

# **Report to Stronger Place Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 9 December 2019**



**Portfolio:** Housing & Property Services (Councillor H. Whitbread)

**Subject:** Older People's Services – Review

**Officer contact for further information:** J. Gould (01992 564073)

**Democratic Services Officer:** V. Messenger (01992 564265)

---

## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the Committee note the proposed a high-level strategic review of the Council's Older People's Services, to include:**
  - (a) the Council's older people's housing assets;**
  - (b) the current support offered to older people both in designated older people's housing and that which is offered to older people in general needs accommodation; and**
  - (c) the Careline offer linked to the telecare devices for which the Council retains responsibility; and**
  
- (2) That Committee note that, subsequent to the completion of the review, a further report will be made to the Cabinet outlining resultant recommendations and seeking agreement to the commencement of consultation with tenants to progress agreed action.**

## **Executive Summary:**

1. Demand for general needs social housing far outweighs supply and while the district has an ageing population the needs of older people are changing. Some older people's housing provision is consequently in low-demand comparatively. Technological advances have also been made in response to the changing needs of older people reducing primary healthcare interventions and easing the demand for limited extra care placements by enabling older people to remain successfully and safely in their homes.
  
2. This report outlines the three areas recommended for review with a view to making best use of Council stock, delivering needs-led support services that provide value for money and taking advantage of smart technology to enable older people to continue living as independently as possible for longer.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

3. The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 implemented in April 2018 placed additional statutory duties on local authorities to help all those who are threatened with or who are homeless regardless of priority need or intentionality. Consequently, local authorities now have a greater responsibility to provide meaningful help and advice to a greater number of people. Government also introduced ambitious targets of halving rough sleeping by 2020 and eliminating it by 2027. It has never been

more important for social landlords to ensure maximum and best use is made of social housing stock.

4. A 20% increase in the population of over 65 years old is expected in the Epping Forest district between 2015 and 2025<sup>1</sup>. This review will enable the Council an opportunity to ensure service delivery that meets the changing needs of a growing older population and capitalise on new technological solutions that compliment support services that are both needs led and provide value for money.

#### **Report:**

5. Following a report to the Select Committee in January 2018 which essentially promoted reducing the number of sheltered units due to low demand, work was undertaken to assess and grade sheltered housing schemes against a series of questions that primarily focussed on the viability of the asset.
6. During the last year, and as part of the wider Council transformation, the Older People's Service has undergone a restructure and it is now timely to extend the original scope of the review that builds on the work already undertaken assessing the assets but that also includes a review of the current support offer along with the Careline and telecare arrangements.
7. The current support offer delivers a fairly traditional service which involves a daily door knock to the 420 sheltered units over 12 schemes and circa 350 dispersed properties. Currently a 'one size fits all' model of delivery, the support offered is labour intensive and is not needs led.
8. While the Council has outsourced Careline it has retained the responsibility of the telecare devices. This does not currently provide tenants with choice nor take advantage of other, more advanced, technology that offers a range of support solutions to enable older people to successfully and safely remain in their homes reducing the number of interventions they may otherwise need from primary healthcare services.
9. The approach to the review will go beyond the traditional 'bricks and mortar' view to recognise that the sustainability of the asset is about the sustainability of:
  - 'people and place';
  - 'supply and demand' and fit in the local housing market; and
  - ongoing financial performance.
10. The review of support services will be largely desk-based and will focus on a functional/financial review of value for money at this stage rather than engaging extensively with residents.
11. When considering the current Careline and telecare arrangements, consideration will also be given to the use of other smart, digital solutions which could form part of a future telehealth offer.
12. The recommendation to broaden the scope of the review in relation to Older People's Services will ensure the Council is making best use of housing stock, is offering support services that are needs led and deliver value for money and provide opportunities to take advantage of emerging technology that will further enable older people to live in the homes they choose.

#### **Resource Implications:**

Resource implications will include the initial cost of a comprehensive review of c£24,000 which has been included on the list of developments. In addition, there are likely further resource implications for any redevelopment of assets that might subsequently be agreed but these will be comprehensively covered in further reports at an appropriate time.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

Housing Act 1985

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

None.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

None at present as what is recommended is a strategic, largely desk-top review, but consultation with existing tenants will be an integral part of any subsequently agreed action.

**Background Papers:**

None

**Risk Management:**

No material risks have been identified for the current recommendations but further action around the redevelopment of assets or transformation of service provision is likely to have a number of risks that will be included in appropriate future reports.