

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 30 AUGUST 2022

TITLE: HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULTS WITH A MODERATE/SEVERE LEARNING DISABILITY – UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

LEAD OFFICERS: JAMES GARDNER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR REGENERATION, (01279) 446449

CARA STEVENS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HOUSING OPERATIONS (01279) 446490

CONTRIBUTING OFFICERS: SUZANNA WOOD, HOUSING REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER] (01279) 446448

LISA WHITING, HOUSING OPTIONS AND ADVICE MANAGER (01279) 446371

RECOMMENDED that:

- A** Opportunities are explored to meet the needs of those living in the District with a moderate/severe learning disability as detailed in the ECC Needs Assessment.
- B** Scrutiny Committee to receive a further report to review progress in 12 months' time.

BACKGROUND

1. The Committee carried out a review on housing and accommodation requirements for adults with a moderate/severe learning disability a year ago.
2. The review showed 11 Supported Living schemes with 47 places in total and 4 Residential Care homes with 99 beds in total (Liveability Keefield (10 beds) Liveability Nettleswell Rectory (9 beds) Tye Green Lodge (61 beds) and Livingstone House (19 beds)) in the District.
3. The Essex County Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2019) estimated that 291 people aged between 18-64 and 38 people over 65 have a moderate or severe learning disability. It was agreed that further needs assessment data was required as part of the review.
4. A total of six recommendations were suggested in the consultant's report (attached as Appendix A to this report) including a level of unmet need for adults

with a moderate/severe learning disability in the District. Officers were asked to progress these recommendations and report back within 12 months.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

5. **Recommendation 1 - Harlow Council should work closely with Essex County Council in the completion of any needs assessment work and commit to a strategy to meet the identified need** – A needs assessment has been produced by Essex County Council (attached as Appendix B to this report). This showed a need across West Essex (Harlow, Epping and Uttlesford Districts) for 9 placements for complex needs and 10 placements for supported living. A series of meetings have been set up to discuss how this need can be met whether using Council owned land, Essex County Council land or secured through the private sector. This work will continue as the joint ECC/Essex Housing/HDC team work to find suitable sites.
6. **Recommendation 2 - Regularly attend the Supported Housing Partnership Board, working with the County to identify accommodation opportunities** – This Board hasn't met for a number of months due to staff changes within the County. A Council representative will attend when the Board is reinstated.
7. **Recommendation 3 - Engage in conversations with Essex County Council to better understand the need and explore opportunities as detailed above** – As per update in point 4.
8. **Recommendation 4 - Introduce a question on the Housing Register application form to identify if applicants have a learning disability or autism.** The Housing Allocations Scheme (Allocations policy) will be reviewed in 2023/24, as part of the review the online form will be updated with the specific question asking if the applicant has a learning disability or autism. **Ensure that an alternative number or email address is available for those who are unable to complete the online form.** A phone number has been added. **Update information on joining the Housing Register to create an accessible format.** This has been completed.
 - users can change colours, contrast levels and font
 - zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen
 - navigate most of the website using just a keyboard
 - navigate most of the website using speech recognition software
 - listen to most of the website using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver)
9. **Recommendation 5 - To consider the use of move on accommodation from supported housing (quota system) within the existing Allocations Policy to support move on from learning disability provision.** As part of the review of the Housing Allocations Scheme (Allocations policy) in 2023/24 the quota numbers for move on accommodation will be assessed ensuring fair distribution and efficient use of supported housing schemes in Harlow. **Ensure that clients with learning disabilities who are in housing need are**

prioritised appropriately in line with the medical and social criteria. Work with the County to develop individual housing plans for those in inappropriate accommodation. Medical/Social Needs continue to be assessed for applicants with learning disabilities in accordance with the current policy and prioritised accordingly

- 10. Recommendation 6 - Officers to meet with Essex County Council to explore the opportunities detailed within this report. Scrutiny Committee to review progress in 12 months' time** – Opportunities being explored to meet the needs of those living in the District, as detailed in the ECC Needs Assessment with Essex County Council and Essex Housing, their development company.

IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Growth and Regeneration

The ongoing dialogue with Essex County Council will be important to establish specific housing needs and in due course this may influence the Council's Housebuilding Programme.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration

Finance

As contained in the report.

Author: Simon Freeman, Deputy to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance

Housing

As contained in the report.

Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing

Communities and Environment

As contained in the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment

Governance and Corporate Services

As contained in the report.

Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Services

Appendices

Appendix A – Consultants recommendations

Appendix B – Essex County Council Needs Assessment

Background Papers

None

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

None