



AGENDA ITEM: 7

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	20 July 2016
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Community Alarm Update
Contact:	Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Andy Vincent – Group Manager Tenants and Leaseholders Responsible Officer
Purpose of report:	1. To update the Committee on work to upgrade the alarm call system within Sheltered Housing and to re-tender the alarm call monitoring service.
Recommendations	1. That the report be noted
Corporate objectives:	Affordable Housing
Implications:	<u>Financial</u>
'Value For Money Implications'	<p>The contract to upgrade the alarm call system within the Sheltered Housing Accommodation owned by Dacorum Borough Council will run for a period of 5 years at £120,000 per year.</p> <p>The contract to respond to the community alarm calls will be retendered shortly to commence in December 2016.</p> <p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>Value for Money principles will drive/has driven the award of these contracts, ensuring that the Council gets the best possible price for the provision of these services.</p>

Risk Implications	The risks associated with ensuring effective contract management are incorporated within the housing operational risk register. This was reviewed for 2016/17
Equalities Implications	There are no equality implications as the alarm call service is universally available to all residents of sheltered housing.
Health And Safety Implications	Alarms within sheltered housing help to preserve the health and safety of residents – as assistance is available via the service 24 hours per day.
Consultees:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing Mark Gaynor – Director of Housing and Regeneration Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director of Housing Andy Vincent – Group Manager – Tenants and Leaseholders
Background papers:	Review of Sheltered Housing – presented to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2013
Historical background (<i>please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context</i>).	The alarm systems in much of Dacorum Borough Council's Sheltered Housing are as old as the schemes themselves. As a consequence many of the systems have deteriorated significantly with a number failing completely. A dilapidation report of the alarm systems was included in the review of Sheltered Housing presented to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2013. This identified the priorities for replacement and upgrade and formed the basis of the current upgrade programme.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	Community Alarms Community alarm systems are the alarm systems contained within the sheltered housing schemes owned and managed by Dacorum Borough Council. These alarms are monitored by an external organisation (SeniorLink Eldercare) and ensure access to health care is available to sheltered residents 24 hours per day 365 days per year. Call stacking With the current analogue wiring system within our sheltered accommodation each external line from a scheme can only carry 1 call at a time to the alarm call monitoring service (the majority of schemes only have 1 external line, some others have up to 4). This means that if 2 alarms are pressed by tenants simultaneously 1 call will not get through until the other is complete; this is called stacking or call stacking.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Dacorum Borough Council owns and manages 1968 sheltered housing properties. These are largely within self-contained schemes (1238) with the remainder being dispersed within the community.
- 1.2 Much of the sheltered housing stock owned and managed by Dacorum Borough Council dates from the 1950s and 1960s. Each scheme is equipped with an alarm system which residents can activate to call for assistance. Many of these alarm systems are in poor condition as much of the wiring originates from when the schemes were first built.
- 1.3 In September 2013 Dacorum Borough Council's Housing Service with the support of the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee completed a comprehensive review of the sheltered housing stock owned by the Council and the service received by residents. One of the recommendations of the review was that the alarm systems were upgraded to extend their lifespan for the next 20-30 years.

2.0 Community Alarm Upgrade Programme

- 2.1 Dacorum Borough Council has sought tenders from external, qualified organisations to deliver the upgrade programme. Tunstall Healthcare was awarded the contract to deliver the upgrade programme which is anticipated to be £600,000 over a period of 5 years.
- 2.2 The upgraded alarm call system will deliver a number of service improvements to sheltered residents:-
 1. Calls to the alarm call monitoring centre will be in digital quality
 2. Calls will no longer be stacked as multiple calls can be passed through to the alarm call monitoring centre simultaneously
 3. The system will be 'future proofed' enabling additional services such as assistive technology to be linked to the call monitoring contract.
- 2.3 The original upgrade programme from 2013 is included in appendix 1. To date the system at Rice Close and Leys Road have been completed with work due to commence at Evelyn Sharpe House imminently.

The reason for the alteration to the original installation programme is that the alarm systems at some schemes (Leys Road for example) have been found to be in a much worse condition than originally anticipated when surveyed by Tunstall Healthcare.

3.0 Alarm Call Monitoring Contract

- 3.1 The current alarm call monitoring contract delivered by SeniorLink Eldercare expires in January 2017. The quality of the service delivered by SeniorLink Eldercare has been excellent; in that they have consistently met the call responding performance target set out within the contract.

- Percentage of Community Alarm calls answered within 1 min – Target 97.5%

- Percentage of Community Alarm calls answered within 3 min – Target 99%
- 3.2 Work has commenced with the Supported Housing Staff and Tenants Forum to develop a new set requirements for the new contract. A market dialogue is being undertaken in early July to discuss with a host of organisations potential additions to the new contract. This will help the Supported Housing Team understand where the alarm call monitoring market is developing and what has changed since the SeniorLink Eldercare contract was awarded.
- 3.3 In discussion with staff, tenants and elected members some of these developments may be included in the new contract. An assessment of the impact of any changes on tenant's support charge will also influence any final decision.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that the new tender for the service will be produced in the summer will evaluations of the submissions being undertaken in September/October with an award of the contract being made in early December 2016.

Appendix 1

Schedule for Community Alarm Replacement

Scheme	Expected date of replacement
Rice Close	2013/14
Evelyn Sharp House	2014/15
Two Beeches	2014/15
Phyllis Courtnage House	2014/15
Southernwood Close	2014/15
Varney Road	2014/15
Saturn Way	2014/15
William Crook House	2014/15
The Drift Way	2014/15
Old House Road	2014/15
Mayflower Avenue	2014/15
Dudley House	2014/15
Lagley House	2015/16
Gravel Lane	2015/16
Elizabeth House	2015/16
Sursham Court	2015/16
Pond Close	2015/16

Oaklawn	2016/17
Compass Point	2016/17
Florence Longman House	2016/17
Cranford	2016/17
Christopher Court	2016/17
Emma Rothschild Court	2016/17
Holly Tree Court	2016/17
Betty Patterson House	2016/17
Leys Road	2017/18
Willow Edge	2017/18
Gilbert Burnet House	2017/18
Chapel Street	2017/18
Douglas Gardens	2017/18