

Appendix 4 Central Government Policy and Local Strategies and Research

Government Policy

1: A host of government reports, initiatives and directives over the past few years have highlighted the need for services that promote independence and choice and enable older people to remain in their own homes, whether that means their original home or a self-contained unit in some form of supported housing.

For example:

- Quality and Choice in Older People's Housing, DETR (2001)
- National Service Framework for Older People DH (2001)
- Our health, Our Care, Our Say; A new direction for community services -White Paper, DH (2006)
- Commissioning Framework for Health and Well Being, DH (2007)
- Putting People First, DH (2007).
- Lifetime Homes Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, CLG/DH/DWP (2008)
- Health and Social Care Bill, DH (2011).
- Localism Act, DCLG (Dec. 2011).

2: Sheltered housing was supported by government policy from the late 1950s but always

provided a relatively low level of support, from a resident 'warden' or 'manager'. In the late 1970s and early 1980s public and voluntary sector providers started to experiment with the provision of 'very-sheltered' housing, where additional support was available.

3: At the same time one or two providers of residential and nursing care were exploring the potential to provide residential and nursing care in more self-contained settings.

4: During the 1990s it began to be realised that in most parts of the country there was a sufficient supply of conventional sheltered housing, but that opportunities existed to add to the stock of extra care housing. This was substantiated in a study for the Department of the Environment (McCafferty, 1994) which concluded that there was "a significant unmet need for 'very sheltered housing' and a potential over-provision of ordinary sheltered housing". Seventeen years on, this is still true, but the problem is exacerbated by further ageing of both the sheltered housing stock and the population.

5: In 2001 '**The National Service Framework for Older People**' set out standards of care for older people and made a commitment to ending discrimination in health and social care on the grounds of age. It also set objectives of promoting an active, healthy life in old age and developing 'person-centred care', themes which became more prominent during the decade. It announced a reform programme that would develop more effective

links between health, adult social care and other services such as housing partners working with the voluntary and private sectors. New housing models such as extra care housing fitted perfectly with these objectives.

6: Guidance produced in 2002 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (as it was then) and the Department of Health on **“Preparing Older People’s Strategies”** encouraged local authorities to give consideration to extra care housing as one of the key elements of their local strategies for housing provision for older people. Similarly, in 2006 the department for Communities and Local Government report **“Quality and choice for older people’s housing: a strategic framework”** encouraged local council strategies to address older people’s immediate requirements and, at the same time, plan to meet future requirements. In particular it promoted preventative approaches which could contribute to older people being better able to retain their health and mobility.

7: The 2007 White Paper, **“Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services”**, although dominated by health issues, gave implicit support for housing models which enshrined the concepts of ‘independence’, ‘choice’ and ‘care close to home’ in the provision of social care.

8: **“Putting People First”** (2007) set out the government’s commitment to independent living for all adults. It did not discuss specific models of housing

provision, but promoted ‘personalised’ care, an agenda which is now being driven forward in social care commissioning.

9: In 2008, the government published **“Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A national strategy for an ageing society”**. This document recognised the fact that the majority of people not only *want* to stay in their existing home as they grow older, but actually do so. It therefore placed emphasis on the Lifetime Homes concept of accessible design of *all* housing and on support for adaptation of existing accommodation by means of disabled facilities grants and home improvement agencies. Nevertheless, the role of ‘specialist’ housing provision (e.g. ‘sheltered’ or ‘extra care’) was also recognised.

10: The **Health and Social Care Act 2012** which received its Royal Assent in March 2012 introduced major health care reform. The Act amounts to the most extensive reworking of the structure of the National Health Service. The Act has implications for all health organisations in the NHS, not least for NHS Primary Health Care Trusts (PCTs) and Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs), which would be abolished; at the same time, £60 to £80 billion of “commissioning”, or cash health care funds, would be transferred from those dissolved PCTs over to several hundred “consortia” run by the general practitioners (GPs) in England.

11: This fundamentally changes the way commissioning of health

services for older people will be made.

12: DCLG/DH/HCA :Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation: panel for Innovation (HAPPA1) 2009. The high-profile was established in June 2009 to tackle the following question: **What further reform is needed to ensure that new build specialised housing meets the needs and aspirations of the older people of the future?**

The panel focused on improving the quality of life of our ageing population by influencing the availability and choice of high quality and challenging the perceptions of mainstream and specialised housing for older people, for existing and future generations.

In addition it aimed to raise the aspirations of older people to demand higher quality, more sustainable homes and spread awareness of the possibilities offered through innovative design of housing and neighbourhoods.

The report outlines innovative housing examples from across England that respond to a variety of care needs such as older people controlling the housing processes, issues regarding space, light and accessibility, a shared sense of purpose the idea of being part of a community.

13:Housing Our Ageing Population: Plan for Implementation: All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care for Older people:

November 2012: The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Housing and Care for Older People, chaired by Lord Best, has highlighted the benefits of improved housing options for older people. Their 2012 inquiry report, is the result of a five month inquiry into the progress in implementing the recommendations and design criteria set out in the 2009 HAPPI report.

The APPG inquiry found there were far reaching benefits from developing good quality housing for older people, including a reduction in health and social care costs, as well as the freeing up of family housing and has made a series of recommendations to create movement in the housing market, improve the health of older people and create new housing options for **younger people and families.**

14: The Localism Act received Royal Assent in December 2012. The coalition government is putting localism and decentralisation at the heart of its agenda. This shift of power will underpin the overarching objective of building the 'Big Society'. The Act will impact on a number of key service areas and democratic practices which include but are not limited to
Neighbourhood planning
Social Housing tenure reform
Community right to buy/challenge 'communal' assets and Local Referendums

15: There is also a potential impact with the **Welfare Reform Act** which could affect many older people if they are under-occupying their current property. Housing benefit will be paid based on the

claimants bedroom need as opposed to the size of the property they occupy. This could have an adverse affect on many older people living in under-occupied homes in Tower Hamlets and claiming benefits.

16: The Government plans to use the Welfare Reform Act to introduce a measure to cut the benefit payable to working age 'under-occupiers' in social housing, at an average cost of £14 per week for 670,000 tenants across UK. The current definition of working age is anybody up to the age of 65 years old.

Local Strategies and Research

The needs and provision of services for older people are covered through a range of local strategies and research:

1: The aim of the Tower Hamlets [2020 Community Plan](#) is to *'improve the lives of all those living and working in the Borough'* by 2020.

2: The Plan outlines ways in which Tower Hamlets will become a great place to live such as investment in neighbourhoods, improved transport networks, helping economic growth in the Borough,

3: The plan is split into four themes:

- A great place to live;
- A prosperous community;

- A safe and supportive community;
- A healthy community.
- Managing Demand and Reducing Overcrowding.
- Increasing housing supply and Investment.

4: Underpinning these 4 themes is a desire to build One Tower Hamlets where everyone has an equal stake and status, equal opportunities, a responsibility to contribute and where families are the cornerstone of success.

5: There is particular reference to older people under the 'Great Place to Live' theme. The strategy aims to prevent and reduce fuel poverty for vulnerable groups such as older people and ensure that the local transport system makes the borough's town centres and neighbourhoods more accessible for all local people, particularly older and disabled people.

6: The Council **Local Development Framework** (2010-2025) core strategy has been declared sound and adopted, the key plan to guide the development of the Borough over the next 15 years. There is a strong emphasis on rejuvenation and on the provision of more affordable housing. Strong borough-wide policies are underpinned by a vision for each of the areas ("hamlets") that make up the borough. The Framework identifies key sites for new health facilities, improved transportation hubs and large housing developments.

7: The **Housing Strategy** (2009-12) has four main aims. These are;

- Decent Homes and Housing Management.
- Place-making and Sustainable Communities.

8: The first aim, Decent Homes and Housing Management looks at Decent Homes in the private sector including vulnerable people. The section on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) says that under the East London protocol Registered Providers will carry out aids and adaptations work up to £1,000. Works to Tower Hamlets Homes (ALMO) (THH) properties are funded through major repairs capital budgets.

9: The second aim, Place-making and Sustainable Communities includes a commitment to ensure healthy living programmes and health infrastructure requirements are an integral part of social housing providers' activities. Also a commitment to integrate the Supporting People (SP) Strategy with housing and homelessness strategies.

10: The third aim, Managing Demand and Reducing Overcrowding lists a number of initiatives already in place to reduce overcrowding, a major issue for the borough.

11: Finally increasing the housing supply, reiterates targets in housing market assessment and in addition, states that 45% of affordable new housing should be 3 bed or larger. It also refers to the need to increase the proportion of fully wheelchair accessible housing (10% of all new developments) and accessible housing generally. In addition it sets out the design

requirements to meet the needs of BME households. There is reference to innovative approaches to develop intermediate market housing but no specific reference to housing for older people.

12: There is a new **Supporting People Commissioning Strategy 2011 – 2016**. The Strategy is based on four key delivery areas as follows:

- Supporting individuals to live as independently as possible;
- Rebalancing services towards prevention and early intervention away from high cost less empowering longer term services;
- Expanding our commitment to personalised services; and
- Driving up efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

13: The **Homelessness Strategy (2008-13)** makes no specific reference to older people, reflecting the fact that very few older people present as homeless. Other boroughs have found, however, that older people can be over-represented in some hostels, often as long term residents. The Places of Change agenda is beginning to tackle this problem. This agenda has been driven forward by government since 2005 under the Hostels Capital Improvement Programme (HCIP). The HCIP has invested £90 million of capital grants in organisations serving homeless people. This investment has improved the physical condition of homelessness services and provided items of capital equipment for associated activities.

14: The strategy highlights pressure on social housing and recommends consideration of different pathways for single people, this could potentially impact on older people wanting more appropriate accommodation but not wishing to move into sheltered housing.

15: A **Best Value Review (BVR) of Older People** was carried out in May 2006. Tower Hamlets was recognised for good practice in a number of areas, including Social Exclusion Unit work with older people, and being chosen as a pilot for LinkAge Plus. The BVR report highlights the contribution of DFGs and housing allocations to helping people remain independent.

16: A **Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing** was carried out in June 2006. The report refers to 4 extra-care schemes, providing 161 units, managed by Adult Social Care. This was considered to be a slight over-supply, with some hesitation about whether demand would increase in the future. There were around 100 units of culturally specific sheltered housing provision. Most sheltered accommodation is 1 bed, though there are a few 2 beds. Most people are satisfied with sheltered accommodation; the main complaint was distance from the shops. Security was also a concern for many. There were also issues raised about the lack of social and leisure activities, policies on pets, and disputes between tenants.

17: In December 2008 the Council submitted an expression of interest to the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and

was successful in securing enhanced service programme funding for 2 years. This funding was to be utilised to expand, develop and integrate the Borough's existing Home Improvement services, with the aim of providing an infrastructure where all Home Improvement services can be accessed and coordinated from a single point of access. Ridgeway's were commissioned to carry out an assessment of the home improvement agency in 2010.

18: In 2008, the Council commissioned Tribal to produce a **Needs Assessment for Extra Care Sheltered Housing** for older people over the next five to ten years. The report found that there should be an:

- Increase in the contribution that extra care housing can make to the avoidance of residential care placements, and the needs of people with dementia in particular
- Provide a higher proportion of placements (up to 25%) to people under 65 who would nevertheless benefit from this type of housing
- Enable access to extra care housing for people with lower level needs, where preventative benefits or other strategic outcomes are possible.

19: The **Ridgeway Report** (Ridgeway Associates 2010) recommended significant change to existing services, into an integrated holistic service which sits within one department, with a first point of access which can signpost to

relevant services and a single assessment process in place. The consultation highlighted a lack of knowledge about services, including from staff at the LinkAge Plus centres, and a view that services were only available to those on benefits. Consultation with over 50s in general needs housing includes looking at services which they may require for the future.

20: During 2009, the Council carried out a **Strategic Housing Needs Assessment (SHMA)**. The SHMA is a study conducted to enhance the Council's awareness of how the housing market functions. The study provided a wealth of analysis, including information on:

- The housing market in Tower Hamlets in relation to neighbouring markets
- How the housing market operates, key drivers and relationships within the market
- Levels of housing need and demand that will inform the development of local planning and housing policies
- The mix and size of market and affordable housing required.

21: The study found that there is likely to be an overall increase in the 65+ population of 27.1% by 2026 (4,914 people). In the 85+ age group there is a rise of 1,553 people (81.0%).

22: The increase in older householders will have implications for support services, extra care housing, and the long term

suitability of accommodation, equity release schemes, adaptations, and other age-related care requirements.

The study recommended that:

- There is a need for support services and adaptation required to enable people to remain in their own home;
- Update the type, scale and quality of existing sheltered stock in meeting today's housing standards and preferences;
- There is a future need for 'extra care' accommodation for the growing frail elderly population over the longer term.

23: The Council commissioned Trimmers Associates to carry out a detailed **Older People's Housing Needs Assessment (2010)** looking at housing need, supply and demand for older people's housing in Tower Hamlets. The report provided valuable information which in turn is used as the empirical evidence base that underpins this strategy.

24: Gateway Housing Association carried out an Older Person Housing Commission in 2012. The aim was to make a positive contribution to local strategy development, to strengthen the local evidence base and to ensure that Gateway's own development strategies are well aligned with the latest knowledge of best practice. The Commission's findings will contribute both to local service innovation and to future strategy development in older

people's services in Tower Hamlets as well as more widely across the older people's accommodation sector.

25: Tower Hamlets Homes carried out an enquiry in 2012. It was established in order to understand how they can provide the best services and support for older residents.

The Inquiry was borne out of a realisation that:

- whilst roughly a third of Council tenants and leaseholders were aged 65+, as a general-needs housing provider, we had no specific service offer to the older age group
- the demographic profile of council tenants and leaseholders differs from that of the Borough more generally
- demographic indicators predict that the older segment will grow in size, and people will live longer.

In a time of constrained resources, retrenchment of health and social care and support in general as well as the opportunities brought about by significant investment in their stock, THH felt it was a good time to begin a discussion about what older people housed in Council properties need, want and expect and to think through the organisational responses to these challenges.

These challenges will include making choices around asset management and investment. THH also want to shape the service we

offer and the ways in which they offer it to better match the preferences expressed by older people.