is based at an office on site. The Sheltered Housing Officers carry out daily visits to tenants within their allocated sheltered housing scheme. Sheltered Housing Officers are funded via the Supporting People Programme.
- 4.8.1 The Task and Finish Group felt that consideration needs to be given as to how mobility scooters are best stored in the future and whether or not renting garages within the complex to people living outside is in the best interests of everyone concerned.
- 4.8.2 At the site visit to Milton Keynes, the Task and Finish Group heard that its Sheltered Housing tenants are permitted to use mobility scooters on site and in the corridors. Milton Keynes Council is putting together a Policy, with the Fire and Rescue Service stating the criteria for storage and charging of the vehicles. Tenants with such a vehicle will be required to have public liability insurance. It was suggested that when the Policy has been finalised that a copy should be forwarded to the Head of Housing Needs and Support.
- 4.9.1 Frequently smoking takes place in the communal lifts creating health and safety issues. The Task and Finish Group understands that the Sheltered Housing Co-ordinators are trying to resolve this situation but felt that extra steps will need to be taken to ensure that the safety and comfort of the residents is paramount.
- 4.9.2 When visiting Sheltered Housing accommodation within the borough, the Task and Finish Group was concerned to note the ineffectiveness of warm air heating. The Group had met with a tenant sitting under a blanket to get warm as she was unable to use the warm air heating system as it affected her asthma.
- 4.10 In putting together its Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (screening) the Task and Finish Group was mindful of the need for a full EIA to be produced for Sheltered Housing for any future changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendations.

- 5.1 The Task and Finish Group therefore recommends to Cabinet that:
 - 5.1.1 When considering the Task and Finish Group's recommendations that Cabinet recognises that the ageing population presents a huge challenge for the council in a period of public spending cuts. It also presents a significant opportunity to improve the Services offered to older people in a way that effectively promotes independent living. The fact that there are more individuals aged over 60 than under 25 is a huge issue that should be addressed and the impact on Northampton understood and responded to. The Council needs to develop a wide range of options to suit the needs of older and vulnerable people and that represent real choice in terms of the services offered.
 - 5.1.2 After hearing all the evidence from various sources, the Task and Finish Group realised that a return to the old system of residential wardens would not improve services to older people and should not be returned to.
 - 5.2.1 To ensure that services represent excellent value for money, are competitive and deliver positive outcomes to promote independent living, a flexible structure of visits to sheltered housing tenants should be introduced according to individual needs. Such changes to be in line with the Supporting People grant conditions to safeguard this important funding stream.
 - 5.2.2 The Head of Housing Needs and Support be authorised to commence dialogue with private sector housing providers to encourage the co-ordination and widespread installation of the Lifeline system.
 - 5.2.3 The Task and Finish Group accepts that the floating support system generally works but highlights the need for flexibility of provision and to minimise the frequency of staff changes to ensure stability and continuity of service provision.
 - 5.3.1 Discussions should take place regarding how Northamptonshire County Council and Northampton Borough Council can work more closely together to eliminate overlaps with some of the work streams at the Call Centre and Telecare Office.
 - 5.3.2 The use of digital technology should be maximised to support the delivery of services, such as Telehealth.
 - 5.4.1 Dialogue takes place between the Portfolio Holder (Housing), relevant key officers, ward Councillors, tenants and other concerned Agencies to investigate how the community rooms can be used to their full potential.

- 5.4.2 The Head of Housing Needs and Support be authorised to set up a meeting with Northamptonshire County Council, all relevant Agencies and organisations to promote a joined up approach to the delivery of services for older people, with a particular focus on the role of Voluntary Groups and the importance of community activities to counteract social isolation.
- 5.4.3 A general review of the Garage Tenancy Agreement should take place to include the possible adaption of garages for the storage of mobility scooters.
- 5.5 That the Head of Housing Needs and Support completes the review of sheltered housing properties and produces a plan that outlines which properties will no longer be designated as sheltered, identifying opportunities for new build which meets lifetime homes standards. The Task and Finish Group's observations about heating systems at some sheltered housing units to be taken into consideration during this review.
- 5.6.1 A full consultation programme, in accordance with the Council's Consultation Toolkit, with existing and potential sheltered housing tenants, is developed regarding any proposed changes.
- 5.6.2 Improved communication methods with existing and potential sheltered housing tenants is maintained. In particular to work with dissatisfied residents to understand their issues and respond to their concerns
- 5.7 The location of the Call Care service to be reviewed due to the poor quality of accommodation currently used and the service is relocated.
- 5.8.1 A Policy for the storing of mobility scooters at sheltered housing accommodation is introduced. The evidence contained in this report should form part of that Policy.
- 5.8.2 Ward Councillors to be issued with details of the location of sheltered housing and details of the Sheltered Housing Coordinators for each ward
- 5.9.1 The issue of security doors and access is reviewed in blocks of flats designated as sheltered housing
- 5.9.2 That the Head of Landlord Services is requested to address specific issues at Melbourne House as identified in the main body of this report. The first floor door entry systems at Melbourne, Abbey and Devonshire be redesigned or appropriately adjusted to alleviate the current problems encountered by tenants.
- 5.10 A full Equality Impact Assessment is produced for future changes to Sheltered Housing.

Northampton Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny

Report of the Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People Task and Finish Group

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Task and Finish Group was:

- To establish whether the Sheltered Housing Service provides a value for money service and how it can be improved.
- To establish residents' satisfaction levels and understanding of Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People
- To determine a better understanding of the complex nature of Sheltered Housing

1.2 A copy of the Scope of the Review is attached at Appendix A.

2. Context and Background

2.1 This Review had been included onto the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme as a result from a request from Management Board to undertake a Review and also in response to a notice of motion that was put to full Council at its meeting on 13 July 2009:

“Proposer Councillor David Palethorpe

Seconder Councillor Jamie Lane

This Council notes the concerns of many local residents in Northampton about the Sheltered Housing system and the lack of personal contact they receive under the ‘floating support’ scheme, and believes it was a mistake by the Government to take Sheltered Housing out of the Housing Benefit budget, leaving Sheltered Housing within the underfunded Supporting People budget, and making it difficult for district councils to manage.

This Council therefore calls on the Chief Executive to urgently instigate a review of the system and listen to the concerns of local residents.”

2.2 Housing Support comes under the preventative agenda.

The current system for sheltered housing was introduced in 2007, the

service required improvement, there were boundary management issues and issues in respect of the role of Wardens. Prior to the introduction of the current system, a wide consultation of users and stakeholders had taken place. Three levels of service were introduced;

- Daily visits
- Visits, three times a week
- Monthly visits

- 2.3 After the system had been in place for six months further consultation took place. A high percentage of users reported they were satisfied with the new service. However, throughout this period there had been a small number of residents who had expressed the view that they felt the service had been reduced and put questions to full Council, articles in the press and on the web.
- 2.4 In the wider context, people are now living longer and population is greater. There are more individuals aged over the age of 60 than under 25. This is a huge issue that needs to be addressed as part of a trend and the impact locally.
- 2.5 Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) receives central Government funding to provide housing related support to vulnerable people. NCC funds housing related support. Ringfencing for sheltered housing no longer exists, last year NCC had agreed to ringfence a sum for the year 2009/2010, however, funding could be under threat for 2010/2011. Nationally, funding of £1.6 billion is provided. NCC receives £15 million for the whole of the county of Northamptonshire, of which approximately £1 million is for NBC. In addition, NBC provides approximately £500,000 of its own resources. Funding is also received from other Agencies and bodies such as Supporting People, Gateway.
- 2.6 A Councillor Task and Finish Group was established comprising Councillor Christopher Malpas (Chair); Councillor Malcolm Mildren (Vice Chair), Councillors Lee Mason, Irene Markham, Jean Hawkins and David Garlick. Councillor Gina Ogden, Northamptonshire County Council, and Fiona Seymour, Head of Adult Social Care, Northamptonshire County Council, co-opted members joined the Group.
- 2.7 The Task and Finish Group agreed that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:
- A synopsis of all information available
 - Results of surveys undertaken
 - Performance Indicator Statistics
 - Evidence from the Portfolio Holder (Housing)
 - Best practice Council – Nottingham and Cambridge
 - Visits to internal Sheltered Housing accommodation – observing process and speaking to employees and tenants:-
 - Visit to the Call Centre – observing process and speaking to employees

- Evidence from tenants – meetings, as part of the site sites, written evidence
- Evidence from:-
 - SITRA
 - Northamptonshire County Council
 - Northants Health
 - Age Concern

2.8 This Review links to the Council's corporate priorities as it demonstrates recommendations being made for the improvement of the Sheltered Housing Service at Northampton Borough Council and housing options for older people (corporate priority 2 – Housing, Health and Well being refers).

3. Evidence Collection

3.1 In scoping this review it was decided that evidence would be collected from a variety of sources:

3.2 Head of Housing Needs and Support

3.2.1 The Head of Housing Needs and Support provided baseline data:

3.2.1.1 Northampton Borough Council's definition of Sheltered Housing/Semi Sheltered

3.2.1.2 Traditional sheltered housing comes in a variety of forms. Northampton is no different and has built and/or designated accommodation as 'sheltered housing' over a number of different periods.

3.2.1.3 In thematic terms, housing for older people should draw together the following considerations:

- Company
- Community
- Privacy
- Safety/security
- Ownership
- Comfort/environment

3.2.1.4 Properties should generally be described as housing for older people if they are intended for older people (regardless of the actual characteristics of each tenant) and they incorporate some or all of a number of explicit design features.

3.2.1.5 Residents in housing for older people should have access to support services as need arises to enable them to live in the property for the rest of their lifetimes.

3.2.1.6 Access to support means that at a minimum, a process is in place to assist in accessing and/or signposting tenants to support services that

they need.

3.2.1.7 A non-exhaustive list of criteria that defines accommodation as suitable for older people is set out below:

- Living units have access to laundry and/or washing machines
- All living units have access to communal lounge or community room.
- The whole scheme including entrances and the buildings that comprise it is designed to mobility user standards;
- Living units have walk in showers or bathrooms adapted for people with mobility problems or mobility users.
- Living units have kitchens that are designed to mobility standards;
- The scheme must have a bathroom with provision for assisted bathing;
- If there is more than one storey there must be a lift.

3.2.1.8 **Northampton Borough Council's Eligibility criteria for sheltered housing**

3.2.1.9 *'As a general rule you need to be over 60 to qualify for sheltered accommodation or be disabled and in receipt of Disabled Living Allowance.*

We accept applications if you live in your own home or privately rented accommodation and have housing support needs. '

3.2.1.10 **The definition and clear role definitions of Care and Support**

3.2.1.11 **Adult social care**

3.2.1.12 *'Care'* was defined for the purposes of this Task and Finish Group Review, as Adult Social Care; social care being a statutory duty of the County Council.

3.2.1.13 Adult Social Care helps people who need extra support, or vulnerable people to live as independently as possible and is widely defined as the provision of social work, personal care, protection or social support services to adults in need or at risk, arising from illness, disability, old age or poverty and their families and carers. Provision will variously aim to protect people who use care services, to preserve or advance physical or mental health, to promote independence and social inclusion, to improve opportunities and life chances, and to strengthen families and to protect human rights in relation to people's social needs.

3.2.1.14 Examples of social care are:

- Assisting some one to get out of bed in the morning, or into bed at night
- Providing personal hygiene tasks to individuals
- Preparing and/or providing drinks and meals
- Providing transport

3.2.1.15 **Housing related support**

3.2.1.16 The term *Support* refers to the services provided under the Supporting People programme, and encompasses services that are define as *housing related support*.

3.2.1.17 The main aim of 'housing related support' is to develop and sustain an individuals' capacity to live independently in their home following for example long term illness, loss of a carer or loved one or any situation that may have affected their confidence.

3.2.1.18 Some examples of housing related support:

- Help with managing money and paying bills
- Help with understanding the rights and responsibilities of a tenancy agreement.
- Signposting to other agencies - such as drug and alcohol services, education and employment agencies.
- Provision of a community alarm service, or a sheltered housing service
- Help with household tasks

3.2.1.19 **Floating Support**

3.2.1.20 Floating Support is a service that provides housing related support to vulnerable adults to enable them to maintain their independence in their own home. Floating support services will generally be short term (less than two years) and will have the flexibility to support a person wherever they live – as distinct from accommodation based services, where support is tied to particular accommodation. This kind of support service helps the individual to become more independent, and may mean that they can continue to live independently at home when with out support it would be difficult to do so.

3.2.1.21 **Housing related support might include:**

- Setting up and maintaining a home or tenancy
- Managing finances and benefit claims
- Developing independent living skills
- Gaining access to other services
- Help to make sure the clients accommodation is safe and secure

3.2.1.22 Supporting People funding cannot be used to fund housing management, personal or health care. Other sources of funding are available for these services. Supporting People funds are not to be used to discharge statutory duties, particularly under community care and homelessness legislation, aftercare services following hospital discharge.

3.2.1.23 The CLG (Communities and Local Government) has identified vulnerable client groups for whom the programme should provide support services. These include:

- Older people
- People with mental health problems
- People with learning or physical disabilities
- Victims of domestic violence
- People with drug and alcohol problems
- People who are homeless
- Refugees
- Teenage parents
- Young people at risk or leaving care
- People with HIV or AIDS

3.2.1.24 Some people will not have to pay for the support they receive. Other services are free to people who receive Housing Benefit, but require those not receiving Housing Benefits to have a Fairer Charging assessment. This assessment determines if the client will be required to make a contribution to the cost of their support.

3.2.1.25 **Service User Survey**

3.2.1.26 Attached at Appendix B is an extract of Service User Survey. Key points of evidence:-

- Those who were not satisfied or very unsatisfied amounted to 14%.
- 86% of service users were relatively satisfied with the service they received and this is a positive result for a service that has recently experienced changes to service delivery.
- There appeared to be concerns about the number of staff residents have to get used to, and visits not being made at regular times or as often as they should.
- The other area of potential concern is the perception that staff do not care enough and do not have enough time to spend with residents. All the general comments raise issues that the service as a whole should be looking at. The level of satisfaction was greater from those who had been in the service over 5 years.

3.2.1.26 **Supporting People - Quality Assessment Framework**

3.2.1.27 The Supporting People Team is the section within the Local Authority that agrees and administers the funding for housing related support service/s.

3.2.1.28 'Supporting People' requires that service/s meet certain standards laid out in the Quality assessment framework (QAF).

3.2.1.29 The Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) is a tool, which has been produced to help both Service Providers and Administering Authorities to introduce the quality and monitoring requirements of the Supporting People programme.

- 3.2.1.30 Service Providers are expected to provide the Supporting People Team with a self-assessment of each service.
- 3.2.1.31 The Quality Assessment Framework:-
- is made up of nationally agreed standards, which will ensure that services are of a high quality
 - it provides a standardised way for Administering Authorities to test the quality of the service/s you provide. As all providers are assessed using the same standards it is also a very fair process.
 - it gives Service Providers a framework for reviewing services and continually improve service/s delivery.
- 3.2.1.32 The Quality Assessment Framework is made up of a series of assessment tables with six core objectives:
1. Need and risk assessment
 2. Support planning
 3. Security, health and safety
 4. Protection from abuse
 5. Fair access, diversity and inclusion
 6. Complaints
- 3.2.1.33 Service performance is assessed, by looking at, and evidencing the way in which services are provided. Then awarding a performance level against each of the Core objectives.
- 3.2.1.34 There are four possible levels:
- A. this level denotes excellence and is associated with those services striving to be leaders in their field
 - B. this level denotes good practice and services at this level should be working towards achieving a level A
 - C. this level means that the service meets the required minimum standard but there is scope for improvement and should be working towards a level B
 - D. this level means that the service does not meet the required standard,
- 3.2.1.35 Level D does not mean that the provider is “in trouble” but means that the service must be improved if it is to continue to receive Supporting People funding. As a result of the Service Review, Providers achieving a level D will need to agree with the Administering Authority an action plan for achieving level C within an agreed timescale.
- 3.2.1.36 A steady state contract will not be issued to providers until they meet level C for all of the six Core Objectives.
- 3.2.1.37 Administering Authorities will need to carry out visits (called validation visits) to services/schemes to check whether providers are achieving the standards that they have been contracted to deliver. They will do this in a number of ways; by talking to service users, frontline staff and

stakeholders and also be looking at the evidence of the information you provide in the QAF. This will give Authorities a real insight into service quality as experienced by service users,

3.3 Supporting People Programme

3.3.1 On 1 April 2003 the *Supporting People* programme was launched. The programme is committed to providing a better quality of life for vulnerable people to live independently and maintain their tenancies. The programme provides housing related support to prevent problems that can often lead to hospitalisation; institutional care or homelessness and can help the smooth transition to independent living for those leaving an institutionalised environment.

3.3.2 The *Supporting People* programme provides housing related support services to over 1.2 million vulnerable people. The programme is delivered locally by 150 Administering Authorities, over 6,000 providers of housing related support, and an estimated 37,000 individual contracts.

3.3.3 Instead of Housing Benefit (that still paid the rent for those means tested as qualifying), Supporting People was paid by the County Council for the 'warden charge'. This in turn meant that the County Council became a commissioner/client of the Borough Council and a contract was agreed that created a performance management framework (such as needs assessment, Quality Assessment Framework) that was monitored regularly by the Supporting People team.

3.3.4 The national Supporting People budget has been reduced from £1.8 billion to £1.6 billion since 2003.

3.3.5 Northamptonshire's allocation for the three years to 2010/11 has been set at 2007/08 levels (£14,256,621 per annum).

3.3.6 Northampton Borough Council receives just under £1 million per year in Supporting People income for its Sheltered Housing service.

3.3.7 Housing related support in Sheltered Housing

3.3.7.1 The Sheltered Housing Service provides a range of housing related support services for older people and people with disabilities. Residents living in sheltered housing benefit from tenancy related support provided by a team of visiting coordinators and can summon assistance 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through the Council's Call Care service.

3.3.7.2 The service levels are:

Level one (Low support need – residents who are able to live independently and look after themselves with the minimum support from the coordinator.) Providing one visit a month and the 24 hour Call Care Service at a cost of £ 5.64 a week.

Level two (Medium support need – residents who have an identified

support need.) Providing 3 visits a week and the 24 hour Call Care Service at a cost of £ 12.25 a week.

Level three (High support need – residents who have high support needs e.g. those who are housebound. A daily visit will ensure their well being is maintained.) Providing 7 visits a week and the 24 hour Call Care Service at a cost of £17.99 a week.

3.3.7.3 The level of support that will be provided to a resident will be determined through an individual assessment process. This is carried out by the Assessment Officer using an appropriate assessment tool.

3.3.8 **Independent Living Review**

3.3.8.1 As part of the Independent Living Review, the Community Rooms will be reviewed, as will Sheltered Housing Schemes' to assess whether they are fit for the purpose of providing high quality accommodation for older people in the future. The Review will be completed by the end of March 2010.

3.3.8.2 A project reviewing how the Council works in partnership with the Voluntary Sector is being developed. The value of voluntary work is significant and can be extremely supportive of the service the Council directly provides. One initiative is to develop a voluntary project based on mutual support within the community.

3.3.8.3 The Council liaises closely with Supporting People. Northamptonshire County Council is committed to providing preventative support services to older people but are aware these will have to be delivered differently from before The resident warden scheme will not be returned to. There will be around 50,000 people over 50 years of age residing in the borough by 2030, NBC supports approximately 2,000. Pilot schemes will be run with Supporting People funding to enable everyone who requires a service to receive one in an affordable way. It will be delivered to current sheltered housing tenants and general housing tenants (over 60 and those with disabilities) as well as owner-occupiers and private rented tenants. This will mean some withdrawal of face-to-face support services, reliance more on telecare, reliance on voluntary care, other organisations such as Age Concern, which will help to allow people to remain in their own home, if that is what they prefer. Focus groups, postal and telephone surveys will be included as part of the consultation process.

3.3.8.4 Assistive technology is treated as a separate part of the Review but cannot be underestimated. NCC will be asked to fund the installation of some of the systems. The Telecare Team (NCC) will be involved with hospital discharges.

3.3.8.5 Investigations are taking place regarding Supporting People funding and how this is provided. Funding is a real issue.

- 3.3.8.6 An embryonic Communications Strategy is being drafted. Such a Strategy is imperative.
- 3.3.8.7 There is not one single solution; it must be about choice with a range of options available. There is a need to understand what is driving the requests for an on site warden. There is a need to understand what people want so that issues such as the number of staff required can be understood, there may be competition from the private sector too.
- 3.3.8.8 The current set number of scheduled of visits is not flexible enough.
- 3.3.8.9 Pilot projects will commence from April 2010. The schemes review is extremely likely to see a recommendation of a decrease of sheltered housing properties across the borough, possibly around 30-40%. The Task and Finish Group felt that this needed to be a phased transition. If a block was decided to no longer be sheltered housing, residents would be consulted, it will be an incremental change.

3.4 **Portfolio Holder (Housing)**

- 3.4.1 The Portfolio Holder for Housing attended the meeting on 21 December 2009. Key points of evidence:
- There are 47 sheltered housing co ordinators, which is equivalent to 37.5 full time equivalent (fte). This is adequate to deliver the service contracted for.
 - 2,100 properties that are designated as sheltered housing. There are three levels of support – daily, three times a week or monthly.
 - A work rota is produced every Friday, which includes floating support. The most vulnerable tenants (level 3) take precedence for visits. The rota comprises 3-5 staff. It is aimed that the team will cover a specific area, however if a member of staff was off sick, an employee would be drafted in from another area. Staff are in possession of proper identification. The small teams are rotated on a monthly or three monthly basis. Newsletters are issued with photos of the whole team. Tenants get to know all sheltered housing co ordinators.
 - Prior to 2009/10 training that was provided was minimal. However, this is now more robust and includes issues such as fire safety, safeguarding adults, dealing with challenging behaviour and equality and diversity.
 - All Sheltered Housing Tenants are linked to the CallCare system installed.
 - 377 sheltered housing units are provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).
 - There are just under 2,100 sheltered housing units, which equates to 17% of council housing stock.
 - A project is being undertaken with Northamptonshire County Council to identify the support needs. It is about projecting the different sectors of needs around the borough in order that commissioning of services can be planned. The project will be looking at all vulnerable groups under the Supporting People

Programme.

- There are tenants under the age of 60, with disabilities, residing in sheltered housing within the borough.
- There is no definitive way of measuring. Housemark, a best practice partner, has been approached for this information.
- There are no plans, either from the Council or with RSLs, to develop further sheltered housing units. There are some private residential homes currently being developed.
- There are small area teams of 3-5 Sheltered Housing Co Ordinators that provide consistent support. Work planning is robust.
- There is a current Review in progress that is investigating whether the system of floating support is sufficient.
- There are three Area Supervisors and a Quality Assurance Framework that dictates the quality of the product delivered. A whole range of standards must be met. Sheltered Housing Co ordinators have monthly 1:1s and regular appraisals. Work is constantly being reviewed. Mystery shopping also takes place. Support planning is just one part, but it is a key part. All support plans are reviewed twice a year and signed off. There is a set criteria and scoring mechanism. There is a robust process in place to access people's support needs. The Council also has the Sheltered Housing Residents' Forum, which holds quarterly meetings. The Review will look also at a robust consultation framework to help gather wider evidence. Selection of tenants for the survey is currently at the very early stages. Some softer consultation has been undertaken; inviting residents to become involved, postal surveys do not always work. Liaisons with the Local University are taking place regarding assistance that could be provided, using a sample selection of residents. It is also envisaged that a high volume of tenants will be interviewed in their homes. Any consultation process will only be a sample of residents but it is envisaged that this will be widespread across the borough.
- Residents are very involved in support planning.
- There are eleven area teams and an area supervisor. Regular meetings take place.
- The support plan stays in the tenant's home. The team of Sheltered Housing Co Ordinators will familiarise themselves with support plan prior to any visits.
- All residents have contact details of sheltered housing co ordinators; the Council and the Call centre which they are aware is contactable 24 hours a day.
- There is no downtime. 80-85% of the Sheltered Housing Co Ordinator's working day consists of providing face-to-face support. The rest of the working day comprises travel and working on social interaction events.
- There are eleven areas, consisting of a team of 3-5 staff for each area.
- Independent living works closely with the Department of Works and Pensions, SITRA and Northamptonshire County Council. Independent Living also works alongside Age Concern.

- NBC is working closely with Northants PCT regarding sheltered housing provision around the borough.
- Performance is measured both monthly and annual. Each department has a Performance Champion. Performance clinics are held within the housing department who scrutinise performance, identify gaps, and provide the support required to improve. Further meetings are held between the Team Leader, Supervisor and Sheltered Housing Co Ordinators regarding improvement mechanisms. There is no Best Value Performance Indicator relating to sheltered housing. However, Local Indicators are in place.
- Statistics for November 2009:-
 - 1,700 visits to residents
 - 100% visits for level 2 and 3 visits
 - 99% visits for level 1 residents
 - 339 support plans completed
- The Borough Council is working with the leading providers in tele health and tele care, such as Northamptonshire County Council's tele care, which provides a number of lifelines in the county. Early discussions have taken place with Nene Commissioning regarding a pilot tele care throughout the county.
- No savings have been made since implementation in 2007
 - 2007/08 £1,460,160
 - 2008/09 £1,511,635 (£51,475 increase)
 - 2009/10 £1,831,661 (£320,026 increase)
- More money is being put in each year for the floating warden scheme. In addition, Northampton Borough Council provides nearly £700,000 HRA.
- To qualify for sheltered housing, applicants must be over 60 years of age or disabled in receipt of Disabled Living Allowance. There is no minimum age.
- Some schemes have sheltered and general tenants in same building. This is a legacy of previous policy decision with hard to let sheltered accommodation to tenants with general needs. This decision has now been reversed. It is not believed that there are many hard to let properties.
- Sheltered Housing Tenants have Secure Tenancies identical to General Needs Tenancies. Assessment is carried out and Support Plans produced. There is no provision of right to buy for Sheltered Housing Tenants.
- There is no comprehensive needs forecast data. Data is relied on from Northamptonshire County Council's data lifetime needs Strategy and other such documents. There are a lot of national projections for individuals over 60 years of age and those over 80. Data can be produced from this. The Government's Poppi data is also useful for these purposes.
- Customers need a recognisable and consistent face, a good neighbour and be-friender who is on call 24 hours, 7 days a week, and offers social facilities.
- Much of the Council's sheltered housing is not fit for purpose. A lot of the residents are happy. Many residents live with able-bodied

spouses and partners. Many vulnerable people have “vulnerable visits” from other organisations.

- A return to resident wardens is impossible.

3.5 **Head of Policy and Affairs, SITRA**

3.5.1 The Head of Policy and Affairs, SITRA, attended the meeting on 21 December 2009. Key points of evidence:

- SITRA has been commissioned by Northampton Borough Council to produce a report in relation to sheltered housing. The report contains seven recommendations.
A Ministerial Group is currently working on sheltered housing regarding: consultation, good practice and complaints.
- The main issues in the national commissioning context: -
- Need for more partnership working.
- From 1 April 2010 there will no longer be a named Supporting People Grant.
- Money that would have to be used to continue to fund these services to Northamptonshire County Council will be provided through an area based grant, therefore the issues are how much of that money gets passed on for this purpose.
- Looking to the years 2011-2014, how much money will be provided by Central Government?
- SITRA is engaging with partners on these projects, to try to help people understand the different ways of working and cope with doing different things too.
- The Personalisation Agenda is looking to transform adult social care - Putting People First Concordat – Aiming to give social services clients more of a say over the package of services provided and to focus on the outcomes to be achieved, allowing people to decide for themselves what services to purchase to achieve those outcomes.
- Supporting People will experience a similar shift towards personalisation and outcomes, but it currently uses the five Children’s outcomes rather than the seven Adult Care outcomes.
- There is a need for Northampton to look at volumes and types of needs. There are specific issues around choice, for example – buildings, how many want rented against shared ownership and freehold. In terms of support, there are also choices, such as the balance between paid staff, relatives and neighbours. Often the help people give each other is important. There are various levels of support as people’s needs will vary.
- As a borough there are problems that need to be addressed regarding capital and revenue funding if there was the requirement to build new. In respect of Support Services, Northampton Borough Council receives most of its funding from Northamptonshire County Council. If Northamptonshire County Council was not going to put in as much money for future years, there was a need for Northampton Borough Council to ask whether it could realistically pick up the money if the county council stopped putting it in. There is a need to be concerned where the money is

coming from, how much individuals, NCC, Northants Health and the Council's own resources equate to. The choices must be right for Northampton, there is no blue print; it needs to be specific and local. For example: -

- There is a need to recognise that rented sheltered housing is in part a life style choice. Older people want a variety of housing. They don't all want the same thing. Many often want to stay in their home and will choose to do this however frail they are. Some will want to move into rented sheltered housing. Just because number of elderly people is increasing there is not necessarily the need for more rented sheltered housing, as many will want to remain in their existing home and buy into services. Both Anchor and Hanover have conducted recent research and have adapted their development approaches accordingly.
- Market segmentation research has been undertaken about what kinds of older people actually want to live in sheltered housing.
- A move away from a single, inflexible level of service is being investigated for adult social care using individual service funds. Applicants are informed that they can have a certain amount of help and can choose when to have visits etc, for example alter visits according to their needs. There would be a set number over a month, a quarter or a year.
- Regarding personalisation of services, there would be a need to look at the scale of resources that can be drawn on. Real consideration will have to be given to the scope for choice, recognising that on average support costs are around £8.50 a week.
- Some Tele Care Services provide people with a small base unit with a screen, which gives Internet access, an alarm system and also enables residents to speak to relatives etc. If someone needs to upgrade their visits such a mechanism could be investigated.

3.6 **Age Concern Northamptonshire**

3.6.1 The Chief Officer, Age Concern Northamptonshire, provided evidence. Key points: -

- Age Concern Northamptonshire has provided services to around 10,000 older people in Northampton in the last four years. Over 5,000 older people have made use of its information and advice services; over 1,700 people will commence a new service with Age Concern during the course of the year. Around 1,000 of which will approach Age Concern for the first time. Age Concern Northamptonshire is part of a national federation of local organisations who receive support from Age UK on matters of policy and information.
- Age Concern Northamptonshire believes that all people should be able to live in housing that meets their needs and in which they can enjoy rights, dignity and independence as valued members of the community.
- Older people now and in the future should benefit from quality housing support, housing advice and a range of housing options

appropriate to their circumstances. Age Concern Northamptonshire believes that older people ought to have a range of appropriate choices at the time they need it and that supported social housing should continue to include the option of traditional sheltered accommodation.

- The Northamptonshire joint strategic needs analysis indicates that over the next 15 years people aged 65 plus will grow from 14% to 19% of the population, a growth of 57,300 people. By 2021 there will be 28,500 more people aged 75 plus in the County, a 65% increase. It is important that regional spatial and housing strategies reflect the needs of an ageing population and in particular the projected demand for more housing that meets the needs of older people by providing an adequate range of inappropriate housing options.
- In the main, three sets of factors: health, inadequate or inappropriate housing and the desire to be nearer family and friends, are at the heart of people's decision to move into sheltered housing. Recent policy in relation to the private rented sector has paid little attention to older people and has neglected the needs of older private tenants, 50% of whom live in non-decent housing. It is important that local authorities should gather robust data on non-decent homes in the private sector, which undoubtedly have an impact on the demand for sheltered housing.
- A less often cited reason for moving into sheltered accommodation is the alternative that it represents to residential care, which residents may consider, as an option addressing their sense of vulnerability in relation to their health and social isolation. Few would argue against the position that sheltered accommodation is the better option in terms of the quality of life of the older person or the cost to the health and social care economy.
- A key area of debate has been the impact of changes from warden services to floating support. It is the view of Age Concern Northamptonshire that these changes should be driven by the needs and wishes of residents not principally funding and commissioning considerations. The Chief Officer, Age Concern Northamptonshire, suggested that the review being undertaken by the Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People Task and Finish Group is timely and should consider its response to the proposal to remove the ring fence from the Supporting People budget in terms of its impact on older people and in the context of the introduction of Individual Budgets.
- Help the Aged's report '*Nobody listens*' was the result of focus group research with residents of 25 sheltered schemes countrywide and a survey of 149 local authorities. It reports that 70% of residents see floating support as an effective use of limited resources and good value for money but a similar proportion value warden services and feel that it dramatically improves quality of life. Most residents were unhappy about changes because warden services were in part a deciding factor for their move into sheltered accommodation, they reported high levels of satisfaction with staff, whether resident or non-resident and were concerned about a real or perceived reduction in levels of service but were particularly

dissatisfied with the quality of consultation about the changes.

- Because of the manner in which authorities provide housing choice and therefore residents' attitude that they have made a particular choice because the housing and support arrangements offered to suit their circumstances, arbitrary changes to these arrangements leave them feeling vulnerable and unjustly treated. Consultation and assent in these circumstances is vitally important.
- The concerns of residents of sheltered housing schemes are not just about value for money. The role of the warden has been to provide physical and often emotional security and promote an environment that enhances quality of life and enables residents to develop a positive sense of community. These are the outcomes that changes to the support arrangements in sheltered accommodation should seek to achieve and against which any changes should be measured.
- Although, in the context of an ageing population, Age Concern Northamptonshire has experienced a decline in the availability of sheltered housing nationally and a decline in warden services, the Help the Aged report anticipates that 61% of residents will still live in warden controlled sheltered housing schemes in three years time and reports that in at least a couple of authorities very positive changes have been achieved for residents. This would appear to indicate that there is a value in taking a measured and thoughtful approach to changes in arrangements for support in sheltered accommodation.
- An adequate supply of sheltered housing as part of a range of housing choices should mean an increasing supply in response to an ageing population. The outcomes that residents need to achieve include physical security, a healthy environment and a sense of community. There is a pragmatic consensus that floating support is more cost effective for authorities but residents have a right to be heard regarding the impact of changes on their security and quality of life and to have an influence on planning alternatives that will deliver those outcomes. Some authorities have managed to achieve positive outcomes in the view of their residents. Northampton Borough Council will do the same if they adopt a measured timescale and a focus on the desired outcome of residents rather than simply cost effectiveness and value for money.

3.7 **Head of Direct Services to Adults and Carers, Northamptonshire County Council**

3.7.1 The Head of Direct services to Adults and Carers for Northamptonshire County Council, provided key points of evidence in relation to forecast data on the future need for sheltered housing: -

- Northamptonshire County Council, working with health, has a joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA), which at a high level provides information about the needs of the area.
- Forecast data on the future need for sheltered housing is a shared responsibility of the borough and county council, which would be

informed by the JSNA. This analysis of housing need has to be looked at as part of a whole system, where we are clear about residential and nursing care needs and who needs to live in a residential home. There is also the need to develop more sheltered housing with extra care. That genuinely provides an alternative to living in a care home. Northamptonshire County Council then needs to ensure the right people reside in sheltered housing, Northamptonshire County Council, Northampton Borough Council and Northants PCT need to look the definition together as this informs the assumptions about numbers. It has been agreed at Chief Executive level that Northamptonshire County Council will work with Northampton Borough on this shared plan. The data on existing services and populations shows that this plan will see a continuation of nursing care, a reduction in admissions to residential care, an increase in extra care and a decrease in sheltered housing.

- Consultation has taken place with over 2,000 older people; the consensus was a model that allows people to stay in their own homes, with assistance such as Lifeline and Telecare. Those that would require a greater level of care, do not want to live in residential care but preferred the extra care model. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that the focus on getting the communities and its support right.
- The aim is to keep as many people in their own homes, with the appropriate care for as long as possible, for some this will be until they may need to move into Extracare housing. People residing in their own homes could be dispersed all over the borough; it could be that the sheltered housing requires more Sheltered Housing Co coordinator support.
- Public bodies have to consider how money is used. Once people start to receive an intensive amount of support particularly night time care it becomes more economical for people to live together within the same building.
- For people with less complex needs the issues are that they people require social contact to maintain their independence and well-being. This is an are where councils needs to work cooperatively together
- The aging population is a challenge for all public bodies. The Authorities are unable to continue with the system that is currently in place, there is a need to help and build communities to help each other, which includes investing in prevention.
- Modelling has to include financing too across the system. Issues such as widening the remit of sheltered housing co ordinators' roles could be investigated.
- Northamptonshire has a very high proportion of people leaving hospital and being immediately admitted to a care home. this is a not good for older people who need to avoid making decisions about their future at a point of emergency

3.8 **Site Visits – Sheltered Housing Accommodation - Northampton**

3.8.1 The Task and Finish Group carried out site visits to various sheltered

housing accommodation units within the borough – Albury Road, Devonshire House, Melbourne House, Abbey House, Eleonore House, Fitzroy Place and Alliston Gardens. Details of the findings are attached at Appendix C. Main points of evidence: -

- The visits had provided positive feedback.
- There was a pleasant sense of community at Albury Road. The Police been around and put up `no cold calling` notices, which seems to be working. The accommodation is super and there is a lot of social activity provided in the mornings but not much in the afternoon and evening. A new resident moved in recently but was not welcomed. She had tried to organise other events but this was resisted. Residents were happy with floating support.
- The Group had been surprised that Devonshire House was sheltered housing and had been taken back by residents and Sheltered Housing Co Ordinators' comments that tenants really enjoy living there. The lifts had been changed. One problem that was noted was with the mobility scooters; currently tenants can leave mobility scooters on their balconies. But there may be a future situation where they will be refused to have one regarding safety of storage. It was suggested that nearby garages could be utilised for mobility scooters and bike storage. The Door entry system was installed to stop vandals. There is the provision of key fob entry. each customer has one key fob. The Group felt that this was not practical, however, if the fire alarms go off the doors will automatically open. The lock on the door is important. The recycling system has been introduced to Devonshire House but all bins are located at one place. Flytipping has occurred.
- Tenants residing at Eleonore House had commented that in their opinion the premise had not been decorated for 20 years since the property was built. The Group was very impressed how well it has been kept. The kitchen areas need revamping to bring them up to date for example the installation of winged taps in bathrooms and kitchens would be beneficial for tenants. Eleonore House is categorised between sheltered housing and a nursing home. One resident did not feel it was as good a value as it was previously. Community activities are very good. There is a mismatch of residents on different levels, about 80% go into the dining room for their meals and the other 20% have to provide their own meals as they don't qualify for the meal. The benches looking out over the park were rarely used. A tenant had commented that they would rather look at the view from their flat. One tenant commented that his low level bath had been removed and replaced with ordinary level bath. Eleonore House has potential to remain on the housing stock but could not understand why levels 1 and 2 were also living there. The property had lots of potential. There should be no level 1 or 2 residents living there. Eleonore House is a great service. It does however need reviewing.
- Many elderly residents at Fitzroy Place were now housed in general needs blocks and this meant a reduction in security and also made access more difficult.
- Various points were made by residents at Fitzroy Place and

Alliston Gardens:-

- Problem with paths in snowy weather – need salt/and sand bins.
 - Flats are not regarded as top priority by the Police because just five flats out of 20 are sheltered accommodation.
 - Fencing has improved things.
 - Tenants would prefer a resident warden. Tenants felt that there were too many temporary/ agency wardens who do not seem to care.
 - The flat in Alliston Gardens is very nice but warm air heating is not good for people with lung diseases.
 - There is a problem with access for mobility scooters over lintel of entry doors to blocks.
- General points observed at the visit to Fitzroy Place and Alliston Gardens:-
- Visits from three times a week to once a month is too much of a jump. Four categories are needed.
 - Some blocks are not suitable for elderly tenants but the tenants still want to live in the area. They should not be forgotten because in a minority.
 - Bungalows are better than flats for disabled residents.
 - There appears to be problems with both access and the storage of mobility scooters.
- There is a marked contrast with custom-built schemes elsewhere in Northampton.

3.9 **Site Visit – LifeLine Centre, Exeter Place Northampton**

3.9.1 The Task and Finish Group visited the Lifeline Centre, Exeter Place Northampton, on 21 January 2010. Key points of evidence: -

3.9.1.1 **Independent Living Team**

- The Call Centre has been based at Exeter Place, in a block of Sheltered Housing accommodation, for the past 22 years
- The Call Centre receives applications for Call Care and will arrange for the installation and commissioning of the relevant equipment
- It is imperative that the Call Centre has up to date, accurate information on its clients
- It is not typical for clients to resist the use of LifeLine equipment, but does on occasions happen. In the main clients request the installation of the equipment.
- The cost of each piece of equipment to the Council supplied by the company, Tunstall, is £99. It does however retail at around £140.
- There are many additional components that can be added to the Lifeline equipment, one of which is a smoke detector, which notifies the operator that the smoke detector has set off the alarm. Other such components include:

Epilepsy sensor, pillow alert, movement detector, fall detector, flood detector, temperature extremes detector etc. Investigations are taking place regarding the potential to offer these 'add ons.'

- The Call Centre also receives referrals from Northamptonshire County Council to install the LifeLine system
- 11,000 clients have the use of LifeLine – some have the wired version and others have opted for the wireless, (a pendant)
- The Call Centre receives around 500 calls per day, many are in respect of reassurance and peace of mind for the client
- Very little calls are true emergencies
- Examples of calls over the past seven days was given: -
 - 2 calls where the clients were referred to hospital
 - 10 calls – ambulances were called
 - 478 – accidental calls
 - 354 calls – front door to be opened
 - Other calls were in relation to holiday notification, returning from holiday and lost pendants.
- The Call Centre holds records of every call that is received; this can be monitored so that the operator is aware of any hotspots.
- The call history is kept for around 18 months

The LifeLine system has a battery back up of up to 24 hours. In the event of a power failure, the system sends a message to the operator informing of this

Investigations are taking place into widening the provision of the Lifeline system, for example to individuals living on their own, with no disability and not aged over 60. This would create further income to the Council.

Lifeline system charges: -

Clients living within Northampton borough

Installation	Monthly rental
£47.09	£17.98

Clients residing outside the borough

Installation	Monthly rental
£57.68	£19.50

Should a client be referred from Northamptonshire County Council, they would pay just the installation fee.

3.9.1.1.2 Control Room

- During the busy times, there are four operators working in the Control Room, plus the Control Room Supervisor

- The late shift is quieter and less operators are required
- Should clients have the LifeLine system installed, but no provision of a floating sheltered housing co ordinator, two emergency contacts are documented. If there is a concern and the operator is unable to contact them they will ask the floating sheltered housing co ordinator to visit, if the client live in the borough. In extreme emergencies the Police will be contacted.
- The Call Centre never leaves a call not dealt with.

3.9.1.1.3

Sheltered Housing Scheme Co Ordinators

- Housing related support is provided to 2,000 properties
- There are 42 Sheltered Housing Co-Ordinators
- Four Emergency Response Coordinators are on duty at night
- Sheltered Housing units all have the provision of an emergency alarm service connected to Call Care.
- It is aimed to assess new sheltered housing clients immediately but if this is not possible, an assessment will take place within two weeks.
- It is best practice for clients to be given an explicit charging breakdown, rather than the rental for the LifeLine equipment to be included in the rent and not detailed separately
- The criteria for individuals to live in sheltered housing accommodation is that they are aged 60 and over with a support need or have a disability with a support need
- There are 8,000 people on the general housing register.
- Individuals do not have to already reside in Council properties to apply for Sheltered Housing accommodation. Housing Needs undertake needs assessments on applicants and open and transparent allocations meetings take place

3.10

Site Visit - Gladstone Centre, Northampton

3.10.1 The Task and Finish Group visited the Gladstone Centre, Northampton, on 21 January 2010. Key points of evidence: -

3.10.2 Key points of evidence: -

- The role of a Telecare Officer includes:
- Update reviews, service packages and financial assessment applications onto the system. From April 2010 Gill's role will become more specialised and will include research, signposting and promoting services
- Grant funding for Telecare is due run out shortly but project planning is taking place regarding the continuity of the service
- Northampton Borough Council (NBC) is responsible for the LifeLine Centre (based at Exeter Place) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) is responsible for Telecare. NBC installs LifeLine equipment and invoices NCC. NCC will then charge the customer based on the eligibility criteria. Telecare is available to anyone over the age of 18 that meets these criteria.

- A member of the Re-enablement Team is the first port of call for customers. The Team works with hospitals and unwell people in their homes.
- If a customer has less than £23,000 of accessible capital, they will be eligible for financial support for Telecare.
- There must be a landline installed at the premise for Lifeline to be put in. Occasionally it is linked to a mobile telephone but only if there is no other alternative. The landline must be able to make outgoing calls
- Tunstall provides the equipment, but other companies such as Chubb and Bosch provide similar equipment but this is not inter-linkable to Tunstall's.
- In Scotland, every person over the age of 65 is offered the Telecare System, plus three add-ons, free of charge.
- Telecare is about independence and security
- Details of the types of 'add on' were provided, which include: -
 - Temperature control – if the temperature went below 14 degrees the alarm would be raised. The alarm would also be set off for high temperatures
 - Bed occupancy sensor – two settings - going to bed and getting up. The times are usually set by the family, if the customer is not in bed by half an hour of these times the alarm will be raised. A secondary alarm can also be linked in – for example the customer can get out of bed and visit the bathroom without the alarm going off but if they are not back in bed within one hour the alarm will go off.
 - Pull cords are often installed in bathrooms
 - Pressure mats can be put in by the front and back doors and if the sensor detects pressure the alarm goes off
 - Memo reminders can be put in for example, by the front door, with recorded messages such as 'remember your keys'. This costs around £12.
 - A special plug, which costs just £5, can be purchased and used in sinks and baths. If a certain pressure point is hit, the plug will begin to empty to prevent flooding
 - Medication dispenser – to help prevent overdosing, however officers need to be sure that the customer is fully aware how to use the equipment. Some pharmacies will now fill these dispensers. The equipment costs around £100.
 - Gas detectors are no longer installed. The cost is over £500, however, if a customer wants to pay for the equipment they will be signposted
 - All Telecare smoke detectors are linked in to Lifeline
 - Telecare can provide carbon dioxide detectors that link in. .
 - A bogus caller button can be added on. This will put a silent call through which identifies that it is an emergency situation. These are installed mainly where distraction burglaries have taken place. The Police will often also supply video entry system.
- The 'Just Checking System' is a PIR system linked to the Internet. It monitors the individual's movement at any time of the day and a print out is provided. The equipment is hired and

is used for assessment purposes.

- Regarding liaising with non-English speaking customers, interaction takes place with the families or interpreters are used.

3.11 **Representatives of the Disabled People's Forum and Older Peoples' Forum**

3.11.1 On 2 November 2009 the Task and Finish Group met with representatives of the Disabled People's Forum and Older Peoples' Forum to obtain their views on sheltered housing and housing options for older people. Salient points raised by Forum Members at the meeting: -

- There is a need for an integrated system of health and social care. Currently there are two separate budgets. On occasions, individuals have to 'bed block' in hospitals, as it is unsafe for them to go home. They have to remain in hospital until suitable accommodation is found.
- There is not enough accommodation available for individuals with disabilities.
- There is a need for purpose built sheltered housing accommodation.
- Concerns were raised regarding the self-assessment process, where individuals may have too much pride to reveal the full extent of their disability. Such checks should be undertaken by health professionals.
- Further concerns were raised regarding the removal of ring fencing for supporting people funding – This could create further homelessness problems.
- There is a need for more social housing.
- Sheltered housing appears to be used for general needs too.
- The timescale for bidding on the Choice Based Lettings system is not long enough; some elderly persons are not computer literate.
- Individuals do not have to be Council tenants to obtain Lifeline. The service covers the whole county. There are two systems – wired with cord pulls and a pendant that is worn around the neck. The cost is around £3 per week, plus installation costs. There are three levels of care.
- Concerns were raised regarding the withdrawal of resident wardens.
- Pensioners' Voice had discussed issues relevant to Older People and had called for a review of accommodation for Older People. Pensioners Voice was concerned regarding the removal of resident wardens.
- Elderly people are vulnerable and often need the stability of a visit from a familiar face (resident warden) – this would not be achieved through floating support.
- Reference was made to the Government's commitment of joining up services, which has not been carried out. In his opinion there is a need for integrated services.

- There is approximately 2,143 sheltered housing units in the borough, concerns were expressed about younger individuals living in these units.
- Often elderly people want to be located in familiar surroundings with easy access to shops and other facilities.
- There is a need for better communication channels.
- Reference was made to the integrated system that is in operation within mental health. It was brought in around eight years ago and works very well. Support is often dependent upon the individual's needs.
- There are not many individuals on the housing register who want to live in sheltered accommodation, the majority of those who do will be offered accommodation. However, a lot of available accommodation is unpopular. A number of elderly people live in general accommodation but cannot access support. There is a need to review the situation and look more widely in a joined up approach.
- Everyone on the housing register has housing needs. 25% have priority needs.
- There was a Policy some years ago whereby hard to let Sheltered Housing Accommodation was offered to other groups. This is no longer the case. Upstairs flats, that were designated sheltered housing accommodation at this time, were often let for general use and were offered to those over the age of forty.
- Everyone who requires sheltered housing is provided with a package of support.
- Within Choice Based Lettings, individuals exercise their choice. Everyone is able to see the properties that are available. There will always be properties in certain areas that are more popular than others.
- The Council is currently reviewing its Asset Management Strategy.
- The role of a warden is to coordinate activity that is required to meet the support plan.

3.12

Sheltered Housing Tenants

3.12.1

A number of Sheltered Housing Tenants attending a meeting of the Task and Finish Group on 21 January 2010. The salient points made by those in attendance and providing written evidence: -

- There is a reasonably complicated issue regarding funding. In his opinion rather than being means led it is due to the budget. Funding has reduced over last three years.
- The expected rise in people over the age of 65 is around 60 per cent over the next 20 years
- Money is well spent on preventative services
- Resident wardens were excellent value for money; it is a postcode lottery whether you still get one.
- For every pound spent on a resident warden, £6 is saved.
- In April 2009 the Supporting People Grant was ringfenced but in April 2010 it will become a single area based grant. In the tenant's

opinion this gives a green light for local Councils to `raid' budgets for vulnerable people.

- In the tenant's opinion floating support is unworkable model. It will not work. It is `floating visits'. Many sheltered housing tenants are distressed by removal of resident wardens; it has affected their health.
- Assessments are fundamentally flawed.
- In the tenant's opinion there had been no consultation regarding any changes.

- A resident had moved to Kelmscott Close in 1994 with her 96-year-old mother who had passed away in 1998. Resident wardens were ideal to this particular resident and her mother, as there was regular contact; it was a valuable and good job.
- On many occasions a resident's son had to help residents get up, they often cannot hear the buzzer.
- Due to the heavy snowfall in December and January 2010 calls were made to sheltered housing tenants rather than visits, a tenant's son was concerned as many tenants cannot hear or answer the phone. After a tenant's mother had died, she had found it hard to look after her father, especially when the resident wardens were replaced by floating support. There was no opportunity of respite as a local care home had closed down.
- Resident warden also ran errands for the tenants, and knew their routines.
- In a resident's opinion the system of floating support is not working, it is not safe and is not cost effective.
- Some residents do not have family living nearby and may only see the floating wardens three times a week.
- One resident's main concern over the whole facet of sheltered housing was communication; in particular the call care system as she felt that it is not efficient.
- It was felt that a lot of the systems are not working and there are also false alarms.
- Tenants can often wait ages for someone to answer when cord is pulled
- Sheltered housing at Pennycrest has been standing for around 25 years, most with original call care equipment
- A tenant gave an example of when a car had run into his home and caused damage. When it happened he was not allowed to go back into the building, as it was dangerous. He called and mentioned the predicament to Council (he was staying with friends). It was emphasised that this was an emergency situation and the tenant was asked to complete forms. When he called the Council office to inform them of the incident, he was told to leave premise, as it was dangerous. When the house was ready to return back the tenant asked for help to move back, none was provided. A contingency plan needs to be put in place for such situations. The temporary accommodation found for the tenant did not have the heating connected.
- A resident gave an example of a situation when he had asked Callcare to clear away snow and was informed that this was not

- possible. Gritting did not appear to take place.
- A tenant apprised that she has worked as a Resident Warden. She could remember two resident wardens dealing with 12 deaths in one year on their patch – they would also identify the bodies if no one else were able to do so. The number of people who require dependence due to the immobility is increasing. When the resident was a warden she remembered visiting a tenant 15 times a day.
- Form filling is too long and repetitive. It can take an hour to complete.
- Visits - numerically they are flawed.
- People returning from hospital are not seen on the day they return home. Such a visit is essential.
- Timescales of sheltered housing co ordinator visits need to be investigated and individualised.
- Concerns were conveyed regarding St Johns Court – the access to the flats and the condition of the footpath from one block of flats to the other is dangerous. The tenant had been told that a barrier would be installed near to the footpath. However ownership of this piece of land requires confirming.
- A tenant commented that pendants had failed 57 times and he was concerned that frail residents could have been using a faulty pendant. Technology is not fail safe.
- Repairs to the premises should be carried out.
- Sheltered Housing Tenants are issued with photographs and names of the floating support team.
- Arthur Street has become noisy, particularly in the late evenings and night. Criminal activity is also taking place. Various departments have been informed.

3.13 Northamptonshire County Councillor

3.13.1 A County Councillor attended the meeting of the Task and Finish Group held on 21 January 2010 and provided details of his experience of sheltered housing within his ward. Main points raised: -

- Ecton Brook comprises two large sheltered housing estates; there are a wide range of needs of residents living in these two estates.
- The system of rotating staff has demoralised the staff and 'upset' the tenants. Residents feel they have lost a friend and the support from the loss of the resident warden.
- There can be a wide range of residents with different care requirements. There is a need and desire for a level of sheltered housing but some residents may be in the wrong type of housing. A permanent warden based on site is the preferred option of some residents but it was accepted that this was no longer practical. How floating support can be addressed by looking at the level of care rather than the geography would be an interesting issue to discuss.
- Feedback from residents includes they do not understand the term independent living; there is a lack of communication, which can cause rumours to be circulated. The majority commented on the

lack of a friend/support from the loss of the resident warden or a warden permanently assigned to their sheltered housing estate.

3.14 Help the Aged Report – No one is listening

3.14.1 The Task and Finish Group received a copy of the Help the Aged Report – *No One is Listening*. The conclusion to the report states: -

“The changes taking place to sheltered housing and warden services are complex and multi-faceted. We consider that it would be unrealistic to argue for a return to the resident warden model in all localities and for all providers. Resources to fund support for those unable to pay for this themselves are finite. The aim is to spread support more widely across the community of older people continuing to live at home. So it is predictable that SPAAAs will explore alternatives to paying for a resident warden to support a relatively small number of people, especially when some of them may not want, need or value that support.

While SP commissioning decisions have undoubtedly driven and accelerated change in services, many providers were already in the process themselves of updating services. Changes may be needed, and should be carried out with regard to due process, managed sensitively and over an appropriate timeframe, following effective information and consultation.”

3.15 Panorama Programme – Sheltered Housing

3.15.1 The Task and Finish Group watched a short Panorama programme that was broadcast in August 2009.

3.15.2 Key Issues from Programme:

3.15.3 Northampton

- Concerns were recorded regarding the loss of Resident Wardens that have been replaced by a Team of Sheltered Housing Co ordinators
- Protest march in the town centre and petitions presented against this change
- The Director of Housing confirmed that:-
 - The changes were regarding independent living – enabling people to live in their own homes providing services to over 2,000 people
 - Vast majority of people appear to agree with change, 85% of those who responded broadly satisfied with service
- Reporters of Panorama interviewed a sheltered housing tenant who commented that they were tolerant of the change
- Another tenant interviewed commented that ‘they were putting up with the change’
- Answers to the questions asked by the presenters provided responses such as “*you have to accept what you were given, you*

have to tolerate and put up with it"

3.15.4 **Whitstable**

- The programme detailed an example of a sheltered housing complex, 'The Oysters', that has the provision of a Sheltered Housing Officer
- The Sheltered Housing Officer used to live on site but a few months previously was relocated to accommodation around 200 yards away
- Some residents missed his presence on the premises, particularly vulnerable residents
- Residents commented that they were not consulted about the change of living accommodation for the Sheltered Housing Officer, but it was confirmed by the Highgrove Group that manages the site that consultation did take place
- The change in accommodation for the Sheltered Housing Officer has proved not suitable for all vulnerable tenants
- A petition comprising tenants' signatures was submitted to Central Government regarding this change

3.15.6 **Yeovil**

- In 2007, floating support was introduced whereby residents were visited around twice a week. There is no longer the provision of a resident warden
- An example given of a tenant who had fallen and had been lying in her flat for some time. She had the provision of pull cords and a pendant but the way that she fell meant that she was unable to call for assistance
- The Housing Association confirmed that the Contact Centre is in operation when the wardens are off duty
- Examples of 'add on's to the LifeLine system were given, for example, bed sensors would alert the Contact Centre

3.15.7 **Nottingham**

- A smart team in place of resident wardens

3.15.8 **London Borough of Barnet**

- A protest took about the changes from resident wardens to floating support
- Details of budget savings were given – in order to make the changes from resident wardens to floating support, there would be a saving of £400,000
- Representatives from the London borough of Barnet commented that this system would provide more fairly distributed support

3.15.9 **Communities of Local Government**

- A ministerial Working Group has established that one of its tasks is to investigate how to make residents more aware of how to raise their concerns

3.16 **Northants Health**

3.16.1 The Task and Finish Group recognised that the strategic health agenda is of fundamental importance to the development of the Council's strategy for providing services to older people in Northampton.

3.16.2 Therefore a request was made to Northants Health for its views on sheltered housing and housing options for older people. Unfortunately by the time the evidence gathering process concluded a response had not been received.

3.3 Looking at Best Practice and other Local Authorities

3.3.1 Local Authorities

3.3.1.1 Desktop research was carried out with Cambridge City Council, Eastbourne Borough Council and Eastbourne Homes. The Task and Finish Group visited Milton Keynes to look at its Sheltered Housing Provision. The Task and Finish Group also received details of a review into Sheltered Housing that had been undertaken by Blackpool Borough Council.

3.3.1.2 Other information was obtained via the Internet and the Audit Commission's website.

3.3.1.3 Key issues:

3.3.2.3 Cambridge City Council

3.3.2.4 Cambridge City Council has a comprehensive page on its website that is dedicated to Older People's housing. Its Older People's housing scheme is said to offer a range of convenient and comfortable accommodation with an environment of friendship and social contacts with other residents.

3.3.2.5 The accommodation is available for people of retirement age and over, who are able to live independently but who want a safe environment with minimal support.

3.3.2.6 The following services are offered to all Older People housing tenants: -

- An independent living facilitator service
- An emergency alarm service
- Housing management, including how to pay rent, Council

Tax, service charges and how to order repairs

- Cleaning and maintenance of communal areas and grounds
- Cleaning of the outside windows

3.3.2.7 There are fifteen Older People Housing Schemes. Some of which are flatted accommodation. However, one is currently closed for refurbishment and another is for sale on the open market.

3.3.2.8 Detailed below are two examples of the types of accommodation offered:-

3.3.2.9 **Brandon Court**

3.3.2.10 The Scheme comprises two one-bedroom flats and 34 bedsits over three floors. There is the provision of a passenger lift. Each flat has a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and lounge. Bedsits comprise a lounge with a sleeping area, kitchen, with communal bathing facilities located on each corridor. There is a communal lounge and kitchenette for tenants' use, together with a sun lounge and laundry unit. The building is fitted with a zone alarm – smoke detectors, automatic closing doors, break glass indicators and warning bells. A guest area is also available which consists of a sleeping area, with a toilet located in the corridor. The charge for use of this guest area is £5 per night. Parking is available on site and there is a private.

3.3.2.11 Within this housing development there is also 21 flats for general housing needs. The flats are over three floors without lift access. Applicants must be over 17 years old and again people who do not currently live or work in the city will only be considered as low priority.

3.3.2.12 **Ditchburn Place**

3.3.2.13 There are also three types of housing for vulnerable people under retirement accommodation at Ditchburn Place. There are 14 flats and seven cottages for temporary accommodation, a three-bedroom house designated a shared house and a detached house, which is adjacent to Ditchburn Place and comprises four part furnished bedsits.

3.3.2.14 In order to qualify to live within the supported housing at Ditchburn Place, applicants must be over 17 years old, under retirement age and have the ability and motivation to cope with daily living. They should not suffer from problems that are likely to create behavioural difficulties, which would be unacceptable to other tenants and should have in place an existing care package with arrangements for regular reviews. Again, people who do not currently live or work in the city will only be considered as low priority.

3.3.2.15 In addition to the above, twenty flats and two bedsits are designated extra-care housing within Ditchburn Place. The flats are grouped into small clusters, each with a bedroom and living area. The bedsits have a large combined living area and bedroom. Kitchens and dining facilities are shared within the other tenants within the cluster. As assisted bathroom

is provided. There is lift access and the units are designed for wheelchair access.

3.3.2.16 The weekly rent covers accommodation and a service charge and a further charge is made for individual use of heating and lighting. It is a condition of the scheme that tenants pay a weekly charge for the on site support service. Services provided for people in extra-care housing include: -

- Support and on-site care
- Laundry, cleaning and maintenance services
- Restaurant

3.3.2.17 Applicants must be retirement age and over and should be independently mobile (with or without a wheelchair), and be able to use the toilet independently. Tenants may need help with daily living and support, such as preparing meals, cleaning, arranging shopping, and various paperwork. Personal care is available from the on-site team but the tenant may use alternative care if they wish. Again, people who do not currently live or work in the city will only be considered as low priority.

3.3.2.18 **Cambridge Dial A Ride**

3.3.2.19 Cambridge Dial A Ride is a non-profit organisation that provides local transport services that are promoted as safe, affordable and accessible to community groups and individuals who have difficulty in accessing public transport. The service is offered to anybody over 16 years old who has difficulty using public transport due to a disability, infirmity or age. The service will take individuals shopping, to the doctors or dentist surgeries or to the hairdressers.

3.3.2.20 All buses are equipped with lifts or ramps for wheelchair access and are equipped to enable wheelchairs to be secured while in transport.

3.3.2.21 To use Dial A Ride you must become a member and pay an annual membership fee of £10. Fees after that range from within the City £3.50 single fare (£2.25 reduced fare with bus pass) to £7.00 return (£4.40 reduced fare with bus pass). Fares outside the city are £7.50 return and there is no provision for a reduction for those with a bus pass.

3.3.2.22 **Independent Living facilitators**

3.3.2.23 Independent Living Facilitators ensure, as far as possible, the safety and well being of the tenants but also encouraging independent living. They liaise with tenants and provide an activities programme throughout the year to include any requests. Tenants are also encouraged to organise their own activities and events. A monthly newsletter is published with up to date information about the service and what is happening during the month.

3.3.2.24 **Emergency Alarm Services**

3.3.2.25 Each flat is connected to a control centre by an emergency alarm system. In an emergency the control centre will alert someone immediately. That person is trained to assess the situation and to make any necessary arrangements.

3.3.2.26 The alarm is a small unit fixed to the wall. It is a speech unit with a button on the front and a pull cord. Pull cords are installed in various locations around the flats.

3.3.2.27 **Tenants Associations**

3.3.2.28 The Cambridge Federation of Tenants, Leaseholders and Residents offers support and advice for tenants and owner occupiers on Council estates. The Older People's Housing Scheme Residents' Association meets on the second Wednesday of every month.

3.3.2.29 **Repair Services**

3.3.2.30 Requests for repair work have to be forwarded to an Independent Living Facilitator. Repair jobs are given categories of urgency. They have to be completed within different timescales, dependant upon the urgency of the job. For example emergencies, which are categorised as blocked drain, serious electrical fault, burst or leaking pipes, major roof leaks, broken heating systems and broken lifts are repaired within eight hours but more serious emergencies will be tended to within one hour. Urgent repairs such as electrical faults where there is no risk of injury, problems with hot water supply, leaking waste pipe, problems with toilet flush, minor roof repairs will be tended to within five days. General repairs are within 20 days by appointment and long term-planned maintenance is programmed in and tenants are given advance warning.

3.3.2.31 **Corporate Assessment Report – Audit Commission**

3.3.2.32 In December 2008, the Audit Commission, as part of its Landlord Service Inspection, awarded Cambridge City Council a good two star service with excellent prospects for improvement. In relation to involving sheltered housing residents in the refurbishment of their scheme, it was reported: -

“In delivering the sheltered modernisation programme, residents of the Scheme are set up as a Committee to be involved in the design, and other aspects of the refurbishment. Views are also sought from the residents involved in the previous refurbishment scheme, to share their experiences and to comment on the proposals.”

3.3.2.33 It is further commented that –

“Sheltered housing stock is being refurbished to meet modern day standards.”

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are based on a three-stage approach of initial screening, a more in depth assessment and at stage three a full review, which would involve working with the community to develop or change services. EISA for City Home' services include income management, the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, sheltered housing and resident involvement. Outcomes from the assessments can be clearly seen, for example the sheltered EIA led to some new sheltered units being designated for the Chinese community.....

The sheltered housing stock is being effectively addressed. The sheltered housing strategy agreed in 2005, identified a ten-year programme to modernise the stock. Prior to 2005, two schemes were modernised and in line with the Strategy a further scheme has been refurbished to provide extra care units, another scheme is being refurbished to life time home standards, and a further scheme is planned for refurbishment in 2009/10. In addition one scheme is in the process of transfer to a Registered Social Landlord for redevelopment and re-provision and another is being sold on the open market to provide the resources to deliver the modernisation programme..... Long term difficult to let properties are being effectively tackled with number significantly reduced, and by the end of the programme all properties in sheltered schemes will be to modern day standards to meet both current and future needs.”

3.3.3 Eastbourne Borough Council (Eastbourne Homes Limited)

3.3.3.1 Background

3.3.3.2 Eastbourne Homes Limited (EHL) is an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), a private company, which provides Housing Services to Eastbourne Borough Council's tenants and leaseholds. The company is wholly owned by Eastbourne Borough Council, who still owns the housing stock.

3.3.3.3 Included within the services provided by Eastbourne Homes Limited is retirement housing.

3.3.3.4 Emergency Alarm Service

3.3.3.5 The service of the Wealden and Eastbourne Lifeline Scheme (WEL) is provided for those older people who prefer to carry on living in their own home but feel the need for some kind of support. A pendant is supplied that is usually worn around the neck for older people to use in emergencies. Every property in Retirement Housing is fitted with an emergency alarm system, which goes through to the Lifeline Control Centre. Every room has an emergency pull-cord installed and a pendant is provided. There is always a response when the alarm cord is pulled - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

3.3.3.6 Schemes specially designed for older people aged 60 or over are provided. Some are offered on a rented basis others can be bought as part of a private scheme, for example those built by McCarthy and Stone.

3.3.3.7 Sheltered housing to rent is offered either through a Housing Association or through Eastbourne Homes (who manage the Council stock). However, applicants must join the HomeChoice Scheme, which is similar to Northampton's Choice based letting scheme.

3.3.3.8 The Council has recently reviewed the support that it offers to older people living in Council housing and has introduced support workers who can work with any of its older tenants who have a support need whether or not they live in one of the retirement courts.

3.3.3.9 Floating support

3.3.3.10 Examples of help provided by floating support includes: -

- Understanding the terms of tenancy, tenant's responsibilities and guidance on remaining safe in the home
- Assistance with understanding rent and council tax payments
- Assistance with making Council tax and housing benefit claims
- Basic budgeting, money management and issues around debt
- General correspondence and help opening bank accounts

3.3.4 **Blackpool Borough Council – Scrutiny Review – Sheltered Housing Lettings Policy**

3.3.4.1 Blackpool Borough Council undertook a Scrutiny Review into Sheltered Housing Lettings Policy.

3.3.4.2 Detailed below are the main findings and recommendations contained in Blackpool's Scrutiny Review.

3.3.4.3 This Review came about as a result of an increasing awareness amongst elected Members of incidents of anti-social behaviour and noise to which sheltered housing residents were being subjected. The problems appear to be exacerbated when accommodation blocks are shared between sheltered and non-sheltered tenants who often live completely different lifestyles and do not always appreciate each others needs, requirements and vulnerabilities.

3.3.4.4 The Review noted that it would never be possible to completely eliminate all isolated incidents of anti-social behaviour but emphasised that the five recommendations that have resulted from this Review would, if fully implemented, improve matters considerably for a particularly vulnerable section of our community.

The Scrutiny Committee came to the following findings: -

3.3.4.5 In the Blackpool Coastal Housing Impact Assessment of the current Lettings Policy it was reported that some Sheltered Scheme tenants experienced anti-social behaviour from the general needs tenants residing above them. In the impact assessment these were mainly attributed to the conflicting lifestyles between general needs and sheltered tenants.

3.3.4.6 As a result of the Impact Assessment, a proposal was made to implement a Local Lettings Policy for first floor non-sheltered properties located within sheltered schemes. The aim of this proposal was to reduce the problems experienced by sheltered tenants in ground floor properties and increase the sustainability of lettings of first floor properties. There would be no requirement for a full change in policy as the current Allocations Policy allows for the development of local lettings criteria in appropriate circumstances.

3.3.4.7 The suggestion of the Local Lettings Policy was to limit the lettings of first floor general needs flats to applicants who are:

- over 35 years of age, or
- in receipt of regular support from Social Services as a result of a Community Care Assessment or
- in receipt of regular support from tenancy related support services supplied via a Supporting People Provider.

3.3.4.8 Residents across the Borough recounted many experiences of anti-social behaviour and discussed the potential of these being linked to age of a tenant, drugs or alcohol abuse. At tenant meetings, it was determined by

way of a vote that tenants considered that the Local Lettings Policy proposed by Blackpool Coastal Housing through the Impact Assessment would not prevent instances of anti-social behaviour.

3.3.4.9 The Scrutiny Committee was informed of measures, which had already been trailed across the borough to reduce instances of anti-social behaviour on sheltered accommodation sites. At one specific location external refurbishments and erection of gates around the site to prevent unauthorised access to the site had reduced anti-social behaviour considerably. This was not a formally designated sheltered housing site but residents felt significant improvements in the sense of community at the site and increased safety. Blackpool Coastal Housing had indicated that further realignment of sheltered housing sites was being considered for the future.

3.3.4.10 Further research was undertaken as part of the Review and it was ascertained that: -

Stoke on Trent City Council had implemented a Local Lettings Policy for an area which had encountered particular difficulties with anti-social behaviour and unsustainable tenancies. This included limiting the letting of general needs flats within two particular schemes to applicants over 30 years of age, allocating certain properties to two parent families and restricting applications for certain types of accommodation to individuals in employment or who are undertaking a work based training scheme.

Wrexham County Borough Council implemented a Local Lettings Policy, which limited the allocation of some flats which had been historically difficult to manage and had been the subject of a number of instances of anti-social behaviour to tenants over the age of 30 years old.

3.3.4.11 The recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Report all link to helping to prevent anti social behaviour in Sheltered Housing accommodation:

(1) That the following criteria be incorporated into the lettings policy for general needs tenants living above sheltered accommodation:

- Potential applicants must be 40 years of age or over
- Properties will not knowingly be let to individuals with current alcohol or drug issues
- Blackpool Coastal Housing, in conjunction with the Police and the Council's Environmental Services Officers, shall regularly and meaningfully monitor the conduct of tenants residing in the said properties and act with all deliberate speed to resolve any issues of noise, disturbance or harassment

(2) That robust reference checking be undertaken for all prospective tenants, prior to a formal accommodation offer being confirmed by Blackpool Coastal Housing

- (3) That all accompanied viewings undertaken for general needs flats above sheltered properties be attended by the relevant Scheme Manager to raise awareness of the nature of sheltered accommodation with the prospective tenant
- (4) That the relevant Scheme Manager attend all welcome visits for tenants in general needs flats on sheltered sites and where appropriate continue to attend the second and third visits if deemed appropriate by the Housing Operations Manager
- (5) That Blackpool Coastal Housing continue to fully investigate all opportunities for the creation of specific sheltered accommodation schemes and designated blocks within larger schemes to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve the living conditions of all tenants

3.3.5 Milton Keynes Council

3.3.5.1 The Task and Finish Group visited an example of Milton Keynes Council's Sheltered Housing accommodation on 1 February 2010.

3.3.5.2 Key Issues

- 800 households receive a weekly visit from visiting wardens (Team of eight). Should demand for this service increase, there is the flexibility in both funding and the service to cope with any increase
- Visiting wardens is used mainly by Council tenants but some other residents also use and pay for the service
- 26 full time and two part-time (30 hours each) Sheltered Housing Officer cover 29 Sheltered Housing Schemes, approximately 945 properties. Each Sheltered Housing Officer is based at an office on site
- Sheltered Housing Officers carry out daily visits to tenants within their allocated sheltered housing scheme
- Sheltered Housing Officers are funded via the Supporting People Programme
- The role of a Sheltered Housing Officer includes: -
 - Daily visits
 - Identifying support needs
 - Reviewing Support Plans – Support Plans are reviewed every nine months and also when circumstances change due to illness and stays in hospital
 - High support package to those requiring high dependency support
 - Monitoring
 - Encouraging tenants to organise social events. Most Sheltered Housing Schemes have Social Committees, members are elected by the tenants

- Comments received from tenants regarding the service provided have been positive, indicating that it is a good way of working. Tenants have conveyed concerns that the full time Officer support will change to floating support
- Sheltered Housing Officers aim to visit at the same time each day. If a tenant is due to be out at this time or is busy, they can put a card on the door, which indicates that they are well. The Sheltered Housing Officer will post the card through the letterbox letting the tenant know that they have been
- Anyone over the age of 55, with a support need, is eligible for sheltered housing. Additionally, social workers can signpost individuals to the visiting warden scheme
- Sheltered Housing tenants are permitted to use mobility scooters on site and in the corridors. A policy is being put together, with the fire and rescue service stating the criteria for storage and charging of the vehicles. Tenants with such a vehicle will be required to have public liability insurance. It was confirmed that when the Policy is finalised a copy would be sent to the Chair
- The visiting warden scheme is being linked with Telecare. Visiting wardens are offered to all those with Telecare. The Supporting People Programme funds Telecare – it costs £1.50 per week, plus the alarm service at a weekly charge of £3
- Should the visiting warden call when the individual is out, they will post a card asking them to call. If there is no call, they will ring later that day or the following day. They will only carry out a follow up visit if there is real concern, using their skill and judgement
- An on call mobile team, consisting of 20 members of staff, is funded by Supporting People. Individuals also pay for this service themselves. The team also monitors outside Milton Keynes, for example Shropshire.

3.3.5.3 The Task and Finish Group visited Hoskin House – Sheltered Housing Accommodation that comprises: -

- Around 30 flats
- Communal lounge – Tenants use this for get-togethers such as coffee mornings and art group. Age Concern hosts a weekly lunch club
- Outside garden area
- Laundry room
- Kitchen
- Guest flat, comprising twin bedroom and bathroom - guests may stay at a cost of £8 per night. Usage is variable
- Rent for sheltered housing is – basic rent £65 per week or £100 per week including all utility bills

3.3.6 Milton Keynes Council – Supporting People Review

3.3.6.1 The Task and Finish Group met with the Supporting People Manager, Milton Keynes Council, on 4 March 2010 and received details of the

recent Supporting People Review.

3.3.3.2 Key issues: -

- Milton Keynes has a lower than average population of older people but the majority are with the fifties age bracket. Therefore it is projected that the older population for Milton Keynes will increase dramatically over the next few years. Overall migration tends to be young families but older people also move into the area.
- Charges for this service are currently a weekly charge of £16 plus £3 for the community alarm service.
- The Task and Finish Group was advised that satisfaction levels of tenants is high,
- Milton Keynes is a unitary Authority and the Supporting People Manager felt that this promoted a joined up approach
- Visiting `wardens' provide a service to owner-occupiers but in practice this is just to Council Tenants.
- Visiting wardens operate planned scheduled visits. They provide a basic health and welfare check. The weekly charge for this service is £1.50.
- Milton Keynes Council undertook a Review and from this ascertained that the main reason for individuals opting to go into Sheltered Housing was bereavement, loss of confidence, break-in, family's `peace of mind. If at this point liaisons could take place with the individual and options discussed, it is possible that they could prefer to continue to live in their own home with technological assistance such as Telecare.
- It was noted that provision of Extracare would probably not suit all
- Milton Keynes Council operates a system similar to Choice Based Letting; prospective tenants are offered a property pool according to need.
- As a commissioner, a mix of accommodation is seen as beneficial, for example, some of Milton Keynes' sheltered housing will need refurbishing, disposing of etc. Therefore there is a need to decide what to do with the resource. When consulting with people, their response in the main is that sheltered housing is not for them, however in 10-15 years time their views could change. It was confirmed that if a proposal was in existence it would not include replacing like with like.
- It is expected that people are going to be more demanding with greater expectations. Domiciliary care can be included within modern schemes; such as Extracare.
- Previously there were strict criteria, including financial criteria, for individuals to live in sheltered housing; this is no longer the case.
- The Supporting People Manager confirmed that local elections at Milton Keynes take place annually on thirds. The Task and Finish Group acknowledged that this could have an impact upon decision making

4 Equality Impact Assessment - Screening

- 4.1 Following the scoping of the Review, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) – Screening was undertaken.
- 4.2 This exercise identified: -
- The main beneficiaries or people affected by the Review
 - The information already in existence
 - Which parts of the Review have the potential for adverse impact or to discriminate unlawfully
 - Whether a particular sector of the community could be disadvantaged by the Review
- 4.3 The Task and Finish Group was mindful of the six strands when undertaking its Scrutiny Review so that any recommendations that it made can identify potential positive and negative impacts on any particular sector of the community. In terms of the working of the Task and Finish and its impact on the equality strands, paper copies of the agenda for the meetings of this Task and Finish Group were issued to all Members of the Group, relevant officers and anyone else who is on the distribution list. As Task and Finish Group meetings are not held in public electronic versions of the agenda were not issued to a wider circulation including, the local press and radio. However the Task and Finish Group did, as part of its evidence gathering, meet with representatives of the Council's forums and sheltered housing tenants. The meetings were held in easily accessible rooms and provision was made for transport for those who required it. Provision has been made for attendees who have a disability, e.g. the documents are written in 12 scale font for those who may suffer from a visual impairment, the blind have access to 'talking' documents, those whose first language is not English have access to translation services and the building in which the meetings will occur contain hearing loops and are accessible by those with severe mobility issues, such as wheel chair users.
- 4.4 The meeting with representatives from the Council's Forums was set at a time that is known to be suitable to those who attended. The meeting with the Sheltered Housing tenants was been set for 6pm in the evening, but transport was provided to those requiring it. Provision was made for those not able to attend this meeting to send in their views or to provide them over the telephone. One tenant forwarded written representation.
- 4.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Review is being undertaken to identify the evidence that will help to make recommendations for improvement. The evidence should also help to identify whether certain diverse sectors are not included.
- 4.6 Short research has indicated that at the present time there does not appear to have been an Equality Impact Assessment undertaken for this Sheltered Housing accommodation. However, it is noted that it is intended that a full EIA will be produced and this will indicate that issues have been investigated at regional level. The Task and Finish Group acknowledges the need for a full EIA to be produced for Sheltered

Housing.

4.7 The Action Plan detailed in the Equality Impact Assessment - Screening included the following details: -

1. The data gathered would be reviewed and appropriate recommendations made.
2. If it is found that it is difficult to obtain evidence due to a lack of data, it may be necessary to consider monitoring to improve data intelligence. If required this will be undertaken using the principles set out in the EIA Toolkit.
3. It is possible that some groups could be disadvantaged from some of the recommendations contained in the final report.

5. Conclusions and Key Findings

- 5.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:
 - 5.1.1 The Task and Finish Group recognised that traditional sheltered housing is provided in a variety of forms and that Northampton, similar to other towns, has built and/or adapted accommodation as sheltered housing over the last fifty years.
 - 5.1.2 The financial costs of providing support to older people are significant. It is important that services demonstrate value-for-money, maximise their impact and deliver positive outcomes that contribute and complement the other support that older people receive (i.e. family, health service etc.)
 - 5.1.3 It was acknowledged that people are now living longer and the older population is growing. There are now more people aged over 60 than under 25 in the general population. The Task and Finish Group realises that this is a huge issue that needs to be addressed in order to understand the impact on Northampton.
- 5.2.1 Further discussions are taking place with Supporting People regarding preventative services and it was acknowledged that it needs to adapt to the changing environment or risk losing Supporting People funding.
- 5.2.2 There is not one single solution of housing options for older people and that it must be about choice with a range of options available. Detailed at Appendix D is population comparison data for Northampton Borough Council and Milton Keynes Council.
- 5.2.3 A lot of elderly people live in general needs accommodation but cannot access support, therefore there is a need to review the situation and look more widely at a joined up approach with partners, which will assist greater numbers of people to live independently.
- 5.2.4 After hearing all the evidence the Task and Finish Group agreed that the current set number of scheduled visits to sheltered housing tenants is not flexible enough and should be based on needs.
- 5.3.1 The Task and Finish Group noted the importance of the benefits of the Telecare System but was concerned to hear that not all of the Telecare system was compatible with the Lifeline system currently operated by Northampton Borough Council. This system assists residents to live as independently as possible in their own homes. There are several 'add ons' to the system, which includes a medication dispenser, memo reminder and a plug to prevent flooding. The Task and Finish Group felt that with the Call Care Service, based at Exeter Place and the Telecare Scheme at Gladstone Centre there appeared to be some overlap in the assessment process and the Task and Finish Group supported discussions taking place regarding how this could be combined.
- 5.3.2 The Task and Finish Group commended the excellent job that staff based at

Exeter Place were doing but was concerned about the lack of office space and recommended that alternative office space be considered such as John Dryden House.

- 5.3.3 The Task and Finish Group supported the investigations that are taking place into widening the provision of the Lifeline system, for example to individuals living on their own. It was acknowledged that this would create further income to the Council but may also require additional resources.
- 5.3.4 The Task and Finish Group felt that it would be beneficial for dialogue to take place with Private Sector Housing Providers and to encourage the co-ordination and widespread use of the Lifeline System.
- 5.4.1 There is a need to assist communities to help each other, and to invest in prevention initiatives that support independent living.
- 5.4.2 The Task and Finish Group felt that some of the community rooms located within Sheltered Housing are poorly managed and under used and that discussions should take place how they could be better used.
- 5.4.3 The Task and Finish Group noted the integrated system that is in operation within the Mental Health Service, which was brought in around eight years ago, works very well. Support is dependent upon the individual's needs. It was felt that this emphasised the need for a joined up approach of all Agencies for the service of sheltered housing and housing options for older people.
- 5.5 The Schemes Review is scheduled to complete by May 2010 and it was noted that this Review is likely to see a recommendation for a decrease in sheltered housing properties across the borough.
- 5.5.1 Currently ward Councillors are not made aware of the Sheltered Housing Coordinators are for each ward and the location of sheltered housing within each ward. The Task and Finish Group felt that it would be beneficial for Councillors to be provided with such a list. It would be useful for Councillors to be furnished with this information in case of a problem.
- 5.5.2 The Task and Finish Group felt that the sheltered housing coordinators' role should be clarified.
- 5.6.1 The Task and Finish Group noted the concerns raised by some residents regarding the loss of resident wardens and the replacement with floating support. Many residents realised that this was not the best way to deliver services, created dependency and was campaigned for by a vocal minority. The Task and Finish Group was therefore minded not to support the campaign for the return to traditional resident wardens.
- 5.6.2 It was recognised that there is a need to understand what is driving the requests for an on site warden. There is also a need to understand what people want so that issues such as the number of staff required can be understood; there may also be competition from the private sector. It was further realised that the Council was unable to continue with the old system

- and further consultation with residents and stakeholders would be required.
- 5.6.3 The Task and Finish Group was pleased to note that 86% of service users were relatively satisfied with the service following a user survey.
- 5.6.4 It was important however to understand the issues of the 14% who were not satisfied and work to make changes to improve services to this significant minority.
- 5.7 Northampton Borough Council has 47 Sheltered Housing Coordinators, which is equivalent to 37 and a half full time equivalent (FTE). It was noted that this is considered adequate to deliver the service contracted for. The Sheltered Housing Coordinators visit the 2,100 properties that are designated as sheltered housing in accordance with the three levels of support – daily, three times a week or monthly. The Task and Finish Group noted that Milton Keynes Council has 26 full time and two part-time Sheltered Housing Officer that cover 29 Sheltered Housing Schemes, around 800 households. Each Sheltered Housing Officer is based at an office on site. The Sheltered Housing Officers carry out daily visits to tenants within their allocated sheltered housing scheme. Sheltered Housing Officers are funded via the Supporting People Programme.
- 5.8.1 The Task and Finish Group felt that consideration needs to be given as to how mobility scooters are best stored in the future and whether or not renting garages within the complex to people living outside is in the best interests of everyone concerned.
- 5.8.2 At the site visit to Milton Keynes, the Task and Finish Group heard that its Sheltered Housing tenants are permitted to use mobility scooters on site and in the corridors. Milton Keynes Council is putting together a Policy, with the Fire and Rescue Service stating the criteria for storage and charging of the vehicles. Tenants with such a vehicle will be required to have public liability insurance. It was suggested that when the Policy has been finalised that a copy should be forwarded to the Head of Housing Needs and Support.
- 5.9.1 Frequently smoking takes place in the communal lifts creating health and safety issues. The Task and Finish Group understands that the Sheltered Housing Co-ordinators are trying to resolve this situation but felt that extra steps will need to be taken to ensure that the safety and comfort of the residents is paramount.
- 5.9.2 When visiting Sheltered Housing accommodation within the borough, the Task and Finish Group was concerned to note the ineffectiveness of warm air heating. The Group had met with a tenant sitting under a blanket to get warm as she was unable to use the warm air heating system as it affected her asthma.
- 5.10 In putting together its Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (screening) the Task and Finish Group was mindful of the need for a full EIA to be produced for Sheltered Housing for any future changes.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Task and Finish Group therefore recommends to Cabinet that:
- 6.1.1 When considering the Task and Finish Group's recommendations that Cabinet recognises that the ageing population presents a huge challenge for the council in a period of public spending cuts. It also presents a significant opportunity to improve the Services offered to older people in a way that effectively promotes independent living. The fact that there are more individuals aged over 60 than under 25 is a huge issue that should be addressed and the impact on Northampton understood and responded to. The Council needs to develop a wide range of options to suit the needs of older and vulnerable people and that represent real choice in terms of the services offered.
- 6.1.2 After hearing all the evidence from various sources, the Task and Finish Group realised that a return to the old system of residential wardens would not improve services to older people and should not be returned to.
- 6.2.1 To ensure that services represent excellent value for money, are competitive and deliver positive outcomes to promote independent living, a flexible structure of visits to sheltered housing tenants should be introduced according to individual needs. Such changes to be in line with the Supporting People grant conditions to safeguard this important funding stream.
- 6.2.2 The Head of Housing Needs and Support be authorised to commence dialogue with private sector housing providers to encourage the co-ordination and widespread installation of the Lifeline system.
- 6.2.3 The Task and Finish Group accepts that the floating support system generally works but highlights the need for flexibility of provision and to minimise the frequency of staff changes to ensure stability and continuity of service provision.
- 6.3.1 Discussions should take place regarding how Northamptonshire County Council and Northampton Borough Council can work more closely together to eliminate overlaps with some of the work streams at the Call Centre and Telecare Office.
- 6.3.2 The use of digital technology should be maximised to support the delivery of services, such as Telehealth.
- 6.4.1 Dialogue takes place between the Portfolio Holder (Housing), relevant key officers, ward Councillors, tenants and other concerned Agencies to investigate how the community rooms can be used to their full potential.
- 6.4.2 The Head of Housing Needs and Support be authorised to set up a meeting with Northamptonshire County Council, all relevant Agencies and organisations to promote a joined up approach to the delivery of services for older people, with a particular focus on the role of Voluntary Groups and the importance of community activities to counteract social isolation.

- 6.4.3 A general review of the Garage Tenancy Agreement should take place to include the possible adaption of garages for the storage of mobility scooters.
- 6.5 That the Head of Housing Needs and Support completes the review of sheltered housing properties and produces a plan that outlines which properties will no longer be designated as sheltered, identifying opportunities for new build which meets lifetime homes standards. The Task and Finish Group's observations about heating systems at some sheltered housing units to be taken into consideration during this review.
- 6.6.1 A full consultation programme, in accordance with the Council's Consultation Toolkit, with existing and potential sheltered housing tenants, is developed regarding any proposed changes.
- 6.6.2 Improved communication methods with existing and potential sheltered housing tenants is maintained. In particular to work with dissatisfied residents to understand their issues and respond to their concerns
- 6.7 The location of the Call Care service to be reviewed due to the poor quality of accommodation currently used and the service is relocated.
- 6.8.1 A Policy for the storing of mobility scooters at sheltered housing accommodation is introduced. The evidence contained in this report should form part of that Policy.
- 6.8.2 Ward Councillors to be issued with details of the location of sheltered housing and details of the Sheltered Housing Coordinators for each ward
- 6.9.1 The issue of security doors and access is reviewed in blocks of flats designated as sheltered housing
- 6.9.2 That the Head of Landlord Services is requested to address specific issues at Melbourne House as identified in the main body of this report. The first floor door entry systems at Melbourne, Abbey and Devonshire be redesigned or appropriately adjusted to alleviate the current problems encountered by tenants.
- 6.10 A full Equality Impact Assessment is produced for future changes to Sheltered Housing.

Appendices



Appendix A

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SHELTERED HOUSING AND HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- To establish whether the Sheltered Housing Service provides a value for money service and how it can be improved.
- To establish residents' satisfaction levels and understanding of Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People
- To determine a better understanding of the complex nature of Sheltered Housing

2. Outcomes Required

- To establish whether the Sheltered Housing Service is providing value for money, offering a good service to the citizens of Northampton.
- To make recommendations for improvement, as appropriate.

3. Information Required

- A synopsis of all information available
- Results of surveys undertaken
- Performance Indicator Statistics
- Evidence from the Portfolio Holder (Housing)
- Best practice Council – Nottingham and Cambridge
- Visits to internal Sheltered Housing accommodation – observing process and speaking to employees and tenants:-
- Visit to the Call Centre – observing process and speaking to employees
- Evidence from tenants – meetings, as part of the site sites, written evidence
- Evidence from:-
 - CITRA
 - Northamptonshire County Council
 - Northants Health
 - Age Concern

4. Format of Information

- Officer Briefings
- Officer Reports
- Portfolio Holder evidence
- Published Reviews by other Councils
- Expert advice
- Surveys with tenants
- Witness evidence
- Presentations
- Site visits

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Interviews with tenants
- Task and Finish Group meetings
- Site visits
- Structured visits to best practice Councils
- Desktop research
- Structured visits to sheltered accommodation and the Call Centre
- Interviews with the relevant Portfolio Holder

6. Co-Options to the Review

- Councillor Gina Ogden representing the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, Northamptonshire County Council.
- An approach be made to Fiona Seymour, Head of Direct Services to Adults and Carers, Northamptonshire County Council to ascertain whether she, or her representative would be co opted to this Review.

7 Equality Impact Screening Assessment

- An Equality Impact Screening Assessment to be undertaken on the scope of the Review.

8 Evidence gathering Timetable

October to March 2009

8 October 2009 Scoping Meeting

- 19 November 2009 Evidence gathering
- 21 December Evidence gathering
- 21 January 2010 Evidence gathering

- 4 March Finalise Chair's report
Various site visits will be programmed during this period.

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm

7. Responsible Officers

Lead Officer Fran Rodgers, Head of Housing Needs
Co-ordinator Tracy Tiff

8. Resources and Budgets

Fran Rodgers, Head of Housing Needs, to provide internal advice.

10 Final report presented by:

Completed by 4 March 2010. Presented by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group to Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 and then to Cabinet.

11 Monitoring procedure:

Review the impact of the report after six months (October/November 2010)

Appendix B

The service user survey

- 7.20 Residents in Northants sheltered housing were asked their opinions about the new service introduced in April 2008. One resident will win £50 in vouchers for returning the survey.
- 7.21 The survey was delivered to residents by Supported Housing Coordinators and returned to SP Solutions in sealed envelopes. The survey is attached as Appendix C.
- 7.22 1,176¹ surveys were returned and analysed after having been input to an Access database.

Help needed by residents

- 7.23 It is clear from the responses that most people need little practical support from the scheme co-ordinators but do want the reassurance of someone popping in to see that they are all right. Question 7 asked what practical assistance residents needed and whilst over 80% percentage wanted some to check if they were all right, the second most common response was reporting repairs at 27%.

Making appointments	Contacting family	Correspondence & forms	Budgeting and bills	Arranging social events	Reporting repairs	Dealing with organisation	Just checking I'm alright	None of the above	Other
7	1	1			3		9	1	
3	5	8	1	2	1		4	1	7
	2	4	7	6	8	0	8	2	2
6%	1%	1%	1%	2%	7%	0%	8%	1%	6%
	3%	6%	1%	2%	7%	0%	1%	0%	6%

Difficulties experienced by residents

- 7.24 The responses to question 11, which asked what difficulties residents are experiencing, show that more than half of the residents have a problem with walking and over 40% experience difficulties with stairs. For those aged over 85 the percentage having difficulties with walking rises to 68%, those having difficulties with reading and seeing increases to 37%

Walking	Using Stairs	Dressing	Washing Or Bathing	Reading Or Seeing	Hearing	Household Chores

¹ 2,108 surveys sent out, 55% response rate

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669	492	166	269	260	160	408
57%	42%	14%	23%	22%	14%	35%
People aged 85 and over						
68%	46%	10%	22%	37%	24%	43%

Overall satisfaction

- 7.25 The overall level of satisfaction for service users was at 86%². The higher levels of dissatisfaction registered in Areas NN1 and NN3 are a cause for concern. There are considerable differences between the satisfaction level at individual services and some had particularly low levels of satisfaction.
- 7.26 At Kelmscott Close the proportion of residents saying that they were satisfied or very satisfied was exceptionally low at 39% and those who were not satisfied made a number of comments about the frequency of staff changes. For Goldcrest Court the figure was 57% and for Bouverie Road, St Johns House and Albury Road it was between 63% and 69%. The full list is attached in appendix xx.
- 7.27 Neither the number of bedrooms or type of accommodation has an impact on satisfaction.

Frequency of visits

- 7.28 The 91% who felt the frequency of visits was just right is impressive. This contradicts expectations given the strength of staff's view that there should be another level of service between three times a week and once a month; this was not offered as an option in the survey. It is possible that if other levels of service were suggested, i.e. visits once a week or once a fortnight, the amount of interest shown by residents would settle the matter once and for all.
- 7.29 Satisfaction varies with the frequency of visiting. The highest level of satisfaction was shown by those who are visited every day at 97%, for those with a monthly visit the figure was 88% compared with 85% for those having 3 visits per week.

Length of time in accommodation

- 7.30 It is encouraging that a high number of people who are new to the service are extremely satisfied with it. Satisfaction is exceptionally high at 95% for those new but is lower for longer standing residents. However the lowest satisfaction rate of 84% is still close to the average of 86% and there is no significant dissatisfaction in any age group.

Age of respondent

- 7.31 There is a slight variation in satisfaction by age group. The average is 86% and those aged 75-79 are marginally above this at 89% and those

² overall figure of satisfaction having been quoted

Overview & Scrutiny, Task & Finish Group
Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People

aged 65-69 are marginally below at 83%. However the difference is not great.

Comments of those unsatisfied

- 7.32 Those who were not satisfied or very unsatisfied amounted to 14%. This is a large enough group to warrant looking at their concerns closely. However it should be noted that 86% of service users were relatively satisfied with the service they received and this is a positive result for a service that has recently experienced changes to service delivery.
- 7.33 Whilst there was bound to be discontent from some residents about the loss of their regular warden, there appeared to be concerns about the number of staff residents have to get used to, and visits not being made at regular times or as often as they should.
- 7.34 The other area of potential concern is the perception that staff do not care enough and do not have enough time to spend with residents. All the general comments raise issues that the service as a whole should be looking at. The level of satisfaction was greater from those who had been in the service over 5 years.



Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 (Housing and Environment)

Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People Task and Finish Group

Group B comprising Councillor Christopher Malpas (Lead) and Councillors Lee Mason, Tess Scott and County Councillor Gina Ogden visited Arlbury Road and made the following observations



Arlbury Road is a sheltered housing development in Blackthorn. It is very well served by public transport with buses going past the end of the road every 10 minutes making it easy for the residents to get to the Weston Favell Centre or Northampton town centre. However, the local shopping centre is a reasonable distance away from this development and this could be a disadvantage to those vulnerable residents trying to be as independent as possible.



Whilst walking around it was evident that Arlbury Road was well-maintained, clean, quiet and a very pleasant place and there were many police signs in prominent places advising cold callers that they were not welcome in this area.



The residents are a complete cross-section of sheltered housing tenants with many of them being able to live very independent lives, with a few still driving and owning a car.

Whilst on our visit it became evident that there was a good sense of community within the complex with several residents greeting each other as they walked to and from the bus stop and post box. We also witnessed many visitors and care workers coming and going.

Arlbury Road is also the home of the Ambridge Community Room. This is a splendid facility for the residents to use and there is evidence of many activities taking place within the building.



AMBIDGE COMMUNITY ROOM ARLBURY ROAD		
PENSIONERS AND SHELTERED HOUSING RESIDENTS		
MON 1ST & 3RD IN MONTH	RESIDENTS 4 RESIDENTS 10.00-12.00 (SHELTERED HOUSING CONCERNS) CONTACT TEDDY MCNABB 401518	ARTS & CRAFTS 1.00-4.00 CONTACT EILEEN CLIFFORD 406303 EMAIL eileen555c@hotmail.com
TUES	BINGO 1.30-4.00 CONTACT JOYCE MADDY 492827	
WEDS	BINGO 1.30-4.00 CONTACT JOYCE MADDY 492827	
THURS	ARTS & CRAFTS (U3A) 10.00-12.00 CONTACT EILEEN CLIFFORD 406303 EMAIL eileen555c@hotmail.com	FRIENDSHIP CLUB 12.30-3.30
FRI 2ND & 3RD IN MONTH	CREATIVE WRITING 1.00-4.00 CONTACT EILEEN CLIFFORD 406303 EMAIL eileen555c@hotmail.com	
LAST FRI IN MONTH	FISH & CHIPS & BINGO 12.00-3.00 BOOKED AND PAID FOR IN ADVANCE CONTACT JOYCE MADDY 492827	

A democratically elected committee manages these rooms but we found evidence that this system is not always working in the best interests of the whole community. Unfortunately it was alleged that the committee could be very hostile to new residents and new ideas. Although there are activities on everyday it is evident that these rooms are underused and perhaps with encouragement other activities or services could be set up for the benefit of the community. Group B comprising Councillor Christopher Malpas (Lead) and Councillors Lee Mason, Tess Scott and County Councillor

Gina Ogden visited Eleonore House and made the following observations

Eleonore House



This facility was built around 20 years ago and was widely regarded as the flagship of Northampton's sheltered housing. The property is situated in a pleasant area at the corner of Eastfield Park. Unfortunately the bus stops, like the shops are a fair distance away and this could prevent some of the residents from living as independently as they would like.



The property is subdivided into individual flats for either one or two adults and Communal areas and facilities. The flats

comprise a lounge, kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and an airing cupboard. These flats are small enough for the residents to manage but have enough space for them to feel comfortable, safe and secure. Like the rest of the building the kitchens and bathrooms in the flats would benefit from some general updating and maintenance. The kitchens have a small number of cupboards and an area set-aside for a small "baby belling" style cooker, which on the whole is sufficient for the residents but simple things like modern "winged" taps would make life a lot easier for the residents.



The Communal areas consist of dining area, meeting rooms, a launderette, hairdressers, treatment room, and offices.

The launderette is financed from the service charges paid by the residents together with tokens purchased at a cost of one pound each time they use the machines.

The hairdressing facility is run in partnership with Northampton College and the students are getting practical hands-on experience whilst the residents are benefiting by getting the service they require.

The treatment room is a facility that is used by carers in order to Bath those less able and professionals to offer services such as chiropody.



Residents are able to book either of the 2 guest suites, which are set up with twin beds for their families to visit them; this costs five pounds per night and can be booked for a maximum two weeks at a time. There are two guest suites for the resident's families to use.

The corridors and Communal areas have not been painted or redecorated since the property was first built and although the staff have done a brilliant job in keeping this facility looking its best, maintenance needs to be carried out sooner rather than later.

It was explained to us that Eleonore house it in the middle of a transition and at the moment nobody appears to know what direction this facility should take. All residents are level 3 supported, however, several should only be on level 2 or 1. When this property was first opened it was designated as a very sheltered housing complex and only those residents that needed that extra level of support were placed there, now there appears to be residents from all levels living there,

some living very independently whilst others have carers and care companies visiting them on a regular basis.

Appendix D

Northampton	2009	2015	2020	2025	2030
People aged 65-69	8,000	10,900	9,800	10,700	12,200
People aged 70-74	6,500	7,700	10,000	9,100	9,900
People aged 75-79	5,400	6,000	6,900	9,100	8,300
People aged 80-84	4,400	4,400	5,000	5,900	7,800
People aged 85 and over	3,900	4,600	5,200	6,300	7,900
Total population 65 and over	28,200	33,600	36,900	41,100	46,100

Milton Keynes	2009	2015	2020	2025	2030
People aged 65-69	8,300	12,100	12,300	13,500	15,200
People aged 70-74	6,100	8,000	11,200	11,300	12,400
People aged 75-79	4,800	5,800	7,300	10,100	10,200
People aged 80-84	3,500	4,100	5,000	6,300	8,700
People aged 85 and over	3,200	3,800	4,600	5,900	7,700
Total population 65 and over	25,900	33,800	40,400	47,100	54,200

Source: <http://www.poppi.org.uk>