



**COUNCIL CABINET**  
**19 DECEMBER 2006**

Report of the Community Commission

## **Sheltered Accommodation Charges**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That Council Cabinet note that the Commission:
  - a) welcome the outcome of the review which will result in significantly reduced charges for self-funding service users
  - b) is concerned about the possible impact on residents with incomes close to the eligibility threshold for means tested benefits
  - c) is concerned that although the new service is planned to be sustainable, on the basis of known Supporting People allocations, it could be vulnerable in the event of future cutbacks.
- 1.2 That Council Cabinet and Derby Homes should act to ensure that appropriate members of their staff offer each service user a full benefits check at least once per year.
- 1.3 That the Council Cabinet member should monitor the Supporting People budgets and ensure that in the event of future reductions in the allocation to Derby that these Supported Living schemes are suitably protected.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **Reasons for Recommendation 1.1**

- 2.1 David Enticott had attended the meeting to explain the report and respond to members' questions. Also present were three members of SHOUT which represents sheltered housing tenants. Recommendation 1.1 sets out the conclusions arrived at by the Commission that drive the proposed actions in at 1.2. and 1.3. The Commission were pleased that the cost dividend from re-modelling the service was being passed on to the self-funding service users.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation 1.2.**

- 2.2 Some concern was expressed about the potential impacts on service users of paying the charges. One scenario was self-funders with moderate to low incomes and diminishing savings. Given time an individual may dip under capital limit and become eligible for income-related benefits but not be aware they had become entitled.

- 2.3 Other scenarios are around residents with incomes close to the central government needs level where differing percentage upratings to state pensions, private pensions and income related benefits can create or remove an entitlement to benefit year-by-year. Some currently not in receipt may not know to (re-)apply.
- 2.4 Ensuring that each service user is offered a full benefit check by a welfare rights adviser or suitably qualified staff member at least once per year would provide a safety net.

### **Reasons for Recommendation 1.3.**

- 2.5 The Commission were informed that the new service had been designed to be stable and sustainable. However, given the Council's previous experiences with Supporting People a precautionary approach is desirable. Therefore the Council Cabinet member should monitor the various Supporting People budgets to identify overspends (and underspends) plus the overall allocation made to Derby. It is important that these Supported Living schemes are suitably protected as they promote independence and can avoid the need for institutional care.

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<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications

## **Appendix 1**

### **IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Financial**

1. The re-modelled schemes are designed to be deliverable within the Supporting People budget.

#### **Legal**

- 2 None directly arising.

#### **Personnel**

- 3 None directly arising.

## **Equalities impact**

- 4 None directly arising.

## **Corporate Priorities**

- 5 The Community Commission's recommendations will help to 'Improve the quality of life in Derby's neighbourhoods', Deliver excellent services, performance and value for money' and to 'Build healthy and independent communities'.