
REPORT OF THE HOUSING BEST VALUE SUB-COMMITTEE

1 HOUSING CARE AND SUPPORT STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Housing Best Value Sub-Committee on 14 February to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a number of recommendations. A copy of the officer's exempt report to the Sub-Committee is being circulated under separate cover to Members of the Committee.
- 1.2 The Sub-Committee has noted the background to strategy development and received a detailed presentation from Mr King on behalf of the Council's consultants. During the presentation Mr King wished to emphasise that a significant statistical aspect was the high number of persons over 65 living within the District and the likely sizeable increase in this number over the next few years.
- 1.3 The Sub-Committee has also noted that:-
- Management experience associated with current sheltered schemes pointed to a need for increased levels of support. Scheme car parks were used by both carers and residents. The low level of the supporting people budget remained an issue.
 - Implementation of the strategy would require both the shifting of resources and new resources.
 - The costing that could be associated with item 'i' on page 18 of the exempt report totalled approximately £4m. The Council had previously decided to suspend further work on sheltered scheme refurbishment pending the outcome of the stock option appraisal process. Refurbishment activity had been the largest element of the Council's major repairs allowance.
 - A number of "retirement villages" were under construction around the country. Such villages typically contained 200-300 dwellings and a comprehensive range of facilities. The consultant's experience was that such villages proved very popular. For an authority such as Rochford, the introduction of a village development could have consequences for sheltered housing provision in that it would provide an alternative for traditional applicants and existing residents. A key factor was affordability – developed by private companies, such villages are likely to offer accommodation that is predominately for sale.
 - The Council's sheltered housing register included home owners. The demand for traditional sheltered housing was relatively low – "extra care" accommodation being more in demand.

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- Levels of care management could be identified as an issue in that service providers did not always respond to the lifestyle/care needs of residents. Nationally, policies were moving towards more individual tailored services and this aspect was addressed within the strategy. Supporting People Assessments would lead to the driving-up of standards. The delivery of care was the statutory and financial responsibility of social services.
 - Nationally there had been issues with regard to attracting appropriate care staff for a number of years. Wage cost was a factor behind a number of smaller care home proprietors leaving the industry. Social services departments had developed a range of strategies to address this issue, including the gradual increase of wages; the developing use of assisted technology; the review of building design and recruitment from abroad.
 - The strategy touched on shared ownership. Varying forms of equity release were becoming more of a norm.
- 1.4 The Sub-Committee fully endorsed the consultant's report and noted that specific concerns around the practical application of proposals could be addressed when detailed consideration is given to policies. It was agreed that, subject to Parent Committee endorsement, the Sub-Committee would be the appropriate forum for considering all issues that arise once the Council had reached agreement on the future option for housing.
- 1.5 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) That the Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board be advised of the consultant's conclusions.
 - (2) That, following Council's agreement to the future option for housing, the Housing Best Value Sub-Committee be tasked with considering the policies relating to the Council's sheltered housing stock that the Council would wish to see in any future agreement relating to the provision of housing and all other issues that arise from the agreement.
 - (3) That the Council's future housing care and support strategy be finalised once the future direction for the local authority sheltered housing schemes is determined.

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Background Papers:-

None

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