

Committee:	Tenants and Leaseholders Consultative Forum
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Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Older People’s Housing Review
Responsible Officer:	Gwyneth Allen – Head of Housing
Portfolio Holder:	Housing
Exempt:	No

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY

This report sets out the recommendations of the Older People’s Housing Review, as approved by Cabinet, and indicates the main issues for housing tenants and leaseholders.

FOR INFORMATION

SECTION 2 - REPORT

2.1 Background

2.1.1 Cabinet in 24 June 2004 approved the commissioning of the Older Persons Housing review. Housing, People First and the Harrow Primary Care Trust (PCT) led the review jointly. The objectives of the review were as follows:

- To identify opportunities for change so that housing services better meet older people's needs/aspirations, local strategic priorities (promoting independence and a person-centred approach) and make best use of resources
- To review the current range of supported housing service options for vulnerable older people in Harrow to ensure the needs of the diverse local population are met
- To make recommendations for a future work programme, including pilot projects, service options and initiatives which complement other programmes and form the basis of an older persons housing strategy.

2.1.2 Contact Consulting were appointed following a competitive tendering procedure to conduct the review. A steering group comprising representatives from Housing, People First and the PCT oversaw the project.

2.1.3 The review consisted of a desktop review of policy and statistics, interviews with key officers of the Council and PCT, housing associations, voluntary organisations and meetings with councillors. Consultation with older people was also an important element of the work and this included attendance at meetings of Harrow older people's consultation groups, visits to sheltered schemes and community groups, an open consultation event and a questionnaire.

2.1.4 Cabinet received a report on 10 November 2005 setting out the key findings and recommendations of the Older Persons Housing Review, led jointly by Housing, People First and the PCT. Cabinet noted and approved the recommendations and agreed that the Member Panel receive regular briefings on progress and that Cabinet receive a progress report in six months' time.

2.1.5 Since then work has proceeded in developing an action plan to implement the recommendations of the Review. The key elements of the action plan are:

- Strengthening strategic links on older people's issues – to ensure strong and high level corporate support for service level strategies
- Setting up governance arrangements and keeping stakeholders involved and informed throughout

- Improving housing advice and options – to be more comprehensive and meeting the needs, preferences and aspirations of service users
- Developing a range of sheltered housing options – to provide enhanced sheltered, leasehold retirement and extra care housing and to ensure that allocations policies are appropriate to the services on offer
- Improving services to home owners, the BME community and people with additional health issues to ensure their particular needs are met

3.1 Implications for tenants and leaseholders

- 3.1.1 Residents and their representatives have an opportunity to be involved in the implementation of the review in a variety of ways:
- Registering their interest with the project leader (contact officer for this report) and contributing individual comments or attending open stakeholder events to help develop work arising from the review
 - Participating in the consultation framework e.g. the POP housing sub group, the Older Persons Housing Review Implementation Group and its sub groups, the BME Housing Strategy Group
- 3.1.2 An important strand in the project is a review of all the sheltered schemes in Harrow, both Council and housing association owned. The aim of this is to see how well they meet the changing needs of older people e.g. accessibility for people with limited mobility, the availability of care services if required, the availability of one and two bedroom accommodation within schemes, the suitability of services for people from BME community or with particular health needs, such as dementia or learning disability.
- 3.1.3 The sheltered housing sub group, which includes warden and tenant representatives, has considered and agreed a programme for visiting each Council housing sheltered scheme to look at the physical accommodation and works needed and also to talk to scheme residents and wardens about how well the scheme meets their needs. Officers will also prepare a newsletter and be present to explain the background to the review and the purpose of the exercise. Visits will start shortly.

- 3.1.4 The information will then be collected and reviewed and put into a plan to improve/ refurbish/ develop/ change council and housing association sheltered schemes over a period of time so that Harrow has an appropriate mix of housing for older people in the future, in line with their changing needs. All stakeholders will be consulted on the plan before implementation.
- 3.1.5 Another item in the action plan, which is underway, is a review of the allocation criteria for sheltered housing to ensure new residents require the services on offer and to plan for the future, in terms of the other recommendations of the review. Any changes to the allocations criteria will be consulted upon before implementation.
- 3.1.6 The action plan also includes steps to increase the amount of housing support offered to older people living in private sector housing (leasehold, rented or owner occupied). This type of support work is funded by Supporting People and in 2006 a new scheme has been commissioned to provide low level 'floating support' i.e. a support worker who visits people at home to help with their housing issues.
- 3.1.7 In addition Supporting People officers are carrying out visits to all Council, and housing association, sheltered schemes to check the support that each scheme provides via its warden and helpline services. The Supporting People Commissioning Body also intends to carry out a longer-term review of how support services are funded. Any changes resulting from this will be consulted upon via the Supporting People Stakeholder Forum.

SECTION 4 – FURTHER INFORMATION

- 4.1 Members of TLCF are asked to note the information contained in the report regarding the current work plan.
- 4.2 Further reports will be made to TLCF and Cabinet as the work progresses.

SECTION 5 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact:

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Background Papers:

Cabinet report 24 June 2004, Older People's Housing Review

Cabinet report 10 November 2005, Older People's Housing Review

Cabinet report 3 August 2006, Older People's Housing Review Progress Report

Cabinet reports are available on the Council's web site:

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/ccm/content/council-and-democracy/democracy-and-elections/committees/committee-structure.en>

A copy of the report "Review of housing and care needs of older people in the London Borough of Harrow" is available on the Council's web site:

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing-and-planning/council-housing/supported-housing-index.en>