



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Executive Board

Date: 26th August 2009

Subject: Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) Older People's Housing

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

1. Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 In June 2009 Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) published a report on Older People's Housing. In accordance with the requirements of the constitution, the response to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations needs to be agreed by the Executive Board. The purpose of this report is therefore to outline for Executive Board the recommendations made by Scrutiny Board and to note the comments of the Environment and Neighbourhoods, Adult Social Care and City Development directorates.

2. Main Issues

The directorate's comments to each of the recommendations are as follows:-

Recommendation 1 – *That the updated Leeds Older People's Housing Strategy action plan is seen within the context of the other key strategies aimed at promoting the wider health and wellbeing agenda for older people, such as the Dementia Strategy, Leeds Mental Health Strategy and Older Better Strategy.*

The director agrees with Recommendation 1 and can confirm that work is underway to update the action plan in the wider context of national and local strategies.

Recommendation 2 – *That the updated Leeds Older People’s Housing Strategy action plan is brought back to the relevant Scrutiny Board for consideration once available.*

The director agrees with Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 3 – *That the Executive Board commits to the development of an area based Initiative for Leeds based upon a ‘Warm Zone’ model over the next 12 months as a method of addressing fuel poverty, particularly amongst vulnerable households such as older people.*

Excess cold has been identified as the most common hazard relating to private housing stock in the city. Action to address excess cold is therefore a key priority in relation to improving private sector housing standards. The draft Housing Strategy puts forward a proposal relating to establishing a ‘Warm Zone’ in the city, albeit with the caveat that this proposal will need to be initially considered by the Executive Board.

Recommendation 4 – *That the council ensures that from April 2010, housing related support services receive sufficient funding through Area Based Grant to at least maintain existing services, with a view to enhancing provisions in the future to meet with any increased demands for such services.*

Decisions relating to the distribution of funding lies with the Executive Board. Information can be provided to the Executive Board, when setting the budget, which will describe the potential impact of budget proposals.

Recommendation 5 – *That the findings of the research commissioned by the Leeds Commissioning Body into the wider benefits and outcomes generated through the provision of housing-related support services, is brought back to Scrutiny for consideration.*

The director agrees with Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 6 – *That the implications of the personalisation agenda and the role of Individualised Budgets in the commissioning of housing related support services is taken into consideration in the development of the Leeds Housing Related Support Strategy.*

The director agrees with Recommendation 6.

Recommendation 7 – *That the Leeds Housing Related Support Strategy is brought back to the relevant Scrutiny Board for consideration once available.*

The director agrees with Recommendation 7.

Recommendation 8 – *That further analysis around future projections for the demand of Telecare Services in Leeds forms part of the wider piece of research work commissioned to assess the impact of Telecare services in Leeds.*

Adult Social Care agree that current research being undertaken into the impact of telecare should include a future demand forecasting exercise.

Recommendation 9 – *That the Director of Development investigates and reports on the viability of adopting a model to be implemented, which reflects the spirit of the London Supplementary Planning Guidance for mandatory development to Lifetime Homes Standards, but suits the diversity and specific requirements of the City of Leeds, reporting findings to the Executive Board before 31 December 2009*

This recommendation is not agreed. The council is already taking steps to address this through the formal planning process.

Recommendation 10 – *That the Director of Development reports back to Scrutiny within 3 months on the existing and planned policies and guidance aimed at promoting innovative and inclusive planning design and quality across the city in line with the Lifetime Neighbourhoods Concept.*

The Council's existing adopted guidance 'Neighbourhoods for Living' (2003) includes a range of principles and guidance aimed at developers, designers, community groups, decision makers, businesses and the public which are consistent with the Lifetime Neighbourhoods concept. Key issues addressed include improving accessibility for disabled people and accommodating an ageing population, creating walkable neighbourhoods and creating a safe and secure environment. In addition major new policies and guides are subject to Sustainability Appraisal and Equality Impact Assessment. Given that this is broadly consistent with the aspirations expressed in the Scrutiny recommendation it is not considered that the further work proposed is appropriate, particularly given the context of other work priorities and resources.

Recommendation 11 – *That the Director of Development reports back to Scrutiny within 3 months on how Leeds can work towards achieving Beacon status for inclusive planning.*

Whilst it is recognised that Beacon status would be a positive achievement experience suggests that this involves a resource intensive process both in achieving Beacon status (through an application process/rigorous assessment) and if successful, delivering the on going work programme (including the Beacon year). This entails both maintaining and 'growing' the initiative as a Beacon authority and also external PR & partnership hosting (events and arranging visits from authorities wishing to learn from best practice i.e. the 'Beacon authority'). Given current resourcing levels, existing commitments and the need for further efficiencies it would be difficult to absorb this work without severely affecting other work streams. Comments on the previous recommendations indicate that we are already looking to address these issues and it is clearly not necessary to have Beacon status in order to achieve better outcomes.

Recommendation 12 – *That the following factors are taken into account by the Council in the future development of extra-care housing schemes:*

- i. To have a very clear strategic position before embarking on a new scheme;*
- ii. That the scheme fits in with the needs of the wider community and integrates with and complements what already exists locally;*
- iii. To look at what is practicable and deliverable before consulting the wider community on the scheme;*
- iv. To project-manage the scheme so that the lead-in time from the development stages to completion is kept as short as possible;*
- v. To be more inventive with the name of the scheme, such as 'retirement village' rather than use the term 'extra care housing' which may not attract residents;*

- vi. *To have a transparent allocations criteria and procedure (making use of an independent body to act as mediator) and to be clear from the outset that not all applicants will receive a place;*
- vii. *To accept that new schemes will continue to evolve as technology develops and expectations change*

In relation to recommendation 12 (vi), the Council will need to ensure that any changes to the allocations criteria and procedure, including the use of an independent body as a mediator, are made in accordance with the legislative framework.

Recommendation 13 *That the Brunswick Gardens Retirement Village in Sheffield is considered by the council as an example of good practice for extra care provision, particularly in relation to the development of community facilities*

The director agrees with this recommendation and would also recommend that other examples of best practice are used to inform future developments in Leeds.

Recommendation 14 *That the directors of Adult Social Care and Environment and Neighbourhoods conduct an urgent piece of work to establish the potential costs of providing housing related support services to the proposed schemes outlined within the council's Private Finance Initiative funding bid for the modernisation of sheltered housing.*

The directors of Adult Social Care and Environment and Neighbourhoods are committed to work to establish the potential costs of proposed schemes as outlined in Recommendation 14. This work will be undertaken within the wider revenue scoping required within the schemes. A cross-directorate project team has been established in relation to the proposed PFI schemes and the revenue costs will be included within the overall project plan.

Recommendation 15 *That the details of the options appraisal into the future investment/management of council housing, with specific reference to older people's housing, is brought back to Scrutiny for consideration at the earliest opportunity.*

The director agrees with this recommendation.

Recommendation 16 *That a dedicated strategy is put in place to take forward the council's plans for the development of Older People's housing irrespective of the outcome of the PFI funding bid.*

The director agrees with this recommendation and would comment that this will be included in the refresh and update of the older people's housing strategy and action plan. Members will note that the council has been successful with the PFI Expression of Interest and that £183m has provisionally been allocated to the city.

Recommendation 17 *In supporting the development of an Extra-Care Housing Plan to quantify the demand and required supply of extra care provision across tenures and locations, we recommend that this Plan be brought back to Scrutiny for consideration once available.*

The director agrees with this recommendation.

Recommendation 18 *That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on producing an action plan over the next 6 months aimed at enhancing existing housing support and advice services targeted at older people across the city.*

The director agrees with this recommendation. The refresh of the current Older People's Housing Strategy action plan will reflect the outcomes of this recommendation.

Recommendation 19 *That the Directors of Environment and Neighbourhoods and Adult Social Care ensure that the work conducted by the Leeds Older People's Forum around addressing social isolation amongst older people is embedded into existing training mechanisms for all relevant front line staff delivering services to older people.*

The directors agree with this recommendation and will ensure that this requirement is built into all services commissioned by the two directorates.

Recommendation 20 *That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods takes a lead role in developing a working model aimed at delivering integrated housing and housing support services to older people at a neighbourhood level.*

The director agrees with this recommendation. The services currently commissioned to provide housing related support to older people are delivered at a local level but there is work ongoing to ensure that these are integrated with other services offering care and housing management in the same locality. The Environment and Neighbourhood directorate works closely with Adult Social Care to jointly fund Neighbourhood Networks through the Supporting People programme and will continue to develop this integrated approach.

3. Recommendation

That the Executive Board approves the responses from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods as outlined in this report.

Background papers

None