



PRCC.18 14/15

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**Prosperous Communities  
Committee**

**Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2014**

**Subject: Changes to Wardens Services**

Report by:	Chief Operating Officer
Contact Officer:	Alan Robinson Head of Central Services T: 01427 676509
Purpose / Summary:	Following the resolution of the Council on 28 April 2014 to update members on the progress made investigating how the change from resident wardens in Acis sheltered accommodation in the District to travelling Housing Support Assistants has affected residents and to assess whether there is a role for West Lindsey District Council in augmenting this provision.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** That officers continue to monitor the services (Acis Travelling Housing Support Assistants and support through the Well Being Service operated by the Lincolnshire County Council) that have replaced resident wardens in Acis sheltered accommodation and a further report on the options available to this council be brought to the Prosperous Communities Community once a full years monitoring information on the new provision is available.

#### **IMPLICATIONS**

**Legal: None**

**Financial : FIN / 52/15 None**

**Staffing : None**

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : N/A**

**Risk Assessment : N/A**

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None**

<b>Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:</b>

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

Yes  No

**Key Decision:**

Yes  No

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 On 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014, at Full Council, Members requested that officers prepare a report for the Prosperous Communities Committee on the experiences of residents of sheltered accommodation following the removal of the Warden Service in nine Housing schemes across the District. The specific resolution was *“that options the council has around the changes to the provision of wardens at the ACIS sheltered housing sites (including any link to the supporting people programme) be considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee and the conclusions be reported back to Council”*
- 1.2 Officers and members agreed the need to develop a robust evidence base in order to understand the impact of the changes and to inform future options to meet any unmet support needs or gaps in provision brought about by the changes.
- 1.3 Officers have met with key stakeholders including Acis Group Ltd, Lincolnshire County Council and service providers as well as internal

stakeholders and councillors to build knowledge and understanding of the changes and impact of the changes on residents. Any intervention in this service – which is operated by an organisation which is external to the council - will need to be clearly based on evidence and agreed with the organisation responsible for the provision of the sheltered accommodation.

- 1.4 The travelling Housing Support Assistants provided by Acis and the Wellbeing Service provided by the Lincolnshire County Council have been in operation since the start of April 2014. Therefore much of the work involved in assembling this report has been around collecting an evidence base on how the new service is working and how it is meeting residents' needs.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 There are nine housing schemes for older persons within the West Lindsey district formerly funded by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) as sheltered housing schemes with a warden provision.

- 2.2 The warden service included:

- A resident warden on site
- Daily door knocking service
- Support for residents wellbeing
- Estate / Housing Management

- 2.3 Anecdotally, officers have also been advised by ACIS that some of the previous wardens also provided support for things such as social activities for residents which went above and beyond their agreed job roles. This was valued by residents, but was not part of their agreed role.

- 2.4 Following consultation regarding an alternative model of service delivery, LCC introduced the wellbeing service from April 2014. Focussed on maintaining the independence of older people in their own homes, the wellbeing service comprises two key elements:

- Assistive Technology / Telecare: Delivered countywide by a single provider
- Wellbeing Service: Delivered in West Lindsey by a provider consortium (Lace Housing, Home Improvement Agency, Age UK and Boston Mayflower). This is known as the Lincolnshire Independent Living Partnership (LILP)

- 2.5 Councillors received briefings on the wellbeing service in 2013 prior to the launch of the LILP service. Further information can be provided to support members understanding of the current project performance, outcomes and delivery.

- 2.6 This report is focussed on the request from Full Council to explore the impact of the changes on residents of sheltered accommodation schemes. Officers consider that at this stage – the new service has only been in operation for five months – it is not possible to fully assess its effectiveness and therefore advise members on the options available.
- 2.7 The revised service sees the provision split between Wellbeing Services provided by Lincolnshire County Council and two Dedicated Housing Assistants provided by ACIS. This Council, following the transfer of its housing stock to a registered provider has no direct role in the provision of this service. However in its role as a community leader it has an interest in ensuring that some of the most vulnerable people in the District are adequately served by these arrangements.

### **3. ACIS Response to Wellbeing Services Changes**

- 3.1 Further to the procurement of the Wellbeing Service, resident wardens were withdrawn from sheltered accommodation operated by Acis in the District and replacement with the travelling housing assistants and the services operated through the Wellbeing service of the County Council.
- 3.2 Following consultation between West Lindsey DC and Acis Group; Acis resourced 2 x housing assistants to provide some housing management support to those in former sheltered accommodation schemes
- 3.3 The Acis Housing Assistants provide a total of 50 hours of support per week across 9 schemes for approximately 250 tenancies. Service provision includes:
- A monthly audit of property and grounds
  - Weekly Health and Safety checks
  - Managing low level arrears
  - Managing low level Anti Social Behaviour
  - Sign posting to support services
  - Welfare benefit advice
  - Letting new tenancies

### **4. Performance**

- 4.1 ACIS

Since the introduction of the new arrangements ACIS report that they have received one item of written correspondence making a positive suggestion to improve the scheme. Two tenants have expressed a desire to move from the schemes due to the removal of scheduled daily visits. This equates to less than 1% of the tenants expressing any discomfort with the new arrangements. Therefore as far as the provider is concerned there are no issues emerging so far with the operation of the new service.

#### 4.2 LCC Service Monitoring

The Wellbeing Service has provided some draft information from the first quarter of the 2014/2015 year. This data has been released prior to full data quality checks being carried out. The data show that 77 residents in West Lindsey have used the Wellbeing Service. 72% of calls have been dealt with by a visit of less than 30 minutes. Further work is still required to understand the data as well as the full data quality checks.

#### 4.3 ACIS user survey

Commencing in September for a period of eight weeks, ACIS intend to conduct an independent survey of scheme users. The results of this survey are due to be published in January 2015. The response rates for surveys of this type are normally high and therefore it is anticipated that the results will provide qualitative information on the performance of the scheme.

### 5. Summary

- 5.1 It is acknowledged that some residents may be dissatisfied with the new arrangements. However the evidence obtained so far would indicate that a vast majority are satisfied with the new arrangements. On the basis of this information it appears that there is little evidence of a need to change the current service provision and it is deemed premature at this stage to consider any possible options around support for these vulnerable people.
- 5.2 We will continue to work with both Lincolnshire County Council and ACIS and are particularly interested in the findings of the survey to be conducted on ACIS' behalf. It is proposed that a further report is brought back to the Committee once all the information has been collated.