

Blaby District Council

Older Persons Housing Strategy

March 2011



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Summary.....	3
1.2	Priorities identified	3
1.3	Actions identified	3
2	Introduction	4
2.2	Strategic Overview.....	5
2.3	Core themes emerging from existing research.....	6
2.4	Consultation.....	6
2.5	Links to other issues	7
	Housing and Health.....	7
	Housing and Transport.....	8
	Housing and Communities	9
2.6	Funding and partnership.....	9
3	KEY AIM ONE: Support older people to remain independent for as long as possible.....	10
4	KEY AIM TWO: Help those who wish to remain in their own homes access appropriate support.....	11
4.1	Services to support people in their homes	11
	Disabled Facilities Grants.....	11
	Three Oaks Homes Lifeline Service	11
	Three Oaks Homes Handy Van Service	11
	First Contact Scheme	11
	Resident Support.....	12
4.2	Exploring Equity Release.....	12
5	KEY AIM THREE: Work to improve the supply of appropriate housing for older households	13
5.2	Demand for sheltered/supported housing in Blaby District.....	13
5.3	Growth in older households	14
	Table 1 Projected growth in population aged 65 and over, Blaby District 2009 to 2030	14
5.4	Meeting Needs and Expectations	14
	Recognising Diversity	14
	Improving Existing Stock	15
	Providing options locally	15
	Providing affordable downsizing options.....	15
	Assisted move schemes.....	16
	Extra Care Housing	17
	Open market housing for older households	18
	Replacing family homes	18
6	KEY AIM FOUR: Maintain communication links with the older community to ensure we are responding to their needs and aware of their views	19
7	KEY AIM FIVE: Keep older people and their families informed about relevant services.....	19
8	KEY AIM SIX: Adopt strategies which recognise the wider impact of older households in relation to the local market	20
9	APPENDIX	21
9.1	Strategic and research framework	21
	Relevant documents in the Blaby District Council Portfolio:.....	21
	Sub-regional documents and research:	21
	Regional and national documents and research:	21
9.2	Consultation with stakeholders - responses.....	22
9.3	Questionnaire used to interview older individuals in community groups....	23
	Blaby District Council Older Persons Housing Strategy Action Plan	27

1 Summary

1.1.1 This document has been the subject of thorough consultation, with stakeholder organisations, and individual older people attending groups and activities across the district. Its objective is not simply to provide new housing for older people, but to work towards a range of options which recognise the wider needs of this group. In general terms 'older people' refers to those aged over 55.

1.2 *Priorities identified*

- Support choice and independence.
- Join up effectively with other organisations.
- Provide and promote effective services.
- Communicate about what older people want and need us to provide.

1.3 *Actions identified*

- Improve the delivery of available services by working together with other departments and organisations.
- Set up effective ways of communicating with the older community.
- Widen the information available about local services and developments (for example through newspaper articles).
- Support those who wish to remain in their own homes by linking to existing services and exploring possibilities for new services.
- Work towards improving and expanding the housing choice for older households.

2 Introduction

- 2.1.1 Providing appropriate housing and services which cater effectively for older people is a national concern. As a nation we have grown, now needing to accommodate four generations rather than three. The increased longevity in our society is an achievement, a testament to both healthier living and advances in technology and medicine. However, this brings with it a greater responsibility to respond to and plan for the long term impacts of this change in our society.
- 2.1.2 As a popular suburb for mature families and older households, the District of Blaby is witnessing the impacts of an ageing population to a greater extent than the national average. Many of our parishes and settlements are popular choices for older households looking to move in later life.
- 2.1.3 This strategy sets out the current situation in Blaby, and our intentions in relation to providing housing and housing related support services in future.

Key Strategic Aims

1. Support older people to remain independent for as long as possible.
2. Help those who wish to remain in their own homes access appropriate support.
3. Work to improve the supply of appropriate housing for older households.
4. Maintain communication links with the older community to ensure we are responding to their needs and aware of their views.
5. Keep older people and their families informed about relevant services.
6. Adopt strategies which recognise the wider impact of older households in relation to the local housing market.

2.2 Strategic Overview

2.2.1 The Older Persons Housing Strategy links with the following objective set out in the **Blaby District Council Sustainable Community Strategy (2008-28)**:

“In 2028 the District will be recognised and celebrated for the safety, strength and health of its communities where”

- People work together to make their communities safer
- Anti-social behaviour is a thing from the past
- People from differing backgrounds and needs are active and supported in their community
- Communities and individuals have the skills and confidence to actively work together in their communities
- All people are as healthy and active as they can be
- **Older people are independent and enjoy a good quality of life**

Blaby District Council Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2028 (p.3)

2.2.2 This in turn links with the following Priority Outcomes of the **Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008**:

- **More older people are able to live independent lives**
 - More older people are supported to live at home
 - The income of older people is maximised
 - Older people have improved access to advice and information to support decision making
- **The health and well-being of older people is increased**
 - Older people have access to a wide range of cultural and learning activities
 - The number of older people unnecessarily admitted to hospital and residential care is reduced
 - Older people's well-being is at the centre of services
- **Older people are empowered to play an active part in the community**
 - The Older People's Network and Older People's Champion Network enable older people to play an active part in decision making

Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 p.56

2.3 Core themes emerging from existing research

2.3.1 There is a wide range of existing research regarding the needs and aspirations of older households, from which a number of recurring themes emerge, all stemming from the overarching principle of ensuring maximum independence and choice:

- A need for increased formal support services for older households
- A need to improve informal community based support networks.
- Increased focus on shared services, joined up working, and early intervention.
- A need to ensure older households remain independent for as long as possible, through:
 - Wider choice of services
 - Streamlined support for aids and adaptations
 - Greater community based support
 - Innovations in accommodation
 - Greater care in design, incorporating features which are an aid to mobility and mental health
- Recognition of the largest group as owner occupying households living in family properties, with significant purchasing power and choice.

2.4 Consultation

2.4.1 During consultation we visited several groups across Blaby District which are aimed at and frequented by older people, in order to talk to them about what we are doing as a Council and obtain their views. The majority of individuals interviewed during consultation were aged between 70 and 90. The main findings of these interviews were:

- Local services are highly valued, particularly libraries, Post Offices, local transport schemes and public transport services.
- People are very attached to their local areas, because of nearby family and friends, and community groups.
- A recurring problem relates to buses being inaccessible because routes no longer come through villages and estates. The extra distance to travel to bus stops prevents many people from going out and creates feelings of increased isolation.
- A second recurring issue is physical difficulty in accessing local services - in several parishes older people said that the majority of amenities were at the top or bottom of a hill and they struggled to make the journey on foot.
- Support needs are frequently met by family or friends, and only occasionally through private services.

- Where physical support needs are concerned, the majority of respondents strongly preferred adaptations which allowed them to remain in their current homes, rather than moving to bespoke properties such as bungalows or supported housing.
- Where a move to a different property was considered, the most common preference is for bungalows. The key theme is that properties should be easy to manage and maintain.
- Many respondents felt that if they were to move, help would be provided by family and friends.
- In principle assisted move services were viewed as potentially valuable, particularly to households with no informal support, but people were wary of costs and conditions.
- Extra Care was little known and not well understood. Many people valued the concept but were concerned about the cost.
- Options like shared ownership, low cost homebuy and equity release were generally viewed negatively and with suspicion. People did not like the idea of sharing ownership with another organisation. Most were happy with their current financial arrangements, and felt they did not need to release equity.

2.4.2 We also sent the draft document out to a wide range of stakeholders, groups and organisations involved with providing services to or liaising with older people. The responses received have been incorporated into the revised strategy and are summarised as an appendix to the document.

2.5 Links to other issues

2.5.1 Housing is rightly being recognised as intrinsically linked to a great many other societal factors, such as health, economy, employment, education, transport, wealth and social mobility, poverty and deprivation, community links, anti-social behaviour, crime, migration and so on. Where we live and the opportunities (or otherwise) that this provides us with can have a profound impact on our quality of life.

2.5.2 Given the great complexity of public services that must be provided to society, it is often difficult to maintain a multi-dimensional, joined-up approach which accounts for these linkages. To fully explore all the relevant linkages between housing and other factors is not possible within this document. However, consultation with older people in the district has highlighted some linkages which are particularly important.

Housing and Health

2.5.3 Older residents often expressed concerns about themselves or people they knew with regard to isolation, lack of support, difficulty managing some household tasks and needing care in later life.

2.5.4 Many people were almost phobic about residential care, and there was a general preference for remaining in difficult to manage properties with assistance from family and friends (where this was available) over being in a care situation which is associated with a loss of

independence. This highlights the need to address the stigma associated with housing for older people, as well as the potential extent of housing related health problems.

- 2.5.5 The Leicester and Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment recognises the potential for appropriate housing for older people to effectively tackle health issues and reduce costs.
- 2.5.6 The assessment highlights factors like trips and falls in family homes which could be prevented through aids and adaptations, or provision of bespoke properties like bungalows or supported flats. Fuel poverty is another issue which is recognised as having an impact on health. Extra Care and other types of alternatives to residential care are seen as important in tackling wider health issues and potentially reducing the cost of health services in later life through prevention.
- 2.5.7 The links between housing and health are also highlighted in Leicestershire County Council strategic documents including the Strategy for Ageing Well in Leicestershire Refresh 2010-2011, Leicestershire Extra Care Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015, and the Leicestershire County Strategic Review of Housing Related Support Services for Older People 2010.
- 2.5.8 The new Health and Social Care Bill currently before parliament contains greater responsibilities for local government and health providers which lay the foundations for improved joining up of services.

Housing and Transport

- 2.5.9 During consultation, many older people raised bus services as an issue which affected them. People regularly expressed concern about what they would do when no longer able to drive, and many said that reliance on bus services which were limited and difficult to walk to made them feel isolated. People acknowledged cuts to subsidised bus services to villages and around estates were necessary because of lack of use, but often said they would be happy to sacrifice some or all of the subsidy they were entitled to as pensioners to keep a service running.
- 2.5.10 The need for accessible bus services links to the priorities identified in the Draft third local Transport Plan (LTP3) for Leicestershire, in particular *“to improve the connectivity and accessibility of our transport system”*.

Housing and Communities

2.5.11 One of the most valued aspects of life among residents who were consulted about this strategy was the community in which they lived. Maintaining a thriving and active community is a key consideration in housing. Where housing is not available for a mix of households, communities can become polarised, isolated or less vibrant.

2.5.12 Blaby District Council will need to work with community groups, voluntary organisations, and other community representatives to find ways of providing and sustaining activities and groups which keep communities alive. This may involve help with searching for funding, help with joining up and mediation, finding venues or helping to advertise events.

2.6 Funding and partnership

2.6.1 Services for older people are evolving in response to changing demand. Research has shown the new generation of people reaching pensionable age are assertive, financially empowered, technologically capable, and hold greater expectations in relation to what they want during retirement. Meeting the expectations of this group will involve:

- Varying levels of personal support with greater choice in how this is provided
- Advances in the technological and physical adaptations available and required
- Greater expectations in relation to housing design, space, quality and location

2.6.2 Meeting these needs will involve a range of health and support organisations including Adult Social Care, Social Services, Supporting People, and local GP consortia. Specialist housing provision will require input from Registered Providers of Social Housing, as well as other potential stakeholders, communities and private developers.

2.6.3 Under the new localism agenda, Local Authorities will need to take on a central role in gathering local input and co-ordinating a strategic response to it.

2.6.4 The cost of providing joined up services and the distribution and allocation of those costs is a pivotal issue, particularly with regard to providing flexible services for different groups with different support needs. No area of the public sector has been immune to cuts, and the potential for accessing central or local government funding is extremely limited.

2.6.5 Whilst partnership working has always been necessary, now more than ever it is clear that the provision of improved, flexible and attractive options for older people simply will not happen without a range of partners, all willing to commit resources. Even then, it will be a real challenge to deliver housing and related support services for older people which are economically viable.

2.6.6 In driving forward this strategy, Blaby District Council will explore options which harness a variety of potential income streams. This could involve:

- Registered Providers of Social Housing
- District and County Councils (including donation of land)
- Department of Health
- Private Finance
- Adult Social Care
- Relevant benefits
- Supporting People
- Cross subsidy through mixed tenure schemes

2.6.7 In addition to this there will be a greater expectation to harness resources from within the third sector. Blaby District Council already works closely with a number of third sector organisations, including:

- Community Action Blaby District
- Community Advice Bureau
- Homestart
- Age UK

2.6.8 The requirement to improve the supply of supported housing has been highlighted and recognised within the Local Investment Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire. Any new initiatives and funding streams with the potential to provide improved housing and related support services will be monitored to ensure opportunities are responded to as they arise.

3 KEY AIM ONE: Support older people to remain independent for as long as possible

3.1.1 Independence is a theme which runs consistently throughout this strategy, and is common to all pieces of research and evidence about the needs and wishes of older people in modern society. All the other key aims are essentially linked to this primary aim, although the final aim (recognise the wider impact of older households in relation to the local housing market), has a scope which reaches outside the interests of the older community.

4 KEY AIM TWO: Help those who wish to remain in their own homes access appropriate support

4.1 Services to support people in their homes

4.1.1 A number of services are already provided which help in achieving this aim. These include:

Disabled Facilities Grants

4.1.2 The Council provides Disabled Facilities Grants to eligible households to help with works which allow them to be more independent in their homes. A large proportion of these are provided to older households. On average there have been more grants for private compared to social sector homes, although growth in demand is evident across both tenures.

4.1.3 It is expected that the demand for grants will continue to rise, particularly in relation to the growing number of older households with support needs. Blaby District Council will endeavour to work with local partners, including Registered Providers of Social Housing, in order to streamline delivery and maximise provision.

Three Oaks Homes Lifeline Service

4.1.4 The Lifeline service offered by Three Oaks Homes provides an emergency call function via a standard telephone line, and supports older households who do not wish to move but require reassurance that help is available in an emergency. The Lifeline service covers all tenures and is to be expanded to provide a greater array of options to users.

Three Oaks Homes Handy Van Service

4.1.5 Three Oaks Homes also delivers the Handy Van service which offers assistance with small household jobs. The service is currently only available to tenants with support needs, but plans are being discussed to roll the offer out to private residents. The types of jobs carried out by this service include fitting shelves, other fixtures and fittings, moving furniture, replacing inaccessible light bulbs, and similar jobs requiring 30 minutes or less.

First Contact Scheme

4.1.6 The First Contact Scheme¹ was launched across Leicestershire in January 2010 with the aim of improving the health and well being of people aged 60 or over. The project allows people to access a range of services without having to contact the different organisations themselves. One form completed by front line staff at any one of a number of agencies can enable an older person to receive vital services to remain safe and independent in their own homes. Services include fire safety checks, benefits advice and 'Befriending Schemes'.

¹ <http://www.blaby.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/community-and-living/crime-prevention-and-safety/first-contact-scheme/>

Resident Support

- 4.1.7 The Blaby District Council Resident Support Team provides housing related support services to vulnerable households across the district, which includes older households with complex needs.
- 4.1.8 Numerous studies involving consultation with older people have shown that for many the services required to remain independent and feel secure are minimal. Blaby District Council will continue to explore and promote initiatives which provide simple solutions in a cost effective way.

4.2 Exploring Equity Release

- 4.2.1 Consultation and research has shown that equity release products are relatively unpopular among older households. Some recurring reasons for this are:
- Reluctance to touch inheritance
 - Consider equity release to be inappropriate
 - Do not trust equity release products
 - Products are overly complex
 - Fear of losing home
 - Fear of losing other benefits
- 4.2.2 More households in future will spend much longer in retirement, and may also be more likely to need to spend some time in care which in many instances will have to be self funded. Finding a product which allows people to improve their quality of life or care in old age without jeopardising other priorities is an important response to this.
- 4.2.3 A number of providers are already exploring models of equity release which aim to avoid some of the negative perceptions listed above. This includes products which release small amounts of capital rather than lump sums (therefore not affecting benefits), and products which are available to households in alternative tenures (such as leasehold schemes).
- 4.2.4 Blaby District Council has already begun talking to local providers, particularly Three Oaks Homes, about the possibility of equity release products and how best to provide them.

5 KEY AIM THREE: Work to improve the supply of appropriate housing for older households

- 5.1.1 Blaby District contains a total of 1,537 units of social housing for older people (generally referred to as *sheltered or supported housing*). Many units are in sheltered schemes such as Brook Court in Countesthorpe, or Peverel Court in Braunstone Town. Approximately 56% of the sheltered stock is made up of bungalows (mostly with one or two bedrooms). The majority of this stock is owned and managed by Three Oaks Homes. In addition, 432 properties have been made more accessible across the district through Disabled Facilities Grant works.
- 5.1.2 There is a single Extra Care scheme in the district (owned and managed by Hanover), located in Glen Parva, providing 41 units (Extra Care is discussed later in this section).

5.2 Demand for sheltered/supported housing in Blaby District

- 5.2.1 The Housing Register gives us some idea of demand for sheltered/supported housing. About 5% of this demand relates to households with disabilities or other support needs, but the majority of demand relates to older households. However, many older households will require specific housing or related support services but will not necessarily want or need social housing. Analysis of the Housing Register shows the following:
- A majority of single person households (57%), approximately 38% two person households (mostly couples), and a very small percentage of larger households have applied for sheltered/supported housing.
 - Most households are eligible for, and require, bungalows or flats with minimal support (mainly in the form of emergency pull chords).
 - Over 40% of households would not accept, or are not eligible for, housing schemes with high levels of support.
 - Owner occupiers are by far the largest tenure group applying for sheltered or supported housing (57%).
 - Most applicants for sheltered/supported housing are in the 50 to 65 age range. 73% of applicants are aged between 50 and 75. Less than 25% are aged over 75.
 - Demand for sheltered/supported housing is spread across the district relative to settlement size.
 - Applicants for sheltered/supported housing represent around 2% of total households aged over 50 in the district.

5.3 Growth in older households

5.3.1 The number of households aged over 65 as a percentage of the total population in the district is expected to increase to almost 25% over the next two decades. The proportion over 85 is expected to more than double. This growth has clear implications in relation to demand for services.

Table 1 Projected growth in population aged 65 and over, Blaby District 2009 to 2030

Overall Population	2009	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total population	94,200	98,000	101,500	105,100	108,400
Population aged 65 and over	16,600	19,800	21,600	23,900	26,400
Population aged 85 and over	2,000	2,600	3,200	4,000	4,900
Population aged 65 and over as a proportion of the total population	17.62%	20.20%	21.28%	22.74%	24.35%
Population aged 85 and over as a proportion of the total population	2.12%	2.65%	3.15%	3.81%	4.52%

5.4 Meeting Needs and Expectations

5.4.1 Meeting the needs and expectations of local people requires significant investment of time, long term planning and funding. The issues and options which have been considered are discussed below.

Recognising Diversity

5.4.2 The recent report “A Qualitative Assessment of the Housing Needs and Aspirations of Older People in Leicestershire” (May 2010) provides an important insight into the differing views and expectations of older people from different backgrounds. Some of the most notable findings are shown below.

- People from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds were reluctant to move away from family, and any specialist housing was preferred to be located near existing links to be attractive. (However, a desire to be close to existing community links is fairly universal among all groups).
- Members of the Asian community suggested the provision of a prayer room in any scheme was important in the absence of a nearby mosque.
- Views among Black and Minority Ethnic people varied regarding whether schemes should be mixed or targeted specifically at people from their own communities. The need for cultural choices to be available within the options on offer was highlighted.
- Older Gypsies and Travellers expressed a strong preference to have care and bespoke accommodation or services provided on existing gypsy and traveller sites wherever possible. The idea of emergency pull chords being fitted in existing homes was raised. Most were reluctant to move into ‘bricks and mortar’ housing.
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people overall implied a preference to be housed in mainstream accommodation. However, there were specific concerns about prejudice, segregation and a lack of active support from scheme staff and management. The specific care

needs of transgender individuals was also raised as a potential issue, particularly in relation to awareness and sensitivity from care providers. A key point raised was that better awareness training about LGBT issues is needed.

Improving Existing Stock

- 5.4.3 The sheltered schemes across the district were designed and built during the 1960s and are generally speaking no longer fit for purpose. In particular this relates to design features such as steps leading to, and within buildings (reducing mobility), small room sizes, and narrow doorways (making wheelchair accessibility difficult or impossible). Despite this, some schemes remain popular and well occupied, particularly in locations such as Kirby Muxloe and Countesthorpe.
- 5.4.4 Updating or replacing these schemes is a key challenge. Consideration must be given to feasibility, cost, and replacement provision where necessary. The closure of any sheltered scheme requires long term planning. Ideally schemes need to empty naturally to avoid causing distress to any existing tenants. This in itself has a cost implication as units will be left vacant throughout this process. Any replacement provision will be more space and resource intensive, with substantial funding implications.

Providing options locally

- 5.4.5 All research and consultation involving older people has indicated a preference to remain close to family, friends and existing links with the local community. Where people need to move but do not have any options available locally, it is far more likely that they will not move voluntarily until a crisis or their health dictates that they must.
- 5.4.6 Blaby District Council has been talking to Parish Councils about local housing issues and is working to keep communities informed about the options available for providing housing which meets the needs of their own local community. Often this relates to Rural Exceptions Schemes, but could also involve Community Build Initiatives or other similar community led schemes. The Council will continue to work with communities as part of this strategy.

Providing affordable downsizing options

- 5.4.7 The Council takes homeowner equity into account, so that homeowners applying for social housing are given low priority unless they have a specific support need. The fact that many older homeowners in the district are applying for social housing with little chance of accessing it implies that the market alone is not meeting this demand.
- 5.4.8 The decision to move is always complex and subjective. Often older people have to move in response to a crisis (illness, injury, loss of spouse etc). However, growing numbers of older households are considering the potential for increased longevity as a financial risk, and are more willing to trade down to a smaller home to:

- Improve their quality of life during retirement
 - Reduce the likelihood of needing to move because of a crisis
 - Raise additional capital in order to pay for care in later life.
- 5.4.9 Bungalows are repeatedly identified as the most popular downsizing choice. However, they are often not dissimilar in price to family homes, and do not necessarily provide any financial incentive to move. An alternative intermediate product is needed to meet the requirements of downsizing owner occupiers looking to release funds for later life.
- 5.4.10 Subsidised properties for sale which allow households to downsize with full and independent control are currently being considered. The provider would retain the right to buy back the property at resale, recovering the subsidy for future households. This would provide a more financially attractive downsizing option, and allow greater choice with regard to the size of property.
- 5.4.11 Providers are already exploring floating support services with a related service charge, in partnership with Supporting People or other social care bodies.

Assisted move schemes

- 5.4.12 Financial incentives to encourage downsizing have been successful in the social sector. Research carried out by Blaby District Council has indicated demand for a service which provides practical assistance during downsizing. This type of service could be provided at a cost where appropriate, and would potentially make the process less daunting. A service like this may be particularly valued by households for whom mobility is an issue.
- 5.4.13 Examples of assisted move schemes
- Most existing assisted move schemes are funded by developers in relation to new build properties.
 - The New Homes Group (www.thenewhomesgroup.co.uk) works to provide assistance to downsizers in the private sector. Initially assistance was primarily focused on facilitating and administering purchases of new build properties and related sales. However, the group have confirmed that they are increasingly active in the resale market.
 - Assisted move schemes are already being offered to social tenants by several local authorities and housing associations. Many offer cash incentives, though several also offer assistance with organising and carrying out the move. Some examples are:
 - Kettering Borough Council – HomeMove downsizing service
 - Oldham Council First Choice Downsizing Scheme
 - Wandsworth Borough Council Room to Move Scheme
 - Northampton Borough Council Under Occupiers Scheme
 - Havering Borough Council Downsizing Incentive Scheme

Extra Care Housing

5.4.14 The Department of Health defines Extra Care Housing as follows:

“Extra Care Housing describes a type of specialised housing that provides independence and choice to adults with varying care needs and enables them to remain in their own home. Extra Care Housing should be able to provide most residents, if they so desire, with a home for the remainder their life, regardless of changes in their care needs.

Services are provided in a purpose built, housing environment with care and support delivered to meet the individual resident's needs. This type of housing provides 24-hour support, meals, domestic help, leisure and recreation facilities and a genuinely safe environment to its residents. It can provide a base for out of hours or outreach services to the local community. Intermediate care facilities, to prevent avoidable admission to hospital or to help people return from hospital to their own home more quickly, can also be based at Extra Care Housing schemes.”²

5.4.15 Extra Care Housing is relatively new and little known. The idea is to create a setting which enables people to be as independent as possible, with easy access to care and support, if and when they need it. The provision of Extra Care is a priority for Leicestershire County Council as a more attractive and affordable alternative to Residential Care.

5.4.16 Consultation showed that residents in Blaby District generally have little awareness of Extra Care as a concept. Often the word ‘care’ was found to be off-putting, and was linked to negative perceptions of residential care or nursing homes. Once the concept was explained, the response to the idea was much more positive. This implies that work is necessary to increase awareness and improve understanding of Extra Care as part of any delivery strategy.

5.4.17 Blaby District Council is working with partners to assess local demand for Extra Care, and to develop a strategy for an appropriate development, in an appropriate location. The size of an extra care scheme will be partly dictated by demand and partly dictated by necessity.

5.4.18 The principal challenge in providing Extra Care relates to economic viability. The need for subsidy to fund older persons housing and related support services, particularly in relation to Extra Care, is being highlighted wherever possible, and emerging national and sub-regional funding streams are being monitored.

² See

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Deliveringadultsocialcare/Housing/DH_083199

Open market housing for older households

5.4.19 Some research has found that older people who choose to move may not require a smaller or less expensive property, only one which is more accessible and manageable. Provision of larger properties appropriate for older households should be considered by Registered Providers of Social Housing within their offer, but also by private developers responding to demand in the open market.

5.4.20 Blaby District Council will continue to recommend a balanced mix of open market housing within new developments across the district, including bungalows and other downsizing properties where appropriate. This should help to facilitate greater movement within the housing market, resulting in increased availability of family homes.

Replacing family homes

5.4.21 Whilst in an ideal housing market under-occupying households would downsize from family homes, it must be accepted that currently, in the majority of cases, residents wish to continue to live in their existing family homes for as long as possible. Necessity may dictate removal to residential care, but households may not move at all. In these cases houses often enter an extended probate period during which they are unoccupied. Because older households are living longer and occupying much of the existing stock of family homes, it is necessary to build new family homes for emerging households.

5.4.22 Blaby District Council works to ensure decent family homes (both affordable and open market) are provided on new developments, to enable healthy, balanced, mixed communities across the district. This is particularly important in smaller, more rural settlements which tend to have older populations and a very limited supply of accessible family housing.

5.4.23 The requirement for an appropriate housing mix which recognises both the issue of under-occupation and demand for family homes is embedded in the current strategic housing and planning portfolio and evidence base. Important documents include:

- Local Housing Strategy April 2009
- Affordable Housing Strategy January 2010
- Core Strategy Submission Version July 2009
- Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008
- Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Assessment 2009

5.4.24 The need to replace family homes and provide a mix of housing will be incorporated into any updates of the above documents, and any new emerging documents relating to district or sub-regional housing growth, including Local Plans.

6 KEY AIM FOUR: Maintain communication links with the older community to ensure we are responding to their needs and aware of their views

6.1.1 Blaby District Council will endeavour to consult with and update older residents about how this strategy is being implemented wherever possible. Consultation will be through the channels listed below, and we will continue to explore other ways of engaging with residents:

- Older Persons Engagement Network (OPEN)
- County Integrated Partnership for Older People (CIPOP)
- Community Action Blaby District
- Three Oaks Homes Tenants Federation
- Groups held for older people throughout the district³
- Information made available in public areas (including the Council main reception area, libraries, GP surgeries and other locations as appropriate)
- Postal surveys and information distribution where possible
- Articles and information in local media (newsletters, local papers etc)
- Other channels as appropriate, where opportunities arise.

7 KEY AIM FIVE: Keep older people and their families informed about relevant services

7.1.1 Making people aware of the services available to them is a longstanding challenge. Often in consultation it was found that older people wanted a service that already existed, but were unaware of its existence.

7.1.2 A key difficulty in relation to promotion and raising awareness is cost. While many services are subsidised or not-for-profit, budget for advertising and promotion may not be available. This is even more of an issue in the current climate of cuts and reduced spending.

7.1.3 Blaby District Council needs to explore ways of helping people to know what is available which are either free or of minimal cost. This could include:

- Website advertising: Though this is a cheap and convenient way of promoting services, many older people have said that it is ineffective because they cannot or do not use the internet. However it may still be useful to inform 'younger old' people about services, as well as family members and friends.
- Information leaflets: A number of information leaflets about existing services are currently on display in the reception area at the main Council Offices. However this immediately excludes people who do not visit the main offices. There are many leaflets on display in the

³ See <http://idocs.blaby.gov.uk/external/health-social-care/services-older-people/older-peoples-guide.pdf>

reception area which also means that people may not see the leaflets intended for them. To improve this, leaflets could be distributed to other, more targeted locations such as:

- Parish Council venues
- Libraries
- Doctors Surgeries
- Community club venues
- Community shops
- Advertising on the 'big screen' in Blaby District Council reception at the main offices. Again, this excludes those who do not visit the main offices.
- Articles or advertisements in local papers, including in the Blaby District Council Contact Magazine: A number of people thought this would be an effective way of informing them about services during consultation. In particular, people said they were more likely to take note of an article about something than an advertisement.
- 'Piggybacking' on other promotions or mailings from the Council where appropriate.

8 KEY AIM SIX: Adopt strategies which recognise the wider impact of older households in relation to the local market

- 8.1.1 Blaby District Council recognises the importance of a holistic approach in relation to strategic housing and planning. The need for housing to suit the specific demographics of the district is recognised across existing strategies.
- 8.1.2 Population change and socio-economic change is continually monitored, as are trends in housing need, house prices and development. Emerging research relating to housing and related issues, as well as new national or sub-regional policies likely to affect our residents, are also evaluated on a regular basis. Where specific issues are identified as a result of this monitoring the strategic framework and approach in relation to housing issues are amended accordingly.
- 8.1.3 Examples of successful policies and practices elsewhere that can be applied locally will also be monitored.
- 8.1.4 Blaby District Council will review emerging research, relevant strategies and guidance. In planning for the future we will work with partners and stakeholders to provide the best offer of housing and related support services for our residents.

9 APPENDIX

9.1 Strategic and research framework

Relevant documents in the Blaby District Council Portfolio:

- Local Housing Strategy April 2009
- Affordable Housing Strategy January 2010
- Core Strategy Submission Version July 2009
- Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions SPD February 2010

Sub-regional documents and research:

- Leicestershire County Council: Strategy for Ageing Well in Leicestershire Refresh 2010-2011
- Leicestershire Adult Social Care Services: Leicestershire Extra Care Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015
- A Qualitative Assessment of the Housing Needs and Aspirations of Older People in Leicestershire – Report for Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area Partnership (HMA) May 2010
- Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008
- Leicester and Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2009
- Leicestershire County Strategic Review of Housing related Support Services for Older People 2010
- Affordable Housing Provision and Developer Contributions July 2009
- Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Assessment 2009

Regional and national documents and research:

- National Housing Federation, (February 2011), *Breaking the mould: Revisioning older people's housing*
- Imogen Blood and Sally-Marie Bamford, (October 2010) *Equality and diversity and older people with high support needs*, International Longevity Centre UK (supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
- Karen Croucher and Mark Bevan, (April 2010), *Telling the story of Hartfields: A new retirement village for the 21st century*, supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Donald Hirsch, Social Policy Consultant and Philip Spiers, FirstStop Advice, (March 2010), *Funding care: how can each generation pay its fair share? Viewpoint: Informing debate* (on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
- Audit Commission Local government report (February 2010) *Under Pressure: Tackling the financial challenge for councils of an ageing population*
- National Development Team for Inclusion (November 2009), *Finding out what determines 'a good life' for older people in care homes*,

Findings: Informing change, (supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

- Deborah Klee on behalf of Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) (May 2009), *Getting on well together: Councils working with older people*, I&DeA
- *Delivering Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods, A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society*, (December 2008), Communities and Local Government
- *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods, A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society*, (February 2008), Communities and Local Government
- Karen Croucher (2006), *Making the case for retirement villages*, Centre for Housing Policy, University of York (supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
- Housing and Older People Development Group (HOPDEV), (October 2005), *Delivering housing for an ageing population: Informing housing strategies and planning policies*
- Nigel J.W. Appleton (2002), *Planning for the majority: The needs and aspirations of older people in general housing*, (supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

9.2 Consultation with stakeholders - responses

East Midlands Housing Association:

Welcome the strategy in acknowledging the demographic drivers and current position, and the need for a range of support and accommodation to meet need.

Helpful to include the needs of BME communities and how these can be met.

Underline the need for flexibility in approaching supply of new housing for older people, given current problems with accessing capital and funding.

Braunstone Town Council:

Concern about new build developments providing the bulk of new housing for older people and these being principally in urban areas. Encourage a single build target for the district to allow supply to be built in rural settlements which permits people to remain close to their families and local communities.

Concern about cutbacks in services for older people – potential gaps in provision should be identified in the strategy.

Glenfield Parish Council

Target dates should be included in the action plan. (Comment – review dates are included but target dates are difficult to realistically apply in the current climate of uncertainty).

More detail on how goals will be achieved.

Replacing family homes is agreed to be a key issue, and should be incorporated into the planning process in the same way that affordable homes are included. Identify where this aim will be incorporated elsewhere within the strategic framework.

9.3 Questionnaire used to interview older individuals in community groups

N.B. In several instances participants in community groups preferred to answer questions together rather than individually, therefore the structure was used as a guide rather than a rigid format.

ABOUT YOU...

Where do you live?
.....

How many bedrooms do you have? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Tenure Type? Owner Occupier Private Rent Social Rent Shared Ownership

What type of property do you live in? Please Circle
House Bungalow Maisonette Flat Sheltered Accom

Are you on the waiting list for Social Housing?
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Do you have any support needs at the moment? How are they met?
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ABOUT THE AREA YOU LIVE IN...

What services do you use? Where do you go to access them? E.g. doctors, leisure facilities and transport.

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What services do you see as most important? E.g. doctors, leisure facilities and transport.

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What do you like about where you live now? What is important to you about where you live?

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Are there any problems where you live now? What do you feel needs to be done to tackle them?

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ABOUT YOUR FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS...

If you develop a need for additional support in the home, would you rather have your home adapted to meet your needs or move into specialist (supported) accommodation?

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If you were to move, what would be your ideal property type? Where would you want to live?

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Would you welcome an assisted move scheme?

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Have you heard of Extra Care? What are your views?

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Have you heard of Shared Ownership or low cost homebuy? Do they appeal to you?

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Blaby District Council Older Persons Housing Strategy Action Plan

Strategic Aim	Related Action	Related Organisations	Measure	Review Date
Support Older People to remain independent for as long as possible	<p>Promote available support services through effective referrals and inter-departmental working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistent communication across organisations and departments Monitor available support services and emerging schemes Liaise with community representatives, groups and forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blaby District Council Housing and Community Services Three Oaks Homes and other Housing Associations operating in the district Organisations in the third sector offering services to support older households (for example Age Concern/Care and Repair) 	<p>Increased uptake/awareness of available services and benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Contact Assisted Move Lifeline Other services as available 	March 2012
	<p>Work towards providing new services tailored for older people in conjunction with local and sub-regional strategic partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and respond to new initiatives which provide opportunities Maintain contact with sub-regional groups to facilitate service provision and explore funding opportunities Forge and strengthen alliances with existing organisations and groups working in relevant sectors Maintain communication with service users and representatives to ensure services are appropriate and desirable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blaby District Council Housing and Community Services Housing Associations operating in the district Leicestershire County Council Adult Social Care Service Leicestershire Primary Care Trusts Leicester and Leicestershire Councils Charities and organisations operating in the third sector 	<p>Introduction of new services to assist and promote independence, including (potentially):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community schemes Joined up care provision through housing and care providers <p>Positive feedback from service users, monitored through liaison with community groups and forums.</p>	March 2012
	<p>Continue to streamline delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blaby District Council Housing and Community Services Housing Associations where relevant Social Services and Occupational Therapy Services 	<p>Minimum delivery timescales for Disabled Facilities Grants</p>	March 2012

Strategic Aim	Related Action	Related Organisations	Measure	Review Date
Work to improve the supply of appropriate housing for older households	Make appropriate recommendations with regard to market and affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blaby District Council Developers operating in the local area Housing Associations operating in the local area 	Increased provision of appropriate housing options in new build developments	March 2012
	Work with stakeholders to provide bespoke developments and improve existing schemes in the area for older households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blaby District Council Three Oaks Homes Housing Associations operating in the local area Leicestershire County Council Adult Social Care Service Supporting People Homes and Communities Agency / other funding and enabling bodies 	Increased provision of appropriate housing options for older people Successful review and remodelling of existing provision where appropriate	March 2012
	Work with partners and stakeholders to pilot assisted move initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Float proposal with potential service users Float proposal with local stakeholders and potential service providers Explore funding opportunities Construct strategy and action plan to move forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blaby District Council Three Oaks Homes Housing Associations operating in the local area Private sector organisations where appropriate Third sector organisations where appropriate Community groups and representatives 	Effective understanding of market demand and product requirement. Achieve support from partners for pilot Introduction of pilot	June 2011 TBC TBC
	Explore potential for provision of Extra Care facility in the district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand demand and assess appropriate locations Evaluate capacity for provision Explore funding options with potential partners and assess feasibility Monitor existing provision and forthcoming provision, particularly within the private sector Determine specific requirements for local provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blaby District Council Housing Associations operating in the local area Leicestershire County Council Supporting People Homes and Communities Agency / other funding and enabling bodies 	Understanding of demand and locational 'pull' factors through consultation Determine strategy for provision with partners	June 2011 TBC

Strategic Aim	Related Action	Related Organisations	Measure	Review Date
<p>Maintain communication links with the older community to ensure we are responding to their needs and aware of their views</p>	<p>Work to create, improve and maintain relationships with local community groups involving and representing older people.</p> <p>Explore additional methods of communicating with the older population i.e. through secondary referral from existing services/newsletters/publications in appropriate locations.</p> <p>Liaise with other organisations operating locally with good relations with the older community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaby District Council • Older Persons Engagement Network (OPEN) • County Integrated Partnership for Older People (CIPOP) • Voluntary Action Blaby District • Groups held for older people throughout the district • Age Concern • Care and Repair • Other organisations in the third sector where relevant • Providers of supported housing • Tenant groups • Leicestershire County Council Adult Social Care Service 	<p>Improved feedback from older community, monitored through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt of enquiries and inputs direct to the council from older residents • Improved inclusion and recognition of Housing representatives within existing groups • Improved response rate to consultations • Continual review of strategies and objectives in response to consultation 	<p>March 2012</p>
<p>Keep older people and their families informed about relevant services</p>	<p>Explore the best places to distribute information on services via consultation with local groups.</p> <p>Monitor uptake and effectiveness of promotion and advertising through measuring enquiries and uptake.</p> <p>Regular review of local groups and services where promotion would be effective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaby District Council • Older Persons Engagement Network (OPEN) • County Integrated Partnership for Older People (CIPOP) • Voluntary Action Blaby District • Groups held for older people throughout the district • Age Concern • Care and Repair • Other organisations in the third sector where relevant • Providers of supported housing • Tenant groups • Leicestershire County Council Adult Social Care Service 	<p>Increased enquiries and uptake of promoted services, monitored through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Relationship Management system (Blaby District Council) • Liaison with service providers • Periodic review of awareness through telephone/postal surveys where appropriate 	<p>March 2012</p>

Strategic Aim	Related Action	Related Organisations	Measure	Review Date
Adopt strategies which recognise the wider impact of older households in relation to the local housing market	<p>Incorporate holistic view into emerging and revised strategies, including strategic planning documents.</p> <p>Ensure housing providers are aware of the wider issues in relation to demographic issues and stock balance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaby District Council • Housing providers operating in the area • Consultees regarding emerging strategic documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved housing mix monitored via planning data and housing register statistics. • Strategies recognise population changes and projections in relation to housing for a mix of household types. 	Ongoing