

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 16th November 2015

Sheltered housing service and charges.

Joint report of the Senior Supported Housing Development Officer and the Housing Services Lead.

(This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Terry Beale)

1.0 Executive summary

Following Somerset County Council's review of commissioned housing related support services in 2013/2014, Taunton Deane Borough Council's Housing and Community Service is having to make changes to the services it delivers and the charges it applies in respect of its sheltered housing service.

The purpose of this report is to consider and agree a proposed new sheltered housing service and charges for sheltered housing.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Tenant Service Management Board are asked to note and comment on the proposals within this report.

3.0 Background and full details of the report

3.1 The current housing related support service in sheltered housing

Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) currently owns, manages and provides housing related support services to a total of 880 (01.11.15) sheltered housing council tenants.

(Appendix 1 provides a list of the locations of TDBC's sheltered housing accommodation/schemes).

TDBC's sheltered housing is currently comprised of two separate but highly related elements:

- 'Designated accommodation' – This is a flat or bungalow, which is equipped with an interactive alarm system. The accommodation is paid for by tenants in the form of rent and service charges. Tenants on low incomes can claim housing benefit to assist with both the rent and 'housing benefit eligible' service charges; and
- 'Housing related support' – This can include regular and occasional welfare checks that provide reassurance and a minimal level of social contact. The support can also help with basic household tasks such as dealing with correspondence, arranging essential appointments and sometimes to help plan meals, organise shopping and foster good relations with neighbours. The housing related support service is paid for by Somerset County Council grant – formerly Supporting People funding.

(Section 3.3 provides more detail on the current housing related support service at TDBC)

Note:

- a) It is important to distinguish support from care. Care is about attending to personal needs such as washing, dressing etc. Care is not an element of the sheltered housing service at TDBC; and
- b) This report does not concern TDBC's two extra care schemes at Kilkenny Court, Taunton and Lodge Close, Wellington as services at these schemes are being reviewed separately.

3.2 Somerset County Council's supported housing service contract review

Over the last few years TDBC's contract with Somerset County Council (SCC) to provide housing related support to its sheltered housing tenants has reduced significantly. In 2012/2013 the overall contract value was £244,223.48, reducing to £229,570.07 in 2013/2014.

Following a comprehensive review of commissioned services by SCC throughout 2013/2014 a new contract was entered into by TDBC to provide housing related support to its sheltered housing tenants. The overall value of the new contract is £153,046.71 per year for the period October 2014 to October 2018.

3.2.1 In addition, SCC's review also redefined key elements of its service contract specification, such as:

- Limiting the provision of support to people with higher level support needs;

- Providing support that is focussed on helping people to develop ways of coping with the things they are finding difficult and will be increased, reduced or stopped according to their needs at any given time; and
- Providing support only where the person has no other means of meeting their needs. If the person has family who are willing and able to help them, if they are receiving other services that meet their support needs, or if they can reasonably purchase a service to meet their support needs, they will not be offered further support through the new contract.

For full details of Somerset County Council's housing related support in sheltered housing service specification see Appendix 2.

As a direct consequence of a significant reduction in the housing related support contract value and changes to the service specification issued by SCC, TDBC is having to make changes the housing related support service it currently delivers to its sheltered housing tenants.

3.3 The current housing related support service for sheltered housing

TDBC has for many years delivered a housing related support service to its sheltered housing tenants that:

- Promotes independence and supports all tenants to: Achieve economic wellbeing; Stay safe; Be healthy; Enjoy and achieve; and Make a positive contribution;
- Is person centred and focused on individual housing related support needs, as identified in a needs and risk assessment and planned through individual support plans;
- Provides access to Deane Helpline and the Emergency Response Team via emergency alarm equipment located at all properties;
- Supports tenants to contact appropriate services and agencies to ensure they get the help they need to remain independent;
- Supports tenants to access health and other care and support services as necessary;
- Promotes tenant well-being, health and quality of life;
- Encourages and supports tenants to access activities;
- Responds to the changing needs of tenants in a flexible way;
- Reviews all individual support plans regularly;
- Works alongside TDBC housing service colleagues to provide and assist with the maintenance and management of tenancies;
- Ensures all sheltered housing schemes are safe by carrying out regular on-site inspections; and
- Safeguards vulnerable tenants from abuse.

The service is generally well regarded by all sheltered housing tenants achieving consistently good levels of satisfaction ratings over many years.

3.4 The proposed new sheltered housing service

The proposed new sheltered housing service for tenants will continue to respond to the aging population on our sheltered housing schemes. The service will have a positive social impact, helping tenants to lead active and independent lives. The service will aim to achieve and maintain a high level of tenant satisfaction.

Our sheltered housing schemes will be attractive to older people and be places where they want to move to. There will be a focus on prevention and early intervention to avoid and postpone health and care needs

Tenants will be offered a service that provides that community touch, helping tenants to feel part of their scheme. Services will reflect the occupancy and interests of those living on them.

Listed below is what a tenant should expect from the proposed new sheltered housing service:-

3.4.1 Additional housing management:

1. Help on entering the service – tenants will have access to help when initially viewing a property, signing up for a tenancy and be introduced to the range of services available on a scheme. A full introduction to the new home and tenancy will be carried out over a six week period;
2. Preventing tenancy breakdown - tenants will have access to help involving the provision of information and advice required to meet their needs in managing their tenancy through self-help or assistance. For example, the provision of advice and information on welfare benefits, budgeting, managing money, tenancy responsibilities and obligations etc.;
3. Help with maintaining security – tenants will be provided with help in making referrals for aids and adaptations or disabled facilities grants and in dealing with property repairs. Regular visits/inspections of schemes will be undertaken to ensure the environment remains safe and secure; and
4. Help with moving on – tenants will have access to help when seeking a transfer, mutual exchange or ending a tenancy.

3.4.2 Community development:

1. Community programmes – utilising the communal facilities at many sheltered housing schemes, all sheltered housing tenants will be encouraged to stay active and connected in their community. With a focus on attaining and gaining independence, self-help will be promoted to enhance the capacity of all, in support of tenancy sustainability. For example: facilitating sessions in the sheltered housing meeting halls where many sheltered housing tenants will have access to on-line housing services, or alternatively, home visits where access to welfare benefit and debt advice services will be offered.

3.4.3 Tenant involvement and empowerment:

1. Tenant empowerment will be aimed at preventing social isolation and increasing well-being. Tenants will be given a wide range of opportunities to influence and get involved in the management of their homes and to hold the council to account;
2. Tenants will be offered help to understand and be confident about the services on their scheme and intensive support will ensure tenants can participate in decision making; and
3. Supporting the formation and activities of tenant groups, tenants will be encouraged to attend Service Development Group meetings. Training will be offered to develop the skills and abilities of those that want to get involved in the management of their homes.

3.4.4 Housing related support service:

1. This part of the service will be targeted to those tenants who have been assessed as having the highest level of support needs and are at most risk of requiring a social care service. A formal assessment of need will be undertaken. The service will be outcome focussed, encompassing a clear exit strategy. The service will be personalised to the needs of individuals and will support and enable those tenants with more complex and or enduring needs;
2. Risk assessments, support plans and outcomes will be reviewed on an individual case by case basis with regular progressive reviews being undertaken. Support at this level will be provided when required and then may be reduced or withdrawn as needs are met.

3.4.5 Deane Helpline and Emergency Response service:

1. Access to the Deane Helpline and the Emergency Response Team service, via emergency alarm equipment, will be provided automatically to all sheltered housing tenants. TDBC installs emergency alarm equipment in every sheltered housing property to make sure that sheltered housing tenants can get help easily when they need it. The emergency alarm system works through the phone lines or depending on the sheltered housing scheme it can also work via a 'hardwired' system.

3.5 Changes to sheltered housing service charges

- 3.5.1 At present, the amount of weekly service charge a tenant pays for their sheltered housing service depends on the type of sheltered housing scheme on which they reside.

In the existing service charges a tenant residing on a 'low level scheme' would receive less regular contact from staff and this would be classed as the baseline service. However, a tenant residing on a more 'standard sheltered housing scheme' may require more regular visits and increased contact.

- 3.5.2 Listed below are the usual current sheltered housing service charges applied to sheltered housing tenants rent accounts for 2015/16, however some tenants have a tenancy that has 'protected rights' in relation to the sheltered component of their service charge:

Type of service	Current weekly charge
Sheltered housing	£12.59
Low level sheltered housing	£4.47

- 3.5.3 In the proposed new service a new single rate sheltered housing service charge will be applied to all sheltered housing tenant rent accounts from April 2016:

Type of service	Proposed new weekly sheltered housing service charge
Additional housing management; Community Development and Tenant involvement and empowerment.	£10.04

Note:

- (a) Some tenancies where 'protected rights' are applicable in relation to the sheltered component of their service charge will retain their protected status. No existing sheltered housing tenant will be financially worse off as a consequence of this proposal.
- (b) Sheltered housing tenants on low incomes will be entitled to apply for housing benefit.
- (c) The figure quoted (i.e. £10.04) relates to 2015/2016 charging values and will be subject to the normal annual inflationary assessment at April 2016 onwards.

3.5.4 The housing related support element of the proposed new service will continue to be grant funded by Somerset County Council and subject to a formal contractual agreement.

(Please refer to Appendix 2 for details of the service contract specification).

3.5.5 The actual cost of providing the Deane Helpline and Emergency Response services to sheltered housing tenants is £4.43 per week at 2015/2016. This cost is subject to an annual review by Deane Helpline.

Many tenants residing in sheltered housing can often be vulnerable and in receipt of a low income.

It is proposed that the actual weekly cost of the Deane Helpline and Emergency Response service be applied as a charge to all sheltered housing tenants rent accounts, unless they are exempt due to being in receipt of housing benefit.

It is proposed that the financial consequence of the above will be taken account of as part of the current review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

The table below provides a summary of the current and proposed new service, along with details of the funding that is available to help with the costs:

Current sheltered housing service	Funding type	Proposed sheltered housing service	Funding type
Housing related support.	Means tested with those eligible receiving Supporting People grant funding.	Additional housing management; Community development; Tenant involvement and engagement.	Means tested with those eligible receiving housing benefit.
Deane Helpline, including the Emergency Response Service	Support with the cost of Deane Helpline charges is not eligible for housing benefit or supporting people grant funding.	Deane Helpline, including the Emergency Response Service.	Means tested with those eligible receiving Housing Revenue Account subsidy.
		High level housing related support.	Somerset County Council grant funded.

4.0 **Staffing**

There are currently 9 sheltered housing officers (SHO) in post within the sheltered housing service.

For some time the officers have been undertaking hours of work that are in addition to their formal contracted hours – a practice of redistributing hours of work amongst the SHO team following a vacancy.

Subject to the proposals in this report being approved and with the agreement of officers, the existing arrangements are to be formalised.

In the interest of fairness and because job roles evolve over time we are in the process of re-evaluating the SHO post.

5.0 **Next steps / implementation timeframe**

Subject to receiving approval from the Council's Executive Committee it is proposed the new sheltered housing service and charges will be operational with effect from the start of the next finance year i.e. 04/04/2016. Prior to this date officers and managers within Housing and Community Services will be working to update administrative systems to enable tenants to receive full details and formal notification of the new service and charges.

6.0 **Finance**

The financial implications of this report are addressed within this report.

7.0 **Legal implications**

Legal issues are addressed in the body of the report, especially in relation to Somerset County Council's housing related support contract.

8.0 **Links to corporate aims / priorities**

The proposals within this report are linked to the following corporate aim:

Aim 3 – a vibrant social, cultural and leisure environment – work with partners to improve the lives of our most vulnerable households.

9.0 **Environmental impact implications**

There are no specific environmental implications.

10.0 **Community safety implications**

Community safety is incorporated in the strategic priorities for Housing and Community Services and our proposed new sheltered housing service has been created to have positive implications for community safety. Housing and Community Services aims to take action so that disadvantaged communities will have better access to local housing services and support. Housing and Community Services also aims to continue its support for a range of vulnerable people and to tackle crime and fear of crime through reducing anti-social behaviour.

11.0 **Equality and diversity impact**

An Equalities Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 3. There are no significant impacts arising from this report.

12.0 **Safeguarding implications**

Sheltered housing services and emergency alarm systems create a safe living environment for vulnerable tenants.

The proposed new service is all about responding to changing needs and therefore supports the safeguarding of vulnerable tenants.

13.0 **Risk assessment**

The risks associated with the proposed new sheltered housing service are monitored effectively through the Sheltered Housing Review Project risk register. The risk register is monitored regularly through the Sheltered Housing Review Project Group meetings.

14.0 **Partnership implications**

The drafting of the proposed new sheltered housing service has been influenced by Taunton Deane Borough Council's partners. It is clear that the activities derived from the proposed new sheltered housing service will have a positive impact on the work our partners undertake throughout the Borough.

15.0 **Health and wellbeing implications**

TDBC's sheltered housing schemes and services have a direct link to the council's health and wellbeing agenda and contribute towards increasing the health and wellbeing of council tenants through the provision of services such as:

- (a) Suitable properties;
- (b) Enabling the provision of care and support services;
- (c) Enabling a safe environment for our most vulnerable tenants; and
- (d) Enabling an environment that helps older people and those with mental health and physical disabilities to live as independently as possible for as long as possible.

- 15.1 The council has an enhanced duty under the Care Act 2014/2015 to work together with other agencies to ensure the safety of vulnerable individuals and support the delivery of outcomes focused services that meet needs. Many older people face health and social issues, and the council needs to be working with local partners to reduce the more preventable health issues that are linked to wider local health aims.

16.0 **Asset management implications**

There are no direct implications or dependencies within the proposed new sheltered housing service. However, in order to meet corporate principles, provide quality customer driven services and be forward-looking we need to ensure that the physical environment on our sheltered housing schemes is supportive of tenants needs.

The HRA Business Plan recognises that it is important that we ensure all our housing stock meets government decency standards as a minimum

and is maintained in a good state of repair. We need to continue to deliver enhancements by investing in existing homes as well as developing new homes that take account of the communities within which they are being built and wherever possible improve the local area too. Therefore, the Council needs to ensure sheltered housing properties are fit for purpose, are somewhere that tenants will want to live, meet their needs now and in the future, and are financially sustainable.

17.0 **Consultation**

- 17.1 The proposals in this report have been considered by TDBC's Tenants' Forum at their meeting on the 13th October 2015. The Tenants' Forum were unanimous in their support for the proposals with particular comments received describing the current Deane Helpline and Emergency Response Service as a 'life saving' service.
- 17.2 The proposals in this report have been extensively communicated to existing sheltered housing tenants and to members of the Supported Housing Service Development Group.

Over a two week period in October/November 2015 meetings were held at sheltered housing meeting halls with over 150 sheltered housing tenants attending. Overwhelmingly, the feedback received from sheltered housing tenants was in support of the proposals.

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APPENDIX 1

Sheltered housing schemes	Unit number
BOVET STREET	33
BROOMFIELD HOUSE	18
BRUFORD CLOSE	3
BULFORD	81
BUNGALOWS ELMS ESTATE	1
CALWAY ROAD	24
CHAFFINCH CLOSE	1
CHAPMAN COURT	13
CHARTER WALK	2
CHEDDON ROAD	3
CHURCHILL WAY	24
COLERIDGE CRESCENT	4
CREEDWELL ORCHARD	15
CROSSWAY	2
DARBY WAY	32
DINHAMS	5
DORCHESTER ROAD	8
DOWELL CLOSE	30
ENMORE ROAD	6
FLETCHER CLOSE	5
GEORGE STREET	25
GRANGE WALK	6
GREENLANDS	30
HARNELL CLOSE	7
HEATHFIELD DRIVE	33
HENDERSON CLOSE	10
HOPE CORNER LANE	16
LEACHS FIELD	9
LYNGFORD PLACE	2
LYNGFORD ROAD	16
MANOR DRIVE	1
MIDDLEWAY	9
MILTON CLOSE	6
MONMOUTH ROAD	27
MOORLAND CLOSE	4
MOORLAND PLACE	34
NEWTON ROAD	31
NORMANDY DRIVE	24
PLAIN POND	4
POLKES FIELD	26
QUANTOCK ROAD	14
RICHARDS CRESCENT	4
ROBIN CLOSE	30
ROLAND CLOSE	18
SLAPES CLOSE	14
SOUTH ROAD	16
SQUIRREL COURT	9
STEDHAMS CLOSE	1
TAUNTFIELD CLOSE	25
TREBOROUGH CLOSE	33
TRINITY ROAD	13
TRISCOMBE ROAD	10
WARWICK ROAD	18
WELLESLEY STREET	39
WILLIE GILL COURT	6
Grand Total	880

Schedule B

Service Specification

Support in Sheltered Housing/Housing Related Support Service

1	Service Description	
1.1	Type and Model of Service	<p>Annual contract value: As per summary financial schedule</p> <p>This Specification is for a housing related support Service. It is expected that service users will have short and/or long term needs met and the Service will be flexible to meet these needs. The service will be targeted to those tenants with the highest level of support needs and are at most risk of requiring a social care service. Those with lower needs will be signposted to other community resources.</p> <p>The Service will be outcome focussed, encompassing a clear exit strategy. Its purpose is to meet the needs of people who have been assessed by the service provider as requiring the most intensive housing related support to enable them to either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the skills to maintain, acquire and establish a new home, or • Maintain their capacity to remain living independently, when they are appropriately accommodated at the time they engage with the Service. <p>The overall objectives of the Service are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote/increase independent living in Sheltered Housing. • To provide structured and outcome focussed housing-related support, with goals agreed by the service user and support provider to work towards. • To ensure that risk assessments, support plans and outcomes are flexible and made on an individual case-by-case basis with regular progressive reviews. • To provide a support Service that is targeted to service users with the highest level of assessed support needs. • Support is provided when required and then may be reduced or withdrawn as the Service Users' needs are met.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going support may be provided for Service Users with long term assessed support needs, with at least annual reviews to reassess need. • To work with other professionals e.g. Health, Adult Social Care, Children and Young People Services, Avon & Somerset Probation, Somerset Partnership, the District Housing Options Teams and other agencies as appropriate. This will be achieved by signposting and liaising with community and voluntary agencies as determined by service users identified needs. • Support worker contact with Service Users will usually be planned and agreed with service users through the support planning process in line with the principals of personalisation.
1.2	Details of accommodation (List of Sheltered Schemes the service is delivered from)	See Schedule D: Accommodation List
1.3	Housing related Support Provided for service users with more complex and / or enduring needs	<p>The Service will be personalised to the needs of individuals and will enable Service Users with more complex and / or enduring needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access or maintain tenure for suitable independent accommodation or move-on and provide assistance with tasks associated with taking up independent housing. • Have access to a suitably trained support worker to work with them in a flexible and holistic way to meet their goals and aspirations, promoting their independence and choice. • Receive advice on maintaining their independence within their accommodation, with respect to budgeting, catering and managing the home. • Review safety and security particularly where there is a change of circumstances / health / falls / bereavement / hospital discharge or other critical events to maximise independence and reduce the need for move-on to higher care and support settings. • Access opportunities locally e.g. leisure, cultural, faith, volunteering, education, training and employment. • Access healthcare and receive advice in relation to promoting healthy living. • Access other specialist services when appropriate. • Be encouraged to build or sustain effective social and familial relationships, thereby reducing social

		isolation.
1.4	Referral routes to the high level support service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-referral for Service Users aged 18+ years. • Professional referral (with the Service Users agreement) • Friend/family referral (with the Service Users agreement) • Inter-agency referral (with the Service Users agreement) <p>Referral Method</p> <p>By application form By phone call By interview</p>
2	Service Eligibility	
2.1	Primary Client Group	People living within Sheltered Housing in Somerset. (See Schedule E)
3	Service Outcomes	
3.1	Desired outcomes	<p>The Service User is supported to:</p> <p>Be Healthy Better manage physical health Better manage mental health Better manage substance misuse Better manage independent living as a result of assistive technology/aids and adaptations</p> <p>Enjoy and Achieve Participate in chosen training and/or education, Participate in chosen leisure/cultural/faith/informal learning activities Participate in chosen work like/voluntary/unpaid work activities Establish contact with external service/family/friends</p> <p>Staying Safe Maintain accommodation and avoid eviction Secure/obtain settled accommodation Comply with statutory orders and processes (in relation to offending behaviour) Better manage self-harm, avoid causing harm to others, minimise harm/risk of harm from others</p> <p>Economic Well Being Maximise income and reduce debts where economic</p>

		<p>well being is critical to maintaining independence Obtain paid work/Participate in paid work</p> <p>Making a Positive Contribution Greater choice and/or involvement and/or control at service level and within the wider community</p>
4	Staffing	
4.1	Cover arrangements for annual leave and sickness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing levels will be available/adequate at all times to meet the need of service demand • Service Users to be informed of arrangements for staff absences • Cover staff to have appropriate skills, experience and training to be able to maintain a safe, consistent and effective Service • Staffing adequate to meet the needs of the Service User group
4.2	Volunteers involved in Service	DBS checks to be done proportionately to service user involvement

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment – pro-forma

Responsible person	Gary Kingman /Stephen Boland	Job Title: Senior Supported Housing Development Officer / Housing Services Lead
Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (Please mark as appropriate)	Proposed new policy/service	
	Change to Policy/service	Change to service.
	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP	
	Part of timetable	
What are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment on (which, service, MTFP proposal)	Taunton Deane Borough Council - Sheltered Housing Service.	
Section One – Scope of the assessment		
What are the main purposes/aims of the policy/decision/service?	Responding to significant changes to the commissioning of housing related support services by Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council proposes to deliver a new sheltered housing service that continues to support a arrange of vulnerable groups living within its designated sheltered council housing.	
Which protected groups are targeted by the policy/decision/service?	1. Age; 2. Disability; 3. Gender Reassignment; 4. Pregnancy and Maturity; 5. Race; 6. Religion or belief; 7. Sex; 8. Sexual Orientation; 9. Marriage and civil partnership.	
What evidence has been used in the assessment - data, engagement undertaken – please list each source that has been used The information can be found on....	Engagement: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback received from TDBC’s Tenants’ Forum members at their meeting held on the 13th October 2015; and 2. Feedback received over a two week period in October/November 2015 - meetings were held at sheltered housing meeting halls with over 150 sheltered housing tenants attending. 	

Section two – Conclusion drawn about the impact of service/policy/function/change on different groups highlighting negative impact, unequal outcomes or missed opportunities for promoting equality

The proposed changes to the sheltered housing service will apply to all sheltered housing tenants and as such no potential discrimination amongst the protected groups has been identified.

There have been no negative equality impacts identified as a consequence of the proposed changes.

I have concluded that there is/should be:

No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	
Adjust the policy/decision/service	
Continue with the policy/decision/service	No adverse equality impact on the protected groups identified as a consequence of proposed changes to sheltered housing services.
Stop and remove the policy/decision/service	

Reasons and documentation to support conclusions

Section four – Implementation – timescale for implementation

The proposed changes will be implemented with effect from April 2016.

Section Five – Sign off

Responsible officer: Gary Kingman / Stephen Boland
Date: 9th November 2015

Management Team: Housing and Community Development.
Date: 9th November 2015

Section six – Publication and monitoring	
Published on	
Next review date	Date logged on Covalent

Action Planning

The table should be completed with all actions identified to mitigate the effects concluded.

Actions table					
Service area	Housing and Community Development		Date	November 2015	
Identified issue drawn from your conclusions	Actions needed	Who is responsible?	By when?	How will this be monitored?	Expected outcomes from carrying out actions
N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a