

 Executive 8 February 2017		Agenda Item No. 8
Title	Housing Related Support Services	
For further information about this report please contact	Simon Brooke, Sustaining Tenancies Manager, Housing and Property Services 01926 456433 Simon.brooke@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	13 January 2016 Housing Related Support Services Minute No. 91	
Background Papers	Consultation leaflets	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes 777
Equality and Fairness Impact Assessment (E&FIA) Undertaken	No
An E&FIA will be undertaken as part of the work to support final recommendations to Employment Committee and Executive in June 2017.	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Deputy Chief Executive	06/01/17	Bill Hunt
Head of Service	06/01/17	Bill Hunt
CMT	10/01/17	Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	10/01/17	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	10/01/17	Andy Jones
Finance	11/01/17	Andrew Rollins
Portfolio Holder(s)	13/01/17	Councillor Peter Phillips
Consultation & Community Engagement		
An informal consultation was completed in early 2016, followed with formal consultation with all tenants who are currently provided with Housing Related Support, which ended on the 20 December 2016. A verbal update was provided to the Housing Advisory Group on the 17 January 2017.		
Final Decision?	No	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		
Full Council to approve charges. Employment Committee March/June 2017 & Executive June 2017 for next steps in the review of these services.		

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report makes recommendations to ensure the future delivery of housing related support services to Warwick District Council tenants who live either in our sheltered schemes or in a property designated for older people. This follows the withdrawal of funding from Supporting People grant administered by Warwickshire County Council.
- 1.2 The recommendations follow a commitment by Warwick District Council to continue with support services to our tenants and to continue to offer Lifeline services to the wider public. The new charges recommended offer us a platform for further work to review our services and form part of an overall plan to continue to deliver good housing support services.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Executive note that extensive consultation has taken place with residents of sheltered schemes and tenants of designated properties for older residents.
- 2.2 That Executive recommend to Council a service charge from 3 April 2017 for our sheltered schemes of £8.40 per week for intensive housing management services, and a service charge of £3.60 per week for the Lifeline service. These charges replace the £29.12 per week Supporting People Charges for the tenants of the five sheltered schemes: Acorn Court, Chandos Court, James Court, Tannery Court and Yeomanry Close. These charges will be charged to all residents of the schemes as part of their tenancy agreement obligations.
- 2.3 That Executive recommend to Council a service charge from 3 April 2017 for our designated properties of £3.60 per week for a Lifeline alarm service, or £7.56 for Lifeline Plus services (£3.60 plus £3.96 intensive housing management charge). These charges replace the existing Supporting People charge of £11.50 or £6.52 per week.
- 2.4 That Executive recommend to Council that the charges set out in 2.3 above will no longer be obligatory, as part of the tenancy agreement, with charges only being levied where agreed with the tenant that they require these services.
- 2.5 That Executive note that proposals for new management arrangements for housing support services will be reported to the March 2017 Employment Committee and that a full redesign of the teams delivering these services will be presented for consideration at the Employment Committee in June 2017, with any cost implications, including potential redundancy costs, also reported to Executive in June 2017.
- 2.6 That Executive agree to begin a consultation with tenants on the removal/changes of age restrictions on 42 properties in mixed age blocks and a further 200 properties where there is a specific access to the property rather than a communal block entrance, with the outcomes of the consultation and any subsequent proposals on the removal or alteration of age designations being reported back to a future Executive.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 Supporting People funding of £463,700 per annum was previously contributing towards the cost of the provision of services to tenants in sheltered and

designated properties but this funding, paid to the Council by the County Council, ceased on 31 July 2016.

- 3.2 In anticipation of this cessation of funding, the Executive agreed, on 13 January 2016, to approve the utilisation of additional budget provision, held within the HRA Business Plan, to maintain existing levels of Housing Related Support to tenants of the Council's sheltered schemes and properties designated for older people. This provision was made available until July 2017, allowing services to be maintained for the remainder of the financial year 2016/17 and the start of the financial year 2017/18 while new proposals for funding the service were developed and brought forward for approval.
- 3.3 The recommendations set out proposals for new charges, as part of our response to the loss of grant. Other proposals relate to a full review of the staffing of the service and active management steps to market the services and hence increase income. These proposals will be reported to Employment Committee and a further report will come to Executive in June 2017 to show how the current funding gap, set out in section 5, will be addressed as a result.
- 3.4 As part of the review, extensive consultation has taken place with tenants. Informal consultation was undertaken in early 2016. In October 2016, formal consultations started with proposals sent out to all the 1,300 tenants affected. In addition, nine public meetings were held, having advertised them in the consultation documents. These were a useful opportunity to explain the proposals and discuss any concerns. The deadline for comments from the consultation was the 20 December 2016.
- 3.5 The consultations for the sheltered schemes and the designated properties were separate. The proposal put forward to sheltered residents was that:
"We will continue to provide a service similar to the one we provide now. There will be an officer on duty at each scheme Monday to Friday, and an officer to visit each scheme on Saturday and Sunday. Daily welfare checks will be made as required.
There will be a 24/7 Lifeline and emergency response service.
It will be a condition of your tenancy that you receive this service (you will not be able to opt out of this service).
You will be required to pay for this service (some of the cost may be met by housing benefit)."
- 3.6 Of the 186 tenants we received 70 forms back. The response to this was as follows:

	Number	Percentage
Agree with the proposal	59	84%
Do not agree with the proposal	11	16%
	70	100%

Tenants expressing views at the public meetings were generally pleased; we were able to reassure those present that the charges associated with this proposal would be in the region of £10 to £15 per week. As some residents are paying £29.12 per week, most residents were satisfied. We were also able to inform them that the charge for the Lifeline part that would not be eligible for housing benefit would be under £5 per week and those attending the meetings did not express any views that indicated they thought this was unreasonable.

A typical comment recorded from the consultation *"It is very comforting to know for myself and my family that I will have the Lifeline, best thing ever. Thank you and well done!"*

3.7 The tenants of our designated properties for the over 60s, were consulted on two different proposals, reflecting views expressed during the informal consultations already held. The two proposals are as follows:

Proposal 1: Lifeline service is a condition of your tenancy and you will be required to pay for the service.

Proposal 2: Lifeline service is not a condition of your tenancy and you will only pay for the service if you require it.

3.8 The results of the consultation were as follows:

Proposal	Number	Percentage
Option One	107	26%
Option Two	307	74%
Total	414	100%

Comments from the responses included the following comments. *"I found the consultation meeting very helpful. I have chosen proposal two as I feel I can have this service when I feel the need. Thank you for the continued help of my support officer"*.

"I support proposal two as I believe tenants should have a choice to these services. I also think it is unfair for tenants to have to pay for services they don't use".

The tenants attending meetings also showed a clear preference for an opt-in service; with a number of tenants feeling they did not need this service at the moment and therefore feel that they should not have to pay for this service. The proposals set out for approval are, therefore, in line with the preferences expressed by the majority of tenants in the consultation exercise and thus can be expected to have support from most of the residents affected.

3.9 The proposed weekly charges, as referred to in 2.2 and 2.3, are set out below:

	Existing SP charge	New charges	Of which not eligible for HB
Sheltered schemes	£29.12	£12 (£8.40 intensive housing management+ £3.60 Lifeline service) Compulsory for all customers	£3.60
Designated properties	£11.50	£7.56 (£3.96 intensive housing management + £3.60 Lifeline service) Voluntary, tenants can opt out	£3.60
Designated properties	£6.52	£7.56 (£3.96 intensive housing management + £3.60 Lifeline service) Voluntary, tenants can opt out	£3.60

Discussions have taken place with the Housing Benefits team who have confirmed that the intensive housing management charges would be eligible for Housing Benefit and that the charges for Lifeline are not eligible for Housing Benefit.

- 3.10 Of the 84 residents of the sheltered schemes 39 will have to pay £3.60 per week where they are currently they not having to pay for this service. 45 residents will be better off as they are currently paying the full £29.12 per week charge.
- 3.11 Subject to approval of recommendations 2.2 and 2.3, residents will be informed of the results of the consultation and these charges as part of the new rent notification letters to be sent out at the end of February, with the new charges being implemented on the 3 April 2017.
- 3.12 This review has also highlighted that some properties that are currently designated as older person properties are perhaps not best suited to this categorisation. We are finding that some properties advertised to the over 60s are on many occasions receiving no or very few bids and then have to be re-advertised, with a reduced age restriction which delays re-letting. At the same time we have applicants with medical priority and other priorities that have to wait years for a reasonable offer of accommodation.
- 3.14 Two groups of properties have been identified for review:
 a) 42 properties in mixed blocks, so some residents in the block are of a designated age and others are not; and
 b) 200 properties in flats where access is not via a communal entrance.
 If the recommendation is accepted consultation will begin in April 2017, consideration will be made on individual locations depending on the feedback and circumstances of each location. A report of any changes recommended will come back to Executive for approval.
- 3.15 Removal of the designated status will open up the properties upon re-letting to the Right to Buy. The designated properties are currently excluded from the Right to Buy. However, we do not believe we should keep the designated status just to preserve this restriction. It is more important that we are making the best use of our stock given the housing demands in the District.

4. Policy Framework

- 4.1 **Policy Framework** – As the Council is continuing to provide services for older people, there is no change to the policy framework.
- 4.2 **Fit for the Future** – The review of services for older people will take into account the principle of Fit for the Future.
- 4.3 **Impact Assessments** – An impact assessment in respect of equalities will be carried out as part of the review of the management and full redesign of the services to older people.

5. Budgetary Framework

- 5.1 The table below sets out the current funding arrangements for the housing related support services provided to older people in 2016/17:

		Total
Expenditure	Housing Support Team (Housing Support to sheltered and designated properties)	434,800
	Lifeline Services (Control, Lifeline, Warwick Response Team)	947,900
Expenditure Total		£1,382,700

Income	Lifeline charges (paying clients)	-244,700
	Other Income	-46,700
	Income from tenant charges	-166,400
Income Total		£-457,800
Total		£924,900

Funding	Supporting People Grant (from WCC until 31 July 2016)	155,000
	Housing Revenue Account (from WDC)	769,900
Funding Total		£924,900

- 5.2 The table shows that the Council's services for older people were financially dependent on the Supporting People Grant received from WCC.
- 5.3 The HRA Business Plan approved by members in March 2015, included provision for the HRA to fund the replacement of the grant received from WCC for one year after it ceases. This provision was made to ensure sufficient time for the Council to react in a measured and informed way to any reduction of Supporting People funding. In subsequent years the current Business Plan assumes a neutral effect as either the service would be significantly reconfigured or a new charging regime introduced to cover the costs in full.
- 5.4 When the HRA Business Plan was drawn up the reduction in Supporting People grant was expected to take effect in 2017/18. However, with the Supporting People income from WCC ceasing much earlier, from 31 July 2016, we were presented with an anticipated reduction in income of £309,000 against that budgeted in HRA Base Budget for 2016/17. Therefore the provision for the HRA to fund the replacement of the grant received has already started being used, and will cease on 31 July 2017.
- 5.5 The table below sets out the current funding arrangements for the housing related support services provided to older people in 2017/18:

		Total
Expenditure	Housing Support Team (Housing Support to sheltered and designated properties)	439,500
	Lifeline Services (Control, Lifeline, Warwick Response Team)	952,900
Expenditure Total		£1,392,400
Income	Lifeline charges (paying clients)	-244,700
	Other Income	-35,500
	Income from tenant charges	-293,367
Income Total		£-573,567
Total		£818,833

Funding	Housing Revenue Account (from WDC – agreed until 31 July 2017)	272,944
	Housing Revenue Account (additional contingency provision recommended in the HRA and Housing Rents paper elsewhere on this agenda)	545,889
Funding Total		£818,833

- 5.6 The table shows that changes have to be made to the service in order for it to remain financially viable. The proposed new charges for tenants are estimated to generate income of £293,367, based on an estimated 50% of existing

tenants of designating dwellings opting out. Charges in 2016/17 were recovering annual income of £166,365 from self-payers.

- 5.7 The next steps of the review will focus on reducing the expenditure incurred by the service, as well as looking to generate further income from increased marketing of our services. However, in 2017/18 as shown in the table above, it is proposed that additional funding income of £545K will be provided, as set out in the HRA and Housing Rents report elsewhere on this agenda.
- 5.8 This additional provision is prudent and can be accommodated within the HRA Business Plan as a 'one-off' cost for 2017/18. However, it is anticipated that the next stages of the review, to reduce management costs and generate additional income, will significantly reduce the necessity to draw down the full amount of this contingency provision. Nonetheless the contingency is required to reflect current costs based on existing structures. Proposals to change these structures and reduce costs will be reported to Employment Committee and Executive in June 2017 with the latter report setting out the measures to be taken and the level of the additional contingency allocation actually required for the remainder of the financial year 2017/18.

6. Risks

- 6.1 Services in this area are providing support to many elderly and vulnerable customers. In many cases, our services are helping to sustain people living independently and prevent hospitalisation and or care home solutions. Changes to these services need to be carefully considered and demonstrate understanding of the vulnerabilities of many of our customers.
- 6.2 The full review of older person's services will address the risks associated with the loss of Supporting People funding. The first part of this is the new charges; a review of the management and staffing arrangements has already started and plans to expand the take up of Lifeline services to our own tenants as well as private customers are being developed.
- 6.3 Significant savings are being identified in the way that we are delivering services which will be reported to Employment Committee and Executive in June.
- 6.4 Consultation with the Council's tenants, legal advice we have already obtained, as well as work with our staff, are expected to ensure that the proposed charges and staffing arrangements can continue to deliver effective support services to older tenants and good value for money.
- 6.5 The proposal to allow tenants to opt out of services will mean that income will be reduced. The number of existing residents in designated properties taking up the new voluntary services, we have estimated at 50%, the dropout rate could be higher or lower. The number opting for the enhanced Lifeline Plus service is also unknown. The dropout rate will determine our income levels going forward and feed into the staffing review that is currently being progressed.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 The Council could decide to no longer provide Lifeline Services or support services to older tenants. The proposed charges are considered reasonable and are part of our response to have properly funded and effective services.

- 7.2 The Council could continue to impose charges on tenants of our designated properties and not allow an opt-out. This would be unpopular but would better preserve income to pay for our services. It is expected that with the charges proposed, with savings that can be made, and the marketing to increase take up of Lifeline services, that the Council can continue to deliver effective services to older residents.
- 7.3 If the Council are unable to increase take up of Lifeline services within 2 years, a re-evaluation of the continuation of Lifeline services will take place.

8. Background

- 8.1 In October 2015, WCC agreed to the restructure of Housing Related Support as part of its One Organisation Plan Savings to achieve a cumulative savings target of £3.725 million by 2018.
- 8.2 To implement this decision, WCC decided to decommission many of the existing services that their Housing Related Support funding supported and to use revised eligibility criteria to recommission other services.
- 8.3 WCC is not now commissioning any services that are specifically for older people. WCC have commissioned floating support services and any older person who fulfils the eligibility criteria regardless of tenure can be referred for this service.
- 8.4 For clients wishing to benefit from those Housing Related Support services that are to be re-commissioned, WCC will introduce and use eligibility criteria based on either the definitions of need within the Care Act 2014 or a local definition of 'edge of care' based on national guidelines

Care Act 2014

The person will have eligible needs if they meet all of the following:

- They have care and support needs as a result of a physical or mental condition;
- Because of those needs, they cannot achieve two or more of the outcomes specified;
- As a result, there is significant impact on their well-being.

The outcomes are specified in the regulations, and include people's day to day outcomes such as dressing, maintaining personal relationships, and working and going to school.

Edge of Care

The definition of 'edge of care' is taken from No Secrets 2000 guidance and has been updated in line with the requirements of the Care Act 2014. This means the 'vulnerable adult' as now become a 'Priority Person.'

A 'Priority Person' on the 'edge of care' is defined as a person aged 16 years or over who is, or may be, in need of a Housing Related Support service to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for longer term care and support; and/or protect well-being by reason of:

- Disability
- Age

- Illness
- Substance misuse
- Homelessness
- Experience of institutional living such as prison or long stay hospital or children’s residential care service.

8.5 Housing Related Support services are designed to help people by providing the following services:

- Setting up and maintaining a home or tenancy
- Developing domestic and life skills
- Developing social skills
- Advice, advocacy and liaison with outside organisations
- Help in managing finances and benefit claims
- Supervision or monitoring medication
- Peer support and befriending
- Help in finding move-on accommodation
- Help in maintaining the safety and security of the dwelling
- Advice and support on repair work and/or home improvements
- Management of handyman services

8.6 The following are specific exclusions to Supporting People funding for Housing related Support services.

- Personal care
- General social care
- Dispensing of medicine
- Provision of meals

8.7 All tenants of the Council’s Supported Housing schemes and dwellings designated for older people were required to pay the Supporting People Charge as a condition of their tenancy

8.8 A tenant who is not in receipt of Housing Benefit was expected to pay the Supporting People charges from their own resources. The Council expected these self-paying tenants to continue to pay for the service until any new service and associated charges are agreed and implemented.

8.9 A tenant in receipt of Housing Benefit did not pay Supporting People charges. This was paid to the Council by WCC. The grant funding the Council received from WCC was therefore only for those tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit. The Council will not make any recovery of these payments from these tenants when the WCC funding ends on the 31st July 2016 until any new service and associated charges are agreed and implemented. This is because the tenants by virtue of receiving Housing benefit are likely to have a low income and would find making payments difficult. The cost of this will be covered by the contingency allowance made in the HRA Business Plan to fund the transition period from the end of WCC funding to the introduction of new service and associated charges

8.10 The table below illustrates the levels of support that WDC is contracted by WCC to deliver to older people in its sheltered housing schemes and dwellings designated for older people.

Type of dwelling	Number of Tenancies	Weekly SP charge 2015/16	Number of tenants on HB	Number of tenants self-payers

Sheltered Schemes with staff on site – Acorn Court, James Court, Yeomanry Close, Tannery Court, Chandos Court	186	£29.12	143	43
Schemes (alarmed) with no staff on site but usually with a communal building near by – Tachbrook St, Beauchamp Rd, Charles Gardner Rd, Grandborough Ct, Marsham Close, Pickard St, Saltisford Gardens, Shuckborough Grove, St Michaels Rd, Stockton Grove, Waterloo St, Whitacre Rd, Antelope Gardens	274	£11.50	209	65
Designated dwellings – bungalows and specific ground floor flats	848	£6.52	664	184

8.11 The services that the Council currently provides for each weekly charge are detailed below.

Sheltered Schemes £29.12 a week

Provide and deliver a 24/7 housing support service to vulnerable and/or older tenants living in Warwick District Council Sheltered Housing Schemes (Acorn Court, Chandos Court, James Court, Tannery Court, Yeomanry Close), with the objective to enable people to live independently in their home for as long as possible and to provide peace of mind.

- To provide an emergency response 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- To contact emergency services or family/friends, or have a Warwick Response Officer attend.
- To provide regular support. A Housing Support Officer is allocated to each scheme and is 'on duty' at the scheme each morning, Monday to Friday. A member of the Warwick response team is on site each Saturday and Sunday. A daily welfare check is carried out on all residents (residents can opt out).
- To provide monitoring equipment and ensure it is maintained in good working order.

A total of 371.69 hours of housing related support is provided each week, this includes the monitoring call centre staff. The definition of support hours includes all ancillary tasks associated with providing housing related support, as well as the face to face support, e.g. travel to the service user. Administration of HRS, training specific to HRS tasks, annual leave and management of the HRS.

Alarm service – schemes with no staff - £11.50 a week

Provide and deliver 24/7 Housing Support Service to WDC tenants living in alarmed properties. This service is delivered to dispersed properties which are linked to the call centre which provides a daily call to service users (if required)

and a regular visit from a Support Officer (if and when needed). Response officers are available at all times to attend emergency situations.

A total of £199.35 of housing related support is provided each week, this includes the monitoring call centre staff.

Designated Dwellings £6.52 a week

To provide and deliver a 24/7 housing support service to vulnerable and/or older people living in WDC stock of designated dwellings. The community alarm service is provided to all service users, with option of visit from Support Officer when required, Response Officer available at all times to attend emergency situations.