

Extra Care Housing - Visit to Sanctuary Housing Group schemes

Background

Sanctuary are our partners for the planned extra care housing scheme on Mackworth. To get a better understanding of how their schemes look and operate we went to see 3 schemes on 13/2/09. Attendees were Cllr Skelton as the Cabinet Member & Cllr Tuplin as a ward councillor together with 3 officers. An earlier visit to a scheme in Glossop was attended by Cllr Tuplin with the Chair & Secretary of the Mackworth Estate Resident Association.

Visit Details

We visited 3 schemes in Cambridgeshire and met with Sanctuary afterwards. The schemes were a fairly large, older development which will soon be redeveloped & extended. The second was a new, small scheme in a rural setting and the third was also a modern building on a smaller & more urban site in the grounds of a hospital. We were also able to study drawings & applications for other Sanctuary developments around the country.

Conclusions

- The visit was productive & helpful in making decisions about how to progress the scheme in Mackworth. Residents were obviously happy & enjoyed living where they did. All were popular with strong demand
- It is possible to develop an attractive and pleasant complex even on a relatively small & urban site
- The quality of extra care accommodation is improving quickly. Older units were noticeably inferior with less facilities. The average number of units for new schemes are increasing from 30-40 in the past to 60+.
- The option of phasing is not attractive. It adds time, cost & risk. There are no directly comparable examples of phased developments
- The financial model for extra care is complicated for residents & they need clear advice about the financial implications
- The question of meals is important. There were various models ranging from a commercial pay as you eat arrangement to including meals as a compulsory charge as part of the tenancy agreement
- It had proved difficult to rigidly adhere to allocation policies aimed at ensuring a mix of levels of need. The popularity and waiting times tended to lead to a greater concentration of residents with higher level needs
- Approaches to dementia differed. Some schemes had a designated part of the building whereas for others it was fully integrated
- Very few people were unable to stay in extra care until the end of their life
- Outdoor areas were all well designed, well maintained & well used
- Staffing was vital. At 2 locations the manager was evidently a huge part in creating a good atmosphere and ensuring appropriate care & support for residents
- Communal activities varied but it seemed clear that where they were appropriate and well taken up they were valued by residents

- The initial estimates of how long this would take to get through planning look optimistic based on past experience of Sanctuary
- People are entering the scheme at an older age than ten years ago and tended to stay in the scheme for shorter periods on average
- Residents preferred to have access to the bathroom directly from the bedroom rather than having to go through the lounge
- The entrance to the building can have a significant affect on prospective visitors and users and should therefore needs to well designed