
OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

Purpose of Report

1. The following were the main areas of work under my Community and Public Protection Portfolio:-

Extra Care Scheme for Rosemary Court

2. We have received £3.2m grant from the Department of Health to improve our sheltered housing scheme at Rosemary Court at Lascelles Park. This was a partnership bid with Social Services, Housing, the Primary Care Trust and Hanover Housing Association.
3. Over 140 bids were received for the £40m grant available and Darlington was one of only 21 successful bids. A new three storey building will be provided by Hanover Housing Association which will incorporate new communal facilities and 14 much needed flats for older people with dementia.
4. The current building will be remodelled and extensively refurbished with four flats being used for intermediate care, allowing older people to leave hospital as soon as they are well enough to receive treatment and care at home. Residents will be supported to live independently with 24 hour on-site care available and restaurant facilities. Work will start on the scheme later this year.

New Governance Arrangement for Council Housing

5. The new governance arrangements for Council tenants are now well established with regular meetings of the Housing Executive Group and two meetings of the new Tenants Board being held since it formed earlier this year. The 20 tenants were selected on the basis of their skills and experience, ability to comply with the Codes of Conduct and to obtain a good cross section of the community. They have already agreed an ambitious work programme of the year including a comprehensive package of training and various Task and Finish Groups.

Floating Tenancy Support

6. The Housing Division's Floating Tenancy Support was recently the subject of a review by Supporting People. I am pleased to report that the inspection found that the scheme which provides support to 36 units of council accommodation was found to be a well run scheme that has been embraced by the whole team and one that is appreciated by the service users. All relevant policies and procedures are available and understood by the support workers. All service users have support plans which are proving to be effective.

7. The inspection found a service that very much focused on housing related support and was strategically relevant reflecting the principles behind Supporting People. The service links into crime reduction, homelessness, drug and alcohol issues, older persons, Mental Health and Domestic Violence strategies. It also promotes social inclusion which is at the forefront on the valuing people strategy.
8. There was demand for the service and the inspection found that the Tenancy Support Scheme has built up good relationships with other floating support providers and subsequently they have created a common waiting list which is operated by the Tenancy Support Section. Referrals are also taken from other Council departments such as Social Services and independent agencies such as First Stop.

Storm Damage

9. Storm conditions in January caused extensive damage across the housing stock, with some 858 repair orders raised. Building Services Division have completed 630 of these orders and work on the remaining 228 will be completed shortly. There was major damage to a number of garages and some garage blocks required demolition following storm damage. The Grounds Maintenance Team have also dealt with in excess of 50 trees that required attention.

**Councillor Bill Dixon
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Community
and Public Protection**