

EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL UNDER STANDING ORDER 49 (3)

ITEM FOR: INFORMATION

DISCUSSION

DECISION

REPORT TO: EAST NORTH EAST HOMES LEEDS BOARD

REPORT FROM: EAST NORTH EAST HOMES LEEDS CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: STRATFORD COURT SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME

PRESENTED BY: STEVE HUNT

DATE: 1 DECEMBER 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stratford Court is a sheltered housing scheme located in the centre of Chapel Allerton. The scheme was constructed in the 1960s and comprises twelve units with shared bathing facilities. The scheme needs refurbishment to bring it up to modern standards and this report proposes a number of options for Board to consider that will deliver that modernisation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ENEHL Board is asked to consider the various options for the future of Stratford Court and take a view on which option to support.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To obtain ENEHL Board support for redevelopment of Stratford Court Sheltered Housing Scheme to deliver a modern facility with increased bed spaces.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Stratford Court Sheltered Housing Scheme is a twelve unit block for older residents located in the centre of Chapel Allerton. It was built in the 1960s on an in-fill site on School Lane to the rear of what is now a Somerfield supermarket on Stainbeck Lane almost at the junction with Harrogate Road. The scheme is now dated, particularly as it has shared bathing facilities, and requires substantial investment to make it suitable for older residents in the 21st Century. It is considered the number one priority Sheltered Scheme for investment in the ENEHL area but despite its need for investment and lack of basic amenities it remains a fully occupied and popular scheme due to its proximity to the urban centre. ENEHL no longer provide a resident Warden on site and support for the residents is provided by a mobile Scheme Manager linking into the Care Ring system out of hours.
- 2.2 Earlier this year ENEHL was allocated £500k of the FRS17 reserves which were returned to the Council following their decision to underwrite our liability, in order that we could undertake an improvement programme at Stratford Court to convert the scheme to self contained units with en suite bathing facilities. That conversion would have reduced occupancy levels down from units to around seven units. As this is considered to be small for a sheltered scheme and would result in displacement of some of the existing residents, other options have been explored.

3.0 INFORMATION

- 3.1 A number of options have been considered for the future of the Scheme:-
- **Do nothing.** The Scheme is fully occupied and remains popular despite its dated facilities, mainly due to its excellent location. However this would leave ENEHL managing a scheme with facilities falling far short of those expected in modern sheltered accommodation. At some stage demand issues would arise;
 - **ENEHL improvement.** The Scheme can be upgraded to provide en suite bathing facilities but this would require temporary decanting of the existing tenants and a reduction in the number of habitable units from 12 to 7. The estimated cost of upgrade is £500k and this sum has been earmarked from FRS17 funds returned to the Council by ENEHL;
 - **RSL redevelopment.** A redevelopment schematic has been produced by Unity Housing Association which proposes clearance of the existing scheme and redevelopment and replacement with a new 28 room facility. This proposal requires release of the existing scheme at less than best value (free) and would provide a mix of rented, shared ownership and flats for sale on the site (60/20/20% mix). The rents would be a mix of market and affordable. Support would have to be given to Unity to decant the existing tenants whilst the

redevelopment takes place but ENEHL would look to secure nomination rights allowing those tenants to return to the new scheme should they so wish The schematic is attached as Appendix A;

- **Demolish the Scheme.** The existing scheme could be demolished and the site sold without reprovion resulting in a capital receipt for the Council. This would result in a loss of 12 units of accommodation in the locality. Demolition costs would initially have to be borne by ENEHL and an application made for reimbursement from the land sale receipt.

3.2 Doing nothing and demolishing the scheme are not considered viable options. The scheme falls far short of current standards and investment is urgently required but clearance would result in the loss of sheltered units for which there is demand.

Of the two remaining options both are viable. ENEHL could undertake the conversion work but this would reduce the number of habitable units from 12 to 7. That would result in some existing tenants having to be permanently rehoused and a reduction in overall sheltered provision in the locality. Redevelopment and provision of a new scheme would require all existing tenants to be temporarily rehoused (or permanently if they so wished) but with a commitment to allow them to return on completion. The new Scheme would provide additionality and a mix of tenures which it is believed would be appropriate in this locality. Redevelopment could be undertaken at no cost to ENEHL whereas conversion of the existing scheme would cost around £500k.

3.3 There has been some preliminary discussions within the Council about the options, particularly the option to demolish and replace through Unity Housing Association. Planning have given initial support to the schematic which has been adjusted to reflect concerns about elevations and overlooking of adjacent properties. Regeneration have given indicative support to the proposal by Unity as this would require reallocation of Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding allocations over the next few years (which has been given in principle support). No consultation has taken place with Ward Members or Residents at this stage.

Overall officers at ENEHL consider disposal and redevelopment by a Housing Association to be the preferred option.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 If the Scheme is redeveloped by ENEHL then it would cost in the region of £500k and funding is available for this from the FRS17 redistribution. These funds could potentially be reallocated to other capital works if one of the other options is selected. If the site is disposed of to Unity at less than best value then the Council would forgo the capital receipt which could be realised if the site were disposed of on the open market. If Unity develop a new scheme this would be at no cost to the Council or ENEHL save for the cost of decanting tenants for the duration of the redevelopment.

5.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 There is potential for an adverse public reaction from the existing residents and surrounding neighbours to the scheme. It is substantially higher than the existing scheme (2/3 storeys rather than 1) although has a similar footprint. Residents would be inconvenienced in having to move but would be able to move back to a new facility albeit at a higher rent.

6.0 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment will be undertaken by Unity as part of their submission to HCA.

7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 7.1 There are no known health and safety issues.

8.0 VALUE FOR MONEY

- 8.1 Whichever option is adopted (other than do nothing) there would be a procurement or tender exercise to secure best price for the work or for the site. Unity have to demonstrate the financial viability of the scheme to the HCA.

9.0 ACCESS AND CUSTOMER CARE

- 9.1 Existing residents would be visited individually and have access to existing support provided by ENEHL to displaced residents.

10.0 RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

- 10.1 Residents have not been consulted at this stage, nor have local Ward Members. If approvals in principle are given by ENEHL Board and by the Council then a full consultation exercise will be carried out.

11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 ENEHL Board is asked to consider the various options for the future of Stratford Court and take a view on which option to support.