

Healthier Communities Select Committee			
Report Title	Autism Spectrum Housing Progress Report		
Key Decision	No	Item No.	7
Ward	All		
Contributors	Executive Director for Community Services Executive Director for Customer Services		
Class	Part 1 INFORMATION ITEM	Date:	2 March 2016

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on progress made by the Council's Housing and Autism Group in identifying an alternative housing solution for autistic adults in Lewisham.

2 Recommendations

It is recommended that members of the Healthier Communities Select Committee:

- 2.1 Note the information contained in this report and the progress which has been made in identifying a potential future partner to deliver a supported housing scheme for people with Autism in Lewisham.

3 Policy Context

- 3.1 The contents of this report are consistent with the Council's policy framework. It supports the achievements of the Sustainable Community Strategy policy objectives:

- Ambitious and achieving: where people are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential.
- Empowered and responsible: where people can be actively involved in their local area and contribute to tolerant, caring and supportive local communities.
- Healthy, active and enjoyable: where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being, supported by high quality health and care services, leisure, culture and recreational activities.

- 3.2 The content is also in line with the Council policy priorities:

- Strengthening the local economy – gaining resources to regenerate key localities, strengthen employment skills and promote public transport.

- Clean, green and liveable – improving environmental management, the cleanliness and care for roads and pavements and promoting a sustainable environment.

4 Background

- 4.1 At its meeting on 2 December 2014 the Healthier Communities Select Committee, received an address from the Chair of the Campaign in Lewisham for Autism Spectrum Housing (CLASH). The Committee requested that the Mayor considered urgently, provision to meet the housing needs of adults diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder living in Lewisham.
- 4.2 The Mayor received a report on 18 February 2015 which contained an officer response to that referral, setting out the activity that was already underway, in partnership with CLASH, in order to meet those housing needs.

5 Housing and Autism Group

- 5.1 A Housing & Autism group was set up three years ago, with the objective of identifying deliverable options to meet the housing needs of adults diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder living in Lewisham.
- 5.2 Members of the project group include officers from the Council's housing, adult social care, public health and, joint commissioning teams, alongside representatives of CLASH and the Burgess Autistic Trust. More recently, representatives from a specialist Housing Association, Birnbeck Housing, have also been in attendance. The objectives of the project group are to:
- Establish a better understanding the level and nature of autism in the Borough
 - Investigate existing housing services and placements for autistic children and adults
 - Investigate potential sources of funding both current and future, revenue and capital
 - Investigate options for the provision of an autism-specific housing scheme for local adults either within existing stock or new supply
- 5.3 The meeting is chaired by the Housing Strategy and Programme Manager, meetings are held bi-monthly and are usually well attended. Discussions have concentrated on two main areas, the provision of housing units for autistic adults and how the services required to support these clients to live independently would be commissioned and funded.

6 What options are currently available to those who are eligible for housing support?

- 6.1 Under certain circumstances people with autism may qualify for the Councils' housing register. Band 3 of the Council's housing register includes medical priority, which is awarded by the Council's medical advisor if they are satisfied that current accommodation is aggravating the person's health issues and if the person or their household is not moved to alternative accommodation, it would result in that person suffering a significant deterioration in their health.
 - 6.2 There are circumstances in which this could apply to people with autism. For example, the housing circumstances of a person with autism may make that person particularly anxious, in a way that would not be the case for somebody who did not have autism.
 - 6.3 Healthier Communities Select Committee will be aware that the pressure the Council is experiencing in making accommodation available to those who need it – even those who qualify for housing – is extreme and at present there is no indication that it will relent. There are currently more than 8,500 households on the housing register, of whom 2,080 households are on bands 1 and 2, and so would be considered to have a greater housing priority than the client group in question. Furthermore, there are nearly 600 households who are homeless and housed in bed and breakfast accommodation, a situation that is so severe that now 80% of 2 and 3 bed properties that become available are let directly to homeless households.
 - 6.4 In short, the pressure on available housing is great, and the number of units that become available for this client group is few.
- 7 What options are currently available to those who are eligible for social care support?**
- 7.1 If following a Community Care Assessment an adult with autism is found to have eligible needs under the Care Act 2014, they may be eligible for support services in their own home or a residential/supported living placement.
 - 7.2 The estimated prevalence for autism in adults has been variable due to differences in the way autism was diagnosed and defined ³. Relatively newer reports suggest a prevalence of 400,00-500,00 adults in the UK have autism, or 116 per 10,000⁴. (*Dr Ratna Ganguly, Autism In Lewisham 2013*)
 - 7.3 It is not possible to give a totally accurate number of people with autism living in Lewisham, as the current social care recording systems do not have Autism as a category for Support Reasons or Service User Group.

- 7.4 For those Lewisham residents with a Learning Disability as a primary support reason it is estimated that 20% are on the autistic spectrum and of those approximately 50% are living in their own/family homes and 50% are in supported living, residential care or residential college.
- 7.5 There are also a number of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder who do not have a Learning Disability who are eligible for services under the Care Act 2014 and who are in receipt of support from Social Care.

8 What is the gap?

- 8.1 The housing needs of adults with autism are extremely varied. For some people who are eligible for care services under the Care Act 2014, there will be the option of residential care or packages of care. At the other end of the spectrum some adults with autism may be able to live independently.
- 8.2 For those autistic adults who are not eligible for services under the Care Act 2014, NHS Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group has commissioned Burgess Autistic Trust to provide information and support services in areas such as benefits, accommodation, training and employment and education.
- 8.3 The 'gap' that has been of particular concern to CLASH, and which has been the focus of the project group, is the lack of options that are available to those adults with autism who are neither eligible for services under the Care Act 2014, nor who are able to live totally independently. This gap covers a range of needs but might broadly be described as supported housing.
- 8.4 There is currently no supported housing provision in Lewisham that is specific to adults with autism, and the group has been working over the past two years to develop a new service model to address that gap.

9 Proposed Future Service Model and progress

- 9.1 The basis of a new model to fill this gap would be the provision of a small scheme, upon which a specialist autism provider would enter into a lease and offer a support service to the tenants. This type of accommodation would be suitable for adults with low level support needs, with support workers funded by an element of service charge covered by Housing Benefit. The support element of this proposal could be delivered by the Burgess Autistic Trust (BAT), which is already the specialist provider for this client group in the borough.
- 9.2 BAT and Council Officer's identified Birnbeck Housing Association as a possible partner for delivering this scheme. Birnbeck is a small

developing Housing Association which specialises in supported housing for people with autism, and supported housing for people with mental health issues. Representatives from Birnbeck have attended the Housing and Autism Group and they are interested in working with the Council to develop new build supported housing for people with Autism.

- 9.3 The Council identified a site which may be suitable for the development of New Build supported housing for people with Autism and asked Birnbeck and BAT to develop a proposal which could be delivered there, or at an alternative site if necessary. The scheme will deliver a minimum of 4 self-contained one-bed flats with an element of shared space to encourage socialisation. Detailed designs will be developed in partnership with the members of the Housing And Housing Working Group.
- 9.4 Officers will present a report to Mayor and Cabinet in due course which will set out in more detail the mechanism for delivering such a supported housing scheme and will seek formal authority to transfer land to Birnbeck, subject to the final negotiations and detailed proposals.
- 9.5 BAT and CLASH have identified a number of potential future tenants who could be suitable candidates for the proposed scheme.

10 Next Steps and Conclusion

- 10.1 Council Officers will continue to work with Birnbeck and BAT to develop a proposal for a supported housing scheme based on the model outlined in this report.
- 10.2 Subject to Mayor and Cabinet approval to proceed with the proposals, please find below indicative timeframes for the project:

Summer 2016 – Submit Planning application
Autumn 2016 – Planning permission determined
Early 2017 – Start on Site
Early 2018 – Flats available for let
- 10.3 Council Officers will present a report to Mayor and Cabinet which will provide details of the proposed site and the mechanism for transferring the land to a supported housing provider to deliver the scheme.
- 10.4 Please note that at this stage there are many factors which could impact on the timeframes for delivering this project. These include a range of factors which are site-specific, as well as other factors like the availability of GLA funding. Council officers are working with BAT and Birnbeck to minimise possible delays.

11 Financial Implications

- 11.1 The proposal set out in this report are at an early stage and no specific financial implications can yet be identified. Once the proposal is developed the financial implications, most significantly in respect of the land transfer and procurement, will be set out in the report to Mayor and Cabinet.

12 Legal Implications

- 11.1 With respect to the Council's social care duties these are set out in the body of the report

13 Crime and Disorder Implications

- 13.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

14 Equalities Implications

- 14.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this response report.

Background Documents

None

If you have any queries relating to this report please Jeff Endean, Housing Strategy and Programmes Manager, on 020 8314 6213