
OLDER PERSONS HOUSING STRATEGY 2007

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor Bill Dixon, Community and Public
Protection Portfolio**

Councillor Bryan Thistlethwaite, Adult Services Portfolio

Responsible Director(s) – Cliff Brown, Director of Community Services

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members approval for the adoption and implementation of the Older Persons Housing Strategy

Information and Analysis

2. Older people account for the fastest growing proportion of the local population and the Council needs to maintain high quality accommodation and support services to meet the growing housing and support requirements of local older people. A natural consequence of becoming older is that your accommodation and support requirements change over time and the Older Persons Housing Strategy as attached at **Appendix 1** seeks to responds to this challenge by offering quality and choice to some of our most vulnerable older people.
3. The Older Persons Housing Strategy ensures that wherever possible, flexible housing design allows older people to remain in their home for longer with minimum adaptation required at minimum cost. However, older housing stock sometimes has to be adapted in order to maintain the required level of independence for older people, or, to provide a safe environment, to which older people leaving care, can return with minimum care support.
4. The Strategy embraces national good practice and follows national guidelines in the provision of older person accommodation and support. An example of this is our Extra Care Schemes which provide modern, high quality facilities which meet the increasing demands and aspirations of older people, bringing accommodation, support, health care and other mainstream services under one roof. Extra Care facilities also provide a wider community function through the provision of respite care and delivery of health care and day care services to a localised community setting. Providing accessible services to all older people empowers them to have real choices about their accommodation and support.

5. The Council have responsibility for delivering, procuring and commissioning a range of services for older people regardless of the tenure of their property, with a number of local stakeholder partners, covering all sectors of the community. A key element of this process is to achieve value for money within available resources while providing and maintaining consistently high service and product standards. Clearly the health, well being and safety of older people is paramount and the Older Persons Housing Strategy sets out key strategic objectives to provide a range of options for older people who experience difficulty or discomfort in their homes.
6. Alongside the Older Persons Housing Strategy, a new Private Sector Financial Assistance Policy has been introduced providing financial assistance to undertake essential home repairs and/or disabled adaptations through the dedicated Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency. Sub-regionally an energy efficiency contract is providing essential energy efficiency improvements at discounted rates to tackle fuel poverty, often experienced by a disproportionate high number of older people.
7. The annual Housing Capital Programme demonstrates a high commitment to the remodelling, improvement and security of older person flats and sheltered accommodation allowing them to enjoy modern homes well above the Government Decent Homes standard. The Older Persons Housing Strategy has natural linkage with the Supporting People Strategy and the outcomes of service reviews influence and shape future older person accommodation with support.

Outcome of Consultation

8. Consultation has been undertaken with Growing Older in Darlington (GOLD), the Supporting People Team and Help the Aged in the identification of key strategic priorities. The Tenants Board is also actively involved in developing and improving services for older people and there is a well-established Task Group for Sheltered Housing which has also been consulted.

Legal Implications

9. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

10. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

11. This report is being taken to Council as a strategic document for the purpose of the Council's policy framework.

Conclusion

12. The Older Persons Housing Strategy represents the most appropriate delivery mechanism to raise standards within existing older person accommodation and support services, maintain quality and choice with new development, achieve "value for money" services, maintain a safe and secure environment and meet future older person accommodation and support requirements.

Recommendations

13. Members are requested to formally approve the adoption and implementation of the Older Persons Housing Strategy.

Reasons

14. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) Older people represent a significant proportion of the local population and are often some of the most vulnerable members of the community.
 - (b) Older people are deserving of high quality Decent Homes which are well maintained and meet their accommodation and support needs.

Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services

Background Papers

- (i) Quality and Choice in Older Peoples Housing: A Strategic Framework.
- (ii) Our health, our care, our say (Department of Health White Paper).
- (iii) National Service Framework for Older People.
- (iv) A Sure Start to Older Life: Ending Inequalities for Older People.
- (v) Housing Corporation Strategy for Older People.

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