

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS

'SHAPE THE FUTURE' CONSULTATION

During October 2005 a number of consultations took place with tenants, with the intention of those views contributing to the Older Persons' Housing Strategy. While the group sizes were relatively small, this does not diminish the validity of the findings, which have not been previously published.

Tenants were asked for their views on 'sheltered housing'. These have been grouped into themes, but note that these were not structured or based on multiple choice, so the responses are varied and are shown 'as received'. The responses reflect a common positioning of key priorities: safety and security, neighbourhood, community and sense of belonging are clearly important. Probably the most common issues, however, perhaps because these are in the most immediate view, relate to the property and its environs. These are most likely to earn praise where they are of a high standard, and most likely to be adversely commented on where they are not up to standard.

Personal Needs

- **Security:** feeling of safety and security
- **Community:** people of the same age group; company; Good neighbours
- **Independence:** your own front door; independent but able to socialise
- **Locality:** Nice and quiet; near shops, doctors and buses; comfortable
- **Choice:** want access to newer or nicer properties being built

About Property

- **Design:** account for disability when modernising; look at private sector
- **Bedrooms:** too small; lack of spare bedrooms; 2-bed flats good
- **Maintenance:** decorate and improve old flats; keep to promises
- **Bathroom:** need walk in showers
- **Access:** need lift or stair lift
- **Kitchens:** need improvement and enlarging and careful design
- **Common areas:** communal lounge and laundries appreciated
- **Decorations:** need decorating allowance or spruced up prior to moving in

About Landscaping/Gardens/Environment

- **Garden areas:** all are appreciated; need use of outside
- **Landscaping:** not good in surrounding area; want improvements to outlook
- **Car Parking:** not enough parking / no parking at all
- **Lighting:** improved security lighting outside
- **Storage:** change bin stores into storage for walkers / scooters

About Facilities

- **Furniture:** need for new or upgraded furniture in lounge
- **Catering:** on site kitchen facilities would be good

About the Warden Service

- **Warden Service:** want full time/ on site/ 24 hour warden
- **Nomenclature:** Change name of warden [to]: 'Community Support Worker'

About 'Sheltered Housing'

- **Nomenclature:** Change Sheltered Housing [to]: 'Retirement Complex'

'LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL' CONSULTATION

Redditch Borough Council hosted a conference on the future of sheltered housing in November 2005. This included a further 'shopping' exercise, as conducted over a number of events between October 2005 and March 2006, and involved 14 groups of tenants selecting their priority 'purchases' from a given range of facilities or services. The rankings of those choices were as follows. For example, each of the 14 groups included security as a priority issue but only one group felt that a library or computer room was a priority:

VOTES:	FOR THESE PRIORITIES
14	Security; Landscaping; Level Access; Communal Lounge
13	Car Parking; Size of Accommodation
12	Bus Stop; Quietness; Neighbourhood; Walk-in Showers
11	Washing Machine space
9	Social Outings; Lunch facilities
7	Shop
5	Scooter Store
4	Doctor's; Laundry; Jacuzzi
3	Guest Bedroom
1	Library; Computer Room; Gym; Hairdresser
Others	Mobile shop; lift; social club; garden facilities; bowling green; street cleansing; police; volunteer shop; restaurant; recycling; maintenance handyman; bowling green

VISUALISATION 2006

An exercise in March 2006 involved people visualising what was important to them when they were well, and what was important when they were unwell. The visualisations relating to being well show their own front door, security, family and friends, holidays, recreation, exercise, religion, economic comfort and their own car.

Those relating to being unwell show a desire for the same quality of life as before, with ongoing independence. What is wanted is help when it is needed, from a happy and friendly helper, whether professional or family, supported by services like Dial-a Ride or Keep Fit classes.

DOWNSELL HOUSE

DOWNSELL HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE - 2007					
Question	1	2	3	4	5
What do you like about your current housing?	Large windows	ok, prefer flat to bedsit	Bungalow	Very suitable	Bedsit
Type of housing	Good	Yes	None	Very good	NA
Communal facilities	Good	Yes	Yes	Excellent	Good
Warden Service	VeryGood	Yes	Yes	Super	Good
Lifeline System	Good	Yes	None	Very good	NA
Social Activities	Friendly people				
Other:					
What improvements would you like to see?	One more washing machine	Lift	Bathroom updated	Individual showers	Bedrooms put in (not bedsit)
In the building	the garden made more level	improved walking surface	Yes	part-time gardener (when needed)	Good
With the landscaping	the lounge carpet washed once a year	improved cleaning		All satisfactory	NA
In the communal areas			Yes	Adequate (when needed)	NA
In the service provided	Some in the evening	More activities	Yes	?	NA
In the social activities					
Other:					
What attracted you to accept your current accommodation?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Illness / mobility	Yes	Security the real reason	Yes	Yes	
Security / safety		Yes	Would have liked another bedroom	Yes	
Size of the accommodation		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Running costs	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Socialising		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Location					

CONSULTATION WITH SPECIAL NEEDS TENANCY OFFICERS

The views of the Special Needs Tenancy Service, which has been running for just under a year, were sought during a meeting in June 2007.

The role of the two members of staff is to address the housing needs of tenants of all ages from children to the elderly, primarily arising from their medical conditions. When new needs are identified the service will attempt to bring in adaptations or equipment or locate suitable alternative properties, coordinating as necessary with hospitals and other agencies. Referrals come from a variety of sources – hospital discharges, One Stop Shops, through Choice Based Lettings, the Community Warden service, self-referral etc. Officers will undertake a check list of needs to ascertain requirements.

Special Needs Tenancy officers largely identify the same schemes as the Community Warden Service and the Scheme Assessments as being problematic in some way for residents and can be considered as endorsement for those findings.

A particular identified need was that for accommodation on the ground floor in suitably adapted premises for mainly young severely disabled men, often arising from vehicle accidents. SNTOs believed the demand was for 3-4 per year; there is the potential for this need to be met from

CONSULTATION WITHIN SCHEME ASSESSMENTS

All of Redditch Borough Council's designated older persons' housing schemes were the subject of an assessment of the accommodation's fitness for the purpose of housing older people. The views of the residents met during the course of these visits have been taken into account in the assessment itself, or within recommendations arising from these visits. Conversations with tenants, within generally very positive feedback, demonstrate a number of issues for people about their accommodation, most usually centering on the modernisation of kitchens and bathrooms, property size, aspects of mobility, parking and transport.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ON THE COMMUNITY WARDEN AND LIFELINE SERVICES

The Community Warden Service undertakes comprehensive support plan reviews with the people it supports, on at least an annual basis, under the heading 'Are we Making a Difference?' These reviews look at all aspects of the persons' support needs, and also give valuable general feedback revealing a high level of overall satisfaction.

The quarter from April to June 2007 record 102 completed responses. Of these, 87 people commented on the Community Warden Service, with 69 rating the service as excellent and 14 rating it as good, giving an overall good to excellent satisfaction of 95%.

"Knowing that the warden is visiting and able to support me with any difficulties that arise, makes life much easier"

"When I arrived in sheltered housing I felt the service was not for me, but I have been very grateful of support and understanding from this service"

“It is nice to think someone is looking after us”

“I feel more secure and happier since moving into the property, having someone visit regularly to check on me”

“Trustworthy, honest, friendly but professional”

95 of the responses rated the Lifeline service, with 58 rating the service as excellent and 31 rating it as good, giving an overall good to excellent satisfaction of 94%. The greater comparative number giving this service a good rating is probably a reflection of the fact that many service users will not have had need to use the service and therefore tested its efficacy.

“I know I can always get in touch with someone if I get into difficulties”

“It allows me to feel safe in my own home and gives me a lot of confidence”

“Grateful to know there is help when needed”

“Always helpful and supportive when I have needed them”

“it is nice to know someone is there for you 24 hours”

ANCHOR HOUSING, REDDITCH

Anchor staff believed that their residents chose to live in their scheme based on the quality of accommodation and its location, backed up by the support of a warden on site during the day and the 24-hour Anchor Call system. People chose older persons' housing in order to lead a less stressful life, while they were still healthy. Residents felt that their lives now were better than before their move, and they valued the mutual support of their neighbours.

Residents were resistant to the idea of residential care. 80% of their residents were in receipt of housing benefit; the option of private ownership was only really open to those with money. Staff believed that future schemes would most likely be on the retirement village model, but what they felt was of paramount importance was the quality of the accommodation and the support of the warden service.

Anchor had reduced its age limit to 55+ in 2004 having had similar problems with voids, especially with the smaller studio flats. While the general age group was in their later 70's, a number of the younger residents were moving in for reasons of health or security. Those with a learning disability appeared comfortable in this environment.

AGE CONCERN, REDDITCH

Age Concern is in daily contact with 30-50 older people, the majority aged over 75, supporting them through social contact, advice and activities, and also its Wellcheck and Handyperson Services.

The agency believes older people are not keen on the idea of sheltered housing, because of the connotations of 'control' and the 'communal room', although image and marketing can influence this positively. They believe the ideal for most of their

clients is a small house or bungalow, such as Forest View, supported by a warden, with adaptations when needed. The aspiration would be to two bedrooms, although this might not be achievable. While people might eventually accept bedsits, they felt this would be a compromise of peoples' wishes. Any change from independence to sheltered housing would probably result from a health condition, and generally after the age of 70. They felt people would not consider their future needs until such time as their personal situation forced them to do so.

Age Concern is aware of the difficulties faced by home owners, who may have homes too large for them, who may be confined to the ground floor for health reasons, and who do not have access to the warden support service. They found it both daunting and difficult to undertake a move, and had no incentive to do so. The agency believes this group of people would benefit from advice and incentives to help them downsize, and from the same support input Council tenants receive.

Transport was a major issue for many, with bus services inconsistent or limited, and with Dial-a-Ride oversubscribed. Security on footpaths was an issue for those who were no longer drivers. The concentration of services, where these were regionalised, created significant problems for people, with some choosing not to attend appointments where the journey was impracticable.

MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

The Working Group has been conscious of the need to consult with minority ethnic groups, in order to establish and then reflect their different needs within the Strategy. As a first stage, the Group has planned that the 'My, Future, My Choice, My Home' consultation would be able to produce some initial data on which more in-depth consultation could be based. The responses from this group have been examined in detail within the analysis of completed questionnaires.

Because the Pakistani community represents the largest minority ethnic group, the Group asked the Pakistani Forum to help ensure that we maximised input from that area. In addition, some initial discussions have been held with them to examine how consultation might be refined to tap into the specific agenda of the elders that they are in contact with, which they estimated to be around 200 in number.

The plan is to develop a minority ethnic specific model that we can then use with other groups. Initial discussions have envisaged, as an ideal, a 'mini-village' with prayer centre for this group. The Strategy is committed to including appropriate provision that meets the particular needs of these groups.