

Executive Committee

All Ward Relevance

26th August 2009

OLDER PERSON'S HOUSING AND SUPPORT STRATEGY- MY HOME, MY FUTURE, MY CHOICE

(Report of the Head of Housing and Community Services)

1. Summary of Proposals

The Committee is asked to approve the Older Person's Housing Strategy, attached at Appendix 1, and the implementation of the Action Plan.

This will enable the provision of housing and support for older people within Redditch to be reflective of demographic change and the changing needs of older people plus deliver the strategic aims of National, Regional, County and Local policies.

This strategy aims to set the agenda and framework for the future of older person's housing and support provided by the Council over the next sixteen years.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

- 1) subject to Members' comments, the Older Person's Housing Strategy, attached at Appendix 1, be approved; and**
- 2) subject to community consultation, Officers implement the Strategy for the Housing and Support of Older People as detailed in the Action Plan (Appendix 3).**

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in adopting the Strategy. However, the implementation of the action plan could highlight areas for further consideration. Officers will bring back further reports in the future to Members.

Legal

- 3.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) places duties on service providers and requires 'reasonable adjustments' to be made when providing access to goods, facilities, services and premises.
- 3.3 The duties on service providers have been introduced in three stages:
- a) Since 2 December 1996 – It has been unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
 - b) Since 1 October 1999 – Service providers have had to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people, such as providing help or making changes to the way they provide their services.
 - c) Since 1 October 2004 – Service providers may have to make 'reasonable adjustments' in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access.
- 3.4 Section 167 (1) of the Housing Act 1996 requires each Local Authority to have a scheme for determining priorities in allocating housing accommodation. The existing Housing Allocations Policy already meets the Local Authorities legal requirements.
- 3.5 In order for Redditch Borough Council to achieve the strategic aims of national, regional, county and local policies it is necessary for the Council to develop a strategy for the housing and support of older people.

Policy

- 3.6 The current Housing Strategy provides the strategic direction generally for older person's housing. This Strategy would form the basis of setting a specific policy for older persons housing.

Risk

- 3.7 Failure to approve the strategy will make it difficult for the Council to achieve national, regional, county and local strategic aims.
- 3.8 There could be a loss of revenue through difficult to let properties due to the current housing provision being unsuitable and not meeting housing need.

- 3.9 The Council could be in breach of the Disability Discrimination Act in that some schemes do not meet the requirements.
- 3.10 The Council may not be able to meet the demand in housing and support from the growing population of older people.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.11 Based on the demographic data obtained with the assistance of the Worcestershire County Council's Research and Intelligence Department the 65 plus population is projected to grow from 10,800 in 2008 to 17,900 by 2026. It is important that Redditch Borough Council ensures that the housing and support provision is able to cope with this demand.

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 This strategy was commissioned to examine the background to change at National, Regional and Local Levels in relation to Older Persons Housing and Support.
- 4.2 There is an ageing population with changing expectations in Redditch. From the Worcestershire County Council's Research and Intelligence Department it is estimated that between 2008 – 2026 the Borough will see an increase of 7,100 people who may potentially draw on its Older Person's Services.
- 4.3 The Strategy proposes the actions the Council will need to take to meet the needs and aspirations of the Boroughs Older People over the next 16 years, over all tenures.
- 4.4 The strategy has also been influenced by the change in funding for the support services by Supporting People. Funding is now based on the support needs of the individual not based on the accommodation unit. This reflects the commitment made by Worcestershire County Council to provide support to people who are vulnerable through age, disability or life experience to maintain independence.
- 4.5 Older Person's Housing accommodation is specialised accommodation which was developed largely in the 1970's and 1980's and does not meet the needs and aspirations of older people today.

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- 4.6 Consultation to produce this strategy commenced in 2007 through “My Home, My Future, My Choice” which was carried out throughout the Borough and covered all sectors.
- 4.7 It was possible, following consultation with tenants, the Home Support Service and prospective future residents to define 15 key standards that meant housing designated for older people was of good quality, fit for purpose and valued by tenants (p24 of the strategy). Using these standards Officers were able to assess the current accommodation.
- 4.8 Following research and consultation with tenants and residents of Redditch the initial draft of this report was produced and issued for review. Comments received from the review have been recorded, considered and, where appropriate, added to the Older Person’s Housing Strategy.
- 4.9 The Action Plan within this Strategy includes 3 main priorities, each priority has detailed objectives (See Appendix 3). These priorities are:
- Priority 1 To ensure Older Person’s Housing is responsive to demographic change in the period 2010 -2026.
 - Priority 2 Ensure Older Person’s Support is responsive to demographic change in the period 2010 – 2026.
 - Priority 3 To ensure service users are fully informed and involved and their views are taken into consideration.

5. **Key Issues**

- 5.1 The research and consultation has identified that the current housing stock which was built in excess of 25 years ago is unable to meet the changing needs of older people.
- 5.2 A stock condition survey of the Sheltered Housing identified that some of the current housing stock does not meet the standards as detailed in the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 5.3 The accommodation is predominately bedsits, which is not the type of accommodation being sought by people who are 60 years and over.
- 5.4 To try and reduce the numbers of empty bedsits and flats in sheltered accommodation, changes were made to the Housing Allocations Policy by reducing the age to 50 years plus in certain schemes. Although this met the objective of reducing the length of

time a property was empty and saving loss of revenue it also lead to instances of anti social behaviour in some schemes due to the different age groups and differing life styles of people living in the same scheme.

- 5.5 With the changes to the Supporting People Contract for the Home Support Service (previously Community Wardens) moving from accommodation based to Floating Support, tenants can now choose if they want to receive the support from the Home Support Team. This has again changed the way Sheltered Housing is being used and has resulted in very independent people living alongside people who require the support of the Home Support Officers to enable them to live independently.
- 5.6 By setting standards for older person's designated Housing, Officers were able to measure how suitable current provision is for tenants. Our initial findings have found that not all of these standards are being met. Further investigation is required to identify what work needs to take place and the associated costs.
- 5.7 Following consultation it became evident that older people do want to maintain their independence and stay in their own home for as long as they can. The support provided needs to be reviewed so that it is responsive to the needs of the individual regardless of tenure.

6. Other Implications

- Asset Management - There are 1,163 units of accommodation designated for older people within the Councils Housing stock.
- Community Safety - The mix of age groups in Sheltered Housing could lead to incidents of anti social behaviour.
- Human Resources - Review of the support service.
- Social Exclusion - By providing the correct type of housing and support to reflect an individual's need social exclusion for this vulnerable group can be reduced.

7. Lessons Learnt

The comments received during the consultation period and prior to preparation of this report will be taken into account prior to implementation of the action plan.

8. **Background Papers**

National Service framework for Older People
Opportunity Age – the National Strategy on Ageing (pending review)
Independence Well-being and Choice
Our Health Our Care Our Say – a new direction for Older People
A Sure Start to Later Life - Ending Inequalities for Older People
Independence and Opportunity – Our Strategy for Supporting People
Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All.
Strategy for Housing Older People in England
Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable.
Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for
Housing in an Ageing Society.

9. **Consultation**

This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers and consultees including Scheme and Borough residents, Anchor Housing and Age Concern. Further consultation will be carried out through the Council's Community Forum, Borough Tenants Panel and with tenants currently living in the Council's Sheltered Housing.

10. **Author of Report**

The author of this report is Liz Tompkin (Head of Housing and Community Services), who can be contacted on extension 3304 (e-mail: liz.tompkin@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – My Home, My Future, My Choice - Older Person's Housing and Support Strategy
Strategy Appendices (refers to annotated pages)

- 1 Fuller summary of national documents.
- 2 Population projections for Redditch
- 3 Projected minority ethnic needs demography
- 4 Schedules of RBC accommodation for older people by category
- 5 Summary of all older persons accommodation in Redditch.
- 6 Further details of other support inputs.
- 7 Summary of consultations
- 8 Fitness for purpose indicators
- 9 Scheme assessments by Category
- 10 Change management process

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- 11 Schedule of schemes where lift installation is not feasible.
- 12 Communal facilities
- 13 Design recommendations arising from scheme assessments
- 14 Profile of Home Support Service Users.

Appendix 2 - My Home, My Future, My Choice Consultation Report

Appendix 3 – Action Plan

Appendix 4 – Executive Summary