
REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	AGENDA ITEM: 12
DATE OF MEETING:	21 NOVEMBER 2002	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	SANDRA WHILES (Ext 5712)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	IMPROVEMENTS TO SHELTERED HOUSING : OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AT BASS'S CRESCENT, PINE GROVE AND SMALLTHORN PLACE	REF: s:\cent_serv\committee reports\housing & community services\21 nov 2002\sh option appraisal outcome-sw.doc
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	CASTLE GRESLEY, WOODVILLE AND NEWHALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: CS01

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Members close Bass's Crescent, Castle Gresley and Smallthorn Place, Woodville with the exception of the two wheelchair accessible bungalows at Bass's Crescent.
- 1.2 All tenants at Bass's Crescent and Smallthorn Place, with the exception of those in the two wheelchair accessible bungalows at Bass's Crescent are provided with financial and practical help in moving to alternative sheltered accommodation in accordance with the package agreed at Council on the 26 September 2002.
- 1.3 A development brief is drawn up in relation to Bass's Crescent and Smallthorn Place which looks at the options for the two sites and which considers the general housing and other needs, such as schools, GP services and community needs in the District.
- 1.4 Future allocations to the flats at Pine Grove, Newhall are made to tenants of 50 years and above.
- 1.5 That Members are nominated for a task and finish group comprising Members from this Committee and Community Scrutiny Committee which is set up to agree a clear vision of what constitutes the Sheltered Housing service and how this impacts on the current Sheltered Housing stock.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To inform Members of the recent consultation exercise with tenants and stakeholders at the three Sheltered schemes, to consider the future use of the three schemes in question and to consider work to further shape and deliver improvements to Sheltered Housing in South Derbyshire.

3.0 Executive Summary

3.1 This report provides information on the results of the recent consultation with Sheltered Housing tenants on their housing options and considers a way forward for three schemes.

3.2 The report considers the future use of these schemes against the background of an overprovision of sheltered accommodation in South Derbyshire and the need to agree a clear strategic vision through which to further improve the overall housing service provided to older tenants.

4.0 Background

4.1 In August 2002 this Committee approved proposals to consult and work with tenants of Bass's Crescent, Pine Grove and Smallthorn Place to look at alternative and better housing options at these schemes before Members formally considered the future use of these schemes.

4.2 At the same Committee Members approved proposals to consult with stakeholders on potential options for these schemes.

4.3 The Best Value Inspectors have highlighted the need for the Council to develop its strategic vision for Sheltered Housing and to make clear decisions on the standards and quantity of sheltered accommodation it provides for older people.

4.4 The three schemes in question suffer from chronic low demand although it should be noted that it is often hard to let homes at some other sheltered schemes across the district.

4.5 The communal schemes at Bass's Crescent and Smallthorn Place are of poor physical layout and condition with some units of accommodation failing the Decent Homes standard. The accommodation at Pine Grove is of a higher standard but the first floor flats which lie at the heart of the scheme, suffering from low demand from older people.

4.6 Work in preparation for Supporting People clearly identifies a high level of provision of Sheltered Housing in South Derbyshire, with the Council being virtually the sole provider. It also identifies that there is an under provision of very sheltered housing. The Council has over 1100 sheltered units of accommodation against the Governments assessment of a requirement between 10 and 229 homes.

Any steps that the Council takes to rationalise the use of inadequate accommodation and overprovision now could allow the resources which are then freed up to be used for service improvements to be made for the benefit of other Sheltered Housing tenants

- 4.7 Since the start of the consultation exercise several tenants from Bass's Crescent and Smallthorn place have approached the Council seeking a move to better accommodation. At the Council meeting on 26 September 2002 Members agreed to a financial support package for tenants in advance of making a decision on the future use of the schemes. To date several tenants have been offered and accepted new homes.

Consultation Exercise

- 4.8 The consultation exercise involved:

- ⊗ Tenants meetings at each scheme. Ward Councillors were invited to these meetings along with the Chair and Vice Chair of Community Services and the Chair of Community Scrutiny
- ⊗ After the tenant meetings a questionnaire was drawn up and distributed. This was based on the options identified and discussed for each scheme
- ⊗ An invitation existing to Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners to submit outline proposals for the three schemes

- 4.9 Annexe A includes details of the numbers attending each consultation meeting and the type of issues that were raised in the discussions

- 4.10 Annexe B includes details of the questionnaires.

- 4.11 The following table shows an analysis of the responses received.

Bass's Crescent, Castle Gresley (14 voids)

Number of tenants	11
Number of respondents	9
Number of respondents with preference to move	7
Number of tenants with preference to stay put	2

Smallthorn Place, Woodville (9 voids)

Number of tenants	16
Number of respondents	13
Number of respondents with preference to move	12
Number of tenants with preference to stay put	1

Pine Grove, Newhall (3 voids)

Number of tenants	32
Number of respondents	11
Number of respondents in favour of lowering age group eligible for flats	11

- 4.12 The tenant consultation process has shown that the majority of tenants from Bass's Crescent and Smallthorn Place would prefer to move to more suitable accommodation. Tenants from Pine Grove have generally expressed a desire to stay in the area and to widen the eligibility to the flats to people who are 50 years old and above both to deal with the under occupation problem and to widen the age group so as to make the community more balanced, particularly in relation to confidence and community safety issues.
- 4.13 Since the tenant meetings housing staff have been in close and regular contact with the tenants, particularly those at Bass's Crescent and Smallthorn Place. Staff are working with individual tenants to help reassure them about their options and to plan and support moves for tenants who want to move now. This support includes visits to see other Sheltered Housing schemes and arranging for tenants to move to areas which are best for them in relation to their friends and support needs. Should Members agree to the recommendations in this report this support will increase. A team of officers will help tenants through each step of the changes and will provide guidance and support after the moves.
- 4.14 An analysis of the Housing Register shows that in the Newhall area there is strong demand for one and two bedroomed flats for people in the 45 and above age group which cannot be currently met. In both Woodville and Castle Gresley there is a demand particularly for two and three bedroom houses and one and two bedroom bungalows. In all three areas there are issues concerning community safety and general environmental issues, which should be considered before determining the future use of the schemes.
- 4.15 Three Registered Social Landlords have submitted a range of ideas for the potential redevelopment of these schemes. If Members agree to the changes outlined in this report officers will then draw up a development brief in relation to Bass's Crescent and Smallthorn Place. This brief will look at the range of options for these two sites and will consider the general housing and other needs, such as schools, GP services and community facilities of the district. As outlined earlier any steps that the Council takes now to rationalise the use of inadequate accommodation could release resources which Members may wish to use for service improvements to other Sheltered Housing schemes.
- 4.16 The Council now has a real opportunity to help tenants secure improved living conditions. There is the immediate task of deciding on the future of the three schemes in question and the longer-term issue of defining the strategic vision for Sheltered Housing in South Derbyshire.

4.17 It is now recommended that Members:

- ⊛ Close Smallthorn Place and Bass's Crescent, with the exception of the two wheelchair accessible bungalows at Bass's Crescent, from the Sheltered Housing stock
- ⊛ Rehouse all affected existing tenants from Smallthorn Place and Bass's Crescent into better and more suitable accommodation
- ⊛ Provide financial and practical help and support to tenants who are required to move as agreed at Council in September 2002. This help will be in the form of a £750 lump sum payment for the disturbance experienced. In addition the Council will arrange and make payment for the removal of furniture, the disconnection and reconnection of cookers, washing machines and telephones
- ⊛ Instruct officers to draw up a development brief in relation to Bass's Crescent and Smallthorn Place. This brief will look at the range of options for these two sites and will consider the general housing and other needs such as schools, GP services and community facilities in the District.
- ⊛ Endorse that future allocations to the flats at Pine Grove are made to tenants of 50 years and above to help meet the local demand for accommodation for this client group and to provide for a more balanced community.
- ⊛ That a task and finish group comprising Members of this Committee and Community Scrutiny Committee is set up to agree a clear vision of what constitutes the Sheltered Housing service and how this impacts on the current Sheltered Housing stock. The work of this group will include visits to a range of sheltered schemes in other locations to inform this vision. It is anticipated that the work will be completed by the February meeting of this Committee.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The cost of providing support to tenants will be around £54,000. This would need to be met from HRA balances.
- 5.2 The potential capital income and costs of redeveloping the sites at Bass's Crescent and Smallthorn Place will be identified at the next stage.
- 5.3 The costs of securing any empty building would be met from the responsive repair budget.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 This report will allow Members to clearly demonstrate the Council's commitment and ability to improve the housing services provided to older tenants.

7.0 Community Implications

- 7.1 The report proposes ways to improve the quality of accommodation and services for older people who currently live in inadequate sheltered accommodation. This will then allow the concentration of resources on other schemes and the subsequent improvement of services to other Sheltered Housing tenants.
- 7.2 The development a clear strategic vision for Sheltered Housing will allow the Council to make the next step in improving the housing services provided for older people in South Derbyshire.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 This report sets out a path for Members so that they can improve the living conditions for vulnerable older people in South Derbyshire.
- 8.2 The report recommends that Members work to develop a strategic vision for Sheltered Housing and a development brief for the future of the sites at Bass`s Crescent and Smallthorn Place. Both of these tasks will contribute to the delivery of the Council`s strategic housing role.

9.0 Background Papers

- 9.1 Contents of Sheltered Housing consultation file.