

HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN CROYDON

**2008 TO 2013
STRATEGY**

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SUMMARY

Introduction

We are living in an ageing society. People are living longer, and the number and proportion of older people in the population are growing. Good quality housing and housing services play a central role in helping older people to live as fully, independently and safely as possible during their longer lives. A range of factors will mean changes to how we provide housing services. Longer life expectancy is not yet matched by better health expectancy and we are seeing higher levels of disability and dementia. There are more people living alone. Whilst much is made of the increasing spending power of older people, poorer households will now be spending longer periods on low incomes which of course will affect their ability to maintain their homes or manage their fuel bills as well as affect their welfare, health and quality of life.

Technological advances are transforming how we live: equipment, adaptations, sensors, telecare (remote care of older people) and “virtual wards” mean remaining in the home will be a viable option for increasingly more people. The introduction of self-directed support will radically change the way in which people choose to use the resources available for their care and the types of choices they make about how they live their lives.

This strategy sets out the way in which housing services will develop in coming years in response to changing needs and opportunities.

It provides a direction of travel and set of long-term aims against which decisions will be made as resources become available and services are reviewed.

The strategy has been developed within the wider housing and social care context in Croydon. There is a serious shortage of housing, in particular of affordable housing (social rented or low cost home ownership), and this shortfall has resulted in high levels of homelessness and housing need. There are 12,000 households on the council's housing register but only 1,500 properties become available for letting each year.

This strategy focusses on the accommodation, support and advice needs of active older people, and supports the Strategy for Better Health and Social Care for Older People in Croydon.

The people

56,000 people in Croydon are aged 60 and over - nearly 1 in 5 people. The 60+ population is projected to grow by 24% by 2020. A relatively small proportion of older people are from ethnic minorities but this is growing, another factor which will have an impact on service provision. More than a third of 65 to 74 year olds, and a half of over-75s, experience a limiting long-term illness. Many disabilities, conditions and health risks have a particular connection to life in the home, for example, trips and falls, limited mobility, and mental health problems and dementia. Other

conditions such as respiratory problems, hypothermia and increased risk of infections can be exacerbated by poor housing conditions.

The majority of older people live in general housing and only a small proportion are in residential care or other communal establishments. Seven out of 10 people own their own homes, a further two out of 10 rent from the council or housing association, and one in 10 is a private renter or lives rent-free. Older people make up a quarter of council tenants.

There are about 3,000 flats in the borough for older people. Most of these are in sheltered housing, where residents benefit from support from on-site or peripatetic support officers. Some private schemes don't offer support but do provide an attractive, age-friendly environment for retired people.

Existing services for older people

As well as the sheltered and retirement housing mentioned in the last paragraph, the borough has a range of housing services which are specifically or predominantly for older people. The majority of these are designed to enable older and disabled people to remain in their own homes. Aids and adaptations are carried out for council tenants, and there are grants for owner-occupiers and private renters for adaptations. There are also home renewal and energy efficiency grants to help private sector occupants repair and maintain their homes, and an equity release scheme to help them

borrow money for major repairs. The Staying Put team provides advice and support to people having adaptations or major repairs, and helps people being discharged from hospital. A range of minor interventions - the handyperson service and Safe Project for example - can make a big difference to the quality of people's lives especially by making homes safer and more secure.

A range of "telecare" products are available from the Aztec Centre - these promote independent living and link people up to Croydon Careline, a community alarm service which responds to people in emergencies whether as a result of a direct call for assistance or of concerns triggered through telecare systems. We provide information about housing and social care, including the mobile Pop Service taking advice out to local neighbourhoods.

Housing need amongst older people in Croydon

Information from the council's records, local surveys and consultation, the census and national studies, has provided a comprehensive picture of the needs of older people.

Housing conditions:

- single pensioners in private sector housing are more likely to be in poor condition housing (housing which does not meet the decent home standard) than average, and their homes are harder and more expensive to heat
- the condition of council housing

is much better - 85% of homes, including all sheltered housing flats, meet the decent home standard. However, ongoing repairs and refurbishment will be needed to maintain this quality.

Demand for social rented housing:

- 700 applicants on the council's housing register (9%) are older person households
- the average wait for sheltered housing ranges from one to just under two years; the average wait for 1-bedroomed general needs housing ranges from 8 months to 11 years. These different waiting times may affect the choices people make.
- about half of applicants have said they want sheltered housing, and half general needs housing; the main requirement is for ground floor housing in a quiet neighbourhood, close to shops.

Housing-related support:

- only half of residents in sheltered housing think they need support, and the support most likely to be needed is someone to check that they are alright
- there is a mismatch between the level of support provided and the level needed, mostly because people with low or medium support needs live in schemes offering high support
- support offered in sheltered housing is not tailored or geared up to the needs of more vulnerable residents
- there is a lack of housing-related support for people living in their own homes

Remaining in the home:

- 7,000 private sector residents said that they needed aids and adaptations - the total cost would be £67 million (2002 survey); 10% of council tenants said their home did not meet needs arising from a disability
- 3,500 older person households said they had difficulties managing their homes
- demand for adaptations, Staying Put assistance, telecare services and the handy person, Muckbusters and Safe Project services, has been increasing constantly in the last few years; the demand for adaptations goes significantly beyond the resources available resulting in lengthy waits.

Issues for the future

Older people's expectations are changing and, for example, they now want higher standards of accommodation and often resent the provision of support in sheltered housing. Some of the existing council and housing association sheltered housing does not meet these expectations and there is a need for investment, in part to modernise the schemes, and in part to ensure provision can meet a range of needs, such as those of disabled people or older people caring for younger sons and daughters. They also want to see services taken out to local communities.

There are some issues which present problems when it comes to planning services. It is difficult to anticipate what people will want because current demand is based on available options and not desired ones. Older people

themselves often do not or cannot anticipate their future housing needs well: they don't, for example, envisage that housing problems such as maintaining the home will become major factors creating a need to move. This difficulty in predicting future demand is exacerbated by the potential for huge changes to services arising from the emerging personalisation agenda and the scope for older people to choose exactly how they receive their social care. Over time, people's self-confidence in putting together their own care solutions may have far-reaching implications for how and where they live as well as housing services.

There are wider housing issues which must be considered. Older people are often living in homes which are, according to standard criteria, too large for them. Yet there is a serious shortage of larger homes and increasing levels of overcrowding: helping older people to move to smaller homes could have a beneficial impact on meeting housing need and creating a more balanced housing market. However, we must all fully understand the feelings of those occupants who may have lived in their homes for many years and will want to remain because of the memories the home holds. On the other hand, there are probably many people who would move but for considerable barriers: the provision of practical or emotional support may help overcome these. Good quality retirement housing would also make moving a more attractive option.

Aims and priorities

The aims are to:

- help people live as independently as possible and remain in their own home or move to another, more suitable, home of their own
- provide support to those who need it, regardless of where they live
- give people choice over where they live through different models of housing
- ensure that choices can be made at the right stage in someone's life through the provision of timely and comprehensive advice.

We will also have regard to:

- good management of the affordable housing stock
- best use of resources.

The priorities to help achieve these aims are:

1. To provide flexible support services which respond to different types and levels of support need and to different living situations
2. To provide high quality retirement housing, and to create a level of supply which achieves a balance between the needs of older people and the needs of other households
3. To make better use of the facilities offered in retirement schemes by opening them up to older residents in the wider area
4. To provide a range of "staying put" services and home adaptations
5. To provide information & advice which helps people choose, or plan for, the right solutions for them.

Priority One: To provide flexible support services which respond to different types and levels of support need and to different living situations

The main objectives of this priority are: to expand the options available thereby enabling people more choice over where and how they live; and to better tailor services to the needs of individuals and ensure resources are used most effectively. There are people living in their own homes who would benefit from low levels of support to help them manage. There is an opportunity to develop this type of service by re-configuring the current support service for people living in sheltered housing. Many sheltered residents neither need nor want the support on offer which represents poor value for money as well as reducing the attractiveness of this older people's housing. This re-configuration could also help by ensuring more vulnerable people are given higher levels of support. To reflect the changes, we will be renaming sheltered housing "retirement housing" as this describe schemes regardless of the support model.

Our actions will be to:

- Develop different models of support and accommodation including:
 - retirement housing with support
 - retirement housing (without support)
 - floating support service
 - "support when you need it" service
 - specialist support services eg

for people with mental health problems

- Pilot and evaluate a new model in 2008/09 in seven retirement schemes - residents will get support if they want and need it, with released resources used for providing support to people living in the neighbouring areas in their own homes; all residents will have a link to Croydon Careline
- Evaluation of combining support services operating in two or more retirement schemes so that just one provider runs the support service (although not necessarily at a reduced level of support for residents)
- Develop tailored support packages for a small number of vulnerable people with specialist requirements
- Put extra staffing into an existing special sheltered scheme to increase its viability as an alternative to residential care.

Priority Two: To provide good quality retirement housing, and ensure a level of supply which achieves a balance between the needs of older people and the needs of other households

Our actions will be to:

- Seek to include new retirement homes, for example bungalows in attractive settings, within the council's new-build programme funded through the new special purpose vehicle
- Complete refurbishment works at

Kuala Gardens retirement housing scheme and complete the new extra care scheme at Fellows Court

- Carry out a feasibility appraisal of a range of options for the council's retirement housing should resources become available: conversion to general needs housing or to supported housing for younger client groups; retention as older people's housing but with significant investment to make them more attractive and popular; or sale and investment of the receipt
- When other retirement housing schemes are refurbished, to incorporate as many options as possible from a menu of design features (set out in the sheltered housing and Secured by Design standards)
- Seek opportunities within refurbishment programmes to increase the number of wheelchair-accessible flats and two-bedroomed flats suitable for older people caring for vulnerable grown-up sons and daughters
- Monitor the demand for extra care housing, including amongst people with dementia, and identify opportunities for developing additional schemes

Priority Three: To make better use of the facilities offered in older people's housing schemes by opening them up to older residents in the wider area

- Survey retirement housing schemes to identify suitability for opening up the use of communal facilities to people in the wider neighbourhood as well as scheme residents, and discuss opportunities for events or surgeries with partners

Priority Four: To provide a range of "staying put" services

- Continue to carry out adaptations for council tenants and private sector residents through grants and Staying Put, and seek to increase the budget
- Publicise the HouseProud (equity release) scheme as a method of achieving home improvements
- Maintain staying put-type services at existing levels and extend the Staying Put in the Garden project to cover all wards
- All new affordable homes, where feasible, to meet the lifetime home standard, and 10 % to be fully wheelchair-accessible
- Develop an independent living strategy to consider how we can address demand for people to stay living safely and independently at home.

Priority Five: To provide information & advice which helps people choose, or plan for, the right solutions for them

- Develop high quality written and website information

- Put together a business case for a one-stop older people's housing advice service as part of the council's development of integrated services for older people, and continue with outreach advice through the Pop Service
- Nominate an older people's housing champion and run inter-agency training on older people's housing issues and services

Implementing and reviewing the strategy

The executive group of the Partnership Group for Older People will oversee the implementation, and the full group, together with other stakeholders, will receive reports on progress. We will ensure that future older people's stakeholder events continue to debate the best solutions for the future.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Almost one in five people in Croydon is aged 60 or over. Older people play a vital role in the life of our borough. Their welfare and ability to live full, independent, healthy and active lives are important to the whole community.

Housing is the cornerstone of independent living. Where people live, the condition, cost and suitability of their homes, the provision of care and support within the home, and the character of the surrounding neighbourhood, are all crucial factors contributing to health and well-being. Older people spend a much larger proportion of time in their homes than younger people and tend to move home much less often, so the decisions they take about their housing are of paramount importance to their welfare and happiness. For most people as they get older, the option of residential care is one they consider only as a last resort – the right housing, perhaps with support, can ensure that option does remain the last resort. The challenge is to develop housing options that respond to the different needs of an increasingly diverse elderly population, as they get older.

There are three overall housing choices open to older people:

- remaining in their own homes, possibly with adaptations, equipment, support or help with repairs and maintenance
- moving to a different home which better meets their needs and preferences, for example because it is nearer to relatives or care sources, or is easier to look after and manage in

- moving to accommodation with support or care.

The vast majority of older people live in their own homes and have the resources to look after their homes or to move to somewhere more suitable. They are also able to make these arrangements themselves, perhaps with the support of family and friends, and to manage independently. Even where they need essential services from public sector agencies such as the council and health service, they may not need help with their housing. There is a reasonable supply of private sector supported housing in the borough which many can afford using their own incomes or savings. However, many people will need some form of housing service from the council or its partner agencies, often because they have limited financial resources, have a level of vulnerability or no other source of support, or just because they need advice to help them make the right decisions.

This strategy considers how the council and its partners can best contribute to promoting independence and offering individual choice through:

- provision of affordable housing
- provision of housing support services
- assistance which helps people to remain in their own homes
- help with dealing with housing problems such as homelessness or benefits
- information and advice about housing options and solutions and enabling of informed choices.

The focus of this older people's housing strategy is on the housing needs of active, fully independent older people and those who require low levels of related support or assistance. The needs of older people who require high levels of support, such as residential, nursing and medical care, are covered by wider health and social care plans for the borough. The principal focus is on older people's accommodation and housing-related support as these services are the most under debate about how they can be modelled to meet the needs of today's older people. We see the provision of advice and information as another core area.

The majority of people reliant on social housing and other housing services provided by the council will be on limited incomes and thus in need of affordable housing, grant funding or low-cost services. However, we also recognise the need for the council to reach all older people in the borough, regardless of their financial position or vulnerability, in particular through comprehensive advice and information.

The strategy has been developed by the council in partnership with Croydon Primary Care Trust and the borough's voluntary sector, and this partnership will continue throughout the implementation. Housing has probably not always had a high enough profile within local health and social care plans and programmes, but the benefits of good quality housing and housing services for health and well-being in later life are nevertheless recognised. The

merger of the former housing and adult social services departments within the council into the new department for adult services and housing will provide a real boost to joint working, both within the authority and with external health and care agencies. The strategy has been consulted on extensively including through the partnership group for older people, VOSSPOP (voluntary agencies working with older people), the sheltered housing panel, and at the recent Open Space event, a forum for older people.

The action plan in the strategy sets out some specific actions we will be carrying out with our partners. More generally, the strategy sets out a significant agenda for the future. This will be heavily dependent on the availability of resources, the level of which is not fully known at this stage. The main purpose, therefore, is to set out the general direction of travel and provide a framework of objectives and principles within which future decisions, as they arise, will be taken. The housing strategy supports the Strategy for Better Health & Social Care for Older People in Croydon, developed by the Older People's Partnership Group. It will also play an important role in the social care transformation agenda, including the introduction of self-directed support, and the emerging carers strategy.

It also supports the Housing Strategy for Croydon 2006 to 2010 which sets out our plans for housing for the wider population and which provides the context for housing for specific groups within the community.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND

National and regional context

The implications of our ageing society are major considerations for national and regional government and these provide an important context for what we are doing in Croydon.

In 2008, the government published *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods*, its strategy for housing in an ageing society. The strategy makes housing and community planning a national priority linked to well-being in all its forms and recognises the role of housing in tackling poverty and improving health. The government's objectives are to give people greater control over their lives through diverse housing choices and good quality information, and to help people remain comfortably and safely in their homes. A central strand is the reconnection of housing, health and care. As with other national strategies relating to older people, *Lifetime Homes* places great store on joint working between the agencies responsible for health, housing and social care.

The other national policy which is of crucial relevance to this strategy is the 2006 government white paper, *Our health, our care, our say*, which called for services to have an emphasis on preventing problems and for joint working between agencies to help maintain independence. Central to maintaining independence and well-being is being able to live in a decent, warm and comfortable home.

The Transforming Social Care Circular set out the requirement for all local authorities to make significant progress towards the introduction of personal budgets - enabling them to choose what services they get and who provides them - by 2011, and it also deals with the wider well-being and preventative agenda.

The London Mayor's strategy, *Valuing Older People*, published in 2006, recognises the importance of housing and homelessness services and specifically encourages the re-development of inappropriate sheltered housing to meet diverse needs.

Local context

The quality of life of older people, and the services which the council can provide to enhance that quality, are major considerations in our aims and plans for the borough. The *Sustainable Community Strategy* includes the aim of "maintaining and improving the quality of life for an ageing population".

The plan for a healthy Croydon 2008-11 sets out a series of aims including local services for local people, enabling people to live actively and independently, and ensuring fair access to services tailored to people's individual needs.

Croydon's housing strategy 2006-10 sets out six overall priorities for housing in the borough. These include increasing the supply of housing, in particular affordable housing; improving the condition of existing housing; and helping people to live independently.

Our Supporting People Strategy 2003 to 2008 sets out our plans for supported housing in Croydon for a range of vulnerable client groups including older people. Aims include increasing the supply and improving the quality of housing related support, making the best use of resources and provision, and effective partnership working.

The council has recently produced a new *local area agreement* which sets out the highest priority targets for the borough. The targets relate to national indicators (NIs) developed by the government to measure local performance. This strategy will contribute to a number of the targets:

- the strategy contains a significant range of ways in which we can support people with long term conditions to be independent (NI 124) and help older people achieve independence through rehabilitation and intermediate care (NI 125). These include supported (sheltered) housing, floating support for people in their own homes, community alarm service, aids and adaptations, a handyperson and other similar schemes to make the home safe and manageable and reduce the risk of accidents, and help to move to more suitable housing thus reducing reliance on care services
- home safety measures will help to reduce the acquisitive crime rate (NI 16)
- increasing independence and activity, and extending the use of retirement housing to the wider

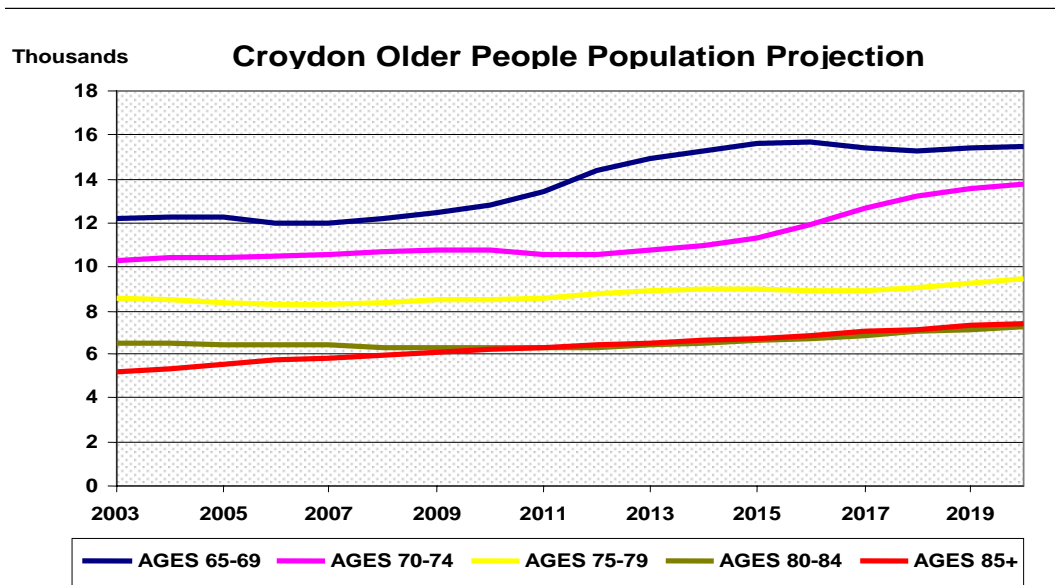
community, will help to promote a sense of community and enable community engagement (NI 1)

- plans to work with voluntary agencies on the provision of advice will contribute to a thriving third sector (NI 7)
- our plans for overhauling advice and information services for older people, in particular through a new one-stop shop, should contribute to an increase in the public's satisfaction with local public services (this is a local indicator).

Other national indicators which make up the public service agreement (PSA 17) on tackling poverty, and promoting well-being in later life, include satisfaction with the home and neighbourhood, and the extent to which over 65s get the support they need to live independently at home.

Older people in Croydon

There are 56,000 people aged 60 and over in Croydon, 17% of the total population. Of these, 36,000 (64%) are aged 60 to 74, 15,000 (26%) are aged 75 to 84, and 5,000 (10%) are aged 85 and over. The number of older people is set to grow over the next few decades, initially in line with the increase in the overall population but, from 2012, at a higher rate than average. There will be a predicted 24% increase by 2020. The over-85 age group is increasing at a faster rate and is expected to increase by around 2.7% a year over the next 5 years, by a total of 16% to 6,400 by 2012 and by a total of 35% to 7,400 by 2020.



Source: ONS/Government Actuaries sub national population projections 2003

12% of households in the borough are single pensioners and a further 6% are pensioner-only households. The number of older people living alone and with a limiting long-term illness is predicted to increase by a third, from 8,000 to 10,000, by 2025 which will have implications for housing need and policy.

The incidence of poor health, disability and socio-economic deprivation are major issues within the older population. Croydon has health inequalities that persist despite more than 10 years working to reduce them. Older people make up about half of the total population with a limiting long-term illness, which is experienced by over a third (37%) of 65 to 74 year olds and more than a half (56%) of over 75s. Health expectancy is growing at a slower rate than life expectancy in Britain. Emerging evidence suggests that as we live longer, we also spend longer in ill-health. Certain health risks, such as falls and mental health problems, have a clear connection to housing and life in the home. Nationally one older person dies every 5 hours as the result of a fall

and falls are a major cause of disability. If we could reduce the number of older people who accidentally fall we could save lives, cut down on preventable pain, and reduce NHS costs.

A fall can precipitate a permanent move into a care home simply because the person can no longer manage to live independently in their own home. A common route into a care home is after hospitalisation often after a fall.

If we provide appropriate housing, we can prevent costly health and care expenditure.

The number of older people with learning disabilities is projected to increase by a third by 2025.

Just under 1,600 people aged 60 and over are living in “communal establishments” (residential care, nursing homes and local authority establishments)¹. So the vast majority of people live in general

¹ 2001 census

housing albeit that some are receiving care within the home.

Of households consisting of one pensioner, or two or more adults who are all pensioners, seven out of every ten (69%) live in their own homes; most of these have paid for their homes outright although 12% still have mortgages on their properties. A significant proportion (22%) live in social rented housing – housing rented from either the council or a housing association. A further 9% rent their home from a private landlord or live rent free. Younger pensioners (65 to 74 year olds) are more likely than average to be owner occupiers. However, this position is reversed for over 85 year old pensioners. Very elderly pensioners are more likely to be renting, both as social and private tenants, than is usual in Croydon. 85% of couples or other multi-pensioner households live in their own homes but the position is far different for single pensioners of whom only 61% own their homes. In terms of the council's landlord function, older people are key customers: 27% of council tenants are pensioner households.

One demographic feature of recent years has been the increase in the proportion of people from ethnic minorities, although older people are still much less likely to be from ethnic minorities than younger people. In 2001, around 20% of 50 to 70 year olds were from an ethnic background but this fell to only a little over 10% of 70 to 80 year olds and under 5% of people aged 80 and over (compared with 36% for the overall population). The ethnic minority elder population is predicted to rise at a proportionally higher rate than the white elder population over the next 5 years. There are fairly

similar proportions of Irish, white other, Asian and black older people.

Better preventative housing, health and care services will become increasingly important as demographic pressures on health and care increase.

Housing in Croydon

Like all London boroughs, Croydon has a serious shortage of housing. The shortage is true for both private market and affordable housing but there are particular pressures on the latter. High house prices and rents in the private market mean a heavy reliance on social housing amongst people on low and moderate incomes. Taking into account the backlog of housing need and newly arising need over a five year period, the shortage has been estimated at 29,000 homes, of which 21,000 need to be affordable. Older people make up a proportion of the households currently in unsuitable housing and population growth will create newly-arising need amongst them – the shortfall includes 4,000 one and two-bedroomed homes to meet their needs.

The inability of supply to keep up with demand and growing population has given rise to high levels of homelessness and other forms of housing need such as overcrowding. There are now 12,000 households on the council's housing register with only about 1,500 council and housing associations homes becoming available for letting each year. About 2,500 households approach the council as homeless each year.

Although the shortage is true for all sizes of home, it is particularly so for larger properties. Overcrowding increased by 3% between the last

two censuses and the wait for a home through the housing register is very much longer for larger families than smaller households. This makes it imperative that we make the best use of existing housing for example by encouraging under-occupying households (who are very often older people) to move to smaller homes thus releasing larger family homes for overcrowded households.

The housing shortage means opportunities for people to move home are limited. There are over 2,000 tenants registered for a transfer including more than 400 with a very urgent need to move.

The physical condition of council and housing association homes in

Croydon is generally very good. The government has introduced a target for all social housing to meet the decent home standard by 2010, and we are on track to achieve this in Croydon. 90% of social housing stock currently meets the standard, one of the highest levels in London.

Conditions in the private stock are much poorer, however, even when compared with private housing across London. It is predicted that between 37% and 54% of homes do not meet the decent home standard although the proportions are much higher amongst vulnerable households (which include older people and others on means-tested benefits).

CHAPTER THREE: EXISTING HOUSING AND RELATED SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Croydon currently offers a range of services either specifically for older people or which are used predominantly by this client group:

- sheltered housing with housing-related support available to residents
- grants and other support for home-owners towards repairs and home improvements
- help with aids and adaptations for disabled older people including major home adaptations and minor equipment and aids; the Aztec Centre provides a display space for equipment as well as advice
- help for people to make their homes more energy efficient so that it is easier and cheaper to keep them warm
- minor one-off interventions such as small home repairs to help people manage and feel safer
- community alarm services, such as Croydon Careline scheme, which provides help to people in an emergency or communication links to support services
- telecare products and systems for enhancing independent living and providing a link to the
- tailored advice and information services such as those offered by Age Concern Croydon.

As well as these specific services, older people can also be entitled to mainstream services – advice about their rights of tenure, assistance to prevent homelessness or the provision of alternative accommodation if homelessness is unavoidable, advice about housing options and help with making the right choices, access to social housing or, for existing social

tenants, the ability to apply for a transfer, and access to housing-related support services for example those which are for specific client groups such as people with mental health problems or learning disabilities who may of course be in the older age bracket. People living in social rented housing (council and housing association homes) also receive a range of housing management services from their landlord.

Mainstream affordable housing

There are 24,000 social rented homes in the borough provided by the council and housing associations, all of which have affordable rents. Access to these is via the council's housing register although some housing associations also run their own registers. Anyone who has recourse to public funds can join the housing register. Applicants are prioritised for rehousing according to their level of housing need and the length of time they have been on the register. The factors giving rise to need include homelessness, insecurity of tenure, lack of or shared facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms, the unsuitability of the current home for people with disabilities, and welfare factors such as the need to be near support networks or health services.

Applicants can be living currently in private rented housing, lodgings, homes attached to their employment, or with friends or family. Owner-occupiers can also register but they will only be

considered if they are actively in the process of selling their home and if they cannot use the proceeds to buy another suitable home, for example because the home will not realise sufficient equity or they are unable to manage the home-buying process.

People who apply to the council as homeless will also be placed on the register but, if they are in priority need and homeless through no fault of their own, the council will have other duties towards them, in particular to provide temporary accommodation while they are waiting for a permanent home. Homeless people aged 60 and over, and in need of affordable housing, will automatically be regarded as vulnerable and entitled to this assistance.

There are various cross-agency protocols in place designed to provide timely assistance to older people with specific problems. The first is a protocol whereby adult social care staff can request rehousing assistance in cases of elder abuse within the home. Private tenants whose rent is too high to be fully eligible for housing benefit will be referred to the housing advice service for help in finding somewhere cheaper whilst meanwhile awarding a discretionary housing payment to cover the gap between their rent and benefit. The council and Mayday Hospital are piloting a London-wide protocol whereby patients with housing problems are referred for housing advice, and advance notification of discharge is given to enable housing solutions to be sought at an early stage.

Existing council and housing association tenants can apply to move to another social rented home and similar considerations are used

in working out their priority for a transfer. As there is a particular shortage of larger homes in the borough, the council is keen to help people whose homes are too large for them - under-occupiers who are quite likely to be older people – to move to smaller homes and so they receive a high priority for a move.

There are various mobility schemes, mostly accessed through the housing register. For example, we can help people move to traditional retirement areas through the Seaside and Country Homes Scheme. Existing social housing tenants can get substantial grants to help them buy their own homes on the open market. People can also go through the council to swap their homes with other tenants (the mutual exchange scheme).

It is worth mentioning that access to some blocks of flats can be age-restricted (with a minimum age of 40) in order to ensure a balanced community within the block, thus affording older people a greater chance of rehousing.

Help with staying put

The council operates a range of services which help people remain in their own homes. By investing in proven approaches, such as advice and information, adaptations and repairs these can all contribute to preventing health and care crises for individuals.

Aids and adaptations - disabled people of all tenures can get means-tested financial assistance for major aids and adaptations such as stair lifts, ramps, and walk-in showers. Most recipients are older people. The budget for disabled facilities for

private sector residents in 2007/08 was £1.1m which helped 100 people. The funding for these grants is a mixture of government grant and council resources. Adaptations for council tenants are funded separately through the housing revenue account – the baseline annual budget is £0.75m although this has been augmented by a further £0.5m over the last two years to meet a backlog of need. About 90 tenants are assisted annually (113 in 2007/08). In addition, the council's recent programme to bring all homes up to the decent home standard has taken the opportunity of kitchen and bathroom modernisation to install or include adaptations or design features suitable for older and disabled residents. In all, 430 such adaptations have been carried out in addition to the ongoing adaptations programme up to March 2008.

Minor aids and equipment - the Aztec Centre, a showroom for a wide range of equipment which residents can either purchase or be assessed for, has recently been approved as an independent living centre. Whilst still serving as a display space, the centre is now also providing independent advice, information and signposting, which will be led by Croydon Disability Forum. The centre provides a growing range of telecare products such as sensors for alerting the community alarm scheme or occupants of the home of various situations – floods, gas left on, falls, people not returning to bed during the night and so on.

Home renewal grants - owner-occupiers and private tenants can apply for means-tested financial help for essential repairs and improvements to their homes. The

majority of recipients are older people. The budget for grants in 2007/08 was £1.6m which helped 244 people. The council also invests in its own stock and has a large major repairs and improvements programme each year.

Energy efficiency - some of the home renewal grants are used for energy efficiency measures in private sector homes although there is also a separate grants programme specifically for this purpose. Coldbuster grants are used for insulation, central heating, cladding, draft-proofing and other measures which make it easier and cheaper to keep the home warm, and older people are major recipients of the assistance. The council also works with external agencies to bring other forms of financial help and advice into the borough – for example, we are working with British Gas which offers discounts for loft insulation, and with Creative Environmental Networks to help people access national schemes such as Warm Front. 162 energy grants were paid out in 2007/08. The council also has an energy efficiency programme for its own stock which has resulted in some of the highest energy efficiency levels across London for several years.

Staying Put - the above schemes offer financial assistance but this can be meaningless without other forms of support throughout the process of arranging what are often quite major works to the home. Staying Put is the council's home improvement agency which works closely with people and their relatives and provides the link between them and the building professionals. This work includes carrying out surveys,

arranging for the works, and liaising with applicants and their families throughout the process to minimise disruption and ensure that people's needs are met. About 250 households are assisted each year. Staying Put uses the opportunity of helping people to carry out welfare benefit checks and refer people onto the council's specialist welfare benefits team where appropriate to ensure people are getting the full benefits to which they are entitled.

Hospital discharges - the Staying Put Team also provides help for about 250 people a year, who could not otherwise return home from hospital, by carrying out repairs, adaptations and physical rearrangements to the home.

Staying Put in the Garden - this service helps about 150 people in the 12 most deprived wards a year by maintaining gardens which helps ensure safety and security. The funding for this (neighbourhood renewal grant from the government) ends in March 2009 but the council is hoping to continue the service and to extend its coverage to all wards using its own resources.

Handyperson scheme - undertaking minor repairs is a low cost intervention which can make a major difference to people's safety and welfare. The kind of jobs include replacing tap washers, hanging curtain rails, fitting handrails, decorating, putting up shelves, and mending stair treads or uneven floorboards which may cause trips and falls. Under the council's service, open to people of all tenures, there is a small labour charge and a charge for materials.

We also automatically fit a smoke alarm free of charge to all homes. The council scheme aims to help about 250 people a year.

Age Concern Croydon also operates a service carrying out minor repairs, installing smoke alarms and security fittings, and undertaking home fire safety checks. The repairs team carried out over 1,600 jobs in 2006/07.

Safe Project - this scheme is funded by the council and primary care trust and is used for carrying out security and safety checks to the homes of older people and implementing a range of small scale improvements such as new door and window locks, smoke alarms, measures to prevent accidents and so on. Because of the limited nature of the funding, it is only available to people in fourteen wards chosen because of relatively high levels of social and health deprivation. It assisted 268 households in 2007/08. The disbanding of the Metropolitan Police's crime prevention team in Croydon may affect this service but we hope to maintain it in future if possible and to extend its coverage to all wards.

Hypothermia project - This service helps to prevent hypothermia in homes occupied by vulnerable people by lending them emergency heating or cooking facilities, for example if they have been disconnected from the gas supply or lack heating or cooking facilities. The scheme is open to people in wards with relatively high levels of deprivation and health inequality. The service can be followed up with grants for heating, hot water and other energy efficiency measures to provide long

term protection against the cold. 53 households benefitted from heaters and 5 from cookers in 2007/08.

Muckbusters - under this scheme, people who have been unable to look after their homes, to the extent that they have become a public health nuisance, can get help from a specialist cleaning and pest control service. It is for people of any age but most recipients are older people. About 35 households a year are helped although this fell to 13 in 2007/08. The condition of the home indicates that someone needs some form of ongoing help to manage and adult social care staff follow up the cleansing with a care plan: however, there is no automatic access or referral to a housing-related support service which may be useful in addition to any care provided, but this is being given consideration.

Safeguarding and adult protection - all reports of elder abuse are investigated by care managers and a safeguarding plan drawn up where appropriate. The aim is to help people remain in their own home where possible and safe, and the methods of stopping abuse include injunctions against perpetrators, an increase in the level of care provided, and installation of alarms.

HouseProud - this scheme helps owner-occupiers use the equity in their homes to access loans for home improvements and aids and adaptations. The level of demand for the service is disappointing and only two people secured loans in 2007/08.

Sheltered housing

About one in twenty older people (almost 3,000) live in accommodation, in either the private or social housing sector, which is restricted to older people. Most of this is what is generally termed "sheltered housing" – blocks of flats which usually have on-site or peripatetic officers (in the past called wardens) who provide support to residents which goes beyond normal housing management functions. This is certainly the model for social housing schemes and for many private sector schemes although, in the case of the latter, the support element may be minimal or absent. Whilst these schemes provide distinctive features such as the sheltered housing officer and communal facilities, they mostly provide the kind of flats which are found in more general blocks.

In addition to this "standard sheltered" provision, there is also what is called locally "special sheltered" housing, which is specifically for frailer people who have higher levels of disability or vulnerability and, consequently, the need for greater levels of support and facilities.

Standard sheltered housing

Croydon has 1,996 social rented flats within standard sheltered housing schemes, split fairly evenly between those provided by the council and those provided by housing associations. In addition, there are an estimated 700 flats in private sheltered schemes.

Of the social rented provision: -

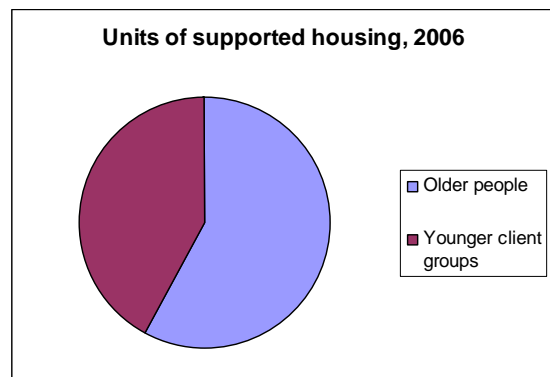
- there are 56 standard sheltered schemes, ranging from three to 82

flats, with the average size being 36 flats

- the majority of schemes have fully self-contained 1-bedroom flats: however, 6% of flats in council schemes and 18% of those in housing association schemes have bedsitting rooms (rather than separate bedrooms and living rooms).
- all flats have their own kitchens and bathrooms. (In one scheme, at Kuala Gardens, many of the flats did not have their own bathrooms but this is now undergoing refurbishment and all flats in future will be completely self-contained and have separate bedrooms and living rooms.)
- provision is predominantly located in the north and centre of the borough and there is relative under-provision in the south.
- two small schemes (16 flats) are specifically for Asian people in recognition of the language and cultural needs of many from the Asian community. The council also has access to five flats in a scheme in Merton which is specifically for African Caribbean elders (this was funded by Croydon in partnership with two other local authorities).
- most council and housing association flats are linked to a community alarm system which enables residents to register with the emergency response service. Different providers use different services.

The support provided within sheltered schemes is funded by the council under the *Supporting People* programme. We receive a grant from the government for

commissioning housing-related support services for a large range of vulnerable client groups, including older people. Services are commissioned through contracts (with external organisations) or through service level agreements (where the council itself is providing the service), and standards and performance are monitored through a regulatory framework. All of the support provision designated for older people is channelled through sheltered housing officers - there is no service for people living elsewhere. Older people's support units make up just over half (57%) of all Supporting People provision although only 22% of the total budget.



Where people have the means, they are re-charged for the service although anyone in receipt of housing benefit and others on low incomes receive the service free under the council's charging policy.

A range of tasks makes up the support provided by sheltered housing officers. These include practical help with settling in and maintaining the home, helping people to develop domestic and life skills such as budgetting, cooking, changing a plug and social skills, signposting to other services, and general emotional support and

counselling. Sheltered housing officers are supported by domestic staff responsible for cleaning communal areas and funded through a service charge on the residents.

Special sheltered housing

There are 316 units of social rented special sheltered or extra care housing. In addition, there is a 38-unit private sector scheme in the borough and a further scheme under development. These schemes offer 24-hour care as well as support to frail older people.

- there are seven social rented schemes (six managed by the council and one by Eldon Housing Association) ranging from 30 to 60 flats. A new scheme, being developed under the Homes for the Future programme, will open in 2008 and provide 40 new homes - residents will get the full level of extra care.
- all schemes have completely self-contained flats and provide a communal dining room, catered meals, cleaning of flats and communal areas, and a bathroom enabling assisted bathing
- the type of support provided is the same as in standard sheltered housing but one of the main differences is that, instead of the emergency care line service, any care needed is provided by on-site staff. Staff are on duty during the day and there is sleeping cover at nights.
- the vast majority of flats are fully wheelchair-accessible
- the schemes are geographically dispersed with provision in all parts of the borough.

Community alarm services

The council set up Croydon Careline in 2004 and this now provides a borough-wide community alarm and telecare service in partnership with Invicta Lifeline. The basic service is the 24-hour alarm, emergency response service (attending people in their homes in emergencies) and up to three sensors which detect, for example, fire, floods, gas leaks and falls. On top of this service, people can also buy in other more complex sensor systems, for example in relation to wandering, inactivity, and getting into and out of bed. There is a basic charge and additional charge for the more complex sensors up to a cap of £40 per week. 2,500 people are registered with the service; about half of these are residents of sheltered housing and the other half live in the wider community. It is growing at the rate of 30 people a month and the council is promoting the service widely in order to expand it.

Housing associations provide access to different community alarm services.

These services are offered to people of all ages but older people make up the vast majority of clients. An internet-based assessment system enables people to know the most appropriate sensors for them.

Information and advice

Various agencies provide either specialist housing and housing-related benefits advice, or advice on a combination of subjects aimed specifically at older people. The council's housing advice and housing options services provide information

on tenure, homelessness prevention, housing debt, applying for social housing, and other housing solutions. Croydon Housing Aid Society, now a part of Croydon Law Centre, provides independent advice and advocates on behalf of their clients for example in their dealings with the council. Age Concern Croydon, which is affiliated to the national organisation Age Concern England, is obviously geared up to helping older people (over the age of 55) on a range of things including housing. It provides advocacy support, benefit checks, information and advice, home visits, accompanied viewings to properties on offer, and practical support, for example with filling in official forms.

One former Age Concern scheme, funded for a temporary period and regarded as valuable and comprehensive, was a service helping people who needed to move home. This involved not only expert advice but support with the difficult process of moving, including bereavement counselling and help with the practical arrangements. The council has been asked to give consideration to re-establishing this. Such a service might encourage people to move who would otherwise be daunted at the prospect.

The Pop Service, a mobile advice service for older people, visits various locations in the borough. Staff can give a whole range of advice, including basic advice about housing services and specialist welfare benefits. It can refer people to other services or follow up on queries. The bus regularly visits sheltered housing schemes and can see people privately in their own flats if preferred. The sessions provided at the schemes, which have included adjustments to hearing aids and walking sticks, blood pressure and

medication checks, and advice on falls, diet and nutrition, have received very positive feedback and highlighted the popularity of taking services out to people in their homes and communities.

The POP Service shows that, when the council, primary care trust and voluntary sector work in partnership, older people's health, independence and well-being can be improved.

Self-directed support

Self-directed support is a new model for adult social care introduced recently by the government. It will give people greater control over any financial help they receive for care and enable them to put together their own packages of support in a more flexible way than when arranged directly by the council. It will bring about a radical change in the way that services are commissioned and delivered and may change the services themselves. Self-directed support may well affect people's housing choices although the Department of Health has not evaluated the nature and extent of this impact. But people could, for example, use the financial help they receive to fund a walk-in shower rather than domiciliary care to help with bathing. In the future, this approach may also apply to other funds, for example for housing-related support and disabled facilities grant.

Conclusion

Unless indicated above or elsewhere in the strategy, the council will continue to provide these services at existing funding levels in the future.

CHAPTER FOUR: HOUSING NEED AND ISSUES

This section sets out information about the needs, expectations and preferences of older people, and the issues relating to housing services.

Housing condition

The majority of older people live in private sector housing. A stock condition survey in 2002 found that single pensioners were more likely than average to be in unsuitable housing: their homes were far less likely to meet the decent home standard² than those of other household types (70% are in non-decent homes compared with 54% overall) and were less likely to be fit for human habitation; and they had the lowest energy efficiency rating of all homes so, especially given the small household size, they presented the highest heating costs. 11% of people over 65 (5,000) have no central heating. The picture is different for pensioner couples who tend to live in better than average housing.

For the most part, given the types of housing need older people have, there are likely to be in-situ solutions, such as repairs or adaptations, although that does not necessarily mean these solutions are affordable or feasible. Certainly older people surveyed did not tend to see the solution to their problems as a move to alternative accommodation.

² The decent home standard is a national standard which requires that a home be hazard-free, weather-tight, warm and have reasonably modern facilities

The condition of social rented housing in Croydon is far better than in the private sector, with a higher proportion of homes meeting the decent home standard. In fact, single pensioners are far more likely than other households to live in social rented housing.

Crime and harassment

Older person households have a greater fear of crime than other households. This was borne out by a survey of council tenants carried out between 2000 and 2003 which showed that older people were more likely than others to be afraid to go out at night.

Age is a factor which can give rise to harassment in the wider community. In a survey of tenants in 2006, 4% of respondents said they had been harassed because of their age, considerably more than in a survey four or five years earlier.

Elder abuse

In 2007/08, 201 older people were assessed following a report of financial abuse, neglect and physical abuse, and abuse was proved very likely in 35 cases. Abuse often cannot be substantiated (which does not mean it hasn't happened). Over half of the incidents take place in people's own homes, the rest in hospital, care homes or the perpetrator's home. Although appropriate in only a small number of cases, tackling abuse plays an important role in helping people to remain in their own homes.

because of old age (about 2% of all homelessness acceptances).

The need for additional housing

The shortfall of housing in Croydon has an impact on older people. Whilst the housing need survey suggested that older people living in unsuitable housing could resolve their problems within the existing home, it is clear that many will need to move because they can't afford the home or it does not lend itself to adaptation. The most common reason for wanting to move was that the current home was too big. The growth in the older population alone will mean that, of the new homes needed, many must cater to older people in both the social rented and private sectors.

The council's housing register includes about 600 single older people and 160 couple households, where at least one person is aged 60, who are private residents wishing to move to social housing. In addition, 250 single older people and 60 pensioner couples were existing social tenants seeking a transfer. Altogether, these households make up 9% of the total register.

55 households on the housing and transfers registers included an older person living as part of a larger household.

The register also includes people who are homeless. Older people are less likely to experience homelessness than younger people. In the last two to three years, about nine people were accepted each year by the council as homeless and in priority need

Housing preferences

Slightly less than half of the pensioner households on the housing register (44%) indicated in their applications that they wanted general needs housing. The remainder wanted or would consider sheltered housing. Transfer applicants expressed similar preferences. Generally speaking, applicants wanting general needs housing were willing to accept one-bedroomed properties and most were flexible about which part of the borough they would consider. Single people were far more likely than couples to opt for sheltered housing. This perhaps supports the findings of an Age Concern survey showing that nearly half of single householders were unhappy living on their own.

Two focus groups held for applicants aged fifty and over on the housing register elicited a range of views about what people want from either general needs or retirement housing. Key features included: ground floor accommodation (preferably bungalows) in good condition, and in a quiet neighbourhood but close to public transport. People also wanted a longer period in which to move in (the council is under pressure to let vacant homes quickly and has to restrict the time for taking up offers) especially for people transferring to smaller homes or where the new home needed decorating.

Of the transfer applicants, almost half (40%) were tenants under-

occupying their homes. These households were far less likely to want sheltered housing, indicating that it is not an attractive option if we are to encourage under-occupiers to move to smaller homes.

There are two assessments undertaken to decide eligibility and priority for sheltered housing. The first looks at housing need and the second at social need taking into account factors such as medical problems and disabilities, functioning and loneliness. It is generally the need for support which gives people the highest priority for rehousing.

Waiting times for social housing

138 sheltered homes become available for letting to housing and transfer register applicants in 2007/08 as a result of people moving out or dying. It should be noted that this figure understates

the level of supply because some housing associations, as well as taking nominations from the council, have their own mechanisms for identifying new tenants. About 400 one-bedroomed homes become available for letting annually although these are for applicants of all ages. A quarter are used for homeless households for example.

The waiting time for rehousing varies according to several factors - the band in which an applicant is placed (ie the level of need and priority for rehousing they have), the size of property needed, and individual preferences relating to type and location. The following table shows average waiting times for sheltered housing and general needs accommodation broken down by applicant type. Band 1 includes the most urgent cases, that is applicants with high levels of need.

Projected average waiting time (years) for applicants - August 2007

Housing type & size	Housing register - all applicants	Housing register - Band 1	Transfers register - all applicants	Transfers register - Band 1
Sheltered housing				
All schemes	1.8	1.0	1.7	1.1
General needs housing				
1 bedroom	11.4	0.7	9.1	4.4
2 bedrooms	4.8	1.7	8.4	1.8
3 bedrooms	6.7	2.9	7.7	0.8
4 + bedrooms	Over 10	5.1	15.3	2.8

The position of sheltered housing applicants contrasts sharply with that of other applicants for social rented housing. There is a clear shortage of general needs housing for all property sizes, but relatively short waiting lists for sheltered housing.

On the other hand, the waiting time for Band 1 housing register applicants seeking general needs housing is the shortest overall. It is also quite possible that many applicants opt for sheltered housing exactly because of the better

chances of rehousing, rather than because it is their first choice.

Many older people use wheelchairs and need specially designed or adapted housing to help them manage. Most disabled applicants for social housing are rehoused in the same or shorter times than the norm and longer waits tend to be amongst people needing larger homes. Nevertheless, increasing numbers of frail elderly people in the population indicate the need to increase the number of available wheelchair-accessible homes to keep abreast of rising demand.

Level of supported housing provision

Based on Supporting People data for all local authorities, in 2003 Croydon had a relatively low supply of sheltered housing units, with supply falling 43% below the national average and 7% below the London average. This comparative data has not been updated and the position may have changed since; a 2006 survey of about half the boroughs in London indicated that Croydon has slightly more provision than other boroughs - 5.4 units per thousand of the population compared with the London average of 4.8. The supply of social housing sheltered homes is at about the same level and the difference is accounted for by a higher level of private sector provision. Although much sheltered housing is popular and readily accepted by applicants when offered, some schemes are not seen as desirable. Analysis of offers and lettings over a 12 month period indicated that some vacant properties were offered to as many as six, seven or eight applicants before they were accepted. Many of these are the schemes with shared

facilities or bedsit flats; housing associations have reported similar problems with a handful of their schemes quoting bedsits and lack of lift access as reasons. This suggests that sheltered housing is seen as an option but, in its current form, not always an acceptable one.

In order to fill empty homes in sheltered housing, the council has recently undertaken a promotional campaign by advertising in the press and putting boards outside certain schemes. This has been successful and supplied a good pool of applicants. However, given the council's need to ensure a balance of housing which can meet the range of different needs in the community, the unpopularity of sheltered housing, amounting to an over-supply when compared with far greater shortages of general needs family housing, is an issue we need to consider in determining the best use of existing stock and redressing these imbalances. We therefore need to consider whether some sheltered housing should be re-designated as general needs housing or whether refurbishment will better attract under-occupying tenants. Analysis of lettings, however, shows that the average entry age has not changed since the marketing campaign and sheltered housing is still catering to the same age group.

A further solution could be to revise the lower age limit in order to improve access for younger people, thus extending the number of potential tenants. In the last 18 months, less than 3% of people moving in have been aged 54 or under.

Need for support within sheltered housing

A sample audit of the support needs of people living in sheltered housing was undertaken in 2006. An assessment of the level of support needed in individual schemes was made, based on the aggregated needs of each scheme's residents. The audit concluded that:

- The average level of support provided in sheltered schemes is low at only around 1 hour per tenant per week.
- The correlation between the level of support needed and the level offered was not particularly good. For example, of those schemes providing high levels of support, none had high aggregated support needs. In the schemes with medium support needs, support for the most part was being offered at a low or very high level. This position neither serves residents well nor represents good value for money.
- 70% of sheltered tenants do not receive any other support apart from that provided by the sheltered housing officer. The most common additional form of support or care (apart from family and friends) is home care.
- Tenants in council schemes in the south of the borough have higher support needs on average than tenants in the north (although housing association schemes had fairly consistent profiles).
- Schemes providing very high levels of support tend to be small and specialist such as the Abbeyfield Society schemes.

We have on several occasions consulted sheltered housing residents on their support needs and

on the support services provided in sheltered schemes. Consultation with sheltered residents has elicited wide-ranging views:

- many were unhappy that, by moving into a scheme, they had to accept the support of the sheltered housing officer as they felt that they were able to manage independently: a survey in 2004/05 of residents within 13 sheltered housing schemes indicated that only half (51%) considered that they needed support to live independently; and the most likely element of support needed was someone to check that they are alright.
- this discontent at having to accept unwanted support is exacerbated when the sheltered housing officer lives on the premises and support is constantly visible. There was additional resentment amongst people who were expected to pay for support when they did not need it. This finding echoes a Joseph Rowntree Foundation study which found that few people who had moved into sheltered housing gave the reason as a specific desire for support as opposed to small, convenient accommodation on one level.
- on the other hand, many existing residents who had been used to the presence of an on-site officer expressed concerns about trends towards more peripatetic staff; to some extent this was because a scheme without a resident officer was not considered to be as secure.
- communal facilities are not always well-used. A survey of sheltered housing applicants indicated that only 55% thought a communal

lounge an essential feature although quality and well-managed activities could make it a valuable "extra".

- the security features and alarm service were appreciated. The 2004/05 survey reported a fairly widespread use of the community alarm scheme (40% of residents).
- many felt that the location of most of the council-owned schemes (on large social housing estates) meant that they did not offer the desired escape from the noise and anti-social behaviour of the estate; on the other hand, the location is ideal for tenants wishing to remain in their own neighbourhood near family and friends.

The issue raised by people about the automatic provision of support on moving into sheltered housing is crucial. Not only are we giving support to people who want independence, but we are making poor use of resources. It also runs counter to the philosophy of personalisation and individual choice and control, and perhaps creates a reliance on institutional support which would not otherwise exist. However, as people do still move to sheltered housing despite this, or at least consider it as a possibility, it suggests that older people's housing, minus the support, could be a desirable option if made sufficiently attractive.

Sheltered housing support for more vulnerable residents

The support service offered is fairly inflexible and on a "one size fits all" basis – it is of a fairly basic level and does not meet the needs of more vulnerable residents or those with specialist needs. There is anecdotal evidence of a growing number of

such residents, principally those with mental health problems and substance misuse histories. This indicates a need for some form of additional support, possibly of a specialist nature, as well as links to health care and housing management services.

Older carers

There are other needs not catered for – older people caring for their grown-up sons and daughters because, for example, of a learning disability, cannot benefit from sheltered provision although their needs could be as great. They may not require extra support from the scheme itself as any existing care and support for the son or daughter could easily transfer. Meeting this need would require a reasonable supply of two-bedroomed flats. There are 20 such council flats at present but all but three of these are within two schemes, so there is little geographical choice. The scheme undergoing refurbishment at present will provide a further three two-bedroomed flats. The council is currently developing the Carers Strategy 2008 to 2011 which may identify other issues.

Physical disabilities

Many schemes are not particularly suitable for people with physical disabilities or sensory impairments. Only 88 of sheltered housing flats are fully wheelchair-accessible (4% of the total) and 57 of these are to be found within just three schemes; 43 schemes have no wheelchair units. Even where individual flats are accessible, there may be limited access to communal areas, narrow hallways, and heavy fire doors. The future level of demand for wheelchair-accessible homes is difficult to gauge but consultation

has indicated the need for more provision. A joint strategic needs assessment being undertaken by the primary care trust and council will be considering how changing demographic and health data could help in projecting future levels of demand.

Extra care housing

The expected increase in the number of people aged 85 and over due to increasing life expectancy suggests that there will be increasing demand for extra care housing schemes. The survey of 15 London boroughs mentioned earlier indicated that Croydon has a relatively good supply of special sheltered provision and local data indicates a balance between supply and demand. The addition of a new scheme at Fellows Court in September 2008, is likely to mean that all demand can be met for the foreseeable future.

However, if levels of support in existing provision could be increased further (so becoming "extra care" schemes), special sheltered housing could become a much more viable alternative to residential accommodation for many frailer people.

Ethnic elders

There is a little provision tailored specifically to the needs of ethnic elders (two Asian and one African-Caribbean schemes) which is popular with older people. Aashyana is popular and has a waiting list of 60 to 70 people but there is a low turnover of accommodation. However, the schemes contain some bedsit flats which have more limited appeal and, as in other schemes, can be difficult to let. The African-Caribbean scheme is relatively new

and so there has been no turnover since it first opened - allocations are through the council's register but there is no specific waiting list.

There has been little call for additional specialist provision as part of the consultation but, given that the number of ethnic elders will be increasing in the future, we will need to monitor needs carefully and also ensure that mainstream provision is attractive to different ethnic groups. Aashyana reports that changing attitudes within the Asian community mean that younger families will be less likely to keep older relatives living with them in future and this could well increase demand for both sheltered housing and smaller general needs accommodation suitable for older people together with floating support.

Intermediate care provision

A small number of flats are reserved for people leaving hospital who need time in suitably designed accommodation or support during their rehabilitation until they are ready to go home. Three flats are reserved at present and these have proved sufficient to meet demand.

Quality of sheltered housing support

Support provided in sheltered housing is subject to the Supporting People regulatory framework. Standards are set out in contracts and service level agreements between the council and providers which are based on the national quality assessment framework. These standards are monitored in various ways by the Supporting People Team: support providers are required to return performance data, there are regular contract monitoring

meetings with the providers, and each scheme is reviewed in depth every three years. The reviews include detailed consultation with residents to get their feedback. Action taken to remedy poor standards will vary according to the concerns and level of performance but providers can be asked to put action plans into place and the ultimate sanction is the withdrawal of funding and transfer of the service. All schemes were reviewed during 2004/05; quality varied considerably with a third of schemes falling below the minimum standard against at least one indicator. There have been some validated improvements since then and the next batch of reviews will check that action has been implemented to raise standards.

People living in their own homes

The main gap in provision is the lack of available housing-related support for people who continue to live in their own homes and who do not wish to move to sheltered housing in order to obtain it. There is no data about how many people are in need. However, it seems logical to think that there may be a need in the wider community and that this need will grow over time. There are, for example, 1,400 people in the borough receiving domiciliary care many of who may also benefit from housing-related support.

Condition of local authority sheltered housing stock

All local authorities are required to bring their homes up to the decent home standard which requires that properties are hazard-free, warm, weather-tight and have reasonably modern facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms. The government originally set a target for all council

and housing association homes to meet this standard by 2010 although this deadline has now been extended as many bodies could not comply.

In fact, Croydon is on schedule to meet the target still. All but two sheltered housing schemes meet the standard at present. The remaining ones are Kuala Gardens, which will undergo major works, and Arthur Court, which will receive a replacement boiler; these works will take place in 2008/09. However, over time, properties deteriorate and facilities age. It is estimated that, based on current property conditions and normal deterioration rates, eight schemes will fall below the standard in the years just following 2010/11. The works to bring the properties back up to standard will not necessarily be extensive: they relate to communal heating systems and modernisation of kitchens and bathrooms specifically and not to large-scale improvements.

Local housing associations have told us that all of their stock will meet the standard by 2010.

Despite meeting this minimum standard, the preferences of older people mentioned above indicate the need to go beyond this standard to create highly attractive buildings. This will require significant investment in the social housing stock.

The community alarm systems in some sheltered schemes are now becoming due for renewal, and an upgrading programme has already started.

General needs retirement housing

There are developments which, although similar to other general needs housing, are specifically for older residents. These may be regarded as providing a more appropriate environment, for example they are in quiet locations and have some form of protection.

Evidence suggests that, taking into account existing need and the growing older population, about 200 to 300 new social rented homes a year are needed over the next seven years, and that retirement developments are likely to prove an attractive option within this need.

The need for new private sector homes for older people is estimated to be in the region of 450 to 550 a year over the next seven years. Any demand within this which is for retirement developments is most likely to be for homes for sale. The economic downturn may stall such developments in the near future but the need for more retirement housing will nevertheless increase as a result of population growth.

The council is undertaking a local housing market assessment and this may give some indication of the supply and demand position in relation to older people's housing. The findings will feed into the production of the local development framework.

Adaptations and staying put-type services

A survey of private sector residents and housing association tenants in 2002 found that, based on their own perceptions, 7,000 households (of all ages) needed some form of adaptation to help them manage. The most common types were handrails, downstairs WC, shower

units and stair lifts. The average cost was estimated at £10,000 and surveyors estimated that adaptations were physically feasible in 83% of homes. The total cost to meet all needs would be in the region of £67m. This requirement compares with an annual budget for disabled facilities grants for private residents of just over £1m. A study by the Audit Commission found that government support to local authorities only enables councils to help one out of 26 eligible people.

The same survey found that about 3,500 older person households (14% of all such households) had difficulties managing their homes, highlighting the value of the Staying Put Team and related services and grants (described in Chapter Three).

In a survey of council tenants between 2000 and 2002, 10% of respondents said that their home did not meet the housing needs of a disabled member of the household, with the majority considering that adaptations would be a solution.

The increase in the number of older people makes it very likely that we will see a growth in the demand for those services which help people remain safely and independently within their homes. Already, there are signs of rising demand.

- The number of requests for adaptations following an occupational therapy assessment has increased from 264 in 2004/05 to 482 in 2005/06, 548 in 2006/07, and 533 in 2007/08; demand therefore doubled over this period
- A backlog of applications for adaptations has developed and there have been concerns about

waiting times. This is particularly true for council tenants although the budget for disabled facilities grants is committed for many months ahead with new applicants required to join the waiting list. It is anticipated that the recent adaptations carried out as part of the kitchen and bathroom modernisation in council stock will in effect anticipate some future demand and reduce applications to some extent. In 2007/08, average waiting times fell. The average time to assess applications fell from nine to four months and to start works from 48 to 43.5 weeks. The target for March 2009 is to reduce this further to 35 weeks.

- The number of enquiries about the Staying Put service increased from 420 to about 650 between 2004/05 and 2006/07, an increase of more than 50%
- demand for the handy person service has more than doubled in the last year from 143 cases in 2005/06 to 358 in 2006/07
- demand for the Muckbusters service has been increasing with 26 cases in 2005/06, 35 in 2006/07 and 50 in 2007/08
- the number of people helped through the Safe Project has risen from 308 to 350 between 2004/05 and 2006/07, an increase of 14%, and waiting times have increased
- the number of people provided with telecare products increased from 538 in 2004/05 to 746 in 2007/08.

There is at present no national research or evidence from the primary care trust into how effective an adaptations programme can be in

preventing more serious interventions such as admission to residential care or in preventing falls and conditions which result in disabilities and medical treatment. However, it is often clear in individual cases that an adaptation will have an immediate effect, for example by removing the need for domiciliary care. This is an area for further exploration and we are aware that national body Foundations is seeking funding for undertaking research.

The need for advice and information

No information is available about the trend in people seeking advice but an increase is inevitable. Age Concern Croydon helps about five to six thousand people a year. Given the changing map of services, for example the many more ways in which people can be assisted to stay in their homes, advice will also need to become more sophisticated and comprehensive. It also needs to be geared more towards helping people plan for the longer term.

An International Longevity Centre UK report, *Building our Futures*, suggested a need to focus on low income households. People in socio-economic groups AB/C1 are the most likely to plan their future housing and to consider sheltered housing even though groups D/E were most likely to be living in sheltered housing. People in group E are the most dissatisfied with their area but least likely to wish to move. This suggests that better off households have more choice and possibly better quality options in their reach but less need. Poorer households move to sheltered housing at an earlier age, perhaps because they are more likely than others to experience ill-health, even though they do not anticipate

this, suggesting the need for good quality housing and comprehensive advice.

That said, however, any advice service needs to be a universal one and appeal to all older people in the borough. Consultation has indicated that many people are reluctant or afraid to approach the council, highlighting the importance of the voluntary sector and independent advice services.

Conclusion

The evidence set out in this chapter shows that a number of specific needs are not being met or met well at the moment, and that demographic changes are already bringing about increases in demand for some services. In summary, these are:

- there is a lack of support provision for people who don't want to move from their own homes to sheltered housing
- a more flexible approach to support for people in sheltered housing is needed so that the level of support offered is directly

related to the level of need of an individual

- more wheelchair-accessible flats are needed within sheltered housing and a better spread across sheltered housing schemes
- more 2-bedroomed flats within sheltered schemes may help meet some specific needs eg carers or two-adult households
- there will be a need for physical investment in sheltered schemes in future years to modernise them and keep them in good condition
- there are significant actual and anticipated increases in demand for staying put services
- new affordable and market homes being developed within the borough need, to some extent, to cater to the needs of older people.

Meeting some of these needs and demands will require substantial capital investment or additional revenue resources, but the findings also show that there is considerable scope for re-casting existing services to better meet needs without any adverse impact on existing service users.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE STRATEGY

We are living in an ageing society – not only the growing numbers of older people need to be taken into account in planning for housing and housing services, but we need to consider that people are living longer and, with that, comes growing levels of disability and frailty. It also means that a much greater number and proportion of people will be living alone and this can affect their housing choices. Life expectancy is also increasing amongst people who have been vulnerable in their younger years; for example, people with learning disabilities are far more likely to live into old age now than in the past, and medical advances mean that people with a range of conditions can expect to live longer and stay independent for longer.

People's preferences and expectations are changing – resistance to moving to residential care is strong and new technological advances are making it much more viable for people to remain in their own homes despite growing frailty. And, whilst in the past older people readily moved into sheltered housing which had shared bathrooms, small flats or warden services, these features do not meet modern day expectations. At one of the older people's consultation events named Open Space, it was clear that the existing model of provision is now seen as out-dated and that the term sheltered housing itself lacks appeal for people who see independence as vital.

Many people have considerable

spending power: the market for leisure and recreation for older people is growing, for instance, and what people want from their homes and services will be affected.

On the other hand, living longer can mean more years spent in poverty and social exclusion with an increasing inability to maintain and repair the home. The private sector housing survey mentioned earlier painted a fairly stark picture of the living conditions of single pensioners. This picture may grow worse as the existing private stock ages – in recent years, most maintenance problems have been in pre-first world war properties but inter-war housing is now showing signs of deterioration. Disrepair and inadequate housing can impact on health and lead to conditions such as respiratory problems, bronchitis, hypothermia and cardiovascular conditions.

The levels of investment required to maintain and improve these homes are beyond the means of the council but will also be difficult to sustain by elderly owner-occupiers. Whilst the HouseProud scheme and other products on the market enable home-owners to take out loans for improvements against the equity in the property, there is a current reluctance to take advantage of these.

Fuel poverty and the drive to reduce carbon emissions are housing-related issues, and people both need and expect higher levels of energy efficiency from their homes. Older people are twice as

likely to be unable to afford fuel in winter, and thermally inefficient housing has been linked to the increase in deaths during the colder months. This is a particular concern for private sector residents as the private stock in Croydon has relatively poor levels on average compared with other boroughs.

In recent years, one of the main motivational factors for moving to sheltered housing has been fear of crime and the desire to move away from general needs housing where people feel prey to anti-social behaviour – the fear of crime does not necessarily correlate directly to the incidence of crime but, nevertheless, it may continue to have a significant impact on people's housing choices in future.

It is also difficult to judge what tomorrow's older people will want. A report by the International Longevity Centre UK, drawing on various studies, points to evidence that current demand is not a good indicator of future need and choices. Current demand is determined by current options and knowledge of these, both of which may be limited. Although retirement provides the trigger for moving home, beyond this time moves become much less frequent. People tend not to anticipate future housing difficulties then plan and act on these. They don't, for example, link maintaining their independence with planning for housing needs and, when asked which factors may cause them to move in future, the condition of their current housing or maintenance requirements are some way down the list. Age Concern Croydon has found that

people can be reluctant to say they can't cope in their homes as they fear they may be "put in a home". These factors mean that people can be forced into inappropriate solutions: fear can make people move although there could be alternative solutions which help them to stay put; or a move is put off until there is a crisis by which time the options are far more limited. People may remain in an unsuitable home because of the barriers to moving: difficulties managing the conveyancing or removals process or of making good the new home; and the emotional upheaval of leaving behind memories of a past life. These considerations highlight the importance of widely available advice and information on life options, together with practical and emotional support to make planning and moving less distressing.

There are considerations about the pressures on the housing stock, pressures likely to grow as new housing supply fails to keep up with household population growth. This will affect older people although the shortfall is particularly acute for larger households – families needing homes with three or more bedrooms – with the result of higher rates of overcrowding.

The Audit Commission, in its 1998 report *Home Alone - the housing aspects of community care*, noted the tendency of councils to allocate vacant sheltered stock to older people regardless of their degree of frailty. Whilst there is value to this if it reduces the use of temporary accommodation or frees up a larger home for a growing family, placing

fit, active older people in sheltered housing can be an expensive option.

This is certainly an issue in Croydon. There is a serious shortage of affordable housing yet we have difficulties letting some sheltered housing units. We are therefore letting social housing to older people with much lower needs than other household types. And we are providing support to people living in sheltered housing even though some people neither need nor want it. At an average cost of £600 per person per year, and based on a survey of residents suggesting that half do not need support, the total cost is in the region of £600,000 a year. Yet there are other older people, living in their own homes or with high support needs, who could benefit. Furthermore, the support given to people living in sheltered housing is the same for everyone, regardless of their needs, and there is no flexibility within the current support arrangements for using this provision for people living elsewhere or for tailoring it to individual needs by providing more intensive support for more vulnerable residents.

Converting some sheltered housing to general needs housing suitable for families and younger adults is an obvious answer as is only providing support to people who need it.

Another way in which we could secure better value is to make better use of the amenities offered by sheltered schemes by opening them up to residents in the wider neighbourhood. These would

include, for example, the use of communal facilities for visiting health services, chiropodists and hairdressers, and for social and recreational activities. Thinking further ahead, there may be scope to provide more ambitious facilities, such as a swimming pool, gym or café, thus offering a valuable local resource and giving schemes a modern feel which further increases their attractiveness.

It is of concern that many people are seeking older people's housing because they wish some protection from the younger population who they see as presenting risks in terms of crime and safety. Whilst we need to respect these wishes, we also need to develop ways of bringing the generations together to ensure balanced communities and engender mutual respect.

Within the private sector, the level of supply for retirement or other housing is generally driven by market forces and developers will build new schemes if they think there is adequate demand. However, the local authority has a role in terms of its planning obligations to ensure an adequate supply through its planning policies and guidance. Given that retirement housing will attract under-occupying home owners, a good supply may serve to free up larger family homes and help tackle the overall shortage. This issue will be considered as part of the local housing market assessment being undertaken and in the local development framework.

The role of adaptations and telecare is becoming increasingly prominent. The government's

strategy, *Lifetime Homes*, quotes various studies indicating that minor modifications to the home can reduce falls by between 6% and 68%. 51% of admissions to care homes followed hospitalisation after which a return to the home was not practical. 15% of admissions were because of serious housing problems. Nationally, 1.25 million falls a year result in hospital admissions and older people's falls alone cost the NHS around three quarter of a billion pounds each year. Technological developments are providing ever more methods for tackling a wide range of domestic situations although, being new, awareness is still very limited.

So, to summarise:

- Much of the current social housing sheltered provision is fit for purpose: it is often very popular, in particular for single people. A frequent resistance to change amongst existing residents suggests that the current "model" is not always far wrong. The age-friendly environment and opportunity to live with people of the same age is desirable to many. The support provided by sheltered housing officers, whilst at a low level, can make a crucial difference to people who are vulnerable or those who just want the assurance of help in an emergency.
- Many older people give, as a central reason for choosing sheltered housing, the desire to move away from general needs housing where there is anti-social behaviour from (as they see it) from children and young

people. This points to the need for better, safer neighbourhoods and designs and initiatives which promote these.

- On the other hand, some standard sheltered provision is very unpopular with housing applicants even though they have expressed an interest in this type of provision. This is a waste of social housing particularly given the overall deficit.
- Helping older people living in family homes to move to smaller homes, whether in older people's or general needs housing, meets a frequently-cited need amongst older people. It is also an effective strategy for the council in managing the overall social housing stock, ensuring the availability of larger homes for families and tackling overcrowding. There may be compromises involved – tenants are happy to trade down if they can be assured of getting the right property (type, location and so on) and help with removal costs, factors which can make the option of a move compelling.
- By the same token, a good supply of both retirement housing and well-designed smaller homes for sale can encourage under-occupying owners to move thus making good use of the private stock and ensuring a balanced market.
- The current provision of housing-related support is

inappropriate. Support is provided even if not needed; and the level of support is inadequate for people with higher needs. And there is a mismatch between the level of support in individual sheltered schemes and the level of the combined support needs of their residents.

- However attractive we can make older people's housing, most will still wish to stay in their own home - services for people wanting to stay put will need to increase if only to keep up with population growth and perhaps because this option will increasingly become the preferred one.
- Extra care or special sheltered housing is also a popular form of independent living, helping people to avoid moving into residential care homes. It can be cost-effective for the council – rented accommodation together with housing-related support provides good value for money compared with residential care. In its current form, it is not a suitable alternative for many people with a high dependency but could become so by increasing the existing levels of support.
- There is scope to make better use of sheltered housing in responding to different kinds of needs, often of a temporary nature. A number of flats in standard sheltered housing have, for example, been set aside specifically for people leaving hospital who are not yet ready to return home –

accessible flats and the support of the sheltered housing officer enable a period of rehabilitation for people who have acquired physical or sensory disabilities. Special sheltered housing has been used for younger adults with physical disabilities for whom there is no suitable adapted accommodation at the initial point of need.

- The demand for aids and adaptations, and other staying put-type initiatives, is growing, as will the demand for telecare as people discover the benefits and more products become available. Handyperson and similar services are also in great demand and are likely to become increasingly called-on solutions in future. However, the available resources for funding these are not growing at anything like the same rate. Limited research into the preventative effects and savings to the NHS means we do not fully understand the value for money but larger-scale investment may have a significant impact on health care expenditure.

The research we have carried out presents a complex picture, not least because it is hard to anticipate future expectations and gauge the best solutions. Some possible solutions, such as the physical refurbishment or re-modelling of existing older people's housing, could only be achieved over time. Resources are limited in the short term and sheltered housing has hundreds of existing permanent residents whose

expectations may not be the same as those of future residents. Any major changes will, for the most part, need to take place over a number of years.

What we are aiming to do through this strategy is to present a set of longer-term aims and objectives which will inform future decisions as resources become available and opportunities arise. For example, if there is scope within the future council stock investment programme or if regional resources are made available for modernising sheltered housing, decisions will be taken by referring back to this strategy. The strategy therefore describes the direction of travel rather than sets out a detailed plan of action.

As a general point, the term “sheltered housing” has become unappealing to many people and, given the proposals in this strategy, will be less descriptive in future. We think the term “retirement housing” would provide a more general and popular alternative.

Aims of the strategy

Our aims are:

1. to help people live as independently as possible and remain in their own home or move to another, more suitable, home of their own
2. to provide support to those who need it, regardless of where they live
3. to give people choice over where they live through different models of housing
4. to ensure that choices can be made at the right stage in

someone’s life through the provision of timely and comprehensive advice.

Within the overall context of these aims, we also need to have regard to:

- good management of the stock of affordable housing in the borough so that it meets the diverse needs of the whole community
- the best use of resources available for support and other forms of assistance.

These considerations are not only compatible with the overall aims but contribute to their achievement.

Priorities

There are five overall priorities or themes which will help to achieve these aims:

1. To provide flexible support services which respond to different types and levels of support need and to different living situations
2. To provide high quality retirement housing, and to create a level of supply which achieves a balance between the needs of older people and the needs of other households
3. To make better use of the facilities offered in retirement housing schemes by opening them up to older residents in the wider area
4. To provide a range of “staying put” services and home

adaptations

5. To provide information & advice which helps people choose, or plan for, the right solutions for them.

PRIORITY ONE: To provide flexible support services which respond to different types and levels of support need and to different living situations

Research and consultation has indicated that most sheltered housing tenants require only minimal support and many neither need nor want any support. On the other hand, the council recognises that the support provided in sheltered schemes serves a preventative function that reduces the incidence and seriousness of ill-health and other life crises, is critical to the well being of a minority of tenants, and almost certainly reduces the need for more intensive and expensive alternatives. Views amongst residents about what they want from their schemes vary considerably.

The council is conscious of the needs of the larger numbers of other older people living in general needs housing for whom there is currently no housing-related support.

There are two overall objectives: to re-focus the existing support service so that it can assist people wherever they live and is tailored to individual needs; and to offer people choice by providing different models of retirement housing. Our approach will be to develop and

evaluate different models through a series of pilots.

1. ***Retirement housing with on-site support for all residents*** - some existing sheltered schemes would retain the traditional supported housing model. A support officer will provide support to all residents within the scheme although, for many, this will amount to a good neighbour role with, for example, the support officer simply checking that residents are well. Schemes would continue to provide links to a community alarm scheme. A further aspect to this model would be the sharing of the support service between two or more schemes in close proximity - this would be by way of a rationalisation of the service with one provider taking over sole responsibility from two or more different organisations (rather than a reduction in the level of service provided). A further option is to gradually convert a traditional sheltered scheme into an extra care one, in particular a scheme with residents with high care needs; this will not be considered in the short term though.
2. ***Retirement housing without support*** - some schemes for older people will have no specific support service although residents will be able to apply for support (from the support services described below or from a community alarm scheme) on an individual basis and, subject to an assessment of their support needs, they will be offered

support from a community-based service. Over time, if successful, these schemes may become the norm and replace most or all traditional models. The pilot initiatives referred to below describe how this approach will work. It will have the further benefit of freeing up staff flats to create additional older people's accommodation.

The decision about which of options 1 and 2 will apply to each individual scheme will be taken in consultation with residents and will be based on the following factors:

- Existing levels of support needs in individual schemes – the dependency audit referred to earlier indicated that the proportions of people needing no support or relatively high levels of support vary across schemes. Those schemes with low overall support needs would be more suitable for the second model for example.
- The existing physical configuration of the scheme – those which are more suited to frailer people, for example because of good disability access, may be more suited to the first model.
- The geographical location and the amount of sheltered housing schemes within a particular area – we would like to offer different models within each area and, for the second model, ensure a suitable catchment area where there is likely to be a need for a floating support service amongst

the wider population.

- The proximity of community-based floating support services – it is proposed that these services will be centred on particular areas and, where a floating support or community based scheme is established, retirement housing which is near this source of support would be particularly suitable for the second model.
3. ***An older people's floating support service*** – this would offer support to people regardless of where they live (retirement or general needs housing of any tenure): the amount of support provided would vary according to an individual's needs but would be provided on an ongoing basis for people who need support all the time.
 4. ***A "support when you need it" service*** - this would offer a type of insurance model of floating support with people able to opt into a service which offers support visits or proactive phone contact for limited periods only when needed, for example during an illness or when family support is temporarily unavailable. For any individual, the service could be on a one-off basis or used from time to time. The service would be linked to a community alarm service such as Croydon Careline. The proposed scheme would be expected to serve significant numbers of older people because the cost per service user would be

significantly below the cost of a continuously provided floating support service or the provision of ongoing support in a sheltered housing scheme.

5. **Specialist support** – catering to the support needs of more vulnerable people, for example those with mental health problems or substance misuse histories, may require more specialist services and certainly higher levels of support. These may be separate to the mainstream older people's floating support services which would enable us to use specialist providers with experience of working with such client groups.
6. **Extra care** - increasing staffing levels in extra care housing could make it a viable alternative to residential care for some people with high dependency needs. We will be piloting this in one scheme and providing more care hours and waking night duty cover, as well as installing a hoist.

Some new services are being tried out in 2008/09, the lessons from which will help in deciding the best approach for future developments. Two floating support services, run by the council and housing association In Touch, will replace the current sheltered housing officer service in five sheltered housing schemes. The scheme tenants will continue to get support if they want *and* need it (a support needs assessment will be undertaken) but the support service will also be open to other residents in the surrounding

neighbourhoods (again if assessed as needing support). It is estimated that, initially, we would be able to support between ten and fifteen non-residents altogether. At this stage, it is envisaged that support will be provided on a short-term, one-off basis although longer-term placements may be considered in future. New tenants moving into the schemes would be offered support on the same basis and may, for example, get a period of intensive support to help them settle into their new home and area, followed by a gradual tapering off of assistance.

Between them, the new services cover three areas of the borough: Thornton Heath, Upper Norwood, and South Norwood. We will consider proposals from other housing associations which want to model this new approach. The council scheme will commence in April 2008 and run for about a year, during which time it will be evaluated. Assessments of older people living in their own homes will be undertaken by the council's sheltered housing team which is drawing up the eligibility criteria. The scheme will be open to people in need regardless of their tenure, and cover people over 60. The floating support officer will be available during week days. At night and weekends, people will be able to call Croydon Careline. It will be important that all schemes involved offer access to the community alarm service: links will be established in the one scheme which currently doesn't.

A central part of the work of the pilot will be to identify residents living in their own homes, develop

referral systems and publicise the new service to appropriate referral services such as care management teams, GP practices, specialist health services, and voluntary advice and advocacy agencies.

The support services will be funded through the Supporting People programme; means-tested charging will apply in the same way as other services. Quality will be regulated, and performance monitored, through the normal quality assessment framework, contract management and performance systems used for all Supporting People-funded provision.

The proposals have so far met with considerable support from existing residents although there have also been concerns. The evaluation will consider whether these concerns are founded or could be mitigated, but will also consider these in relation to the benefits to and feedback from the new tenants who will now be able to access support.

As the new models develop, there may be a need to review the current way in which eligibility and priority for rehousing in older people's housing are assessed. For example, priority for the traditional model may go to people with support needs rather than just housing needs.

More flexible services, together with technological advances, will mean that demand will increase for both telecare services and community alarm services. It has been council policy for some years to install basic alarm service provision in its own sheltered provision. These systems are now ageing and, more importantly,

changes to telephone technology will require the replacement of many or all systems in the next few years. Some have already been replaced, and we are tendering for the replacement of systems in a further five schemes. We will be reviewing the suitability of telecare technology in council retirement schemes and considering the business case for changes and updates.

We see the role of local registered social landlords (RSLs) as very important in the provision of older people services. Clearly, one has been involved in the floating support pilot but RSLs have generally been at the forefront of developing such services for younger adults helping them to build up expertise. Some Croydon schemes are run by national organisations which provide a broader perspective and which can ensure that good practice developed elsewhere is brought to the borough. There is some specialist provision such as the Abbeyfield Society and ethnic minority schemes.

Two RSLs have been selected as preferred partners for developing any new supported housing services for older people commissioned under the Supporting People framework. RSLs are also key agents of the Housing Corporation in building new publicly-funded homes.

PRIORITY TWO: to provide high quality retirement housing, and to ensure a level of supply which achieves a balance between the needs of older people and the

needs of other households

There are three general options for the social housing stock. In view of the unpopularity of some sheltered schemes, the first is to convert some schemes to much-needed family and general 1-bedroomed homes to cater to the needs of all different household types including older people. On the other hand, when under-occupiers move to smaller homes, they help larger households (so it could be a different way to achieve the same end). So the second option is to upgrade existing schemes to a much higher standard to make this type of housing an active choice and to encourage people to move from larger homes. Breaking the link between retirement schemes and support would further increase its appeal to many. The third option is to sell schemes which do not lend themselves to either of these solutions which, in turn, will result in a capital receipt for investment in the stock.

Converting an older people's scheme to general needs housing is not an easy decision because there will be many residents, some quite frail or vulnerable, who have lived there for some time or who like the current set-up.

It is not proposed that changes are made on a large scale. A limiting factor will be the capital resources either for conversion or refurbishment. Social housing grant, a capital grant from the government for major building programmes, is not available to local authorities and it is also designated specifically for building new homes. However, funding

may become available in the future within the council's own investment programme or possibly through regional funding programmes.

The scheme at Kuala Gardens, for example, is currently undergoing refurbishment because it does not meet the decent home standard. This is a major project to improve the quality by converting bedsit flats with shared bathrooms into fully self-contained flats with separate bedrooms and living rooms. Other features, such as a number of wheelchair-accessible flats, some two-bedroomed flats, a scooter store, solar panels, internet access in all flats, and level access showers throughout, are helping to create an attractive environment and accommodation which can meet diverse needs. The opportunity is also being used to create some self-contained, supported housing for younger adults – people with learning disabilities in this case – which is also in short supply in the borough. Kuala Gardens has been an unpopular scheme in recent times and it is anticipated that the refurbishment will create a modern, well-liked development. The works are being funded from the council's housing revenue account, the budget used for council stock repairs and services. Once re-occupied, we will seek feedback from residents on features of the greatest value and satisfaction levels.

A number of other schemes will also fail the standard in coming years as they deteriorate with age. In some cases, the requirements may be limited to specific elements eg new roofs. However, in some

cases, needs may be more extensive and the investment will offer the opportunity of major re-configuration. Clearly, the scope for this will depend of the level of resources available but we hope such opportunities arise. We are discussing with housing associations the scope for similar projects in their stock where they are able to lever in funding.

It is proposed that the decision on whether to convert a scheme to general needs housing or upgrade it as retirement housing will be taken on a scheme by scheme basis. The factors to be considered will be: whether there is a good existing supply of older people's housing in the area which can meet the needs of local residents or whether there will remain a reliance on that scheme; the dependency levels of existing residents; the feasibility of the options which may be limited because of the location or physical constraints of the building; the needs of other households on the housing register; and predicted future levels of demand. There may be scope to develop combined schemes as, for example, at Kuala Gardens, and the need for new supported housing schemes for younger adults is likely to persist in the near future. As mentioned above, another option, subject to the physical suitability of a scheme and space for catered dining, is to convert it into extra care housing (see below).

Where older people's schemes remain as retirement housing, we will, as part of any major refurbishment programme, seek to include a range of specifications

wherever possible. These will include ensuring that:

- a proportion of homes meets full wheelchair standards
- all homes meet the lifetime homes standard³, for example in relation to kitchen and bathroom fittings, door widths, space standards and light switch levels
- a proportion of homes to have walk-in showers
- disabled (wheelchair) access into the building and to all communal parts such as laundry rooms and gardens
- lift access to upper floors
- a small proportion of two-bedroom flats with a particular view to letting these to older people who are caring for vulnerable adult sons and daughters
- the scheme meets Secured by Design standards to provide high levels of security, with additional security features such as controlled entry systems and spy holes in front doors
- there is adequate storage space
- all homes have high levels of thermal efficiency
- all homes are connected to a 24-hour alarm system
- a wheelchair and scooter park with metered electricity supply
- each scheme has a lounge or other communal room or facility to foster a sense of community
- a range of minimum technical and design specifications
- internet cabling
- where there is an existing or prospective tenant, s/he will be

³ This standard incorporates 16 design standards in relation to, for example, space, level access and suitability for future adaptation, that makes homes more flexible, convenient, safe and accessible.

involved in the design decisions for example about kitchens and bathroom fittings. It will also be possible to install additional disability features which are identified through an occupational therapy assessment.

Major refurbishment will offer a good chance to achieve all or a high proportion of these features but we will seek to achieve others of these standards in less extensive refurbishments and, eventually, in all schemes. The sheltered housing quality standard, agreed with tenants, provides detailed specifications for refurbishments such as kitchen and bathroom modernisation and this standard is applied consistently.

We will use the stock condition survey to identify the scope for making some flats in retirement housing wheelchair-accessible; this may require the conversion of two adjacent flats so scope will be limited.

One specific idea mentioned above is the scope for retirement housing to cater to older people who live with and care for younger disabled adults and we are keen to pilot this idea and evaluate the benefits and impact on existing residents.

We have submitted a bid to the Mayor of London's housing investment programme for enhancing the gardens in eight retirement schemes. This will include making them suitable for people with sensory and mobility disabilities.

Extra care housing

A new extra care scheme is being built in Addiscombe by the council as part of its redevelopment of four residential care homes in the borough. The scheme has 40 flats representing an increase in supply of more than 10%. This growth in provision is likely to mean that demand is met in the foreseeable future. However, should demand increase again in future, it may be appropriate then to increase provision further.

We are currently assessing the potential level of demand for an extra care scheme for older people with dementia or mental health problems, and considering models of supported housing (rather than residential care) which could offer a suitable form of accommodation. Demand is not sufficient for a separate specialist scheme at present. However, the projected 46% increase in the population with dementia, from 3,100 in 2008 to 4,231 in 2025, suggests that there will be demand in future. South London and Maudsley NHS Trust has agreed to monitor the trend.

Two of the targets in Croydon's local area agreement relate to increasing the supply of general needs housing, both affordable and private sector. We wish to see a mix in terms of property size, and smaller homes will help address the needs of the growing older population. Although the pressing need is for larger homes for homeless and overcrowded families, there are greater challenges achieving these, and it makes sense to create housing which will also encourage people under-occupying larger properties

to move to smaller ones. Homes which meet the lifetime home standard and have inclusive design will therefore be important, as will a range of properties which meet different preferences, including flats and bungalows, which under-occupiers have told us they want, and small developments targetted at older people. Private sector retirement housing is also a popular option and we are keen for developers to continue to build these schemes.

In terms of area, demographic and mobility patterns indicate that the south of the borough will be the most popular for retirement housing. However, amongst applicants for social housing, there is also demand for housing in the centre and, although to a lesser extent, north of the borough.

Many older people will wish to move away from London. The Seaside and Country Homes Scheme enables people to move, and the Greater London Authority will be building more homes which benefit London residents. We refer people to the scheme but will explore whether we can make more of it. Discussions are under way in London to develop a pan-London mobility scheme which will make it easier for social housing tenants to move elsewhere in the capital, and an accessible housing register is being set up which will help disabled people in particular.

We will continue to offer geographical mobility for social housing tenants through transfers and mutual exchanges. Under-occupiers moving to smaller homes will receive a high priority for

rehousing as well as financial incentives and other assistance with the move. This assistance could be made more comprehensive.

We will also explore different types of tenure. This could include enabling people to take out equity shares in council or housing association homes (which will also generate capital income for re-investment) and shared ownership in the private market which will help social housing tenants to purchase or existing owners to release equity. These schemes would be attractive to those wanting flexible ways to manage their money, savings and investments. Under the assisted private purchase scheme, people receive grants to move from social housing to home ownership – this could combine with shared ownership or equity share schemes.

The housing market downturn will create difficulties for older owner-occupiers who want or need to sell their homes because of declining number of property sales. We will discuss with local registered social landlords any scope for intervention, in particular where the home to be released is a family-sized home and could assist with meeting other housing need whilst at the same time providing an affordable and safe solution for the owner-occupier.

Wheelchair-accessible housing
More new homes have to be built to meet increasing demand. Whilst this has been an aim within the social housing development programme for many years, the

Housing Corporation's grant regime has militated against this and the level of provision has been low. Commitment to wheelchair homes has now been given by the Corporation and the Mayor of London who makes recommendations about the development programme in the capital. The council has set a target of 10% of all new homes built on larger sites to be accessible or adaptable for people using wheelchairs. This applies to both social and private sector housing developments. In the current social housing programme for 2008/11 (for which only the first tranche has yet been approved by the Corporation), 20 new homes will be built in addition to 22 in the pipeline funded in the 2006/08 programme. We have been lobbying the Corporation for higher grant rates for wheelchair homes and we are working with registered social landlords charged with the building of new homes to ensure they are contributing to the target.

PRIORITY THREE: To make better use of the facilities offered in older people's housing schemes by opening them up to older residents in the wider area

Existing retirement housing schemes offer valuable amenities such as communal lounges which can be used for social events, health and well-being sessions and facilities which enable visiting services such as chiropody and hairdressing.

Residents have fed back that they want services provided locally, and

they suggested the use of existing amenities such as retirement housing schemes. This would offer a good value way of providing services rather than developing new premises which would only be used on occasion. Providing care close to the home would contribute to national health service aims of prevention and early intervention.

We are therefore proposing opening up these facilities for a range of uses. These could include mobile health units to carry out screening and provide advice, social occasions, such as coffee mornings, dances and Christmas celebrations, fitness sessions, and venues for older people's forums. These uses will contribute to health and social care aims. Social and cultural events promote cohesion and local venues would ensure easier access. On council estates, neighbourhood wardens (who are funded through the housing service and who play a key role in community development and improving the quality of life for all residents on estates) often take part in the organisation and entertainment. Wardens could also have a role in helping people from the wider neighbourhood get out to events, for example by accompanying people in the dark when they don't feel safe out alone.

Opening up communal facilities may present some concerns to the residents of the scheme because of the potential safety and security risks. However, the value in providing local health services, or benefits and other advice surgeries, and in programmes to help reduce social isolation in particular amongst people living on their own

on large estates, would merit the tackling of security issues through, for example, developing separate entrances.

It is proposed to pilot this approach to establish its value and identify how we can ensure scheme residents continue to have the right amount of security and privacy. The first stage will be discussions with various partner agencies - such as the primary care trust, Fitness First and Age Concern - about which services would be a priority, and to evaluate all retirement schemes to see which would lend themselves to providing a community base (for example those with separate entrances or appropriate security arrangements). The pilots will involve both social activities and outreach advice or prevention services.

Using these communal facilities for a larger population may require some physical investment. The council will audit its stock to identify schemes with potential and assess the costs. We will also discuss with housing associations the scope to undertake this in some of their schemes.

PRORITY FOUR: To provide a range of “staying put” services

Demand for aids and adaptations, help with repairs and maintenance, and the other types of services to help people manage, such as the handy person scheme, has been increasing in recent years and it is anticipated that this upward trend will continue. The data set out in chapter three point to the high

capital costs involved in major home improvements or adaptations. Whilst the council has a programme of grant aid to provide financial help to poorer tenants and owner-occupiers, as well as a programme of investing in its own stock, this can meet only a small proportion of the total need in the borough. It is essential, therefore, that individuals are helped and encouraged to invest their own resources in maintaining their homes, whether through their income and savings or through releasing equity.

The funding for adaptations for council tenants has been increased in the last two years to deal with a backlog of applications. From 2008/09, the baseline annual budget has been increased (although not as much as in the last two years) to £1m. Recent years have seen a lot of additional adaptations work as part of the decent homes programme. The council has incorporated a range of measures into its stock modernisation programme, for example, new kitchens have included lower work surfaces, and new bathrooms walk-in showers where people have asked.

The funding for private sector residents comes mostly from central government by way of a disabled facilities grant although the council matches this to the ratio of 60:40 (central to local government funding). The council is committed to continuing to fully match-fund the grant in order to obtain the full allocation. The budget in 2008/09 is £1.197. Central government has pledged to increase grant funding substantially

in the next three years which we hope will benefit Croydon.

Nevertheless, there will still be a shortfall in funding. The updating of the council's physical disability strategy will include consideration of how we deal with adaptations, to help mitigate this. We will be undertaking a review of the current processes involved in assessing and prioritising people. We will also be benchmarking Croydon's investment levels and eligibility criteria against those of other boroughs in London. And we will be studying applications to assess the value for money of adaptations by estimating other costs which may be incurred if adaptations are not funded, such as stays in residential care homes, home care, hospital stays arising from falls, medical treatment for other associated conditions, and delayed hospital discharges. We will also explore modern adaptation options such as pre-fabrication. This strategy will form an important partner document to the older people's housing strategy.

We will continue to encourage people to invest their own resources, both for improvements and adaptations. Croydon contributes to the London-wide HouseProud scheme which provides the option for owner-occupiers of securing loans against their properties for improvements. Under this scheme, people need not fear being evicted from their homes. The scheme has not so far proved as popular as hoped, partly because of a general fear of borrowing. However, in conjunction with other boroughs in south-west London, we have

employed financial advisers to give people good quality information about the benefits and financial risks.

Housing renewal grants will continue in 2008/09 but the council is considering whether offering loans rather than grants may provide a better use of the council's capital resources.

The Aztec Centre, which advises on assistive technology for the home, facilitates assessments of people's needs and financial eligibility for aids and equipment, but also enables people to buy them using their own resources. For many, this is the preferred option anyway as they don't have to wait or face what they might see as an intrusive assessment. The council is committed to continuing, expanding and promoting this service.

Other services, such as the Staying Put Team, handyperson and Safe projects, are funded through the council's general fund budget which is made up of income from council tax payers and government grant. Pressures on this budget mean that it is unlikely that we will be able to increase these services in the near future but it is hoped that they will continue at the existing level. The government has announced plans to fund new local rapid repairs and adaptations services with a bidding round in 2009/10.

These services are now all eligible for funding under the Supporting People programme and it is hoped that all will be moved over to that programme in coming years to secure their future. Unfortunately,

the Supporting People grant from central government will remain at the same level for the next three years (a real terms funding cut) and there will be limited scope to transfer over the funding. The council is developing a programme of efficiency savings which may enable the Supporting People programme to take over responsibility for the existing Staying Put, handyperson and Muckbusters schemes – as well as fund the extension of Staying Put and Muckbusters.

From 2009/10, Supporting People funding will no longer be restricted to supported housing services and will go towards the new area-based grant for meeting local area agreement targets. This may affect existing spending plans as the grant may be used for more pressing priorities.

As mentioned earlier, Staying Put in the Garden has been funded through neighbourhood renewal funding which hails from central government. This grant will cease in March 2009. Once funding ends, and if no alternative funding is identified, it is proposed to continue Staying Put in the Garden on a fee-paying basis and to include the scheme on the Supporting People commissioning plan for future consideration.

Neighbourhood renewal funding for the hypothermia project ended in March 2008. The council is now funding it from within its own resources and hopes to continue to do so.

The ability to remain in one's home is often very much down to its design and suitability for people as

they grow older and develop physical mobility problems and sensory impairments. The lifetime homes standard involves a range of technical specifications for housing which "age-proofs" it. The home is either disability-friendly as it is or it readily, and more cheaply, lends itself to adaptation. The council's target is that all new homes (affordable and market) built in the borough will, wherever feasible, be built to this standard. (This target is ahead of the government's target of 2011 for publicly-funded housing and 2013 for all housing.)

Safeguarding older people from abuse within the home can help them to remain safely at home, rather than be forced to move to residential care, for example. Care managers within the council are trained on recognising the signs of abuse and dealing with it. This awareness is to be spread across all housing staff through a comprehensive training programme with the aim of ensuring that people at risk are identified and referred for specialist help.

PRIORITY FIVE: To provide information & advice which helps people choose, or plan for, the right solutions for them.

A strand running through this strategy is the need for good quality and comprehensive advice. There is evidence that people aren't always aware of all the options – many, for example, know about sheltered housing but not about solutions for remaining in their own home. There is also evidence that people do not always plan ahead or anticipate the kind of housing

problems they may face in future years. It is clear that many people are reluctant to consider equity release but this is likely to become an important method of funding repairs and adaptations to private sector homes. The government is looking to expand the range of products and reducing reliance on public sector funding. And there is not just a need for specialist advice but assistance which helps frail older people take full advantage of the options; this may require quite practical help and support for people moving home.

An expanded range of housing options, to include for example a floating support service and a fuller range of telecare and assistive technology, will not only require a review of the information we provide but call for more intensive training for staff. This will also require an integration of advice traditionally provided by different agencies or departments. Benefits advice, to help people maximise their incomes, could also be an important component of an integrated advice service.

We envisage this advice encompassing a sign-posting function so that people are referred to the wider range of services within the borough which enable people to live independently and remain in their homes. This would include home care services, equipment and the virtual wards.

We are keen to explore the feasibility of developing a comprehensive older people's service, such as a one-stop shop or other model which provides the same benefits, which gives advice

and support in pursuing different options. This would bring the kind of specialist advice provided by the council, including access to its resources such as social housing, grant funding and assistive technology, home improvement agency functions and occupational therapy assessments, as well as the expertise in dealing with older people's issues developed by Age Concern Croydon and the voluntary sector. This would link up to the government's proposed national web-based and telephone advice service.

The council is currently looking at how all of its services for older people can be better integrated and the housing advice service will obviously be considered within any borough-wide developments. In the meantime, the Aztec Centre has received government funding which will enable it to extend its opening hours and widen up the advice it offers, turning it into a "pop village" echoing the approach of the Pop Service. The centre will be able, for example, to run a range of surgeries (which could include housing advice) and other services such as benefit checks. Future housing advice services will need to be developed alongside the pop village.

Advice and information could extend to private sector services such as private retirement housing for sale.

Recent developments include SARA and the independent living centre website. The SARA (self-assessment rapid access) service allows people to assess themselves for equipment and minor adaptations and find out what's available quickly. The website has a directory of equipment and a

DVD provides a virtual tour of the Aztec Centre.

Depending on resource availability, we are keen to look at a service which either helps people move home or remain in their own home through very practical and emotional support. To some extent, this is provided at present through the Staying Put Service, which can react flexibly to a range of requirements. However, we see this as a growing demand which could make a lot of difference to people's lives. Support could include anything from helping people to get rid of belongings or finding reliable conveyancers, to a spring clean and preparing for the emotional distress of a move.

The council's contact centre would play an important role in providing the front-line service taking telephone enquiries from people, dealing with routine issues and ensuring that people are appropriately referred to specialist back office staff.

A key action for both contact centre and other front-line staff would thus be training to increase awareness of older people's needs and widen knowledge of services available.

The council has been developing a single assessment procedure whereby professionals collect a range of information from customers and not just that relating to their own specific service. This enables cross-referrals and better information for customers about other services. Housing is not currently an element of this assessment but we

would see this, together with joint protocols relating to referrals between agencies, as crucial in ensuring a more integrated approach. The department of health is piloting and introducing a common assessment framework which incorporates housing, and this may be a model we wish to adopt.

Government proposals for developing a predictive model for identifying people at risk of a health or care crisis would assist in targetting people for housing services at an early enough stage.

An older people's "champion" within the housing service would help to develop expertise on their needs and provide a contact point for other agencies advising or advocating on behalf of their clients.

A further issue for development is how we provide information which helps people plan for their longer-term future. This could be through promotional campaigns, for example about the costs of maintaining housing for people as they get older or about incentives such as under-occupation transfer payments, as well as individualised advice.

The Pop Service, the mobile service for older people, is being funded on a temporary basis by the Department of Health under its Partnerships for Older People Projects programme. Its success in reaching people, especially those from the upper end of the age scale and other hard to reach groups, and in preventing accidents, ill-health and deterioration in welfare, is being evaluated throughout the two year pilot period. This will enable the council and

primary care trust to assess the value of the service and to factor this in to considerations about longer-term funding. Housing will continue to be included in the advice-giving remit of the project, and retirement housing and social housing estates will provide venues for the bus.

Finally, we intend to carry out a review of written and web-based information for older people and their carers and relatives, to ensure that it is comprehensive and meets best practice standards in terms of accessibility. This will provide a link between the council and Age Concern Croydon, and take advantage of the information provided by Age Concern England. We will continue to run regular items for older and disabled people living on council estates in the *Open House* newsletter.

Implementing the Strategy

The action plan within this document sets out the actions we will take over the next few years to take this strategy forward and which will be incorporated into the council's annual service plans.

Implementation will be overseen by the executive group of the partnership group for older people.

Other members of the partnership group, together with other

stakeholders including older people groups and the voluntary sector, will receive reports on progress and evaluation of pilots.

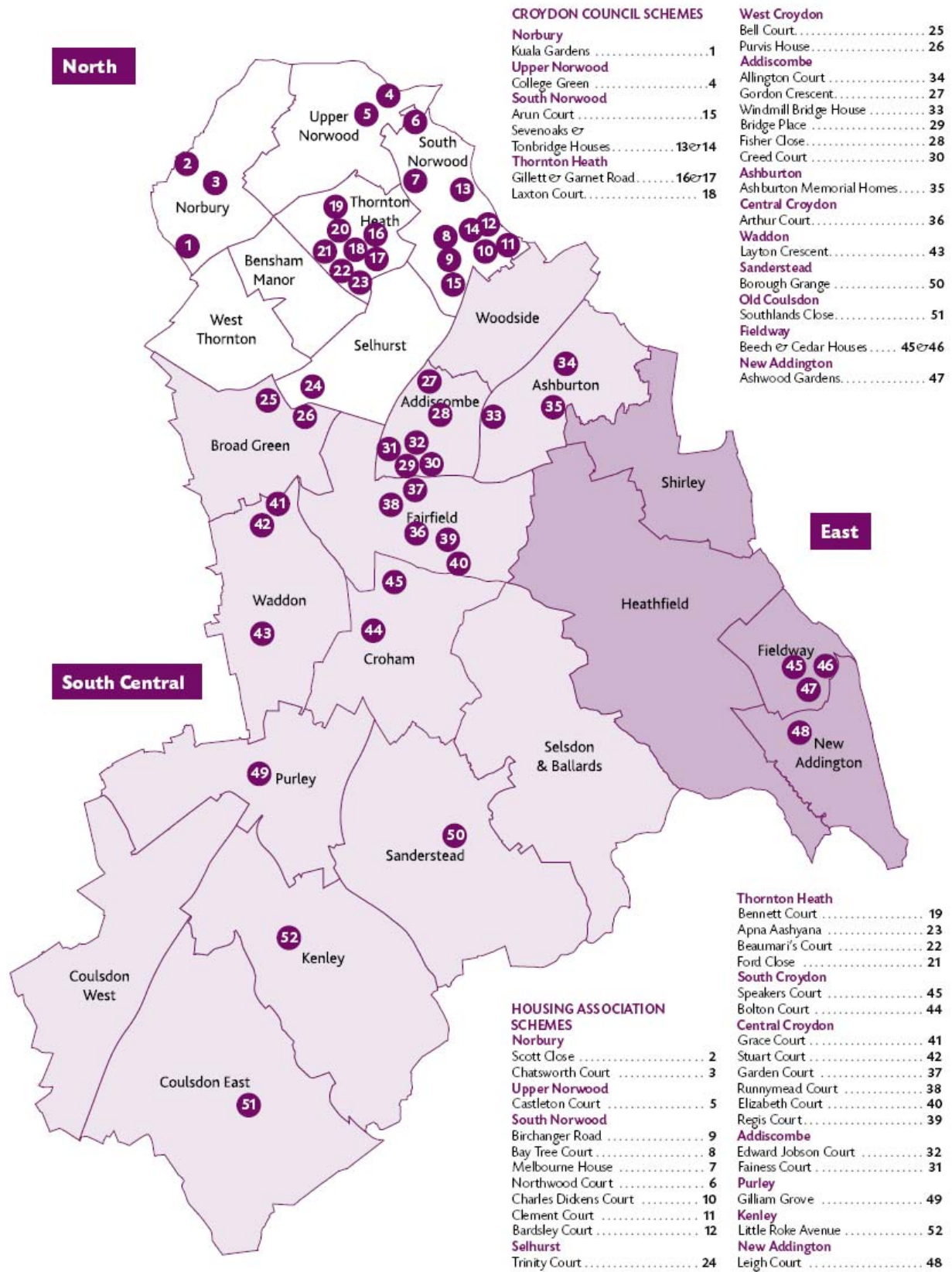
The action will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is up-to-date and that the strategy used to inform decisions about resources and service planning. We envisage that our understanding will develop further in the months and years ahead, and we will ensure that older people's views continue to influence decisions. The council and PCT are currently working on a joint strategic needs assessment which pulls together information about trends in need. This will provide a good opportunity for joint working between health, social care and health professionals, together with the voluntary sector, in building up a comprehensive picture of older people's housing needs.

We therefore welcome views on this strategy and on the impact of new proposals as they are implemented.

We will ensure that future older people's consultation events include the housing theme and continue the debate about the best solutions for the future.

For further information, or to comment on this strategy, contact:
Housing Strategy Team, Adult Services and Housing Department,
Croydon Council, Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon CR9 1DH
Email: HSG-STRATEGY@croydon.gov.uk
Tel: 020 8726 6100 ext 62345

Location of Sheltered Housing Schemes in Croydon



Appendix Two: Housing-Related Support

In general terms, the range of services available to vulnerable people living in their own home falls between typical housing management services that tenants can expect to receive and personal care. Support is provided to individual service users (as opposed to groups or communities of people) who each have a support plan designed around their specific housing related support needs.

The following list sets out the kinds of tasks which are typically carried out by housing support workers such as sheltered housing officers. These are all eligible for funding through the Supporting People programme.

- Help in setting up and maintaining a home (e.g. help with connection of and budgeting for utilities)
- Help in developing domestic and practical skills (e.g. learning how to change a fuse in a plug, learning cooking skills)
- Help in developing social skills/confidence or managing behaviour (e.g. accompanying people on a first visit to a day centre, or signposting them to addiction services)
- Advice, advocacy and liaison with statutory agencies (e.g. help with making a housing application)
- Help in managing finances and dealing with benefit claims
- General emotional support, counseling and advice (but not specialist counseling)
- Help in gaining access to other services (e.g. training, education)
- Help in establishing social contacts and activities (e.g. signposting to cultural or religious activities)
- Help in establishing personal safety and security
- Supervision and monitoring of health and well-being (e.g. advice on local G.P.s or referrals for a care assessment)
- Peer support and befriending (e.g. encouraging mutual self-help among a group of service users)
- Help in finding other accommodation
- Provision of community alarms
- Provision of the advice and support elements of home improvement, repair and handy-person services (capital costs excluded)
- Provision of tenancy deposits to enable people to move on from short term supported accommodation into private sector tenancies, so long as it is accompanied by a resettlement support service
- Assessment of the housing related support needs of vulnerable people and place them with appropriate supported housing services
- Personal care where it is provided in the context of an adult placement scheme
- Handyperson services to carry out small repairs to the homes of vulnerable people, excluding the cost of materials

This list may not necessarily be exhaustive. Services funded by Supporting People will not necessarily carry out all of these activities.