



Report of Head of Tenancy Management & Customer Services

Report to Outer West Area Committee

Date: 14th September 2010

Subject: Sheltered Service Review

Electoral Wards Affected:

Calverley & Farsley
Farnley & Wortley
Pudsey

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call in Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

This report provides members of the Outer West Area Committee with the background and current position to the Sheltered Housing Review currently being undertaken and implemented by West North West homes Leeds. The report highlights that the service has previously been found not to be financially viable within the current arrangements and funding provided via Supporting People. The review has included vast customer consultation and has enabled a financially viable model to be developed which allows WNWhL to provide a supportive and caring environment for an independent life style. WNWhL have now submitted a tender for the Sheltered Housing Service based upon this model, the result of which will be due in September 2010. WNWhL has also recently undergone a Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework validation which has resulted in the overall score improving from a level "C" to a level "B".

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

To Update the Local Ward Members on the progress of the Sheltered Housing Review within West North West homes Leeds, which is aimed at promoting independence and preventing the need for more intensive services.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 In 2002 the Sheltered Housing Service transferred to Neighbourhoods and Housing from Social services. In 2003 Supporting People was introduced. In 2006 the service

was transferred to the ALMOs and in 2007 West North West homes Leeds was formed when the ALMOs merged. In 2008 the organisation made a decision not to bid for the Sheltered Housing Service when it came up for tender, due to the service not being financially viable. No other bidders for the West North West Sheltered Housing Service were received in 2009 and WNWhL continued to provide this service to date.

- 2.2 Following the successful review and delivery of a number of modernisation projects within West North West homes Leeds, the Board agreed a further review of the Sheltered Housing Service to be carried out. The objective of the review was to determine if the service could be made financially viable, whilst still offering customers a high level of service and ultimately competitive through the tendering process.
 - 2.3 As part of the review, the Board considered a number of service models from maintaining the status quo of a “one size fits all” approach, to modernising delivery to a needs led service. The Board approved that the work be undertaken to modernise the service around a needs led service which is financially viable and cost neutral over the life contract. WNWhL aims to provide a service which offers value for money, helps older people live healthy and active lifestyles, promotes independence and social inclusion and which exceeds performance indicators.
 - 2.4 During our Audit Commission inspection in March 2010, only two weaknesses were highlighted with the Sheltered Housing Service, these being the lack of progress of the modernisation, due to WNWhL decision not to bid for the service and the lack of alternative bidders, and the quality of some stock condition, which is being addressed through our Management Asset plan.
 - 2.5 Positively the Audit Commission commented on the effectiveness of WNWhL support for vulnerable customers, use of support plans, high satisfaction levels, ranges of activities and events held at most schemes to promote active and healthy lifestyles and combat social isolation.
 - 2.6 In June 2010 the Board of WNWhL approved our bid for the tender of the Sheltered Housing Service, based upon the proposed new model of delivery and within the financial specifications of the contract, this was submitted on time and has resulted in WNWhL attending a shortlist interview in September 2010. The contract award decision is expected towards the end of September and the contract should commence in November 2010.
 - 2.7 A Quality Assessment visit took place by Supporting People on the 3rd June 2010. The visit comprised of a managers briefing, evidence checks on site and subsequently a desk top review, interviews took place with staff and customers .
 - 2.8 As a result of this assessment, WNWhL has improved its previous “C” rating and has now been awarded a “B” score , specifically in relation to Support Planning and Safeguarding. We are pleased that as part of this process, there were a number of areas where WNWhL attained the highest possible level “A”.
 - 2.9 Positive comments received from Supporting People include; “All staff are passionate, committed and knowledgeable about their role and believe they are helping older people to remain in their own home and preventing them having to be admitted to hospital and residential and nursing care”.
- 3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 All of our customers received a one to one interview with the warden to agree a visit pattern that promotes independence and reflects the needs identified within the support plan process. We have agreed the visit pattern with the customer and the type of contact made i.e. phone call or face to face visit. This has enabled us to build a model that provides every customer with the level of services they need, within budget and with the enhancement of offering a wider range of activities and events to help improve health and well being, independent living and combat social isolation.
- 3.2 The modernisation programme is being managed through a Project Board, consisting of Senior Managers, Customers and a Board Director. Councillor Alison Lowe has been providing Director level input. To date the Project Board has been very effective at ensuring that customers needs are at the centre of the modernisation programme. Staff and customers have been involved in the process throughout, participating in workshops which have helped design the new roles and duties and the improved support planning procedures.
- 3.4 The modernised service will be delivered by three “cluster” teams within specific geographic areas. This will ensure that our customers receive a consistent service and that there is appropriate cover for sickness, annual leave etc, by individuals who are known to our customers. We are in the process of reviewing ICT support needs to ensure that the new service is as effective and efficient as possible, optimising the amount of time our Scheme Managers (Wardens) can spend facilitating activities and undertaking their support duties.
- 3.5 As part of our realignment of services, we are merging the Sheltered Housing and Tenancy Support services under the umbrella of Independent Living. This will ensure that we have Team Leaders with specific responsibility for matters of Safeguarding, Support and Activities, and that our front line staff are equipped with the knowledge and access to referrals for tenancy support. An “Independent Living Coordinator” will be in place for the first 12 months. It will be their responsibility to ensure new processes are in place to support the enhancement of activities etc.
- 3.6 The Trade Unions have been actively involved in negotiations in relation to this project and have not identified any areas of concern.
- 3.7 Every six months we have carried out Customer satisfaction questionnaires in the Sheltered Service. Through these we have identified that our customers want to engage in more social activities. As a result we have planned to resource a dedicated member of staff to coordinate this task within the new structure.
- 3.8 We have introduced a Sheltered Housing Hot Line to ensure our customers and their relatives can speak in confidence to a Manager who is independent from the operational service. Customers are being kept up to date with the review via our newly introduced sheltered newsletter “Looking Forward”. We have commenced a programme of scheduled visits to coffee mornings to ensure that all customers’ concerns and enquiries are listened to and acted upon.
- 3.9 We have visited 3 Star organisations with Sheltered Staff and some of our sheltered customers and shared good practice which is being fed into our Service Improvement Plans

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

- 4.1 WNWhL have kept LCC updated on progress through the quarterly strategic landlord meetings. All ward members and MPs have received a written briefing and had an invite to attend drop-in sessions in August and September 2010.
- 4.2 The Board and Committee governance structure of WNWhL have been the principle decision making bodies for the proposals to modernise and bid for the service. Supporting People as the commissioning body have received WNWhLs proposals for modernisation through the tender process and will evaluate this against the specification when considering who to award the contract to. These decisions are ultimately agreed via the Environment and Neighbourhoods Delegated Decision Panel.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1 The supporting People Contract Management process is to ensure that services are being delivered to the required quality standards and are continually improved as stated in the method statement at procurement. Service quality is monitored through the Contract Management process and involves an annual self assessment of each service against the Five Supporting People quality standards in the Quality Assessment Framework.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The modernisation of the delivery of Sheltered Housing Services within the West North West area has been positively received by customers and partners. It not only addresses a key weakness identified by the Audit Commission, but also acts as a driver to improve services in accordance with the Quality Assessment Framework. The modernisation programme will ensure that services are delivered in line with our current customers' "wants" and our future customers' "needs". These changes have been necessary to make the service lean and financially viable within the constraints of the Supporting People contract specification. The review has enabled Senior Management, Customers, Board Members and Ward members to fully understand the Sheltered Housing Service and make recommendations for improvements based upon supporting independence, capacity building and promoting, health, well being and social inclusion.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Area Committee note the positive work that has been undertaken to improve services for Sheltered Housing customers within the West North West area.