

Housing-Related Support

Sheltered Housing Charges

Issue under Consideration

This proposal seeks approval to reduce housing-related support funding to the Homes for Haringey sheltered housing service, and replace it with an enhanced housing management offer, with effect from April 2020.

Background

The Council funds Homes for Haringey £1.1m per annum for the provision of housing-related support to 1322 sheltered housing tenants (plus 12 leaseholders). The funding is managed using a Service Level Agreement and equates to the provision of a maximum of 1hr of support per tenant per week.

In 2017, the service moved to a hub and cluster model and HRS funding reduced by £200,000 per annum. This concentrated the available staff and resources to 8 'hub' services who provide a visiting support service to tenants in nearby 'cluster' schemes. Hubs are evenly divided across the East and West of the boroughs and were selected due to their location, facilities and potential as a community resource.

In 2019, a £350,000 saving was committed in the MTFs, to be taken from the £1.1m annual contribution to the service. This decision precipitated a number of discussions about the funding and charges model within the sheltered housing service, leading to this proposal.

Proposal

Since the lifting of the Supporting People ringfence in 2009 and the subsequent pressures on HRS funding nationally, it is now fairly unusual to fund sheltered housing through Housing-Related Support. The majority of London boroughs having moved to an 'enhanced housing management' approach funded by Housing Benefit. Southwark introduced this approach as far back as 2013 and in doing so were able to enhance the service for residents, reintroducing a full-time Warden into every scheme.

In Haringey, a 'Sheltered Housing Charge' is already included as part of the rent and service charge breakdown for all sheltered housing tenants. Presently, tenants who are eligible for housing benefit have this charge subsidised by HRS funding. Self-paying tenants pay this charge from their own funds with charges clearly set out before tenancy sign-up. There are currently 152 self-payers living across the service, 11% of all sheltered tenants.

It is proposed to cease subsidising this charge via HRS funding, and to move to an enhanced housing management model, with effect from April 2020. This is not anticipated to have any effect on current or future tenants as the charge would

continue to be paid for HB eligible tenants and self-payers would continue to pay from their own funds.

| | Sheltered Housing | Good Neighbour |
|------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Number of Units | 857 | 465 |
| Weekly Charge | £28.31 | £12.84 |
| Income Generated (per annum) | £1,261,606.83 | £310,471.20 |

It is proposed that each of the eight hub services would continue to receive funding for the delivery of the health and wellbeing service which is now well embedded and achieving positive outcomes. It is proposed that the existing SLA is modified and that each hub receives funding of £40,000 per annum to deliver support and wellbeing activities, case management of complex cases and partnership initiatives with community organisations which are not housing benefit eligible. Therefore, from April 2020 onwards the HRS funding to the sheltered housing service would be £320,000 per annum in total.

If agreed this would generate income for the sheltered housing service above and beyond the existing funding from HRS. It is recommended that the service consider reinstating warden provision, something older people repeatedly request in routine consultation an co-production. It is worth noting, that in 2013 the sheltered housing service charge in Southwark was £36.48 per week¹ and they reinstated their warden provision. In 2019, the Haringey charge is only £28.31 (as listed below) and there have not been any charge increases since 2012. Therefore, Homes for Haringey could consider reviewing charges in future years. The approach that Southwark took included a ballot for tenants on a number of options about the future operating model, and subsequent charges, for the service. This was led by Gerri Scott who is now the Executive Director of Operations for Homes for Haringey.

Considerations

The proposal to move to an 'enhanced housing management' model does not require Cabinet approval or public consultation as the charge is already listed on rent breakdowns and it is not proposed to change it.

If agreed, it would be necessary for Homes for Haringey to review and amend current role profiles in line with an enhanced housing management model. As funding will continue at an increased rate, there will be no need for consideration of redundancies. It will be necessary to present the charge to Housing Benefit colleagues for

¹ Sheltered Housing Service Charges, Southwark, December 2012:
<http://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s34365/Report%20-%20Sheltered%20Housing%20Service%20Charges.pdf>

agreement, although as this is common practice nationally there is unlikely to be any problem.

If agreed, the proposal would deliver the £350,000 MTFS saving identified for 19/20 and 20/21. If not agreed the saving will still be made from the HfH funding from HRS but there will not be an agreed plan in place to ensure service delivery is maintained.

Appendix 1 – Example of Current Rent and Charges

| Charge | Current Charges |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Rent (Permanent Dwelling) | £93.95 |
| Community Alarm Charge | £6.85 |
| Door Entry System Maintenance | £0.89 |
| Estates Road Maintenance | £0.58 |
| Gas (Elderly Person) | £10.02 |
| Grounds Maintenance | £3.05 |
| Integrated Reception Service | £0.77 |
| Light and Power | £2.40 |
| Sheltered Housing Cleaning Service | £1.77 |
| Street Sweeping | £5.12 |
| TV Aerial Maintenance | £0.31 |
| Water Rates | £0.00 |
| Window Cleaning | £0.55 |
| Sheltered Housing Charge | £28.31 |
| Total | £120.31 |