OLDER PERSONS HOUSING NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS: LEICESTERSHIRE

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

WORKSHOP 1: Developing new schemes for older people

Older people have specific requirements regarding the location of new housing schemes within existing or planned urban settlements. How can such schemes be incorporated within overall urban planning design to ensure full integration with the local community?

Key Points

- Building bungalows to provide for the demand from older households is very difficult from a planning perspective, because of the low density of the properties. Developers do not favour them as the same amount of land could be used to build a 4 bedroom house.

- Some feedback suggests that raising awareness about existing schemes might resolve some of the demand for bungalows, since there is a general lack of understanding about the alternatives on offer and their potential benefits.

- Work needs to be done to raise awareness regarding the nature and objective of Extra Care and in tailoring any new developments to fit their location.

- Funding is a key obstacle to any progress – we need to consider how to innovate, how to raise funds outside of central government, how to tap into the existing wealth and equity of the owning older population in order to provide these services.

- We need to accept that the perceptions and demands of service users have changed:

  - More people are insisting on remaining in their own homes and that the support comes to them.
  - Where people do move and do not receive the support they need or expect, this can have serious consequences for their health and wellbeing.

- Where people have support needs, want to remain in their own homes but lack the income to sustain this, could there be scope for some support to be drawn through Housing Benefit? Public sector organisations need to make effort to work together and pool resources / streamline where necessary to provide for this demographic.

- From a wider perspective developers have experienced less opposition from communities when it comes to proposals for older persons provision.

- From a planning perspective, we may need to explore developing new land use policies and new mechanisms to facilitate development.

- Any decisions are very difficult and the way forward is highly uncertain in the current climate.

WORKSHOP 2: Older sheltered housing schemes – redesign, refurbishment or decommission?

The older types of sheltered housing no longer meet the needs of older people in terms of location, design and facilities. What options are there for those schemes that have reached their 'sell by date'?

<u>Key Points</u>

- Any approaches to older people need to respect the existing residents especially where changes to stock are being proposed.

- The existing community and residents must be involved throughout the whole process and this must cover all aspects of the project. It is essential that there is sufficient support to allow residents to fully engage in the process.

- Ongoing consultation is key to success.

- There have been some successful examples of schemes being remodelled and redeveloped in a number of local authority areas but they have tended to involve lots of public subsidy and this is unlikely to be available in the future.

- Innovation is required with regard to how future work can be funded. Is there a possibility of looking to develop mixed tenure schemes and attract finance this way?

WORKSHOP 3: Promoting Extra Care housing

The research shows that older people have little appreciation and knowledge of extra care housing, yet it is an important housing option for many older people. How can this form of housing be promoted appropriately among the target audience?

<u>Key Points</u>

- There is a stigma attached to the terminology of sheltered/supported housing – a review of the terms used in promoting what is on offer may help (e.g. "Assisted Living")

- Groups need to work together to influence decision makers/policy makers regarding provision. We also need to raise awareness among other professionals who interact frequently with the older community (i.e. GPs, Health Visitors, Carers etc)

- There is a need to differentiate regarding tactics/promotions for reaching the different age groups. The "young old" will have different aspirations and may prefer different models.

- We could review how other types of information & products are promoted to older people. Information needs to be in an accessible format – i.e. in different languages for BME groups / large text etc.

- We need to work on raising awareness among older people about the type of support that is available and that they are likely to need it at some point in the future. This could include going into the community, engaging with organisations involved with the older community (e.g. voluntary organisations), and key members of communities.

- Existing residents could be asked to help promote the schemes available.

- Younger people also need to be more aware of the issues and products available – promotion of forward planning.

- Could have 'Open Days' in existing schemes / use schemes as social centres or hubs for the local community.

- Provide website to allow service users to access information

- Choice available may be increased with the introduction of Choice Based Lettings

- We need to expand and promote the use of mixed tenure development and raise awareness of the flexibility that is available to older households.

- Older people's champions need to be involved in promoting supported housing and raising awareness.

- It may be possible to 'piggyback' on existing advertising campaigns (i.e. via local TV or radio).