

Report of the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel

Increasing Independent Living Through Housing Inquiry

September – December 2008



PANEL MEMBERSHIP

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1. Promoting independent living has been a key priority for Southampton City Council, and nationally the Government is committed to making sure that every citizen has the opportunity to have a fulfilled, active and independent life.¹
2. Housing is key to independent living,² and suitable housing, and housing related support, can play a vital role in helping people to lead independent lives.
3. As the population of the United Kingdom ages and is living longer there is pressure on local authorities to provide appropriate accommodation and support services that enable people to live in their own homes. This is in accordance with evidence that indicates that the vast majority of older people choose to live in their own homes in the community well into later life.³
4. A number of issues related to increasing independent living through housing were suggested as topics for future scrutiny inquiries in April 2008. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee identified sheltered housing, incentives to encourage under-occupiers to move out of family social housing, and disabled adaptations as potential inquiry topics for 2008/09.
5. In recognition that there was a link between the various issues Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee approved the indicative terms of reference for an inquiry into increasing independent living through housing at its meeting on 10th July 2008, and requested that the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel conduct the inquiry and report back their findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting on 15th January 2009.
6. The terms of reference for the inquiry focussed on the issues of sheltered housing, incentives to move and disabled adaptations. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel recognised that these issues are complex and require time to review in detail. This requirement restricted the scope of the inquiry ensuring that it would not cover wider aspects related to independent living through housing such as support for the homeless, and that the inquiry would not review additional elements that contribute to independent living such as transport, health, crime and social care.
7. The objectives set for the inquiry were:
 - To analyse and comment on the outcomes from the review of sheltered housing and to explore the extent to which adequate levels of such accommodation are available in locations where people in need of this type of property wish to live
 - To assess the effectiveness of the current range of incentives offered to people to relinquish council-owned family homes who might benefit from

¹ Independence and Opportunity—Our Strategy for Supporting People, DCLG, June 2007, p10

² Age Concern, Policy Position Papers, Housing, May 2006

³ Tinkler et al, 2001, referenced in Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, p30

- the facilities offered by high quality sheltered housing
- To assess the effectiveness and speed of delivery of housing aids and adaptations supplied to people living in private sector accommodation, council accommodation, and housing association properties, and to identify areas where improvements to services are required
- To compare Southampton City Council methods with other local authorities
- To highlight examples of good practice and identify recommendations to improve the situation regarding independent living in Southampton.

The full terms of reference for the inquiry, agreed by the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel on 4th September 2008, are shown in Appendix 1.

8. To enable the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel to review all of the areas outlined in the above objectives six evidence gathering meetings were arranged.
9. At the first meeting of the inquiry the Scrutiny Panel agreed to schedule two meetings to look at the Supporting People programme. Members agreed to this approach because the Supporting People programme provides the context for a number of the issues influencing sheltered housing and disabled adaptations, therefore, an understanding of this developing area would be advantageous to the Scrutiny Panel.
10. The outline project plan, shown in Appendix 2, identifies the structure of each of the evidence gathering sessions.

Limitations of the inquiry

11. The inquiry took place within the context of the following policy developments:
 - **Sheltered Housing** – A fundamental review of Southampton’s sheltered housing was approved by Cabinet in 2006 and the results of the consultation with tenants and people on the housing list was scheduled to be presented to Cabinet on 27 October 2008.
 - **Supporting People** – The Supporting People Service is currently undertaking a Strategic Review of Support for Older People in Southampton.
 - **Disabled Adaptations** – The Executive Directors of Communities, Health and Care and Neighbourhoods co-ordinated a joint improvement programme for the adaptations services provided by the City Council in 2007/08 and a new set of internal service standards were agreed in April 2008.
12. Due to the timing of the inquiry the focus of the review altered from looking at the role housing plays within the City to facilitate independent living, towards acting primarily as a health check examining if new or impending policies reflect best practice and are moving the City Council’s approach to independent living through housing in a positive direction, and towards meeting the needs of the individual.

Consultation

13. The Healthy City Scrutiny Panel received evidence from a variety of organisations and officers from Southampton City Council. A list of witnesses who provided evidence to the inquiry is detailed in Appendix 3. The level of consultation undertaken through the inquiry reflects the extensive consultation that has been undertaken by the City Council during the development of the policies identified in paragraph 11.

Conclusions and Recommendations

14. Following the evidence gathering process the Scrutiny Panel has developed a number of conclusions and recommendations.

Supporting People - Conclusions

15. Following discussions with officers from Southampton City Council, and utilising information on national initiatives, the Scrutiny Panel came to the following conclusions with regards to the Supporting People programme in Southampton:
 - Supporting People services play a key role in acting as preventative services by providing low cost solutions and preventing people from having to move to higher cost services
 - Changes to homelessness services show that taking a strategic overview of services can lead to better decision making and challenging of current structures
 - Supporting People services contribute to meeting numerous Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets. The Scrutiny Panel believe that the LAA presents a real opportunity to take the Supporting People learning regarding improving services, lowering costs and improving outcomes across a wider range of services
 - That innovation is being shown by Supporting People locally in looking to improve lives through different solutions.
16. Following discussions with officers from Southampton City Council, and utilising the information on national initiatives, the Scrutiny Panel came to the following conclusions with regards to the strategic review of services for older people:
 - The issue of services to older people is complex but there is a need to review these in full
 - The Strategic Review is considering the right range of issues
 - **Needs data, statistics and other information gathered, all suggests that Southampton has not got the right mix of support to older people in the City. To make a real difference to the lives of older people the Scrutiny Panel believe that there is a need to focus on the needs of older people living outside of the sheltered housing, while**

recognising that sheltered housing can provide a good starting point for these community services. Access to support must be based on needs

- Linking support to care and health, through for example engaging in the case management approach, is appropriate for future Supporting People funded services - eg. a Home from Hospital service is a positive service development
- The one year Supporting People Older Person's project operating in Harefield and Redbridge is a positive development in testing out responses, measuring the needs within a community, and identifying the most appropriate referral routes
- There is an urgent need to rationalise community alarm provision. This requires baseline service quality to be met.

Supporting People - Recommendations

- 17.
- That Supporting People funding for older people is determined by the needs of older people irrespective of their housing situation
 - That through the Supporting People Programme work is undertaken with support providers and landlords to rationalise community alarm provision and ensure that baseline quality service standards are met
 - That the short-term service for older people, operating in Harefield and Redbridge, be evaluated on an on-going basis and be used to provide the basis for community based support services to older people in the longer term.

18. During the meetings at which the Supporting People programme was discussed there were a number of comments made about the handyman scheme. This service is not currently funded through the Supporting People grant. Following the discussions the Scrutiny Panel identified a conclusion and two recommendations relating to the handyman scheme. These are shown in paragraphs 34 and 35.

Sheltered Housing Review – Conclusion

19. Following consideration at the meeting on 4th September members of the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel were satisfied that the outcomes from the review of sheltered housing were properly evidenced and reflected the extensive consultation undertaken. The Healthy City Scrutiny Panel did not therefore feel that it was necessary to develop any recommendations and supported the proposals as a means of improving Southampton City Council's sheltered housing. This was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting on 9th October 2008.

Incentives offered to under-occupiers to relinquish council owned family homes – Conclusions

20. Following discussions with officers from Southampton City Council, and utilising information on national initiatives and approaches from other local authorities, the Scrutiny Panel came to a number of conclusions with regards to incentives offered to under-occupiers to relinquish council owned family homes.

21. The Scrutiny Panel recognise that surveys undertaken by City Council employees demonstrate that most people currently under-occupying council owned family housing do not wish to move. However, the Panel believe that more can be done by Southampton City Council to incentivise under-occupiers to downsize.

22. If the City Council is to significantly increase the number of under-occupiers relinquishing council owned family homes there is a need to:

- Increase the practical support available to help under-occupiers find and move to alternative accommodation, and keep informing under-occupiers of alternative accommodation that is available to them
- Increase the financial incentives offered to under-occupiers. Although evidence suggests the amount of financial support offered to under-occupiers is not the determining factor in most decisions, members of the Scrutiny Panel recognised that the amount offered by Southampton City Council was below the levels offered by most comparable local authorities. In addition consultation undertaken by the City Council with tenant representatives considered the current level too low in relation to the upheaval and costs of moving
- Increase the supply of desirable properties that under-occupiers want to relocate to. The Panel recognises the efforts being made with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to increase the number of available bungalows or two bedroom flats in small blocks in desirable areas, and the forthcoming developments regarding sheltered housing, but the Panel believes that by further increasing the supply of bungalows and other desirable properties more under-occupied family homes will become available.

23. The Panel recognise that nationally a problem exists with regards to the provision of timely information and advice on housing options for older people. The Scrutiny Panel believe that if older people in Southampton are to be able to make more informed decisions regarding their housing options as they age there is a need to:

- Inform residents, on a continuing basis, of the alternative housing options available to them in later years.

24. To help increase the number of under-occupiers moving out of council owned family housing and into smaller, more appropriate accommodation, it is recommended that:

- Southampton City Council continues to contact under-occupiers on a regular basis informing them of the availability of suitable alternative accommodation
- Southampton City Council increases the financial incentives offered to under-occupiers who move to smaller City Council owned or RSL accommodation. The increase should take into consideration the incentives offered by other local authorities and the relative success or otherwise of their schemes, and should be reviewed annually
- Southampton City Council continues to use its influence with providers of social housing to encourage the development of appropriate accommodation that under-occupiers might wish to live in.

25. To help older people make more informed decisions regarding their housing options as they age it is recommended that:

- In conjunction with the Government's proposals to work across government and with external partners to develop national housing advice and information for older people, it is recommended that Southampton City Council develops the provision for timely advice on housing options as people age, to help them make informed decisions.

Disabled Adaptations – Conclusions

26. Following discussions with officers from Southampton City Council, In Touch - Home Improvement Agency and a contractor, the Scrutiny Panel came to a number of conclusions with regards to the delivery of disabled adaptations.

27. The co-ordinated joint improvement programme for the adaptations services provided by the Council has led to significant improvements:

- The backlog of people waiting for an assessment by an occupational therapist has been cleared and officers reporting to the Panel expected that the new service standards for occupational therapy assessment would be met by November 2008. However, the sustainability of the improved performance levels will be tested when the additional capacity provided by independent occupational therapy practitioners is withdrawn
- Minor adaptations are being completed at a faster rate than previously achieved and it is expected that the backlog will be cleared, and new service standards met, by the end of December 2008.

28. There is a clearly understood demarcation of responsibilities between the various service providers and the process appears to be well co-ordinated.

29. It is too early to quantify the impact that the co-ordinated joint improvement programme for the adaptations services provided by the Council has had on the overall average length of time it takes to deliver major adaptations within the City.

30. The Council's ability to effectively compare performance levels with other local authorities, across all aspects relating to the delivery of disabled adaptations, needs to improve.
31. The Scrutiny Panel recognises that some disabled adaptations are complex and take a long time to be completed. However, the Panel believe that the service standards for the delivery of major adaptations are too long and should be reduced to a level closer to that outlined in the Government's good practice guidelines, shown in paragraph 193.
32. RSL's should be encouraged to provide their tenants with major adaptations when required in accordance with the Housing Corporations Good Funding Guide.

Disabled Adaptations - Recommendations

33. To improve the effectiveness and speed of delivery of housing adaptations it is recommended that:
 - The new processes for delivering disabled adaptations be evaluated when full year performance information becomes available. This process should include service users and stakeholder groups
 - Following the performance evaluation the Panel recommends that the overall service standard for the delivery of major disabled adaptations from referral to installation should be reduced from 12 months to a challenging target to be determined once a full year's performance information becomes available
 - To improve awareness, manage expectations and monitor performance the City Council should develop a more comprehensive range of performance standards and targets for the delivery of disabled adaptations. This should include targets for people assessed to be in **critical need** and targets for people assessed to be in **substantial need**. These targets should relate to the time taken:
 - A) from referral to assessment by an occupational therapist
 - B) from occupational therapists assessment to the installation of the adaptation.

Where performance targets are not being met it should be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee as part of the quarterly performance management process
 - The City Council works with other local authorities to develop a comparator group that will enable Southampton City Council's performance standards, targets, budgets and processes relating to the delivery of disabled adaptations to be compared with other authorities
 - That the City Council seeks to negotiate Service Level Agreements with RSL's, clarifying the role played by RSL's in the delivery of disabled adaptations, and the level of funding that they will provide to support this.

Handyperson Scheme – Conclusion

- 34.
- The handyperson service is a valued service, particularly for older people in Southampton, that saves public money by reducing the need for costly services from being required later. If this were managed through the Supporting People programme locally, it would become strategically relevant and would fit with a range of other services to older and disabled people – under contract to a programme managed by the City Council and the Primary Care Trust among others.

- 35.
- That the provision of handyperson services be sustained and developed in Southampton
 - That the City Council use the next 2 years to consider the long-term options for paying for a handyperson service. This should be mindful of the future financial pressures already being faced by the Supporting People programme locally, and that any funding from this source may be short-term in nature.

General Recommendations

- 36.
- That the recommendations are incorporated into the updated Housing Strategy for Older People
 - That the Cabinet comes forward with measurable targets and timescales to deliver the recommendations contained within this report.

Introduction

37. Promoting independent living has been a key priority for Southampton City Council, and nationally the Government is committed to making sure that every citizen has the opportunity to have a fulfilled, active and independent life.⁴
38. Housing is key to independent living,⁵ and suitable housing, and housing related support, can play a vital role in helping people to lead independent lives.
39. As the population of the United Kingdom ages and is living longer there is pressure on local authorities to provide appropriate accommodation and support services that enable people to live in their own homes. This is in accordance with evidence that indicates that the vast majority of older people choose to live in their own homes in the community well into later life.⁶
40. A number of issues related to increasing independent living through housing were suggested as topics for future scrutiny inquiries in April 2008. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee identified sheltered housing, incentives to encourage under-occupiers to move out of family social housing, and disabled adaptations as potential inquiry topics for 2008/09.
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43. The objectives set for the inquiry were:
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 - To assess the effectiveness of the current range of incentives offered to people to relinquish council-owned family homes who might benefit from the facilities offered by high quality sheltered housing
 - To assess the effectiveness and speed of delivery of housing aids and

⁴ Independence and Opportunity—Our Strategy for Supporting People, DCLG, June 2007, p10

⁵ Age Concern, Policy Position Papers, Housing, May 2006

⁶ Tinkler et al, 2001, referenced in Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, p30

adaptations supplied to people living in private sector accommodation, council accommodation, and housing association properties, and to identify areas where improvements to services are required

- To compare Southampton City Council methods with other local authorities
- To highlight examples of good practice and identify recommendations to improve the situation regarding independent living in Southampton.

The full terms of reference for the inquiry, agreed by the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel on 4th September, are shown in Appendix 1.

44. To enable the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel to review all of the areas outlined in the above objectives six evidence gathering meetings were arranged.
45. At the first meeting of the inquiry the Scrutiny Panel agreed to schedule two meetings to look at the Supporting People programme. Members agreed to this approach because the Supporting People programme provides the context for a number of the issues influencing sheltered housing and disabled adaptations, therefore, an understanding of this developing area would be advantageous to the Scrutiny Panel.
46. The outline project plan, shown in Appendix 2, identifies the structure of each of the evidence gathering sessions.

Limitations of the inquiry

47. The inquiry took place within the context of the following policy developments:
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 - **Supporting People** – The Supporting People Service is currently undertaking a Strategic Review of Support for Older People in Southampton.
 - **Disabled Adaptations** – The Executive Directors of Communities, Health and Care and Neighbourhoods co-ordinated a joint improvement programme for the adaptations services provided by the City Council in 2007/08 and a new set of internal service standards were agreed in April 2008.
48. Due to the timing of the inquiry the focus of the review altered from looking at the role housing plays within the City to facilitate independent living, towards acting primarily as a health check examining if new or impending policies reflect best practice and are moving the City Council’s approach to independent living through housing in a positive direction, and towards meeting the needs of the individual.

Consultation

49. The Healthy City Scrutiny Panel received evidence from a variety of organisations and officers from Southampton City Council. A list of witnesses who provided evidence to the inquiry is detailed in Appendix 3. The level of consultation undertaken through the inquiry reflects the extensive consultation that has been undertaken by the City Council during the development of the policies identified in paragraph 47.

Acknowledgements

50. Members of the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel would like to thank all those who have assisted with the development of this review.

Background to Independent Living Through Housing – National

Definition of Independent Living

51. Independence itself is a matter for each individual. Everyone has their own sense of independence and the factors that affect it and are important to them. For one person it may be managing their own finances, while for another getting out every week to the shops, or to worship.⁷

52. In the Government's Independent Living Strategy the following definition of independent living, generated by disabled people, has been identified:

'Independent living does not mean doing things for yourself, or living on your own. Instead, it means:

- having choice and control over the assistance and/or equipment needed to go about your daily life
- having equal access to housing, transport and mobility, health, employment and education and training opportunities.⁸

National Policy on Independent Living

53. In 'Independence and Opportunity – Our Strategy for Supporting People,' produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2007, the Government outlined its commitment to supporting independent living by stating that:

'The Government is committed to making sure that every citizen has the opportunity to have a fulfilled, active and independent life.'⁹

54. The Government has recognised that a number of increasingly interdependent aspects impact on a person's ability to live independently and, as the definition identified in paragraph 52 indicates, these include factors such as transport, health, employment, education as well as housing.

55. Numerous strategies have been developed that seek to, amongst other things, promote independent living. These include the following strategies:

- Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services (2006), Department for Health
- Opportunity Age (2005), DWP
- Independence and Opportunity - Supporting People strategy (2007), DCLG
- Independent Living, A cross-government strategy about independent living for disabled people (2008), Office for Disability Issues

⁷ Information contained within the 'Briefing on the Southampton Senior Citizens Charter', provided by the Later Years Partnership

⁸ Independent Living, A cross-government strategy about independent living for disabled people, Office for Disability issues, Executive Summary p11, Feb 2008

⁹ Independence and Opportunity—Our Strategy for Supporting People, DCLG, June 2007, p10

- A Sure Start for later Life – Ending Inequalities for Older People (2006), DCLG

This is by no means an exhaustive list.

National Policy on Independent Living through Housing

56. The Government has been consistently advocating the key role that housing can play in promoting independent living. The 2007 Supporting People Strategy concludes that:

‘Having the right housing available at the right time is an essential part of meeting this commitment (to make sure that every citizen has the opportunity to have a fulfilled, active and independent life).’¹⁰

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society

57. It has been predicted that older households, where the main householder is over 65, will make up about half of household growth by 2026. By that time there will be 2.4 million more older households in England than there are today.¹¹ By 2025 over a million people are predicted to be suffering from dementia and by 2041 the number of older disabled people in England is predicted to rise from 2.3 million in 2002 to 4.6 million.¹²

58. As the population ages, due to the inextricable link between ageing and disability, the subsequent need for support becomes more pressing. In recognition of this the Government has produced Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society.

59. This strategy is a key document outlining the Government’s plans to promote independent living for older people through housing. The introduction to this strategy from the Prime Minister states that:

‘Ensuring that older people have access to good quality housing is a vital part of helping them maintain their independence and their quality of life.’¹³

60. The Ministerial Foreword contains the following statements that underpin the approach the Government intends to pursue to support independent living through housing for older people:

‘We have no choice about growing older, but we can make the process one which does not mean an inevitable drift into dependence’

¹⁰ Independence and Opportunity—Our Strategy for Supporting People, DCLG, June 2007, p10

¹¹ Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2004 based household projections

¹² Source: Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p20

¹³ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p8

¹⁴ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p9

'Our approach is based around a few simple principles: that everyone should be able to make a choice that mirrors their lifestyle and circumstances; above all, to remain safely in their own home, near friends and family, as long as they would wish to.'¹⁴

61. In October 2007, in anticipation of 'Lifetime homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods' Public Service Agreement 17 set out two indicators, now part of the place survey that identify what the proposed strategy must address and deliver: '*Satisfaction with home and neighbourhood amongst the over 65s, and having access to the support and information to live independently at home.*'
62. These indicators form part of a plethora of performance indicators that local authorities are required to collect that relate to the issue of supporting independent living.

Background to Independent Living Through Housing - Southampton

63. According to the 2005/06 Housing Needs and Housing Market Survey 22% of households in Southampton include somebody with additional needs requiring support / care to live at home. The additional needs can relate to a number of issues including sensory impairments, mental health problems, learning difficulties or drug and alcohol problems. The largest group of people with support needs are those with mobility problems.
64. The 2005/06 Housing Needs and Housing Market Survey also identified that Southampton has an ageing population. Projections indicate that the number of people aged over 60 in Southampton will rise by 41% by 2026 and by then the 60+ population will make up 25.2% of Southampton's population.
65. Evidence identifies that there is an inextricable link between ageing and disability and 58% of those with support needs are over the age of 60.¹⁵
66. The rising population of older people has not been reflected in an increased demand for residential care within Southampton. Over the last six years the total number of placements purchased in independent residential care provision has decreased by more than 159 despite the increase in population of older people.¹⁶ This reduced demand is reflected in an increase in the provision of support services to people who have opted to remain in their own homes.

Southampton City Council strategies to support independent living through housing

67. The key strategies produced by the City Council that aim to maintain or promote independence through housing are the Supporting People Strategy and the Housing Strategy for Older People. In addition the City Council adopted a Senior Citizens Charter in 2007 that sets out those things that are important to the City Council in addressing the needs of the ageing population.

Supporting People Strategy

68. The Supporting People programme provides housing related support services for people who are vulnerable and unable to live independently without advice, support or training in developing skills or managing their housing.
69. The Supporting People programme has been discussed by the Scrutiny Panel during this inquiry and the findings from the considerations are reported later in this document.

Housing Strategy for Older People

70. The Housing Strategy for Older People 2003-2007 was a sub-strategy of the Housing Strategy and the Supporting People Strategy. This strategy is in the process of being updated and will be influenced by the Government's strategy,

¹⁵ Housing Needs and Housing Market Survey 2005/06

¹⁶ Information extracted from the review of City Council Residential Care Home Provision in Southampton, presented to Cabinet on 27 October 2008, p5

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society.

71. The vision for older people's housing in Southampton, outlined in the Housing Strategy for Older People, is:

'Southampton City Council wishes to meet the housing aspirations of older people living in the city and for them to have decent homes they can afford that meet their housing needs and the support needed to enable them to live in their homes.'

72. The Housing Strategy for Older People also committed the City Council to:

- Ensuring older people are able to secure and maintain their independence within their own homes appropriate to their circumstances.
- Supporting older people to make active and informed choices about their accommodation by providing access to appropriate housing and services and by providing advice on suitable services and options.

Senior Citizens Charter

73. The City Council adopted a Senior Citizens Charter in 2007. The Charter sets out those things that are important to the City Council in addressing the needs of the ageing population, and in steering the City towards its ambition of being known as *"a city that is good to grow older in"*.

74. All aspects of the charter are relevant to the role of housing supporting individuals to live independently, and should underpin the City Council's work in this area. However, there are some sections that are particularly relevant.

75. The Charter includes a commitment on independence:

'Independence is fundamental to our quality of life. Each person's ability to feel independent, and live their own life, can be affected by many things – especially their ability to make and shape their own choices. The Council commits itself to upholding and supporting independence for senior citizens wherever and however it can, and will ensure that all its services contribute positively to achieving that.'

76. At the inaugural meeting of the inquiry Panel Members were given a strategic overview of the Housing Strategy for Older People, the Supporting People programme, the Senior Citizens Charter and some facts and figures for Southampton to provide the context for the work that the Panel was to undertake regarding sheltered housing, incentives to move and disabled adaptations.

The Supporting People Programme

Inquiry Objective

77. The Supporting People programme was not identified within the indicative objectives for the inquiry approved by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. However, at the first meeting of the inquiry the Scrutiny Panel agreed that, due to the influence the Supporting People programme has on independent living through housing, two meetings of the inquiry programme should be dedicated to the Supporting People programme in Southampton. At meeting one the Scrutiny Panel were provided with background information on the Supporting People programme, and at meeting two the emphasis was on the ongoing strategic review of support services for older people.

Background – National

78. Supporting People is a Government funded programme that has brought together a range of disparate funding streams to pay for housing related support. Managing the Supporting People programme has been the responsibility of local authorities since April 2003.
79. The Supporting People programme provides housing related support services for people who are vulnerable and unable to live independently without advice, support or training in developing skills or managing their housing. All services must be:
- Aimed at maintaining or promoting independence
 - Related to current housing.
80. Support services enable independence, prevent homelessness, and prevent people from needing higher cost care services. Support is provided to a range of vulnerable groups including:
- Older people
 - Homeless people
 - People with learning disabilities
 - People with mental health problems.
81. National expenditure on the Supporting People programme is £1.7 billion a year and funding supports a significant number of vulnerable people to live independently. In the United Kingdom 840,000 older people each year receive help and support to live independently through the Supporting People programme.¹⁷

Background – Southampton

82. The Supporting People programme in Southampton is a partnership of the City Council (Health and Community Care, and Housing Solutions), the Primary Care Trust and Probation. The City Council retains financial responsibility and management of the grant budget.

¹⁷ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p22

83. In Southampton, the programme supports over 6,000 people at any one time, through over 130 separate services, provided by over 30 different service providers of which 85% are from the voluntary sector.
84. The Supporting People programme's annual budget is currently £10.1 million, a reduction from the 2003 expenditure of £11.7 million. This budget is decreasing year-on-year, with no allowance for inflation. This reflects allocations based on a distribution formula, under which Southampton is a significant loser. This means that:
- In 2009/10 the budget will be £9.6 million
 - In 2010/11 the budget will have reduced to £9.1 million.

The budget will continue to reduce for a further three years after these dates.

85. The programme has managed the reductions while still improving services. The programme in Southampton has been making efficiency savings of approximately 25% in key client group areas.
86. Southampton's Supporting People programme was awarded Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Regional Champion status for 2007 and 2008. This recognised achievements in service design and achieving value for money. Good practice on commissioning, procurement and strategic management is being disseminated to Supporting People teams, PCTs and others nationally.

Where is Supporting People funding spent in Southampton?

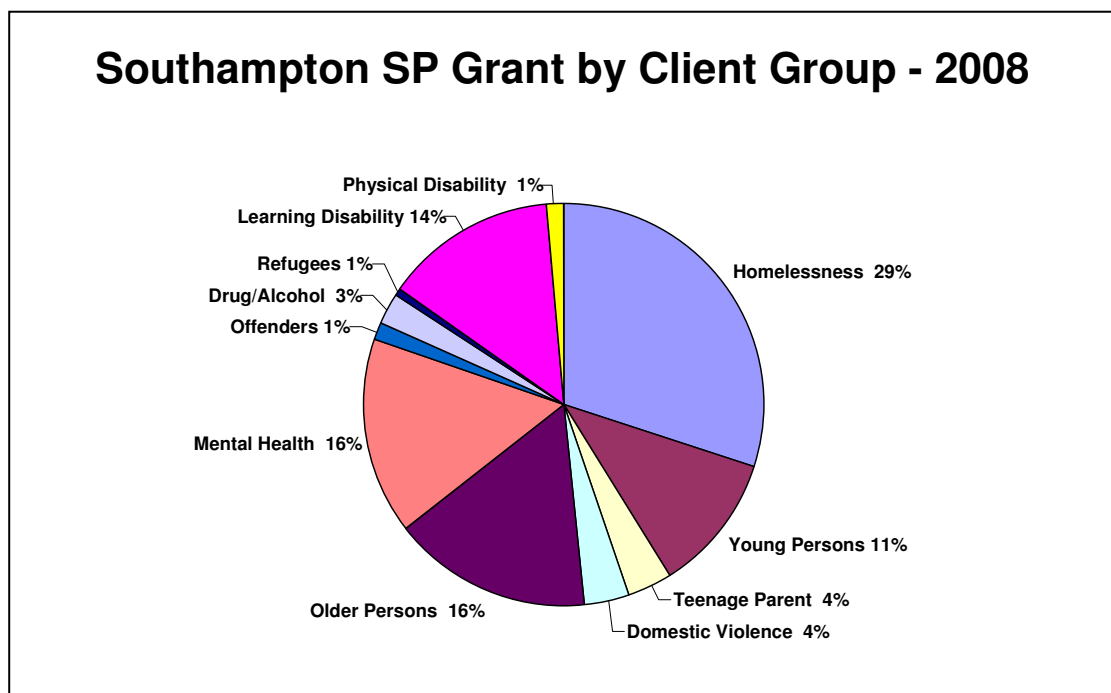


Figure 1

What type of services does Supporting People funding support?

87. Supporting People supports two types of service within Southampton:
- Accommodation based (support attached to accommodation)
 - Floating support (support can follow the individual)
88. Supporting People helps to pay for staff providing support. This includes:
- Wardens/Support staff in sheltered housing
 - Support staff in emergency hostels and in other supported housing
 - Support workers for people in their own homes.
89. Supporting People activities include:
- Helping people to find and maintain accommodation
 - Helping people to develop life skills - but not doing things for them
 - Helping people to budget – by giving them the skills to manage
 - Providing an appropriate advocacy role
 - Helping people to access other community based services – e.g. Health, Social Services, Probation.
 - Helping prevent social isolation.
90. Supporting People funding does not provide:
- Care services provided through community care legislation
 - Housing management.

Although there are strong links between care, housing and support services.

Supporting People and the Local Area Agreement (LAA)

91. The Supporting People programme is now included within the LAA and National Indicator 141 (planned move-ons) is a stretch target. However, through the services supported by the Supporting People programme it contributes to delivering many other targets within the LAA.

Strategic Reviews

92. Supporting People has developed a 'Strategic Review' process enabling support services within each client group to be reviewed as one. A client group that has been strategically reviewed is the services for homeless people in Southampton.

Strategic Review – Homelessness

93. In 2003, 36% of Supporting People funding in Southampton was spent on services for single homeless people. The strategic review had to address a number of major issues:
- Complexity - 11 providers and 30 services

- Established culture - Long established services but reluctance to change
- No existing service design - Services users confused about options
- Existing processes did not facilitate joint working
- Limited focus on individual needs in services - Created dependency
- Poor outcomes for service users – 59% of people in the four direct access hostels were repeat users and only 11% were successfully moving into independent housing.

94. Following the strategic review of the services to homeless people a new service model for homeless people was developed. Although the final elements of the service model have only been in place since February 2008, the model is already providing positive outcomes:

- Access to services is clearer
- Move-on is easier to explain to service users, and accountability is greater
- A new focus is on education, training and employment (ETE). This is providing new opportunities for service users to return to work
- Outcomes for services users are easier to monitor and understand
- Planned move-on rates are improving significantly – from 26% in 2004 to 60% in 2008/09. The expectation is for significant improvements to continue to be made as the model becomes more established
- Commissioning for floating support services has resulted in 15% more hours being delivered for 10% less cost, and the assessment centre in the new model is being delivered at a 25% reduced cost
- Homelessness services now account for only 29% of Supporting People expenditure.

Supporting People Strategic Review of Support Services for Older People

95. The lessons of the new homelessness model are being used across the Supporting People programme. Supporting People is currently in the process of strategically reviewing support services for older people. The Scrutiny Panel were given information relating to work being undertaken to develop the strategic review and the emerging outcomes.

96. The challenge identified for the Supporting People strategic review of services for older people is to:

‘move from managing dependency for a small part of the older population, to adopt an approach which enables the wider older population to remain independent for as long as possible and live their lives to the full.’

97. This challenge has emerged because out of the £1.6m per year currently spent from the Supporting People budget on services to older people, nearly 100% of it is spent on older people living in Council rented sheltered accommodation (66%) or Registered Social Landlord (RSL) rented sheltered accommodation (34% - divided between the 13 separate providers of sheltered accommodation in Southampton).

98. The £1.6m Supporting People funding for older people currently supports the

provision of wardens/support staff and community alarms in sheltered housing and only 43 older people receive floating support in the City, and all of these are RSL tenants.

99. Southampton has a higher than average number of sheltered housing units and Southampton City Council provides two thirds of the 4,384 units. The issue here is that 89% of people over 60 in Southampton do not live in sheltered accommodation yet the need for support is not confined to people who occupy sheltered accommodation.
100. Information presented to the Scrutiny Panel identified that approximately 20% of Southampton's 40,200 population of over 60's is in poor health. Out of this total 64% of people in poor health are owner occupiers and only 36% rent from the City Council or from RSL's. The figures suggest that the majority of people in need of support are not being provided with support through Supporting People funding.

Needs Analysis

101. Through the strategic review work has been undertaken to test the above assumption. Needs information was gathered to enable maps of relative need to be developed. Information was collected on the numbers of older people:
 - Living alone
 - Who are income deprived
 - In ill health
 - Claiming benefits.
102. Findings from the needs analysis identified that current support provision is untargeted and that there is substantial levels of need outside sheltered housing. The wards with the highest levels of indicated needs are Harefield and Redbridge.

One Year Supporting People Project

103. Supporting People has developed a one-year project working in Harefield and Redbridge. This project is developing ways of identifying and supporting older vulnerable people; ways of engaging with this group; and developing sustainable relationships. This will provide information to enable better services to be developed in the future based on the needs of the local community.

Community Alarms

104. Supporting People funding also helps to support the provision of community alarms in sheltered accommodation. The Scrutiny Panel were informed that service user consultation has highlighted the importance of community alarm systems and that there are currently 15 different alarm services operating in Southampton. The Supporting People team have identified through the strategic review that this leads to inconsistencies in the level of service provided.

Service user consultation has identified that a high quality community alarm

system offers a very cost effective way of providing low level support to older people, and that service users place a very high value on the security and peace of mind it provides.

Case Management Approach

105. A significant emerging agenda regarding services to older people is the Case Management Approach currently being developed between the health and care sectors in Southampton. This will identify people with significant levels of need and coordinate the response to meet those needs. It utilises GP surgeries as the key referral route. It will enable older people 'at risk' (e.g. of being hospitalised) to be identified, and appropriate care and support to be provided to minimise those risks. Two pilots will commence soon. One of these will be in Redbridge (one of the seven wards identified by the Supporting People strategic review), and the one year Supporting People project is linking in to this development.
106. Members of the Scrutiny Panel were informed that support services offer the ability to successfully fill the gaps that cannot be met by either health or care services. For example, this could be the provision of an element of a 'return to home' from hospital package. This may include help with bills, setting up new links with neighbours etc. This would provide greater certainty and security for the individual, and ensure the return to home is more likely to be positive and successful.

Handyperson Services

107. During the discussion on the Supporting People programme the value of the Handy Person service was raised. It is not a service provided through Supporting People, funding is provided through Housing Solutions budgets, but consultation with service users during the strategic review identified that this service was highly valued as a means to helping older people remain active, safe and independent in their homes.
108. Information contained within Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods identified that the Northampton Care and Repair handyperson scheme costs Northampton Care and Repair £1,900 per month and during a typical month will help to discharge 20 people from hospital. One hospital day stay for 20 patients at an average UK-wide rate of £350 per day stay would on average cost the State £7,000.¹⁸
109. One of the proposals published by Southampton City Council's Executive for the 2009/10 budget is the removal of £24,000 worth of subsidy in a full year from the Handyperson scheme. The comment attached to the proposals are:

'The handy person scheme provides a free or low cost repair service to 600

¹⁸ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p70

¹⁹ Report to Cabinet on 27 October 2008, 2009/10 General Fund Revenue Budget and Council Tax - Major Proposals for Consultation, Appendix 3

households each year. It carries out minor repairs to private homes in the City occupied by people who are over 60, disabled and/or claiming an income related benefit (such as income support). The Cabinet are keen to continue this service and are exploring avenues to make this self funding.¹⁹

110. Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society contains the following commitment from the Government:

'We will develop new rapid repairs and adaptations services, expanding coverage of handyman services across the country from 2009/10.'²⁰

It is possible that a sum of £50,000 may be secured from central government for a handyman scheme, managed through the local Supporting People programme. This would increase to a sum of £70,000 in 2010/11. This would enable the handyman service to be redeveloped, to fit with the outcomes of the Supporting People strategic review of services to older people, and be focused on older and disabled people in most need. If this funding is secured, the City Council will need to consider how this service would be sustained in the longer term.

Conclusion

111. Following discussions with officers from Southampton City Council, and utilising information on national initiatives, the Scrutiny Panel came to the following conclusions with regards to the Supporting People programme in Southampton:

- Supporting People services play a key role in acting as preventative services by providing low cost solutions and preventing people from having to move to higher cost services
- Changes to homelessness services show that taking a strategic overview of services can lead to better decision making and challenging of current structures
- Supporting People services contribute to meeting numerous Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets. The Scrutiny Panel believe that the LAA presents a real opportunity to take the Supporting People learning regarding improving services, lowering costs and improving outcomes across a wider range of services
- That innovation is being shown by Supporting People locally in looking to improve lives through different solutions

112. Following discussions with officers from Southampton City Council, and utilising the information on national initiatives, the Scrutiny Panel came to the following conclusions with regards to the strategic review of services for older people:

- The issue of services to older people is complex but there is a need to review these in full

²⁰ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p149

- The Strategic Review is considering the right range of issues
- **Needs data, statistics and other information gathered, all suggests that Southampton has not got the right mix of support to older people in the City. To make a real difference to the lives of older people the Scrutiny Panel believe that there is a need to focus on the needs of older people living outside of the sheltered housing – while recognising that sheltered housing can provide a good starting point for these community services. Access to support must be based on needs**
- Linking support to care and health, through for example engaging in the case management approach, is appropriate for future Supporting People funded services - eg. a Home from Hospital service is a positive service development
- The one year Supporting People Older Person's project operating in Harefield and Redbridge is a positive development in testing out responses, measuring the needs within a community, and identifying the most appropriate referral routes
- There is an urgent need to rationalise community alarm provision. This requires baseline service quality to be met
- The handy person service is a valued service, particularly for older people in Southampton, that saves public money by reducing the need for costly services from being required later. If this were managed through the Supporting People programme locally, it would become strategically relevant and would fit with a range of other services to older and disabled people – under contract to a programme managed by the City Council and the Primary Care Trust among others.

Supporting People Recommendations

- 113.
- That Supporting People funding for older people is determined by the needs of older people irrespective of their housing situation
 - That through the Supporting People Programme work is undertaken with support providers and landlords to rationalise community alarm provision and ensure that baseline quality service standards are met
 - That the short-term service for older people, operating in Harefield and Redbridge, be evaluated on an on-going basis and be used to provide the basis for community based support services to older people in the longer term.

Handyperson Scheme Recommendation

- 114.
- That the provision of handyperson services be sustained and developed in Southampton

- That the City Council use the next 2 years to consider the long- term options for paying for a handyperson service. This should be mindful of the future financial pressures already being faced by the Supporting People programme locally, and that any funding from this source may be short-term in nature.

Sheltered Housing Review

Inquiry Objective

115. 'To analyse and comment on the outcomes from the review of sheltered housing and to explore the extent to which adequate levels of such accommodation are available in locations where people in need of this type of property wish to live.'

Background

116. The sheltered housing review was completed and a report submitted to Cabinet in April 2006. Cabinet agreed to a number of recommendations and instructed officers to consult customers in relation to a number of issues. At the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 4th September 2008 the Panel were presented with information on the background to the review, work undertaken since the report to Cabinet, and the emerging results of consultation with tenants and other stakeholders which were scheduled to be reported to Cabinet on 27th October 2008.
117. It was necessary for the Panel to discuss the sheltered housing review at the first inquiry meeting to enable any recommendations generated by the Scrutiny Panel to be considered by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Local Services prior to the decision making meeting on 27th October.

Sheltered Housing Review – 2006 Approved Recommendations

118. The recommendations approved by Cabinet in 2006 were designed to address the following issues:
- The low demand for sheltered housing
 - The need to modernise the sheltered housing stock
 - The need to re-model housing support services to reflect the Supporting People requirements that have been discussed within this report.
119. The recommendations, that have been subject to consultation with all sheltered housing tenants as well as with some people aged over 50 who are on the housing register, include:
- Re-aligning housing related support
 - Lowering the age criteria for some sheltered accommodation
 - Reclassifying some sheltered housing units as general needs stock
 - Capital Improvements to the sheltered housing stock.
120. The Scrutiny Panel considered each of these recommendations in turn and commented on them following discussions with the Sheltered Housing Project Officer.

Re-aligning housing related support

121. Housing related support is currently provided to sheltered housing tenants through wardens allocated to a particular scheme. To improve the service and to

meet the requirements of the Supporting People programme, who grant fund the service, it is proposed to move from scheme specific services to 8 staff teams who will work across small geographical areas providing housing related support to City Council tenants, and to customers living in other tenures within Southampton.

122. Although feedback from tenants indicated that the current warden service is highly valued this recommendation was supported by the Scrutiny Panel as a means to deliver support services to older people in need across the City, irrespective of an individuals housing situation. This concurs with the conclusions reached by the Panel following discussions on the Supporting People programme.

Lowering the age criteria for some sheltered accommodation and reclassifying some sheltered housing units as general needs stock

123. In recognition of the low demand for a proportion of the sheltered housing stock the Cabinet report in 2006 recommended that all satellite and category one accommodation, units that receive less support, be allocated in future to people over the age of 50. Access to the City Council's sheltered housing stock is currently, with some exceptions, restricted to those over 60.
124. In addition the Cabinet proposed to remove a number of units from sheltered stock by reclassifying them as general needs.
125. The consultation process revealed an encouraging level of support for lowering the age criteria in some units and the recommendations were supported by the Scrutiny Panel who recognised that Southampton has an over supply of sheltered housing units.

Capital Improvements to the sheltered housing stock

126. To enhance the desirability and suitability of the City Council's sheltered housing the Council is proposing to make improvements to the stock. Improvements include converting some lower demand sheltered housing stock, such as bedsits, to the more popular two bedroom and one bedroom self contained flats.
127. The Scrutiny Panel supported these proposals and recognised the positive contribution that improved sheltered accommodation may have on promoting independent living by:
- Incentivising older people currently under-occupying council owned family housing to move to more appropriate accommodation
 - Reducing demand for adaptations as people decide to move to sheltered accommodation instead of adapting their own house.

These issues are discussed later in this report.

Conclusion

128. Following consideration at the meeting on 4th September members of the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel were satisfied that the outcomes from the review of sheltered housing were properly evidenced and reflected the extensive consultation undertaken. The Healthy City Scrutiny Panel did not therefore feel that it was necessary to develop any recommendations and supported the proposals as a means of improving Southampton City Council's sheltered housing. This was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting on 9th October 2008.

Incentives offered to under-occupiers to relinquish council owned family homes

Inquiry Objective:

129. 'To assess the effectiveness of the current range of incentives offered to people to relinquish council owned family homes who might benefit from the facilities offered by high quality sheltered housing'.

Background

130. The issue of under-occupation of council owned family accommodation was considered to be a suitable topic for a scrutiny inquiry for two reasons:
- There is a shortage of family homes at affordable rents in Southampton. Freeing up under-occupied properties is a mechanism to help meet the high demand
 - A number of under-occupiers are aged over 60 and evidence indicates that many people who live in large family accommodation could retain their independence for longer if they moved to more suitable accommodation.²¹

It is for the second reason that the issue of incentives offered to under-occupiers to relinquish council owned family homes has been incorporated into a review looking at increasing independent living through housing.

Under-occupation in Southampton

131. Under-occupation has become an issue in Southampton as the existing high demand for family homes at affordable rents cannot be met. The waiting list for family accommodation in Southampton is long.
132. Southampton City Council's stock of family housing has decreased due to family housing being favoured when people opt to purchase houses under the 'Right to Buy Scheme'. The current stock of family housing owned by the City Council is about 5,274.
133. Information made available to the Scrutiny Panel identified that there are about 2,200 households with 2,3,4+ bedrooms that do not require this number when under-occupation formulas are used. This is not a static figure.
134. The Scrutiny Panel were also informed that people's aspirations have changed. Coupled with the trend towards older people wishing to remain in their existing homes for longer there is a growing trend towards older people not wishing to move into small one bedroom flats in a sheltered housing scheme. This was identified in the previous section within this report.

²¹ In Housing Choices and Aspirations, DCLG, 2008, consultation identified that sheltered housing was seen to be useful way of prolonging people's independence, p30

135. In September 2008 there were only 352 under-occupiers on the housing list seeking smaller accommodation. However, a number of these people have requested a move to a specific property, or type of property that may be limited in number, such as a bungalow. Under tenancy agreements they cannot be moved out of the family accommodation until the requested property becomes available.

Southampton City Council's Under-Occupation Incentive Scheme

136. To encourage people under-occupying council owned accommodation to relinquish family homes a number of incentives are currently offered.

137. Financial incentives:

- A payment of £850 for City Council tenants relinquishing a
 - 2 or more bedroom house or
 - 3 bed ground floor maisonette or
 - 4 bed maisonetteand moving to smaller Southampton City Council or RSL accommodation via the housing list.
- A removal grant of up to £150, or removals carried out by a City Council contractor (and paid for by the Council).
- Payment towards the cost of disconnecting and reconnecting a cooker (up to a maximum of £100) is paid to Southampton City Council tenants aged 60 years or more who are relinquishing a 2 bedroom or larger general needs property to move to accommodation designated for people aged 60 years or over.

138. Other incentives:

- Points levels:- The highest level of exceptional points available under the Lettings Policy are awarded to Southampton City Council tenants who are transferring from a 2 bedroom or larger property to a smaller property, and are giving up at least one bedroom. These points are not time limited and this gives them the highest priority when applying for alternative accommodation.
- RSL tenants will be awarded these points for the first time. However, this is conditional upon the Council being able to nominate an applicant to the vacated RSL property, and upon the definition of under-occupation in the Council's Lettings Policy being used.
- Southampton City Council tenants relinquishing a 3 bedroom or larger house can bid for a 2 bedroom house/flat/maisonette even if their need is for a 1 bedroom property.
- Southampton City Council tenants aged 60 years or more transferring from a 2 bedroom or larger house to smaller accommodation designated for older people, can be considered for a bungalow immediately after any applicant who has an assessed need for such accommodation.

139. Support to help facilitate house moves:

- Support is available to help people to understand Homebid, the choice based lettings system, and tenants have access to the Homebid magazine.
- Under-occupiers are informed about new housing developments that may appeal to under-occupiers. The City Council does not employ specialist under-occupancy staff.

Impact of the Incentive Scheme

140. In 2007/08 only 52 households, out of 2,200 eligible households, received the £850 payment. Consultation undertaken by Southampton City Council in 2006 with under-occupiers identified that although the majority of tenants did not want to move a number thought that the £850 payment was too low.

What actions are effective at encouraging under-occupiers to downsize?

141. 'Managing Under-Occupation', a research report from the former Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) produced in 2001, identified that the following factors have the greatest impact on encouraging under-occupiers to move to smaller accommodation:

- Providing personalised support to assist people to move house
- Having good quality accommodation for people to move to.

Providing personalised support to assist people to move house

142. Research undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government revealed for many older people the thought of moving was simply too overwhelming.²²

143. Many local authorities have developed practical as well as financial packages to help households, particularly older people whose families may have left home, to overcome the barriers to moving to smaller, more manageable accommodation, thereby releasing larger family accommodation.

144. Southwark Council's Small is Beautiful programme helped 117 movements to smaller accommodation in 2006/07. As well as providing cash incentives Southwark also offer personal support from a dedicated officer.²³

145. A study of pilot schemes in London attempting to address overcrowding found that providing targeted support to under-occupiers considering a move was the most effective incentive. The report concludes:

²² Housing Choices and Aspirations of Older People, DCLG, 2008, p13

²³ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p113

'The experience of all the pilots is that providing effective personalised support ('handholding') to assist people to move house is key to a successful scheme. This is a particular incentive to under-occupiers whose decision to move is voluntary and who might otherwise be put off by the inconveniences and effort involved in moving house.'²⁴

146. Practical support can include explaining available options, accompanying prospective movers to property viewings, completion of forms, support on the day of the move, providing advice on the financial issues associated with moving. All of this can be offered as part of an overall case management approach.
147. The findings from 'Managing Under-Occupation' show that it is practical help (at a personal level) to find the right, smaller home rather than the size of the financial incentive which is most helpful.

Having good quality accommodation for people to move to

148. The Managing Under-Occupation report states that:

'The surest way to generate interest in under-occupation moves is to provide and market housing schemes that are attractive to middle aged and older tenants'.

The report cites that these are, in particular, good quality, two bedroom homes (preferably bungalows) in convenient locations.

149. Experience from within Southampton demonstrates that when purpose built small schemes, aimed at under-occupiers, have been developed they have proved to be effective at encouraging under-occupiers to move out of family accommodation.
150. The 15 purpose-built, RSL owned, one bedroom bungalows (with an extra informal room in the roof void) in The Grove, Sholing attracted considerable interest from many under-occupiers in 2002. Here the property type and design proved the main incentive for people to relinquish their family homes. Other RSL schemes have also been aimed at council tenants relinquishing family homes, such as a block of two bedroom flats at The Dell (north central area), the 6 x two bedroom flats at Oriel House in Millbrook, and the 6 x 2 bedroom bungalows due to be built at Warburton Court in Thornhill.
151. The Council is working with RSL's to build more bungalows or two bedroom flats in desirable areas and with their own amenity space, with the aim of encouraging more people to relinquish their family homes.
152. It is also anticipated that the proposals, outlined in the review of sheltered housing, to convert some lower demand sheltered housing stock to the more popular two bedroom and one bedroom self contained flats will encourage more under-occupiers in council owned family housing to downsize.

²⁴ Tackling Overcrowding in England, DCLG, June 2008, p15

Providing Information and Advice on Housing to Older People

153. An outcome from the Scrutiny Panel's discussions on incentives to move was an increased recognition amongst Panel Members of the key role that appropriate housing information and advice plays.
154. Most people are reluctant to consider their future selves and what steps they might take now to make life easier and more comfortable in the future.²⁵
155. A number of older people consulted by the Government recently stressed the importance of considering housing options, and if necessary moving, when you are young enough to cope with moving. During this consultation those people who had moved said they had been determined to make a deliberate choice to move to a particular place, rather than be forced to move when they might not have the capacity to look at different alternatives and make a considered decision as to what was best for them.²⁶
156. Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods, the Government strategy for housing in an ageing society, identifies a critical need for more and better information about the range of housing choices available to older people.
157. Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods includes the following quote about the need for information and advice:

"Better information about housing options might enable older people to make informed, proactive decisions as opposed to reactive decision at a point of crises"²⁷

National Developments that may have an impact on under-occupiers

158. The Government is considering replacing tenancies for life with fixed term tenancies with regular reviews to ensure their circumstances entitle them to subsidised housing. This could impact on under-occupiers and reduce the general pressure on council owned family housing.
159. Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods, the Government strategy for housing in an ageing society, includes proposals to work across government and with external partners to develop national housing advice and information for older people, from 2008/09.
160. Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods also commits the Government to work with local authorities and partners to strengthen specialist local housing advice, information and moving home services for older people from 2008/09.²⁸

²⁵ Housing Choices and Aspirations of Older People, DCLG, 2008, p8

²⁶ Housing Choices and Aspirations of Older People, DCLG, 2008, p8

²⁷ Quote cited in Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p48, sourced from Housing Choices and Aspirations of Older People, DCLG, 2008

²⁸ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p148

Conclusion

161. Following discussions with officers from Southampton City Council, and utilising information on national initiatives and approaches from other local authorities, the Scrutiny Panel came to a number of conclusions with regards to incentives offered to under-occupiers to relinquish council owned family homes.
162. The Scrutiny Panel recognise that surveys undertaken by City Council employees demonstrate that most people currently under-occupying council owned family housing do not wish to move. However, the Panel believe that more can be done by Southampton City Council to incentivise under-occupiers to downsize.
163. If the City Council is to significantly increase the number of under-occupiers relinquishing council owned family homes there is a need to:
 - Increase the practical support available to help under-occupiers find and move to alternative accommodation, and keep informing under-occupiers of alternative accommodation that is available to them
 - Increase the financial incentives offered to under-occupiers. Although evidence suggests the amount of financial support offered to under-occupiers is not the determining factor in most decisions, members of the Scrutiny Panel recognised that the amount offered by Southampton City Council was below the levels offered by most comparable local authorities. In addition consultation undertaken by the City Council with tenant representatives considered the current level too low in relation to the upheaval and costs of moving

(The Scrutiny Panel has been made aware of the report on disabled adaptations in public and private sector housing, that was approved by Cabinet on 24th November 2008, that states that the Council will be reviewing the level of incentives and support provided to residents in order to help them move.)

- Increase the supply of desirable properties that under-occupiers want to relocate to. The Scrutiny Panel recognises the efforts being made with RSL's to increase the number of available bungalows or two bedroom flats in small blocks in desirable areas, and the forthcoming developments regarding sheltered housing, but the Panel believes that by further increasing the supply of bungalows and other desirable properties more under-occupied family homes will become available.
164. The Scrutiny Panel recognise that nationally a problem exists with regards to the provision of timely information and advice on housing options for older people. The Scrutiny Panel believe that if older people in Southampton are to be able to make more informed decisions regarding their housing options as they age there is a need to:
 - Inform residents, on a continuing basis, of the alternative housing options available to them in later years.

Recommendations

165. To help increase the number of under-occupiers moving out of council owned family housing and into smaller, more appropriate accommodation, it is recommended that:

- Southampton City Council invests resources into practical support to help and encourage under-occupiers to relocate to smaller accommodation
- Southampton City Council continues to contact under-occupiers on a regular basis informing them of the availability of suitable alternative accommodation
- Southampton City Council increases the financial incentives offered to under-occupiers who move to smaller City Council owned or RSL accommodation. The increase should take into consideration the incentives offered by other local authorities and the relative success or otherwise of their schemes, and should be reviewed annually
- Southampton City Council continues to use its influence with providers of social housing to encourage the development of appropriate accommodation that under-occupiers might wish to live in.

166. To help older people make more informed decisions regarding their housing options as they age it is recommended that:

- In conjunction with the Government's proposals to work across government and with external partners to develop national housing advice and information for older people, it is recommended that Southampton City Council develops the provision for timely advice on housing options as people age to help them make informed decisions.

Disabled Adaptations

Inquiry Objective:

167. 'To assess the effectiveness and speed of delivery of housing aids and adaptations supplied to people living in private sector accommodation, council accommodation, and housing association properties, and to identify areas where improvements to services are required.'
168. Two meetings of the inquiry programme were dedicated towards achieving the objective stated above. However, because Southampton City Council has recently reviewed its processes for delivering disabled adaptations the Scrutiny Panel focussed its work on ascertaining the effectiveness of the new ways of working.

Background

169. For many people support is necessary to help them stay living in their own home. Findings from consultation identified that for many reliable repairs and adaptations services are needed for 'that bit of help' around the home.²⁹
170. Research has identified that home adaptations can have a major impact on an older or disabled person's quality of life and independence.³⁰ The provision of housing adaptations and equipment for disabled people also produces savings to health and social care budgets. This is particularly evidenced in savings in the cost of residential and home care, and prevention of potential health care costs.
- 'Not all adaptations save money. But where they are an alternative to residential care, or prevent hip fractures or speed hospital discharge; where they relieve the burden of carers or improve the mental health of a whole household, they will save money, sometimes on a massive scale.'³¹
171. Local authorities have various duties to provide assistance to disabled people to enable them to move into and out of their homes, to utilise living and sleeping areas within the home and to access cooking, bathing and toilet facilities and to live independently. Appendix 4 details the legal framework surrounding the delivery of disabled adaptations.

Disabled Adaptations - Southampton

172. The Executive Directors of Communities, Health and Care and of Neighbourhoods have coordinated a joint improvement programme for the adaptations services provided by the Council, which has focussed on decreasing the time taken from enquiry to completed adaptation and improving consistency across all tenures, while maintaining high levels of quality and client satisfaction.

²⁹ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p21

³⁰ Reviewing the disabled facilities grant – ODPM, 2005

³¹ Better outcomes, lower costs: Implications for health and social care budgets of investment in housing adaptations, improvements and equipment: a review of the evidence, Heywood and Turner for the ODI, 2007

173. A new approach was required because within Southampton there was a significant waiting list for people requiring adaptation works to their home. This restricted individuals ability to remain independent both in the short and long term.
174. The processes related to the provision of disabled adaptations are complex. This is primarily due to the different stages and funding streams that are available to support the process that differ depending on housing tenure.

Occupational Therapy Assessment

175. The first step for any adaptation is for a needs assessment to be carried out by the Occupational Therapy Service, within the Health and Community Care Division. An Occupational Therapist will visit a customer at home to carry out a comprehensive needs assessment, which includes equipment, adaptations, moving and handling advice and managing the consequences of disability and complex physical care needs. After the assessment is completed the recommendation is given to either the Housing Solutions Division or the Decent Homes Division depending on the customer's housing tenure. In accordance with the Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) needs assessment, only those people assessed as having a critical or substantial need or who meet Disabled Facilities Grant criteria are eligible for the provision of council services.
176. The speed of provision of initial assessment and advice has been improved by employing additional occupational therapy staff in the Health and Community Care Contact Centre. This ensures people whose needs can be met by equipment rather than adaptation, or who need other support in addition to an adaptation, can be offered these services as soon as possible, and appropriate cases referred speedily for full assessment for adaptations.
177. To reduce the backlog of customers waiting for an occupational therapy assessment the Health and Community Care Division has:
- Restructured occupational therapists in the contact centre, locality and rehabilitation teams
 - Employed on a short-term basis independent occupational therapy practitioners
 - Focused occupational therapy inputs on assessing needs, rather than on implementing adaptations once needs have been identified.

People in Private Homes

178. Funding for major adaptations in private homes (From £500 up to a maximum of £30,000) is paid through the statutory means tested Disabled Facilities Grant, administered by Southampton City Council's Housing Solutions Division.
179. Private homes in this context include those that are owner occupied or rented from a private landlord or Registered Social Landlord (housing association). Before a Disabled Facilities Grant is considered for someone living in a housing association home, the housing association is approached to investigate whether

it will fund some or all of the adaptation. In a few cases, the housing association agrees to pay for lower cost major adaptations. There is no statutory requirements for RSL's to provide major adaptations but the Housing Corporations Capital Funding Guide states that:

'As good social landlords the Corporation would expect RSL's to provide their tenants with adaptations where required.'

180. Although the Council administers and approves grants, the City Council funded Home Improvement Agency (currently provided by In Touch, part of the Hyde Group) works on behalf of the customers to appoint a contractor and project manage the work. The Home Improvement Agency helps the person to apply for a grant and acts as the main interface between the customer, contractor and the Council. Contractors are chosen from an approved list and an agreed schedule of rates is used to ensure value for money. The Council gives a grant for the work, but it is the customer who employs the contractor.

People in Homes Rented from the Council

181. Funding for adaptations to council homes is funded through the Housing Revenue Account and is not subject to means testing. Adaptations are administered by the Decent Homes Division and adaptations are provided by council contractors.
182. The City Council has recently approved a new policy when considering disabled adaptations in council housing, when there is one or more of the following:
- Under occupation of the property
 - The cost of the adaptation work is expected to be over £30,000
 - It is not considered by the Council cost effective to carry out adaptations at the current property
 - The property, even when adapted, is not going to meet the long term needs of the disabled tenant.

If one or more of the above criteria applies, the tenant will be offered suitable alternative accommodation. Additional support will be made available and the new home will be adapted to meet their needs as required.

Minor Adaptations

183. Minor adaptations (those costing less than £500) are provided by the Council's technician service for home owners and private tenants. This is managed and funded by the Communities Health and Care Directorate at the present time. Work is ongoing to scope future management arrangements for the service. Work has also been undertaken to support RSL's and the Decent Homes Division to take responsibility for their own assessment of minor adaptations by the end of the year, freeing up occupational therapy time to assess situations where they will add value. Minor adaptations for council tenants are provided directly by the Decent Homes Division and for housing association tenants directly by the housing association.

Completed Adaptations - Southampton

	April – Sept 08/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
Major adaptations completed in Private homes*	51 (Target for 08/09 is 100)	106	115	109
Major adaptations completed in Council homes	(100 Target)	158	146	113
Minor adaptations completed in Private homes	467 (752 projected for 2008/09)		675	730
Minor adaptations completed in Council homes	Projected 750	750	744	744

Table 1 – Completed adaptations

* Private homes in this context include those that are owner occupied or rented from a private landlord or a RSL (Housing Association).

Capital Budgets and Expenditure

	Housing Solutions (Disabled Facilities Grants)*		Decent Homes (Housing Revenue Account)	
	Budget £,000	Outturn £,000	Budget £,000	Outturn £,000
2008/09	1,000	-	1,350	-
2007/08	1,114	1,111	1,440	1,300
2006/07	900	751	950	1,067
2005/06	828	819	1,650	1,580

Table 2 - Capital budgets and spend

* The Government contributes 60% of the Disabled Facilities Grant budget

New Service Standards

184. A new set of internal service standards were agreed in April 2008.

	Client in a private home	Client in a council home
Major adaptations		
Time taken from initial enquiry to occupational therapy referral	3 months	3 months
Time taken from occupational therapy referral to Disabled Facilities Grant approval	5 months	-
Time taken from grant approval to completed adaptation	4 months	-
Time taken from occupational therapy referral to completed adaptation	-	9 months
Time taken from enquiry to completed major adaptation	1 year	
Minor adaptations		
Time taken from enquiry to completed minor adaptation	1 month	

Table 3 –Service standards

185. In addition to the standards detailed in table 3 above, there is a commitment to complete the most urgent (critical) cases within a month in council homes. This is not possible in private homes because of the statutory Disabled Facilities Grant administration process. The ratio of critical to substantial cases has a significant impact on achieving the service standards. This becomes more difficult if there are more critical cases.

186. To help track progress against these standards, and to answer queries about how cases are progressing, officers are planning to use the PARIS client record system. This will replace the manual system currently employed.

Outcomes – Occupational Therapy

187. Since the new measures were introduced the Occupational Therapy Service has:

- Reduced the backlog of people awaiting assessment, despite the number of referrals increasing
- Ensured that occupational therapy customers receive a more timely service, with only 5 people waiting over the service standards 3 months for an assessment in July 2008 and;
- It is expected that all occupational therapy referrals will be assessed within the 3 month timescale by November 2008.

This improvement must be seen within the context that the additional independent occupational therapy practitioners employed on a short-term basis have significantly contributed to the improved service standards.

Outcomes – Minor Adaptations

188. In September 2008 critical minor adaptations were being delivered within an average of 2 weeks but substantial work was taking on average 16 weeks. This is still a significant improvement on April 2008 performance levels when critical work was taking on average 8 weeks and standard work took on average 80 weeks. It is expected that backlogs will be cleared and service standards met by December 2008.

Outcomes – Major Adaptations

189. When the information was reported to the Scrutiny Panel on 30th October 2008 the Housing Solutions Division had no customers waiting for their case to be allocated to an officer and the Decent Homes Division had a waiting list of 55 substantial cases and all critical were in hand.
190. Discussions with the Home Improvement Agency, who deal with major adaptations in private homes, revealed that they were struggling to meet the 8 week target imposed on them by the Council to submit Disabled Facilities Grant applications to the Council from referral by Occupational Therapy. The Home Improvement Agency is reviewing its processes to identify where improvements can be made that will speed up the process for routine cases.
191. Due to the timing of this inquiry full year information is not available to assess how effective the new processes have been in speeding up the process from referral to completion of the disabled adaptation. This information will be available in April 2009.

National Comparisons

192. The Scrutiny Panel has tried to obtain credible performance information by which it can compare Southampton City Council's performance regarding disabled adaptations with other local authorities.

193. Due to differing budgets, number of adaptations and variations regarding ownership of council housing stock, it has not been possible to get reliable 'like for like' performance information from other local authorities. The Scrutiny Panel has however, been given the indicative time targets contained within 'Delivering Housing Adaptations for disabled people – A good practice guide' and these ambitious targets suggest that:

- High priority cases (critical) should be delivered from start to finish in 83 working days (4 months)
- Medium priority cases (substantial) should be delivered from start to finish in 151 working days (7 months)
- Low priority cases should be delivered from start to finish in 259 working days (1 year).³²

194. The Scrutiny Panel were informed by officers that most critical major adaptations and routine major adaptations were completed well within the City Council's 1 year service standard. However, it is evident that Southampton's service standards are not in accordance with the ambitious targets identified in the good practice guide.

National developments that may have an impact on disabled adaptations

195. This report has previously made reference to the Government's commitment in, 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society,' to undertake the following:

'We will develop new rapid repairs and adaptations services, expanding coverage of handyman services across the country from 2009/10'.³³

Developments within Southampton that may have an impact on disabled adaptations

196. The issue of disabled adaptations within the City can clearly be impacted upon by developments within the Supporting People programme, incentives offered to under-occupiers to relinquish council owned family homes, and the review of sheltered housing all of which have been highlighted within this report.

197. If resources are invested into preventative services such as those funded through Supporting People, and the emerging case management approach, there should be a reduction in the growth in the number of people requiring adaptations within Southampton as people are supported when risks are identified to peoples health.

198. If the level of incentives offered to people to move out of under-occupied City Council or RSL accommodation is increased, then more people who require adaptations may move to more appropriate properties. This may make adaptations unnecessary or reduce the cost of adaptations required.

³² Delivering Housing Adaptations for disabled people – A good practice guide, DCLG, 2006, p54

³³ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, DCLG, 2008, p149

199. If the quality and attractiveness of City Council sheltered accommodation increases, following the review of sheltered housing, then more people in private and social housing who require an adaptation may wish to move into the more appropriate sheltered accommodation. This may make adaptations unnecessary or reduce the cost of adaptations required.

Conclusion

200. Following discussions with officers from Southampton City Council, In Touch - Home Improvement Agency and a contractor, the Scrutiny Panel came to a number of conclusions with regards to the delivery of disabled adaptations.
201. The co-ordinated joint improvement programme for the adaptations services provided by the Council has led to significant improvements:
- The backlog of people waiting for an assessment by an occupational therapist has been cleared and officers reporting to the Scrutiny Panel expected that the new service standards for occupational therapy assessment would be met by November 2008. However, the sustainability of the improved performance levels will be tested when the additional capacity provided by independent occupational therapy practitioners is withdrawn
 - Minor adaptations are being completed at a faster rate than previously achieved and it is expected that the backlog will be cleared, and new service standards met, by the end of December 2008.
202. There is a clearly understood demarcation of responsibilities between the various service providers and the process appears to be well co-ordinated.
203. It is too early to quantify the impact that the co-ordinated joint improvement programme for the adaptations services provided by the Council has had on the overall average length of time it takes to deliver major adaptations within Southampton.
204. The Council's ability to effectively compare performance levels with other local authorities, across all aspects relating to the delivery of disabled adaptations, needs to improve.
205. The Scrutiny Panel recognises that some disabled adaptations are complex and take a long time to be completed. However, the Panel believe that the service standards for the delivery of major adaptations are too long and should be reduced to a level closer to that outlined in the Government's good practice guidelines.
206. RSL's should be encouraged to provide their tenants with major adaptations when required in accordance with the Housing Corporations Good Funding Guide.

Recommendations

207. To improve the effectiveness and speed of delivery of housing adaptations it is recommended that:

- The new processes for delivering disabled adaptations be evaluated when full year performance information becomes available. This process should include service users and stakeholder groups
- Following the performance evaluation the Panel recommends that the overall service standard for the delivery of major disabled adaptations from referral to installation should be reduced from 12 months to a challenging target to be determined once a full year's performance information becomes available
- To improve awareness, manage expectations and monitor performance the City Council should develop a more comprehensive range of performance standards and targets for the delivery of disabled adaptations. This should include targets for people assessed to be in **critical need** and targets for people assessed to be in **substantial need**. These targets should relate to the time taken:
 - A) from referral to assessment by an occupational therapist
 - B) from occupational therapists assessment to the installation of the adaptation.

Where performance targets are not being met it should be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee as part of the quarterly performance management process

- The City Council works with other local authorities to develop a comparator group that will enable Southampton City Council's performance standards, targets, budgets and processes relating to the delivery of disabled adaptations to be compared with other authorities
- That the City Council seeks to negotiate Service Level Agreements with Registered Social Landlords, clarifying the role played by Registered Social Landlords in the delivery of disabled adaptations and the level of funding that they will provide to support this.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference
- Appendix 2 – Outline Project Plan
- Appendix 3 – Consultation
- Appendix 4 – Legal Framework – Delivery of Disabled Adaptations

INQUIRY INTO INCREASING INDEPENDENT LIVING THROUGH HOUSING

Project Brief

1. Purpose of the Inquiry

One of Southampton City Council's five corporate priorities is to promote independent living. This inquiry will review the delivery of aids and adaptations, and issues regarding sheltered housing, to identify if improvements can be made that will enable people to live independently for longer.

2. Objectives of the Inquiry

- Phase 1 - To analyse and comment on the outcomes from the review of sheltered housing and to explore the extent to which adequate levels of such accommodation is available in locations where people in need of this type of property wish to live
- Phase 1 - To assess the effectiveness of the current range of incentives offered to people to relinquish council-owned family homes who might benefit from the facilities offered by high quality sheltered housing
- Phase 2 - To assess the effectiveness and speed of delivery of housing aids and adaptations supplied to people living in private sector accommodation, council accommodation, and housing association properties, and to identify areas where improvements to services are required
- To compare Southampton City Council methods with other local authorities
- To highlight examples of good practice and identify recommendations to improve the situation regarding independent living in Southampton

3. Inquiry Methodology

Extensive consultation will be undertaken with a variety of key stakeholders. Consultees may include:

- Neighbourhoods Directorate
- Communities, Health and Care Directorate
- Cabinet Member for Housing and Local Services
- Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health
- Southampton PCT
- Southampton Universities Hospitals Trust
- Registered Social Landlords
- Later Years Partnership
- Older Persons' and Disability Network Forum
- Age Concern
- Help The Aged
- Southampton Home Improvement Agency
- Service Users
- Contractors
- Other local authorities

4. Outline Consultation Plan

- Prepare a plan including a balance of written and oral views of those groups and individuals outlined above
- Develop further understanding by members of the Scrutiny Panel through a series of interviews with expert witnesses

5. Outline Project Plan – September 2008 to December 2008 (Report to January 15th Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee)

Meeting 1: (Phase 1 - Sheltered Housing) 4 September, 4pm, CR3

- Providers – What are the emerging outcomes from the review of sheltered housing?
 - a) Introduction to issues relating to independent living
 - b) Sheltered housing review – emerging outcomes
 - Neighbourhoods Directorate

Meeting 2: (Phase 1 - Sheltered Housing & Incentives) 19 September, 4pm, CR4

- Agree recommendations for report to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on Sheltered Housing proposals (OSMC on 9 October)
- Incentives to move house

Meeting 3: Supporting People 7th October, 4pm, CR3

Meeting 4: Supporting People 21 October, 4pm, CR3

Meeting 5: (Phase 2 - Adaptations) 30 October, 4pm, CR3

- Service Providers – Who does what and how? What can improve?
 - Context – Southampton Senior Citizens Charter
 - Communities, Health and Care Directorate
 - Neighbourhoods Directorate – *SCC homes / Private sector*
 - Southampton City PCT
- People who work with Southampton City Council – What can improve?
 - Registered Social Landlords
 - Southampton Home Improvement Agency
 - Contractors

Meeting 6: (Phase 2 - Adaptations) 20 November, 4pm, CR3

- Users and representative groups / Best Practice – How can the experience improve for users?
 - Older Persons' and Disability Network Forum
 - Age Concern
 - Service
 - Seniors Council
 - Site Visit or a presentation from another local authority

Meeting 7: Overview 9 December, 4pm, CR4

- Agree recommendations

Inquiry Manager:

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Performance and Scrutiny Co-ordinator

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Appendix 2 – Outline Project Plan

DATE	MEETING THEME	INDICATIVE TOPIC DETAIL	EVIDENCE TO BE PROVIDED BY
04/09/08	Introduction to inquiry	Background to independent living through housing	Southampton City Council Head of Housing Solutions Commissioner for Supporting People and Adult Care
	Phase 1 – Sheltered Housing	Emerging outcomes from the review of sheltered housing	Sheltered Housing Project Officer
19/09/08	Phase 1 – Sheltered Housing	Agree recommendations for report to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on sheltered housing proposals	
	Phase 1 – Incentives to move	To assess the effectiveness of the current range of incentives offered to people to relinquish council-owned family homes who might benefit from the facilities offered by high quality sheltered housing	Housing Needs Manager Housing Policy Officer Assistant Head of Health and Community Care
07/10/08	The Supporting People Programme		Commissioner for Supporting People and Adult Care
21/10/08	The Supporting People Programme		Commissioner for Supporting People and Adult Care
30/10/08	Phase 2 - Aids and Adaptations	Context; Southampton Senior Citizens Charter Service providers and contractors – Who does what? What can improve?	Head of Housing Solutions Head of Decent Homes Assistant Head of Health and Community Care

20/11/08	Phase 2 - Aids and Adaptations	How can the experience improve for recipients of the service? Best Practice	Assistant Head of Health and Community Care In Touch HIA Contractor Housing Solutions Decent Homes
09/12/08	Agree final report	Approve report for submission to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	

Appendix 3 - Consultation

The following people gave evidence to the Independent Living Through Housing Inquiry:

- Barbara Compton- Head of Housing Solutions, Southampton City Council
- Carol Valentine – Assistant Head of Health and Community Care, Southampton City Council
- Matthew Waters – Commissioner for Supporting People and Adult Care Services, Southampton City Council
- Paul Juan – Private Sector Housing Manager, Southampton City Council
- Lee Simmonds – Sheltered Housing Project Manager, Southampton City Council
- Liz Slater – Housing Needs Manager, Southampton City Council Southampton City Council
- Sue Perry – Project Officer, Southampton City Council
- Simon Thompson – Project Development Officer, Supporting People, Southampton City Council
- Charlie Hislop – Later-Years Partnership Co-ordinator, Southampton City Council
- Bryn Shorey – Head of Decent Homes, Southampton City Council
- Kevin Adams – Manager, Home Improvement Team, Southampton City Council
- Mike Crane – Principal Officer, Housing Solutions, Southampton City Council
- Anna Read – Area Manager, In Touch HIA
- Eddie Leitch – Surveyor, In Touch HIA
- Mark Spencer – Managing Director, Total Care Ltd
- Steve Price – Installations Manager, Total Care Ltd

Appendix 4 – Disabled Adaptations Legal Framework

The council has various duties to provide assistance to disabled people to enable them to move into and out of their homes, to utilise living and sleeping areas within the home and to access cooking, bathing and toilet facilities and to live independently:

- *NHS and Community Care Act 1990* – requirement for the council, acting as social services authority, to carry out a needs assessment and to decide whether services should be provided. The Department of Health Circular LAC(2002)13 on fair access to care services (FACS) describes the general processes of assessment that should be followed.
- *Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970* – requires the council to identify the numbers of disabled people in its area and to publish the help available; and to arrange practical assistance in the home and any works of adaptation designed to improve safety, comfort or convenience. The focus is on arranging assistance – the council does this by administering Disabled Facilities Grants, by acting as a landlord in relation to its own stock and by working with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006* - makes it unlawful for all landlords not to allow or make reasonable adaptations
- *Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996* – sets out the council’s absolute requirement to administer Disabled Facilities Grants to adapt the homes of disabled people. The grant is subject to a statutory means test. The maximum grant is currently £30,000.
- *Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002* – enables the council to give discretionary assistance in any form for adaptations. In Southampton, this includes the Accessible Home Loan and funding for a local home improvement agency.
- *Children Act 2004* – defines authorities’ requirements for supporting children in need, including disabled children
- *Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act 2003* – any community care equipment and minor adaptations needed should be provided free of charge, subject to eligibility and a maximum cost of £1,000.