

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Housing Services Strategy relates to the Council's approach to the provision of Housing Services for Older People. The Strategy sets out how this element of the service is delivered by Housing Services, including links with other services both internally and externally.
- 1.2 Housing Services for Older People is delivered by the Older Peoples Services Section and is an important front-line service which covers a wide-range of activities. It includes services delivered by Scheme Managers, sheltered housing, the Council's twenty-four hour emergency alarm Careline Service, and Housing Services' involvement with the Epping Forest Social Club Committee. In addition, it refers to planned service improvements following the completion of the Best Value Service Review of Housing Services, and the implementation of Supporting People.
- 1.3 This Older People Service Strategy has been formulated in consultation with representatives of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, and includes information contained in Housing Services policies and procedures. The Strategy was approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder on xxxxxxxxxx.

2. Background to Housing Services for Older People

- 2.1 Housing Services for Older People are managed from the Careline Centre in Loughton, which is not open to the general public. The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) who is responsible for the service is based in offices above the Centre. The Assistant Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) deputises for the Housing Manager in all aspects of the Section.
- 2.2 To ensure communication on policy, procedural and performance matters, quarterly meetings with Scheme Managers take place, chaired by the Housing Manager. In addition, meetings are held for Careline staff. The Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations) attends most meetings and the Head of Housing Services attends periodically.

3. Coverage

- 3.1 This Housing Service Strategy covers the Council's;
- a) Older People's Housing Support Services;
 - b) Sheltered housing;
 - c) Designated dwellings for older people on housing estates;
 - d) The Careline Service including;
 - (i) grouped schemes;
 - (ii) dispersed alarms;
 - e) Social Clubs;
 - f) Assessments of sheltered housing applicants;
 - g) Jessopp Court (Part 2½ accommodation for frail older people);
 - h) Supporting People
 - i) Best Value Service Development Plan
 - h) Care in the Community;
 - i) Collection of concessionary TV licence payments; and
 - j) Ordering and distribution of cleaning supplies.

4. Relationships with Other Documents

- 4.1 Housing Services for Older People forms part of the Council's overall Housing Strategy which is set out in the Council's Housing Strategy.
- 4.2 The Council has adopted its Housing Charter which sets out, in simple, clear and precise terms, the Council's general approach to all its Housing Services.
- 4.3 Housing Services have detailed policies and procedures for most of its functions, including Housing Services for Older People that give important guidance to staff.
- 4.4 Following the completion of the Best Value Service Review of Housing Services in March 2004, the Service Development Plan, which is monitored by Members, includes many improvements to Housing Services for Older People, including Scheme Managers becoming non-resident and the diversification of the Careline Service.
- 4.5 Housing related support services provided by the Older Peoples Services Section are funded by Supporting People. There is a contract in place between the Essex County Council Administering Authority and the Council for the provision of these services. In addition, as part of the Scheme Review process, a Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) document has been submitted and the standard required to confirm future funding has been achieved.
- 4.6 Important statistical performance information is available and is monitored at quarterly Performance Management meetings chaired by the Head of Housing Services.
- 4.7 Information on Housing Services for Older People is contained within the Tenants Handbook. Certain Conditions of Tenancy relating solely to tenants in sheltered accommodation are contained within the latest Tenancy Agreement, which came into effect in January 2002.

4.8 Leaflets on Services to Older People and sheltered accommodation will be distributed to around 1,220 tenants living in both sheltered accommodation and designated dwellings for the older people on housing estates who receive the Service. These will also be available for those who are considering moving to sheltered accommodation. Incorporated within these leaflets is a clear explanation of the Scheme Manager's role. These will also be distributed to staff from outside agencies to enable them to understand the responsibilities of the Scheme Manager. All new tenants are given a "Welcome Pack" when they sign up for their new sheltered housing tenancy. In addition, tenants in sheltered accommodation will be given a leaflet on health and safety advice. A separate Tenants Guide is provided to those living at the Part 2 ½ scheme, Jessopp Court, Waltham Abbey which is referred to at Paragraph 8.7 of the Strategy.

4.9 Information packs on the Careline Service will be sent to all residents within the District, who are considering applying for a dispersed alarm. These will also be sent to the Social Care Department, Hospitals, Day Centres etc. in order to further promote the service.

5. Aims and Objectives

5.1 The aim of the Council's Housing Services Strategy on Older People's Housing Services is:

"To ensure that the well-being of all older tenants living in sheltered accommodation and designated dwellings for older people is carefully monitored, and that all users of the Careline Service receive an efficient response to their calls giving them an increased sense of security and peace of mind".

5.2 The following Section explains how the aim will be met under four headings:

5.3 Sheltered Accommodation

a) Scheme Managers in sheltered accommodation will visit, or account for all tenants, on every duty day, completing the visit declaration form;

b) When Scheme Managers at sheltered accommodation are absent for less than a week the Careline Centre will call, each day, all those tenants previously nominated by the Scheme Manager as being "at risk";

c) If any Scheme Manager at sheltered accommodation is absent for one week or more, the Housing Assistant (Older Peoples Services) or a Careline Operator will visit the scheme and undertake a full round accounting for all residents;

d) Scheme Managers will assist residents to live independently, offering housing related support and encouraging communal social activities;

e) Scheme Managers will liaise with outside agencies on behalf of residents;

f) Scheme Managers will contact the tenant's relatives in the event of illness or accident; and

g) Tenants living in sheltered accommodation will be encouraged to use the Careline alarm service in emergency situations. The equipment will be tested by the Scheme Manager on a regular basis, with all tests being recorded;

5.4 Area Schemes for Older People

a) Through the call category system (set out in Paragraph 8.2.2) Scheme Managers who cover designated dwellings for older people will ensure that all older tenants are visited in accordance with their need;

b) Those living on area schemes will be provided with housing related support, assisted to live independently, with their health and general well being monitored;

c) Scheme Managers will contact the tenant's relatives in the event of their illness or accident;

d) All Tenants will be encouraged to use the Careline alarm service in emergency situations, which will be tested by Scheme Managers on a regular basis; and

e) Scheme Managers will encourage all their tenants to support one another, act as a community, and promote social activities.

5.5 Epping Forest Careline

a) Careline staff will endeavour to ensure that all calls received by the Careline Centre are responded to within target times, and that all dispersed alarms are installed within two-days of the application being received. These targets are monitored under Housing Services' quarterly Performance Management regime;

b) All calls received over the alarm system, and telephone conversations, will be tape recorded as a safeguard to both service users and the Council.

5.6 Other Housing Services for Older People

a) The Older Peoples Services Section will visit potential tenants who have applied for sheltered accommodation and have been referred by the Housing Needs Section for assessment;

b) The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) will attend the Older Persons Purchasing Panel, which forms part of the Essex County Council's Social Care assessment process, when the Council is concerned that a greater level of care is required for one of its older tenants; and

c) The Epping Forest Social Club Committee (referred to in Paragraph 8.6) will be supported with the provision of premises for Social Clubs at the Council's sheltered housing schemes, subject to consultation with residents. The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) will attend their six monthly meetings.

6. Statutory Requirements

6.1 The relevant key statutory requirements for elderly services are as follows:

- a) Housing Act 1985;
- b) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- c) Environmental Protection Act 1974;
- d) Human Rights Act 1998;
- e) Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- f) Noise Act 1996;
- g) Public Health Act 1936; and
- h) Disability Discrimination Act 1996 (three stages of implementation)
- i) Data Protection Act

7. Client Consultation, Information & Involvement (Statutory Requirement)

7.1 The way in which tenants will be consulted, informed and involved with regard to the Council's policy on housing services for older people is as follows:

- a) Consultation with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation;
- b) Consultation with the Sheltered Forum
- c) Consultation with Residents Associations;
- d) Encourage the setting up of Tenants Associations in sheltered housing schemes;
- e) Information to tenants in publications e.g. Housing News, Annual Report;
- f) Posters on the Careline Service displayed throughout the District;
- g) Distribution of leaflets on Older Peoples Services and Careline;
- h) Liaison with the Citizens Advice Bureau;
- i) One to one consultation with tenants;
- j) Consultation with tenants at various meetings at the schemes; and
- k) Changes in policy;

8. General Principles

8.1 Section 5 of the Housing Services Strategy sets out the aims and objectives of older peoples housing services. This Section details the general approach taken on the delivery of the service under the following headings:

8.2 Services Provided by Scheme Managers

8.2.1 The Council currently employs 11 full time Scheme Managers at sheltered and grouped schemes for older people and 3 Scheme Managers who visit older tenants living in designated dwellings for older people on general needs housing estates (e.g. Ninefields, Waltham Abbey; Oakwood Hill, Loughton etc.).

- 8.2.2 The service assists older tenants to live as independently as possible. Tenants living in sheltered housing are visited by the Scheme Manager on every duty day. When they are absent the Careline Service monitors calls from tenants and calls each day those who are designated by the Scheme Manager as being “at risk”. Tenants living in designated properties for older people on estates are monitored by a Scheme Manager who visits in accordance with the call category system. In accordance with this procedure the Scheme Manager undertakes a risk assessment of tenants to assess if they are either “high” “medium” or “low” risk. “High” risk tenants are visited approximately twice weekly, “medium” risk tenants visited once each fortnight, with “low” risk tenants being visited once every four weeks. All area scheme properties are linked to the Careline Service.
- 8.2.3 Records of residents are maintained detailing those who are absent. All Scheme Managers complete a visit declaration form on a monthly basis detailing all visits made to residents during the period. This is submitted to the Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services who undertakes “spot checks.” If anyone is not accounted for, then checks are undertaken to ensure the well being of the tenant. Scheme Managers liaise with relatives, Essex County Council’s Social Care, and other agencies on behalf of tenants when appropriate.
- 8.2.4 Scheme Managers do all that is possible to encourage tenants to support each other, act as a community, and promote social activities.

8.3 Sheltered Housing

- 8.3.1 The Council has 13 sheltered housing schemes which are for people who are over the age of 60 years, capable of living on their own, but feel more secure with support from the Scheme Manager. The level of support depends upon the needs of the residents; advice is offered when needed and communal activities encouraged. All sheltered housing properties are linked to the Careline Service.
- 8.3.2 One-bedroom flats are the most common type of accommodation, although there are some studio flats. All sheltered housing schemes have door entry systems installed and reception areas are covered by CCTV. Communal facilities generally include a laundry room, guest room for visiting friends or relatives, communal lounge and kitchen for social activities and special events.
- 8.3.3 Scheme Managers are normally on duty during normal working hours between Monday and Friday. When off duty the scheme is linked into the Careline Centre.

8.4 Designated Dwellings for Older People on Housing Estates

- 8.4.1 Scheme Managers also visit older tenants who live in designated dwellings on general needs estates. Around 870 properties are designated as suitable for occupation by an older person. These residents are visited by 3 Scheme Managers. In addition, Scheme Managers in sheltered accommodation visit some designated properties for older people which are located near to their schemes, with the residents often being invited to social activities in the complex. Scheme Managers often arrange coach trips for their residents, particularly where communal facilities are not as readily available.
- 8.4.2 All properties covered by the Scheme Manager are linked directly into the Careline

Service. Scheme Managers are provided with mobile 'phones. All staff are provided with personal attack alarms for their own safety.

8.5 Supporting People Scheme Reviews

8.5.1 "Supporting People" is a major Government initiative, which introduced a new policy, and funding framework for supported housing and ancillary welfare services from April 2003. These services include housing related support delivered by Scheme Managers and the Careline Service.

8.5.2 An "interim" contract is in place between the Council and Essex County Council for the provision of its support services. Following the completion of scheme reviews, (which are undertaken by the Essex County Council Supporting People Team to ensure services meet the requirements of the interim contract) a "steady state" contract will come into force.

8.5.3 Scheme reviews are undertaken every three years, although the Quality Assessment Framework, which is a detailed service analysis, must be submitted on an annual basis and currently assesses four core objectives as follows:

- Health and safety
- Protections from abuse
- Fair access, diversity and inclusion
- Needs assessment and support planning

8.5.4 The Quality Assessment Framework core objectives increased in 2005 to six, and will increase further to seventeen in 2006. Guidance on the additional core objectives is about to be published by Essex County Council.

8.5.5 In 2004, all of the Council's support services were Reviewed and found to meet at least the minimum requirements under each core objective to ensure continued funding.

8.6 Sheltered Forum

8.6.1 The way in which Housing Services involves, consults and provides information to tenants is set out in the Housing Service Strategy on Information under Client Consultation, Information and Involvement. The District-wide Tenant Participation Agreement explains the Council's commitment to tenant participation and how it will enable its tenants to participate in the delivery of their housing service.

8.6.2 The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation comprises two members of each recognised tenants associations in the district, and the Leaseholders Association. Regular meetings are held with the Federation to consult on housing policy matters and to seek member's views. The outcomes are reported back to the local associations and Members take them into account when making decisions.

8.6.3 The Council is committed to consulting with tenants on housing issues that are important to them. Over recent years attempts were made to set up tenants associations within the sheltered schemes, but there was only a few residents at each scheme who were

willing to become involved.

8.6.4 It was therefore decided to set up a Sheltered Forum comprising of a small number of residents from each scheme who could put forward their views on behalf of all residents on housing services offered to older people.

8.6.5 The first meeting of the Sheltered Forum was held in August 2004. Meetings are now taking place on a quarterly basis and are well attended.

8.7 Epping Forest Careline

8.7.1 The Careline Centre based at Parsonage Court, Loughton was set up in June 1984 and had around 2,400 properties linked into the service as at 1 April 2005. Connections include all the Council's sheltered housing schemes and designated dwellings for older people. In addition, there are 900 dispersed alarms linked in, which are one-off installations for those living in the private sector for which they, (or in some cases Social Care) pay an annual fee which is agreed annually by the Council. The current fee from April 2005 is £140.

8.7.2 Careline is a twenty-four hour, 365-day service dealing with around 60,000 calls each year and offers valuable support to Scheme Managers. The Centre is equipped with the PNC 3 "Vision" technology, with the latest "Communicall" two-way speech system installed in the grouped schemes. In addition, there is a back-up facility located at one of the Council's sheltered housing schemes in Waltham Abbey.

8.8 Social Clubs

8.8.1 The Council supports five Social Clubs providing accommodation at the following sheltered housing schemes:

- a) Frank Bretton House, Ongar;
- b) Jubilee Court, Waltham Abbey;
- c) Parsonage Court, Loughton;
- d) Hyde Mead House, Nazeing; and
- e) Buckhurst Court, Buckhurst Hill.

8.8.2 The Social Clubs are run by volunteer organisers and helpers for housebound local residents. The organisers visit residents who apply for membership to assess their suitability. Social Clubs offer social activities, day trips, and generally enables older people to have an enjoyable day out.

8.8.3 Older People Services staff visit Social Clubs on a regular basis to offer support.

8.8.4 The Epping Forest Social Club Committee meets on a six monthly basis and is attended by the Council's Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services).

8.9 Accommodation for Frail Older People (Part 2½)

8.9.1 The Council has one "Part 2½" scheme for frail older people in the District - Jessopp Court, Waltham Abbey which is staffed by Essex Social Care.

8.9.2 Although the Council has nomination rights to Jessopp Court, all properties are allocated through the Social Care Purchasing Panel which meets on a weekly basis to consider

funding for older peoples services.

8.9.3 The difference in service provision at Jessopp Court in comparison to sheltered housing is that Essex County Council's Social Care staff are on duty twenty-four hours, and a meal is provided to residents (who have an assessed need) in the dining room by the Meals Service at lunchtime.

8.9.4 The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) attends the Joint Management Team for older peoples services which meets monthly. Discussions about Jessopp Court are a standard agenda item.

8.9.5 The Older Peoples Services Section undertakes assessments of applicants for Jessopp Court.

8.10 Assessment of Applicants for Sheltered Accommodation

8.10.1 All applicants who apply to live in sheltered accommodation are visited and assessed by the Older Peoples Services Section prior to an offer being made. A copy of the assessment is included in the new tenants Tenant Support Plan.

8.11 Care in the Community

8.11.1 The Council works in partnership with other agencies in order to achieve a multi agency approach to Care in the Community. The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) attends the Older Peoples Joint Management Team which consists of a representative from all agencies meeting on a monthly basis in order to work with service users, carers, to ensure that services for older people are accessible and meet most peoples needs.

8.12 Collection of Concessionary TV Licence Payments

8.12.1 All Scheme Managers, as part of their duties, collect the annual fee of £5 from all older tenants living in sheltered and designated dwellings for older people, who qualify for the concessionary TV licence and are under the age of 75 years.

8.13 Ordering and Distribution of Cleaning Materials

8.13.1 The Assistant Manager (Older Peoples Services) manages the ordering and distribution of cleaning supplies for the Council's sheltered housing schemes. These supplies are stored in a garage at Parsonage Court, Loughton. An audit of the supplies is undertaken annually.

9. Best Value Considerations & Action Plan

9.1 Following the completion of the Best Value Service Review of Housing Services in March 2004, the Service Review Panel set up to oversee the Review agreed a Service Development Plan for Housing Services. The actions in the table below (some of which are included in the Service Development Plan and Section 8 of this Strategy) will be undertaken in the future by Housing Services in order to enhance Older Peoples Housing Services:

Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Resource Implications
Encourage the setting up of at least one additional Tenants Association at a sheltered housing scheme in accordance with the Tenant Participation Strategy and District Tenant Participation Agreement to promote and implement Tenant Participation	Tenant Participation Officer	April 2006	Existing resources
Explore the possibility of setting up at least one further Social Club;	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	April 2006	Existing resources
Introduce repairs reporting service out of hours at the Careline Centre;	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Property & Resources)	September 2005	Existing resources
Promote the use of newly available dispersed alarm peripherals with new and existing users;	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	June 2005	Existing resources
Work towards improving Supporting People performance scores;	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	April 2007	Existing resources
Purchase and implement new Careline disaster recovery back-up system	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	May 2005	Existing resources
Increase the number of non-resident Scheme Managers by two by 2007	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	April 2007	Existing resources
Convert the former Scheme Manager accommodation at Jubilee Court, Waltham Abbey & Parsonage Court, Loughton	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Property & Resources)	April 2007	Existing resources

Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Resource Implications
Subject to the outcome of the feasibility study and obtaining of Planning Consent, undertake installation of canopies above sheltered housing scheme main entrance doors	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Property & Resources)	April 2007	Existing resources
Supporting People Co-ordinator to be in post to administer the Supporting People contract and oversee the improvement of Supporting People services	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	May 2005	Existing resources
Complete the feasibility of undertaking a major improvement scheme at Wickfields, sheltered housing scheme in Chigwell.	Head of Housing Services	May 2005	Report to Cabinet
Explore greater use of Careline Corporately	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)	April 2006	Existing resources
Promote the provision of Careline monitoring to other providers	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)	April 2006	Existing resources

10. Future Developments

10.1 The following “SWOT” analysis identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the areas covered by the Service Strategy.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable and committed staff • Robust policies and procedures • Integrated housing system • Charter Mark accreditation • ISO 9001:2000 accreditation • Good relationships with tenants • Good tenant consultation framework • Comprehensive performance monitoring • Council-owned Careline Centre • Multi-agency approach • Healthy Housing Revenue Account 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading the disaster recovery arrangements for Careline (April 2005) • A proportion of Careline funding being provided by Essex County Council.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced sickness due to Scheme Managers becoming non-resident • Improved repairs reporting service to customers out-of-hours through the Careline Centre • Additional income from dispersed alarm peripherals • More older people remaining in their own home and therefore privately renting dispersed alarms • Working towards Improving Supporting People Scheme Review Scores • Converting sheltered housing bedsits into flats when appropriate • Greater Corporate use of Careline • Provision of Careline service to other providers • Improved business continuity 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of demand for properties set aside for occupation by older people which as a result are being de-designated • More older people being cared for at home and therefore not requiring sheltered accommodation • Costs of Careline exceed income • Possible loss of Supporting People funding

11. Resourcing the Strategy

- 11.1 Staff delivering this Strategy in 2004/5 were 23.50 FTE. Following the change in post titles and the upgrade of the Careline Supervisor's post, this included the Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) Assistant Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services), 14 Scheme Managers 2 FTE Housing Assistants (Older Peoples Services) and 5.5 FTE Careline Operators.

11.2 The projection for the number of staff required to deliver the Strategy for 200/6 and the following three years is detailed in the following table:

Staff Resource Projections			
Posts	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Older Peoples Services Staff	23.5	24.5	24.5

11.3 The following table details the estimated proportion of staff time within Housing Services spent on Older Peoples Housing Services for 2004/2005:

Posts	FTE
Head of Housing Services	0.05
Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)	0.2
Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	1.0
Assistant Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	1.0
Scheme Managers (Estate Based)	3.0
Scheme Managers (Sheltered Housing)	11.0
Careline Operators	5.5
Housing Assistant (Older Peoples Services)	2.0
Total	23.75

12. Key Targets & Performance Monitoring

12.1 The Council will monitor performance and compliance with this Strategy through quarterly performance management meetings with the Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) ensuring the following target times are met:

Task	Actual 2004/05	Target
% of calls responded to within 30 seconds (including routine calls from Scheme Managers and test calls)	98.9%	97%
Average (seconds) to respond to calls	5.6 Seconds	10 Seconds
Installation of dispersed alarms	Within half day	Within 2 Working Days
Number of dispersed alarms installed	65 per quarter	40 per quarter
Contractors repairs response in accordance with service agreement targets	89.7%	90%

13. Reviewing the Strategy

13.1 The Strategy for Older Peoples Services will be reviewed in consultation with the Tenants' and Leaseholders Federation before April 2007.