

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 03 JUNE 08

SUBJECT: SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION IN LUTON

REPORT BY: FAUZIA SAEED - SCRUTINY OFFICER

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY	
EQUALITIES	✓	ENVIRONMENT	
FINANCIAL		CONSULTATIONS	✓
STAFFING		OTHER	

WARDS AFFECTED: NONE

PURPOSE

1. To update the committee on the on going review of sheltered accommodation in Luton.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the update on the Scrutiny Sheltered Accommodation Review.
3. Recommend the findings of the listening Event and the Older People's Accommodation review to the Executive for consideration during the review of Sheltered Accommodation.

BACKGROUND

4. The social Inclusion scrutiny committee on the 20 September 07 agreed to set up a SARG¹ to assist with the review of the existing portfolio of sheltered housing schemes in Luton. The remit of the review was to evaluate the portfolio in terms of “fitness for purpose and the potential for existing sheltered housing blocks to be redeveloped or improved”.
5. The committee agreed to set up a review group and its membership was derived from the following:
6. Tenant representatives, officers, stakeholders, members of the older people’s scrutiny working group, trade union representatives. The following Members of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee were nominated:

Councillor J Davies
Councillor Simons
Councillor Timoney
Councillor Malik

7. The two portfolio holders were also invited to attend the Sheltered Accommodation Review Group (SARG):

Cllr Hussain -- Adult Social Care &
Cllr Shaw -- Housing

REPORT

8. Key members of the Older people’s working group were contacted and they indicated their willingness to participate in the scrutiny process.
9. Meeting are alternated between 2.00 pm and 6.00 pm and are held at the in the Town Hall. So far 6 meetings have taken place. The committee also choose to use other methods of seeking the views of those who are unable to attend the meetings e.g. site visits, focus groups, interviews, through the media etc.

UPDATE ON THE REVIEW

10. The Committee has been kept informed of developments through regular reporting and briefing on the work of the Scrutiny Sheltered Accommodation Review Group (SARG). Since the last update, the main thrust has been on consultation and visits to a selection of Sheltered Accommodation Schemes.

¹ Sheltered Accommodation Scrutiny Review Group (SARG)

VISITS TO LUTON BOROUGH COUNCIL SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION SCHEMES

11. Members of the sheltered accommodation review group visited the following 4 schemes on the 14th May 2008:

1. **SPANDOW COURT**
2. **BRAYS COURT**
3. **QUANTOCK COURT**
4. **ACWORTH COURT**

12. The following members of the SARG made the visits:

Cllr S Timoney	(Chair of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee)
Cllr Khadija Malik	(V. Chair of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee)
Cllr M Simons	(Member of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee)
James Stevens	SARG Member
Peter Gomm	SARG Member
Dr Rasmuthai	SARG Member
Arthur Davies	SARG Member
Ivy Cannings	SARG Member
Fauzia Saeed	Scrutiny Officer

COMMENTS FOLLOWING VISITS TO SHELTERED SCHEMES IN LUTON

13. The visits were pre-arranged and the Scheme Managers were informed of the visits in advance. At the meeting of the SARG on the 20 May members made the following comments on the Schemes that they had visited:

SPANDOW COURT

14. Tower Block
- a. Garden overgrown and litter evident, perimeter fence insecure and damaged.
 - b. Garden not fit for use – furniture poor and in need of replacement.
 - c. Common Room - unfriendly, too large, not cosy.
 - d. The Group could not see a flat due to unavailability.
 - e. Allocation of flats to younger people causing residents unease.
 - f. Kitchenette adjacent to common room in poor condition in need of updating.
 - g. Scheme manager not available so unable to discuss issues in detail
 - h. Location good.
 - i. Residents happy generally but did not want to share with younger families.

BRAYS COURT

15. Four separate blocks of flats with no covered links – problems for residents accessing common room, visiting each other and accessing laundry in cold/wet weather.
 - a. No lift – Therefore more able residents allocated to this Scheme
 - b. Common room pleasant but wallpaper peeling due to water leak – reported but not redecorated
 - c. Only one washing Machine
 - d. More friendly feel to common room
 - e. Garden fences broken
 - f. Attempts had been made by the residents to do some gardening but had not been able to.

QUANTOCK

16. 'More like a hotel' Modern built, with some provisions of Bungalows. The Group were not able to visit the bungalows
 - a. Light and airy, clean.
 - b. Excellent furniture, and Lighting.
 - c. Additional common rooms upstairs.
 - d. Very active scheme manager – lots of activities arranged.
 - e. Back garden in poor condition and not always open when garden maintenance is carried out
 - f. Best seen – 'this is what all sheltered accommodation should be like'
 - g. Pleasant, well presented dining room.

ACWORTH

17. Tower Block

- a. Two common rooms – one with Kitchen and the other where most activities take place – clean, but needs refurbishing.
- b. Handrails fitted in corridors but cold harsh concrete structure
- c. Scheme manager trying to care for garden
- d. Activities and outings advertised
- e. Empty flat viewed – good sized rooms, bathroom in poor condition but due for renewal later this year.
- f. Problems with the lift, actually witnessed by members of the group during the visit

CONSULTATION UPDATE - SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

18. SHELTERED HOUSING RESIDENTS INTERVIEWS

1. All sheltered housing schemes in Luton were visited between 5 – 19 March 2008.

2. A total of 299 questionnaires were completed by sheltered housing residents (32.3% response rate), of which 284 were completed during a face-to-face interview and 15 over the telephone.
3. Overall, the sheltered housing residents were very positive about the consultation exercise and were pleased that the Council came to see them to listen to their views and opinions.
4. Initial Results were presented to the SARG meeting on 20 May 2008.
5. Letters will be sent out to all sheltered housing schemes in due course to give the residents feedback and an update on the sheltered accommodation review.

SURVEY OF RESIDENTS ON THE HOUSING WAITING AND TRANSFER LIST

19. A postal questionnaire was sent to 1000 residents aged 50+ (without dependent children) on the Council's housing waiting and transfer lists to ascertain current and future housing needs.
 1. The fieldwork period commenced 16 April and ended Friday 2 May – no reminder letter was sent out.
 2. A total of 281 responses were received, representing a response rate of 28%.
 3. The results will be presented to SARG on 18 June. The results will also be fed back through Housing Matters (a magazine for Council tenants), Lutonline (Council's newspaper) and the Council's website.

FURTHER PLANNED CONSULTATIONS

20. A full report on the consultation will be presented to the next meeting of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee on the 18 September including:
 - Workshops with sheltered housing scheme managers
 - An event with the voluntary sector and other stakeholders

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE DURING THE OLDER PEOPLE'S ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

21. In 2004/5 the SISC carried out a review of the development of an older persons Strategy. In particular the review focussed on accommodation needs of older people.

22. Another related report compiled after a conference, attended by over a110 people, on the future living arrangements for older people living in Luton was also circulated to the group. The Executive had endorsed the recommendations of both these reports.
23. The scrutiny officer circulated copies of the recommendations of the above reports at the last meeting of the Sheltered Accommodation Review Group.
24. Sheltered Accommodation Review Group requested that in shaping future accommodation for older people in Luton these reports be kept in consideration.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

25. There are no legal implications of this report and this has been agreed by the J. Newman Solicitor on 29 May 2008.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

26. This report has specific implications for people who need sheltered accommodation. Older People including those who need sheltered and extra sheltered accommodation are often socially excluded. This review is about ensuring that its recommendations when accepted by the Executive will improve the services that Council provides for older people in Luton.
27. The Council of Faith has already been consulted and the Race Forum is due to receive a report on the sheltered accommodation review on the 2 June.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

- Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee Minutes of the 20 September 07
- Conference Report: Listening Event: Future Living Arrangements for Older People Living in Luton