
SUPPORTED HOUSING STRATEGY

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Veronica Copeland,
Adult Social Care and Housing Portfolio**

Responsible Director - Richard Alty, Director of Place

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report introduces the draft Supported Housing Strategy 2012-17 **(Appendix 1)**. The production of this strategy was one of the actions established in the Housing Strategy 2012-17.

Summary

2. Supported housing is a general term that describes properties that provide a mixture of accommodation and support. It covers specialist accommodation for a wide range of different needs:
 - (a) Adult Groups: This includes people with a Learning Disability, a Mental Health problem and people with a Physical Disability or a Sensory Impairment.
 - (b) Homeless related groups: This includes for example families, homeless single people and people fleeing domestic abuse.
 - (c) Older People: This covers people age 50 and older.
3. The strategy reflects the changes that have been introduced in national policy since 2010 and the need to offer more choice of housing and while placing individuals in control of support and care services within the context of a difficult financial environment.
4. The strategy sets out an analysis of the current market for specialist accommodation by each one of the needs groups and produces a set of priorities for action and a delivery plan. The strategy structure follows the Council's Business Model and the intention to become more of a commissioning organization. The document provides both strategic direction and commissioning intentions through the action plan.

5. Consultation on the strategy is taking place during October and November 2012.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Members agree recommended actions in Supported Housing Strategy 2012/17 at **Appendix 1**.

Reasons

7. That recommendations are supported for the following reasons:-

- (a) The Supported Housing Strategy is a key element of the delivery of the Housing Strategy.
- (b) The strategy reflects the changing policy agenda, financial environment and an evolving understanding of support needs.
- (c) The Strategy provides a clear set of objectives and actions for supported housing.

Richard Alty, Director of Place

Background Papers

- Localism Act 2011
- Health and Social Care Bill 2012
- Housing Strategy 2012-17
- Homelessness Strategy 2010-15
- Darlington Draft Learning Disabilities Strategy
- Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy
- Supporting People Strategy
- Older People's Housing Strategy
- Darlington Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012.

Ken Davies: Extension 2435

S17 Crime and Disorder	Some supported housing helps to prevent offending or reoffending while other forms of supported housing support victims of crime
Health and Well Being	Supported housing plays a key role for those who live in it and some forms like sheltered housing and extra care perform a wider role for the community
Carbon Impact	The strategy does not deal directly with Carbon Impact. This is included within the Housing Strategy
Diversity	The Strategy has been the subject of an Equalities Impact Assessment
Wards Affected	All those with supported housing
Groups Affected	A wide range of groups with support and specialist housing needs
Budget and Policy Framework	The Supported Housing Strategy is not one of the strategies that forms part of the Council's Policy Framework as set out in the Constitution and therefore this report does not represent a change to the framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The draft Strategy supports the vision and outcomes of the Darlington Partnership by seeking to make sure that those that have a housing and specialist housing need have access to affordable, decent housing that meets their needs.
Efficiency	No new implications. Supported housing can produce efficiencies in other service areas.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Introduction

8. The development of a Supported Housing Strategy introduces a specific focus on supported housing. Supported housing is a mix of varying degrees of support services and purpose designed accommodation. It ranges from accommodation for young homeless people to Extra Care Housing for older people. Some supported housing is provided as transitional accommodation for a two year period with the aim of moving to independent living while other forms provide a permanent home with long term support.

Role of Supported Housing

9. Supported Housing is a well established model of support and accommodation with specialist older people's housing in its more modern form being provided from the 1960's onwards. The role of supported housing has evolved over time. The objectives of Supported Housing are now:
 - (a) To support independence for those who have a support need that can not be met in ordinary housing.
 - (b) To enable those who need supported accommodation as part of a transition to more independent living to develop the skills and confidence to successfully make the shift.
 - (c) To play a role in diverting people away from other high dependence options.
 - (d) To ensure that those living in supported housing can exercise choice and control so that they can maintain their individuality and dignity, and retain their status as independent adults.
 - (e) To be flexible enough to meet changing needs.
10. In developing this strategy a number of challenges were identified:
 - (a) A continued downward pressure on public sector funding that will have an impact on funding of support and care.
 - (b) Very limited public resources being made available to fund new build.
 - (c) A housing market that is showing little current growth reducing opportunities for those interested in owner-occupation.
 - (d) Demand for most forms of social renting remaining high.
11. The strategy therefore faces a number of challenges:

- (a) Understanding the impact of changing national and local strategic priorities.
- (b) Understanding the needs and expectations of people who need these services and how they may change over the next five years.
- (c) Reporting on how well existing supported housing is meeting current needs and what might need to change to meet needs over the next 5 years.
- (d) Developing a strategic approach to the use of existing supported housing stock, and within this the identification of the stock that should be retained, refurbished, remodelled, replaced or added to.
- (e) Consideration of the options available to change the way supported housing services work to offer better and more effective outcomes for those who need these services.
- (f) Consideration of the impacts of the changes to funding of public sector services including Supporting People funding, changes to Welfare Benefits, the new arrangements for funding new social housing and changes to social care eligibility criteria.
- (g) Addressing the impact of Personalisation on the way support is structured.
- (h) Consideration of the consequences of the government's health reforms and the introduction of Clinical Commissioning Groups. They have the potential to have a major impact on supported housing and the way support and care are delivered.
- (i) Understanding the role the Private Sector and the Third Sector currently plays and how it can help to meet future needs.

Results of the Analysis

12. There is clear evidence of continuing growth in the needs across all of the groups covered. There is demographic evidence of future growth in numbers of older people, people with learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities and people with mental health problems. The trends associated with homeless related groups suggest that, at least in the medium term, there is likely to be an increase in homelessness. There are noticeable national trends in the increase in mortgage repossessions and use of Bed and Breakfast that support this view.
13. Within the context of growing numbers the realities of continuing pressure on public spending create the framework for developing priorities for the future. However, a key feature of the strategy is the need to increase the choice of housing solutions available. This includes the development of options for those who want owner occupation and those who want more independent solutions.

Supported Housing for Adults

14. This group includes people with a Learning Disability, Mental Health problem and people with a Physical Disability or a Sensory Impairment.

(a) Learning Disabilities

- (i) The development of supported accommodation was largely focused on the Supported Living model where two or three people share a house with dedicated care and support. Over 120 people are being supported in this way. However, there are increasing difficulties in finding suitable people to share when vacancies occur and there is some evidence that a growing number of people want to live more independently. There is a need to shift the balance towards more independent living.
- (ii) People with a Learning Disability are living longer and the number of aging carers is also increasing. Both factors suggest that the use of existing older people's accommodation needs to be actively explored as a housing option. There are 45 families with carers over 65 and they will present a particular re-housing challenge if the families wish to remain together
- (iii) A number of people would like to explore options for owner-occupation. Currently there is no supported housing option of this type in Darlington.

(b) Mental Health

- (i) A strategic review of support conducted by Supporting People concluded that most people with a mental health problem were best supported in ordinary housing. As a consequence support is now provided by floating support services such as a weekly visit from a Support Officer. There are still three properties that, at least partially, operate as supported housing.
- (ii) There are a significant number of people with a mental health as a secondary problem who are living in other various forms of supported housing, for example, people with a drug or alcohol problem.

(c) Physical Disabilities

- (i) For many people with a physical disability there is no need for specialist accommodation. While there is an ongoing demand for adaptations there is a small demand for specially designed accommodation. However this does not necessarily translate in to a need for supported accommodation. Many disabled people do not need a support service and, where they do need support, technology is playing an increasingly important role.

Homeless Related Groups

15. This covers a wide range of needs from young single homeless people to people with drug or alcohol problems and people fleeing domestic abuse. This form of supported housing is intended as a precursor to independent living and is therefore

different to other forms of supported accommodation covered in the strategy. All of this supported accommodation is social rented housing.

16. One of the main challenges within this sector is dealing with the needs of people with complex needs. Specific support services have been commissioned to support people with this type of need but there are still a number of challenges to resolve. Often involving a number of agencies, coordinating a consistent response is challenging. Often these problems are linked to drug and alcohol problems. Although there is now national evidence of a decline in drug use, mainly among younger people, the legacy will remain.
17. The welfare reforms will not directly apply to supported accommodation but they are having an indirect impact, as suitable move on accommodation will become increasingly difficult to find. Another indirect impact is likely to be some increase in domestic abuse as financial pressures increase and young people find it more difficult to leave home. Domestic Abuse has consistently risen partly as the reporting of incidents has resulted in a better response and as public awareness has grown.

Older People

18. This is by far the largest group covered by the strategy. In Darlington the older population is set to grow by 7,700 over the next 30 years. This is a 41% growth. There is therefore a need for more specialist accommodation for older people and this is supported by the Darlington Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012. However it is suggested that this should be focused mainly on owner occupiers as the growth in older owner-occupiers is such that 77% of those 65 to 75 are now owner-occupiers.
19. There is a noticeable fall in demand for social rented accommodation. There has been a trend in falling demand for some upstairs flats and this has been addressed in the past by adjustments to the age criteria for these properties. However a number of Registered Providers are reporting that the allocation of some properties is becoming increasingly difficult. There is no need for wholesale changes but some adjustments are needed to the market. Discussions are taking place with all providers of accommodation about solutions. This may result in any or all of the following:
 - (a) Some change of use of existing accommodation by changing the age criteria or focusing on other needs;
 - (b) Addressing the quality of accommodation: the council has modernised all of its properties but one provider still offers bedsit accommodation;
 - (c) Promote sheltered housing as an attractive option;
 - (d) Make better use of the communal facilities.
20. Although Extra Care Housing is included in the strategy and an Extra Care Housing strategy is to be produced as an Annex to this report this will not be available until

December in order to synchronise with the review that is taking place in to some aspects of Extra Care.

Priorities for Action

General

21. Ensure there is an appropriate range of information available on housing options including owner-occupation
 - (a) Regularly review allocations policies to ensure current needs are being met.
 - (b) Review the progress of the strategy annually.

Learning Disabilities

22. There is a need to offer a better range of housing options:
 - (a) Independent accommodation for those who choose to move out of Assisted Living. This is likely to see a reduction of 10 and 20% in Supported Living over the next 2 years.
 - (b) Make available sheltered housing/ extra care for those who need more specialist accommodation. This will include younger people who would benefit from a communal environment.
 - (c) Plan additional accommodation to take account of the growth in the number of people with a learning disability who will want to leave their family and become more independent.
 - (d) Plan for those older carers who may need to move with their family to larger specialist accommodation due to increasing frailty.
 - (e) Increase access to private sector accommodation.
 - (f) Provide options for those who may want to purchase or part buy a home.

Mental Health

- (g) There is no evidence that there is a need for more dedicated supported housing for people with mental health problems and therefore support will be provided through floating support commissioned by Supporting People.
- (h) We need to recognise that some people entering all forms of supported accommodation will have a mental health problem as a secondary need. There are therefore issues concerning the type of support on offer which will be addressed by Supporting People through their review process.
- (i) A small number of people with complex problems including mental health problems present challenges that require a high level of inter-agency action.

Work is on going to build a shared approach across agencies to improve the collective response.

Physical Disabilities

- (j) Commission the development of additional properties for Affordable Rent for people with physical disabilities within the wider Affordable Housing Development Programme¹.
- (k) Make the best use of properties that have been adapted. For those Council properties that have had expensive adaptation a Flexible Tenancy (Fixed Term) will be offered to new tenants. This will provide an opportunity to review the need for this type of accommodation.

Homeless Groups

- (l) At the moment there is no case for additional provision.
- (m) Supporting People will lead a review of supported housing during 2013 for this group and this may lead to further recommendations.
- (n) Closely monitor trends in homelessness to understand how the downturn in the economy and the welfare reforms are affecting supported housing.
- (o) Continue to work Private Sector landlords to help increase housing options.

Older people

23. Promote the development of specialist accommodation for owner-occupation.

- (a) In specific areas consider small developments of new specialist housing for social rent over the next 5 years. This will be informed by the work on local plans for dealing with falling demand for extra care accommodation
- (b) A number of actions are required to address stock condition and falling demand in older persons' accommodation.
- (c) Discussions with all providers concerning the quality of existing stock with an aim of reducing substandard accommodation.
- (d) Produce a full market assessment of specialist accommodation by catchment area. This will see:
- (e) The development of plans for local services and housing provision for older people in consultation with tenants.
- (f) A small amount of stock re-designated for use by another client group. Existing tenants will be consulted and if they choose to move they will be assisted in

¹ Funded through the Homes and Communities Agency

transferring to another property.

- (g) Changes to the allocations policy for some properties leading to some properties being let to younger people. This has already taken place for some properties.
- (h) Action to improve access where this is a problem and the work is feasible.
- (i) Development of targeted promotional activities.
- (j) Address the need to support social activities to combat isolation and promote wellbeing, in discussion with the 3rd Sector and other registered providers. This is likely to have resource implications and funding options will need to be explored in consultation with stakeholders. This includes extra care housing.
- (k) A number of detailed recommendations included in the Extra Care Housing Strategy will need to be implemented.

Financial Implications

- 24. There are no immediate financial implications. The Strategy identifies a number of housing development options but this will be the subject of individual project development and any resource implications will be identified as part of that process. These projects will then be subject to further approval.

Equalities Considerations

- 25. There are a number of equality implications as this strategy covers a wide range of vulnerable groups. An Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted and this is included within the strategy. The self-assessment concluded that the Strategy would make improvements for a number of vulnerable groups, particularly older people and people with a Learning Disability when consultation took place.

Consultation

- 26. As the strategy covers a wide range of different needs an extensive consultation process took place during October and November. Specific consultation events have been organised with partner organisations concerning Older People, Learning Disabilities and homeless groups. Consultation took place with a range of people who will make use of supported accommodation and this includes a representative group from the Tenants' Board, carers groups and other representative groups. Discussions have also taken place with service and housing providers. The strategy has also been placed on the council's website for consultation. The views were also sought of Members of the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee.

Outcome of Consultation

- 27. A number of minor changes were proposed to the strategy, these have been included in the final draft.