

# HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Scrutiny Board**

**22 November 2016**

## ***Review of Independent Sheltered Housing in the Borough***

FOR RECOMMENDATION

KEY DECISION NO

REPORT BY: Communities and Housing Scrutiny and Policy Development Panel

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The review was established to investigate issues with residents living in independent sheltered accommodation within the Borough. Guinness Partnership and Portsmouth City Council schemes were selected as the main two providers of independent sheltered housing in Havant.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended to Cabinet that;
- 2.11 six monthly liaison meetings be arranged with the Guinness Partnership and Portsmouth City Council for Councillors (Portfolio Holders) and officers (Heads Of Service) to discuss high-level strategic issues within housing schemes and community issues in the Borough;
- 2.12 Monthly contact discussions be arranged between officers at the Council and Guinness Partnership / Portsmouth City Council housing teams to discuss housing related issues and concerns relating to residents the Borough;
- 2.13 A clear guideline on the process of raising issues concerning residents living within schemes provided by housing associations be circulated to all members;
- 2.14 Guinness Partnership be recommended to improve its communication and performance recording to overcome the clear disparity between the expectations of their customers and the service it provides;
- 2.15 Councillors be encouraged to regularly visit sheltered housing schemes within their ward e.g. attend coffee mornings to improve the profile of the Council and strengthened the link between councillors and their constituents;
- 2.16 Guinness Partnership and Portsmouth City Council be requested to supply the Council each year with a copy of their Housing Annual Report together with a breakdown of the performance statistics relating to this Borough;

- 2.17 The officers be requested to compile a list of sheltered housing schemes within the Borough and publish this on the Council's website; and
- 2.18 a link to the definition of Sheltered Housing be included in the Home Choice website.
- 2.2 It is recommended to the Scrutiny Board that the Crime and Disorder Panel include in their review of the Safer Havant Partnership, how the agencies work together to resolve anti social behaviour in sheltered accommodation.

### **3.0 STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The project links with the key aim in the Corporate Strategy to work with partners to help ensure health and well being of our residents

### **4.0 LEGAL**

- 4.1 There are no legal considerations arising directly from this report.

### **5.0 RESOURCES**

- 5.1 The proposed meetings recommended at 2.1 would require attendance by Councillors and officers. However, it is proposed that these meetings be half yearly to ease the burden on resources.

### **6.0 STAKEHOLDERS**

- 6.1 The residents of the Borough and their concerns over their accommodation were the key consideration throughout this review. The aim of this review was to improve the quality of life for residents living at independent sheltered housing schemes within the Borough.

### **7.0 RISKS**

- 7.1 There are no risks arising directly from this report.

### **8.0 METHODOLOGY**

- 8.1 This review was instigated after a Councillor received complaints from residents at one of the sheltered schemes in the Borough. It was then decided that the review would investigate the standards of independent sheltered accommodation sites by visiting 12 schemes within the Borough – 6 under the management of the Guinness Partnership, 6 under the management of Portsmouth City Council – to allow for comparison. The project plan for this review is included in the background papers.

- 8.2 Full details of the methodology of the project is set out in a separate Findings Pack.

### **9.0 KEY FINDINGS**

- 9.1 Both the Guinness Partnership and Portsmouth City Council give publications on the service provided to tenants prior to move-in. However, compared to the tenants of Portsmouth City Council a larger percentage of Guinness Partnership tenants had a higher expectation of the anticipated services provided under a sheltered housing scheme than was actually provided by the Partnership..
- 9.2 It is acknowledged that the removal of some services funded by Hampshire County Council may be an explanation for the difference between expectation and delivery. However, this cannot explain the discontent arising from repairs and redecoration from the Guinness Partnership's tenants, who took part in the survey. This appears to be a communication issue which needs to be resolved.
- 9.3 From the information provided the key difference between the way the two landlords communicate sheltered housing to tenants is that Portsmouth City Council provide separate guidelines for sheltered accommodation whereas Guinness Partnership include their sheltered housing information in a general tenancy handbook ;
- 9.4 Although the Guinness Partnership has performance targets e.g. to complete general repairs within twenty eight days, it doesn't record how it performs against all these targets. Measuring and publicising its performance could help resolve the problem highlighted in 9.1 above;
- 9.5 Although Guinness Partnership record 92% satisfaction with repair contractors, this figure relates to all properties owned by the Partnership and not solely repairs in sheltered housing schemes. The Panel's survey shows that 51% of those that took part in the survey consider that the repair service is poor. This suggests that the partnership's policy of only checking 10% of repairs across all properties in housing is not a true reflection of the views of their customers in sheltered housing schemes. In contrast Portsmouth City Council checks all its repairs and has a higher level of satisfaction with repairs;
- 9.6 With regard to the rating of décor and cleanliness of the Building/Communal Areas surveyed Portsmouth City Council residents appeared to be more satisfied than Guinness Partnership's. However, this difference in the level of satisfaction could be largely due to the fact that major refurbishment works had recently been undertaken on three of the City Council's schemes included in the survey;
- 9.7 There are currently no clear guidelines on how Councillors should raise residents' concerns to Landlords. The project has highlighted the value of Councillors meeting the residents of sheltered housing schemes. Visiting Councillors were extremely well received at all of the schemes they visited, and it is hoped that this review will lead to more Councillors visiting housing association schemes within their respective wards. It would be helpful if guidelines could be produced which enable Councillors to pass on

issues/matters raised by the residents during these visits. This would reinforce the Councillors role in his or her ward and at the time improve the system for resolving constituent's concerns or complaints;

9.8 The project has also illustrated the value of Councillors meeting representatives and being able to raise concerns directly with landlords. The meeting with the Partnership proved enlightening and a valuable discussion forum to the members of the Panel and hopefully the Partnership's representatives. Both the Guinness Partnership and Portsmouth City Council have indicated that they would be happy to attend future meetings with the Council. It is hoped that these meetings (as detailed in 2.1 and 2.2) will lead to improved communication and quicker solutions to resident concerns.

9.9 Although not included in the survey questionnaires, a number of tenants who took part in the survey raised concerns about the way complaints about anti social behaviour are handled. The Panel acknowledge that Guinness Partnership has a robust anti social behaviour policy and the legal processes for dealing with such behaviour through the courts can be lengthy. However, it is felt that the way the agencies deal with anti social behaviour in sheltered homes could be included in the Crime and Disorder Panel's review of the Safer Havant Partnership to see if these complaints could be resolved more quickly.

## 10.0 Background Papers

[Survey Results Pack](#)  
[Findings Pack](#)

Appendices

**Appendix A** – Additional Comments To the Report and Findings Pack Received from Guinness Partnership, Portsmouth City Council and the Cabinet Lead for Communities and Housing.

### Agreed and signed off for publication by:

<b>Head of Service:</b>	19.10.16
<b>Head of Finance:</b>	09.11.16
<b>Head of Legal:</b>	01.11.16

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