

Item No. 10.	Classification: Open	Date: 23 October 2012	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Sheltered Housing Remodelling	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All wards	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Ian Wingfield – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing Management Councillor Catherine McDonald – Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD – DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND COUNCILLOR CATHERINE MCDONALD – CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE

We are proposing to introduce an enhanced housing management service that allows the Council to deliver saving from the Supporting People budget through a remodelling of the service. This will secure alternative funding through service charges for an enhanced service. This enhanced service will allow a warden in each scheme to be re-introduced to provide, on site, enhanced housing management support, Monday to Friday. This new service will continue to support older people to have a wide range of choice in their housing options and will have an important role to play in keeping Southwark's older people healthy safe and well and living in their own homes for as long as possible. The vast majority of residents are eligible for housing benefit and the warden service charge will be paid for in full by their housing benefit. Current residents who do not receive housing benefit will have the service paid for by the council, for the duration of their lifetime in the sheltered housing.

The sheltered housing service is currently funded through the Council's supporting people programme. There are 19 sheltered housing schemes with 590 units plus one Extra Care scheme consisting of 38 units that will be affected by these proposals, providing a total of 628 units of accommodation for elderly tenants in Southwark.

Current the yearly cost of £802k purchases a visiting warden support service to tenants living in the 590 units of Sheltered Housing in the 19 council owned sheltered housing schemes, across the London borough of Southwark. The supporting people element for the extra care scheme is currently separate from funding of the standard sheltered housing noted above. The budget of £802K is held within Adult & Social Care in supporting people budgets.

Consultation has taken place with the residents at each of the sheltered schemes and this is set out in detail in Appendix 1. Stakeholders representing older people have been consulted both individually and through the Older People Partnership Board.

Every scheme has supported option 3 (the enhanced model (resident warden) based on an on site warden available Monday to Friday) as their preferred option. Resident feedback also supported the introduction of a dedicated handy person and visiting night time security across the schemes.

Cabinet will be pleased to note that the proposals set out in this report have been very positively received by residents and if approved, will enable the council to expand the service and return to a day time on site presence as well as responding to resident feedback by providing significant service enhancements, including a dedicated handy person service for minor repairs and odd jobs as well as a night time visiting security service to promote greater security at the schemes outside of day time working hours.

We are therefore asking the cabinet, after consideration of the officers' report set out from paragraph 1 onwards to note the recommendations below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Cabinet

1. That the outcome of the consultation with residents is noted and that the residents favored options are:
 - a scheme based warden service is re-introduced in all of the schemes, from 8am to 4 pm each week day
 - a dedicated handyperson service is introduced to carry out minor repair jobs for residents in the council's sheltered housing schemes
 - a night time security visiting service is introduced to improve security at the sheltered housing schemes
2. To note that officers propose to implement these service changes and that they are funded through the introduction of a service charge, based on an enhanced housing management model, which will be eligible for housing benefit. No existing tenants will be affected by the introduction of the service charge and the majority of prospective tenants are entitled to housing benefit that will cover the charge in the future.
3. That it is proposed that current residents who are not in receipt of housing benefit have their service charge paid through a transitional protection scheme, funded through savings on Supporting People budgets. Transitional protection will apply to all qualifying tenants for the lifetime of their tenancy.
4. To note that it is proposed that these changes are introduced from January 2013.
5. To note that that these proposals are subject to further consultation with the Housing Area Forums and Tenants Council on 26 November 2012.

Recommendation for the Leader of the Council

6. That authority is delegated to the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management, in consultation with the cabinet member for health and adult social care, to consider the outcome of consultation referred to in paragraph 5 and take a decision on the proposals in this report.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

7. In 2011, the council consulted stakeholders on an Older Persons Housing Action Plan. A key aim of the action plan is to help older people to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes and the council's sheltered housing service provides an important local resource to support this aim.
8. Local demographic trends indicate:
- **Projected growth in number of over 65s** – Approximately 22,300 people aged 65 or over live in Southwark. By 2020 the number of older people in Southwark over 65 is expected to grow significantly.
 - **Faster growth in the number of over 85s** – The number of older people aged over 85 increased by 5.3% between the 2001 and 2011 census, with the growth rate for over 90 year olds increasing by 2.6%. As the population ages, the disproportionate growth in the “very old” is likely to continue to increase.
 - **The number of older people with dementia and other forms of mental illness** is also expected to grow. In 2015 an estimated 1,705 people over 65 will have some form of cognitive impairment in Southwark.
9. The sheltered housing service currently has 247 older people on the sheltered housing register. The average age of applicants on the list is 72 years of age and a breakdown of applicants requesting council sheltered housing by age is set out below.
- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 55-59 | 4% |
| 60-70 | 33% |
| 71-84 | 48% |
| 85-100 | 16% |
10. Approximately 58% of applicants are female and 42% are male. Circa 95% of applicants are currently in receipt of Housing Benefit.
11. There is steady demand for sheltered housing; a snapshot of the housing register showed there were 247 people who had registered for sheltered housing including a high proportion from the top two priority bands. The void rate is just 2.85% for Council sheltered accommodation. For the last three years there have been around 550 bids per year for sheltered housing. There are approximately two lettings a week to council sheltered housing.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

12. The Council Assembly agreed in February 2011 to make a 50% reduction in Supporting People (SP) expenditure over three years to contribute towards the council's social care savings plans. These plans incorporated withdrawing the £800k funding from the SP programme to the in house sheltered housing services in 2012-13, as well as achieving a further savings target from Registered Social Landlords (RSL) sheltered services from April 2012.

13. In agreeing the savings to be achieved set out above the council made a commitment to work with sheltered housing providers and tenants on an alternative funding model paid through housing benefit eligible service charges. The implementation of these savings plans have been regularly reviewed by the SP Commissioning Body since this time.
14. The sheltered housing service is currently funded through the council's supporting people programme. There are 20 sheltered housing schemes affected by these proposals, providing a total of 628 sheltered units of accommodation for elderly tenants in Southwark. 590 of these units are general needs sheltered and have been receiving £802k p a to fund a visiting warden support service to tenants living in council owned sheltered housing schemes, across the London borough of Southwark. Budget funding is held within Adult & Social Care in supporting people budgets.
15. The remaining 38 units relate to an extra care scheme based within a council owned and managed former sheltered housing block at Lew Evans House. The integrated care and support extra care service provided to this building is delivered under a contract with Allied Health Care which was externally commissioned through a tender process that concluded in September 2011. This service is funded by Health and Community Services which also covers the Hyde Housing Association scheme, Lime Tree House.
16. In January 2012, Cabinet considered a report which set out the options for the council to consider that could allow the proposed withdrawal of Supporting People funding for the council's sheltered housing service. This report highlighted ways that mitigated against any adverse impact on existing residents.
17. The report set out the options for future service delivery which Cabinet agreed would form the basis of consultation with tenants and recommended a proposed way forward for funding the service in future through a housing benefit eligible service charge.
18. The purpose of this report is to feedback to Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation to date and to ask Cabinet to note the proposed introduction of new arrangements for delivering the service from January 2013.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

19. The current sheltered housing service provides support during normal working hours on a hub and spoke model. This means that small teams of 3-4 officers are largely based in 4 hub schemes and provide visiting support to the more vulnerable tenants located in nearby schemes. Out of hours support is provided by the Southwark Monitoring and Alarm Response Team (SMART) through a warden call system.
20. Cabinet in January 2012 agreed to consult tenants on the proposal to introduce a service charge for the sheltered housing service that could fund an enhanced housing management model that would replace the existing service described above. Tenants were consulted on the following three options available for future provision of a service for sheltered tenants.

- Option 1** – Restructure of current service model (service hubs call out and warden visiting service). This would involve a landlord service charge to tenants of £21.91 p/w.
- Option 2** – Reduced service model (call out) based on a call out emergency response service only. This would involve a basic landlord service charge to tenants of £6.68 p/w.
- Option 3** – Enhanced service model (resident warden) based on an on site warden available Monday to Friday from 8am to 4 pm each day. This would involve a landlord service charge to tenants of £32.70 p/w.
21. The new enhanced housing management model would include tasks such as security, dealing with anti social behaviour issues, monitoring visitors to the schemes, managing CCTV, and dealing with the general upkeep of the schemes and the reporting of individual and communal repairs.
 22. The enhanced housing management model would also see a re-orientation of the existing model of service delivery, from a support service to an enhanced housing management service, funded through a housing benefit eligible service charge.
 23. A number of boroughs have successfully changed their service to an enhanced housing management model, based on a housing benefit eligible service charge, including Hammersmith and Fulham and Bromley. Other boroughs currently considering this option are Greenwich, Lewisham and Lambeth. It should also be noted that from April 2012 some RSL sheltered housing providers in Southwark introduced an Enhanced Housing Management model as part of the withdrawal of Supporting People funding noted in paragraph 13 above.
 24. The outcome of the resident consultation is set out in the section on consultation in this report and further detailed information is also included in Appendix 1. A majority of residents strongly supported the re-introduction of a site based day time warden service, together with a dedicated handyperson service, and visiting night security.
 25. The dedicated handy person service will carry out minor repairs and small jobs, which will include the following types of work:
 - carpentry: repairs to internal doors, kitchen cupboards and worktops.
 - minor disabled adaptations: including fitting rails and shower seats.
 - falls prevention: carpet strips, removing carpets, changing light bulbs and curtains.
 - minor electrical repairs and plumbing: changing switches, taps, bulb holders and security lights.
 - security: locks on windows and doors as well as replace/repair key safes
 26. It is proposed that a visiting night security team will check each scheme on a rota basis nightly and respond to specific incidents if and when they occur. This would be an additional service and would involve the creation of two new security officer posts within the Southwark Mobile Alarm Response team.

27. Cabinet also agreed that any new arrangements are put in place from April 2013, however this report recommends that the implementation of these arrangements are brought forward to January 2013 following positive tenant feedback and strong levels of support for the proposals.
28. The proposals set out also help to support the partnership work that the council has been undertaking with the London Fire Brigade to promote fire safety, and our fire safety risk assessment work, which recommends that an improved on site presence is necessary to most effectively promote safety and mitigate risks. The London Fire Brigade has also been fully briefed on the contents of this report.

Policy implications

29. Sheltered Housing Schemes prior to the introduction of the Supporting People programme in April 2003 were funded through rents. Following the introductions of the SP programme support charges for warden services among other support functions were disaggregated from rents and passed over to the SP budget.
30. Sheltered Housing has since that time been part of the SP strategic commissioning programme which is focused on lower level not statutory preventative services that support people to live independently in their own tenancies.
31. The objectives of the Housing Strategy 2011-16 Older People's Delivery Plan set out a range of core housing objectives to respond to the varying needs of the borough's older population. The delivery plan recognises the need to promote support for older people to remain and retain their independence.
32. The plan also recognises the need to expand the level of extra care provision for those with more substantial needs, including eligible social care needs, and makes a commitment to develop at least a further 150 units of extra care to ensure which will ensure older people with more substantial needs have alternatives to residential care and greater choice around living more independently in the community. This is particularly important as 25% of tenants in sheltered housing are also in receipt of care packages provided by Adult Social Care. Those tenants with eligible care needs will continue to be visited by carers in line with agreed care plans and the delivery of their care will not be affected by the introduction of the proposed enhanced housing management service model.
33. The proposal set out in this report provides the council with the opportunity to ensure that Sheltered Housing remains a part of the overall range of services available to older people in Southwark at a time of significant pressure on funding. It is also consistent with and supports the objectives of the Older Persons Delivery Plan.
34. The service model recommended in this report has been informed by the findings of a needs mapping exercise of sheltered tenants undertaken by the council in 2011, and the subsequent Impact Assessment conducted on the proposals. The needs mapping exercise and the consultation with tenants on the options for an enhanced housing management service identified that the key issues for tenants were related to housing management functions, most notably repairs and security.

35. The proposed warden model will have a role in supporting older people to resolve repairs issues. It will be important that the new service model adopts a re-abling approach, that promotes independence and self reliance, thus complementing one of overarching strategic priorities of the Shadow Health and Well Being Board.
36. As noted above the proposed enhanced housing management model will allow older people to continue to have a range of choices in their housing options by ensuring that those with lower level needs who require assistance around practical aspects of maintaining their tenancies, including resolving any housing management and repair issues, have access to the right advice and assistance. Based on feedback from the consultation it will also provide older people with reassurance around feeling safe and secure while living independently in the community. Those tenants who have support needs but are not eligible for statutory social care services will continue to have access to supporting people funding community based support alongside the enhanced housing management warden service. It is expected that where this is needed the enhanced housing management service will have a role in providing information and advice on other support services available to tenants.
37. There is also scope for the warden service to promote access for older people to aids and adaptations through investment and training that ensure wardens can carry out a trusted assessor role for simple aids and adaptations.
38. The criteria for assessing residents for sheltered housing will also be subject to re-consideration, as part of the lettings policy review.

Community impact statement

39. The eight strands of the council's equality agenda have been considered to assess any potential impact. These eight strands are age, disability, faith/religion, gender, race and ethnicity, marital status, gender identity and sexual orientation.
40. It has been assessed that there are no significant detrimental impacts from the proposals which are set out in this report.
41. No existing tenants will be affected by the introduction of the charge and it is estimated that only a small percentage of new tenants would not be eligible for housing benefit to cover the cost of the new charge in future. For the small number of new potential tenants that are likely to have to pay the charge in future, advice will be provided in relation to income maximisation as well as other housing options available.

Resource implications

42. The proposed implementation of a service charge to fund an enhanced housing management service will allow the council to deliver the budget savings from the supporting people budget while ensuring sheltered housing tenants have access to the advice and assistance needed to maintain their tenancies.
43. Although the majority of existing tenants will receive funding through housing benefit to pay the proposed service charge, the work to develop the model and

consultation process has identified 84 tenants who are not eligible for Housing Benefit subsidy.

44. The council has made a commitment to ensure that there is transitional protection for existing tenants not entitled to housing benefit. The transitional protection will be funded from the supporting people budget and is expected to cost £158,782 in the first full year. It should be noted that the council also made a commitment to provide transitional protection to a similar cohort of RSL sheltered tenants from April 2012.
45. It is estimated based on past management information on the average turnover in sheltered housing that the cost of transitional protection will decrease by around 5% yearly due to tenancy changes. Illustrative figures for the next five years are provided below.

Projected cost of 5 years of transitional protection

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
£158,782	£151,793	£144,204	£136,993	£92,271

46. The proposed transitional protection scheme will mean that the full savings of £800k from the SP budget will not be made immediately on implementation. However over time the full saving will be made as the level of transitional protection reduces and eventually ends as existing qualifying tenants move on.
47. If the council is able to implement these changes from 1 January 2013, savings in 2012-13 would be achieved in the region of £158,358, after provision of £39,398 in transitional protection.

Service charge options

48. Detailed below are the three initial service charge options listed in the cabinet report of January 2012 these were the service charge options consulted on

Option 1 - Restructure of current hub service	General Fund £000	HRA £000
Current contract and budget value – fixed fee	802	
Service re-provided by Housing revenue account		713
Service charge income - rebatable service charge based on 84 tenants on transitional protection (tenants paying in full)	96	- 713
Redundancy costs 1 post - one off cost	35	
Net budget requirement 2013/14	131	
Supporting People contract saving FY 2013-14	671	
Supporting People windfall saving FY 2012-13	177	
Cost over and above current budget		nil
Weekly levy to tenant £		21.91

Option 2 - Call out service only	General Fund £000	HRA £000
Current contract and budget value – fixed fee	802	
Service re-provided by Housing revenue account		218
Service charge income - rebatable service charge based on 84 tenants on transitional protection (tenants paying in full)	29	-218
Redundancy costs 13.5 posts - one off cost	230	
Net budget requirement 2013/14	259	
Supporting People contract saving FY 2013-14	543	
Supporting People windfall saving FY 2012-13	193	
Cost over and above current budget		nil
Weekly levy to tenant £		6.68

Option 3 - enhanced housing management service provision	General Fund £000	HRA £000
Current budget – fixed fee	802	
Service re-provided by HRA		1,065
Service charge income - rebatable service charge approx 84 tenants transitional protection (incl. cash & part HB tenants)	143	-1,065
Redundancy costs 1 post - one off	22	
Net budget requirement 2013/14	165	
Saving assuming no SP support	637	
Supporting People windfall saving FY 2012-13	165	263
Weekly levy to tenant £		32.70

Developed model of option 3 (See table below)

49. During resident consultation of all 20 schemes and feedback over the last 7 months a preferred service charge emerged at £36.48 p.w as detailed below:

Preferred Option includes the handyperson support & security	General Fund £000	HRA £000
Current contract and budget value – fixed fee	802	
Service re-provided by Housing revenue account		1,187
Service charge income - rebatable service charge approx 84 tenants transitional protection - (tenants paying in full)	159	-1,187
Redundancy costs 1 post - one off cost	22	
Net budget requirement 2013/14	181	
Supporting People contract saving 2013-14	621	
Supporting People windfall saving FY 2012-13	161	
Weekly levy to tenant £		36.48

50. This report overall proposes the re-introduction of a scheme based warden service for residents of sheltered housing and the introduction of tenant service charges in response to the withdrawal of Supporting People (SP) funding from 2013/14.
51. Cabinet first considered this in January 2012. At that time three initial service charge options were proposed which are detailed above. Since then further work has been undertaken and resident consultation suggests a developed model of option 3 is preferred. This involves the provision of an enhanced housing management service to sheltered residents to be paid for by way of a weekly

service charge of £36.48pw. This results in general fund savings of £621k from April 2013. If implementation were to be brought forward to January 2013, the saving for 2012/13 would be £161k based on a full year saving of £621k.

52. The withdrawal of SP funding transfers the financial cost to the HRA and recent proposals under the Welfare Reform Act which seek to restrict housing benefit eligibility for service charges potentially presents a risk. However, the council's proposals for the provision of an enhanced housing management service are deemed to fall within the eligibility criteria for housing benefit moving forward.
53. The council operates 20 sheltered housing schemes, providing 628 units of accommodation, including an extra care unit at Lew Evans. Under existing housing benefit regulations, service charges are rebatable. Therefore the majority of existing residents will see no change in their financial circumstances as charges will be met by housing benefit. However, there are currently 84 tenants who are not entitled to housing benefit, but their full service charges will be transitionally protected through Supporting People savings for the remaining length of their tenancy. The financial impact of this is estimated at £159k in year one (2013/14) but will decline over time as the number of tenants entitled to protection reduces due to turnover. Tenant turnover is approximately 5% per annum; therefore it is important to recognise the continuing general fund commitment to fund this over the medium-term.
54. New residents taking up sheltered accommodation after April 2013 (or January 2013), will either be covered by housing benefit or will need to meet the cost of the service charge from their own means.

Overview of re-organisation proposals

55. A proposed new staffing structure for the sheltered housing service is set out in Appendix 2. This new staffing structure would enable the service to provide a day time site based service at all of the schemes, from 8 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday. It would also provide a dedicated handy person for the sheltered housing service to carry out small jobs and minor repairs.
56. For the council's preferred model, the paper proposes that 23 new posts are created on a permanent basis. They consist of three Sheltered Housing Coordinators, who will be responsible for managing a total of twenty Sheltered Housing Officers split between them. In addition there will be an Assessment and Referral Officer who be responsible for managing a Sheltered Housing Support Officer. These are new posts which will be required to be evaluated under the Council's job evaluation process. This is an increase to establishment. Posts will be recruited to in line with Council policy with priority consideration for redeployees. Staff and trade unions will be fully consulted on these proposals in line with the Council's Reorganisation, Redeployment and Redundancy Procedure.
57. Staff redundancy costs if applicable will be matched against the outturn and will be dependent on the year of implementation. If this is not possible a request will be made from corporate resources to cover the cost and will be dependent on the chosen option above.

Consultation

58. Consultation has taken place with each of the residents at the sheltered schemes and this is set out in detail in Appendix 1. Stakeholders representing older people have been consulted both individually and through the Older People Partnership Board.
59. Every scheme has supported option 3 (the enhanced model) as their preferred option. Resident feedback also supported the introduction of a dedicated handy person and visiting night time security across the schemes.
60. This option together with the handy person and visiting night time security service would involve a service charge at £36.48 p/w to the tenant.
61. Area Forums and the Tenants Council will also be consulted and their feedback will be reported to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing Management who, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, will decide whether any further changes or adjustments are necessary before the current proposals are implemented.

Risk assessment

62. The main risk associated with this proposal is regarding the impact of Universal Credit and other wider government welfare reforms. At this stage, the government's welfare reform plans are not considered to have a significant impact on these proposals but this will need to be carefully monitored and kept under regular review to mitigate any possible future financial risks.
63. A further risk has been identified in relation to recruitment of the additional staff being completed by January 2012. However steps have been put in place to accelerate the process or liaison with the trade unions and recruit temporary staff if necessary as an interim arrangement to allow for the permanent recruitments.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal Services

64. The report asks cabinet to note recommendations for the reintroduction of a scheme based warden service, the introduction of a dedicated handyperson service and night time security visiting service in its sheltered housing schemes to be funded through the introduction of a service charge.
65. The council may provide the proposed services under general powers of management relating to housing accommodation conferred by section 21 of the Housing Act 1985 and the power to provide services for promoting the welfare of persons for whom accommodation is provided conferred by section 11A of the same act. The Housing Act also confers powers for the council to make reasonable charges for the proposed services under sections 11A and 24.
66. Consultation has been carried with tenants likely to be affected by the proposals and the report sets out the outcome of that consultation. Further consultation is planned; this is in line with the consultation arrangements agreed by cabinet in January 2012 and the requirement of the council's conditions of tenancy to

consult with the Tenant Council before seeking to vary rents and other charges. To conform with legal requirements relating to consultation, the outcome of all the consultation carried out must be taken into account when the final decision on the proposals is taken.

67. The decision maker, when taking the final decision, is also required to have due regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This duty requires the council to consider all individuals when carrying out its functions. Specifically, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those who do not. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The PSED also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in relation to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct. The report confirms that an equality assessment has been carried out and the community impact statement summarises the outcome.
68. As to the proposed introduction of a service charge, the law requires that tenants be notified by service of a notice at least 28 days before it takes effect. The proposed implementation in January 2013 will depend on consultation and final decision taking processes being completed in sufficient time to comply with this requirement.
69. As to the impact of the proposals on council employees working in the relevant housing service, the report indicates that consultation will be carried out with staff and the trade unions. Managers must ensure the final proposals are implemented in a manner fully compliant with the council's re-organisation, redeployment and redundancy procedure.
70. The report recommends delegation, by the Leader of the Council to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for housing management, of authority to consider the outcome of consultation and take a decision on the proposals in this report. The Leader has authority to make the recommended delegation pursuant to Part 3 of the council's constitution that enables the Leader to delegate executive decisions to individuals.

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services (NR/F&R/16/7/12)

71. This report recommends that the Cabinet approves the re-introduction of a scheme based warden service, the introduction of a dedicated handyperson and night time security visiting service, that the changes are funded through the introduction of a service charge, current residents who are not in receipt of full housing benefit have their service charge paid through a transitional protection scheme, funded through savings on Supporting People budgets and that the proposed changes are introduced from January 2013.
72. The strategic director notes the resource implications contained within the report and is mindful of the risks associated with housing benefit legislation changes in the future forcing additional unanticipated costs and the recoverability of service charges. Should this happen, alternative actions would be taken. Officer time to effect the recommendations will be contained within existing budgeted revenue resources.

Revenues and Benefits Implications

73. For Housing Benefit purposes, unless the council considers the rent to be unreasonably high, service charges are deemed to be eligible if they must be paid in order for the tenant to occupy their home. These service charges are counted as part of the eligible rent if they relate to the provision of adequate accommodation, for example services such as those provided by caretakers.
74. Examples of charges that cannot be included in the eligible rent include any service charges for medical, nursing or personal care. Service charges for general counselling and support services are also not usually eligible. Any other charges for services which are not connected with the provision of adequate accommodation are not met by Housing Benefit. This includes charges for personal needs, even if these are essential for the tenant to remain in their accommodation.
75. As with any service charge, one for security services must effectively be connected with the provision of adequate accommodation. The HB/CTB Guidance Manual, paragraph A4.174, points to the accommodation being adequate for any tenant rather than a particular tenant. An eligible service charge would therefore generally be one that relates directly to the fabric of the dwelling covered by the tenancy and not directly to the needs of the tenant in enabling them to live in it.

Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services

76. The recommendations set out in this report relate to the re-introduction of on site warden support, access to a handyperson services and enhanced night time security. It is believed that these initiatives will contribute to the delivery of the council's Future Vision for Social Care approved by Cabinet in April 2011 by playing a role in promoting independence for older people with lower level needs who want to live in the community in their own tenancies.
77. Officers from Adult Services have worked closely with Housing and Community Services Department colleagues on the development of the plans set out in this report, and have engaged as required in the consultation programme involving the council's sheltered tenants.
78. There is also scope for the wardens to receive training and become "trusted assessors" for sheltered residents who require basic equipment and assistive technology aids to promote their independence.
79. It is noted that handyperson services can be a cost effective way of achieving both social care outcomes and improving the quality of life for older people. The provision of handyperson services in sheltered housing, is anticipated to provide quick access to remedial work necessary to rectify slips and falls hazard (as a result of frayed carpeting etc) and establishing temporary "micro environments"¹ for older people following a hospital discharge.

¹ Micro Environments is a temporary relocation of an older person's living space into a single room following hospital discharge or other form of health crisis, fall etc. For example the moving of a bed and commode into to a living room to facilitate more effective care by home care and health care professionals

80. It is also noted that the recommendation contained within this report includes reintroducing a warden service at Lew Evans House, the council owned scheme in which an extra care housing service is delivered by an externally contracted provider. It will be important to ensure clear lines of responsibility and working protocols are established between the proposed warden service and the contracted integrated care and support extra care service in order to maximize the benefit for existing and future tenants of this scheme. The referral and access to this scheme is managed through a specialist extra care panel jointly convened by housing and adult social care.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet report - Council Sheltered Housing: Strategic Review	Housing and Community Services department / Community Housing Services, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1P 5LX	Darren Welsh 020 7525 1203
Impact Assessment	Health and Community Services 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1P 5LX	Andy Loxton 020 7525 3130

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Summary of resident consultation feedback
Appendix 2	Proposed staffing structure
Appendix 3	Impact Assessment

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Members	Councillor Ian Wingfield – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing Management Councillor Catherine McDonald – Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care	
Lead Officer	Gerri Scott – Strategic Director of Housing and Community Services Romi Bowen – Strategic Director of Children’s and Adults Services	
Report Author	Darren Welsh – Head of Community Housing Services Jonathan Lillestone – Head of Commissioning, Adult Social Care	
Version	Final	
Dated	11 October 2012	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Children’s and Adults Services	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Members	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	11 October 2012	