

Solihull MBC

INDEPENDENT LIVING AND EXTRA CARE HOUSING STRATEGY

DRAFT [FOR CONSULTATION]

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FOREWORD

This is Solihull's first Independent Living and Extra Care housing strategy. Its main focus is on older people, adults with learning disabilities, mental health needs and physical and sensory disabilities.

The strategy sets out how the Council will help older and vulnerable people to continue to live independently in their current homes wherever this is possible.

The Council accepts that there will always be some people who need to be in residential care, but it wants to reduce the occasions when people feel that there is no option to going into care.

This will require the provision of readily accessible and reliable advice to people on their options and choices, and an expansion of available practical help for people to overcome problems with their homes.

Housing related support will be provided to qualifying customers with the aim of promoting independence, choice, control and self directed support. Where longer – term support is required this will be provided in a way which seeks to maximise the customer's independence.

As some people will need or wish to move to other independent accommodation the strategy also aims to increase the amount and variety of homes to which people can move to in order to continue to live independently.

There is a need for a wide range of provision from individual homes through to purpose built Housing With Care schemes. This is a priority within Solihull's draft Local Plan, which will influence the number and type of new homes in the coming years.

The strategy will operate in difficult financial circumstances. The Council's resources are limited and must be focused on those most in need. This will mean that in many cases customers will have to pay more or find their own solutions.

The Council aims to work with partner agencies including voluntary and community organisations to develop a strong local network of advice and practical assistance to enable older and vulnerable people to get the information and support they need to continue live independently.

Through strong partnerships, leveraging – in new forms of funding, and through maximising the potential of its land and buildings the Council will work to expand the availability of good quality independent homes to meet the needs of Solihull's growing and increasingly diverse population.

There will now be a three month consultation on this draft strategy, involving a wide range of partner agencies and customers. Through this the Council hopes to gain support for the approach set out here, together with the ideas and commitment from respondents on how we can work together to deliver our objectives.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope and Purpose of the Strategy

This strategy sets out a vision for how the provision of housing and housing - related support services for vulnerable adults should develop within Solihull.

It is relevant to people who are over retirement age, people aged 18 and over who are vulnerable due to learning disabilities, mental health needs and physical or sensory disabilities, and to some people aged under 18 where transition into adulthood is a key issue.

The strategy identifies the Council's current knowledge of unmet need, for each of these groups and known gaps in current provision in order to:

- inform the commissioning of support services to enable people to continue living in their own homes wherever possible and desirable
- inform decisions on investing in the provision of appropriate accommodation, self-contained or otherwise, for vulnerable people who need or wish to move
- inform the way that available resources are applied to pursue priorities for meeting demand.

It is the aim of the Council to bring together organisations in all sectors which can combine to improve the range of local services on offer to vulnerable people and to best meet their needs and aspirations within the scope of the available resources, both private and public.

1.2 Objectives of the Strategy

There are two main objectives:

- to enable vulnerable people to continue to live independently in their own homes through provision of support services
- to encourage provision of a wider range of suitable and affordable independent accommodation for people who need or choose to move

1.3 Format of the Strategy

The strategy is in two parts:

- I. Part 1 (this document) sets out the purpose, scope and objectives of the strategy, its policy and financial context, priorities and arrangements for commissioning, delivery, monitoring and review
- II. Technical Appendices (separate document) contain detailed information on current provision, needs analysis and identification of the gaps and future requirements for the four key client groups (people with learning disabilities, people with mental health needs, older people and people with physical and sensory disabilities) as advised by commissioners

2. CONTEXT

2.1 Strategy and Policy

This strategy builds on local strategies which are produced by the Council and partner agencies within the Solihull Partnership

Solihull Sustainable Communities Strategy (2012) has a vision for a Solihull in 2018 '*where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer, and more prosperous*'.

Solihull Housing Strategy (2009) includes objectives which aim to:

- Produce a range of homes that meets the diverse needs and aspirations of the community and allow people to exercise choice in where they live
- Ensure that homes are secure, in good repair, are affordable to keep warm, have modern amenities and are suitable to the occupant's needs.
- Enable people to live independently in their own homes, with support where required, wherever this is possible in line with the wishes of the individual

Whilst there is a need for long-term support for some people, for many, short-term one-off interventions are sufficient. The approach is therefore to make targeted interventions at the lowest effective level in order to enable people to live as independently as possible within the community.

The forthcoming revision of the strategy (July 2012) will include independent living as one of the its stated strategic objectives.

Putting Solihull People First is one of the 'Top 5' priorities for the Council through which it aims to develop a new care and support system based on a new Care Pathway. The pathway will map out a new process for providing people with adult social care services, from their first request for support to receiving the advice or care that they need.

The aim is to provide people with a single point of contact and improve the management of their care to help them maintain as much control, choice and independence as possible. It will seek to ensure that people, irrespective of illness or disability, are supported to:

- Stay healthy and recover quickly from illness
- Exercise maximum control over their own lives
- Live independently and stay safe
- Sustain a family unit and avoid family members taking on inappropriate caring roles
- Participate as active, equal citizens both economically and socially
- Have the best possible quality of life and maintain maximum dignity and respect

The new pathway will introduce significant change to Solihull's traditional model of care which has tended to create over-reliance on residential care, nursing homes and day care facilities, many of which are directly provided and managed by the Council.

This strategy aims to assist in reducing this reliance and in providing for a continuum of needs ranging from assistance to help people remain in their own homes to the provision of desirable alternative accommodation options for those who cannot or do not want to continue to live in their current accommodation.

All of the actions contained within this strategy are aimed at encouraging and helping people to maintain or regain wellbeing and independence. They seek to avoid or delay the need for more intensive care and support and minimising the need for people to enter institutional care.

Fundamentals of Putting Solihull People First

- **Universal services:** ensuring that anyone who requires care and support can find the services they need in their community.
- **Preventative services:** helping people to maintain their health and well being for longer.
- **Choice and control:** giving people as much control as they want over decisions which affect their care.
- **Building social capital:** recognising that individuals can receive care and support from their friends, families, neighbours and community groups.

2.2 Demographics¹

The population of Solihull is 208,400 and is projected to increase by 11% to 229,500 by 2030.

The 'headline' trend which will have a particular influence on the commissioning of services in the future is the projected increase in the proportion of the population and the proportion of the Borough's households which consist of people aged over 65, and particularly those who are 85 and over.

At the present time 20% of people are aged 65 and over. By 2030 it is projected that this will have increased to around 55,900 people (24% of the total)

The 85+ age group will increase from 2.8% of the total Solihull population today to 4.6% in 2030. This is particularly significant in light of the fact that 20% of the 80+ age group are likely to suffer with dementia, learning disability and age –related health issues.

There were 80,930 households in Solihull as at the 2001 census and of these 25% were headed by a person aged over 70, and 5% by someone over 85. According to the ONS the number of households in Solihull is expected to increase to just under 100,000 by 2033 with households headed by a person aged 65 or over due to make up 36% of this total.

The ethnicity of Solihull's population is changing with a rapid growth of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population, albeit from a low base. The number of people from a BAME group increased by 98% between 2001 and mid-2009, compared with overall population growth of 3%. The BAME population in Solihull is proportionally much higher in younger groups².

2.3 Health Indicators

Average life expectancy across Solihull is 81.6 years compared to the England average of 80 years. However men in the more affluent parts of Solihull live, on average, 10.6 years longer than people in the three most deprived wards in North Solihull, and for women the gap is 8.6 years. In Solihull's most deprived wards the prevalence rates for longer term conditions, the incidence of premature deaths and unhealthy lifestyle behaviours are all higher than the national averages.³

¹ Unless specified all population data is taken from ONS mid-year population estimates 2010, published 21st March 2012

² Taken from Solihull People & Place, prepared by Solihull Observatory

³ Solihull Draft JSNA, 2012

Nationally, around 2% of the population have a learning disability (4000 people in Solihull) and approximately 0.4% of the population are classed as having a severe learning disability (800 people in Solihull). The number of people aged 65 and over predicted to have a learning disability is set to increase by almost 40% up to 2030 and as people with learning disabilities grow older they are likely to have a range of other health needs, such as dementia, at an earlier age.

It is estimated that in Solihull around 10,000 have a moderate disability and 3000 a severe disability. The incidence of disability is predicted to increase gradually at 2 – 3% per year to 2030, with the increase concentrated amongst older people.

Prevalence of mental illness in Solihull reflects the national picture of one in six people being affected at some point during their life. All conditions are predicted to increase by between 4.0% and 4.5% over the period to 2030. Mental health conditions are almost three times more common in the wards in the North of Solihull, suggesting an association with deprivation

The total population aged 65 and over with a long term limiting illness is projected to increase by 41.2% to 25,799 people in 2030 and the largest overall increase will be amongst people aged 85 and over⁴.

Increasing life expectancy means that the period of time that people are likely to spend in a state of chronic ill health and disability at the end of life will increase alongside a potential increase in individuals who live with more than one long-term condition.

2.4 Economy

Solihull has a relatively buoyant local economy. Its location and high concentration of businesses in growth sectors should mean that recovery from the recession is relatively early and strong.⁵

However the economic position and prospects of Solihull residents are variable. The LEA identifies the need for continued intervention to tackle 'worklessness', low skills and deprivation in Solihull – particularly in the 'North Solihull' regeneration area, but also in other locations where 'worklessness' rates are high and amongst groups who appear to be particularly disadvantaged economically; residents with a disability in Solihull experience unemployment rates higher than the local, regional and national averages⁶.

There is a very wide range of household wealth in Solihull, with a clear spatial difference between the North Solihull regeneration area, which includes three wards which are multiply – deprived, and the rest of the Borough. However, there are households outside the regeneration area which have limited income and wealth and many of these are headed by older or disabled people.

The overall economic position of older households will be influenced by the variation in pension provision. ONS Pension Trends 2010 show that only 43 per cent of men and 37 per cent of women have a company or personal pension, so the majority of older people must rely on the state pension. As a result there is a significant income divide amongst those aged 65 and over. In addition relying on supplementing pensions with savings has become less feasible due to low interest rates.

⁴ Department of Health's Projecting Older people Population Information System (POPPI) Version 7, updated 15th June 12

⁵ Solihull Local Economic Assessment (LEA)

⁶ Solihull Local Economic Assessment (LEA)

These factors have led to an increasing number of older people facing economic difficulty. The future prospects are no better given the withdrawal of final-salary pensions and the increase in personal debt which many people carry into retirement.

2.5 Housing Market

Solihull is a popular place to live but it has a housing market which is often difficult to access, with high levels of owner occupied and often high – value homes but a relatively small social sector and little in the way of intermediate tenure housing.

78% of homes in the Borough are owner occupied and 44% of these owned outright. This is a higher proportion than for the region and country as a whole and reflects the older age profile of the Borough and the high levels of prosperity in some parts of Solihull. However, many of these owners may be ‘asset rich, cash poor’.

There is a strong demand for housing in the Borough. This is reflected in higher than average house prices and rapidly increasing demand for social housing. There is a severe shortage of homes to buy and to rent at prices which are affordable to households with average incomes and below and there is a lack of effective housing choice for many established households which would wish to move.

There are three broad housing market areas in Solihull, each being part of a larger market which extends into neighbouring districts. These are the North Solihull regeneration area (Chelmsley Wood, Smith’s Wood, Kingshurst & Fordbridge), the urban west (Solihull, Shirley, Olton, Elmdon) and the rural fringe (Knowle, Balsall Common, Meriden). These areas have significant housing market differences including tenure profile, house prices, housing type and age and condition of stock.

The nature of the owner –occupied sector varies spatially with generally less home ownership and lower value homes in the North Solihull regeneration area. However household incomes tend to be lower in this part of the Borough so homes are not significantly more affordable to local people.

There has been a long term decline in the size of the social rented sector which now provides just over 13,000 homes (15% of the housing stock), of which 10,553 (80%) are owned by the local authority and 20% by housing associations. Of the homes in Council ownership 51% are flats and most (72%) are located in the North Solihull regeneration area.

The private rented sector is concentrated in the south and west of the Borough. Rent levels are generally higher than elsewhere in the West Midland Metropolitan area and market demand is strong.

The Council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) estimated the demand for an additional 2,147 units of accommodation in Solihull between 2006 and 2011 of which 52% needed to be social rent and a further 11% intermediate housing. In relation to households having one or more members with a special need the SHMA found them more likely to be living in homes that are unsuitable for their needs, and less likely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market.

2.6 Housing Conditions

Whilst the condition of the Borough’s housing is generally good, a sizeable proportion in the private sector falls short of acceptable standards in terms of fitness, repair and suitability:

- around 25% of private homes are likely to be in substantial disrepair
- approximately but 13% are likely to have health and safety hazards and of these around 5% are likely to be serious

Many homes in Solihull do not reach present day standards of energy efficiency. Where the occupant is on a low income it often results in fuel poverty⁷ and can result in ill-health or even 'excess' winter mortality. In Solihull excess winter mortality was estimated to be 87 people during 2010/11. Solihull's home energy efficiency and affordable warmth strategy, *'Keeping out the Cold'* aims to target advice and assistance on the most vulnerable people in the least fuel – efficient homes.

Many residents have problems with their home as a result of age, disability or long term limiting illness impacting on their ability (both physically and financially) to undertake works to keep their homes in satisfactory condition. The need for investment in advice and assistance to home –owners to enable them to remain in decent homes and to adapt their home to changing needs will increase as the elderly population increases and as the proportion of the population with disabilities rises.

In some cases the changing needs of the occupant mean that their current home is so unsuitable that moving is the only feasible option. Again, higher proportions of older and / or disabled people will increase demand for affordable purpose – built housing.

⁷ The government considers a household to be in fuel poverty if they have to spend in excess of 10% of their net income on heating costs to keep a house comfortable. In March 2008 it was estimated that there were 9,091 households living in fuel poverty in Solihull, 10.5% of total households in the borough.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 Overall Strategic Objectives

This strategy is founded on the principle that people will be helped to continue to live in their current home wherever possible, and if this is what they choose.

As stated at 1.2 above, it has two main objectives:

- to enable vulnerable people to continue to live independently in their own homes through provision of support services
- to encourage provision of a wider range of suitable and affordable accommodation for people who need or choose to move

The strategy recognises that there is a continuum of dependency, from those who require only advice or simple assistance through to those who require substantial support to be able to live independently.

Many residents have problems with their homes as a result of age, disability or long term limiting illness which impact on their ability (both physically and financially) to undertake works to keep their homes in satisfactory condition.

In some cases the changing needs of the occupant mean that their current home is so unsuitable that moving is the only feasible option.

Those people who cannot live independently even with support may require residential care (which is beyond the scope of this strategy). However, people should not have to move out of their home and into residential care because of problems which could be overcome with a reasonable level of investment or support.

The Council therefore seeks to support the provision of a range of services and accommodation choices which are suitable to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of customers.

The headline requirements for additional housing identified through the strategy are as follows:

- 100 units of accommodation for people with learning disabilities up to 2026 with 92 units required over the next 5 years. Most of these homes will need to be for rent and a third will need to be suitable for people who also have a physical disability.
- 30 units of grouped accommodation for people with mental health needs to replace Ipswich Walk and to meet the needs of other people with long term vulnerabilities, plus the need for 5 units of supported accommodation per year to enable people to move out of inpatient rehabilitation services (part of this will be met through the re-provision of Ipswich Walk and turnover of existing supported units)
- Additional homes which are suitable for older people across the borough and particularly in the South and rural areas. These will be required to meet the needs of self funders as well as those needing 'affordable housing so a mix of type and tenure will be required.
- There are no identified requirements for new units of accommodation for people with physical and sensory disabilities; the need for specialist supported accommodation for this group will be considered as part of the development of larger housing-with-care schemes with the overall aim being to meet the needs of adults with physical and sensory disabilities by supporting them in their own homes.

Further information on identified need for vulnerable client groups is set out in section 3.4 and in the technical appendices.

The housing – related support services which are included in this strategy will provide preventative support to those with lower needs thus reducing higher dependency in the future.

3.2 Helping People to Live Independently in their Current Home

The first objective of this strategy is to support people to remain independent and able to continue to live in the home that they currently live in wherever possible and where this is what they choose.

This will minimise the occasions when people feel - or are advised - that they have to move when in reality a reasonable level of investment in their property or personal support can enable them to remain at home. This is not only in line with the wishes of most people but is also usually the more cost effective solution.

This is aimed at reducing reliance on long –term support and rehousing wherever possible, particularly where this would involve a move from independent living to residential care.

The approach will be to provide only as much help as is needed for as long as is needed.

The housing – related services which are currently offered by the Council, Solihull Independent Living (SiL) and other partner agencies fit within this framework as shown below.

3.2.1 Universal Services

The Council and partner organisations will continue to improve and extend ‘**universal services**’ which provide good information and sound advice to people (and those who help them) so that they can understand what assistance is on offer and what their choices are within their available resources.

Housing – related services	providers
Information and advice on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housing and other personal debt • home repairs • home adaptations • keeping warm • keeping safe • Safe and Sound service • tenants’ rights • housing options • benefits and financial advice • homelessness prevention • finding an alternative home 	www.solihull.gov.uk Solihull Connect, SCH Contact Centre Solihull Independent Living (SiL) Social Care One Front Door external advice agencies

These services will provide people with the ability to make informed choices and determine their own affairs. In many cases they will be all that a customer needs.

There are several agencies which provide information and advice, notably the Council, SiL, SCH, Citizens Advice Bureau, Age UK and other third sector partners. Recent examples of change include:

- An information portal, led by a Voluntary Sector organisation, has been established. This gives people easy access to information on personal budgets, the services that can be purchased, and a step by step guide on the choices available

- Solihull Independent Living has brought together disparate sources of advice to provide a better information source for people seeking advice on repairs and adaptations
- Sources of advice to vulnerable people on heating and insulating their homes have been co-ordinated and improved

The service model toward which Solihull is working is one in which all service users will go through a **single point of contact**, allowing information and advice on personal support and property services to be given in the first instance. There will be a comprehensive directory of care and support available to all residents to assist them to make informed choices about how to meet their care and support needs; this will also meet the needs of those who are able to fund their own support but need advice and assistance to identify what is available.

In advance of this the Council and partner agencies will continue to:

- ensure that web-based information is as accessible informative as possible, with adequate links between the sites of different agencies
- find new and more effective ways of reaching people, for example through the health, retail and third sectors

3.2.2 Rapid Response

Whilst the condition of the Borough’s housing is good overall, a sizeable proportion in the private sector falls short of acceptable standards arising from under investment in repair, often due to the inability of older person households to afford the maintenance required.

It is important that reliable help is available at short notice to people who are experiencing acute problems which may prevent them from living safely and securely in their homes. Assisting people to overcome small problems at an early enough stage will often prevent a crisis developing and ensure that people are able to manage independently for longer.

Included here will be intensive short term support for people discharged from hospital or already in the community.

This will assist people who just need ‘a little more help’, to stay independent for as long as possible, including home repairs and adaptations, helping to maintain homes and gardens.

Housing – related services	providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness prevention • Emergency rehousing if homeless • Emergency repairs • Fast-tracked home adaptations and minor works • Prioritised response to ASB/ harassment • Provision of emergency heating • Provision of telecare • Toughening home security 	SCH SiL Social Care One Front Door Homecheck scheme Third sector

There is a strong adult safeguarding theme here; protecting vulnerable people from avoidable harm, from abuse and from neglect.

The Council and partner agencies provide a raft of services which can help people quickly and decisively, including:

- immediate advice and assistance to people who are threatened with homelessness or who are homeless, in priority need (for example older people and those with disabilities) and require help to secure accommodation
- quick help for people who feel that they cannot stay in their home due to serious disrepair, heating failure or anti social behaviour or harassment
- quick repairs and minor home adaptations for people who have a difficulty in living in their home, particularly where this facilitates discharge from hospital
- installation of home security measures and preventative work to reduce hazards in the home which may result in falls or other problems

Recent examples of change include:

- the expansion of advice services which prevent homelessness by Solihull Community Housing, including a money advice service which assists people who are at risk of losing their home through debt
- the development of 'fast – track' delivery of repairs and minor home adaptations by Solihull Independent Living (SiL) to help as many people as possible as quickly as possible.
- an annual Winter Warmth campaign run by the Council in partnership with Age UK which provides advice to help people keep warm affordably together with emergency assistance for those at risk

3.2.3 Reablement

The redesign of adult social care is dependent on robust re-ablement pathways which support hospital avoidance, hospital discharges and community services. Reablement is a service which can offer up to a 6 week free intensive period of care and support, helping people to regain their independence.

As no-one will progress to specialised assessment or to residential care until assessed for re-ablement, this approach will create a reduction in the use of more intensive forms of care and support.

Housing services can contribute to an effective reablement service, mainly through provision of home repairs and adaptations.

Housing – related services	providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home adaptation (requiring OT assessment), major works • Loans for home renovation • Floating support (time – limited) provided through supporting people funded services to a range of vulnerable client groups 	SCH SIL Registered Providers Third Sector

There is inevitably some overlap with 'rapid response' services, particularly regarding assistance for home improvements and adaptations, but as the strategy is to provide for a continuum of needs, this is neither avoidable or problematic.

Solihull Independent Living (SiL) currently provides a range of services which can play a part in reablement. This may involve assistance referred to above under 'rapid response' or may involve larger scale adaptations to the applicant's home.

Since its inception in 2010, SiL has worked with Occupational Therapy service (first as part of Solihull Care Trust and now part of Adult Social Care) to provide adaptations, often with the aid of a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

There are various housing ‘floating support’ schemes provided by SCH, housing associations and other voluntary and community sector organisations which meet the support needs of a range of people for as long as they are required, and once the recipient can do without the support it ‘floats’ off to another customer, with them remaining in the property.

These schemes meet a wide range of needs, many of which are beyond the scope of this strategy. However at May 2012 there were 79 people with learning disabilities, 42 people with mental health needs and 14 people with physical or sensory disabilities benefitting from these services.

3.2.4 Longer Term Support (in the customer’s current home)

Any service user requiring enhanced levels of **longer term care and support** will receive a community care assessment which will consider all available models of care provision and, where necessary, alternative accommodation options.

Housing – related services	providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and Sound • Telecare • Keyring • Housing With Care 	SCH RPs

For many people continuing support will be required to enable them to remain living independently in their own home.

Approximately 2500 older people and 120 vulnerable people under retirement age currently live in some form of housing which was designed or converted for occupation by older people or others with disabilities.

Much of this accommodation will have some type of support provided, including Safe and Sound and telecare. It ranges from bungalows and flats at social rents provided by SCH on behalf of the Council, through to modern Housing with Care schemes provided by housing associations which cater for a range of dependencies.

Many older and other vulnerable people will live in homes that have not been designed or adapted to their current needs, so it is important that services can provide long-term support in a wide range of home settings.

One source of low-level support which is currently provided to over 1600 residents of the Borough by Solihull Community Housing is ‘Safe and Sound’. Customers are vulnerable tenants and self-paying owner occupiers who receive regular personal contact, an emergency alarm and on call service and an annual home check. The level of service, and the charge to users, is variable according to need. The service can be provided to customers in their existing homes and is not dependent on a specific property type or location.

3.3 **Helping People to Maintain Independence by Moving to Another Home**

Where it is not possible or desirable for a customer to continue to live in their current home, support will be given to finding a suitable alternative home which maintains their independence, often through provision of support.

Whilst some home owners, particularly those who own outright, may be able to afford to buy a suitable property, in most cases people will require some form of ‘affordable’ housing which is at less than market price.

Housing – related services	providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehousing (council, private or Registered Provider) • Supported accommodation and sheltered housing • Extra care housing 	SCH Registered Providers Private sector

Solihull has a social sector of 12,898 homes for rent, of which almost 2500 are designed or designated for people with age or disability related needs. The current offer in terms of alternative independent housing includes:

- Homes for rent which are provided by the Council and housing associations, usually allocated through the Solihull Home Options scheme, which enables households who are admitted to the Council's housing register to bid for available properties. The scheme has seven priority bands, with the top priority band including people with an urgent need to move for health reasons.
- Amongst the homes which are let by Solihull Home Options are those which have been designed for, or are designated for, older people and people with disabilities. These are provided by SCH on behalf of the Council and by a number of Registered Providers (RPs). Some homes owned by RPs are let directly to applicants outside the Solihull Home Options scheme.
- The Council no longer provides sheltered housing with an on-site scheme manager, favouring telecare solutions which enable support workers to reach a greater number of people. The further development of telecare and telehealthcare is important to the objectives of this strategy as it will enable more people to retain independence with the back-up of more support where this is required.
- There are currently 83 units of extra care accommodation in Solihull, mainly for social rent but with a small number of shared ownership properties. These provide higher levels of on-site care and support which can be tailored to meet the needs of individual service users, allowing people who need more intensive forms of care and support to continue to live with some degree of independence as they will occupy self-contained accommodation with access to communal facilities.

Where these and 'general – needs' properties become available for reletting or resale, opportunities are provided for people to move from their current home to take up the vacancy.

An individual's prospects for rehousing will depend on the extent of their assessed need for housing (including available space and its suitability, medical and social factors), the availability of homes of a suitable type and in an acceptable location and the applicant's readiness to bid for properties that become available. Where necessary applicants can be assisted to make bids for properties, or this can be done on their behalf.

However, there is an acute shortage of affordable housing in Solihull and, within this, housing which is suitable for older people and others with disabilities. This can result in long waiting times for applicants in substantial need and it is increasingly the case that those in low needs stand little chance of obtaining a home.

The arrangements for entry to the housing register will be reviewed during summer and autumn 2012 in light of the Localism Act. One of the objectives of this review will be to ensure reasonable access to rehousing opportunities for older and other vulnerable people.

Where people under-occupy accommodation there may be benefits in moving to something smaller, both for the customer (a more manageable property, lower heating costs etc) and the community (family sized homes becoming available for rent or purchase. The review will also consider how the Council might encourage more people to move in this way.

3.4 Increasing the amount and range of suitable accommodation

Solihull has a high level of owner occupation and a relatively restricted social sector, with a stock of 12,898 homes for rent of which less than 2500 are designed or designated for people with age or disability related needs. There is a small intermediate housing sector providing homes on shared ownership to older people and to people with learning disabilities.

Tenure and house values reflect the pattern for income and wealth with the highest in the south of the Borough and the regeneration area having lower values and a higher incidence of social housing.

One of the objectives of this strategy is to increase the number and range of homes which can meet local needs. This additional supply may come from new development, from redevelopment and through conversion.

3.4.1 New Development

The Council works with Registered Providers to increase the number and range of homes. Recently completed Supported Housing provision, new build and conversion, is set out below.

Scheme	Number of places	Provider
Tivoli Court	12 x LD	Bromford Housing Group
Starling Grove	11 LD	Bromford Housing Group
Wharf Lane	7 LD	Bromford Housing Group
Cornerways (conversion)	12 LD 50 plus	Council
Dassett Road (conversion)	13 LD 50 plus	Council

There are a number of current development proposals which are planned or in progress and for which completion is definite or very likely:

Site	Number of Dwellings	Status
Hampton Lane, Solihull – elderly extra care, including LD	32	On-site; completion 2012/13
Shirley Town Centre - elderly extra care, including LD	52	Negotiations at advanced stage; completion potentially 2013/14
North Arran Way 3 – mental health and LD	27	Negotiations at advanced stage; completion potentially 2013/14

Additionally there are proposals that may be classed as ‘tentative’ until commissioning requirements are clear, development briefs compiled and planning consents obtained. Two of these are in the ownership of the Homes and Communities Agency which is keen to pursue development as quickly as possible.

Site	Number of Dwellings	Status
Chelmsley Lane/Coleshill Road, Marston Green	To be agreed – total net capacity 80 dwellings. Provision for older people (of some form) attractive.	Local Plan site owned by HCA. Development Brief not yet compiled
Middlefield Hospital, Knowle	Up to 115 homes	As above

Other potential sites are contained in the Draft Local Plan and are due to come forward before 2018.

On these sites the Council would require 40% affordable housing. Part of this could be housing with support, subject to the direction of social care commissioners and economic viability.

Site	Number of Dwellings	Status
North Solihull Regeneration Area	7 sites with a total estimated net capacity of 795 dwellings	Detail of type, size and mix to be agreed with North Solihull Partnership
Mature Suburbs	3 sites (Solihull Town Centre, Blythe Valley Park and 'Powergen' in Shirley) with a total estimated net capacity of 650 dwellings	Detail of type, size and mix to be agreed. Places Directorate to agree approach to Development Brief production
Rural Area	3 sites (Bentley Heath & Knowle) with a total estimated net capacity of 365 dwellings. Two sites already being taken forward but third is a possibility (see 'status' column)	Third site is owned by HCA. Estimated net capacity of 115 dwellings. Type, size and mix to be defined in Development Brief

The draft Local Plan sets out the Council's intended approach to spatial development in the years to 2028. It emphasises the importance of development which can meet the Borough's housing need, particularly the various forms of 'affordable housing' and properties which are suitable for, and affordable by, older and vulnerable people

The draft Plan is clear that there will be a continuing need to provide suitable accommodation for older people and vulnerable people of all age groups including people with learning disabilities, physical and sensory impairments, and mental health conditions

It makes the case for including homes which are suitable for those with vulnerabilities through their design and the terms on which they can be obtained, whether for purchase or rent. In particular, the draft Plan is clear on the need for more housing which is affordable to people who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market.

The draft Plan is therefore supported by a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on affordable housing is significant as much of the required provision will be homes at Affordable Rent and on intermediate tenures rather than full-cost sale.

The Plan lists a number of locations which are suitable for consideration as housing Sites (and mixed use sites which include housing). Where development briefs are prepared for these sites the Council will have the opportunity to put forward proposals for development that meet some of the needs identified in this strategy.

Most of the developable land in Solihull is in private ownership, so provision of anything other than market housing will be the result of negotiations with developers and the use of planning powers by the Council. These will be set out in the Local Plan and an accompanying Supplementary Planning Document on affordable housing.

For the people to whom this strategy applies this covers a range of property types, including:

- self contained flats and houses, some of which may require design features that reduce the need for later adaptation, often self – contained units in general new build developments.
- grouped accommodation, from small clusters of apartments through to large developments of self-contained accommodation linked to community and care facilities for older people, including the large ‘elderly village’ model which has been provided elsewhere in the country. These developments will be expected to include accommodation with support for people with learning disability and / or dementia and within this, providing suitable opportunities for couples to stay together.

When the Local Plan is approved, its requirements will feed through to site development briefs and thereby inform prospective developers of the Council’s requirements which will be the subject of negotiation and will be a consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Preparation of the draft Plan has been informed by the knowledge of unmet local needs and their prioritisation provided by commissioners in Adult Social Care and the Council’s housing team.

The schedule below is based on advice provided by commissioners at the beginning of 2012. It is not definitive and more work is required to produce a comprehensive statement of unmet need and priority investments, particularly in relation to physical and sensory disability and mental health. More detailed information is presented in **Appendices A – D** (available as a separate document).

An earlier version of this information was used to inform priorities the HCA’s 2011-15 investment programme. The priorities were updated toward the end of 2011 to inform the draft Local Plan. This revision included items relating to the provision of alternative accommodation for people currently in residential care and people with early – onset dementia. The schedule of priorities is set out below:

Number of People Requiring Accommodation	Number and Type Accommodation Required	Additional Requirements
1. People with Learning Disabilities Aged 18 – 64		
<p>142 people with learning disabilities will require accommodation with domiciliary care and support up to 2026.</p> <p>Of these 134 will need accommodation to be available in the next 5 years.</p>	<p>100 units are required up to 2026; 92 of these are needed within the next 5 years.</p> <p>The majority of people will require ‘affordable’ rented housing.</p>	<p>A third of the new units will need to be specialised or adapted to meet the needs of those who also have a physical disability.</p>
2. People with Mental Health Needs Aged 18 - 64		
<p>The overall priority for this client group is to increase access to mainstream accommodation and invest in community support services so that people are able to remain living independently in the community.</p> <p>Supported accommodation is required to enable people in inpatient rehabilitation services to live more independently with appropriate support; it is estimated that 5 people per annum require this type of supported accommodation.</p>	<p>5 units of supported accommodation per annum to meet the move-on needs of those in inpatient rehabilitation services.</p> <p>Ipswich Walk which currently provides 16 units of registered care for people with mental health needs is due to be moved to a new site at North Arran Way; this will provide 11 additional units which will be used as additional capacity for mental health and for adults with other longer term vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Taking into account turnover in existing schemes plus the additional units through the re-provision of Ipswich Walk no immediate short term need for additional units has been identified by commissioners.</p>	<p>Move-on arrangements will be required to enable those who are ready for independent living to move out of supported accommodation, freeing units up for continued referrals from inpatient rehabilitation services. Provision of move-on accommodation will need to be found from existing stock.</p>

3. People with Physical & Sensory Disability Aged 18 – 64		
<p>The number of people with moderate and severe physical disabilities and with moderate and severe personal care disabilities is expected to increase gradually up to 2033.</p> <p>Wherever possible the lowest level of assistance is provided to enable people to live independently. A small number of people under the age of 65 with physical disabilities are in residential care.</p> <p>The overall aim is to reduce the use of residential care and to meet the needs of people aged 18 - 64 through mainstream accommodation with transitional and reablement care and specialist adaptations and support to meet identified need.</p>	<p>There are no identified requirements for new units of accommodation for this client group; the need for specialist supported accommodation for people with physical and sensory disabilities will be considered as part of the development of larger housing-with-care schemes.</p> <p>Information gathered from people with physical and sensory disabilities about their accommodation needs and aspirations concluded that there was a need for more variety and choice of accommodation with a particular need for transitional supported accommodation, adapted properties and affordable 1 and 2 bed units.</p>	<p>To meet the need for suitably adapted general needs accommodation there is a requirement to ensure the best use of existing adapted properties and to work with developers and providers to ensure that new supply takes into account the needs of people with physical and sensory disabilities.</p>
4. Older People (Including frail elderly, older people with dementia and older people with mental health needs, learning disabilities or physical disabilities)		
<p>An analysis of demographic data and population projections show that the proportion of older people is set to increase up to 2033, with significant rises in the 85+ age group.</p> <p>Within this, conservative estimates would suggest that pensioner households are likely to rise, making up 36% of total households by 2033 compared to 25% as at the 2001 census. Some of these households are likely to need or want to move to more appropriate housing if it were available.</p> <p>In addition there are at least 200 people in residential care who could move to more suitable independent living schemes if places were available</p> <p>There is currently no method to estimate the future accommodation and support needs of older people. However the release of the 2011 Census data during 2012 and 2013 will provide an opportunity to revisit the current household projections based on more accurate figures of current household numbers and composition and to further develop local sources of information on the housing and support needs of older people.</p>	<p>It is not currently known how many new units will be required.</p> <p>More generally demographic information shows that there is a need for the additional provision of homes suitable for older people across the Borough and particularly in the South and rural areas.</p> <p>The type of homes required will vary from self contained apartments through to larger mixed tenure housing-with-care schemes that provide self-contained accommodation with communal facilities and support staff on site.</p> <p>Accommodation will be required to meet the needs of self funders and those needing sub-market housing, so a mix of affordable housing, shared ownership and owner occupied homes will be required.</p> <p>There may be an additional requirement for self contained accommodation arising from any action to address the quality of registered residential care services directly managed by the Council.</p>	<p>Housing-with-care schemes of up to 50 units should ideally provide accommodation to cater for older adults with differing levels of need, with up to 30% of units being available for people with learning disabilities and 10 and people with physical disabilities as well as some provision for people with dementia and the option for couples to stay together.</p> <p>Within larger housing-with-care schemes there will also be a need to provide a smaller number of units to provide for people with higher level support needs so that people can move-on within a scheme as their care needs increase.</p>

New homes could be delivered through a range of providers including:

- Registered Providers (Housing Associations), the main providers of self-contained housing and larger schemes for social rent and shared ownership. There are 14 stock – owning associations in Solihull. They will remain potential providers but as capital grant from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) will be in very short supply, RPs will be under increasing pressure to diversify their funding sources. Changes in the HCA’s funding policy and the wide differences in associations’ financial strength and development capacity may introduce new developing associations to Solihull so the Council should be proactive in forging new partnerships.

- Solihull Community Housing is registered as a provider with the HCA and has a fledgling development programme, but is unlikely to become a major provider given the limits on HCA funding which favours larger providers and the absence of further Prudential Borrowing from the Council.
- Private sector provision will depend on market conditions and the availability of public funding to reduce development costs. Given the constrained capacity of the public sector in coming years there is a need to develop new partnerships with private developers. Much will also depend on the strength of the Council's negotiating position on deriving affordable and supported housing from the planning system.
- The third sector should be assisted to develop its capacity as the contribution of voluntary and community groups in providing information, advising and assisting vulnerable people is essential. Development of this capacity through Compact Plus and new opportunities arising from the Localism Act and 'Big Society' should be pursued wherever possible.

3.4.2 Redevelopment and Conversion

Redevelopment opportunities have arisen over recent years through North Solihull Regeneration. New homes for older and vulnerable people have been provided in several new developments arising from remodelling parts of the regeneration area. Subject to the progress of the programme, there may be further opportunities.

There will need to be a forward – looking approach to the how current housing provision for older and vulnerable people may be remodelled.

Where current properties can continue to provide good quality accommodation which support the objectives of the strategy by meeting identified needs in a cost –effective way their useful life should be maximised through repair, improvement and modernisation where required. As in the past, some cases may involve extensive remodelling and / or a change in purpose.

Where this is not the case the most effective option may be to dispose of assets and reprovide where necessary in other settings or locations. This will produce a cleared site which may then be available for replacement provision or sale.

Developments which have recently completed or are in the pipeline include:

- Remodelling of residential care and sheltered housing to deliver the first purpose built extra care housing scheme in Solihull at Swallows Meadow which opened in October 2009 and provides 49 units of accommodation (43 affordable rent and 6 shared ownership)
- the relocation of accommodation for people with mental health needs currently provided at Ipswich Walk to a new site at North Arran Way village centre, part of the North Solihull regeneration programme

Large registered residential care facilities which are directly provided by the Council are currently under review. The Council is clear that it will seek to work in partnership with provider organisations in the statutory, private and third sectors to secure the accommodation and services which will enable the transformation of residential services in Solihull. Where this and future reviews recommend replacing current provision, opportunities for the provision of additional independent accommodation may be presented.

4. PRIORITIES

4.1 Supporting People in their Own Homes

4.1.1 To continue improve the quality, coverage and accessibility of universal services

There is no shortage of information and advice, but to enable the objective to be achieved, agencies need to:

- improve the coverage, quality and accessibility of information and advice which can inform consumer choice
- improve the connectivity between various sources of information and advice to ensure that consumers get the same messages regardless of source.
- to ensure that all advice – giving agencies are provided with accurate and up-to-date information by the Council so that they can inform customers accordingly

4.1.2 To support and develop rapid response services to help as many people as possible resolve their issues quickly and at the first contact with the Council or partner agency.

Key actions to achieve this will include:

- Maintaining the capacity of the homelessness prevention service (which is provided by SCH on behalf of the Council) beyond its current funding agreement, which runs to the end of 2012-13.
- Ensuring that the Council maintains the capacity to respond to problems of serious disrepair in the Borough's expanding private rental sector, particularly the remediation of 'Category 1 Hazards'.
- Improving the delivery of repairs and minor home adaptations by Solihull Independent Living, including maximising the use of 'fast track' methods of delivery, and considering options for the transfer of the handyperson and gardening services to the third sector
- Building on the success of previous Winter Warmth Campaigns to extend the coverage and effectiveness of this annual exercise from 2012/13 onwards

4.1.3 To continue to support and develop services in order to ensure that problems which a person has with their home are reduced or removed as a contribution to their reablement.

Key actions to achieve this will include:

- Ensuring that SiL maintains the capacity to meet demand for home adaptations to customers with 'critical' or 'substantial' needs, through targeting assistance and limiting costs
- Establishing SiL as an effected 'signposted' agency to assist those with 'moderate' or 'low' needs where the provision of assistance can deal effectively with a customer's problems and prevent needs becoming critical or substantial
- Developing the links between SiL and the third sector

- Securing a reliable and affordable source of loan finance which homeowners can access to part-fund home improvements
- Continuing to review the provision of floating support services to ensure that resources meet priorities in an effective and efficient way

4.1.4 To develop services which provide long-term support to people in their current homes, including:

- Continued expansion of the Safe and Sound service through signing up more home owners
- Extend the use of Telecare

4.2 Enabling People to Move to Another Independent Home

4.2.1 To ensure that arrangements for the allocation of homes in the social sector take into account the needs of older and other vulnerable people

- to review the arrangements by which vulnerable people can access social rented housing during summer 2012 following the publication of fresh guidance by DCLG on the implementation of the housing provisions of the Localism Act.
- to consider new ways in which owner occupiers and tenants can be encouraged and assisted to downsize to a property which is more suitable for their needs, following evaluation of pilot schemes elsewhere in the country.

4.2.2 To seek opportunities to meet housing needs, including those of older and vulnerable people, in other sectors

- to continue to encourage and assist in the development of Solihull's private rental sector which may offer long - term solutions for some vulnerable people
- to seek opportunities to provide homes in intermediate tenures where these are affordable and the terms are acceptable

4.2.1 To maximise the opportunities for people to move to suitable independent accommodation through the development of additional homes.

- to be clear on priorities for development at a strategic level and ensuring that these are fed into the planning process to inform development briefs and negotiations with developers (for current priorities see table at 3.4.1 above)
- to be clear on the nature of required provision at the single - development level
- to be clear on the availability of revenue funding to support new developments
- to take a forward view on potential opportunities for additional independent living from the redevelopment or conversion of existing accommodation
- to form effective partnerships with developers and Registered Providers
- to lever-in funding from established public sources (such as the Homes and Communities Agency), from new sources (including the New Homes Bonus) and from the private sector (potentially including Real Estate Investment Trusts and other sources of institutional finance).

4.3 People with Learning Disabilities

Based on the evidence of need and gap analysis set out in **Appendix A** the main strategic priorities for people with learning disabilities are to:

4.3.1 Helping People to Live Independently

- Reduce the dependency for more intensive forms of service provision and support people to live as independently as possible

- Develop and secure maximum value within existing floating support services
- Ensure that the unmet housing support needs of people with autism are catered for in future developments / redevelopments and carry out further work to establish the support needs of young people in transition to adulthood with autistic spectrum condition and with multiple and profound learning disabilities

4.3.2 Creating Options for People to Move to Suitable Accommodation

- Meet requirements identified through the housing needs analysis for people with learning disabilities carried out in 2009 and updated in 2011 to enable the provision of 92 additional units of self contained accommodation within the next 5 years plus 2 small schemes (of 8 additional units) within the next 10 – 15 years. Of these 29 of the self contained units and both of the schemes should meet the needs of those people who also have a physical disability and one third of accommodation should be provided in South Solihull
- Remodel some existing small group homes and residential provision to provide supported living opportunities
- Develop independent living schemes that support the most vulnerable adults with learning disabilities
- Facilitate appropriate supported living opportunities and work with housing providers to secure suitable units within new build schemes / provision and to make better use of adapted properties
- Assist people with learning disabilities in out of Borough placements to move back into the Borough where they wish to do so (in to either independent living with support or appropriate supported accommodation)
- Ensure that people with learning disabilities are given the opportunity to be housed in all general needs developments and specialist services where they meet the relevant criteria (e.g. age criteria in the case of Extra Care)
- Support people with learning disabilities to access suitable accommodation in the private rented sector (home ownership and private rented) and include the needs of people with learning disabilities in any development opportunities with private landlords

4.4 **People with Mental Health Needs**

Based on the evidence of need and gap analysis set out in **Appendix B** the main strategic priorities for people with mental health needs are to:

4.4.1 Helping People to Live Independently

- Assess the numbers of users who may be currently inappropriately placed in residential or nursing homes where the development of additional housing related support services would enable them to move into independent living freeing up resources for those with a higher level of need.
- Expand floating support services and increase the range and availability of community based accommodation with support.
- Identify the needs of younger people (up to the age of 35) with mental health needs and people aged 18 – 65 with early on-set dementia and develop appropriate services

4.4.2 Creating Options for People to Move to Suitable Accommodation

- Provide increased supported living opportunities through new development or remodelling existing provision to meet the requirement for 5 units of supported accommodation per annum for those in inpatient rehabilitation services who could live independently with the right provision

- Include the housing needs of those with mental health issues in the development of extra care / housing-with-care schemes
- Facilitate the development of specialist independent accommodation for people who wish to rent or buy
- Remodel existing provision so that it meets modern standards and the needs and aspirations of service users

4.5 Older People

Based on the evidence of need and gap analysis set out in **Appendix C** the main strategic priorities for older people are:

4.5.1 Helping People to Live Independently

- Promote independence, supporting people in their own homes and reducing inappropriate admissions to long-term care
- Maximise the contribution that low intensity housing related support services can make to maintain older people's independence.
- Expand handyman and minor repair services (Solihull Independent Living)
- Ensure that home energy efficiency and affordable warmth assistance is available to older people who would like to continue living in their own homes
- Work toward the effective joining up of health, housing and social care services to provide care packages which will enable older people to continue living in their own homes
- Develop an effective integrated out of hospital care pathway

4.5.2 Creating Options for People to Move to Suitable Accommodation

- Replace all residential and non-residential care provision that does not meet modern quality and regulatory standards with fit for purpose accommodation to meet identified need within the next 3 years
- Review the longer-term viability of existing sheltered and specialised older peoples accommodation and redevelop / remodel to provide services that meet current needs and expectations.
- Review current provision of residential and nursing care and reconfigure where necessary
- Plan and support a greater variety of housing provision
- Assess the need for dedicated provision for older people with mental health needs and dementia and align any proposals with the development of extra care, sheltered housing and registered care (include within this opportunities for couples to stay together).
- Supporting the provision of specialist housing services identified within the Dementia Strategy. This should include supporting the development of specialist dementia residential and nursing care homes but at the same time consideration should be given to how best to accommodate the needs of people with dementia within more mainstream provision to minimise the need for move on accommodation

4.6 People with Physical and Sensory Disabilities

Based on the evidence of need and gap analysis set out in **Appendix D** the main strategic priorities for people with physical and sensory disabilities are:

4.6.1 Helping People to Live Independently

- Reduce the dependency for more intensive forms of service provision
- Extend floating support services to enable people with a physical or sensory disability to live independently wherever possible.

- Deliver disabled facilities grants, adaptations and aids to mobility in the home to promote independent living, mobility and choice (through Solihull Independent Living)

4.6.2 Creating Options for People to Move to Suitable Accommodation

- There are no identified requirements for new units of accommodation for people with physical and sensory disabilities; the need for specialist supported accommodation for this group will be considered as part of the development of larger housing-with-care schemes.
- Work with housing providers to deliver specialist housing schemes, lifetime homes and make better use of adapted properties.
- Develop independent living schemes that support the most vulnerable adults with physical and sensory disabilities
- Remodel some existing small group homes and residential provision to provide supported living
- Facilitate appropriate supported living opportunities

5. RESOURCES

5.1 Public Funding

In Solihull, many households have the financial capacity to 'self-fund' these solutions, sometimes with advice and assistance from the Council or other agencies.

However, households containing one or more vulnerable people are more likely to be in housing need, are more likely to be living in homes unsuitable for their needs and are less likely to be able to afford to invest in their homes, move home or buy-in the support that they require to continue to live independently.

Given the increasing number of older people with dementia and other age-related issues, and the increase in younger people with disabilities and mental health needs it is clear that pressure on the provision of housing and support services can only increase.

There will therefore be a continuing need for the Council and partner agencies to provide capital and revenue funding to fund and part-fund services. The availability of this, and the basis on which it is made available, will be a critical factor in determining the level and nature of future provision.

The emphasis will therefore be on funding priorities, minimising the cost of provision and in particular cutting the requirement for new public money through concentrating available funding on priorities, on recycling resources (money, land, buildings), on accessing private funding and in many cases changing the financial basis on which services are provided to the end – user.

5.2 Funding for Home Adaptations and Improvements

Assisting vulnerable people to repair and improve their homes is an important aspect of the strategy as it can help people to retain their independence. It is recognised that demand for these services will increase given Solihull's demographic.

The Council has a duty to address serious disrepair⁸ in private sector housing, but new Government funding for private sector renewal has been withdrawn. The Council will increasingly rely on the use of carry-forwards from previous years' unspent capital allocations, on prioritising assistance and on reducing the cost of assistance.

⁸ Category A hazards as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System

The introduction of loans in place of renovation grants was approved by the Council in 2010 and an allocation was made by West Midlands Kickstart. However, following the withdrawal of regional funding this organisation has folded and the Council is now in the process of sourcing loan products from elsewhere.

Government funding is still received toward the cost of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) via the Area Based Grant and the Council funds the balance to ensure that its statutory obligations are met. In January 2011 the Council received £75k additional funding for DFGs.

The Council has been fully funding DFGs in excess of the statutory £30k maximum but in future will seek to enable the applicant to cover any works in excess of £30k through loans rather than additional grant wherever possible.

In 2012 the Council extended its Fair Access to Care (FACS) criteria to the provision of equipment and adaptations. This means that from May 2012, customers who are assessed as 'critical' or 'substantial' receive a full assessment by the Occupational Therapy service. SiL then provides assistance through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants and other methods to meet the assessed needs in the most effective way.

Where the applicant is assessed as 'low' or 'moderate' under FACS, they will be signposted for assistance to another agency. Where SiL receives referrals in this way it will seek to meet the applicant's needs within its financial capacity and its ability to assess potentially complex requirements.

In these cases the applicant may be required to self – fund work to their homes and SiL is currently assessing how it can assist homeowners to access loan finance on reasonable terms. This policy has replaced the provision of renovation grants but its continuation will depend on the ability to source reliable and competitive loan products in the future. If this is not possible there may need to be a return to grant provision, but for a limited range of priority cases.

DCLG has maintained an annual allocation to the council for the expansion of handyperson services and this is passed to SiL to support the local scheme.

5.3 Capital Subsidy for New Development

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the main source of capital subsidy for the provision of affordable housing, including supported housing. The agency is working with a substantially reduced budget which is heavily oversubscribed.

Commissioners will be expected to reduce costs to the HCA and providers through provision of free land and premises, by matching funding from other sources and through other mechanisms.

The likelihood of obtaining HCA support for any given proposal will depend on a number of factors including:

- the amount of funding available to the HCA
- evidence of need and the extent to which the proposal meets priorities within the Local Investment Plan and its place in the prioritisation of proposed schemes
- value for money and the extent to which relevant agencies contribute assets such as finance, land and buildings to minimise the amount of money which is sought from the agency and the scope for the agency to recoup any investment at a later date
- deliverability of the scheme - including planning consents
- the availability of revenue funding to meet support costs (where applicable)
- high quality design and sustainability standards

- opportunities for local employment and training and apprenticeships in construction
- satisfactory arrangements for long-term stewardship of assets

The Council has access to new sources of capital funding for housing such as the New Homes Bonus and consideration will be given to how this can assist in the delivery of this strategy, alongside competing calls for its use.

There will also be continued emphasis on progressing the strategy through the use of private finance. Potential sources of funding for new development such as Real Estate Investment Trusts will be sought as well as other sources of institutional finance that may emerge.

5.4 Revenue Funding for Support Services

The requirement for the Council to realise cashable revenue savings will impact on all revenue budgets and the ability to make revenue contributions to home adaptations. To meet its savings targets, the Council will seek to make necessary reductions through reducing duplication and driving down costs without reducing front-line services.

The Supporting People programme is an important source of revenue funding for a wide range of services which contribute to the objectives of this strategy.

Although Solihull's Supporting People (SP) budget is one of the smallest in England it supports over 60 services provided by 29 different organisations, and serves over 2,000 users.

Amongst the newly commissioned services since the SP programme was launched in 2003 are Older People (57 homes), Learning Disabilities (77 homes), People with mental health needs (17 homes) and various floating support schemes including Mentally Disordered Offenders, homeless people and an organisation helping gypsies and travellers. SP is also part of the funding package for Solihull Independent Living.

Since April 2011 the resources allocated to the Supporting People Programme have been included within Local Authority's Revenue Support Grant as a non fixed sum. The Council has retained the full amount for contracted services and providers were required to make a nominal (0.8%) cash reduction in 2011/12, with a larger flat rate reduction of 5.84% being applied to all contracts in 2012/13.

The Council has been clear that the continuing allocation of resources to fund the current range of housing related support services is not a 'given' and services will need to demonstrate that they continue to represent a priority for investment. The Commissioning Body is overseeing a programme of service reviews during 2012/13.

5.5 End – User Costs

There is a clear trend toward transferring costs to end—users across the range of services covered by this strategy.

People will increasingly be expected to meet their own needs in the market wherever possible.

There is increasing market provision for aids and adaptations, home adaptations and telecare, and the expansion of personal budgets and self-directed care will provide people with more choice in what to buy and where from. This may include market options where these are affordable.

The restriction of financial assistance for social care (including home adaptations) to those whose needs are regarded as 'Critical' or 'Substantial' will inevitably lead to people with lower level needs having to consider buying solutions in the market, possibly with the assistance of a third party.

There is a mature market for the provision of housing which is suitable for older people. For those for whom home ownership is a financial possibility, their ability to buy and to sustain home ownership will depend largely on lending policies and interest rates.

Intermediate tenure encompasses shared ownership and shared equity homes to part – buy / part –rent. Some people with learning disability and other support needs have accessed shared ownership in the past and the Council will continue to support providers which seek to introduce more affordable housing options including intermediate tenures.

However, it is very clear that for many households the only feasible option will be to rent a home in the social sector. As well as the problem of excess demand over supply which will restrict the availability of a home for many people, there are changes to the financial basis of this provision, notably:

- Pressure on rents will be increased through successive above-inflation rent increases in the social sector for current tenants and the introduction of the Affordable Rent regime for all new HCA – funded housing and a proportion of Registered Providers' relets. With rents at or near 80% of market levels this model (which is still within the definition of 'affordable housing') is considerably more expensive than social rent which is broadly 40-50% of market levels
- reductions in Housing Benefit will make it more difficult for some households to afford to rent privately and will pose affordability problems for some social tenants. There may be particular adverse impacts on tenants who have a 'non-dependent' in their household and to people aged below 35 whose benefit entitlement will be limited by the extension of the single room rate to those between 25 and 35.
- the proposed introduction of reductions in Housing Benefits for people who are deemed to 'underoccupy' their homes may prompt more people to seek to downsize their accommodation.

6. DELIVERY

The strategy will be delivered through the market, through the existing provision of accommodation and services of the Council and its partner agencies and through additional activity of these organisations.

6.1 Commissioning Arrangements

The commissioning and funding of housing related support services will form part of the overall redesign of adult social care.

The Council now hosts joint commissioning arrangements for mental health, learning disabilities and carer services. This means that the Council's commissioning leads in these areas have dual accountability to both the local authority and PCT/CCG.

Social care services for older people, people with disabilities and sensory impairments remain the responsibility of the local authority as a single agency commissioner, but with extensive collaborative work.

Increasingly, service users will wish to access services for which they can use their personal budget, so the new arrangements will promote self – directed support and

personalised care, finding new ways of working with service users to promote their independence.

The Council has recognised the need to strengthen the commissioning arrangements, operationally and culturally, to achieve an adaptable commissioning infrastructure to meet the strategic demands it faces now, and those anticipated in the future.

It will create a new commissioning structure within the Council which can work collaboratively with partner organisations and local stakeholders, involving the integration of commissioning across adults' and children's services to result in a whole life, whole family approach, and focusing on the transition from child to adult.

The directors of each service (Adult, Children and Public Health) will be brought together in a single leadership team for the People Directorate. This will also feature a Director of Business Transformation.

There will be four service areas relevant to this strategy: Children and Families, Disabilities / sensory impairment (all ages), Mental Health (including dementia) and Older People (early intervention through to residential care).

A Strategic Commissioner for each area will lead the delivery of a needs assessment for designated services or service user groups (producing annual joint commissioning intentions, supported by a strong evidence base and needs analysis with defined support requirements, and costed plans.

The commissioners will lead and develop relationships with stakeholders (service users, carers and providers) to shape the market in response to identified needs and to develop policy.

An Operational Commissioning Lead will oversee all other aspects of operational commissioning activity for adults, children and families with two Commissioning Managers to deliver the day-to-day tasks of commissioning, including capturing information about local needs

All data, business intelligence and analytical capacity will be located in a single, corporate business intelligence hub. This hub will also continue to provide management information and reports for all aspects of service, and not only for commissioning.

The new arrangements are expected to be introduced during 2012/13. They will embrace all or part of the commissioning work for accommodation and support services for older and vulnerable people and so they will be part of the implementation arrangements for this strategy.

These proposals will significantly improve the ability of the Council to commission housing – related services and the prioritise requirements for new developments

In the meantime commissioning will continue to be a shared function between Adult Social Care and the Places Directorate. Officers within the former will identify the needs and priorities for accommodation and services. Some accommodation and services are commissioned directly by Adult Social Care and some via Places, especially where the support of the HCA is required.

It will be essential for commissioners to be able to put forward proposals for development to meet identified needs and to be able to evidence that need. The Director of Adult Social Care, in liaison with the Director for Places, will be required to have an overview of these (potentially competing) needs and be able to prioritise them.

This will enable priorities to be considered when sites come forward for development, particularly when development briefs are prepared for sites in the Local Plan.

It will also ensure that, via the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Registered Providers know what Solihull's priority needs are.

6.2 Partnerships

Many people covered by this strategy would be unable to afford owner occupation under any market conditions. Therefore continued effort to expand the market of independent and extra-care housing for those who cannot afford full ownership is required.

To create and exploit opportunities for the development of new independent homes and support services, the Council will need to extend and strengthen its range of partnerships in all sectors.

In particular:

- Supporting Solihull Independent Living and others to carry out their role as 'signposted agencies' for the delivery of advice, home repairs, adaptations and other services
- Forging new partnerships with Registered Providers and others to take opportunities for the development of new homes which meet priority needs through development and remodelling
- With the North Solihull Regeneration Partnership to make the most of development and redevelopment opportunities during the remainder of the programme

6.3 Equality and Diversity

Solihull MBC is committed to meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010: to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between communities.

It wants all sectors of the community to be treated fairly, for the diversity of customer needs to be reflected in the services provided and that people are not disadvantaged by the way that services are made available by providers.

The priorities for development of accommodation and support services outlined in this strategy will take into account the specific needs that are presented the community and respond to the changing needs of Solihull's population. This will include the increase in the number of older people and people with disabilities and mental health needs. It will also include the growing ethnic diversity of the Borough's population.

People want to have a choice over where and how they live their lives, and have access to good quality, responsive services to enable them to live life to the full. By adopting this strategy, vulnerable client groups are able to exert choice and influence over their accommodation – something that others take for granted.

By helping more vulnerable residents to have the same opportunities in accessing viable housing options, including sustaining their own housing within our communities, this strategy aims to advance equality of opportunity

To ensure that the strategy starts from the right place and does the right things, a Fair Treatment Assessment will be carried out by the Council's equality and diversity team and the results and recommendations will inform the considerations of elected Members in approving the strategy.

6.4 Implementation and Monitoring

The Strategy and accompanying delivery plan and monitoring plan will be approved by Cabinet in December 12.

Progress against the delivery plan will be reported to the Adult Social Care DLT on a quarterly basis and to elected Members on an annual basis as part of the planned review of the strategy

6.5 Review

The Strategy will be jointly reviewed by the Council's Director for Adult Social Care and Director for Places on an annual basis.

The annual review will include a period of consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including service users and their representatives where appropriate.

The consultation will include scrutiny by elected Members and, following this, approval by Cabinet.

In the event that legislative or policy change requires a significant revision to the strategy, a review and subsequent change to the strategy may need to take place earlier than the planned timing of the annual review.