

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 15 December 2016  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, People  
**PORTFOLIO:** Health & Wellbeing  
**SUBJECT:** Older People's Housing Support Services  
**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report gives an overview of the current position for older people's housing support services and requests Executive Board approve the preferred options.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board**

- i) **Consider the options outlined in 4.0 and agree options 4.1 for Housing Support Services and 4.2 for Extra Care.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Background Information**

3.1 Housing support services were funded through the ring fenced Supporting People budget created in 2003. Typically these services provided advice, support and information in respect of managing tenancies, financial information, accessing the local communities and activities. This became an alternative funding source for warden services in sheltered accommodation and associated lifeline services. Services were required to be monitored for quality and value for money. Sheltered housing services had their contracts extended annually as it was unlikely that any procurement process would attract competition or realise efficiencies for the Council. With the removal of the ring fence and grant conditions, all services became subject to the Council's procurement standing orders and therefore consideration needs to be given to tendering for these type of services.

3.2 There are currently 10 providers delivering 19 housing support services to older people in Halton. There are 2 extra care housing schemes (Naughton Fields and Barkla Fields), 12 services are provided within sheltered housing settings with support provided on site by a scheme manager, and 5 are community alarm services only (Appendix 1).

- 3.3 Halton Housing Trust (HHT) also provides the Amethyst Living Service, which is a core and cluster model based around HHT's 3 sheltered schemes with the service extended to support eligible HHT tenants living in the community. There are 4 levels of support available, from sheltered, which provides weekly visits and telephone support to community alarm only through the Council's Lifeline service.
- 3.4 The current contracts have been in place since April 2008, and waivers have previously been awarded to extend service provision to March 2017. For these contracts to continue, procurement advice is that we would need to go out to tender to ensure a transparent procurement process.

#### **4.0 Options**

##### **4.1 Support Housing Providers to Deliver Similar Services through Intensive Housing Management Support and Cease Halton Borough Council Funding for Sheltered Services.**

This option would apply to all services except the Extra Care schemes at 4.2.

The scheme managers providing support within the sheltered schemes are employed by the housing provider and have a dual role to provide housing management and housing support.

Any charge for intensive housing management is Housing Benefit eligible and can be reclaimed from central government at no cost to the Local Authority.

In addition, a number of the housing providers are large national organisations and as such are able to provide support for seemingly low costs through rent charges rather than support charges. The majority of the support cost is absorbed into the overall cost of the service.

A number of housing providers have already started to review their funding of sheltered housing provision and are considering this alternative funding option.

For those clients receiving a community alarm only service, the Council's Lifeline service can be offered as an alternative provision and most housing providers either operate their own or access other community alarm services for their tenants.

This option has been undertaken in Liverpool with the phased withdrawal of funding over a two year period, and similarly this has happened for some sheltered services in Sefton due to the reduction in funding level. Elsewhere housing providers have reviewed their

charges and included some costs in their intensive housing management charges to allow continuity of service provision.

#### **4.2 Continue the Service in the 2 Extra Care Schemes via a Waiver for a Further 12 Months to evaluate the model**

The Extra Care schemes at Naughton Fields and Barkla Fields are delivered by HHT. The awarding of tenancies is subject to a process outside of Property Pool Plus. The people who meet the extra care criteria have different levels of care and support needs to those living in traditional sheltered housing. The extra care services have been in place for a limited time. It is proposed that the contract is extended via a waiver for a further 12 months. A review of the model will be undertaken to determine a sustainable approach to both the support and care needs of the tenants.

#### **4.3 Undertake a Procurement Exercise for a Remodelled Service with a 6 Month Waiver Agreed on the Existing Contracts with the Exception of Extra Care Schemes.**

As the contracts are due to end in March 2017 a further 6 month extension to these contracts would be required to enable sufficient time to undertake a procurement exercise.

However, this would not be the preferred option for the traditional sheltered services model due to the following considerations:

- Although the unit costs vary between the schemes, the majority are value for money and some are very low cost. It is very unlikely that any procurement exercise would realise any efficiencies with the risk that costs would increase;
- The existing scheme managers are employed by the housing provider and have the dual role across housing management and housing support. To re-procure just the support element of the service would be complex and risks adversely affecting the people who are currently in receipt of this service;
- A benchmarking exercise was undertaken in 2015 with neighbouring authorities about their sheltered provision. Of the local authorities contacted, any contractual changes have been done through negotiation and no local authority contacted had undertaken a procurement process for sheltered housing services.

#### **4.4 Review Only Those Service Areas where there are Higher Services Costs**

In Halton there are only two services that may be considered high cost when compared to other local sheltered services.

It is anticipated that a review and reduction of unit costs would only realise annual efficiencies of approximately £25,000. This would not therefore realise the £300,000 identified as the efficiency.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no policy changes required for any of these options. The implementation of the Care Act in April 2015 requires support providers to focus on the achievement of outcomes, better quality and value for money, and improved integration within an evolving system of integrated health and social care services. The commissioning of extra care services and provision of sheltered housing services funded through intensive housing management costs will ensure valuable preventative services continue to be delivered to meet this requirement.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Funding for these services is contained within the existing People's Directorate budget.

The financial model for the preferred option 4.1 would achieve ongoing savings from 2017/18 of £300,000 if this is agreed.

The annual contract value of the extra care service is £72,000 and this would continue in 2017/18.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **7.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

None identified.

### **7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

### **7.3 A Healthy Halton**

The provision of a high quality, effective extra care housing services enables older people to remain in their own home, to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing outcomes, and to access additional care and support services should their needs increase.

### **7.4 A Safer Halton**

Services delivered under these contracts must comply with Halton's Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures. Support is provided to individuals to enable them to stay safe in their own home.

**7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified

**8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 HBC has a challenging resource reduction required for 2017/18. Option 4.1 enables services to be maintained without continued HBC financial support. Other service areas would need to realise additional efficiencies should this option not be agreed.

The risk to service users associated with the proposal to cease HBC funding for sheltered housing services and transfer the costs to intensive housing management is low as this would not affect service provision and would not be an additional cost for either the Council or those service users in receipt of housing benefit.

The procurement risk for the extra care service is low as the contract value is below the EU threshold and a review is planned.

**9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 Housing support services are delivered to some of the most vulnerable and socially excluded members of the community. The continuation of these services through an Intensive Housing Management route would not impact in this area.

**10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

The change supports HBC to deliver a balanced budget in 2017/18 whilst maintaining support for the local community.

**11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Alternative options considered within the report.

**12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

**13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.

**APPENDIX 1**

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Service and capacity</b>	<b>Annual contract value</b>
Anchor Trust	Broome Court, Runcorn (36)	£11,850
Halton Housing Trust	Amethyst Living service including Queens Close, Runcorn (32) Brunswick, Runcorn (35) Quarry Court, Widnes (30) community support (63)	£73,632
Hanover Housing	Runnymede Court, Widnes (69) Hanover Court, Runcorn (42)	£9,526
Housing 21	Cannell Court, Runcorn (28)	£6,438
Guinness Northern Counties	Iveagh Close, Runcorn (20)	£6,424
Pentecostal	Fairhaven Court, Widnes (44)	£58,435
Plus Dane	Community Alarm Service (32)	£9,140
Riverside ECHG	Victoria Court, Widnes (30) Southlands Court, Runcorn (40) St Georges Court, Widnes (34) Woodland Court, Widnes (42)	£82,719
Riverside ECHG	Community Alarm Service (32)	£11,365
Your Housing Group	Madeline McKenna Court (Sheltered Housing), Widnes (11) Elaine Price Court, Runcorn (28)	£35,405
Your Housing Group	Community Alarm Service	£960
Halton Housing Trust	Naughton Fields and Barkla Fields Extra Care Housing Schemes	£72,000