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| Report to: | Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee |
| Date: | 29 February 2024 |
| Subject: | Dementia-ready Housing Taskforce Update |
| Director: | Liz Hunter, Director of Policing, Environment and Place |
| Author: | Helen Forman, Urban Design Manager |

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| Is this a key decision? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1: | |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the Dementia-Ready Housing Taskforce: its progress to date and proposed next steps.

2. Information

Background

- 2.1 The West Yorkshire mayor's housing pledge in May 2021 included the commitment to establish a Dementia Ready Housing Taskforce to look at how older people's housing and related services can be dementia friendly. The Taskforce was established in March 2022 and last reported to this committee in March 2023.
- 2.2 The number of people living with dementia in the UK is [expected to double](#) in the next 25 years, to 2 million people. Dementia costs the UK economy £26.3 billion a year and is a significant challenge for the NHS with an estimated 25% of acute beds occupied by people with dementia. Building and adapting homes so that they are dementia-ready, allowing people to remain in their own homes for longer, makes economic sense as well

as allowing people to be independent, healthier and happier, and building stronger communities.

- 2.3 Increasing the provision of accessible and adaptable homes is one of the key objectives of our housing strategy (see agenda item 8) which in turn supports the Combined Authority's West Yorkshire Plan missions. This work also aligns with that of the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership under our shared commitments to tackling inequality and shaping homes and communities as determinants of health (see agenda item 9).

2.4 **Progress to date**

- 2.5 The taskforce is made up of representatives from local authority housing teams, housing associations from the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership, public health, NHS, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Homes England, the Alzheimer's Society, Leeds Older People's Forum and the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership. It has set up a network of Dementia-ready Housing Champions, one from each member of the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership (WYHP), who have committed to carrying out actions from the Alzheimer's Society's [Dementia-friendly housing guide](#).

- 2.6 A list of criteria defining a dementia-ready home has been developed by the taskforce from a literature review of key documents and in consultation with the Champions. The idea is to help those with dementia to 'age in place' where they are most comfortable and happy, and to reduce the economic burden on the NHS at the same time. The criteria have been carefully designed so that changes are not perceived as institutional in appearance and can be applied to all housing categories. They are as follows:

1. Front door that is easy to find, day or night.
2. Front door has step-free access. For new build properties, step-free access to all external doors.
3. Internal surfaces mitigate confusion
4. Bathroom is easy to find
5. Bathroom / WC locks aid rescue
6. Good level of natural light in all rooms
7. View of nature in at least one habitable room
8. Access to an outdoor space that is easy to navigate
9. Amenities and other homes within 1km
10. Active dementia champion within the housing organisation

More detail is attached at Appendix 1. A clear short A4 document with photos of examples will be produced which can be used to help those assessing properties decide whether they meet the criteria.

- 2.7 At the meeting of the Chief Executives of the WYHP on 24th January, the partnership committed to:
1. including the criteria in their development standards for all homes, not just those for older people.
 2. Incorporating as many as possible on each new development, keeping a record of the dementia-ready scores out of ten.
 3. Exploring the viability of implementation of the criteria in existing stock, through programmes of existing work or between tenancies when properties are empty.
- 2.8 The taskforce has a new Chair, Helen Lennon, CEO of Connect Housing, who replaces Yvonne Castle from Johnnie Johnson, who has retired.
- 2.9 The Combined Authority hosted a Diversity and Dementia roundtable at Wellington House on 7th February with experts in this field to discuss how the CA can support those from all backgrounds who are living with dementia. There were attendees from LGBTQ+ and minority ethnic groups, local authorities, housing associations and the Alzheimer's Society.
- 2.10 At the time of writing, the Combined Authority was planning to promote 'Dementia Friends' awareness through an all-staff event with the Mayor on 20th February.
- 2.11 The CA's work around dementia also extends to transport and policing. The Orange Wallet Travel Card gives people with communication difficulties or disabilities a subtle way of letting bus drivers know that they may need extra time or help. The Criminal Justice and Mental Health Forum is working on the 'Right Care Right Person' model to ensure that people calling the emergency services and in police custody receive the right care, at the right time, in the best place, by the most qualified person.
- 2.12 Next steps for the taskforce include:
- 2.12.1 Working with partners to implement the criteria above and recording the impact.
 - 2.12.2 Taking forward the commitments from the housing strategy to understand current and future need for supported housing for those with additional needs.
 - 2.12.3 Exploring adoption of the dementia-ready housing criteria more widely, through continuing to engage with the private sector (through developers and architects), the government's [Older People's Housing Taskforce](#) and in schemes we fund. A review of two of our Brownfield Housing Fund schemes aimed at older people, and at this Committee for approval, showed that they meet several of the dementia-ready criteria.
 - 2.12.4 Seeking funding to take the work further.
- 3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

3.1 There are no direct climate emergency implications directly arising from this report, but developing more dementia-ready homes will reduce the carbon impact of hospital beds for those with dementia.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 People in lower socioeconomic groups in the UK are exposed to a higher risk of developing dementia, and may face additional barriers such as limited access to healthcare services. [Research](#) has found that the increased risk is particularly associated with people living in very disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 A [sevenfold increase](#) in dementia in the Black and South Asian population is expected over 40 years. There is less awareness of dementia and accessing associated services can be harder for people from ethnic minorities. Research suggests that LGBTQ+ people will experience difference challenges and concerns about dementia compared to the general population. Our new Housing Strategy includes a commitment to seek to understand the diverse housing experiences of those with protected characteristics and we will explore how we can support these communities at the Diversity and Dementia roundtable.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the committee notes the work of the taskforce to date and endorses the Dementia-ready housing criteria.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Dementia-ready housing criteria – February 2024