

**DRAFT**

# **Housing for Older People in Stevenage 2020-2030**

Stevenage Borough Council, Housing Services

Hertfordshire County Council, Adult Care Services

## **Homes for Healthy Ageing in Stevenage**

December 2020

## Foreword

Welcome to Stevenage's Housing for Older People Strategy 2020-2030. This is a joint strategy that has been developed by Stevenage Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council to improve housing options for older people in the town.

Within the existing financial climate, it is important that we take a long-term and strategic approach to providing different housing options for older people. Our strategic objective is to enable healthy ageing for older people in Stevenage through the provision of a new housing and support offer.

Both councils know the provision of good quality, affordable and appropriate housing is key to meeting the needs of our older people across Stevenage. The same is also true of vital services that enable people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible and prevent a crisis from occurring. All older people deserve to have a home which meets their long term wishes and enables them to maintain their independence, whatever their changing health or support needs.

Our priority is to support our older people to live independently for as long as possible and we must ensure that our recommendations reflect older people's future needs and aspirations. We know a range of housing is required in different settings.

We recognise that some older people may be living in accommodation that is too big and is difficult to maintain and heat. From our research we understand that many do not want to leave their homes where they have raised their families and they enjoy living in their local area that they know well; feeling forced to move can negatively impact their health and wellbeing.

It is important therefore, that there is suitable, alternative local housing to help older people to make the move to downsize, should they wish to do so. Housing that is more adaptable and accessible, and flexicare housing, where there are additional care and support needs will also help to meet the needs of our older population. We want to make sure that older people are aware of options to downsize and can be supported in what can be a difficult transition in moving from a home that has been lived in for many years and holds special memories, to starting a new life in a home that is more suitable to their current and future needs. This strategy recognises the many challenges we have and we can meet these through excellent partnership working across the statutory and voluntary sectors. We aim to develop our data and information, encourage the further expansion of partnership working and improve the quality and increase the supply of housing across all tenures. We look forward to working with all of our local partners to ensure its success.

We would like to thank all residents, support agencies and professionals who have contributed their thoughts, time and information to help us bring this work together and have been instrumental in shaping the commitments within it.

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## Introduction

In line with the rest of the country, Stevenage has an ageing population which exacerbates a continuing challenge for housing, health and social care. This strategy sets out Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage Borough Councils' approach to ensuring that we have suitable housing on offer for older people in Stevenage, now and in the future.

Stevenage has a well-established and productive Strategic Supported Housing Accommodation Board, where the County Council and Borough Council meet regularly to discuss and agree initiatives to bring forward new supported housing and housing related innovation in the town. The Board is chaired jointly by the Chief Executive of Stevenage Borough Council and the Director of Hertfordshire Adult Social Care, and has attendance from property, development, planning and housing officers from both organisations. This strategy is a product of that Board's activities, and its effectiveness and action plan will be scrutinised as part of the Board's work.

## Scope

This strategy recognises that housing for older people comes in many types and tenures, and that people's aspirations vary in relation to their health and care needs, socio-economic status, community and family circumstances and personal goals. This strategy will therefore look at specialist housing for older people, such as independent living and flexicare (also known as extra care), and residential and nursing care homes, and also general needs housing that is suitable for older people across private rent, social and home ownership tenures.

## Outcomes

The strategy seeks to achieve the following:

- A robust, evidence-based understanding of current and future needs of older people and their aspirations for specialist mixed tenure housing in Stevenage, including affordability and locality;
- An understanding of future services and capacity of specialist housing as well as support services required in the town;
- An understanding of the future demand for new specialist housing across different tenures;
- An understanding of how specialist older person's housing can influence the wider housing market;
- Identify likely gaps in service provision, and potential routes for addressing those gaps, through early discussion with key partners and stakeholders such as Hertfordshire County Council, East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and third sector partners;
- An understanding of future support services needed for older people delivered by Stevenage Borough Council.

This strategy should highlight gaps in service provision and allow us to make fitting recommendations that will positively impact older people living in Stevenage, both now and in the future. This strategy also seeks to shape the way Stevenage Borough Council provides support services to residents.

In addition, this strategy will look beyond the needs of our current older person population by considering the future demand for specialist housing required by the ageing population – aged 55+. This approach will enable us to future-proof, where possible, any recommended provisions.

This strategy recognises that older people in Stevenage occupy accommodation across all types of tenure, and as such our approach is tenure blind, enabling a wide offer of choice.

## Methodology

To develop this strategy, we have undertaken a structured research programme, using a variety of methods to gather evidence and information from those aged 45+, older people, their families and carers, and professionals who work with them, about their housing needs and aspirations, and have drawn on a number of local and national sources of information:

These have included:

- ✓ Surveys and conversations with current and future older residents, service user forums and community groups, and professionals who work with older people in Stevenage;
- ✓ Local policy drivers and initiatives;
- ✓ National policy and legislation;
- ✓ National and local statistics from public sources such as the Office for National Statistics, Public Health England District Profiles, and the Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;
- ✓ Local statistics and research, such as Stevenage Housing Register and allocations data, and Strategic Housing Market Assessment;
- ✓ Sector research and best practice from across the UK.

A list of reference documents can be found at [page 52](#).

A town wide survey of residents over the age of 45 generated 271 responses, of which 214 completed all 38 questions. We chose to survey this age range to capture the views of those turning 55 years old within the strategy's lifespan. Furthermore, Census 2011 information shows us that over 20% of the Stevenage population fall within the age structure 45-59 and we must ensure that our recommendations reflect this population's future needs and aspirations. The survey was predominantly web-based, though some paper questionnaires were also circulated to specific community groups.

We also asked the same questions, with some nuancing, to professionals working with older people in Stevenage. This survey was also web based and was advertised by directly emailing the link to care and other providers working in Stevenage, and via the HCC Adult Care Services intranet and local networks. There were 62 respondents (though not all fully completed the survey) with 18 at management level or above.

The questionnaire and analysis can be found at Appendices 1 and 2.

We consulted our key stakeholders working with older people in Stevenage. This included, for example, Elected Members, registered social landlords, voluntary agencies, groups representing those from minority groups and health and social care professionals. Summaries of the discussions can be found at appendix 3.

Two stakeholder events were held that highlighted four key areas for investigation:

- Development, standards and design

- Information, advice and technology
- Support and assistance to help people move
- Inter-organisational working

We explored these themes further through face to face discussions and focus groups.

In addition to this, we completed a desktop literature review of local and national research to fully understand the challenges that older people face in securing good accommodation and retaining their independence, comparing Stevenage Borough Council's performance against best practice and the performance of other Local Authorities. It is acknowledged that the results are only a snapshot of the opinions of a small percentage of the residents in Stevenage who will potentially require more suitable housing in the future, however, we feel that it is important to acknowledge Stevenage's unique relationship with its residents and have related the national and local data and best practice to the views expressed by them within their responses.

We would like to thank all residents, support agencies and professionals who have contributed their thoughts, time and information to help us bring this work together and have been instrumental in shaping the commitments within it.

## Strategic Objective

This strategy has one Strategic Objective:

**To enable healthy ageing for older people in Stevenage through the provision of a new housing and support offer.**

It is important that we take a long-term and strategic approach to tackling and managing the complex challenges associated with an ageing population, spending wisely and using assets well. We believe that keeping our residents healthy and independent gives them a better quality of life and helps reduce pressure on stretched public services, and that good, accessible housing is a key part of this. This is reflected in national and local policy and is one of the Healthy Stevenage priorities. The Housing for Older People Strategy (HOPS) will focus on working collaboratively with partner agencies to develop housing options that support independence and reduce demand for more intensive and costly services. We will build on primary and secondary research to support this. While both councils have good working relationships with our partners, we recognise that we must work more closely with them and target our resources more effectively to meet the challenges to providing appropriate housing options, support and advice for older people.

In this strategy, the term 'older people' refers to those aged over 55: the industry standard extra care age trigger, and the point at which private pension or early retirement settlements can start to be considered. We do, however, recognise that for most people age is not the number of years a person has lived, but is a state of mind and physical health: many people do not consider themselves old even when well into their later years, while others need higher levels of care and support earlier in their life. Housing for an ageing population cannot therefore be a generic housing type or just scheme-based solutions but needs to be flexible and appropriate to people's ages and stages of life and form part of a wider mixed community. This strategy also relates to the housing needs for all older people in Stevenage, regardless of whether they receive formal services from the Borough or County Councils, whether they own their property or rent, and regardless of their employment status (working, unemployed or retired).

New guidance for local planning authorities requires them to consider the needs of those approaching retirement age as well as those already in need, and we have taken the same approach: we want and need to understand how people plan and act in order to meet their current and future housing needs. We recognise that this is broad, however the housing and support needs of individuals, along with their aspirations, will vary greatly and flexible solutions to enable healthy ageing will need to be available. This housing strategy for older people in Stevenage aims to address this issue. We have designed it show to a clear direction of travel, but also to be aspirational and flexible, with solutions emerging over time so that we can adapt to new technology, best practice and the changing needs of the Stevenage communities.

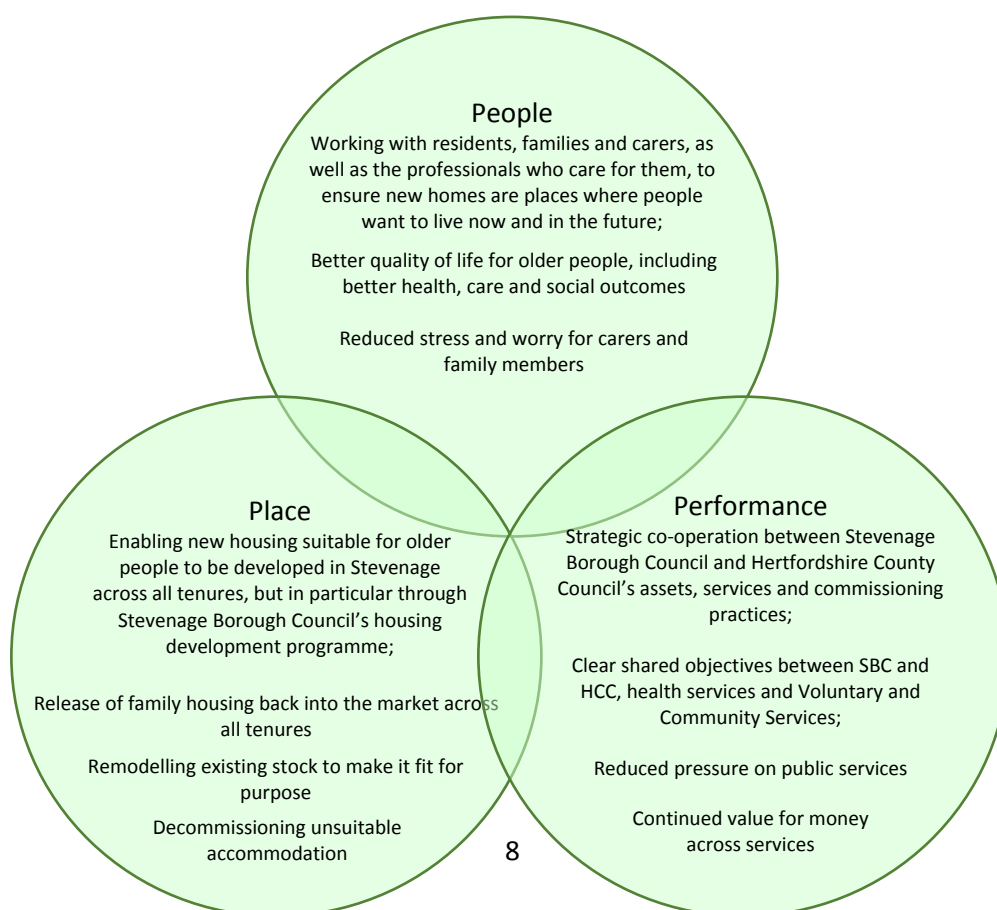
A key element of the collaborative approach to meeting older people’s needs in the borough, is the effective use of assets and land holdings of both the Borough and County Councils to ensure that new development is viable, fit for purpose and able to be used by its intended occupants well into the future. Some of this will mean reconfiguring and reconstructing existing stock, making strategic decisions about best use of sites including the potential for sale and reinvestment elsewhere, and ensuring, wherever possible, cost neutrality in the development process.

We recognise that good, affordable and accessible housing has a beneficial effect on older people’s health and wellbeing, helps keep communities together and provides wider societal benefits, as well as helping to reduce pressure on the health, social care and housing systems. High quality accessible, adaptable and well-designed housing will need to be provided in conjunction with good care and support services. New housing should be well placed, be connected to amenities, and linked to communities to help people live well and independently, preventing isolation wherever possible. We accept that there is a need to think innovatively when increasing the supply of homes that can support positive ageing.

We therefore considered general needs as well as specialist housing for older people, reflecting their housing ‘journey’ through the different stages of later life, and recognising that many older people are able to manage on their own and wish to take responsibility for themselves. We are using the three principles of People, Place and Performance to guide our thinking (figure 1).

Four key themes have come out of the consultation and research for this strategy, and we have focussed our future thinking on these:

Figure 1





**Development, standards and design:** ensuring mixed communities, flexible spaces, good design and high standards that older people will want to move to, close to amenities and providing good design and layouts that matter to them. Balanced communities work better and keep people more active and engaged, and recognise that one size doesn't fit all: whilst people's needs change, they often do not want to leave their friends and community;

**Information, advice and technology:** finding ways of working collaboratively to provide timely advice to people who need or wish to move in later life, or for those who need help in maintaining or living in their current home. Using technology to provide access to information and services to change perceptions and encourage people to think about their housing choices earlier to sustain or improve their quality of life;

**Support and assistance to help people move:** linked to the information and advice theme, people asked for practical help in accessing suitable housing and for support both during and after a move. Forms, managing utilities and legal matters, packing and unpacking, handyperson jobs and support to help people emotionally adjust to moving to a smaller property were all areas of concern;

**Inter-organisational working:** joining up existing services in different statutory and voluntary organisations to better identify and support people to move earlier and more quickly, or to get adaptations or support where they wish to stay. At present there is no single point of contact, and people do not want and should not need to explain their circumstances more than once, even when talking to different agencies. A better collective understanding of the individual as a whole, what support is needed and who is involved: using a place-based approach, people asked for a sharing of ideas, learning from the way other organisations deliver their older persons offer, working together and keeping momentum going.



*"At present I am capable of continuing my life in my own home. I would wish to stay here as long as possible. As I get older and need support, I would hope that would be forthcoming in my own home. I would only want to move as a last resort."*

*(resident's survey response)*

## Part 1: Why do we need this strategy?

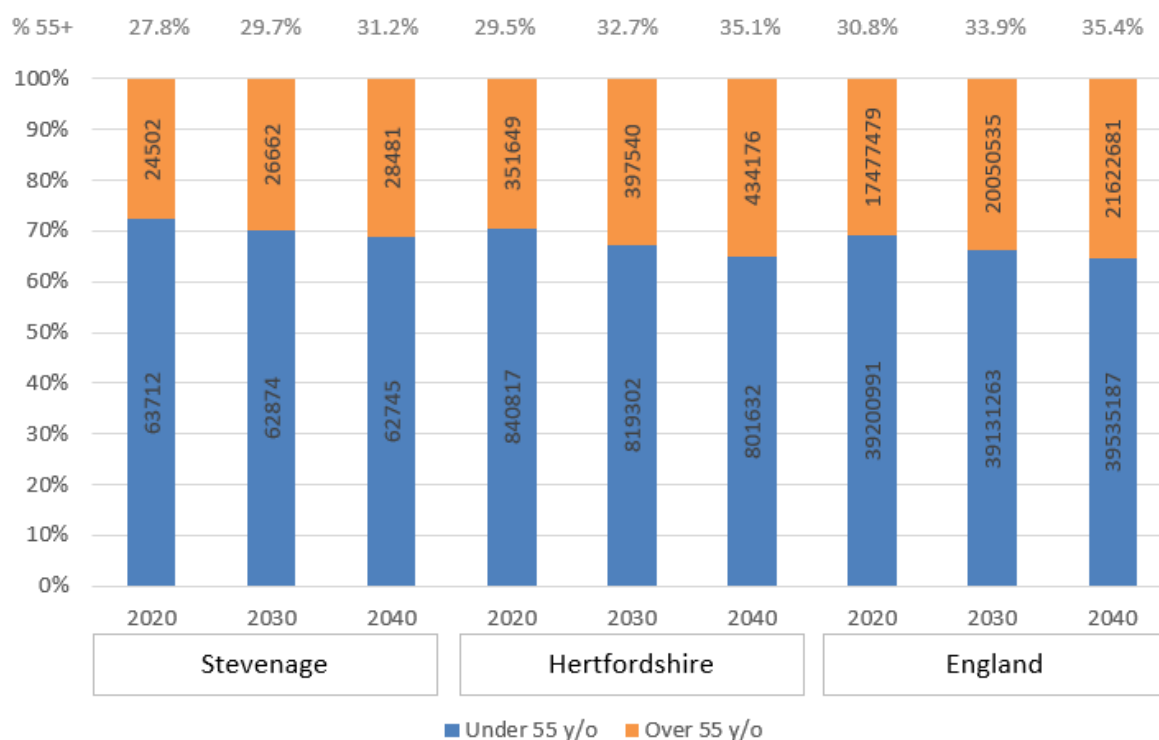
The UK has an ageing population, yet most new housing development is aimed at younger people, families and newly forming households. Government incentives, such as Help to Buy and shared ownership, are generally aimed at young adult first time buyers, and shortages of available suitable land results in high density living that is not always suitable for people with mobility problems or who need additional space for medical equipment. As a consequence, as people live longer, are more active in later life but also live with complex health needs for longer, the housing market does not service their needs well. Only 9% of new housing<sup>i</sup> in the UK is appropriate for older people or those with mobility concerns, despite ONS population projections showing that by 2066, over a quarter of adults in the UK will be over 65, and 7% will be over 85<sup>ii</sup>. More older people are now living in the private rented sector, and recent reports also point to an increase in homelessness applications by people over 60<sup>iii</sup>. Well-designed homes whether general needs or specialist schemes such as independent living or flexi care, can help maximise the independence and well-being of older people, keep communities together, reduce pressure on public services and help balance the wider housing market.

Stevenage is one of the ten district and borough councils in Hertfordshire, is situated 28 miles north of London and is bounded by North Hertfordshire and East Hertfordshire. It was the first New Town to be built under the New Towns Act 1946 and was built around the concept of self-contained neighbourhoods. Residents still very much feel part of these communities and wish to stay living in their specific local areas where possible (appendix 4). Housing provision for older residents in Stevenage reflects the national picture and the town's neighbourhoods lacks the types of housing suitable for potential older residents to live safely and independently in their homes without adaptations, care or moving to another property.

While the total number of people under 55 in Stevenage is estimated to reduce between 2020 and 2040, the number of people over 55 will increase by almost 4,000 equating to around to 31.2% of the population. Figure 2, below, shows how the population changes in Stevenage compare to Hertfordshire and the rest of England. Stevenage still has a slightly younger overall population than the rest of the County, but not only will there be more older people who will need care and support in the future, but also that the percentage of working age people in the population will be reducing here as elsewhere. This will affect the workforce and communities who can provide this care, and, nationally, the tax-base that will pay for it.

*Figure 2: Population projections*

## Percentage of people over 55 years old as a proportion of total population 2020-2040



Responses from residents tell us that people value the role that Councils have in their housing and wellbeing, but that advice and support is not always tailored to their needs as they would like it to be. Their feedback suggests organisations, including the voluntary and community services, should be better joined up to deliver a single system, which provides information and assistance that helps older people make informed decisions about their own lives when it is needed.

### Housing, Health and Social Care

There are a number of national studies that show the benefits of appropriate housing on improving health, wellbeing and quality of life<sup>iv</sup>. With an ageing population, age related disability is more prevalent, and as people live longer with more complex conditions, services must respond accordingly. It is anticipated that the number of people with disability and care needs will increase significantly over the next 20 years, but people's aspirations for their later life have also changed. People do not feel themselves to be 'old' at age 65, and are expecting to be working and contributing to society well into later life. Yet services do not necessarily reflect these aspirations, and people's perceptions of their housing options remain restrictively fixed as residential or nursing care homes when they are no longer able to care from themselves.

Age related health issues are also on the rise and conditions such as diabetes, dementia and heart disease in older people are expected to increase with the rise in population reaching older age<sup>v</sup>. Good lifestyle choices, including choosing suitable housing and healthy living spaces, help reduce the likelihood of such conditions and also impact positively on wider issues in public health and society.

The costs of an ageing society to health services and social care authorities is placing unsustainable pressure on already stretched budgets, not only in terms of rising cost of providing interventions and formal care packages, but also in relation to a smaller workforce able to undertake such care activities: whilst the older people we spoke to understandably did not want to become dependent or be treated with anything other than dignity and respect, some care will be needed. Healthy ageing achieves positive outcomes for all three of these dimensions: older people retain control and independence over their lives; health issues reduce or are less acute, including age related frailty and mental health concerns; and formal care packages are reduced as people live in enabling environments that encourage and support healthy ageing and continued connection to friends and family<sup>vi</sup>. This links to the [Healthy Stevenage Strategy 2018-2022](#) that has a strategic priority to support people to remain independent as long as possible through the work of the [Healthy Stevenage Partnership](#). [Connected Lives](#)<sup>vii</sup> is Hertfordshire Adult Care Service’s approach to community practice, personalised enablement and new models of commissioning. The Provider Outcome Framework is underpinned by the nine definitions of wellbeing from the Care Act 2014: personal dignity, physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing, protection from abuse and neglect, control by the individual over day-to-day life (including over care and support provided and the way it is provided), participation in work, education, training or recreation, social and economic wellbeing, domestic, family and personal, suitability of living accommodation and the individual’s contribution to society. The five outcomes summarise our shared vision with what we want to achieve for the people we support. The key to the model is the concept of connecting: to people, to support, to opportunity, to knowledge and to positive daily occupation.

**Connected Lives model**



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**Current housing options for older people**

Older people live in a variety of housing types, including mainstream (general needs), retirement and ‘age restricted’ housing, or specialist accommodation such as independent living or flexi care schemes. Many older people wish to remain in their own home as they age, especially where there are emotional ties to the family home, or equity to be passed on to future generations. Adaptations, a home care package and other support, including telecare alarms and community services, can help people stay where they are for as long as they are able, but sometimes property costs, layout and maintenance become too much, and other, more suitable, housing needs to be considered. Stevenage Borough Council own 16 schemes with 810 properties in Stevenage that are specifically designed for older people, with a mixture of studios, 1 bedroom and some 2 bedroomed properties housing individuals and couples: two of the schemes are Flexicare (with a care agency on site 24 hours 7 days a week).

There are also 13 residential and care homes in the town, some of which are privately owned and some that provide services to people who receive social care funded packages.

Some of the current stock in Stevenage is no longer fit for purpose or sustainable in the long term, and there is a need for more specifically age-friendly and technically advanced properties to meet the need in the town. There are around 180 flats available for private sale for older people managed by organisations such as McCarthy & Stone, Millstream Management Services, Anchor Hanover, Aldwyck and First Port. It is recognised that for some home owners, the cost of moving to these schemes are unaffordable. It is estimated there are approximately 300 social rented homes owned by housing associations.

Stevenage Borough Council manages 7,808 properties in the Borough, of which 814 are within independent living or flexicare schemes. Stevenage Borough Council's Asset Management Strategies of 2014 and 2019 have included key objectives for the review of its existing independent living stock to ensure that it is fit for purpose, through investment and remodelling. This includes:

- Planned works to improve and remodel the independent living stock where necessary (inclusive of communal areas);
- The conversions of low demand independent living studio accommodation to self-contained one-bedroom flats, using communal areas where appropriate;
- The creation of additional homes in existing schemes, providing additional accommodation and improving their viability; and
- The disposal and redevelopment of independent living accommodation identified as being unsustainable in the long term.

Stevenage Borough Council commissioned a detailed review of its independent living scheme assets in 2016, which categorised all schemes into one of the following categories:

**Green** – Sustainable in the long term, continue to invest and retain as independent living.

**Amber** – Sustainable in the medium term but will require investment and/or remodelling to remain viable in the long term

**Red** - Unsustainable and investment levels make the schemes unviable to retain as independent living schemes

Those independent living schemes falling into the amber category are considered to be at risk of experiencing longer term demand and/or physical problems which require investment to upgrade the schemes and, in some cases, remodel accommodation. Following the review, Stevenage Borough Council has implemented a £3 million improvement programme that, over the next 5 years, will deliver the investment required to remodel and enhance these schemes to the required standard. This is alongside a programme of planned maintenance being delivered as part of the asset management strategy.

Two of the schemes deemed to be unsustainable (red) have been decommissioned and the sites are being re-developed. The remaining two schemes are part of a further options appraisal to determine their future viability.

Many older people will live in ordinary general needs properties too, but older housing stock in both the social and private sector may cause difficulties for older people in terms of size, maintenance or adaptability as needs change. Significant development is underway in Stevenage through its housing development programme, and so we are in a perfect position to use this strategy to influence the design and accessibility of new housing which allows older people to 'right-size', move to more age-friendly housing in the community, or to develop new schemes such as extra care which also provides an on-site care provision where it is needed. People age at different rates, regardless of the number of years they have lived, and some people need more services than others at different stages of their lives. We need,

therefore, to recognise that a range of housing is required in different settings to meet the aspirations and needs of our population.

## Current support services, information and advice

Under the Care Act 2014, the local care authority (Hertfordshire County Council) must make provision to prevent, reduce or delay care needs. This can be managed through a combination of ways to assess and commission care to maximise a person's independence. Reducing social isolation and enabling social connection, facilitating mobility and mental and physical well-being, and providing an enabling home environment allows people to live well and have a better quality of life. The principle of the promotion of an individual's [wellbeing](#), enshrined in section 1 of the Act, and within section 1 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance, includes the suitability of living accommodation as underpinning the authority's functions in addressing a person's care and support needs. In 2019-20 Hertfordshire Adult Care Services (ACS) provided 1,059 packages of care for people over 55 living in Stevenage across all services.

In carrying out these functions, Hertfordshire County Council provides a range of support services, including the Hertfordshire Equipment Service (HES), organises respite and day care services, provides Occupational Therapy services, and carries out carer's assessments for people looking after a loved one. All of these services are affected by and can impact on a person's home and living environment. When Social Workers undertake an assessment of a person's needs, their living circumstances should be taken into account. Stevenage Borough Council is also part of the shared Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA) which is hosted by the County Council.

Stevenage Borough Council's Housing Options team offer a range of impartial information and advice across all tenures and types of housing. Stevenage Borough Council also have their own Aids and Adaptations Policy and has a small budget to fund adaptations to council properties.

The SBC Specialist Support Services Team provides support to all those living in Independent Living and flexicare accommodation owned by SBC. All residents receive a 24/7 emergency response service either through a hardwired alarm or a pendant alarm unit depending on the scheme that they live in. For more details of the support service see 1.2.

## Stevenage Borough Council's Business Unit Review (April 2020):

Stevenage Borough Council's Housing and Investment department (H&I) has been through a business unit review in April 2020. It was an opportunity to review all the services and was the catalyst for the transformation of the Independent Living team to Specialist Support Services (appendix 5). The research from this strategy has also fed into the review.

Some of the key changes to staffing, roles and service provision include:

- Introduction of Specialist Accommodation & Complex Needs Officer – this role will be the single point of contact for potential applicants moving into our schemes. They will manage the transition from a property on notice of termination through to the letting, co-ordinating viewings, lettings and removals for residents enhancing the journey for the customer.

They will link closely with colleagues across the council and in particular linking in with the Aids and Adaptation Team ensuring best use of council stock.

- Introduction of Health & Wellbeing Programme Officer – this post will enhance the health and wellbeing of our Specialist Support Services customers by supporting and empowering residents

to organise some activities in their schemes. They will co-ordinate a health and wellbeing programme of activities and information sessions within schemes, linking in with the work of the Healthy Stevenage Partnership and networking with other agencies and health partners to tackle loneliness and improve health and wellbeing.

The post holder will be actively seeking funding opportunities or initiating projects for residents and will be a Dementia Friends Trainer to train colleagues across the organisation and other organisations.

- Some of the smaller schemes have been merged together and have two named Specialist Support Officers working across three schemes; this enables the team to provide additional support to larger schemes or those with higher demands. This is a flexible structure and the team will adjust presence at schemes in line with demands as they change. Residents continue to receive 24/7 emergency response service through their alarm.
- Introduction of Rapid (a mobile technology solution) to complete forms, collect data and complete assessments; this has enabled the staff to work more flexibly on the go and has reduced duplication.

## Covid-19 Response

In March 2020 with the outbreak of Covid-19, both Stevenage Borough and Hertfordshire County Council responded to the needs of our residents.

The Specialist Support Services team at Stevenage adjusted the way services were delivered to ensure the safety of residents and staff. The team continued to respond to emergency calls 24/7 and continued to carry out essential visits. Regular contact was made to all residents through the alarm system and telephone for those not requiring a physical visit.

The team were able to make contact with all Stevenage Careline customers and any council tenants over the age of 70 years old to check on their wellbeing and to ensure they could self-isolate safely. The team provided weekly welfare calls to over 140 households, providing reassurance and ensuring the service users and residents received the support they needed. The Football Foundation, through the Healthy Stevenage Partnership, worked collaboratively to support older people with providing meals and support during the pandemic and have been working with the Specialist Support Services Team to look at who would need continuous support going forward.

At the same time, Hertfordshire County Council adapted their support services, by sending a 'Your Connected life' resource leaflet to everyone who receives support and running associated social media campaigns over the winter period. These encouraged people to stay active and engage with their communities, plan ahead, and to contact us if they are anxious about their care and support arrangements. Arrangements were put in place to make Direct Payments easier to organise and use, supporting people to use these flexibly to ensure they had the care and support they need, in addition to making sure that the council responded accordingly where people's care and support plans needed to change as a result of Covid-19.

Understanding and sharing best practice in care homes in relation to supporting residents and their loved ones to keep in touch is very important, and resourcing the Council's monitoring teams to deliver 'Health and Wellbeing' themed visits, to support all providers in sustaining a focus on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people with care and support needs was a key activity in supporting care homes to remain open to visits where they can do this safely.

Both Hertfordshire and Stevenage councils were active participants in 'Operation Sustain' and 'Operation Shield' reaching out pro-actively to people during the first phase of the pandemic and reminding them how to get help. Working with voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors and health partners we give ongoing support to anyone who needs assistance. We have also been supporting people who are struggling with their mental health, who are experiencing economic hardship, and those who are finding it difficult to access services in an increasingly on-line world. This extends to bereavement support and supporting those who care for others by working with Carers in Herts to check in with family carers pro-actively, ensuring they have the support needed and a back-up plan to see them through the winter, and that they know what to do if they are struggling. This has involved keeping in touch with and supporting carers who are unable to visit loved ones, giving access to sitting, respite and short breaks services, and supporting providers to continue to provide and to re-open closed day services where we can do this safely. This has included supporting voluntary and community organisations as they look to re-open community centres.

We have also been proactive in ensuring no-one is excluded from accessing the support they need. We have done this by ensuring alternatives to digital communication are used, ensuring that all of our communication is in a suitable and accessible format for the diverse communities across Hertfordshire. Recognising that there is a higher vulnerability to the virus for specific communities, we have been developing improved links with Black, Asian and other ethnic groups, and continuing our targeted approach to provide information, advice and direct support to people with a learning disability and Autism and those that care for them.

## **Cost of Services**

Funding has been challenging for all public authorities in recent years, and changes in central government support has made it necessary to make some difficult choices across organisations, including the reduction, realignment or commercialisation of (i.e. charging for) some services. In order to continue to provide the support service to older people in the town, in 2017/18 Stevenage Borough Council introduced a small weekly support charge for those who received the service for free so they were making a contribution. SBC still currently subsidises towards this service for these residents. Local authorities have responsibilities to make best use of public money and aspire to reduce costs to the public purse by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the services they provide. The actions contained within this Strategy will assist with this agenda.



## Part 2: Future Focus

Stevenage is a town which has ambitious aspirations for growth. It has a very strong community focus, a population that values its uniqueness and history, and a new Local Plan setting out aspirations for new housing and the regeneration of the town centre. Older people clearly have a role to play in the reshaping of the town and ensuring that there is suitable housing for them is important, not only for their wellbeing and community coherence, but also to help release existing family homes back into the wider housing market.

This part of the strategy follows the four themes identified earlier:

- **Development, standards and design**
- **Information, advice and technology**
- **Support and assistance to help people move**
- **Inter-organisational working**

**All four of the themes are intrinsically linked, and so many of the recommendations identified will be cross cutting, will work across organisational systems, and will support each other and existing workstreams within the housing and social care realms.**

### Theme 1: Development, standards and design

#### New housing development

As the biggest landlord in Stevenage, the Borough Council has a significant role to play in both the shaping of new and existing communities, leading the way with applying design standards and technology which help people age well in their homes and driving sustainable development. A significant housing development programme is underway across the town to reinvigorate and modernise the offer to Stevenage residents, and new housing is included within its scope.

New developments, such as the Borough Council's flagship scheme being developed at Kenilworth Close, are leading the way in the Borough's aspirations for older people. The scheme will provide over 200 new dwellings, of which 88 will make up a new Independent Living Scheme. The remaining properties will be made up of general needs flats and houses as well as some for private sale. New community facilities and new public realm, and a number of retail units are also included within the scheme design.

### Kenilworth Close Regeneration:

A total of 236 New Homes  
88 affordable & social  
rented homes for  
independent living by the  
over 60 age group  
Modern, thermally  
efficient homes  
incorporating HAPPI  
features

A mixed tenure blind  
community  
Provision for 5 local shops  
to support local economy  
and sustainability  
Start on site: Jan 2021  
Completion in 2023/24



Kenilworth Close in Bragbury End is a new development that will have an Independent Living Scheme of 1 and 2 bedroomed apartments. As part of SBC's Regeneration Project, the apartments have been specifically designed for older people, recognising that they have different aspirations and requirements when it comes to their housing and care needs.

Each apartment will have a useable balcony or personal outdoor space, enhanced security features, and plenty of communal areas, both inside and outside the scheme. The development itself is positioned close to local shops, green space and transport links to the town centre.

In October 2019, Hertfordshire County Council also adopted a new strategy and capital fund to enable new extra care housing across the county, including Stevenage, and proposals for a new residential care home for the borough are also being discussed.

Using the Housing Older People Supply Recommendations [HOPSR<sup>viii</sup>](#) demand modelling tool, developed by Sheffield Hallam University, it is estimated that demand for specialist housing for older people over 75 will increase in Stevenage by some 68% in age exclusive, sheltered, enhanced sheltered and extra care by 2030 (current supply – 1,349; 2030 recommended future supply – 2,262), with an additional increase in residential care home beds for the same age group of 90% (current supply - 511; 2030 recommended future supply – 972). Table [1] below shows how this is split across rented and owned tenures, although it should be noted that these figures are only indicative, and will not be completely consistent with locally calculated figures, which take other factors into account. The final mix of properties are likely to be different to meet local needs.

Table 1: Housing for Older People supply Recommendations (HOPSR) by tenure for Stevenage

	Recommended tenure supply			
	current	2025	2030	2035
<b>Age exclusive (units)</b>				
Rented	397	397	440	518
Owner	34	34	37	44
<b>Sheltered (units)</b>				
Rented	820	1,071	1,215	1,430
Owned	157	206	233	275
<b>Enhanced sheltered (units)</b>				
Rented	14	18	21	25
Owned	12	15	17	20
<b>Extra Care (units)</b>				
Rented	81	106	121	142
Owned	12	16	18	21

Following revisions to the National Planning Policy Guidance in June 2019, strategic policy-making authorities “will need to determine the needs of people who will be approaching or reaching retirement over the plan period, as well as the existing population of older people”<sup>ix</sup> so these numbers can be seen to be an underestimation of need when late middle age and younger older people – i.e. those between 55 and 74 years of age – are taken into account. This does not mean that targets have to be set for specialist housing, but does give extra impetus to ensuring that age appropriate housing across all types and tenures is factored into Local Planning Policy. Stevenage’s Local Plan was adopted in May 2019<sup>x</sup>, and will stand until 2031, with a review within five to ten years. In order to allow flexibility, there isn’t a target set for older people’s housing, although there is a recognition that age appropriate housing needs to be considered in all new developments. The Local Plan does include a specific policy, HO10 (sheltered and supported housing) dedicated to shaping the developments of older persons housing schemes. HO11 also relates to accessible housing development, although this is not older person specific.

Over 40% of respondents to our professionals’ survey, felt that the lack of availability and quality of specialist housing on offer to older people was a barrier when considering a move to more appropriate housing. The current offer requires some service users to move away from familiar environments, leaving behind friends and family, at a time in their life when they may already be feeling vulnerable: those otherwise reluctant to move may be attracted if the opportunity is on their doorstep. It was felt that the issue of relocating was compounded by a lack of public transport.

**We will ensure that new housing developments brought forward by the Councils have a percentage of housing that is suitable for older people in line with population trends, including general needs as well**

as specialist housing wherever possible. This will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is in line with population projections and demand.

We will work with our planning department to ensure that future Housing Market Assessments, Land Allocations and Planning Policy reflects the needs of an ageing population, that preparatory work for the Local Plan reviews and renewal have sufficiently robust evidence from both authorities to underpin policy direction.

We will do this by:

- Ensuring suitable and robust data about older people's housing requirements is gathered from national, borough and county sources, is shared and analysed jointly to underpin planning policy decisions that meet residents' current and future needs and feed this into any future council house building
- Working with our neighbouring districts to ensure that cross boundary planning requirements and housing mobility are recognised and reflected in relation to older people's care needs.

Stevenage Borough Council is currently undertaking an ambitious and large-scale regeneration programme, which will result in 2,000 new homes within and around the town centre. The Council aspires to use its assets wisely, by offsetting development costs wherever possible through assessing land value and existing buildings potential for resale or redevelopment and reinvesting any capital proceeds into the new developments to arrive at a neutral cost position to the Council overall. Our aspiration is to work with partners to increase provision of housing for older people as part of the later phases of the town centre regeneration.

At the same time, Hertfordshire County Council's property company, Herts Living, has embarked on a new housing development joint venture company - Chalkdene Developments - which is looking to utilise identified County Council owned sites to bring forward much needed housing across Hertfordshire including Stevenage. In both these cases, some of these will be occupied by older people and those approaching retirement, and so master-planning should reflect this need by viability and design assessments that include features that are age appropriate.

Additionally, a new programme of [Delivering Extra Care in Hertfordshire](#) is being established by the County Council to help give older people more choice about where and when they move, preventing health and care needs escalating for those who need support. These new developments are expected to be mixed tenure to appeal to a range of people, and to reflect the communities in which they are set<sup>xi</sup>. Demographic modelling done by the County Council based on population projections, current care requirements and national modelling tools, have shown to have an estimated demand in Stevenage of 301 extra care homes in total (including existing provision), with around half of those (154) available for people with fully funded care packages from Adult Social Care. It is intended that the majority of these new developments will be met through strategic working between the county and Stevenage Borough Council, particularly in terms of land use, funding (for both the development and housing support) and design, and officers from both will be included on the project teams. We will use landholdings from both councils effectively to ensure that flexicare schemes are built in the right locations that meet local communities' needs and will leverage grant from Homes England and other sources to facilitate development. Additionally, professional expertise from occupational therapy, housing teams and social work teams will be utilised to inform the design and facilities provision, ensuring that people receive excellent support, care, that social interaction is maximised, and health benefits are realised.

Local housing and planning authorities are required to ensure that planning policies adhere to the economic, social and environmental principles of sustainable development that support strong, vibrant and healthy communities<sup>xii</sup>, improvements in the conditions in which people live, and widening their housing choices<sup>xiii</sup>. Today's older people have different aspirations from previous generations, and new developments must acknowledge that traditional ideas of housing for later life may not still be appropriate. Conversations with older residents in Stevenage show that people expect more space for hobbies and visitors, want at least two bedrooms, and require easily maintained and sustainable homes in smaller developments sited within their local communities.

Both councils are currently undertaking significant reviews of their land and property holdings and are identifying potential sites for redevelopment: Stevenage will be conducting options appraisals as part of the Asset Management Strategy 2019-2023, and Hertfordshire County Council has already identified a number of potential redevelopment opportunities which are being assessed for suitability. However, it is also recognised that land is a scarce resource and limited land availability in the Borough is a risk to developing significant numbers of new housing specifically for older people, within wider housing market demands.

**We will work collaboratively between the two authorities to identify and exploit land opportunities in both public and private ownership that can help increase housing options across all tenures for older people for whom their existing housing is no longer a safe or suitable option, or people with care needs, or for those wishing to proactively plan for their later years before significant care needs arise.**

**We will do this by:**

- **Undertaking land and asset reviews and jointly identify suitable development opportunities in the town to bring forward viable, cost neutral development for older people where it is needed most.**
- **Developing flexible, age-appropriate housing, exemplar flexicare and residential care in Stevenage through SBC and County's housing development programmes.**
- **Developing good marketing strategies**

## **Housing Types and Tenures**

Residential care and independent living homes are still necessary in today's and future housing landscape, but more people are now thinking earlier about their housing options and considering 'rightsizing' or 'future proofing' before they become unable to manage without formal care. Consequently, a range of housing types and tenures should be considered, that meet the aspirations of older people, and which include home ownership, shared ownership and rented options. The Housing for Older People survey results show that while half (53.3%) of the respondents felt they would like to maintain their current tenure, a quarter 25.0% (26/104) of current homeowners felt they would move to a rented property, with the remaining 22.1% stating that they were unsure about the best tenure option for them (*table 2*).

Table 2: Service User Survey – current tenure and where people would move to

Existing	Would move to	Buy outright or with a mortgage	Rent from SBC	Rent from a housing association	Shared Ownership	Not sure
A home you own with a mortgage		13	12	1	1	8
A home you own without a mortgage		41	11	2		15
Rented from the Council (SBC)		1	40	3		
Rented from a Housing Association		1	6	3		2
Extra Care or sheltered / independent living scheme			6	1		1
Rented from a private landlord			8	2		

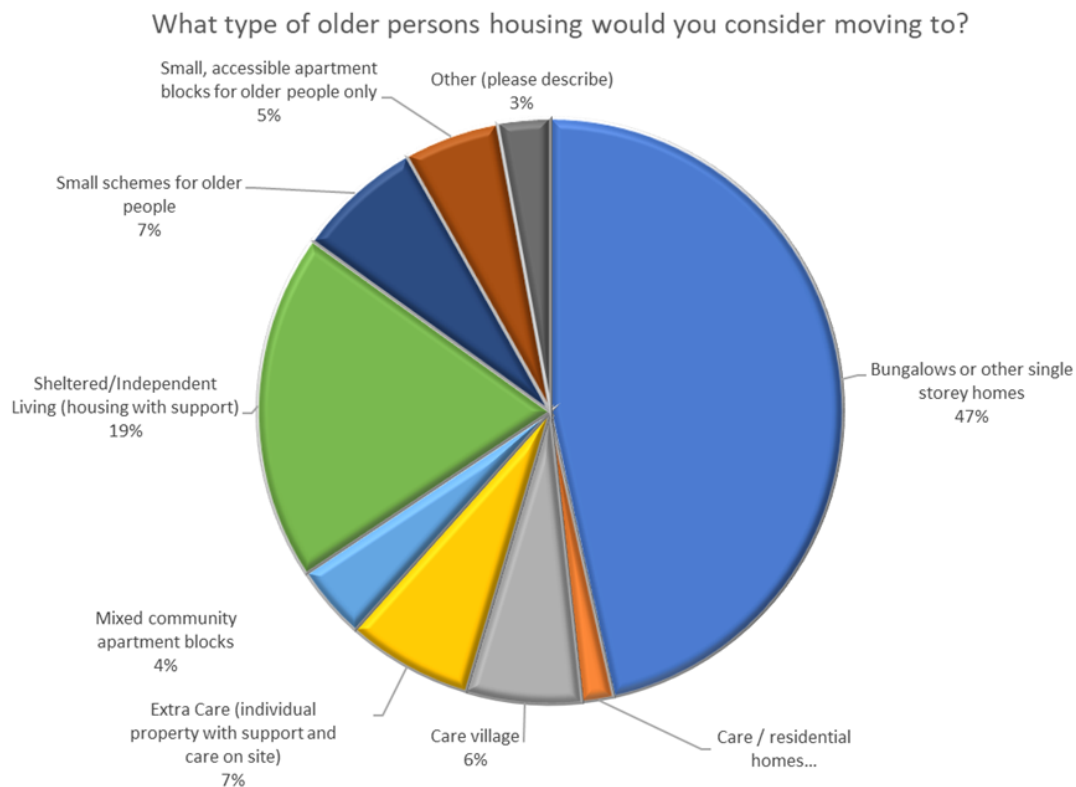
In June 2019, nearly a quarter of applicants on the Stevenage housing register were over 55 (23.8%) indicating that the need for affordable housing for older people is still a major issue. Recent national data<sup>xiv</sup> also shows that homelessness applications for older people are also on the rise, often from the private rented sector, and are generally poverty driven. Although Stevenage does not appear to be suffering similar issues currently, it is a trend we wish to prevent.

In our survey, only one respondent said that they would be interested in a shared ownership model of housing, however we are not sure if this low number is due to a lack of interest or a lack of information. Currently shared ownership is not a product often promoted to older people in Hertfordshire. Other areas of the country, however, successfully include shared ownership within older persons housing schemes: one study showed that many older people in Manchester were trapped in a home they could not afford to move out of, but neither could they afford to maintain it<sup>xv</sup>. The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation<sup>xvi</sup> include a new measure of Income Deprivation Affecting Older People (IDAOPI) (60+). The IMD measures factors of social inequality across small geographical areas, known as Lower Spatial Output Areas or Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) [1]. This new measure, specifically related to older people, shows that over 80% (42/52) of the LSOA in Stevenage are in the lowest five deciles in Hertfordshire, meaning that they are in the most deprived areas in the County for this indicator. Shared ownership may be a way of addressing this issue and is something we wish to explore further.

We also asked people what sort of housing they would like to move to, if they were considering a move, and what sort of design features and facilities they would want to see in those new homes. The majority of people wished to move to a single storey dwelling (with one respondent specifically requesting a bungalow, not a flat), and 45% of respondents (77) suggesting that schemes specifically for older people

*My current home meets my needs now, but if I become unwell or have a disability in old age, my concern is the lack of properties to choose to live safely. I would require a ground floor flat or bungalow that is close to amenities and has a social centre. I believe we need more of this housing both now and in the future. Stevenage has a high aging population and there are older*

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**We will continue to monitor and assess tenure requirements for older people, and work with developers to create the right mix of housing types to meet the needs for existing and future older populations.**

**We will do this by:**

- **Undertaking research into people’s understanding of different tenure types and, using co-production techniques and improved data gathering processes, gauge the appetite for different types of housing tenure in different groups of people in the town**

- **Use this research to influence the market through increased choice awareness and managing demand**
- **Ensure tenure choice for older people is included in future Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Local Housing Need Assessments where they are carried out. Carry out a specific older person needs assessments if the new methodology isn't sufficient.**
- **Build these findings into future council housing developments.**

## **Design standards**

In the residents' survey, only 21% of respondents said they had no disability or major health condition, with mobility issues being the most prevalent condition cited. As people get older, it is more likely that they will develop health complications which can be impacted positively or negatively by housing design. Mental health can also suffer, and as recent months have shown with the Covid pandemic, while aiming to reduce social isolation and bring communities together, housing design must also ensure that people are safe from infection in times of high risk. Open space, well planned walking routes, and secure areas in housing developments should be considered to minimise potential risk factors, but still maintain a sense of community. Hertfordshire Public Health have recently introduced [Health Impact Assessments](#) for new developments to ensure that health and wellbeing concerns are factored into design and place shaping considerations. For older people, who may be more vulnerable to environmental factors that impact on health, undertaking such an assessment is recommended.

We will aim to ensure that all new housing for older people of any tenure is built to accessible and sustainable standards, conforming to HAPPI<sup>xvii</sup> design standards, are digitally enabled for assistive and other technology, and will encourage developers to build to energy efficient and carbon neutral specifications. This will be achieved through well managed early conversations with developers, and clear expectations of what we require. Hertfordshire County Council has recently approved a set of extra care design standards as part of their new strategic Extra Care development programme.

Environmental sustainability is a major consideration in all new development, with both Stevenage Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council announcing a Climate Emergency in June and July 2019 respectively. HCC and SBC are both committed to being net carbon zero by 2030, most new buildings will hit that target before 2030 and Stevenage Borough Council has also done considerable work on their own housing design standards to drive sustainable development in the town. This commits both Councils to work with partners to deliver a [Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy](#) to help reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, promote energy efficiency, reduce waste, and to promote more environmentally friendly land use, including that used for housing. Housing design must be energy efficient, both in construction and use, making best use of natural light and passive warmth, and link well to sustainable transport routes to minimise parking and car use. PassivHaus, BREEAM, and higher Building Regulation standards are encouraged where possible, to provide a high level of sustainability in build and use (whole life costing). Older people will often be fuel poor and yet feel extremes of temperature more acutely than younger people. These can lead to significant health complications, so both new and existing homes must be affordable to heat in winter and be cool in summer. Stevenage Borough Council currently has a programme of work to upgrade the communal heating at the existing independent living and flexicare schemes to improve energy efficiency and reduce cost.

**We will continue to ensure that sustainability and energy efficiency are factored into all design and construction methods, using modern methods of construction, best practice and new technologies wherever possible.**



### **We will do this by:**

- **Developing a set of co-produced design standards, based on best practice and involving service users, for general needs and specialist housing for older people in Stevenage (built by SBC), and promoting accessible, adaptable, and dementia friendly design;**
- **Investigating options such as PassivHaus and other eco-build designs for specialist older persons housing, to reduce thermal variances and the associated costs, and assist in preventing poor health outcomes in older people.**
- **Ensuring that tenders, design competitions and contracts clearly reflect and contain scoring criteria relating to sustainability and whole life costing.**
- **Developing a protocol for capturing ‘lessons learned’ from each new development, to improve future design and development projects;**
- **Using developer forums and communications to ensure that contractors are aware of our sustainability and environmental commitments.**

Social interaction is a major factor in health and wellbeing, and it is important that new development for older people reflects the need to keep people connecting to each other, their communities and the wider world. This can be done through sensitive design, including transport and shared spaces, building accessible housing which allows people to get out and remain active, and by using assistive, integral technology to help people feel safe and connected when at home. Working with planning colleagues, occupational therapists, community-based services and housing providers early in design and master-planning activities can bring professional expertise to place shaping, making new development suitable for all generations to use and enjoy.

Where required, and under certain conditions, grant may be available to housing providers to help bring forward a higher standard of housing suitable for older people. This could, for example, be put towards innovative design, higher space standards to allow for mobility aids and medical storage, assistive technology and connectivity, and additional adaptability. When asked (in the Housing for Older People survey), residents had a clear preference for larger properties, including two or three bedrooms; guest rooms; raised beds in gardens; building close to amenities and shops and close to public transport routes, and within existing communities where possible. These results are similar to other research projects, such as the DWELL project carried out by Sheffield University in 2016<sup>xviii</sup>, which showed that people were comfortable with apartment living, but still with a preference for bungalows (though two storey dwellings were also acceptable if they were accessible), but were also keen to see flexible and adaptable homes which can cater for changes in care needs, and to allow room for visitors and family members including grandchildren. Technology was seen as being an integral part of the home, for example Wi-Fi as standard, and scooter storage and charging points were also considered essential. All housing developed with older people in mind should enable these connections to thrive, and an avoidance of long corridors or an institutional feel would be welcomed. Analysis of the features most favoured by older residents and professionals can be found in Appendices 3 and 4.

Extra care, or other age friendly housing development, also allows for the provision of community hubs, where health and related services can serve both the people living in the scheme and their families and neighbours living in the wider community. In our professionals’ survey, 30% of respondents favoured having a GP surgery or clinic in close proximity which could help administer community-based health services that older people need, more effectively. Research carried out by the Social Care Institute for Excellence into community based integration services found that health and wellbeing outcomes tend to

fare better when healthcare, mental health and social care needs are met in the community, allowing for services to be designed around the needs of the local population and tailored to local context and priorities. The transformation of community based services has been found to be integral to the delivery of person centred coordinated health and social care and empowers people to take control of their own health and care needs.<sup>xix</sup>

**We will continue to work with professionals across health, housing and social care to sensitively plan for older person's housing in mixed developments to encourage healthy communities that include housing suitable for an ageing population.**

**We will do this by:**

- **Continuing to build on the work of the Stevenage Supported Accommodation Board and engaging with East and North Herts Clinical Care Group (CCG) and Hertfordshire and West Essex Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP), to plan strategically across all services.**
- **Work with our planning departments to engage public health colleagues to shape healthy places suitable for people of all ages to enjoy.**

In our increasingly tech-enabled world, building suitable digitally enabled infrastructure into any new development is crucial. Technology, both in terms of individual applications and generalised environmental controls (such as smart metering and automatic systems), are evolving and developing at a pace, and so understanding what to build into new properties, or what can be retrofitted into existing homes, is difficult to determine and will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis taking into account available technologies at the time. High quality, reliable and robust digital infrastructure is essential as systems must be able to run wirelessly without interruption and be secure. Fibre optic broadband should be available at a minimum. Assistive technology can then be personalised, and could, for example, include video entry systems, medication reminders and automated lighting, in addition to assisting with caring responsibilities such as movement monitoring, so unusual activity can be picked up swiftly, 'checking in' and telecare. Each resident will have their own individual care needs and desired outcomes to be achieved, but as a guiding principle the following drivers will need to be uppermost: supporting people's independence; sustaining people's ability to remain in their home; identifying people's changing needs at an earlier stage; keeping people safe; better support for carers; reducing social isolation; and better engagement with communities.

Residents must be comfortable with and in their homes, so assistive technology should be unobtrusive but of benefit to them, be secure enough to protect their privacy, and be easy to operate; practitioners should be able to use the information wisely to inform care assessments and respond to crisis swiftly; and families need to be sure that the technology is helping their loved one appropriately. We will of course always be mindful of potential safeguarding issues, data protection and personal privacy, and data gathering will be GDPR compliant.

**We will work with occupational therapists, social workers, care organisations and assistive technology providers to ensure new technologies are considered as an integral part of scheme development, and that high-quality digital infrastructure is included in all new build specialist older persons' housing schemes as standard to support new technology.**

**We will do this by:**

- **Jointly investigating new assistive technology and incorporating appropriate systems into new housing development and refurbishment as standard where it is viable to do so.**
- **Ensuring that design standards are reviewed and updated as infrastructure is upgraded, and new technologies emerge.**
- **Ensure the integral or retrofitted technology is reflected in the Asset Management, maintenance and renewal policies and reviews.**

Many older people use mobility scooters or other electric vehicles which will require charging points. Some will still drive and will need transport of their own, especially if dealing with disability, still working or who have caring responsibilities. Balancing the needs of sustainability and accessibility can be difficult, and much will depend on the location and facilities close to where new housing is sited.

In a recent study<sup>xx</sup>the better use of electric bicycles and scooters was cited as a technology to enhance physical mobility. Stevenage's segregated pedestrian and cycle network that links all parts of the town is underused, however this reflects the national picture: a 2013 study found that cycling accounted for only 1% of all journeys amongst people aged 65 and over in the UK, compared to 23% in the Netherlands, 15% in Denmark and 9% in Germany<sup>xxi</sup>. The promotion of this model of travel amongst older people and the provision of cycle parking/hire at sites of specialist housing for older people, can help to encourage the use of cleaner and greener modes of transport, as well as delivering wider benefits in terms of health and wellbeing.

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages positive planning for cycling and walking, giving people a real choice about how they travel. Moreover, this approach is aligned with the County Council's Local Transport Plan, and Stevenage Borough Council's Local Plan and Future Transport Strategy.

**We will encourage the use of safe and sustainable transport by older people.**

**We will do this by:**

- **ensuring that electric vehicles are able to be charged and stored safely and that schemes link to the existing cycle network wherever possible.**
- **developing schemes in places with good public transport links.**
- **encouraging safe, well-lit walking and cycling routes to be incorporated into development plans.**

## **Long Stay Residential Care and Nursing Homes**

The number of frail older adults within the Stevenage area is expected to increase, driving increasing demand for residential and nursing care. [Hertfordshire's Ten Year Supported Accommodation Strategy 2017-2027](#) outlines the expected requirement for older adults' residential and nursing provision and approach that will be taken to ensure adequate supply of affordable, quality care in Stevenage. It is also expected that there will be further demand for short term residential nursing services to support people needing short breaks or care immediately on being discharged from Lister Hospital or other health care settings.

**We will work together to ensure that Stevenage residents can access the right care when they need it.**

**To do this, we will:**

- Increase flexicare provision and reduce funded placements to long stay residential care as a proportion of care commissioned with a net reduction in the total beds.
- Increase in the availability of good quality residential nursing care to meet challenging increases in demand linked to demographic change.
- Evaluate the case for the partnership to lead the development of a new residential nursing home in Stevenage to support people requiring publicly funded care, including supported discharge from hospital.

## Existing Homes

In 2013, Stevenage Borough Council commissioned a complete review of housing and household conditions across the private housing sector, to update the previous survey completed in 2007. The survey, which used a stratified sampling methodology of 1,000 homes representing 4% of the total private housing stock, showed that 42% of households were headed by someone over 55.

Stevenage currently has an excellent track record of keeping people safe and warm in their homes in recent years: in 2019/20 excess winter deaths in the over 85s were nearly half that of the England average (17.6 per 10,000 population, compared with 30.8 in England) and fuel poverty in Stevenage is lower by almost a third (Stevenage 7.4%: England 10.3%)\*<sup>xii</sup>. However, fuel poverty is more prevalent in older households, with the highest levels occurring in the wards of St Nicholas, Chells and Bedwell.

An asset management review of Stevenage's independent living housing stock was undertaken in 2016 to assess viability and fitness for purpose, with two schemes being decommissioned and reinvested into a new Kenilworth Court scheme. Further opportunities to remodel or develop new schemes are being assessed. We know that many general needs homes, across all tenures, are occupied by older people and may not be suitable for them. Providing aspirational homes, that are well located and built for older people will also free up larger family housing, helping to stimulate the market and unlock housing chains. Furthermore, upgrading or refurbishing smaller properties in the private or social sector to more accessible standards could help older people downsize to more manageable and efficient homes.

Many older people, however, live in their own homes and have no wish or need to move. Homes are uniquely personal spaces, and so where it is possible and safe to do so, we will support people to remain in their current accommodation. People who live in homes they own, or who live in privately rented or housing association accommodation can apply to the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA) for help in adapting their homes to make them more suitable for their needs, and Stevenage Borough Council is responsible for adapting the homes of its tenants (see appendix 6 for the SBC Aids and Adaptations policy). At the time of writing, since its inception in January 2018 the HHIA has had 150 enquiries for adaptations funded through Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in Stevenage, of which 97% were for over 50-year olds, and in the same period Stevenage have 400 requests for aids and adaptations for its tenants. The average age of applicants to the HHIA is 67 years old. The County Council currently supports the work of both adaptations teams through their Occupational Therapy service who work with residents to identify disabling factors within the home, and make professional recommendations on what is required to remedy or mitigate them. Although the responsibilities are similar, the Borough Council does not have the same funding availability as the HHIA and has to work within different parameters, which means that the two services are not completely aligned.

We also recognise, however, that sometimes people will need to consider whether their existing home is the most appropriate place for them to be, and so as part of the assessment process for adaptations

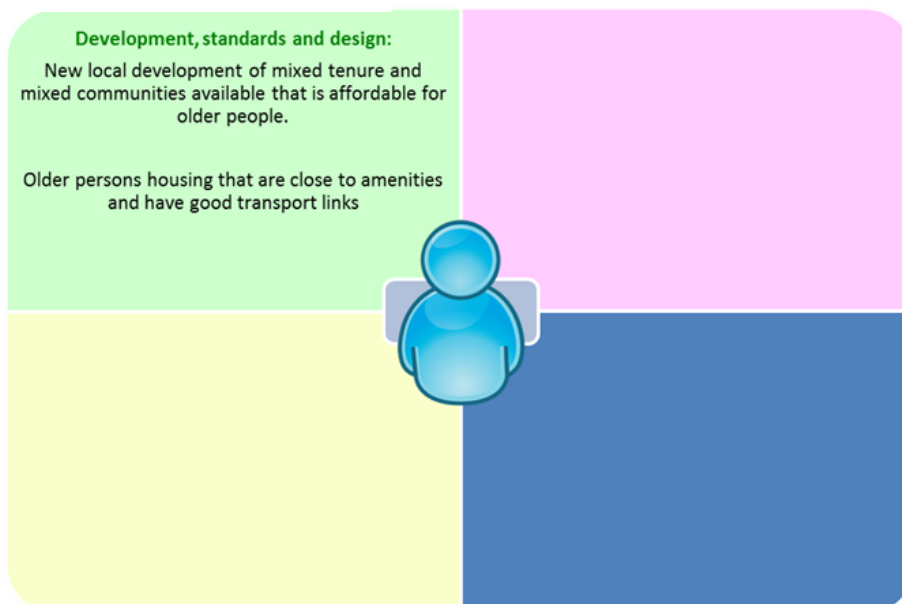
Careful appraisal should be undertaken to see if more suitable housing may be more appropriate before committing to major works in the home. The HHIA discretionary policy provides a means tested Moving House grant currently capped at £5,000. This is not enough however, to assist with the true cost of moving house and take up is low. It's usually applied to fees such as mortgage arrangement fees, valuations and stamp duty, although it can also be used for adapting the new property.

**We will continue to support older people living in their own homes by providing care and support services and using adaptations and equipment to enable them to live well, regardless of tenure, where it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. We will continue to remodel and develop new older person's housing to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet the needs of older people.**

**We will do this by:**

- Working to align and improve HHIA and SBC's aid and adaptations policies to ensure that people receive the same service wherever possible.
- Investigate ways of using DFG and HRA<sup>1</sup> funding in innovative ways to keep people healthy at home.
- Investigate ways of upgrading smaller existing homes to higher accessible standards, so they are available for older people to downsize into.
- Review and develop existing appraisal methods, funding and criteria for recommending alternative housing options, and strengthen links with housing options teams to help people make decisions earlier, and access support.
- Investigate remodelling opportunities for existing schemes.

### Outcomes for Older People



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<sup>1</sup> Housing Revenue Account

## Theme 2: Information, advice and technology

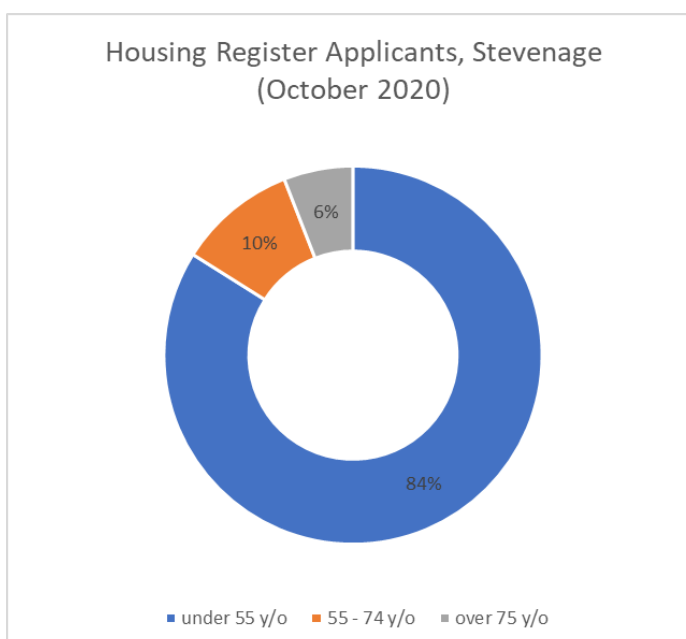
When asked about what information, advice and support for moving was available, both residents and professional's surveyed mentioned that downsizing for homeowners was specifically problematic, and understanding what services were available to help with this was sometimes difficult. Joined up working between the voluntary sector and the councils were mentioned as a gap, and removals and house clearing were cited as problem areas.

Questions of tenure were also raised: home owners, for example, may still want to own their property, and while nationally housing organisations provide shared ownership as a viable choice for some older people who have not enough equity to buy on the open market but who still wish to hold an ownership stake in their home, responses from residents and professionals in our survey, indicated that there was a limited understanding of what it involves and how it works. Understanding what potential residents might be giving up, in terms of space and gardens for example, and their pets and communities, and how that will influence their decision should be considered, and more education about what is available would be useful.

The Housing Options team at Stevenage Borough Council offers a range of housing related services to residents but does not offer specific advice about housing for older people. The 2014 Housing Allocations Scheme (reviewed 2018), which describes the criteria and process for people to apply for council or social housing in Stevenage, contains provisions for assessing financial circumstances (including capital released from selling an existing property), joining the housing register, and priority allocations and banding criteria for the Choice Based Lettings scheme. Independent living and flexi-care homes are let, via a panel process, through this Scheme, but otherwise older people are not specifically mentioned (except in relation to disability, medical need or overcrowding where an older person has moved in with family to receive care). The Annual Lettings Plan is agreed each year to ensure that allocations are appropriately distributed between bandings and priority groups. Additionally, SBC can produce a Local Lettings Plan specifically to address a local issue or concern, which could be used to help residents access suitable property in the locality. Older people did not wish to feel 'infantilised' or to lose control of their own financial and housing affairs, but feedback from residents and stakeholders is that a single point of contact dedicated to older people's housing needs would help relieve some of the confusion around what they can do and what is available to them. The Housing Allocations Policy is due to be reviewed again, with the process starting in September 2020 and this strategy will feed into that review.

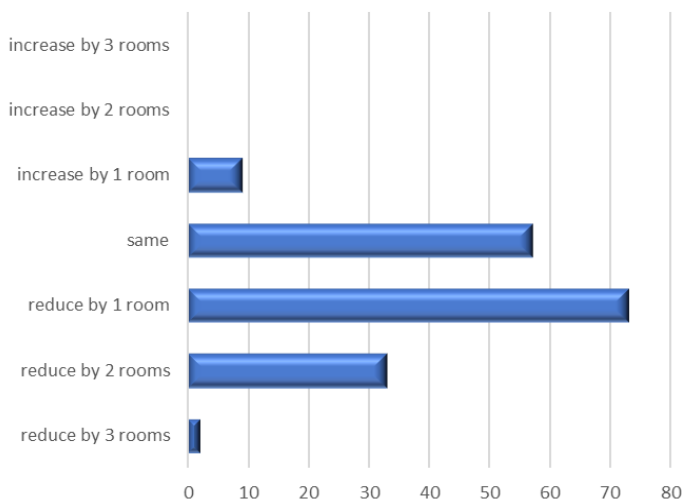
### Under-occupation

Sometimes housing providers will work with their older tenants to help facilitate a move, in particular where residents are under-occupying family sized housing. In September 2020, there were approximately 11% of council owned homes where people over the age of 55 were under-occupying by at least one bedroom, this is around 910 properties. While it is appropriate to help people stay where they are safe and feel happiest, sometimes this



is not the most suitable place for them in terms of keeping them healthy and connected, and also means that a larger home that might be used by a family in need is not available for them. This is a difficult question to answer, and care and sensitivity must be used to ensure that older people don't feel pushed out of their homes whilst also helping people fully explore their options.

Stevenage Older Persons Survey - willingness to move to a smaller property



When asked, respondents to our survey suggested that while 33% of people would want to retain the same size property, 61% would be willing to reduce their property size by one or two rooms. One answer to this is to ensure that suitable advice and support is available to older people living in all tenures so that they are aware of their housing options early enough to make informed decisions, and to make sure that suitable and attractive housing is available for them to move into. In September 2020, a snapshot was taken of the applicants on the Stevenage Housing register of people over 55 who are waiting for housing, and showed that there were 16% of applicants compared

to 28% in the population. There is a high proportionate of people over 55 who are owner occupiers in Stevenage. Better data gathering about why these people are looking to move home and what type of property they would accept needs to be undertaken, as well as further research into people who may need rehousing but are not eligible for the housing register. This data can then be used to further refine housing demand for older people, informing new development proposals.

**We will support our residents to consider their housing options earlier and assist with practical advice and help when they wish to move to enable their continued wellbeing.**

**We will do this by:**

- **Appointing dedicated services to work with older people and those with complex needs to help them navigate the different options open to them, and be the single point of contact for people wishing to move into specialist accommodation;**
- **Reviewing assessment processes for older people to ensure that housing and care assessments reflect and capture needs, concerns and barriers to people moving to suitable housing, and that these findings are considered across teams to improve services;**
- **Considering the specific needs of older people when reviewing the Allocations Scheme and Annual Lettings Plan to ensure older people have access to smaller properties that are suitable for them to downsize into.**
- **Develop local lettings plans for new schemes (in consultation)**

## **Connectivity and technology**

Connectivity becomes more important as people age: flexibility around work, caring, social networks and financial transactions are increasingly digital and new technologies emerge to change the way we interact with business, services and each other. As well as the design elements discussed earlier, older people can

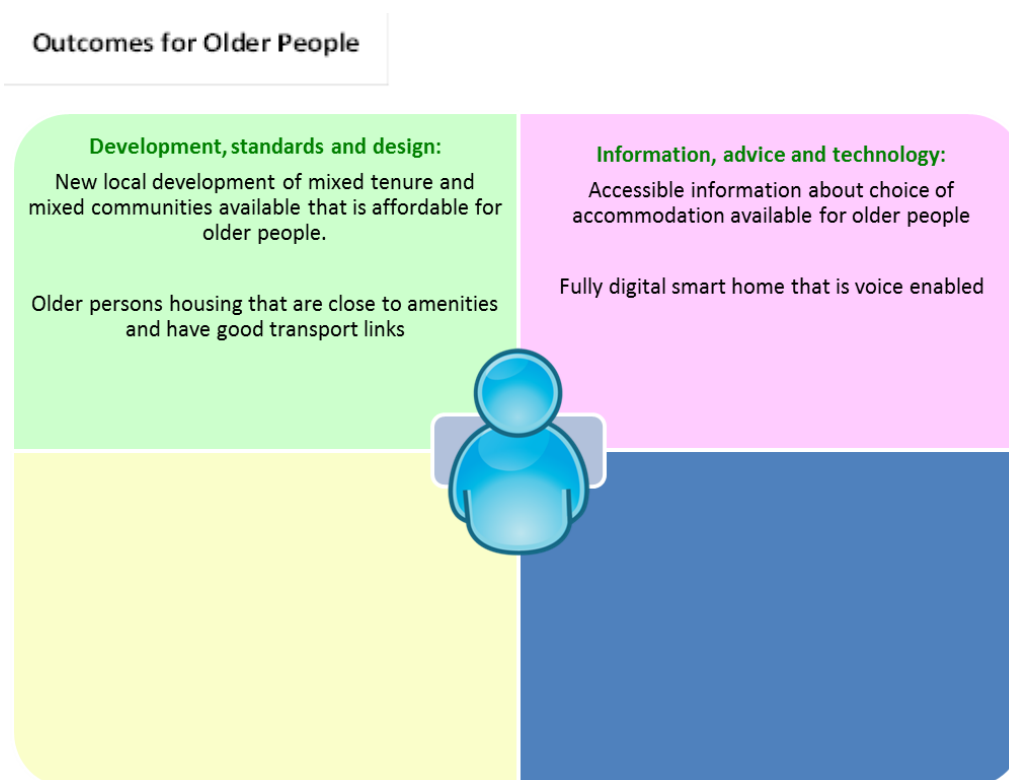
use the internet to assist with health and care challenges, connect with loved ones living too far away to travel to, keep track of spending and expenses, access advice and services, and a multitude of other uses, but there are perceived barriers in terms of a lack of skills, distrust of technology (and fear of being scammed) and assumptions about technologies usefulness or affordability. High speed broadband is already available in Stevenage, opening up services such as telecare and telehealth to our residents, both of which require reliable internet connection.

Technology also has the potential to facilitate social connectivity and tackle some of the loneliness that many older people report, particularly as families are becoming more geographically dispersed. People with a high degree of loneliness are twice at risk of developing Alzheimer's as people with a low degree of loneliness<sup>xxiii</sup>.

**We will support connectivity in our new and existing developments for older people, to reduce isolation, reduce fear or misunderstandings around new technology, and improve access to services, telecare and assistive technology opportunities.**

**We will do this by:**

- **Ensuring new build properties are connected to good quality broadband services, with fibre optic broadband provided as a minimum standard.**
- **Enabling courses for older people with low skills or trust in new technology, to help them understand and use technology better.**
- **Develop protocols for assistive technology prescribers, to ensure that personal privacy and GDPR requirements are met.**



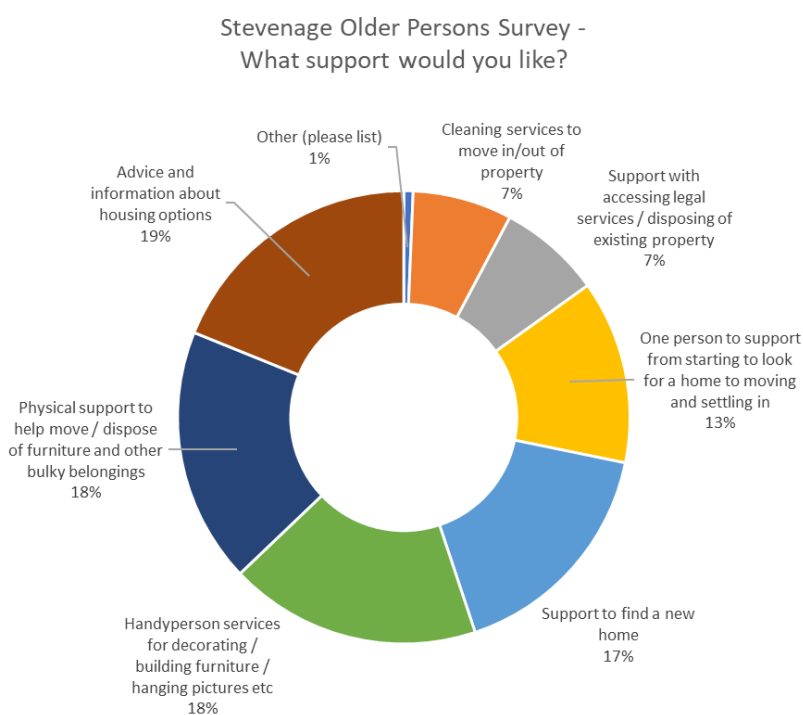


### Theme 3: Assistance to move and support

One often cited reason for people not moving, is that moving home is a physically and emotionally stressful experience. Identifying, securing and arranging a move is time-consuming and can cause distress, and clearing and selling owner-occupied properties, plus the transfer of utilities and other services can be daunting. Leaving communities where one has lived for many years can also be upsetting and disorientating.

Unfortunately, these difficulties can leave people in unsuitable housing, which is larger than they can manage, or which cannot support their needs. While disabled facilities grant and adaptations can help relieve some of this difficulty, for some people the best option could be to move to specialist housing such as flexi care or independent housing, or to downsize to an accessible, more age-friendly property. Housing Related Support funding is being redesigned to be more focussed on the housing needs of tenants, including the proposition to fund the promotion of flexi care or other specialist housing when people are struggling to manage in their current homes. While no-one would be forced to move, the role will help people to understand their options better, and to make links with other organisations who can help facilitate a move.

Stevenage Borough Council's Community Support Service offers council tenants over the age of 55 regular weekly contact of up to two visits a week from fully trained Specialist Support Officers currently at no charge. Support and guidance are offered on care and health services, benefit assessments, aids and adaptations, access to groups specialising in supporting older people, support with emergencies that may arise, and encouragement and support to participate in social activities in the local community and at local independent living schemes.



Research for this strategy, however, has identified that there is a demand for such support services across all tenures (currently it is only provided to council tenants only), and that people would be prepared to pay for such services if the costs were reasonable, and were tailored to people's means and needs. Of 170 responders who answered the question, 5% felt that support service should be offered by voluntary and charity organisations; 28% felt this was the responsibility of the Councils; and 69% thought that it should be a mixture of the two. When asked, however, only 6% of professionals thought it was the sole responsibility of the Councils, and that friends and families should support more: 84% felt that a mix of voluntary and community and council services was the best way to provide support.

Pensioner poverty is an area of growing concern, with an estimate of 1,500 older households in Stevenage currently not receiving the benefits they are entitled to, a sum of around £4m annually<sup>xxiv</sup>. Some of this is

related to a lack of awareness of entitlement including a misunderstanding, particularly among owner occupiers, of eligibility. Changes in government policy relating to entitlements for couples of different ages (i.e. one pensioner and one working age) will also reduce incomes, as exemptions to the benefit cap and under occupation charges (known as the 'bedroom tax') may be removed. Support services therefore need to understand how housing costs and benefit take up contribute to people's ability to manage, as well as the physical aspects of their home, and we need to ensure that the group of people affected by the changes in entitlement conditions for mixed age couples have access to the full range of housing options on offer.

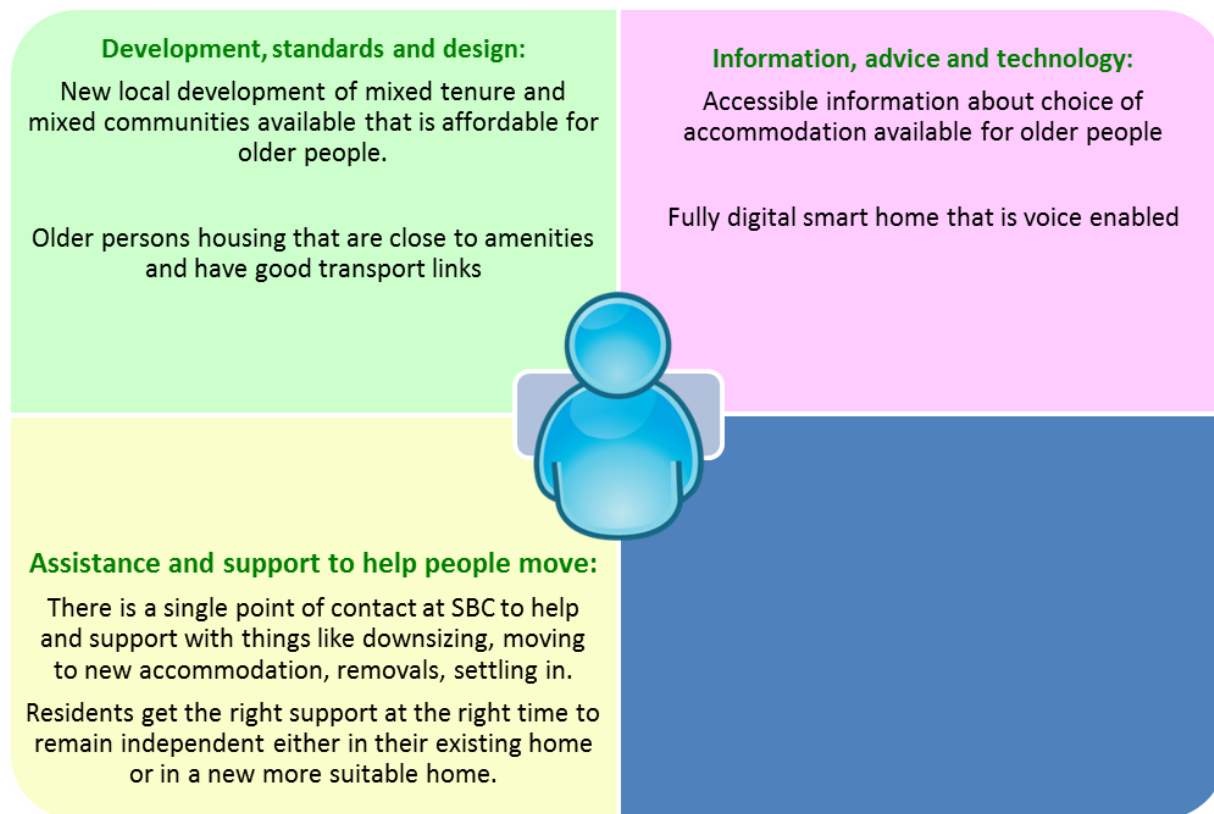
We will review the current support offer and seek to expand services across all housing tenures, working with our voluntary and charity sector partners and other statutory services, and exploring ways to fund activities via a sustainable and affordable business model across organisations. These activities will include:

- Working with Finance colleagues to understand the full cost of the support services across the two organisations, and identifying where savings can be made;
- Explore commercialisation opportunities to help offset some of the service costs, for example:
  - Expanding the Stevenage Careline alarm 24/7 response service to other providers within Stevenage and to neighbouring authorities;
  - Providing the community support service to private customers across the town. Covid-19 response demonstrated there are private residents that also needed the regular contact.
  - Offering the support and alarm response service to Housing Association tenants who no longer receive these services from their landlord.
- Review the level of service provided at Independent Living or extra care schemes and consider a range of support levels and services to meet changing needs.

#### **We will do this by:**

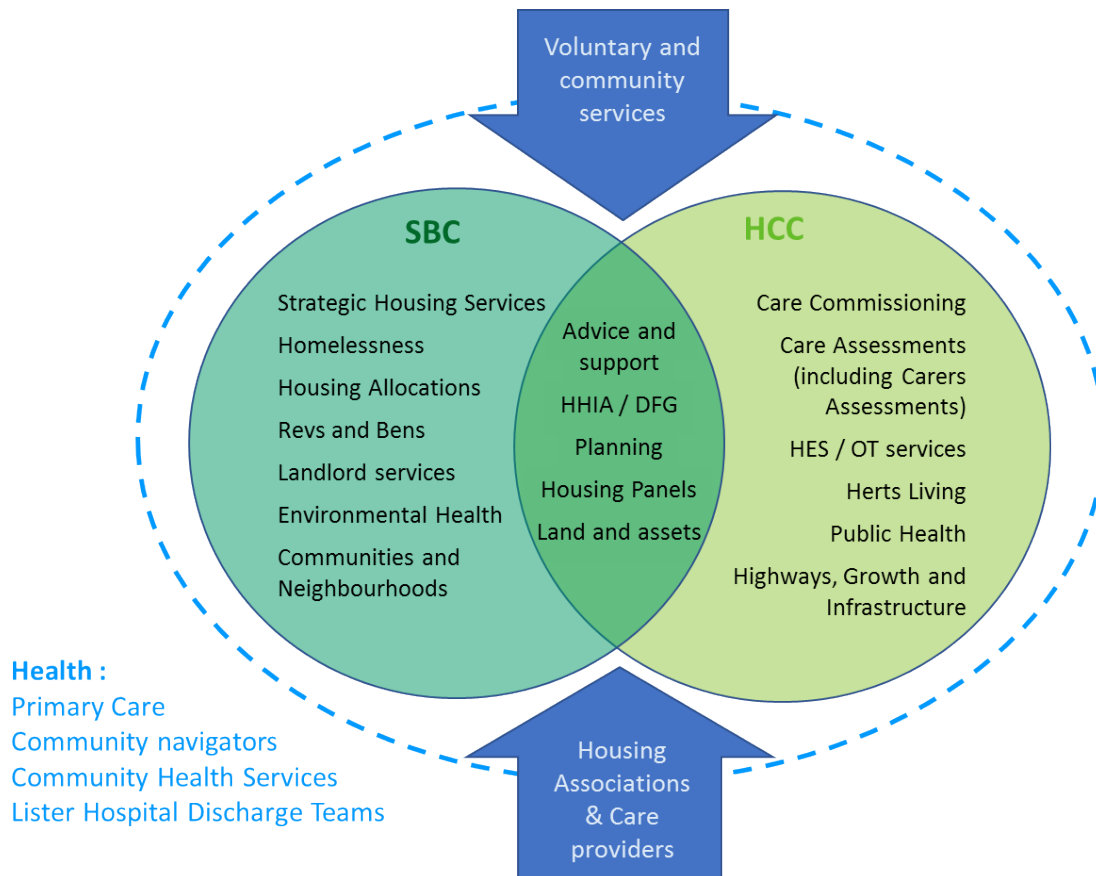
- **Creating a Stevenage HOPS Partnership comprising of a range of statutory and voluntary services and older person representatives with the aim of improving the supply and quality of older persons housing in Stevenage;**
- **Working with the HOPS Partnership, co-produce and cost services that meet older persons aspirations and needs, develop a business case and plan for expanding Community Support services across the Borough, incorporating some paid-for services and accessing external funding where it is available;**
- **Undertake a joint awareness campaign across services linking older people's benefit take up and housing options advice, to reduce instances of pensioner poverty and potential homelessness in Stevenage;**
- **Work with the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency to improve take-up of home mover's grants and investigate ways of funding handyperson services to help older people with practical aspects of moving to a more suitable home;**
- **Appointments of a health and wellbeing officer to provide on-going support activities to promote wellbeing of residents and an Accommodation and Complex Needs officer to provide a single point of contact for residents and supports people moving into specialist accommodation.**

## Outcomes for Older People



### Theme 4: Inter-organisational working

Older people, along with their carers and families, have input from and contact with a number of agencies and organisations, and it has long been an aspiration to have a fully joined up system where people only have to give their story once; while considerable work has been done toward achieving this, feedback from residents and professionals suggests we still have a way to go. Data protection has become increasingly regulated in order to protect people's privacy and personal details and organisations must legally have a better understanding of what data is able to be shared and how to improve communication with residents in relation to giving informed consent. By gathering meaningful data, and continuing to monitor trends and population growth, better strategic decision making across boundaries can be achieved leading to improved shared outcomes for everyone.



Loneliness is often associated with older people who live on their own. It is a growing problem which not only reduces the quality of life of individuals, but has far reaching implications for families, the wider community and public services. Loneliness can increase the risk of coronary heart disease, strokes, depression and cognitive decline such as anxiety, Alzheimer’s and dementia, ramping up pressure on public services through increased referrals to adult social care and triggering multiple attendances at GP surgeries. There is a need for us to support the building of a national conversation on loneliness, raising awareness of its impacts and helping to tackle stigma, supporting the development of ways of combatting it in our communities.

Social prescribing has a developing role in supporting older people to source and act on housing advice and connect to other people. In Hertfordshire this is provided through HertsHelp, the Hospital Discharge and Community Navigator Service and the new Link Workers in primary care. Independent living and flexi care schemes are increasingly opening up their communal areas to voluntary sector groups and lunch clubs, increasing awareness of these housing options in the wider community, and maintaining links back to the neighbourhood for residents.

Both Hertfordshire and Stevenage Borough Councils provide funding for a range of voluntary sector support that can help people to maintain a tenancy: citizens advice, crisis intervention, and the money advice units help people of all ages, and there is also support for individuals living with dementia and their families, and a hoarding resolution service. As part of the initial development of this strategy, we worked with a number of professionals from different organisations (see list of [consultees/contributors](#)) who work with and support older people in Stevenage.

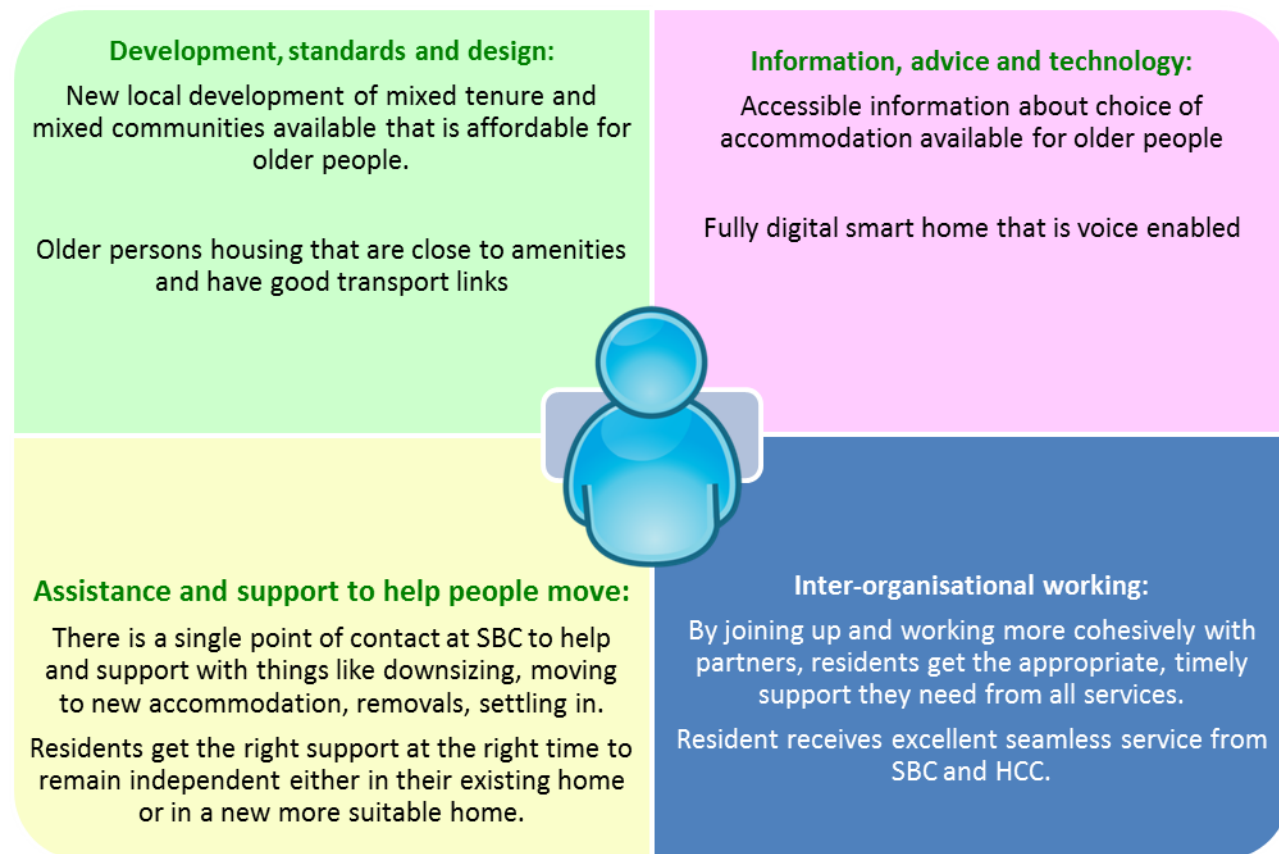
**We will work with a range of organisations in Hertfordshire who deliver services to older people in Stevenage, including statutory, voluntary, social or community enterprises and private companies, to**

ensure that there is a clear understanding of what strategic information can and should be shared, and how best to use that information to drive strategic decision making.

We will do this by:

- Working with HCC Public Health to produce a Stevenage Housing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA);
- Strengthening existing links between housing and hospital discharge teams, HHIA / Adaptations policies and social prescribing to further improve older people's swift and safe return to home;
- Continuing to work towards the Healthy Stevenage Strategy 2018-2022
- Co-producing a range of informational and promotional materials across print, digital and social media channels aimed specifically at older people to raise awareness of housing options and benefits of proactively managing their housing needs in later life;
- Undertake annual joint professionals' workshops to improve operational understanding between authorities, catch up on new best practice and policy changes, and remove barriers to collaborative working;
- Undertake wellbeing surveys with people who have recently moved, to gauge their experience of moving, what prompted them to move, and how they feel their wellbeing has changed by doing so. This will continue to feed into future work.

#### Outcomes for Older People



## Part 3: Delivering the Strategy

### Resourcing the Strategy

Both Councils will have responsibility for ensuring that the actions and aspirations contained within the strategy are carried out, resourced as appropriate and reviewed for effectiveness during its lifetime. Much of the work will be a continuation of current programmed work, but with a higher awareness of the commitments here and changes in process and procedure to ensure older people's housing needs are adequately and proportionately considered in future policy making.

It is recognised that some of the actions and commitments recommended here will require specific project resource and co-ordination. To manage the implementation of the strategy there will need to be a job role that links in with both Councils to ensure that the programme is on track and manage some of the projects within the action plan. This post would sit within the Managing Homes section of Housing and Investment at Stevenage Borough Council and their objectives will be clearly linked to the action plan.

There are some projects that will need extra resource and will form part of the annual budget setting and service planning process for the relevant year as required.

### Monitoring and Review

This strategy will be monitored through the Stevenage Strategic Supported Housing Accommodation Board, and revisions, risks and strategic decisions will be discussed there, with resolutions or recommendations recorded in the minutes.

It will also be subject to scrutiny through Stevenage's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Hertfordshire County Council Adult Care Services Management Board (ACSMB).

The strategy as a whole will be refreshed periodically, but not less than every two years to ensure that changes in demography, technology, funding and resources (including officer time) are appropriately assessed and distributed across the two councils.

Performance indicators will include

Success factor	Success indicator
<b>Critical success factors for individual projects outlined in the Action Plan</b>	Completed within project parameters
<b>Numbers of completions<sup>2</sup> of new-build age-friendly or specialist housing available to older people, shown by tenure and type</b>	% Increase over all Ratio of total properties
<b>Numbers of completions<sup>3</sup> of refurbished age-friendly or specialist housing available to older people, shown by tenure and type</b>	% Increase over all Ratio of total properties
<b>Numbers of older people accessing advice and support relating to their housing needs through SBC's Customer Service Centre, HCC's Hertshelp and Adult Care Services</b>	% Increase

<sup>2</sup> Including those currently in construction

<sup>3</sup> Including those currently in process

Success factor	Success indicator
Numbers of older people assisted into a more suitable home	% Increase
Numbers of older people in unsuitable housing (on housing register)	% Decrease
Numbers of older people under-occupying family homes (social and council properties only)	% Decrease
Number of people accessing HHIA Moving Homes grant to enable a move to a more suitable property for their needs	% Increase Average grant Average age of applicant
Number, size and type of care packages for older people in Stevenage	% Decrease numbers % Decrease total costs % Decrease total size (average hrs per band/type)
Overall satisfaction of moving to suitable housing for older people	
Number of residential care bed-spaces available to Social Care service users, rated excellent / good	% Increase
Number of Flexicare homes, shown by tenure	% Increase
Results of longitudinal wellbeing survey for older people who have moved to more suitable housing – linear study	% Increase

## HOPS Action Plan

Short Term: 1-3 years

Medium Term: 4-6 years

Long term: 7-10 years

## Themes

1. Development, standards and design

2. Information, advice and technology

3. Support and assistance to help people move

4. Inter-organisational working

Time frame	ACTION	Purpose	Theme (s)	Action Owner	Stakeholders	Success criteria
Short Term and on-going	Establish and programme joint professionals' workshops across sectors	<p>To improve operational understanding, best practice and facilitate joint training opportunities, and to remove barriers to collaborative working.</p> <p>To engage with professionals across services to gather information and data about older persons housing needs and aspirations, and how services can evolve to meet needs more effectively.</p>	2, 3, 4	SBC/HCC ACS	<p>SBC Housing and Investment</p> <p>HCC ACS</p> <p>ENHCCG</p> <p>Community Navigators</p>	<p>Programme of workshops including speakers / themes / discussion topics where possible.</p> <p>Clear understanding of outcomes arising from the workshops to encourage attendance</p> <p>Commitment from organisations to support and attend.</p>
Short Term	Create HOPS Partnership (revamp existing older persons network)	<p>To provide co-production, consultation and critical friend role for strategic planning and project development.</p> <p>To generate ideas and offer feedback to support strategy review and new projects.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4	SBC	<p>SBC Communities and Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Service users</p> <p>HCC</p> <p>PH</p> <p>E&amp;NHCCG</p> <p>VCS</p>	Active and diverse forum with clear work plan and objectives.



Time frame	ACTION	Purpose	Theme (s)	Action Owner	Stakeholders	Success criteria
					<i>Elected member(s)</i>	
Short Term	Develop design standards for older persons housing	<p>To standardise development criteria so developers understand the design needs of older people.</p> <p>To ensure sustainability and energy efficiency measures are considered in designs.</p> <p>To ensure new developments are built to reflect healthy place shaping and sustainable transport elements wherever possible.</p> <p>To ensure technology and connectivity requirements are factored into design to allow future assistive technology to be easily enabled.</p>	1, 4	SBC	<p>SBC Planning</p> <p>SBC Housing Development</p> <p>HCC ACS</p> <p>HCC OT Service</p> <p>HOPS Partnership</p> <p>HCC PH</p>	Clear, co-produced development standards for all housing developers in Stevenage to ensure that older people have suitable, efficient and attractive housing that enables them to live well in the community.
Short Term	Review of tender documents and commissioning requirements	To ensure new design and sustainability criteria are clearly articulated and embedded in tender documents	1, 4	SBC/HCC	<p>SBC Housing Development</p> <p>HCC ACS</p>	All new developments containing age friendly or accessible housing are built to high environmental and accessible standards.
Short Term	Appoint and train new health and wellbeing, accommodation support and specialist support officer roles	<p>To increase dedicated support to older people in independent living or community housing</p> <p>To be a 'one stop' shop for older people to support them to move</p> <p>To help arrange 'settling in' activities</p>	2, 3	SBC	<p>SBC Housing and Investment</p> <p>SBC Communities and Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>Appointments made</p> <p>Older people have access to health and wellbeing activities</p> <p>Older people have more access to digital technology</p> <p>Older people have a better customer</p>

Time frame	ACTION	Purpose	Theme (s)	Action Owner	Stakeholders	Success criteria
		<p>and support for people new to their homes</p> <p>To improve health and well-being of older residents, including technology orientation working collaboratively with Healthy Stevenage Strategic Partnership group</p>				service to support them to move to a more suitable property for their needs.
Short Term	Create dashboard for reporting	To have a standard reporting mechanism for reporting progress to SSAB, ACSMB and SSLT.	1, 2, 3, 4	SSAB	HCC ACS SBC Housing and Investment	<p>Agreed template and recording schedule.</p> <p>Commitment from action leads to provide information regularly as requested</p>
Short / Medium Term	Joint data mapping project	<p>To provide robust information on housing need, tenure requirements and numbers required specifically for older people who have accessibility or care needs to support planning and development decisions.</p> <p>To provide a methodology that can be replicated across the County to inform wider growth scenarios.</p> <p>To inform reviews of strategic housing market assessments, local housing need assessments and Local Plan / Planning Policy updates.</p>	1	HCC	HCC ACS HCC GIU HCC CI SBC planning SBC Corporate Policy and Business Support SBC H&I	<p>Robust data set and growth methodology for future planning</p> <p>Percentage target for new-build age appropriate housing across all tenures</p>
Short /	Develop protocol for	To embed continuous improvement	1, 4	SBC	SBC Planning	Clear process embedded into PMO

Time frame	ACTION	Purpose	Theme (s)	Action Owner	Stakeholders	Success criteria
Medium Term	recording lessons learned from new development	into design and development for older persons housing			SBC Housing Development HCC ACS HCC OT Service HOPS Partnership	documents for all new schemes /projects and reviewed
Short / Medium Term	Implement Asset Management Strategy and review Private Sector Stock Condition Survey	To scope, cost and enable a programme of refurbishment of smaller general needs homes that may be suitable for older people to downsize into.  Ensure the integral or retrofitted technology is reflected in the Asset Management, maintenance and renewal policies and reviews.	1, 2, 3, 4	SBC	SBC Housing and Investment SBC Planning HCC ACS / OT service HCC Assistive Tech team HOPS Partnership Private Sector Landlords	To increase the supply of private sector and social housing suitable for older people to downsize into  To access external funding to help achieve accessible and technology enabled housing for older people.
Short / Medium Term	Review and align HHIA and SBC Adaptations policies and investigate joint funded projects across tenures where possible	To ensure older people across all tenures have equal access to adaptations and specific housing related practical support to move.	1, 3, 4	HHIA	SBC Housing and Investment HCC OT HOPS Partnership HHIA Partnership Board	
Short / Medium Term	Older persons communications and marketing plan	To ensure that older people have a range of up to date and relevant information about the benefits of suitable housing choices in older age, and advice on housing options available	2, 3, 4	SBC	HOPS Partnership SBC Housing Options SBC Housing development SBC Housing and	Clear co-produced plan using a range of communication methods to improve uptake of older persons housing, adaptations, grants and benefits.

Time frame	ACTION	Purpose	Theme (s)	Action Owner	Stakeholders	Success criteria
		<p>to them.</p> <p>To engage with older people to gather information and data about their housing needs and aspirations</p> <p>To generate interest in new developments of older people's housing across all tenures</p>			<p>Investment</p> <p>SBC Comms</p> <p>Members</p> <p>HCC ACS OP commissioning</p> <p>HCC ACS OP Capital Programme</p> <p>HCC Comms</p> <p>HCC Behaviour Unit</p>	
Short / Medium Term	Review information and data sources, and recording mechanisms (cross authority) to capture strategic information on older people's housing needs and aspirations	<p>To provide a database of key data to underpin decision and policy making, identify trends, and map service improvements.</p> <p>Re-run service user survey at regular intervals (to be determined) to see trends in changing attitudes, and to realign service user aspirations and strategic objectives where necessary.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4	HCC/SBC	<p>HCC CI</p> <p>HOPS Partnership</p> <p>SBC Corporate Policy and Business Support</p> <p>SBC Housing and Investment</p> <p>Residents</p> <p>VCS</p> <p>HHIA</p>	A clear set of cross organisational indicators and data sets to help inform research, decision making and service improvement.
Short / Medium Term	Business case, to include cost-of-service analysis, for expanding community support services for older people across tenures including handyperson	To enable support for older people living across the community in all tenures but who need support to help them move to more suitable accommodation	2, 3, 4	SBC	<p>SBC Housing and Investment</p> <p>HCC ACS</p> <p>VCS</p>	<p>An agreed business case with costed services, timelines, and clear objectives / outcomes</p> <p>Programme of service projects to take forward</p>

Time frame	ACTION	Purpose	Theme (s)	Action Owner	Stakeholders	Success criteria
	services to facilitate moves	To access funding and resources from various sources to enable and pilot paid for and subsidised services			External funding streams HHIA	External and other sources of funding identified
Short / Medium / Long Term	Develop joint land register of suitable development land available for older persons housing, or as part of other development proposals	To enable strategic joint assessments of land availability and possible uses, including other land parcels not in ownership of the councils, and existing buildings that could be repurposed or redeveloped, achieving appropriate financial and social outcomes for all relevant parties.	1, 4	SBC Planning	SBC Housing Development HCC ACS HCC Property Herts Living Ltd H&WE STP? Private developers	Regularly updated register, leading to more collaborative working and understanding of older persons housing supply across all tenures
Medium term?	Review allocations policy and lettings plan to include older people's housing  Develop local lettings policy for older people's housing	To ensure that age friendly housing is available to older people, to allow family or other housing to be released for families or younger people in housing need		SBC Housing and Investment	SBC Housing and Investment Residents VCS RSLs	A clear policy in place with targets for letting age friendly / specialist housing to older people
Medium Term	Produce Stevenage Older Persons Housing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	To underpin planning policy, design and service decisions  To help provide robust evidence to support project work and housing development.	1, 4	HCC PH	HCC SBC Planning SBC Housing and Investment SBC Corporate Policy and Business Support SBC Communities and Neighbourhoods	Completed JSNA

Time frame	ACTION	Purpose	Theme (s)	Action Owner	Stakeholders	Success criteria
Medium / Long term	Enable the development of mixed tenure Extra Care homes across several schemes in partnership with SBC and in line with HCC's Extra Care Strategy.	To help improve housing options for older people who have care needs but wish to and are able to remain independent in their own homes.  To ensure that there is a commissioning strategy that includes housing related support grant (THIS HAS NOT BEEN CONFIRMED YET BY HCC)	1, 2, 4	HCC ACS	HCC Property SBC Planning SBC Housing Development SBC Housing and Investment Housing provider Care provider	Completed exemplar extra care scheme(s) fully occupied and staffed on time and within budget
Medium / Long Term	Develop new Residential Care Home	To enable excellent care and accommodation to Stevenage residents who need higher levels of care and are funded by HCC.	1	HCC ACS	SBC Housing Development ENHCCG	Completed exemplar residential care scheme fully occupied and staffed on time and within budget
	To meet the standards as set out in the Supported housing: national statement of expectations guidance	To provide a set of guidelines on what should reasonably be expected from the accommodation element of supported housing.  To ensure good quality and value for money	1	SBC/HCC	SBC Housing Development SBC Housing and Investment SBC Planning HCC ECH and Care Home Capital Programmes HCC ACS Commissioning	

## Glossary

### Affordable Housing

*Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing that is provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market*

### Age Designated Social Housing

*This relates to flats and bungalows that are separate to local independent living housing schemes and restricted to those aged over 55. As this accommodation is not part of a scheme there is no on-site staff availability, however in Stevenage, residents do benefit from the support of a visiting Supported Housing Officer and the 24-hour emergency help service via an alarm.*

### Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

*A statutory means-tested grant managed locally by the Hertfordshire Home improvement Agency to assist in covering the cost of home adaptations for those with disabilities.*

### Flexi-Care Housing (also Extra Care)

*Flexi-Care schemes (also known as Extra-Care) offers older people who might otherwise consider residential care the chance to stay independent but with greater access to domestic and personal care support and eliminate the need to move from their home should care needs increase. The schemes comprise of self-contained homes usually with communal and community facilities that differ between schemes. This accommodation type is designed with the needs of people who need care and support, and as such, most services have eligibility criteria. Schemes may be offered across all tenures inclusive of owned, rented, or shared ownership, however in Stevenage, at the time of writing, they are only offered for rent.*

### Future proofing

*Anticipating, adapting and remodelling homes so that they continue to be safe and comfortable as our needs change, as we age.*

### Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency

*A shared service between Hertfordshire County Council, Stevenage Borough Council, Broxbourne Borough Council, North Herts District Council, East Herts Council, and Watford Borough Council to deliver adaptations to older and disabled people's homes in the private sector (i.e. not council owned homes) to enable them to live more independently. Works are paid for primarily through disabled facilities grants, which is means tested for adults.*

### Indices of Multiple Deprivation

*The Indices of Multiple Deprivation are measures of deprivation for every Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOAs); a small geographic area in England. These LSOAs are then ranked according to how deprived they are relative to each other, and this information is brought together into one overall Index of Multiple Deprivation, where they are ranked from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived*

area). The Index is then divided into 10 equal deprivation deciles ranging from the most deprived 10% of LSOAs nationally to the least deprived 10% of LSOAs nationally.

#### Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

JSNAs steer the commissioning of services to meet the identified health and well-being needs of a local area.

#### Local Plan

A plan for future development of a local area, drawn up by the Local Planning Authority.

#### Mainstream or General Needs Housing

Whilst this is generally not a specialist housing type, it is important to capture it as the accommodation type most commonly occupied by all people, including older people. This accommodation comes in all designs and is available to people of all ages. Furthermore, it can be adapted to meet the specialist needs of older people or developed with an understanding of future needs in mind. This accommodation type is available across all tenures from social landlords, private landlords and developers and via community-led models e.g. co-housing.

#### Private Sector Retirement Housing

This type of accommodation is typically built by private developers and the management responsibility transferred to a separate management group once all properties have been sold. A Scheme Manager would then be responsible for organising maintenance and other services.

#### Residential Care Home

A residential setting whereby 24-hour care and accommodation is offered, usually in single rooms, to a number of people. The accommodation type has access to on-site care services and provides personal care, or personal care together with nursing care if needed.

#### Right-sizing

A move into a home that better meets a person's needs, both now and in into the future, as a means of improving their quality of life.

#### Independent living (also known as Sheltered Housing)

Independent living accommodation is typically self-contained accommodation available for rent. They are often designed to include communal areas with some schemes offering activities. Residents are usually supported by a part time/visiting Specialist Support Officer and for added safety and security, benefit from a 24-hour emergency help service via an alarm.

In Stevenage, this type of accommodation is allocated based on need by Stevenage Borough Council and Registered Social Landlords.

#### Social Prescribing

Social prescribing is a means of enabling local agencies to refer people to a link worker, who will take a holistic approach to people health and wellbeing, recognising the benefit of non-clinical services. Link workers will connect people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support.



### Supported Housing

*This type of housing is combined with support services and is allocated based on scheme specific criteria. This accommodation is usually offered in a shared setting although it can extend to self-contained accommodation.*

### Tenure

*Housing tenure describes the arrangements under which people occupy their accommodation. The most common forms of tenure are:*

*Home Ownership: this includes homes owned outright and mortgaged*

*Renting: this includes both social and private rented housing.*

### Whole Life Costing

*An investment appraisal and management tool which assesses the cost of an asset over its whole life, including running costs and maintenance. The value of adopting a whole life costing approach, where applicable, is recognised by the HM Treasury and the Department*

### Healthy Stevenage Partnership

*A group of public, private and voluntary sector organisations who work together with the purpose of improving health and wellbeing, and reducing the health inequalities, of Stevenage residents.*

### Packages of care

*A care package is a combination of services put together to meet a person's assessed needs, as identified following a social care assessment or review.*

## Authors

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## Contributors/ Consultees

Stevenage Borough Council

- Specialist Support Services
- Environmental Policy and Development
- Housing Allocations and Advice
- Housing Development
- Community Services
- Adaptations
- Planning
- Investment

Hertfordshire County Council

- Adult Care Services, Integrated Accommodation Commissioning Team
- Adult Care Services, Older People's Commissioning
- Adult Care Services, Stevenage Older People's Team
- Adult Care Services, Integrated Care Team (BCF)
- Growth and Infrastructure Unit
- Property
- Community Intelligence
- Fire and Rescue
- Public Health
- Herts Living Ltd
- Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency

*Age UK*

*Alzheimer's Society*

*Small Acts of Kindness*

*Hertfordshire Police*  
*Aldwyck Housing Association*  
*Hanover Housing Association*  
*Guinness Partnership*  
*Hightown Housing Association*  
*Network Homes*  
*Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service*  
*Hertfordshire Care Providers Association*  
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*St Peters Community Faith Group*  
*Hampson Park Community Lunch Group*  
*Bedwell Good Companions Club*  
*Renaissance Group*  
*The Oval Friendship Group*  
*Stevenage Muslim Community Centre*

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