

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

HOUSING MANAGEMENT
SERVICES COMMITTEE
21 JUNE 2010

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF HOUSING OPERATIONS

TRANSFER OF THE MANAGEMENT OF FOXTON GARDENS SHELTERED SCHEME FROM SPIRITA TO NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

1 SUMMARY

Nottingham City Homes are to take over the management of the Foxton Gardens sheltered housing scheme in Bilborough. It is a Nottingham City Council scheme, but managed by Spirita who have given notice to end their management responsibility. NCH will assume responsibility for all housing management functions from 28th June 2010. Spirita are retaining responsibility for care and tenancy support.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Housing Management Services Committee approve the arrangements detailed in the report, subject to the financial position that is to be confirmed.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Foxton Gardens was built in 1992 by Nottingham City Council and is the most modern sheltered housing scheme owned by the City. It has considerably better appointed communal facilities offering a range of services than in traditional schemes. It is a mixed scheme with 42 one-bedroom flats, 14 one-bedroom bungalows and 2 three-bedroom houses. One of the houses has previously been used as office accommodation, but neither are currently occupied. The City Council are looking to let at least one of the houses sensitively through the Assisted Living Team.
- 3.2 Whilst built and owned by Nottingham City Council, the City and latterly NCH have never managed the complex. It was managed by Anchor Housing until 2004 and then by Spirita. Tenants hold Secure Tenancies with the City Council.
- 3.3 Foxton differs in a number of ways from the rest of the property stock, particularly around rent charging that will need to be addressed. Namely, Foxton tenants currently pay weekly in advance over 52 weeks per annum and the inclusive rent charge for the flats includes heating and water charges. A service charge for the communal facilities is paid by all tenants. Housing Benefit is paid to Spirita four weeks in arrears.
- 3.4 Spirita have given notice to Nottingham City Council to end the housing management function that they provide. They are retaining the tenancy support function until March 2011 when the Supporting People contract is

up for renewal.

4 TRANSFER PROCESS

- 4.1 A Project Plan has been devised to guide the transfer process and regular meetings with the City Council and Spirita are taking place.
- 4.2 Key actions such as surveying the properties, creating computerised records and a Joint Working protocol are in the process of being completed. The project is on track to complete the transfer by 28th June 2010.
- 4.3 A new post of Facilities Co-ordinator has been created and a Job Description written and graded. Recruitment through an agency on a fixed term basis until 31st March 2011 is in progress. It is anticipated that the appointment will be made by 21st June 2010 to assist in the handover.
- 4.4 Residents have been briefed on the transfer by the City Council and Spirita. A meeting with residents is being arranged in the week commencing 14th June 2010 to ensure payment methods are updated and communication is maintained.
- 4.5 Surprisingly, given the quality of the scheme, there are 9 properties void at the time of writing, not including the 2 houses. 3 of these have been void for over a year. Letting these properties and reducing the considerable rent loss is a priority with better marketing of the scheme and its facilities.

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 At the time of writing the increase in management fee due to the Company had not been confirmed by the City Council. The Company will ensure that the fee provided will cover costs and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.
- 5.2 The management of risk will follow the existing measures put in place by the Company and the Supported Housing service. A site-specific risk assessment will be undertaken on transfer.

6 IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The transfer of the management of Foxtan Gardens to the Company ends the anomaly of Council stock being managed elsewhere. Foxtan Gardens is a high quality sheltered scheme that is looking to provide services to the local community in addition to residents. This will add value to the stock managed by the Company and help to deliver excellent services to tenants and communities.
- 6.2 The City Council are also considering whether the scheme could be a future Extra Care facility. This provides the Company with the potential to gain experience in this area which could provide future business opportunities.

7 VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENCY ISSUES

- 7.1 The additional properties to be managed will come with a corresponding increase in the Management Fee provided by the City.

8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The residents of Foxtan Gardens are generally considered to be more frail than those at other sheltered schemes. The facilities provided are more extensive and of a higher quality than existing schemes.
- 8.2 The housing/ facilities management and tenancy support functions are to be separate at Foxtan Gardens. This is different to other sheltered schemes, but a Joint Working Protocol has been written to ensure the continued wellbeing of residents.

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

- 9.1 None

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