

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 69

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Delivery of support services for council sheltered housing tenants		
Date of Meeting:	12 November 2008		
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care and Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Helen Clarkmead	Tel: 293250
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	East Brighton, Goldsmid, Hangleton, Hanover and Elm Grove, Hollingbury and Stanmer, Moulsecomb and Bevendean, North Portslade, Patcham, Queens Park, St Peters and North Laine, South Portslade, Westbourne and Knoll, Wish.		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report outlines the redesign of the council's sheltered housing service. This is necessary in order address current service delivery issues, meet resident aspirations and accommodate budget pressures. The redesign seeks to provide high quality services and value for money.
- 1.2 The report also includes the review of support and service charges, reflecting the changes in service provision, and the review of the sheltered communal service charges.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing;
 - a) Notes the changes to the sheltered support service to a team based service delivery model with non residential scheme managers and the proposed service charges.
 - b) Agrees the revised communal services service charges as set out in Appendix 2 with effect from 6 April 2009.
 - c) Authorises the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing to implement the new service and support charges, but with power to make any minor amendments which may appear to be appropriate in particular cases.

3. CURRENT SHELTERED SERVICE PROVISION

- 3.1. The council has 24 sheltered schemes representing 855 units of accommodation. This represents half of the social rented sheltered stock in the city, and the council is by far the largest provider of sheltered housing.
- 3.2. The council currently operates a scheme manager based model with complex and expensive weekend and out of hours cover. This service is not currently meeting the needs of all service users and was last reviewed in 2000.

4. PROPOSED SHELTERED SERVICE PROVISION – TEAM BASED WORKING

- 4.1. The options for managing sheltered support services range from full residential scheme managers to floating support. The current service is based on the traditional residential scheme managers, following consultation with residents and an analysis of risk, advantages and disadvantages of each option a team based approach has been selected. This model is a sound compromise between fully traditional and flexible services would meet most resident aspirations and accommodate savings targets.
- 4.2. Team based working provides small teams of scheme managers working together managing a group of schemes in a geographic area or neighbourhood. The benefits of this approach compared to the current traditional model of provision are:
 - Improved use of staffing resources and even distribution of tenants to each scheme manager improving customer service by providing a consistent service to all tenants. The staff resources are allocated on the basis of units of accommodation rather than site management.
 - A team based approach will offer a mix of staff skills and experience to tenants. This approach will also aid staff development through joint working and allow automatic cover for staff absences allowing for a better continuity of service.
 - Improved recruitment and retention of staff. This will reduce future recruitment and training costs and allow retained staff to develop good relationships with tenants. Residential staff has been difficult to recruit in the last few years.
 - Team based working can also be better adapted to developing future needs based services.
 - Reduction in costs from recruitment, training overtime payments and rent subsidy for residential scheme managers that no longer required.

In addition to the Team based approach, it is proposed to review opportunities for improvements to the current weekend and out of hour's services through a resident working group.

5. SERVICE CHARGES

- 5.1. Sheltered tenants currently pay support and charges for support and communal services. The support charge is eligible for Supporting People grant and the communal areas service charge is eligible for housing benefit.
- 5.2. The support charge is currently a flat fee of £13.25 per week for each tenant and covers providing housing related support to enable vulnerable tenants to live independently within the community. For example this includes completing benefit forms, arranging adaptations or other professionals to call, arranging social events for residents.
- 5.3. Approximately 84% of sheltered tenants are eligible for supporting people grant funding to cover their support charge with the remaining tenants paying themselves. The service was initially set up as self financing but is now operating at a cost to the HRA of £46,000 per annum. This is because the income received from the Supporting People grant and tenants has only increased by 2.1% over the last five years whilst the expenditure, mainly salaries, has continued to increase annually by inflation.
- 5.4. The Commissioning Body has advised that the Supporting People grant funding will be reduced by 11.5% over the next three years with no allowance for inflation. This means that the service charge to tenants will reduce from £13.25 to £11.73 per week by 2011/12. The service has therefore been reviewed to ensure that future costs are fully recovered through the reduced service charges.
- 5.5. The communal services service charge includes communal cleaning, electricity costs, fire precaution equipment and materials. This service charge has been reviewed to ensure that costs are accurately recovered. The individual elements of the service charges including the increases or reductions are shown in Appendix 1. The main variation is from increased electricity costs averaging 83% from the new contract which was awarded on 1 April 2008.
- 5.6. Approximately 84% of sheltered tenants receive full or partial housing benefit to cover the communal areas service charges. Scheme Managers will work with the 38 tenants who will need to personally fund increases of more than £0.50 per week to ensure they are receiving all benefits to which they are entitled and offer general support.
- 5.7. Appendix 2 shows the net effect of the changes to both service and support charges for each sheltered scheme with effect from 1 April 2009 and also proposed changes to charges for 2010/11 which shows the full effect of the reductions in supporting people charges (but excluding an inflationary impact on the communal areas service charge).

6. EMERGENCY ALARM RESPONSE SERVICE

- 6.1. Tenants have asked that the service level and cost of the emergency alarm response service is reviewed. Residents will be at the heart of the process to agree and procure to a new service specification. There is substantial scope for budgetary savings which can then, in accordance with tenant's wishes, be invested in providing front line support services.

7 RESIDENTIAL SCHEME MANAGERS

- 7.1 Prior to sheltered schemes being supplied with emergency equipment linked to CareLink, residential staff were employed to respond to all out of hours emergencies and some schemes had two residential scheme managers to achieve this. But the advent of CareLink rendered the 'live-in' nature of residential staff of less importance.
- 7.2 Although residential staff have been retained as 'first point of contact' in an emergency where called by CareLink, there has been no requirement for staff to remain at home out of hours or work at weekends. As a result, the attendance of a residential scheme manager to attend an emergency was largely based on luck rather than a systematic approach.
- 7.3 Historically, some residential staff carried out duties at weekends even though they were not contracted to do so. Some undertook activities for which they were not employed or supervised to do, such as cook weekend meals, take residents on holidays and organise weekend social events. Some partners of residential staff not employed or supervised by the council also undertook a role in sheltered schemes. These activities have led to an unrealistic expectation of the services provided by residential staff. These activities also led to a blurring of professional boundaries in which a culture of favouritism or cases of elder abuse could thrive.
- 7.4 Residential working could also be stressful for staff who were effectively never off duty and potentially dangerous where clients of concern lived on site. As a result, some residential staff asked to become non-residential with the support of their union and occupational health. These issues also contributed to the problem of recruiting to residential posts. At the time of the Best Value Review in 2000, there were 22 residential staff. By 2008 this had fallen to just 5.
- 7.5 An employment tribunal decision in 2003 (the 'Harrow-Judgement') and recent changes to tax exemptions previously enjoyed by residential staff have also contributed to the increasing trend away from residential working.

- 7.6 It is therefore recommended that the service is confirmed as being non residential, as it is not a desirable or cost effective way of providing an out of hours service. This applies to new staff only. The five existing Residential Scheme Managers will be offered the opportunity to remain living on site, but without rent subsidy, whilst employed to deliver front line support services to sheltered tenants. Should any Residential Scheme Managers wish to move, they will be offered assistance.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There has been extensive consultation with tenants. This included a series of roadshows visiting sheltered schemes to specifically discuss operational service delivery issues. This complemented the earlier series of roadshows and extensive, wide ranging work of the Chairman's Focus Group for Sheltered Housing.
- 8.2 The majority of at tenants who participated in the roadshows preferred the team based model of service delivery, as this allows retention of the highly valued Scheme Manager role, but without the need for what is generally viewed as further, potentially unaffordable service charges. The majority of tenants agree the provision of out of hours cover should be reviewed for efficiency and value. Most tenants consulted expressed strong views that the out of hours service should be re specified, service levels agreed and procured in accordance with tenant wishes with an emphasis on better value for money and a less complex service.
- 8.3. The council welcomed the petition organised by the Sheltered Housing Action Group as presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee in July 2008. The overwhelmingly supported scheme manager services as opposed to floating support. The team based model has been developed to provide scheme manager based services within available budget. The model retains scheme managers with site management responsibilities, but uses this staff resource more effectively.
- 8.4 There will be a review of how the redesigned service operates, involving residents, 6 months after implementation. The outcome of this review will be reported back to Housing Management Consultative Committee.

9. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 9.1 The supporting people expenditure budget for 2008/09 is £635,530 against an income budget of £589,530 which shows a forecast under recovery of £46,000. The proposed changes to the service should ensure that all future costs are fully recovered through support and service charges and the 11.5% reduction over the next three years in the supporting people charge is achieved. The proposed expenditure budget for 2011/12 is £521,710 which provides a service charge of £11.73 per week.

The review of the sheltered common areas service charge has highlighted an under recovery of £19,800 which is due to the 83% increase in electricity costs. Implementing the new charges from April 2009 will ensure all costs are fully recovered.

Further details regarding the service charge calculation are included in section 5 of the report and the Appendices.

The total savings achieved from removing the under recovery of these service charges of £65,800 will be included in the 2009/10 HRA Budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman Date: 01/10/2008

Legal Implications:

- 9.2 The Council is empowered to provide sheltered housing, and to impose a reasonable charge on tenants for that service.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 22/09/2008

Equalities Implications:

- 9.3 The proposed changes will ensure greater consistency in the support services provided to older vulnerable tenants.

Sustainability Implications:

- 9.4 There are no direct implications

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 9.5 There are no direct implications

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 9.6 There are no direct implications

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 9.7 There are no direct implications

10. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 10.1 The petition referred to at 7.3 above clearly demonstrated that tenants do not want to move to a floating support based model of service delivery. Roadshows confirmed this position. Floating support is becoming a less acceptable service delivery model across the sheltered housing sector.
- 10.2 Most tenants at the roadshows rejected the option for a more traditional model of one scheme manager for each scheme due to higher costs and lack of capacity to cover absences. A traditional model based on one scheme manager per scheme of up to 45 units and additional support for larger units would result in a weekly service charge of £17.57 per unit for 2009/10 of which £4.84 per week would not be eligible for Supporting People funding or Housing Benefit support. This would need to be funded by all tenants and would increase to £5.84 per week by 2011/12 (excluding inflation) in line with the future reductions in Supporting People grant. This model was rejected by tenants on the basis of affordability. The traditional model has far less flexibility in terms of staff cover and incurs high costs for agency staff when postholders are sick or leave the service.

11. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 For the Cabinet Member for Housing to agree a revised service delivery structure and changes to communal areas service and support charges.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Proposed Sheltered Communal Areas Service Charge with effect from 6 April 2009
2. Summary of proposed sheltered communal areas and support charges with effect from 6 April 2009 compared to current charges. The table also shows charges in 2011/12 when the full reductions in support charges will be in place.
3. Summary of resident consultation.

Documents In Members' Rooms None

Background Documents None

PROPOSED SHELTERED COMMON AREAS SERVICE CHARGE WITH EFFECT FROM 6 APRIL 2009

APPENDIX 1

Scheme	Cleaning / window cleaning			Electricity			Alarm maintenance / fire precaution			Other supplies			Current charge total	Revised charge total	Diff	% Diff
	Current	Revised	Diff	Current	Revised	Diff	Current	Revised	Diff	Current	Revised	Diff				
Ainsworth House	2.93	2.67	(0.27)	2.67	3.02	0.35	0.74	0.54	(0.20)	0.26	0.28	0	6.61	6.51	(0.10)	-2%
Broadfields	3.64	3.30	(0.34)	3.65	3.46	(0.19)	0.56	0.51	(0.05)	0.26	0.28	0	8.12	7.56	(0.56)	-7%
Churchill House	6.15	5.56	(0.60)	1.20	1.23	0.03	0.57	0.53	(0.04)	0.26	0.28	0	8.18	7.59	(0.59)	-7%
Ditchling Gardens	2.16	1.97	(0.19)	0.17	0.14	(0.04)	0.56	0.54	(0.01)	0.26	0.28	0	3.15	2.93	(0.22)	-7%
Elizabeth Court	5.27	4.76	(0.51)	1.09	2.28	1.19	0.56	0.53	(0.03)	0.26	0.28	0	7.18	7.85	0.67	9%
Elwyn Jones Court	6.94	6.26	(0.68)	3.45	2.41	(1.03)	0.70	0.54	(0.16)	0.26	0.28	0	11.35	9.50	(1.85)	-16%
Evelyn Court	3.81	3.45	(0.36)	1.37	3.60	2.23	0.69	0.54	(0.14)	0.26	0.28	0	6.13	7.88	1.75	29%
Hazelholt	7.43	6.70	(0.73)	1.42	2.44	1.02	0.56	0.52	(0.03)	0.26	0.28	0	9.67	9.95	0.28	3%
Jasmine Court	2.81	2.56	(0.26)	1.27	2.85	1.58	0.71	0.53	(0.18)	0.26	0.28	0	5.05	6.21	1.16	23%
Jubilee Court	4.90	4.43	(0.47)	2.04	3.61	1.57	0.77	0.54	(0.23)	0.26	0.28	0	7.98	8.87	0.89	11%
Laburnum Grove	4.70	4.25	(0.45)	1.42	3.39	1.97	0.65	0.54	(0.12)	0.26	0.28	0	7.04	8.46	1.42	20%
Lavender House	3.88	3.52	(0.37)	1.66	3.60	1.94	0.56	0.52	(0.03)	0.26	0.28	0	6.36	7.93	1.57	25%
Leach Court	7.56	6.82	(0.74)	1.96	2.61	0.64	0.59	0.54	(0.05)	0.26	0.28	0	10.38	10.25	(0.13)	-1%
Windfield Court	6.51	5.88	(0.63)	2.32	2.51	0.19	0.56	0.54	(0.01)	0.26	0.28	0	9.66	9.22	(0.44)	-5%
Manor Paddock	2.33	2.13	(0.21)	1.69	2.17	0.48	0.57	0.54	(0.02)	0.26	0.28	0	4.85	5.13	0.28	6%
Muriel House	7.75	6.99	(0.76)	1.40	2.61	1.21	0.72	0.53	(0.19)	0.26	0.28	0	10.12	10.41	0.29	3%
Rose Hill Court	6.60	5.96	(0.64)	2.12	2.12	0.00	0.82	0.53	(0.29)	0.26	0.28	0	9.80	8.89	(0.91)	-9%
Sanders House	4.34	3.93	(0.41)	0.97	3.76	2.79	0.68	0.54	(0.13)	0.26	0.28	0	6.25	8.52	2.27	36%
Sloane Court	4.22	3.82	(0.40)	1.71	5.07	3.36	0.88	0.53	(0.35)	0.26	0.28	0	7.08	9.71	2.63	37%
Somersset Point	3.00	2.72	(0.28)	1.42	2.45	1.03	0.69	0.54	(0.15)	0.26	0.28	0	5.37	5.99	0.62	12%
Southsea	2.84	2.58	(0.26)	1.00	2.20	1.20	0.75	0.54	(0.21)	0.26	0.28	0	4.85	5.60	0.75	15%
Stonehurst Court	2.24	2.04	(0.20)	0.53	3.24	2.70	0.56	0.54	(0.01)	0.26	0.28	0	3.59	6.10	2.51	70%
Walter May House	3.83	3.47	(0.36)	1.55	2.53	0.98	0.63	0.53	(0.10)	0.26	0.28	0	6.27	6.81	0.54	9%
Woods House	4.93	4.46	(0.47)	1.30	1.96	0.67	0.61	0.54	(0.07)	0.26	0.28	0	7.10	7.25	0.15	2%

Note Assumed 2009/10 'current' charge is 2008/09 inflated by estimated RPI 4% plus 0.5%

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SHELTERED COMMON AREAS AND SUPPORTING PEOPLE CHARGES WITH EFFECT FROM 6 APRIL 2009

Scheme	No. units	Tenanted dwellings not on HB	Communal areas		Supporting People		Change		Year 3 (2011/12)	
			Current charge total	Reviewed charge total	change	Current charge	Reviewed charge	change	Total change	% Diff at year 3
Ainsworth House	19	1	6.61	6.51	(0.10)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.62)	-8%
Broadfields	15	5	8.12	7.56	(0.56)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(1.08)	-10%
Churchill House	36	4	8.18	7.59	(0.59)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(1.11)	-10%
Ditchling Gardens	26	7	3.15	2.93	(0.22)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.74)	-11%
Elizabeth Court	32	7	7.18	7.85	0.67	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.15	-4%
Elwyn Jones Court	72	16	11.35	9.50	(1.85)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(2.37)	-14%
Evelyn Court	22	7	6.13	7.88	1.75	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	1.23	1%
Hazelholt	24	2	9.67	9.95	0.28	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.24)	-5%
Jasmine Court	32	4	5.05	6.21	1.16	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.64	-2%
Jubilee Court	29	2	7.98	8.87	0.89	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.37	-3%
Laburnum Grove	59	11	7.04	8.46	1.42	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.90	0%
Peavender House	25	1	6.36	7.93	1.57	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	1.05	0%
Leach Court	108	15	10.38	10.25	(0.13)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.65)	-7%
Lindfield Court	31	4	9.66	9.22	(0.44)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.96)	-9%
Manor Paddock	24	3	4.85	5.13	0.28	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.24)	-7%
Muriel House	35	6	10.12	10.41	0.29	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.23)	-5%
Rose Hill Court	27	2	9.80	8.89	(0.91)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(1.43)	-11%
Sanders House	38	4	6.25	8.52	2.27	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	1.75	4%
Sloane Court	40	6	7.08	9.71	2.63	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	2.11	5%
Somerset Point	71	8	5.37	5.99	0.62	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.10	-5%
Southsea	24	7	4.85	5.60	0.75	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.23	-4%
Stonehurst Court	25	5	3.59	6.10	2.51	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	1.99	6%
Walter May House	32	2	6.27	6.81	0.54	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.02	-5%
Woods House	26	6	7.10	7.25	0.15	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.37)	-7%
Total units	872	135								

Note: Assumed 2009/10 'current' charge is 2008/09 inflated by estimated RPI 4% plus 0.5%. Year 3 charge excludes inflation on communal areas charge.

