



Report to: Community Protection Panel
Adults Services Panel

Date: 21 July 2008
22 July 2008

Subject: Wigan and Leigh Housing : Older Persons Housing and Support Review Programme of Improvement

Report of: Director of Environmental Services

Contact officer: Peter Layland 01942 828983

Purpose / summary: To advise Members on Wigan and Leigh’s Older Persons Housing and Support Service Improvement Review

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: The alternative option would be to propose little change to the sheltered housing service, but this may threaten the future sustainability of the service.

Recommendation / decision: That report be noted and that any comments be forwarded to Wigan and Leigh Housing.

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	None
Staffing:	None at present
Policy:	Older Persons Housing Strategy
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	Yes (on the Older Person Housing Study)
Wards affected:	

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

None at Present

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

It is likely to lead to significant implications and these will be outlined in subsequent reports. A diversity impact assessment relating to the wider Council Older Persons Housing Study (of which this review is part) is attached as an appendix to this report

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

Not at present

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

N/A

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

N/A

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	x		x
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
CP Panel 21/7 08 AS Panel 21/7/08			

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title of document	Which meeting did it go to?	Date of meeting	Copy available from?
Older Persons Housing Study Action Plan	CP Panel	10/3/08	

Proper Officer Martin Kimber

Date 1/7/08

1 Background:

- 1.1 This report to the Wigan and Leigh Housing Board reflects two processes currently underway with regard to older persons housing. Firstly it illustrates the pressures Wigan and Leigh Housing (WALH) face in terms of uncertain demand for some of their sheltered schemes and the need to provide an improved range of options to older people. Secondly it is also in keeping with the Councils Older Persons Housing Study / Action Plan recently reviewed in March. This document produced by the Older Persons Housing Working Group sets out a wider vision of housing and housing related services to older people. It emphasises the need to provide more help to people within the community and for sheltered housing to become a more flexible product that meets the aspirations of older people.

2 Proposals:

- 2.1 In light of this background the WALH report sets out a process of assessing the future sustainability of each of the 49 WALH sheltered schemes looking at the potential to change or indeed enhance the role of the accommodation. The approach is seen as flexible and will take a considerable time to work through. The details of the approach are contained within the report attached as Appendix 1. At this stage no proposals on any individual property are made, but they may arise from the review in the future.

3. Conclusions:

- 3.1 This report looks to develop an approach which will look to ensure the sustainability of its sheltered housing service. It represents the start of a long term process which will look to meet the future housing aspirations of older people.

WIGAN AND LEIGH HOUSING BOARD 3RD JUNE 2008

Report of the Director of Housing Needs

Contact: Janice Barton Tel. No: (01942) 705711 E-mail: j.barton@walh.co.uk

**Older Persons Housing and Support Review –
Programme of Improvement**

Purpose/Summary:
To advise Board Members of the outcome of the Older Persons Housing and Support Service Improvement Review and the proposed improvements flowing from this, in particular the approach to the sustainability of sheltered housing.
Recommendations:
To approve the approach to securing the future sustainability of sheltered housing.

For decision, discussion or information?	For discussion and decision.
For the open part or the press and public excluded part of the agenda? If press and public excluded please state reason.	Closed – sensitive information.

Resource and Value for Money Implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within existing resources at this stage. • Value for Money will be an important criteria for any improvements. 				
Employee Implications:	None at this stage.				
Key Risks incl. Company reputation, business relationships, health and safety and legal implications	Resident concern regarding the future of schemes.				
Equality (Impact) Assessed?	Yes		No	√	Not Applicable
Equality & Diversity and Community Implications:	Older people are a vulnerable group. Any strategy and policy changes will be subject to an impact assessment including the effect on the community.				
Environmental Implications:	None at this stage.				
Area Forums Affected:	All				
Tracking/Process	Consultation	Area Forum/s	Committee	Board	
				3 June 2008	

1.0 Background

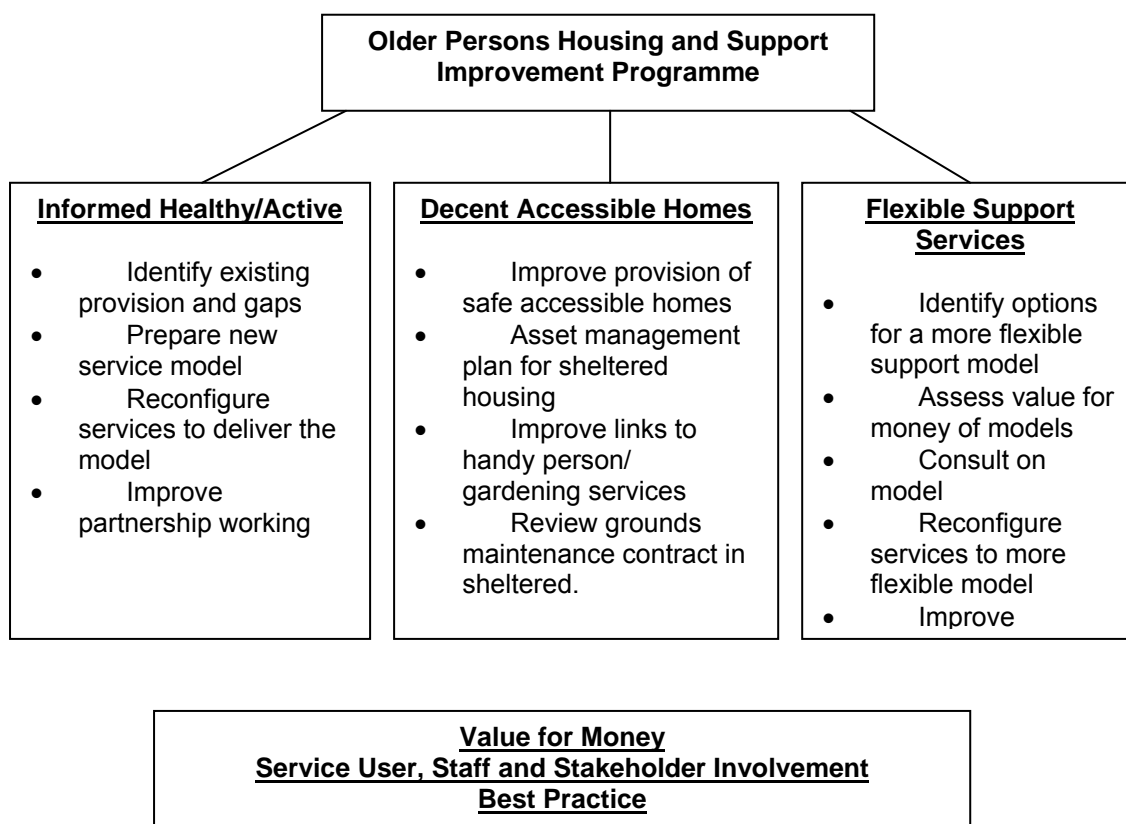
1.1 Board Members will recall that the approach to the Vulnerable People strand of Wigan and Leigh Housing's Vision involves 3 elements:

- Older Persons Housing and Support Review
- Improvements to the homelessness service with the emphasis on prevention
- Review of support for vulnerable people on estates

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update on the first element. The Director of Strategy, Planning and Projects has now taken temporary responsibility for the second element and the third element will not be started until the end of 2008/09 due to capacity issues. This is because the Older Persons' element is more extensive than first considered and because of the resources going into the 'Affordable Housing' element of the Vision.

2.0 Older Persons Housing and Support Review

2.1 This review started approximately twelve months ago. Work with tenants and stakeholders has produced three clear priorities of where the service needs to improve. These are shown in the diagram below:-



- 2.2 Board Members have previously approved an action plan to deliver the workstreams. There has been some slippage due to other priorities but work is ongoing. More detailed updates will be provided on the various workstreams as appropriate.
- 2.3 The main purpose of this report is to advise Board Members of the proposed approach to developing an asset management plan for sheltered schemes and ensuring the future viability.

3.0 Asset Management Plan for Sheltered Housing

- 3.1 The Company manages 49 sheltered and grouped schemes. Sheltered schemes are flats in one building, grouped schemes are groups of flats or bungalows. All have a designated scheme manager and most have communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry, etc.
- 3.2 Nationally there has been a decline in the popularity of sheltered housing in its current form. This is due to:-
- Alternative support available to keep people in their own homes
 - Aging sheltered schemes that do not meet current customer expectations
 - Unpooling of the support charge for the scheme manager service resulting in less subsidisation
 - People staying more active and independent as they mature.
- 3.3 The schemes managed by Wigan and Leigh Housing are no exception and currently there are 53 properties vacant (4%), compared to 1% vacants in the general stock. The vacants are not spread across all schemes, being concentrated in particular schemes and areas. More unpopular schemes are in the main those with bedsits, shared facilities, older design and in areas of over provision.

4.0 Options Available

- 4.1 Over the last ten years various options have been tried both nationally and in Wigan to address falling demand for sheltered housing. Short term fixes such as open days, conversion of bedsits to include showers and marketing exercises, have had limited success. An overall strategic approach is required to secure the future of such accommodation for older people.
- 4.2 The options open to organisations and currently being regarded as best practice are:-
- Change the use of schemes away from sheltered housing. This option may be applicable for a number of schemes but is not appropriate as a whole scale solution. The borough's housing needs survey still shows some demand for sheltered housing in the borough.

- Change schemes to extra-care sheltered schemes to cater for more frail elderly. This is a more complex option involving extensive upgrading of schemes and care services on site. None of WALH managed schemes currently meet the criteria for extra care. Significant investment would be required and provision of care is not our core business. This may be applicable for a very limited number of schemes following significant investment but it is not a whole scale solution.
- Changing the approach to properties and support that provides a more flexible 'sheltered' model. The properties are considered on their merits as future accommodation for older people. Schemes may be used as the base for support services but the support is linked to a person not the property. This is linked with a more flexible approach to the allocation of properties such as age 40 plus allocations and support not being a requirement of the tenancy. This also allows broader use of support services.
- Rehousing of residents and regeneration of the site where none of the above options are viable.

4.3 In reality because of the size of the Council's housing stock, a combination of the above solutions is more likely.

5.0 Preferred Option

5.1 Analysis has been carried out of the 49 sheltered schemes to estimate the proportion that :-

- Have no sustainability issues at the current time
- Have some issues that can potentially be addressed
- Have serious sustainability issues.

5.2 A number of indicators have been used to rank the schemes. The results are shown in Appendix 1 with the names of the schemes removed. This indicates of the 49 schemes

21 are currently sustainable
 19 have some sustainability issues
 9 have serious sustainability issues.

5.3 The schemes in all categories are located across the borough. When considering individual schemes the location is very important in relation to general demand, location of other schemes and future developments.

5.4 It is therefore proposed that analysis of the future sustainability of sheltered schemes is considered on a locality basis area by area, starting with those areas with the most acute sustainability issues. Proposals will be put forward for all the schemes in a particular locality.

5.5 Alongside this work:

- Vacant sheltered properties, where there is evidence of demand, will be targeted by a small project group to ensure maximum effort in securing appropriate lettings.
- The workstream on how the support service is delivered in future will continue.

It is intended to start in the Leigh area and the proposed project brief is attached at Appendix 2.

6.0 **Implications and Risks**

6.1 The implications of this approach are that it will take some time to develop a strategy for all sheltered schemes across the borough (approximately 18 months). However, a phased approach allows us to deal sensitively with each area and to learn from the outcomes.

6.2 The risks with this approach are:-

- Stakeholder concern
- Changing housing market
- Funding limitations/changes.

6.3 It is also not possible to put on hold investment in all schemes until the strategy is developed for all schemes across the borough. The proposed approach is, therefore to:

- Carry out any essential works required to all schemes
- Concentrate long term investment in 3 priority areas identified as important by residents:-
 - Security improvements
 - Access improvements
 - Works to make individual properties and schemes more attractive to potential tenants including conversion works and environmental improvements.
- Long term, investment, particularly any major investment such as lifts, to be concentrated on those schemes where there are no, or few, sustainability issues or those schemes where a long term strategy has been agreed following review on a locality basis.

In the current year there is approximately £800,000 identified for works to sheltered schemes. This approach may mean that not all the funding is utilised in the current year as the strategy is developed. Board Members' views, particularly tenant representatives, are sought on the priority of this funding for 2009/10.

6.4 The proposed approach will need approval by the Council and it is suggested that the overall approach to sustainability also be shared with residents in a way that does not lead to unfounded concerns about future plans for particular schemes. It is important to note that this is about a long term strategy that will take some years to deliver.

The Council is also considering the role of all sheltered housing in the borough and the overall approach is set out below.

'The older persons work element reflects the strategic concern shown by Wigan Council/Housing Partnership over older person housing issues. A revised Older Persons Housing Study/Action Plan has just been developed which sets out the notion that current sheltered housing provision is not meeting all the needs and aspirations of older people. It also concludes that if the "right" provision was available future demand would be strong.

The board strategy is to look to provide a more flexible product in the future that provides answers to a range of needs. This would emphasise better quality accommodation, variations in the support provided and an increase in extra care provision. It would also encourage a range of different tenure options.

The move will be made over a considerable period of time and will involve both the re-configuration/improvement/decommissioning of existing provision and the development of additional specialist accommodation in certain parts of the borough. The findings of this report the Council considers to be complementary to this overall strategic framework.'

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The older persons housing and support review has produced a programme with 3 workstreams. The 'Decent and Accessible Homes' workstream includes considering a strategy for the future sustainability of the 49 sheltered housing schemes.

A proposed approach to achieve this has been suggested with an outline project plan.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 To approve the approach to developing a strategy to secure the future sustainability of sheltered housing.

PROJECT BRIEF

Project name *Production of model to allow analysis of Sustainability of Sheltered Accommodation.*

Author:	Julia Southam
Owner:	Janice Barton
Client:	Wigan & Leigh Housing Co. Ltd.
Document Number:	001

Background

The Business Plan 2007-10 set out the goals for Wigan & Leigh Housing Company Ltd.

- Goal 5 “What we want to achieve” refers to “Housing Services for Vulnerable people”,
- “How we will deliver” as “fundamentally reviewing supported and sheltered housing services. To ensure housing services are accessible to the most vulnerable.”

A Service Improvement Team (SIT) was set up to look at the issue of “housing for older people”, numerous staff from WALH, both operational and strategic, a number of tenant representatives, a Wigan Council Housing Policy Officer and a Board Member created a vision with goals. One of the sub-level goals is “better access to a variety of decent, adaptable and safe homes for older people”. The method of how to achieve the goal is defined as “identifying options for low demand WALH managed housing suitable for older people”.

Wigan & Leigh Housing manage 49 supported Housing Schemes for Older People, with 1320 units of accommodation. The type of scheme varies from sheltered schemes which are generally blocks of flats, to Grouped schemes which are a group of bungalows. Some schemes have a mixture of both flats and bungalows. The property offered in these schemes varies in type, from bedsit flats with shared facilities to self contained bungalows. It must also be noted that there are a number of other providers in the Borough, who provide in excess of 800 units of accommodation for older people.

Whilst WALH has a good supply of stock many of the schemes are unpopular with applicants and suffer demand issues and long term voids. To create a robust method of assessing sustainability of the individual schemes a vast quantity of data was collected and analysed. The data allowed a ranking system to be placed onto the individual schemes.

The data collection covered two distinct areas

- Housing management information
- Tenant Satisfaction data

Housing Management Information

The data sets collected and analysed were:

- % stock in scheme without own bathroom(Source:HMIS 05-12-07)
- % stock which are bedsits (Source: HMIS 05-12-07)
- terminations as % stock in scheme (exc deaths) (Source: HMIS 2006-07)
- void bedsits as a % of bedsit stock in scheme (Source: HMIS 10-09-07)
- void flats as a % of flat stock in scheme (Source: HMIS 10-09-07)
- void bungalows as a % of bungalow stock (Source: HMIS 10-09-07)
- voids > 12mths as % of stock in scheme (Source: HMIS 10-09-07)
- average time in days from RFL to TCD (Source: HMIS 2006-07)
- no. of voids relet as % of stock in scheme (Source: HMIS 2006-07)
- % of households in scheme requesting a move (Source: HMIS 20-11-07)
- Average length of tenancy in months (Source: HMIS 20-11-07)

Tenant Satisfaction data

The data sets collected and analysed were:

% households satisfied with their home – (Source: TSS 2006)

% households dissatisfied with number of rooms in their home (Source: TSS 2006)

% households satisfied with social activities – (Source: Sheltered Survey 2007)

% satisfied with standard of fixtures and fittings within the scheme (Source: Sheltered Survey 2007)

Methodology

Each indicator was ranked across the schemes. Initially the overall ranks for all the schemes were analysed using all data, namely both housing management data and tenant satisfaction data.

Whilst tenant satisfaction data is important it can be considered to be soft data and subjective to the households perspective at a moment in time. For many of the schemes, where there has historically been difficulties allocating the properties due to the level of tenant demand, the level of tenant satisfaction was positively counter-balancing some of the housing management data.

The housing management indicators are more rigid and the data is more auditable. When the tenant satisfaction indicators were removed from the ranking and the analysis was purely based on the housing management Indicators a distinct pattern emerged.

Conclusions

The housing management indicators provide a sound ranking system for WALH schemes, and enable us to progress to the option appraisal stage with sound supporting data.

It is difficult to look at individual schemes in isolation for sustainability without regard for similar properties in the vicinity.

As three of the nine lower ranking schemes fall within the Leigh Management Area it is proposed to conduct an option appraisal to look at all WALH schemes within the Leigh Management Area rather than the lower ranking Leigh schemes in isolation.

As part of the option appraisal in depth analysis is conducted into the demand for WALH properties for older people in the Leigh Management area.

The option appraisal will include details of capital costs likely to be sustained on the schemes over the next 10 years.

Objectives	To make recommendations regarding the future sustainability of the Council's sheltered housing stock
Scope	To analyse statistical data and physical attributes of the Leigh schemes managed by Wigan & Leigh Housing Co. Ltd.
Exclusions	Although schemes from other housing providers will be analysed for cross comparison, these will be excluded from the sustainability league table.
Constraints	Staffing resources and time available to analyse data and conduct physical visits.
Interfaces	Liaison with other housing providers,
Time	Following acceptance of the proposed approach by WALH Board a period of 3 months will be required to analyse data and make necessary recommendations for the future sustainability of the individual schemes in the Leigh Management Area. Following the outcomes of the initial study the approach will be reviewed and moved to other areas. The total project time is approximately 18 months.
Cost	Salary of Project Manager and another part time officer.
Scope	WALH schemes and other Registered Social Housing Providers in the Leigh Management Area.
Reasons	Analysis of sheltered / grouped schemes managed by Wigan & Leigh Housing Co. Ltd. to allow future business planning.
Options	To carry out an option appraisal on all low ranking Leigh Schemes in isolation. Preferred option to carry out an option appraisal of all WALH managed Leigh Schemes including cross comparisons.

<i>Benefits expected</i>	To identify the true sustainability of the Leigh schemes.
<i>Cost and timescale</i>	Following acceptance of the proposed approach by WALH Board a period of 3 months will be required to assess demand and suitability issues.
<i>Investment Appraisal</i>	The rent loss from long term voids is unacceptable. The average rent loss per day is approx £10 per void.
<i>Risks</i>	<p>Concern from residents, and public regarding the future of particular schemes to be balanced by consultation on the proposed approach and subsequent outcomes.</p> <p>Lettings climate change.</p> <p>Withdrawal of external funding sources such as Supporting People.</p>

Diversity Impact Assessment form

Section: Housing Strategy

Policy/Service Area: Housing Strategy

Person Completing Form: Peter Layland

Date: 12.02.08

Do any of the below groups suffer specific disadvantage (please indicate)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Race		No	Disability		No
Ethnicity		No	Gender		No
Age		No	Religion		No
Class		No	Sexual Orientation		No

Is there evidence of disadvantage or associated problems?

The purpose of the Older Persons Housing Study / Action Plan is to tackle disadvantage in relation to housing eg tackling poor housing conditions, extending choice and making housing accessible.
Thus the aim of the plan is to affect all groups positively

How was the information collected and/or who have you consulted with?

Based on Housing Need studies and discussion within the Housing Partnership Specific stakeholder consultation event held 08.11.07 which included Hard to Reach reps

Action Plan – *What specific actions are planned to tackle any disadvantage identified?*

Contained within the report

Is the policy in line with current equality legislation and relevant codes of practice?

Yes

Timescale	2008-10
Responsibility	Peter Layland
Comments	

Are the actions specified included in any other documents/plans?

Departmental Service Plan	
Section/Team Plan	yes
Other (Specify)	

Date for further review 2010
