

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Older People's Housing Strategy 2009-2014

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The strategy will be available on the internet at www.cambridge.gov.uk/Housing

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Glossary of Terms

This glossary is intended to help readers make the most of this strategy and is not intended to give a precise legal definition of terms used.

Adaptations: Changes to the physical fabric of the home to make it suitable for the occupier. The most common adaptations are stair-lifts, grab rails, level access showers and ramps.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME): Generic term for people or communities who are not White British.

Choice Based Lettings (CBL): Method of allocating social housing in which applicants choose or 'bid' for available properties and these bids are prioritised by the Local Authority on the basis of need.

Disabled Facility Grant (DFG): A means-tested grant available to disabled people to help with adaptations to the home.

Decent Homes: The standard set by the government relating to the condition of people's homes. The government's target is that all local authority and housing association homes should meet the Decent Homes standard by 2010.

Extra-Care Housing: Independent flats with access to 24-hour care from the scheme. This provides flexibility for people to access care when they need it whilst retaining independence.

Home Improvement Agency (HIA): Locally based not-for-profit organisations who assist older, disabled and vulnerable people to remain living in their homes independently by helping them to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their home. Cambridge's HIA, 'Home Aid', is currently run by the City Council.

Home-Link: the Choice Based Lettings scheme for Cambridge and surrounding areas.

Independent Living Service (ILS): Cambridge City Council's team of staff which supports sheltered housing residents and those who have emergency alarms in the community.

Lifetime Homes: Homes built to the national Lifetime Homes standard have certain design features that make them flexible enough to meet the changing needs, over time, of the households that occupy them.

Local Area Agreement (LAA). A LAA sets out the priorities for a local area as agreed between central government and that local area through the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership and other key local partners.

Occupational Therapist (OT): A professional who can assess the need for adaptations to the home, or for other disability aids (such as hoists or

specialist chairs or beds). OTs also work to support rehabilitation after major injuries or stroke, and to support clients returning home from hospital.

Primary Care Trust (PCT): Local organisation responsible for health care budgets, planning and delivery of primary care services.

Registered Social Landlord (RSL): Generally used to mean the same as Housing Association.

Retirement Village: A cluster of privately-owned or leased properties occupied only by older persons, often with some support and social activities available.

Supporting People: The programme for distributing public spending on housing-related support services. The commissioning body is made up of representation from district councils, Social Services, PCTs, and the Probation Service .

Telecare (also called Assistive Technology): A range of equipment that can be fitted in people's homes to allow constant monitoring and access to help. The term includes community alarms, which allow a person to access help in an emergency, as well as specialised equipment to support very frail elderly people or those with dementia.

Executive Summary

Older people in Cambridge contribute to the community in many ways but for some their ability to participate fully in society is hampered by poor or inappropriate housing, which affects their physical or mental health, or their ability to get out and about.

Cambridge currently has a relatively young population overall, and the growth of the city is likely to bring more younger people to the area. However, there will be some increases in the number of older people in the city, and the numbers of older people living in surrounding areas are set to increase markedly, which could lead to some people moving to the city, or to new developments on the city-edge.

Older people today have higher expectations than previous generations. Quite rightly, most want to be able to remain in their own homes and to be able to have those homes adapted if they need to, or to receive support at home to maintain their independence.

In developing this strategy, we talked to older people and support agencies.

We will continue to involve people as we deliver the actions identified.

Our vision is for older people in Cambridge, with a range of diverse needs, to be able to:

- Live independently for as long as possible, with support and/or adaptations if they need them;
- Live in safe, decent, accessible, warm and energy efficient homes and to stay in their existing homes for as long as possible where they choose to do so;
- Have a range of housing options to choose from, preferably close to services and facilities, to meet their particular needs;
- Have access to high quality and appropriate information and support to enable them to make informed choices about their housing.

We have set out ways in which we can try to meet this vision.

We already operate some services to support people who remain in their own homes. This includes adaptations and grants for repairs. We will

launch a handyman service. We will look for ways to make services more flexible, and support people who wish to move as well as those who need adaptations.

Our Home Improvement Agency service is likely, under County Council procurement rules, to have to be tendered. We will work with partners to ensure that the important services it provides are delivered in a way that best meets needs, is more accessible to the community and provides good value for money.

We began a programme to modernise our own sheltered accommodation in 2004. We will continue this programme. We will review what it means for schemes not yet included, and we will work with tenants and their families to plan for changes that may arise if some schemes become ineligible for funding.

For owner-occupiers whose homes are not safe, warm and well maintained, we offer a range of help. We will continue to evaluate the success of these schemes in reaching the most vulnerable older people. We will consider how we can make services more available to people from minority groups.

Our Home Energy strategy and Affordable Warmth policy are already delivering results for people across tenures. In a climate of rising fuel prices, we will review how we can deal with those homes that are most difficult to insulate, to meet the needs of their occupiers.

In the coming years, there will be many new homes built in and around Cambridge. We have already developed planning policies designed to make the new communities as accessible as possible to people of all ages and abilities. We will work with partners to ensure that new housing in the city and in the new communities meets the needs of older people, both those who require specialist housing, and those who would like smaller homes that are suitable for their changing needs as they age. Already, our affordable housing is developed to Lifetime Homes Standards. We will define and adopt standards for fully accessible housing.

In order to support older people making decisions about whether to move home, or to repair or adapt their current home, we need to provide good information and advice. Home-Link provides support to people who want to move into a Council or Housing Association property. We will work

with voluntary sector agencies to improve the access older people have to information and support to make the right decisions in a timely way.

We have identified that we do not know enough about the needs of older people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds; we need to work with these communities to understand their needs and plan for the future. We need to consider how our services can be more accessible to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older people, and whether there are ways in which sheltered and extra care accommodation in particular can be less intimidating to such groups.

There is a small but significant number of homeless people growing older in Cambridge with poor health, whose needs are not yet met. There are also a number of people living in supported accommodation who are ageing, and who will not be able to remain in their current homes into old age. We need to plan for these groups, working with individuals, families and support agencies.

There are a number of things we will need to do as a result of this strategy. We will develop an action plan, share it with our partners and monitor its progress regularly.

Introduction

This document is for older people and agencies or individuals supporting older people in Cambridge. It focuses on how we can work together to ensure that older people's housing meets their needs and aspirations.

We recognise that housing is key to our health and well-being. Good housing promotes safety and security, allows us to entertain friends and family and helps us to belong to a community. Home adaptations or support can enhance this. Inadequate or inappropriate housing contributes to poor physical and mental health for people who cannot move easily around their home, or bathe or cook, and by preventing older people from going out or having family and friends to visit. Housing too far from family and friends can be isolating. Expensive housing coupled with high fuel bills can lead to homes that are not warm enough.

In the United Kingdom people are living longer than ever before. The age balance of our population is changing, and we need to plan to meet different needs in future. This strategy considers how to meet the needs of not only older people here today, but also the population of the future.

In developing this strategy, we have listened to older people and agencies who work with them. What they told us has informed our proposals for the future. Key to those conversations and messages were the following:

- wanting choice;
- wanting to live independently for as long as possible;
- not wanting to have to move, but wanting help and advice to be available to support decisions about whether, when and how to move;
- wanting help that respects their wishes and needs, in particular more flexible support, and home visits for welfare advice;
- the importance of social events outside the home, and of good transport, as well as of a neighbourhood that feels safe and secure.

Older people contribute to good communities: many are still working, or caring for others (parents, children or grandchildren); many engage in voluntary work. But some older people in Cambridge face barriers to participating as fully as they would wish.¹ Poor or inappropriate housing

¹ Source: Cambridge Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-11.

can be one barrier; this strategy sets out how we can improve the housing of older people.

Other barriers to participation include transport, income, and fear of crime. Older people tend to spend more time in their homes than younger people; around a third leave their homes on average only once a week.² In Cambridge, over a third of people aged 60 plus have no access to a car,³ and this percentage increases with age, so the need for good public transport, local amenities and welcoming neighbourhoods is significant. This strategy cannot address these wider issues but we highlight areas where we will work with other agencies to make Cambridge a more inclusive, sustainable community.

Our vision is for older people in Cambridge, with a range of diverse needs, to be able to:

- Live independently for as long as possible, with support and/or adaptations if they need them;
- Live in safe, decent, accessible, warm and energy efficient homes and to stay in their existing homes for as long as possible where they choose to do so;
- Have a range of housing options to choose from, preferably close to services and facilities, to meet their particular needs;
- Have access to high quality and appropriate information and support to enable them to make informed choices about their housing.

This strategy sets out how we will work towards that vision.

Part I looks at what we know about older people in Cambridge, what is happening nationally and to the population, and what older people have told us.

Part II looks at how Cambridge City Council can help to meet the needs and aspirations of older people in Cambridge, and how we will work with partners to achieve our vision.

² Source: Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (Communities and Local Government, 2001).

³ Source: ONS census 2001.

Part III explains how we will work with partners to deliver, resource and monitor the strategy, and how we will involve older people, carers and agencies in future.

Next steps for putting the strategy into action

We will build the actions that we can deliver into our programme for 2009/10 and beyond, but it will need involvement from a wide range of agencies as well as older people to take the work forward and implement the recommendations, just as they were involved in developing the strategy.

We will work with our partners to develop the Action Plan, based on the priorities in this document, by February 2009.

PART I

Chapter 1: National, Regional and Local Policy Context

For the first time, there is a national strategy for housing for older people. Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society (CLG, 2008) sets out a vision for housing in which "policies for housing and planning positively reflect the aspirations, changing lifestyles and needs of all of us".

Key policies introduced or re-emphasised in this document include:

- developing a national housing and information service;
- strengthening local information services;
- extending handyperson services so that more people can access rapid repairs and minor adaptations to their homes;
- modernising the Disabled Facilities Grant system so it reaches more people more quickly;
- continuing the Decent Homes and Warm Front programmes to promote safe, warm homes;
- ensuring new housing is accessible and can be easily adapted as people age by requiring homes to be "Lifetime Homes";
- promoting neighbourhood design that meet the needs of older and disabled people through reform of planning policy;
- investing in services to prevent crises, and targeting those services on people most at risk;
- promoting specialised housing as places people would choose to live.

This strategy builds on earlier aims of creating communities which are accessible to people of all ages and abilities;⁴ on encouraging providers of housing, care and support for older people to plan for the future and to provide 'joined up' housing and support packages which meet the aspirations of older people; and on addressing the increasing costs of health and social care for older people by looking at ways to prevent ill health and crises.

Housing Choices and Aspirations of Older People (CLG, 2008) brings together research and consultation with older people, identifying people's preferences for staying at home, retaining independence, and also a

⁴ The Sustainable Communities Plan (ODPM 2004 – now at www.communities.gov.uk).

reluctance amongst many to plan ahead for future needs. It highlights the need for good design, adequate space, and better information to support choices.

National policy relating to health and social care is also relevant to older people's housing: personalised care services are being piloted and introduced, with an emphasis on allowing people to choose which services they receive. New legislation on age discrimination in the workplace seeks to support older people to continue to work if they want or need to.

Within the Eastern Region, housing policy is primarily focussed on growth and the need to create more housing – and within that, more affordable housing.

The Regional Spatial Strategy⁵ requires the City to have at least 19,000 new homes by 2021 compared to 2001.

The vision of the East of England Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2010 (EERA) is: *'To ensure everyone can live in a decent home which meets their needs, at a price they can afford and in locations that are sustainable.'*

The Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) commits regional partners to improving the quality of both public and private housing, including the promotion of private sector loan schemes. It also includes commitments to:

- develop guidance on accessible housing;
- work with health organisations;
- promote Lifetime Homes and Smart Homes as mechanisms to minimise the social exclusion experienced by many older people;
- consider what additional support might be required for housing providers to enable people to remain in their own homes ;
- encourage the coverage of Home Improvement Agencies across the whole of the Region.

Supporting People is the government funding programme for housing-related support to vulnerable people, including older people. The regional and local Supporting People strategies determine which groups of people will receive this support.

⁵ East of England Plan, www.eera.gov.uk

The Supporting People East of England Regional Strategy 2008-2011 focuses on changes happening in local government, and the need to ensure that funding remains available for people who require support to live at home. The strategy identifies a lack of money available in the East of England, which will mean some existing supported housing, including older sheltered schemes, will have to be remodelled or closed. The strategy also supports a move away from institutionalised models of care towards supporting people at home: *"Older People increasingly want to stay in their own homes rather than move into sheltered housing ... Very Sheltered and Extra Care provision can help prevent a move into residential care."*

Cambridgeshire Supporting People Commissioning Strategy 2008 – 2010 sets out how Supporting People (SP) services will be shaped and modernised in Cambridgeshire. The SP vision is to: *'improve the quality of life and well-being by ensuring housing and housing support is available that reduces risk and enables vulnerable people to live as full a life as possible'*. SP commissioners intend to provide more floating support services, and more extra care for older people. They also intend to even out the distribution of sheltered housing across Cambridgeshire – this means less sheltered housing to be funded in Cambridge so that more can be provided elsewhere.

Cambridgeshire County Council together with Primary Care Trusts, published a Countywide Commissioning Strategy for Older People 2004 – 2009 which focussed on integrating health and social care services in order to help more people to live independently at home; reduce the numbers of older people living in residential care; develop more alternatives to institutional care (such as extra care); and develop community-based services which anticipate and respond to older people's needs, thus reducing the numbers of emergency and unnecessary hospital admissions experienced by older people. These themes are taken forward in the Local Area Agreement (see below).

Cambridgeshire County Council has developed a draft Older People's Strategy 2008-2011. The County Council is responsible for a range of support services provided directly to older people and services key to the well being of older people (e.g. transport, libraries) and as such its strategy can have a great impact on the lives of many older people. A draft version, currently out to consultation, covers housing and the home; neighbourhood; social activities, social networks and keeping busy;

getting out and about; income; information; and health and healthy living. It requires further development, and we will work with Cambridgeshire County Council and other partners to support them in this.

The Cambridgeshire Disability Housing Strategy 2008-2011 is also in draft form, aimed at removing barriers and promoting independence and choice in the provision of housing and support services to people with learning, physical and sensory disabilities. An action plan is being developed with the themes of making maximum use of current available housing, improving access to housing and housing advice services, assessing and meeting future demand within the context of growth, and provision of support services for people with disabilities.

The Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 (LAA)⁶ is a three year agreement between central government and the local authorities and other partners of Cambridgeshire, working as the Cambridgeshire Together Board. The LAA has five key priorities, all of which impact on the lives of older people in Cambridge:

- * **Growth** – accommodating growth, creating flagship communities and ensuring the benefits of growth and infrastructure are enjoyed by all communities;
- * **Economic Prosperity** – supporting the special role of Cambridgeshire as a centre of knowledge and innovation, especially in low-carbon technologies;
- * **Environmental Sustainability** – meeting the challenges of climate change while maintaining a high quality environment;
- * **Equality and Inclusion** – supporting vulnerable groups and enabling them to participate fully in community life; encouraging healthier and more sustainable lifestyles;
- * **Safer and Stronger Communities** – engaging citizens in service planning and improvement, and ensuring our communities enjoy good quality of life and health, with low levels of crime, unemployment, discrimination and inequality.

The LAA has 55 targets against national indicators (Nis), a number of which relate specifically to older people, including:

- increase the number of older people achieving independence through rehabilitation or intermediate care by 1% every year (NI 125);

⁶ For the full LAA see www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/partnerships/LAA or contact Cambridgeshire County Council for a printed copy.

- reduce the number of people who experience a delay in transferring from hospital from 43 per 100 000 to around 10 per 100 000(NI 131);
- increase the number of people supported to live independently through social services by 100 every year (NI136);
- increase the number of vulnerable people achieving independent living by 2.5% every year (NI141).

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Cambridge has its own Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2011, with the priorities:

- tackling climate change;
- building sustainable communities;
- ensuring strong and inclusive communities.

Amongst the things the LSP wants to see in achieving these priorities are:

- a sufficient supply of decent affordable housing, including socially-rented housing, to meet need in the city;
- more older people enabled to live independent, active lives and have the opportunity to thrive in their communities;
- different generations (older and younger) and ethnic groups living harmoniously alongside each other and feeling a sense of community;
- improved energy efficiency and comfort levels in homes.

This strategy will help to meet the objectives set by the LSP and contribute to meeting the priorities and targets within the LAA.

Part of the Council's overall vision for the City is that the community as a whole and every person in it matters; also that diverse local communities will 'enjoy a high quality of life in safe, accessible neighbourhoods supported by affordable housing, integrated transport, and good access to leisure and community facilities'.⁷

There are four Medium Term objectives which underpin this vision:

- Promote Cambridge as a sustainable city, in particular by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of waste going into landfill in the City and sub-region;
- Ensure that residents and other service users have an entirely positive experience of dealing with the Council;

⁷The Council's Medium Term Objectives, www.cambridge.gov.uk

- Maintain a healthy, safe and enjoyable city for all, with thriving and viable neighbourhoods; and
- Lead the growth of Cambridge to achieve attractive, sustainable new neighbourhoods, including affordable housing, close to a good range of facilities, and supported by transport networks so that people can opt not to use the car

This strategy will contribute to meeting this vision and each of the Medium Term Objectives.

The City Council also has a number of other strategies and plans relevant to meeting the housing needs and aspirations of older people.

The Housing Strategy 2004-2007 had the following priorities:

- tackling homelessness;
- tackling the poor condition of the housing stock in all tenures;
- more housing, and in particular, more affordable housing.

The Council's Housing Strategy Refresh in 2008 states that these objectives are to be tackled within the context of the priorities under the Sustainable Community Strategy (see above).

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Cambridge sub-region contains a range of information on current and future housing need⁸. Further work on the housing needs of older people and people with disabilities has been identified as a priority for 2008/2009 and beyond.

A new sub-regional housing strategy and the local Cambridge element of that strategy will be published in early 2009. In developing this, more research will be carried out into the housing needs of specific groups including older people. The new strategy will also draw on the Council's BME Housing Strategy which highlights low take-up of social housing, supported housing, and schemes to help people stay at home amongst members of some ethnic communities.

The strategy recognises barriers to older people participating in society and seeks to encourage partners to address these, including through improved energy efficiency and comfort levels in homes (outlined further in the Council's Home Energy Strategy and Affordable Warmth

⁸ Cambridge sub-region Strategic Housing Market Assessment, www.cambridgeshirehorizons.gov.uk

Strategy)⁹ and through promoting the take-up of concessionary bus fare schemes for older residents.

The needs of older people are also reflected in the Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy in relation to tackling housing conditions, providing community alarms, accessing services etc.

The Cambridge Local Plan (2006) sets out the strategy for achieving growth in the City including, amongst other things, the need to promote good quality design, consolidate and improve existing residential communities, promote new housing and community facilities in the growth areas, and a greater emphasis on diverse housing needs.

The Local Plan is being replaced incrementally by a Local Development Framework for the same purpose. Supplementary Planning Documents set out how the city will seek to create sustainable communities through good design inside and outside of homes.

⁹ Available from Cambridge City Council on request, or from www.cambridge.gov.uk.

Chapter 2: Older People in Cambridge

Nationally, the percentage of older people in the population is set to increase markedly over the next two decades. In some areas, the balance of the population will shift so that there are more older people than working adults and families. In Cambridge, high levels of planned housing development mean that increases in the population are expected to come mostly from younger people moving to the city for work, and hence the numbers of children and younger people should increase more than those of older people.

More people today are living longer than before, giving rise to an increasing population of elderly people. One in five children born today can expect to live to 100 years old:¹⁰ with more people living into their nineties, more of us will experience frailty and disability in old age.

This chapter looks at what we know about older people in Cambridge now and what we think will happen to the population in future, and what we know about housing in Cambridge now and what might need to happen in the future.

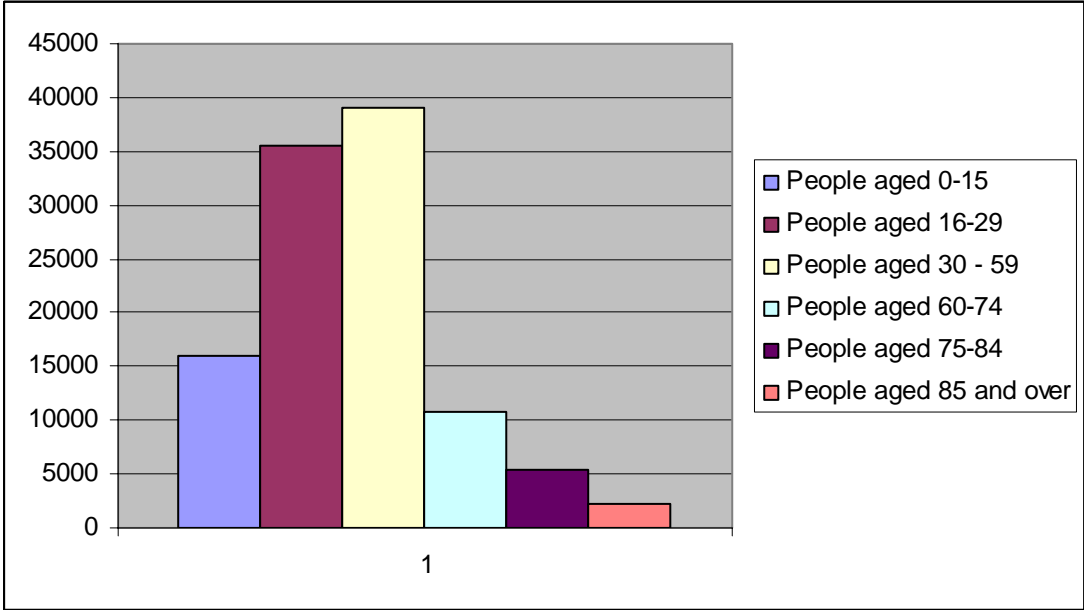
Older people living in Cambridge now

There were 18,322 people aged over 60 living in Cambridge city in 2001¹¹; 57.2% of them were women and 2.7% of them declared themselves as from a non-white ethnic group. In terms of age, Cambridge City has, relatively speaking, a young population, with large numbers of students and people of working age, and parents with children: 16.8% of the city's population were aged over 60, lower than in surrounding districts or nationally.

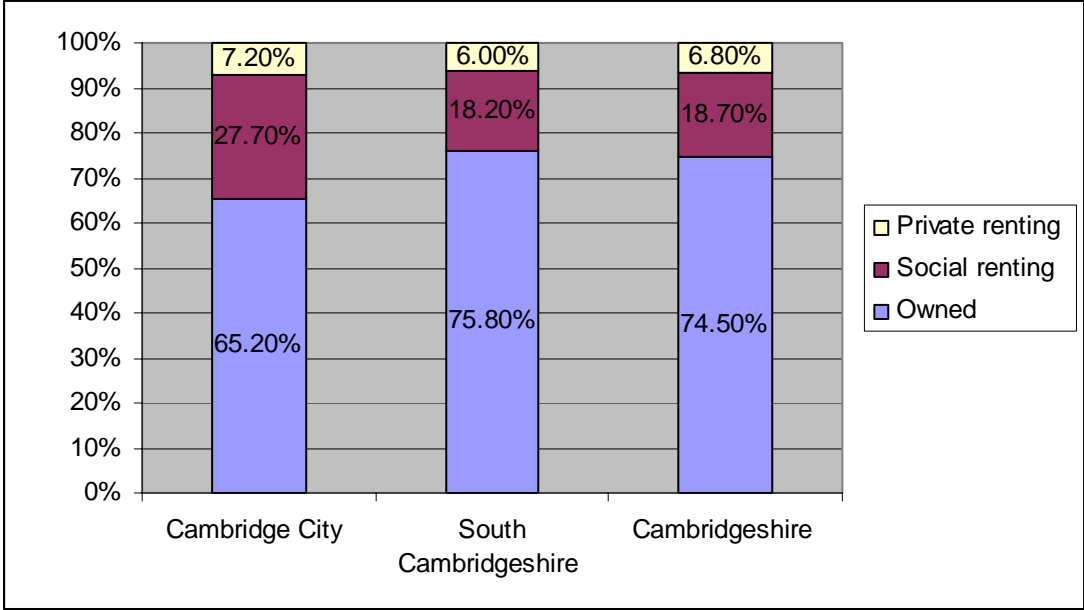
¹⁰ Source: lifetime homes, lifetime neighbourhoods p.11.

¹¹ Source: ONS census 2001.

The Age Structure of the Population of Cambridge¹²



Tenure of Older People in Cambridge and Surrounding Areas¹³



In Cambridge, more than a quarter of the older population (aged 60 and over) live in social housing, compared to less than a fifth of the City's population as a whole. More older people in Cambridge live in social housing than in other neighbouring districts, possibly because Cambridge has a good supply of sheltered housing schemes so that

¹² Source: ONS census 2001.

¹³ Source: ONS Census 2001

some older people have chosen to move from other tenures into social housing to receive care and support or to enjoy the company and security of living with other older people. Around 20-25% of the Council's tenants are over 65, and at least 12% are aged over 75. This means that the Council has a significant number of frail elderly tenants, many of whom are in general needs rather than sheltered accommodation.

Older people who live in rented accommodation are more likely to experience poor health or life-limiting illnesses than those who own their own homes. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that some older people have moved into social housing or sheltered accommodation because their health is deteriorating.

In Cambridgeshire, census data shows us that over 13% of the over-60 population are providing unpaid care for someone, and the number of hours of care provided is higher amongst older carers (over 75), reflecting the fact that they are caring for people with more complex needs, often their own partners.

Whilst only a small percentage of the older population declared themselves in the 2001 census as coming from a BME group, this percentage had increased on the figures reported ten years previously. The two data sets cannot be directly compared (because the categories had been changed), but we know that new migrants to England tend to be young when they arrive, so as migrant families settle the non-White population would be expected to age over time. In planning for the future, we need to take account of the changing needs of the BME population, and in particular the changes in lifestyles and expectations that can occur between generations.

Older people in Cambridge are currently more likely to live alone than in surrounding areas: 23% of men and 44% of women aged over 60 live alone in Cambridge, much more than in surrounding villages where 16% of older men and 35% of older women live alone.¹⁴ However, as well as an increasing number of people living alone, there is also a rise in intergenerational households, and more BME households caring for elderly relatives may increase this further. This means we need flexibility in housing design.

In Cambridge, in 2001 there were a large number of older people without central heating, including over 600 older people living alone without

¹⁴ Source: Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group Report based on Census 2001.

central heating. Lack of heating can contribute to poor health, although some older people will have chosen to live without central heating and to use stoves or fires for warmth. As frailty increases, heating that is easy to use is increasingly important, but equally important is whether the heating is affordable, especially in the current climate of increasing fuel costs.

There are large numbers of older people living on the first floor or above, (1,686 people): many of these will be sheltered residents, or people living in flats with lifts, but for some access to their homes may be a difficulty.

Many older people in Cambridge own their own homes (65.2%), and for the majority the home is owned outright (without a mortgage). This does not necessarily mean that elderly home-owners are well-off, as many live on small pensions and state benefits, and find the costs and responsibility of home maintenance extremely difficult.

One pensioner in five in Cambridge lives in a household receiving Housing or Council Tax Benefit,¹⁵ and there may well be others on very low incomes, especially homeowners who have some savings but very low incomes.

Over a third (37.2%) of people aged over 60 in Cambridge have no access to a car; the over 85s have least chance of accessing their own vehicle. Being able to get out of the home is important to social and emotional well-being and, for those without their own transport, public transport is important. We know that on average over 65s spend 80 per cent of their time in their homes, with over 85's spending 90 per cent of their time at home.¹⁶

Older Council tenants

There are currently 507 sheltered tenancies with the Council; these are a mixture of bedsits, 1 bed and 2 bed flats and some bungalows, almost entirely occupied by older people, the majority of whom (60%) are over 70.

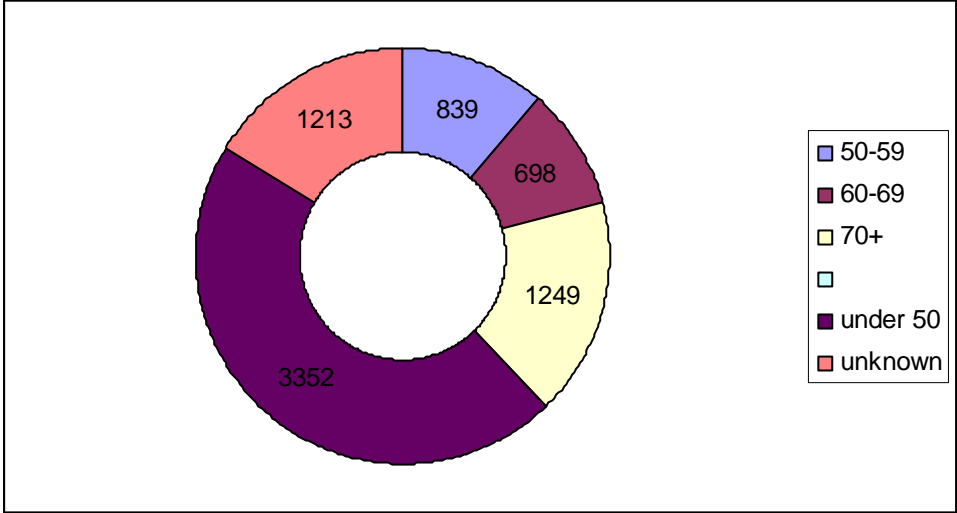
The Council owns 230 bungalows, of which only 25 are known to be let to people under 50 (these are mostly specialist bungalows let to individuals or families which include a disabled person).

¹⁵ Source: Cambridge City Council "Mapping Poverty 2006" report.

¹⁶ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (CLG 2008).

A quarter of all the Council's tenants – general as well as sheltered –are aged over 60, and 4 in 10 are aged over 50. This large number of tenants in or approaching older age means that the Council has to plan seriously for meeting the needs of these people into the future.

Age of Cambridge City Council tenants – numbers of tenants - all types of tenancies¹⁷



A significant percentage of older tenants live in houses rather than in flatted accommodation or sheltered schemes. The needs of this group need to be planned for, as many homes will become unsuitable over time. There is more detail on this in Chapter 6.

Older People in Cambridge in the future

It is extremely difficult to predict what will happen to populations over time as there are many factors involved, and demographers are trying to second-guess what choices people will make. For Cambridge, predictions are based partly on what will happen to the people of the existing population as they age. Will they move away from the city? Will they live with family or alone? Will they move into care homes or other communal establishments? However, many of the new households expected to live in Cambridge in 2021 will have moved to the city, and so predictions must also be based on who is likely to move here.

The population of Cambridge as a whole is predicted to increase by 40 000 people, or 18 400 households, between 2001 and 2021.

¹⁷ Source: Cambridge City Council tenant data

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire DC are working together, with Cambridgeshire Horizons, landowners, developers and the public, to plan for major new developments around the edge of Cambridge which will accommodate much of this population growth, as well as considerable development within the city itself.¹⁸

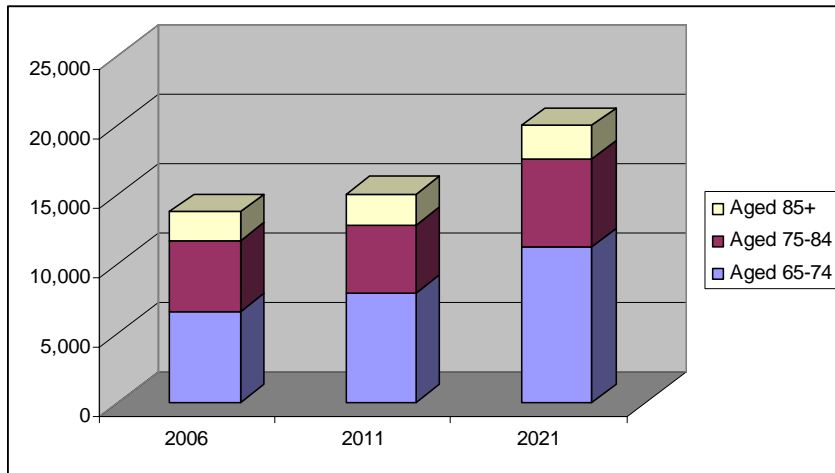
We know from the experience of previous major developments that new settlements are usually most attractive to younger people moving to an area for work. Most such migrants will choose to rent privately or to buy, although we can expect that some will require more affordable housing – including social rented – and that some people who currently rent in Cambridge or nearby, or who are inadequately housed, will want to move to social housing in the new developments.

The predictions set out below show that we are not currently expecting large numbers of older people to move to Cambridge as a result of the new developments. However, we are planning for those developments to be attractive to all, so they can become inclusive communities for older residents of both Cambridge and surrounding villages to move to, and to meet the needs of the new migrants as they themselves age. What we cannot predict accurately is the extent to which communities designed to be inclusive may be more attractive to older people than previous new developments have been. Such developments could attract more older people, perhaps following younger members of their family moving to the area to take up jobs.

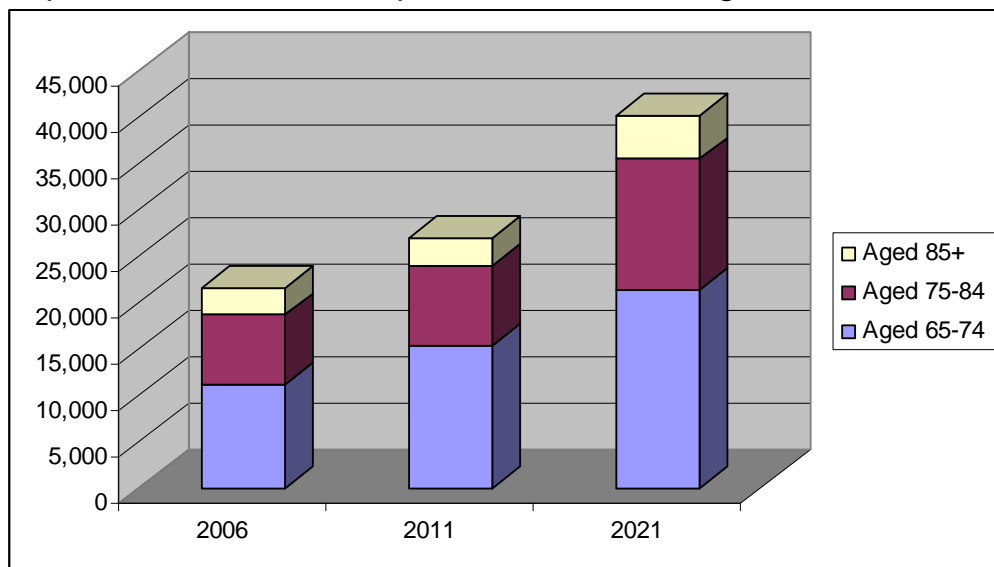
Much of the new development will take place close to or across the boundary with South Cambridgeshire: these developments are being planned jointly. Current population figures for South Cambridgeshire show an older population than Cambridge, and one which is ageing more rapidly. We cannot accurately predict the extent to which older people living in villages will move to new urban development. Previous evidence suggests that older people are more likely to move out of the city, but we should plan the new developments to be inclusive and to work well if the reverse turns out to be true.

¹⁸ For more information, see the Cambridge Local Plan, available on line at www.cambridge.gov.uk, or for inspection at Cambridge City Council offices.

Population of Older People, Cambridge City 2006 to 2021¹⁹



Population of Older People, South Cambridgeshire 2006 to 2021²⁰



The population of elderly people aged over 75 is currently falling in Cambridge, and is expected to continue to do so until after 2011 when it will begin to increase again. By 2016 there will be more people aged 75 and older than there are now, and by 2021 it is predicted that there will be 250 more people aged over 85 than there were in 2006, and 1230

¹⁹ From the Cambridge Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment available at: www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk.

²⁰ From the Cambridge Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment available at: www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk.

more people aged over 75. We know that over a third of men aged 85 and over, and half the women of the same age, are physically or mentally frail. We therefore predict around 200-250 more frail elderly people in Cambridge in 2021 than today.

The number of people with dementia is set to rise and prevalence of depression is also significant, with 7.6% of men and 11.3% of women over 65 experience depression. Schemes to reduce isolation, and promote social activity can be significant in tackling this.²¹

We also know that people wish to stay in their homes, and people who are getting older now are demanding better quality accommodation and services than previous generations. The increase in the frail-elderly population people means that we should plan accommodation specifically to meet their needs, whilst assuming that the majority of younger-older people (aged 60-65 or 70), will choose to remain in their own homes.

Housing stock profile

The last private sector housing condition survey was carried out in 2002. It indicated that the level of unfitness within Cambridge City was 7.4%, equating to approximately 2,500 properties. The occupancy type of persons living in the property that failed unfitness was primarily older people who owned their own property. At that time 63.5% of homes occupied by vulnerable people were assessed as meeting the Decent Homes standard. The recent stock modelling that was commissioned indicated that 24% of the stock in Cambridge failed on a category 1 hazard. The hazard that was the main failure was excess cold, which is probably due to the age of the stock. It is very difficult to assess how much progress the Council has made towards national targets, as we do not know who has improved their home without our help. A new Housing Condition Survey will be carried out shortly, with more information available from it early in 2009.

The Cambridge Private Sector Housing Strategy 2005 says:

'Older people (particularly single pensioners), people with special needs and households on low incomes often live in the poorest housing, and it is these groups who are particularly in need of help.'

²¹ Source: Older People's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Cambridgeshire PCT, January 2008) available at www.cambridgheshirepct.nhs.uk.

Cambridge City Council has 992 homes adapted for people with a disability. Some homes have only minor adaptations such as grab rails, many have level access showers, and 172 have access ramps to allow a wheelchair into the property (although this does not necessarily mean that the interior is to a wheelchair standard throughout).

All Council and Housing Association homes will be to Decent Homes standard by 2010, except for a small number where the occupiers have refused to have works carried out. Decent Homes standard includes adequate heating and insulation.

Sheltered Accommodation

In April 2008 there were 996 Council and RSL rented sheltered units available in Cambridge, the majority of which were 1 bed flats. The Council's sheltered accommodation modernisation programme is explained in chapter 5. In addition there were 60 extra-care Council and RSL units in the City.

There are 322 privately owned sheltered units in Cambridge – owner occupied or leasehold homes where some support is provided; in addition there are 32 almshouses and 57 extra care units. This gives a total of 1498 independent homes with some support provided, and equates to 109 units per 1000 people aged over 65 living in Cambridge.

The *Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing* (BVR), carried out by partners across Cambridgeshire adopted a standard of 45.1 units of supported accommodation per thousand population aged over 60. Cambridge has more such accommodation than other districts, and, by this standard, more than the review assessed as being needed, as the population of older people (over 75) in the city declines, and then increases slowly. Demand for older-style sheltered accommodation has reduced but demand for high-quality sheltered housing remains strong, and both need and demand for extra care accommodation is increasing.

The *Supporting People Commissioning Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2008-2011* builds on the assumptions in the BVR and, with updated figures, has proposed that the amount of sheltered housing in Cambridge should reduce significantly, whilst the provision of extra care should increase. For surrounding districts, where the numbers of older and especially of older frail people over 85 increase much more rapidly, new provision will be prioritised.

The demographic predictions available cannot tell us about the incomes of older people in the future, however we do know that:

*'Fewer elderly people are likely to live with, or even near, relatives; there will be increasing numbers of elderly people who have no children who they can rely on as carers. And although incomes are generally lower for older people, there are increasing numbers who are relatively well off and very little is known about the demand for private-sector retirement and extra-care housing.'*²²

We should therefore work with the private sector and with older owner-occupiers to understand the demand for such private housing, and the barriers to older people moving into it.

Although the Council did not accept the methodology for calculating the required reduction in sheltered units (which assumed that future older people will be able to afford private provision, unlike many current residents of rented sheltered accommodation), the Council is committed to implementing the Best Value Review. Older sheltered schemes which do not meet the agreed standards will no longer be eligible for block funding in the future, and the number of units is already being reduced through implementation of the Council's Sheltered Housing Modernisation Programme.

With less sheltered housing available, it will be increasingly important to ensure that adequate support is available to older people to go on living in their own homes. Chapter 4 talks about ways in which the Council will support this objective.

²² Source: Strategic Housing Market Assessment,
www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk.

Chapter 3: What Older People Say

We consulted with older people and agencies working with older people in Cambridge in the summer of 2008. We did this by:

- Writing to agencies and asking them to complete a questionnaire around key themes for older people in Cambridge;
- Talking directly to older people: we held a Listening Event in August with 25 Age Concern Service Users, most of whom were aged over 70;
- Working with Age Concern and Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise (COPE) to circulate and encourage feedback on a questionnaire to residents over the age of 50 living in Cambridge. This involved a questionnaire mail-out to Age Concern service users and volunteers, to City Council sheltered housing residents and Community Alarm service users, and to BME groups within the City. An advert was placed in the COPE newsletter and the consultation was promoted at the COPE AGM inviting members to respond. A press release was published in the Cambridge Evening News, and the survey was published on the Council's website. Out of 1,351 surveys sent out, we received 404 replies – a response rate of 35.5.

We have looked at the results of consultations other groups have held locally and nationally, as these include the views of a wider range of older people than those we reached. Generally, our local results support the national picture.

National research for the government,²³ in which a wide range of people participated, found that:

- most people were happy with their current homes and felt they would be able to stay put as they grew older;
- neighbours and neighbourhood were a key influence on people's housing decisions;
- participants were reluctant to consider their future selves. Many felt it was impossible to plan for future uncertainties and that they could make any necessary adaptations if and when the need arose;
- the general view was that sheltered housing was "a good thing", but only really necessary for the very old or for those who were infirm;
- most people have a low opinion of care homes;

²³ Source: Housing choices and Aspirations of Older People (CLG 2008).

- very few people had heard of Extra Care Housing or Assistive Technology;
- people value support with repairs in the home;
- space is important, with two bedrooms a minimum standard.

This is backed up by the findings of our local consultation and by research carried out by Age Concern for Cambridgeshire County Council,²⁴ which found that the following are important: social contact, getting out and about, transport, feeling safe at home, help at home especially with household chores, information and help with form-filling, adequate income, dignity and respect.

Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise (COPE) research found that older people want to live independently:²⁵ whilst there is some downsizing taking place, a significant proportion of 80-90 year olds live in 3-bed houses. Where older people do want to move, they need a range of accommodation choices – many just want a smaller, self-contained property but may also require help and advice with moving costs, arrangements and physical removals. Most want good quality accommodation with small gardens.

COPE also found demand for adaptations, help with home improvements, repairs and garden maintenance.

This matches our research which found that most older people value:

- being able to stay put and live independently for as long as possible;
- being close to amenities and services – health care, shops etc;
- being close to friends and relatives;
- good public transport services (particularly important);
- adaptations – showers in particular, but also others;
- sufficient indoor space (at least 2 bedrooms) (important);
- repairs in the home (important).

Overall, sheltered residents were generally happy with their homes, with high levels of satisfaction in Council sheltered schemes. Elsewhere, a range of types of accommodation is needed including: owner-occupied property, and other housing designed for older people.

²⁴ Source: Cambridgeshire Older Peoples Strategy (Consultation Draft Sept 2008)

²⁵ Source: Coping With Housing and Moving, available from COPE on request or from http://www.cambridgecope50.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1.

Focus group discussions in particular identified the need for:

- small gardens;
- ground floor accommodation (some preference for bungalows);
- help with gardens.

The consultation also highlighted some issues which had not been identified as significant priorities through the wider national and local consultation with older people. These include:

- energy-efficient property: this may be a particular concern now that fuel prices are high and rising;
- safety and security in and around the home, including lighting, smoke alarms, etc (although most felt very or fairly safe where they are now);
- sound-proofing;
- access to properties through Home-Link, the local Choice Based Lettings scheme.

A fuller consultation report is available on request.

We have built on these views of older people in developing our vision, and the proposals in Part II of this strategy. However, we need to continue to talk to older people and their carers, to understand their changing needs and in particular to see which options may best address their needs. One of the priorities for further development of our Cambridge sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)²⁶ is to achieve a better understanding of the housing needs of older people within the sub-region. The results of our consultation will be fed into that work.

²⁶ Cambridge Sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
www.cambridgeshirehorizons.gov.uk

PART II

Chapter 4: Living Independently

What are we trying to achieve?

Our vision is for older people, with a range of diverse needs, to live independently for as long as possible, with support and/or adaptations if required.

Why is this important?

Older people have told us that they want to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes. Some people need adaptations or support to live independently; without them, either life is very difficult – putting pressure on the older person and their family and carers – or independent living can break down.

Not only is independent living the choice of most older people now but it is likely to be others' choice as they age too, so more of us will want to remain at home and will expect the support to enable us to do so.

From the point of view of public expenditure, it is relatively inexpensive to support people to live at home.²⁷ In the past, many people moved into more costly residential care rather than staying at home. Older people have told us that they don't like the idea of moving into care homes. For many people today a move out of their own home takes place due to a crisis – a fall or other medical emergency leading to an expensive stay in hospital. We believe that supporting more vulnerable elderly people at home can reduce the number of older people admitted to hospital.

The Office for Disability Issues has produced a report with findings that show clearly that the provision of housing adaptations and equipment for disabled people produce savings to health and social care budgets in four major ways:

- by reducing or removing completely an existing outlay (e.g. residential care or intensive home-care);
- through prevention of an outlay that would otherwise have been incurred (e.g. prevention of falls);
- through prevention of waste (e.g. providing timely adaptations);

²⁷ For more about the costs of caring for elderly people, see the, Older People's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008, from Cambridgeshire PCT, www.cambridgeshire.nhs.uk.

- through achieving better outcomes for the same expenditure (e.g. adaptations can replace the need for carers to assist with bathing, etc.)

People often fall whilst waiting for adaptations. The average cost to the State of a fractured hip is £28,665: this is 4.7 times the average cost of a major housing adaptation (£6,000) and 100 times the cost of fitting hand and grab rails to prevent falls.²⁸

At our Listening Event, older people told us their priorities for help with remaining independent:

- help with upkeep of property;
- good transport links;
- security;
- help when bidding for properties on Home Link .

They also told us that it is easier to remain independent if there is access to health services, leisure outings organised specifically for older people, and if transport is easy to use and paths are well-maintained (including winter gritting). Home adaptations, especially level-access showers, were also important.

Of those responding to our residents' questionnaire almost two-thirds answered that they had had a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits their daily activities. Around 30% said that one or more people in their household used a wheelchair. Respondents told us that they particularly needed or were likely to need adapted bathrooms, stair-lifts/vertical lifts, grab rails and/or kitchen adaptations, now or in the future. They also identified access to services, provision of public transport, and provision and cost of care as the three most important issues currently facing older people in the area in which they lived.

This chapter discusses maintenance, adaptations and transport. Chapter 5 explores security, and chapter 6 talks about Home-Link.

Adapting homes

Adapting Homes: What have we done so far?

²⁸ Source: Better outcomes, lower costs (Heywood and Turner); report at www.officefordisability.gov.uk.

We provide a Home Improvement Agency Service (Home Aid) to assist people who need adaptations to their homes. For Council tenants, adaptations are paid for by the Council; for homeowners, financial help is available through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). Home Aid staff will help with grant applications, and with seeking additional funding if necessary. Nearly half of the adaptations we carry out are level-access showers for older people.

Some people's homes are not suitable for adaptation. Home Aid staff will support older people who need to move because their home cannot be adapted, or because they would prefer to move to a more suitable home.

We have worked with the PCT to reduce the amount of time people wait for adaptations. However, people in Cambridge are still waiting longer for adaptations than elsewhere in the county, because the wait for an assessment by an Occupational Therapist is longer in the city. The Primary Care Trusts across Cambridgeshire have recently reorganised to become one organisation: hopefully this will lead to a more even service across the county.

In this and previous years, Cambridge City Council has allocated additional resources over and above that required by government to meeting the needs of disabled residents through DFG. However, demand appears to have dropped and need and demand will be kept under review. We will need to ascertain whether national changes to the DFG system lead to an increase in demand.

Adapting Homes: What should happen in future?

We must work with the PCT to speed up assessments for adaptations. We have set challenging targets to reduce waiting times for Council tenants who need adaptations so that by March 2011 tenants should not wait longer than seven months from requesting an adaptation to getting the work done, whereas now it can take up to a year.

We will consider how we can best help people who need adaptations to move, if their home is unsuitable for their long-term needs, or if they would prefer to move to a more suitable property. We currently offer this service to Council tenants, and we have occasionally developed bespoke solutions, including purchasing a home for shared ownership use by one client, but we do not yet have a fully developed cross-tenure home-move service.

The Cambridgeshire Supporting People Team reviewed Home Improvement Agencies in 2008, and proposed that all such services should be re-tendered. Current indications are that County Council and national procurement rules will indeed require HIA services across the county to be tendered. If this is the case, the City Council will need to establish what type and level of service should be provided, and whether to bid to continue to be a direct provider of this service. We will ensure that any re-tendering maximises the opportunity to improve the quality, flexibility and responsiveness of the service, and engages local people in designing service improvements.

The government has recently published a report on the future of Home Improvement Agencies which repeats the message from *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods* that HIAs should become 'the hub around which vulnerable householders exercise choices about their home environment'.²⁹ We will use these recommendations to help shape our local services in future.

Repairs, Maintenance and Gardening

Help with the Home: What have we done so far?

We have developed services to help people with repairs to their homes.

Repair Grants are available for those people with less than £20,000 in savings and who have owned their own home for more than 3 years. They can be used to help fund a wide range of repair and improvement works to the home, including re-wiring, re-roofing, guttering, windows and doors, kitchen or bathroom improvements and energy-related works. Cambridge Home Aid will help people to organise the works.

Where emergency repairs are required, perhaps to make a home safe for someone returning from hospital, a "Quick Hit Grant" of up to £1,000 is available without a full means test to those who meet a set of agreed criteria.

Where home safety works, home energy improvements or larger home improvements are required, other grants are available. For more information see chapter 5.

²⁹ Source: The Future Home Improvement Agency: Supporting choice and maintaining independence - a report overview (CLG, 2008).

The Council runs a **Green Fingers Gardening Scheme** which provides a limited free gardening service for those on disability related benefits, but there is a significant waiting list (over 2 years as at autumn 2008).³⁰

Many older people whom we surveyed would not have been eligible for the Green Fingers scheme, but responses to the survey suggest that some people may already be paying privately for help with their gardens. We need to know more about those who may like help, but who are not currently receiving it, and whether some of those may be able to contribute towards the costs of such a scheme.

Tenants of sheltered accommodation receive a gardening service. Tenants of each scheme choose what level of service their scheme should receive.

Help with the Home: What should happen in future?

The repairs services should be continued. More promotion work is necessary to make sure people are aware of the service. This includes working with the PCT to ensure that GPs and other health professionals are able to refer older people to Home Aid at an early stage, when works are most beneficial.

A handyman service is needed to help with small repairs. This should be launched soon as Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) Reward Grant funding has just been awarded to extend the Safer Homes scheme to offer a Handyman service within Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire to carry out preventative jobs around people's homes.

To make best use of adaptations, we need to ensure that homes are re-occupied by people who can use them wherever possible. For more on developing information about adapted homes see chapter 7.

We will ensure that any re-tendering of Home Improvement Services represents good value for money and does not lead to a loss of quality.

We will involve local people in designing changes and improvements to services.

³⁰ Source: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/strategy-and-partnerships/disabilities/home-and-gardens.en?page=2>.

We will use the government's HIA review framework to inform the future shape of the HIA service.

We will investigate further the demand for gardening services, and whether there is scope for increasing provision, either through existing schemes, or through other channels such as expanding the HIA service to include including gardening.

Support to Older People to live independently

Support: What have we done so far?

The Council's Independent Living service (previously known as Care Call), offers community alarms to older people and people with disabilities to help them to live independently in the community. It also supports Council tenants in sheltered accommodation.

The Council's Independent Living Facilitators (ILFs) work with tenants of sheltered accommodation to identify their needs and agree support plans. If the tenant wishes, other professionals, family and friends that are involved in ensuring their well-being are involved in the support plan too. Support can include help with practical problems, accessing welfare benefits, ensuring access to health care services, and requesting support from other agencies, including home care or meals on wheels.

ILFs can identify the need for assistive technology to support both sheltered tenants and community alarm customers. This is supplied free of charge by the PCT, and may include carbon monoxide alarms, flood alarms, reminder alarms (to remind people to take their key as they are leaving or to take medication at a certain time), fall detectors, movement detectors, detectors to alert carers or family if someone is leaving their home, etc. These technologies can be of particular benefit to those who are very frail, at risk of falling, and to those with dementia who may put themselves at risk. However, they are not always appropriate as a direct replacement for human contact and support; isolation may be an issue for those without family or other support networks, which in turn can lead to hospitalisation, tenancy failure etc.

The Independent Living Service was restructured in 2005 and the effectiveness of the new regime is clearly seen through tenant satisfaction data. Every three months managers meet with tenants in each of the schemes to gain feedback about the delivery of the services

they receive. The last tenant survey showed tenants are *'very pleased with the communication between staff and themselves'* and *'the service is the best it has ever been'*.

At Ditchburn Place, we have 24-hour Care and Support staff on duty working to keep tenants in their home. This is particularly suitable for frail older people who need more support than might be possible if they lived alone in the community. The level of care and support also allows people to be discharged from hospital to Ditchburn Place.

Tenants in our non-sheltered stock who need housing-related support to live independently can receive "floating support" from the Council's Floating Support Team. This is short-term support which can help tenants through a difficult period or a move, and can refer them to longer term care services, but it does not meet the needs of those older tenants who require long-term support.

Voluntary sector agencies provide significant help to older people at home. Their work is particularly important in terms of access to advice and information (chapter 7) and social activities.

Support: What should happen in future?

In our consultation, older people and agencies told us that there needs to be a wider range of tenancy/floating support services to reflect the wide range of need, from younger residents with mental health and substance misuse issues to elderly residents with dementia. We also need such services to be available in the event of caring relationships breaking down, temporarily or permanently, for the well-being of the person concerned and so that respite places are not occupied for long periods of time by people who do not really need them. Early intervention is important to ensure that, wherever possible, issues are picked up before they get to crisis point.

The Council will work with Supporting People to improve the provision of floating support to a wide range of client groups, including older people.

We will work with relevant agencies to support achievement of the targets within the Local Area Agreement which relate to addressing delays in discharge from hospital and achieving and supporting independent living.

In light of pressure on Supporting People and PCT funding the Council will assess whether it should continue to bid to be a direct provider of care and support to older people when the contracts for these services come up for renewal.

Access to health, transport and leisure

The Council does not directly provide health or transport services. We do provide some leisure services, but many others are provided by other organisations and companies.

Access to Services: What have we done so far?

All community centres continue to offer programmes targeted at older people as part of the Cambridgeshire Celebrates Age scheme.

Our Arts and Entertainments Service runs a number of events specifically targeted at older people including the Mayor's Day Out, regular tea dances in the Guildhall and a range of trips, film shows and other events. It also organises shows and other entertainment presented in homes and clubs, catering for the less mobile.

The Council's grants budget has a specific funding pot for 'active older people', which grant-funds a number of groups representing the elderly. Recipients this year include Age Concern, Cambridge Pensioners Voice, Cambridge Older People's Enterprise, and others. Funding through Area Committees also regularly support groups of older people, often for trips and events.

The Council also provides support to over-50s to run their own groups, including help with fund-raising, developing committee skills and filling in grant applications.

As part of our commitment to the Active Aging and Aging Well programme the City Council's Sheltered Housing team has paired up with the County Council and we now have free access to a minibus, used throughout the week to take tenants on outings, to garden centres, to supermarkets, and to a weekly swimming group.

Sheltered residents are encouraged to mix with the wider community. Local schools have partnered up with schemes to bring young and older people together with tenants assisting with reading classes and enjoying lunch at school.

We run two programmes which can support active and healthy ageing through participation in exercise:

- Exercise Referral: The Start-Up programme is based at Abbey pool and eight other sites around the city. Medical practitioners refer patients who would benefit from exercise to the scheme, which offers a comprehensive consultation followed by a tailored, supervised programme of activity. The scheme also offers a community Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme;
- Staying Active in Later Life focuses on the development of physical activity and sports sessions for older people.

Within the Sheltered Schemes we hold Arm Chair Exercise classes and Movement to Music classes.

We are working to encourage use of public transport, to enable all people, including older people, to travel sustainably within the city. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough concessionary bus pass scheme offers free travel for pass holders on all local bus services within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and reduced fares to some out of county destinations.

Other agencies in the City such as Age Concern also provide services to older people, such as activities in day centres etc.

Access to services: What should happen in the future?

We will continue to provide grant funding and support for groups and projects aimed at supporting older people.

We will work with partners through the Local Strategic Partnership to improve access to health, transport and leisure.

We will increase our knowledge and understanding of community-based services for older people provided by other agencies so that we can better direct older people towards the services available.

We will ensure that access to community facilities is a key factor in the design and development of new communities in and around the City.

Chapter 5: Decent, warm and safe homes for older people

What are we trying to achieve?

Our vision is for everyone to be able to live in safe, decent, accessible, warm and energy efficient homes, and to stay in their existing homes for as long as possible where they choose to do so.

We aim to achieve the government target of:

- all homes owned by the council and housing associations to be made decent by 2010;
- at least 70% of privately owned homes occupied by vulnerable people (including elderly people) be decent by 2010.

Why is this important?

For older people, it is especially important that homes not only meet the decent homes standard (the government minimum standard for homes) but that the home is accessible, safe and warm, as this can improve health and contribute to preventing ill health, admissions to hospital, falls and other crises.

Older people told us that safety and security are particular concerns to them in Cambridge.

Fuel prices have risen sharply over the past year, and for many people the costs of keeping warm are excessive. We know that there are too many pensioner households in Cambridge who do not have central heating. Older people told us that energy efficiency is a concern for them.

Achieving Decent Homes in Council-owned accommodation

Decent Homes – Council Sector: What have we done so far?

We have improved large numbers of homes by carrying out major repairs and installing new kitchens, bathrooms, central heating systems and thermal insulation.

Decent Homes – Council Sector: What should happen in future?

We will continue to work towards meeting the National Decent Homes target by 2010, and maintaining homes to this standard beyond 2010.

We are currently reviewing the Decent Homes programme for Council homes in the light of improved data and funding pressures, and developing a plan which goes beyond 2010.

We will continue to improve thermal insulation within the Council's homes.

Upgrading sheltered accommodation

Upgrading Sheltered: What have we done so far?

In 2004, we developed a 10-year *Sheltered Housing Modernisation Strategy* which set out how we would improve some of the City Council's sheltered housing in Cambridge. The purpose of the modernisation programme is to:

- reduce the number of empty sheltered homes;
- improve the condition of sheltered homes;
- make sheltered housing more attractive, thus encouraging people to move from larger family homes which can then be reused by families;
- replace shared facilities with self-contained accommodation;
- improve choice of sheltered accommodation size (more 2-beds);
- refurbish to Lifetime Homes standard.

In developing the strategy we consulted with our tenants and their families. We prioritised improvement works to the most unpopular schemes and those in poor repair. We are now well into the programme. We have:

- refurbished Whitefriars and Rawlyn Court sheltered schemes;
- just completed the refurbishment of Mansel Court to achieve a 25 unit sheltered/extra care scheme of self-contained one- and two-bedroom flats;
- transferred Simons House to Cambridge Housing Society for redevelopment to provide a 40 unit extra care scheme, with exemplary levels of environmental sustainability (Code level 5 or carbon-neutral);
- secured grant funding in partnership with Hundred Houses Society to redevelop housing land at Elmfield Close which will provide 40 two-bedroom flats targeted at people over 55;

- begun the re-development of Talbot House as a 20-unit sheltered scheme of one- and two- bedroom flats; due for completion in 2009;
- started to plan the refurbishment of Brandon Court to deliver 20 one- and two- bedroom self-contained flats;
- modernised Stanton House as part of our Decent Homes programme

Two sheltered schemes have been closed as part of the programme, at Roman Court and Tiverton House.

Upgrading Sheltered: What should happen in future?

We will continue to deliver the Sheltered Housing Modernisation Strategy, in particular:

- complete the sale of Tiverton House to raise capital funding to fund the modernisation programme
- complete the redevelopment of Talbot House, and the refurbishment of Brandon Court
- consider the future options for Seymour Court sheltered scheme .

We are now reviewing the modernisation programme to plan the next phase, which will consider the need for modernisation or improvement of schemes not previously included in the first phase.

We will work with Supporting People to ensure a sustainable future for sheltered housing in Cambridge, and to plan ahead for tenants in any schemes which may be ineligible for funding in the future.

Decent Homes in the Private Sector

Decent Homes – Private Sector: What have we done so far?

Since 2004 we have been providing grants and loans to help homeowners to improve their properties. Initially, take-up was slow, but we have consulted service users and older people and have reviewed and improved the scheme to try to make it more attractive. Whilst take-up of grants has increased it is still lower than we had expected, and we are now carrying out further surveys of stock condition get a more up-to-date picture of need, which will inform our services in future. We know from national research that many older people find the idea of taking out secured or equity-release loans worrying,³¹ and we know that some people find the process of and paperwork involved in applying for

³¹ Source: Housing Choices and Aspirations of Older People, CLG 2008

funding. We now provide the following grants and loans (means tests apply):

- Repair Grants: up to £5,000 interest-free to be repaid if the property is sold within 12 years;
- 'Quick-Hit' Repair Grants: non-repayable grant of up to £1,000 over any 5 year period for applicants over 60 with less than £20,000 in savings who have owned their home for 3 years or more;
- Repair Loans: up to £20,000 interest-free loan, to be repaid when the property is sold;
- Home Energy Grants: non-repayable grant of up to £1,000 for people with less than £20,000 in savings and household income who have owned their home for 3 years or more;
- Decorating Grants: up to £500 for people on means-tested benefit who are either disabled or over 60.

In 2006/07 we set aside £470,000 to deal with decency levels, but we have reduced the budget in subsequent years in line with demand, and a need to prioritise funding to the most effective solutions. For 2009/10 onwards the budget is likely to be £195,000 per year

Decent Homes – Private Sector: What should happen in future?

We need to review take-up of grants and loans, particularly in the light of the current financial climate and 'credit crunch'. We need to continue to ensure that we support people as much as possible in the process of applying for funding, and that we are meeting needs. In view of national research, we need to consider whether we are reaching the most vulnerable people (especially those over 75, and those at increased risk of falls) or whether, working with the PCT, we can target our services more effectively.

We will consider whether a sub-regional approach to providing grants and loans, which may be eligible for grant funding from the government, might be a cost-effective way forward in the future.

We need to renew the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey so we have good information about where to target our services.

Affordable Warmth

In consultation, older people told us that fuel bills were a concern, and that they were also interested in insulation, double glazing, and alternative sources of power such as solar hot water and wind turbines.

During 2007 and 2008, fuel prices have increased sharply, and with other economic pressures affecting low-income householders, the government and energy companies are increasing the funding available through the Warm Front scheme. However, this will still not provide enough help to households, particularly those living in pre-1930s homes without cavity walls.

Affordable Warmth: What have we done so far?

We have:

- adopted a Council-wide Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan;
- adopted a Home Energy Strategy and invested in employing two Home Energy Officers³²;
- adopted an Affordable Warmth Policy³³;
- set targets for improving the energy efficiency of homes; reducing fuel use and ensuring 1000 home energy grants per annum are delivered;
- launched new Energy Grants of up to £1,000 for people with low incomes, although we will support applicants to access Warm Front or other government and energy supplier schemes first;
- successfully targeted energy efficiency work in homes in the private sector through an 'Energy Action Zone' in Cherry Hinton. One of the reasons for selecting that area was the high proportion of older people living there. A second area has now been identified in the north of the City.
- introduced low-energy lighting, insulation and double glazing to all our sheltered schemes.

All of these should contribute to achieving the targets set out in the Local Area Agreement in relation to climate change.

Affordable Warmth: What should happen in future?

We need to monitor the effectiveness of grants in improving the health and well-being of the most vulnerable people.

³² Contact Cambridge City Council's Home Energy Officers

³³ Contact Cambridge City Council's Home Energy Officers

We need to work with householders to develop solutions for house types that are more difficult to insulate (eg which do not have cavity walls or roof spaces).

We have just had Regional funding approved to carry out energy efficiency works in private rented housing through the Council's Landlord Accreditation scheme and we will need to monitor the impact of these works on older people living in rented homes.

In our own stock, we need to continue to improve the SAP rating by improving more difficult property types.

In sheltered housing, we will install energy consumption monitors to encourage tenants to be aware of and then reduce their energy use. We will also investigate using light sensors in communal areas to ensure energy is not wasted in lighting them during daylight.

Safety and Security

Older people told us that safety in and around the home is important, although a majority of the respondents to our questionnaire said they felt safe or fairly safe in their own neighbourhood.

Consultation revealed that lighting was particularly important to older people. This matches what our tenants told us during consultation for the "Cambridge Standard" in 2003/04, and we have been working with tenants to improve security and lighting in our own stock.

Gardening is considered an important factor in making residents feel more secure – a well-tended garden can help to make a home look occupied and therefore act as a deterrent to potential intruders.

Safety and Security: What have we done so far?

Between 2005 and 2007, we ran a Fire Safety and Security Scheme in partnership with the Fire Service under which they installed nearly 850 smoke alarms. From next year, reduced budgets mean that this service will not be offered (but we will be considering how existing resources can be better focused on other priorities identified within this strategy).

We invest in the Safer Homes Scheme, funded jointly with the PCT and run by Age Concern. It aims to make older people's homes more safe and secure, through providing practical help with small household jobs or by providing information. Works include fitting light bulbs, moving

furniture, dealing with carpets that cause slips and trips, and installing grab rails. During 2005-06 the scheme assisted 300 households. Following re-organisation the service has been helping around 20 households a month since September 2006.

We have developed inter-agency guidelines and procedures for older people living in sub-standard conditions to improve living conditions and make homes safer to live in. This has involved PCT social care, Mental Health and Age Concern.

The Green Fingers Gardening Scheme is in operation (as mentioned in chapter 4).

For Council tenants, we have been working to improve lighting and safety, including installing controlled entry doors to flats, and CCTV in some areas.

Safety and Security: What should happen in future?

We need to continue to work towards meeting the Cambridge Standard agreed with tenants especially in regard to security and lighting

We will work with colleagues in the Police and Community Safety teams, and through the Local Strategic Partnership, to make communities feel safer for older people who live in them.

Chapter 6: Increasing housing choice

What are we trying to achieve?

Our vision is for older people to have a range of housing options to choose from, preferably close to services and facilities, to meet their particular needs.

We are trying to ensure that there is a good supply of housing in a range of different types to meet a wide range of needs and to be affordable to different people.

An increased supply of good, affordable, accessible housing will be suitable for other people too, not just older people. Our aspiration for new developments – and especially for the large developments planned for the edge of Cambridge – is that they should be designed to provide accommodation which is suitable for a wide range of people throughout their lifetimes.

In order to increase housing choice we need:

- robust information on current and future needs, with a clear understanding of the likely impact of growth on future demand;
- a good supply of general needs housing that is more suitable for older and disabled people and more easily adapted. Nationally all new affordable housing built from 2011 onwards, and all housing of other tenures built from 2013 onwards, will be required to meet the national “Lifetime Homes” standard;
- better quality sheltered accommodation with private facilities and more two bedroom units where possible;
- more extra care housing;
- a good supply of homes that are already adapted for wheelchair users and people with reduced mobility, and robust information on what adapted housing is already available so that best use can be made of existing adapted stock;
- good quality private sector accommodation – sheltered housing or possibly retirement villages available to buy or lease from the private sector;
- independent accommodation, including housing schemes targeted at older people, which elderly tenants or home owners can choose to move to if their home is no longer suitable, or if they prefer to move to somewhere easier to look after (e.g. with less garden)

Why is this important?

If appropriate homes are not available, older people who want to make good housing choices are not able to do so. Supporting older people to move is important in meeting their needs; it also frees up family homes for younger people who need them.

Providing Sheltered and Extra Care Accommodation

We have a sheltered housing modernisation strategy – see Chapter 5.

We are working with Supporting People, the PCT and other providers to identify opportunities to provide more extra-care accommodation in Cambridge and in the new developments.

We are planning provision of a 40-bed extra care facility on the new Cambridge Southern Fringe development. This would be for both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. The development of this facility is still subject to a detailed funding plan and negotiations with partner agencies.

Designing New Housing and New Communities

In planning the growth of Cambridge, we have adopted a series of principles that will govern the design of new housing, and of the neighbourhoods it is built in. We have set out our aspirations in the Local Plan and in Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for *Affordable Housing and Sustainable Design and Construction*.³⁴

The local plan states that developments of 15 or more dwellings should provide housing with external design, layout and access suitable for occupation by people with disabilities, including the frail elderly.

The Affordable Housing SPD states that affordable housing should not be distinguishable from market housing by its external appearance. Affordable housing must meet the Housing Corporation's design and quality standards (or any future replacement of these) and Lifetime Home standards. Developers should avoid high maintenance costs and service charges.

The Council's Housing Strategy aims to ensure that people with disabilities have access to suitable adapted homes, with a target for 10% of the affordable housing on schemes of over 25 units to be fully adapted.

³⁴ Available online (www.cambridge.gov.uk) or from Cambridge City Council's Planning Service.

Around 30% of respondents to our consultation questionnaire said that they had or would consider moving from their current home. Nine out of ten of those would like to stay within the city.

Older people who took part in our Listening Event told us that they preferred bungalows. But felt ground floor accommodation was essential. The top priorities for designing housing for older people were as follows:

- Level access showers;
- Wheelchair accessible housing with safety locks, fitted kitchens and outside lighting;
- One-level accommodation, preferably 2 bedrooms, with small garden, near shops and medical centre. Home should have high level sockets, smoke and emergency alarms and sound-proofing;
- In a building with a maximum of three levels with lifts, on-site warden/security officer, near a bus stop and community meeting room, with electric windows and door openers. There is a preference for bungalows.

Respondents to our questionnaire agreed that security and safety, being close to amenities and buses, an energy efficient property, lifts to higher floors, and being close to friends/relatives would be important if they were to move.

Around a quarter of all questionnaire respondents said that financial help would be essential if they had to consider moving. We asked in our questionnaire what type of property people would prefer to move to. Council or Housing Association sheltered accommodation was the most popular option, followed by 'housing designated for older people' and "Council/Housing Association extra-care schemes".

However, the majority of respondents were already Council tenants so we need to explore further what types of property other older people would consider in future.

New Housing and Communities: What have we done so far?

Since 2002 our Housing Strategy has required all new social housing to meet Lifetime Homes criteria; we have also been including up to 10% of new affordable homes built to wheelchair standard, often to meet the specific needs of people waiting for them.

This year we completed a 21-unit general needs scheme specifically designed for over 55's and offered first to people living in larger family homes who could release them to families needing them.

Grant funding has been approved for the redevelopment of a site at Elmfield Close for 40 one- and two-bedroom flats targeted at older people.

We have introduced an incentive scheme which gives financial assistance to help older people who are currently under-occupying larger properties to move to smaller accommodation.

New Housing and Communities: What should happen in future?

We will improve the information available on current and future housing need in relation to older people, including those with disabilities, through the sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

We will work with developers to ensure that new housing contains a mix of property types close to facilities and services where possible, including smaller homes suitable for single older people as well as larger homes for inter-generational households.

We will continue, where possible, to use our own land to develop new homes. These homes will be designed to meet a wide range of needs, including those of older people.

For the larger developments we will:

- Confirm definitions of standards of accessible housing to be used to encompass a range of needs;
- Ensure that sufficient community facilities are provided;
- Work with partners to include housing designed specifically for older people;
- Consider ways to make these developments attractive to older people, including ways to support older people who are moving to these homes to be near to their families in order to give or receive support.

Managing housing supply

We need to try to manage the supply of housing, so that properties are available to people who need them or who would like to move. This

includes making sure that adapted properties are reused wherever possible by people who need the adaptations, or who expect to need them in future – so that expensive fittings are not removed unnecessarily.

We need to make sure that as wide a choice of properties as possible is available to everyone, and that people are supported in making their choices.

Managing Housing Supply: What have we done so far?

We have launched a Choice-Based Lettings scheme, Home-Link, so that people looking for social rented housing (Council or housing association) can choose which properties they wish to bid for. However, some respondents to our consultation felt this scheme might be a barrier to older people. We need to do more work to understand whether this is the case. There is more information on support for Home-Link users in chapter 7.

For people who need significant adaptations or a fully wheelchair-accessible home, we have developed a special needs register and a register of adapted properties, so that we know who is looking for an adapted property and where those properties are. This means we can match people up with suitable properties. This only applies to our own Council homes, but we can meet identified needs through asking RSLs to build new adapted properties.

In the period February -September 2008, 53 households headed by a person aged over 65, and 20 by a person aged 60-64 were re-housed through Home-Link. The Home-Link register shows 13 households aged 65 and over, 9 aged 60-64 and 14 aged 50-60, where there is a disabled family member with a need to move.

Our Home Aid Service has developed flexible solutions for supporting people to move where required. On one occasion, they helped a family to move from an owner-occupied home to a shared ownership property which the Council purchased and adapted for them.

Our scheme for offering tenants financial help with moving costs is aimed at older people under-occupying family sized accommodation. Otherwise relocation grants may be available where an Occupational Therapist assesses that the current home is not suitable for necessary adaptations to be carried out.

Managing Housing Supply: What should happen in future?

We will regularly monitor Home-Link to see if it is working for older people seeking homes, checking whether or not the support offered is reaching those who need it, and whether older people are bidding for properties successfully.

There is a lack of information on wheelchair housing and adapted homes owned by RSLs and in private ownership. We will work with RSLs and estate agents to improve information on homes available.

We will work with RSLs to understand whether adaptations are being removed unnecessarily. One suggestion made through the consultation was that landlords should pay for and adopt adaptations, so that they consider them an integral part of the building rather than a temporary fix for the current tenant. We will explore this further.

We will work with RSLs and older people to explore whether there is potential for shared equity to be more valuable to older people, either for supporting people moving to smaller homes, or in releasing equity in their current home.

We will work with partners through the county-wide Disability Housing Strategy to improve the information available on and access to, disabled adapted properties in all tenures, to maximise the use of existing adapted stock.

Meeting the needs of Council Tenants

Cambridge City Council has 2329 tenancies where the lead tenant is aged over 50; 947 are aged over 70. A quarter of all Council tenants are aged over 60 and 4 in 10 aged over 50.

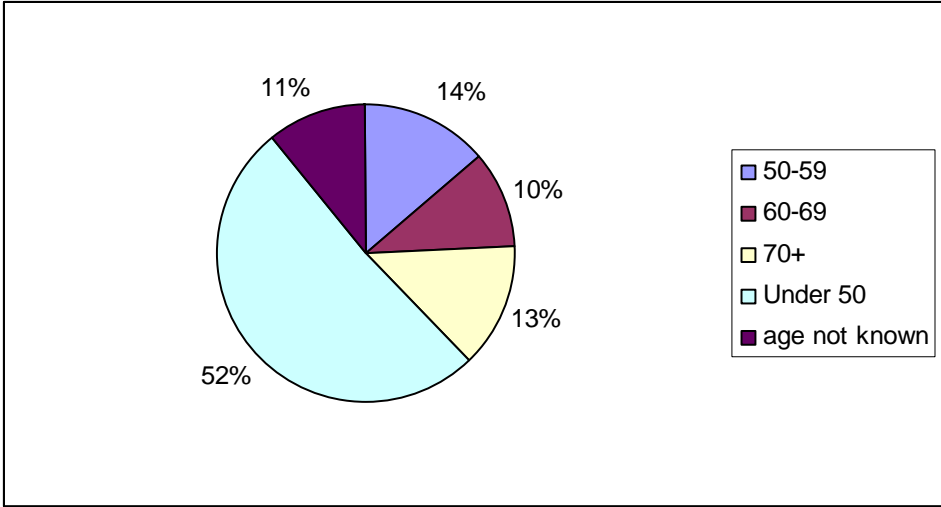
Many older tenants live in sheltered accommodation, where the majority of tenants (60%) are aged over 70. Only 32 out of 507 City Council sheltered tenants are aged under 50.

However, many older tenants also live in general housing. 180 Council flats (non sheltered) are occupied by tenants aged over 50. Over a third - 37%- of Council family houses are let to tenants over 50; indeed 23% or 597 houses, mostly 3 bed roomed properties, are occupied by tenants aged over 60.

For many tenants, as they age these larger houses become increasingly difficult to manage. The Council needs to plan to be able to meet the needs of tenants who request adaptations such as stair lifts. However, some homes are not suitable for adaptation because of the physical design or structure of the home, and in others there are larger gardens and other features which mean that the homes is increasingly difficult to manage.

Age of All Council Tenants

Age of Council Tenants as at October 2008³⁵



Tenants often need support to consider moving from homes where they have lived for many years, and may have brought up families or lived with love ones who have since passed away. The Council needs to consider how to identify those tenants who would benefit from a move at a much earlier stage, and discuss options with them, although without putting pressure on them to move if they do not wish to do so. It also needs to plan to provide new accommodation which will be attractive to older people, including ground floor flats in the new developments.

The Council needs family homes for applicants waiting to be re-housed, and for its own tenants whose families have outgrown their current properties. We therefore offer incentives to older tenants in large homes who are willing to downsize. This includes support with moving and financial help with costs associated with a move, such as new carpets.

³⁵ Source: *Cambridge City Council tenant data*

The Council should consider what more can be done to help with practical and emotional aspects of moving, especially in terms of encouraging older and younger-older people to consider attractive housing in new developments.

Support to take up available choices

Many older people need support in taking up the housing choices available to them, and especially in planning and managing a move. This support, advice and information is explored in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7: Accessible advice and information

What are we trying to achieve?

Our vision is for older people to have access to high-quality, appropriate information and support to enable them to make informed choices about their housing.

This can include information about accessing services and about repairs, improvements and adaptations. It may also include information about options for moving and advice and support in considering these options and making a decision.

Why is this important?

Many older people put off making decisions about their housing until there is a crisis. For some, the arrangements to move to more suitable accommodation are then too difficult or stressful and they lose their independence, moving into residential care.

Older people have told us that better advice and information would help them to make decisions about their housing, (although interestingly the majority of respondents to our questionnaire felt that they already had enough information to make an informed choice about their future housing). From national research, we know that many older people find the current advice and information difficult to access and to use. Because of this the government is proposing to pilot more appropriate types of advice.³⁶

Advice and Information: What have we done so far?

We provide a wide range of advice and information about housing to older people. We are bringing together our services in a single Customer Access Centre, where initial advice and signposting is given. Specialist housing advice is then available from:

- Home Aid Services: advice on home adaptations, and advice to home-owners on repairing or improving their homes;
- Housing Options and Advice: advice is available to older people on housing rights and options, and for people who are in urgent housing need because they are homeless or threatened with homelessness;

³⁶ See Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (CLG 2008)

- Home-Link: advice and support is available for older people who are considering re-housing as a housing option ;
- The Independent Living Service: advice for people who want Community Alarms or to move to sheltered accommodation.

All of these services will provide a home visit where necessary. We can also provide an interview with a hearing loop or an interpreter if required, and we can provide printed materials in large print. Some key documents can also be produced in Braille or audio-tape on request. Our Customer Service Centre at Mandela House is fully accessible and has disabled-adapted facilities for the public to use.

Self-service PCs are available in the Customer Service Centre and the Housing Offices to allow service users access to the Home-Link and Council websites, and to link to other websites e.g. CAB, Age Concern and COPE.

We also support independent agencies which work with older people.

A significant number of representatives on the Council's Housing Management Board are of pensionable age, which helps to ensure that the needs of older tenants are considered in decisions relating to management of the Council's own housing and services provided to tenants.

Home-Link

In 2008 we launched a new way for people to access Council and Housing Association housing, called Home-Link. Home-Link is a Choice Based Lettings Scheme which means that rather than applying for housing and waiting to be offered a property, applicants can bid for advertised properties.

Sheltered housing is now advertised through Home-Link, and sub-regionally we are trying to encourage take-up by highlighting sheltered housing on the website and in the fortnightly magazine. We encourage applicants to contact us so we can discuss what sheltered housing is available and try to match them up with a unit that we can then let directly to them.

Home-Link aims to be a very accessible, transparent and customer friendly system and most people find it easy to use, but because there may be some people who have difficulties (for example if they are

housebound, if English is not their first language, or if they are frail or vulnerable in other ways) we have an Access Strategy. This ensures help is available through one-to one support from staff and access to information in a range of formats. Voluntary sector support agencies (e.g. Cyrenians, CAB, COPE, Age Concern) are also encouraged to support older clients and act as advocates for them.

Advice and Information: What should happen in future?

Older people told us that we should promote existing services, for example by holding “Open Days” at sheltered facilities. We will explore other ways to inform more people about the options available to them.

We will further develop partnerships with PCT staff, and others who have regular contact with older people to explore ways to use their information to target advice on the very frail, and on those approaching older age.

We will continue to develop services which actively support older people needing to move.

We will consider the results of the consultation in shaping the future of the Home Improvement Agency Service.

We will continue to develop Home-Link, including working with older people’s support services and advice agencies to promote options and to ensure that older people are getting the advice and information they need.

Chapter 8: Meeting Diversity

What are we trying to achieve?

Older people from all backgrounds need to be able to access appropriate housing and support. That means that we need to understand the needs of people from different backgrounds, and provide culturally-sensitive services.

Older People from BME Backgrounds

By 2026, there will be 1.8 million older people from BME backgrounds in the UK. Many national studies and reports have highlighted the issue that older people from BME backgrounds, particularly those of Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage, face much greater poverty in retirement.

There is a widely held myth that older people from BME backgrounds do not need formal support because "they look after their own". Yet for a range of BME citizens it has become increasingly difficult to live with members of their families, and a large number of older people from BME backgrounds still appear unwilling to consider sheltered housing through fear of isolation, discrimination and exclusion.³⁷

Nationally, a wide variety of barriers to accessing housing-related support services have been identified. Language barriers remain a significant problem not only as an initial barrier to accessing services but also as an impediment to receiving appropriate or effective support once within the care system.

Within Cambridge, there is a wide variety of ethnic groups, and we can expect an increasing number of BME elders over the coming years. We have looked at the housing needs of this population more in our BME Housing Strategy.³⁸

Gypsies and Travellers are one of the largest minority groups in Cambridgeshire, and a group who continue to be subjected to significant harassment and discrimination. Their life expectancy is 10-12 years lower than average. Whilst there are not yet any official traveller sites in

³⁷ Source: BME Spark.

³⁸ Available from Cambridge City Council

Cambridge City, we know that there are many settled travellers living in rented housing, some of whom are older and in poor health.

BME Elders: What have we done so far?

We supported the Vietnamese community to develop An Lac House – a scheme for their elders – more than 20 years ago. This experience may be useful to other communities who wish to develop ways to meet their specific needs in future.

Simons House sheltered scheme is being transferred to Cambridge Housing Society and redeveloped as an extra-care scheme. We have worked in partnership with the Chinese Community Association to ensure that eight units within this scheme will be designed to meet the needs of Chinese elders, who will have first refusal on these units. We are also working to ensure that appropriate culturally sensitive support will be available to those residents.

We have a policy of training all housing staff in cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.

We have developed a BME Housing Strategy which highlights the areas where we need to do more work with local communities. One such area is the low take-up of services by people from BME backgrounds with disabilities.

In Cambridge the largest three ethnic minority groups are Chinese, Indian, and Bangladeshi, yet there were no applications for Home Aid assistance during the period 2005-06 from the Indian or Bangladeshi communities and only 1 from the Chinese community. Currently, approximately 5% of the city's populations are from these groups whereas only 0.0075% applied to Cambridge Home Aid in the year 2005-06.

BME Elders: What should happen in future?

We will work with BME and faith communities to help them address the needs of their elders, and to identify where the local authority should assist.

We will work to improve the promotion of our services to BME communities.

We will involve people from a range of backgrounds in helping us to design new sheltered schemes and new communities.

We will continue to train and develop staff, and seek to recruit staff who can represent BME communities in our services.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Older People

From national research³⁹, we know that LGBT people have particular concerns about whether supported accommodation will be comfortable for them, with worries about homophobic attitudes in specialist housing or care.

We have not carried out any specific work with LGBT Older People in relation to housing needs and we need to engage more proactively with this group.

LGBT: What should happen in future

The Council's Independent Living Service are collating information on tenant sexual orientation in Sheltered Housing to try to establish numbers, but this must be treated with caution as not all older LGBT people will be comfortable with being "out" in their scheme.

We should ensure that staff in our ILS are trained in cultural sensitivity, and in particular are aware of issues facing older LGBT people.

Homeless Older People

People who have been homeless, particularly those who have been homeless for long periods and/or have suffered repeat cycles of homelessness and lived on the streets, age more quickly than the general population. This means that homeless people in their 50s may show similar signs of ageing to others fifteen or twenty years older.

We carried out local research into the numbers and needs of older homeless people in Cambridge in January 2007.⁴⁰ Of 93 people over the age of 45 interviewed, 40 were aged over 55. Nearly one third of the interviewees had been in temporary accommodation for more than two years, and 10% for over ten years. Most had multiple support needs and

³⁹ Housing Choices and Aspirations of Older People (CLG, 2008)

⁴⁰ Available from Cambridge City Council's Rough Sleepers' Team.

would not manage independent living without considerable ongoing support.

In 2007/08, 138 households were accepted as homeless and in priority need by Cambridge City Council; only one was aged over 60, five were aged 50-60.

The results of the research make a strong case for improved joint working with social services and health to address the needs of this vulnerable population, including the needs of 'younger older' homeless people.

Homelessness: What have we done so far?

We have conducted local research.

We are actively working with partners through the Cambridge Single Homeless forum to identify and find solutions to needs.

We have been actively working to reduce homelessness amongst all age groups to reduce street homelessness, to eliminate the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, and to improve temporary accommodation for homeless households. More information on these actions is in our *Homelessness Strategy* and *Single Homeless and Rough Sleepers Action Plan*. The strategy is currently being revised and consultation is under way; the new strategy will in place from 2009.

Homelessness: What should happen in future?

We will work with partners to develop housing options for older homeless people. This may include some or all of the following: intensive floating support to help them maintain tenancies; work to make sheltered housing appropriate for such tenants; specialist schemes providing long-term support to the most vulnerable, including the 'younger old' aged 45 and over.

We will work with the Drug and Alcohol Action Team to support drinkers. This team is appointing an "alcohol coordinator" to support this work.

We will seek further resources to support work with drinkers, as support to them is key to helping older homeless people into and to remain in accommodation. We will seek LPSA reward grant for a specialist community psychiatric nurse to work with street drinkers.

We will monitor the use of Home-Link by homeless applicants to ensure that they are accessing the system and provide support them to bid for properties where required.

Disability

Many people become disabled in older age: appropriately accessible housing is a priority. We need to continue to work with partners to understand and address the housing needs of people with disabilities, including those with sensory impairment.

For more about how we work to support people who need adaptations to their home see chapter 4; for more on moving to an appropriate home see chapter 6.

Learning disability

Through our consultation additional help was requested to help people with learning difficulties to find housing, especially with the trend away from more supportive group homes towards private rented accommodation.

At the present time, we do not know how many older people with a learning disability need more appropriate housing. We do know from our partners that there are a number of older people who are full-time carers for their learning disabled children (now adults), and that the demands of continuing this caring relationship into old age can pose an enormous strain.

We will work with the Learning Disability partnership to understand the needs of older people with a learning disability. We will also work with them to plan for the housing needs of adults with a LD who live with carers over the age of 60.

Mental health

Between 2006 and 2021, dementia sufferers in Cambridge are predicted to increase in number from 1,100 to 1,400. There may be a need for specialist housing for older people with dementia and other functional mental health problems who are not able to live independently but who do not need to be in care homes. During consultation, the accommodation at Wulfstan Way was cited as an instructive example of good practice in housing older people with dementia.

The incidence of depression amongst older people is high (see Chapter 1) and for many people feeling lonely and isolated exacerbates this. Housing which promotes social contact, and provision of safe outdoor environments can help to reduce depression, as can effective support, including through voluntary groups, social activities and faith groups.

In the Supporting People review of mental health schemes,⁴¹ it was highlighted that there are many adults with long-term mental health problems living and growing older in supported housing schemes in Cambridge, who may need to move to accommodation which better suits their needs (e.g. without stairs) but with ongoing specialist support.

We will work with the Mental Health Trust to plan for the future housing needs of people with dementia, and long-term residents of supported housing.

We will work with Supporting People to explore ways to expand floating support services to older people, including those with mental illness.

⁴¹ Available from Cambridgeshire's Supporting People Team

PART III – Taking the Strategy Forward

Chapter 9: Strengthening consultation and partnership working

As stated in earlier chapters, successful delivery of this strategy can only be done in partnership with a range of other agencies. We already have strong partnership links with many of these groups, but we need to improve these links in some areas, and look to develop new links with other agencies where appropriate. The increasing national emphasis on the role of the Voluntary sector increases the opportunities for us to work more closely with and harness the expertise of some of these agencies.

We have carried out a range of consultation on this strategy with older people and key stakeholders. In meeting the priorities identified in this strategy we need to further analyse some of the questionnaire responses received from older people to get a better understanding of the profiles of groups experiencing particular issues or looking for certain types of solution to their housing problems. We will continue to engage with individuals and groups in implementing the strategy, through existing agencies, local residents groups, existing survey mechanisms etc, as well as through more detailed consultation if required.

Chapter 10: Next Steps

This strategy has identified a number of priorities which need to be taken forward, many in partnership with other agencies. We will develop a more detailed action plan showing how these priorities will be met by the end of February 2009.

A number of these priorities are relevant to achieving targets agreed within the Local Area Agreement, as well as in performance against some of the other National Indicators, and the action plan will be developed in this context.

Resourcing the Strategy

Value for money is a key issue for the Council and other agencies. This strategy helps to identify the priorities in relation to older people in Cambridge to ensure that resources can be targeted in the areas where they are most needed.

Some resources – revenue and capital - are already in place through the Council's General Fund, and through its Housing Revenue Account (which funds services provided to the Council's tenants).

Additional revenue funding for support and care is provided through the Supporting People programme and the local Primary Care Trust. Supporting People funding for sheltered schemes in the City will continue to reduce in line with the outcomes of the county-wide Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing and the requirements of the Cambridgeshire's Supporting People Commissioning Strategy. Implementation of those plans will depend on extra-care funding being made available through the PCT. We are in liaison with the PCT over care funding for those sheltered schemes which are being refurbished/redeveloped as extra-care schemes.

The Council's housing capital programme is under increasing pressure due to diminishing resources available, and is currently under review. Priorities identified within this Older People's Housing Strategy are being taken into account in that review.

The Council has been successful in securing capital grant funding for particular projects. For example Housing Corporation Grant funding has been approved for the redevelopment of Elmfield Close into new housing

targeted at older people, and for the redevelopment of Simons House into an extra-care scheme.

LPSA reward grant funding has been made available for the extension of the Safer Homes scheme to provide a Handyperson scheme.

More funding is expected, in future, to be channelled through the county-wide Local Area Agreement, and we will use the evidence in this strategy to highlight the need for resources for services for older people in the City.

Our action plan will identify any additional resources which may be required and how those resources might be secured. The Council will continue to bid for external funding where appropriate.

Monitoring the Strategy

Where appropriate, actions identified through this strategy will be fed into and monitored through the Council's Service Planning process. Ongoing progress against the strategy as a whole will be monitored alongside progress against the Housing and BME Housing Strategies, through regular reports to the Council's Housing Management Team.

Appendix 1 – Summary of Priorities

Vision: For older people to live independently for as long as possible, with support and/or adaptations if they need them;

- a) Work with the PCT to speed up assessments for adaptations.
- b) Consider how we can best help people who need adaptations to move if their home is unsuitable for their long-term needs or if they would prefer to move to a more suitable property.
- c) Establish, by engagement with local people and agencies, what type and level of Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service should be provided, and ensure that any re-tendering of the service represents good value for money and does not lead to a loss of quality. Also whether to bid to continue to be a direct provider of this service.
- d) Continue to provide grants and loans to older people in the private sector, although at reduced funding levels to reflect lower levels of demand than previously anticipated, and to improve promotion of and early referral to the service and support people in the process of applying for funding.
- e) Launch a handyman service for help with small repairs (LPSA Reward Grant funding has been awarded to extend the Safer Homes scheme to offer a Handyman service).
- f) Make best use of adaptations by making sure that homes are re-occupied by people who can use them wherever possible.
- g) Investigate further the demand for gardening services, and whether there is scope for increasing provision, either through existing schemes, or through other channels such as expanding the HIA service.
- h) Work with Supporting People to improve the provision of floating support to a wide range of older people, including those with mental illness.
- i) Work with the PCT to ensure appropriate provision of extra-care.

- j) Continue to provide grant funding for local groups and projects aimed at supporting older people.
- k) Work with partners through the Local Strategic Partnership to improve access to health, transport and leisure.
- l) Ensure that access to community facilities is a key factor in the design and development of new communities in and around the City.
- m) Work with the Drug and Alcohol Action Team to support older drinkers. (This team is appointing an “alcohol coordinator” to support this work).
- n) Work with relevant agencies to support achievement of the targets within the Local Area Agreement which relate to addressing delays in discharge from hospital and achieving and supporting independent living.

Vision: For everyone to be able to live in safe, decent, accessible, warm and energy efficient homes and to stay in their existing homes for as long as possible where they choose to do so

- o) Continue to work towards meeting the National Decent Homes target by 2010, and maintaining homes to this standard beyond 2010.
- p) Continue to deliver the Sheltered Housing Modernisation Strategy, in particular to complete the sale of Tiverton House to raise capital funding to fund the modernisation programme, complete the redevelopment of Talbot House and the refurbishment of Brandon Court, and consider the future options for Seymour Court sheltered scheme.
- q) Work with Supporting People to ensure a sustainable future for sheltered housing in Cambridge, and to plan ahead for tenants in any schemes which may be ineligible for funding in the future.
- r) Review take-up of grants and loans, and continue to ensure we are meeting needs and reaching the most vulnerable people (especially those over 75, and those at increased risk of falls) or whether, working with the PCT, we can target our services more effectively.

- s) Consider whether a sub-regional approach to providing grants and loans, which may be eligible for grant funding from the government, might be a cost-effective way forward in the future.
- t) Renew the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey so we have good information about where to target out services.
- u) Work with householders in the private sector to develop solutions for house types that are more difficult to insulate (eg which do not have cavity walls or roof spaces).
- v) Monitor the impact on older people of energy efficiency works through the Landlord Accreditation scheme.
- w) In our own stock, continue to improve the SAP rating by improving more difficult property types.
- x) Install energy consumption monitors in sheltered housing to encourage tenants to be aware of and then reduce their energy use, and investigate using light sensors in communal areas to ensure energy is not wasted in lighting them during daylight.
- y) Continue to work towards meeting the Cambridge Standard agreed with tenants, especially in regard to security and lighting.
- z) Work with colleagues in the Police and Community Safety teams, and through the Local Strategic Partnership, to make communities feel safer for older people who live in them.

Vision: For older people to have a range of housing options to choose from, preferably close to services and facilities, to meet their particular needs;

- aa) Work with developers to ensure that new housing contains a mix of property types close to facilities and services where possible, including smaller homes suitable for single older people, as well as larger homes for inter-generational households.
- bb) Continue, where possible, to use our own land to develop new homes. These homes will be designed to meet a wide range of needs, including those of older people.

- cc) For the larger development on growth sites, confirm definitions of standards of accessible housing to be used, ensure that sufficient community facilities are provided, work with partners to include housing designed specifically for older people, and consider ways to make these developments attractive to older people, including ways to support older people who are moving to these homes to be near to their families in order to give or receive support.
- dd) Regularly monitor Home-Link to see if it is working for older people seeking homes: checking whether or not the support offered is reaching those who need it, and whether older people bid for properties successfully.
- ee) Work through the county-wide Disability Housing Strategy to improve information on wheelchair adapted homes available. Understand whether adaptations are being removed unnecessarily, and explore whether there is potential for shared equity to be more valuable to older people, either for supporting people moving to smaller homes, or in releasing equity in their current home.
- ff) Improve the information available on current and future housing need in relation to older people, including those with disabilities, through the sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- gg) Work with BME and faith communities to help them address the needs of their elders, and to identify where the local authority should assist.
- hh) Involve people from a range of backgrounds in helping us to design new sheltered schemes and new communities.
- ii) Work with partners to develop housing options for older homeless people, including the 'younger-old' aged 45 and above.
- jj) Work with the Learning Disability partnership to understand the needs of older people with a learning disability; we will also work with them to plan for the housing needs of adults with a LD who live with carers over the age of 60.

kk) Work with the Mental Health Trust to plan for the future housing needs of people with dementia, and long-term residents of supported housing.

Vision: For older people to have access to high-quality, appropriate information and support to enable them to make informed choices about their housing.

ll) Explore other ways to inform more people about the options available to them.

mm) Further develop partnerships with PCT staff, and others who have regular contact with older people to explore ways to use their information to target advice on the very frail, and on those approaching older age.

nn) Continue to develop services which actively support older people needing to move, especially in terms of encouraging younger and younger-older people in Council homes to consider attractive housing in new developments.

oo) Consider the results of the consultation in shaping the future of the Home Improvement Agency Service.

pp) Continue to develop Home-Link, including working with older people's support services and advice agencies to promote options and to ensure that older people are getting the advice and information they need.

qq) Work to improve the promotion of our services to BME communities.

rr) Continue to train and develop staff, and seek to recruit staff who can represent BME communities in our services.

ss) Ensure staff in our Independent Living Service are trained in cultural sensitivity, and in particular are aware of issues facing older LGBT people.

tt) Seek further resources to support work with drinkers, as support to them is key to helping older homeless people into accommodation,

and seek LPSA reward grant for a specialist community psychiatric nurse to work with street drinkers.

uu) Increase our knowledge and understanding of community based services for older people provided by other agencies so that we can better direct older people towards the services available.

Appendix 2 - Stakeholders Consulted

(NB although all the following were consulted, not all agencies responded. We will endeavour to engage some of these groups more effectively in developing and implementing the action plan)

Organization

Cambridge City Council - Active Communities, City Homes, Transport Planning, Home Aid, Housing Advice, Housing Needs, Homelessness, Independent Living Services, Safer Communities, Strategy and Partnerships, Strategic Growth, Tenant Participation and Planning.

Cambridgeshire Supporting People

Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust

Older People's Partnership Board

Anchor Housing Association

Cambridge Housing Society

Granta Housing

Housing 21

Raglan Housing

St Pancras and Humanist Housing Association

Cambridge Federation

Cambridgeshire COPE

Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum

Disabilities Cambridgeshire

Speaking Up

Diverse

Lifecraft

Age Concern

Help the Aged

Cam Sight

Heyday

Future East

Cambridge Law Centre

Citizens' Advice Bureau

Cambridgeshire Older People's Active Group

National Pensioners' Convention

Cambridge Cyrenians

English Churches Housing Group

Crime Reduction Initiatives' Street Outreach Team

Appendix 3 – Action Plan

To be developed with stakeholders.