

YOUR HOMES – OUR PROMISE

THE REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE

CONSULTATION MEETINGS - TENANTS HANDOUTS



1. The review of the council's Sheltered Housing Service



Thank you for taking part in this consultation meeting, which, as mentioned in our invitation letter, is one of a series of identical events being arranged at each of our 38 sheltered housing schemes.

There are two important reasons for us asking you to the meeting:

- First we wanted to have everyone in the scheme together so we can give you a presentation about our Review of the sheltered housing service and what will be happening over the coming months, and
- To give you and fellow tenants the opportunity to ask questions about the Review and for us to provide answers.

This document has been prepared so that you have written information about the Review to keep for reference along with the regular newsletters we will send you as the Review progresses. Please share this information with your family and / or friends if you wish.

2. Why are we undertaking this review?



The February 2012 housing stock transfer ballot for our tenants resulted in a majority vote in favour of their homes remaining with the Council rather than being transferred to a new, not-for-profit housing organisation.

As part of the offer within its Housing Stock Transfer Proposals to tenants the Council made a commitment to review sheltered housing service within a year of the ballot decision. The aim here is to develop an improved service for tenants in sheltered housing and for other older people living in the Council's housing.

Additionally, in July 2012, the Welsh Government published its new Supporting People Strategy, which needs to be taken into account when considering how support services will operate in the future.

3. How have things progressed and what is planned?



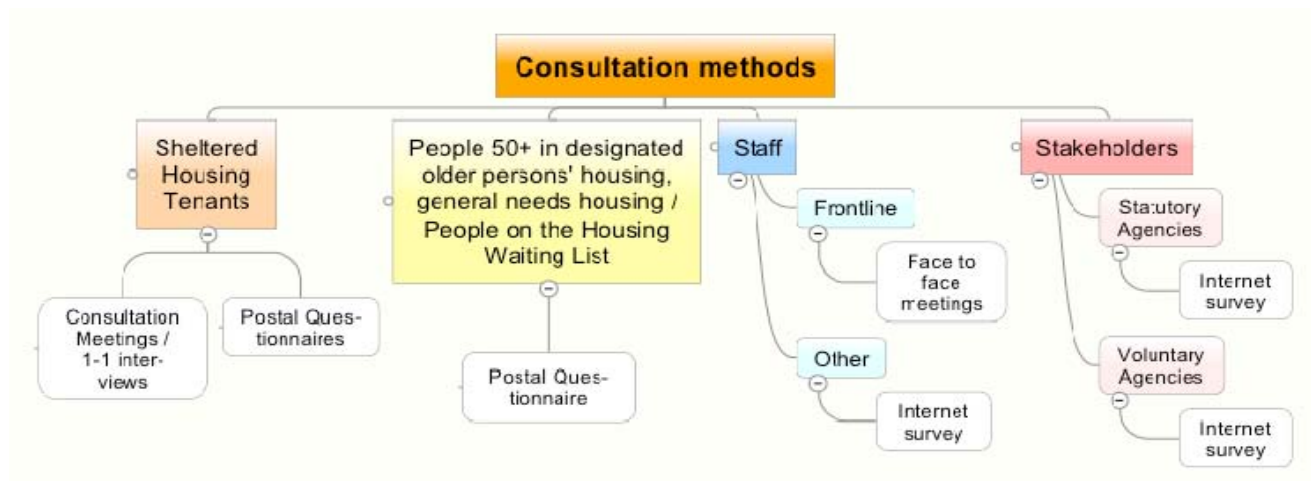
As mentioned in the invitation to you for today's meeting the Council has:

- Established an Older Persons' Housing Project Group, which currently includes ten tenant members, to oversee the Review, to assist with its consultation events and to ensure that the views of tenants are heard
- Met with wardens to brief them on the review processes
- Appointed specialist consultants, Ridgeway Associates, to assist with the Review and provide an independent focus.

The above steps have been closely followed by arrangements for the wide range of consultation, which forms a key part of the Review.

This includes meetings with sheltered housing tenants such as the one you have attended today. And, for those sheltered tenants unable to attend meetings, arrangements will be made for one-to-one discussions with a Council staff member.

The full range of consultation methods and those we will consult with to gather information for the Review is shown on the following page:



The Review will also look at a range of other factors, including:

- The condition of our Sheltered Housing schemes – e.g. are they fit for the future?
- Our Sheltered Housing tenants’ current needs for support services
- An appraisal of our current service and the way service charges are set out
- Projected trends among Caerphilly’s population
 - For example, in terms of age, health and housing circumstances
 - Acknowledged best practice elsewhere.

And there are other issues that require consideration, such as:

- Our Supporting People income which goes towards the warden support service has been reducing year on year
- The impact of the new Supporting People (SP) Strategy mentioned above, because:

- In the future SP funding will be based on each person's actual support needs rather than a traditional 'blanket' service for everyone, whether it is needed or not
- The Supporting People Team have told us that:
'The SP Team will no longer fund the traditional warden type service which delivers 'support' regardless of the needs of the scheme residents. Rather there is an expectation that we will fund more flexible targeted services (Floating Support) which will expand beyond the confines of sheltered services.'
- This will affect the way we deliver the sheltered housing service in the future – so we must prepare for these changes
- It has been accepted that as Caerphilly has a large number of sheltered schemes that it will take time to make the changes
- It is expected, however, that changes will be implemented by April 2016 at the latest.

4. The way ahead



The above information is intended to give an overview of the key activities and issues to be addressed in this Review. But as might be imagined there will also be a considerable amount of analysis, thought and debate in reaching conclusions as to how the warden support service can be shaped for the future.

While we cannot prejudge the Review's findings it is of interest to consider the approach taken by other sheltered housing providers needing to develop a flexible service able to meet individual tenant's support needs. For example:

This has been achieved by adopting a 'core and cluster' method of service delivery where support teams based at core schemes serve clusters of nearby schemes:

- Typically the number of schemes in these clusters range from 4 to 6 so tenants get to know each team member and when they will be present at their scheme
- Support is delivered flexibly based on tenants' needs using a 'banding' system with levels ranging from low to high
- Tenants can move between these bands if their needs change
- Additionally support is usually available in an emergency / times of crisis.

The benefits of the ‘core and cluster’ model include:

- Delivering a high quality service that is flexible
- Tenants receiving a service when there are staff shortages due to sickness and annual leave
- Providing choice in service delivery for tenants, so creating an ethos of independence rather than dependency
- Utilising staff flexibly to make best use of their skills and providing the best service
- Making service delivery more equitable by addressing the inconsistency in the number of units managed by wardens.

Some sheltered housing providers have expanded the above to offer a ‘menu of services’ that are known to be of interest to some of their tenants, for example:

- Introducing a new post of ‘Activity Co-ordinator’ to increase social and health & wellbeing events across sheltered schemes
- Provide, for example, a handyman service and help with gardening, and decorating
- Services like these are paid for by tenants but charges tend to be competitive and tenants often feel more secure since they are provided by their landlord or trusted contractors where appropriate.

5. Next steps



You will receive regular newsletters providing updates on the Review and also feedback on the question and answer sessions held at all the 38 consultation meetings.

Following the completion of the consultation meetings you will be asked to complete a questionnaire designed to provide more information about your views and the type of service you would like to see introduced in the future. If you need help completing the questionnaire please contact your warden who will be able to arrange for someone to assist you. You will have a prepaid envelope to return the questionnaire directly to Ridgeway as this will ensure confidentiality.