

## STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA

ITEM NO

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

9 APRIL 2019

6

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>OLDER PEOPLE'S HOUSING STRATEGY (HRA)</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To present the Older People's Housing Strategy (HRA) 2019 - 2023 in relation to the Council's housing stock which is suitable for older people.
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>Housing Committee RESOLVES to:</b> <b>a) Adopt the Older People's Housing Strategy (HRA) 2019 - 2023 and Action Plan.</b> <b>b) Agree a review date of 2 years from adoption of the strategy.</b>
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation involved a Vision & Strategy Group, Task and Finish Group, a telephone survey of over 500 Stroud district residents and discussion with the Sheltered Modernisation Project Steering Group. These are detailed further within the report.
<b>Financial Implications and Risk Assessment</b>	<p>The Older Persons Strategy builds on the works identified in the Sheltered Modernisation Programme. Sheltered Modernisation is currently funded across the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), but as has been previously reported, funding has not yet been allocated beyond this to complete the programme.</p> <p>The estimated cost of the capital works to communal areas is a total of £7.3m, £4.5m over the current allocation of HRA funds. It would be expected that this cost will be spread over a number of years.</p> <p>This would need to be considered, alongside other priorities, as part of the budget monitoring process and the additional funding is subject to full Council approval.</p> <p>The Strategy also allows for the opportunity to convert some of the existing common areas into additional dwellings. Current estimates put the cost of this in the region of £1.8m. This could be considered for funding through borrowing, with the additional rental income supporting the borrowing costs.</p>
<b>Financial Implications and Risk Assessment</b>	<p>It is recommended that a review of service charges be undertaken as the current blanket charge in Sheltered Housing wouldn't be appropriate across different levels of service, and differing communal spaces, in schemes.</p> <p>Lucy Clothier, Principal Accountant  Tel: 01453 754343 Email: <a href="mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk">lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>Legal Implications</b>	<p>There are no specific legal implications arising from this report however, as anticipated in the report, any proposed change to service charges will need to be consulted upon.</p> <p>Patrick Arran, Interim Monitoring Officer Tel: 01453 754369 Email: <a href="mailto:patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk">patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
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<b>Options</b>	<p>The Council can choose to retain the sheltered housing schemes as they are, with only planned works undertaken over future years.</p>
<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	<p>The action plan which forms part of the Older People's Housing Strategy (HRA) will be reviewed on a bi-monthly basis by the Head of Housing Services. Information updates will be provided to Housing Committee on an annual basis.</p>
<b>Background Papers/ Appendices</b>	<p>Older People's Housing Strategy (HRA) Appendix A – Ark Report Appendix B – Vision &amp; Strategy Group Appendix C – Task &amp; Finish Group Appendix D – Future Focus Research Appendix E – Action Plan</p>

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. SDC has previously commissioned reports into Older People's Housing through the CIH and Ark Consultancies. The CIH report 'Sheltered Asset Review' was produced in September 2014 and the Ark report 'Getting Better, Getting Fit for the Future' was produced in July 2015. Reports relating to these two pieces of work have been presented to Housing Committee in October 2014, March 2015, October 2015 and June 2016. The outcomes and recommendations of the reports have provided a solid foundation on which to develop an Older People's Strategy which relates to SDC's housing stock.
- 1.2. SDC currently owns 27 sheltered housing schemes across the district (none of which are extra care). The Sheltered Modernisation Project is currently underway which is rationalising and improving the stock and ensuring that it is fit for purpose now and in the future.
- 1.3. The Sheltered Modernisation Project currently has an agreed approach for four of the five red schemes. There is also an agreed approach to three of the amber schemes which are being modernised into 'hubs'. These are Sherborne House, Stonehouse, Concord, Nailsworth and George Pearce

House, Minchinhampton. Although the schemes were categorised into red, amber and green, there is currently no agreed approach for the remainder of the amber schemes, some of which were identified as 'consider for an alternative use' in the Ark Report. The development of an Older People's Housing Strategy seeks to address this.

- 1.4. There are many positive projects being undertaken across different services in the council such as the Health & Housing Plan, Local Plan Review, Service Charge Review and the Sheltered Modernisation Project, to name but a few. The Housing Strategy 2015 – 2019 is currently being renewed and details the approach to improving accessibility to good quality affordable housing and housing related services across the district. The Housing Strategy references the Older People's Housing Strategy (HRA) which sets out the Council's approach to its own housing stock.

## **2. Development & Consultation**

- 2.1. To begin developing an Older People's Housing Strategy for SDC's housing stock, officers set up a Vision & Strategy Group during 2018. The group comprised of a number of officers from across service areas. The purpose of the group was to undertake horizon scanning and to begin developing a draft strategy which would link to other corporate strategies and projects across the Council. This fits with the recommendations contained within the CIH and Ark report.
- 2.2. A Task & Finish Group was then formed with members and officers to explore the expectations of the 'next generation' in relation to SDC's older people's housing. The group commissioned a telephone survey of 500 Stroud district residents and engaged Future Focus Research to undertake this on their behalf. The results and findings of the survey were presented to officers in December 2018 and to Housing Committee in February 2019. The results were then fed into the Older People's Housing Strategy along with members input into the overall aims of the strategy.
- 2.3. The draft Older People's Housing Strategy (HRA) was reviewed by the Sheltered Modernisation Steering Group which comprises senior management and officers. Comments were provided by Head of Housing Services, Head of Contract Services and Head of Property Services, all of which have been developed into the final strategy and action plan.

## **3. The Strategy**

- 3.1. The Older People's Housing Strategy (HRA) 2019 - 2023 sets out SDC's vision for its older people's accommodation over the next five years, and links closely with the Corporate Delivery Plan 2018 - 2022 priorities, one of which is the delivery of the Sheltered Modernisation Project.
- 3.2. Although the strategy is formed in a challenging financial climate, SDC is committed to delivering its vision of "providing good quality older people's housing which meets a variety of current and future needs – where people want to live".

- 3.3. The strategy sets out its approach to delivering the six 'UNIQUE' strategic objectives which in turn will realise SDC's vision.
- 3.4. Part of the strategic approach is to adapt the existing sheltered housing model by re-branding and re-categorising schemes to a range of Independent Living accommodation which better reflects the housing that we provide. This will comprise of 'Independent Living Hubs', 'Independent Living +' and 'Independent Living' schemes. The strategy also details the approach to 'associated suitable outlying properties' i.e. some of our general needs stock.
- 3.5. The strategy has a robust action plan which sets out the timescales for the delivery of the six strategic objectives. It is important to note that the re-branding of sheltered schemes will be made over a number of years, involving consultation with residents, and will not result in an immediate change. The action plan sets out clear actions for consulting with tenants about these changes.
- 3.6. As schemes are re-categorised, the impact of service charges will be carefully considered and the cost may be amended to reflect any changes to the scheme, for example – where on a few schemes we may convert communal lounges to additional accommodation (only where these communal areas do not deliver genuinely desirable facilities for tenants) there may be a reduction in service charge. There could also be a further impact depending on what future decisions are made by Housing Committee regarding service charges.
- 3.7. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the development of the strategy. There were no adverse impacts as a result of the proposed strategy.
- 3.8. The action plan will be monitored and reviewed on a bi-monthly basis by the Head of Housing Services, with progress on the action plan provided to Housing Committee annually.

#### **4. Funding**

- 4.1. The Sheltered Modernisation Project is currently only funded within the current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and beyond this the Council has not yet allocated sufficient resource to complete improvements to all sheltered schemes.
- 4.2. The adoption of this strategy will show the Council's commitment to the project moving forward and as such the resource available to deliver both will need to be agreed on an annual basis during the budget setting process.
- 4.3. During the development of the strategy, officers have made estimates about the potential cost of delivering this strategy in its entirety. Working on the basis of the sheltered modernisation costs to date and on the assumption of creating 10 x 'Independent Living Hubs' and 7 x 'Independent Living +' schemes, the delivery of this strategy could cost in the region of an additional

£4.5 million. The actual cost would depend on the final categorisation and design for each scheme and the timescale of the programme.

- 4.4. The opportunity would also exist to convert any communal areas in 'Independent Living' schemes to create additional dwellings. On the assumption of creating 6 x 'Independent Living' schemes the costs could be in the region of £1.8 million to create approximately 12 new affordable properties. Subject to an appraisal of the scheme and committee approval, this cost could be added to the New Homes and Regeneration programme and could be funded through Right to Buy receipts and borrowing (with the borrowing costs to be funded from the additional rental income.)

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1. It is recommended that the Committee approve the strategy in respect of housing revenue stock so that it has an agreed approach to the remainder of the Sheltered Modernisation Project and the future delivery of housing for older people.
- 5.2. It is also recommended that the strategy is reviewed after two years due to the changing financial and political climate.