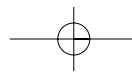
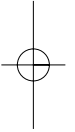
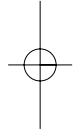
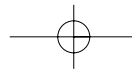


Older People's Housing Strategy for Merton 2006-2009



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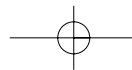
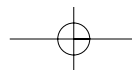
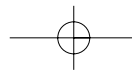


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FOREWORD

By Councillor Diane Neil Mills, Cabinet Member for Housing & Regeneration; Councillor Margaret Brierly, Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Services; Councillor Ron Wilson, the lead Councillor for Older People; and Lynne Bainbridge, Chief Executive of Age Concern Merton

We are very pleased to introduce this as the first housing strategy we have developed specifically for older people.

Despite an overall improvement in people's quality of life, we cannot fail to recognise that well into the 21st Century, many older people continue to live in poor housing, experience poor health, have difficulties accessing services, and may suffer exploitation and neglect.

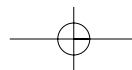
As leading Councillors with an interest in housing and older people and Chief Executive of Age Concern Merton, we are well aware of the needs of frailer older people requiring assistance with their housing and other day-to-day needs. We also know that ethnic minority elders in Merton often have specific needs because of language and cultural differences, and that there will be more ethnic elders in Merton over the next 10 years.

Our agenda also encompasses the needs and aspirations of a new generation of people approaching older age, who are likely to have different expectations. Older people increasingly pursue a more active lifestyle and will have different aspirations and needs.

We also know through this work, that those who are frailer and have particular support needs no longer wish to be restricted by an "institutionalised" housing model. We need to respond to that by reviewing traditional models of housing, as well as care and support options.

There is anecdotal evidence that, despite their "vision" of a more active old age, few people will actually be proactive in making plans while they are still active and independent.

Early planning is key to assisting people maintain their independence for longer and enjoy the opportunities on offer, it will also encourage people to think about financial planning and practical support as and when they need it.



It is our aim to respond to the changing and diverse range of housing and support needs of older people, through:

- Promoting independence and choice
- Championing preventative measures and early planning

We will also need to have regard to demographic changes, to ensure that we plan services accordingly. To help us achieve this aim, we will:

“Identify housing needs, aspirations, expectations and perceptions of older people as they change with age, and develop policies and actions that meet those needs”

We know how important it is to find out from older people themselves about their housing needs and aspirations. Consequently, this Strategy has been formulated through a bottom-up approach with older people involved in the various stages of its development.

We have taken the time to build a robust multi-agency partnership to support this bottom-up strategic development process. The Older People’s Strategy Team, established in October 2004, brought together older people, key voluntary sector and community organisations with statutory service providers.





Councillor Diane Neil Mills
Cabinet Member for Housing and
Regeneration
London Borough of Merton



Lynne Bainbridge
Chief Executive
Age Concern Merton



Councillor Margaret Brierly
Cabinet Member for Health & Adult
Social Services
London Borough of Merton



Councillor Ron Wilson
Lead Councillor for Older People

Through our partners on this team, we were able to engage with a wider audience of older people and we were successful in ensuring frailer older people who often experience difficulty in getting involved were assisted to fully participate. We sought their views on existing services and on how they would like to see housing and support services develop.

Working with older people has helped us fill some of our knowledge gap. The Council has also learnt a lot about older people's issues through working closely with voluntary and community organisations. This is a great beginning for Merton and will provide us with a solid platform from which to further reach out to excluded older people and develop our understanding of their needs and aspirations.

Looking to the immediate future, we see tremendous opportunities for us to develop integrated services for older people, as the Government has placed an increasingly strong emphasis on the need to improve services for older people, and many initiatives were introduced as a result.

These include a drive to increase the number of extra care housing schemes, and Merton has recently learnt that our bid for a new Extra Care Housing scheme of over 30 new homes has been successful. A culturally specific sheltered scheme has also opened recently in Merton for African and Caribbean elders. This is a great start for Merton in providing more housing choice for older people.

Members of the Strategy Team have also provided us with many ideas for improving housing choice and other related services for older people. This Strategy contains a 3-year Action Plan with a total of 50 actions, which will help us achieve the 5 key objectives set out in the Strategy.

The Strategy Team will work closely with other partnerships to deliver these actions, and will report to Merton's Older People's Partnership Board, which brings together health and social care professionals as well as voluntary sector organisations. The Merton Partnership structure will also support and deliver priorities set out in our Community Plan (2006-2015), which has a clear focus on issues for older people as one of five key themes.

The launch of this Strategy is therefore just the start but we are confident that, with the commitment of all partners involved, we will be able to deliver the Action Plan and have a positive impact on the lives of older people in Merton.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Need for a Strategy – The Challenge Ahead

Merton's Housing Strategy 2004-2007 was awarded "fit-for-purpose" status by the Government Office for London (GOL) in February 2004.

A number of strategies have been developed to support the Housing Strategy, including Merton's Homelessness Strategy, which was commended by the Housing Quality Network; the Ethnic Minority Housing Strategy, assessed as a model of good housing practice by HouseMark; and our Supporting People Strategy.

Merton Housing is now building on this success by developing a Housing Strategy specifically for older people. This has been accomplished with older people who have been key members of the Strategy Team. The Strategy aims to provide focal points for addressing housing issues concerning older people, be it homelessness, older people with special needs, needs of older people from ethnic minority communities, or older people living in unsuitable housing in the private sector.

We will therefore maintain links with all Merton strategies covering services for older people, to ensure a joined up

approach in improving services for older people. Relevant strategies include the Private Sector Housing Strategy, the Affordable Housing Strategy, currently in development, as well as Merton's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, the Older People's Commissioning Plan (2003-2006), and the Supporting People Strategy (2005 - 2010) to ensure a joined up approach in improving services for older people.

The Community Plan 2006-2015 from the Merton Partnership contains one chapter that sets out the issues and ambition for the broad theme of older people in Merton.

Recent changes in society have led to improved physical and financial well-being for many older people, resulting in higher expectation of service standards. However, for some older people this is not their experience. It is therefore important that we recognise the different needs and the diversity of older people – an age group that can span three generations. Services should be "person centred". We will need to develop and deliver services that meet needs, as well as aspirations and expectations of older people.

The broad ambitions for older people now centre on "active ageing" and full citizenship. This goes beyond

Part I - Background

traditional ideas about older people that have focused on health and social care, linked to dependency. These revised views on older people are based on priorities and experiences from older people and the organisations that represent them. They challenge perceptions about age and ageing, and promote the contribution of older people in the borough – working with them as well as meeting needs.

This Strategy sets out how the Council and its partner organisations will improve housing and related services for older people living in Merton and how we will contribute to national and regional objectives towards 2010. The aim of this strategy is:

- To identify housing needs, aspirations, expectations and perceptions of older people as they change with age, and develop policies and actions that meet those needs.

Key issues relating to older people's housing needs are outlined in this strategy, which also sets out what the key priorities for change are. A 3-year action plan has been formulated to help achieve the changes required.

The challenge for Merton is to successfully implement changes to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of older people in relation to their housing and support needs, and to help improve their well-being and quality of life.

1.2 National, Regional & Local Context

The Government's health, housing and social care policy for older people emphasises the need for prevention, as well as promoting independence and choice.

Housing Policy

In relation to housing, its overall housing policy objective is to offer everyone the opportunity to have a decent, affordable and appropriate home and so promote social cohesion, well-being and independence.

The policy context has moved away from institutional provision in residential settings towards supporting older people in their homes within their communities, either in the homes they own or rent, or in specialist schemes such as sheltered or extra care housing. It promotes an approach that is integrated, holistic and inclusive, and emphasises that housing policy has a major role to play in ensuring that older people are able to stay active and maintain their personal independence.

A strategy framework for Older People's Housing Strategy - *Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing*, was published by the DTLR, now Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department of Health in 2001. The document set out the Government's vision and overall policy objectives for older people's housing and support services. This

framework will have a direct impact on the provision of decent, affordable and appropriate housing for older people.

Five key areas had been identified as priority for new policy and service development for older people:

- Diversity and Choice
- Information and Advice
- Flexible service provision
- Quality
- Joint working

Choice-Based Lettings

All local authorities are required to introduce Choice Based Lettings schemes by 2010. Under this new scheme, people who have applied for social housing will no longer be 'allocated' a home, but will be able to choose from homes that they are eligible to 'bid' for. This will provide increased choice for those needing affordable housing through increased flexibility.

Merton Housing Services has introduced Choice-Based Lettings from April 2006. Vulnerable client groups have been consulted to ensure that their specific needs are taken into account under this new scheme. The scheme

will also be monitored closely to ensure there will be no barrier to access for older people and other vulnerable clients.

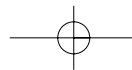
Social Care Policy

A Green Paper on Adult Social Care – *"Independence, well-being and choice: our vision for the future of social care for adults"* in England, was published by the Department of Health in March 2005. This sets out a vision for adult social care over the next 10 to 15 years.

The Government's social care policy is clearly moving towards the provision of more flexible kinds of care. It has provided resources to local authorities to allow older people to be cared for in their own homes, and has introduced innovative new schemes to enable older people to receive money to arrange and pay for their own care.

Linking Housing, Health & Social Care

The importance of developing links across strategies and policies, particularly between housing, social care and health, was emphasised by the Government with the publication of the *National Service Framework (NSF)* for older people in 2001, and a guidance for local authorities *"Preparing older people's strategies: linking housing to health, social care and other local strategies"* in 2003.



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The NSF for Older People identifies ways to improve health and social care services for older people to support independence and promote good health, and the guidance sets out how social services and Primary Care Trusts can work in partnership with housing authorities as part of drawing up Local Delivery Plans and capacity plans for older people's services.

Social Exclusion & Sure Start for Later Life

More recently, the Government has renewed focus on tackling isolation and social exclusion amongst older people with the publication of ODPM's *"Excluded Older People"* report in March 2005. Key issues highlighted in the report include independence, choice, prevention of exclusion and isolation.

"A Sure Start to Later Life" was published by the Department of Health and the Department of Work and Pensions in 2006, building on work from the Social Exclusion Unit in central government with an agenda to end inequalities for older people. By adapting the theme of "Sure Start", this will not just be about better social care but comprehensive services that can empower older people and improve quality of life.

Older People Strategy for London

The Mayor had consulted on a draft Older People's Strategy between November 2005 and February 2006,

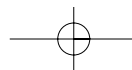
Part I - Background

to be published in September 2006. The Strategy has prioritised four key areas for action. The 4 areas are:

- Challenge negative perceptions of older people and fully recognise the contribution they make to London.
- Take action to reduce pensioner poverty in London.
- Promote high quality social care.
- Support those valuable discretionary services which can make so much difference to older people's lives.

Local Area Agreements

Older people's issues are coming to the forefront of the Government's agenda. It is one of three key areas to be addressed through the Government's Local Area Agreements (LAAs) initiative, which all local authorities will have to put in place by April 2007.



LAA's will set out local priorities agreed between central government and Merton Council, to be delivered through the Merton Partnership (Merton's Local Strategic Partnership). Priorities for older people in Merton are clearly set out in Merton's Community Plan to 2015, and form one of five key themes to be addressed by the Merton Partnership.

In January 2006 the Merton Partnership agreed to restructure into 5 thematic partnerships around the five strategic themes : sustainable communities, safer & stronger communities, healthier communities, older people, children & young people . Each thematic partnership has a chair and an officer lead. The Older Peoples Thematic Partnership, which reports to the Merton Partnership, is chaired by the Director of Community and Housing and the lead officer is the Head of Strategy & Business of the same department.

1.3 The Strategic Development Process

This is very much a Strategy developed with older people for older people, as its development was underpinned by a full consultation programme involving a quantitative questionnaire survey of older people's housing needs, an action planning Away Day, a Listening Event for Older People, as well as a Housing Forum held during Merton's Older People's Festival – "Celebrating Age".

Key partner organisations and stakeholders were involved from the start to develop this Strategy, and a steering group – the Older People's Housing Strategy Team - was set up in October 2004 involving organisations representing and working with older people in Merton, such as Hanover AtHome (Care & Repair Merton), Merton Association of Pensioners (MAP), South West London Chinese Association, South London Tamil Welfare Group, West Indian Family and Friends Association (WIFFA), and Wimbledon Guild. The steering group is chaired by the Chief Executive of Age Concern Merton.

Quantitative Research

Early in 2005, quantitative research based on a questionnaire survey was undertaken to gather evidence of the needs and aspirations of older people. Just over 1,000 questionnaires have been completed, mainly through face-to-face interviews, with a number of postal returns from older people who are housebound.

This was an exceptionally high response rate for research on a specific client group. We were able to achieve this through working in partnership with organisations represented on the steering group. In particular MAP's Housing Action Group members were closely involved in the fieldwork, the Listening Event and the Housing Forum.

Part I - Background

Key research findings are highlighted throughout this report. A detailed research report is published as part of the publication of this Strategy.

The Listening Event

Nearly 60 older Merton residents – representing the variety of housing tenures proportionate to the 2001 Census – took part.

Merton adopted a good practice model in consulting older people, which has been successfully piloted by Care and Repair England in other parts of the country.

Participants were encouraged to “Think without Limit” about their housing aspirations. Service providers, including Council staff as well as representatives of organisations working for older people were there to listen. Key messages of that day have helped to inform the development of this strategy.

The Housing Forum, July 2005

An outline of the draft Older People’s Housing Strategy was presented to about 80 delegates attending a whole day devoted to the discussion of independent living for older people during “Celebrating Age 2005” – Merton’s Festival for the over 50s. In a series of facilitated workshops, participants discussed the draft in depth and their comments recorded to further inform the development of this strategy.

Objectives for the Strategy

Following a series of action planning meetings, and having undertaken extensive research and consultation with older people, the Older People’s Housing Strategy Team has identified 5 key objectives for this Strategy. These objectives are:

1. Support for Older People At Home
2. Decent, Warm & Safe Homes for Older People
3. Increase Housing Choice and Build Communities
4. Provide Quality and Accessible Information and Advice
5. Strengthen Consultation and Partnership Working

These objectives are set out in Part II of this strategy. That section gives detailed information on needs and aspirations relating to the 5 objectives, identifies gaps in service provisions, and sets out key priorities for Merton Council and its partners over the next 3 years (2006-2009) in developing and improving housing and related services for older people. Actions contained in the accompanying plan in Part III have been given either High, Medium or Low priority, to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

1.4 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

The Steering Group set up to develop this strategy, the Older People's Housing Strategy Team, will continue to meet following the launch of this strategy. The group will move from its development role to focus on the implementation of actions and targets contained in the Action Plan, and will monitor the progress of the strategy regularly to ensure that the work is on track. The group will also take on the task of evaluating and reviewing the strategy.

In order to facilitate the implementation of key projects and actions, the Strategy Team has agreed to set up various sub-group to lead on different aspects of the strategy's work. To date, the Strategy Team has agreed to set up three sub-groups:

- Housing Options Directory – This group will be led by Merton Association of Pensioners. The group will focus on promoting early planning, through accessible information for all tenures. A Housing Options Directory will be developed through users' involvement and liaison with relevant agencies.
- Advice Network – This group will be led by Age Concern Merton. The group is tasked with improving accessibility and quality of housing

advice for all older people through the establishment of a network of advice agencies to ensure consistency, and to reduce the need for older people to contact various service providers themselves.

- External Funding – This group will be led by Hanover AtHome (Care & Repair Merton), to access external funding sources for priorities and actions identified in the Action Plan that require resources, and to lead on preparing bids for funding.

Whilst the three sub-groups have very distinct remits, their work is also very much inter-related therefore there will be close co-ordination between them throughout the implementation stage.

The main Strategy Team will receive regular report back from all sub-groups, and will monitor progress against targets set in the Action Plan. The Team will review the Strategy at the end of Year One (March 2007) and will produce an update to ensure that the Strategy remains robust.

Part I - Background

2. OLDER PEOPLE IN MERTON**2.1 Demographic Information****Population**

'Older people' are most often viewed as people aged 65 and over. However, with increased emphasis now placed on preventative services, it is important that we also consider the need of those approaching their later years, i.e. those aged 50-64, to promote independence and well-being, and the need for early planning.

Frail older people aged 85 and over often have a higher level of need therefore have different requirements for services. The older people population is therefore a very diverse group spanning three generations and their differing needs will need to be addressed.

According to Census 2001 there were 24,288 older people aged 65 or over residing in Merton. They comprised nearly 13% of the total population of the borough. 59% of older people aged 65 or over were female and 41% were male. 15% of the 65 and over age group were from ethnic minority communities, of which 5% were Irish older people.

More than a quarter (27%) of Merton's population were people aged 50 and over. There were 3,228 older

people aged 85 plus in 2001, making up 1.7% of the overall population.

Population Projection

The proportion of older people aged 65 and over is expected to decrease from 13% to 11.8% of total population by 2010, with outward migration contributing to this (ONS 2003-based Subnational population projection). However, more people from ethnic minority communities will enter retirement during this period, in particular people from the White Irish, Indian, Caribbean and Chinese communities.

The number of older people aged 85 or over is projected to increase by 13%. This will have clear implications for future service planning for frail older people with high level of needs.

Looking further ahead, the proportion of older people aged 65 and over is expected to steadily increase from 2010, reaching 12.4% by 2015, 12.8% by 2020 and 14% by 2028. The proportion of people aged 50 plus, currently estimated to be 26.8%, may well increase to 28.3% in 2015 and to 31.4% in 2028. People aged 85 and over is likely increase to an estimated 3,600 persons (16% increase) by 2015 and to 4,300 persons (39% increase) by 2028.

Household Composition

Merton's Housing Needs Survey June 2005 (HNS June 05) shows that 19.2% of households in Merton contain older persons¹ only (15,481 households), and a further 8.4% contain a mix of both older and non-older persons. Older persons' only households made up a quarter (25%) of households living in council housing, and 27% of households living in homes owned and/or managed by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

Older person-only households are disproportionately comprised of only one person. The HNS June 05 showed 10,442 single pensioner households in Merton, making up 13% of all households, providing implications for future caring patterns.

Census 2001 data shows that the majority of older people's households are single person households (68%), followed by pensioner couples (30%) and other all pensioner households. It should be noted that analysis does not pick up pensioners living in "inter-generational" households that may include older people, their children and grandchildren.

¹The HNS defines older persons as those of a pension age i.e. men aged 65 or older and woman aged 60 or over.

Tenure

Census 2001 data shows a large proportion of older people owning their own homes. 67% of all older person households are owner-occupiers, with another 10% renting in the private sector.

Just over 1 in 5 older person households (21%) live in social rented housing, with 7% living in Housing Association (RSLs) properties and 14% in council owned housing. Results from Merton's recent Housing Needs Survey show that 25% of council housing is occupied by older persons-only households, and 27% of households living in homes owned and/or managed by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

Property Size

Merton's Housing Needs Survey June 2005 (HNS June 05) shows that half of all older persons only households, mostly comprised of only one or two persons, are in three or four bedroom dwellings. These findings reflect the Census 2001 data, which shows that across all tenure, 54% of pensioner only households are under-occupying their homes by one or two rooms², compared to 40% of all households.

²The Census occupancy rating assumes that every household, including one-person households, requires a minimum of two common rooms, excluding bathrooms.

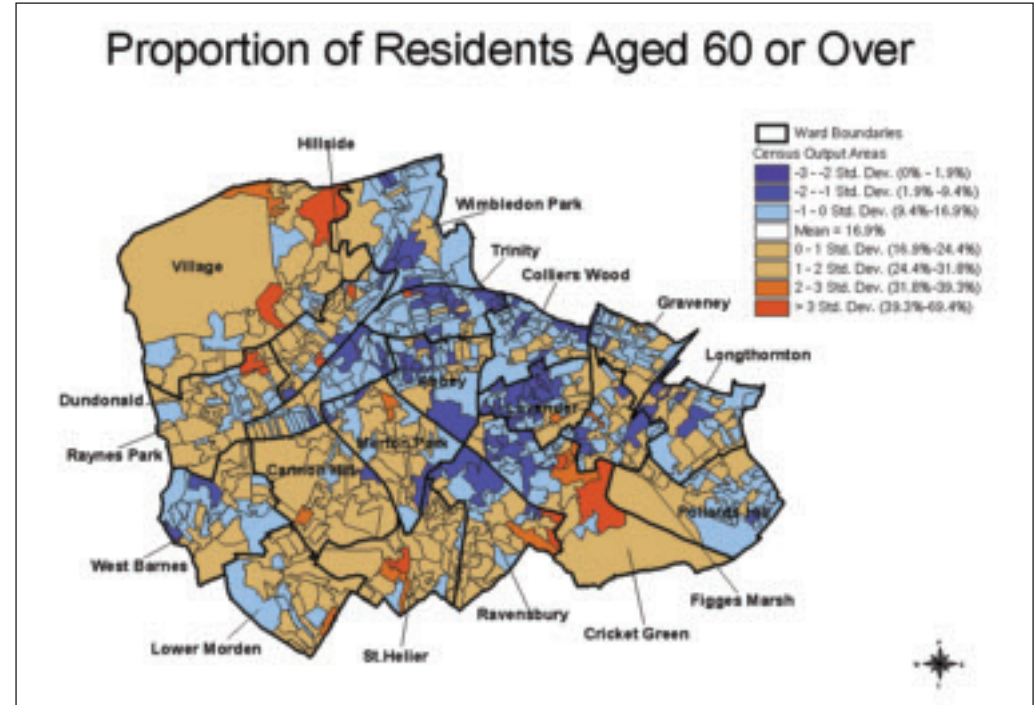
Part I - Background

In the private sector, as many as 68% of pensioner households are under-occupying by one or two rooms, compared to 43% of all households; and 47% of pensioner households in the social rented sector under-occupy, compared to 36% of all households.

Geographic Distribution of Older People

The map below shows 16.9% of Merton residents were people aged 60 and over (Census 2001). Older people are more likely to live in the western and southern parts of the borough. Some areas have a very high proportion of older residents, with the proportion of older people living in a few local areas as high as 40%-70%. This has clear implications for planning for older people’s services.

affordable warmth, aids & adaptations and support services.



Income

National research has shown that the levels of income older people receive falls with age. The median net household income for people aged 50-59 was £353 a week (2003-04), compared with £232 for people over 80 (after housing costs and adjusted for household size).

2.2 Older People’s Housing

At present, there are just over 1,000 homes run by social housing landlords designated for older people. The majority of these are designed for older people who are more independent, including over 200 designated older people’s homes (e.g. bungalows) owned by the Council, about 780 units of sheltered accommodation, of which 30% (235 homes) are owned by the Council and the remaining 545 homes owned by registered social landlords (RSLs).

Millat Asian Housing Association runs a 16 unit sheltered scheme for Asian elders. There is also a culturally specific scheme for Black African and Caribbean elders, developed on a sub-regional basis with Croydon, Wandsworth and Sutton councils. Five homes will be available for Merton residents. This new scheme was completed and let in early 2006.

In addition to homes for rent, there are a number of housing schemes with a total of about 210 homes in Merton that cater for older owner-occupiers. These include retirement homes and Alms Houses run by either private sector companies, voluntary sector organisations or Registered Social Landlords.

For older people who are frailer and need care, there are 2 Extra Care housing schemes in Merton owned by RSLs providing a total of 74 homes, as well as a privately run Extra Care scheme with 21 homes. The number of Extra Care homes in Merton is relatively low when compared to other London Boroughs. There are 3 extra care homes per 1,000 Merton residents aged 60 and over, compared to the highest rate of provision in Barking and Dagenham, which has 9.4 homes per 1,000 residents. To remedy this, the Council and its partners have bid for over 30 extra care homes through funding from the Housing Corporation, and at the time of going to press this bid has been awarded funding.

Merton Council does not own any residential homes, but currently places about 350 people in residential or nursing homes. The Council's aim is to reduce placements through increased independence and choice for older people.



Part I - Background

To help inform the development of this strategy, we need to identify the housing and support needs of older people. This is achieved mainly through consulting with older people, and through the analysis of service records. Merton's Housing Needs Survey (June 2005) and our quantitative research report on the needs of older people also provide us with clear indicators of needs. This section provides an overview of needs identified through service records, research and consultation.

3.1 Older People with Disability or Special Needs

Special needs households in Merton are disproportionately made up of older persons only and are generally smaller than the average households (Merton HNS June 05). These special needs households have lower than average incomes and are more likely than households overall to be in unsuitable housing.

Merton Council's physical and sensory impairment registers (see Table 1 below) had a total of 7,452 people (as at Nov 04), of which 5,565 (75%) were people aged 65 and over. Older people with physical disability are the largest group on the registers, with over 4,078 people making up 55% of all people on the registers. An overwhelming majority of those on the Hard of Hearing

register were older people (86%). Older people also make up almost 1 in 8 people on the partially sighted register.

Table 1

Disability/Impairment (Nov 2004)	On Register	65+	%
Physical Disability	5'444	4'078	75.7
Blind	641	489	76.3
Partially Sighted	494	391	79.1
Deaf with Speech	190	109	57.4
Deaf without Speech	95	21	22.1
Hard of Hearing	554	477	86.1
Child with Disabilities	34	-	
Total	7,452	5,565	75.3

Projection data estimated that there were 23,900 people aged 65 and over in 2004 (ONS 2003-based Subnational population projection). This means that almost a quarter (23.3%) of older people aged 65 plus have a disability or impairment.

It is also necessary to bear in mind that a significant number of those eligible to register with the local authority do not know how to or are reluctant to do so, hence the number of people on Merton's registers may not be a reliable indication of local need, and the actual level of need is likely to be higher.

3.2 Older People and Health

2,488 households of Merton’s Housing Needs Survey (June 2005) identified themselves as frail elderly households, making up 3.1% of all households, and 16% of all households with older persons only.

Table 2 below shows that across all age groups in Merton, 13.4% of residents have a “limiting long-term illness”. Amongst

older people aged 60 or over, 4 out of 10 (42.5%) have a limiting long-term illness (Census 2001). Amongst the 85 plus age group, this rises to 7 out of 10 (69.9%)

Table 2

Aged Group	All Persons	No. with Limiting Term Illness	% Limiting Long-Term Illness
60-64	7,189	2,096	29.2
65-84	20,721	8,982	43.3
85+	2,835	1,982	69.9
Aged 60+	30,745	13,060	42.5

3.3 Care and Support

Demand for Care & Support

There are clear indications that the provision of care at home is regarded by older people as the preferred alternative to residential care. Council and agency staff working with older people have reported an increased level of demand for care at home, as well as an increase in the complexity of care required.

Merton’s Social Care Registers show that in addition:

- 1,588 receive support from Adult Social Care (excluding those in residential care).
- 873 older people’s households receive Supporting People funding, including 74 very sheltered housing and 90 floating support units.
- Approximately 1,920 older people are assisted to remain in their own homes through the use of assistive technology such as community alarms.
- Hanover AtHome (Care and Repair Merton) Handy Person’s Scheme completed 452 jobs for older & vulnerable people in 2005-2006.

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It is recognised that older people are still having difficulties accessing services. It is therefore unlikely that the above figures provide a true reflection of local need. Other concerns identified through Merton's Home Care Services and Supporting People analysis include:

- Individuals who fall through the support and care network, as they do not meet the 'Fair Access to Care' Criteria, despite having needs, thereby making them ineligible for services.
- Older people with disability can be low down the Housing priority list, as sensory impairment does not warrant medical points for housing.
- No support mechanisms for those living in Merton's Disabled Persons Units (DPUs). Anecdotal information suggests that some people are going into residential care because there are not enough DPUs available.
- Lack of floating support to assist occupants of DPUs with initial settling in, budgeting/benefits, decorating & maintaining property, smoke alarms, sell by dates on food and all other aspects of preventative intervention.

Older Carers

The General Household Survey revealed that many older people are forced to become carers. Across the UK around 6 million people provide unpaid care to adult family members. A third of these carers are themselves older people. Carers UK reported a shortage of respite care, with many caring for years without a break.

Census 2001 showed that 9% of residents in Merton provide unpaid care³ for family members or friends. The age group most likely to have to provide unpaid care for someone is the 50-59 age-group, with 22% providing unpaid care, often for older relatives or friends.

Of the 60 and over age group, a higher than average proportion (13.5%) of people provide between 1-60 hours of unpaid care. Significantly, as many as 5% of those aged 85 plus have to provide unpaid care, equivalent to over 2,800 people aged 85 plus. This shows that frail older people needing care often have to rely on their partners or other family members who themselves may have high levels of needs because of old age.

³A person is a provider of unpaid care if they give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental health or disability, or problems related to old age. There is no specific reference to whether this care is provided within the household or outside the household.

Many older carers have responsibility for children or relatives who have a disability. In Merton, there is a large number of people with a Learning Disability living with older carers over the age of 70. There is an issue of continuity of care provision for the child/relative as the carer becomes too old to provide care. The Government's White Paper "Valuing People" acknowledged the future needs of this client group and identified the need to develop long-term housing and support plans for these households.

3.4 Key Messages from Older People

Merton's Older People Research

A research report has been produced following the analysis of results from our questionnaire survey undertaken in January 2005. The report is published as part of the publication of this Strategy. The Research has found that the top five issues affecting older people are as follows:

1. Difficulty in maintaining home and garden (29%)
2. Help with small jobs, e.g. changing light bulbs (22%)
3. Difficulties with using stairs / lifts (21%)
4. Problems with home being in need of significant repair work (19%)
5. Problems of companionship (13%)

The research shows ethnic minority elders experience significantly higher levels of housing problems. Results show that 31% of Asian Elders and 26% of Black Elders need significant repair work, compared to 19% of all older people. 35% of Asian elders need help with maintaining home and garden, compared to 29% overall. 29% of Black elders need help with small jobs compared to 22% overall.

Focus Group Research with Ethnic Elders

Focus group research conducted with ethnic elders, undertaken during the development of our Ethnic Minority Housing Strategy, had highlighted a lack of awareness of housing options amongst all ethnic elders because of language barrier, as well as culturally specific issues relating to the Asian community. Culturally Asian children do not move away from home until they get married, therefore much existing housing designated for older people, which is mainly bed-sits or 1-bed homes, are not suitable for many Asian elders who live with non-dependent children.

We have since found that many of the issues raised by ethnic elders also affect older people across all ethnic groups. For example, many older people across all ethnic groups now have adult children living at home because of the increasing gap between high property prices and income. Other issues that affect older people of all

Part I - Background

ethnic backgrounds include:

- People on mid income found it difficult to access services as they are not eligible for assistance because of means testing.
- Owner-occupiers wanting and needing to downsize from family-sized accommodation found few affordable options.

Listening Event

A number of key messages emerged from the Listening Event held in May 2005 to consult older people living in the borough. They are:

1. Merton Council should listen and learn, and recognise that older people have declining and limited funds.
2. Providers of support services should listen and act where possible, giving older people choice.
3. Older people should not be sectioned off in institutionalised housing, but should be given concrete and real help to stay in their own homes.
4. Housing designated for older people, providing security within the community, is needed.
5. Older people need good quality, consistent

information from a central point and the development of a one stop shop would prevent them being referred from place to place on all services and entitlement, such as the service of a one-stop shop rather than being referred from place to place.

6. There is a need for choice and availability of dedicated housing for older people, integrated into the community, with links to good transport and health services, and should be integrated into the community.

Housing Forum Consultation – July 2005

At the Housing Forum, older people were asked to identify service areas needing development or improvement. These include:

- More Handyperson services needed to provide support for older people.
- Better communication with less independent older people through targeted mailout.
- The need for unbiased advice on Equity Release.
- The need for more Lifetime Homes.
- One single point of contact for all advice for older people.
- Develop local one-stop shops, covering Wimbledon, Mitcham, Morden and Pollards Hill.

OBJECTIVE 1 – SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE AT HOME

1.1 Low Level Support

The provision of adequate support for older people to remain in their own homes can prevent or delay the need for older people having to move into institutions such as residential care or nursing care homes.

One of the key messages emerged through consultation is that many older people would like to remain in their own home with support:

“Older people should not be sectioned off in institutionalised housing, but should be given concrete and real help to stay in their own homes”.

Although many organisations in the borough provide older people with low-level support to help them remain in their own home, our research findings suggest that more of these services are needed to meet older peoples’ needs.

Merton’s Housing Needs Survey (2005) identified considerable scope for ‘care and repair’ and ‘staying put’ schemes. A large proportion of special needs households stated that they had problems with maintaining their homes, the majority of these were living in the owner-occupied sector.

⁴The HNS defines Older Persons as those of a pension age i.e. men aged 65 or older and women aged 60 or over.

The Survey also shows that nearly one in five (19.2%) of Merton households are older persons⁴ only households, and that they are disproportionately comprised of only one person. The HNS June 05 showed 10,442 single pensioner households in Merton. This indicates a very high demand for low-level support for older people.

Merton’s own Older People Housing Research highlighted the problems faced by older people in maintaining their homes. Key issues include:

- Some housing problems increase with age e.g. small jobs, stairs, bathrooms, maintaining house and garden are key problem areas that show as increasing dramatically between those aged 66-70, and those aged 85 and over.
- Older people who are renting privately face higher levels of problems than those living in other tenure.
- 33% of owner-occupiers and 27% of housing association tenants said maintaining the house and garden was a problem or a serious problem.

Studies have shown that poorly maintained gardens may encourage crime and also increase the risk of accidents. We know anecdotally that older people find their inability

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to maintain their gardens frustrating and this may affect their well-being.

Existing Services

Hanover AtHome (Care and Repair Merton)

Hanover AtHome is a voluntary sector agency which provides older homeowners and private tenants (aged 60 and over) with advice and practical support with repairs, adaptations and improvements, to enable them to remain in their own home. They run a Handyperson service, carry out home assessments, help find reliable contractors, advise on sources of funding and oversee building work. The service has recently won a National Foundations Award for partnership working which resulted in the development of the Merton Home Safety Network.

MASCOT Telecare

Merton has a well established community call centre service – MASCOT Telecare, which provides support for well over 3,000 vulnerable people in Merton and beyond via telecare and assistive technology. Assistive technology involves the installation of modern equipment in people's home to help them manage the challenge of living with a disability. Merton Council has obtained funding to turn a number of sheltered homes into 'Smart' flats through the installation of assistive technology.

1.2 Equipment & Adaptations

Merton's Housing Needs Survey (June 2005) shows that special needs households in general stated a requirement for a wide range of adaptations and improvements to the home. The most commonly-sought improvements needed were:

- Shower Unit (2,082 households or 22.0% of all special needs households)
- Downstairs WC (1,868 households or 19.8% of all special needs households)
- Single level accommodation (1,642 households or 17.4% of all special needs households)

Aids and adaptations for daily living can be obtained from Merton Social Services or the Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust (SMPCT), following an assessment by the Occupational Therapy (OT) Teams from either service.

There is high demand in Merton for assessments by occupational therapists (OTs), and there are delays in carrying out assessments. This is an issue also identified nationally, due to a shortage of OTs. In Merton, we are committed in supporting older people in their own homes through the provision and installation of equipment and aids & adaptations.

Existing Services

Assessments for Aids & Adaptations

Merton Council has streamlined referral and assessment procedures in order to reduce delays and provide a more responsive service. As a result, the waiting list for Occupational Therapist assessments has been reduced by 50% in the first 12 months of its introduction.

The OT Service has moved towards the principle of self-assessment wherever appropriate. The OT Service will now Fast Track some simple equipment, grabrails and stairrail provision at the point of referral with provision to the user within 7 days. Appointments at an Assessment Clinic are also offered.

Both these initiatives will assist in focusing OT time towards people with more complex needs e.g. those requiring major adaptations. This has resulted in a 72% increase (Oct 99 – Oct 02) in the provision of equipment costing less than £1,000.

The OT Service is working with all parties i.e. Housing Services, housing associations and voluntary agencies to develop more effective and timely services for Older People.

Occupational Therapy Services

The aim is to provide a responsive service delivery to all eligible people. The OT Service helps people who have a disability to live within their own homes as independently as possible. This includes helping people to overcome the effects that a disability may have on their daily life and also providing advice and support to the people who care for them. All essential equipment, irrespective of cost, is provided free of charge and on loan for as long as it is needed. Minor adaptations under £1,000 are provided free of charge.

Housing Services and the Occupational Therapy Team have set up new processes for dealing with adaptations to council properties.

Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES)

ICES (Integrated Community Equipment Service) is a national initiative across health and social care to develop community equipment services, to assist people with disabilities or long-term medical conditions in their daily living.

In Merton, an ICES Management Advisory Board (MAB) has been established, involving health, social care staff, users, carers and voluntary organisations. The aim of the MAB is to improve the quality and supply of aids and adaptations to residents in Merton. The Board includes

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suppliers as well as people who use aids for daily living.

The Board has made significant advancements in progressing the local ICES agenda. These include:

- An agreement made between Merton Social Care Services and the Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust in April 2004 to develop an integrated approach to all aspects of equipment provision, including the pooling of budgets.
- New integrated service provided through a one-stop centre at Pincott Road.
- Consultation held with users, carers, staff and voluntary sector organisations.
- Agreed eligibility criteria.
- Advisory Board to be overseen by new Chief Executive Commissioning Group.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Private sector households (owner-occupiers and private tenants) that have a member who is disabled may qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DGF) towards the cost of providing adaptations, which will enable the disabled person to continue to live independently in their home. Applicants are subjected to a means-test and may have

to make a contribution towards the cost of the works, depending on their financial circumstances.

The maximum amount available is £25,000. The grant is available for a range of works, including the following improvements:

- Widening doors and installing ramps.
- Provide or improve access to the living room, bedroom, kitchen, toilet, washbasin, bath and/or shower facilities (e.g. a stair lift or downstairs bathroom).
- Provide or improve a heating system suitable to the needs of the disabled person.
- Adapt heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use.
- Improve access and movement around the home to enable the disabled person to care for another person who lives in the property (e.g spouse or child).

The table below shows number of grants and average amount available over the last few years, and the proposed grant amount for 2006-07.

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Proposed
No.of Grants/ Loans (all mandatory)	34	28	43	50	45
Total Expenditure (000's)	227	172	334	450	500
Average Grant (£)	6,880	6,140	7,770	9,000	11,110

2004/05 Returns

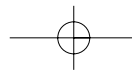
Key Priorities

There is a very high demand for low-level support amongst older people to help them remain in their own homes, such as handyperson services that deal with minor repairs, gardening and small-scale maintenance problems. We aim to improve provision of aids and adaptations and support services for older people.

Key Actions

- Increase low-level support and preventative services, to include help such as gardening and minor repairs, to help older people stay at home.
- Work with partners in the public, voluntary and community sectors, to identify and bid for resources for low-level support.
- Reduce waiting time for Occupational Therapists' assessments.
- Provide major aids and adaptations in a timely fashion.
- Develop additional "floating support services" for older people.

We will ensure that voluntary sector organisations are involved to extend information and advice available to older people on accessing reliable contractors and services. Key actions for this are set out under Objective 4.



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OBJECTIVE 2 – DECENT, WARM & SAFE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

2.1 House Conditions

The link between poor housing and poor health has been identified by various research findings. Older people are particularly affected by poor conditions in housing and they are very susceptible to the cold weather. A poorly heated home often has a detrimental effect on their health and well-being.

Merton's joint Housing Needs and Stock Condition Survey (June 2005) shows that vulnerable households in Merton, including older people households, are more likely to be living in unfit housing. The survey suggested a large proportion of special needs households had problems with maintaining their homes, the majority of these were living in the owner-occupied sector.

Merton's Older People's Research also found that over half of the respondents would like to make an improvement to their home, and that many older council tenants' property requires significant repair work, with 24% stating this is a problem or serious problem.

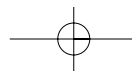
Decent Homes

The government has set a target for local authorities to bring all social housing up to Decent Homes standard by 2010, with most of this improvement taking place in deprived areas.

In 2002 this target was broadened to cover private sector housing. Local authorities will need to increase the proportion of vulnerable households living in private sector 'decent homes'.

The government's definition of a decent home is one that meets the 4 following criteria:

- **It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing – The fitness standard.**
- **It is in a reasonable state of repair – i.e. not having key building components or electric and gas heating that are old and need replacing.**
- **It has reasonably modern facilities and services – not lacking 3 or more of the following:**
 - reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less)
 - kitchen with adequate space and layout
 - reasonably modern bathroom (30 years or less)
 - appropriately located bathroom and toilet, adequate noise insulation (where external / neighbourhood noise is a problem)
 - adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.
- Provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort – with effective insulation and effective heating.



Existing Initiatives

Private Sector Renewal Grant

Local authorities receive funding from Government to support new ways to fund repairs and improvements to the homes of low income and vulnerable homeowner and tenants, especially older people.

These extra funds are designed to support the new private sector housing renewal agenda, and local authorities are encouraged to make full use of their new powers to tackle poor private sector housing, providing assistance for clearance, demolition, repair and adaptation of housing.

There are also renovation grants available through Merton's Environmental Health Service for private sector renewal and equity release. The table below shows the number of grants and average amount available over the last few years, and the proposed grant amount for 2006-07.

'House Proud' Equity Release

Merton Council works in partnership with HouseProud, a national initiative which helps older homeowners (aged 60 or over) to access a variety of loans to pay for repairs, improvements and adaptations in their homes. Homeowners are given a guarantee that repossessions would not be sought even if applicants were unable to keep up with repayments.

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Proposed
No. of Grants	96	69	20	80	60
Total Expenditure (000's)	286	181	58	200	200
Average Grant (£)	2,979	2,623	2,900	2,500	3,333

2004/05 Returns

Typical works supported by HouseProud include:

- A new bathroom
- Electrical rewiring
- Central heating
- A new roof
- Replacement windows and doors
- New guttering
- Plumbing
- A refitted kitchen
- Better home security

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2.2 Affordable Warmth

Merton's Older People Research showed that the biggest problem facing older people in the private rented sector is the lack of central heating, with 29% stating this was a problem or serious problem. The average SAP rating, a way of measuring the energy efficiency of a home, for Merton's private sector properties is 52 and slightly less energy efficient than the London average of 53.

Within Merton, pensioner couples live in homes with the lowest SAP rating (49) and are the least energy efficient. This rating compares with 57 for lone parents and 53 for couples with children. Older people are particularly susceptible to the cold weather. A poorly heated home often has a detrimental effect on their health and well-being.

An Affordable Warmth Strategy (2005-08) has been developed for Merton to address these issues, and a number of initiatives already exist. Outlined below is a summary of these initiatives, details of which can be found in the Affordable Warmth Strategy.

Existing Initiatives

Warm Front Grant

Warm Front Grant is a Government grant introduced in 2000 to provide private sector households who are on



low income with energy efficiency and heating measures. People over 60 are eligible if they are in receipt of a state benefit. The maximum amount available was increased to £2,700 in May 2005 when the criteria were also extended.

The grant is administered by the Eaga Partnership. Measures can include cavity wall and loft insulation and central heating. During 2004/05 in Merton there were 451 Warm Front installations and the borough is working with Eaga to increase installations in future years by targeting areas where people are most likely to be eligible.

Health Through Warmth Scheme

“Health Through Warmth” is a Health Referral Network run by the Creative Environmental Network. This initiative provides health referral training for statutory and voluntary staff working with vulnerable people. Trained workers will identify and prioritise those most at risk and fast track their grant applications. So far, 50 workers have received health referral training.

Heat Streets and Coldbusters

The Heat Streets scheme targets deprived areas with the highest number of properties that will benefit from free and discounted insulations. The scheme was launched in April 2006 by Powergen, in partnership with Merton Council, and is open to private sector residents. The Government funded Coldbusters scheme, run by the Creative Environmental Network, also offers loft and cavity insulation, although further funding is needed to continue the scheme beyond March 2007.

Initiatives for Council Tenants

Each year Merton sets aside an amount of between £55,000 to £75,000 from the Major Repairs Allowance to address fuel poverty and energy efficiency in council homes. Work funded includes a community scheme ‘Here to HELP’ run in partnership with British Gas, which targets vulnerable tenants suffering from cold

homes. Other measures include installation of central heating, ‘A’ rating condensing boilers and reflector panels into council homes, and improving insulation of some solid-walled homes.

2.3 Home Safety and Security

Merton’s Older People Housing Research has found that concerns over safety and crime are the most important issues older people consider when looking at future housing options. Safety concerns include falls within and outside the home, home security and bogus callers who often target older people. Older people’s homes are often at higher risk of being burgled. In Merton, a number of initiatives already exist to improve safety and security for older people.

Existing Services

MASCOT Telecare

MASCOT Telecare, Merton’s community alarm service, also offers vulnerable individuals emergency assistance, enabling them to live as independently as possible within their own homes. The service is connected to phone lines and offers help 24 hours a day throughout the year to older people, people with a disability, victims of racial harassment, domestic violence and other hate crimes.

Part II - Strategic Objectives

MASCOT runs a Helping Hand Service and a Community Support Team. A Mobile Response Officer has joined forces with the local London Fire Brigade to fit smoke detectors in the homes of older people in Merton. MASCOT can also arrange a fire safety check.

Merton Intelligent Monitoring System (MIMS)

The Merton Intelligent Monitoring System (MIMS) is a pilot project using chromatic technology to alert relevant agencies of potential emergent pre-critical situations. The pilot involved volunteer residents at the Oaks sheltered housing scheme, who all had the small monitoring systems fitted in their homes.

The system is completely non-intrusive and does not have to be activated by the person in need of support. It is tailored to monitor the resident's environment for pre-critical signs and provides an alert signal through a variety of media (SMS, mobile phone, web-enabled PC, email). The alert is managed by the Council's MASCOT Telecare Service.

Merton Council has received a national award for this innovative pilot scheme. The award, for New and Emerging Technology for Better Government, was granted in recognition of partnership working between Liverpool University, Roehampton University Social Research Centre and Merton's successful MASCOT Telecare Service. It was

also an acknowledgement of the way in which volunteer residents at the Oaks have embraced innovation and change.

Merton Home Safety Project

The Merton Home Safety Project, which aims to prevent accidents in the homes and reduce the risk of avoidable harm to older people aged 65 and over, has been developed by Merton's Planning and Commissioning Team for Older People jointly with Hanover AtHome (Care & Repair Merton), and is managed in partnership with the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

This initiative has recently won a National Foundations Award for partnership working, as it demonstrates the power of partnership working on an operational level to achieve concrete results.

The project aims to increase older people's awareness of safety, and pro-actively seeks out vulnerable people and provide them with e safety equipment and facilities in the home, such as smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, and various security measures.

Areas covered are advice on personal safety issues, such as falls, food safety, winter warmth and medicines, fire safety, security in the home and environmental hazards.

It is anticipated that the following outcomes will result from this project:

- Reduced injuries arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 of the population, and maintenance of the current zero death rate in Merton (BVPI 143).
- Reduced visits of people aged 65 and over to Accident and Emergency departments as a result of accidents in the home.
- Less deaths and injuries from fractured femurs in people over 65 per 1,000 population aged 65 and over.

MESH

The Merton Elderly Secure Homes (MESH), run by the Merton Community Safety Trust, is a charitable organisation based at Merton Council. The service provides people aged over 60 with up to £200 for security. This includes the fitting of smaller security devices, such as spy holes and door chains, door and window locks, and a device called ‘memo minder’ where a recorded voice reminds a person about security as they approach their front door.

Key Priorities

We aim to improve the living conditions of older people, by addressing issues such as unfit housing and non-decent homes, the lack of affordable warmth, security risks, fire risks and risks of accident at home. This will be achieved through initiatives such as Disabled Facilities Grants, ‘House Proud’, Warm Front Grant and the Home Safety Project.

Key Actions

- Increase the proportion of vulnerable people, including older people, who live in private sector homes that are in decent condition.
- Provide assistance for older people to take up Disabled Facilities Grants.
- Promote energy efficiency amongst older people and increase take up of grants.
- Increase provision of Handyperson and similar services to include help such as installation of security devices.
- Evaluate the MIMS pilot and where appropriate identify additional funding to extend the pilot.

Part II - Strategic Objectives

OBJECTIVE 3 - INCREASE HOUSING CHOICE & BUILD COMMUNITIES**3.1 Housing Needs and Aspirations**

There are a number of affordable housing options for older people in Merton. Older people could apply for a home within a sheltered housing scheme owned either by the Council or by a registered social landlord, one of the two extra care housing schemes, as well as council-owned housing units designated for older people.

In total, there are just over 1,000 units of social housing designated for older people. The majority of these are units designed for older people who are more independent. The number of Extra Care units in Merton is relatively low when compared to other London Boroughs. There are 3 extra care units per 1,000 Merton residents aged 60 and over, compared to the highest rate of provision in Barking and Dagenham, which has 9.4 units per 1,000 residents.

Whilst sheltered housing is 22% under provided⁵ in Merton, some homes are hard to let because they are bed-sit style accommodation with shared facilities. The Council's Best Value Review for Older People also suggested a demand for good quality self-contained accommodation with Careline systems such as those provided by MASCOT.

⁵Source: Department for Communities and Local Government

The needs of older owner-occupiers will also need to be given priority as Census 2001 data showed that 67% of older people in Merton are owner-occupiers. Through consultation, many older owner-occupiers have expressed a desire to downsize from family-sized accommodation, but found a lack of quality housing that is affordable and suitable for their needs. Many of them also expressed desire to have a second bedroom available for visiting family and friends.

Increasing housing choice for older people will help encourage and facilitate those who want to downsize to move to smaller homes that are easier to maintain and cheaper to keep warm. This is important given that pensioner households are more likely to be under-occupiers (Census 2001), and that half of older persons only households, mostly comprise of one or two persons, live in three or four bedroom homes (HNS 2005). Facilitating older people to downsize will also help release family-sized accommodation, for which there is a great demand in Merton.

The Listening Event held in May 2005 has highlighted the importance for Merton to provide choice for older people in relation to housing. We asked older people where they

would want to live, especially when they become older and frailer. We have found very diverse needs and aspirations amongst the older people we have consulted.

The majority of older people we have consulted would prefer to get adequate support to help them remain in their own home, rather than having to move. Most would not move into institutions such as residential homes by choice but sheltered accommodation remains popular with some older people. It is clear that for many older people, the preferred option is to continue to live in the wider community amongst families and young people, in group housing designated for older people.

The following key messages emerged from the ‘Listening’ consultation event that took place in May 2005:

“Housing designated for older people, which provides security within the community, is needed”.

“There is a need for choice and availability of dedicated housing for older people integrated into the community, with links to good transport and health services”.

Existing Housing

Sheltered Housing Schemes

Sheltered housing provides older people who are able to live independently with self-contained accommodation within a scheme. It offers communal facilities, emergency alarm and an estate manager or warden on call.

Merton Council has 8 sheltered schemes, which provide a total of over 200 units of accommodation. Of these, 2 are in Wimbledon, 3 in Morden, and the remaining schemes are in Mitcham, South Wimbledon and Merton Park. The Council also has another 200 units of accommodation available only to elderly applicants, which are a mixture of bungalows and flats.

Housing Associations operating in the borough provide another 600 units of accommodation for the elderly.

Sheltered Housing for Ethnic Elders

The Millat Asian Housing Association runs a sheltered scheme with 16 units which target Asian elders. Another cultural specific scheme has just opened in Mitcham, targeting Black African and Caribbean elders. This scheme has been developed by Pathway Housing Association, with support from three neighbouring boroughs – Croydon, Wandsworth and Sutton.

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Sheltered Housing Review

Merton Housing has undertaken a review of council-owned sheltered housing as part of the overarching 'Land and Property' Review of council properties. The review aims to ensure best use of land and property assets, and will recommend whether existing schemes should be retained, upgraded or re-developed in more modern housing schemes.

The local perception of sheltered housing, which is seen as a bit out-of-date, may act as a barrier to the take up of sheltered housing. In particular, this poor perception may also create a barrier to the take-up of Extra Care Housing schemes that are remodelled from sheltered housing schemes.

Extra Care Housing

Extra Care or Very Sheltered housing options fall between sheltered housing and residential care homes, offering the independence of a tenancy in a self-contained flat, with a care package suitable for the elderly person's needs. Very frail elders and those with very high care needs will require residential accommodation, where residents often only have a room with shared facilities.

In Merton three extra care housing schemes exist, providing a total of 95 flats for older people. Trellis House, run by Shaftesbury Housing Association, was

built in 1994 whilst Glebelands, run by Hanover Housing Association was built in 1995. The third is a private sector scheme with 21 homes, run by Westminster Health Care in Wimbledon.

Merton Council and its partners, working with a Registered Social Landlord - Housing 21, are planning to develop additional Extra Care schemes in the borough for older people who are becoming less independent. The Extra Care model will provide people with a home with its own front door, in a non-institutionalised setting, with on-site care provisions. This bid for over 30 new homes to high design has been given the go-ahead by the Housing Corporation and allocated funding from the 2006-2008 national housing programme.

There is a commitment to inclusion in designing an Extra Care scheme. The emphasis will be to promote a mixed community and create a community hub where the site allows. Inter-generational interactions will also be encouraged.

3.2 Developing New Housing for Older People

Life Time Homes

It is recognised that the provision of homes that are wheelchair adapted and Life Time Homes are important

in keeping people at home. The Joseph Rowntree Fountain definition for Life Time Homes is - “Homes which are designed either to meet the changing needs occurring throughout one family’s lifetime or to meet the varying needs of numerous changes of the occupiers in the same home.”

Wheelchair housing is suitable for use by people who experience severe disabilities and are permanently confined to wheelchairs. It needs to be on one level and its principal feature is above average space standards to allow for full wheelchair manoeuvrability throughout.

Merton Council have stated in the Dwelling Mix (HM3) Policy, part of Merton’s Planning Policy, that we will seek to ensure that 10% of all new housing developments are wheelchair accessible, and that we will promote the building of Lifetime Homes in all new developments. Merton’s Local Development Framework, to be introduced from 2008 and currently in draft form, proposes that all new housing is to be designed to Lifetime Homes Standards, in line with the Mayor’s London Plan.

Designated Housing for Older People

We aim to provide more quality and affordable housing that is designated for older people. Over the next 10 years, we will work with registered social landlords to

identify suitable locations to develop ‘cluster’ housing designated for older people within new general needs schemes. This model of housing will enable older people to continue to live amongst the wider community, mixing with other age groups whilst at the same time being close to other older people for support and companionship.

Planning for Older People’s Accommodation- A Checklist

The Strategy Steering Group recognise the need to ensure that new housing for older people is designed and built to older people’s specific needs, both in relation to the physical structure and layout as well as to the social environment needed to create and maintain a “balanced” community within older people’s housing schemes.

The Steering Group has therefore developed an initial checklist, which will need to be further developed and feed into Merton’s planning guidelines. The final checklist will incorporate and build on the following

- Establishing the profile of potential residents at an early stage.
- Liaise with RSLs in relation to nominations.
- Ensuring appropriate location & design of new schemes.

Part II – Strategic Objectives

- ‘Bricks and Mortar’ housing developments should include facilities, which will benefit the wider community of older people and help build communities.
- Creating security by having an older people’s community within the wider community in new schemes.
- Taking into account any proposed change of use for existing sites resulting from the sheltered housing review.
- Promoting ‘Preparing for the Future’ to older people, e.g. downstairs toilet, aids and adaptations, highlighting length of time aids and adaptations take, to promote early intervention.

Choice-Based Lettings

Merton Housing Services has introduced Choice-Based Lettings from April 2006. Vulnerable client groups have been consulted to ensure that their specific needs are taken into account under this new scheme. We will need to monitor this scheme closely to ensure there will be no barrier to access for older people and other vulnerable clients.

Key Priorities

We aim to increase provision of non-institutional housing for older people that incorporate modern technologies such as Telecare, to help older people maintain independence and prevent or delay the need for residential or nursing care. These will be achieved through the development of new extra care housing schemes, designated ‘cluster’ housing for older people in the community, more Life Time homes, and through the improvement and upgrading of existing sheltered accommodation, taking into consideration the need to help build communities within schemes. Key to the success of this will be the involvement of older people in the planning and design stage, and in monitoring the new Choice-Based Lettings scheme to ensure there is no barrier to access.

Key Actions

- Identify and harness resources to make best use of existing Council-owned sheltered housing.
- Develop more Extra Care accommodation in consultation with older people.
- Work with Registered Social Landlords and private developers to develop ‘cluster’ housing for older people within the wider community.

- Work with Registered Social Landlords and private developers to increase number of wheelchair-accessible homes and Life Time Homes in Merton.
- Involve older people to further develop Design Checklist for developing new accommodation for older people, to feed into the Council’s planning guidelines.
- Monitor the impact of Choice-Based Lettings on older people’s access to social housing.



Part II - Strategic Objectives

OBJECTIVE 4 – PROVIDE QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE ADVICE & INFORMATION**4.1 Advice & Information Needs****Need for Accessible Advice**

Consultation through the Listening Event has identified concerns amongst older people about accessing good quality advice. Many feel that they often have to approach a number of organisations, and are referred from agency to agency, in order to get the advice they needed. Many are not aware of what services are available and from where, and what their entitlements are. One of the key messages from the ‘Listening’ Event was:

“Older people need good quality information on all services and entitlement, such as the service of a one-stop shop rather than being referred to from place to place”.

It is therefore important that we establish links with other services, and work together to develop community hubs at local or neighbourhood level, for older people to access advice, information, as well as a range of services.

4.2 Early Planning

The need for older people to start planning for their

housing and support need earlier was also identified. Many older people only start considering other housing options when they become more and more frail, and finding it increasingly difficult to remain in their own homes.

Having to move to more suitable accommodation can be traumatic for someone frail, and many are forced to move into an institution such as a residential care home. Others have to continue to live at home with little support, as they had not planned financially for their long-term needs when they were younger. It is therefore important that we promote early planning through clear and accessible information and advice, and the concept of “Preparing for the Future” to those in their 50s and 60s. This is particularly important given that people’s income level falls with age.

Existing Services**Care Connect**

Care Connect was established in 1998 to provide information to the general public on community care and health issues. The service was set up by the Health Authority and Social Services to meet the social care and health information needs of the residents of Merton. It runs a drop-in service at Merton’s Civic Centre in Morden.

Key Advice Agencies

A number of key advice agencies in Merton provide advice for older people. These include Age Concern Merton, the Citizens Advice Bureaux, Threshold Housing & Advice and the Wimbledon Guild. Advocacy Partners for Older People will help those having difficulty negotiating with statutory services to meet their needs.

Key Priorities

We aim to improve the accessibility and quality of housing advice for all older people through the establishment of a network of advice agencies, linking in with neighbourhood or local hubs being developed for older people. The network will focus on a number of key areas. These are:

- 1) Identify key locations / organisations in the borough to deliver housing advice for older people, and work with other statutory agencies to develop one-stop shops where older people can access housing, health as well as social care services.
- 2) Improve the quality of advice available to older people and ensure consistency through developing a training programme for advisors, and through participation in a Quality Mark programme.
- 3) Improve referrals procedures and data sharing to produce a seamless service, and reduce the

need for older people to contact various service providers themselves.

We also aim to promote the need for early planning, through the provisions of clear and accessible information and advice. We aim to raise the awareness of those approaching old age, of the importance of early financial planning, and where to get help and advice.

Key Actions

- Engage the expertise of voluntary sector organisations.
- Produce a Directory of Housing Options for all types of tenure.
- Establish a co-ordinated network of advice agencies.
- Simplify and standardise assessments and referrals.
- Create a specialist Housing Advice Worker and specialist Housing Options Worker.
- Create local One-Stop Shops through partnership working with other agencies such as Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and health agencies.
- Develop and implement a Training Programme for advice agencies.

Part II - Strategic Objectives

OBJECTIVE 5 – STRENGTHEN CONSULTATION & PARTNERSHIP WORKING**5.1 Consulting Key Partners and Users**

When formulating this strategy, we have consulted older people extensively. The development process has been led by Age Concern Merton, supported by a large number of local organisations working with older people. Older people were involved in every stage of the process. This is therefore very much a strategy produced for older people by older people.

The development of this Strategy was underpinned by a full consultation programme, which included a quantitative questionnaire survey of older people's housing needs, an action planning Away Day, a Listening Event for Older People, as well as a Housing Forum held during Merton's Older People's Festival – "Celebrating Age". Older people have been involved in every stage of the process.

5.2 Harnessing the Expertise of the Voluntary & Community Sector

A large number of voluntary sector organisations in Merton provide advice and assistance for older people. These organisations have developed a high level of knowledge and expertise on the needs and aspirations of older people, and have a good understanding of the issues and

barriers faced by older people in accessing services.

Community organisations representing older people are also well-placed to advise and assist statutory agencies in improving services for older people. These older people's groups provide a powerful voice for individuals, particularly those who are not in a position to express their own needs or get involved in the consultation process because of their vulnerability.

Harnessing the knowledge and expertise of these organisations is therefore crucial to the success of this Strategy. We will need to continue to engage these organisations, as well as involving older people themselves in the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy, to ensure that older people can continue to shape the development of housing provisions and services to older people.

5.3 Linking up with the Merton Partnership Structure

As the need to improve services for older people is coming to the forefront of the Government's policy agenda, we will need to establish closer links with other agencies to ensure that this Strategy progresses in line with the wider agenda for older people. Older people's

issues is one of the key areas to be addressed through the Government's Local Area Agreements (LAAs) initiative, which all local authorities will have to put in place by April 2007.

LAAs will set out local priorities agreed between central government and Merton Council, to be delivered through the Merton Partnership (Merton's Local Strategic Partnership). Priorities for older people in Merton are clearly set out in Merton's Community Plan to 2015, and form one of five key themes to be addressed by the Merton Partnership. The Merton Partnership has been reconfigured to reflect these themes, which are: sustainable communities, safer & stronger communities, healthier communities, older people, children & young people.

The Government also recognises that housing and social care and support are inextricably linked. Strategy framework documents published by the Government to address older people's issues were produced following cross-department work involving the DCLG, the Department of Health and the Housing Corporation. Local authorities are expected to adopt this joined-up

approach to provide integrated services for older people.

In Merton, an Older People Partnership Board has been set up to strengthen links between health, housing, social care services and voluntary sector providers. The Board is chaired by the Sutton & Merton Primary Care Trust, with support from Merton Council's Older People Commissioning Services. The Older People's Housing Strategy Team is closely linked with the work of the Partnership Board and reports to the Board as and when appropriate.

This Older People's Housing Strategy has been developed as a sub-strategy of Merton's Housing Strategy, and has links with other housing strategies, including the strategies on Affordable Warmth, Ethnic Minority, Affordable Housing & Private Sector issues. The progress of Merton's Housing Strategy and all its sub-strategies are monitored and reviewed regularly by the Housing Strategy Review Group (HSRG). At present, council officers on the Older People's Housing Strategy report back to the HSRG. Formal links between the two groups will be established through OPHST representation on the HSRG.

Part II - Strategic Objectives**Key Priorities**

We aim to increase involvement of older people in the delivery and monitoring of this Strategy and Action Plan, by encouraging them to lead on project sub-groups set up to implement the Strategy. We will strengthen links with agencies providing services for older people, and with other partnerships set up to address older people's need, to ensure that the Older People's Strategy Team becomes an integral part of the partnership structure for older people in Merton, and feeds into the wider agenda for older people.

Key Actions

- The Older People's Housing Strategy Team to oversee the implementation, monitoring and review of the Strategy.
- Establish Older People's Housing Forum, to be led by users.
- Establish user-led sub-groups to implement and deliver actions identified in this Strategy.
- Link up with the work of Merton's multi-agency Older People Partnership Board and the Merton Partnership structure.
- Provide representation to Merton's Housing Strategy Review Group.



Part III – Action Plan

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
1	Objective 1 – Support for Older People At Home							
1.1	Build capacity of low-level support, including handyperson services, to provide affordable assistance for older people with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden maintenance • Loft clearance for energy efficiency work • Minor repairs • Decorating • Crime prevention 	Older People’s Housing Strategy Team / Hanover AtHome (Care & Repair Merton Handypersons Service)	Private Sector Housing Strategy	Identify external funding sources and bid for funding to increase capacity of low-level support services in Merton.	Ongoing	Additional / External funding required	High	Enable more older people to retain independence, to continue to stay in their own homes.
1.2	Provide advice on repairs, grants etc. through Hanover AtHome (Care & Repair Merton) in accordance with targets set	Hanover AtHome (Care & Repair Merton)	Target in Affordable Warmth Strategy	Advice to be given to 30 older / vulnerable clients per month	Annually	LBM Grant funded	Medium	Increase in advice given to Older People in Merton
1.3	Provide talks, publicity & information on Hanover AtHome services to older people, agencies with high older people involvement, and BME groups.	Hanover AtHome (Care & Repair Merton)	Target in Affordable Warmth Strategy	1 meeting per month & 2 talks per month. 20% over the year should be aimed at BME groups	Annually	LBM Grant funded	Medium	Increase in advice given to Older People in Merton
1.4	Reduce waiting time for Occupational Therapists’ assessments. Provide responsive delivery of aids and adaptations.	LBM OT Services / Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet Department of Health target of providing an OT assessment within 1 month. • Monitor the success of self-assessments. • Provide standard stock equipment within 7 days. 	Ongoing		High	Speedier access to aids and adaptations for vulnerable people. Maintain independence and safety within the home.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
1.5	Annual review of services for keeping people at home in order to identify gaps and remove duplication.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team		Complete a review once a year.	Annually		High	Review information will feed into service improvement plans.
1.6	Research, review and adapt best practice with regard to keeping people at home, looking at government & academic guidelines and Think Tank research. Commission best practice guide where none is available.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team		Identify external funding for commissioning research work.	March 2009	Additional / External funding required	Low	Best practice guide identified or produced, to feed into service improvement plans.
1.7	Provide support for older Council tenants.	LBM Estates Services		Provision of a minor repairs service for Council tenants aged 65 and over.	March 2007		High	Enhanced service for vulnerable tenants
1.8	Increase floating support services to older people	Older People's Housing Strategy Team & Supporting People's Team	Supporting People Strategy	Make the case for additional "floating support services" for older people at home.	By March 2007	Supporting People Programme budget	High	Enable more older people to live at home
2	Objective 2 - Decent, Warm & Safe Homes for Older People							
2.1	Meet the decent homes target to increase the proportion of vulnerable people who live in private sector homes that are in decent condition	Environmental Health / LBM Housing Strategy & Development	Target in Private Sector Housing Strategy	To monitor all initiatives that will contribute towards the reduction of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes	By 2010		High	More older people living in decent homes in the private sector
2.2	Implement the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HSSRS) and encourage referrals from colleagues/groups working with older people	Environmental Health	Target in Private Sector Housing Strategy	1. Enforcement action taken in category 1 cases and in category 2 cases as appropriate where the occupant is 'high risk' 2. Presentations to Home Safety Network/Older Persons Strategy Team	1. From April 2006 2. By September 2006	Existing resources	High	Condition of homes improved and made safer

Part III – Action Plan

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
2.3	Assist people on low incomes to improve the quality of their homes	Environmental Health	Target in Private Sector Housing Strategy	Full spend of £200,000 small repairs budget	By March 2007	Existing resources	Medium	Condition of properties improved
2.4	Reduce fuel poverty and promote affordable warmth amongst older people	Health & Warmth Partnership	Target in Affordable Warmth Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop leaflet publicising available assistance (subject to available resources) 2. Produce poster and distribute in key information points 3. Integrate affordable warmth into falls prevention through completion of checks with appropriate referrals 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional/ External funding required 2. Additional/ External funding required 3. Existing resources 	Medium	Reduction in fuel poverty. More energy efficient homes
2.5	Produce affordable warmth poster	LBM Housing Strategy Team	Target in Affordable Warmth Strategy	Produce poster and distribute in key information points - Age Concern, Libraries, MAP Newsletter etc.	March 2007		Medium	Increased awareness of help with energy efficiency issues amongst older people.
2.6	Integrate affordable warmth into Falls Prevention Strategy	PCT (Falls Prevention Service) / Age Concern Ageing Well Project / Merton & Morden Guild	Target in Affordable Warmth Strategy	Checks completed by Falls Service (with point of contact at Nelson Hospital) Referrals made to Warm Front / CEN as appropriate	Ongoing		Medium	More older people referred to agencies for Home Safety checks.
2.7	Develop Energy Community Champions for energy / affordable warmth referrals (see Affordable Warmth Strategy)	Creative Environmental Network	Target in Affordable Warmth Strategy	Recruit and train at least one Champion to represent older people	May 2006	Funded by National Energy Action	High	More older people made aware of help with energy efficiency issues.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
2.8	Promote Home Safety for older people to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime prevention issues • Community Alarm Service • Healthy Home Environment 	Hanover AtHome (Care & Repair Merton) / LBM Community Care / MASCOT Telecare	Target in Affordable Warmth Strategy	10 Home Safety checks per month.	Annually	LBM Grant funded	High	Increased awareness of home safety issues amongst older people.
3	Objective 3 - Increase Housing Choice & Build Communities							
3.1	Increase the number of Extra Care housing homes in Merton, in consultation with older people and with reference to best practice models of extra care housing, meeting the needs of older people requiring rented accommodation as well as those needing intermediate and market housing (e.g. owner-occupiers who cannot afford older people's housing at full market price).	LBM Extra Care Housing Project Team / Housing 21	Affordable Housing Strategy	Increase the number of non-institutional homes in older people's housing schemes with on site care provisions.	Ongoing	External Funding from Housing Corporation and private finance raised by Housing 21	High	More non-institutional housing available for frailer older people in Merton.
	Increase the number of designated 'cluster' housing for older people in mixed aged community, meeting the needs of older people requiring rented accommodation as well as those needing market housing (e.g. owner-occupiers who cannot afford older people's housing at full market price).	LBM Housing Strategy & Development / LBM Planning / Developing RSLs	Affordable Housing Strategy	Increase number of designated homes for older people in the community in consultation with older people.	Ongoing	External Funding from Housing Corporation and private finance raised by RSLs required	Medium	More non-institutional housing available for frailer older people in Merton.

Part III – Action Plan

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
3.3	Monitoring Housing Register to identify housing needs of older people requiring affordable housing, to help plan future development.	LBM Housing Strategy / Older People's Housing Strategy Team		Undertake monitoring of Housing Register data by age and feed into annual review of services (see 1.5)	Annually		Medium	Better planning of future housing & support provision for older people.
3.4	Monitor take-up of older people's housing by ethnicity to identify issues relating to barrier of access, as part of Merton's Equalities Monitoring Programme.	LBM Housing Strategy / Older People's Housing Strategy Team		Undertake monitoring of Housing Register data by age, and feed into review of the Choice-based Lettings Scheme (see 1.5)	Bi-Annually		High	Increased take-up of older people's housing scheme by ethnic minorities.
3.5	Analyse profile of people living in sheltered homes to identify needs and issues, to help improve services and plan future development.	MASCOT Telecare		Undertake monitoring of sheltered residents profile.	Annually		Medium	Better planning of future housing & support provision for older people.
3.6	Develop mechanisms to meet needs of people with learning disabilities who have ageing carers, either through re-housing into a designated grouped scheme, or into an extra care housing scheme with mix clients / ability.	LBM Housing Strategy & Development / LBM Community Care	Affordable Housing Strategy / Older People Visioning Strategy	Increase the number of 2-bed homes in new extra care or grouped housing schemes to meet needs of households where an older person cares for someone with a learning disability.	Ongoing		High	More housing choice for older carers who care for a family member with a learning disability.
3.7	Review affordable housing options for older people every 3 years, including a review of sheltered and extra care accommodation.	LBM Housing Strategy & Development / Older People's Housing Forum	Affordable Housing Strategy	Complete review of affordable housing options for older people.	March 2009		High	Take into account older people's views and wishes and will help plan more appropriate housing for older people in the future.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
3.9	Review the use of Development Checklist by planners and developers.	LBM Housing Strategy & Development / Older People's Housing Strategy Team / LBM Planning		Review the use of the Checklist.	March 2009		Medium	This will help ensure identified needs of older people are incorporated into design briefs for new housing.
3.10	Consider the local prevalence of physical/sensory impairment, mental health problems and dementia to help in the design of potential schemes.	LBM Community Care / Older People's Housing Strategy Team	Mental Health Strategy, SMPCT Practice Commissioning Board	Local prevalence and needs considered and information used to inform development of schemes.	Ongoing		Medium	More appropriate new housing designed to meet needs of older people with special needs.
3.11	Create and maintain a "balanced" community within extra care schemes by developing Eligibility Criteria to ensure fair access based on need and to create a balanced community.	Housing Needs Team / Extra Care Panel		Finalise draft Eligibility Criteria to include nominations of owner-occupiers to new mixed tenure schemes.	March 2008		Medium	This will help create mixed community within older people's housing schemes.
3.12	Work with planners to develop Life Time Homes targets for houses and ground floor homes in 'affordable' housing schemes, to be incorporated into Merton's Local Development Framework.	LBM Housing Strategy & Development / LBM Planning / RSLs		Increase number of Life Homes built through the Affordable Housing programme	Ongoing	Dependent on level of funding from Housing Corporation and private finance raised by RSLs	High	Older people will benefit from more Life Time Homes built in Merton.
3.13	Develop a property database showing Council and RSL supported housing which meets Lifetime homes or wheelchair standard, and those that have been adapted.	NROSH (National Register of Social Housing)/ RSLs		Database developed.	March 2008		Medium	Better use of existing housing through improved matching of needs and supply.

Part III – Action Plan

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
3.14	Build up a database of adapted properties in the private sector through work with private landlords and estate agents.	Private Sector Strategy Team		Database developed.	Ongoing		Low	Better use of existing housing through improved matching of needs and supply.
4	Objective 4 – Provide Quality, Accessible Advice & Information							
4.1	Link up with various agencies, including RSLs, the PCT, Housing Advice, Social Care services and community organisations, to develop Neighbourhood One Stop Shops for older people.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team	PCT Neighbourhood Care Strategy	Set up project sub-group involving relevant agencies to identify ways forward.	Ongoing		Medium	Older people will be able to access a range of services & activities through their local One Stop Shops.
4.2	Mapping existing communities of older people down to local area, looking at transport links and other facilities, align area analysis with the new PCT neighbourhoods and to identify suitable locations for Neighbourhood One Stop Shops for older people.	LBM Housing Strategy & Development / Older People's Housing Strategy Team / Voluntary sector agencies	PCT Neighbourhood Care Strategy	Mapping information produced and fed into the work of the project sub-group (see 4.1 above).	March 2007		Medium	More appropriate locations for the provision of services at a local level identified.
4.3	Promote the concept of "Preparing for the Future" and the need for early intervention to ensure older people in their 50s and 60s will plan for their needs in later life, through a series of promotional events or roadshows.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team		At least one promotional event a year.	March 2007		High	More older people to start planning early for their needs in later life.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
4.4	Address poor perception of sheltered housing and encourage take-up, particularly by ethnic minority elders, by organizing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of promotional events including Open Days and Road Shows. • GOSH – “Going into sheltered housing” week as part of Older People’s Festival 2006. 	Older People’s Housing Strategy Team		At least one promotional event a year.	March 2007		High	Create mixed communities in older people’s housing schemes.
4.5	Produce clear information on eligibility for the Occupational Therapy service.	Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES)		Information on eligibility produced.	March 2007		Medium	Improve accessibility to Occupational Therapy service.
4.6	Compile a Directory of Housing Options – a compendium of cross tenure housing options (both in Merton and other areas), criteria and assistance.	Older People’s Housing Strategy Team – Housing Directory sub-group		Directory produced through detailed Project Planning, Focus Groups consultation and information gathering.	March 2007		High	Older people more aware of housing and support services available.
4.7	Publish and distribute Directory to all Housing Advice Workers for older people and through voluntary, statutory and local business outlets.	Older People’s Housing Strategy Team – Housing Directory sub-group & Funding sub-group			March 2008	External Funding required	High	Older people more aware of housing and support services available.
4.8	Establish an Advice Network of existing agencies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop unifying referral protocols. • Promote good quality advice. • Ensure consistency in advice and services given to older people. • Explore usefulness of a Single Telephone Enquiry Line for all housing issues. 	Older People’s Housing Strategy Team – Advice Network sub-group		Advice Network established, accreditation framework and training programme agreed.	March 2007		High	Accessible advice and services for older people that is consistent and of high quality.

Part III – Action Plan

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
4.9	Develop and deliver training programme for advice workers, and seek accreditation where possible, with the aim of increasing knowledge base on older people's housing and social care issues, and to ensure consistency in advice provision.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team / LBM Housing Advice Team		Training programme delivered.	March 2008	External Funding required	Medium	Accessible advice and services for older people that is consistent and of high quality.
4.10	Create an Advice Worker's Forum to facilitate discussion of casework issues, provide peer support, sharing good practice, and reporting back to the Advice Network.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team		Advice Worker's Forum established.	March 2008		Medium	Accessible advice and services for older people that is consistent and of high quality.
4.11	Seek to create Specialist Housing Advice and Specialist Housing Options Worker posts for older people to supplement general advice given through the Advice Network and to deal with high input casework.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team		Identify external funding to fund specialist workers.	Ongoing	External Funding required	Medium	Accessible advice for older people to help deal with more complex issues.
5	Objective 5 – Strengthen Consultation & Partnership Working							
5.1	The current Older Peoples Housing Strategy Team to oversee the implementation of the published Older People's Housing Strategy and develop a monitoring and scrutiny role ensuring the targets are met.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team		Monitoring system developed.	September 2006		High	

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
5.2	Establish a Housing Consultative Forum that is fully representative of older people in the borough, and to link in with existing groups such as Merton Association of Pensioners' Housing Action Group. The Group will get involved in development, planning and other housing issues that affect older people.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team		User-led Housing Forum established.	July 2006		High	Older people are involved in statutory agencies' decision-making process.
5.3	Identify and bid for external funding resources to support the work of the Older People's Housing Forum.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team		Identify external funding to support the work of the Housing Forum (see 5.3 above).	Ongoing	External Funding required	High	Older people are involved in statutory agencies' decision-making process.
5.4	Adopt the User Involvement Model used by the Older People's Partnership Board (OPPB) to ensure older people who are unable to attend consultation events are consulted using a variety of means that are sensitive to the needs of older people (one to one visits, different languages, formats etc).	Older People's Housing Strategy Team		User Involvement Model adopted.	Ongoing		Medium	Older people are involved in statutory agencies' decision-making process.
5.5	Develop and maintain links with the Older People's Partnership Board, SMPCT, Home Safety Partnership to ensure that housing remains a key issue in service development across agencies.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team		Members of Strategy Team represented on various partnerships.	Ongoing		Medium	An integrated approach to providing services for older people.

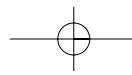
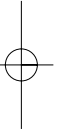
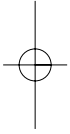
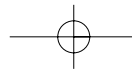
Part III – Action Plan

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	LINKS	TARGET	TIME-SCALE	RESOURCES	PRIORITY	OUTCOMES
5.6	Develop a process for the sharing of key information between agencies, create protocols and develop IT to support this process, in order to provide an efficient and seamless service.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team / Voluntary Sector		Information sharing procedures or protocols developed.	March 2007		High	An integrated approach to providing services for older people.
5.7	Review housing application and Housing Benefit validation processes to reduce bureaucracy and to review application forms to ensure they are user friendly and understandable, and make recommendations to the appropriate agencies for change.	Housing Needs Team / MAP Action Group		Review completed and recommendations fed to appropriate agencies for change.	March 2007		High	Accessible advice and services for older people that is consistent and of high quality.
5.8	Work with Carers Support Merton to ensure carers' needs are represented and ensure carers' views are highlighted across the strategy.	Older People's Housing Strategy Team / Merton Carers Partnership	Carers Strategy	Carers' views on housing and support issues incorporated into the review of the Strategy.	Ongoing		Medium	Needs of carers identified to help develop improvement actions.
5.9	Establish and maintain links with Merton's Housing Strategy Review Group (HSRG)	Older People's Housing Strategy Team	Housing Strategy	Members of Strategy Team represented on HSRG and regularly attend meetings.	Ongoing		High	Older people's issues clearly addressed by Merton's Housing Strategy and it's sub-strategies.

Older People's Housing Strategy Team

Name	Organisation
Jacque Bye	Anchor Trust
Lynne Bainbridge - Chair	Age Concern Merton
Bert Hyde	Asylum Welcome
MA Karim	Bengali Association of Merton
Katie Dare	Hanover AtHome
Dawn Jackson	Hanover Housing Association
Christine Dawson	LB Merton - Care Connect
Amanda Kendall	LB Merton - Housing Needs
Carol Lovelock	LB Merton - Housing Needs
Daniel Butler, Angela Chu, Cecily Herdman, Tracy Stanley	LB Merton - Housing Strategy
Michael Pitt	LB Merton - Learning Disability / Mental Health
Laxmi Jamdagni	LB Merton - Planning & Commissioning (Older People)

Name	Organisation
Colin Willard	LB Merton Planning & Commissioning
Eileen Nutting	LB Merton - Supporting People
Susan Baker, Doug Miles	Mascot Telecare
Barbara Bampton, Myrtle Agutter, Mary Sinfield	Merton Association of Pensioner
Mr Islam	Millat Asian Housing Association
Chenzira Mutasa	South London Black Elderly Project
Nirmalan Kugathasan, Lidwin Nayagam, the late Mr Stanislaus	South London Tamil Welfare Group
Sheila McAuliffe	South London Irish Welfare Society
Peter Mai	South West London Chinese Association
Oscar Lashley, Orville Simpson	West Indian Family & Friends Association
Vernon Jones	Wimbledon Guild



If you would like more information in your own language, please contact us at the address shown in the box below.

Albanian Nese deshironi me shume informacion ne gjuhen tuaj, ju lutemi te na kontaktoni ne adresen e dhene ne kutine me poshte.

Arabic إذا أردت معلومات إضافية بلغتك الأصلية الرجاء الاتصال بنا في العنوان المذكور ضمن الإطار أدناه.

Bengali যদি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় লেখা আরও তথ্য চান তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন, ডলার বক্ সে আমাদের ঠিকানা রয়েছে।

Chinese 如果你需要用中文印成的資料，請按低端方格內提供的地址與我們聯系。

Farsi اگر مایل به اطلاعات بیشتر به زبان خود هستید، لطفاً با ما از طریق آدرس زیر تماس بگیرید.

French Pour tout renseignement complémentaire dans votre propre langue, veuillez nous contacter à l'adresse figurant dans l'encadré du bas.

Gujarati જો તમને તમારી પોતાની ભાષામાં વધારે માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને નીચે અંતમાં આપેલા ખાનામાં દર્શાવેલા સરનામે અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

Punjabi ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਹਿੱਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਖਾਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Somali Hadii aad u baahan tahay faahfaahin intaa kabadan oo ku soobsan afkaaka hooyo ama Af Somali fadlan lana soo xiira cinwaanka hoos ku qoran.

Spanish Si usted desea más información en su propia lengua, por favor contáctenos en la dirección al pie del formato.

Tamil உங்கள் மொழியில் மேலதிக தகவலைப் பெற விரும்பினால், அடிவிரிவில் உள்ள பெட்டிகில் தரப்பட்டிருள்ள விவரத்தில் எம்முடன் தொடர்பு கொள்ளுங்கள்.

Urdu اگر آپ اپنی زبان میں مزید معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم ہم سے اس پتے پر رابطہ قائم کریں جو کہ نیچے کے بکس میں درج ہے۔

You can also get this information in large print, in Braille and on tape.

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Contacts

If you have any comments or questions about this report, please do not hesitate to contact:

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