

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

DECISION NO:
16/00137

For publication

Key decision

Affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions, and savings of more than £1m

Subject: Changes to funding arrangements of housing related support and community alarms in sheltered housing.

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, I:

- a) **AGREE** for work to be undertaken in collaboration with current providers to explore and secure alternative funding models, enabling the gradual withdrawal or reduction of the council's contribution towards housing related support and community alarms in sheltered housing by end of March 2018; and
- b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health, or other nominated officer, to undertake the actions necessary to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

The government's consultation on 'Funding for supported housing' ended in February 2017. This consultation is the first step towards creation of a new funding mechanism for supported housing based on integration of health and social care on a regional basis, encompassing a broad spectrum ranging from some housing management activities to elements of healthcare. Aspects of Housing Benefit will be devolved to local level from 2019/20, amounting to £2.12bn, predominantly to fund these activities. This fund will be ring-fenced and set on the basis of current projections of future need.

In preparation for the proposed changes, the necessary devolution of funding needs to be met. Many of the activities in sheltered housing can be funded in this way. The transitional funding arrangements must take place in tandem with withdrawal of KCC's contribution to these services to avoid duplication.

The transition of appropriate costs to Housing Benefit is the only way to ensure that the devolved funding is considered appropriately and that future funding of supported housing in Kent continues to be sustainable.

Financial Implications

The financial impact associated with the proposed decision will be set out in detail in the recommendation report which supports the executive decision and this will be subject to the outcomes of a stakeholder engagement exercise.

The implementation of this decision will help to deliver the council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2017-20.

Equality Implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The impact on groups affected will be minimal, and will be carefully managed and mitigated.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications of the suggested action, subject to standard termination clauses within the specified contracts.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision was discussed at the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee on 20 July 2017. Emma Hanson (Head of Strategic Commissioning – Community Services) and Mel Anthony (Commissioning and Development Manager) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mel Anthony introduced the report and outlined the background to Housing-Related Support and Community Alarms in Sheltered Housing. Kent County Council had issued a joint accommodation strategy that highlighted ambitions to deliver for the Extra Care Housing to address housing needs of older people in need. Central Government had held an evidenced review, a consultation and an inquiry to set a course to change the way in which supported housing was funded. In this model, a proportion of an estimated £2 billion would be devolved to local level. The County Council proposed to work collaboratively with providers of sheltered housing schemes to help them to make the transition to the new arrangements. An event was held to deliver training and raise awareness to organisations at senior levels to help them understand the changes and prepare.

a) A Member asked questions about possible issues and concerns related to costs and support required. She also proposed that the decision be delayed for one year to allow a contingency plan to be put in place. Ms Anthony said that the team were working with providers collaboratively and understood that the transition process would be challenging. An event was held with East Kent Housing to look at how the process could be implemented whilst ensuring people in Sheltered Housing were fully supported. Any person in Sheltered Housing who had eligible needs would continue to receive the specialist services;

b) Mrs Chandler declared an interest as a board member of East Kent Housing. She also wanted to be sure that the housing providers' expertise and time would be used to assist residents to access the changed housing benefit. Ms Anthony reassured the Committee that the team worked closely with the providers to ensure that needs were met and appropriate resources were available;

c) Another speaker supported the proposal to delay the decision by one year in order to look more closely at the concerns highlighted. Ms Anthony confirmed that the change would be implemented in April 2019 and if this were to be delayed, there would be a risk of insufficient funds. Organisations had had time to prepare for the change as the Government had been aware of this change since 2015. The aim was to guarantee the future of supported housing in Kent and ensure that action was taken to support the organisations that were making the transition and ensure that this was done properly;

d) A Member said that this would prove to be challenging and sought a guarantee that would be able to move through the transition process within the given timeframe;

e) A Member asked for further information relating to the other providers that were experiencing similar problems to Canterbury. Ms Anthony said that the team had worked most closely with Canterbury, Dover and Shepway because they had been significantly affected by the different arrangements; all sheltered housing providers had been advised on Kent County Council's approach. The manager of East Kent Housing had expressed doubt that this would be possible, but had been advised that it had been possible for other organisations in a similar position;

f) The Cabinet Member, Mr Gibbens said that seven of the twelve districts had already been through the change and confirmed that everyone who had an eligible Social Care need in accordance with the Care Act had had that need met; and

g) A Member asked a question about the savings that would be made. Ms Anthony said that the total annual contract value of sheltered housing currently spent in a year was £2.7 million. An exact savings figure would be determined once the finalised figures are released.

2. The Chairman clarified that Ida Linfield had proposed and Mr B Lewis had seconded that the decision be delayed for one year to allow a contingency plan to be put in place.

Upon being put to the vote, this was lost (3 votes for, 10 votes against)
Mr R H Bird, Mr B H Lewis and Ida Linfield asked that their votes against be minuted.

3. The recommendation in the report was then put to the vote.

Carried (11 votes for, 3 votes against)

Mr R H Bird, Mr B H Lewis and Ida Linfield asked that their votes against be minuted.

4. RESOLVED that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, to:

a) work in collaboration with current providers to explore and secure alternative funding models, enabling the gradual withdrawal or reduction of the Council's contribution towards housing related support and community alarms in sheltered housing by the end of March 2018; and

b) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision,

be endorsed.

The Cabinet Member also met with officers and politicians from Canterbury City Council and Dover and Shepway District Councils during September 2017, to discuss the proposals.

Any alternatives considered:

N/A

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: *NONE.*



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signed

26 SEPTEMBER 2017

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date

