

**SHELTERED HOUSING AND LIFELINE SERVICE TASK GROUP held at
HATHERLY COURT SHELTERED HOUSING COMPLEX SAFFRON
WALDEN at 11.00 am on 23 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Present:- Councillors E L Bellingham-Smith, J E Hudson, J A Redfern and S V Schneider (UDC).
Suzanna Clarke (Housing Policy and Strategy Manager), Maggie Cox (Democratic Services Officer), Heather Duncan and Maureen Cox (Sheltered Housing Officers), Helen Harvey (Senior Sheltered Housing and Lifeline Officer), Jill Jackson (Supporting People Team, ECC), Nicole Shepherd Lewis (Tenant Participation Officer) Liz Petrie (Housing Management Manager), Sue Russell (Lifeline Officer) and John Maddams (Tenant Forum).

SH21 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor J A Redfern be elected Chairman of the Task Group.

SH22 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D J Morson, Suzannah Westwood (Strategic Commissioning, ECC), Karen Patient (Tenant Manager, Social Care) and Paul Simpson (Tenant Forum).

SH23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2009 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SH24 SUPPORTING PEOPLE UPDATE

Jill Jackson reported that since the last meeting the draft Improvement report had been out for consultation and the final report had now been issued. It was proposed to offer one of 3 models and providers were being asked to decide which route they wished to follow. There would then be a series of meetings to discuss the implementation. The Commissioning Body was currently looking at the financial implications and the Joint Project Board and Working Group would be meeting at the end of October to decide the next course of action. It was hoped that the hub and spoke model would be implemented in April 2010. She would report the outcome of the October meeting to the next meeting of the task group.

SH25

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE HUB AND SPOKE MODEL

At the last meeting, the Task Group had expressed a preference for the hub and spoke model for providing the sheltered housing service. Discussions were now taking place on how this might work in the Uttlesford area. The first task was to consult widely with residents and their families and carers to establish the true level of need. Officers would then be able to consider how to provide a service to meet these needs.

The Senior Sheltered Housing and Lifeline Officer said it was important that the residents were clear about what was meant by 'support'. This was not to provide care but to give a service that would facilitate an independent life. Residents would need to be given more information on the choices that were available and the different bodies that provided them. Officers would be working more closely with partner agencies to improve the service. Each resident would have a support plan that was frequently reviewed which would hopefully provide an early indication of a change in needs.

The Chairman asked how this task group could help in pushing forward the changes to the service. Officers replied that after the consultation phase a decision would need to be made by the Community and Housing Committee on the hub and spoke model and partnership working with a different control centre.

The plan was to start to implement the new model from April 2010 but it would take some time to put in place across the district.

SH26

PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH A DIFFERENT CONTROL CENTRE

The Task Group was informed that the Council's out of hours calls were currently answered by the North Herts control system based in Hitchin. Officers now felt that this service was not giving value for money. It had become too large and was losing its personal touch, but more importantly it did not provide a response service. This meant that if there was no designated family contact, the Sheltered Housing Officer would be called out, often more than once a night. This was not only an unacceptable situation for the officer but also had significant cost implications for the Council.

Various alternative options had been investigated and had been narrowed down to Braintree District Council that had the capacity to answer the calls and could also provide a response service. It would also have the capacity to handle all calls to the Lifeline service and not just those from council tenants.

The Council's Accountant was looking at the initial costings and further details would be reported to the next meeting.

SH27

WEEKEND WORKING

The Council was looking at the viability of weekend working as part of the overall review of the service. Uttlesford was one of the few authorities that still

provided this service and the value of this against the cost would be examined. Members asked whether officers had considered whether a shift system might be appropriate for this area.

SH28 REVIEW OF ACCOMMODATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Council's sheltered housing stock had been subject to review over the last few years and some redevelopments had already taken place. The programme to get all the units up to standard would continue whilst acknowledging that there were some units in villages that were very difficult to let because of the lack of public transport and facilities.

The chairman asked if officers could produce a list of all the sheltered properties in the district together with a desired programme of work.
This was AGREED

SH29 REVIEW OF GUEST BEDROOMS

The charges for the use of the guest bedrooms at the sheltered units had not been reviewed for some time and were currently around £3 to £6 a night. Whilst this charge was low and should probably be reviewed, it was stressed that the aim should only be to cover the cost of the use of the room.

It was AGREED that officers investigate the cost of providing the service and obtain comparative charges from other districts.

SH30 FUTURE OF COIN OPERATED TELEPHONE BOXES IN SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES

The telephone boxes in the sheltered complexes were very rarely used and the group did not think that residents would miss them if they were taken away, as most people now had access to a mobile phone.

AGREED that the proposal to remove the pay phones be included as one of the questions in the residents' consultation.

SH31 TELECARE – THE PLEDGE

Sue Russell reported that ECC was offering to provide the Lifeline service free for 1 year to all residents in the county aged over 85. Members asked about the arrangements for publicising this initiative. It was noted that there would be a stand in the Saffron Walden Market Square on 29 September and arrangements would be made to inform the local press.

Sue Russell gave details of the facilities available with the Telecare service which went much further than the basic call button system. All Sheltered Housing Officers had been on a Telecare training course so that they could inform tenants of the services that were available. It was stressed that any

lifeline system was only as good as the reply received by the resident which was why the response service was so important.

SH32 OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman said that the comments from the residents before the meeting had pointed to the need for the sheltered units to have a repair/handyman. This would be taken into account in the overall review.

The Chairman asked why there were people aged over 60 in sheltered housing who didn't really need this type of facility. She was informed that there was limited housing available for this age group.

Members ask if Sky television could be provided at the complexes. It appeared that although this could not be offered to individual properties, there was an available package if at least 4 people were interested.

AGREED that the Repairs Manager be asked to take this forward.

SH33 NEXT MEETING

The next meetings would be on 22 October 2009 at 11 am and 30 November 2009 at 2.00pm – venues to be advised.

The meeting ended at 1.00pm.