

Members Briefing: Sheltered Housing Consultation February 2014

In November 2013, Housing Overview & Scrutiny approved a report reviewing the current sheltered housing provision and recommended that the Council consult with tenants on proposals.

A full consultation with current sheltered housing tenants, stakeholders and other interested parties, commenced on 3rd February 2014 and lasts until 31st March 2014.

Every sheltered housing tenant has been sent a letter and a questionnaire outlining what the consultation is about and detailing how they can take part. Further information regarding the consultation process can be found below.

Summary of the Proposals for Consultation:

All proposals are subject to the outcome of the consultation process and this will be made very clear to tenants.

- Introducing a new model for sheltered housing

The new sheltered housing model will create teams of sheltered housing officers to improve consistency in the delivery of services.

The new model will be flexible to allow the council to offer tenants choices in the type of services delivered.

- Changing the use of sheltered housing due to decreased demand

It is appropriate to consider some change of use as schemes become increasingly harder to let.

Tenants who are below 55 years should be considered for accommodation in sheltered schemes, provided the age criteria is set at 45 years and over.

- Re-introducing a service charge

The proposal to reintroduce service charges is to ensure that those who use and benefit from the service should directly make a financial contribution.

Tenants who currently qualify for housing benefit will be able to apply for assistance to meet their service charge costs.

The consultation process:

• Current Sheltered Housing tenants:

The consultation process will be sensitive to the needs of sheltered housing tenants.

Subsequently, a meeting will be held in every sheltered housing complex over the next two months, and tenants can either attend the event at their own complex or at a different complex if they prefer. Dates of all events have been provided to tenants.

During the meeting, details of the recommendations and options will be explained to tenants and there will be an open forum for discussion.

Immediately following the meeting, tenants will be given an opportunity to talk with officers on a one to one basis or if they prefer, an appointment can be made for a later meeting.

The questionnaire, which outlines the proposals and options, has been sent to every sheltered housing tenant to complete. Assistance will be given to those tenants who need help in completing the questionnaire, but if preferred, tenants may give verbal feedback which will be recorded by officers.

• Non-Sheltered housing tenants:

Stakeholders will be invited to a separate event and members of the public will be able to consult via the Council's consultation website portal at <https://consult.thurrock.gov.uk/portal/tc> where the questionnaire can be viewed and completed online. The questionnaire outlines proposals and possible options and will enable family members and friends of sheltered housing tenants to give their views.

• Members

Members are invited to discuss the recommendations and options with senior officers at a briefing on Thursday 20th February from 6-7pm in Committee Room 1 at the Civic Offices.

Attached

1. Copy of O & S report November 2013
2. Copy of letter sent to all sheltered housing tenants
3. Copy of Consultation Questionnaire
4. Sheltered Housing schemes meeting dates