

**Sheltered Housing Review**  
**Southend on Sea Borough Council**  
**Executive Summary**

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**Team:**  
**Denise Gillie**  
**Malcolm Gara**  
**Louise Craig**



## 1. Introduction

Peter Fletcher Associates (PFA) was commissioned by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council in November 2015 to review the Sheltered Housing stock and service. Work covered Part 1 and Part 2 schemes and bungalows.

Our methodology was based on our sheltered housing toolkit developed with the Northern Housing Consortium which brings together technical data and cost forecasting together with consideration of wider factors such as location, demographics, demand, tenant satisfaction and the service model.

We worked in partnership with our commissioners at the Council, South Essex Homes and other stakeholders.

### 1.1 National Policy Context

The national policy agenda is increasingly focusing on:

- Promoting the independence and wellbeing of the growing numbers of older people. Between 2010 and 2030 there is expected to be a 50% increase in people aged 65 or older, and a doubling of people aged 85 or older
- Providing increasing levels of care and support within the home in line with the preferences of older people.
- Addressing the housing and support needs of older people across all tenures including older owner occupiers

Social care and health policy is focusing on prevention, reablement and enabling older people to sustain independence and well-being in the community and out of hospital and long-term care.

### 1.2 Local policy Context

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment, South Essex May 2016 highlights large projected increases in the older population many of whom will wish to live independently and a need for more sheltered and extra care housing.

The Draft Integrated Market Position Statement for adult social care services expects an increase in community care provision.

The Older Person's Commissioning Outcomes Plan 2015/16 includes reducing hospital admissions, improving social care discharge, management and admissions avoidance; redesigning social services to reduce reliance on institutional care; moving towards a system built around prevention, early intervention and well-being and promoting healthy and active lifestyles for older people.

The Council's Older People Strategy aims for older people to lead fulfilling lives with the opportunity to age well in a community that values their experience whilst helping them remain independent for as long as possible.

## 2. Demographics and market analysis

The demographic and market analysis includes data for Southend-on-Sea local authority area and the 19 ward areas that make up Southend-on-Sea. The local authority data was compared with regional and national data to provide context.

The main findings include:

- 66,300 people aged 50+ in 2015, rising to 87,100 by 2035 – increase of 31.4%. 85+ population to increase by 103.8% between 2015 and 2035.
- 97.6% of the 65+ population are White, 1.5% Asian/ Asian British.
- The Council has higher levels of long-term limiting illness than the regional and national averages.
- 4,761 people aged 65+ providing unpaid care in 2015, rising to 6,322 by 2030 an increase of 32.8%.
- 2,520 people aged 65+ are estimated to have dementia in 2015, rising to 3,867 by 2030 which is an increase of 53.5%.
- 78.1% of pensioner households are owner-occupiers – higher than the national average but lower than the regional average. 12.2% of pensioner households are living in social rented accommodation and 8.1% in private rented accommodation
- 12,600 people aged 65+ living alone in 2015, rising to 17,455 by 2030, an increase of 38.5%.
- Southend has the lowest overall average property price (£204,000) when compared to neighbouring local authority areas.

## 3. Specialist housing supply

South Essex Homes manages 475 Part 1 sheltered housing properties and 998 Part 2 sheltered housing units. The latter includes 30 units of extra care housing.

Registered Providers of social housing include Anchor Trust, Estuary, Genesis and Riverside, together with provision managed by the local Abbeyfield Society and charities providing a total of 394 units.

The total number of sheltered units for social rent in the Borough is 1,767.

There are four extra care schemes in the Borough. Longmans and Westwood each provide 15 units of accommodation in one bedroom flats. Estuary Housing Association manages Leyland Court which provides 24 units and Genesis Housing Association manages 55 units at Catherine Lodge.

Just over 78% of older people in the Borough own their own home and there are a number of retirement housing schemes offering properties for sale. The majority of properties are apartments which range in price from under £100,000 to over £300,000.

## 4. Council extra care and sheltered housing

### 4.1 Extra care housing

Extra care provision is in two former sheltered housing schemes, Longmans and Westwood where 30 studio apartments were remodelled to provide 15 one bedroom apartments at each scheme. Remodelling costs for Longmans were £487,000 and Westwood £521,000.

The Council contracts care from independent providers under a block contract for 250 hours per week at each scheme and spot contracts additional hours. South Essex Homes provides housing management services including repairs and maintenance at both schemes.

At the time of the review there were some issues with voids and two units at Longmans were void, one for over 6 months.

The Council's Care First data shows three residents from the schemes moving into long term care in 2015/16.

At an operational level it is not clear if the schemes are able to provide an alternative to residential care or support people with complex needs and without this information it is not possible to make a judgement about their value for money. At a strategic level it is not clear how the schemes fit with integrated commissioning and older person's services more widely.

### 4.2 Sheltered housing

Residents in the Part 1 schemes are younger than those in Part 2 schemes where almost 20% of residents are aged 85 and over.

Data from the Council's Care First system shows 8 residents in the Part 1 schemes and 75 residents in Part 2 schemes in receipt of Council funded domiciliary care.

In 2014/15 Care First data shows 32 Part 2 residents and 6 part 1 residents moving into care homes. The Part 2 sheltered schemes do not seem to be supporting frail older people and preventing moves into care.

There is a high demand for social housing across the Borough and as a result older people are more likely to have their housing need met through a move into sheltered housing.

There are a high number and percentage of studio flats, only three schemes do not have any studios and it may only be the shortage of social housing that is masking potential lettings issues.

A typical service charge for a Part 2 property is £28.82 per week which includes £15.96 for the Scheme Officer service.

Consultation with residents highlighted the following issues:

- High water charges compared with larger properties. This issue is being addressed by SEH and the water company
- Historical overcharging for heating for which monies were refunded
- Lack of transparency in charges - residents would like to be provided with detailed scheme specific service charge breakdowns

## **5. Housing related support**

The Council is currently contracting with Genesis, Estuary, CWL, Riverside, Jewish Care and Anchor for the delivery of housing related support services in ten sheltered schemes. In addition the Council contracts with Estuary and Genesis to deliver support in two extra care housing schemes. Contracts expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and cannot be extended. In interviews with providers they are all expecting funding to be reduced or withdrawn. Total expenditure is in excess of £200,000 per annum and it is not clear if this is providing the Council with value for money.

### **5.1 Careline**

Careline is the community alarm service operated by South Essex Homes which provides a service to all residents in the Part 2 schemes at a weekly charge of £1.30. A further 173 residents in Part 1 schemes have a lifeline alarm. Non-residents can buy or rent a service from Careline.

## **6. Recommendations**

### **6.1 Extra Care Schemes**

Options for the two Council schemes include:

- To become part of integrated commissioning aimed at people who would otherwise need to move into a care home. This may require an increase in overnight staffing, or
- Let them as sheltered housing.

Estuary Housing and Genesis manage schemes which are aimed at providing frail older people with an alternative to residential care. It is recommended that discussions take place with both providers to agree future funding for care and support services.

Extra care housing would benefit from a more explicit role; marketing to older people and their carers and to be understood by staff working across housing and adult social care.

## 6.2 Sheltered housing service

Sheltered housing services in the Borough would benefit from having a more strategic role to play in supporting older people to remain independent. Actions include:

- Developing a shared vision and strategic role for sheltered housing across the Council, SEH and other providers.
- Improving information on the Council website to include names and addresses of schemes and the organisations that manage them and a link to the Elderly Accommodation Counsel website to get more information.
- Discussions about the future of Council funded support services with Registered Providers.
- Improving consultation with residents in the Council sheltered schemes.

## 6.3 Careline

Operationally Careline should make clear to residents in the Part 2 schemes that the service is monitoring only unless the Scheme Officer is on duty when s/he may be able to respond.

At a strategic level information about telecare on the Council website should be improved. There is also potential for the service to grow, including as part of the Council's trading company, providing services to support older people to return home after a hospital stay.

If Careline is not part of the Council's wider plans, community alarm monitoring services could be purchased from outside the Borough.

## 7. Technical appraisal

Analysis of the Stock Condition Survey highlights the following:

- Current backlog on capital investment for 41 schemes = £4.45m
- Total spend on all 41 schemes required over next 30 years = £39m

Key issues are:

- The SEH Asset Management Strategy document is in need of updating
- Southend would benefit from producing 'A vision for the future of housing for older people in the Borough' to provide clarity about its role and to inform future investment decisions
- Consideration should be given to the long term sustainability of schemes when components are renewed.
- All future reinvestment decisions should be based on a considered business case backed up with figures to show a likely return on capital investment.
- Individual scheme decisions should be taken in the context of the whole estate and the wider impact of any decision – both positive and negative

- Consideration should be given for change of designation to upper floor flats without mechanical vertical access to general needs housing.

## 8. Options Appraisal

A traffic light system has been used. Schemes with a green traffic light are those with lifts or level access and one bedroom. These include:

- Great Mead
- Nicholson House
- Trevett house
- Bungalows (all areas)

Schemes with an amber traffic light include those with studio flats where there is potential to remodel and provide one bedroom accommodation. Schemes include:

- Adams Elm
- Bishop House
- The Jordans
- Kestrel House
- Norman Harris House
- Scott House

Also in this category are schemes that would benefit from a more detailed scheme specific appraisal to determine their future. These include:

- The Brambles
- Buckingham House
- Crouchmans
- Furzefield
- Keats House
- Mussett House
- Nayland House
- Nestuda House
- Senier House
- Stephen McAdden House
- Trafford House

Schemes with a red traffic light are those without lifts or level access or isolated ground floor units with long travel distances from vehicle drop off points. It is suggested that units in the following schemes should be let as general needs housing:

- Avon Way/West Road
- Bradfordbury/Eastwood Old Road/Rothwell Close
- Cedar Close/Dickens Close
- Kingfisher Close/Sandpiper Close
- Nursery Place

- Randolph Close
- Shelley Square
- Sherwood Way
- Snakes Lane
- Yantlet

There may also be some schemes where the sites lend themselves to redevelopment, such as those which cannot be remodelled, schemes adjacent to Council owned sites, schemes with a large site footprint and those which require major investment for which there is no business case.

It is also recommended that former warden properties be let as general needs housing or converted for older people, taking account of recommendations about the future of schemes.