

<b>12<sup>th</sup> September 2013</b>	<b>ITEM: 6</b>
<b>Thurrock Health and Well-Being Board</b>	
<b>THE CONTRIBUTION OF PLANNING AND HOUSING TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Les Billingham, Head of Adult Services	
<b>Accountable Directors:</b> Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing David Bull, Director of Planning and Transportation	
<b>This report is public</b>	
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> This report sets out how housing and planning, as wider determinants of health, will contribute to the good health and well-being of Thurrock's residents.	

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report details one of Building Positive Futures work streams - the role of housing and planning in relation to promoting good health and wellbeing for Thurrock's residents: a fundamental part of Thurrock's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The report outlines the successful work undertaken to date, and proposes a programme of work to build on those successes which will better enable Housing and Planning (in conjunction with Adult Social Care and Health) to assist in promoting good health and wellbeing.

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1.1 To recognise the contribution of the Council's Housing and Planning functions to the work of the Health and Well-being Board and;**
- 1.2 To agree that a programme of work be undertaken, under the auspices of the Board, to improve the availability of specialised housing and other facilities and amenities needed to enable older and disabled people in Thurrock to stay well and retain their independence;**
- 1.3 To agree that progress against the programme described in 2 above be included within the Board's performance framework and that the framework be amended to incorporate key actions and milestones relating to 'create the homes and neighbourhoods that support independence'.**

### **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Building Positive Futures, the Council's programme to transform adult social care, combines a number of inter-related workstreams, recognising that for people to stay well later in life, they need to be living in appropriate housing, in hospitable neighbourhoods, with the support of appropriate facilities and services.
- 2.2 Together, the three major elements will make Thurrock a great place in which to grow older:
- Strengthening communities to support health and well-being;
  - Transforming and integrating services to improve outcomes and to manage demand;
  - Creating the homes and neighbourhoods that support independence.
- 2.3 In relation to the third element of the programme a number of joint initiatives involving planning, adult social care and housing have been undertaken. These include:
- a review of the Council's planning policies against the recommendations of the report of Housing Our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation;
  - a Developers' Summit in March 2013 to make the case for investment in specialised housing for older and disabled people;
  - a successful bid to the Department of Health and the Homes and Communities Agency for funding for a scheme of 28 flats in Derry Avenue South Ockendon, specially designed for older and disabled people.
- 2.4 In line with the new Building Positive Futures governance arrangements, it is now appropriate to establish a programme of work under the auspices of the Health and Well-being Board to enable the Council and its partners to improve the availability of housing, transport and other facilities needed by older and disabled people.
- 2.5 Housing is represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board by the Director of Housing, although there is currently no formal link to Planning. A closer relationship with Planning will help planners to ensure the vision and aims for achieving good health and wellbeing for all in Thurrock are fully reflected in planning policies and regeneration plans. It will also enable the Health and Well-being Board to engage more closely with Housing and Planning to take advantage of development opportunities that will help deliver its strategic priorities. The new governance arrangements for the Building Positive Futures programme will consolidate the links between Housing and Planning and the Health and Well-being Board by regular progress reports on one of the main elements of the programme - work to create the homes and neighbourhoods that support independence.
- 2.6 It is recommended that progress reports will be included within the Board's performance framework and that the framework be amended to incorporate key actions and milestones relating to 'create the homes and neighbourhoods that support independence'.

### **3. THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The House of Lords Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change, Report of Session 2012-13 Ready for Ageing? 2013, recognised the importance of Planning and recommended that:  
*‘Health and Wellbeing Boards, on which local planners should be represented, should draw up plans for how communities can prepare themselves for older populations and involve housing associations and private developers to ensure that there is enough specialist housing, adequate transport and other easily accessible facilities for older people. Health and Wellbeing Boards should consider housing in tandem with health and social care provision because well-designed housing, as well as older people’s capacity to avoid social isolation, are strongly linked to better health outcomes’.*
- 3.2 The Ready for Ageing? report also stresses ‘Central and local government, housing associations and house builders need urgently to plan how to ensure that the housing needs of the older population are better addressed and to give as much priority to promoting adequate market and social housing for older people as is given to housing for younger people’.
- 3.3 Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to play a key role to ensure delivery of desirable housing in good locations. The National Planning Policy Framework of March 2012 signalled that it is important to consider future demographic change when making planning decisions. The Framework said that it is also crucial to “address the needs of people over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs”.
- 3.4 The Government’s Housing Strategy, ‘Laying the Foundations’ notes that as life expectancy increases, an increasing number of households will need support to remain in their homes in later life. Limited choice in the housing market makes it difficult for older households to find homes that fully meet their needs. In relation to our ageing population nationally it should be noted that some 60 per cent of projected growth in households to 2033 will be aged 65 and older.
- 3.5 The report produced by the Housing Our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) and published jointly by the Department of Health, Homes and Communities Agency and Department for Communities and Local Government in 2009, made recommendations about good practice in design for housing for older people. It noted that housing plays a critical role in enabling older adults to live independently, and also to enable carers and health and social care services to support them more effectively.

- 3.6 The factors requiring specific consideration in relation to specialised housing for older adults identified in the HAPPI Report include:
1. generous internal space standards, with potential for three habitable rooms and designed to accommodate flexible layouts;
  2. design of homes and shared spaces, with the placement, size and detail of windows, and to ensure plenty of natural light, and to allow daylight into circulation spaces;
  3. layouts maximise natural light and ventilation by avoiding internal corridors and single-aspect flats, and apartments have balconies, patios, or terraces with enough space for tables and chairs as well as plants;
  4. to ensure adaptability, homes are designed to be 'care ready' so that new and emerging technologies, such as telecare and community equipment, can be readily installed;
  5. building layouts promote circulation areas as shared spaces that offer connections to the wider context, encouraging interaction, supporting interdependence and avoiding an 'institutional feel', including the imaginative use of shared balcony access to front doors and thresholds, promoting natural surveillance and providing for 'defensible space';
  6. multi-purpose space is available for residents to meet, with facilities designed to support an appropriate range of activities – perhaps serving the wider neighbourhood as a community 'hub', as well as guest rooms for visiting friends and families;
  7. design measures ensure that homes engage positively with the street, and that the natural environment is nurtured through new trees and hedges and the preservation of mature planting, and providing wildlife habitats as well as colour, shade and shelter;
  8. homes are energy-efficient and well insulated, but also well ventilated and able to avoid overheating by, for example, passive solar design, the use of native deciduous planting supplemented by external blinds or shutters, easily operated awnings over balconies, green roofs and cooling chimneys
  9. adequate storage is available outside the home together with provision for cycles and mobility aids, and that storage inside the home meets the needs of the occupier;
  10. shared external surfaces, such as 'home zones', that give priority to pedestrians rather than cars, and which are proving successful in other countries, become more common, with due regard to the kinds of navigation difficulties that some visually impaired people may experience in such environments.
- 3.7 These reports and national policy all stress the need for action at national and local levels to build the homes that will meet the needs and aspirations of the growing ageing population; all highlight the role that well designed housing has in relation to the prevention agenda and the promotion of health and well-being. Good housing for older people can enable them to live healthy, independent lives and reduces pressure on working families in caring for older relatives. It can also prevent costs to the NHS and social care. For some older people a move to a smaller, more accessible and manageable home can also free up much-needed local family housing.

- 3.8 There is however, recognition that the absence of good quality housing for older people also means that people's expectations about housing later in life are limited and this in turn impacts on demand for housing designed for older people. Exemplar schemes (as with the scheme in Derry Avenue) in attractive locations are needed to help stimulate demand for a wider range of housing options.
- 3.9 There is also a need for public information to advise people about the health benefits of living in appropriately designed housing in later life. The costs and consequences of living in inappropriate housing are not well understood by the general public. In addition, housing developers have not seen the growing older population as a potential area for growth. Yet the impact on quality of life as well as the cost to the public purse is considerable.
- 3.10 Many older people choose to move home to enable them to remain independent, to release equity and to access appropriate support and care. The Government is encouraging local authorities to make provision for a wide range of housing types across all tenures, including accessible and adaptable general-needs retirement housing, and specialised housing options including sheltered and ExtraCare housing for older people with support and care needs.
- 3.11 The support of the Health and Wellbeing Board is needed to bring sufficient focus on improving the supply of well designed housing for older and disabled people, and the Board also has a key role to play in influencing the wider public debate about housing for older people, including both developers and those older people who may benefit from specialised housing.

#### **4. UPDATE ON THE BUILDING POSITIVE FUTURES WORKSTREAM: Creating the homes and neighbourhoods that support independence**

- 4.1 Elizabeth Gardens, Thurrock's new purpose built extra care housing scheme has recently opened, with the first residents moving in in June 2013. Symbolically, the scheme is built on the site of a former residential care home, underscoring the current policy direction which is to assist people to 'age well' in their own homes.
- 4.2 The three storey scheme, which is designed to be dementia friendly, has 18 one-bedroom and 47 two-bedroom flats and a full range of communal facilities for use by residents and the wider community. The communal facilities include: lounge, restaurant offering a cooked lunchtime meal, hair and beauty salon, laundry, mobility scooter store, assisted bathroom, health suite, activity room, two lifts, guest room and secure landscaped gardens. The scheme, which has full time on site care, is mainly for people of 55 years and over who, because of age or illness or disability, have a substantial or critical need for adult social care.
- 4.3 The scheme is also a significant resource to the wider community, in terms of its communal facilities – not least the health suite and the restaurant. The opportunities for linking the scheme with the wider community are being

explored with Thurrock CVS in relation to the community hubs programme and volunteering.

4.4 As noted above, Thurrock was successful in its bid for grant funding for a scheme of 28 flats specially designed for older and disabled people. The recommendations of the HAPPI report described in 3.5 above informed the design of the Derry Avenue scheme. As an exemplar in terms of design standards and quality, the scheme will raise the aspirations and expectations of residents planning for their later years, as well as providing a model for developers.

4.5 Design features of the scheme at Derry Avenue include:

#### Ease of Access

- The building is designed to be easy to navigate and accessible for all. An open main entrance with direct access/views to the garden room and the garden beyond gives on to the vertical circulation cores.
- Flats are clustered around two vertical access cores. The provision of two cores negates the requirement for corridors. Circulation space benefits from excellent natural light and ventilation.
- Sensitive use of colour differentiation and wayfinding between different areas of the building will be considered as part of the interior design to support residents with dementia.

#### Garden Aspect

- All flats are arranged with a western view across the adjacent garden.
- Generous, full width balconies provide attractive private amenity looking out across the garden.
- A large proportion of the flats are dual aspect.
- A communal garden room on the ground floor provides residents with a space for socialising with direct views and access to the garden.

#### Typical Dwelling Plans

- Generously dimensioned hallways.
- Large store, adaptable as a wheelchair storage space.
- Oversized to allow for adaptation into a fully wheelchair accessible bathroom, plus 'soft spot' in master bedroom partition.
- Kitchens are generously proportioned to provide ease of circulation for residents who are mobility impaired or use a wheelchair.
- A sliding screen gives an open, spacious quality. Flexibility of use for second bedroom.
- All rooms open onto a generous external balcony overlooking the new communal garden.
- Windows to the kitchen allow for natural light and allow views to the communal areas.
- Shelving/seating adjacent to flat entrances.

4.6 As with Elizabeth Gardens, connections between the proposed new scheme at Derry Avenue and the wider community will be developed through the Community Hub – the South Ockendon Centre - and the Local Area Coordinator.

- 4.7 It is recognised that Elizabeth Gardens and the scheme at Derry Avenue contrast with the Council’s current sheltered housing offer, which was developed in a different era and for different needs and aspirations. The sheltered schemes are well run and largely popular, but they were not designed to meet the needs of the current population of older people: a number of the schemes present particular issues for tenants with mobility needs because the first floor flats are not suitable for retrofitting lifts.
- 4.8 A number of initiatives have been undertaken to address these issues. This includes the use of ex-warden properties as supported housing for people with disabilities, so reducing the need for residential care for adults of working age. Now, as the Housing Department has embarked on its own housing development programme to produce 1,000 new homes over the next five years, there is an opportunity for part of the programme to be targeted at older people, and so improve the Council’s housing offer.
- 4.9 In March this year, Thurrock hosted a Developers Summit in order to raise the profile of housing for older people with private developers and Registered Social Landlords. At the Summit, the Director of Planning & Transportation and the Director of Housing highlighted the need for higher standards and invited developers to work with the Council to improve the design and supply of housing for older people. For its part the Council offered a range of assistance to developers including:
- Providing profiles of the housing needs of older people in Thurrock’s communities;
  - Engaging with local people so that they understand the benefits of specialised housing for older people;
  - Flexibility in relation to planning requirements, for example, parking if the site is well served by access to local facilities and transport;
  - Exploring the potential for joint ventures with private sector developers;
  - A one-stop service to facilitate scheme discussions at any point, not just at the pre-planning application stage.

**5. NEXT STEPS FOR THE BUILDING POSITIVE FUTURES WORKSTREAM:  
Creating the homes and neighbourhoods that support independence**

- 5.1 Issues raised at the Developers’ Summit are being addressed with a view to stimulating further engagement with developers, and to create the conditions that are conducive to developer activity in this market.
- 5.2 In terms of developing a range of housing options for owner occupiers, there is recognition that a range of tenure options need to be available including rented, equity share and purchase. A range of steps are planned for the autumn which include:
- The Council’s planning, housing and adult social care officers are collaborating on new **good practice guidance for housing development** which builds on best practice in design for older and disabled people, and people with dementia;

- Work is underway to take a fresh look at the housing needs of older people across Thurrock's communities with a view to taking forward a programme to ***develop specialised housing for older people***;
- The Council is also establishing a ***Developer's Coalition*** as the next step on from the Developers Summit. It is intended that this will help to secure the commitment of private developers to our programme;
- Consideration will also be given to case for undertaking ***Health Impact Assessments*** for larger developments to highlight how these may improve the housing choices for older people and people with disabilities;
- In line with the Government's policy in Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England 2011, opportunities to ***free up surplus, formerly used public sector land*** with capacity to support new homes, will need to be considered by the Council and its partners.

5.3 A wide range of organisations and individuals have a central role to play in helping Building Positive Futures achieve its aims. This report highlights the key role that the Council's Housing and Planning services can play in helping achieve the objectives of the Health and Well-being Board.

## 6. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

6.1 The Council has engaged in a dialogue with developers on meeting the housing needs of our ageing population and plans further work in this area.

## 7. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

7.1 The Community Strategy and Corporate Plan, and the Housing Strategy are all relevant to the Building Positive Futures programme as is of course the Health and Well-being Strategy.

## 8. IMPLICATIONS

### 8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**  
 Telephone and email: **01375 652772**  
**mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk**

The report outlines the principals and governance arrangements for the implementation of the programme.

Specific projects, and their associated financial implications will be reported separately once they require approval



## 8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Chris Pickering – Principal Solicitor**  
 Telephone and email: **0208 227 3774**  
[chris.pickering@bdtlegal.org.uk](mailto:chris.pickering@bdtlegal.org.uk)

This report notes the Building Positive Futures programme and sets out recommendations for building homes for older and disabled residents of Thurrock. As such there are no legal implications to this report and the report's author asks simply for the contents to be noted.

## 8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**  
 Telephone and email: **01375 652472**  
[sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk)

8.3.1 Each of the Building Positive workstreams will need to be undertaken with due regard to equality and diversity considerations.

8.3.2 In the case of the proposed development at Derry Avenue, this will include adherence to the relevant 'Equality' Codes of Practice on Procurement. These require consideration of the equality arrangements of all companies bidding for any development contract; that they have relevant policies on equal opportunities and be able to demonstrate a commitment to equality and diversity. These arrangements will also be subject to a full review as part of the contract management of the development. The Housing Allocations scheme determines who will qualify for social housing within the borough and how they will be prioritised, and it will determine lettings in the proposed Derry Avenue scheme. Ongoing monitoring with regards to who is being housed via the new scheme will be implemented. This will include monitoring of equality strand groups.

## 8.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

There are none.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):**

- House of Lords Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change Report of Session 2012-13 Ready for Ageing? 2013  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldselect/ldpublic/140/140.pdf>
- The report of Housing Our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation 2009  
<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/housing-ageing-population-panel-innovation>
- Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England 2011  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7532/2033676.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7532/2033676.pdf)

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

- None

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