



Older Person's
Housing Strategy 2009-2014

DARTFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Foreword & contents

FOREWORD BY COUNCILLOR PAT COLEMAN, SPECIAL ADVISOR FOR HOUSING

I have great pleasure in presenting this Older Persons' Strategy for Dartford, along with my colleague, Councillor Ann Allen, Dartford's Older Persons' Champion.

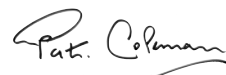


This Strategy has been developed following extensive consultation with stakeholders including Members, relevant Dartford Borough Council staff including supported Housing Officers, Kent County Council, health services, external agencies, housing associations, The Elder's Forum and Resident's Forum. Their valuable input has made this Strategy possible.

This Strategy focuses on services and housing provision for older people, especially those residing in our supported housing units, and aims to ensure that future service provision and housing, is adequate and meets the expectations and aspirations of our residents over time.

People's aspirations change over time and older people, quite rightly, have higher expectations than, say 20 years ago, and our housing service must be able to change and adapt to future housing needs. For example, it is predicted that there will be a greater need for housing that can provide extra care whilst still allowing people to live independently.

We must try and ensure that the next generation of older people have access to good quality housing that meets their needs over time. We hope that this Strategy goes some way to address these issues.



Councillor Pat Coleman
Special Advisor for Housing

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1. Executive summary

1.1 MAIN FINDINGS

1.1.1

The number of older people in Dartford is predicted to rise. This changing population profile will impact on the future housing market locally.

1.1.2

Dartford Borough Council (DBC) is committed to working with its partner organisations to develop a clear vision and supporting strategy for housing related services for older people in the Borough. DBC has formed robust, working partnerships with Kent County Council and the Registered Social Landlord's operating within the borough. There is also a willingness to reach a similar level of collaboration between the West Kent Primary Care Trust and the Council.

1.1.2

Residents' aspirations for accommodation to meet their specialist needs as they grow older and frailer are changing. The Housing Needs Survey estimated that this would result in a higher demand for extra care accommodation by 2016, with a need for 241 units of extra care accommodation from 2006-2009, against a planned supply of 60 units. (Note: this level of demand has not yet been evidenced).



1.1.3

The Council's supported housing stock, although ageing, is well maintained and some schemes are very well designed. There is demand for more two bedroom supported units.

1.1.4

The impact of the Thames Gateway development needs to be fully understood by the Council so that its influence on the availability of land for supported housing development in all sectors, and capacity to shape house prices in the medium to long term is incorporated into relevant strategies and plans.

1.1.5

The Supporting People Programme, funds much of supported housing. The programme carries out regular needs analyses to ensure that Supporting People meets evidenced need and identifies necessary changes in the pattern of services in a timely fashion.

1.1.6

The development of self-directed care will give older people the ability to manage and direct their care in the medium term. This, coupled with a significant increase in the numbers of older people needing care and support in the future, will mean that the Council may need to re-evaluate its model of support in consultation with its partners and stakeholder organisations.

1.2 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

These are key recommendations only. Detailed actions formulated throughout the consultation process and embedded within the Strategy are set out in the Action Plan.

1.2.1

Undertake a surveyor's assessment of DBC's supported housing stock to establish its capacity to remain fit for purpose for the next 30 years.



1.2.2

Ensure that DBC's supported housing stock meets current energy efficiency standards by 2012.

1.2.3

Determine through the stock condition survey if any supported housing scheme would be difficult or costly to adapt to meet the changing needs of the frail elderly and/or are difficult to let. If this is the case examine if the scheme could be decommissioned to meet other housing needs.

1.2.4

Review the Council's allocations policy for its supported housing stock.

1.2.5

Consider the feasibility of the Council developing further support schemes for older people living independently in the community.

1.2.6

Monitor the development of retirement villages within all housing sectors.

1.2.7

Consult with supported housing residents on the action plan contained in this Strategy.

2. Introduction

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1
The UK is vastly becoming an ageing nation; by 2026 it is estimated that there will be over 2.3 million more older person households in the UK.

Dartford like the rest of the UK follows this trend, for instance the Council's 2006 Housing Needs Survey predicts that future growth in the borough will be concentrated in the older age groups, with the proportion of the population who are retired rising to 21.4% by 2016.

2.1.2
Housing has an important role to play in the lives of older people. Housing which has appropriate adaptations and which offers emergency support can greatly improve quality of life and give the opportunity for older people to remain independent for longer. On the other hand inappropriate housing can leave older people feeling isolated and increase the risks of falls.

2.1.3
In realisation of the importance of housing for older people and the rate at which the older population is growing, the Council in partnership with the Consultancy Company has developed this Older Persons Housing Strategy. This Strategy represents the findings of the 2006 Housing Needs Survey and the 2008 Consultancy Company's review of the Supported Housing Service.

2.2 AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

- 2.2.1**
Through these findings this Strategy aims to:
- Review current and future requirements for:
 - Council provided supported housing
 - Non-council specialist housing for older people
 - Review how housing can best compliment related care needs.
 - Produce an action plan.



3. Methodology

3.1
Building on the findings of the Housing Needs Survey undertaken in 2006 which identified emerging trends in housing in Dartford. The development of this Strategy focused on desktop analysis of additional data, particularly that supplied by the Council's partners, focus groups and housing forum. Analysis considered the range of specific issues concerning housing and related care issues for older people.

3.2
The following activities were also undertaken:

- Reading/research to identify relevant policy,

- planning and research documents at national, regional and local level.
- Desktop research to provide a 'snapshot' of where Dartford is currently positioned and its capacity and capability to respond to changing demographics and local developments.
- Interviews with senior housing managers and key staff in DBC.
- A series of focus groups held jointly with Gravesham Borough Council with representatives from a variety of organisations including:
 - Registered Social Landlords operating in the area.

- National Health Service agencies and Kent County Council.
- Voluntary sector advocacy and support organisations operating in the area.
- A housing forum with key council elected Members and Supported Housing Officers and staff to review possible strategic directions for the future of the Council's housing related services to older and vulnerable people.
- Consultation with the Dartford Elders' Forum and Dartford Residents' Association.

4. The population profile of Dartford

4.1 POPULATION GROWTH

4.1.1

The 2001 Census recorded Dartford's population as 86,000. However, the most recent estimate of the population is 91,300, which was forecasted in the Council's 2006 Housing Needs Survey and Housing Market Assessment (HNS). The survey predicts that the population of Dartford will rise steadily in coming years reaching 108,700 in 2016, a 19% increase over the 2006 estimate.

4.1.2

Growth is predicted due to new developments within Dartford which will provide housing and jobs. The Borough is at the centre of the major redevelopment of the Thames Gateway and within 'Kent Thameside' (Dartford and Gravesham boroughs) which is intended to have more than 11,000 new homes by 2015. Key developments in Dartford are the new international station at Ebbsfleet and over 7,000 new homes being built at Eastern Quarry in the next 10-15 years.

4.1.3

The Housing Needs Survey predicts that by 2016, the number of 45-64 year olds will increase by 22% and those over 65+ by 20%. The survey also anticipates that inward migration from older people will be higher than in comparable local authorities.

4.1.4

Subsequent analysis by Kent County Council (KCC) demographers suggests that increases across these 'older age groups' will not be uniform. The greatest surge is anticipated as being amongst the very elderly, that is people aged over 85, where a 42% increase is anticipated between 2006 and 2016 from 1,200 to 1,700. This is a consequence of increased life expectancy and may mean that people have a long period of retirement when they are independent before the impact of the ageing process means that they

	2001	2006	2011	2016	Change 2001-16
0-15	18,200	18,500	20,200	21,500	+3,300
16-24	9,000	10,400	12,200	12,700	+3,700
25-44	26,900	28,400	30,200	33,100	+6,200
45-64	19,500	21,000	23,700	25,700	+6,200
65+	12,400	12,900	13,900	15,600	+3,200
Total	86,000	91,300	100,200	108,700	+22,700
% Change		+6.2	+9.7	+8.5	+25.4

Figure 1: Population Age Band Forecasts, Dartford Borough Council, 2001-16
(Source: Housing Needs Survey 2006)

need support with daily living and care services. The Housing Needs Survey highlights the resource demands associated with 'very elderly' people and this is reinforced in the government's recent publication, 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for an Ageing Society, 2008', which states, "social care expenditure would need to increase more than threefold (325%) to meet demographic pressureif we do nothing to change the current housing situation".

4.1.5

The Housing Needs Survey predicts that the growth rate for older age groups will be matched by the forecast increase for people in the 16-24 year old age band, this group is newly household forming and have substantially different needs and aspirations than those in older age groups.

It is possible that the figure for 16-24 yr olds is an underestimate as it does not take into account recent migration to the UK of economically active citizens of newly admitted European Union member states. As Figure 1 shows similar substantial growth is anticipated

in the numbers of people aged 25-44, who are the most economically active.

4.1.6

The proportion of residents from black and minority ethnic groups is close to the regional average, at approximately 8%, but lower than the national average of 13%.

4.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

4.2.1

Although relatively affluent in UK terms, Dartford falls below the average for the South East region on a number of significant socio-economic measures, for instance the average weekly wage is lower than the South East and house prices are below the regional average. Population density is also unusually high and is three times greater than the regional average. There are also a few areas of relatively high deprivation in Dartford, notably Swanscombe and Joyce Green.

4.2.2

Dartford's relative lack of affluence when compared with Kent and the South East is reflected in the statistics on self funding. Fewer older people in Dartford who require support from KCC Adult Social Care to live independently (personal care and shopping services) are self funding than in other parts of Kent. The average for the county is 60% self funding but in Dartford the figure is less than 10%.

4.3

HEALTH INDICATORS

4.3.1

Disparities in health between areas appear greater in Dartford than in the rest of Kent. There is a higher incidence of cardiac and pulmonary disorders and asthma, and life expectancy is also lower in Dartford than for Kent as a whole (for females it is below the national average). It is therefore a cause for concern that the Dartford area has fewer district nurses and health visitors for its population than the remainder of North West Kent. Fortunately redressing this balance is a short term improvement target for the North West Kent Primary Care Trust.

The incidence of dementia in Dartford is not increasing as a percentage of the population but the actual number of cases is rising as a consequence of people living longer because its occurrence increases with age.



5. Analysis of current provision of support and housing for older people in Dartford

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1

For many older people support services and housing come hand in hand. Support services such as disabled adaptations or visiting carers can greatly improve someone's quality of life in their home and can also prevent someone having to move to costly care or nursing accommodation.

5.1.2

This section outlines the general support that is available to older people, the types of specialist accommodation in the borough and the partnerships Dartford Borough Council has with housing and support providers.

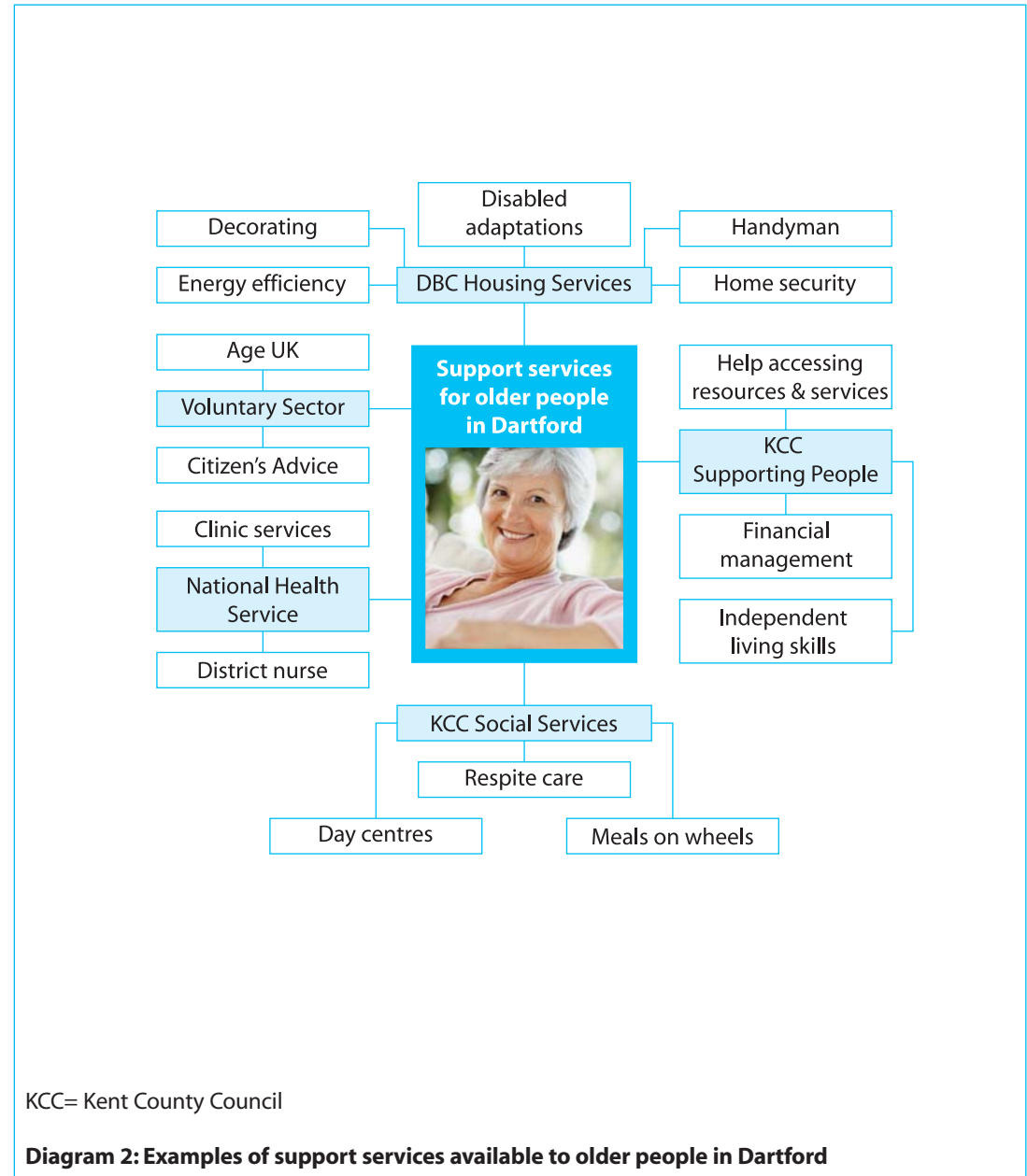
5.2 SUPPORT SERVICES

5.2.1

In Dartford there are a number of services which support older people ranging from health and day care centres to adaptations for the home and handyman schemes. These services are provided by private, public (such as Dartford Borough Council, National Health Service, Kent County Council) and voluntary sectors.

Service provision by the private sector falls into two broad categories:

1. Provision which is secured through the client paying the private provider direct for services which they have agreed to purchase
2. Provision which is commissioned from the private sector by (usually) public sector agencies which have outsourced the delivery of their provision e.g. in Dartford domiciliary care is funded by Kent County Council who commission an arms' length organisation to undertake the delivery to the client.



5.2.2

Information booklet

The Council's housing service seeks to promote support services and healthy lifestyles amongst Dartford's residents and has jointly produced a booklet with organisations in West Kent. The 'Living life to the full in West Kent' booklet provides information on a variety of issues which affect older people, from 'keeping healthy and well' to 'dealing with life changes' and 'financial, legal and housing matters'. The Council has distributed booklets free of charge to libraries, supported housing schemes and to other organisations in Dartford.

5.2.3

Support provided by Dartford Borough Council:

Disabled Adaptations

Disabled adaptations can play an important part in reducing the chance and fear of falls, thereby helping people stay independent for longer.

Following an Occupational Therapy assessment by Kent County Council, financial help is available for disabled adaptations to allow a person with a disability to continue to occupy their home safely.

The Council will fit and cover the complete cost of adaptations for its tenants (the cost is supported through the Housing Revenue Account). Other residents in the borough can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

The Council's budget for DFG's in 2008/09 was £340,000. In recent years the budget has not been fully spent, for example in 2007/08 when £271,000 was disbursed on some 30 projects from a total budget allocation of £325,000.

However, the forecasted spend for 2008/2009 is £335,000. The principal reason for the under spend in 2007/2008 was a shortage of Occupational Therapists in the County Council's Adult Social Care team to carry out the assessments necessary to secure grants. This is a national problem and not unique to Kent. However, from 2008/09 an Occupational Therapist was seconded to the Care Management Team at KCC and this has led to more timely grant processing, reducing the waiting list.

Fuel poverty

The Council recognises the needs of older, frailer people for adequate heating and ventilation and works with the Energy Savings Trust to reduce fuel poverty in all properties in the borough.

The Council is currently partnered with British Gas to deliver cavity, loft and wall insulation to its tenants' properties.

Help with practical jobs around the home

The Council provides a free Handyman Scheme for its tenants who have a disability or are aged over 65. The Handyman will undertake small practical jobs around the home. Council tenants who are aged over 70 (and have no one living in the property under 70) can also apply to have one bedroom decorated every 5 years.

For other residents in the borough the Council grant aids (alongside Kent County Council) a private organisation, the Home Improvement Agency, 'In Touch', (part of the Hyde Group, a large social housing organisation) to work in Dartford. In Touch supports older and vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes through the provision of subsidised services, such as:

- A handyman service for routine household maintenance and DIY tasks

- A gardening service
- Home security advice and fitting services

Dartford Elders Forum

Dartford Borough Council facilitates a successful Elders Forum for Dartford residents over 55. The Forum aims to provide a two-way channel of communication between attendees and the Council. Meeting between 3-4 times per year the forum hosts a wide range of informative presentations, promotions and consultations both from internal officers and external partner organisations.

Community Safety

The Council's Community Safety Unit work to reduce the fear of crime among older people within their community safety programmes. A copy of the Community Safety Strategy can be found at www.dartford.gov.uk/communitysafety

5.2.4

Support provided by Kent County Council:

Social Services

The County Council provides a full range of care services to residents living in their own homes. Older people living independently are more likely than other age groups to be using its care services. These include domiciliary care services, day centres, meals on wheels and respite care.

Supporting people – Floating Support

Floating Support is a free service for people in all types of tenures. It is delivered by a number of different organisations and is paid for by money provided by the government to the Supporting People Team within Kent County Council.

The aim of floating support is to help people who are in difficulties remain independent through providing housing related support such

as help with financial management, life skills, being independent at home, finding a doctor and accessing other necessary services, etc. The aim of support is to prevent problems that can often lead to hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness.

5.2.5 Support provided by National Health Service:

Health Services

Older people access health services through:

- Their General Practitioner and practice based nurses. These include specialist clinics for specific conditions, practice nurse clinics and repeat prescription services.
- The West Kent Primary Care Trust (PCT) which provides a range of locally delivered health services, as well as funding the GP service. Key services include the district nurse service, in-patient, walk in and clinic services in community hospitals.
- Acute hospital services.

5.2.6 Support provided by the Voluntary Sector:

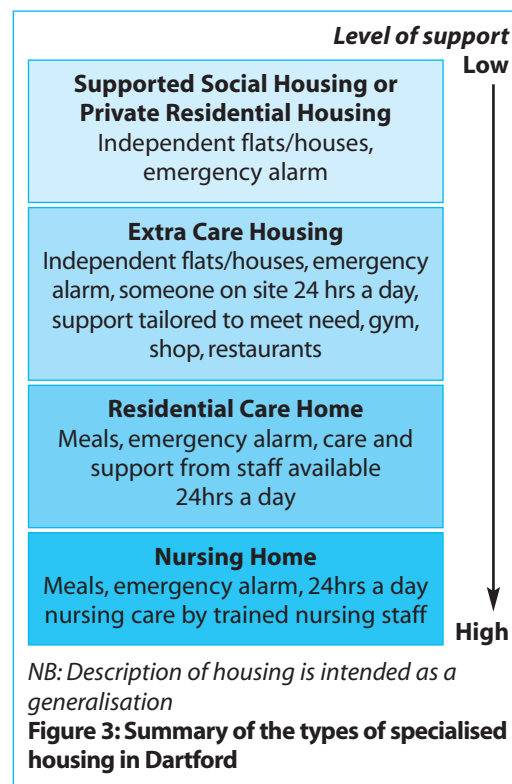
There is a lively voluntary sector in Dartford which include the Citizen's Advice Bureau (which is part funded by the Council – £120,000) and other support services such as Carer Support and Age UK.

5.3 SPECIALIST HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The diagram below summarises the types of specialist housing in Dartford and their generalised level of support:

5.3.1 Supported social housing

In Dartford there are approximately 646 units of supported social rented housing. The Council is the largest provider of this accommodation and has a stock of 598 units in 14 schemes. A further 48 units are provided by Registered Social



Landlords (Dartford Almshouse Charity offer 36 and the English Churches Housing Group 12).

5.3.1.1 Dartford Borough Council's supported social housing

The Council's supported housing is predominately flats located on ground, first and second floors supplemented by bungalows and three houses. Bedsit units have been phased out and all properties are scheduled to achieve the decent homes standard by 2010.

For tenants who live in supported housing, the Council has a community alarm service which operates through Invicta Care. There is also a team of eight full time Supported Housing Officers, part funded by Kent County Council

through the Supporting People budget. The Supported Housing Officer's duties include:

- Maintaining contact with residents and preparation of support plans which are reviewed every six months
- Carrying out needs and risk assessments
- Giving advice on any tenancy sustainment issues
- Liaison with other care agencies

In 2006 the Council's Landlord Services (including Supported Housing) was inspected by the Audit Commission, the results and key recommendations can be found in the appendix. Later in 2008 Dartford's Supported Housing was reviewed by KCC Supporting People and received an A grade. This put the Council in the top 10% of the 129 providers in Kent.

Resident feedback on the supported housing service provided by the Council is generally positive. The Council's supported housing stock is in good repair and several projects, such as Wardona Court are thought to be exceptionally well designed and located. This may be a contributory factor to the relatively high number of new lettings being made to people who were not previously resident in the borough, i.e. 21.7% of new supported accommodation lettings in 2007/08; however the majority of new residents appear to move to the area because of a family connection.

Despite the positives of the schemes, people's expectations change over time, and technical developments create new challenges as well as opportunities. The Council's supported housing residents are dissatisfied with the communal shower facilities provided in some of the schemes. The shared facilities are perceived as less hygienic and offer insufficient privacy to meet 21st century expectations. At present the Council is also unable to provide individual level access showers for all residents in the schemes. The rapid expansion in the use of ride on scooters or

buggies as a mobility aid means that residents of supported accommodation now need on site facilities where they can charge the vehicles and some want to be able to use them in internal passage ways as a means to accessing their home. Such concerns are indicators of the changing nature of life for the elderly and illustrate the way in which buildings which were fully fit for purpose twenty years ago become less suitable over time.

5.3.2 Extra care housing

Extra care housing is designed to support older people living independently in self-contained accommodation, whilst also providing necessary care and support. Residents come from the following need groups:

- Medium levels of dementia
- Vulnerable individuals (e.g. people who fall regularly or who are frail)
- Those with disabilities

The concept draws on developing technologies such as Telecare and other forms of on-line support. The Council's registered social landlord (RSL) partners report that extra care is very effective for dementia sufferers who have not yet reached the point of losing their mobility and still have the ability to feed themselves.

Dartford currently has one 40 unit scheme in Wilmington, which opened in April 2009. Dartford and Sevenoaks councils share nominations to the scheme with 20 units per authority.

5.3.3 Care homes

There are currently twelve registered care homes in Dartford Borough, providing 235 bed spaces for the elderly and a further five schemes providing 93 bed spaces for older people with mental health problems. A further ten schemes provide bed spaces for people with learning disabilities, but only a small percentage of these will be accessed by older people.

5.4 PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

5.4.1 Kent County Council (KCC)

The Council has a strong partnership with Kent County Council. There are effective links and joint working across both councils and each values the contribution made by the other.

5.4.2 Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)

Links with the 17 RSLs operating within the borough are sound and the preferred development partner scheme (the North Kent Housing Partnership) has been in existence since 2003 and continues to work well. It should be noted however, that the preferred partnership arrangements do not necessarily preclude other housing associations or housebuilders from developing in Dartford.

Given that the vast majority of new social housing development in England is now undertaken by RSLs, both they and appropriate health service agencies need to develop partnerships and increase their capacity to collaborate with each other.

5.4.3 Care and Health

The West Kent Primary Care Trust acknowledges that it has been slow to build partnerships with other local agencies, particularly local authorities. KCC's domiciliary care agency also reported issues in its relationship with the Primary Care Trust arising from the limited support which is provided by the district nursing service for hospital discharges. There are additional tensions with KCC adult services around the threshold for nursing care for patients with high level needs, which KCC believes is too high, and a reluctance which the PCT perceives in KCC care teams to accept referrals of elderly clients with mental health difficulties. Frequent structural changes, re-

organisations and financial difficulties within the West Kent PCT have overloaded the leadership team and they have not had the capacity to progress partnership working. It is an issue that the PCT recognises must be addressed.

However, there are good relationships in place between the Supported Housing Officers and local health agencies, including the acute hospitals, to support the admission and discharge of residents.

5.4.4 Priorities for the Council and its partners

Representatives of the Council's main partners who were consulted on the development of this Strategy identified the following priorities for this area of their work:

- The Council should develop a vision for its work with older people which it can share with local people and partner agencies. Its role in supported housing would then develop in line with a clear statement of intent.
- The care and health service agencies recognise that they have not yet developed sufficient skill and knowledge to commission services which meet the needs of local elderly and frail people in the most effective and cost efficient ways. Currently they are lagging behind other areas and need to focus on catching up.



6. The broader picture - future trends and demand for housing

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1

This section examines future trends in housing and support for older people and the demand for housing in relation to identified need in Dartford.

6.2 FUTURE TRENDS

6.2.1

In recent years the policy driver for older people's housing is to ensure that as they become frailer, there are alternatives to residential care where they can retain as much independence as possible through living in well designed and appropriately supported accommodation. This emphasis on independent living is rooted in the UK national experience: only 18% of people aged 80 plus live in a residential care unit.

6.2.2 Own home

It is the expectation of central government that most older people will choose to stay in their own home if it can be adapted to meet their changing needs through the installation of a stair-lift, widening doorways to give wheelchair access, making the bathroom large enough for a wheelchair to turn in, installing grab rails and providing aids and equipment.

The new construction standards proposed in, 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for an Ageing Society', are predicated on this approach and require builders of residential property to ensure that new homes are easily adapted to support people with mobility and other physical challenges.

This national approach is also expressed more locally in Kent County Council's vision, 'Active Lives 2007-2016', which seeks to "influence the building industry, so that new-build homes are designed to enable people to live in them, even if they become progressively more disabled, without making major adaptations [lifetime homes standard]." It plans to achieve this influence through working with its housing partners through Local Development Frameworks. Other proposed actions within Active Lives include:

- Further developing innovative schemes to support people in their own homes with new technology which gives added security and confidence, such as telecare.
- Working with the health service to extend recuperative care and rehabilitation services across Kent.
- Ensuring that people are able to make informed choices about where they live and the services which they receive.
- Giving access to preventative domiciliary care services.
- Providing more intensive home care.
- Planning holistically for housing and support across all tenures and developing best practice.
- Seeking to maximise the outcomes of Disabled Facilities Grants by developing a database of properties adapted at public expense so that these can be matched against the needs of individuals and managed moves promoted.

However, the paper is intentionally visionary and as such is "unconstrained by detailed practical considerations" (page 6) including funding. Currently no budget provision has been made to support the implementation of these proposed actions.

6.2.3

Retirement Villages

Retirement Villages provide independent living through to nursing care on a single site. Endorsed by the UK government, retirement villages were initially developed in the USA, but had mixed success. However alternative community based models are increasing in popularity in Australia and New Zealand.

This approach was, in part, anticipated by the private sector property development companies in the UK which introduced a new form of house ownership on sites where all residents must be aged 55 plus. However, the properties in such schemes have a poor re-sale value with property owners failing to recover their initial investment and the sector did not experience the rise in property values which characterised the housing market prior to the recent economic downturn. Consequently it is probable that developers will be cautious of developing further schemes of this type in the future and will consider this experience to be a poor indicator of likely commercial success for a 'retirement village' product.

6.2.4

Outcome focused accommodation

In July 2008 reference was first made in public policy documents to the desirability of developing an 'opportunity age' framework. This flows from the success of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda with its five key aims:

- Being healthy,
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

'Every Child Matters' has been instrumental in raising standards in services for children in England. Central Government has already extended the reach of this agenda as 'Every Citizen Matters' and may implement an outcome focused policy framework which will shape the way in which councils deliver services to older people and empower them within their communities. It is likely that such an initiative will set targets for the availability, quality and delivery of supported housing and related support services.

6.2.5 Self directed care

The Department of Health is championing the delegation of care budgets to services users to give them the independence of procuring and managing their own tailored care packages. Although this approach has many strengths, there are also associated risks as elderly and vulnerable residents may be unable to manage their care packages effectively opening them to exploitation by providers.

6.3 HOUSING DEMAND IN DARTFORD

6.3.1

Mirroring the national expectations that most older people would prefer to stay in their own home, KCC Adult Social Services report that more frail elderly people live alone in Dartford than in the county as a whole and that this trend is observed in the private ownership and rented sectors as well as in social housing.

6.3.2

The desire of older people to remain in their own homes was also reflected in the Housing Needs Survey (2006) which asked respondents to consider what might be the future demand

	Private Market	Affordable Sector	All Sectors
Existing households	14	307	321
In-migrating households	390	584	974
Total	404	891	1,295

Figure 5: Anticipated demand for supported housing in 2016 in Dartford (Housing Needs Survey, 2006)

for accommodation among their families in Dartford. The majority of older people expressed a preference for remaining in their own homes for as long as possible and, when necessary, receiving support at home.

However, when the views of other family members are included a somewhat different pattern of preferences emerges, perhaps based on a desire to ensure that older relatives were receiving regular skilled support, for example, the demand was for:

- 30.8% Council/HA supported housing;
- 20.6% private supported housing;
- 21.7% care home accommodation (with or without nursing).

34.3% of households indicated that their older relative could live with them in the future. However, around 70% of these considered that their home would need adaptation or extension to make this practicable.

The responses to the Housing Needs Survey also show a higher level of anticipated inward migration by older people than in comparable local authorities and across Kent. This is also reflected in the high number of supported housing tenancies which are let to out of borough applicants. This is a trend which needs to be monitored to assess its ongoing impact on demand in Dartford.

6.3.3

Forecasted supported accommodation need for 2016

The Housing Need Survey estimated the potential requirement for supported accommodation for 2016, where there are interventions to assist residents to live independently in their own homes, the estimates were:

- 2,730 extra care units
- 14 residential/nursing home units
- 119 units of independent accommodation with external support

Supported accommodation

The Housing Needs Survey estimated that 1,295 units of supported accommodation would be required, 891 in the affordable sector and 404 in the private sector by 2016. The survey recommended that this be met by further provision of 307 units in the affordable sector (Council or RSL owned property) and 14 units in the private sector. The number of units needed in the affordable sector is less than the predicted requirement because of the turnover, that is, changes in the occupiers of the properties.

Extra care

The Housing Needs Survey estimated that 241 units of extra care accommodation would be required between 2006 and 2009, and 2,730 units from 2006 to 2016. This seems extremely high however, and demand has not run at this

level to date. Demographic data suggests that given the forecast aging population there will be an increasing need for this type of accommodation. However, the relatively new nature of this type of accommodation makes it difficult to predict demand with confidence. Other factors are also shaping future demand such as the move to self-directed care. This gives care and support service users including older people the opportunity to arrange and manage their own support at home and will inevitably impact on future demand for extra care accommodation to some degree.

In order to address some levels of unmet need, Kent County Council and its local authority partners are currently developing 11 extra care

schemes across Kent through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) 'Better Homes, Active Lives,' and the Council is also entering into a new partnership agreement with KCC to provide an additional 40 units of extra care accommodation in Manor Brook in Dartford.

Limitations to estimates

It must be noted that a proportion of the accommodation requirement contained in these figures from the Housing Needs Survey, will be addressed by turnover in the occupiers of the existing supported stock but the survey does indicate a need to invest in new developments, across both the statutory and independent sectors to meet anticipated demand.

However it is important to note that these figures are only estimates and relate to all people who need support with daily living in the community and not exclusively to older people. In addition, to date there has been no robust evidence to suggest that the scale of forecasted need is justified.

6.3.4 Demand for general needs accommodation:

An advocacy agency, Citizens Rights for Older People, has observed in Dartford a shortage of rented property in the private sector which is suitable for occupation by older people, particularly bungalows and other easily accessible homes.

7. Key recommendations and actions

7.1

This Strategy's review of supported housing and housing related services has shown that the expectations and aspirations which people have for the later years of their lives are changing rapidly. This means that no strategy can be future proofed against anything other than a short time horizon. Consequently the actions identified are linked to two time horizons to give maximum flexibility. This Strategy will be reviewed regularly during its lifetime and new actions can be added if necessary to meet the changing environment in which the Council is operating.

7.2

SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM RECOMMENDATIONS – 2009-2014

7.2.1

Undertake a surveyor's assessment of the Council's supported housing to establish its

capacity to remain fit for purpose for the next 30 years.

7.2.2

Improve the levels of energy efficiency within the supported housing stock to meet current and anticipated future standards.

7.2.3

Use the findings of the surveyor's assessment of the supported housing stock to consider whether there is potential to meet both the changing housing needs of older people and some of the pressures on the supply of affordable housing in Dartford. Some of these pressures include:

- Kent County Council reports that there is a need for more accommodation in Dartford which is suitable for people with learning and/or physical disabilities and wishes to extend the work of the Joint Assessment and

Referral Process (JARP) into this area.

- The demand for social housing from younger single people including care leavers.
- Offering a greater number of two bedroom supported properties.
- Provision of general needs affordable accommodation.

7.2.4

Undertake a review of the allocation policy for supported housing to address two policy issues arising from the review of housing for older people:

- Should the Council maintain its current level of allocations to out borough applicants?
- Given health gains in the population, the national rise in the pensionable age for women to 65 and increasing life expectancy should the Council raise the age threshold for supported housing tenancies?

7.2.5

Consult with residents of DBC's supported housing stock on the actions contained in this Strategy.

7.3

LONGER TERM RECOMMENDATIONS – 2015 AND BEYOND

7.3.1

For many older people on limited incomes maintaining a privately owned property becomes more difficult as they grow older. Dartford Borough Council will look at other options to provide support to older people.

7.3.2

The Council will need to monitor the development of retirement villages within all housing sectors. Central government policy now favours the development of retirement villages "in which older people will want to live". This expression of support is not currently being incentivised through any funding streams for social housing but pump priming money may become available in the future.

Further detailed actions and timescales are contained within the attached comprehensive Action Plan on page 24.



8. Acknowledgements

Dartford Borough Council would like to thank all those who participated in the research and consultation work underpinning this Strategy including Dartford Borough Council staff and colleagues from Kent County Council, West Kent Primary Care Trust, registered social landlords, members of Dartford Elder's Forum, Dartford Resident's Association and local voluntary groups.

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9. Appendix

RESULTS OF AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION – LANDLORD SERVICES

The Audit Commission inspected The Council's Landlord Services in 2006 and assessed the service provided to be fair, a one-star service that has promising prospects for improvement.

The following positive aspects were identified:

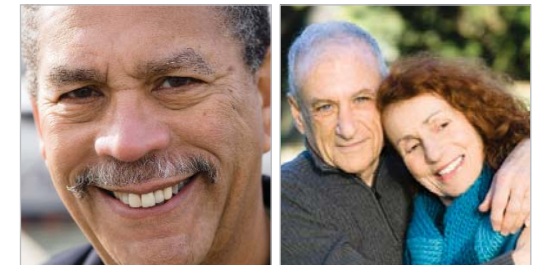
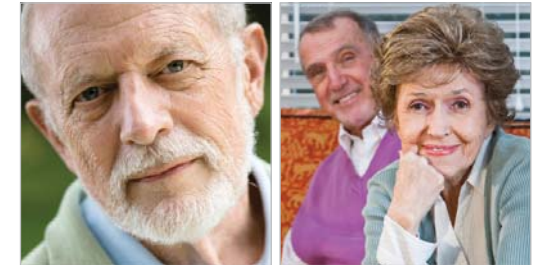
- The service is generally easy to access.
- Progress has been made in consulting with minority groups.
- The condition of the housing stock is understood and the decent homes standard should be achieved by 2010.
- Repairs to occupied and empty homes are done on time, and nearly all homes have up to date gas safety certificates.
- Income collection is improving for both rents and service charges.
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a priority and staff work closely with partners to prevent ASB and tackle it when it arises.
- Estates generally appear tidy and clean, free of graffiti, dumped rubbish, abandoned cars and other eyesores.
- Residents have been involved in local schemes focused on practical issues such as the Gunn Road regeneration project, and tenant service monitoring is being developed.
- Major cost savings have been made on staff and repairs which has resulted in efficiency gains in the last three years.

Areas for improvement included the following.

- The Council does not systematically use feedback to hear and take account of what its customers are saying about the service.
- The diversity of customers is not understood and services take little account of diverse needs.
- Individual communications and other needs are not adequately recorded.
- The repairs appointments system is not working properly.
- The adaptations service keeps some people

waiting too long and needs reviewing with partner organisations.

- Debt advice is very basic and is unlikely to meet all users' needs.
- Performance on ASB is not measured and adequate records are not consistently kept.
- Cleaning of estates is not consistent with some problems both inside and outside the flatted blocks, and the inspection regime is not sufficient to deal with these issues.
- Resident involvement in policy and decision-making is over-reliant on a central forum and needs to be broadened in a demonstrably representative way.
- Construction and maintenance services are all procured traditionally with schedules of rates or input based contracts, and there is no use of modern procurement methods.



Action plan

Number	Action	Target date	Completion date	Lead section	Progress
Objective – Provide good quality housing that people want to live in					
1	Identify likely cost of undertaking a survey of the supported housing stock and include within future years budget planning	January 2010		Head of Housing, DBC	
2	Consider whether supported housing stock could be used to meet other housing needs following feedback from the surveyor's assessment	2011		Head of Housing, DBC	
3	Carry out a review of the Council's allocation policy for supported housing following feedback from the surveyor's assessment	2011		Housing Options and Advice Manager/ Housing Policy & Development Manager	
Objective – Ensure that the supported housing stock meets energy efficient standards by 2012					
4	Carry out improvements to the supported housing stock as part of the Council's carbon Management Programme including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loft insulation • Installation of passive lighting controls • Adopt an energy policy • Organise energy awareness training for staff • Negotiate new gas contract 	2012		Housing Maintenance Manager	
Objective – Ensure that housing meets the needs of the elderly now and in the future					
5	Enable the provision of 40 units of extra care accommodation in partnership with Kent County Council	2012		Housing Policy and Development Manager/ KCC	
6	Set up a register of available land that may be suitable for supported housing development	December 2009		Housing Policy and Development Manager	

Number	Action	Target date	Completion date	Lead section	Progress
Objective – Ensure that housing meets the needs of the elderly now and in the future					
7	Take account of supported housing needs in the development of the Housing Strategy	October 2009		Housing Policy and Development Manager	
8	Monitor the development of retirement villages within all housing sectors	2009-2014		Housing Policy and Development Manager	
9	Set up an implementation group to monitor the progress of the action plan	December 2009		Housing Policy and Development Manager	
10	Work collaboratively with KCC on the development of an Older Persons' Strategy for Later Life	Ongoing		Housing Policy & Development Manager/ KCC	
11	Ensure that Dartford is represented on KCC Older Persons' Housing Forums	Ongoing		Housing Policy & Development Manager/ Supported Housing & Finance Manager/KCC	
12	Work in partnership with KCC on the production of an Older Persons' Handbook for Kent	June 2009		Housing Policy & Development Manager/ Supported Housing & Finance Manager/KCC	Completed and included within the Strategy (5.2.2)
13	Review the proportion of homes that are built to Lifetime Homes Standards	September 2009		Planning Policy Manager	
14	Produce a debt advice booklet for use by all Dartford residents	July 2009		Housing Policy & Development Manager	
15	Consult supported housing residents on the actions contained within the Strategy	July 2009		Housing Policy & Development Manager	
16	Consider the feasibility of developing further support schemes for older people living independently in the community	April 2009-2014		Housing Policy & Development Manager	

DARTFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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