

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF TENANCY & ESTATE MANAGEMENT

17 NOVEMBER 2009

REVIEW SUPPORTED HOUSING SERVICES

1 SUMMARY

- 1.2 In order to secure the long term future of the Supported Housing Service a comprehensive review has been undertaken to make sure that the service is fit for purpose; meets customer expectations; delivers value for money and maximises Supporting People funding. The report outlines the recommendations arising from the review.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that a small working group from the Housing Services Committee is established to work with Officer's to deliver the required modernisation of the Supported Housing Service.
- 2.2 That further discussions are undertaken with the Supporting People team to maximise funding to support the changes in service delivery

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The 2009 Audit Commission Inspection found that the strengths and weaknesses of the Supported Housing Service were balanced. It went on to say that whilst the service was valued by residents it did not reflect modern practices. The report stated that NCH recognised the need to modernise and would be well placed to secure Supporting People contracts in the future as the modernisation of the service was being addressed by the review.
- 3.2 The review has included extensive consultation with key stakeholders and tenants.

In summary the review proposed four options for change:

- Leave the service as it is;
- Modify the existing service for example, augmenting support hours at schemes where there are high dependency needs and reducing support in schemes where support needs are lower;
- Adopt a floating support model;

- Adopt a Hub and Spoke model of service delivery;

3.2 Leave the service as it is

3.2.1 The current service consists of 62 sheltered schemes, four of which are high rise; each has a dedicated Scheme Manager. The Mobile Support Service responds to calls after 2pm weekdays and at weekends. The current service provides support based upon where a tenant lives as opposed to the required support needs of the individuals. The service is a traditional warden service with one scheme manager per scheme with the number of sheltered units varying widely between schemes. There is a lack of consistency in service delivery which operates on a Monday to Friday basis, in addition there is little contingency built into the structure to cover for periods of long term sickness absence and holidays.

3.2.2 Both the Audit Commission and the Supporting People Team have highlighted the need to modernise the service to meet the needs and choices of customers and to ensure it is robust enough to secure future Supporting People contracts. Tenants have also identified concerns regarding the current structure, therefore the option to leave the service as it is, is not a viable one.

3.3 Modify the existing service

3.3.1 A move towards a 'needs led service' based on tenants' individual need and choice, is in line with the Governments personalisation agenda. Under this option the service would change incrementally to offer support over a seven day period according to 'need'.

3.3.2 Taking this approach and changing the service incrementally over a period of time, would mean the short term impact for tenants would be lessened. However some of the changes needing to be implemented are not possible on an incremental basis, such as the tiered needs led service provision, a revised charging structure and the move away from the one manager per scheme model. It is likely that some schemes would have insufficient support hours needed to justify one full time equivalent scheme manager. In addition any changes would take place over a much longer period of time which presents its own challenges in maintaining the momentum and vision for the new service. This option does not fully meet the needs led approach which is desired for the service and which is a requirement for Supporting People.

3.4 Adopt a floating support model

3.4.1 Increasing numbers of service providers are restructuring to deliver services via a floating support system. Floating support systems are seen to be an effective use of limited resources. This would offer a 'needs led' service whereby support is offered to tenants in their own homes. In Nottingham there is already a Floating Support Service

delivered by Spirita, providing support for older people across tenure. Supporting People have stated that they are not looking to commission a further floating support service to older people in the city. If NCH were to move to this model of service delivery there is a real risk that it could lose business.

- 3.4.2 During the review tenants made it clear that a consistent staff presence on site is important to them for peace of mind and security. It encourages a sense of community. For some it was the main reason they moved in to sheltered housing and is seen as one of the main attractions of the service. Increasingly sheltered schemes are catering for an ageing tenant population, who have a higher level of frailty and sense of vulnerability.

3.5 **Adopt a Hub and Spoke model approach to service delivery**

The outcome from the review was to recommend this model of service delivery for NCH. A number of providers have successfully adopted this approach and it is the model supported by the Essential Role of Sheltered Housing (ERoSH), an independent national charity.

The Hub and Spoke model is a flexible approach to service delivery and a good basis for delivering tiered services as it is fully 'needs led' with support plans and is based on the assessed needs of the individual.

It is proposed that support officers would work within small area teams. Each team would be based within a sheltered scheme in a central location (Hub), whilst delivering support services to surrounding schemes (spokes). Through the Hub and Spoke model, staff teams will benefit from improved team working and synergy. Roles responsibilities and accountabilities are clearer and supervision works more effectively. Other providers using this model have said it achieves improved performance and meets service targets.

There are opportunities to develop partnership working with other agencies such as Adult Social Health and Housing (ASHH), community Police teams and voluntary agencies by using facilities at the hub or with the possibility of basing some services in the hub. Customers can then access a potentially wide range of services at the scheme. Many of these services would be low level preventative services which are both a local and national priority.

There is also a greater focus on developing the use of sheltered schemes as a community resource. Specialist roles within teams would be developed to tackle issues such as Dementia, or promote take up in schemes from the BME communities.

4 **Other Findings**

- 4.1 A dependency survey was undertaken at each sheltered scheme to

assess the amount of support required. The support element based on customer need is broken down into three categories:

- High Contact of 15 minutes per day over 7 days per week
- Medium Contact of 30 minutes per 5 day working week
- Low Contact of 60 minutes per month

4.2 To meet the Supporting People's personalisation agenda the individual customer will choose how and when they want the allocated support delivered and will be offered a choice of visits and intercom contacts.

Based on the dependency survey, schemes have been broken down into six areas across the City, with the four high rise schemes together as an individual hub and spoke unit, Staffing resources will then be allocated to each hub and spoke based upon the dependency.

4.4 The Mobile Support Service which offers out of hours support to residents connected to Nottingham on Call is not funded by Supporting People but is Housing Revenue Account funded. The service is 100% support based and should be funded by the Supporting People team. The service needs to be restructured as part of the review and will require additional resources to ensure its efficiency.

4.3 At present all corridor sheltered schemes are cleaned via a Service Level Agreement with Nottingham City Council. Sheltered scheme managers currently clean the communal areas in sheltered schemes. The review has recommended that as part of the professionalisation of the Supported Housing Service cleaning duties should not be undertaken by scheme managers but responsibility and budgetary provision moved to the Estates and Caretaking Service Manager.

4.5 It is recommended that arrangements regarding the provision of social activities should be centralised to ensure consistency and provide a wider range of options within centres. It is also intended to widen the audience for activities by encouraging other older residents in the surrounding community into schemes, particularly those who are vulnerable and/or socially isolated.

4.6 Catering facilities also need to be reviewed to ensure that where activities are undertaken the facilities and equipment within the centres meet health and safety requirements.

5 OTHER OPTIONS

5.1 The options are outlined in 3.2 - 3.5 above.

6 FINANCIAL & RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Failure to modernise the service is likely to result in the loss of the Supporting People contract and/or failure to attract new business

opportunities

- 6.2 Changes to the service could result in redundancies. To mitigate this risk recent vacancies have been filled through agency or fixed term contract employment.
- 6.3 The review will be contained within existing budgets, with opportunities to make efficiencies taken wherever possible.
- 6.4 There is a need to review the charges made to tenants for the service and decisions on whether a tiered approach to charging need to be explored.
- 6.5 In addition the cost of service provision for NOC is not being fully met by residents and Supporting People
- 6.6 Supporting People funding needs to be maximised. There are areas of the Supported Housing Service which should be funded through Supporting People and are not. Discussions are taking place to ensure any efficiencies which can be made in areas of the service currently funded by Supporting People can be recycled to fund services which currently are not funded, in particular the Mobile Support Service.

7 IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The review of the Supported Housing Service is one of the Company's key priorities.

8 VALUE FOR MONEY & EFFICIENCY ISSUES

- 8.1 A modern, fit for purpose Supported Housing Service will place the Company in a good position to not only retain current services but attract new business opportunities.
- 8.2 The review of the service will deliver a more efficient and effective service to our customers and key stakeholders.

9 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A Full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the review.

10 BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

- 10.1 NCC Older Persons Strategy
NCH Supported Housing Review – Older People

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