

Committee: COMMUNITY & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: 12 November 2009

11

Title: **SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW UPDATE**

Author: Elizabeth Petrie, Housing Management
Manager. Tel no 01799 510362

Item for decision

Summary

1. This report is to update the Committee of the last meeting of the Sheltered Housing/Lifeline Task Group, held on 22 October 2009 (see Appendix D re minutes) which details the work and progress that has been made with regards to the review of the sheltered housing service.
2. It has already been agreed that the Council moves forward with implementing the 'Hub and Spoke' model (targeting housing related support to those that need it and the potential of taking the service into the wider community). As a consequence the Task Group have discussed Essex County Council's Supporting People proposed three options for funding the 'Hub and Spoke' throughout Essex.
3. The Task Group have also started to look at the feasibility of providing a full out of hour's response service to all sheltered and lifeline users, including the weekend service. Officers will report back to the next meeting of the Task Group in January 2010 with full details of how this might be achieved and a subsequent report will follow to the next meeting of this committee in January 2010.

Recommendations

4. The Committee agree to Option 2 of Essex County Council's Supporting Peoples Options for funding of the Hub and Spoke Model.
5. The Committee agree for officers to further investigate the potential of partnership working with a different Control Centre. Look at current weekend working arrangements, with a view of providing a full response service for weekends and out of hours (7 days a week) for all sheltered and lifeline users.

Background Papers

6. All background papers are available on request from the author of this report.

Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	The task group promotes consultation with service users, partner agencies, staff and the wider community.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	The sheltered and lifeline service must be applied without discrimination of any kind.
Finance	Any financial implications will be brought to the committee's and chief finance officers attention
Human Rights	N/A
Legal implications	Fulfils the Council's statutory duty.
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	Covers the whole Uttlesford District
Workforce/Workplace	The sheltered and lifeline function is part of the housing management function. Any changes to the service may impact on current staffing levels.

Situation

- 8 The Task Group have carefully considered Supporting Peoples (SP) three funding options for providing the Hub and Spoke mode.
 Option 1: Block gross contract
 Option 2: Block gross fixed capacity
 Option 3: Combined block gross and block gross capacity
- (See Appendix A, B & C)
9. Although there are pros and cons for all three funding options SP have stated that agreement will need to be reached on which funding model is adopted across the county, to ensure consistency and equity.
10. The Task Group agreed that the best option that would work for providing an improved and more efficient service would be Option 2. This means that as a provider we would be able to retain the income that we receive from self funders (those not in receipt of housing benefit). Compared to other Essex authorities Uttlesford has the highest proportion of self funders, which is currently 31% of our service users, which equates to approx £103,000.

Without this income it would be virtually impossible to continue to run the service.

11. This option also gives service users a choice as to what level of service they would like to receive and pay for, as well as giving the opportunity to expand the service by taking it into the wider community.
12. Option 2 would also ensure that we get paid regardless of the level of voids (empty hard to let sheltered accommodation) or if a scheme is decommissioned.
13. Consultation has already begun with service users and their family/friends and carers to ascertain what level of service they would like to receive. For example from initial consultation officers have carried out not everyone wants/needs a daily visit from a Sheltered Housing Officer,(SHO) which is the current level of service we provide. Some have indicated that they would prefer a weekly/monthly visit and would like to see a “handy person” who would concentrate on going to the schemes checking and reporting/carrying out minor repairs, checking smoke alarms etc which would also free up more time for the SHO’s to provide more support where it is most needed.
14. As outlined in the original terms of reference, a full review of how Uttlesford provides the sheltered housing and lifeline service would need to be undertaken as this part of the service has not been reviewed for some considerable time. This piece of work was identified as a high priority in the Housing Services Divisional plan. Officers have already started to look at different options with regards to providing a full a full out of hour responder service, including the weekends. At present the Council works with North Herts Control Centre who provide a monitoring only service for our sheltered housing and lifeline users. The contract with North Herts expires at the end of March 2010 so officers feel this is the right time to review this part of the service.
15. Although there is a lot of work ahead, officers feel that there are opportunities to be had to be able to provide a much improved efficient and effective service to our service users.

Risk Analysis

16.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That existing sheltered housing residents and vulnerable residents in the wider community are not offered housing related	1 Unlikely	3 A service that fails to meet the needs of the residents of the district	Implementation of a new Sheltered Housing Service, which targets those most in need.

support in a timely fashion, to help enable them to remain as independent in their own homes for as long as possible.			
---	--	--	--