

QUESTION FROM	QUESTION TO
<p>Ms Shella Thomas, Daughter of Liz Bennett, 20 Cambridge House, Dursley</p>	<p>Housing Committee</p>
<p>With regards to the Sheltered Housing Asset strategy I wish to raise the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When do you propose to start work on Cambridge House? 2. When will people be decanted from these properties? 3. Will people be able to return to these properties and have priorities and choice where they are to be housed? <p>It is important for all residents to retain their community and friendships.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. How is this going to be achieved when decanting people? 	<p>The report to housing committee being discussed tonight, recommends that Cambridge House along with other schemes, is supported 'in principle' for redevelopment where it will be reviewed in detail to consider all possible options before we make a final decision. Until all options have been considered and a decision made I cannot say what the future for the scheme will be or when any future works may start.</p> <p>What I can say, is that; as with all schemes in the red category, we will work with tenants to share our findings and listen to their thoughts, as we go. This will include developing our response to your questions: 2, 3 and 4, the last question being well made, as we do recognise the importance of sustaining the community and friendship networks and will work with residents to best achieve this.</p>

Peter Price, 30 Cambridge House, Cambridge Avenue, Dursley

Nationally there is a grave shortage of modern one bedroom energy homes.

Given over the years SDC have used Sheltered Housing to house people not because they have a need to be there, clearly shows they too fall into this category.

While some schemes lend themselves to the 'alternative use' strategy, are there any where the conversion to a level of 'fit for purpose' costs are so exorbitant it justifies their demolition? Thereby opening up the total use of the 'building area'.

Housing Committee

Within the district of Stroud, we have a shortage of 1 bedroom general need homes. This shortage is felt particularly, by older but independent single applicants, many of whom still work each day. These people find the high demand for, and limited supply of, suitable general need accommodation prohibitive and in many cases come to live in sheltered housing by default because they qualify by age, and face far less competition for vacancies.

This review will enable us to look at options which may enable us to build more suitable accommodation that meets the real needs of the community. The options appraisal referred to in the report and in my answer to the previous question, will identify how, we might address this increasing problem.

Pauline Simpson (Mrs), Sheltered tenant, Dryleaze Court, Wotton-under-Edge

Are council aware of the erroneous statistics that form the basis of the ark report and are they concerned that they are potentially being misled ?

For example – Page 2, item 2, Scheme Profile, 2.1 states there are 788 homes in 28 schemes. In a document “Sheltered Housing costs 2008/2009” there was a total of 796 dwellings over 29 schemes. Over the past couple of years with the removal of residential Scheme Managers some of the properties occupied by them have been converted to additional sheltered units e.g. Ringfield Close; Sherborne House; Cambridge House; Jenner Court; Burdett House; etc.

Chair of Housing Committee

The Council had until recently 796 sheltered homes. The review looked at all sheltered schemes, but did not address eight bungalows in our stock that will not form a part of the recommendations of this report, hence 788. Reference to 28 schemes is because we have tended to join George Pearce House and Trinity Drive together, which is reflected in the report, although they are treated separately for the purpose of improvement work later on.

The council is currently refurbishing and converting the

<p>therefore the number of sheltered dwellings is in excess of 796 and not 788 as quoted.</p> <p>Dryleaze Court page 8 - is stated as having 63 homes there are in fact 54, plus the breakdown of the properties is as follows: 12 x 1 Bedroom bungalows, 4 of which are suitable for 2 persons; 1 x 2 bedroom bungalow, 19 one bedroom flats, 18 suitable for 2 persons; 4 x 2 bedroom flats; and 18 bedsits plus 1 x 3 bedroom house integral to the main building.</p>	<p>former warden homes, with many of these now being brought into rental use, raising our total sheltered stock currently to 817. These properties were not included in the review.</p> <p>I note your comment about Dryleaze Court, bungalows here number 34-43 are recorded as part of Dryleaze House, but have a Dryleaze Court address.</p> <p>I must however, emphasise, that none of these issues raised change the report, its validity and importance.</p>
<p>Jim Simpson, Sheltered tenant, 51 Dryleaze Court, Wotton-under-Edge</p>	
<p>Is council not concerned that after reducing the sheltered housing service to balance the books the budget remains in the red due to the cost of continual reviews and reports produced by outside consultants and is council considering further cuts to the service in order to finance further reviews ?</p> <p>E.g. TPAS ; CIH consultants; ARK consultants; Spend on refurbishing long term empty Bedsits at Dryleaze Court with new kitchens and bathrooms, gas boilers, new carpeting etc.; Estimated relocation costs paid to relocate approx. 6 persons from bedsits at Dryleaze Court; Estimated loss of revenue on void properties at Dryleaze Court; Cost of refurbishment of ex scheme managers properties to "at risk schemes" i.e. Ringfield Close, Cambridge House, Dryleaze Court, Willow Road and Glebelands; Excluding officer / individual consultants time.</p>	<p>In 2013 we faced the loss of half a million pounds in 'supporting people' funding and demonstrated our commitment to sustaining a quality service, despite this loss, not by making knee jerk cuts, but by redesigning and creating an innovative and new service, which has been shown to be a very good and popular one, and one which we are able to sustain within existing internal budgets.</p> <p>This offers protection from having to make further changes, which we know is a concern widely expressed by sheltered tenants, whom we consulted with extensively.</p> <p>You will no doubt be aware that other social landlords have been less successful in maintaining a service offering a daily on site presence. I take great pride in</p>

the fact that we have been approached by a number of other councils, interested to learn what we have done, which is a testament to our achievement and our use of consultants.

We use consultants to access experience, information, benefit from proven research and an insight into sector based best practice, which we it would be uneconomical to directly employ within our staff resource, as such skills would be required infrequently. I also believe that the changes we have made as a result far outweigh the cost incurred.

I assume your reference to a 'budget in the red', relates specifically to sheltered housing. A service which has for many, many years operated at a cost that exceeds its income. As it is a sub budget within the housing revenue account, this has and will continue to be tolerated, as we believe that a high standard of service to sheltered tenants is a priority. This position has no bearing whatsoever on the use of consultants, whom I should say have helped us, to not only cope, but sustainably manage, the loss of half a million pounds per year.

I should say that any organisation, seeking to develop a multi million pound investment programme, not based on having the right information, asking challenging questions, considering all options and reviewing the best practice within its sector, may be open to challenge over the basis of its decision making. We have not made this mistake, and I hope that you will recognise this, once you have listened to

the presentation that will follow.

We are here tonight to decide how we can deliver the highest standard in terms of our sheltered provision, one that is modern, efficient, and appropriate to the needs of our community for decades to come, whilst balancing this objective with a number of key financial challenges presented to us, including a planned rent reduction which all social landlords will have to introduce from 2016.

Overcoming this will be a priority and we will be developing plans and models to achieve this in the coming months. I would hope that we can have your support in this as I believe that we share the same desired outcome of providing quality homes to older tenants.

