A Review of Sheltered Housing in Norfolk

Consultation Draft

Norfolk Supporting People
Norfolk County Council 2008
Introduction

Sheltered housing is the most common form of housing support for older people in Norfolk. This report is a culmination of a countywide review of sheltered housing which took place between 2006-2007. The aims of this report were to gain a better understanding of the range, standards and use of existing sheltered housing and to use this as a platform for planning housing support to meet the needs of a changing population in future years.

There are two appendices linked to this document and shown in the contents below. There is also a separate draft strategy and action plan. These documents are available by request from the Norfolk Supporting People team.

Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Background</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a. Strategic relevance and demand</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. Use of time and support tasks</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c. Quality standards</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d. Types and standards of accommodation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1e. Support models</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demographics</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Policy context</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Approaching the strategic review</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Findings from the sheltered review</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a. Access to amenities</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b. Other location issues</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c. The external environment</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d. Shared areas</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5e. Individual units</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5f. Utilities</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5g. Voids, demand and access</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice example - Housing 21 shared ownership</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5h. Support, social life and integration</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice example - Great Yarmouth Borough, Council, support planning</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice example - Norwich City Council, tenant participation and consultation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice example - Saffron Housing Trust, putting tenant activities at the heart of the local community</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice example - Broadland Housing engagement through activities</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Headline findings and recommendations</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Location and amenities</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b. The building - shared areas</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c. The building - individual living units</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6d. Utilities</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6e. Lettings and demand</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final Version

6f. Support 36
6g. Social life and integration 38
6h. Strategic and planning 38
7. Norfolk Standards - housing and support 39
7a. Standards for support and the SP quality assessment framework 39
7b. Aspirational Standards for sheltered stock 40
7c. Standards for new build 41
7d. Standards for the involvement of tenants 42
7e. Standards suggested by this review 42
7f. Review Steering Group 42

Appendix 1 Detailed information from the sheltered housing audit
Appendix 2 Standards, guidance and draft scheme audit format

Contact the Norfolk Supporting People Team on 01603 719145

Email: robert.cooper@norfolk.gov.uk
Final Version

1. Background

“For some time, providers have recognised the need to review their sheltered housing strategy to ensure that they are providing financially viable, sustainable accommodation and support that can meet the needs of current and future tenants, and will comply with the external requirements of funders and regulators”.

Sheltered housing comprises the largest sector for which Supporting People funding for housing related support is provided in Norfolk. Across the country there is recognition that significant trends have increased the importance to strategically plan for the future of housing support and evaluate the desirability of moving away from reliance on sheltered housing as the exclusive means of providing this support.

Life expectancy continues to increase and as does home ownership. This promotes the likelihood that people will come into sheltered accommodation at a later age and with a set of more substantial support needs than much of that accommodation stock was originally designed to manage. As life standards in the UK have increased, expectations about what is acceptable in terms of personal living space and the activities it should enable will continue to change.

In November 2004 Norfolk Supporting People brought together a large group of participants for the Jigsaw Conference which explored the potential roles for housing support in providing holistic solutions to the support needs of older people. The adequacy of sheltered housing and its continuing fitness for purpose was a key discussion theme to emerge from the day. Since then Norfolk Supporting People have been exploring with older people and providers of services and support, some of the consequences of this theme.

As part of the process of preparing for the first round of reviews of sheltered services, it was agreed within Norfolk that a clear position statement was needed in respect of this sector. The first round of Supporting People reviews of sheltered housing services were embarked upon with the intention of developing knowledge about the sector and the extent to which it is likely to remain ‘fit for purpose’ over the coming decades.

The first round of reviews was used to highlight areas that would warrant in depth exploration with providers, service users, relatives and potential service users. In undertaking the first round of reviews a sample of schemes managed by each provider was chosen for consideration. The issues highlighted at this stage were:

   a. Strategic relevance and demand

Some schemes had relatively low utilisation with difficult to let units or units that took a long time to let. This was most likely for schemes with bedsits;

---

1 ‘Options for the future of sheltered housing stock’, Trudi Kleanthos, Housing Quality Network, March 2007
**Final Version**

relatively poor access to amenities or in an area which was seen as less desirable perhaps because it was too rural. Access to the majority of sheltered housing appeared to be through the common housing registers of district councils. There were, however, a small number of providers which either did not engage with common lettings registers or the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) schemes, up and running in two of the seven Norfolk local authorities at the time the service reviews took place.

Some providers were failing to engage or promote their services with their local authorities so that even though lettings could be made through a common housing register or LA nomination, in effect the majority of lettings were made through the provider's internal waiting list. Examples were highlighted at service review where providers let to new residents from outside the county particularly for schemes in popular areas such as North Norfolk without according priority for local connection. Similarly internal lettings and transfer policies was sometimes used to let more desirable types of accommodation, for example ground floor units, on a basis other than the highest demonstrable need for that type of accommodation.

**b. Use of time and support tasks**

In some schemes on review there was a lack of clarity about what constituted housing support and what amounted to other support tasks. There were instances where Supporting People funding was being used to subsidise housing management or social care. This was not unique to older person's services and mirrors similar findings from the reviews of Norfolk SP services for people with learning difficulties for example. From the reviews it appeared that housing support was almost exclusively tied to sheltered housing schemes and rarely extended to older people with support needs living in other tenure.

**c. Quality standards**

Service reviews found widespread quality gaps in a number of areas. Most commonly providers were required to work on an action plan which improved their services in the areas of support planning, needs assessment and protection of vulnerable adults from abuse and harm.

**d. Types and standards of accommodation**

Inevitably some providers would struggle to meet contemporary expectations about access, space, design and facilities in stock which was built or refurbished twenty years ago or more. At review a number of schemes were identified with units upstairs where there was no scope for lift access and sometimes little scope for a stair lift. Some schemes had steps up to external entrances or doors that were difficult to manage for people with limited mobility. A number of properties did not have a level access shower. A minority of schemes had no communal social area. There was a shortage of wheelchair standard units in some schemes.
e. Support models

Prior to the introduction of Supporting People, categorisation of sheltered housing had been on the basis of support available and the perceived support needs of recipients. Category 1 schemes were properties linked to an alarm service with no communal facilities and limited or no visiting support. This model has been considered suitable for relatively active older people. Category 2 schemes generally had a resident warden, communal facilities and were planned for people who were less active. Category 2 ½ (housing with care) schemes offered extra care with twenty four hours live in support available, designed for people who were relatively frail with more limited mobility. The scope of this audit includes Category 2 and some Category 1 schemes. There will be a further review of alarm only provision.

Some of the large providers had moved or were strongly moving towards visiting support, as opposed to onsite support, in respect of the majority of their provision. In respect of the two local authority providers (Great Yarmouth and Norwich) there was an aspiration to extend the visiting support available to tenants in sheltered units out to other people in the community. Providers were flagging that there were costs associated with extending or remodelling provision in this way.

Saffron Housing Trust has been piloting the extension of an existing warden service at Brooke to support people with circumstantial temporary needs for support in the wider community. POPPS (Partnerships for Older People Project) pilot initiatives projects, across the county to support older people to live independently. Various projects are being run to provide rapid response in times of crisis, covering the daytime and also a service throughout the night. These projects also link into HIAs (Home Improvement Agencies) providing information and alarms dealing with home security and also the Handyperson service. Various smaller POPPS projects are being run in different parts of the county.

The Abbeyfield model has offered a distinct form of sheltered accommodation, which traditionally catered for people with lower support needs, by offering bedsits with shared facilities. Support generally includes a cooked meal and appeals to potential residents who would benefit from living in a shared house. SP Reviews of Abbeyfield services in Norfolk suggested that the ability of residents to remain independent could be compromised where the model offered no opportunity for people to cook for themselves. However service users that were spoken to when validation visits were made to two of the schemes, said that they had chosen to go into Abbeyfield schemes as they did not want the worry of maintaining a house and garden. They said that having meals prepared for them was a bonus as it was nice to have company at meal times, also the fact that they did not have to worry about shopping and cooking gave them more time to do things that they wanted to. There were also issues about relatively low demand and whether Abbeyfield schemes could meet minimum accessibility requirements.

2. Demographics
The projected increases in the numbers of older people in Norfolk are higher than projected increases for England as a whole. In 2008 the proportion of the population aged 65+ is predicted as 16.18% for England as a whole, rising to 19.23% by 2020. The proportion of people aged 65+ in Norfolk is predicted at 21.06% in 2008, rising to 25.93% by 2020. The proportion of people aged 85+ in Norfolk is predicted at 2.92%, with a predicted rise to 3.76% by 2020.

In terms of numbers of people it is envisaged that there will be 177,500 people aged 65+ in Norfolk in 2008, increasing to 238,100 by 2020. This includes 24,600 people aged 85+ in 2008, rising to 34,500 in 2020.²

The predicted numbers of older people and envisaged rates of increase varies immensely between some of the districts. The estimated proportion of older people in North Norfolk exceeds the figures for the county as a whole. In contrast the projection percentages of older people for Norwich are below the figures both for Norfolk and for England as a whole.

The majority of older people live in mainstream housing with over 78% of older people owning their own homes. There are contradictory trends in respect of poverty and quality of life. Whilst the percentage of pensioners in poverty has fallen over the last decade older people are still more likely to live in poor standards and unsafe housing conditions.³

In respect of housing tenure the General Household Survey indicates that there are differences between single people and older couples. Older single people appear more than twice as likely as older couples to be in social housing. They appear twice as likely as couples to be living in private rented housing.⁴ Older people in rural areas are more likely to be home owners than older people in urban areas.⁵

This review of sheltered provision needs to consider older people who have been marginalised from mainstream services. It has been estimated that nationally were over 5,000 older people living in homelessness hostels in 2004.⁶ The Coalition defines older people who have experienced long term homelessness as aged 50 and up. The assumption is that their life experiences have resulted in premature ageing.

At Norfolk SP Inclusive Forum meetings participants have referred to a small proportion of older people who have been living for a long time in group homes and have an indefinite need for some form of supported accommodation. Strategic housing authorities and sheltered providers will need to engage with key providers of homelessness accommodation such as

---

² 'Projecting Older Persons Population Information' - DOH POPPI Web
⁴ ‘Housing and consumer durables’ – General Household Survey, ONS, 2005
⁵ ‘The housing and support needs of older people in rural areas’ – The Commission for Rural Communities, April 2006
⁶ 'Older people's housing and homelessness strategies' - UK Coalition on older homelessness/Homeless Link; 2007
Herring House Trust, St Martin's Housing Trust and St Matthew Housing.
Support options for older homeless people could include lettings in existing schemes or remodelling elements of existing provision to create discrete specialist services. Housing with care may be an appropriate move on model for some people with complex needs who have been homeless or living in a hostel for a long period.

One large sheltered housing provider has reported an increase in individuals coming into sheltered housing schemes with complex support needs, around for example their mental health and substance use. There is a need to think carefully about the balance and management of support for such individuals. This will entail sheltered services and other housing focused support being provided in tandem with health and social care. The provider made the point that Housing with Care managers will require the housing expertise and focus to be able to deal with housing management related issues (such as anti social behaviour) likely to arise in catering for some of these needs.

Key agencies working with Gypsies and Travellers, such as the Gypsies and Travellers Liaison Group and the Ormiston Trust Norfolk Travellers Initiative, may also have information on needs to contribute. Any comprehensive examination of the future needs for sheltered should account for demand from older members of Gypsy and Traveller communities. Consideration should be given to whether sheltered is an appropriate model for meeting these needs.

It has been estimated that by 2026 there will be 1.8 million elders from BME communities living in the UK. 7 Research summarised on the BMESpark website challenges previously held ideas that BME communities tend to look after their older family members. Older people from BME communities are over represented in poor quality housing and less willing to consider sheltered as an option.

A Norfolk countywide BME research project undertaken in 2007 examined the housing tenures of different communities in Norfolk. 8 It also looked at where people from BME communities go for information about housing and support options. For the purposes of developing a comprehensive strategy in respect of housing for older people with support needs it will be important in future to understand whether there are any barriers, social or cultural factors preventing older people from different community backgrounds from using sheltered services in Norfolk.

### 3. Policy context

Over the last decade the emphasis in government policy towards older people shifted from care of the most frail and vulnerable towards preventative intervention. In the last five years the agenda has moved again placing prevention within the concept of ‘successful ageing’. There is a focus on older people as interactive members of wider communities in which they are valued

---

7 BMESpark website - www.bmespark.org.uk
8 The housing and support needs of black and minority ethnic communities in Norfolk and Waveney, Fordham Research, 2007
and able to contribute, and through which choices are extended. This has been accompanied by increased spending on Home Improvement Agencies, telecare, dispersed alarms, extra care housing as an alternative to residential care and the piloting of individual budgets for older people. The direction of travel has been consistent with the movement of government away from welfare solutions and towards mixed social economy in which private, voluntary and not for profit organisations contribute substantially to provision.9

The formal introduction of Supporting People in 2003 brought together a number of streams of funding for housing support. It introduced a framework to ensure services were meeting identified needs, providing value for money, of verifiable quality, involving people who used those services in planning and achieving measurable outcomes. At the outset of the programme the pattern of services within each sector was already given. In respect of older people support was almost exclusively delivered through the sheltered housing model, having an onsite manager. As well as only meeting the needs of people living in a particular scheme the traditional model may not offer good value for money. It has been suggested that there are a number of different potential options for remodelling to change the way housing support is delivered. These include:

- Move scheme managers offsite
- Review support hours allocated to each scheme
- Review scheme staff roles in relation to housing management duties
- Extend staff roles to provide additional floating support in local communities
- Identify partnerships between social care/health in providing care support models 10

Providers have recognised the importance of ensuring that housing and support change with the needs of older people. In 2005 the National Consortium of Sheltered Providers issued a challenge to central and local government in addition to providers. This was to develop a clear vision about housing and care for 2020, when the ageing of the ‘baby boomer’ generation is anticipated to peak. The proposals included that low demand and low standard schemes are remodelled, that the support role of scheme managers is reviewed to encompass needs in the wider community and the potential of schemes to become community support hubs is fully explored.11

In developing the first Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2005 - 2010 commitments were made in the short term to contribute to the support of individuals in their own homes (through expanding the availability of Home Improvement Agencies and working with other organisations to deliver more responsive and flexible support). In the longer term the need was recognised within the Strategy to:

---

9 ‘Transforming services: A report on a strategic review of Kent’s SP funded services for older people’ – Kent Supporting People, November 2006
11 ‘20/20 a vision for housing and care’ – ERoSH, 2005
“Use the reviews processes and work in partnership with providers and other partners to lead in the strategic remodeling of housing related support services over a five year period”

This reflects similar initiatives in other authorities and is consistent with proposed aims set out by central government in developing a position statement in advance of a national strategy in respect of housing older people. These aims include:

- Increasing the percentage of older people who say that their housing meets their needs
- Increasing the percentage of people over 80 supported to live safely in their own homes
- Increasing the proportion of homes that meet Lifetime Homes Standards
- Increasing the numbers of people receiving Home Improvement Agency services 12

In 2008 the government published 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A national strategy for ageing in an ageing society'. The document makes much of the need to ‘future proof’ new homes and the neighbourhoods in which they are situated. Key measures include:

- Building all new homes to Lifetime Homes Standards by 2013
- Requirement for planning to take account of ageing
- Increased funding through Disabled Facilities Grants and to expand handypersons schemes
- Stronger advice, information and preventative housing services

The national strategy reaffirms the value of sheltered housing as 'specialist housing' within the range of housing choices for older people. It advocates using existing stock to its fullest potential. The value of support is also recognised and some caution is expressed over remodelling stock that is not fit for purpose.

"Sheltered housing, extra care and care homes at their best can be vibrant community hubs, tackling social exclusion and promoting active ageing, even if the accommodation itself is dated. An excellent local manager can make all the difference in creating a place where people can do all the things that make life worth living" 13

A strategy for the housing and support of older people based on the outcomes of the current sheltered review in Norfolk will have to be mindful of the other key components of comprehensive support. These include social care, health care and technology. This piece of work must be seen as integrating the other initiatives due to progress over the next couple of years.

Final Version

These are:

- The proposed Supporting People and partner agencies review of the provision for community alarm services in the county
- The review of POPPS (Partnerships for Older People Pilot Services) in Norfolk - If POPP's is to be mainstreamed consideration will need to be given to the effects this would have on community alarms and sheltered housing provision. Would the night owl response services take on some of the roles of traditional 24/7 alarm services and from which sources would such services be funded?
- Norfolk County Council's planned consideration of County Council residential care homes and the action needing to be taking to ensure that relatively higher care needs are met most effectively in future
- The government's planned National Housing Strategy for an Ageing Society and its anticipated emphasis on community based and tailored support as opposed to static, building based services. This will have implications for housing, housing support, housing with care and residential care planning in Norfolk.

It will also have to account for wider strategic questions which have yet to be resolved.

4. Approaching the strategic review

As a result of the Supporting People service reviews we formulated a number of questions about the sector that we wanted to explore with people currently living in sheltered housing. These were:

- Where and why (in what circumstances) do we need sheltered housing?
- What types of service should sheltered housing provide?
- What facilities should sheltered housing schemes have?
- How should sheltered housing fit into the wider community
- What should new schemes be like

We checked assumptions about the design of schemes and the way in which support was offered through consultation sessions with older people, the relatives of older people, people working for provider and stakeholder organisations and community groups. In these sessions we explored what was positive, desirable and problematic about living in sheltered housing. As a result of this we formulated a draft audit questionnaire which covered the following areas:

- Proximity to amenities
- Vacancies and the time taken to let units
- How lettings are made
- The external and shared areas of the building
- Individual units
- The support service
Following further discussion with providers an audit questionnaire was distributed which asked detailed questions about each scheme under the broad heading areas above. The response rate to the audit questionnaire was good with responses being made from 21 different providers in respect of 201 separate schemes. The responses covered 6455 units although a number of respondents did or could not give full responses to every question. For this reason there is variation between tables and data over the number of schemes and number of units.

The distribution of units in the survey between districts was:

**Table - number of schemes by number of units**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No of Providers</th>
<th>No of Schemes</th>
<th>No of Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breckland</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Yarmouth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King’s Lynn and West Norfolk</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Norfolk</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Norfolk</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>6455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Providers were asked to submit a survey form for each separate service classed by Supporting People as providing sheltered housing for older people at the time of the survey. Alarm only services and schemes supporting frail older people were excluded. Responses were received in respect of 6455/6717 units or equating to 96% of SP funded sheltered units for older people.

In general the next sections summarise and give headline information from the Audit. The detailed information is available as an appendix to the main report.

5. **Findings from the sheltered housing audit**

5a. **Access to amenities**

The pattern of access to everyday amenities reflected the mixed suburban and rural nature of Norfolk as a county. 50% of schemes in North Norfolk and 39% of schemes in Breckland are over 1 kilometre from the nearest GP surgery. This is also the case for over one third of the schemes in Great Yarmouth. By contrast 68% of the schemes in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk were less than ½ a kilometre from the surgery.

Most schemes had reasonable access to the nearest food shop with only 8% of schemes over 1 kilometre in distance. 17% of schemes were over 1
kilometre from the nearest post office with this being marginally more likely for schemes in North Norfolk than in other areas.

The information on proximity to the nearest bank indicated the changes which have taken place in recent years in the way in which banking services are provided. Over half of the schemes were more than 1 kilometre from the nearest bank. This ranged from 29% of the schemes in Broadland to 75% of schemes in the King’s Lynn and West Norfolk district and 81% of schemes in Great Yarmouth.

In consultation older people have made it clear that enabling choices around meeting housing needs in rural areas is not just about housing, but about making critical linkages with other key features of rural living, such as transport and access to a range of services. Transport has been viewed as the most significant issue facing older people in the countryside.14

Bus links were strongest in the suburban areas and weaker in the more rural districts with 29% of schemes in Breckland and 37% of schemes in North Norfolk seen as not having access to a convenient bus service.

Onsite or visiting commercial services are likely to be of importance particularly for older people with limitations on mobility where there were few local commercial amenities and or local shops offer limited choice. Frozen meals delivery services offer a convenience option especially where there are no established luncheon clubs.

In Breckland only 5/28 schemes reported they had commercial visiting or onsite facilities at which tenants could buy food or other goods. These included frozen meals deliveries and a greengrocer weekly visit. The degree to which retail and other commercial services have a visiting or other presence at any given scheme will be dictated by commercial decisions – if there is a demand and it pays to do so then a visiting grocery service may operate. The likelihood of a viable wider catchment in the locality will also encourage visiting vendors and other businesses. Given the relatively poor transport links reported for a number of Breckland sheltered schemes, providers should examine with their tenants whether they feel they have an adequate choice of goods and whether there is further scope to improve this choice.

In Broadland 10/17 schemes reported they had facilities onsite or visiting at which tenants could buy food or other goods. These were often fresh fish, vegetable, groceries or milk deliveries. There were a wide range of other commercial services available to some of the Broadland schemes including clothing parties, fish and chips, mini markets and a mobile hardware store.

13/32 schemes in Yarmouth reported they had facilities onsite or visiting at which tenants could buy food or other goods. Fresh fish deliveries were

---

14 ‘The housing and support needs of older people in rural areas’ – The Commission for Rural Communities, April 2006
commonly reported. Other schemes reported deliveries of household goods, frozen meals, and fruit and vegetables.

16/28 schemes in King's Lynn and West Norfolk reported they had facilities onsite or visiting at which tenants could buy food or other goods. There was common access to fresh food reported.

12/24 schemes in North Norfolk reported they had facilities onsite or visiting at which tenants could buy food or other goods. Fish and chips and frozen food deliveries were more commonly reported than fresh foods.

18/52 schemes in Norwich reported they had facilities onsite or visiting at which tenants could buy food or other goods. Fresh food and groceries were often reported as accessible with access to a variety of other items dependent on the scheme. At one service residents maintained an "onsite pantry"

In South Norfolk 14/20 schemes reported they had facilities onsite or visiting at which tenants could buy food or other goods. Grocery deliveries visit a number of services and access to purchase clothes onsite was fairly commonly reported. One scheme had an onsite restaurant.

It is likely in the near future that teleshopping and online access to goods and services will have a major impact for future generations of sheltered housing service users. However this survey provided little evidence that current service users were routinely using these options.

5b. Other location issues

The location of a scheme can determine utility and popularity. Amongst the potential location difficulties highlighted through the SP service reviews and through the consultation with older people were:

- Rural isolation
- Proximity to large roads
- Slopes
- Poor transport links
- Perceived less desirable location

In this survey at least one quarter of schemes were said to have some difficulties in respect of the location. Problems varied in the degree to which these were significant or viewed as impacting on the lives of residents.

8/28 schemes in Breckland were said to have some difficulties in respect of scheme location. Three schemes were in unpopular locations (hard to let, near a high school, prone to anti social behaviour). The rural nature of four schemes caused difficulties. One scheme was on a hill. The total numbers of units at schemes with reported location difficulties in Breckland were 245 and six of these schemes were managed by one provider.
Only 1/17 schemes in Broadland was said to have some difficulties in respect of scheme location. These difficulties were about the distance from some amenities.

3/32 schemes in Yarmouth were said to have some difficulties in respect of scheme location. These were about access to amenities in the case of one scheme and distance from public transport for all three.

3/28 schemes in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk were perceived as having location difficulties. One was on a steep hill. One scheme was too distant from the shops and a third scheme was said to have narrow streets leading to it making access difficult.

10/24 schemes in North Norfolk were said to have location difficulties. In the case of four schemes the difficulties were about rural location and poor transport links. The building of four schemes on slopes or inclines was said to be problematic. Shortages of parking and difficulties in manoeuvring emergency vehicles caused difficulties in two schemes. The schemes with location problems in North Norfolk covered 212 units and eight of these schemes were managed by one provider.

12/52 schemes in Norwich were said to have location problems. Three of the schemes are on uneven ground or on slopes. For four of the schemes the difficulties were about distance from the city centre or shops. One scheme was said to be close to a park which attracted anti social behaviour. Another scheme suffered from being close to a noisy road and work environments.

6/20 schemes in South Norfolk had reported difficulties in respect of location. For three of the schemes the problems were due to being built on a slope but in respect of one of these schemes the gradient was slight. In respect of another considerable work had been undertaken on ramps to improve access to units. For the other three schemes the problems centred on distance from amenities and/or public transport.

5c. The external environment

At least 42/201 schemes did not have an external environment or entrance area that met the expectations of the Disability Discrimination Act (see Appendix for summary of key features in respect of sheltered housing). The bulk of these schemes were in Breckland, King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, North Norfolk and Norwich. Providers were less clear about the number of schemes which could physically be adapted to meet these requirements if funding were available. At least twenty six of the schemes could be adapted to meet the DDA requirements.

5d. Shared areas

In respect of communal areas, at least 41/201 schemes had communal areas which did not meet DDA requirements, although this figure may include some schemes which have no communal lounge provision. At least twenty nine of
these schemes could be refurbished to provide communal areas which meet DDA expectations. In respect of the majority of schemes in Yarmouth and some Norwich schemes the question was considered inapplicable because of the lack of communal provision.

An attractive and usable communal area allows for the option of social activities within a sheltered housing scheme and provides one means through which residents can socialise with other people in the local community. Most schemes which were not in a block model had a shared lounge. There was scope within a further six schemes for a lounge to be provided although providers indicated they would not be willing to provide a lounge in respect of three of these schemes.

141/201 schemes had some form of shared laundry. At least five further schemes could be adapted in this way but providers viewed 30 schemes as not capable of or worth adapting to provide a separate laundry.

The scope for sheltered housing to provide a more genuine lifetime home for larger numbers of older people requires a physical environment conducive to support being increased as needs become greater. As some people become physically more frail they need assistance with in a bathroom that can physically accommodate two carers and hoist equipment. This is not largely available within existing sheltered housing provision in Norfolk. A minority of schemes (26/201) have a suitably sized shared bathroom in which assisted bathing could be offered. Seven further schemes could provide assisted bathing through refurbishment.

Sluice rooms are an important resource in the care and support of individuals with incontinence problems. Sluice facilities were only available in 5 schemes and not currently available at all in sheltered housing in four of the districts. There was scope for sluice facilities to be provided in twelve other schemes.

The communal areas of most schemes were felt to be well an appropriately lit with 19/201 schemes said to have lighting deficiencies. Proportionally this was an issue for more of the schemes in Broadland and North Norfolk than in other districts.

One area in which there remains something of a generational gap is in respect of use of information technology. This was apparent in talking to older people currently living in sheltered in the context of this review. There was some interest in exploring IT but few people were regularly using it for shopping, banking and leisure. This will not be the case with the next generation of older people who will require housing and other support.

The growth in ownership of home computers has been recent and rapid (from 25% of households in 1995 to 63% in 2005). Although this masks age differences (only 16% of people aged over 59 who live alone had a home computer in 2005) figures suggest that information technology (IT) use will be routine amongst future generations of older people. Over 80% of all family
Final Version

households and nearly 50% of households with two older people aged over 59 have home computers. 15

Saffron Housing Trust and Broadland Housing Association appear to be leading the way in Norfolk in making IT access available in the communal areas of all of their schemes. BHA also arranges training for tenants to develop IT skills. The increase of IT provision would help to promote independence and also provides stimulation and links to a network of services.

As the trend continues for people to leave the area in which they were born and settle away this would seem to emphasise the importance of a guest room being available at a sheltered housing scheme for visiting family members. During the consultation in preparation for the survey scheme managers gave mixed evidence about the extent to which guest rooms were used. In some schemes they had been used to offer respite or a trial period to someone considering sheltered. Just under half of all schemes had a guest room. A guest room was available in two thirds or more of the schemes in Norwich and King’s Lynn and West Norfolk. It was only available in 9% of the Great Yarmouth schemes.

5e. Individual units

Just under one third of existing units meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. At least 37% of the remaining units could be refurbished to ensure compliance with these expectations as a matter of best practice. 20% of current units are of wheelchair standard. There were significant gaps in the information about the potential for adapting other units but the indications are that at least 38% of the remaining current units could be refurbished to meet wheelchair standards.

Just over 90% of units had sufficient circulation space to allow for free movement with use of a walking frame. This ranged from 84% of units in Breckland to 97% of units in South Norfolk.

46% of schemes King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, 33% of schemes in Norwich and 25% of schemes in Breckland offered access to battery charging facilities for mobility scooters and buggies. This does not necessarily indicate that schemes with units that have some battery charging provision had adequate availability to meet demand. In the other districts the number was 12% or less of schemes. A large number of schemes in Great Yarmouth and North Norfolk have the potential for charging facilities to be added.

Over three quarters of schemes have adequate parking for residents and visitors. This was least likely for North Norfolk (38%) although 4/10 schemes could be adapted to provide adequate parking in this district and the landlord would undertake to provide more if finance were available.

15 ‘Housing and consumer durables’ – General Household Survey, ONS, 2005
Final Version

We examined whether all units on upper floors were serviced by a lift capable of taking a wheelchair or stretcher. 56% of all schemes where it was applicable did not have full lift access to upper floor units. The districts with the highest proportion of schemes lacking adequate lift access to upper floors were North Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk.

85% of the schemes with first floor units that did not have a lift, also did not have a stairlift. Over half of these schemes were in Norwich. Some form of lift access could be provided in at least 45% of the schemes with no such access to upper floors if finance were available.

The survey included two Abbeyfield houses where the model is private bedsit accommodation within a shared building that has some communal facilities. 6% of all the units in Norfolk are bedsits. These comprise around 10% of all units in four districts (Breckland, Broadland, North Norfolk and King's Lynn and West Norfolk). There are bedsits in 37/201 units. None of the providers reported plans to redesign or reduce the number of bedsits although work may be undertaken when a bedsit unit becomes empty. Saffron for example will not relet any existing bedsits and convert such units when they become vacant.

During the consultation (undertaken before the review questionnaire was sent out) some scheme managers reported an increase in the numbers of couples seeking sheltered housing. We tested perceptions about this demand issue as part of the audit. This was felt to be the case in respect of 15% of schemes. There was no trend or geographical pattern as to where demand from couples was likely to be perceived as an issue.

The need for spatially adequate accommodation will be an issue as both men and women are tending to live longer. An additional bedroom can also reduce the need for someone to have to make a further move to residential care, allowing more substantial care to be provided at home. 15% of existing units have 2 bedrooms. These are spread between 44% of schemes. The spread of 2 bedroom units ranged from around 20% in Breckland, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk and South Norfolk to just under 10% of units in Broadland and Norwich. Three quarters of the Great Yarmouth schemes without 2 bedrooms could be adapted to make this provision. There is only one scheme in Broadland which currently offers 2 bedroom accommodation.

Over three quarters of units had at least one double bedroom capable of accommodating a double or twin beds.

The majority of units (93%) were said to have sufficient kitchen storage space. 90% of units had enclosed storage space for tall equipment. Just over 80% of units had an airing cupboard for drying washing.

As mobility reduces it becomes difficult for many people to continue to use a bath without assistance and support. A level access shower is a key element in promoting continued independence and reducing the need for increased home care support. 39% of units had level access showers. This ranges from
Final Version

17% of the units in Kings Lynn and West Norfolk to 55% of units in South Norfolk and 58% of units in Great Yarmouth.

Adaptations could be made within at least 50 schemes to ensure level access showers are fitted. However, as was evident during the consultation a smaller number of older people currently in schemes strongly favour retaining a bath in their own unit. At a small number of schemes it was reported that some tenants had exercised this choice and refused to allow a shower to be fitted.

93% of units had a self-contained bathroom with a bath or level access shower plus wash basin and WC.

At least two of the schemes with shared facilities of this kind could be remodelled if finance were available to provide self-contained washroom facilities. Residents in 6 schemes only had access to shared washroom or WC facilities and this applied mostly to bedsit units.

As the availability and affordability of white goods has changed people are more likely to own washing machines and dishwashers than they were thirty years ago. 71% of British households had a washing machine in 1975 compared with 95% of households in 2005. 83% of single people and 98% of households with a couple aged over 59 had a washing machine in 2005. 16

In some sheltered schemes the landlord provides white goods. We asked about whether units had space for tenants to bring their own white goods. The majority (85%) of units had space for a fridge/freezer. This ranged from 76% of units in Kings Lynn and West Norfolk to 92% of units in Norwich.

65% of units had space for a washing machine or dishwasher. The range here was from 51% of units in Broadland and North Norfolk to 88% of units in Great Yarmouth.

5f. Utilities

The provision of shared or district heating is a traditional means within sheltered housing of keeping costs down for tenants. This involves some limitation of choice to tenants about which supplier they go with. In Norwich just over half the units were supplied through shared or district heating systems. In Breckland and Great Yarmouth this form of heating arrangement is available in less than 7% of units.

Inclusion of fuel and water charges will be welcomed by some tenants as removing the responsibility for having to budget separately for these payments. Such arrangements also reduce autonomy and choice for older people. Gas was included in landlord charges in respect of 34% of units. This ranged from 11% of units in Great Yarmouth to 46% of units in North Norfolk.

16 ‘Housing and consumer durables’ – General Household Survey, ONS, 2005
Electricity costs were included in landlord charges in respect of 7% of units. The range was from 1% of the units in Great Yarmouth to 15% of units in Breckland and 16% of units in South Norfolk.

There was considerable variation within some schemes in respect of arrangements for payment of water charges with some tenants on water meters paying their own charge and others paying as part of the landlord charge. Water charges were included in landlord charges for 28% of units. This ranged from 12% of units in Great Yarmouth to 34% of units in Norwich.

### 5g. Voids, demand and access

A range of factors can affect the time that units in any scheme remain void. Units may be void for longer periods where they are subject to planned refurbishment and redecoration. The size or location may dictate how easy it is to let units. As one provider observed there are seasonal factors. Mortality may be higher amongst vulnerable older people during certain months. People are more reluctant to move during winter. Providers were asked about the turnover in each scheme and the time taken to let each vacant unit over the two year period ending in March 2006.

Breckland - there was a 19% turnover in units over two years. Three providers had five schemes that stood out as having a number of units which took longer to let. In respect of an Orbit scheme the provider now reports that the waiting list is healthy. The schemes managed by Flagship which contained units that took time to let included schemes which had reported location difficulties. Some of the units are bedsits, upstairs flats of small flats. 14% of all voids took ten weeks or longer to relet.

Broadland - there was a 30% turnover in units over two years. Three Wherry Housing schemes had a number of units which took longer to let. Two of these schemes have bedsits and a third has flats with smaller bedrooms. Voids can be difficult to fill particularly where there is more than one vacancy at a time in one of these schemes. Wherry had taken an innovative approach to letting one bedsit in two of the schemes for young people with learning difficulties. From the perspective of the provider this has worked very well. 15% of all voids took ten weeks or longer to relet.

Great Yarmouth - there was a 24% turnover in units over two years. A small number of units took longer than 4 weeks to let. These were spread between different schemes and the reason was planned refurbishment. Only 2% of all voids took ten weeks of longer to relet.

King's Lynn and West Norfolk - there was a 21% turnover in units over two years. In this area nearly 80% of void units took over four weeks to let. During the period covered by this survey the borough council transferred its housing stock, including sheltered provision, to Freebridge Community Housing. Investment in the stock was slow during the period prior to the stock transfer. As a consequence Freebridge is currently undertaking major improvement to
five schemes and this accounted for void weeks in one of the schemes in the survey.

Five of the schemes with longer void periods all have bedsits. In another scheme one bedsit was not considered suitable for reletting. A further bedsit is being used as an office for carers. In two further schemes the location (lack of transport, distance from shops) may have contributed to the longer void periods. 36% of all voids took ten weeks or longer to relet.

North Norfolk - there has been a 29% turnover in units over two years. Four North Norfolk Housing Trust schemes have relatively high numbers of units which took longer to let. One of these schemes has a number of bedsits which can take longer to let. This scheme is also in a very rural location. From the providers perspective the other three schemes are all in sought after areas. The delays in letting at these schemes are accounted for by redecoration or repairs/refurbishment. 25% of all voids took 10 weeks or longer to relet.

Norwich - there has been a 14% turnover on units over two years. Four of the schemes managed by Norwich City Council had units which took relatively longer to let. One of these schemes had been described as being in a less popular location. The lack of lift access made letting a particular unit more difficult. From the provider perspective all of the schemes concerned offer bungalows which are generally popular lets. Refurbishment and asbestos removal accounted for some of the letting delays Norwich started a new process for letting voids in November 2006 aimed at reducing void periods. From November 2007 sheltered will be let through Choice Based Lettings which again should reduce letting times. 10% of voids in Norwich took ten weeks or longer to relet.

South Norfolk - there has been a 19% turnover in units over two years. Reasons for more prolonged void periods were updating and modernising in two Saffron Housing Trust schemes. Voids were maintained in another scheme to allow for a planned decant. Another scheme with a cluster of voids at over five weeks was seen by the provider to be a generally popular scheme, close to amenities. Part of the reason may relate to bungalows which form part of the scheme because they are older, smaller and less popular than the new units. 12% of all voids took ten weeks or longer to let.

The data on the origins of lettings was incomplete and can only be taken as an indicative snap shot - (1228 lettings are recorded into 1314 voids). There are particular shortages of information about lettings in respect of North Norfolk Housing Trust, the most recent stock transfer). From the data 69% of lettings were made through the Local Authority Housing Register, 11% of lettings were made through the internal waiting lists of providers and 2% through the national mobility scheme. It is not clear what the origin of the remainder of referrals was.

7% of all lettings recorded for the two year period were made to people from outside Norfolk. There were no lettings recorded in the audit made to people from outside Norfolk into schemes in South Norfolk. 45% of the lettings made
to people from outside Norfolk during this period were made into schemes in King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

At least 6% of all lettings during the two year period covered by the survey were made to tenants under 60 years of age. This included 16% of all recorded lettings in Breckland. By contrast, only 2% of the lettings recorded in Norwich were made to younger tenants.

Waiting list information is held and recorded by District Councils in their strategic housing enabling roles, and also by providers. The information is held in different formats making it difficult to aggregate or compare between different lists and can at best give a snapshot of demand. No meaningful information was obtained in respect of Broadland and Great Yarmouth. The information is likely to include some double counting as people express an interest in more than one area.

In Breckland, Peddars Way held the list information for the district. There 357 applicants with 29% wanting to live in Dereham, 20% in Thetford and 51% in other rural areas.

In respect of King's Lynn and West Norfolk the Borough Council had 443 applicants waiting for sheltered housing. 45% wanted to be housed in King's Lynn, 15% in Heacham, 12% in Downham Market and 10% in Hunstanton. The biggest demand is for two and one bedroom bungalows with limited demand in urban areas for flats and no demand for bedsits.

482 applicants were listed by North Norfolk District Council as waiting for sheltered housing. There was a spread of demand around the district with the most popular areas being Cromer 20%, Holt 18%, Sheringham 15% and North Walsham 11%.

There were 464 applicants for sheltered housing in Norwich. Just over one third were couples. There appears to be reasonable to strong demand in all parts of the city as measured by the expressed scheme preferences of applicants. Schemes at the edge of the city centre (Unthank Road, Dereham Road, Vauxhall Street) appeared more popular than schemes which were very centrally located. There appeared to be marginally more preference for areas considered popular in respect of other forms of housing tenure (Eaton, South City, Thorpe).

Applicants appeared to be expressing much stronger preferences for the Norwich City Council schemes than those managed by other providers. This may equal out as a result of the introduction of Choice Based Lettings in late 2007. A number of the schemes with relatively low preference figures had factors other than location which might have contributed to making them less popular – no communal lounge, no lift to first floor units). However a couple of schemes with these apparent limitations also appeared to be in demand.

There were 540 applicants waiting for sheltered accommodation in South Norfolk although it was not clear which areas were most strongly in demand.
The figures available in respect of four of the districts suggest that 21% of applicants on waiting lists for sheltered are applying from outside the immediate area. That figure is inflated by numbers of applicants who have expressed in interest in more than one scheme.

There were contradictory views expressed in respect of whether those coming into schemes were seen as independent and self sufficient. In respect of over one third of schemes the trend was for new tenants to be seen as very independent. However respondents saw people coming into a quarter of schemes as not very independent.

Good Practice example – Housing 21 shared ownership

Haugley Suffolk

This a development of affordable 32 one and two bed flats. It is a shared ownership scheme, with residents having the option of buying either 50% or 75% of the value of the flat, with no rent payable if 75 % is purchased. This sort of scheme allows owner occupiers to still remain in the property market in suitable accommodation whilst being able to release equity from their property. It offers an affordable choice for owner occupiers who need this extra care model.

The scheme is very well designed with excellent communal areas that are utilised by the outside community. The communal areas including the restaurant are open to the public, and this resource is well utilised by the residents of the nearby sheltered housing scheme. There is a separation from this relatively public space and living units as a fob is need to enter the residential parts of the building.

The flats are designed to wheelchair standards, and are finished to a very high specification, with plenty of space and light. Each flat comes with white goods included, and there is a communal laundry that can also be used. The bathrooms are large with level access showers and there is also a separate cloakroom large enough to accommodate a wheelchair. These additional facilities allow scope for extra care to be provided as the support needs of resident's increase.

The scheme is ideally located within easy access of a village with plenty of amenities including shops, post office and two pubs.

5h. Support, social life and integration

The support funded through the Supporting People for older people comes predominantly in the form of sheltered housing or alarm only provision. In
2006/07 the total funding through Supporting People in Norfolk to older persons services was £4,082,100. This figure has to be treated with caution as there are fluctuations in the prices of individual contracts for a variety of reasons. The breakdown of the expenditure on support was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered housing and alarm only schemes</td>
<td>£3,473,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra care housing schemes</td>
<td>£371,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Improvement Agencies</td>
<td>£218,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaseholders support</td>
<td>£18,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£4,082,100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The payments made to leaseholders are largely a legacy arrangement that pre-dates Supporting People. SP makes direct payments to people on low incomes in private retirement schemes as a contribution to the costs of the support. Taking the amount paid to Home Improvement Agencies as a proportion of the total expenditure, only 5% is targeted on support to older people in their own homes rather than in older age schemes. The Supporting People Commissioning Body agreed to increase the funding to HIAs from April 2007. To date there are no specific support arrangements that target floating support at older people in the private rented sector, although a number of older people are supported through the generic floating support services. This number of older people receiving floating support may increase because new floating support services were established from April 2007 with clearer arrangements for access.

There is a lack of equity in current arrangements in charging sheltered tenants for the support that they receive. Landlords levy a fixed support charge to residents to cover the costs they incur for the provision of support (the 'Supporting People charge'). Many tenants will be entitled to means tested help with meeting the charge however individuals without such entitlement will be liable for the charge whether they have support needs or not. The revenue income for each given scheme is based partly upon the support charges levied so any dismantling of that system would be an immense undertaking.

Just over half of all schemes have a warden or support worker living onsite but there is immense geographical variation in these arrangements. In Great Yarmouth and Breckland the balance of arrangements are weighted considerably towards off site visiting support. In Norwich there are marginally more schemes with visiting rather than onsite support. In all other districts the balance was heavily weighted towards warden or other residential support.

Strikingly there was wide variation in the support hours reported to be available on a weekly basis at schemes. In all districts there was variation and this was also the case between schemes managed by the same provider. In Great Yarmouth there appears to be the most apparent logical basis for the allocation of support time within the schemes managed by the Borough Council. At Wherry Way, a scheme developed for people with higher support needs, support was said to be available at the scheme for 37 hours per week. In the other GYBC schemes supported is provided on an individual basis to
meet needs identified within support plans. Support however is still only open to people in sheltered housing and not available to other people with housing support needs in the borough.

**Good Practice Area**

**Great Yarmouth Borough Council**  
**Support planning for older people**

Historically sheltered housing tenants in Great Yarmouth had differing levels of contact dependant upon the designation of the scheme. Some schemes had been designated as resident therefore all tenants received a daily visit while others were known as neighbourhood and received a weekly visit. The level of visit was based purely on the scheme type.

Prior to Supporting People being introduced the Council took the decision to equalise the service available and staff were asked to consider the level of contact based on the tenants circumstances. When making a decision staff were asked to consider things such as whether a tenant lived alone, their general health, level of frailty, what other services they were receiving and the tenants own view of what they needed. Any changes to levels of service would then be discussed with the Supported Housing Officers line manager before being agreed.

The difficulty of the approach was that both tenants and staff had fallen into routine visiting which was very difficult to change. The introduction of support planning brought about for our service a formalised approach to determining levels of need and therefore level of service. It became easier for tenants and staff to understand and agree upon differing levels of contact. Tenants commented that they began to understand better what sheltered housing could offer and the role of the Supported Housing Officers. Support planning also ensured that staff made time on a regular basis to focus on the tenant to identify any change in need, which has led to support being provided in a planned way rather than an emergency. Tenants have the choice of how they are contacted visit, telephone/warden call or mixture plus how often they are visited; up with the maximum being 5 routine visits but with the option of 7 visits a week if they are particularly unwell and have no other support.

This change in approach needed to happen because of the inherited different types of service levels. However to get to where we are all staff have had extensive support planning & needs assessment training from external providers, which is now in the process of being updated. Plus on-going support from line managers who sign off on the support plans and routinely sample plans to check they are current. Some staff did struggle with the new way of working and needed lots of support, some were unable to make the transition and have left the service.

In respect of other providers across all areas the range of available support was between no hours to 24/7 support (available at The Great Hospital in Norwich). In the case of some large providers (Wherry in Broadland, Norwich City Council and Saffron in South Norfolk) the availability of support hours was reasonably uniform with their own provision. For other providers variance in reported available support hours appeared to be influenced by whether support was shared between schemes (Peddars's Way, Breckland) or live in
warden's (Freebridge, King’s Lynn and West Norfolk). The answers given in respect of some schemes with live in wardens indicated that there remains an assumption on the part of some wardens that they see themselves as always on call.

There was little evidence that the focus of support extended outside the immediate sheltered scheme in the majority of existing provision. Saffron has been piloting an outreach from a scheme in Brooke to support older people living in their own homes. The existing warden at the sheltered scheme provides housing related support to people who have a temporary need for support because for example of illness or bereavement. The provision of this support has prevented individuals having to make a permanent move to sheltered or to a higher support setting. In 2008 funding was agreed to extend this model to four other areas of the County.

Two other services (one in South Norfolk and one in Breckland) reported offering some outreach support to people living in the community. Some of the Wherry schemes reported being engaged with the POPPS (Partnerships for Older People) pilot scheme.

The traditional sheltered housing model is still predominant in six of the seven districts in Norfolk despite the fact that the majority of older people with support needs do not live in sheltered schemes. In the absence of support being provided to meet clearly defined support needs through support planning, current arrangements represent poor value for money in the sense that support is delivered to the people who happen to live in sheltered housing irrespective of whether they need it or not. Some people will opt for sheltered as a safeguard against future frailty or because of the relative ease of managing the accommodation rather than because they have current support needs.

All schemes had access to community alarm services when there was no staff member on site. The only exceptions were a scheme for people with no support needs and the Great Hospital which, through offering a range of additional care services, has someone on site at all times.

We asked whether all residents could access other forms of assistive technology if required. Access is mainly through Social Services and Yare Care in Yarmouth. Technology that could be accessed through schemes included pendants, wrist alarms, falls prevention assistance such as belts, overflow alerts, carbon monoxide monitors, loops and other devices for people who are hearing impaired. The majority of schemes said that residents could access other forms of assistive technology than community alarms in Breckland, Broadland and North Norfolk. About two thirds of schemes in Norwich offered this access.

Such access to assistive technology is not available in the majority of schemes in the other three districts. There is a programme of planned upgrades in Great Yarmouth to ensure more schemes are open to additional
assistive technology as it is developed. In South Norfolk Saffron are looking into the costs of installing radio sensors.

As some measure of the extent to which a scheme was part of a wider community the number of visiting services was examined. Relatively few schemes had more than one visiting service. The most common visiting service was either chiropody or pharmacy - prescriptions collection or delivery. In contrast to other districts considerably fewer schemes in Breckland had any services coming into them. Schemes in North Norfolk and South Norfolk, in addition to schemes in Breckland had a relatively narrow range of services being brought in for residents.

The pre audit consultation highlighted the importance to many older people of social and leisure activities in combating isolation and contributing to fulfilment. Regular social events can enhance friendships and create a positive environment within a sheltered scheme. Since the introduction of the Supporting People programme this area has become contested and sometimes controversial ground. In establishing eligibility criteria for SP funding housing related support the emphasis in Norfolk, as in many other areas, has been towards the eligibility of enabling activities. This emphasis favoured what was already seen as best practice in some sheltered services where support workers backed up active residents in arranging events and activities. It challenged practices in other schemes where the warden or support worker essentially took on the role of social secretary and entertainment officer arranging all or virtually all aspects of social and leisure activities.

In the pre audit consultation the point was sometimes made about the difficulties of engaging residents in roles around organising activities because many lack the energy or physical activity to do such tasks consistently. The majority of schemes had regular activities. This ranged from 68% of schemes in Great Yarmouth to 97% of schemes in King's Lynn and West Norfolk. With the introduction of Supporting People came a new clarity about the role of support workers within a framework of what was eligible for Supporting People funding. This has presented a challenge to the traditional role of Sheltered Housing Warden which has often combined elements of housing management, befriending and entertainments secretary.

The emphasis within SP has been to fund support which is housing focussed, delivered through support plans and provided in an enabling way. It is interesting that in this audit the provider with the approach to providing support which appears most consistent with the SP framework (Great Yarmouth BC) is associated with the provision which has the lowest number of social activities. There are legitimate questions to be considered about how support can be provided to residents to ensure that there is access to activities which are important in providing socially outlets and contributing to quality of life.

17 'An eligible tasks guide for providers’ – Norfolk Supporting People, October 2005
Good practice example - Norwich City Council
Tenant Participation and Consultation

The Sheltered Housing Tenants Forum has tenant representatives from a number of the sheltered housing schemes from within the City. The purpose of the Forum was a ‘traditional’ tenants group where tenants would come together to hear of new polices and procedures and on occasions guests speakers would be invited to the meeting.

Over the last eighteen months the objective of the Forum has been revisited, which has included: -

- Revisiting the Constitution of the meeting to ensure that it is participation/consultation led rather than just an information forum.
- Tenants are encouraged to consider and help shape new policies, both locally and nationally regarding older people services, not just housing, but also to consider the wider agenda of both health and social care services. This has recently included raising their awareness around the new Norfolk Strategic Older Peoples, Partnership Board.
- Whilst this approach may have been new to most tenant representatives, most embraced in the new way of working and were happy to contribute to its continued development. All meetings are minuted with an agenda and each meeting allows time for ‘scheme issues’ to be discussed as well as forward planning.
- A Tenants Away Day has been planned which will allow tenants living in sheltered housing the opportunity to comment and discuss areas of service delivery, within the sheltered housing service, but also look at health, social care, community safety, transport and benefits. Outcomes from this away day will be feed back into the forum agenda to develop further, and where necessary will be shared with colleagues in other service areas/organisations.
- The need to move away from just using the forum as an afternoon out and chat, but actively engaging in the consultation process on behalf of the tenants within their respective schemes
- Following the remodelling of the Forum, membership has increased and a tenant representatives from the sheltered housing tenants forum now sits on the Council Tenants City Wide Board, to ensure that older persons perspective are also highlighted and considered.

The challenges ahead.
Reviewing the model of the forum has allowed for a structure to be implemented where tenants can make a positive and valued contribution to the development of the service. Further work needs to be done to ensure that their voice is heard within other forums around the County, such as the Norfolk Older People Forum, and also look to see how tenants can be involved with the recruitment and selection of staff, both within the sheltered housing service and Norwich Community Service.
Whilst coffee mornings and bingo were most common there were a wide range of activities across schemes. The widest range was across the schemes in Norwich and the narrowest range in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk. A further finding underlines the need for an open discussion about respective responsibilities for organising social events (and where the funding should come for this work). There were a number of gaps from support workers, particularly from schemes with onsite support, in responding to the question about who organises social activities. This illustrates some remaining confusion, or fear of penalisation on the part of some support workers who still play a substantial role in organising social activities.

In many schemes organisation is shared between support workers and groups of residents. Amongst some providers the support workers tended to emphasise in their responses that their role was enabling groups of residents to organise activities. Support workers from particular providers saw a distinction between the organisation of activities in which they took the lead (therapeutic and educational) and the sorts of activities groups of residents led in organising (social). The proportion of schemes in which managers or support workers said they organised all events was roughly the same as the proportion of schemes at which groups of tenants were said to organise all events (7%).

Where tenants organise events with little or discrete support it can be in informal groups or more formally through a tenant’s committee, residents committee, amenities committee or social club. In a minority of schemes examples were given in which volunteers from the local community or external organisations either collaborated with residents to organise activities or put on events within a scheme. The involvement of local volunteers is a key aspect of the Abbeyfield model.

Within Norfolk as with other areas consideration has been given to using the full potential of some sheltered schemes to offer more to older people with support and social needs who are living in the local community. Where there was limited evidence that people were being supported outside of schemes the involvement of local people from the neighbourhood in the social life of a scheme was far more common. The range of schemes opening activities to people from their local community was from 41% in Great Yarmouth to 84% in South Norfolk. In many cases the activities were limited to one regular event (bingo, coffee mornings, ‘knit and natter’) that may be supplemented by wider local community open functions (fetes or sales). In South Norfolk seven of the schemes consciously opened all of their activities (comprising a wide range of events) to people from the wider community.
Good Practice Example – Saffron Housing Trust: Putting tenant activities at the heart of the local community

Extend Exercise

This activity is an exercise programme designed for older people and people who have limited movement. The exercises can be adapted to suit the individual. For example they can be completed seated or standing. A trained teacher conducts the exercises and they are completed to music.

This activity was started after discussion by residents on what they would like to do in the communal room. The scheme manager suggested that this idea be placed on the agenda for the next residents meeting. This was done and the idea finally went to the residents Social Committee for approval and organisation.

To find an appropriate service Age Concern was contacted and they provided a contact number for the teacher. The teacher came and gave a sample class to the residents. The scheme manager completed a risk assessment of the activity to ensure that it would be safe.

It was decided that the activity would be beneficial to residents of the sheltered scheme and also to older people in the community. There is another exercise class in the local community but not one that focused on the exercise needs and abilities of older people. Attracting other people would ensure that the class would be viable regarding participants and could be run on a weekly basis.

To inform and attract other older people in the local community newsletters were produced by the scheme manager and given out locally. An announcement was placed in the local church magazine. A notice was put up on the communal notice board and in the window of the Common Room.

Residents have been encouraged by the scheme manager to take ownership of the activity. They now organise the room on the day, take the class fees, pay the teacher and organise refreshments afterwards. This means the activity can continue whether or not the Scheme Manager is on duty. These residents are now a point of contact for other older people in the community and they ensure that these people are kept informed of activities at the scheme.

The benefits of the exercise class are that it helps keep older people supple with gentle exercise. It encourages social integration and interaction. Anyone can take part as the exercises are designed especially for older people who may have limited movement. Residents and older people from the local community meet in the informal setting of the common room. This means that residents feel part of the wider community and do not become inward looking. Older people from the community feel that they can join in other events and activities at the scheme.
Good Practice Example – Broadland Housing Association: Engaging the local community in tenants activities in a sheltered housing scheme

Bingo
This was started by the Scheme Manager and weekly sessions are now held in the evening for residents and people from the surrounding area. Between 35-45 people attend, 15-20 being residents. One of the residents now organises and runs the bingo with support from the Scheme Manager. The bingo numbers are picked using an automatic selector purchased by the residents. Tea coffee and biscuits are sold in the interval and a raffle is held making this evening is a very social occasion, which brings a lot of people into the scheme, and good friendships have been made. The bingo is also the main contributor to the social club fund.

Whist Drive
The whist drive club was started and run by a resident who enjoyed playing whist. The club is now run by a club member who is not a resident, and about 20 people attend a weekly session. The club pay a small charge to use the communal hall and this money is offset against the service charges.

Coach Trips
Several coach outings are organised each year for the residents and details are displayed on the resident’ notice board. The cost of the coach is paid for out of the social club funds and entrance fees or meal charges are paid by the residents or subsidised by the social club. Visitors to the bingo read the notices and are encouraged to fill the spaces on the coach trips if they are interested in going, no charge is made for the coach and they pay the full cost of any meals etc.

Hearing Aid Support
A volunteer from the Deaf Association visits the scheme every three months to give practical help and support to residents with hearing aids. This was organised with the help of the Sensory Support unit at N.C.C. A volunteer visits on a Monday during the coffee morning and assists residents with anything to do with their hearing aids, from cleaning them, minor repairs and new batteries to the correct way use them. As this is a very valuable community resource we decided to open it up to the wider community and posters are now displayed in the town inviting anyone interested to attend between 11:00am and 1:00pm, after the coffee morning, so it is not disrupted too much.

One of the objectives of sheltered housing is to support people adequately enough to lessen the need for further accommodation moves as the care as poor health and frailty increases. All Supporting People funded providers are required to submit regular information in a range of areas including the destinations of people moving on from services. An examination was undertaken for a two years period of people moving on from sheltered housing.
Final Version

Table – Moves out of Sheltered Schemes in Norfolk 2004 - 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Breckland</th>
<th>Broadland</th>
<th>Great Yarmouth</th>
<th>Kings Lynn &amp; West Norfolk</th>
<th>North Norfolk</th>
<th>Norwich</th>
<th>South Norfolk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average quarterly capacity</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>1361</td>
<td>589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>' Planned' moves</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. to independent housing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. other sheltered accommodation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. long term sup housing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. died</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. committed suicide</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. long stay hospital/hospice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. care home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. nursing care home</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. short-term sup housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. abandoned tenancy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Unknown/ lost contact</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These figures do not include schemes which with properties in more than one district and appear particularly short in the potential that would be expected in general and in Breckland in particular

If sheltered housing can provide a lifetime home for older people, this reduces the disruption, stress and anxiety of making further accommodation moves in order to have care needs met adequately. In this sense to die without having to make further moves to access care and support may be seen as vindication of the role of sheltered housing. In all districts, apart from Broadland and Kings Lynn where the proportion was lower, between 40 to 49% of all those leaving sheltered housing stayed in their accommodation until they died.

In general the in respect of people recorded as ‘unknown’ these are likely to include numbers of older people who moved into general hospital following health crisis, and some of whom would have subsequently have moved to higher care. Some of the departures under B (other sheltered accommodation) are likely to include housing with care. Taking categories ‘G – J ’ as clearly demonstrating a move from sheltered housing to higher care
Final Version

shows the proportion of all moves within this two year period which were to demonstrably higher care settings.

Table - % of moves from Norfolk sheltered to higher care support settings (2004-2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breckland</th>
<th>Broadland</th>
<th>Great Yarmouth</th>
<th>Kings Lynn &amp; West Norfolk</th>
<th>North Norfolk</th>
<th>Norwich</th>
<th>South Norfolk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursing home, long stay hospital or hospice</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of moves</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential care home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of moves</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information on which the table is based was taken covered a small sample. Considered alongside other information about needs it could indicate geographically where particular consideration about the development of future remodelling to create additional housing with care provision should be given. In this period relatively higher proportions of individuals were moving to residential care from sheltered housing in Norwich, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, and North Norfolk.

One of the possible developments for some sheltered schemes may be in their suitability to provide a base for a wider multi disciplinary team that could provide social, health and handyperson repairs support, in addition to housing support. Such teams could be available both to people living in age specific accommodation and other older people living in mainstream housing in the local community. Location of the scheme, the attitudes of existing tenants, availability of parking and usable facilities would all be factors in potential suitability.

There were eleven schemes spread between five districts which had units that had previously been used as live in accommodation for support staff and were now not being used at all. 33/201 schemes had office facilities on site which could be adapted for use by a larger integrated care and support team if required. Each district had at least two schemes which could be used in this way. There were a further 12 schemes which following adaptation could accommodate a larger team.
6. Headline findings and recommendations

a. Location and amenities

- Providers of schemes in rural areas (such as Breckland and North Norfolk) where there are poor transport links and relatively low levels of amenities should examine with their tenants whether they have sufficient access to goods and leisure activities.

- Where there are limited choices in goods and services for tenants, landlords and support providers should fully explore options for increasing choice and access through arranging visiting businesses, amenities and teleshopping - this is of particular relevance for schemes in rural areas with poor transport links.

- Around one quarter of schemes reported some difficulties with location – providers should identify these schemes and assess whether the issues are resolvable.

- Nearly one fifth of schemes did not have an external environment or entrance area which meets the expectations of the Disability Discrimination Act - Providers should identify which of their schemes can be adapted to meet DDA requirements and cost the implications of undertaking this work.

b. The building – shared areas

- A minority of sheltered schemes had a bathroom large enough to accommodate hoist and carer support with bathing or sluice facilities.

- There was a lack of adequate lighting in some schemes in Broadland and North Norfolk.

- Saffron Housing Trust and Broadland Housing Association were the only providers to make internet access available in a number of schemes – there were no schemes in Great Yarmouth or North Norfolk currently offering internet access. In anticipating likely changes to the lifestyles of future residents of sheltered housing providers should seek to address this relatively straightforward issue.

- Only 9% of schemes in Great Yarmouth have a guest room – the Borough Council should assess with tenants whether there is demand for more guest room provision in some schemes.

- North Norfolk schemes were the least likely to have adequate parking provision - this issue should be examined by North Norfolk Housing Trust and other providers with stock in the district.
Final Version

c. The building – individual living units

- Two thirds of living units did not meet DDA expectations and less than one fifth of units conform to expectations about mobility of people in wheelchairs – providers should examine the stock with a view to increasing the amount of accessible living units

- 22% of schemes had some units above the first floor without any lift access. The highest proportion of these schemes was in Norwich. The potential and costs of providing lift access to living units above the first floor should be examined by Norwich City Council and other providers where this is lacking

- The availability of two bedroom sheltered accommodation is limited to 44% of schemes and there are particular shortages in Broadland and Norwich – providers should examine the potential and costs of increasing the number of two bedroom living units

- Bedsits comprise 10% of the provision in four districts – these are an outmoded model unlikely to suit contemporary expectations about living space – providers should seek to refurbish these units and careful consideration could be given to the suitability of alternate use provide there is no requirement to share WC/shower facilities

- There was a wide range in the availability of level access showers with a smaller proportion of units in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk having these fitted than in other areas – providers should ensure the installation of level access showers is addressed though refurbishment as units become vacant

d. Utilities

- There was a wide variety in arrangements in respect of charging for utilities and water rates – providers should consult with tenants and prospective tenants about their preferences over payment of charges

e. Lettings and demand

- There appear to be a small number of schemes where one overriding factor, or a combination of factors suggest decommissioning or remodelling a service. Factors may include low demand, a number of difficult to let units, outmoded design which cannot easily be refurbished, bedsit units and other space limitations, location difficulties. Providers need to involve their strategic housing authority and Supporting People at an early stage in any discussions about decommission and remodelling proposals.

- Providers and commissioners would have to consider systematically the relative benefits and costs associated with options for below
standard and hard to let schemes, weighing these against other
demands for capital and revenue

- Limited space in some existing living units appears to be one of the
  biggest disincentives

- A larger number of units in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk took
  significantly longer to let during the survey period than units in other
districts – the Borough Council should fully examine the reasons for
this with providers

- There are significant disparities in the way in which district councils and
  providers collect information about demand and need for sheltered
housing – a common mechanism for collecting and a local reporting
source for that data could greatly enable future planning

- To ensure that all lettings are accessible RSL and private providers
  should fully and actively participate in CBL and other district council
lettings systems

f. Support

- There is a substantial bias in the provision of support to older people
  which is rarely available in Norfolk to people who are not in sheltered
housing

- There is immense variation in the amount of support available within
districts and between providers with little evidence outside of Great
Yarmouth that support is being tailored to meet individual needs

- Providers should adopt and develop appropriate methods of individual
  assessment and planning with people using sheltered services

- The tied association of housing support revenue to the sheltered
housing model means that the people who receive support are not
necessarily those in the greatest need

- Authorities should seriously consider disaggregating over time the
  funding of housing support from buildings and sheltered housing
schemes

- Supporting people should fully explore the implications of contracting
  with providers to offer support to a specified number of older people
with support needs who are not living in sheltered schemes

- Issues about meeting the costs incurred by landlords in the provision of
  support and the charges made to residents for support would have to
be resolved equitably for the current revenue funding links to be broken
Final Version

- As a basis for setting targets around numbers of people to be supported outside of sheltered schemes, Supporting People needs of the numbers of people currently being supported within schemes and how they are being supported.

- As part of exploring the case for change to supporting specified numbers of older people outside sheltered schemes, full consideration would need to be given to:
  - What current scheme based support related activities would stop to provide scope to extend support to the community?
  - Accounting for information on levels of need as part of the proposed housing and community support strategy.
  - How different housing market structures influence types of support needed (building based versus community based).
  - Current variation of unit costs for support in sheltered.
  - Likelihood that the unit costs of supporting individuals in the community will be higher.
  - How such a change would be applied given the range of providers (size, differences).
  - What the ramifications would be for letting policies and who vacancies are targeted at.
  - How charging policy would be applied fairly and consistently.

- Supporting People and partner organisations should consider safeguarding the Abbeyfield model within any new arrangements because this offers a distinct living choice not available elsewhere in sheltered housing - provided schemes can evidence adequate demand, meet accessibility standards and ensure people do not have to share WC/shower facilities.

- A stronger emphasis on support planning would enable support to be targeted more effectively on needs within and outside of sheltered schemes.

- Breaking the link between revenue and the sheltered housing model would allow a variety of arrangements to be fully explored potential support models including:
  - The creation of patch based multi disciplinary teams of which support is one component.
  - Targeting older people at risk of losing their homes or at risk of falls in private rented and privately owned tenure.
  - Better use of office and former warden flats in some existing schemes to accommodate teams with a community support focus.
  - Extension of pilots to provide short term interventions to people who might otherwise need to move to higher care to get their needs met.
  - Remodelling some provision for other client groups.
Final Version

⇒ Remodelling some provision to offer extra care - although the housing support component within such models is likely to be very limited

g. Social life and integration

- There were some excellent examples of schemes, particularly amongst the Saffron Housing schemes, with active groups of residents arranging a wide range of activities to which older people from the local community were welcomed and encouraged to participate

- By contrast there was a lack of such activity in a number of schemes or concentration on just one traditional activity

- A minority of schemes appeared to be outward looking in their approach to their local community, arranging services and activities that are open to and promoted amongst older people within the local community of a scheme

- At the local policy level there is insufficient priority given to the value of sheltered housing and the housing support role in enabling older people to overcome isolation through meeting social and leisure needs

h. Strategic and planning

- There is a lack of effective countywide structures to lead strategically on the provision of housing and housing support for older people in Norfolk. There is a pressing need for a countywide structure, effectively linked to the Local Area Agreement, which enables cohesive planning for the near future. A countywide structure could bring together and harmonise waiting list and demand information and enable the joint planning required to remodel low demand and/or unfit services

- A countywide strategic and planning group should be established with strong links to and representation from the district councils, Norfolk County Council, the Supporting People programme, Health, housing support providers, tenants and older persons representative organisations

- A countywide housing and community support strategy should be developed which is able to provided an integration approach to meeting the needs of older people

- In addition to needs and demographic information the proposed housing and community support strategy should draw effectively on information from the sheltered housing audit, the review of alarm services, review of POPPS, examination of the use of residential care, and understanding of the impacts of the growth of Home Improvement Agencies to achieve integrated future planning
Final Version

- Agreement should be reached over a set of standards for the provision of supported housing and housing support for older people building on the framework laid out below in this report

- Providers should fully contribute their expertise to this proposed standards framework which should be flexible and sensitive to local issues, rural pressures and the diversity of the county

- Any resulting strategic structure as proposed above should agree how many elements of the Norfolk standard a newly built housing scheme for older people should have to achieve before it received local prioritisation for capital and any revenue funding

- Providers should be encouraged to use the standards framework when considering options in respect of their existing stock includingremodelling

7. Norfolk standards in housing and support for older people

The development of a framework of standards if set in the context of a medium term vision for the delivery of housing and support services for older people, would be instrumental in achieving greater consistency and equity in provision across the county. A countywide strategic structure of the support proposed above would be an appropriate body to drive on the development of a set of countywide standards. It is beyond the scope of this report to propose the content of a set of standards but it is appropriate to draw on the findings to indicate areas that should be considered - see Appendix 2. An effective set of standards for Norfolk would need to draw on relevant existing standards.

7a. Standards for support and the SP QAF

In respect of support the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) has already been used in the first round of service reviews to take a benchmark in respect of the provision of support in sheltered housing. The core elements of the QAF are:

- Needs and risk assessment
- Support planning
- Security, health and safety
- Protection from abuse
- Fair access, diversity and inclusion
- Complaints

The question about where strategic responsibility for the proposed work would finally sit is dependent on the outcomes of the review of local government boundaries in Norfolk.
Final Version

These areas have proven effective within the context of a robust review programme in evidencing and driving up the quality of housing support services. There has been debate since the introduction of Supporting People about the degree of expectations around elements of the QAF (in particular needs assessment, risk assessment and support planning) and their application in sheltered housing with its focus on relatively low support. However, if the recommendations above are accepted about targeting housing support on older people with greatest housing support related needs, the quality expectations of what is acceptable in respect of assessment and support planning may also need to be reviewed.

In late 2008 Norfolk Supporting People participated in a government led review and pilot project around a revised QAF framework. The new QAF was due to be introduced in 2009.

7b. Aspirational standards for sheltered stock

In respect of the management of existing stock (as opposed to standards for new build) the four key components of the Decent Homes programme standard are:

- Fitness for habitation
- Disrepair
- Modern facilities
- Reasonable thermal comfort

The same requirements to modernise kitchen and bathroom facilities and improve heating systems in respect of general social housing tenants should also apply to the tenants of sheltered housing. In the context of Decent Homes at least one district council authority (Norwich) was undertaking an internal review of its sheltered housing stock to evaluate long term viability. Other landlords were undertaking best value reviews and stock appraisal.
Moving towards Norfolk standards for sheltered – CIH good principles checklist 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good practice principles checklist: buildings (CIH Good Practice Guide)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide well maintained, secure, self-contained accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have a lift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are well located</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meet mobility and decent homes standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have a separate communal lounge with own facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have a non-institutional appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feature appropriate, inexpensive adaptations and assistive technology, available as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are audited against regulators’ standards for older people’s housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Remodelling proposals take account of existing provision in the local area, local older peoples’ strategies, social and demographic influences, aspirations of ‘younger’ older people, diversity, the need for extra care provision in the area, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Future remodelling/new build is consistent with rising expectations of future generations of older people (eg, desire for two bedrooms and computer terminals)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7c. Standards for sheltered – New build

The Housing Corporation has revised expectations of standards in respect of all new homes that receive Social Housing Grant and this includes newly built schemes for older people. 20 For sheltered housing developments the external environment core standards are mandatory as are additional specific standards. The performance measures for the external environment standards are laid out in the form of Building for Life - 20 questions to answer. 21 The heading areas cover scheme/building character; roads, parking and pedestrian areas; design and construction; and environment and community. A set number of the questions need to be answered positively to meet standards in respect of the external environment.

The direction of specific standards remains the creation of Lifetime Homes for older people. The following are basic requirements:

• Laundry, washing machines or provision for washing machines in individual units*
• Communal lounge*
• Wheelchair standard throughout
• Walk-in showers or bathrooms adapted for wheelchair users and people with mobility problems
• Kitchens in individual units designed to wheelchair standards
• A scheme bathroom with provision for assisted bathing
• A lift for any story above ground floor

19 CIH quoted in Kleanthos 2007 as above
20 ‘Design and quality standards’ – Housing Corporation, April 2007
* These are mandatory Housing Corporation requirements for all newly developed designated accommodation for older people

There are a similar set of specific stipulations for remodelled or purpose built group housing for older people with the added expectation that residents can access support services which enable them to remain for their lifetimes.

7d. Standards for involvement of tenants

In stipulating the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard the Government has been clear about the need to involve tenants in any decision about the future of their stock. In the same way sheltered housing tenants and residents should be involved in any decisions which might have an impact on the homes they currently live in.

7e. Areas for a standards framework which are suggested by this review

Location

- Housing for older people should be close to amenities or community facilities or be served by adequate transport routes
- Housing for older people should fully meet DDA and accessibility standards
- Older persons housing should not be sited on steep slopes or inclines
- There should not be stepped approaches to the buildings or adjoining gardens
- The whole layout should allow for comfortable use by someone with limited mobility including someone who requires a wheelchair, frame or other mobility aids
- There should be adequate parking for emergency vehicles, residents and their visitors

Shared facilities

- Designated schemes for older people must have a laundry and/or washing machines in living units – in Norfolk the priority is that older people should have a washing machine in their own unit
- Designated housing for older people must have a communal lounge – it should be attractive and comfortably furnished
- Adequate storage and battery charging facilities should be offered for mobility scooters and buggies
- Lighting should be of good quality and on timer switches in external corridor and reception areas
- There should be large shared bathroom space with room to take a hoist
Individual living units

- Living units should allow for comfortable and effective use by individuals using wheelchairs, frames and other mobility aids – units should conform to Buildings Regulations and to the Code of Practice for the Disability Discrimination Act
- There should be lift access to all upstairs living units and lifts should be of sufficient size to take a wheelchair or stretcher
- Living space should offer two bedrooms for couples or one bedroom per person
- Schemes should offer sufficient kitchen and storage space and should offer a proportion of unfurnished units so that new tenants can bring their own white goods
- All units should have level access showers and self-contained washroom and WC utilities

Utilities

- Tenants should be allowed to pay for the utilities they use because this increases choice and maintains independence

Support and community

- Older people should be entitled to receive adequate and appropriate housing support irrespective of what sort of tenure they occupy
- Housing support should always be provided through a support plan through which the individual collaborates in identifying their support needs
- Older people have a right to support which includes playing a full and active social life based on undertaking the activities they chose to do
- Older people should have wide opportunities to contribute to the services which are planned and managed to meet their needs

Review Steering Group

The Steering Group met to advise SP team members and acted as a sounding board through the review. The SP Team wishes to thank the members of the Steering Group for their contribution to this work. The members of the Steering Group were:

Nigel Andrews, Norwich City Council
Lorraine Douglas, King's Lynn and West Norfolk District Council
Sarah Ellis, Norfolk County Council
Vicky George, Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Lesley Graham, Flagship Housing
Ann O’Leary, Norfolk County Council
Gillian Peck, Housing 21
John Whitelock, Saffron Housing