

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Housing Management Sub-Committee	31 January 2013
Subject: Sheltered Housing Schemes	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Decision
<u>Summary</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report outlines the current position regarding the City's sheltered housing schemes. • Nationally, demand for traditional sheltered housing is falling. • The City has two dedicated sheltered housing schemes – Mais House, in Lewisham, Harman Close, in Southwark. There is also sheltered accommodation in part of Isleden House, in Islington. • The two dedicated sheltered schemes are outdated and no longer meet the standard of accommodation that is expected of modern accommodation for older people. Demand has fallen at these schemes. Demand remains high at Isleden House because of the nature of the estate, but the accommodation is not fully accessible and is in need of upgrading. • The Supported Living Review identified the need for the City to develop a long-term strategy for the provision of accommodation for older people. • This report proposes that a detailed review of the present and future needs of older people is carried out, and that it should include an options appraisal for existing schemes. • It is proposed that this review will be led by a combined Member and officer panel which will report its findings to the Housing Management Sub-Committee. 	
Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree the need for a review of sheltered accommodation; - Agree to the formation of a Member/officer Panel to lead the review; - Ask the Chairman to appoint one or more Members to the Panel, in liaison with the Housing Services Director; - Delegate to the Housing Services Director the task of commissioning a consultant to carry out the review. 	

Main Report

1. Background

- 1.1 The term ‘sheltered housing’ is most commonly used to describe a group of homes for older people (usually aged 60+), run by a social housing provider. Homes are self-contained and easy to manage. Sheltered schemes are distinct from a nursing home or care home in that the tenants are usually able to look after themselves, are active and are afforded a high degree of independence. Most have communal areas such as a lounge and/or garden.
- 1.2 Traditionally, a sheltered scheme would have a dedicated manager, living on site and providing general support, as opposed to actual care. This model is becoming less common, as more sheltered schemes are staffed by floating managers, usually with the back up of a 24 hour call-out system.
- 1.3 The City has two dedicated sheltered schemes – Mais House in Lewisham, and Harman Close in Southwark. There is also sheltered accommodation on the ground floor of Isleden House, as part of a mixed estate. The Housing Service also manages 50 homes for older people in Lambeth, but as these are owned by the City of London Almshouses Trust and Gresham Trust, they are outside the scope of this report. A review of the Almshouses could be undertaken in the future, subject to the agreement of Trustees.
- 1.4 The City maintains the traditional model of dedicated managers living on site at its schemes. Most of its sheltered residents are aged 60+, although the age limit has occasionally been lowered for special cases (such as an over-riding medical need), or where accommodation has proved particularly hard to let.

2. Current position

- 2.1 Nationally, the demand for traditional sheltered housing has declined in the last decade. More older people choose to stay in their own homes and access care and support in different ways – largely through adult social care services or the private sector. By the time they are no longer able to cope, they are likely to need more care than sheltered accommodation can provide.
- 2.2 When older people do look at sheltered housing as an option, they have expectations which are significantly higher than in previous years. Although they may wish to downsize, they still require accommodation of a reasonable size – often wanting family to be able to stay with them regularly. Therefore, where the traditional sheltered scheme comprised a large number of bedsits, modern sheltered accommodation needs to offer a significant proportion of larger flats.
- 2.3 Demand for accommodation at Mais House and Harman Close has reflected this trend in recent years. Although both are maintained in reasonably good

condition, the facilities are dated and both have a large proportion of bedsits which are no longer considered desirable accommodation. It is becoming increasingly difficult to let some flats – particularly at Mais House, where its location, at the top of a steep hill and remote from local amenities, makes the scheme unappealing despite its attractive surroundings.

- 2.4 Isleden House's sheltered flats are larger (although the majority are bedsits) and are in high demand because of the good location and the fact that the estate blends sheltered and general needs housing. However, the accommodation and estate do not meet modern accessibility standards.
- 2.5 The Supported Living Review, which was presented to the Community & Children's Services Committee in December, highlighted the fact that the City has no extra-care accommodation to offer residents who need more support than sheltered accommodation can provide, even supplemented with floating support. This puts the City and its officers in a very difficult position, as we have people living in our sheltered schemes whose needs cannot be met. At the same time, we have younger people who have no support needs at all, but have accepted sheltered accommodation only because the waiting list for general needs housing is too long.

3. Proposed action

- 3.1 It is clear that the City needs a long-term strategy and plan for addressing the housing needs of older people. To develop this, we are proposing to commission a detailed review of existing provision and future needs.
- 3.2 The review should include:
 - An analysis of the future housing needs of older people in the City
 - A look at the best in modern accommodation for older people, including extra-care schemes
 - An independent, expert assessment of each of our existing schemes
 - Interviews with existing staff and residents
 - An options appraisal for each scheme, with recommendations for refurbishment and/or redevelopment
 - Proposals for changes to take place over a 5-10 year period.
- 3.3 We do not have the resources to carry out the review in-house, and so it will be necessary to appoint an external consultant to carry out the work. The costs of the review will be met from local risk budgets.
- 3.4 It is important to note that the review must be conducted with sensitivity, as we have no desire to alarm existing residents or to make them unnecessarily fearful for the future of their homes.

3.5 This will be an important and far-reaching review, and needs significant Member involvement from the outset. It is therefore proposed that the review be led by a panel composed of Members and officers. We suggest that the panel should be chaired by the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the Housing Management Sub-Committee, and should include one or more other Members who are interested in the work.

3.6 The remit of the panel will be to:

- Agree the brief for the review;
- Meet regularly with the consultants to receive updates and discuss the direction of the work;
- Make visits to the City's existing schemes and to examples of excellent schemes elsewhere;
- Agree a draft strategy and proposals to be presented to Committee.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to;

- Agree the need for a review of sheltered accommodation;
- Agree to the formation of a Member/officer Panel to lead the review;
- Ask the Chairman to appoint Members to the Panel, in liaison with the Housing Services Director;
- Delegate to the Housing Services Director the task of commissioning a consultant to carry out the review.

5 Financial and Risk Implications

5.1 The review will be funded from Local Risk budgets. Financial implications of any proposals will be identified as part of the review and presented to Members for consideration.

5.2 If this review is not carried out, there is a risk that the City's sheltered accommodation will become increasingly unfit for purpose, and that the City will not be able to provide for the housing needs of older people in the future.

6 HR Implications

6.1 The review will identify any impacts on staff and these will be fully considered in the report.

7 Strategic Implications

7.1 The measures outlined in this paper contribute to the Departmental Priorities of

- Improving the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals; and

- Making best use of resources and improving the way we work.

8 Consultees

The Town Clerk, Chamberlain and Comptroller & City Solicitor have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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