

## **Community Committee, November 20, 2008, Item 10**

### **SHELTERED HOUSING AND LIFELINE SERVICE TASK GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 10.00 am on 29 OCTOBER 2008**

Present:- Councillors R H Chamberlain, E L Bellingham-Smith and J E Hudson (UDC).  
Liz Petrie (Housing Management Manager), Helen Harvey (Tenant Participation Officer), H Duncan and Maureen Cox (Sheltered Housing Officers), Maggie Cox (Democratic Services Officer).  
Karen Patient (Tenant Manager, Social Care), Susannah Westwood (Strategic Commissioning, ECC), Jill Jackson (Supporting People team, ECC)  
John Maddens and Paul Simpson (Tenant Forum).

#### **SH1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor R H Chamberlain be elected as Chairman of the Task Group

#### **SH2 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D J Morson and J A Redfern and from Tess Smith from Essex Social Care. ..

#### **SH3 WELCOME**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the first meeting of the Task Group. He explained that this service had last been reviewed 9 years ago, and although it had been a useful exercise the review had quite a narrow remit. This review would be much more extensive and more challenging. He was pleased that so many agencies were represented at the meeting, although it was noted that the PCT had not yet appointed a representative. He said that the input of the agencies was essential to success of the review and asked that agencies send a representative if the nominated person was not able to get to a meeting.

#### **SH4 BACKGROUND AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Liz Petrie said that the review of the Sheltered Housing and Lifeline Service had been identified as a key priority in the Housing Divisional Plan. It was clear that the service would need to respond to the needs of an increasingly ageing population and the changing expectations of older people. It would need to take account of the character of Uttlesford District which was a

predominantly rural area with poor access to services in some areas and with a limited elderly persons housing stock.

Over the past few years the Council had been under taking a phased review of its sheltered housing sites and which had led to the refurbishment and design of 3 complexes. It was planned that all the schemes would be looked at in due course.

In terms of the staffing of the sheltered homes there was a weekend team of 5 officers and 6 officers for Monday to Friday. After the end of the working day the calls were directed to the Hitchin control centre. There were 18 sheltered schemes with 469 units. The current policy was that every resident received a daily personal visit from a sheltered housing officer. It had become clear that a one size fits all policy was not now appropriate when there such different levels of need and greater expectations by residents.

The Council had been operating the Lifeline Service since 1987 and now had 720 units, 560 of them in private homes. With an increasing ageing population a greater number of elderly people wished to live independently in their own homes and demand for this service would increase. Also technological advances in Telecare had improved the service which had also increased demand.

Liz Petrie advised the group that the review would also need to take account of studies being carried out by other agencies, particularly the current Supporting People review.

She concluded that this was a good opportunity for the Task Group to carry out an in depth review and improve the quality of the service provided. It was essential that both the users and staff were consulted at every stage.

The terms of reference agreed at the Community Committee follows:-

To carry out a review of the Sheltered Housing and Lifeline service, with a particular focus on ensuring wide consultation to:

- Review the adequacy and standards of existing accommodation for older people in the Council's housing stock
- Evaluate and consider current and future demands for older person's accommodation in the district
- Establish client requirements for both Sheltered and Lifeline service
- Review ways of providing 'real time support' for older people and other vulnerable adults to those who may need more housing support than others
- Explore ways of raising awareness of what sheltered housing and Life line have to offer
- Make suitable recommendations to committee that are cost effective and affordable, ensuring that these recommendations fit with the Housing Revenue Business Plan
- Recommend a strategy as to how the service will be delivered for the next 5 years in light of the outcome of the Supporting People review
- Undertake research into good practice from other providers

- Ensure adequate resources are available to deliver effective outcomes

It was intended that recommendation would come to the committee in September 2009.

SH5

## **WAY FORWARD AND ACTION PLAN**

The Chairman thanked Liz Petrie for her introduction. He said that he had recently attended a number of Supporting People meetings and realised that this review was part of a wider agenda for the County. Things had moved on significantly in the last 9 years in terms of people's expectation and with the technology that was available. He warned that this review might be a difficult process as it would be necessary to challenge existing processes and look at different ways of doing things.

It was agreed that the first thing to be established was the existing tenants' views of the service. The group discussed the best way to achieve this. Although a questionnaire would protect anonymity there was a general feeling that there had already been a number of similar surveys and it was unlikely that many would be returned, especially from the more vulnerable groups. Jill Jackson said that during a recent consultation small focus groups had proved popular and successful. The Chairman suggested that the next two meetings could be held at a sheltered complex with time set aside prior to the meeting for members to speak informally to the tenants.

There was some concern about the wide scope of the study and whether there were sufficient officer resources to undertake the work required. In terms of financial resources it was clear that there would be no new money coming from the district council and any proposals would have to be worked up with partner organisations.

The Chairman asked for clarification on the progress of the studies being carried out by Essex County Council. At a strategic level, Social Care was preparing a strategy for older people which would identify a range of housing need. It had particularly identified a need for Extra Care and this was a service that was lacking within the Uttlesford District. Supporting People was currently reviewing its strategy for providing elderly persons services in the county and had reached the stage of putting forward 3 possible models. It was expected that a decision on the preferred model would be made early in the new year. This model would be adopted county wide but there would be an extended implementation and it was not expected that there would be a change in service provision in the next year.

The Task Group noted the importance of taking into account these studies when deciding on its own strategy. It might also be necessary to extend the completion date of the review in order to allow for the other study deadlines.

The Chairman thought it was important for the Group to understand how the sheltered housing and Lifeline services were funded. It was complicated by the fact that Social Care, Supporting People and Uttlesford District Council each funded different aspects of the service. It would be useful for members

to know the percentage of the costs that were met from other bodies and how much was met from the HRA, to enable better planning of the service. It would also be useful to know how much it actually cost to provide the service. It was agreed that, as the Council had limited resources, the aim of the review should be to reach the most vulnerable people and not spend scarce resources on people that didn't need them.

SH6

### **NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on a Wednesday morning in January at a sheltered complex in the district. At 10.00am District Council Members and Tenant Forum representatives would have an opportunity to meet with the tenants with the formal meeting commencing at 11.00am.

The following matters would be considered:-

- 1) Funding
- 2) Lifeline service technology
- 3) Void details
- 4) Update on Supporting People / Social Care reviews
- 5) Feedback on tenant's comments.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am.