

## **CABINET - 7TH MARCH 2024**

### **Report of the Director of Housing and Wellbeing Lead Member: Executive Member for Public and Private Sector Housing**

#### **Part A**

#### SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

##### Purpose of Report

To consider the Sheltered Accommodation Strategy Framework at Appendix 1.

##### Recommendations

1. That the Sheltered Accommodation Strategy Framework at Appendix 1 be approved.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Housing and Wellbeing to make minor amendments to the Sheltered Accommodation Strategy Framework at Appendix 1 in consultation with the Executive Member for Public and Private Sector Housing.
3. That budget provisions of £47,300 be made available for the creation of a project officer, £200,000 for specialist external support, and £200,000 for costs associated with decommissioning Block A of Fielding Court.
4. With reference to recommendation 3 (above) that Cabinet approve any necessary procurement exercises.
5. That Block A of Fielding Court be decommissioned pending options appraisal, and that steps be taken to prevent tenants from being financially disadvantaged because of losing their home.
6. That Block B be retained as age-designated accommodation whilst options are considered with alarm and warden support, albeit without the communal facilities at Block A, which lacks heat and hot water.
7. That a range of options for the future of Fielding Court be explored, and that a recommended option be returned to Cabinet in 2024/25 for consideration.
8. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Housing and Wellbeing, and the Head of Strategic Housing in consultation with the Executive Member for Public and Private Housing to reduce the age at which sheltered accommodation may be accessed to 55, particularly at schemes subject to an interim investment strategy, rather than identified as a priority for intervention, with any necessary amends made to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy to enable this.
9. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Housing and Wellbeing, and the Head of Strategic Housing in consultation with the Executive Member for

Public Housing to reduce the age at which non sheltered, general needs 60+ bungalow accommodation may be accessed to 55, with any necessary amends made to the Council's Allocations Policy to enable this.

### Reasons

1. To set out a strategy framework around the improvement of sheltered accommodation.
2. To enable minor amendments to be made in response to internal and external changes in context which have a bearing on the strategy.
3. To provide both in house and expert external capacity to progress the project, and to provide a budget for costs arising from decommissioning.
4. To support delivery of recommendation 3 (above).
5. To limit capital expenditure on a scheme which has a high level of empty properties, many of which are not self-contained and do not meet the needs or aspirations of older people.
6. Properties in B Block are self-contained and are currently meeting a housing need.
7. To determine the future of Fielding Court.
8. To support the letting of sheltered accommodation, maximising rental income.
9. To support the letting of bungalows, maximising rental income.

### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The strategy framework will support compliance with the current Homes and Communities Agency Home Standard (2012), which, in summary, states that the Council must:

- ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.
- meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.
- ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas.

Government is likely to implement new regulatory standards before the end of this financial year. The strategy framework is consistent with these expectations.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 Cabinet approved the Charnwood Standard, to provide a higher standard of accommodation than the statutory Decent Homes Standard.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 Cabinet approved the Charnwood Borough Council Asset Management Strategy 2023-2028.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Cabinet approved the HRA Business Plan and Capacity Update.

The Council’s new Corporate Strategy 2024-2028 contains a commitment to improve its portfolio of sheltered accommodation. The framework sets out the approach to achieving this aim, whilst also having regard to broader intentions set out in the Corporate Strategy around delivering excellent services, exploring opportunities for new homes, achieving value for money through reviewing how we work, engaging with residents, and exploring all options for service delivery to achieve the best results for our communities.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The strategy framework will be implemented when the Cabinet decision comes into force.

Implementation of the strategy framework will be monitored by the Housing Management Advisory Board.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

*Financial Implications*

The budget of £447,300 is fully financed through the housing revenue account.

*Risk Management*

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Insufficient organisational human resource capacity and expertise to drive the strategy forward.	Likely (3)	Major (4)	High (12)	Post to be created to support delivery of the strategy.  Specialist external services to be procured.  Progress will be monitored by the Housing Management Advisory Board.
Communication with affected	Likely (3)	Serious (3)	Moderate (9)	Communications to be issued to affected

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
tenants, does not take place, and tenants are concerned about plans, or in the case of tenants at Fielding Court, unsupported leading to reputational damage.				residents outlining the position, and where appropriate the support available.

### *Equality and Diversity*

The framework will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity. A completed equality impact assessment is at Appendix 2.

### *Crime and Disorder*

This framework will positively contribute towards the achievement of the Council's responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) to undertake reasonable action to improve community safety in the borough. Increasing the occupancy of schemes and reducing the number of empty properties is likely to reduce the potential for crime and enhance a perception of safety amongst residents.

### Climate Change and Carbon Impact

The following principles of sustainability will be supported through the framework:

- Support the meeting of the housing needs of all sections of the community;
- Reduce the energy intensity of Council-owned buildings;
- Reduce, crime, anti-social behaviour and increase community safety.

### **Wards Affected**

Multiple wards.

### **Publicity Arrangements**

N/A

### **Consultations**

N/A

## Links to the Corporate Strategy

Caring for the Environment	Yes
Healthy Communities	Yes
A Thriving Economy	Yes
Your Council	Yes

Key Decision: Yes

Background Papers: Cabinet, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 Charnwood Borough Council Asset Management Strategy 2023-2028

Cabinet, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023, HRA Business Plan and Capacity Update

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## **Part B**

### 1. Scope of the Sheltered Accommodation Strategy Framework

- 1.1 The framework sets out a direction of travel for improving the Council's portfolio of sheltered accommodation, recognising the challenge is one of significant scale, concerning both physical assets, and the wellbeing and aspirations of our current and future residents.
- 1.2 The framework contains a specific section on Fielding Court in Loughborough. Fielding Court has many empty properties, and residents from Block A have been decanted to alternative accommodation following the failure of pipework embedded in the fabric of the building. An urgent need therefore exists to determine its future.
- 1.3 In addition to setting out actions that will support future decision making around sheltered accommodation and the level of resource required to take those actions forward, the framework also sets out actions the Council can take to support the letting of some vacant units at sheltered accommodation and bungalows currently designated for applicants on the housing register aged 60+.

### Consultation

The Housing Management Advisory Board was consulted at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024. It endorsed the strategy framework, noting its view that a range of options should be explored prior to any decision to dispose of a scheme site.

### Appendices

Appendix 1 - Sheltered Accommodation Strategy Framework

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment