

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet 13 April 2026

Report Title

Extra Care Housing Model

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Spicer, Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

All

Report Summary

Extra Care Housing (ECH) is nationally recognised and widely defined by offering self-contained residences for people aged 55 years and above, combining independent living with 24/7 onsite care and support and communal facilities. The model can offer an alternative to residential care for people needing support to live independently for longer.

In Rotherham, there are two ECH schemes, known as Potteries Court and Bakers Field Court, offering a total of 87 tenancies. This report is seeking approval to formally consult on how care and support is delivered to tenants in ECH, to determine a high quality and sustainable future model that meets the needs of tenants.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Note the preferred option to remodel care and support to tenants in the ECH schemes, as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

2. Approve a formal, public consultation on this option for 90 days from May to July 2026.
3. Note that the findings of the consultation and proposed final model will be presented to Cabinet in September 2026 for approval.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Initial Equality Screening Assessment Part A
Appendix 2 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[The Future of Oak Trees Extra Care Scheme \(Stag Willow\) 18 September 2023 Cabinet Report](#)
[Recommendation on the Proposed Future Model for the RMBC Enabling Service Cabinet Report](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
None

Council Approval Required
No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

Extra Care Housing Model

1. Background

- 1.1 ECH is recognised nationally for providing people over 55 with independent, self-contained homes within a community setting, combined with onsite care and support services available 24 hours a day. It is classed as specified accommodation under Housing Benefit regulations as it offers more support than traditional housing or sheltered accommodation, providing a flexible, person-centred alternative to residential care. It enables tenants to maintain their independence while having access to professional support when needed.
- 1.2 The intention of ECH is for tenants, aged 55 years and above, to sustain their independence, whilst benefitting from varying levels of care and support as needed. From an organisational perspective, the ECH model can support the Council to deliver its duties under the Care Act 2014 by preventing people's needs from worsening, reducing needs by offering a sense of community to both tenants and people in the surrounding area, and delaying the need for more intensive care provision.
- 1.3 In Rotherham, there are two schemes, known as Potteries Court and Bakers Field Court, which were commissioned and built as ECH facilities in 2008. Combined, the schemes offer 87 tenancies and currently support 92 people. The schemes offer both self-contained bungalows and apartments within a main building, owned by Together Housing as the housing provider. Properties vary in size and can accommodate 1-2 people.
- 1.4 Six people at the Potteries Court scheme are shared owners which means they part-own their property and pay rent to Together Housing on the remaining portion. Six people at Bakers Field Court are leaseholders who have bought the right to occupy a property for a fixed, long-term period. Restrictions on the properties mean that only people who meet the criteria for ECH are eligible to purchase the properties.
- 1.5 There are 25 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Council-employed staff working across the sites to provide housing and wellbeing related support. Social care and support needs are met through a mixture of commissioned providers, with individual packages of care brokered, and agencies employed via a Direct Payment. The Rothercare Community Alarm Service, which provides a response to care and support related emergencies, is available to tenants in all properties.
- 1.6 Tenants have exclusive use of garden areas and secure scooter stores, conservatories, laundry facilities and activity rooms. The onsite cafes are for use by tenants and the public.
- 1.7 The Council has established formal nomination agreements with Together Housing which means the Council can nominate people from its housing waiting list for properties. As such, access to ECH is in accordance with the Council's housing allocation rules and requires tenants to be aged 55 years or older. An individual must have an identified need for housing related support. A person

first applies to be on the Rotherham Council Housing Register and is then assessed by the Council Housing Options Team as priority for rehousing due to vulnerability to live independently.

- 1.8 Consistently, there have been people awaiting an ECH tenancy; as of January 2026, there were 15 people waiting. Often people wish to stay close to their community, and bungalows attached to the schemes are particularly desirable, therefore people can remain waiting for some time. Once a property becomes available Together Housing and the Council aim to allocate a new tenancy within 4 weeks. Through effective partnership working, there are currently no empty properties at either scheme.
- 1.9 Contractually, ECH tenants have two separate agreements, one with the housing provider, Together Housing, which covers property related stipulations only and a second with the Council for the provision of housing related and wellbeing support, in connection with the tenancy agreement. This agreement specifies that tenants receive the following:
- Housing support.
 - Emotional support and advice.
 - Help in gaining access to other services.
 - Help in establishing social contacts and activities.
 - Peer support and befriending.
 - Help with shopping and good neighbour tasks.
 - Signposting to other services.
- 1.10 The lease agreement for shared owners does not stipulate the provision of a care service, nor does the agreement for leaseholders.
- 1.11 Typically, ECH tenants pay rent, plus a service charge which covers the costs associated with the utilities and the maintenance and safety of communal areas within the scheme. Additionally, a charge of £36.01 per week covers housing and wellbeing support and tenants receive a financial means test to determine their contribution. This excludes leaseholders at Bakers Field who are excluded from paying this charge. The amount includes the charge for Rothercare, which is £4.50 per week. This income, estimated at £26,000 per year, contributes to the housing related support, which is provided by 3.18 full time equivalent (FTE) dedicated Council employed Housing Officers who are part of the ECH onsite staffing establishment.
- 1.12 The Council employs a further 21.82 FTE posts, which includes the care enabler role. This role provides face-to-face wellbeing checks, up to twice daily, to tenants which includes support to make drinks and meal preparation, Rothercare pendent checks and fire alarm testing, and support with activities and socialising, including access to the local area. Care enablers respond to triggers for wellbeing support, via the Rothercare Community Alarm service.
- 1.13 In addition, as determined by a Care Act needs assessment, personal care and support is delivered to some tenants through a combination of home care providers commissioned by the Council and independent agencies employed by

tenants through Direct Payment agreements. Tenants have choice and control of their care provider. Customers are financially assessed to determine their contribution. The table below provides a summary across the schemes, as of January 2026.

	Potteries Court	Bakers Field Court	Cost per year £
Commissioned care and support	3 providers supporting 10 tenants	10 providers supporting 19 tenants	0.716m
Direct Payment	3 tenants	9 tenants	0.373m
Total cost			1.089m

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 applies to ECH, and once implemented, schemes are required to comply with a set of minimum standards for the quality of accommodation and support provided.
- 2.2 Whilst the current model offers tenants a multilayered approach to care and support, the delivery of this can be disjointed, and intrusive and unnecessarily overcomplicates the ECH schemes. Tenants receive support from multiple organisations, which increases the number of professionals involved in a person's life. There are opportunities to strengthen the existing care and support to ensure person-focussed and strength-based approaches are embedded within the ECH model, ensuring a consistent approach across the schemes.
- 2.3 The current model emerged following the implementation of a previous decision in 2016 which led to the reshaping of the Council's enablement provision and the introduction of independent care providers to the ECH schemes. The ECH staffing complement was retained, initially to ensure a safe transfer of care and support. However, during this time, it emerged that there was an ongoing need for tenant care and support between independent care provider visits and therefore a hybrid model evolved.
- 2.4 Over the past 10 years, the policy landscape has changed, moving away from competitive commissioning and fragmented care to a more collaborative approach and a focus on integration. However, care and support provided by independent providers is not based onsite, and therefore the current model is unable to respond flexibly to the fluctuating needs of tenants and therefore a proportionate response to prevent, reduce and delay care and support needs is difficult to achieve.
- 2.5 Essentially, there are two co-dependent systems within the ECH schemes, and neither can maximise delivery. This can compromise the type and amount of support tenants receive. All Council-employed care enablers are level 2 qualified to deliver care and support. However, as the schemes are no longer registered

with CQC, staff are not permitted to deliver personal care. This change to the care enabler role has blurred the distinction between staff delivering housing related support and, over time, some duplication has emerged (for example, the provision of social contact and tenant activities, supporting emotional wellbeing and support with daily living tasks).

2.6 The current model is inconsistent across the schemes in relation to access to support and is not delivering optimum outcomes or value for money. The costs of the schemes are £1.984m per year. This can be broken down into three distinct categories:

- Commissioned care and support £0.716m.
- Direct Payments £0.373m.
- Staffing and running costs £0.895m.

2.7 ECH schemes work most effectively when tenants have varying types and levels of need. Currently, there is a high proportion of tenants with no care needs; 17.4% of the total proportion of tenants do not access formal care and support services. This is unusual compared to most other ECH schemes in the Yorkshire region where applicants are either referred by adult social care, or have eligible needs assessed under the Care Act 2014, before being allocated a tenancy. This is potentially a missed opportunity to ensure valuable resource is targeted and inclusive of people with varying types and levels of need.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Several options to potentially remodel the schemes have been explored.

3.2 **Option 1:** Continue with the current arrangement. This is not considered a viable, sustainable model as there is a lack of stability in the current connections tenants have and the sense of community. Whilst there are some opportunities within the current model to further promote the schemes as community assets and strengthen the allocations process to ensure access to the offer is more equitable, the model does not promote independence as effectively as Option 2 or 3 as it is not responsive to changing needs.

3.3 **Option 2:** Tenant care and support needs are met by an independent provider and Council employed staff are withdrawn. This option would see the displacement of Council employed staff from the ECH service and would potentially release some efficiency as the Council workforce would significantly reduce. Whilst the allocations process could be strengthened to ensure people with a broader range of need can be supported by ECH, this option would severely limit oversight of the schemes and any further development.

3.4 In summary, Option 2 would:

- Continue to deliver the housing management function to people who need help to maintain their property. Together Housing would provide all housing related support.

- Continue to provide care and support to tenants from their current commissioned provider, agency or Personal Assistant via a Direct Payment, ensuring that familiarity is maintained.
- Limit future development opportunities to grow and expand the ECH model.
- Displace all Council employed staff from the ECH service. Staff would be redeployed or supported through HR processes to find alternative roles.
- Increase demand on the Rothercare service for those people requiring a response.

3.5 **Option 3:** The schemes are registered with CQC (under one registration) so that Council employed staff can legally meet tenants' personal care and support needs. **This is the preferred option.** It is proposed that the existing commissioned arrangements, including Direct Payments, would cease as fully trained staff would be available onsite to deliver an enabling approach, encouraging and motivating tenants to retain their independence for as long as possible. Strengths-based, personalised support plans, tailored to individuals' needs will ensure that people are supported proportionately, on a needs-led basis, accessible on a 24/7 basis. The staffing model will include built-in capacity to flex and adapt to individuals' changing needs. Housing related support would continue to be provided by the Council to ensure residents successfully maintain their property. The provision would be modelled on the existing enablement approach embedded within Adult Social Care Provider Services, and staff training needs would be identified to ensure high quality, well-led and safe care and support is provided in readiness for CQC registration.

3.6 In summary, Option 3 would:

- Improve overall tenant experience as the model is simplified.
- Improve the relational experience of tenants by embedding consistency of staff delivering care and support, impacting positively on tenant wellbeing.
- Provide a timely and proportionate response to care needs 24/7.
- Introduce a stronger and timely link between tenants and assessing officers, as staff delivering care and support would identify a need for a review.
- Strengthen quality assurance of the ECH provision, through registration with the CQC.
- Provide robust management and improve oversight ensuring the schemes are well-led.
- Similarly to option one, this option would provide the Council and Together Housing an opportunity to promote the schemes as community assets which invite people in and link tenants to the wider community network. This will maximise connection and wellbeing of both tenants and non-residents.
- Similarly to options one and two, the allocation process could be strengthened by involving representation from adult social care. In turn, this will provide an opportunity to balance and potentially diversify the needs of tenants across the schemes to ensure access to the offer is more equitable, supporting people with a broader range of needs to remain independent.
- Embed consistent language in relation to how the schemes are referred to and ensure compliance with future standards.
- Prevent hospital admissions and reduce readmission rates, avoiding care and support needs escalating to emergency situations.

- Reduce the demand on the Enablement service, as onsite care enablers would provide care and support.
- 3.7 Option 3 enables the Council to develop the ECH model and provides a solid foundation for future expansion. It focuses on providing a balanced approach, improving outcomes for people whilst ensuring value for money, and investment in the Council workforce.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The report is seeking Cabinet approval to formally consult on the preferred model (Option 3).
- 4.2 The preferred option is designed to align with best practice for ECH, and the consultation will seek feedback on the purpose and principles of ECH as well as what respondents want from the future model with regards their care and support. The key elements of the consultation will include:
- Registration of the schemes with the CQC (under one registration) so that Council employed staff can legally meet tenants' personal care and support needs.
 - 24/7 availability of fully trained staff onsite to deliver a proportionate, enabling approach, encouraging and motivating tenants to retain their independence for as long as possible.
 - Built-in capacity to flex and adapt to individuals' changing needs.
 - The continuation of housing related support by the Council to ensure residents successfully maintain their property.
 - Tenant views on ending existing arrangements with independent providers.
- 4.3 A 90-day public consultation will be delivered, providing all stakeholders with an opportunity to feed back on the proposal. This will involve stakeholders that would be immediately affected by the proposed changes to the model, including current tenants, families and carers, the workforce, Together Housing, commissioned providers, agencies and personal assistants.
- 4.4 Leaseholder and shared owners have additional rights in relation to section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, which comes into effect when tenants are required to pay any additional or an increased cost. This, along with any potential variation to lease agreements will be considered as part of the final model.
- 4.5 A consultation timetable and communications plan will be developed to ensure as much reach as possible, including the promotion of an online survey, bespoke focus groups and drop-in sessions within accessible community spaces.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The formal consultation will be open for 90 days from May to July 2026.
- 5.2 The findings of the consultation and final model will be presented to Cabinet in September 2026. Subject to Cabinet approval, a staff consultation will be completed during winter 2026 to operationalise the model. Concurrently, a

review of tenant care and support needs will be completed prior to giving notice to commissioned providers in February 2027. It is estimated that, if approved, the new model would be in operation from 1 April 2027.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The budget for the staffing costs of the extra-care teams is £0.895m. On top of that there are costs within homecare and direct payments that will vary based on the needs of the individual residents of the schemes at any one time. These are currently estimated at circa £1.089m. Any new model will need to be costed when the final model and structure is agreed. The cost of the consultation will need to be managed within existing budgets.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The recommendations of this report are in accordance with existing decisions, the Council's constitution and the legal framework covering extra care housing.
- 7.2 It is anticipated that contracts covering the Council care provision would be entered into by residents electing to move to this model. The contracts team within Legal Services could assist with this.
- 7.3 While the Council has a wide discretion as to how to carry out a consultation, the duty to consult consists of four key elements, known as the Gunning Criteria, *R v London Borough of Brent, ex parte Gunning* (1985) 84 LGR 1, that are designed to make consultation a fair and worthwhile exercise –
- (1) Any lawful consultation must be undertaken at a time when proposals are at a formative stage.
 - (2) There must be sufficient reasons advanced for any particular proposal to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration and an intelligent response.
 - (3) Adequate time must be given for that purpose.
 - (4) The results of that consultation must be conscientiously taken into account before any decision is taken.
- 7.4 The first Gunning principle does not preclude consultations taking place on preferred options or on a decision in principle, as long as the decision maker's mind remains open to change.
- 7.5 There are two further general principles to consider during any consultation exercise, following the Supreme Court decision in *R (Moseley) v Haringey LBC* [2014] 1 WLR 3947 –
- The degree of specificity regarding the consultation should be influenced by those who are being consulted.
 - The demands of fairness are higher when the consultation relates to a decision which is likely to deprive someone of an existing benefit.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 The workforce will have the opportunity to respond to the proposed model during the public consultation.
- 8.2 Subject to the outcome of the formal consultation and the model that is approved by Cabinet, a staffing review will be required to operationalise the model. This would consider the following:
- Any required contractual changes.
 - Revisions to job profiles (including, as required, regarding undertaking personal care tasks and working patterns).
 - The provision of formal care and support and housing related support.
 - The impact on postholders within the existing team, including any job matching or ringfencing arrangements and identification of posts at risk.
 - CQC registration and appointment of a Registered and a Deputy Manager.
 - TUPE rights of care workers employed by an independent provider.
- 8.3 The staffing establishment would be reviewed alongside the care and support needs of tenants, to identify demand and ensure sufficient capacity to respond. As it is likely that the staffing complement will grow, potential opportunities for staff that may be redeployed from other teams within adult care will be identified.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 Subject to a review of tenant care and support needs, all current tenants would retain their tenancy and remain in their current property within the ECH scheme, providing that their care needs can continue to be met by the service. To ensure ongoing legal compliance, tenants of ECH will retain choice and control of their care provider. It is anticipated that most tenants will opt for the stable, consistent and quality care of in-house provision.
- 9.2 The recommended proposal will have a positive impact on future tenants and vulnerable adults as there will be an opportunity to diversify the existing criteria and strengthen the allocation process. This will ensure access to the offer is equitable by supporting people with a broader range of needs to remain independent, rebalancing the needs of people who access ECH.
- 9.3 Additionally, if the preferred model was approved, there would be an improved care and support response for vulnerable tenants over a 24/7 period. Staff would respond in a timely way to presenting needs and be in a better position to identify a requirement for a care and support review, which in turn would reduce unplanned, emergency situations arising and ensure vulnerable tenants maintain their independence for longer.
- 9.4 There are no implications for children and young people.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 The proposals in this report support the Council to comply with legal obligations encompassed in the:

- Human Rights Act (1998), to treat everyone equally with fairness, dignity and respect with a focus on those who are disadvantaged because of disability.
- Equality Act (2010) to legally protect people from discrimination in wider society.

10.2 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 establishes the public sector equality duty (“PSED”) – which requires that the Council, as a public body, in carrying out its functions must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

10.3 The relevant protected characteristics referred to in the Equality Act are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status.

10.4 There is a duty on the Council to keep a record to demonstrate that it has genuinely and consciously had due regard to the PSED.

10.5 Further legal obligations which the report complies with include:

- Care Act (2014) six core principles guiding the provision of care and support services – empowerment, protection, prevention, proportionality, partnership, and accountability. Under the Care Act 2014, individuals in supported living have a right to choose care provider, if it is available, suitable, and within the local authority budget.
- Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 to uplift standards in supported housing for vulnerable people in England by introducing national standards, mandatory licensing for providers, and new local authority duties to oversee these services, tackling poor quality, while ensuring residents get appropriate support, maintain independence, and have choice, distinct from traditional care homes, improving oversight and accountability.

10.6 An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) has been completed to support the planning of the consultation and how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will be considered throughout. Refer to Appendix 1 to support the recommendation to consult.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 A Carbon Impact Assessment has been completed which identifies less carbon emission due to the reduced travelling of independent providers to the schemes from across the borough. The full assessment can be reviewed in Appendix 2.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 The Council will continue to maintain a positive working partnership with Together Housing who have welcomed the potential remodelling. The options presented in this report do not lead to a conflict of interest as Together Housing is not a CQC registered provider of care. Therefore, Together Housing would retain the role of landlord, as current. Nomination rights would be unaffected.
- 12.2 The current arrangements with 13 commissioned providers and agencies and Personal Assistants (PAs) employed through Direct Payments would cease. However, the loss is not deemed significant as it is spread across multiple providers.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Several risks associated with the recommended option have been identified.
- 13.2 **Tenants will retain the right to choose care provision, and they may not want Council-employed staff to meet care and support needs.** The consultation will identify tenant appetite for the preferred option. Contracts covering the Council care provision would be entered into by residents electing to move to this model.
- 13.3 **The sustainability and effectiveness of the model will only be possible if it is staffed sufficiently to deliver safe, quality care.** A review of tenant need will inform the development of a sustainable staff structure.
- 13.4 **Potential budget savings are dependent on reviewing the staffing establishment.** The staffing establishment will be reviewed concurrently during the consultation to ensure a fit for purpose structure is proposed. Following the consultation, this will be considered by Cabinet, alongside the final ECH model.
- 13.5 **Independent providers of care and support could lose business.** As multiple providers support tenants across the two schemes, the risk is spread across organisations. Providers can express any concern they may have through a formal consultation. It should be noted that TUPE rights may apply, if any of the care workers employed by the providers does fifty percent or more of their working week at one of the schemes.
- 13.6 **Managing potentially conflicting views and low participation in the consultation.** A proactive and structured approach will be deployed to run an inclusive and transparent consultation, ensuring information is accessible with an online and face-to-face presence, including targeted outreach. Data will be managed systematically to demonstrate that feedback is considered.

14. Accountable Officers

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Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	18/03/26
Executive Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	11/03/26
Executive Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	13/03/26

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