

REPORT TO: HOUSING, DUNDEE CONTRACT SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 28 APRIL 2008

REPORT ON: MODERNISATION OF THE COUNCIL'S SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO: 210-2008

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To develop a sheltered housing strategy to assist the modernisation of Dundee City Council's sheltered housing service.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Housing, Dundee Contract Services and Environment Services Committee:

- 2.1. Endorses the Sheltered Housing Strategy outlined in this report,
- 2.2. Notes that the Director of Housing will progress the necessary establishment changes contained in this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The staffing restructure will result in savings of £262,334, inclusive of employer's costs, for a full financial year.
- 3.2. Operational costs that occur as a result of implementing the strategy would be funded from the financial savings outlined in 3.1. of this report.
- 3.3. While decommissioning property may lead to some loss of income it is anticipated that this will be proportionate to the reduction in expenditure achieved in the new flexible staffing structure.

4. MAIN TEXT

- 4.1. Reference is made to the Council Sheltered Housing Warden Report (No 84-2006) which was presented to the Council's Housing, Social Work and Personnel Committees on 20 March 2006. The report outlined a proposal to:

Reposition the Sheltered Housing Warden service within the Council structure, a transfer of sheltered housing warden service staff to the Housing Department, focusing warden duties on enhanced tenancy services, and re-grading Sheltered Housing wardens to reflect the changes in duties.

The respective Council Committees endorsed the proposal.

- 4.2. The use of the term sheltered housing service in this report applies to the following types of older people's accommodation; sheltered; very sheltered; and housing with care.

National Policy Context

- 4.3. The provision of support directly linked to individuals rather than accommodation is central to the philosophy of Community Care.

In an attempt to align national care and support policies with core, community care principles, the Government in recent years introduced a variety of social care policies for community care service users that encourages support services to be delivered to people in their own homes. This shift in policy has had a negative effect on the demand for sheltered housing as older people living in mainstream accommodation choose to have their support services delivered to them in their own homes, thereby reducing the need for older people to move to sheltered housing to gain additional support.

Dundee Sheltered Housing: An Overview

- 4.4. The City has 3,575 sheltered houses. The Council is by far the largest provider of this type of accommodation with 66% of the total number of units, Housing Association and the Private Sectors have a market share of 31% and 3% respectively. Over the last 10 years, Dundee has seen an overall decrease in demand for sheltered housing. Although this problem is apparent in both Housing Association and Council Sectors, it is within the latter that the majority of difficulties exist. (Appendix 1 provides a list of Council sheltered housing complexes).
- 4.5. The increase in type and level of support services delivered to older people in their own homes as a result of Government Community Care policies has clearly affected the overall demand for Council sheltered housing. However, age, type, size and the location of Council sheltered housing and lounges as well as issues related to people's aspirations, have also played a significant role in the decrease.

For example:

- Over 75% of Council sheltered housing is tenement accommodation on the ground and first floor with no lift. First floor accommodation without lift access is not conducive to the needs of older people who have mobility problems
- The increase in the number of purpose built, barrier free sheltered housing in the Housing Association Sector in recent years has provided alternative housing options for older people
- Only 15% of Council sheltered housing is purpose built
- Some of the Council's sheltered housing is located in areas of the city with an overall low housing demand.
- Size and quality of lounges varies across the city and as a result inconsistencies exist in the range of social activities provided in Council sheltered lounges.

Sheltered Housing Warden Service

- 4.6. Many traditional forms of supported accommodation, such as sheltered housing, have been developed in such a way that they reinforce the inextricable link between

accommodation and support.

The enactment of the Supporting People Policy on 1 April 2003 is an example of the Government's commitment to removing this link. The Supporting People Agenda achieves this by extending the boundaries of independent living through policies that direct support to individuals rather than accommodation.

- 4.7. In response to the Government's Supporting People objectives, Dundee City Council approved the transfer of the sheltered warden service and staff from Social Work to the Housing Department in March 2006.

This structural change paved the way for a sheltered housing warden service that focuses the wardens duties on the safety and security of clients, providing enhanced housing management services and facilitating a more inclusive use of the complex facilities thereby freeing up care and support resources which can be utilised by specialist home care staff to provide the necessary support and care services to those clients with an assessed need. (Sheltered Housing Report, 20 March 2006, Report Number 84-2006).

Developing a Strategic Response

- 4.8. In light of the fundamental changes in government community care policy, the recent structural change to the Council's sheltered warden service and ongoing low demand issues of Council sheltered housing, the Housing Department recognises the necessity to develop a Sheltered Housing Strategy. This report outlines the proposed strategy.

The Sheltered Housing Strategy

- 4.9. The strategy comprises of two sections:

Section 1: Restructuring the Sheltered Housing Stock

- 4.10. This part of the strategy deals with the question of low demand sheltered housing in the Council Sector; explains how the Department would effectively manage the issue in the long-term; and outlines Phase 1 of restructuring the sheltered housing stock.

Section 2: Remodelling the Sheltered Housing Service

- 4.11. This part of the strategy presents a sheltered housing service model that meets the needs and aspirations of current and prospective Council tenants. The Department would implement the model as part of Phase 1 of restructuring the sheltered housing stock.

Section 1: Restructuring the Sheltered Housing Stock

- 4.12. In response to the reduction in demand of its sheltered housing in recent years, the Housing Department has been decommissioning its sheltered housing to reflect existing service demand. Although this is a pragmatic way of managing problems of demand in the short-term, the long-term solution requires a strategic restructure of provisioning.
- 4.13. The restructuring of stock would result in a proportionate reduction in the number of sheltered houses. To manage this process effectively, the Department would introduce a decommissioning programme. There would be 3 types of decommissioning: partial; outright and gradual (*See Appendix 2 for definitions*).

When a decommissioned house becomes available for re-letting, it would return to the mainstream house lettings pool*, thereby assisting the Housing Department to re-house some applicants from the mainstream waiting list. In situations where there is no mainstream waiting list demand, the Department would refer the identified property to the Housing At Risk Working Group.

The Department is aware of the sensitivity required when reletting decommissioned sheltered properties.

To avoid unnecessary clashes of lifestyle, managers will apply all available discretion to ensure suitable lets, sympathetic to the community, are made.

**With reference to gradual decommissioning, this would only occur where there is no sheltered housing waiting list demand for the property.*

- 4.14. The first phase of restructuring would occur at the point of implementing the strategy. Future phases would be determined by an ongoing monitoring of demand in each of the 37 sheltered housing complexes. As part of a planned process, the Housing Department would release a proposed decommissioning sheltered housing list each year. Any reduction in the number of sheltered units because of decommissioning would trigger a re-assessment of the number of wardens in affected complexes.

The Sheltered Warden Service

- 4.15. Under the strategy, sheltered tenants living in affected complexes would receive the same warden service provided to tenants across the city. However, through time, the number of sheltered tenants in affected complexes may reduce to a level that makes it impractical to provide the service. Where these situations occur, the Housing Department would pro-actively engage with these tenants to explore alternative housing options suitable to their needs.

Re-housing

- 4.16. At the point of decommissioning, sheltered tenants would have the opportunity to be re-housed in core Council sheltered housing throughout the city. Those who request a transfer would submit a housing application form to the Housing Department. Tenants would receive offers of accommodation similar to their current housing size and type. The option to be re-housed would remain open indefinitely for affected tenants.

Assessment of Needs

- 4.17. The Housing Department would refer re-housing applicants to the Medical Advisory Service/Single Shared Assessment. This would allow an up to date assessment of their care and support needs.

Housing Priority

- 4.18. Sheltered tenant applicants would be considered for re-housing in accordance with the Housing Department's Allocation Policy and awarded priority accordingly. However, under the Allocation Policy not all tenants will have sufficient points to qualify for particular sheltered housing in the city. In some cases, applicants will have no points at all. Where these situations arise, the Lettings Contact Centre would consider allocating suitable properties under the Housing Department's Management Transfer Procedure. Allocations made under this procedure will be at the discretion of the

Director of Housing.

Assistance with Removal Costs

- 4.19. The Housing Department would design practical measures and payment in kind to assist sheltered tenants who move to alternative accommodation as a result of the Department's sheltered housing strategy.

Restructuring Phase 1

Identifying Stock

- 4.20. To begin the process of identifying potential stock for decommissioning, the Housing Department's Lettings Contact Centre carried out research related to the level of demand for each of the 37 Council sheltered complexes. The research involved collating void and turnover sheltered housing data from the Department's housing management IT systems. This information, combined with the practical accommodation knowledge and experience of staff managing the complexes, resulted in the identification of 471 Council sheltered houses citywide for decommissioning. The identified accommodation consists of a mix of 2 and 3 apartment accommodation. This would represent Phase 1 of the restructure and would occur at the point of implementing the strategy.

Number of Housing Transfers Requests

- 4.21. This is difficult to estimate because the Department does not know how many sheltered tenants would request a transfer. However, as a result of the Housing Department commitment to retaining the warden service in affected sheltered complexes in the medium term, it anticipates that transfer demand would not be high, and therefore expects to see a relatively slow return of sheltered housing to mainstream lettings pool over a 3 year period. In addition, the pace of re-housing will also be subject to the availability of suitable housing in the areas that tenants have requested.

Section 2: Remodelling the Sheltered Housing Service

Core and Satellite Sheltered Housing Model

- 4.22. One of the key issues that the Housing Department has identified is the need for a future sheltered housing service to be responsive to the changing needs, demands and aspirations of current and prospective tenants. To facilitate this objective the current sheltered warden service requires to be reformed.

The two key areas of reform are related to:

- i. The way in which the Department currently allocates the number of sheltered wardens to sheltered complexes.
 - ii. The inconsistencies citywide in the range and quality of social and domestic activities provided in Council sheltered complexes; due to the variation in size, quality and location of sheltered lounge facilities.
- 4.23. To readdress these issues, the Housing Department intends to introduce a Core and Satellite Model of Sheltered Housing. Under this model, the 37 sheltered housing complexes would be divided into 8 groups. Each of the 8 groups would have a core complex and 3-6 satellite complexes.

One of the benefits of grouping the complexes together in this way is that it provides the Housing Department with the opportunity to make access to a comprehensive range of social and domestic activities more equitable and more inclusive.

This report seeks approval to consult more widely on the most appropriate way of achieving this.

The Warden Service

- 4.24. Under the proposed model, the basis of the service would operate as it currently does. Therefore tenants would receive the following:
- i. Onsite day-time Warden: Provision from Monday - Sunday
 - ii. Onsite day-time Warden: Day-time tenant emergency and social contact
 - iii. Onsite day-time Warden: Mat/Activity movement checks
 - iv. Onsite day-time Warden: Social activities provision
 - v. Overnight support: DCC community alarm service.

Allocation of Wardens

- 4.25. The key change to the existing warden service model is the modification of the *warden-number of units' ratios*, which the Housing Department currently uses to determine the number of wardens allocated to each of the sheltered complexes. The difficulty with this type of allocation system is that it takes very little account of the actual needs of sheltered tenants or the demands they have on the service at any given time.
- 4.26. Under the proposal, the Housing Department would put in place a new ratio of 1.5 warden(s) per complex. In addition to this ratio, a needs-demand criteria would determine the number of additional wardens in each of the 37 complexes. The distribution of wardens in this way would ensure: the onsite presence of a warden in each of the 37 complexes; that the allocation of additional wardens to complexes is based on the needs and demand of service users. This process of allocation would ensure resources are allocated to complexes whose tenants are in greatest need of additional wardens.

Staffing: Resources and Personnel

- 4.27. The implementation of the core-satellite model would require a reorganisation of the current warden structure. The increase of flexibility in the proposed model would allow the current number of warden full-time equivalent posts to reduce from 97 to 86 posts. There are sufficient posts within the new structure for all permanent Sheltered Housing Wardens. Of the 86 posts 84.5 will be permanent and 1.5 will be temporary and reviewed after 12 months.
- 4.28. The new service would also result in the deletion of 3 Sheltered Housing Officers posts and the establishment of one post of Sheltered Housing Supervisor and the re-designation and re-grading of 8 Sheltered Housing Warden posts to Senior Sheltered Housing Warden. The latter would allow a positive career structure for current wardens and for individuals considering a career in the service.
- 4.29. The Senior Sheltered Housing Wardens will be responsible for the staff within their group, ensuring sufficient cover and appropriate response to tenant calls. They will also be responsible for ensuring appropriate communal/social activity is arranged at

facilities within the group.

- 4.30. The Sheltered Housing Supervisor will be filled by competitive interview between the 3 existing Sheltered Housing Officers and will be responsible for the daily operation of the Sheltered Housing Service.
- 4.31. The unsuccessful Sheltered Housing Officers will be redeployed within the Housing Department.
- 4.32. The 8 Senior Sheltered Housing Wardens posts will be filled from within the Sheltered Housing Service and will be responsible for the staff within their group, ensuring sufficient cover and appropriate response to tenant calls. They will also be responsible for ensuring appropriate communal/social activity is arranged at facilities within the group.

Conclusion

- 4.33. This report has explained the changing national and local policy environments in which community care services are delivered to older people. These changes have affected the demand for some Council sheltered housing, and are in addition to the historical problems related to design, size and location. The Strategy contained in this report will assist the Council's objective to modernise its sheltered housing service.

It will achieve this by developing a service that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of older people and produces a balance between the supply and demand for Council sheltered housing.

Consultation with Staff/Tenants

- 4.34. Appendix 3 gives details of the consultation strategy to be used for this report.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Assessment. There are no major issues.

6. CONSULTATIONS

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Head of Finance and all other Chief Officers have been consulted on the content of this report.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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March 2008

COUNCIL SHELTERED HOUSING COMPLEXES INFORMATION

	Sheltered Complex	Sheltered Lounge Address	Number of Units
1.	Craigie Street	6 Craigie Street	43
2.	Watson Street	60 Watson Street	30
3.	Wellgate	2A King Street	22
4.	Hill Street	51 Hill Street	106
5.	Russell Place	2A Russell Place	57
6.	Powrie Place	3 Powrie Place	31
7.	Alva Square	10 Alva Square	40
8.	Moncur Crescent	14 Hastings Place	66
9.	Fleming Gardens	12 Hindmarsh Avenue	84
10.	Strathmore Street	4 Strathmore Street	34
11.	Cleington Road	218 Cleington Road	61
12.	Wedderburn Street	3 Wedderburn Street	42
13.	Alpin/Glenesk	5 Glenesk Avenue	175
14.	Lawton Road	11 Lawton Road	53
15.	Corso Street	37 Blackness Avenue	121
16.	Tullideph	40 Tullideph Place	63
17.	Morven Terrace	1B Morven Terrace	61
18.	Logie	33 Lime Street	106
19.	Garry Place	78 Garry Place	60
20.	St Columba	25B St Columba Gardens	43
21.	Kirkton	7 Ulverston Terrace	56
22.	Mill O' Mains	16 Foula Terrace	45
23.	Clement Park/Tofthill	14B Clement Park	42
24.	Dryburgh	117 Langshaw Road	31
25.	Craigowan	81A Craigowan Road	90
26.	Clyde Place	52 Tummel Place	51
27.	Kirk Street	Adamsons Court	68
28.	Whorterbank	Burnside Court	79
29.	Happyhillock	54A Happyhillock Road	40
30.	Longhaugh	45 Longhaugh Terrace	41
31.	Baluniefield	211A Balunie Drive	26
32.	Balcarres	12 Balcarres Terrace	49
33.	Forthill	3A Forthill Drive	152
34.	Brington Place	30 Brington Place	117
35.	Craigiebank	103 Balgavies Avenue	88
36.	Cullen Place	26/30 Huntly Road	66
37.	Balmedie	Ballindean Place	35
	Total		2,374

KEY:		
Sheltered Complex Column		Units Column
Other Service Provider:	Balmedie: Council Housing, Warden provision by Bield HA	
Housing Stock: West		West: 1,461 (21 Complexes)
Housing Stock: East		East: 913 (16 Complexes)

Information not included in Table 1	
Programmed Demolitions:	Camperdown (6), Menzieshill(23), Summerfield (5).
Other:	Kingsway East(2): Will be decommissioned outright

SHELTERED HOUSING DECOMMISSIONING DEFINITIONS

Type of Decommissioning	Definition
Partial:	A decision taken to withdraw sheltered housing status from a specific group of houses within a sheltered housing complex.
Outright:	A decision taken to withdraw sheltered housing status from a specific sheltered complex.
Gradual:	At the point of a termination and where there is no waiting list demand, a decision taken to withdraw sheltered housing status from an individual property within a sheltered complex.

CONSULTATION STRATEGY

This consultation strategy sets out how the sheltered tenants, the staff and the Trade Unions are to be consulted on the contents of this report.

1. **SHELTERED TENANTS**

There are currently in excess of 2,000 sheltered tenants in the City. Given these numbers and the practical problems involved in consulting with such a large number of tenants it is suggested that a number of different methods are used.

Step 1

All sheltered tenants will receive a letter outlining the changes being proposed and explaining how these changes will affect the service they receive.

Step 2

Whilst the letter will tell the tenants what is happening it does not give them the chance to ask questions or raise any concerns they may have. In order to allow them the opportunity a series of meetings will be arranged to which the tenants will be invited.

Initially, it is proposed to hold 8 meetings across the city in the larger sheltered lounges. Housing staff will be there to explain the proposals in more detail and to respond to any questions from the tenants.

These meetings will be held at a variety of times to enable as many tenants to attend as possible. Where necessary, tenants will be given assistance to get to these meetings. The relevant wardens will also be at each of these meetings.

Once these meetings have taken place the wardens will seek the views of the tenants as to whether more such meetings need to be arranged.

Step 3

Where necessary, wardens will continue to discuss the proposals with the tenants in each of the 37 complexes.

2. **STAFF**

There are currently 3 Sheltered Housing Officers, 97 (Full Time Equivalent) Wardens and 7 (Full Time Equivalent) Auxiliaries.

Step 1

A meeting will be arranged with the 3 Sheltered Housing Officers to discuss the contents of the report.

Step 2

Meetings will be arranged with the Wardens and Auxiliaries.

It is important to try and consult all of these staff at the same time or as near to the same time as possible. With the numbers involved it will not be possible to do it at the same time. It is proposed, therefore, to hold two meetings, one in the morning for half the staff, the other in the afternoon for the remainder of the staff.

Step 3

To ensure staff have ample opportunity to ask any questions and raise any concerns a further series of meetings will be arranged to go over the proposal in more detail. The 8 largest sheltered lounges will be used as venues for these meetings and staff will attend the venue nearest their workplace. There should be no more than 12-15 staff at any meeting.

Step 4

One to one meetings with staff will be arranged, if requested.

3. TRADE UNIONS

Step 1

The relevant Trade Unions will be issued with the report on the same day that staff are having their initial meeting.

Step 2

A series of meetings will be arranged between Housing Management and the Trade Unions.