

## **COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK**

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

Members to consider the redesignation of some of those properties which are currently used for the housing of people of pensionable age.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

The stock of properties within the Housing Revenue Account is steadily reducing due to tenants exercising their right to buy. Forty-six multi bedroom properties were sold last year and to date, 14 multi bedroom properties have been sold this year. The current stock totals 1930 properties. Of these, 14 are permanently used for homeless families and a further 523 are within sheltered schemes for the elderly. In addition, there are 302 one-bedroom properties, which are designated for aged person occupation.

Within the housing stock are therefore 825 properties designated for the elderly and 1091 properties for general needs. Eighty of the general needs properties are one bedroom flats which are situated in Rayleigh and Rochford (Garden Way and Millbourn Court). The Council does not have any one bedroom flats in Hullbridge or Canewdon.

The remaining first floor flats in Hockley, South Rochford, Wakering and Stambridge have become difficult to let to applicants on the Housing Register and are therefore frequently let to the elderly relative of a local resident who is living outside the area.

One person flats in Rayleigh and one-bedroom bungalows in Great Wakering have also become difficult to let. These difficult to let properties account for the increase in void period and the loss of rental income.

#### **2.1 Examples of vacant 1 Bedroom properties which have been difficult to let.**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Property Type</b>	<b>No. of Refusals Before Let</b>	<b>No. of Void Weeks</b>	<b>Rent Loss</b>	<b>Source of New Tenant</b>
Stambridge	1 B/R 1 <sup>st</sup> Fl. Flat	5	19	£773.68	From outside area

Sth Rochford	1 B/R 1 <sup>st</sup> Fl. Flat	7	14	£621.18	From outside area
Rayleigh	1 B/R 1 <sup>st</sup> Fl. Flat	4	11	£580.69	Applicant with nil points
Wakering	1 B/R 1 <sup>st</sup> Fl. Flat	0	4	£174.96	From outside area no suitable applicant on register
Rayleigh	Gnd. Fl. 1 person Flat	5	16	£694.72	From outside area
Rayleigh	Gnd. Fl 1 person Flat	5	13	£564.46	From outside area
Rayleigh	Gnd. Fl 1 person Flat	2	11	£477.62	From outside area
Gt. Wakering	1 B/R Gnd. Fl. Flat	5	15	£640.95	From outside area

- 2.2 There are currently 398 applicants on the one bedroom register including 82 people of pensionable age of which 71 are owner-occupiers. These applicants are very specific as to the location of any tenancy, which they may accept. This can often result in a pensioner designated flat remaining empty whilst a non pensioner if made the offer, would accept the tenancy.

### **3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Reduction in the number of properties remaining unoccupied.

### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Reduction in loss of rent due to properties remaining unoccupied.

### **5 SUMMARY**

The Government have asked all local authorities to review their policies in order to make the very best use of the scarce housing resources and this report is part of that initiative. A change in policy to gradually deregulate difficult to let properties would have strategic advantages to Rochford and would reduce rent loss through voids.

**6 RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RESOLVES** to deregulate flats above ground floor in those areas where properties have become difficult to let and that those properties be let to couples or single people without children. (See Appendix 1 attached)

S J Clarkson

Head of Revenues & Housing Management

---

**Background Papers:**

For further information please contact Clive Burton on (01702) 546366

**APPENDIX 1**

**LIST OF ALL PENSIONER DESIGNATED 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR FLATS**

<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF FLATS</b>
Shoebury Road, Great Wakering	3
St John's Road, Great Wakering	2
Sudbury Close, Hawkwell	8
Harris Court, Hockley	3
Shepheards Court, Hockley	2
Station Road, Hockley	5
Clavering Court, Rayleigh	4
Rodwells, Wakering	4
Evergreens, Wakering	4
Old Hall Court, Wakering	2
Boulevard, Rochford	4
Rochefort Drive, Rochford	2
Sutton Road, Rochford	2
Warwick Drive, Rochford	2
Cagefield Road, Stambridge	8
	<hr/>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>