



### Project Initiation Document

**Project Sponsor** Trevor Saunders  
**Client:** Planning and Development Strategy on behalf of Housing Services  
**Date:** September 2009

<b>Client :</b> Housing Services –Adult Social care <b>Project :</b> Wingfield Court -Ampthill <b>Document</b> <b>Author:</b> Graham Blair, Head of Housing Strategy and Community <b>Published Date :</b> September 2009 <b>Version :</b> 1

#### Change History

The document is to be submitted to the relevant strategic Board (e.g CAMG/LTB) for approval and signoff. Thereafter amendments are to be approved by the appropriate change control procedures.

Issue	Date of Issue	Comments/Reason for change

#### Distribution

Name	Position	Organisation

#### Abbreviations

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#### 1. Introduction

Wingfield Court is a sheltered housing scheme managed by Aragon HA consisting of 14 integral flats and 15 neighbouring bungalows. In 2003 an extra wing was added in partnership with the, then PCT with the aim of providing an intermediate care facility with 6 flats. Unfortunately, the

PCT were never able to use the facility and over the last few years the wing has been used for temporary re-housing. The PCT have advised Aragon they will not be using the facility.

Aragon's Board have considered options and concluded the best way forward would be to convert the whole scheme into 'Extra Care' Housing. Extra Care housing is seen as an effective model of service to meet the needs of certain older people. Essentially Extra Care Housing builds on the concept of sheltered housing; residents retain their own accommodation but have access to facilities and services needed by vulnerable older people. Typically this would cover wheelchair access, wet room showers, adapted kitchens, a modern comprehensive alarm system, hairdressing facilities, space for a care team to operate from and an on site warden. Basically it allows vulnerable elderly people to access much needed services on site, whilst allowing them to retain a large degree of independence.

The proposal involves CB providing grant of up to £175k to Aragon HA to assist the funding of the worked needed to remodel elements of the scheme to almost Extra Care level.

The scheme is owned and managed by Aragon HA. CB's interest is in supporting Aragon and other RSLs, in developing services addressing key priority areas. A remodelling of the scheme for continued sheltered housing or 'normal' flats, whilst useful, would not address a key priority area. An option is to support the scheme in principle but not consider funding the scheme. Aragon is in a difficult position with this scheme. They cannot bid for Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) money as this is not available for conversions. Dept of Health funding for Extra Care is not currently available and experience with 2 bid rounds involving Aragon and former Mid Beds and County staff working together on bids, showed that huge over subscription was a real obstacle.

CB has a sum of money in the capital fund to support affordable housing schemes and criteria to guide the use of this budget.

## **2. Objective**

The objectives of this project help meet Central Bedfordshire Council's vision and priorities set out in its first strategic plan for 2009-2011. In this plan the authority has highlighted that its vision is 'to improve the quality of life of all in Central Bedfordshire, and enhance the unique character of our communities and our environment'.

In order to meet this vision the authority has agreed five priorities for 2009-2011 these are;

- Supporting and caring for an ageing population
- Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people
- Managing growth effectively
- Creating safer communities, and
- Promoting healthier lifestyles

This proposal directly addresses the first and last bullet points.

Aragon's proposal is in line with the strategic direction outlined in both the former Bedfordshire County Council's, 'Older Persons Strategy' and the 'Supporting People Strategy' both broadly supported by all the former District councils. The concept of Extra Care forms a key service provision in the Governments 'National Strategy for an Ageing Society'-2008 and will form a key element in Central Bedfordshire's 'Older Persons Strategy' and will be promoted in the Housing Strategy. Work undertaken by the former County Council suggested something in the region of

200 units were needed, based on broad projections against demographic forecasts.

The current scheme represents an under use of a housing scheme, that with relatively modest investment, could bring large benefits. Firstly there are benefits in making full use of the physical facility. However the main benefits are about providing much needed services to a vulnerable group. In numbers terms, the steady increase in older persons needing housing with support, represents the largest area of 'special needs', after the numbers requiring affordable housing per se. The general direction for supporting vulnerable people is to try and provide services to support people in their own homes. Extra Care schemes allow residents to lead independent lives whilst being designed to enable much needed support services to be accommodated in house; in time the concept of developing such schemes as 'hubs' for the local community, is intended to be developed.

### **3. Scope**

The project would cover internal re modeling of an existing scheme and changes to the car parking. Planning permission would probably be needed but is not considered a major difficulty.

### **4. Description of Work**

The existing extension already offers many of the facilities but needs re modeling. Also needed is improved car parking and a scooter store.

### **5. Financial Issues**

The capital budget for 2009/10 shows £2.4m for supporting affordable housing schemes previously agreed by Mid Beds Council. This has very recently been re profiled down to £1.5m, to reflect housing market conditions and incorporates an assumption that this scheme is supported. The criteria for guiding decisions to allocate funds were set by Mid Beds Executive but essentially were around supporting schemes that met Mid Beds, now Central Bedfordshire priorities. The criteria will be one of the issues to be addressed in the forthcoming draft Housing strategy for CB.

The investment sought from CB is up to £175k. The simplest way to assess VFM for investment in affordable housing is to look at the cost per unit. However, in this case, the proposal is not leading to additional new units, rather a change of use. Even so, a cost per unit figure is reasonable as a rough comparison. The number of units expected to be achieved is 41, which works out at £4.2k per unit. Current HCA funded 'normal' affordable housing suggests something like £45-£60k a unit. It is therefore a cost effective way of gaining an Extra Care type scheme.

The revenue costs will be met from Adult Social Care budgets and achieving more Extra Care facilities is a priority for them.

### **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

The project will be led by the Project Manager. The full project team are:

Name	Location	Responsibility
Graham Blair	Priory House	Budget control

Tony Keaveney	Dunstable	Commissioner
Aileen Evans	Aragon	Service manager
Phil Mitchinson	Aragon	Technical manager
Deborah Stewart	Aragon	Project leader

## 7. Timescale

The following represents a rough timescale.

- Complete specification –September/October 2009
- Planning permission and tender acceptance –December/January 2010
- Scheme finished – February/May 2010

## 8. Conditions / Constraints / Risks

The key factors that will impact on the success of the project are

Risks	Likelihood H/M/L	Impact H/M/L	Mitigation
The project does not come within budget or takes longer to provide than is predicted.	L	M	Aragon is experienced in commissioning and managing complex building work. The funding amount sought allows for some flexibility around tender prices
Service users are not satisfied with the facility	L	H	The scheme design and facilities will be designed to accord with best practice.
Revenue money is not available to support residents support service needs	L	H	The scheme would have to operate on the basis of a traditional sheltered housing scheme