

Appendices

None



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Cabinet response to Sheltered Housing and options for Older people Task and finish group
---------------------	---

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	28/7/10
Key Decision:	NO
Listed on Forward Plan:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	NO
Directorate:	Housing
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Sally Beardsworth
Ward(s)	All

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to respond to the recommendations in the Overview and Scrutiny task and Finish report, "Sheltered Housing and options for older people" presented to cabinet on 9th June.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That all the recommendations included in the Overview and Scrutiny report be considered for inclusion in the report on the future of sheltered housing and options for older people due to come to Cabinet in September
- 2.2 That the task and finish group are formally congratulated for the high quality of this report and the time and effort given to produce it.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 The task and finish group was established following a number of questions to full council from residents about the sheltered housing service. A number of meetings were held to gather evidence from a wide range of stakeholders. In addition, a number of site visits were undertaken to talk to residents and see how other councils operate locally.

3.1.2 19 recommendations are included in the report. These are wide ranging and cover a number of different aspects of services to older people. Of particular importance are the recommendations around increasing the flexibility and choice within the service and the need to work effectively in partnership with key agencies.

3.1.3 These recommendations are:

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.
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.
3. 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.
4. 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. 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. 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.
7. The use of digital technology should be maximised to support the delivery of services, such as Telehealth.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. A general review of the Garage Tenancy Agreement should take place to include the possible adaption of garages for the storage of mobility scooters.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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
14. The location of the Call Care service to be reviewed due to the poor quality of accommodation currently used and the service is relocated.
15. 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.
16. Ward Councillors to be issued with details of the location of sheltered housing and details of the Sheltered Housing Coordinators for each ward
17. The issue of security doors and access is reviewed in blocks of flats designated as sheltered housing

18. 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.
19. A full Equality Impact Assessment is produced for future changes to Sheltered Housing.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 Support services to older people are mainly funded through Supporting People (SP) grant. There were already pressures on the existing service to demonstrate value for money and positive outcomes for customers through the introduction of new ways of working. Since the task and finish report was written, the future of SP funding is uncertain due to the budget announcements by the new government.
- 3.2.2 The Head of Housing Needs and Support will need to enter into discussion with the county council on the implications for the sheltered housing service and report to cabinet in September on the outcome of those discussions and proposals on the way forward.

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 It may not be possible to implement all 19 recommendations but at this stage we cannot advise cabinet on which recommendations will be taken forward. However, all 19 recommendations will be carefully considered and if not adopted, a full explanation of the reasons will be given.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 None at this stage.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 There are no financial implications or risks at this stage. However, recommendations from the task and finish group will need to be reviewed in light of very significant financial constraints.
- 4.2.2 This service area provides services to some of the most vulnerable people within our communities. The importance of support to older people to help them live independently for longer is well documented. Failure to adequately support older people will lead to an increase in hospital admissions and long term care.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 None specifically.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 Some older people are amongst the most financially disadvantaged and socially isolated groups in society. Support services to older people need to promote independent living, optimise the opportunities for a high quality existence and recognise the valuable contribution that older people can make within communities.
- 4.4.2 An Equalities impact assessment will be undertaken once proposals for the future of the service are drafted.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 A wide range of stakeholders including members of Overview and scrutiny, The portfolio holder for Housing, Cllr Sally Beardsworth, County councillor Gina Ogden, Chair of Adult care scrutiny committee, Disabled and Older people's forum, officers from the county council Adult care service, SITRA and the Head of Housing Needs and support.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 Housing, Health and Wellbeing

4.7 Other Implications

- 4.7.1 None

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Report of the Overview and Scrutiny committee 2-March 2010

Fran Rodgers, Head of Housing Needs and Support, Ext 7595