



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Sheltered Housing Review – Support Provision
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AGENDA STATUS: Public

Cabinet Meeting Date:	14 th November 2012
Key Decision:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	YES
Directorate:	HOUSING
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mary Markham
Ward(s)	All

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation exercise relating to Sheltered Housing and to consider proposals for changes to the support service.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the positive outcomes in respect of the consultation with customers of the Sheltered Housing Service to reflect the majority agreement for the need for the Council to provide a more flexible and responsive support service in the future.

- 2.2 To approve the proposed changes to the Sheltered Housing Service model in order to respond positively to the feedback from our customers.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 On the 7th March 2012 Cabinet took the decision to commence consultation with all tenants who currently receive a support service and live in NBC sheltered housing. The consultation also included customers on the Housing Register who have applied for sheltered housing, and customers above the age of 61 (current Pension Credit age) who live in a general needs tenancy. The consultation considered the type and quality of support service the customers currently receive and the options for a future support service.
- 3.1.2 The consultation, facilitated by an independent organisation, commenced on the 2nd July 2012, and was completed on the 30th September 2012.
- 3.1.3 The consultation framework is outlined in **Appendix A**. 1,052 completed questionnaires were received representing a 21.6% response rate. There is overwhelming support for the introduction of changes to the current service.
- 3.1.4 A summary of the responses are listed below:-
- ✚ 94.3% of customers agree that future support provision should be personalised to meet each customer's needs.
 - ✚ 94.5% of customers agree that the future support provision should be flexible to increase or decrease according to a customer's needs.
 - ✚ 85.8% of customers agree that the customers with no support needs will be able to contact staff as and when they need to by telephone or at a regular drop in surgery instead of having co-ordinator visits.
 - ✚ 92.5% of customers agree that instead of visiting customers who don't need support, staff time will be better spent providing enhanced support to customers who most need it.
 - ✚ 81.6% of customers agree that on some occasions when appropriate rather than visit, staff may contact customers by telephone.
 - ✚ 94.7% of customers agree that there is an increasing number of older, disabled and vulnerable people who need our support, but it is currently only available to Sheltered Housing tenants and agree with the principle of providing support services to anyone who needs it, no matter what type of property the customer lives in subject to funding being available.
 - ✚ 81.2% of customers agree that community rooms should be used to support customers to arrange activities and that increased services should be available in the community rooms.

- ✚ 79.8% of customers agree that the support service provided to customers should be called Independent Living.

3.1.5 Full results available online at: www.northampton.gov.uk/shelteredreview (a hard copy of these results can be made available on request).

A list of all stakeholders consulted is available online at:

www.northampton.gov.uk/shelteredreview (a hard copy of these results can be made available on request).

3.1.6 The Council commenced the review of the Sheltered Housing Service during 2011, due to a number of challenges facing the Council. These include:-

- ✚ Increasing numbers of older people requiring support.
- ✚ Negative feedback from customers regarding the relative inflexibility of the support provision currently provided by the Sheltered Housing Service.
- ✚ The quality of the existing Sheltered Housing stock not always meeting the needs of the customer.
- ✚ The reduction in funding nationally and locally for all forms of housing support.

3.1.7 Northampton will experience significant growth in its older population over the next few years with an additional 16,000 people over the age of 60 by 2026. For those over the age of 90 the figure is expected to increase from 1,600 in 2012 to over 3,100 by 2026. This trend will affect future service provision due to the increased numbers of customers requiring support and re-housing from the Council. Therefore, management of demand will be essential.

3.1.8 The Council's current support provision is based on three levels of support. This service is viewed to be inflexible by customers and stakeholders and does not comprehensively address the specific support needs of the customer. The current model varies between support being provided every day to support being provided with one visit a month.

3.1.9 Work has commenced on the development of a Sheltered Housing accommodation standard. This will identify the components that will be included in all sheltered housing properties such as level access showers, wheelchair accessible etc. It is anticipated that the new standard will be implemented during 2013.

3.1.10 The funding provided by Northamptonshire County Council to part fund the support for the Sheltered Housing Service has reduced from £1.2 million during the 2010/2011 financial year to £800,000 during 2012/2013 period (former Supporting People funding programme). This reduction is due to changes in funding provided by central Government to Local Government. All public services are facing financial challenges and there are significant

pressures on budgets that deliver non-statutory services in the current difficult economic climate.

3.1.11 As part of our annual review process, all current Sheltered Housing tenants have been reassessed to identify their support needs and preferences in terms of how they wish to receive support.





3.1.12 **Appendix B** compares the results of these reassessments with the current service provision and identifies a significant difference in our customer's requirements for support going forward.

Proposed New Service Model



3.1.13 All Sheltered Housing customers will be assessed to identify what, if any, support is needed to enable them to live independently. A support plan will be developed in consultation with the customer and will be designed to meet the identified support needs. This plan would be reviewed regularly including when a significant change of circumstances occurs and will be flexible to provide more or less support as required.

3.1.14 It will be essential for the new service to build upon the existing partnership work that has been developed with Northamptonshire County Council, Health Agencies and Voluntary and Community Organisations, to co-ordinate access to services and manage demand in order to enhance choice and life chances, and to deliver services at the point of need and in the most cost effective way. The types of services on offer include:-




Health

-  Assist in registering with a Doctor and/or Dentist
-  Assist in arranging for delivery or pre-sorting of medication
-  Assist in helping to access carers or meals on wheels
-  Assist in making referrals to statutory agencies where appropriate


Economic Wellbeing

-  Assist in applying for benefits and grants
-  Assist in helping to set up bills or a household budget

Social and Leisure

-  Assist in finding training, volunteering or employment
-  Assist in accessing local day centres, activities or transport facilities
-  Assist in developing a range of activities for customers and other older people either at a community room such as coffee mornings, art classes etc.

Safety and Security

-  Assist in applying for adaptations such as a stair lift or level access wet room

- ✚ Arrange fire safety checks

Floating Support

- ✚ Flexible, short term co-ordination of support to help the customer to regain independence.
- ✚ Lifeline Alarm/Call Care
- ✚ Drop-in Surgeries

Enhanced Support

- ✚ Assist in helping customers maintain their independence by involving other agencies such as Adult Social Care and Health on a longer term basis.

Wellbeing checks

- ✚ Regular telephone calls to the customer's home from the Call Care service or a visit to check the customer is well and have the support they need.

- ✚ 3.1.15 About 40% of the current residents have support needs which require regular visits with 56% preferring a lifeline only service and 4% requiring no contact at all. On this basis, it is proposed to reconfigure our service to respond more appropriately to the needs of our customers including those older people who do not live in a designated sheltered scheme and to use our findings and the stated customer preferences to predict the future demand for services and identify the resources required to deliver them.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The growing number of older people in Northampton will place additional pressure on the Sheltered Housing Services provided by Northampton Borough Council.
- 3.2.2 We have identified that older people who live in general needs accommodation have support needs that are currently not being met.
- 3.2.3 There remains uncertainty around the future of prevention funding (former Supporting People) due to financial pressures placed on Northamptonshire County Council (NCC). The current contract for sheltered housing with NCC has been extended until September 2013. There is however, a requirement to identify efficiency savings within this contract and there is no guarantee of further funding from NCC after this date.
- 3.2.4 An important component of the new model would be the delivery of a Call Care/Lifeline or similar 24/7 emergency response service in order to support customers to maintain an independent lifestyle. The Call Care Service is currently under review.

- 3.2.5 The service will need to be reconfigured to meet the new requirements of the service and to manage within the available budget.
- 3.2.6 Community rooms are underused and have the potential to be used more effectively to provide a base for community activities designed to reduce isolation, promote health and well-being and independence.

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 Do nothing: Our customers have made it clear that they do not wish to continue with the service as it is currently delivered and given the reductions in funding this would put additional pressure on other council budgets.
- 3.3.2 Stop providing a support service to Sheltered Housing customers. There is a wealth of evidence that suggests that providing support to vulnerable people significantly enhances wellbeing and independence. It also prevents more costly services being required.
- 3.3.3 Adopt the recommendations in this report which have the clear support of our customers.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The new Sheltered Housing Support Service will contribute to the delivery of key objectives within the Council's Housing Strategy and to Government policies, particularly the Ageing Well Strategy.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 The Service will be required to operate within the limits of the funding that is available. Every effort will be made to maximise the potential funding opportunities available in order to meet the demand for support.
- 4.2.2 The service will manage risk, as part of an inter-agency approach, to promote safeguarding for customers.
- 4.2.3 The new service will be funded from a number of different budgets including the Housing Revenue Account and Housing Benefit in future years. There are potential reductions or withdrawals of funding in future which this Council will not be in control of and this may impact on the size and scope of the service in the future.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 The Council has followed the required consultation framework.
- 4.3.2 The Legal Services team have been consulted and approved the contents of this report.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is available on line. www.northampton.gov.uk/shelteredreview (a hard copy of these results can be made available on request)

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 A list of stakeholders consulted is can be found online at www.northampton.gov.uk/shelteredreview (a hard copy of these results can be made available on request).

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The proposals contained within this report reflect the priorities in the Housing Business Plan, the Corporate Plan and the outcomes identified from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work in this area.

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 There are no other known implications at this time.

5. Background Papers

- 7th March 2012 Cabinet Paper on the Sheltered Housing Review
- Appendix A - Consultation framework
- Appendix B - Reassessment results compared with current service provision

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The Sheltered Housing Service Consultation Framework

- ✚ All sheltered housing tenants received an information pack relating to the consultation and a written questionnaire. This questionnaire was distributed to 2,000 tenants.
- ✚ All customers who have applied for sheltered housing on the Choice Based Lettings housing register or who have a physical disability received an information pack relating to the consultation and a written questionnaire. This questionnaire was distributed to 1,384 customers on the housing register.
- ✚ All tenants living in general needs accommodation owned by Northampton Borough Council above the age of 61 (current Pension Credit age) received an information pack relating to the consultation and a written questionnaire. This questionnaire was distributed to 1,500 tenants of Northampton Borough Council.
- ✚ 37 drop-in surgeries have been conducted at the Guildhall and at various sheltered housing scheme community rooms across Northampton over the 12 week consultation period.
- ✚ One to one meetings were conducted with stakeholders.
- ✚ All stakeholders received a copy of the consultation questionnaire to complete.
- ✚ The Housing Solutions service attended the Diversity Forum, Disabled Persons Forum, the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Forum, the Pensioners Forum and the Homelessness forum to consult on the sheltered housing support service consultation.
- ✚ The questionnaire and information pack including Frequently Asked Questions were placed on the web site to allow all customers access to the consultation.
- ✚ Press releases were issued to the local press relating to the consultation framework.
- ✚ Radio interviews were conducted by the Cabinet Member for Housing advising the wider community of the sheltered housing review consultation.
- ✚ Drop in surgeries were conducted in the Northampton town centre outside market on 2 Saturday mornings in July and in September
- ✚ Drop in surgeries were conducted at various libraries, the Weston Favell shopping centre and 4 tenant forums across the Borough.
- ✚ Employees of the Sheltered Housing service were consulted on the sheltered housing review and initial findings.
- ✚ Unison and the GMB trade unions were formally consulted on the sheltered housing review.

- ✚ The Housing Solutions service established a Sounding Board consisting of Elected Members, tenants of the service, and officers that work in the sheltered housing service to discuss the various stages of the consultation process and to provide critical challenge to all of the work that was planned.
- ✚ A Sheltered Housing tenant's newsletter was forwarded to all sheltered housing tenants 6 weeks in to the consultation process reminding the tenants to return the questionnaire.
- ✚ The tenant's open day was attended by the Sheltered Housing Service to consult on the proposed changes in support.
- ✚ Articles appeared in the My Home tenant's magazine advising customers of the Sheltered Housing consultation relating to the Support Services.
- ✚ Focus Groups were undertaken with 500 tenants and customers on the Housing Register to ensure the services re-design meets the needs of the customers.

Results of the Housing Support Assessments

Results of the review

A review has been carried out on current sheltered housing tenants to assess their current support needs and to compare these needs with the support they currently receive. The findings are detailed in the following tables.

Current Sheltered Support Levels:

Support Level	Number of Customers	Percentage %
Level 1 (visit once per month)	1097	61.0%
Level 2 (visit 3 times per week)	648	36.0%
Level 3 (visit every day)	41	2.3%
Level 4 (Eleonore House - visit every morning, intercom call every evening & staff on site everyday)	12	0.7%
Total	1798	100.0%

This review was carried out on 1,798 of the 2,200 sheltered properties that Northampton Borough Council manages. The main reasons for some 400 properties not being assessed where:

- ✚ 200 non qualifying tenants that no longer received the sheltered service due to opting out.
- ✚ Tenants refusing to undergo the assessment process.
- ✚ Tenants being in hospital or respice care.

Assessed support needs of current Sheltered Housing Customers:

Support Level	Number of Customers	Percentage %
Opting Out (no visits or Lifeline)	71	3.9%
Lifeline Only (no visits)	1004	55.8%
Floating Support	433	24.1%

On-going Support	290	16.1%
Total	1798	100.0%

Currently all 1,798 Sheltered Housing tenants who were assessed receive visits from the Coordinators at least once a month. The assessments carried out by our officers has identified that 1,075 (59.8%) of those assessed do not require any support visits. Therefore only 723 (40.2%) of those assessed showed a need for support visits.