

<b>Key Decision Required</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>In the Forward Plan</b>	<b>No</b>
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## CABINET

10 JUNE 2016

### REFERENCE REPORT FROM SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE

#### **A.3 OCCUPANCY LEVELS IN SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES**

(Report prepared by Mark Westall)

#### **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting held on 1 April 2016 The Housing Manager gave detailed information regarding the ten Sheltered Housing Schemes maintained by the Council. He said that many of the schemes were built over 50 years ago and that although maintained and managed to a very high standard, many would now find it difficult to meet modern needs and requirements. He went on to say that there were 325 units in total with 53% of those units being bedsit studio flats with shared facilities (bathrooms/shower rooms).

Mr Black added that a 'snapshot' of occupancy on 14 March 2016 showed that 82.5% of sheltered units were let and tenanted and 17.5% were void/empty. However occupancy levels at two of the schemes were particularly worrying and had been for some time. Spendells House, Walton only 14 of 30 units let and Honeycroft, Lawford only 20 of 39 units let. The Housing Manager said that location, as well as type of accommodation, were the major factors that potential residents consider.

Based on current voids the combined lost rent, council tax and utility payments for these two schemes amounts to circa £207,138 per annum whereas the current combined rental income is circa £172,800. Honeycroft also now needs to be refurbished in order to maintain living standards.

Members asked a number of questions and discussed the issues before making the following recommendations and comments to Cabinet.

#### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS TO CABINET**

Cabinet is now asked to consider the comments of the Service Development and Delivery Committee.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- (a) The Portfolio Holder for Housing and the relevant Officers commission a report on the viability of the schemes at Spendalls Court and Honeycroft that included the future for the two sites with a report being brought back to the Committee for a meeting in September;

- (b) Councillors Miles, Poonian, Baker and V E Guglielmi be invited to the September meeting as Ward Councillors to discuss the report and
- (c) A Working Party visit the sites once the report is completed;

That Cabinet **NOTE** the following considerations notwithstanding the contents of the report;

- (d) That the Council move towards modernising Spendells Court and Honeycroft to include ensuite bathroom facilities;
- (e) That the Council consider a more holistic approach toward residents in sheltered accommodation and working with partners to achieve this; and
- (f) That the Council engage with multi-agency partners in order to create a scoping document that outlines options and ideas for further usage of the two above-mentioned sheltered housing schemes.

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

Comments will be provided directly at the meeting.