

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 20 December 2017
Report Subject	Sheltered Accommodation Review
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The review undertaken of sheltered accommodation grew out of the perception that a number of schemes were either unpopular, no longer fit for purpose and as a consequence turn over and subsequent void loss was considered excessive.

The review explored all sheltered accommodation stock which totals 2,637 properties across the county.

Looking at the available data the significant categories behind stock turn-over (66%) occur as a result of the tenant's death or their transfer to residential care accommodation.

In revenue terms the loss associated to void properties equated to 1.67% of the Housing revenue account rental stream each year.

Housing management, through the use of individual case by case approvals, have supported the practice of allocating sheltered accommodation below the age threshold criteria, where there are recognised medical conditions, and sheltered housing is the most suitable property type.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Note the outcomes of the review and next steps, and support the principle of Sheltered accommodation being known as "Sheltered and Supported accommodation" to reflect the customer group it serves.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW																														
1.01	The initiation of the Sheltered Accommodation Review grow out of the perception that certain sheltered housing schemes were unpopular/undesirable or that they were no longer fit for purpose and as a result tenancy turnover was considered excessive.																														
1.02	Desk top analysis has been completed to enhance understanding and to help identify options for potential future development of the accommodation to provide an attractive and needs based housing offer for older people.																														
	Current Housing provision for older people [Sheltered].																														
1.03	<p>There are a total of 2,637 properties spread across the county that make up the suite of sheltered accommodation [548 over 55's and 2089 over 60's].</p> <p>This includes;</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="300 947 1289 1328"> <thead> <tr> <th>Description</th> <th>No. of bedrooms</th> <th>No. of properties</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sheltered bungalow</td> <td>1-3</td> <td>1,360</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sheltered Flats</td> <td>1-2</td> <td>631</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mini-group bungalow</td> <td>1-2</td> <td>408</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mini-group flat</td> <td>1-2</td> <td>139</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sheltered bedsit</td> <td></td> <td>63</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warden House</td> <td>3</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warden Bungalow</td> <td>3</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warden Flat</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sheltered House</td> <td></td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Description	No. of bedrooms	No. of properties	Sheltered bungalow	1-3	1,360	Sheltered Flats	1-2	631	Mini-group bungalow	1-2	408	Mini-group flat	1-2	139	Sheltered bedsit		63	Warden House	3	17	Warden Bungalow	3	14	Warden Flat	2	3	Sheltered House		2
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1.04	<p>Looking at the available data over the previous five year period the range of reasons for the termination of properties includes;</p> <table data-bbox="395 1496 1137 1686"> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Deceased</td> <td>44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Move to residential care</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Transfer to FCC property</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Other</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>A range of 14 categories</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>NB: Of particular interest are the categories 2, 3 and 4 making up 46%. The Housing Service could have a degree of control over these categories and this could form the focus of potential changes to the current offer</i></p>	1	Deceased	44%	2	Move to residential care	24%	3	Transfer to FCC property	12%	4	Other	10%	5	A range of 14 categories	10%															
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	Analysis of data																														
1.05	Further analysis was undertaken on those properties with higher void frequency rate by site over a 5 year period. The picture isn't straightforward.																														

	<p>For example bedsit accommodation tends to have more turnover than flats; but in Coppa View the average tenancy is 5.8 years, which would be considered reasonable in older person's accommodation. In other schemes bedsitter tenancy length is shorter. The differences could be reflective of available accommodation in the area (i.e. it is easier to be able to move in some neighbourhoods, due to more supply of older persons accommodation), or it may be that the location of the scheme, make-up of the community in the scheme or availability of local services are more important than the type of accommodation.</p> <p>In some areas which would be described as particularly attractive by many across the county, turnover is higher than the average, (for example Gwernaffield). This could be due to the availability of transport or other local services in rural areas.</p> <p>Some schemes do not have lifts or have significant differences in levels to access the scheme meaning they can become difficult to manage for those with mobility issues.</p>
	Rent loss due to voids:
1.06	<p>Financially [2016/17], rental income from occupied sheltered accommodation provides £8,227,993 to the Housing Revenue Account each year. Rent loss for vacant homes in the same period was £139,000. This represents 1.67% of gross rent. This demonstrates that despite some of the potential challenges identified above the accommodation is very popular overall.</p> <p>As the stock of sheltered accommodation is significant, the focus of the new build programme has mainly been on meeting the needs for smaller family homes. This will continue, except where there is evidence of significant demand for older person accommodation in an area which cannot be met through existing provision; or where it is deemed that the existing provision is unsuitable for older people.</p>
	Observations of Housing Officers and Accommodation Support Officers
1.07	Each of the properties with higher void frequency rates have their own unique circumstances; however there are some common issues.
1.08	Sheltered bedsits are less popular and tend to be used as short-term accommodation.
1.09	Upstairs flats eventually become unsuitable for many elderly tenants as they become less agile
1.10	The ongoing reduction of local convenience stores dictates the need to travel for shopping for those who live in remote sheltered accommodation which again becomes difficult for less agile elderly tenants.
	Potential solutions for these are as follows:-
1.11	Bedsitters have been improved at some schemes in recent years. A plan

	needs to be developed for their long term use across the county's stock.
1.12	Installation of Stair Lifts might be a cost effective solution to avoid the need for tenants in upper flats to move to a more accessible property.
1.13	Technology and training to enable internet shopping and other local deliveries, may be useful in supporting those who live in rural areas better.
	Overview:
1.14	24% of sheltered accommodation tenants transfer to residential care.
1.15	46% of voids are potentially avoidable [Residential care/Transfer to FCC property/other].
1.16	Bedsit accommodation is, as expected, the highest category of sheltered accommodation which becomes vacant.
1.17	Layout and construction of the properties is a contributory factor to void rate, i.e. access to first floor accommodation and difficulty with stairs.
1.18	Flintshire social services have an excellent track record in supporting older people to live as independently as possible in their own homes. The council has a low percentage of older people entering long term residential care, due to the priority given to helping people to remain in their own homes. As a result of this the average age of people in care homes is 87 years with the average stay approximately 2 years. These figures are a positive indicator that older people are being supported to continue to live in their own homes).
	Conclusions:
1.19	The housing register has identified the need for 'specialist' accommodation to meet a range of customer needs. Sheltered accommodation can meet some of this need and therefore it is considered appropriate to broaden the determinants to 'sheltered and support accommodation'.
1.20	The adoption of 'Sheltered and Supported' accommodation formalises the current custom and practice (tenants accommodated who don't meet the age criteria but have a range of health or disability needs that can be met within this type of accommodation). This would continue to be managed very sensitively with Senior level authorisation on a case by case basis to ensure that the balance in individual schemes would not be affected adversely.
1.21	More flexible use of existing accommodation could help to meet a broader range of needs in some cases e.g. individuals with a range of physical disabilities, mental health and learning disabilities. In addition, some new build accommodation will also be required to meet the needs of this customer group.
1.22	A small number of schemes may require capital expenditure such as the installation of lifts to make them fit for purpose for the future. This will be

	considered as part of future years capital budget planning.
1.23	Bedsit accommodation requires further review to ensure that it can best meet changing housing demand and expectation.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Resource requirements, will be determined following appropriate condition surveys determining potential changes to communal and individual properties. This will form part of future capital budgets for members consideration.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Any potential amendments to properties will be undertaken in consultation with current residents and local elected members.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Financial challenges associated to the scale of capital requirements of modifying the existing layout of communal facilities, will need to be considered as part of the annual housing investment programme.
4.02	Lack of detailed information from departmental colleagues on the level of demand determining potential structural changes to communal properties and facilities
4.03	Access arrangements post consultations with tenants effected by potential structural changes to properties.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	n/a

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Steve Agger Telephone: 01352 701658 Email: steve.agger@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	n/a