

17 February 2016		ITEM: 5
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Changes to Extra Care Services		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: Yes
Report of: Councillor Lyn Worrall, Portfolio Holder for Housing		
Accountable Head of Service: Dermot Moloney, Strategic Lead, Housing		
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing & Health		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Thurrock Council needs to make considerable savings to its budget; one area identified to help achieve this is the provision of extra care housing.

A report outlining proposed changes on how Social Care is provided was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 January 2016.

The Committee noted and recommended the changes to Cabinet.

This report outlines the changes and the implications for residents at the extra care schemes at Piggs Corner and Kynoch Court.

1. Recommendation(s)

That Housing Overview and Scrutiny committee note the changes outlined in this report.

2. Introduction and Background

Thurrock Council needs to make considerable savings to its budget; one area identified to help achieve this is the provision of extra care housing.

Thurrock has three extra care housing schemes:

	Total units	Of which = Extra care
Piggs Corner, Grays	55	39
Kynoch Court, Stanford le Hope	48	14
Elizabeth Gardens, Grays	65	65
Total units	168	118

A report outlining proposed changes on how Social Care is provided was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 January 2016.

In order to ensure financial viability, extra care schemes of 50 flats or more are usually needed. Currently neither of the schemes at Piggs Corner or Kynoch Court currently meets this requirement.

It was also identified that social care workers are carrying out many of the housing management functions such as controlling access to the building, reporting repairs and advising on tenancy matters.

The introduction of a concierge service and dedicated sheltered housing officer, in conjunction with social care out of hour's service, would remove the need for care staff to undertake these tasks and thereby reduce the number of hours worked at the scheme.

For this reason it was proposed to expand the Council's extra care offer at Piggs Corner to create 55 units of extra care accommodation, whilst no longer allocating extra care flats to new tenants at Kynoch Court.

Current residents at Kynoch Court would be provided with a domiciliary service but would also be offered the opportunity to move to Piggs Corner or Elizabeth Gardens if they preferred.

It is anticipated that the proposal will achieve savings to the Social Care budget of £236,000 in 2016-17.

During the course of the transition to the new arrangements, each resident will be assessed to ensure that the necessary arrangements for their care and support are maintained.

Consultation was undertaken with residents as outlined in section 5 below.

The proposals were recommended by the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and will be presented to Cabinet in February 2016.

If implemented, all residents affected will receive a letter outlining the changes which will be implemented from 1 April 2016.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Implications for Housing

In order to provide 24 hour on site cover to residents at Piggs Corner, the Housing department will introduce a concierge service which will be manned 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. The service will provide:

- A reception service for all visitors
- Controlled access to the building
- Help with enquiries e.g. caretaking and cleaning services, repairs and any tenancy issues
- Daily safety and security inspections

Concierge staff must have an awareness of the needs of vulnerable and older people including people with physical and mental disabilities such as dementia. They must be able to deal with extra care residents and visitors fairly and in a friendly manner without breaching professional boundaries between staff and residents.

A dedicated sheltered housing officer will also be recruited to manage the scheme during office hours. The officer will be available on site during office hours to assist with tenancy management and any emergency issues.

Provision of the new service will incur an extra cost which as a housing management function, will need to be added to the weekly rent. It will therefore attract Housing benefit subsidy, which means tenants in receipt of housing benefit will be able to claim the additional cost as part of their benefit claim.

For current residents who are not in receipt of housing benefit, a transitional arrangement will be made to ensure that no current tenant is worse off financially.

It is anticipated that the extra cost for the provision of the new service will be around £38 per week per flat.

4. Reason for Recommendations

The available funding for social care in Thurrock is not sufficient to cover the cost of all the services currently provided. A number of efficiency measures have already been undertaken, and operating costs have been reduced, including the deletion of a number of social worker and other posts.

By remodelling the extra care housing service further savings are anticipated whilst improving the offer.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

Consultation on the proposed changes was undertaken, as part of a larger consultation on changes to Adult Social Care provision, over 12 weeks between 14 September and 7 December 2015.

Two questionnaires were produced (one an easy read version for people with learning disabilities) and were published on the consultation portal. Letters were sent with the questionnaires to some 2,800 users of non-residential services in Thurrock.

In addition Thurrock Coalition and HealthWatch Thurrock held meetings and events across the Borough during the consultation period. The Council also ran briefings for staff, and providers attended the Thurrock over Fifties Forum to discuss the proposed changes.

In total 528 separate responses were received. These have been entered onto the consultation data base to inform the analysis contained in this report.

In addition, sheltered housing officers wrote to all of the extra care tenants at Piggs Corner and Kynoch Court and arranged visits to discuss the proposals. 93 tenants took up the opportunity for a visit.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

None.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Finance Manager

The proposed cost savings measures are required in order to ensure that the overall savings target within the Medium Term Financial Strategy is delivered. A decision on **implementing** the proposals will need to be taken by Cabinet, taking account of the views of the Committee, and the Council's statutory responsibilities.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Dawn Pelle**
Adult Care Lawyer

This consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Thurrock Joint Compact between the Council and third sector partners. A Community and Equality Impact Assessment is currently being prepared in line with the Council's policy. A further report will be made to Cabinet in February for final agreement on the proposed changes to the provision of adult social care as set out in the report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development & Equalities
Manager

A Community and Equality Impact Assessment, taking account of the consultation responses and the Submission from Thurrock Coalition on the impact of the proposed changes is being prepared. When finalised, this will be signed off by the Head of Adult Services and matters relevant to the implementation of the proposals, including mitigation measures for negative impacts, will be reported to Cabinet alongside any recommendations for changes to provision and charges they are asked to approve.

7.4 Other implications (where significant – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None.

9. Appendices to the report

None.

Report Author

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