

Older People's Housing Strategy Consultation response Summary

This report summarises the responses to CDC's consultation on the Draft Older Persons Housing Strategy for Cherwell. It also describes how the feedback has influenced the final strategy. The Council would like to thank all of its customers and partners for their responses – in particular it would like to acknowledge the invaluable role played by the OPHS Focus Group which comprised older residents living in the Cherwell district.

Key messages of support

"With people living longer these days, this housing strategy for older people sounds like a challenging endeavour. I wish you the best of luck."

Kidlington Resident

"Oxford Citizens Housing Association (OCHA) is very supportive of this draft strategy. It chimes well with our own strategy for housing and support for older people. We have invested very significantly in improving our sheltered housing stock, including complete re-builds of three schemes, as well as disposal of another. We are now working closely with the County Council to assist with their Extra Care Housing strategy and would be keen to do so also with CDC to support your own strategy."

Ian Gilders, Head of Supported Housing, Oxford Citizens Housing Association.

"We very much support the strategy and its 5 priority objectives and recommendations. We have also welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the working group which produced the strategy."

Nigel Holmes, Extra Care Housing Programme Manager, Oxfordshire County Council

Consultation methods

Sample	Aim	Methods employed
Broad spectrum	To gather as many opinions as possible.	<p>A focus group consisting of older people volunteered to offer invaluable criticism and suggestions.</p> <p>The survey was made publicly available via the online consultation portal. The consultation was regularly publicised via press releases in local newspapers and also through Cherwell Link. There was also a joint district wide mail-out in partnership with Age Concern.</p> <p>Paper copies of the survey were sent out to residents with a freepost return address attached.</p>
Hard to reach groups	To ensure that people from various ethnic minority groups, elderly people, and the lesbian and gay community have a chance to comment on the consultation.	Officers attended Banbury Asian forum, Banbury Polish Forum, the CDC Seniors Forum and consulted with Age Concern's LGBT rep for the district. The consultation was raised at the Equality and Access to Services Advisory Panel.
Cherwell specific groups	Elected members, CDC staff, OCC staff, partner agencies, senior RSL housing development and management staff responsible for the Cherwell area.	Staff newsletters, the consultation was raised as an agenda item at the Cherwell RSL Development Group, Cherwell RSL Management Group, and Planning Obligations Board.

Consultation on the Draft Older Peoples Housing Strategy was carried out between 16th September and 31st October 2009

Responses to specific survey questions

Breakdown of respondents

Organisation	Number
Local government	3
Health	0
Voluntary sector	3
Local residents	41
RSL	4
Space left blank	3
Total	54

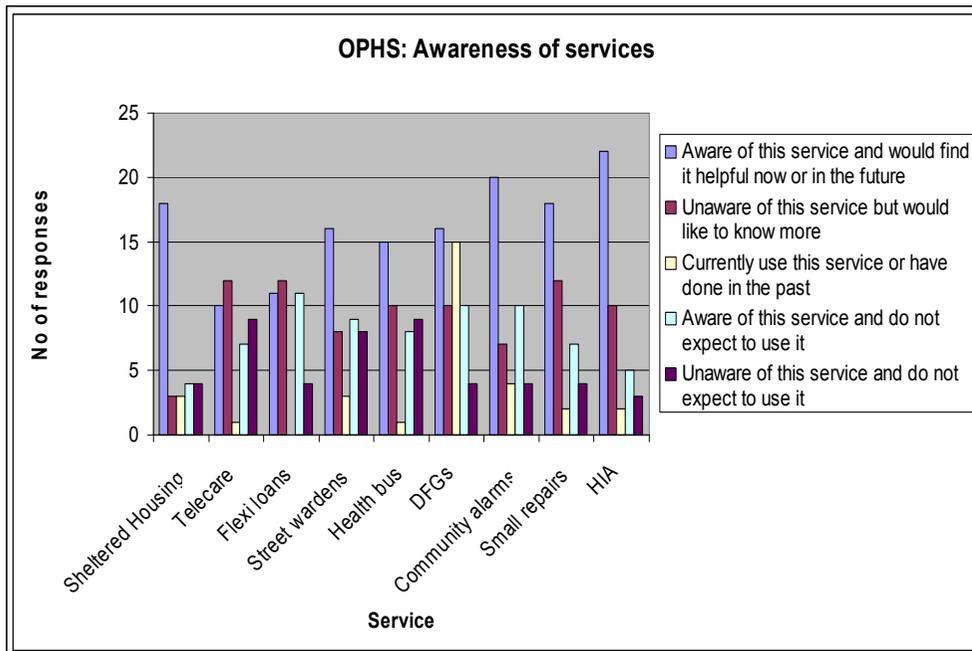
Tenure	
Owner occupied	22
Renting privately	10
Renting from an RSL	10
Living with relatives	2
Blank	10

Ethnic Origin	Number
White	44
BME	1*
No answer	9
Total	54

* Due to the limitations of surveys regarding BME response rate. CDC officers conducted person-to-person group consultation with BME groups. These responses have been included in the comment section and boost the overall BME response to 6.

Responses to specific questions

Question 1 – We are interested to hear how familiar you are with the various services for older people in the district, and also whether you feel likely to use these services in the future.



What we have learnt

The sample is small but general points are:

- HIA services and community alarms seem to be the most popular –both feature as important elements of the strategy.
- There is proportionally a lower level of understanding about telecare and flexi loans and we need to ensure we publicise these effectively.

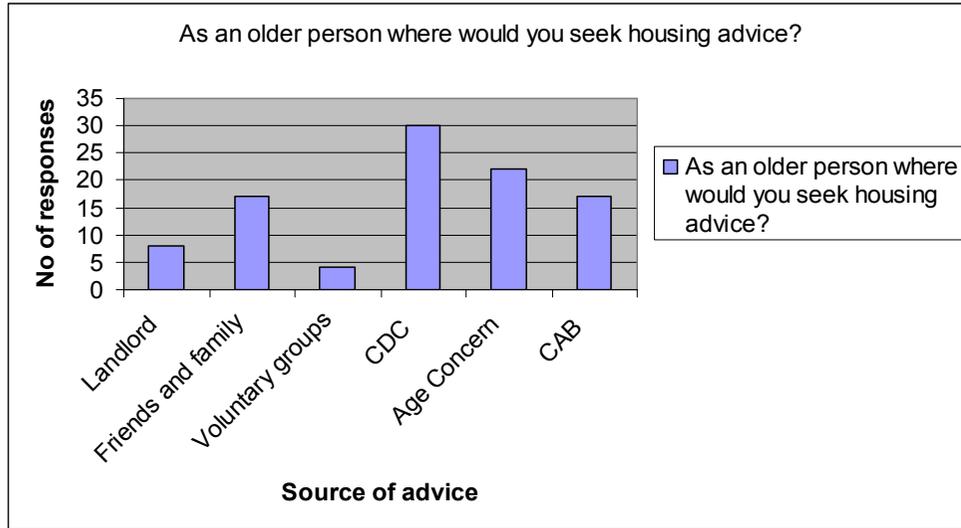
Question 2 –Had you heard of extra care housing?



What we have learnt

We need to make sure we effectively publicise extra care housing as we develop this to maximise opportunities to access this provision for all older people.

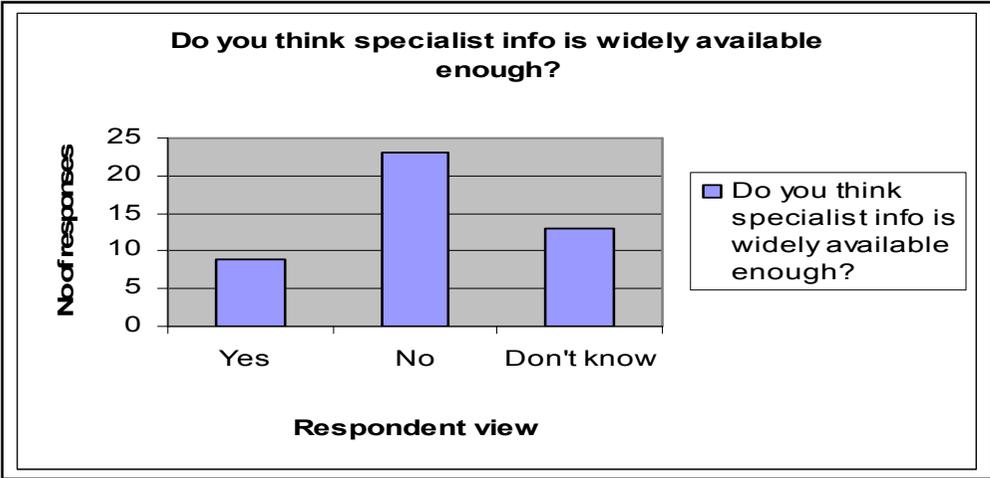
Question 3 -As an older person where would you seek housing advice?



What we learnt

CDC is an important source of advice for older people and we need to use the resources we have through our website and other publicity materials to give people the information they need.
People do use a variety of formal and informal sources on information and we need to ensure the information people get is consistent and comprehensive.

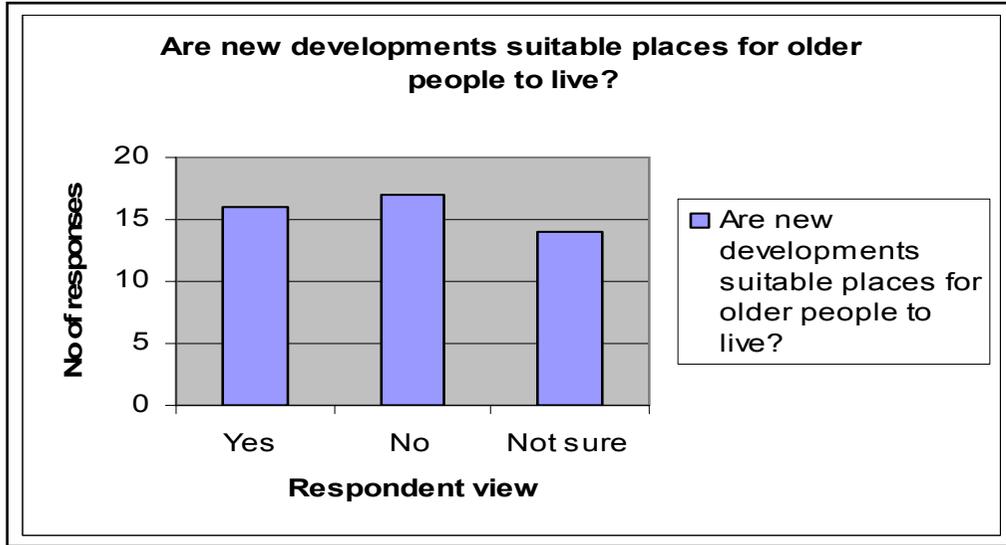
Question 4- Do you think specialist housing information is widely enough available?



Lesson learnt

A high response demonstrating we are right to include this as a priority.

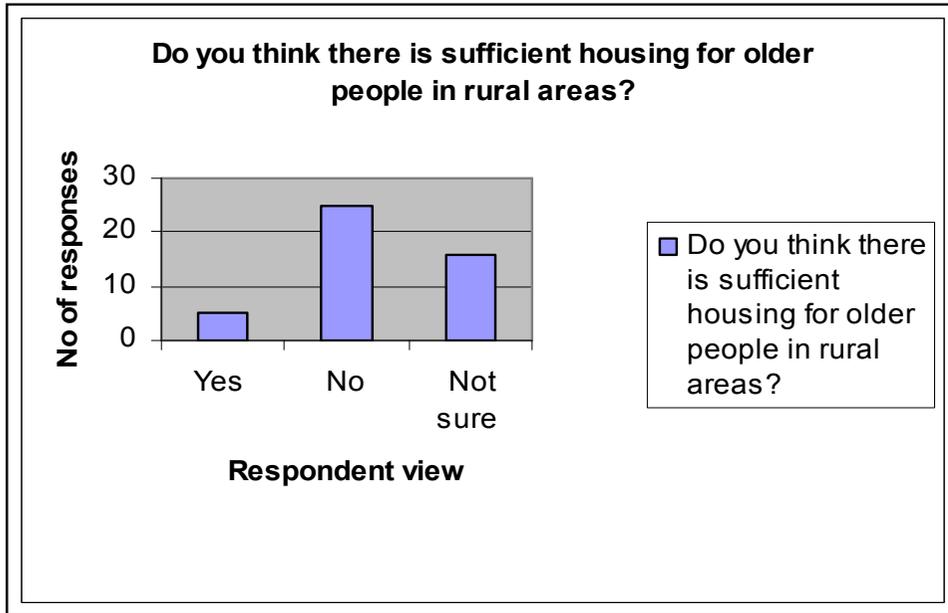
Question 5 -In your experience are new housing developments suitable places for older people to live?



What we have learnt

A very mixed view, traditionally the take up of new housing has been low amongst older people and this is addressed by ensuring we design housing units and environments that are attractive to older people.

Question 6-Do you think there is sufficient housing for Older People in rural areas?



What we have learnt

This confirms the importance of considering the needs of older people in our rural areas.

Summary of responses

Those where a change has been made to the strategy are highlighted in Green.

Respondent	Comment	CDC response
Priority one: Provide and support preventative services that allow people to remain living independently in their own home		
Local government (district)	Importance of bus transport, adult education and fitness.	The strategy cannot directly influence these services but recognises the need for links to activities –see action points 1.7 and 1.8
Banbury Asian Forum	Older people want to remain living at home and be cared for by their families but this is becoming more difficult as families move apart.	We need to understand the needs of this group further. Research to further this understanding will take place under action point 2.7.
Local Government (County)	We recognise the joint value in a clear and consistent approach to disabled facilities and other improvement grants to older and disabled people and suggest that our Occupational Therapy (OT) service are fully involved in the development of this service area.	Disabled facilities grants are due to be reviewed via a new policy. The OT will be a key consultee of this policy.
Local resident	Over 60s concessionary bus passes are important.	Although outside of the scope of the strategy this comment illustrates that transport is an important element to quality of life –we need to ensure that services are accessible and this underpins the strategy.

Local resident	Visits to the local Age Concern centre and regular contact from Age Concern is valuable.	We will work with partners (including Age Concern) to deliver this strategy and ensure we make best use of existing services to ensure people can continue to live independently. Although this underpins the strategy a new action point has been added at X to make sure we have fully mapped existing services.
Local resident	Cleaning service needed	Service could be included in a trades directory –see action point 1.1
Local resident	More improvements for the disabled and wheelchair users.	Covered under action point 5.3
Banbury Asian Forum	People have accessed aids and adaptations service but found the paper work could be an obstacle.	Will be considered as part of the DFG review. Covered in action point 1.2
Banbury Asian Forum	People have problems financing the maintenance of their own home.	More publicity about grants availability. Linked to strategic action 1.4.
Local resident	Respondent used local post office frequently but it has recently closed.	The location of new housing needs to be in areas where there is easy access to services including Post Office services. This is covered in the concept of age proofed design in action point 5.5 but action point 5.6 has been amended to ensure service provision is assessed within rural housing needs surveys.

Respondent	Comment	CDC response
Priority two: Increase provision of specialist older people's housing		
Local government (County)	Regarding the ECH parts of the strategy, I agree with the target levels of provision and the various means identified for implementing such provision. I particularly welcome the inclusion of ECH requirements in your LDF and your planning policy frameworks, plus inclusion of land designated for ECH use in the master plans for strategic sites. I also agree that involving your local RSLs in a review of their sheltered housing and asset management strategies will be a productive way of meeting some of this ECH need and I will be happy to help in such work.	No change required
Local government (County)	As part of the above ECH implementation I agree that all parties need to work together to promote public awareness of ECH and I can offer various resources to assist this. I also support the use of ECH for other older adults with learning and physical disabilities or mental health needs.	Agree –this idea has been added into the description of Extra care Housing under priority 2

Local government (County)	On the specific section describing the benefits of ECH can I suggest that you also highlight that we looking to develop this service for persons with dementia as well? Also, can you add that another advantage of ECH is that it can help couples stay together, particularly where one has a care need and avoids separation by reducing admissions to care homes?	Agree –added to description and outcomes as above
Local government (County)	We also support the policy of targeting specialist housing in localities with a high concentration of social and health care needs. The S&CS department can further assist this via the JSNA data as has already been usefully applied in parts of your strategy document.	Agree –comment added to text under priority 2
Local government (County)	We also support the aim to have 100% of affordable homes built to Lifetime Homes standards wherever practical and affordable.	No Change required
Local government (County)	The County Council has made three sites available for ECH in Cherwell and is happy to review its other land holdings for potential suitability for further specialist housing. Similarly, we welcome any capital contribution the District Council can itself make towards the provision of specialist or adapted accommodation for older people.	No Change required

Banbury Asian Forum	People don't move into specialist housing because they are worried about costs.	Extra Care Housing will be let under a variety of tenures including affordable rent. Need to publicise this to hard-to-reach groups. Covered under action point 2.5 and 2.7
Banbury Asian Forum	Most Asian elders are home owners and don't want to lose equity.	As above
Respondent	Comment	CDC Response
Priority Three: As an older person where would you seek housing advice?		
Local government rep	An assessment of an older person's needs should be more readily available-I attempted to get this done for my elderly mother and the County Council were not very helpful as I was arranging private care. More help needed to find private care and assess what is available.	Although care assessments are outside of the scope of this strategy it is recognised that services need to join up to be effective and therefore the importance of building on partnership working. Information and advice needs to be able to signpost to non housing services.
Local resident	Have on display in public buildings eg libraries Send to Senior Citizen groups Circulate to Council Members and to Parish Councils	Leaflet to be made available outlining improvements made to information and advice once these have been achieved –added to action plan
Local resident	Perhaps a dedicated web site and leaflets available from libraries, doctors surgeries etc	As above
Local resident	Leaflet all pensioners in your district	As above

Local resident	As well as housing information there should be a regular newsletter letting people know about social events, and opportunities for lift sharing so elderly people do not have to drive alone in the winter. Also when I phone the council I would like to speak with a single person rather than being passed from department to department.	Outside of the direct scope of this strategy but will be passed on to relevant services for inclusion in the seniors directory
Local resident	Regular updates by mail.	Difficult to give housing information in this format –but will include updates in the Cherwell Link –added to action plan.
Local resident	Better publicity e.g Banbury Guardian and free papers.	Media will be used to publicise any improvements – added to action plan.
Local resident	Web page, local television advertisements.	Web pages to be updated to include specialist advice for older people -added to action plan.
Local resident	Leaflets could be displayed in post offices. Local newspapers and parish magazines can be used.	Taken up as part of above points.
Voluntary	Send letters to all pensioners	Taken up as part of above points.
Local resident	Translation! More info in Polish.	We will consider translation wherever possible as well as other forms to help accessibility such as Language line.
Local resident	Breakfast Clubs: People attend to talk about facilities and help available.	Will make contact through older people’s groups as invited to discuss housing services available.

Local resident	The information is out there. E.g papers, literature. Just not sure people look for it. Respondent suggested officers attend local luncheons to give an informal talk to people.	See above
Local resident	Put more information in Cherwell Link, older people tend to read this.	Point taken up as part of above points.
County Council rep	We also support the aim of improving information and advice to older people as this too is a key objective for the County Council and I suggest that the implementation of both our interests in this area needs to be co-ordinated wherever possible.	Agreed but no follow up action needed. County are part of the steering group and will be therefore be involved in the delivery of the action plan.
Respondent	Comment	CDC Response
Priority Four: Involvement of Older People in the way we provide services.		
Local residents	14 respondents put themselves forward as being interested in further consultation.	Data base will be added to as contacts with groups are made -2 older people from the existing database are now on the steering group.
Respondent	Comment	CDC Response
Priority Five: Ensure new development of housing meets the needs of older people now and in the future		

Local resident	Alms houses have been in existence for hundreds of years and today they are even more relevant.	Line included about Almshouse in ensuring we support a range of provision for older people under priority two.
Age Concern LGBT rep	Work undertaken recently by Age Concern England has demonstrated the need to raise awareness in sheltered housing and residential care (The whole of me, Age Concern England 2006). Many lesbians, gay or bisexual residents in care homes or sheltered housing schemes feel uneasy about being open. They are anxious about experiencing prejudice or being excluded if other residents or staff members were to know. Many care home and sheltered housing staff believe that they have never met or worked with a person who is gay.	Strategy amended to include LGBT older people in hard to reach groups and action points strengthened to ensure these cover all older people, particularly groups who may be marginalised
Local resident	Location of accommodation in relation to facilities is crucial and to often on the margins of settlements.	Already taken account of through change to action point 5.6.
Local government	My son is a young wheelchair user and very little new (or old) housing is suitable for him-and I suppose he may be in a similar position to elderly people with mobility needs. More needs to be done to broker accommodation for those with mobility requirements with developers. It seems to be just left up to market forces which is inefficient as there is not an easy way for those with housing need to find out what is available (not just in social housing but in all housing).	Because disability affects many older people the needs of people with a disability are addressed in this strategy – see action point 5.3.

Local resident	There is probably a need for single person accommodation in the rural areas. There are usually houses available and these can prove too big or unmanageable for single people.	Addressed by action point 5.6.
Local resident	New developments which are intended for older people should have shops, doctor's surgeries, dentists, opticians, libraries etc in close proximity which can be accessed easily without the need for public or private transport.	Covered by amendment to action point 5.6 to ensure rural housing needs surveys take account of services available in the Parish.
Local resident	From what I experience now young and old in practice just don't mix with this trend of open plan frontage gardens, also some of the older people are long term ill health cases and are in considerable pain and having the noise of screaming shouting children coming through your walls when they are trying to get some rest is just not on.	The strategy addresses the need for older people to have choice over the environment they live in.
Local resident	Houses with built-in wardrobes would be helpful as this is the first piece of furniture elderly people need to get rid of if they move into a flat.	Good point to be taken into account when designing specialist housing for older people.
Local resident	New housing developments are largely filled by younger people. Older people would feel out of place. Also there would generally be a lack of facilities for the old.	Addressed by age proofing new developments (action point 5.5) and new action point to be included on provision of downsizing units as part of new developments
Local resident	Developments in Ambrosden are too isolated.	Addressed through points above –looking at accessibility to services on new developments.

Local resident	Properties themselves could be ok but people may be reluctant to move for fear of community issues, making new friends etc.	Addressed by Action point 5.6.
Local resident	The suitability of newly developed housing depends on nearby facilities.	Addressed by Action points 5.5 and 5.6.
Local resident	Existing developments often need updating.	Valid point. Covered through grants but also through action point 2.6 for sheltered housing.