REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF ENDING THE RESIDENT WARDEN ROLE FROM SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES.

Purpose of Report

To review the impact of the 2014 removal of the residential warden service at sheltered housing schemes.

Background

Around a third of Denbighshire Housing stock is designated for older people aged over 55. We have a number of traditional schemes with a communal centre that previously had a residential warden on site. The role was very generic and required some core rent funding but also some Supporting People funding due to an element of the role providing care and support albeit very low level. The review in 2014 that led to the change concluded that resources could be better deployed in providing specialist support that individuals need regardless of their housing tenure.

This has led to a legacy that some residents lost the reassurance that the on-site warden provided and has led to claims that residents can become more isolated and excluded and the risk that this brings. This risk could be an issue in any of our homes but does seem very avoidable on a "sheltered" style complex.

There have been comments raised in our two STAR surveys since regarding the loss of the warden service and this was also mentioned by customers during interviews with the Wales Audit Office in 2018.

Housing staff regularly visit our schemes however they do not proactively visit tenants. The support needs of our tenant's remains the responsibility for the Councils statutory support services. Any support role involves compliance and detailed support administration.

Residents have also benefited from being increasingly active in running their own residents groups and activities rather than relying on the site based member of staff. Anecdotal evidence suggests that previously the success of the scheme depended on the personality and attitude of the residential staff member and this appears to have led to much inconsistency across the county.

This review has looked at the options to investigate if we can improve our current service to residents in our older people stock.

This has concluded that the complications with support funding mean that it is not feasible to return to a role that includes generic support for these schemes. However we should consider if there are other services or roles that could support additional reassurance however consideration needs to be

given to avoid duplication of statutory services in support provision and also with regards to what is the responsibility of Denbighshire housing as landlord. Expectations would need to be set clearly for residents.

The context is there is significant demand for our homes and we have an ongoing project to consider how we will meet this demand long term with regards to meeting the needs of older people. Our homes need to remain desirable particularly as new extra care schemes are built in our communities that raise the bar in terms of quality of accommodation and supported independent living standards. Our schemes however are good quality, affordable and can provide a positive and supportive community for residents to live.

The age profile of our residents at sheltered schemes suggest residents do live, on average, to an age well above the average age of our community in general.

Recommendation

That the feasibility of items 3 (additional non-support role provision) and 5 (more targeted work by Housing Staff) below be explored and considered further.

The following table reviews the options available.

REVIEW OF WARDEN ROLE AT SHELTERED SCHEMES

	Issue	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments	Potential
1.	**Traditional Residential Warden**	Schemes more marketable Potential reassurance for tenants Potential to reduced isolation by encouraging participation Supports the Wellbeing Act Supports some of our most vulnerable tenants Enable us to provide sheltered plus style independent living at selected schemes. On site presence for community centres Partial Service charge available to cover cost Reduce demands on office staff	Expensive provision (salary / flat) Support is very low level and generic No funding for support element* Resources should be targeted at specific support needs Significant demands & resources needed for compliance and support plan management Builds reliance and expectations Risk that residents rely on visit and contact rather than attempt integration and attending activities Reduces opportunities for resident led activities** Other services would reduce input as potentially duplicates services	This would be return to previous service with residential member of staff. Responsibilities became significantly restricted with limits on actual support / care allowed. Role reduced to daily checks and alerting emergency services if required. *Any support / care element would not be eligible for Housing benefit so would require residents to pay or supporting people funding which is extremely unlikely to be available. ** Some residents current benefit in terms of their own health & well-being from in running residents groups and activities Corporate priorities – Independent Living & Stronger Communities - could be argued that this model supports independent living but also increases reliance and dependency.	Lack of support based funding and the generic nature of the support provision makes this option unviable.

			Staff management - Holiday cover / Sickness absence		
2.	**Mobile Warden Provision**	Economies of scale through cluster responsibility rather than site specific Potential reassurance for residents from site visits Emergency Telephone contact for reassurance On site presence for community centres facilities management Partial Service charge available to cover cost Reduce demands on office staff	Expectations of priorities when not on site Reliance on person but still limited hours service Risk that residents rely on visit and contact rather than attempt integration and attending activities	This would be the traditional warden role involving daily checks but would not be residential and could manage more than one scheme.	Lack of support based funding and the generic nature of the support provision makes this option unviable.
3.	**Other non - support role such as mobile caretaker**	Benefits of on-site presence for reassurance Fully service charge and HB eligible if no support element in role Some costs already service charged could be incorporated to part fund role e.g. cleaning	Limited role and not support Risk that this would increase expectations around level of support for individuals. Expectations of priorities when not on site Competing demands of shared schemes	This would be mobile caretaker role who could potentially visit a number of sites each week. The role could include minor repairs enhanced site maintenance and also manage the community centre but would not involve any direct care or support role with residents but would inevitably involve liaison with residents. This could be directly employed or bought in service.	This option should be explored to assess tenant appetite and if costs can be recovered through service charges.

		Potential to enhance desirability of schemes Reduce demands on office staff On site presence for community centres facilities management Potential for minor repairs savings	Cost of vehicle & maintenance Personality of employee vital to success of this role.		
4.	**Additional role of Older Peoples Coordinator**	Provide some reassurance and referral mechanism for residents as contact for support needs / concerns. Responsibility for support plans and compliance would remain with provider Role provides a Housing focus and links to a residents support and care needs. Could coordinate activities and well-being events at community centres. Could coordinate routine updating of resident information and identify risk	Would not provide any support for individuals Risk of ensuring that the significant number of residents are all included in monitoring Would not add on site reassurance Funded would need identifying through HRA as not benefiting specific individuals Resource could be better used on additional support role in SIL. Duplicates other roles within the Council and other services.	This is a coordinating role with responsibility for overseeing independent living schemes and support needs of residents. Role would not provide direct support but would liaise with support providers to coordinate support provision and services at schemes.	This service would duplicate other services and roles both insider and externally to the council such as Community Navigators.

		for further intervention or follow up Provide consistency of service across schemes or target where additional intervention required. Could lead on opportunities, strategy and marketing of older peoples housing.			
5.	**Increase capacity within the current model**	Housing staff able to commit more time each week to presence at older peoples schemes Smaller patches would enable better insight into customers circumstances Smaller patches will facilitate more targeted work by Housing staff to highlight tenants with greater needs to ensure signposting and referrals for support are in place.	Risk of unrealistic expectation around extent of the role of Housing staff. This to be managed through communication.	Reduce patch sizes (number of properties per officer) to allow more customer focussed service which would facilitate closer working at older people's schemes. Staff would be required to maintain up to date information on tenants at older peoples schemes and	Housing service has been remodelled to create significantly smaller "patches" for staff to be able to know their tenants better.
6.	**Continue with current model**	Promotes independent living and integration within community Affordable homes	Loss of reassuring presence on site Resource demands on other Housing staff	This is the current independent living model we operate.	It is likely we would continue to receive feedback around the

| | | Resources targeted at individual support needs from statutory services

Less risk of staff personality influencing whole scheme

Community led activities mixed with Community Development led projects | Reliance on volunteers to jointly manage centre facilities | | impact of the loss of the warden |