

www.oxford.gov.uk



**OXFORD
CITY
COUNCIL**

Review of Oxford City Council Housing and Services
for Older People

Fiona Brown.

December 2005

Contents

Section	Page Number
Executive summary	3
1. Background and purpose of the review	8
2. Stakeholder involvement and consultation	9
3. Key tasks undertaken	10
4. Relevant local and national strategies	11
5. The relevance of sheltered housing to services for older people	18
6. Current and future requirements for sheltered housing	20
7. Providing a strategic direction for Oxford City Council housing for older people	24
8. Accessing sheltered housing, support and information	35
9. Support services for older people provided by the emergency control centre at Barton	39
10. Developing housing and support for older homeless people	40
11. Improving integrated working with partner agencies	41
12. Working with diversity	44
13. Implementation plan	47
Appendix 1-Design standard	55
Appendix 2 – Scheme appraisal details	58
Appendix 3 –Calculation table for grading schemes	62
Appendix 4- Full list of designated elderly housing schemes	65
Appendix 5-Appraisal process for designated elderly schemes	75
Appendix 6 – Support Needs Assessment	78

Executive Summary.

The review of Oxford City Council's housing and services for older people contains a number of recommendations about how to improve the standard of housing and services for residents and for the wider older population in Oxford. It follows on from the Supporting People strategic review and aims to ensure the Council is in a good position to respond to the new 'contract culture' in sheltered housing services.

The first three sections provide background information as to the purpose and methods used as part of the review.

Section 4. Local and national strategies

This provides a summary of the main national and local strategies and targets relevant to older people's housing and support services. The main thrust of these is to increase independence and choice for older people, to ensure services from all the agencies involved in a person's support are integrated, to provide clear information about how to access services, ensuring services meet diverse needs and promoting good housing design. This section includes reference to the 20/20 vision project that set about trying to establish a picture of how services will look in the year 2020. This vision includes developing a range of accommodation and support that can meet the needs of older people throughout the community, providing more home ownership options for housing with support, the development of telecare services and giving older people budgetary control over purchasing their care. On a more local basis the Supporting People strategy will be used to underpin the future commissioning of services. Supporting People want to see the movement away from accommodation based services towards supporting people on the basis of need rather than tenure, more provision for the frail elderly, more culturally sensitive provision for elders from different ethnic backgrounds and better integration of health, social and housing services. The recent strategic review recommends the move to a three-tier model for providing support to older people, which includes:

- Provision of an emergency alarm service with or without a visiting response in an emergency
- An emergency alarm service with 5 minutes support per day
- An emergency alarm visit with 10 minutes support per day

Eligibility criteria for the level of service someone will receive needs to be developed but this constitutes a big step towards the provision of support on the basis of need rather than because someone has chosen to move into sheltered housing. Clearly this also has big implications for the funding stream for sheltered housing services as different levels of subsidy payment will be attached to each level of service.

Section 5. The relevance of sheltered housing.

This section makes the case for the continued relevance and popularity of sheltered housing as a choice for older people. However in order to be truly

effective the service needs to take advantage of the opportunities provided by Supporting People and other Government agendas. The buildings need to be well designed and the service needs to be able to respond to a range of needs from the community as well as from tenants living in the schemes. Sheltered housing should be part of a range of provision which includes schemes designed as extra care housing with care services as well as housing related support provided on site.

Section 6. The requirements for sheltered housing.

This gives some basic information about the current number of older people in the city and their likely needs. Given that we know that the numbers of older people are due to rise over the next 15 years it is hard to argue there is an overprovision of housing for older people. However there is a strong case to provide a range of models which include housing let only to older people but with no other attached support, sheltered housing, extra care housing and nursing care provision. Most older people are now owner occupiers and so provision needs to be made available to this group either through access to rented housing or through home ownership options such as leasehold or shared ownership schemes.

Section 7. Providing a strategic direction for Oxford City Council housing.

The core part of the review looks at how the Council can improve the quality of its sheltered housing stock. Many of the Council's schemes need a lot of reinvestment if they are going to be a good option for older people in future years. A full appraisal of schemes was carried out based on strategic viability, physical viability, financial viability and the relevance of the support service and each scheme was graded using a simple calculation system. There were four schemes that scored highly and should be retained as they are. The other schemes were grouped on the basis of locality and the best scoring scheme in each locality was noted. The review recommends that options appraisals are carried out over the course of the next year on the poorer performing schemes and these are taken back to Council for a decision on the best option.

Because of the need to make a high level of investment in the stock the programme is likely to result in an overall reduction in the total number of sheltered housing units. However the units lost will be those that will become increasingly unlettable and remaining stock will be of high quality. The report also recommends replacing lost units with other forms of housing for older people including extra care. Any scheme closures will take place over a number of years giving time to reassess the total provision available as time goes on.

This section of the report also deals with the designated elderly housing stock. This is housing that has been let to people over 40. The only support attached to these properties is either a hard wired alarm or a dispersed community alarm where required. There are a number of issues connected with these properties:

An over supply of accommodation. The report provides evidence that there is an oversupply of single person accommodation for the over 40s at the expense of

the demand from younger single people. The lack of accommodation for younger people often means the most vulnerable are housed together creating unsustainable communities

Inappropriate accommodation for older people. Much of the accommodation is not specifically designed for older people. Having the minimum age limit as low as 40 years also means that there can be a clash of lifestyles between the younger and older members of the schemes.

The proposals to deal with these issues are:

- To undertake a pilot project to appraise three of the schemes. If the appraisal shows a scheme will benefit from de-designation the lettings criteria for the scheme will be changed to include all single people regardless of age. This pilot will be evaluated and repeated up to an initial limit of 270 properties.
- Where schemes are de-designated anybody living in them aged 55 or over will be offered the opportunity to move into a designated elderly scheme (or sheltered scheme if appropriate). This will include paying for removal expenses.
- Where schemes are de-designated ensuring that needs and risk assessments are carried out with vulnerable single people before letting.
- To raise the minimum age requirement to 55 years for those schemes not to be de-designated.

Section 8. Accessing sheltered housing, support and information.

There is a need to ensure that the purpose and client group for sheltered housing is defined. At the same time the best sheltered housing has always benefited from being a mixed and balanced community where much of the support is given by residents to one another.

The review proposes that all applicants should undergo a support needs assessment as part of the application process. Applicants will only need one support need identified to qualify as eligible for sheltered housing and these can be very wide ranging from health needs to the need for security or company. The three tier 'menu' of support proposed by the Supporting People strategic review allows for low support needs to be catered for in sheltered housing without attracting a large amount of subsidy payment. Eligibility criteria need to be established that will determine the level of support someone receives when they do move into sheltered housing or indeed live in other tenures where support is provided.

Two obstacles have been identified that may prevent take up of sheltered housing from those who need it. The housing requirements survey identified the numbers of older people who are now owner-occupiers but only some of these have sufficient income to access private leasehold developments. The allocations system allows

for this group to be housed in the rented stock but this is not widely known. The review suggests this should be publicised.

At the moment anyone with a pet is excluded from sheltered housing. This seems unnecessary and many other providers have found ways of allowing pets on schemes without it causing nuisance or animal welfare issues. The review proposes that the policy on pets is reviewed in consultation with residents.

The review recognises that more focus is required on how support services run within sheltered housing can be accessed by those living outside of it. The community support model proposed by Supporting People could help to promote access to services by those living in other tenures.

It is also important that sheltered housing providers can evidence that they provide valuable and cost effective services and to do this need to find ways of recording and monitoring outcomes from the support that is offered.

There is a need for older people to access more information about services. A continual message from the consultation done with agencies and older people is the need for more ways to get information out about what is available and how to access it. In terms of the services sheltered housing offers the review recommends that the sheltered housing marketing pack which covers schemes owned by all providers in the city is completed and sent out to all applicants and made available in advice centres.

As regards wider service provision the council could do more to promote services by having leaflets available in the local offices and sheltered housing schemes. There is also a suggestion to have an electronic services guide for older people in Oxfordshire which could be accessed via the Internet directly or available in advice centres. The guide would be produced across districts and in conjunction with the County Council to ensure all available services in Oxfordshire were captured.

Section 9. Support Services provided by the emergency control centre at Barton.

The 24-hour emergency response service provided by the City Council is central to the service provision for older people in the City and beyond and is valued by older people and service providers alike. However the way this service has been funded needs to change. The service has relied on income from the sheltered housing schemes and so loss of units mean a drop in income for the whole service. The service has received a block grant from Supporting People since 2003 through the Housing Revenue Account pooling and this is due to end in 2006. Furthermore the service, along with other providers will experience a general reduction in funding from Supporting People subsidy from 2006. There needs to be a thorough review of options for the future funding of this service and this needs to be carried out in the next few months to ensure the service remains financially viable.

Section 10. Developing housing and support services for older homeless people.

There is a lack of clear provision for this group. As older homeless people start to age the support provided by hostels and other services can become less and less adequate. Because of their lifestyle, often including problem drinking, people in this group may age prematurely. These clients do get referred into sheltered housing schemes. Sometimes these referrals are successful but too often the tenancy breaks down due to a lack of adequate support or because the environment is wrong for an individual. As a result of this review contact has been made with the National Coalition on Older Homelessness and the Council is looking into the possibility of becoming a pilot authority to use a new methodology to establish the numbers and needs in this client group. Once this is obtained it will be possible to look at models of provision.

Section 11. Improving integrated working with partner agencies.

There is a clear need for the different services involved to become more integrated if older people are to effectively access what they need. A number of suggestions are listed that may help to improve integration of services. These include strategic changes such as integrating strategies across housing, health and social services and ensuring each agency is working to achieve joint targets. It includes changes in processes such as ensuring the new health and social services single assessment process includes a housing assessment and that there are opportunities for middle managers to meet together to discuss ways of dealing with common issues such as falls, aids and adaptations and care assessment. There are also improvements that can happen at scheme level such as better use of common rooms in sheltered schemes to provide a range of activities and services for the community and training scheme staff on the full range of services provided by various agencies.

Section 12. Working with diversity.

There is evidence to suggest that current provision does not necessarily meet the diverse range of needs amongst older people. This section has concentrated on the needs of older people from BME groups. It recommends further investigation and assessment of the needs of this group and the need to translate this into more accessible service provision. This work could be taken forward under the Council's Equality Steering Group and via the BME strategy due to be completed in 2006.

Section 13. Implementation plan.

This section pulls out the main recommendations, gives accountability to particular roles and a guide timetable for introduction.

1. Background and Purpose of the Review.

This review has been commissioned by Oxford City Council following an initial 'scoping' review by an independent consultant. The review has been carried out by Fiona Brown, an employee of Oxford Citizens Housing Association and seconded to work for the City Council for the period of the review. The review took place between August 2005 and January 2006.

One of the main driving forces for carrying out this review was a need to appraise and take decisions about the future of Oxford City Council owned sheltered housing and designated elderly housing. Some of the sheltered housing is now below expected standards and requires a clear strategy for how schemes can be improved. In addition there has been a view for some time that there is too much general needs housing designated for older people and that some of this is also below standard and not meeting the needs of the older residents living in the schemes. A clear policy for the allocation of these properties together with a transition plan that will protect the interests of older residents currently living in these schemes is needed.

Whilst these are the pressing concerns the review followed on from the Supporting People strategic review for the City. It is increasingly important that the City Council can continue to develop its services to meet the Supporting People strategy and that those services can remain financially viable in the face of cuts from Supporting People funding.

However an appraisal of sheltered housing should not happen in isolation but needs to be done in the context of the total provision of older peoples housing and support services and indeed in the context of the full range of services for older people in the City. The Supporting People strategic review gathered a wealth of information about the provision of sheltered housing across all the providers in the City. This has enabled this review to examine the relevance of accommodation managed by the City Council in the light of the full range of provision.

Sheltered housing services rely on partnership working so it has been particularly important to consider how to improve working with other agencies so as to improve services and also to specially consider the needs of older people who do not necessarily fit easily into the standard service sheltered housing provides. These groups are the frailer elderly (particularly those suffering from dementia), elders from black and ethnic minority groups, and older homeless people.

This review has therefore focussed on both how to improve the standard and usage of the City Council's stock and ideas for improving the delivery of services.

2. Stakeholder Involvement and Consultation

The review has been managed by a steering group representing the key stakeholders in the sheltered housing service.

Fiona Brown, Housing Advisor OCC
Chris Lee, Administrator, OCC
Gordon Ilott, Tenant representative, OCC
Cath Stubbings, Housing Strategy Advisor OCC
Graham Stratford, Business Manager, OCC
Jenny Robinson, Elderly Services Manager, OCC
Lisa Watson, Supported Housing co- ordinator, OCC
Rachel Boland, Age Concern
David Truesdale, Catalyst
Linda Ingram, OCHA
Robyn Noonan, Social and Health Care
Clare Dodwell, NHS PCT
Claire Kent, OCC Council Member
David Rundle, OCC Council Member
Ed Turner, OCC Council Member
Duncan Hall, Supporting People Team

The steering group met twice during the course of the review. An initial meeting helped scope the review and a later meeting enabled stakeholders to give feedback on the draft report. Outside of the steering group meetings, members gave access to the reviewer to discuss their own department or organisation's priorities and their views about sheltered housing provision in the City.

There was also a consultation meeting with Connection and the Elmore Team about the needs of older homeless people.

Apart from the tenant representation on the steering group there were a number of opportunities to talk to older people informally and formally about the project. These included:

- A talk to the Oxfordshire Pensioners Action Group
- A talk and feedback session with the Age Concern Older Peoples Forum in the City
- Meetings with members of the Milan Club (a lunch club aimed mainly at elders from Asian communities)
- Meeting with the attendants of the Afro Caribbean day centre

Feedback received as part of the Supporting People strategic review has also informed this review. This took the form of a sample survey with sheltered housing residents and waiting list applicants. Older residents of Oxford City Council will be consulted in more depth once specific proposals are accepted.

3. Key Activities Undertaken

A number of key tasks were carried out as part of the review. These include:

- Research of national and local strategies concerning the delivery of services to older people.
- A SWOT analysis with the steering group highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the current provision
- Gathering of evidence about the demand for sheltered housing. This was done as part of the Supporting People review but has been incorporated into this review.
- A visit to some schemes with a mobile warden to get a feel for the accommodation and services
- Consultation with stakeholders as above including gathering ideas and recommendations for improved services
- Carrying out an extensive appraisal of all the City Council sheltered schemes to assess their viability and cost options for remodelling where necessary.
- Following extensive consultation with all staff drawing up recommendations to change the allocation policy of some designated elderly schemes and a transition plan to protect the interests of older residents living in the schemes.
- The introduction of a thorough support needs assessment process for applicants to sheltered housing

4. Relevant local and national strategies

National strategies

There have been a huge number of national strategies influencing housing and services for older people in recent years and the pace of change on services for older people has been great. Sheltered housing providers have needed to continually assess their services against new guidelines. This has been most noticeable with the introduction of the Supporting People programme but has also been influenced by a number of other government papers.

Quality and Choice for Older Peoples Housing DETR/DOH 2001

This remains an influential report and provides a good set of values against which to measure any service improvements.

The report has two key objectives:

- To ensure older people secure and sustain independence
- To support older people to make active and informed choices about their accommodation by providing appropriate housing, services and advice

Service approaches should be integrated, inclusive, involving and preventative.

It identified five priority areas

- Diversity and choice
- Information and advice
- Flexible service provision
- Quality
- Joint working

National Service Framework for Older People DOH 2001

These are key objectives for the NHS but are relevant to all policy makers working in the area of services for older people. There are eight standards but the ones that most affect this review are:

- Tackle age discrimination and ensure older people are treated with respect and dignity.
- Ensure integrated services with a well co-ordinated and cohesive approach to assessing individual's needs and circumstances and for the commissioning and provision of services.
- Promote health and well being of older people through the co-ordinated actions of the NHS and local councils.
- The framework pays special attention to particular needs of older people in relation to strokes, falls and mental health problems associated with old age

Housing for Older People in England, Housing Corporation 2002

This sets out the Housing Corporations approach to housing and services for older people. It looks at remodelling as an option in the Approved Development Programme (now the national Affordable Housing Programme) and seeks investment that is based on the preferences of local people, meets future demand and fits with local strategies.

Strategy for Housing Older People in England, Housing Corporation

This lists 12 aims and associated targets for older peoples housing. The main ones relevant to this review are:

- An anti discriminatory approach
- Age equality
- Older people influencing decision making
- Older peoples housing advice
- Effectiveness of adaptations
- Development of culturally sensitive housing
- Good design
- Increasing housing choices
- Cutting delays in hospital discharges

Green Paper – Independence, Well-being and Choice: Our vision for the future of social care for adults in England, DH 2005.

The principal recommendations of this report are:

- Individual budgets, with care brokers helping people to assess their own needs and manage their own budgets
- Development of new responsive care models, such as extra care housing and telecare, along with the right to choose not to enter residential care
- New directors of adult social services to provide strategic leadership across all adult services
- Streamlined assessments between agencies to provide more proactive, preventative services
- Support for families, friends and carers delivering care
- Empowerment of the social care workforce

The 20/20 vision project (October 2005)

This has been driven by a number of agencies that help to shape future housing and care policies for older people. It aims to provide a vision for services for older people in the year 2020 when the baby boomers of the 60s and 70s will begin to demand services that meet their needs in older age.

The key recommendations for providers and local authorities are listed under five headings.

Sheltered and Retirement Housing

- Changing the use of social sheltered housing schemes where demand is low and or design/location is unsuitable for older people.
- Assessing the viability of existing schemes as hubs for local older peoples services
- Re-evaluating the scheme manager role as provider of floating support to other sheltered housing in the area and to older people in their own homes.
- Assessing the benefits and outcomes of the scheme manager to services and to residents in order to evaluate the value that scheme managers give.
- Partnering private developers and working with older people to develop new purchase options for older homebuyers; possibly age friendly properties with built in telecare portals and with an on site concierge.
- Working with Social Services and PCTs to realise the value of 'balanced communities' in sheltered housing.

Extra Care

- Establishing indicators which demonstrate value for money
- Ensuring extra care is non institutional (building design and service model)
- Developing specialist housing for older people with dementia or learning disabilities
- Cross subsidising rented units with ownership options

Telecare

- Make sure staff and users have fully costed information on what is available
- Make sure equipment is generic and flexible
- Training for staff
- Access to technology regardless of tenure

Staffing

- Ensure sheltered staff role and skills are communicated to PCTS, Social Services and Supporting People

Government to:

- Look at future staffing needs to meet older peoples health, housing and care aspirations
- Increasing the use of individual budgets and direct payments

Information and Advice

- Increase staff training
- Provide advice and information from schemes
- Establishing one stop high street information and advice centres
- Advertising campaigns directed at older people from diverse communities.

Local Strategies

Oxfordshire Supporting People Strategy (2004-2009)

The general thrust of the local Supporting People strategy is to

- Move away from accommodation based services towards supporting people where they live regardless of tenure.
- To provide accommodation based services for the very frail (e.g. extra care schemes)
- Improve access to services for older people from BME groups
- Better services for frail and mentally infirm older people
- Accommodation of a suitable standard to meet the needs of the frail elderly
- The integration of housing and support services with other community services

The Supporting People team's current view is that there is a poor fit between current sheltered housing models and the strategy.

Between June and October 2005 a strategic review was carried out to make recommendations on how sheltered housing could be remodelled to meet these objectives whilst at the same time finding ways to make the required 15% saving in expenditure due to the anticipated reduction in government funding for Oxfordshire. The review has recommended moving to a three level menu of services for older people. This model will apply to any older person who needs to access the service regardless of tenure.

Level one: Emergency alarm only with a remote or visiting response depending on the needs assessment.

Level two: Alarm plus five minutes per day of visiting support

Level three: Alarm plus 10 minutes per day of visiting support time

This will help achieve the SP target of providing support on a needs led basis rather than accommodation based. The model will be introduced over 5 years to avoid de-stabilising the finances of existing providers.

The report recommends that any savings made from the introduction of the above model in sheltered schemes should be used to fund a pilot community support model whereby the scheme manager delivers services to people living in the immediate vicinity of the scheme. This is recommended to be commissioned with Oxford City Council.

There are a number of other key local targets relevant to this review:

Supporting People Strategic review for Community alarms. (2005)

The review was carried out to consider how community alarm provision could be remodelled to provide support for more people in their own homes and to provide a good infrastructure for the introduction of telecare. The main aims of the review include:

- Developing reliable, timely, flexible, accessible community alarm services across Oxfordshire that are adaptable to changing need to support people to remain living independently in their own homes irrespective of tenure or location.
- Considering how the Oxfordshire Community Alarm infrastructure may be made more robust so that it might act as a platform for telecare services with the capacity to extend and enhancing the provision of telecare services in the future.

Some of the main objectives are:

- Provide flexible fully mobile 24-hour/seven day visiting response services across Oxfordshire as a means of providing fairer access to people needing a community alarm service regardless of where they live.
- Provide access to community alarm services to people in Oxfordshire irrespective of housing tenure.
- Provide information more freely to the public about the range and type of community alarm services available across Oxfordshire both SP funded and Non SP funded; also provide information about how to obtain funded services.
- Provide the appropriate SP funded Community Alarm services in South Oxfordshire to correspond with the need and demand identified in this report.
- Improve the flexibility of existing services to provide more short term and preventative services across Oxfordshire.
- Consider a menu based approach to services with progressive levels; service users able to receive services that are responsive to changes in need and enable them to take more control of their own lives.
- Ensure people and their Carers benefit from person centered services; have access to short term as well as long term Community Alarm services to provide respite and support to enable them to continue to live in their own home for longer.
- Develop service models for both Community Alarms with a visiting response and Community Alarms without a visiting response element so that service users with an adequate or extensive family and or peer support group can have the choice to select the people they prefer to provide a response once the call centre has processed the alarm call; thus providing more service user choice and self determination.

- Continually develop Community Alarm services to all client groups' not just older people i.e. Learning Disability and Domestic Violence, closer working arrangements with services which overlap with Community Alarms e.g. Thames Valley Police, Ambulance Service, Social and Health Care, Children's Services and Health.
- Meet the need of Health to have fast effective deliver of Community Alarm systems fitted within 24 hours to assist in hospital discharge; help develop an assessment procedure.
- Ensure Call Centre services have appropriate procedures in place are ASAP registered and have attained at least level 1ASAP quality standards; so that Oxfordshire has a robust community alarm infrastructure supplying an appropriate 24-hour/seven day service.
- Keep Social and Health Care informed and involved in the process of the development of community alarm services linking with plans to develop telecare services

All of these objectives will impact on the provision of the Council emergency control centre and should result in the growth of the work the centre carries out.

Oxford City Housing Strategy 2005-8

The strategy has 9 objectives of which 3 are particularly relevant to this review.

- Improve the condition of the Council's stock
- Improve housing related support services for everyone who needs them
- Develop housing strategy and policy work to support service improvements

There are also some key actions, which will be addressed by this review

- Complete the city wide review for the need and provision of Sheltered Accommodation
- Develop a housing strategy for older people

The strategy is clear about the need to meet the Decent Homes Standard that forms part of the scheme options appraisal in this review. In addition the strategy has action points to improve services for homeless people and for BME groups and the needs of both these groups have been touched on in this review.

- Work with the supporting people commissioning body to seek adequate funding and support for single homeless especially those with complex needs or who are ready to move on from hostels
- Develop a BME Housing Strategy
- Involve more BME residents in tenant participation

Oxford City Council Homelessness Strategy 2003-8

- Raise the profile of hospital discharges and homelessness and encourage early identification of housing need.

A significant amount of work has been done by the PCTs and Oxfordshire District Councils and a protocol and working arrangements are in place to resolve housing issues at the earliest possible time prior to discharge.

Community Safety Strategy for Oxford 2005-8

The strategy has identified the main priorities as crime reduction, violent assault and robbery, racial homophobic and domestic crime, burglary of people's homes, car crime and anti social behaviour. All of these affect older people in the environments where they live. The strategy seeks to address fear of crime and the need for extra measures in hotspot locations, which include The City Centre, East Oxford, Blackbird Leys, Barton and Littlemore. The review has considered these hotspot areas in the scheme appraisal process when looking at options for providing safe and secure homes for older people.

Oxford Strategic Partnership Community Strategy: Building a city where every-one is valued 2004-7

- To improve the supply and condition of affordable housing.
- Improve access to services by encouraging joined up working across the city.

There are two specific objectives relevant to this review;

Objective 4 –delayed discharges form hospital- to ensure people are able to leave hospital when they are clinically fit to do so

Objective 5 – to increase the number of people receiving intensive homecare support

Social and Health Care Business Plan 2004-2007

The most relevant objectives are:

Objective 1- to help people stay at home through the provision of intensive home support services, supported living services including sheltered housing, day services including transport and assistive technology.

Objective 4 – Reduce delays in hospital discharge and prevent unnecessary hospital admissions through the provision of intermediate care including those with mental health needs, increasing capacity e.g. transitional beds and home support.

Objective 6 –Improve user autonomy and control through increasing Direct Payments and improving user and carer choice within available resources.

5. The relevance of sheltered housing to services for older people

Evidence from the Supporting People review and from meetings with older people as part of this review both suggest that sheltered housing remains a popular choice for older people. However there does need to be choice and flexibility in services and sheltered housing can only form part of the continuum of care that is required. At the start of the review the steering group carried out a SWOT analysis of sheltered housing services. This focussed mainly on the City Council owned stock but within the context of wider service provision. The table below shows the results of this exercise.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF OCC OLDER PEOPLES SERVICES.

<p>Strengths The city control centre service is well regarded and vital to the maintenance of 24 hour provision Some very good schemes across the city Highly trained staff 24 hour service provision Support offered to people in their own homes as well as in sheltered housing Flexible model of service</p>	<p>Weaknesses Some poor schemes –in terms of bed sits and mobility Problems with the allocation policy and inappropriate allocations Other professionals and older people are still unclear about what Sheltered Housing offers as a service Providers don't 'sell' what the service can offer Lack of practical help available –when moving and ongoing (cleaning etc) People can't take pets into some sheltered housing schemes. Accommodation has been neglected due to uncertainty about scheme closures</p>
<p>Opportunities SP review gives impetus for change Real chance to take decisions on which accommodation we should invest in. Opportunity to use outdated schemes for developing new accommodation for other groups Opportunity to implement some clear joint working improvements Chance to better define and market the service Control centre well placed to develop more assistive technology schemes Opportunities to develop intermediate care provision Chance to reassess provision of extra care Opportunity to look at needs and develop a strategy for BME groups and older homeless people To provide better advice and information. May be possibilities to work more closely with the private sector</p>	<p>Threats SP review-spending cuts and uncertainty about future funding Lack of or uncertain funding for new services Loss of staying put service in the city Uncertainty about PCT role may make joined up working harder Impact on residents of changes and cuts</p>

The opportunities, threats and weaknesses of the current service are addressed in this review and by doing so will hopefully help define to users and partner agencies the relevance of sheltered housing within the range of services for older people.

This relevance was borne out by a consultation session with the Age Concern Older Peoples Forum. They were asked to identify their hopes for the future as they aged and this produced a list of current service gaps or failures many of which could be improved through better use of sheltered housing facilities and good quality well designed housing.

Service Gap	Possibilities for Sheltered Housing
To have a register of reliable handy men to carry out repairs	Hold information on staying put and other lists of reputable contractors.
One bedroom flats –not bed sits	Improve the quality of housing for older people
A safe secure location	Develop schemes in areas which feel safe and ensure design adds to the security
Parking close to home	Ensure the redesign of sheltered schemes provides adequate parking for visitors and carers
To look after the needs of carers	Staff on hand to advise and support carers. Activities on site. Possibility of providing respite care
Low level support such as cleaning and gardening	Some providers have employed a staff member whose time can be purchased by the hour to carry out a range of services for older people
Good domiciliary care	Scheme staff are in an ideal position to monitor the care and ensure the well being of their clients. They can advocate for older people and provide a route through the care system.
The need for companionship	One of the main benefits of sheltered housing is the community it provides and more could be done to enable this community to reach out into the surrounding locality through activities and services
Mobility aids	Staff can provide information, advice and support
Information	Schemes can be used as places where older people can find out what is available.
Stimulating activities and opportunities to socialise	Common rooms can be used for a whole range of activities.

Although the Supporting People team states that there is no evidence that sheltered housing can enable people to stay at home longer, improved buildings and access to care would enable many people to stay at home and much of this

report is aimed at trying to improve sheltered housing to achieve this aim. However it is true that sheltered housing providers including the City Council need to become better at demonstrating the value for money and outcomes of the service so that this can be compared to other models of provision.

Good quality sheltered housing is in a strong position to deliver services to older people and to build on opportunities presented by better joint working with agencies and technological innovations such as telecare. However it can only be truly effective if the resources available within sheltered housing are used for the wider community and services are flexible enough to meet individual and diverse needs.

The most obvious gaps in services are in domiciliary care and low level practical support. This has been picked up as a national concern by a recent Joseph Rowntree inquiry. This makes the case that it is these low level services that empower people as opposed to care for higher needs which often involve 'doing for' a client. Scheme managers are often thwarted by the lack of these services, which can play such a crucial role in enabling older people to retain their independence. Service providers need to find ways of investing in this type of practical support.

6. Current and Future Requirements for Sheltered Housing and other models of Housing with care and support.

Information from the Housing Requirements Study.

The Housing Requirements Study was completed by Oxford City Council in 2004. Some key facts from this survey are:

Total number of households with older people. (over 60)	14,735 (27.5%)
Total number with only older people	11,235 (22.5%)
Number of older people aged 55-64	10,215
Number of older people 65-74	8,631
Number of older people 75-84	6,373
Number of older people 85+	2,454
Number of households with mobility difficulties	2,396
Number of frail elderly	2,345
Number with long term illness	926
Number with sensory impairment	838
Number with mental health	35

issues	
Number wanting to move to single floor or specially designed housing	1924
Number of people very likely to consider sheltered housing	2796
Number of people fairly likely to consider sheltered housing	3107
% of older people likely or fairly likely to consider sheltered housing	52.6%
Owner occupiers likely to consider sheltered housing	3746
Council tenants likely to consider sheltered housing	1648
Total number of sheltered units in city	1170

Demographic projections generally confirm that the number of older people will increase over the next 15 years. However the Institute of Public Care figures show a decline in the number of older people in Oxford City, which is against the trend for the rest of the County. The over 85 figures do show a slight increase following a dip in 2005/6.

Information from Oxfordshire Population Needs Analysis (2004)

Year Age	2001	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2111
Over 65	17,470	16,400	16,020	15,680	15,420	15,240	15,050	14,810
Over 85	2,470	2,310	2,390	2,430	2,460	2,470	2,430	2,400

The decline in the over 65age group may be due to a lack of appropriate accommodation (particularly private provision). In any case all these figures suggest the current level of sheltered housing provision is not unduly high.

However if poorer quality sheltered housing units are lost this could provide an opportunity to replace these with other forms of housing for older people such as extra care schemes. This is especially relevant for the over 85s. A great deal of the demand for housing for older people comes from owner occupiers, Whilst the City Council's allocation policy does allow for the application and re-housing of owner occupiers if they cannot buy the accommodation they need, this is not widely publicised. This point is dealt with in section 8 of this report. The number of older homeowners also suggests a need for more mixed tenure provision for example shared ownership schemes that could be affordable for this group.

Information from the Supporting People Strategy

The Supporting People strategy gives the following figures for Oxford City.

Population and ethnicity

Number of older people over 65	18302
Projected number of older people over 65 in 2008	19420
Current population breakdown by ethnicity	
White	98.7%
Asian/mixed Asian	0.6%
Black/mixed Black	0.4%
Chinese/ mixed Chinese	0.2%

The Institute of Public Care Needs Analysis applies general projected percentage increases to the numbers of older people from BME backgrounds. These figures cover the whole of Oxfordshire. They do need to be treated with some caution, as the numbers are low. Figures are for people aged over 65.

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Asian/Mixed Asian	540	544	551	563	577
Black/Mixed Black	382	285	390	399	409
Chinese/ Mixed Chinese	20	20	21	22	23

The numbers of BME older people living in sheltered housing remains low and although the numbers of older people in this population are currently small they will increase and providers need to ensure provision is appropriate and accessible to the diverse needs of the population. This issue is dealt with in more detail in section 11 of this report.

Projected likely increase in dementia (From Supporting People Strategy)

	2005-6	2008-9
Total number of dementia cases in 65+	9,085	9,449

There are no schemes in the City that currently provide specifically for older people with Dementia. Extra care schemes could help meet this need either in general provision or in specialist schemes. The introduction of telecare services may help retain people at home (including in sheltered housing) for longer. The need for

provision is not easy to quantify. Laing and Buisson produced a report for Social services in 2003, which indicated an undersupply of places for people with dementia of 317.

There is very little extra care provision within Oxford City. A 20-unit scheme in Donnington Bridge is currently being developed by health and social care. There is one Abbeyfield scheme. This has a resident manager and provides meals but does not provide care on site and so would not meet a standard definition of extra care housing. There are also some units at St Luke's in Headington but again these do not meet the full range of services provided by extra care. It is clear that extra care provides another choice for older people as they age and provides opportunities to deliver care more effectively and efficiently. It is especially important to ensure those with more complex and acute needs are enabled to stay at home. However an over emphasis on extra care could work against independence and choice. For example it's difficult to see how direct payments (and the choice and empowerment they could help give a person) could work within extra care housing although it has to be recognised that both are high priorities within Government strategy

It is also important to note that extra care is seen as a high risk development for providers due to the uncertainty about revenue funding.

Information from the Supporting People strategic review

The consultation with residents and applicants as part of the Supporting People strategic review did bear out the continued popularity of sheltered housing amongst older people.

There are around 400 people on the Council waiting list for sheltered housing. Nearly half of these have been waiting longer than two years. This suggests that whilst there is a demand for sheltered housing people only want good quality schemes in good locations. Some units in some schemes (notably the bedsits in the poorer quality schemes) have no waiting list.

One bedroom and two bedroom flats and bungalows were the most popular choices. Only 15% of applicants would even consider a bed sit.

20.1% of applicants stated they were moving to receive support. 20.8% wanted to live with other older people, 19.8% wanted housing of good standard that was maintained for them and 17.7% wanted housing that was on one level or adapted for mobility needs.

These figures also point for a need for designated housing for older people without necessarily having an attached support service. However this needs to be of good quality and design and be let only to older people. These types of schemes can offer a good support network for older people but work best where people can access professional support services if they become needed, for example through dispersed alarms or a floating visiting support service.

Of the residents surveyed the most popular reason for moving to sheltered housing was safety and security (53.6%). This could be from the design of the building or from staff presence. 32.6% moved to receive support 89% of respondents were very satisfied or quite satisfied with the service. Only 1.4% were dissatisfied.

To summarise: The numbers of older people in the City and the projected increase in these numbers suggest the number of units of sheltered housing is not unduly high. However a good range of provision of housing options for older people is required. This includes:

- housing designated for older people with access to either a hard wired or community alarm and in future access to the full menu of sheltered housing services
- sheltered housing with an improved range of facilities and services
- extra care housing
- nursing care provision

Whatever the nature of the housing it must be of good design, in a safe location close to amenities and with a mixture of home ownership and rented units.

7. Providing a strategic direction for Oxford City Council housing for older people.

Sheltered housing.

It is clear that good quality housing is key to the provision of support and services to older people.

In order to provide housing that will meet the needs and expectations of older people it was important to firstly assess the quality of the current stock. To do this a full scheme appraisal exercise was carried out, looking at four key areas.

- **Physical viability.** This included looking at creating a minimum design standard against which schemes could be measured ([Appendix1](#)). It took account of the percentage of bedsits on sites, the cost to bring the site up to Decent Homes Standards and the projected maintenance costs.
- **External strategic viability.** This included assessments of the number of sheltered schemes in the ward, the deprivation and population levels of older people in the vicinity of the scheme (taken from the SP mapping), location to public transport and amenities, crime in the area and Housing Register waiting list figures. The waiting list numbers are based on the area rather than the scheme itself and are therefore potentially higher than actual demand for the scheme.
- **Relevance of the Support Service.** This looked at the needs of current residents. It was assumed that the support service was more likely to be

relevant if there was reasonable number of residents aged over 75 and residents did not have issues that were not able to be managed in the scheme (such as alcohol misuse leading to anti social behaviour problems)

- **Financial viability.** This assessed the voids and cost of voids on site.

The full results of the appraisal can be found at [Appendix 2](#) together with the calculation table ([Appendix 3](#)) that was used to give each scheme a grade of A, B, C or D for each of the four factors above. The grading of schemes is summarised below.

RESULTS OF SHELTERED SCHEME APPRAISALS

Scheme	Physical Viability	Strategic Viability	Financial Viability	Support Service	Comments
Atkyns Court Wood Farm	A	C	A	A	<i>The scheme scores well following refurbishment. It scores lower on strategic viability due to the number of schemes in the ward and the relatively smaller waiting list. However there is no evidence that the scheme is difficult to let.</i>
Birch Court Headington	A	B	B	A	<i>Another high scoring scheme. Financial viability is lower only as a result of a high % of voids over the past two years giving relatively high rent loss. This may simply be cyclical and voids were relet reasonably speedily.</i>
George Moore Close Donnington Bridge	D	A	D	D	<i>A low scoring scheme on all counts except strategic. The scheme is in a good and popular location with no other schemes in the ward and a high level of older people on low incomes in the ward.</i>
Grantham House Jericho	D	A	D	D	<i>Very similar to scheme C- a poor scheme in a good location. There is seemingly high waiting list for one beds probably due to the location.</i>
Scheme	Physical Viability	Strategic Viability	Financial Viability	Support Service	Comments
Headley House	B	C	C	B	<i>Scheme scores lower on strategic due to the number of</i>

Headington					<i>schemes in the ward, poor local amenities and a relatively low waiting list. There has been a high level of voids which have taken rather longer to let than Atkyns and Birch the other refurbished schemes. This has affected the financial rating.</i>
Northbrook House Blackbird Leys	C	C	C	C	<i>The scheme scores low on support service due to the relatively low age of residents. The physical viability of the scheme is lowered by the bedsits and the relatively high planned maintenance costs. The financial viability is lower due to the high number of voids although these have been relet quite quickly.</i>
Windale House Blackbird Leys	D	C	D	D	<i>The low scores are primarily to do with the bedsits and maintenance costs of the building, the very long relet time for void properties and the presence of antisocial behaviour problems. In all areas Windale performs significantly less well than Northbrook</i>
Singletrees Rose Hill	A	A	A	A	<i>A very high performing popular scheme</i>
Knights House Risinghurst	C	D	D	B	<i>Both Knights and Rowlands suffer from being in poor locations for transport and amenities. Knight's scores considerably better on physical viability than Rowlands (nearly a B) Although flood decants were discounted when looking at voids the void time may still be higher than normal due to the flooding and this has affected the financial rating.</i>
Scheme	Physical Viability	Strategic Viability	Financial Viability	Support Service	Comments
Rowlands House Risinghurst	D	D	D	D	<i>The poorest scoring scheme being a poor scheme in a poor location. It has experienced the highest number of voids. Although the waiting list appears quite high most applicants may prefer Knights</i>
Bradlands	D	D	C	C	<i>Another low scoring scheme. In</i>

House Old Marston					<i>comparison with Cumberlege it scores lower on the physical viability although the relet times for this property are much lower and the support more relevant.</i>
Cumberlege House Old Marston	C	D	C	D	<i>See comparison with Bradlands above.</i>
Eastern House Littlemore	D	D	C	C	<i>All three schemes in Littlemore suffer from poor location for transport and amenities.</i>
Cardinal House	C	D	D	B	<i>The best of the Littlemore schemes the better physical condition being reflected by a more relevant support service. However the scheme has had a much higher level of voids and a rather longer relet time than the other schemes in the area</i>
Alice Smith House	D	D	A	C	<i>Alice Smith comes out as the poorest scheme physically although voids are relatively low and relet times are good.</i>

Following the information gathering and grading exercise key staff at the council met together to discuss the results. A view was taken that the poorest schemes should be closed and that any money raised from capital receipts from the sale of a development site should be used to refurbish the remaining schemes that required investment. The recommendations have been made on the location of schemes as well as the quality. This took account of what was provided by other organisations as well as the Council owned stock. It was not believed that a high enough standard of refurbishment could be funded for remaining schemes without closures and an initial programme was suggested for implementing this.

Units definitely to remain as sheltered

Scheme	Number of Units	Recommendation	Timescale
Atkyns	24	Keep as is –meets design standard	

Birch	22	Keep as is –as above	
Singletrees	50	Keep as is –as above	
Headley	15	Keep as is though possible efficiency gain through sharing service delivery with local OCHA scheme	
Total	111		

Units likely to remain as sheltered housing following option appraisals

Scheme	Number of units	Recommendation	Timescale
George Moore	32	This will be considered in joint appraisal with Grantham House below. Both schemes are in good locations but require extensive refurbishment or redevelopment.	06/07
Northbrook	25	Consider in joint appraisal with Windale House, which are both in Blackbird Leys. We would want to retain one site in area and Northbrook is rated as the better scheme.	09/10
Knights	26	To be considered in joint appraisal with Rowlands. Both sites are in Risinghurst, an area without good transport or amenities. This scheme has had some refurbishment and is reasonably popular.	07/08
Cardinal	32	Is in the same area (Littlemore) as Eastern and Alice Smith. There is no evidence to suggest the area needs this number of schemes. Cardinal is the largest scheme and has the greatest potential for refurbishment or redevelopment. An options appraisal will be carried out jointly on all 3 schemes	11/12
Total	115		

Units less likely to remain as sheltered housing following options appraisal

Scheme	Number of units	Recommendation	Timescale
Grantham	32	This is a very poor scheme but is the only site in the area. The land is likely to be very valuable and could be used to fund significant improvements elsewhere. However the decision as to how to move forward with both George Moore and Grantham will only be made after a full options appraisal.	06/07
Windale	27	To be appraised with Northbrook but this is the poorer site of the two.	09/10
Rowlands	15	This site will be appraised alongside scheme Knights but is definitely the poorer scheme in	

		the ratings.	
Bradlands	29	These two sites are in the same area, which is a long way from amenities and transport. They are to be appraised together but at this point neither scheme looks viable in terms of location and potential to refurbish.	11/12
Cumberlege	15		
Eastern	15	These two sites are to be appraised alongside Cardinal House which looks the strongest scheme at this point	11/12
Alice Smith	20		
Total	153		

This programme is not intended to pre-judge the outcome of the options appraisal but is simply an indication of what impact the process may have on overall stock numbers.

Because both George Moore Close and Grantham House are the most in need of improvement the recommendation is to prioritise these schemes and carry out a full options appraisal to decide the best way to achieve the better quality housing aimed for. This appraisal should be completed early in 2006 and will be followed by the further option appraisal of work throughout the course of 2006/2007.

This programme will result in the council having a smaller number of units but these units will be of very high quality (meeting the agreed design standard) and able to deliver services to residents for much longer as they age. It is envisaged that some of the savings to the Supporting People programme will be used to invest in extra care housing to replace the units lost. However a cautious note should be sounded about the lack of confidence in the revenue funding for this by possible developers. The programme takes place over several years allowing for the opportunity to redevelop schemes as sheltered housing should the current funding climate change and the need for more units become more apparent. It may also be possible through options appraisals to increase units at some schemes (perhaps most notably at George Moore Close).

However unless a programme such as the one above is agreed the Council's stock will continue to become unlettable except to those with no other choice. Other providers are investing in their housing making the City's poorer quality scheme less attractive as an option for older people.

If Council agrees this proposal, residents will be informed by way of site meetings with a clear plan for how the closure or decanting of the scheme prior to refurbishment will be managed. Consideration will need to be given to the timing of this communication to minimise unnecessary worries. No one doubts the serious impact of moving residents from their homes particularly so for older people. However experience has shown that residents can be supported to move to minimise the stresses and impact and any plans should include:

- Clarity with residents about the need for the move –people cope better if they understand the reasoning behind decisions.

- Allowing plenty of time for the decanting process so that residents can be allocated new housing that meets their needs and wishes
- Trying as far as possible to ensure communities are maintained. This may mean trying to move particular friendship groups together and making sure that any moves allow older people to maintain existing links with the wider community.
- Having a member of staff who is solely tasked with helping residents make all the practical arrangements to move
- Keeping residents fully involved and informed in all stages of the process. This will include involvement in design.

Summary of Recommendations for Improving the Quality of Sheltered Housing

- 1. That sites listed as definitely to remain as sheltered housing are retained*
- 2. That the minimum design standard for quality of the housing is accepted as a target for the improvement of the remaining stock*
- 3. That those sites listed as being likely or unlikely to remain as sheltered are put forward for an options appraisal and brought back to Council for decision*
- 5. That an implementation plan and financial modelling is established by the Business Manager for Housing Services alongside the options appraisals*
- 6. That capital receipts are ring fenced to ensure the remaining sheltered schemes reach the required design standard and to ensure the Council reaches decent homes standards across all its stock.*
- 7. That negotiations are completed with the Supporting People team to try and secure money saved from any scheme closures to be used to fund extra care provision*
- 8. That a communication plan is established for residents*
- 9. That a media strategy is devised to publicise plans to the wider community*

Designated Elderly Housing.

Apart from the units of Sheltered Accommodation for older people there are a further 1270 units of designated elderly accommodation currently let to people aged over 40. 460 of these units have hard wired emergency alarms.810 have no

inbuilt support provision. A full breakdown of the property types and a comparison with the rest of the housing stock is provided below.

Property Type	Total Units	Bed sits	One Bed	Two Bed
Sheltered	364	99	238	27
Designated Elderly 2 (with hard wired alarms)	460	38	388	34
Designated Elderly 1 (with no support other than a dispersed alarm if required)	810	56	719	35
Sub-Total (Older Persons)	1634	193	1345	96
Non-Designated Non-Family	451	57	394*	
Non-Designated Family	5984			
Total	8069	250	1739	

A full list of the addresses of the designated elderly property together with some key details about type and age of residents is attached at [Appendix 4](#).

The allocations review in 2005 proposed a number of suggestions about reusing both the Sheltered Housing and the current designated elderly housing. The report proposed de-designating a number of units (approximately 270 over two years). However this was not agreed and there were reservations by Councillors about the effect of de-designating stock on their older tenants.

Council staff have identified a number of issues arising from the current allocation policy for these properties.

- **The demand for housing from younger single people.**

The table above shows the relative scarcity of one bed units able to be let to the 18-40 age group. There are a number of units of one bedroom accommodation with no age limit owned by RSLs and indeed most people in this age group do get housed by RSLs. There are currently 1040 16-39 year olds on the general list, 201 on the homeless list and 35 on the transfer list. In addition there are 801 people over 40 and not wanting Sheltered Housing on the general list, 220 on the transfer list and 5 on the homeless list. Most people on the homelessness list have not been waiting longer than a year. However there is evidence that people in this

group come on and off the list due to a failure to re-register; thus masking the true time it takes people to get re housed permanently.

The housing requirements study has indicated a need for an additional 760 one bed properties. Some of this need may come from people able to afford to purchase via an affordable housing route such as Shared Ownership. Nonetheless evidence suggests there is a need for more one bedroom units.

These figures do suggest an imbalance in amount of housing available to single people under 40 and those over 40.

- **The support needs of younger single people**

Many younger single people have priority status due to their support needs. In practice most of the allocations to this group are made via the RSLs and there has been a lot of feedback about schemes becoming unsustainable due to the high concentration of people with a high level of support needs. A greater pool of housing available to this client group could mean that this problem is diffused. Furthermore the Council has just developed a support needs and risk assessment process which would be used to assess the support needs of an applicant prior to allocation and to ensure those support needs are met. Where schemes have become unsustainable local lettings plans have been introduced with some success and the staff can consider introducing these if problems do arise.

There is an opportunity to better use the resources available from the various floating support providers through doing an early support needs assessment. It may also be possible to designate flats for particular projects like the Stonham Dolphin scheme ensuring those with specialist needs get the support required.

- **The demand for housing from people over 55.**

Although the designated elderly housing does get let it often goes to people with low priority. There is evidence from the supporting people strategic review and in consultation with Age Concern and older people themselves that living with other older people is a popular choice for many who do not want to move into sheltered housing. However most older people would not consider that schemes being let to people over 40 would count as an older persons housing scheme. Minimum age limits in older peoples schemes are usually set at 55 years. There is no evidence that having fewer schemes would disadvantage people over 55. An overall reduction of 270 units would still leave 1000 units of this type of accommodation in addition to the 1000 units of Sheltered Housing across all providers. RSLs also have a number of units for older people with hard-wired alarms across the city (estimated at a further 250 units).

By having schemes that are truly limited to older people it will be easier to ensure remaining schemes are suitable for their needs.

- **Estate management issues.**

The age range currently in these schemes can range from 40 years to over 80 years and therefore there is sometimes a clash of lifestyles taking away the advantages for some older people of feeling safe and secure in housing specially managed to meet their needs. Some blocks are situated in areas where there has been a high level of anti social behaviour and the schemes have felt insecure compared to the standard of security offered in sheltered housing.

Plans to manage the transition from designated elderly to non designated schemes

Council staff have identified schemes likely to be suitable for de-designation. These have been chosen due to poor design, poor location and the current profile of tenants. These are highlighted on the total list of schemes at [Appendix 4](#). All the units will be subject to refurbishment if they do not currently meet decent homes standards but some will still be less suitable for older people due to the design.

The proposal is to check the validity of these choices by undertaking a brief appraisal of the schemes, which will involve an assessment of their design suitability, environment and the needs and wishes of residents. All residents will be consulted and residents over 55 will be visited to find out more about their needs and wishes. An assessment process for this can be found at [Appendix 5](#). A pilot project involving the appraisal of 3 schemes will be undertaken. These schemes have been chosen by staff as sites least suitable as housing for older people and with residents who are mostly under 60. The schemes will undergo the appraisal process and from that one scheme will be chosen as a pilot to de-designate. Schemes will only be de-designated if the appraisal process shows that this is the most appropriate option.

The whole of the designated elderly stock has been divided into three groups.

1. Those schemes definitely to remain for older people. The age limit on these schemes will be raised to 55 as part of the allocations review.
1. Those schemes already identified as least suitable for older people. These properties will be appraised and de-designated, as part of a rolling programme that it is anticipated will take 2-3 years.
2. The remaining schemes will remain as they are until the initial appraisals of the schemes in group 2 have been carried out.

The proposal to change the age limits for the selected schemes will need to go to Full Council for final agreement and this will be done as part of the allocations review. A report recommending changes to the current allocation policy is due to go to full Council in May/June 2006.

Any residents aged over 55 who wish to move as a result of the scheme being de-designated will be offered a priority transfer to another scheme; either a designated elderly scheme or a sheltered scheme as appropriate. They will be supported to

move through practical assistance and the Council will pay for moving expenses up to an agreed limit. Practical assistance will include organising removals and resettling into new accommodation. The payment of expenses and support will be provided via the REMS scheme and extra budget will need to be set aside for this project. On a quick calculation based on the age of residents and assuming all 3 schemes are de-designated next year the following budget should be assumed:

Scheme	No. of units for de-designation	No of residents aged over 60	Assumed no. who may want to move	Budget for scheme based on £1500 per person
Rose Hill Flats	28	7	5	7,500
Brome Place	22	4	3	4,500
Pegasus Road	20	15 but many living in another part of scheme not included in the de-designation	9	9,000
Total				£21,000

In addition the proposal will lead to some increased void costs caused by the moves. This budget will need to be reset for future years as the programme rolls out.

Residents of the new designated elderly schemes will be able to access a community alarm service if they choose and it is hoped that with the introduction of the community support model will also be able to access visiting support if needed. (See below)

The pilot will be fully evaluated and any lessons learnt before the process is rolled out more widely.

Summary of recommendations for designated elderly housing

1. *In 2006 a pilot appraisal is undertaken in line with the proposal above with three schemes (approximately 100 units) These are units at the Rose Hill flats, Pegasus Road and Brome Place. Only one of the schemes will be de-designated in the first instance.*
2. *That a rolling programme of appraisals and de-designations is begun up on 270 identified units once the pilot has been evaluated.*
3. *That Council agrees an extra budget of £21,000 for the REMs scheme to facilitate the transfer of residents wishing to move.*
4. *That the age limit for designated elderly housing not part of the de-designation programme is raised to 55. This decision will be ratified by full Council in May/June 2006.*

8. Accessing sheltered housing, support and information

Accessing sheltered housing

Under the requirements of the Supporting People framework all sheltered housing residents should under go a support needs assessment. Oxford City council has decided to carry this out at application stage and a comprehensive assessment will be carried out by the mobile wardens from November 2005. A copy of the new assessment can be found at [Appendix 6](#). A check will be done prior to allocation to ensure the support needs have not changed.

One of the strengths of sheltered housing schemes has been the balance of independent and frailer residents. Schemes become communities in which people use their own abilities to contribute to the welfare of others. It is important that this balance is maintained to prevent 'ghettos of dependency' and to build on the advantages of community living.

Therefore anyone with **any** identified support need through the support needs assessment process and who chooses to be considered for sheltered housing will be considered. This may range from a wish for more companionship, a need to move to a flat which is on one level, finding the upkeep of current accommodation too onerous up to serious health or other support needs.

The three tier model of support will allow for more independent older people to continue to be able to take advantage of all that sheltered housing can offer whilst ensuring that the support charges reflect the level of support they currently require.

As noted in the housing requirements section of this report most elderly people are owner-occupiers and there are more owner-occupiers likely or fairly likely to choose sheltered than people living in rented housing. Owner-occupiers are currently accepted on to the waiting list for sheltered housing and re-housed if it is judged they cannot afford to buy the type of accommodation they require. In the case of sheltered housing there is currently very limited availability of leasehold housing in the City and so even if someone could afford to buy there may be

nothing in the area they need to be in to remain close to family or other support networks. At the same time some owner-occupiers will never be in a position to afford to purchase leasehold housing in full. The current cost of a one bedroom flat in a private leasehold scheme is round £195,000. Objective 3 in the housing strategy states the need to increase the opportunities for mobility and choice within the housing stock as a whole and this policy can help the Council to achieve that aim.

Although the allocation policy clearly allows the Council to house owner occupiers in the above circumstances this is not widely known outside of council staff and staff themselves sometimes find it difficult to make the judgement as to whether someone with their own house should be re-housed in rented housing. If the policy is to assess and re-house owner occupiers this should be transparent and clear guidelines put in place to enable staff to make judgements in line with the spirit and intention of the policy. The review recommends as a start that the Councils ability to house owner-occupiers allowed under the rules is publicised within the sheltered marketing pack.

At the same time it is important to recognise the need in Oxford for a greater choice of tenure within housing for older people. If extra care schemes are developed these should offer opportunities to purchase as well as to rent.

Possibly a minor issue but one that again can cause a major obstacle for people moving into sheltered housing is having to give up a pet. Many providers do now allow pets under specific guidelines that deal in advance with any likely nuisance or animal welfare issues. The Council should consider a review of their current policy in consultation with residents.

Recommendation for accessing sheltered housing

1. *That as long as an applicant has at least one area of identified need on their support needs assessment they can be considered for sheltered housing if they choose this option*
2. *That the Council's policy on housing owner-occupiers is publicised more widely and staff are given clearer guidelines on when to re-house.*
3. *That the current policy excluding pets from schemes is reviewed in consultation with residents*

Accessing Support.

As noted above the Supporting People strategic review is recommending a three option 'menu' of support levels for older people living in sheltered housing. In this case an eligibility criteria for each level will need to be introduced. This should be carried out in conjunction with residents and tested against existing residents to ensure the correct level of support is identified.

This assessment will also apply to clients living in the wider community once the community support model is introduced. Oxford City Council has been recommended by Supporting People to pilot the community support model as part of the Supporting People strategic review.

As noted in the requirements for sheltered housing section there needs to be more demonstration of the value sheltered housing services offer and one way to provide evidence for this is to record outcomes. This can be best done at support plan reviews and a simple system needs to be introduced, which could capture this information. This could be a simple tick box where the resident gauges the success of any interventions carried out as part of the support plan.

Recommendation for accessing support services

1. *That the Council staff develop eligibility criteria to determine which level of support a resident should receive.*
2. *That the elderly services team develops a community support service (building on existing work) if funding is released from Supporting People*
3. *A process is devised to enable scheme staff to record outcomes from their residents support plan to review and measure the effectiveness of their work.*

Accessing information

The consultation with older people and with agencies constantly referred to the need for better access to information for older people, both about sheltered housing and the wide range of other services available. From a business point of view it is important that sheltered schemes are effectively marketed and people are given the information to enable them to make a good choice for their own situation.

The Council is currently developing a guide of all the sheltered schemes in the city with information about the services at each scheme. This will include schemes managed by all providers. This will be sent out to applicants enabling them to specify the specific schemes they are interested in rather than simply the general locality as is the case at present.

Age Concern does provide a wealth of information and advice about a wide range of services and issues but older people do not always think to approach them. A one-stop shop approach using a high street venue may be an option for the future. Possibilities for this may include better utilisation of Home Improvement Agencies. However in the short term it would be a good step to have information in as many localities as possible. A full range of leaflets could be available at local offices and at sheltered schemes especially if these are open to the community.

The Housing Options Team are considering having a specialist older person advisor who can help older people look at the full range of options available rather than just recommend an application for sheltered housing. EROSH has developed

a HOOP (Housing Options for Older People) assessment system that could help with this advice work.

Thanet District Council have produced an electronic document available on a web site (www.theislandguide.org.) which features a comprehensive guide to accessing both statutory and voluntary services in the area. Because it is electronic it can be updated regularly and held at any location where older people might be seeking advice. This could help the Council to meet part of its E-government targets.

In addition to the need for marketing services Age Concern have identified a clear need from some older people for practical help to enable them to move once they have made the choice to do so. They are interested in setting up a scheme to help older people. This could be self-financing but they may need some initial support in setting this up. It may also be possible to build on the existing Council removals scheme (REMS).

Recommendations for providing better information and access to services for Older People

- 1. The sheltered scheme marketing pack should be completed by March 2006 and sent out to all applicants waiting for sheltered housing. Copies should also be made available to any Housing Associations who currently maintain a separate list.*
- 2. That a comprehensive range of leaflets advertising services and advice for older people are held in all local offices and on sheltered schemes*
- 3. That the Housing Options Team uses one team member as a specialist advisor in options for older people.*
- 4. That ideas are explored with Age Concern and other interested agencies about how a scheme to help older people with the practicalities of moving could be established.*
- 5. That the Council in conjunction with the County and District Councils considers producing an electronic guide for services for older people*

9. Support services for older people provided by the emergency control centre at Barton

The control centre currently provides management and support of the Oxford City Council sheltered schemes and the mobile warden service as well as providing emergency alarm services to around 22 other providers and to around 1500 private alarm customers.

As such the service is very much at the heart of services for older people in the city and throughout Oxfordshire. Furthermore there are possibilities for growth with new telecare initiatives (see below) and in the expansion of the community alarm service being recommended by Supporting People.

It currently provides 2 visits a day to the city run schemes including visits at the weekend, plus a 24 hour emergency call out service to most of the sheltered housing schemes in the city.

In practice the service to the City owned sheltered schemes and the control centre operations are merged and financially come under one budget.

Following the Supporting People review the service will be subject to an overall reduction in Supporting People grant. In addition the HRA pooled funding, which was allowed following the transitional housing benefit calculations will stop in 2006/2007. Furthermore if it is agreed that schemes will close and not be redeveloped by the City Council the service will experience a further loss in income.

This loss of income will bring the service in danger of not being financially sustainable. There needs to be a complete rethink about the operation of this service so that the Council can ensure that the service continues and develops to take advantage of the upcoming opportunities.

The functioning of the control centre was not initially within the scope of this review. However it is vital to the recommendations about scheme and service improvements that the control centre remains a viable service and hence its inclusion here.

A full options appraisal for the future stability and growth of this service should be undertaken as soon as possible.

Recommendation for future viability of the emergency control centre

<p>1. <i>That a full appraisal of the options for the control centre is undertaken by March 2006 to ensure the service is made financially stable and can build on opportunities for growth.</i></p>
--

10.Developing housing and support for older homeless people.

The problem of what is often termed 'inappropriate allocations' to people with chaotic lifestyles including a history of street homelessness and alcohol and other substance abuse has been highlighted amongst complaints about the service for some time. It is also true to say that whilst there have been a significant number of problems on site arising from these allocations there are also examples where people with a history of alcoholism and homelessness have settled and thrived within sheltered schemes. The support needs assessment process will enable staff to understand any support needs and associated risks prior to acceptance for sheltered housing. However at the moment there is little alternative provision if the risks associated with an individual are felt to be too high and often insufficient support provision if an application is to be accepted.

The UK Coalition on Older Homelessness wrote in 2005 a response to the 20/20 vision campaign in which they recommend there needs to be variety of models for this client group which in itself has very diverse needs. Some people will integrate happily into housing for older people if they have appropriate support, others may be happier in a small unit with people who have a similar history to themselves. Some specialist extra care provision may be required. Furnished flats may be a more realistic option for people who have little by way of their own possessions.

Initial discussions have taken place as a result of this review with the project co-ordinator for the Coalition on Older Homelessness and a small project group comprising of agencies working with this client group has been set up to see if it would be possible to do some needs assessment and consultation and to draw up some possible options for providing better housing and support.

The Coalition are in the process of devising a methodology to assess the needs from this client group within Local Authority areas and would like to use Oxford as a pilot for this methodology. Once a needs assessment had been done a project group could then be established to look at options for improving services to this group.

Recommendation for developing housing and support for older people

- 1. That the Council agrees to pilot the methodology for carrying out a needs assessment of older homeless people.*
- 2. That a project group is set up to look at suitable models of housing and support and possible sources of funding.*

11. Improving more integrated working with partner agencies

There is recognition in all the recent government strategies that better joined up working between housing organisations, PCTs and Social Services is critical in delivering services to older people. Sheltered housing has the potential to offer effective services to help maintain people at home but only in partnership with these agencies. Sheltered housing also has the potential to deliver some of the targets within social services and health care plans.

In Oxfordshire good integrated working between housing and other services remains difficult. However one of the benefits of the introduction of Supporting People has been the opportunity to bring all agencies together to provide a strategic framework for housing related support.

One of the exercises undertaken as part of this review was an informal meeting with staff from Health and Social Care and the City PCT to brainstorm some ideas for better working practice. These ideas are summarised below:

Strategic working

A joint strategy for older people has recently been produced by Health and Social Services but without the involvement of housing. This review will form the basis of a City strategy for older people and this has the potential to closely link into the Social services/ Health strategy.

There are strategic joint working groups –most notably the Supporting People Core Strategy Group, the Strategic Housing Officer Group for Oxfordshire (SHOG) and the Strategic Housing in Oxford Partnership (SHOP). However there may be more opportunities for attendance at core strategic meetings within each service. For example PCT staff felt that there should be a housing representative on the Unscheduled Care Network for example. This group deals with issues such as hospital discharges and intermediate care.

One of the main areas where a joint strategic approach is vital is in the development of extra care housing. Health and Social Care are well underway in developing a 20 unit scheme in the City but this has been entirely led by social services staff. If the Sheltered Scheme re-provisioning that forms the core of this report goes ahead there will be future opportunities for the development of extra care housing. There needs to be joint agency group set up to explore the opportunities and possible models for how and where extra care provision could be developed in time for the next bidding round. The next bidding round for Housing Corporation funding is 2007 and for NHS capital funding is 2008. This group could operate as a sub group of SHOP.

The newest form of providing support to frailer older people is the provision of telecare services. This covers a range of assisted living technology such as movement sensors, voice reminders and safety equipment such as gas cut out on cookers. Social services have received funding for 2006/7 and 2007/8 to provide

telecare equipment through a pilot scheme aimed at providing services for people with dementia. It is important that knowledge of availability and cost of this equipment is made known to sheltered staff and other people involved in care and advice services for older people so that access to this equipment can be made available to all who need it. The provision of telecare within sheltered housing schemes does have the potential to enable people with dementing illnesses to stay at home.

Oxford Citizens 'Home from Hospital project' provides two units that are leased to Health and Social Care. This provides accommodation primarily for in patients who need to have major adaptations carried out before they can return home. By being able to move into a specially adapted flat the patient can be discharged from hospital whilst waiting for the works to be completed. There may be opportunities for further use of sheltered accommodation for early hospital discharge or for respite care. This is currently being explored by social services contracts managers and should be followed up.

Improved joint processes

One of the key processes that will undoubtedly help improve integrated working is the single assessment process. Work on this is underway and has now included the involvement of a housing representative to ensure the process includes an assessment of housing as well as health and social needs. More work is required to bring in the single assessment process and it is vital that this links with housing options work. The single assessment process could enable someone to by pass much of the support needs assessment process if they choose to move into sheltered housing.

A hospital discharge form for people who are homeless is in use with a housing options element. Hospital discharge forms should generally provide some assessment of housing need, together with recognition of the role of the scheme staff if the patient lives in sheltered housing scheme. Housing providers need to continue to work with health to achieve this.

One way to take forward issues such as hospital discharge procedures along with areas of common interest such as falls prevention and response would be for a group of middle managers from all agencies to meet on an occasional basis to agree actions to improve practice. This could also be achieved by invitation to team meetings and other forums where these issues get discussed.

Improved practices at scheme level

There is recognition that sheltered scheme staff provide good value low level and preventative support but that this needs to be broadened out from schemes to support older people in the wider community. The community support model will provide a means of doing this but care needs to be taken that this integrates and not duplicates the work of other services. If the support model is introduced there needs to be an understanding between all the community based services of the

role of the community support worker and what they are contributing to the support of that individual.

Most sheltered schemes have common rooms that are mostly used for activities for residents. The use of this resource could be widened out to include a venue for services for the whole community. This could include a range of health services such as healthy eating and exercise classes, clinics for health checks and flu jabs and other services such as chiropody and alternative therapy treatments. Schemes with appropriate facilities can also be used to run day centres, information events a, adult education classes and a range of other opportunities for social involvement. Although there can be resistance from residents to opening up their home to the community the scheme staff can play a vital role in selling the 'positives'. These can include more opportunities for the residents themselves and more opportunities to feel part of and contribute to the wider community.

One of the targets for Health and Social Care is to increase the take up of direct payments. These provide payments directly to an older person so that they can purchase care for themselves. Help with managing these payments is provided by the Direct Payment Agency. Not only does this provide choice for the older person but could also help to relieve pressure on the already over stretched domiciliary care services. Scheme staff could provide information and advice to older people and support them to make a referral to the Direct Payment Agencies.

Recommendations for improved integrated working

- 1. That this report forms a basis for an overall housing strategy for older people and that this integrates with the joint PCT/ Social and Health care strategy*
- 2 That older people are involved more closely in the development of this strategy*
- 3. That a housing representative sits on the Unscheduled Care Network group*
- 4. That a project group is commissioned by SHOP to look at opportunities, funding and service models to develop additional extra care housing in the city*
- 5. That consideration is given to providing more units within sheltered housing for use for early hospital discharge or respite care in conjunction with Health and Social services commissioners*
- 6. That staff are informed about the outcomes and given general information about telecare services.*
- 7. That the single assessment process is introduced with clear reference to a client's housing needs and that staff are made aware of this process*
- 8. That there are more opportunities for middle managers from housing and Social and Health Care to work together –for example occasional attendance at each others team meetings or one off meetings to look at particular issues such as falls prevention, aids and adaptations or care assessments.*
- 9. That common rooms in Sheltered Schemes are used more widely by the community for health related and social activities such as clinics, healthy eating and exercise classes, day care services and adult education*

10. That Sheltered scheme staff are offered training in direct payments to be able to support and advise residents as far as making a referral to the direct payments agency.