

Information

for County Councillors

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From:	Steve Jones Interim Head of Service
Date:	31/5/16
To:	John Parham, Alan Gloak, Terry Napper, Nigel Woolcombe-Adams, Christopher Le Hardy, Nicolas Townsend, Caroline Tucker. Cc William Wallace, Jane Lock.

Orchard Bungalow

In conjunction with our colleagues in strategic commissioning and Knightstone, our main partner Housing Association, the Learning Disability Provider Service (LDPS) has undertaken a review of our Supported Living properties across Somerset. The purpose of this review was to ensure that properties are of good quality, and that the accommodation is fit for the future needs and expectations of those people with learning disabilities who need housing in Somerset and who use our services.

Standards and expectations have changed over the past ten years, and we are keen to keep pace with best practice.

It has been identified through this property review that Orchard Bungalow in Taunton is not fit for future purpose due to the cramped internal layout and poor shared facilities.

Supported living is provided in partnership with social landlords who offer people tenancies and meet their housing needs, while the LDPS provide a domiciliary care service according to the assessed needs of each tenant. Adults with learning disabilities hold a tenancy agreement with assured tenancy

rights. Tenants are consulted about the running of their home and the support they receive. We also regularly ask tenants' families about their views.

There are currently 6 tenants with learning disabilities at Orchard Bungalow, who receive care and support throughout the day, and who have access to staff support at night when required.

Together with commissioners and Knightstone Housing Association, the landlord for Orchard Bungalow, we have developed plans for a new building on the existing site. The new building will be single storey, as it is now, but will make better use of the land and create nine individual flats built to modern housing standards with a shared communal space. This is subject to various approvals, including planning.

In order to proceed with the new build, we will first need to knock down the existing Orchard Bungalow. Over the coming months, therefore, we will be working together with the tenants, their families and their social workers to identify alternative, temporary accommodation options in the local area which will meet their needs whilst the building works are on-going. Any proposed temporary move will be independently assessed by a social worker to ensure it is in the best interests of the person concerned.

Although we recognise there will be a period of disruption whilst Orchard Bungalow is rebuilt, both LDPS and Knightstone will do everything possible to minimise any negative impact. When complete it will mean that we will be able to offer a number of self-contained flats that will be a far better fit for purpose in terms of housing and support required by the current group of tenants and other people with learning disabilities who may be looking for accommodation in the future.

The reason for informing you is that the tenants at Orchard Bungalow and / or their families live in your division, and as their local member, we wanted you to have advance information about the project and the process of engagement we are embarking upon. We will continue you to keep you updated of the progress of the engagement and the outcomes.

If you would like to discuss this matter further or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

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