

# Housing Scrutiny Commission

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## Sheltered Housing

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Andy Connelly

Date of meeting: 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Lead director: Chris Burgin

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### **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: potentially all
- Report author: Simon Nicholls
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- Report version number: V.1

## **1. Summary**

1.1 There are 14 sheltered housing schemes across the city, these are proving difficult to let and are becoming unpopular. Officers started looking into the sheltered accommodation offer and made some initial recommendations that were approved by the Assistant Mayor for Housing. This report recaps on previous recommendations and proposes new measures, based on consultation with residents, that we hope will improve the living conditions for the existing residents and make sheltered accommodation more appealing to prospective tenants.

Feedback is to be given to all tenants on the consultation exercise that has taken place.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the Housing Scrutiny commission note the proposed improvements and feedback any observations and comments.

### 3. Supporting information including options considered:

3.1 The Housing Division has 14 sheltered schemes located across the city. They vary in size and number of units per block but they all have a mix of flats and bedsits. Letting sheltered accommodation has become more challenging and alterations to the letting policy have been made in the past to make sheltered schemes available to more applicants. The age restriction has reduced to 55 and you do not need to demonstrate that you have a connection to Leicester.

Name of scheme	Location	Number of units
<b>Barnett Janner House</b>	Beaumont Leys	24
<b>Oronsay House</b>	Beaumont Leys	28
<b>Bob Trewick House</b>	Centre	25
<b>Irene Pollard House</b>	Centre	28
<b>John Minto House</b>	Centre	35
<b>Bowder House</b>	Braunstone	26
<b>Bridges House</b>	Braunstone	25
<b>Cromwell House</b>	Saffron	26
<b>Rupert House</b>	Eyres Monsell	35
<b>Dudley House</b>	Rowlatts Hill	26
<b>Helena Roberts House</b>	Humberstone	35
<b>Gumbrill House</b>	Rowlatts Hill	28
<b>Frederick Jackson House</b>	New Parks	28
<b>Norfolk House</b>	New Parks	28

3.2 In January 2018 an interim report was considered by the Assistant Mayor for Housing and the following measures agreed:

- Endorsed new guidelines for sheltered housing to be used by Housing Officers
- To a review of mobile scooter authorisation, insurance and PAT testing requirement introduced for all current and prospective tenants
- To further research into the use of guest rooms and communal showers so that a consistent approach can be agreed across all blocks.
- That officers should carry out a consultation exercise and seek the views of the residents:
- That WiFi be installed.

#### 3.3. Consultation Exercise:

3.3.1 A consultation exercise, in conjunction with Housing Transformation Team (HTT) and Adult Social Care, was carried out that asked existing residents a range of questions.

We received 200 forms back, this equates to 54% return, this is an unusually high figure.

3.3.2 The headline findings are as follows:

- People moved to a sheltered scheme because they wanted to feel safe
- The schemes are easily accessible
- The communal lounge is used infrequently
- Communal activities are important

- Internet use is low
- Residents don't feel listened to.

Feedback will be given to all tenants on the findings of the feedback for their information

### **3.4 Fire Safety**

#### **3.4.1 Explanation of fire safety as the interaction of people and building**

Generally, the management of fire safety concerns both the building's passive and active fire safety infrastructure and the control of persons in the way they use and interact with this building.

The Housing Division manages most aspects of the building in Sheltered Housing. Conversely, ASC division manages the needs of people in sheltered housing. However, when managing fire safety, the Building Responsible Officer (BRO) is attempting to manage the interaction of people and building.

The 'people' element of fire risk is even more important within Sheltered Housing, because of the particular and varying vulnerabilities of the occupancy, and as exemplified by the NFCC recommendation for a person-centred fire risk assessment for vulnerable occupants in specialised housing.

#### **3.4.2 Current situation - matrix management of fire safety in Sheltered Housing**

LCC's current separation of building management and support services responsibilities between divisions, also separates the two aforementioned aspects of fire safety responsibility (building and people) between the Housing and Adult Social Care management areas. This literal division of responsibilities represents a "matrix management" structure which adds to the complexity of fire safety management in Sheltered Housing. The current system of matrix management necessarily requires that officers from across the management divide meet to discuss and ensure that all fire safety responsibilities and concerns are tackled and that none are overlooked.

#### **3.4.3 Future challenges for the matrix management of fire safety in Sheltered Housing**

The current matrix management of Sheltered housing fire safety can continue to function satisfactorily if the officers on both sides of the Housing/ ASC (building/people) separation have the time and resources to liaise with each other. Further work is required to coordinate existing arrangements and consider future options.

### **3.5 Our vision**

We need to define what we want sheltered accommodation to be, there is no statutory definition for Sheltered Housing, so we are proposing to define it as:

“A group of self-contained flats let to people over 60 which are supported by a Sheltered Housing Officer, with access to 24 hours emergency help to enable people to live independently”

Officers carried out an information gathering exercise by visiting 3 schemes to see what others were providing for sheltered housing residents. Two of the schemes visited were in the private sector and one a housing association scheme.

All three schemes were managed the same way, all had a warden on site for 30 hours per week and had robust management processes in place with clear lines of responsibility.

All the schemes had cyclical planned maintenance programmes to deal with the decoration of communal areas, the replacement of carpets and soft furnishing and garden furniture and all had a robust resident consultation process that was used as part of the decision-making process when improvements were proposed.

The schemes were all brightly decorated and furnished in a modern contemporary fashion and not with furniture you would associate with an older persons home, all had a focal point in the main lounge and all had a coffee making station off the communal lounge.

The front entrances were easily recognisable, they were welcoming, had seating areas and direct access to the communal lounge. The lounges had glazed screens that looked onto the corridors and formed part of the space rather than being boxed in rooms, all had access to the direct access to the garden.

### **The following images are representative of our vision for our Sheltered Schemes.**

Development of a specialist kitchen for sheltered housing might include increase task lighting, such as led lights under cabinets.

The elderly might find it helpful to sit down while preparing food, to have a section of worktop set at the appropriate height allows them to do this.

The contrasting tone of Cupboard, worktop and handle colours will help

White worktops help to distribute light around a space, while a matt surface prevents glare, a uniform surface reduces the sense of visual clutter.



Scooter storage and charging solution





## Communal garden improvements



## Designing for Dementia and sight loss

## Promoting a healthier lifestyle





Lighting – increase natural lighting - and changes in daylight over the course of the day help to signal the passing of time and to maintain normal sleeping patterns.



Increasing natural light in internal corridors to give residents a sense of being connected to outside world, and can help people find their way around.

Having electrical sockets and switches which contrast with the surrounding wall colour, helps residents to orientate themselves in their surroundings.

Light switches can be paddle switches with luminated bezel



Door design and colours – in addition to flat numbers, a system of different colour doors can help residents to find the correct rooms and facilities more easily



## Furniture

To be recognisable as furniture so as not to confuse those with dementia.  
Have contrasting colours so to be as easily identified as possible





Continued investment into assistive technologies

Signage

Meaningful symbols



WiFi and better connectivity





Outdoor spaces that create a sense of place



Raised planting





Communal Lounge, kitchen and library







#### **4. Details of Scrutiny**

Housing Scrutiny commission consideration on the 26<sup>th</sup> November

#### **5. Financial, legal and other implications**

##### 5.1 Financial implications

This report recommends that future reports be prepared for:

- improvement works to remaining schemes.

There will be financial implications associated with each of these, and Finance should be consulted as part of the detailed development of proposals.

Stuart McAvoy – Principal Accountant (37 4004)

## 5.2 Legal implications

5.2.1 In respect of the proposed refurbishment of the existing sites, The Council should ensure compliance with its legal obligations in respect of the procurement of maintenance works in accordance with its Contract Procedure Rules and the relevant Procurement Rules. If internal or external frameworks are used to procure the relevant works then the call off procedure will need to be complied with to ensure compliance and robust terms and conditions apply.

John McIvor, Principal Lawyer, ext. 37-1409

## 5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

The renovation of sheltered living properties gives an opportunity to upgrade their energy efficiency, through actions such as fitting LED lighting, insulation, energy efficient boilers and low energy appliances. This would have a positive impact on energy use and costs, and could also make the buildings more comfortable for residents.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

## 5.4 Equalities Implications

The aim of sheltered housing schemes is to support more independent living arrangements. Proposed measures based on consultation with residents, that aim to increase the appeal and improve how schemes are managed with more robust management processes in place and clearer lines of responsibility will have a positive impact on service users from across all protected characteristics. These will be people who are older and with varying vulnerabilities. Moving forward, where there are refurbishments being made, accessible design principles must be a key consideration.

Surinder Singh Equalities Officer Tel 37 4148

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

## **6. Background information and other papers:**

## **7. Summary of appendices:**

**8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No

**9. Is this a “key decision”?**

No