

Charnwood Borough Council

Older Persons Housing Strategy

April 2009



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Introduction

The Audit Commission's "Don't Stop Me Now," Preparing for an ageing population (2008) states,

"Council's have a local area leadership role to ensure that older people can live independently and actively, with a good quality of life, for as long as possible.¹"

It goes on to suggest they should:

- Review their local demographic profiles and reassess their approach to the ageing population;
- Identify how they can work with older people and local partners to make more efficient use of public and community resources;
- Link local demographic profiles and community needs in age-proofing mainstream services and designing targeted services;
- Tackle stereotypes and myths that prevent older people being fully engaged in the community and remaining appropriate services;
- Target spending to have the most impact and improve evaluation; and
- Use this study to support a management review, or councillor scrutiny, of support for well being later in life.

Furthermore in February 2008 Government launched "Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: Housing in an Ageing Society." The strategy, the first of its kind in the world puts "housing in the frontline in both supporting older people's aspirations and preventative care, placing the needs of older people at the heart of policy making."

An Older Persons Housing Strategy has been identified within the strategic housing work programme for some time but as is evident from these national initiatives is more timely than ever.

Who are older people?

Older people have never been a generic group and arguably are increasingly less so. The one size fits all approach so often applied to service provision in the past is no longer appropriate and a range of housing options and services to meet individual needs is now required to reflect this.

Historically many social housing providers considered 60 to be a significant milestone and whether an applicant was above or below that age impacted on where they could live and which services they could receive but it is evident that services should be needs led rather than controlled by relatively arbitrary age criteria.

The Department of Health National Service Framework for older people identified three broad groups of older people

¹ Don't stop me now p6

- **Entering old age** These are people who have completed their career in paid employment and/or child rearing. This is a socially-constructed definition of old age, which, according to different interpretations, includes people as young as 50, or from the official retirement ages of 60 for women and 65 for men. These people are active and independent and many remain so into late old age.
The goals of health and social care policy are to promote and extend healthy active life, and to compress morbidity (the period of life before death spent in frailty and dependency).
- **Transitional phase** This group of older people are in transition between healthy, active life and frailty. This transition often occurs in the seventh or eighth decades but can occur at any stage of older age.
The goals of health and social care policy are to identify emerging problems ahead of crisis, and ensure effective responses which will prevent crisis and reduce long-term dependency.
- **Frail Older People** These people are vulnerable as a result of health problems such as stroke or dementia, social care needs or a combination of both. Frailty is often experienced only in late old age, so services for older people should be designed with their needs in mind.
The goals of health and social care policy are to anticipate and respond to problems, recognising the complex interaction of physical, mental and social care factors, which can compromise independence and quality of life.²

It is worth noting that each of the phases will come at different times for different people and so to tie them to specific ages other than at the broadest level is to misunderstand older people's needs and our approach to allocating properties by age will need revisiting.

Why an older persons housing strategy?

People are living longer and coupled with changing demographics this is having a significant impact on the housing needs and expectations of an ageing population.

The importance of addressing the needs of older people when planning services is currently rising in priority and this is reflected in the recent Cabinet decision to appoint a Cabinet member as Champion for Older People who will represent the Council of the Leicestershire Older Persons Champion network as well as representing older people's interests in relevant internal project boards.

Models of provision developed in the second half of the last century are no longer fit for purpose or in keeping with the aspirations of the next generation of older people who now expect access to technologies inconceivable when their parents retired and expect to continue their leisure pursuits. This impacts on their space and infrastructure requirements.

Charnwood like many authorities have found that the local authority housing developed and available for older people no longer meets demand and this is borne out by high levels of empty properties and lengthy void times across a backdrop of

² National Service Framework for Older People, DoH March 2001 p3

increasing demand for social housing. Consequently as the provision of housing for older people is not meeting demand older households are remaining in their existing properties across all tenures “blocking” much needed family accommodation.

Furthermore County Council research into Housing and Support for Older People identified Charnwood as having the highest proportion of income deprived older people (12.2%) in the County.

Charnwood have always been pro-active in delivering the strategic housing agenda. The borough was the first in Leicestershire and one of the earliest in the East Midlands to produce a fit for purpose housing strategy and the strategy provides the overarching direction of the service.

The strategy identified a number of key outputs for delivery during its life time and these included:

- This Older Persons Housing strategy
- A BME Housing Strategy produced in 2007
- A new Homeless strategy in 2008
- Supporting People Strategy due for a review in 2010

Although an older persons housing strategy is not a statutory requirement like the housing strategy or homelessness strategy it is a critical piece in the jigsaw that informs the Borough’s strategic direction and prioritises resources and work streams.

How have we got where we are?

As early as 2000 CBC, acknowledged the fact that not all of its existing sheltered housing was meeting the needs of the people of Charnwood.

As a result of these concerns research was undertaken and presented in The Housing Needs of Older People and the Role of Sheltered Housing in Charnwood

The Housing Needs of Older People and the Role of Sheltered Housing in Charnwood

The purpose of the study was to look for answers to two “separate, yet interrelated, issues:”

- What are the housing needs of older people in the Borough? (i.e. over retirement age), and
- What role does sheltered housing have to play in meeting the needs of older people in the future?

The findings from the research were intended to provide a sound basis against which future policy could rationally be set and the remodelling of Grays Court was informed by the outcomes of the research.

This strategy is not intended to be the final stage of a journey but rather one milestone along the way. Already feeding into this work are the outcomes of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Leicestershire Housing and Support for Older People study as well as research undertaken nationally by a range of organizations including the Housing Corporation, JRF and Audit Commission. It also builds upon the strategies already produced within the service. Furthermore the Older Persons Housing Needs and Aspirations Research due to be undertaken at a county level will be crucial in ensuring a sound evidence base and better understanding of the demand for older persons housing.

There are also a number of existing work streams that feed directly into this strategy or have already identified actions that need to be reflected within it.

BME Housing Strategy

As part of the BME housing strategy a number of service user discussion forums were undertaken. These identified a number of areas of relevance to older people that need picking up within this strategy including:

The need for services for elderly Asians with higher level of needs, requiring more intensive support and care in their first language. Whilst CBC was not expected to directly provide housing services for elderly Asians, our role as an enabler was identified.

It was recommended that, as a short-term measure, a waiting list be introduced to help manage allocations to Vrudha Nivas the only Asian sheltered housing scheme within the borough, which would fast track those with critical needs.

It was stated that the more established BME communities are ageing, such as the Hindus and Punjabis who arrived in the local area 20-30 years ago. The strategy identified that over the next decade, as the first generation migrants are entering retirement they will create new demands for care, support and housing services specific to their cultural and religious needs. At present this need is not being met and the only available places are away from their local community.

The population trends suggest an increase in the overall population of older people including people from BME communities and that numbers of people living longer and beyond 75 will increase. Now and over the next decade, as the first and increasingly second generation migrants are entering retirement they will create new demands for care, support and housing services specific to their cultural and religious needs.

Within Charnwood the 2001 Census data shows that the population in the over 65 age group is projected to increase by 16.6% by 2016, and those 80 and over by almost 46% by 2016. As the elderly population increases, the need for a culturally

specific approach to housing investment will need further research. This will be carried forward as one of the actions of this strategy.

The need to carry out some research does not however prevent the development of existing services to reflect cultural perspectives or a continuum of support services to help older BME people to access low level support to help them remain at home or to access sheltered housing and extra care, which is within or close to the community.

Asset Management Review of Older Persons Provision

It has been known for some time that much of the current provision of housing for older people does not meet the needs of service users. As a result a number of projects have already been undertaken to improve the quality of sheltered stock.

The most significant of these was the remodelling of Grays Court, Barrow upon Soar which involved an RSL partner to refurbish the Council units and provide additional bungalows on the site owned and managed by the RSL.

Smaller scale works have taken place to convert bed sits to one bed flats such as at Sorrel Court and Dudley Court. However it has become apparent that this ad-hoc approach will not deliver the quantity or quality of improvement necessary. As a result a complete options appraisal of sheltered stock is being developed building upon what has already been learnt.

Ensuring a Continuum of Provision

Running concurrently with the issue of low demand for sheltered stock is the lack of suitable accommodation for older people who do not currently need support. Once over the age of 60 single applicants and couples are no longer eligible for general needs accommodation but for those who do not yet have a support need supporting people funded services are inappropriate also. Provisional discussions have taken place with Supporting People to ensure that their services are targeted to those who need them whilst older people without such needs are able to access accommodation. Ensuring appropriate accommodation is available to older people with a full range of needs will be a central tenet of this strategy.

Key issues and what we hope to achieve

There are a range of work streams that will continue beyond the production of this strategy that will have fundamental impacts on how we move services forward most notably the Older Peoples Aspirations study and the Asset Management Review of CBCs sheltered housing.

Charnwood's overarching vision in relation to older people can be summarised as:

“to ensure that the housing needs of the ageing population of Charnwood are met through a full range of housing options that marry aspirations with need.”

Key Issues

In meeting this overall objective there are a number of significant areas which will need to be examined in more detail and addressed in the action plan;

- To gain an evidence base of predicted future need and aspirations to inform both new provision and reviews of existing services and accommodation
- Ensure best use is made of existing sheltered stock whilst meeting the needs of all older people.
- To identify options to deliver new provision of older persons accommodation across tenures
- To ascertain whether existing information networks are sufficient to ensure older people are sufficiently informed of their housing options
- To identify resources to ensure housing provision continues to meet the needs of an ageing population for years to come
- Identify BME issues in relation to older people and housing

The National and Local Context

There is a wide variety of national and local initiatives that are focussed on services to older people and in particular how they will evolve and be provided in the future. In order to maximise their effectiveness and manage their interdependencies it is vital that we take a strategic approach to ensure co-ordinated delivery at a local level.

National Issues

Demographic trends show that the population is ageing. By 2026 it is expected that nationally older people will account for almost half of the increase in the total number of households amounting to 2.4m extra older households than there are today.

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighborhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society

In February 2008 the government published a national housing strategy giving older people greater choice and addressing the challenges of an ageing population.

At the heart of the strategy are proposals to future proof new housing provision, a focus on age friendly neighbourhoods together with increased support for older people to remain in their homes.

Future Proofing New Provision:

From 2013 Government intends to introduce new standards that will ensure that new homes meet “Lifetime Homes” standards.

These standards will be introduced for social housing by 2011 to ensure that social housing leads the way in this area.

“Age Friendly” Neighbourhoods:

Local Planners and design experts like The Campaign for the Built Environment (CABE) will be encouraged to look at how new developments can be better designed for older people. Areas for consideration include better paving, kerb design location of bus stops etc.

Better Support in current homes:

The Government identified three areas to achieve this aim

1. Develop a national rapid repair and adaptations service to support a major expansion of handyman schemes

2. Establish a new dedicated National Housing Advice and information service providing expert advice for older people

3. Increased funding for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

Although changes to the Supporting People regime have lead some to suggest that specialist housing may disappear, CLG have announced their commitment to continued provision by developing an innovations panel to steer work on the future of specialist housing in England. The panel is charged with “how can we create something that everybody would aspire to go into?” It will look at new forms of specialist housing for older people possibly inspired by other countries and is expected to report in summer 2009.

The Decent Homes Standard

The Government has made a commitment to making all social housing decent and increasing to 70% the proportion of vulnerable people in decent private housing by 2010. Although it has been acknowledged that for some providers this time frame will need to be extended the Decent Homes Standard is still a central plank of a commitment to increase standards in social housing

A ‘decent home’ means one that:

- meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- is in a reasonable state of repair
- has reasonably modern facilities and services
- provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Commitment to tackle Fuel Poverty

The Government has promised to eliminate fuel poverty amongst older households by 2010:

Local Authorities have a key role to play in meeting the target through investment in Council Stock, renewal activity and ensuring that planning policy encourages standards to be as high as possible.

Addressing fuel poverty will be a crucial issue in improving the housing conditions of older people. Locally there are a range of agencies offering advice to householders on all aspects of energy efficiency and a key challenge will be to ensure older people are signposted to the most appropriate agency.

The British Gas Help the Aged Partnership has worked since 1999 to improve the lives of older people by trying to address the three main contributing factors to fuel poverty which are – rising costs of energy, low incomes and poor housing stock. A survey carried out by ICM Research showed that one in seven older people would have to use their savings to supplement their income in order to meet fuel costs.

As one in four older people are currently deemed to be fuel poor the British Gas Help the Aged campaign is focusing on getting advice and information on the benefits, grants and energy efficiency measures available to those most in need.

The Decent Home Standards once delivered will at least ensure a basic level of energy efficiency in the social sector and for vulnerable people in the private sector, although increasing fuel costs will negate some of the benefits the work will deliver.

HACTs' Older Person Programme

The Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT) has been grant funding third sector organisations to develop and test solutions to plug the gaps in provision of services to older people.

Successful schemes included those that:

- Developed housing options approaches that allowed older people to make informed decisions as to whether to remain in their existing homes or seek alternative more appropriate accommodation.
- Provided a holistic approach to home improvement finance to elderly owner occupiers
- Provided equity release products through innovative loan schemes
- Pioneered the use of assistive technologies to improve the well being of older people
- Provided advice and advocacy particularly for hard to reach groups

As a result of the evaluation of the programme a number of recommendations have been made for local authorities

1. improve access to mainstream services
2. promote social financial products
3. promote responsible builders
4. get creative (partnerships)
5. recognise the nature of relationships (and the role of third sector organisations as an intermediary with excluded older people)
6. joined-up policy

There are also a number of other national initiatives that have a wider remit in terms of older people that housing plays a key part in delivering.

The National Service Framework (NSF) for older people

This is the national strategic driver for social care and support services for older people. It sets national standards and service models across health and social services for older people

“The NSF leads with plans to:

- Ensure that older people are treated with respect and dignity
- Ensure that older people are supported by newly integrated services with a well coordinated, coherent and cohesive approach to assessing individual's needs and circumstances and for commissioning and providing services for them.
- Specifically address those conditions which are particularly significant for older people – like strokes, falls and mental health problems associated with older age
- Promote the health and well being of older people through coordinated actions of the NHS and Local Authorities.”

The NSF Local Delivery Plan identifies eight NSF Standards which provide more structure as to what local partners are expected to achieve. Local PCT's have specific targets that they are required to meet via a Local Delivery Plan.

The targets include:

- Delayed transfers of care reduced to a minimal level
- Improvement in the quality of life and independence of older people so that they can live at home as long as possible by increasing the number of those supported intensively to live at home and being supported by social services at home or in residential care homes.
- Intermediate care capacity expanded to meet the NHS Plan targets of an increase in the number of intermediate care beds.
- Service capacity increased in other key areas which support people at home e.g. Care packages (home care), community equipment provided and more extra care housing places.
- Healthy living for the young at heart – (In line with All Our Tomorrows` approach)
- Stock options appraisals – This is of particular relevance in terms of clear decisions being made regarding the future of Sheltered Housing stock and any possible configurations.
- Community Care strategy for older people – which aims for a reduction in residential admissions / institutionalisation and an increase in care packages provided to older people in the community.
- Extra Care strategy – An option that needs to be considered within service provision. Linked to extra care is the area of delayed discharges / transfers from hospital. A housing related service can alleviate some of the delays.

Supporting People can help to achieve the above goals

All Our Tomorrows

In 2002 central and local government agreed a number of shared priorities one of which was to improve the quality of life for older people. All our Tomorrows is a

joint discussion document by the Association of Directors of Social Services and LGA on the future of services for older people

It sets out a joined up approach to how services are delivered to older people and aims to ensure integration of key services such as health, housing, social services, transport, leisure and life long learning, planning, regeneration and the environment. If specialist services are required, then these should be tailored to their needs. Within the All Our Tomorrow's framework the following themes have emerged

- Being valued
- Keeping informed
- Feeling Safer
- Living independently
- Staying healthy
- Getting out and about
- Active retirement
- Money matters – Maximising income.

Regional and sub-regional Issues

County Research / The Leicestershire Housing and Support for Older People Study (H&SOP)

The overall aim of the Leicestershire Housing and Support for Older People study was to enable a more strategic and joined up approach to how the housing needs of older people are being met within the wider housing, health and social care agenda.

The purpose of the research was to provide an evidence base to inform decisions to meet the vision of providing a range of options of supported housing for older people that is client focussed, addresses support as well as housing need, is flexible to the changing needs of clients, and is provided in properties and places where people choose to live.

Its original terms of reference were:

- To develop a county - wide continuum of provision of supported housing for older people that addressed both housing and support needs, flexible to changing needs of older people, maximises independence, and provided in properties and places where people choose to live.
- To develop a profile of housing need across Leicestershire from existing knowledge
- To audit existing services and provision against the model
- To make recommendations on a range of affordable deliverable options for Leicestershire arising from the model
- To devise an action plan for taking the recommendations forward

The other drivers for change and initiatives that had an impact on the outcomes of the research were the introduction of the assistive technology grant and the Supporting People options for saving initiative.

The main findings from the study were:

- That older people preferred to stay in their own homes
- That speedy provision of aids and adaptations was crucial in achieving the above
- Provision of showers as opposed to baths helped in the maintenance of dignity and independence. There was also the issue of safety and preventing falls.
- Safety and security, storage space (with rechargeable facilities) for mobility scooters should be factored into building planning and designs
- Wheelchair accessible buildings and pathways are crucial, so is the height of worktops
- Better building standards in relation to insulation and energy efficiency
- Community alarms seen as good investment and a worthwhile service by recipients
- Publicity of services available in the right formats as most older people are not aware of the services available
- Probable role for private sector to develop extra care schemes
- A mixture of high and low need in schemes e.g. A few extra care flats in ordinary Sheltered Housing schemes

The County Council are part of the project team on Charnwood's Asset Management Review of older peoples housing and the project is being run as a continuation of the H&SOP work. One aim of this strategy is to deliver H&SOP actions at a local level.

The survey identified a number of issues particularly prevalent in the Private Sector including:

- Many older people are unsuitably housed and under occupy their properties
- Property maintenance was an important issue

Furthermore unmet support needs were most prevalent in the private sector. It also confirmed the poor fit between housing needs of older people and the provision of housing designated for older people and identified a high volume of informal support networks that kept older people out of statutory services.

Leicestershire Supporting People Strategy

Leicestershire's Supporting People five year strategy (2005-2010) identified significant gaps, in the provision of support services for older people.

A key issue was the poor fit between the strategic priorities of the programme and the existing sheltered housing services for older people. Supporting People will be

reviewing services for older people in light of the need to re-tender in 2010 and it is important that the opportunity is taken to deliver forward thinking services that meet wider strategic aims and future needs.

The strategy identified that 86% of the household units funded were in respect of sheltered housing for older people. However there was no provision for older people with mental health problems/dementia. Furthermore there were only 3 services directed at the specific needs of the County's growing Black and Ethnic Minority population.

The sheltered services were ineffective in meeting Social Services and Health's strategic priorities to reduce demand on acute services. Services were not targeted on those for whom support could prevent a hospital admission or ease discharge, and few sheltered services were able, for example, to assist residents who may have fallen and may be inappropriately placed in hospital.

Much of the housing for older people is accessed on the basis of housing need rather than the need for support. This means that money on providing the support service is not targeted effectively at those who need it. Many schemes have allocations policies that are age based and this has the effect of excluding some younger people in need of support whilst providing little opportunity for older active people who do not yet need support. Furthermore due to a lack of appropriate services accommodation is offered to frailer older people for whom it is not really suitable.

There is not a standard specification for services delivered across the County by sheltered housing providers. A Sheltered Housing Providers Group has been formed as a sub-group of the Providers Forum, to discuss a number of issues of mutual interest, one of which will be the development of a standard specification.

There is evidence that shows that "Extra Care" sheltered housing (also known as very sheltered housing) can provide an effective alternative to residential care, and that this sort of provision does, therefore, meet Social Services and Health's strategic priorities of enabling people to stay at home and so not need to access residential or nursing care.

During October 2004 the CCP (CVS Community Partnership) carried out a Service User Survey into the housing related support needs of older people in Leicestershire. A questionnaire was sent out to 305 individual members on their Consumer Panel and was completed by 176 people.

The results showed a fairly good understanding of sheltered accommodation, residential and nursing care, but an extremely patchy understanding of other options, such as Extra Care and almost no understanding of Assistive Technology and Floating Support.

The Survey showed that although there was an overwhelming willingness to move to more suitable accommodation if the need arose, 50% had no idea where to go for advice and information. The general view being that luck played a large part in someone receiving the support they needed.

Strategic Priorities.

The key themes running through the current Five Year Supporting People Strategy are the need to achieve the following:

- better quality, more cost effective services, that are targeted at priority needs,
- a wider range of services, that are not related to tenure, to include floating support services, and services that meet the specific needs of BME communities in the County,
- services that form part of a preventative agenda e.g. assistive technology and HIAs meet the priorities of the Supporting People partners,
- additional move on accommodation, and better targeting of services to ensure that they are received by people with the appropriate level of needs, thus making the most efficient use of the services available.

Areas prioritised for further work within the Strategy

One of the areas prioritised for further work was that of Older People with Support Needs and access to sheltered accommodation. The issue being how to align current provision more closely with the priorities of all partners and stakeholders. This will include a consideration of the balance between the number of residents with immediate support needs and those with future support needs, thereby making the link between need and support, and the nature of the service currently being delivered.

To maximise the use and effectiveness of the SP Grant ,the SP Team will support providers and service users who have difficulty to let schemes in looking at different options including design changes, facilities offered, varying client group configuration and in some instances disposal of schemes. Ensuring the provision of sheltered housing accommodation in the County meets current and future needs most effectively will be one of the key challenges for the Commissioning Body.

In addition, further work will be carried out to obtain a better understanding of the housing related support needs of the BME communities in the County. Once these are better understood, opportunities for addressing the identified needs will be investigated, through a range of options.

A review of the strategy has not yet been carried out but there is commitment to continue to deliver the outcomes stated in the action plan with a focus on Extra Care, reconfiguration of older peoples` services, assistive technology and consultation.

Changes to Supporting People

Recently CLG have announced that councils in England are to receive £1.66bn Supporting People Programme Grant funding as an unring-fenced named grant in 2009/10 and from 2010/11 as part of the Area Based Grant. This will give councils the opportunity and flexibility to come up with innovative ways to support the

vulnerable people in a range of different situations. This will also be an opportunity to fully integrate housing related support across health, social care and housing at a regional level. However there are risks associated with the removal of the ring fence including:

- It becomes unclear which services are “SP” services and as a result related data collection becomes less accurate
- With no legal funding protection requiring the provision of housing related support, funding could be diverted into other activities and away from vulnerable groups.
- That the changes are the first step towards a major reduction in the funding of housing related support.

CLG has given an assurance that it will work with providers and stakeholders on how best to allay these concerns through guidance due to be published in April 2009.

Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

The Leicester and Leicestershire SHMA makes a number of recommendations and observations about older people that are of relevance to this strategy. They will also form the basis of the Older Persons Aspiration Study considered further below.

The SHMA recommends that types of housing which are attractive to older households and incentives to help reduce under-occupation in the public and private sectors could help the market to function better.

Resources and policies that help owner occupiers to meet their needs as they grow older will be required and in some cases to create conditions and incentives or assist them to move to tenures and forms of housing which meet their needs best.

As well as location and quality, the cost and price differentials between family housing and property which is attractive to ‘empty nesters’ and older people will also be important.

Recent ‘New Horizons’ research for CLG added useful qualitative findings to this picture.

“...some older participants stressed the importance of considering housing options, and if necessary moving, when you are young enough to cope with moving. Those few people who had moved said they had been determined to make a deliberate choice to move to a particular place, rather than be forced to move when they might not have the capacity to look at different alternatives and make a considered decision as to what was best for them.

For those who were moving, finding suitable properties either to buy or to rent was not always easy.³

It identifies that parts of the Housing Market Area (HMA) are well served with downsizing properties and Loughborough is identified as an area with such provision. It does warn though that how far this supply is sufficient to meet current and potential demand is difficult to judge.

It cautions though that this is potentially a fraught area for policy, and warns of the risk of unintended consequences. If properties are developed that do not meet their aspirations older people are unlikely to move.

The HMA highlights the need to consider older people and their housing circumstances in a wider context than the frailty and care agenda with their “under-occupation” and its influence on market dysfunctionality equally important.

The HMA identifies the ‘older’ old as forming the main constituent of need for primary elderly care and assistance, and is usually the subject of the greatest attention for housing planning. There are also many different levels and types of assistance required within this age range, from occasional help with household tasks to housing with care provision at various levels.

Local Area Agreement

The first Local Area Agreement, drawn up in March 2006, identified an overall aim to “support increased numbers of older people to live healthier lives in their own homes. To reduce the risks that impact on their loss of independence; to bring together resources to improve their well-being and quality of life and to achieve a more co-ordinated response to problems/crises which threaten their independence”

It identified ‘4 main planks’ that would support this

- Improving the quality of support for OP living at home
- Providing a range of decent and safer housing across all tenures
- Maximising income and improving use of income for OP
- Establishing an older people’s consultative network across Leicestershire

Furthermore it established a number of areas where older peoples’ services needed to be further developed including:

- Providing a wider range of housing options and safer homes for older people. Increase number of Extra care schemes, households using assistive technology and receiving floating support services
- Development of a single gateway in order to increase awareness amongst officers to wider issues that might impact on an older persons’ well being.

³ Housing Choice and Aspirations of Older People, CLG P8

- Development of improved communication and co-ordinated response to falls across key agencies – Health, Housing and Social Services.
- Increasing the number of Older People who have access to low level support
- Increasing the range and volume of cultural activities including maximising direct payments to use towards recreational, leisure and educational purposes.
- Ensuring that those living at home have higher standards of housing and support which enables them to live better quality of lives
- Improving their well being
- Increasing the number of older people who are productively engaged in the process of development and design of services that meet their needs and aspirations.

A number of other Local Indicators were also identified however in relation to a number of these quantifying a base line proved difficult, making measuring any improvement impossible.

Leicestershire has achieved some notable successes including:

1. 130 Frail older people are receiving a direct payment as an alternative to attending day centres by June 2008- the target is for 200 by June 2009
2. Over 30 groups have now registered with O.P.E.N. The Older Peoples Engagement Network and as a result of the LAA over 300 older people are now linking up across Leicestershire
3. Over 4090 people have claimed Attendance Allowance – 2182 of whom were directly assisted by the partnership
4. One of the innovative projects developed through the LAA was the SIGNAL Bus run by Age concern Leicestershire and Rutland. It tours the county offering advice on home safety and security also demonstrating the vast array of equipment that can be purchased and used at home like community alarms, calendar clocks, medication prompters and water overflow alarms. As a result of this 2775 new service users registered between April 2006 and March 2008 to use the community alarm service in the County.
5. The production of an Older Persons handbook (Ageing Well) co-funded by the LAA.

These achievements have gone some way to achieving the target although there is more work to be done.

For the 2008-11 period the LAA partnership identified NII 39 “People over 65 who say that they receive the information assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently,” to measure success against ensuring “Older people are empowered to play an active part in their community,” as part of the Stronger More Cohesive communities theme.

They also identified NII35 “Carers receiving needs assessment and or review and a specific carer’s service, or advice and information,” to ensure “More older people are able to live independent lives,” within the Improved life chances for vulnerable people and places theme.

Health Services

All older people, regardless of their tenure or accommodation should be registered with a local GP and have access to medical and community nursing services via this route. The GP services can be accessed out of hours via the central communication centre. Where appropriate a home visiting service can be provided and there are a number of primary care centres around the county.

Secondary healthcare, as it’s often specialised is available at specific clinical locations and is often hospital based. These can be accessed either as an emergency or planned admission as a referral from primary care.

A joint single assessment process involving health services and social care, has been introduced. This is not yet linked to the support needs assessment.

The first LAA picked up on the issue of joint assessment and coordinated responses by all partners involved in the care and support of older people as one of its priorities and identified the actions to develop a single gateway and co-ordinated response to falls would deliver this.

Currently there is no stand alone PCT strategy for older people although they work closely with local partners to address issues affecting older people via joint strategies and protocols such as Safer Communities and Supporting People strategies.

To move a number of work streams forward further engagement of the PCT will be essential.

Local Strategic Priorities

There are a number of reasons why Older Persons housing is currently a priority at the local level. Services to older people have been a recurrent theme within the strategy documents the Authority has produced and contributed to. This strategy builds upon and develops the existing priorities identified in other local housing strategies including:

Charnwood Housing Strategy 2005 – 2010:

The 2003 Housing Strategy identified an action to “Develop an Older Persons Housing Strategy” and this was carried through into the current strategy (2005-2010.)

Furthermore Priority Aim 2 of the Housing Strategy - Balanced Housing Markets contained two actions in relation to Provision for ageing population.

This included maximising the use of existing sheltered stock and the Older Persons Asset Management Appraisal which is running alongside this strategy. This will address this action.

BME Homelessness Strategy 2007

The BME housing strategy identified a number of issues relating to old people including the fact that:

“Now and over the next decade, as the first generation migrants are entering retirement they will create new demands for care, support and housing services specific to their cultural and religious needs.”

Low take up of Charnwood’s mobile warden service by BME applicants highlights a need to develop a more specific service tailored to the needs of the BME community.”

Furthermore the lack of research into the continuing demand or need for specialist provision in the BME community makes identifying levels of need difficult.

The BME Strategy contained a detailed objective of “Map supply of services for BME Older People and monitor take-up of Sheltered Housing/Retirement Housing by BME Older People. This contained two actions 1. Map supply and survey BME needs as part of Older Persons Housing Strategy and 2. Analyse annually by ethnicity applications for sheltered housing.

Homelessness Strategy 2008

The Homelessness Strategy identifies that there is currently an adequate supply of accommodation and support for (homeless) older people and this makes up the majority of Supporting People funded units in the Borough. However due to the ageing population and the need for more flexible models of provision there is a need to develop an older persons housing strategy to analyse how the needs of older people will be met as the older population grows

The Homelessness Strategy identified that homelessness amongst older people is relatively low whilst acknowledging the ageing population will create increased demand for care, support and supported accommodation options for the frail elderly.

As part of the need to develop Housing Options for older people the strategy included an action to “Develop and implement an Older persons Housing Strategy for the Borough, “ to include “Full analysis of housing needs, current provision and areas for future activity.”

Supporting People: Five Year Strategy 2005 – 2010

The Leicestershire Supporting People: Five Year Strategy 2005 – 2010, identified Older People with Support Needs/Frail Elderly/Older People with Mental Health Problems/Dementia – in respect of Extra Care, floating support, assistive technology and Home Improvement Agencies as Priority Level A.

Evidence Base

Demographics

In 2003 the Council commissioned David Couttie Associates to undertake a housing needs survey for the borough. This concluded that up to 2016 the most significant feature would be the growth of the population in the over 65 age group with an increase of 10,000 individuals (43.5%) over the forecast period. Numbers rise throughout the forecast period, with a large rise of 4,700 (16.6%) occurring between 2011 and 2016. The 'older' retirement group, those aged 80 and over, grow by 45.8%, 2,700 more people by 2016. This group represents 8,600 people in the area by 2016, who are much more likely to have care and support needs

Districts and county tenure proportions for older people

At the time of the 2001 census it was clear that as people got older they increasingly moved from the owner occupied sector to social renting. However as services to assist people to stay in their homes are developed and the private sector increasingly develops older persons housing it is unclear whether this pattern will continue.

	Tenure	People aged 55-64	People aged 65-74	People aged 75-84	People aged 85 and over
Charnwood	Owned	88.88%	84.84%	74.53%	64.66%
	Rented from council	6.49%	10.10%	16.31%	18.84%
	Other social rented	1.04%	1.50%	2.60%	4.78%
	Private rented or living rent free	3.59%	3.57%	6.56%	11.72%
Leicestershire	Owned	88.99%	84.27%	74.24%	66.49%
	Rented from council	6.08%	10.19%	16.71%	19.45%
	Other social rented	1.10%	1.61%	2.60%	4.02%
	Private rented or living rent free	3.83%	3.92%	6.45%	10.05%

Source: ONS Census 2001 via POPPI

The SHMA (2008) provides a comprehensive range of demographic information relating to the County and Charnwood extrapolated from a range of sources. Key tables are reproduced below:

Older Person Housing Projections 2008 to 2025 (Households)

Leicestershire	2008	2010	2015	2020	2025
People Aged 65-69	30,700	34,000	42,200	38,300	40,900
70-74	26,400	27,600	32,000	39,900	36,400
75-79	21,900	22,200	24,800	29,000	36,300
80-84	15,700	16,400	18,100	20,800	24,600
85+	13,600	14,500	17,000	20,000	24,100

(From figure 5-4 of SHMA)

Charnwood	2008	2010	2015	2020	2025
People Aged 65-69	7,000	7,800	9,500	8,800	9,100
70-74	6,100	6,300	7,200	8,900	8,200
75-79	5,200	5,200	5,600	6,500	8,100
80-84	3,600	3,800	4,200	4,700	5,500
85+	3,200	3,300	3,800	4,400	5,200

(From figure 5-5 SHMA)

Crude Estimate Older Population by settlement @2016

Settlement	60-75	75-80	85+	Total over 60
Anstey	942	260	239	1,441
Barrow upon Soar	604	144	136	884
Cropston	87	14	18	118
East Goscote	515	86	59	660
Hathern	124	19	16	160
Loughborough	6,818	1,609	1,816	10,244
Mountsorrel	1,277	321	318	1,916
Quorndon	472	91	98	660
Shepshed	1,957	428	416	2,801
Sileby	771	147	168	1,086
Thurcaston	63	25	22	110
Woodhouse Eaves	86	25	22	110
Wymeswold	83	15	11	109

(source SHMA figure 5-7, please note the SHMA looked at “larger” settlements and considered the Leicester principal urban area as a whole and this is why Birstall and Thurmaston are not identified separately)

There have been a number of changes to the nature of household composition that can in part be attributed to “social” factors. One significant issue that needs to be addressed is the phenomenon of “Empty nesters” remaining in the family home despite the family unit reducing in size.

There are a number of reasons for this including the fact that their adult children are not settled in their own housing, and from time to time return to the family home, in what has become known as the ‘boomerang generation’. Furthermore the lack of appropriate accommodation particularly appropriately priced to down size to has also been identified as a reason for a reluctance to move. This issue is likely to be exacerbated in the current housing market as homeowners will have expectations of values their current home should command and are unlikely to cash in their “nest egg” at below this level.

Therefore, to minimise the dysfunctionality in the housing market caused by older people appropriate accommodation for both newly forming younger households and retirees is required.

Data

Potential Demand

Within SHMA the housing requirements of a range of different groups were considered. In relation to Older People it has identified:

- provision of low level care for older people will need to increase by some 50% in the county, and by around 25% in the city, if the projected demographic changes occur.
- the city will need around another 400 residential and nursing home places by 2025, while the county could need some 1,500.

These estimates will be developed and refined further by work by the City and County Councils.

One weakness with figures derived from secondary data though is that Housing market information across tenures will adequately describe the services that older people are currently accessing - but may not explore whether they would behave differently if there were greater housing choices on offer. Work such as the County Wide Aspirational study helpfully fills in some of those gaps.

The H&SOP study also attempted to profile demand for Sheltered Housing across both the private and social sector from existing households living in the Borough and in-migrating parents / relatives at the time of the study.

	Private Market	Affordable sector	All sectors
Existing households	58	254	312
In-migrant households	723	653	1376
Total	781	907	1688

The figures above were predominantly based on forecasts made by children/relatives who assist in the moving process and show a noticeably higher level of demand for sheltered accommodation from those outside the Borough. This is likely to be explained in part by the fact that if older people are giving up the family home to move area anyway then the opportunity to move to more appropriate accommodation is more likely to be taken. Those older people with support already in the area are more likely to seek assistance to remain in their homes.

The SHMA identified that higher levels of under-occupancy, are amongst older households, and especially the aged over 50 'empty nesters'. At a more detailed level this can be seen to be higher in the rural and suburban areas, and lower in the city and towns; and higher for owner occupiers than for tenants. These households make up the core of the demand for older persons housing but unless provision can be made more attractive to encourage them to move it will only be at the point they reach a crisis and are unable to maintain existing accommodation that they will look to move.

There are currently 772 applicants on the Council's housing register featuring a household member over 60 the table below breaks them down by type.

Type	Number
Waiting List	512
CBC Transfer	233
RSL Transfer	26
Homeless	1

Only 16 of these are being considered for general needs accommodation because of their household composition yet there are still significant vacant older persons properties within the borough.

Income

There is a lack of detailed income data for older people at a local level although there has been some research undertaken at national level into incomes of older people.

Research for the Office of National Statistics concluded that people accumulate wealth mainly during the course of their working lives. Older pensioners have less wealth than those around State Pension age. Median net financial and physical wealth for those aged 60-64 was £26,000 and fell to £8,000 for those aged 80 and over in England in 2003/04.

The levels of income older people receive also falls with age. The median net household income for people aged 50-59 was £353 a week compared with £232 for people over 80 (after housing costs and equivalised to adjust for household size) over the same period.

Research for Help the Aged for their "Older People Count" publication found considerably greater rates of older people living on income related benefits for the 75+ group than for the 65-74 group. Nearly 39% of people aged 75+ are living on income related benefits compared with 23% for the 65-74 age group, with the average for the whole older population aged 65+ being 30.5%.

In May 2007 Morris, Wilkinson, Dangour, Deeming and Fletcher⁴ identified a minimum weekly income for healthy living for the old age of £131 for a single person and £208 for a couple. These figures are for those without a disability and it is expected that those with a disability would incur extra expenses.

Research has also found pensioners in rural districts are much less likely than those in urban districts to rely solely on the state retirement pension and state benefits for their income: 8% compared with 14%.⁵

⁴ Minimum Income for Healthy Living: Older People. *Morris J., Dangour A., Deeming C., Fletcher A. and Wilkinson P.*

⁵ The Poverty Site

Furthermore research by the Institute of Fiscal Studies and supported by Age Concern found that in August 2008, average pensioner inflation reached 7.4%, significantly higher than the 5.4% rate for non-pensioners. This was attributed to above inflation rises in items that make up a disproportionate share of pensioners expenditure such as fuel costs.

According to the DWP in 2008/9, the full Basic State Pension is £90.70 for single pensioners and £145.05 for pensioner couples and in 2006/07 1.3 million pensioners in the UK have no source of income other than the state pension and benefits.

According to the ODPM indices of Deprivation 2004 there were 3,673 people aged over 60 years in Charnwood living in income deprived households. The most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) were located in parts of Loughborough Storer and Loughborough Lemyngton wards. There are six SOAs which are ranked within the 10% most deprived in England. In each of these areas, 1 in 3 of the population aged over 60 years live in income deprived households.

The Housing Strategy 2005 identified a number of wards with high levels of income deprivation affecting older people these included

Within the 10% most deprived in the country

E01025723 Loughborough Rosebery
 E01025706 Loughborough Meadow Lane
 E01025699 Loughborough Bell Foundry
 E01025705 Loughborough Midland Station
 E01025700 Loughborough Canal South
 E01025701 Loughborough Central Station

Along with a further 5 within the 20% most deprived

E01025697 Loughborough Thorpe Acre East
 E01025703 Loughborough Toothill Road
 E01025725 Loughborough Warwick Way
 E01025685 East Goscote Centre
 E01025718 Loughborough Centre South

The table below estimates the number of older people in income deprived households by Ward in Charnwood based on 2001 census figures.

Number of older people living in income deprived households		No. over 60 within Ward	% Income Deprived
Loughborough Hastings	278	985	28.2
Thurmaston	254	1995	12.7
Loughborough Lemyngton	222	810	27.4
Loughborough Garendon	208	1123	18.5
Loughborough Storer	207	953	21.7
Loughborough Southfields	180	1066	16.9
Shepshed West	176	1410	12.5

Number of older people living in income deprived households		No. over 60 within Ward	% Income Deprived
Syston West	172	1008	17.1
Syston East	162	1285	12.6
Anstey	152	1310	11.6
Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle	152	1336	11.4
Shepshed East	148	1033	14.3
Birstall Watermead	137	1570	8.7
Loughborough Shelthorpe	135	853	15.8
Mountsorrel	124	1073	11.6
Barrow and Sileby West	120	1142	10.5
Rothley and Thurmaston	102	1484	6.9
Sileby	97	1089	8.9
Loughborough Ashby	96	552	17.4
Queniborough	86	799	10.8
Forest Bradgate	72	889	8.1
Loughborough Outwoods	72	1583	4.5
Loughborough Dishley and Hathern	67	869	7.7
Birstall Wanlip	61	1281	4.8
East Goscote	60	348	17.2
The Wolds	55	580	9.5
Loughborough Nanpantan	41	962	4.3
Wreake Villages	37	610	6.1
TOTAL	3673	29998	12.2

(source: Charnwood Community Profile 2005, 2001 Census Data)

In the same way that the wide range of needs of older people require a broad spectrum of provision, the wide range of income and wealth amongst older people means that ensuring services are accessible regardless of income is vital. An understanding of the areas of highest deprivation amongst older people however will allow services to be appropriately targeted.

Health Needs

The SHMA has projected the level of care required within Leicestershire up until 2025.

Projected levels of care (Leicestershire)

	2008	2010	2015	2020	2025
Older people helped to live at home	7,408	7,846	9,173	10,124	11,102
Households receiving intensive home care for people aged 65 and over	1,128	1,195	1,397	1,542	1,691

	2008	2010	2015	2020	2025
Older people receiving community-based services provided or commissioned by the councils with social services responsibilities (CSSR)	12,637	13,384	15,647	17,269	18,938

Source Leicester and Leicestershire SHMA fig. 5-9

A combination of the Limiting Long Term Illness (LLTI) question introduced in the 1991 Census, and a general health question, introduced in the 2001 Census, asked individuals how their health had been in the previous year. Combining the results from the two questions identified 27,447 individuals living in a household with the most serious health needs in Leicestershire.

The statistics demonstrated a clear east west geographical divide, with the highest rate in North West Leicestershire and Loughborough. Further research in terms of need needs to be focussed on the wards with the highest rates. In Charnwood these are Loughborough Hastings and Loughborough Ashby.

Supply of Older Persons Accommodation

Prevalence of Sheltered/Social Housing

At the time of the 2001 census the tenure breakdown for older people within Charnwood was broken down as follows

Tenure/age	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Owned	88.88%	84.84%	74.53%	64.66%
Council	6.49%	10.10%	16.31%	18.84%
Other social rent	1.04%	1.50%	2.60%	4.78%
Private rent	3.59%	3.57%	6.56%	11.72%

Nationally on Census night in 2001, the proportion of older people living in sheltered accommodation was:

- 3% of people aged 65 – 69
 - 7% of people aged 70 – 74
 - 11% of people aged 75 – 79
 - 17% of people aged 80 – 85
 - 19% of people aged 85 and over
- (Laing & Buisson, 2005).

The current level of SP funded services in Charnwood relating to older people is shown below.

Description	Units
Frail Elderly	38
Sheltered Accommodation	960
Community Alarms	1477

Out of 138 units of accommodation based support for the frail elderly (extra care) in Leicestershire 38 units (28%) are in Charnwood.

The table below shows CBC lettings to older person's accommodation and RSL lettings to over 60s within the borough.

	CBC lettings to older persons accommodation	RSL lettings to over 60s
2007/08	146	24
2006/07	151	33
2005/06	140	39

Source: Core and CBCs Housing Management System

There has been a noticeable reduction in the number of lettings to older people by RSLs although CBC lettings have remained relatively consistent

In the last 12 months (to 18th December 2008) 183 older people's properties became empty.

There are currently 87 older person's properties empty. 13 of these have been empty for over 2 years with 2 of them being vacant for over 7. It is clear then that whilst on the surface there is a healthy waiting list for older person's properties, in practice there is a mismatch between supply and demand.

When commissioning or reviewing services it is important that regard is had to this information and this evidence base is used to target and prioritise services.

Older Peoples Housing Needs and Aspirations across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area

Melton Borough Council is leading on a sub regional project to look into Older Peoples Housing Needs and Aspirations across the Leicester and Leicestershire Area. The Leicester and Leicestershire housing market area group has been successful in securing £20,000 Regional Housing Group funding to support sub-regional strategic housing work (2007/8 funding bid).

The project aims to specifically improve understanding in the following areas:

- The housing size, type and tenure of housing needs and aspirations of older people and understanding of housing options available to inform the type of provision for supported and extra care accommodation for older people. In particular the role of Market Housing as many older people are home owners.
- The services and support networks which are important to older people, their access to them, their expectation and opinion of different types of supported housing and support service models (extra care to home care and

to include older people's views on and the possible role for one or more retirement villages within the Leicester and Leicestershire HMA area).

- The impact of movement of older people upon the existing housing stock, including cross boundary migration patterns and future housing requirements.
- BME older peoples housing needs and aspirations
- Link to Housing Market Assessment and other research data

The study is due to be commissioned in late January. This will be a largely qualitative study building on the quantitative information gathered as part of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The study will assess the housing needs and aspirations of older people in the area to inform Housing Strategies and Local Development Framework policies. It will involve a number of workshops with a range of older people including those living in their own homes and those that are residents of sheltered, extra care and residential accommodation.

The study will be commissioned by the nine Local Authorities in the Housing Market Area. It is due to be completed during the summer of 2009.

Conclusions

It is evident from the large amount of data on older people and their housing that there is a wide range of circumstances affecting older people and as wide a range of reasons to attempt to influence their housing.

Particularly evident from the figures relating to supply and apparent demand for social housing is that care should be taken when drawing conclusions from some of this data particularly in isolation and there is a clear need for triangulation. The forthcoming aspirational research should go some way to doing this.

This strategy will need to ensure the following for conclusions to remain robust and relevant throughout the life of the strategy

- Engage older people in the planning, review and delivery of services
- Ensure that data is robust, relevant and continually updated

Priorities for Service Development

A national study into the aspirations of owner occupiers was recently published entitled Housing Choices and Aspirations of Older People CLG 2008.

The key findings of the study were:

- Most participants were determined to stay where they were currently living for as long as possible
- Most people were happy with their current homes, and felt they would be able to stay put as they grew older.
- Family relationships often determined housing decisions
- Neighbours and neighbourhood were also a key influence on people's housing decisions and their satisfaction with where they lived
- most people acknowledged that it would be their health that would be the deciding factor in the need to move
- people felt their current home could be adapted in the future to meet their needs
- the few people who had moved in a planned way had found it difficult to find suitable properties to move to
- most people were supportive of the principle of equity release although there was a lack of faith in current products
- bungalows were considered the best option for older people
- sheltered housing was generally considered a good thing but for the very old and infirm

These findings are born out in evidence relating to demand for sheltered housing and levels of under occupation in both the private and social sector at SHMA level. They also provide a focus for developing and reviewing services.

It is evident from the range of research and other work relating to older persons housing that there are a number of broad areas admittedly with a high degree of overlap where work can be focussed.

These are:

- Advice Services
- Support
- Accommodation

These are discussed in more depth below

Provision of housing Advice Services

To ensure that older people are able to make informed choices about their current housing options and to plan for their future accommodation needs it is vital that they can access high quality impartial and holistic advice.

Furthermore any new service or provision will only be successful if potential service users are aware of it.

Currently there is a range of advice agencies that provide assistance to older people in Charnwood including the Council's own Housing Needs section, the Bridge Housing Advice Service, Citizen's Advice Bureau and Help the Aged. However, for older people it is likely that there will be a range of interrelated issues which will need to be addressed to ensure positive outcomes.

The SIGNAL bus run by Age Concern and developed in part as a response to the LAA older persons work streams, currently travels around the County promoting Telecare products at different venues like supermarkets, schools and social events. Such an outreach service has potential for expansion into all areas where older people require assistance.

As noted elsewhere there is a lack of knowledge about Extra Care housing and this has led to people making misinformed decisions about available accommodation. Given the importance to older people of maintaining their independence it is essential that all options are understood so that older people do not find themselves accessing traditional models such as sheltered housing or nursing homes by default.

As new models of services are rolled out such as assistive technology and new methods of accessing housing like Choice Based Lettings (CBL), it is important that advocates remain up to date with what options are available and services that can be delivered.

One of the key challenges of CBL is ensuring that 'vulnerable' service users are able to participate in the scheme effectively and are not disadvantaged by the move from traditional allocations approaches.

The Council is currently in the process of developing a CBL scheme and ensuring that the scheme meets the needs of these groups will be at the forefront of the development. The move to CBL also creates a great opportunity to move towards an integrated housing options approach.

Money Advice

One of the key areas where older people require advice is in relation to their financial affairs. This is also the area where the nature of that advice is likely to vary significantly depending on the circumstances and current tenure of the household.

Older people who are owner-occupiers are often "Asset rich but cash poor," and so the kind of advice that they seek is likely to require different expertise to someone seeking advice on benefit entitlement (not to suggest the two groups are necessarily mutually exclusive).

For example equity release is a way of raising additional funds for older owner occupiers and the funds can be used for a range of purposes from aids and adaptations or renovation to the property or just to top up income.

Equity release is an umbrella term used to cover various ways that older homeowners can use their homes to generate income or capital lump sums while continuing to live there. A range of issues need to be taken into account when considering equity release – one being negative impact on any benefits received. There are a range of advantages to these schemes such as:

- older people can keep ownership of their homes and can benefit from rises in house prices,
- there is a possibility of leaving some equity to heirs,
- schemes are regulated by the FSA.

However:

- the entire equity in the property can be exhausted leaving nothing for the heirs.
- the total repayment amount will grow quickly as interest is usually paid at the end of the loan.
- the tax position and eligibility for means tested benefits can be affected.

Because of what can be a fine balance between advantages and disadvantages in many cases great care has to be taken when signposting to services. Any new service developed would have to ensure all partners were confident in the quality of the advice given.

Conclusions

Just as older people have a range of circumstances there are a range of advice services they will need to access at different stages in their housing careers.

The following issues have been identified during the development of this strategy which will need to be addressed

- How to ensure that older people are able to access high quality timely advice
- How do we develop choice based lettings to allow older people to make informed choices?

Supporting People to remain in their homes

Many older people want to remain in their current home but may need assistance to do so. This might be assistance with everyday tasks or help in accessing adaptations or repairs.

However if an older person does need to move to alternative accommodation it is essential that they are able to maintain as much independence as possible.

Assisting older people to maintain their current homes is a positive option and meets the government's social inclusion agenda. Assistance can be provided across a wide range of issues including financial advice, adaptations and personal support.

Direct Payments

Older people who have been assessed as needing help from social services and would like to exercise their right to arrange and pay for their own care and support services instead of receiving them directly from the county council can apply for Direct Payment. One of the local LAA targets is to increase the use of direct payments for older people for recreational leisure and educational purposes. As part of the Action Plan to achieve this, Leicestershire County Council, Adult Social Care Services agreed to work with partner agencies within the locality to develop community based activity sessions funded by individual Direct Payments for Older People. A project officer was appointed to undertake this piece of work and as a result, 130 Frail older people were receiving a direct payment as an alternative to attending day centres by June 2008. The target is for 200 by June 2009.

Minor Repairs/Adaptations

The Council's Private Sector Housing Team assist vulnerable homeowners or private sector tenants, who are older, disabled or on low income to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their home through a series of means tested grants. By improving people's living conditions, the quality of life of older people across all tenures increases and they are able to remain in their home in greater comfort and security. The team also play an important role in helping the homes of vulnerable people within the Borough to meet the decent home standard.

There is also a handyvan Service operated by Age Concern that covers the Borough. The "Safe at Home" scheme operated in partnership with Care and Repair provides home security goods such as extra locks and smoke alarms to qualifying older people to ensure they feel safe and secure in their own homes.

To deliver their commitment in Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods the Government has recently announced a programme of funding for extending handyman services which will be administered through the supporting people teams.

Leicestershire is currently in the process of bidding for this to allow an extension of the service.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

DFGs are provided via the Private Sector Housing Team and are available to modify privately owned dwellings to restore independent living or to make it possible or easier for a carer to look after another person. The service works in close partnership with Leicestershire County Council to provide carefully planned adaptations alongside tailored care packages.

The table below identifies the number of DFGs completed in Charnwood over the last three years.

Charnwood DFG Allocations/Completions 2006/Nov 08

DFGs` Approved/Completed			
Note:- cases included child DFGs` where the applicant is the parent			
	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009*
Total Approved (inc child cases)	130	122	88
Average Value (inc child cases)	4749	5317	4588
Average Age (exc child cases)	69	68	71

*to 30th November 08

Adaptations for Council tenants

For Council tenants, Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing employ their own Specialist Occupational Therapist to provide a disability and adaptation service to enable the elderly and people with disabilities to live in the community for longer. They also maintain a disability database, which enables existing adapted properties to be allocated more appropriately, making more efficient use of properties and meeting the longer-term needs of residents.

Special needs households: improvements to accommodation and services

The H&SOP study identified the level of need for adaptations at a County level. These were:

Improvements required to accommodation and services	Household numbers
Wheelchair access	420
Single level accommodation	549
Downstairs WC	714
Extra handrails outside home	315
Extra handrails inside home	513
Low level light switches	207
Raised power points	548
Lever taps	729
Low level kitchen units	153
Shower unit	1070
Lift/stair lift	456
Car parking space near front door	525
Other alterations/adaptations	390
More support services	218
Alternative housing with specialist adaptations	231
Alternative housing with specialist care/support	220
Total	7258

Extract taken from: H&SOP Older Peoples' Housing Needs analysis in Leicestershire.

This gives an indication of the likely demand for DFG services in future.

Assistive Technology

Social Housing Providers have traditionally been viewed as the key to providing choice and independent living to older people. The introduction of advanced Telecare technologies and services has facilitated a fundamental rethink of that approach. Telecare provides real potential for new models of care, enabling effective management of long term conditions (LTCs) from individuals' homes. Remote monitoring of vital signs (e.g. blood pressure) has the potential to provide cost effective preventative services and reduce unnecessary hospital admissions. As well as providing tools to support local practitioners such as community matrons in their roles, Telecare can provide individuals with much greater personal control over their care often in conjunction with expert patient and other preventative programmes.

The Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) is providing implementation support to local authorities and their partners on the implementation of Telecare and Telehealth including the Preventative Technology Grant. The local authority circular (LAC (2006)5) that covered the grant identified the monitoring arrangements through the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) Delivery and Improvement Statement (DIS).

The grant is awarded to the County Council however the service is likely to be delivered through Charnwood's lifeline and so effective joint working is essential to maximise the benefit of the grant. This will assist the achievement of key Public

Sector Agreement (PSA) targets around supporting people with long term conditions and improving the patient and user experience, in particular supporting older people to live at home.

The White Paper “Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services” sets a new strategic direction for health and social care. It directs organisations towards providing better prevention services, earlier intervention, and more support for people with long-term needs and strongly promotes a “whole system” approach to care that enables people to live more independently in their own homes.

Whilst the funding will go to all councils in England with social service responsibilities, they are expected to work with partners in the NHS, housing and district authorities, voluntary and independent sectors and service users and carers in developing Telecare services.

The purpose of the Preventative Technology Grant is to initiate a change in the design and delivery of health, social care and housing services and prevention strategies to enhance and maintain the well-being and independence of individuals.

Telecare will contribute to a number of important agendas:

- The White Paper “Our health, our care, our say”
- National Service Frameworks
- Self care, intermediate care and extra care.
- Preventing unnecessary admissions to hospital and residential care
- Supporting earlier discharges from hospital
- Valuing People
- Supporting People
- Supporting carers

As well as being high on the national agenda the Local Area Agreement and H&SOP study also identified Assistive technology as a priority at a local level.

One of the areas identified by Leicestershire as a priority after the CSCI inspection (2005-6) was that of the provision of Telecare services and needs to progress the ongoing development of assisted technology services in relation to its key priority areas. These being to support older people with dementia (and their carers) living at home, prevention of admissions to hospital and residential care as a result of falls and supporting older people with long-term conditions.

Leicestershire’s Telecare Strategy sets along with other key developments, the intention to roll out the Signal project across the county, using the Preventative Technology Grant to fund this. The project has provided equipment like calendar clocks, medication prompters and water overflow alarms to people with memory loss and their carers. It also promotes devices that link into community alarm services like alarms on doors, fall and smoke detectors,

Charnwood has recently upgraded its Piper Net Control to PNC5 and this will allow Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing to deliver a full Telecare / Telehealth service that will support the advanced monitoring equipment currently on the market.

Private Sector Lifelines

Housing requirements and preferences differ with age.

The greatest change in tenure in Leicestershire since 1991 has been the increase in outright ownership, up from 27 per cent of households to now stand at 34 per cent. Because outright ownership is normally the result of paying off a mortgage over 25 years, it is likely to be most in areas where an affluent old age population now live. In 2001, 27 per cent of the 50 and over population owned their property outright, and this increased to a peak of 74 per cent in the 65 to 74 year olds before declining for the late old ages to only 47 per cent of those 85 and over. In contrast only 2% of those over 50, rising to 19% cent in the over 85's, live in residential care.

For people living in their own home Private Sector Lifelines allow older people the opportunity to receive a support package similar to those in traditional sheltered housing. The increase in owner occupation amongst older people will mean that demand for lifelines is likely to increase. This increase in owner occupation is also likely to have implications for the demand for DFGs in future.

Within the remit of the Home Safety Grant the Council provide assistance for low income home owners or qualifying elderly, infirm or disabled tenants to purchase community alarm equipment to allow them to connect to the Lifeline Service. Since October 2006, 323 such grants have been awarded.

One of the key issues from the H&SOP consultation was that older people considered the Community Alarm Service as a worthwhile service and investment for recipients. One of the outcomes of the LAA and Supporting People strategies priorities is that 2775 (all tenures) new service users registered between April 2006 and March 2008 to use the community alarm service in the County.

Conclusions

The types of support that people require to remain in their homes will depend on their accommodation and their circumstances.

It will range from relatively minor works such as a different type of tap to a stair lift, from a regular visit from a warden to the piece of mind that being connected to a lifeline system can bring.

As people increasingly choose to and expect to remain in their homes such services will become increasingly important.

The consultation with older people identified gardening, property maintenance, cleaning and meals as the services they would most like to bring in to remain in their existing properties, although there was a concern in relation to knowing whether to trust those providing them. Particularly where such services are not going to be provided through the public sector or third sector ensuring they are reliable and reputable is a challenge to be met.

We also need to be more holistic in our delivery of services. For example initiatives developed to address social isolation should be promoted alongside services to allow people to remain in their homes such as disabled facilities grants. Ensuring the right combination of services is available and co-ordinating them could prove a greater challenge than developing or commissioning individual services.

The following issues will be addressed through the action plan

- How do we fill gaps in services to ensure older people can remain in their homes for as long as they wish?
- How do we approach the pricing of support services?
- How can we co-ordinate and develop floating support to older people regardless of tenure?
- What opportunities does new technology and approaches to design provide to allow people to remain in their own home?

Ensuring Older Peoples Housing Meets Needs and Aspirations

The government is committed to a prolific house building programme and it is important that new developments meet the needs of older people both in terms of individual properties and the communities they are situated in.

One of the issues identified by the 2000 research “the Housing Needs of Older People...” was that “Although there is no magic formula for producing the ideal home, a number of basic requirements have been identified. These include having accommodation that provides a separate bedroom, with private facilities. It must also have sufficient living space, including a decent sized kitchen, where somebody can work and eat, and has room for general storage.”

In 2002 the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) undertook a study of the needs and aspirations of older people living in general housing. Amongst their conclusions they found that:

- the traditional presumption has been that the need for space decreases with age however the reality may be that older households need at least as much space as earlier in their lives. Whilst children may have moved away, as grandparents older people may have taken on at least part-time responsibility for child care.
- Older people will wish to own cars for as long as possible and the increasing demand for pavement scooters will have implications for planning of roads and pavements.
- It is expected that the large majority will live in general needs, rather than specialist housing and therefore more attention needs to be paid to households who wish to move within general needs housing such as from a family home to a large modern bungalow.
- This challenges traditional thinking and existing provision of housing presumed to be for older people and the study acknowledged that a concern for increasing levels of frailty had dominated the entire debate over older persons housing.

There is some suggestion that the expectations of those coming up to “old” age have risen and that new provision for older people would need to meet the expectations of those who have grown up through the digital age. The Older Peoples Housing Needs and Aspirations study will attempt to identify these new expectations.

Social Housing Allocation

The traditional approach to allocations of social housing was that once a household reached 60 provided that there were no children in the family that household should be considered for sheltered housing. Then if no-one over 60 was interested in a

vacancy the 50-60 age group was considered to ensure a relative match of lifestyles or applicants with a disability were considered.

However with the introduction of supporting people the criteria for funding traditional older person's accommodation has become directly linked to the need for the support on offer.

Therefore a number of authorities have found themselves in a position where they have little or no provision for the over 60s who are still active and do not need (or are not prepared to pay) for the support.

At the same time as the majority of social housing with support for older people is accommodation based it is difficult to support those older people who due to circumstances are unable or unwilling to move out of larger family accommodation. Furthermore throughout the consultation process with older people it is apparent that location is one of the highest priorities when choosing a property. As technology allows us to provide many services remotely more thought needs to be given to matching people's locational needs with support requirements.

To ensure that the spectrum of housing need for older people is met it will be necessary to reconsider both allocations and designation of housing. However as supporting people move to a more person centred approach and technology develops to allow services to be delivered remotely then services will increasingly be able to follow the individual rather than be tied to the property.

The focus group that comprised of members of the Council's housing register who had refused a number of offers felt that they were not being offered accommodation that was compatible with what they had requested.

When making offers, particularly when not an exact match, which may happen on occasion particularly when what is being requested is in scarce supply it is important that more information is given to the applicant explaining why the offer is being made and why the allocation may still be suitable.

There was an admission through the focus groups that people were unaware of what sheltered housing was and this impacted on the ability to make informed choices. Tenants felt it would be beneficial if people were able to look around schemes and talk through their options with someone when first considering applying for housing.

Extra Care

Extra care housing supports older people who have both care and support needs and offers the opportunity to retain independence. People living within extra care housing have their own flat or bungalow but also have access to high levels of personal care; meals; domestic support; leisure and recreation facilities, district nursing services and 24 hour security, to create a genuinely safe environment. Night services are usually provided on site to support more dependent older people. Demand for this type of accommodation tends to be high as it is seen as less institutionalised than residential care offering older people greater control and choice over their lives and there tends to be a mixture of frail and more active older

people living together. As extra care housing can include leaseholds, they also provide the opportunity for some people to re-invest their assets. For those people in rented properties, extra care allows them to retain access to their benefits and be better off than in residential care.

The projected levels of care within Charnwood indicate an increase in demand for care services and there are many options available to Local Authorities and their partners to ensure that appropriate and timely support and care is delivered.

Extra Care can be provided within specific extra care schemes, within mainstream sheltered services or even with the advent of assistive technology in peoples' own homes.

Furthermore the County Council have identified Extra Care as able to provide a real alternative to residential care.

The Leicestershire Supporting People Programme 5-year strategy has identified developing supported housing options for frail older people as a priority. This includes the development of extra care schemes. The strategy also identified that the seven District Councils in Leicestershire have a surplus of traditional sheltered accommodation, much of which caters only for older people with low dependency needs. The County have identified the possibility that reconfiguring some existing sheltered accommodation may present for joint working between themselves and Districts. Charnwood are currently working with the County Council to identify whether any opportunities exist as a result of combined land holdings.

Charnwood currently has the highest level of Residential Care Home provision in the County. There are 31 homes in the independent sector together with 2 County Council owned homes. Hadrian House in Thurmaston provides 34 permanent beds, 4 rehab and 2 respite whilst Huntingdon Court in Loughborough provides 32 permanent, 4 rehab, 2 assessment and 2 respite.

In March 2007 a report was taken to the County Council's Cabinet to consider the option of increasing Extra Care provision in the County. At the time 63 new older people a month were being funded to receive residential care although over the previous 5 years the number of people living in a Care Home steadily declined despite the increasing older population.

Government policy through "Our Health Our Care Our Say," identifies the need to move towards facilitating increased independence and allowing people to retain as much control over their lives as possible.

Furthermore in July 2006 Adult Social Care at Leicestershire County Council held a consultation event attended by many older people and representatives of support agencies. The event identified the need to develop a range of housing options to meet people's needs and there was strong support for the Extra Care model.

The County originally intended release the resources from two of their owned schemes to reinvest in extra care however due to strong opposition to the proposal an alternative proposal to transfer six homes as going concerns was developed.

The County Council are currently progressing the transfer of the schemes.

Care Home Provision

Demand for more short-term specialist rehabilitation and respite services for people with dementia is expected to grow in future as more older people are supported outside hospital and living at home with carers.

By developing increased Extra Care provision the County have identified they are able to:

- Focus the remaining in-house provision on community-based support and specialist dementia care
- Provide more sustainable long-term solutions for in-house care homes

This will further develop the spectrum of services that will be required to meet future needs.

Increasing the supply of older persons housing

It is clear that we need to review what we consider as older persons housing. Falling demand for traditional “sheltered” schemes especially bedsit accommodation shows that older person’s expectations have shifted.

Furthermore with the huge increase in owner-occupation over the last generation increasingly households will expect to remain within the tenure throughout their housing careers.

Much research into older peoples housing aspirations has found a strong demand for bungalows and it has been suggested that increasing the supply could tempt more under-occupying households out of their large accommodation, freeing up much needed family housing and providing older people with accommodation that better meets their needs without requiring costly adaptations.

To free up this underutilised family housing the alternatives must be attractive enough to persuade those with no pressing need to move to give up their existing homes. They must be in the right location and of sufficient size to contain many of the trappings of a large house. Given the number of older people that now look after grandchildren it is likely also that a spare room will be seen as an essential. Two bedroom bungalows are also more flexible for alternative use – small families can live in them, and extend them if required.

However bungalows are at odds with recent planning policy that has encouraged high density developments which has lead to an increase in apartment blocks and

although it has been argued that ground floor apartments are equivalent to bungalows they have not proved as popular with older people.

There has been an increase in the development of retirement villages however as the SHMA identifies there is a risk that if schemes are not planned effectively and priced attractively then many will not consider them an attractive enough alternative to staying put. Ensuring good quality older person's accommodation that provides sufficient price differentials to encourage under-occupiers to cash in their equity will be something of a challenge and there may be merit in revisiting leasehold for the elderly type models

Delivering New Provision

The process with which local authorities plan to meet new housing needs is through Local Development Framework (LDF).

For this to be effective though the policy instruments need to be underpinned by a robust evidence base. To ensure that this strategy is able to deliver real outcomes it is imperative that one of the primary outcomes is the need to develop the evidence base in relation to housing need and demand amongst older people.

The forthcoming County Wide Aspirational Study coupled with data derived from the SHMA together with other data sources held by the Council will allow us to develop a robust and defensible evidence base that will support the LDF.

However such plans are framed in the context of national planning policy and these have to a degree been seen as hindering the development of housing that meets older people's aspirations.

Ensuring the efficient use of land is also a key consideration in planning for housing. Local Planning Authorities need to develop housing density policies having regard to the level of demand and need and the availability of suitable land whilst at the same time achieving high quality and well designed dwellings.

A Local Planning Authority can set a range of housing densities to be applied to new developments, however 30 dwellings per hectare is used as a national indicative minimum to guide policy development and decision making, until local density policies are in place.

Density targets can conflict with the provision of elderly persons housing and the promotion of mixed communities. Bungalows are the traditional housing aspiration of older households but unfortunately occupy a larger footprint than traditional 2 storey houses. Developing a proportion of a new residential site as bungalow accommodation will reduce the overall number of dwellings per hectare. Developers can be reluctant to provide new units in the form of bungalows in fear of planning dispute and a reduced gross development value.

In order to secure the future provision of suitable elderly person's accommodation, a balanced view needs to be adopted of policy and other material considerations.

Achieving a mix of housing on new developments is a National Planning Policy set out within Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing. Key characteristics of mixed communities are a variety of housing types, particularly in terms of tenure and price and a mix of different households such as families with children, single person households and older people ⁶ To achieve this effectively housing for older people will need to not only meet their needs but also their aspirations.

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) sets out the Governments objectives for the planning system placing “sustainability” at the forefront of national planning policy. The aim behind sustainable development is, in part to encourage and promote social cohesion by creating strong, vibrant and sustainable communities. Sustainable communities are created, in part by enabling there to be a choice of housing to accommodate the needs of people throughout their life. Elderly person’s accommodation assists in meeting this fundamental aim.

Elderly person’s provision will address an existing housing mis-match in the Borough by realising present under occupied housing and thus plays an important role in the recycling of stock in general. This has a knock-on effect in terms of recycling the whole housing chain – sheltered housing being at the back end of the chain.

In the right location, sheltered housing will lead to less reliance on the private motorcar and underpin local facilities. As far as land use is concerned, elderly persons accommodation provides a land use which is entirely passive and a “good neighbour”.

Identifying that elderly persons accommodation could satisfy the policy considerations detailed above whilst at the same time taking into account other material considerations will play a key part in considering the provision of low density housing against national density bench marking.

There is little evidence locally of a desire for owner occupiers to move into social housing as they get older. A key challenge then is to ensure that the private sector is able to deliver appropriate housing for older people.

Asset Management Review of Older Persons Housing

As has been identified above there is a mismatch in terms of supply and demand of local authority older persons housing. However as has become clear through consultation with existing residents of sheltered housing there is still strong support for the accommodation from residents even where they acknowledge amenities could be improved.

Because of the requirement to bring all Council properties up to the decent homes standard there will be considerable investment in the Council stock over the coming years. To ensure that money is spent efficiently and effectively it is necessary to review current provision and identify medium and long term options for accommodation not currently fulfilling its potential. Older person’s accommodation is an area prioritised for this review.

⁶ Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing , Communities and Local Government, November 2006

There are a number of challenges that will need to be met including;

- Accommodation standards
- The rise in numbers of older people
- The appropriateness of our current models of sheltered housing
- An increasing number of difficult to let bedsits and flats
- Cuts in supporting people budgets, which focus on value for money and strategic relevance.

An asset management review of older person's accommodation has recently commenced which by undertaking a methodical project based approach to reviewing existing provision will ensure that the long term sustainability of provision can be ensured.

Existing tenants of sheltered schemes have raised concerns with the reduction in Warden Cover and it is important that within the long term planning for the schemes we are able to demonstrate how modern delivery method maintain the levels of safety and security tenants have come to expect.

A project team has been established to agree an initial way forward, identify roles and responsibilities and monitor progress

The first stage of the review was to formulate an appraisal toolkit that scored each scheme under a number of different key areas. An overall scheme score could then be used to prioritise each development in terms of order for investigation.

The appraisal toolkit is broken down into statistical led data and subjective view points from the Strategic Housing Team and the Councils ALMO, Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing.

The statistical data focuses on establishing demand levels for the scheme by looking at current void performance. By detailing both current number of voids and average length of current voids, it has been possible to generate a snap shot of void performance at both ends of the spectrum.

To further evaluate each development, subjective data was gathered from individuals responsible for scheme management. In order to ensure a consistent and meaningful mechanism, a similar but scaled down version of the joint Starfish Consulting and Housing Corporation Appraisal Toolkit for sheltered housing review was adopted.

Each scheme was assessed based on service quality, physical viability, logistical viability and financial viability. The appraisal asks questions allowing for a judgement to be made on scheme performance under each category.

The toolkit generated a score depending on responses entered. Each score was combined with void performance to give a scheme total. As a result of the outcome of this assessment schemes were ranked to inform the timetable for site visits.

Site visits will comprise a detailed inspection of each development alongside consultation with Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing to establish both a short and long term plan for each scheme under review.

Conclusions

Making best use of existing stock and developing options to bring it up to modern expectations is one of the key challenges to this strategy. Furthermore ensuring that new provision of older person's accommodation across tenure and to meet the full spectrum of needs will be an ongoing challenge that will require constant review.

As a result we will need to address the following issues.

- How to make best use of existing social housing in the context of changing demands and expectations
- How do we inform planning policy to deliver new high quality accommodation for older people?
- How do we increase the supply of extra care accommodation?

Consultation

A range of approaches has been taken in relation to consultation for the strategy.

These have included:

- Key agencies engaged directly to ensure that the strategy aligned with other work streams
- A consultation document distributed to a wide range of stakeholders focussing on emerging themes
- A targeted postal questionnaire to engage older home seekers who had refused multiple offers of accommodation
- A number of focus groups with older people within the borough
- Three workshops covering the emerging themes from the strategy
- An online questionnaire to gauge the views of older peoples housing

Because of the importance of aligning the strategy with the work taking place within the Adult Social Care department of the County Council and the importance that Supporting People play as a key funding agency in relation to older people's housing contact was made directly with these organisations early on in the development of the strategy. This allowed regard to be had to their priorities commitments and strategic direction from the outset.

Strategy Consultation Document

Prior to the submission of the consultation draft of the strategy to Cabinet a consultation document (attached at appendix X). This was distributed to a wide range of stakeholders identifying the emerging themes within the strategy and highlighting key issues to be addressed.

Postal Questionnaire

A key issue that emerged early on in the development of the strategy was in relation to the increasing time it was taking to let existing older person's accommodation in the social sector and the increasing number of refusals of offers that were being received.

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of the reasons for this and to identify how existing properties and services were not meeting applicant's requirements or expectations a questionnaire was developed to cover both experiences of the current service and applicants aspirations. The responses to this questionnaire were then able to inform other parts of the consultation process.

68 applications were identified where at least one applicant was over 60 years of age and 2 or more offers of accommodation had previously been refused. Of these 29 responses were received a response rate of 43%.

Focus Groups

Marketing Innovations Ltd were commissioned to undertake 4 focus groups with older people. Two of these were targeted at specific groups, one took place with existing residents of Council sheltered accommodation whilst another was aimed at the applicants identified above who had turned down multiple offers of accommodation. A further two “general” sessions were arranged for older people within the borough.

The sessions aimed to gain an insight into older people’s views of their housing options, opinions of existing provision and the provision of housing advice services as well as identifying peoples expectations and aspirations for housing in the future.

By engaging a wide range of people an understanding was gained as to both why existing residents value their current accommodation whilst other older people are reluctant to consider sheltered housing. One clear conclusion to emerge from the groups and one that was reiterated within the workshops is that not enough is done to promote sheltered housing and ensure people are aware of what it can offer them.

Workshops

Three workshops covering the predominant themes of the strategy were also organised for agencies and organisations working with older people. Although the sessions were organised so that discussions could cover a range of issues related to the strategy each was given a number of questions to consider in the course of the discussion and a number of actions was drawn from the outcomes of the sessions. The questions the groups were asked to consider are identified below

Assisting People to Remain in their Homes

- Where are there gaps in services?
- What can we do better?
- Are there challenges around funding?
- what other pressures, deadlines and agendas are you working towards?
- how much should we be supporting people to remain in their own homes rather than move into “older persons” accommodation and freeing up family housing?

Specialist Accommodation for Older People

This workshop split into two groups for part of the discussion, group one focussing on how to make best use of existing resources whilst group two focussed on challenges facing new provision

General Questions (both groups)

- Who qualifies for older persons housing?
- How do we help those that don't?
- What can we do with existing properties?
- What will the next generation of older persons housing look like?
- What role does the private sector play?
- Do we need it at all anymore?

Group One

1. are there ways we can increase the popularity of existing accommodation?
2. how can we work better across providers to be able to provide the range of accommodation to meet the range of needs?
3. do we need to start planning an approach to redesignating accommodation across providers to meet a wider spectrum of needs and which agencies (both landlords and funders) do we need to involve in that process

Group Two

1. what is new "older person" accommodation going to look like?
2. what are the barriers to developing older people's housing as we don't seem to have had much recently despite an ageing population
3. how do we ensure new provision is flexible enough to continue to meet changing future demands (one thing we have learnt already is that if you can't you are soon left with a lot of expensive voids)

Housing Advice Services

- How do we make sure that all the relevant agencies know how to signpost?
- How do we make CBL an opportunity not a threat?
- What methods of delivery are appropriate?
- How can we promote our services whilst remaining impartial?
- Can we learn from elsewhere?
- Who do we need to involve?
- Who needs to lead?
- How do we deliver it?

Online Questionnaire

To ensure the views of the older people of the future are captured an online questionnaire was also developed for the Charnwood Borough Council website. This allowed the possibility of reaching a wider and broader audience than any localised surveys.

The format was modelled on the postal questionnaire to allow a larger sample to be used where appropriate. The results of the questionnaire will inform the detail of actions developed through the strategy as well as identify areas requiring action.

As well as identifying areas requiring action through this strategy all of this consultation has equally importantly begun to identify underlying details as to how the actions can be developed effectively and this will be built upon as the action plan is delivered.

Monitoring and Review

Progress against the Strategy Action Plan will be captured within quarterly update reports produced by the Council's Policy and Strategy team. These reports will also highlight by exception where actions or targets are not on track, and the reason(s). Responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the actions will also sit within the Division's Team Plan.

To independently review the delivery of the plan a "remote" monitoring group comprising representatives of key agencies such as Age Concern, the County Council and the PCT will be formed. This group will receive the quarterly updates and monitor progress. If there is cause for concern the monitoring group will be able to raise issues or convene a Monitoring Group meeting to ensure remedial plans are put in place.

An annual review of the strategy will be undertaken to ensure the strategy and action plan are still aligned with current policies and good practice. Any amendments as a result of this review will require "sign off" by the Cabinet Lead Member for Housing and Health and the Older Person's Champion on Cabinet. The views of the Monitoring Group will be taken into account before any amendments are formalised.

Issues and Action Plan

Theme One: Provision of Housing Advice Services

Issues:-

- Ensuring that relevant information is available to all agencies that need it (survey identified 13 different **types** of agencies)
- How to ensure that older people are able to access high quality timely advice
- Recognising the range of people accessing advice on behalf of older people- eg children, friends, carers
- How do we deliver advice throughout the borough from our Loughborough base?
- How do we develop choice based lettings to allow older people to make informed choices?
- How do we encourage older people to plan for future requirements rather than wait until crisis point?

Theme Two: Supporting people to remain in their homes

Issues:-

- How do we fill gaps in services to ensure older people can remain in their homes for as long as they wish?
- How do we approach the pricing of support services?
- How can we co-ordinate and develop floating support to older people regardless of tenure?
- Older people often have to remain in hospital longer than necessary whilst lifeline type services are co-ordinated
- What opportunities does new technology and approaches to design provide to allow people to remain in their own home?
- Need to identify gaps in services required and statutory responsibilities, eg cleaning/gardening- how do they access?
- Who co-ordinates assistive technology, in terms of assessment etc?
- How do we ensure that those in their own homes overcome isolation?

Theme Three: Ensuring older peoples housing meets needs and aspirations

Issues

- How to make best use of existing social housing in the context of changing demands and expectations
- How do we inform planning policy to deliver new high quality accommodation for older people?
- How do we allow for flexibility as aspirations and expectations change?
- How do we increase the supply of extra care accommodation?
- How do we deliver high quality mixed tenure accommodation?
- How can we improve the experiences of older people applying for housing to better meet their requirements?
- How do we ensure the needs of owner occupiers who don't want to move tenures are met?

Cross Cutting

Issues:-

- How do we engage older people in the planning, review and delivery of services?
- How do we ensure that services to BME Older People are meeting their cultural needs?
- How do we ensure that Older People understand the issues available to them (is this cross cutting or should it fall within advice?)

Theme One: Provision of Housing Advice Services					
Action(s)	Key Partners	Resources	output/measure	Target	Lead Officer
1.1.1 Undertake a mapping exercise of agencies that come into contact with Older People in need of housing advice	Age Concern, PCT, Warden Services, County Council	Within existing	Database of agencies with key contacts developed and maintained	September 09	Housing Strategy Manager/ Policy and Performance Officer
1.1.2 Produce a comprehensive web resource containing information and links for older people and their advocates	RSLs, County Council	Within existing	Web resource online and launched	Dec 09	Housing Strategy Manager/ Policy and Performance Officer
1.1.3 Pilot the use of sheltered schemes for satellite surgeries	Warden Services, the Bridge	Within existing	6 monthly outreach surgeries take place	Feb 10	Housing Needs Manager
			Evaluate programme	Mar 10	Policy and Performance Officer
1.1.4 Maximise the use of CBL to develop a housing options approach to older people	RSLs	Within existing	20% reduction in voids in sheltered housing within 6 months of launching CBL	tbc	Housing Needs Manager

Theme One: Provision of Housing Advice Services					
Action(s)	Key Partners	Resources	output/measure	Target	Lead Officer
1.2.1 Develop an older persons housing "handbook," bringing together agencies, housing providers and services	Care and Repair, RSLs, Warden Services, the Bridge, Age Concern,	Will require printing. Investigate opportunities to fund through advertisements	Handbook printed and distributed at strategic locations	April 11	Housing Strategy Manager
1.2.2 Consider opportunities for developing a sub-regional approach to older persons housing through CBL	Other Leicestershire Districts	To be identified	Feasibility study produced with recommendations	1 year after CBL implementation	Housing Strategy Manager

Theme Two: Supporting people to remain in their homes					
Action(s)	Partners	Resources	Measure	Target	Lead Officer
2.1.1 Work with supporting people to maximise access to handy van services for older residents of Charnwood.	Supporting People	Supporting people funding	Increase in older people receiving services	Check with SP	Housing Strategy Manager

Theme Two: Supporting people to remain in their homes					
Action(s)	Partners	Resources	Measure	Target	Lead Officer
2.1.2 Work with PCT and other partners to develop a hospital release protocol to minimise the time patients are kept in hospital	Warden Services, PCT	Within existing resources	Protocol on place	Dec 09	Housing Strategy Manager
2.1.3 Develop a network of social groups for the potentially isolated	CVS	Development within existing, printing to be identified	Brochure produced	Dec 09	Housing Strategy Manager
2.1.4 Consider options to expand the private sector lifeline service to include assistive technology	Warden Services, Care and Repair, Private Sector Housing, Social Services	Within existing resources	Assistive technology available through grants programme	April 10	Private Sector Housing Manager
2.1.5 Identify mechanism for developing a fair pricing policy for assistive technology across tenures	Supporting People, Warden Services	Within existing resources	Price mechanism agreed	April 10	Housing Strategy Manager

Theme Two: Supporting people to remain in their homes					
Action(s)	Partners	Resources	Measure	Target	Lead Officer
2.2.1 Undertake a gap analysis of services available to older people across tenures	Age Concern, Warden Services, CAB, County Council	Within existing	Report identifying gaps in service produced	Jul 10	Housing Strategy Manager
2.2.2. Investigate the possibility of developing a specialist money advice service for Older People	CAB, Age Concern, the Bridge	To be identified	Money advice service in place	Sep 10	Housing Strategy Manager
2.2.3 Consider options to meet the needs of people with dementia	PCT, County Council	Within existing	Options paper delivered	Apr 11	Housing Strategy Manager, Warden Services Manager

Theme Three: Ensuring older peoples housing meets needs and aspirations					
Action(s)	Partners	Resources	measure	Target	Lead Officer
3.1.1 Review criteria for eligibility to property on the Housing Register to ensure that accommodation is appropriate for all older people	RSLs	Within existing	Recommendations to Cabinet regarding eligibility	Oct 09	Housing Needs Manager

Theme Three: Ensuring older peoples housing meets needs and aspirations					
Action(s)	Partners	Resources	measure	Target	Lead Officer
3.1.2 Undertake review of current local authority older persons housing provision and develop long term plan for each scheme	County Council, CNH Housing Investment	Within existing	Options paper for each scheme produced	Sep 09	Development and Enabling Officer
3.1.3. Analyse annually by ethnicity applications for sheltered housing.	None	Within existing	Annual report produced	First analysis July -09, subsequent April annually	Policy and Performance Office
3.1.4 Develop guidance for negotiations on affordable housing contributions within private sector older person housing schemes	Planning Policy	Within Existing	Guidance produced	Sep 09	Development and Enabling Officer
3.1.5 Revise procedures for making offers to older people to increase the take up of offers	None	Within existing	New policy adopted	Sep 09	Housing Needs Manager
			20% reduction in refusals of older persons housing	Dec 09	

Theme Three: Ensuring older peoples housing meets needs and aspirations					
Action(s)	Partners	Resources	measure	Target	Lead Officer
3.1.6 Review information given to older people on the housing register	RSLs, Warden Services	Within existing	Prototype Information booklet produced	Apr 10	Housing Policy and Performance Officer
			Template distributed to RSLs	May 10	Housing Policy and Performance Officer
			Booklet for all CBC schemes produced	Aug 10	Head of Warden Services
3.1.7 Produce a standard format "brochure" for sheltered schemes to be used across providers to highlight key information relating to schemes	RSLs, Warden Services	Within existing	Template produced	Apr 10	Housing Policy and Performance Officer
3.2.1 Increase number of extra care places within the borough	County Council, Homes and Communities Agency	NAHP, SP, LCC	30 new extra care spaces	Mar 12	Development and Enabling Officer
3.2.2 increase the tenure mix of existing older persons housing schemes	RSLs, Homes and Communities Agency	To be identified	Options paper resulting from Older Persons Housing Review will include appropriate recommendations	Mar 11	Development and Enabling Officer

Cross Cutting					
Action(s)	Key Partners	resources	Output/measure	target	Lead officer
4.1.1 Assist in the development of the Older Persons Housing Needs and Aspirations project.	Steering Group	Within existing	Project delivered	Nov 09	Housing Strategy Manager
4.2.1. Undertake feasibility study into using SAP approach to older people	The Bridge, CAB, Age Concern, Housing Needs	Within existing	Recommendations produced	Jul 10	Housing Strategy Manager, Policy and Performance Officer

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