

FRAIL ELDERLY HOUSING

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 To receive comment and advice from voluntary organisations on their assessment of the housing and support needs of frail older people.

2 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 At the last Committee meeting, Members requested that Age Concern Essex and Rochford Crossroads be invited to attend this meeting so that their views can be taken into account in considering the Council's future strategy on housing for older people.
- 2.2 At the time of writing this report, invitations have been sent and it is anticipated that representatives will be present at the meeting.
- 2.3 Copies of the slides used by Mr Sinden at the last meeting have been sent to Members of the Committee. Appended to this report is a copy of a Working Group report produced as part of the Essex County Council Best Value Review of Older People's services dealing with extra care sheltered housing. This builds on some of the points made by Mr Sinden in his presentation.
- 2.4 Proposals received from the Housing and Support Partnership for further work to support the Committee are being evaluated and will be reported to the next meeting.

3 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee considers the evidence submitted by Age Concern Essex and Rochford Crossroads.

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Background Papers:

None.

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Options Working Group – 2 Extra Care Sheltered housing
Supplementary Report (Draft)

Brief explanation of sheltered accommodation and its relationship with other forms of care.

The original concept underpinning the development of sheltered housing was to provide a housing based environment through which older people could benefit from low-level support and communal activities provided by a warden (who, in most instances, was resident 'on-site').

Over the last decade, there has been a growing body of research into the role and future direction of sheltered housing. The Audit Commission report *Home Alone: the role of housing in Community Care* concluded that 'there is a need to review sheltered housing, which should include an examination of the role of the warden, traditionally viewed as a 'good neighbour'. Wardens are struggling to cope with high levels of dependency amongst tenants. A particular problem is dementia'

The role of sheltered housing has altered in several key areas:-

- It is catering for a frailer, more dependent population than originally intended.
- Many sheltered housing providers aim to offer a *home for life*
- Sheltered housing is staffed by an increasingly professional workforce

Sheltered housing is in a period of intense, policy driven change. The whole national policy environment within which sheltered housing is provided is being overhauled.

The emphasis is being moved away from reorganising existing services around 'models' of service and firmly towards the planning and delivering of flexible, appropriate services that enable older people to remain active citizens.

There is a clear emphasis on the preventative role that sheltered housing can play and, within it, the benefits of extra care sheltered housing services. However, the national Strategic Framework is clear that it cannot be viewed in isolation and has to be seen as part of a wider, cross-agency set of services that promote active citizenship. There is a need to evaluate the services in an inclusive way, looking at whole systems, not just the individual housing, care or health care individual elements.

The Best Value review currently has focused primarily on the social care element provided to extra care sheltered schemes and accepted the principle that tenants in sheltered schemes be seen as having homes for life and treated equality (in terms of social care support) with people living in their own homes.

Essex Social Services Best Value Review
Age Matters - Services for Older People

Taking the Options forward towards local implementation.

Whilst accepting that there is little scope for new build, much can be done with existing schemes to integrate the social care support with the 'warden' type support.

This will require a level of joint work with District and Borough councils, independent sheltered schemes and social care providers.

The first action is for localities to review all existing schemes, initially to identify those to target for more work to detail the level of social care support and who provides this.

Similar work has already undertaken in Epping along these lines and this experience can be drawn on. Of particular note was the time taken for such an exercise and the role that the new Provider Managers can take in such work.

Criteria for the option of changing to an on-site team and the integration of support functions should be based on :-

1. The physical characteristics of the scheme and its location.
2. Current Warden arrangements.
3. The level of social care support going into scheme (Hours and Tenants).
4. The level of social care support provided in the immediate vicinity, which could be covered by an on-site team.
5. The added benefit for the scheme, other tenants and any local population of older people.
6. Population changes that may affect demand over time.

When demand reaches a critical point, different levels of support should be considered as part of a seven-day service from an on-site team. These levels of support are :-

- a) Day cover (7.00 am to 11.00 pm)
- b) Sleep in cover.
- c) Waking night cover.

Such services should be provided by either the local independent sector contractor or Directly managed services, depending on the application of best value principles.

Funding

The potential for further support services (such as Day Care) should also be considered as part of prevention and promoting independence strategies and may be able attract grant funding.

The integration of the warden role with the on-site team could also draw in transitional housing benefit under Supporting People programme.

Designation of sheltered schemes.

Whilst the above proposals will see more schemes developing the capability for a proportion of "extra care" tenancies, this should not necessitate the re-designation of the whole scheme as Extra care Sheltered Housing.