

**SHELTERED HOUSING TASK GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 10.00am on 29 SEPTEMBER 2010**

Present: Councillors E Bellingham-Smith, D J Morson and J E Hudson.

Also attending: Uttlesford District Council officers, Natalie Leatham (Housing Programming and Health & Safety Officer), Elizabeth Petrie (Housing Management Manager), Maggie Cox (Democratic Services Officer), Nicole Shephard-Lewis (Tenant Participation Officer); Tenant Forum representative: John Maddams.

SH6 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor D J Morson be elected chairman for the meeting.

SH7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Redfern and S V Schneider, Maureen Cox, Helen Harvey, Jill Jackson, Karen Patient, Suzanna Wood and Paul Simpson.

SH8 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2010 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SH9 NEW SHELTERED SERVICE UPDATE

The Housing Management Manager updated the Task Group on the new sheltered housing service.

Officers had been in regular contact with Carecall, that had taken over the out of hours service. Data had been collected from the period 1 May – 1 August 2010 and this showed that there had been 43 call outs with 17 occurring at the weekend. The response times appeared to have been good and no complaints had been received.

It was noted that the contract with North Herts District Council, the current operator of the call centre, would end on 31 March 2011. A decision would need to be taken on the future of this service.

A visit had recently been made to each of the sheltered housing schemes to further consult the residents about the new service. A handful of residents had said that they missed having a warden call at the weekends. However, there were other options available during the weekends, for

example, the “buddy scheme” and the residents had been given the necessary details.

Residents appreciated the different levels of service available and the fact that they could move up and down the levels depending on circumstances and the amount of support required.

Members said that it was very encouraging that there had been no other complaints and this positive outcome had been due in no small part to the extensive consultation that had taken place with the residents.

SH10 **THE FUTURE OF SHELTERED HOUSING**

The Housing Management Manager said that the group would need to start thinking about issues around the Government’s personalisation agenda and the implications for the future of the sheltered housing service.

There were issues around how to manage the increasing elderly population. Also, in terms of sheltered accommodation, thought would need to be given to the council’s current qualifying age of 60 and the choice of alternative accommodation for people of that age. It was important to plan for those who would be coming through the system in the future and to that end a detailed audit would be required and further consultation conducted at a later date. There would also need to be discussions around the future of the sheltered housing stock, as there was still a significant amount of bedsit accommodation which remained unpopular.

It was appreciated that any decisions were likely to have financial implications and different options such as partnership working with housing associations and other bodies would need to be explored.

AGREED that officers put together a draft programme of work for the next meeting.

SH11 **MOBILITY SCOOTER POLICY**

The Housing Programming and Health & Safety Officer circulated a draft policy for owning mobility scooters in sheltered schemes. This had been updated to include the consultation comments from various parties including the disability forum. The policy outlined the requirements for insurance, access and storage. It was noted that the storage arrangements would vary with each sheltered scheme. Members thanked officers for producing a clear and well written document.

RECOMMENDED that the Community and Housing Committee be asked to approve the policy for owning mobility scooters in sheltered housing units.

SH12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Housing Management Manager reported on the recent open day at Reynolds Court on 28 July. The aim of the day was to promote the potential of the difficult to let sheltered units once they had been refurbished. Everyone on the waiting list for sheltered housing had been invited and there had been some positive responses.

Members were informed that Swan Housing Association had terminated the contract with Uttlesford District Council for providing warden service at Oakroyd House, Great Dunmow.

SH13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was arranged for Wednesday 8 December at 10.00am in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices.

The meeting ended at 11.00 pm.