



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

**COUNCIL CABINET
28 NOVEMBER 2006**

Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Social
Cohesion and Housing Strategy

ITEM 9

Decommissioning of Category 2 Sheltered Schemes Rodney House and Sancroft Court

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the outcome of consultation undertaken in relation to the proposed decommissioning of Rodney House and Sancroft Court. It also reports that the Derby Homes Board has considered this issue and recommends the decommissioning of both schemes.
- 1.2 A summary of the outcome of the consultation with residents is provided in the supporting evidence and the overall results indicate that there is a majority in support of the proposed decommissioning.
- 1.3 In April 2005 the Council jointly commissioned a Supported Accommodation Strategy with the Central and Greater Derby Primary Care Trusts, incorporating Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Derbyshire Mental Health Services NHS Trust. The report's recommendations included the re-shaping of the sheltered housing service by addressing poor quality provision and over capacity where there is low demand. It also recommended the development of a broader and more flexible range of warden/housing support services to ensure value for money and support for people in ordinary as well as sheltered housing through floating support.
- 1.4 The maximum cost of home loss and associated relocation payments for the current residents are £132,000. It is anticipated that this cost will be met by the facilitation fund as for previous closure recommendations.
- 1.5 Subject to any issues raised at the meeting, I support the following recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Cabinet support the decommissioning of these both these schemes.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The style of service and accommodation offered does not meet modern day requirements and is seriously outmoded. The costs and limitations of remodeling do not support this option. Derby Homes have conducted thorough consultation with current residents who support the decommissioning of this service.
- 3.2 The schemes are not operating effectively and economically due to void levels, high Supporting People charges and the cost of reactive repairs. Due to a lack of suitable tenants willing to accept tenancies, some of the accommodation has been utilized in a temporary fashion to relieve pressure on the Joint Housing Register.



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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1.1 The Jointly commissioned Supported Accommodation Strategy was published in October 2005. It indicated that there was a significant over supply of category II sheltered accommodation within the city resulting in low demand for a number of schemes. The report's recommendations included the re-shaping of the sheltered housing service by addressing poor quality provision and over capacity where there is low demand. It also recommended the development of a broader and more flexible range of warden/housing support services to ensure value for money and support for people in ordinary as well as sheltered housing through floating support.
- 1.2 In response to these findings, Derby Homes commissioned Peter Fletcher Associates to consider the long-term sustainability of all of its category II schemes. The subsequent report published in February 2006 considered that five Derby Homes schemes raised significant concerns in relation to their long term sustainability. The report recommended that three of the schemes may remain viable in the longer term if a variety of new measures were put in place. The report concluded however, that two of the schemes, Rodney House and Sancroft Court did not have sustainable futures and should be decommissioned.
- 1.3 Following the publication of this second study extensive consultation was undertaken by Derby Homes with current residents regarding the proposed decommissioning of Rodney House and Sancroft Court. Overall results indicate that there is a majority in support of the proposed decommissioning. 77% of residents at Sancroft Court and 69% of residents from Rodney House supported the proposal to decommission. The outcome of consultation with the Littleover and Allenton and Boulton Community Panels and the Supported Housing Offering Unity and Trust Group showed 100% support for decommissioning. The recommendation of Derby Homes' Board reached on 27 July 2006 was that the Board approves and recommends to Derby City Council the decommissioning of both schemes.
- 1.4 Both schemes are classified as Category II – sheltered accommodation and therefore consist of self contained flats or bedsits, with individual, discrete front doors opening onto an internal corridor. There is warden provision, although this is only part-time in the case of Rodney House. The units share communal facilities in respect of laundry, bathing and lounge areas. Also jointly accessing electricity and heating facilities. Sancroft Court comprises 20 units, one of which is occupied by the warden.

- 1.5 Within Rodney House there are a core of 18 units; 6 being 2 bedroomed flats, the remaining 12 having one bedroom, with a further 2 units being located on Harvey Road. Future use of the site and/or buildings will be subject to further consultation between Derby Homes, residents and the Council. The site and buildings will be managed to ensure there is no negative environmental impact during the interim period.
- 1.6 All existing residents would receive ongoing support from Derby Homes officers, including a comprehensive individual needs assessment, to ensure that suitable alternative accommodation is found in each case. This may be within alternative category II schemes or in appropriate accommodation providing greater care with nursing. It is anticipated that the decanting process for each scheme could take up to a year, in order to ensure that residents are supported sensitively whilst selecting their new homes.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Remodelling - Sancroft Court and Rodney House were built in the 1960s. A financial viability study conducted in February 2006 indicated that a substantial sum circa £200,000 would be required to achieve a limited re-modelling of each scheme. However the bathroom and kitchen modernisation and the conversion of bedsit accommodation into 1 bedroomed flats would even after re-modelling result in small accommodation which would be unattractive to prospective residents and remain unpopular and difficult to let in the longer term.
- 2.2 In addition Sancroft Court lacks reasonable access to local facilities and transport. The quality of facilities for tenants in the locality of both schemes is adjudged as 'moderate'. The accommodation at Rodney House does not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
The cost of carrying out compliance works are estimated at £5,500.

For more information contact: Officer Ian Fullagar Tel 255185
Background papers: Derby Homes' Board papers July 2006.
List of appendices: Appendix 1 – Implications

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| IMPLICATIONS |
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Financial

1. The costs of any proposed refurbishment of these blocks would be considerable and would have to be met from the capital programme, which is fully committed to other schemes. The proposed loss of these units would be reflected in housing subsidy, and would not therefore place additional revenue financial pressure on the Housing Revenue Account. If they can be re-used as temporary accommodation this could help to alleviate pressure on the bed and breakfast budget.

Legal

2. Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 imposes a duty to consult with tenants likely to be affected by any change in housing management. Derby Homes actions fully comply with these requirements.

Personnel

3. Two members of staff working in these schemes will be dealt with under Derby Homes; At Risk, Redeployment and Protection of earnings policies.

Equalities impact

4. The new supported housing service will be flexible, responsive and needs led and it will provide for better support to people no matter whom they are and /or where they live. All existing tenants of Sancroft Court and Rodney House will be assisted during the re housing process and will all receive a comprehensive needs assessment as part of the process

Corporate priorities

- 5.1 The proposal promotes the Council's objectives to create **healthy, safe and independent communities** and **a shared commitment to regenerating our communities**.
- 5.2 The proposal also furthers the priority of **working in partnership to achieve socially cohesive communities**.