



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Supported Housing Strategy
Date:	4 th December 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Simy Dhyani, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A – Supported Housing Strategy Appendix B – Supported Housing Strategy Action Plan Appendix C – Dacorum Supported Housing Standard Appendix D – Supported Housing Community Impact Assessment Appendix E – Supported Housing Survey Feedback
Background papers:	N/A
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	Housing Transformation Improvement Programme (HTIP) Strategic Asset Review (SAR) Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI)

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Corporate Priorities	<p>Community engagement: Engage with residents and partners to have a real say on our services and the borough</p> <p>Service improvement and delivery: Running the Council efficiently and putting residents at the heart of everything we do</p>
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	<p>Vibrant communities: Foster arts, culture and leisure opportunities</p> <p>Sustainable future: Take action on the Climate and Ecological Emergency</p> <p>Clean, safe and green: Provide a clean, safe and green-focussed environment</p> <p>Homes to be proud of: Enable well-maintained and affordable homes, where people want to live</p> <p>Proud and thriving borough: Realise our potential as a great place to live and work with a thriving business community</p>
Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide members with overview of the direction for the Supported Housing Service. 2. Present the draft Supported Housing Strategy and commitments that underpin future service delivery.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide feedback on the strategy, proposed standard and commitments. 2. Recommend strategy progress to Cabinet for approval.
Period for post policy/project review:	3 years or upon material service delivery or policy change

1 Introduction/Background:

The supported housing service provides housing and enhanced housing management services to those over the age of 60 in the borough. The service consists of approximately 1800 properties, making up nearly a fifth of the council total housing stock.

Due to the stock, and changing demographic needs in the borough, key decisions around investment and long-term viability will need to be made.

The draft Supported Housing strategy, which focuses solely on council owned designated housing for those over the age of 60, will provide the direction for an in-depth review of the current service and which will align with Housing Transformation Improvement Programme (HTIP) and the Strategic Asset Review (SAR).

2 Key Issues/proposals/main body of the report:

National demographic projections determine there will be a significant increase in the number of older people in the UK. Within this, it is anticipated there will be a particular increase in those aged 85+ and those living with lifelong health conditions including mobility issues and dementia. This is reflected locally within the borough.

Furthermore, an understanding of the impact of social isolation on older people is growing, and the effect on mortality is now being likened to other risk factors such as smoking and obesity. There is also a clear link between

the provision of good quality housing and the ability of older people to access health, social care and wellbeing services.

Is therefore necessary for Dacorum Borough Council to have a housing offer for older people that meets current and future need.

The aim of the strategy is to provide the direction of the service in terms of the services that are available to meet the needs of our tenants.

Strategic Asset Review:

The strategy will feed into the Supported Housing Review workstream which is part of the Council's wider SAR – a significant programme of work exploring how Council assets can support the development of new homes, secure financial returns for the Council, and contribute to its wider regeneration and placemaking agenda.

The Supported Housing Review workstream will evaluate the Council's current supported housing stock:

- To understand the current condition of its supported housing schemes and how they meet defined industry standards
- It will assess long-term financial viability of schemes - including rental income against future repair and maintenance liabilities
- It will provide options for re-development where, if viable, this would better meet the evidenced housing need and/or contribute to the wider aims and objectives of the SAR.

We have engaged with consultants previously to review our Supported Housing stock and the findings from those reviews have helped shape the strategy. Research commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) regarding current and future demand for different types of housing for older people has influenced the draft strategy.

The strategy:

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The commitments contained within the strategy are as follows:

Commitment 1: We will tailor our service to ensure it meets the individual needs of our tenants.

We will

- Regularly assess the level of service that our tenants need and work with our tenants to co-design the service moving forwards.
- Regularly complete 'outcome star' assessments to identify areas that our tenants need help with and to demonstrate what progress is being made.
- Support the delivery of regular activities to combat the impact of loneliness and social isolation. This will be done through activities that will allow people of all ages to socialise together, working alongside external agencies to provide as many activities as possible.
- Work with tenants to remove obstacles that prevent them from getting involved in activities, such as transport, cost and lack of support.
- Signpost tenants and support them to access appropriate services, including those that support tenancy sustainment.

Commitment 2: We will provide accommodation that meets the needs of our supported housing tenants both now and in the future.

We will

- Work with tenants to identify opportunities for local groups to use our properties for groups that will benefit our tenants, such as community and faith groups.

- Ensure that all properties meet EPC 'C' rating by 2035.
- Continue to carry out the renewal of our community alarm replacement programme in all supported housing properties.
- Work with others to ensure that our tenants' adaptive needs are met, including through the use of Mutual Exchanges.
- Where appropriate, support our tenants to move to a more suitable property.
- Consider design principles with our current tenants when investing in our properties.
- Continue to refurbish internal communal areas of our buildings.
- Continue to ensure all Supported Housing is affordable and within local housing allowance.

Commitment 3: We will review the suitability of our supported housing stock.

We will

- Include our Supported Housing stock in the strategic asset review.
- Review our properties' locations in terms of access to local service and public transport links.
- Assess our properties against industry-defined design principles.
- Work in conjunction with our Property and Development teams to consider the long-term viability of schemes.
- Consider whether any of the accommodation would be better suited for another use.
- Work with others to identify opportunities to enhance the accommodation.

Commitment 4: We will enhance our partnership working to deliver the best services possible.

We will

- Continue to work with Hertfordshire County Council to consider the opportunity to increase the number of flexi care units within the borough.
- Continue to provide regular engagement opportunities for tenants to work with us to shape services.
- Continue to develop relationships with the voluntary sector to ensure that tenants are aware of the services available.
- Continue to work closely with statutory services to signpost and support tenants to access specialist services including Adult Care Services and Mental Health support.
- Continue to work with our Tenancy Management and Anti-social Behaviour teams to reduce the impact of ASB on our tenants
- Continue to reduce the carbon output from communal areas of Supported Housing schemes by installing hybrid communal heating systems which incorporate air source heat pumps.
- So far, ten of our Supported Housing Schemes have Solar Photovoltaic installed and six have Hybrid Heat. We will continue to integrate these measures to help reduce our carbon outputs.

Supported Housing strategy action plan (appendix b)

To deliver the strategy, a draft action plan has been developed that will provide the opportunity to monitor delivery against agreed timescales. The action plan will be reviewed at regular points to ensure that it reflects workstreams required to deliver the strategy.

Dacorum supported housing standard (appendix c)

The assessment of schemes against a defined standard is crucial to the delivery of the supported housing strategy. Appendix C is a draft Dacorum Supported Housing standard.

The Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles are a set of core design principles that are recognised by the industry for new build accommodation as meeting the needs of older people. Alongside this there are some recognised design principles for those living with Dementia.

The Dacorum Supported Housing standard brings together a number of these principles and has been developed alongside teams within the Council. It is anticipated that this could be the key tool for assessing our schemes against the standard to contribute to discussions about long term viability.

3 Options and alternatives considered

- To not have a strategy and therefore do not progress with a review of the supported housing stock.
- To dismiss the Dacorum standard and use previous reviews of the assets to ascertain long term viability.

4 Consultation

Engagement with tenants (appendix e).

To develop the strategy, a series of in person events were held at schemes throughout the borough. Further to this, tenants were sent a survey to complete asking their opinion on some key areas.

As a result of this engagement, the following areas were developed:

- Greater focus on social activities.
- Commitment to take a scheme-by-scheme approach to refurbishment.
- Commitment to completing replacement programme for community alarm equipment.
- Focus on communal areas and the benefit they can have on tenants' wellbeing.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

There are no financial implications identified from this report. Delivery of a strategy and associated action plan will support the service with ensuring that it delivers modern and efficient services, whilst ensuring value for money. The SAR will enable identification of schemes that poor performing financially and identify opportunities to improve the quality of the scheme, standards and operating costs.

6 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications identified from this report.

7 Risk implications:

There are risks associated with not implementing a Supported Housing strategy:

- Without a robust Supported Housing strategy which defines the approach to providing services to older people, there is a risk that the service will not develop to meet the needs of current and future tenants.
- Should it be determined that a particular scheme is not viable as designated housing for older people, and we must consider its future use, engaging with members, tenants and other key stakeholders about this sensitive issue could carry reputational risks if there is no agreed strategic approach.
- If the supported housing strategy does not align with the Strategic Asset Review, opportunities to enhance neighbourhoods could be missed.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

Community Impact Assessment reviewed/carried out and at Appendix D demographic predications show that the older population is due to experience significant growth nationally and locally, it is therefore essential that the council have an older person housing offer that meets current and future need.

There are no human rights identified from this report.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

This strategy underpins the service commitment to providing housing that meets current and future needs of older people in Dacorum, promoting social inclusion, improving wellbeing and reducing isolation.

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

The SAR will identify opportunity to improve the quality of our schemes, ensuring health, safety and welfare are prioritised.

11 Conclusions:

Next steps:

- Supported Housing Strategy to progress to Cabinet approval.
- Complete a full review of the supported housing stock.
- Ensure that supported housing is included in Dacorum Housing Estates review.