

**CABINET**

**On 17 November 2009**

Report Title: **Supported Housing Review**

Report authorised by: **Niall Bolger, Director of Urban Environment**

Signed:  4 November 2009

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Ward(s) affected: **Hornsey, Tottenham Hale  
and White Hart Lane**

Report for: **Key Decision**

**1. Purpose of the report**

1.1 To provide the Cabinet with an update on the review of supported housing and to seek approval of a plan for addressing the specific needs of 4 sheltered housing schemes, increasing the provision of 'extra care' housing and enabling all of the Council's supported housing to be brought up to the decent homes standard.

**2. Introduction by Cabinet Members**

Cabinet Member for Housing

2.1 I welcome and support the recommendations in this report because, in Haringey, there is no place for unsuitable, poor quality social housing.

2.2 We must ensure that all of the Council's sheltered housing is fit for purpose, is brought up to decent homes and modern standards, and plays its full part in

meeting the current and future needs of older people.

- 2.3 All of the research that has been carried out points to an over-supply of conventional sheltered housing in Haringey and a shortage of 'extra care' supported housing, especially in the east of the borough.
- 2.4 The high number of voids in sheltered housing, coupled with the difficulties that the Council has continued to experience in letting homes in some of its least popular schemes, adds urgency to the need to rationalise the sheltered housing stock and align it with a new multi agency Older Persons Housing Strategy.

Cabinet Member for Adult, Culture & Community Services

- 2.5 The Council is committed to ensuring that all older people are able to live independently, for as long as possible, in appropriate, decent housing.
- 2.6 I welcome the proposals to increase the supply of 'extra care' supported housing, since this will reduce the Council's use of residential care and extend housing choice across all tenures as an alternative to residential and nursing care.
- 2.7 The proposed Older Persons Housing Strategy is also to be welcomed as it will set out the strategic context for future service provision, promote independence and safety in the home, improve the quality of the homes in which older people are living and assist the integration of housing and social care.
- 2.8 It is, of course, essential that any changes to the Council's supported housing stock are handled sensitively and are well managed, and that all of the tenants affected by such changes are properly consulted and supported. To ensure that this happens, I will continue to meet regularly with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Senior Managers in Adult Social Care, Homes for Haringey and Strategic & Community Housing Services.

**3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:**

3.1 The Supported Housing Review supports the Council's objective of improving housing conditions in the borough, and the implementation of the recommendations in this report will help to meet the following priorities in the Council Plan:

- **Priority 3 – 'Encouraging lifetime wellbeing, at home, work play and learning';**

By addressing the deficiencies and limitations of the Council's supported housing schemes, the proposed changes will support and encourage lifetime well being.

- **Priority 4 – 'Promoting independent living while supporting adults and children when needed'.**

Supported housing promotes, encourages and enables independent living.

'Extra care' supported housing provides 24 hour on-site care and support, offers older people a viable alternative to residential care and affords them the opportunity to live safely in an environment where they are actively encouraged to be as independent as possible.

- **Priority 5 – 'Delivering excellent, customer focused, cost effective services'**

If implemented, the recommendations in this report will ensure that, on completion of the decent homes programme, all of the Council's supported housing will meet the decent homes standard.

Where a scheme is not fit for purpose, the site will be either redeveloped (to provide modern general needs / 'extra care' housing) or disposed of.

Two of the 4 supported housing schemes included in the review are not fit for purpose and are expensive to maintain. For the Council, the provision of 'extra care' offers better value for money when compared to residential care options.

#### **4. Recommendations**

4.1 The Cabinet is asked to note the key outcomes of the Supported Housing Review and to approve, in principle, the following recommendations in relation to the sheltered housing schemes at Campbell Court, Protheroe House, Larkspur Close and Stokley Court:

- (a) That Campbell Court is maintained as a sheltered housing scheme and is included within Haringey's decent homes programme;
- (b) That, subject to formal consultation with the tenants and completion of a detailed financial appraisal, Protheroe House will be closed and the site redeveloped as a mixed tenure 'extra care' supported housing scheme;
- (c) That Larkspur Close will continue as a sheltered housing scheme (but will not yet be included in the decent homes programme) until completion of a comprehensive options appraisal and financial assessment (including the feasibility and cost of completing remedial works, converting Larkspur Close to a 'good neighbour' scheme and redeveloping the site) and a decision is made on its future use.
- (d) That Stokley Court will continue as a sheltered housing scheme (but will not yet be included in the decent homes programme) until December 2010 when a decision will be made on its future use.

(e) That formal consultation takes place with the residents of Protheroe House on the future of their homes, and that the results of that consultation and the Equalities Impact Assessment are reported back to the Cabinet.

(f) That, with immediate effect and until further notice, properties that become vacant at Protheroe House will not be re-let.

## 5. Reason for recommendation(s)

5.1 Although 25 of the Council's sheltered housing schemes have already been included in the decent homes programme, 4 schemes (Campbell Court, Larkspur Close, Protheroe House and Stokley Court) have been the subject of an options appraisal..

5.2 Campbell Court, Larkspur Close, Protheroe House and Stokley Court were chosen because they are unsuitable for supported housing, do not have modern facilities or need a lot of investment to bring them up to the decent homes standard.

5.3 In reviewing the future of the 4 schemes, the Council is seeking to improve the quality of supported housing, increase the supply of 'extra care' housing in the borough, provide residents with more choice in how their housing and support needs are met, and help older people to remain independent.

5.4 In August 2009, the Housing Quality Network (HQN) completed its assessment of the different options for each scheme. These are summarised in the table below:

	Larkspur	Protheroe	Campbell	Stokley
DHS/refurbishment 'as is'	NO	NO	MAYBE	MAYBE
Convert to General Needs	NO	NO	YES	MAYBE
Redevelop - Extra-Care	NO	YES	NO	YES
Redevelop - General Needs (housing association)	MAYBE	YES	NO	YES
Redevelop - General Needs (local authority homes)	NO	YES	NO	YES
Dispose	YES	YES	NO	YES

5.5 The HQN report sets out detailed cost estimates of the various options, including an 'optimum' solution that would involve the closure of all four schemes, the conversion of Campbell Court to 'general needs' housing, the redevelopment of Protheroe House as 'extra care' supported housing, the disposal of Larkspur Close and the redevelopment of Stokley Court as social rented housing.

5.6 Although Cabinet is recommended to approve the redevelopment of Protheroe House as 'extra care' supported housing, it is **not** recommended that Campbell Court is converted to 'general needs' housing or, at this stage, that Larkspur Close

is disposed of and Stokley Court is redeveloped as social rented housing.

### **Campbell Court**

- 5.7 The 34 one-bedroom flats and 19 two-bedroom flats at Campbell Court (a nine storey block) are in a reasonable condition and, although relatively expensive, the cost of bringing the block up to the decent homes standard is not excessive compared to other schemes that are included in the decent homes programme.
- 5.8 Although Campbell Court's effectiveness as a sheltered housing scheme is inhibited by its height and the lack of communal facilities, there is a very strong sense of community within the block.
- 5.9 If Campbell Court is not retained as sheltered accommodation, the most appropriate solution would be to convert it to 'general needs' housing, with a mix of 2, 3 & 4-bedroom homes. This would reduce the number of homes from 53 to 44.
- 5.10 As Campbell Court is already a high rise building in a very low-level neighbourhood, redevelopment of the block will not provide an opportunity to increase the height of the development.
- 5.11 Taking everything into account, it is recommended that Campbell Court is retained as a sheltered housing scheme and included in the decent homes programme.

### **Larkspur Close**

- 5.12 The 37 one-bedroom homes at Larkspur Close are small, have flat roofs and are difficult and expensive to maintain and keep warm. Running costs are high and the site has a poor layout and is prone to flooding.
- 5.13 The Housing Quality Network has concluded that, even if it is possible to bring Larkspur Close up to modern standards (in terms of layout and space), the cost of these improvements will be very high.
- 5.14 Consideration was given to the possibility of converting Larkspur Close to 'general needs' or 'extra care' housing. However, given the poor size and layout of the existing accommodation – and the high cost involved in bringing the properties up to a modern standard – neither of these options appear viable.
- 5.15 Given the restricted access, the narrowness of the site and the flooding problem, the options for the future use of Larkspur Close are unclear. More work is needed to establish whether it is suitable for any other type of accommodation or land use.
- 5.16 If Larkspur Close cannot be redeveloped by the Council or a housing association, it could be sold and the sale proceeds (estimated to be around £900,000) invested in the development of 'extra care' housing and/or other social housing.

5.17 Taking everything into account, it is recommended that Larkspur Close continues as a sheltered housing scheme (but is not yet included in the decent homes programme) until completion of a comprehensive options appraisal and financial assessment (including the feasibility and cost of completing remedial works, converting Larkspur Close to a 'good neighbour' scheme and redeveloping the site) and a decision is made on its future use.

### **Protheroe House**

5.18 The 42 one-bedroom flats at Protheroe House have high running costs, are poorly designed and make poor use of the space available. The scheme is not suitable for retention as a sheltered housing scheme or conversion owing to the high levels of investment that would be required.

5.19 The Housing Quality Network has advised the Council that, even if it is possible to bring Protheroe House up to modern standards (in terms of layout and space), the cost of these improvements will be enormous.

5.20 Consideration was given to the possibility of converting Protheroe House to 'general needs' or 'extra care' housing. However, given the high cost involved in bringing the properties up to a modern standard, redevelopment will offer better value than conversion.

5.21 Although the site is also suitable for family housing, the Housing Quality Network has advised the Council that, of the 4 sheltered housing schemes it has looked at, Protheroe House is the most suitable for redevelopment as 'extra care' housing.

5.22 It is estimated that, if redeveloped, the Protheroe House site has the capacity to provide approximately 40 'extra care' homes. .

5.23 Taking everything into account, it is recommended that Protheroe House is redeveloped as a mixed tenure 'extra care' housing scheme, with up to a quarter of the new homes (probably 9 or 10) being offered for sale / shared ownership;

5.24 If this option is supported by the Cabinet, further work will need to be undertaken to determine exactly how the new scheme will be developed, paid for and managed.

### **Stokley Court**

5.25 The 47 one-bedroom flats at Stokley Court are grouped together in a series of 3-storey blocks and situated within a residential neighbourhood close to amenities and Hornsey High Street.

- 5.26 Although the scheme's running costs are reasonable, the blocks of flats suffer from poor design and land use. As the accommodation is spread over 3 floors and is not served by a lift, Stokley Court has obvious limitations as a supported housing scheme for people with limited, or reducing, mobility.
- 5.27 Consideration was given to the possibility of converting Stokley Court to 'general needs' or 'extra care' housing. However, a more fundamental redevelopment of the scheme will offer better value than conversion and, besides, there are already two 'extra care' schemes in the west of the borough and it is known that most of the unmet need for 'extra care' is in the east of the borough.
- 5.28 Of the 4 housing schemes under review, Stokley Court offers the best potential for redevelopment, given the site's size and shape and the scope for including an adjoining site in any redevelopment.
- 5.29 With better use of space and land, redevelopment of Stokley Court could increase the number of homes on the site by up to 25%. There is also the potential to bring neighbouring sites into the consideration of options.
- 5.30 One of the options available would be to redevelop the site as 100% social rented housing (creating up to 60 new council homes) through Homes for Haringey. Such an option would enable Homes for Haringey to establish its role as a developer (and not just as a manager) of new homes.
- 5.31 In order to make an informed decision on the future use of Stokley Court (and to assess the merits and feasibility of increasing the supply of rented social housing and improving the appearance of the local area), the Council first needs to consult with residents, Councillors and other stakeholders.
- 5.32 The solution that is eventually chosen for Stokley Court must be sustainable and in keeping with Haringey's Older Persons Housing Strategy which is due to be published in December 2010. It must also contribute to the well being of residents and the community, and make effective use of all of the resources available.
- 5.33 Taking everything into account, it is recommended that a decision on the future use of Stokley Court is delayed until December 2010, by which time Haringey's Older Persons Housing Strategy will have been approved and published.
- 5.34 This will also afford the opportunity for the Council to carry out an extensive and inclusive consultation with residents, Councillors and other stakeholders (and to complete a detailed appraisal of the cost, merits and feasibility of the various options) relating to the future use of Stokley Court.

## **6. Other options considered**

- 6.1 In its report, the Housing Quality Network sets out the options for each of the 4 sheltered housing schemes, taking into account the state of the current property market, the likely costs of the building work, any planning issues affecting the sites and the likelihood of getting a grant from the government.
- 6.2 The HQN report sets out indicative costs of the options, and focuses on the 'optimum' solution for all four schemes:
- Converting Campbell Court to 'general needs' housing
  - Disposing of Larkspur Close
  - Redeveloping Protheroe House as 'extra care' housing
  - Redeveloping Stokley Court as a 100% social rented housing scheme with Homes for Haringey
- 6.3 The recommendations set out in this report differ from the 'optimum' solution put forward by the Housing Quality Network because, after taking into account all of the information available (including the views of residents and, crucially, the availability of Council and government capital funding), Officers consider that a more modest, incremental approach offers the best prospects of being delivered on time, within the available resources and in a manner that ensures successful outcomes for the tenants who are displaced by the closure of their supported housing scheme.
- 6.4 Consideration was also given to the option of making no changes to the 4 schemes (so allowing them to continue operating as sheltered housing schemes) or simply deferring a decision for another year or so.
- 6.5 The first option was rejected on the grounds that there is an over-supply of supported housing in Haringey and not all of the schemes are suitable for use as supported housing or can be brought up to standard at a reasonable cost.
- 6.6 The second option (the deferral of the decision) was also rejected on the grounds that the tenants of the affected schemes have already told us that they have found it difficult to live with the uncertainty of not knowing what the Council is planning to do with their homes. Unless more work is required before an informed decision can be made, the deferral may simply add to tenants' anxiety and, in the absence of the decent homes investment, contribute to a deterioration in the condition of the four supported schemes.



## **7. Summary**

- 7.1 The Council owns 1,478 units of supported housing.
- 7.2 Two thirds of these homes are provided in the Council's 29 sheltered housing schemes. The other four hundred homes are provided in 26 community good neighbour schemes, situated on general needs estates.
- 7.3 In addition to the Council's 29 sheltered housing schemes and 26 community good neighbour schemes, housing associations own more than twenty sheltered housing schemes in Haringey, providing supported housing for more than 700 older people.
- 7.4 In April 2005, the Council commissioned Ridgeway Associates to carry out a borough-wide analysis of supported housing that included an assessment of Haringey's current and future needs and potential future delivery options. This analysis was informed by a stock condition survey, carried out by Savills.
- 7.5 The Ridgeway Report (see Appendix A) highlighted a number of key issues about the Council's supported housing, including the extent to which it is fit for purpose and the current and future demand for, and supply of, supported housing:
- (a) Some of the existing accommodation suffers from poor layout, has poor space standards and is unsuitable for people who use wheelchairs;
  - (b) Over the next ten years, it is projected that there will be an over-supply of general supported housing in Haringey;
  - (c) The supply of 'extra care' housing should be increased, in order to meet the needs of a growing number of people are moving into supported housing later in life (often when their needs include housing, care and support), provide older people with a wider range of housing choices, and assist the Council's efforts to reduce the number of households living in residential care.
  - (d) Future developments in supported housing should take into account the use of 'assistive technology', the growing number of people with dementia, and the needs of older people from black and ethnic minority communities.
  - (e) Consideration should be given to the needs of older home owners who require housing, care and support but can no longer remain in their own homes.
- 7.6 After considering the Ridgeway & Savills reports, Officers concluded that 25 of the Council's 29 sheltered housing schemes should be included in Haringey's decent homes programme and that the other 4 schemes (Campbell Court, Larkspur Close, Protheroe House and Stokley Court) should be the subject of an options appraisal.

- 7.7 Campbell Court, Larkspur Close, Protheroe House and Stokley Court were chosen because they are unsuitable for supported housing, do not have modern facilities or need a lot of investment to bring them up to the decent homes standard.
- 7.8 To inform its decision on the future of the 4 schemes, the Council asked the Housing Quality Network (HQN) – an independent consultancy – to carry out a detailed assessment of the different options for each scheme. The inclusion of each scheme in the decent homes programme would be dependent on the outcome of the review.
- 7.9 The options considered for each of the 4 supported housing schemes were:
- Retain it as supported housing and include it in the decent homes programme;
  - Convert the accommodation to ‘general needs’ housing and include it in the decent homes programme;
  - Convert the accommodation to ‘extra care’ supported housing and include it in the decent homes programme;
  - Clear the site and redevelop it (with Homes for Haringey or a registered social landlord) as 100% social rented or as a mixed tenure development in line with the Council’s mixed tenure policies;
  - Clear the site and dispose of it on the open market
- 7.10 In its report (see Appendix B), the Housing Quality Network sets out the options for each of the 4 sheltered housing schemes, taking into account the state of the current property market, the likely costs of the building work, any planning issues affecting the sites, possible levels of rent and management costs and the likelihood of getting a grant from the government.
- 7.11 The HQN report sets out detailed cost estimates of the various options, including an ‘optimum’ solution. This solution proposes all four schemes at once.
- 7.12 The optimum solution outlined by HQN would have a one-off cost of around £11.7m for the cost of redevelopment or conversion plus clearance costs. Capital receipts of around £0.9m could be set against this; additionally, HCA funding of around £2.9m may be possible. Securing a housing association partner could attract investment of around £7.2m.
- 7.13 As explained in Paragraph 5.6, however, it is recommended that the Council addresses each scheme on an individual basis, rather than pursue this ‘optimum’ solution. This process will require additional financial analysis and feasibility work to ensure the costs of the proposed changes are viable. Indicative financial estimates are set out in the HQN report attached as Appendix B.

## **8. Chief Financial Officer Comments**

- 8.1 At this stage, it is not possible to determine accurate costs without more detailed analysis of the recommended options. However, where a property is to be retained, it will normally cost in the region of £500k to bring it up to the decent homes standard. The cost for Campbell Court, however, is expected to be less.
- 8.2 Where a site is to be redeveloped, the exact costs would depend on the size and nature of the new scheme, but there may be capital costs of upwards of £7m. The Council would seek to mitigate these costs from grant funding or by working with a partner but, at this point, grant funding cannot be guaranteed.
- 8.3 Any change in the nature of care provided may impact on the revenue budget within Adult Social Services. However, until a decision has been reached on the type of accommodation that will be provided (and the extent to which new provision is likely to impact on the Council's use of residential care), it is not possible to accurately assess the likely impact on the revenue budget.

## **9. Head of Legal Services Comments**

- 9.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report.
- 9.2 The Council has a responsibility to make arrangements to provide residential accommodation for persons aged 18 or over who because of age, illness, disability and any other circumstances are in need of care and attention which is not otherwise available. The sheltered housing scheme is part of such a responsibility.
- 9.3 In making such arrangements, the Council must have regard to the welfare of all persons for whom accommodation is provided and in particular to the need for providing accommodation of different descriptions suited to the different needs of the people to whom it has the responsibility. In order to fulfil its responsibility, the welfare of those people at present in occupation of premises situated at Protheroe House must be addressed.
- 9.4 Protheroe House, Larkspur Close and Stokley Court are held by the Council for housing purposes. Disposal cannot take place unless the consent of the Secretary of State is first obtained. The Secretary of State has issued some general consents. Further reports must be produced once proposals for redevelopment or disposal have been agreed and further legal comments will be provided on those proposals and on whether or not specific consents will be required or whether the Council can rely on the General Consents.
- 9.5 If the tenants of Protheroe House need to move out to enable the site to be redeveloped, suitable alternative accommodation must be provided to those that the Council has a duty under the homelessness provisions, under paragraph 9.2

above and/or those with a secure tenancy.

- 9.6 There is a statutory duty to engage in formal consultation with residents before deciding the future of their sheltered housing scheme. This is described more fully in paragraphs 12.1 to 12.4 below.

## **10. Head of Procurement Comments**

Not applicable

## **11. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments**

- 11.1 The recommendations set out in this report will help to promote sustainable communities by providing older people with greater choice in their housing, housing-related support and social care.
- 11.2 'Extra care' supported housing is under-provided in Haringey, and this severely limits the choices and life chances of particularly vulnerable older people who may find themselves restricted to residential care options.

## **12. Consultation**

- 12.1 The Housing Act 1985 places an obligation on the Council to consult with secure tenants on housing management matters which are likely to affect them, This includes matters that relate to the management, maintenance, improvement or demolition of their homes.
- 12.2 Any proposals to decommission sheltered housing schemes and to transfer tenants to alternative accommodation would be matters that fall within this requirement. The consultation arrangements must allow the tenants to make their views known to the Council within a specified period and the Council must take those views into consideration before making a final decision on the matter.
- 12.3 Although the residents of Campbell Court, Larkspur Close, Protheroe House and Stokley Court have received a number of briefings on the progress of the Supported Housing Review and the options appraisal, no formal consultation has taken place.
- 12.4 Most residents attending the briefings expressed understandable concern and anxiety at the prospect of moving from their home. Some wanted to know whether there is scope for them to remain within a friendship group if they need to transfer to alternative supported housing.

### **13. Service Financial Comments**

13.1 The HQN report sets out estimated costs for each scheme.

13.2 Although the recommendation is to delay a decision on the use of Stokley court, Members need to be aware that if a decision is taken to redevelop the site at a later date, the capital costs of that scheme will be of a significant scale.

13.3 Although the estimated capital costs are shown in the HQN report (Appendix B, it would be prudent for the Council to review this data and costings before a final decision is taken on each scheme.

### **14. Use of appendices**

### **15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

15.1 The following background papers were used to inform the production of this report:

- Ridgeway Report – Older Person’s Housing and Support Needs Analysis (July 2005)
- HQN Report – Sheltered Housing Options Appraisal (August 2009)