

Appendix B

**Review of Housing for older
people in the south of
Central Bedfordshire**

**Consultation Plan for Croft
Green Sheltered Scheme
Dunstable**

Dated July 2011

Foreword from Julie Ogley

Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

Central Bedfordshire Council is undertaking a review of its current provision of housing for older people and would like to hear your views. In this document you will find information on the reasons why the Council is undertaking the review and how you can have your say.

Currently, Council housing for older people is provided through our Sheltered Housing and Extra Care schemes and older person's bungalows. These are designed to meet the needs of older people who may need a little extra support to remain living independently. The schemes benefit from having an alarm service and assistance from Sheltered Housing Officers who make contact with residents on a regular basis. There are also older people who live in standard Council accommodation that has been adapted to help with mobility issues.

There are over 600 units of sheltered accommodation throughout the south area of Central Bedfordshire, many of which were built over thirty years ago. Sheltered housing of the type we currently provide is generally becoming less in demand as people live longer and have changing expectations of the type of housing they will live in as they age. Some of our schemes are still popular and easy to let to new tenants who may wish to down-size, live nearer relatives, or have older neighbours. However, a growing number of our sheltered schemes have begun to 'show their age' and do not meet modern space standards or the expectations of future residents. For these reasons, we are looking at how our existing sheltered schemes can adapt to continue meeting needs now and into the future. We are also looking at different ways of supporting people to stay longer in their own homes.

This document relates to the future of the bedsit block at Croft Green Sheltered Scheme in Dunstable. The bungalows at Croft Green are not under review as they are considered to be in good repair, of a satisfactory size for mobility purposes and easy to let.

I hope that you will take the opportunity to let us know your views.

Meeting the housing needs of older people

Over the last few decades the housing needs of older people have changed. People are living longer and remaining healthier. Many want to retain their independence and stay in their own home for as long as possible, which has contributed to the decrease in demand for sheltered housing. As the main provider of social housing in the south of Central Bedfordshire, the Council wants to make sure it is planning to meet future needs in the right way. It also wants to make sure its current housing for older people is safe, secure and meets modern standards.

The Council has begun a review of its current provision and is giving consideration to how it meets the needs of older people now and in the future. An important part of this review will be the views of current residents of our sheltered housing schemes and potential future residents. We will also be seeking the views of the local community, our health colleagues and other professionals involved in the support of older people.

Research on the housing needs of older people

A major new report published in May 2011 by Henley Business School, '*Housing markets and independence in old age: expanding the opportunities*' highlights the growing challenge for Britain's ageing population. Research shows that by 2033, there will be an extra 3.5 million households aged over 65 years, a 60% increase on current figures.

Research published in 2010 in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Bedfordshire states that the number of single pensioner households will grow significantly between 2007 and 2021, and that over 20% of older person's households in Bedfordshire contain someone with a mobility problem.

The SHMA also reports that the housing needs of older people differ from other household groups. They are less likely to be homeless but more likely to be living in accommodation which has become unsuitable for them due to mobility problems or care needs. They are less likely to move than other household groups. National policy is aimed at helping people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible, and reducing the need for people to enter residential care homes. Older people are not a homogenous group. They have different needs and requirements; it is those that are likely to be frail or suffer long term limiting illness that need additional consideration over and above other households.

Central Bedfordshire is expected to experience a significant growth in the numbers of older people over the next 10-20 years. The number of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase by 53%. An even higher rate of increase, of almost 65%, is projected for those aged over 75. People aged 80 and over are expected to increase by 86%. This means an increasing population of people who are living with health problems which make them frail or reduce their mobility.

One of the ways in which housing services are trying to meet these changing needs is to look at providing more 'extra-care' sheltered housing. This is sheltered housing with on-site care and support, aimed at helping residents to stay-put if they grow frail, so that they can put-off, or avoid having to move into residential care.

Croft Green Sheltered Housing Scheme, Dunstable

Croft Green is a sheltered scheme, situated in the Beecroft area of Dunstable, which was built in the 1950's. The scheme has 24 one-bedroom bungalows arranged in two blocks overlooking a green. There is a further building that contains 7 bedsits, a two bedroom flat, warden's office, communal laundry and lounge.

The Croft Green bungalows are very popular, within easy reach of local shops and are known to attract residents who wish to down-size their accommodation but remain on Beecroft estate. There are no plans to review the future of the bungalows and over the summer individual heating systems are being installed. The communal laundry and lounge in the bedsit building are popular and are used on a regular basis by the residents.

The Croft Green bedsits are not as popular as the bungalows. There are often long delays in the re-letting of the bedsits and they have a poor internal lay-out and do not meet modern space standards. Their size is also a problem if a resident becomes frail or their mobility declines. It is harder to put in disabled adaptations and care for a frail person in a very small property.

In addition, the communal heating system (boiler, pipes and radiators) has reached the end of its useful life and is becoming uneconomical to repair. Due to the age of the boiler replacement parts are becoming obsolete.

As stated earlier, over the summer the Council will be installing gas boilers into each bungalow, which will allow residents more control over their own heating and hot water.

Croft Green Bedsit Block - Consultation Plan

How you can have your say

To fully inform the Council's decision on the future of the Croft Green bedsit block the consultation plan will operate between July 2011 and February 2012 in four phases as outlined below.

During the four phases of the Consultation Plan no decision will be made on the future of the bedsit block and any bedsits that become vacant will be advertised on the Choice Based Lettings system – Bedfordshire Home Finder.

Phase One July to Aug 2011	Phase Two Sept to Oct 2011	Phase Three Nov to Dec 2011	Phase Four Jan 12 – Feb 12
Gathering information on local housing needs and residents' ideas and preferences.	Analysis of information and development of options.	Public consultation on future options	Council decision

Phase One – Information gathering

During Phase One, regular meetings will be held with Croft Green residents and their family and friends to discuss their views, ideas and concerns. Meetings will also be held with stakeholders and partners – for example local health and social care professionals to better understand the needs in the area. In addition, information will be gathered on the types of housing being designed for older people to better inform the options that will be developed during Phase Two.

During this phase, residents will be offered the opportunity for individual as well as group meetings. They will also be offered the support of an independent tenant advisor to provide impartial advice to tenants and ensure that their views inform decision-making. Tenants will also be given the opportunity to tell us how they want to be consulted throughout this process, and how their views should be taken into account.

Phase Two – Developing Options

The council will analyse the information gathered from Phase One. A range of options will then be developed that would meet current and likely future demand. Each option will be costed and the relative advantages and disadvantages identified. It is possible that at this stage the Council may identify its preferred options(s) and the rationale for that choice.

Phase Three – Consulting on the options

The Council will publish a consultation document and seek feedback. This document will provide information on the outcome of the review, views of existing and local residents, the outcome of stakeholder meetings and current and likely future demand. The document will then outline the options and the rationale used to assess each option. Those options that are considered by the Council to be feasible will be further developed within the

consultation document. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also be asked to consider the options although no decision will be made by them at this stage.

Phase Four – Council Decision

The Council's Executive will consider the options and the views of residents, and make a decision on the future of the Croft Green bedsit building.

For more information

Consultation Plan	Sue Marsh Housing Services Manager – 0300 300 5662 sue.marsh@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Choice Based Lettings	Michael Jellow Housing Options Manager – 0300 300 5666 michael.jellow@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
On the web	www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Write to us	Housing Service, Central Bedfordshire Council , Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 1LF

Croft Green Bedsit Block - Consultation Plan

Questions and Answers

Q1. How will I be able to have my say?

A1. You can give your views by writing to us, by attending resident's meetings, by telephoning the council offices and asking to speak to one of the officers named on page 6, by requesting a home visit, by speaking to your Sheltered Housing Officer and the Independent Tenant Adviser, or by speaking to your ward councillors – Councillor Mrs Denise Green and Councillor Julian Murray

We will write to Croft Green residents with notice of the dates and times of planned residents' meetings, and also advertise them on notice boards in the communal areas.

During Phase One, we will set up whatever activities are necessary so that everyone's views are gathered and taken into account when we start developing options for the Croft Green bedsit block.

We will make a written record of every suggestion and point of view which is put forward, and we will take account of these at every stage of decision making.

Q2. Might people have to move out of Croft Green as a result of this process?

Q2. As the review is focussed on the Bedsit Block we do not expect residents of the Bungalows to be affected.

It is too early to say whether any of the options that emerge will involve people needing to move out of the bedsits. However, if this was the case, those people who had been residents for a full 12 months, would be entitled to a Home-loss Payment, to compensate them for the loss of their home, and a Disturbance Payment to cover any costs associated with moving. They would be fully supported through the process by our Tenant Liaison Officers and an Independent Tenant Adviser.

Q3. What information have you got about the housing and support needs of older people?

A4. The information that we currently have about local housing and support needs is based on three important pieces of research. The first is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Bedfordshire which was published in 2010. This research was carried out on behalf of the Bedfordshire local authorities by an independent consultant. It draws on lots of different sets of available information to build a picture of the housing and support needs of older people in the area now and for the next 10-20 years.

The second piece of work is the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Central Bedfordshire, which we are required to carry out by Central Government jointly with NHS colleagues. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) brings together information about the health and wellbeing needs of the local community, and is used to plan services which help to improve health and wellbeing.

Thirdly, a Supporting People Needs Assessment for Bedfordshire was carried out, which aims to understand the support needs of different groups within society. This research estimates that in the Bedfordshire area there is a need for around 150 more units of extra-care housing for older people.