

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 20 August 2018

Sheltered Housing Pilot and Allocation Plan

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Terry Beale, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Report Author: Jan Errington, Project Manager

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report outlines a proposed pilot scheme to provide access to under 60s with disabilities to Sheltered Housing. The scheme aims to provide fairer access to our sheltered housing and opportunities for supported and accessible housing for our most vulnerable. It presents a new Sheltered Housing Pilot Allocations Plan to enable the Council to manage the pilot effectively and fairly to make it a success.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 TSMB comment on the proposed pilot scheme
- 2.2 TSMB support the draft Under 60's Sheltered Pilot Allocations Plan and recommend it for approval to the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

3 Risk Assessment

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
<p>Risk of lettings made without due regard to the nature of sheltered housing leading to disruption of sheltered schemes and management issues. The mitigations for this are the proposed changes as set out in the draft Under 60's Sheltered Housing Pilot and outlined in the report. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising all suitable sheltered properties as a sensitive let • Properties will be allocated conscious of the need to maintain a balanced community and lettings staff will check with the ACM, or the Lettings Manager in their absence, before placing an advert • All lettings will be on an introductory tenancy where the applicant is new to social housing • Housing Options and Lettings colleagues will work closely together to ensure lettings decisions are in line with the Allocations plan • Applicants will have low support needs or Where an applicant has higher levels needs there would need to be a full social and health care package appropriate to their needs in place <p>The Pilot scheme will be closely monitored and managed to ensure appropriate lettings and prompt adjustments and actions where required.</p>	3	2	6
<p>Risk of Right to Buy applications for sheltered stock mitigated by advertising and lettings in line with the Sheltered Under 60s Pilot Allocation Plan to ensure all lettings are made accordance with the Right to Buy exemptions and that applicants and officers are aware of this in line with the plan. The plan includes specific guidance on letting in accordance with the legislation on exemptions.</p>	2	3	6

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Impact							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council has over 800 sheltered housing properties. We have invested in our Sheltered Stock and service over recent years and we want to use it to help as many people in need as possible.
- 4.2 We have invested in the phased improvement of sheltered stock to make it more accessible and suitable for older and disabled people through:
- Swapping out unsuitable properties and swapping in suitable bungalows in appropriate locations
 - Gradually working towards a sheltered housing standard that ensures properties are suitable to meet current and future needs
 - Installing wet rooms in ground floor sheltered as opportunities arise through our voids and replacement works as normal
- 4.3 Currently our Sheltered Housing is accessible through the Homefinder Somerset register for applicants over 60 years old. Those with disabilities who are younger cannot access sheltered housing and compete with the overall register for general needs properties.

- 4.4 The Homefinder Somerset Board and Homelessness Managers Group identified the need to offer Sheltered Housing to people with disabilities regardless of age. Many Somerset landlords have changed their allocations policies to enable their sheltered housing to be available to applicants with disabilities regardless of age.
- 4.5 Colleagues in Housing Options and Occupational Therapy report that it is difficult for younger disabled people to gain access to suitable accommodation with sometimes long waiting times which in turn can be detrimental to their wellbeing where they may be in need of level access, a safe and supportive environment such as Sheltered Housing.
- 4.6 Furthermore, the Care Act 2014 promotes better informed customers, greater choice, and greater empowerment and a duty on Local Authorities to work in partnership to promote health and wellbeing, safeguarding and prevent or reduce risk and care. Sheltered Housing clearly contributes to this agenda.
- 4.7 Supporting the most vulnerable is a high priority for us and we can help by making our supported sheltered accommodation more accessible regardless of age.
- 4.8 To help us deliver our priorities and help more vulnerable people we propose to run a 9 month pilot scheme for designated sheltered schemes with access to meeting hall facilities. The intention is to embed the Allocations Plan into business as usual with the lessons learned along the way to make the most of our sheltered housing provision.
- 4.9 The pilot will be managed tightly by an appointed internal project manager to ensure effective management of the scheme. Project management with continuous monitoring will enable us to respond rapidly to issues, make adjustments and enable the success of the scheme.
- 4.10 The Sheltered Housing environment is intended to be supportive and safe for those who are vulnerable due to poor health or disabilities or are age. Key to the pilot scheme's success will be the proposed Sheltered Pilot Allocations Plan to govern lettings in the pilot at appendix A.
- 4.11 The Proposed Allocations Plan sets out how allocations will be managed in designated Sheltered Housing schemes to ensure fair access, due regard to the nature of the sheltered community, and that lettings are in accordance with Right to Buy Exemptions
- 4.12 Key features of the plan are:
- Advertising all suitable sheltered properties as a sensitive let to assist people regardless of their age who have disabilities (physical, mental health, learning disabilities, sensory loss) who cannot currently access this type of accommodation
 - Properties are to be allocated conscious of the need to maintain a balanced community, in order to ensure this lettings staff will check with the relevant Area Community Manager (ACM) or the housing manager – lettings in their absence
 - Tenants who are new to social housing will be allocated an introductory tenancy
 - Close liaison on the pilot for each letting between housing Options and Lettings colleagues and ACMS
 - These principles also apply to applications to exchange into our stock.

- 4.13 Sheltered Housing staff are used to working with a wide range of needs. Training will be offered to those who need to be upskilled in relation to the pilot. In addition, from October, Community Agents will provide support to all of our sheltered stock; they work with a wide range of needs regardless of age.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 5.1 The Sheltered Housing Under 60s pilot links to our Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Priority of 'supporting the most vulnerable' by providing access through appropriate lettings to applicants with disabilities and support needs regardless of age. It provides a better and stronger service offer meeting more local needs in keeping with the Care Act and our priorities below:

Supporting the most vulnerable

This means we are committed to letting homes to people who have the fewest housing options and will provide additional support that helps people who are older, disabled, or socially excluded to live comfortably in their Council-owned home.

Better Service

This means we are tenant and community focused and are committed to improving our services in line with what our residents have said matters to them. Our approach will support people to move through our social housing to cater for their changing needs and aspirations over time.

A Stronger Business

This means we will prioritise efficiency to support delivery of our social priorities and objectives.

6. Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications, the pilot is about how Lettings and Housing Options colleagues work together to advertise and let suitable properties which is business as usual.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 Our sheltered stock is exempt from the Right to Buy. We need to protect the status of our sheltered housing stock because it is suitable for people with disabilities and older people and to ensure it's ongoing availability.
- 7.2 Guidance on letting properties in accordance with the exemptions to the Right to Buy in line with legal advice is included within the draft Under 60s Sheltered Housing Pilot Allocation Plan to ensure that lettings are made under the scheme in a way that does maintains the exemption.

8 Environmental Impact Implications

- 8.1 There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 There are no safeguarding implications in relation to the pilot scheme. However, sheltered housing services with its emergency alarm systems creates a safe living environment for vulnerable tenants. Therefore, the pilot supports the safeguarding of our vulnerable under 60s tenants with disabilities.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 Following Equality Impact Assessment there are no adverse impacts arising from this proposal. The scheme positively supports accessibility of services to vulnerable applicants with disabilities regardless of age where previously there has been a lower age threshold. Therefore, it will have a positive impact for those who fall under the protected characteristics of age and disabilities. In addition, the pilot gives disabled applicants access to more flexible and accessible properties throughout the district.

11. Social Value Implications

- 11.1 Supported housing plays an important part in directly helping our most vulnerable tenants their independence and wellbeing and helps their families feel reassured. This in itself is big contributor of social value within the district. Extending access to under 60s with disabilities will benefit a greater number of vulnerable tenants and their families in this way.
- 11.2 Our meeting halls and service also contribute to a sense of community providing opportunities for social activities for health and wellbeing, reducing potential isolation and loneliness and bringing communities together. These are part of Sheltered Housing facilities in the Pilot Scheme.
- 11.3 A fundamental part of enabling supported housing to contribute to social value is ensuring its accessibility to vulnerable tenants who need it whilst maintaining the safe and supportive environment that is part of the sheltered provision.

12 Partnership Implications

- 12.1 Sheltered Housing tenants may require the support of our partners in Adult Social Care and specific support organisations including Village and Community Agents. This will be business as usual for partnership working in relation to sheltered housing here and across Somerset with key support and social care agencies. The increased access to Sheltered Housing is welcomed by our partners.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 13.1 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:
- Suitable properties
 - Enabling the provision of care and support services
 - Enabling a safe environment for our most vulnerable tenants
 - 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.

13.2 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 disabled 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. The pilot scheme supports these aims.

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 The report does not relate to Asset Management and there are no asset management implications within the proposed sheltered under 60s pilot scheme. However, the Council has previously supported working towards a new sheltered housing standard including improving ground floor accessibility with a wet room programme and rationalisation of the stock to swap in suitable ground floor bungalows, to ensure that the physical environment on our sheltered housing schemes is supportive of the needs of tenants with disabilities. Therefore, Sheltered Housing physically supports the needs of applicants who will benefit from access to more suitable properties.

15 Consultation Implications (if any)

15.2 Tenants have been consulted on the proposed pilot scheme through the Tenant Forum. The Tenant Forum supported the Sheltered Under 60s pilot scheme on 16 July 2018.

15.3 The Portfolio Holder for Housing has been consulted and supports the pilot scheme subject to consideration of comments from the Tenant Services Management Board.

15.4 Colleagues have been consulted and welcome this greater access whilst also keen that the scheme is carefully and sensitively managed.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees –No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – No**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency : **Once only** **Ad-hoc** **Quarterly**
 Twice-yearly **Annually**

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix A	Under 60s Sheltered Housing Pilot Allocations Plan
Appendix B	
Appendix C	

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UNDER 60's SHELTERED HOUSING PILOT ALLOCATIONS PLAN

EFFECTIVE: 01 September 2018 – 31 May 2019

This plan has been approved by the Tenants Services Management Board, Portfolio Holder for Housing (Cllr T Beale) and senior management on *****.

This is a Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) allocations plan for the Under 60's Sheltered Housing Pilot.

Background

TDBC own in excess of 800 properties which have traditionally been categorised as "sheltered housing" (housing for older people), these properties are typically located on self-contained schemes many of which have the benefit of a meeting hall, for use by residents. These sheltered housing schemes are located across the whole geographic area of the borough.

The proposed Allocations Plan

It is proposed to operate an allocations plan by advertising all suitable sheltered properties as a sensitive let. This will assist people regardless of their age who have disabilities (physical, mental health, learning disabilities, sensory loss) who are either tenants or applicants who cannot currently access this type of accommodation as follows:

- Where there are assessed needs in the household for this type of low level supported accommodation, or;
- Where an applicant has higher levels needs there would need to be a full social and health care package appropriate to their needs in place as sheltered would not meet for example, complex mental health needs.

Schemes and Properties

The following schemes will be included in the pilot:

Churchill Way, Darby Way, Elms, George St, Grange Walk, Heathfield Dr (bungalows), Henderson Cl, Hope Corner Lane, Middleway, Moorland Pl, Newton Rd, Lower Quantock Rd, Upper Quantock Rd, Roland Cl, Seabrook House, Squirrel Court, Wellesley St.

The properties that will be advertised for the pilot will be ground floor and accessible to persons with mobility needs.

Marketing of void properties on Homefinder Somerset Website

All of the properties that are within a Pilot will be advertised as follows:

Sensitive Let forms will be submitted to Housing Options, these will outline why the particular property requires to be sensitively let and contain marketing text that requires applicants to have no recent history of ASB, drug or alcohol issues.

Only properties that are exempt from Right To Buy (RTB) in accordance with RTB exemptions, Schedule 5 of the Housing Act 1985 will be used as part of this pilot. See the attached Appendix 1 for more information.

Allocations

Properties will be allocated conscious of the need to maintain a balanced community, in order to ensure this Lettings staff will check with the relevant Area Community Manager (ACM) prior to adverts being placed on Homefinder. In the event that the ACM is not available the Housing Manager - Lettings will approve to avoid delay in adverts being placed.

These principles will also apply to applications to exchange into our stock.

Tenancy Type

All tenants that move as part of this plan will continue with existing tenancy rights' in those cases where the household are new to Social Housing or have had a break in tenancy history they will be allocated an Introductory Tenancy.

Partnership Working

In order to achieve the greatest success of the plan officers from all Area Teams, Housing Options Team and Lettings Team will need to work closely together.

Monitoring and Review

Careful monitoring of property allocations and the management of the plan will be the responsibility of the Housing Manager – Lettings.

Operation of the pilot will be reviewed on a monthly basis. The review will include number of properties let that month, and commentary on issues that have arisen either with tenants or the communities on the schemes.

Appendix 1

Right To Buy

Properties can fall in and out of the right to buy exemptions. The exemption applies only for the period let to a tenant in accordance with the exemption. So if a qualifying property (suitable with different/additional relevant features e.g. sheltered housing) was let to a 59 year old with no identified specific learning disability, mental illness or physical disability, the Right to Buy would apply for the duration of that tenancy, and if it was a property that could be succeeded to, to the successor (e.g. adapted general needs let on a secure tenancy). If the property was then relet to a new tenant in accordance with the exemptions the Right to Buy would not apply for the life of that tenancy.

To remain RTB exempt we must

Let in accordance with RTB exemptions, Schedule 5 of the Housing Act 1985, i.e.

What the law says

There is no Right to Buy if the property is:

Sheltered housing for the **elderly, people with physical or Learning disabilities or mental illness**. Special rules must be met in these cases. 'Sheltered housing' normally means that the property is one of a group of such dwellings, that has a community alarm, that there is a common room nearby which can be used for relevant activities, that either a warden service is provided on or off site, or a social service or special facilities are provided wholly or partly for the purpose of assisting those persons, and

- was let for occupation by a person with the above assessed needs
- 'Housing for the disabled' means a property that is one of a group and has features that are substantially different from those of ordinary dwellings and with special facilities that are provided nearby.

Or, is

- is particularly suitable for occupation by elderly persons, taking into account its location, size, design, heating system and other features, and
- was let for occupation by a person aged 60 or over, whether they were the tenant or not; and
- was first let before 1 January 1990.

Extract from Housing Act 1985, Schedule 5

Physically Disabled – Suitable Property usually e.g. accessible, ground floor, wet room, possibly other adaptations, piper alarm etc

The right to buy does not arise if the dwelling-house has features which are substantially different from those of ordinary dwelling-houses and are designed to make it suitable for occupation by physically disabled persons, and—

(a) it is one of a group of dwelling-houses which it is the practice of the landlord to let for occupation by physically disabled persons, and

(b) a social service or special facilities are provided in close proximity to the group of dwelling-houses wholly or partly for the purpose of assisting those persons.

Mental Health Needs – Sheltered if there is a meeting hall and support is provided

(1) The right to buy does not arise if—

(a) the dwelling-house is one of a group of dwelling-houses which it is the practice of the landlord to let for occupation by persons who are suffering or have suffered from a mental disorder, and

(b) a social service or special facilities are provided wholly or partly for the purpose of assisting those persons.

(2) In sub-paragraph (1)(a) “mental disorder” has the same meaning as in the Mental Health Act 1983

Sheltered Housing for over 60s and the physically disabled

10(1) The right to buy does not arise if the dwelling-house is one of a group of dwelling-houses—

(a) which are particularly suitable, having regard to their location, size, design, heating systems and other features, for occupation by elderly persons and

(b) which it is the practice of the landlord to let for occupation by persons aged 60 or more, or for occupation by such persons and physically disabled persons,

and special facilities such as are mentioned in sub-paragraph (2) are provided wholly or mainly for the purposes of assisting those persons.

(2) The facilities referred to above are facilities which consist of or include—

(a) the services of a resident warden, or

(b)the services of a non-resident warden, a system for calling him and the use of a common room in close proximity to the group of dwelling-houses.

The Elderly

The right to buy does not arise if the dwelling-house—

(a)is particularly suitable, having regard to its location, size, design, heating system and other features, for occupation by elderly persons, and

(b)was let to the tenant or a predecessor in title of his for occupation by a person who was aged 60 or more (whether the tenant or predecessor or another person).

(2)In determining whether a dwelling is particularly suitable, no regard shall be had to the presence of any feature provided by the tenant or a predecessor in title of his.

(6)This paragraph does not apply unless the dwelling-house concerned was first let before 1st January 1990.