

# APPENDIX 1



**Northampton Partnership Homes**

## **OLDER PERSONS' HOUSING STRATEGY**

*May 2016*



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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The development of this Strategy has taken place at a time of significant internal change within Northampton Borough Council (NBC) as in 2015 the management of its housing stock was outsourced to Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH), an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO). In addition, current and proposed Government policy changes will also have a significant effect within the older persons' housing and support sector. For example, the Government's agenda to increase housing development and the welfare reform legislation, coupled with budgetary constraints, have moved 'housing and services' up the priority agenda for statutory authorities.

In the interests of achieving brevity and its purpose this Executive Summary concentrates on the recommendations that have been proposed as a result of the research undertaken. It is nevertheless anticipated that decision makers will consider, as relevant, the content of the Strategy that follows and also the appendices contained within a separate document that provide full details of the outputs from the research undertaken.

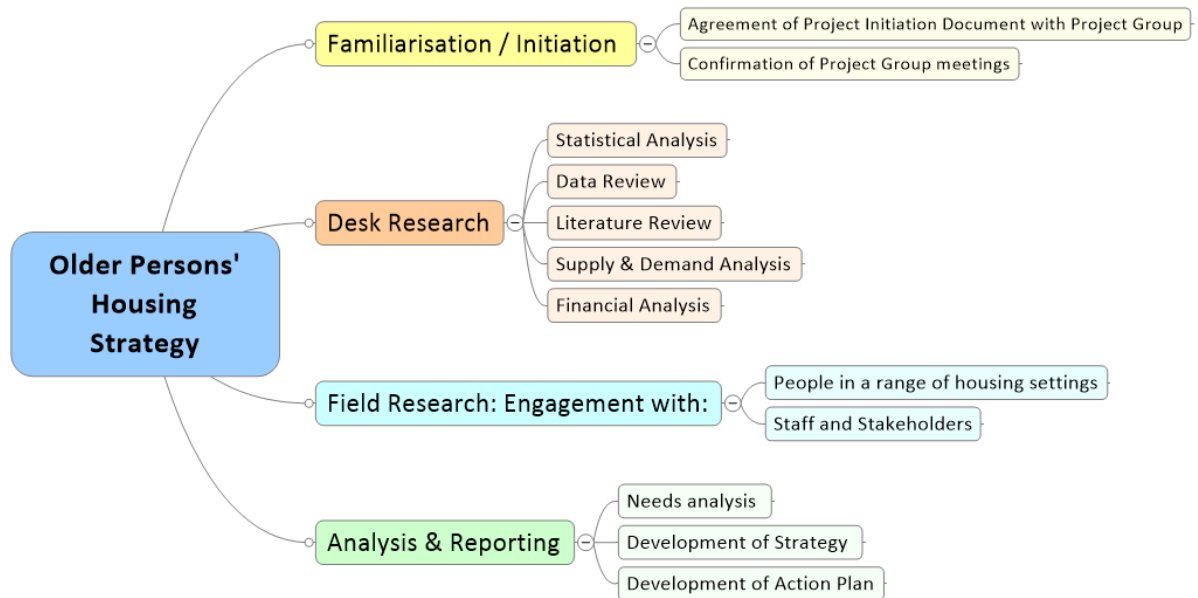
## The Scope of the Strategy

This Strategy has been devised in partnership with service users and stakeholders with the aim of providing an essential tool to identify and inform priorities for the future that can deliver high quality cost effective housing and services for older people in Northampton irrespective of the tenure in which they live. Also included is the projected service provision for the more vulnerable and their future needs for accommodation and non-accommodation based services. In essence, as a deliverable, the Strategy covers the following ground:

- The likely on-going demand for older persons' housing (across all tenures – social rent, market rent, shared ownership, outright sale).
- The likely demand for housing with 24 x 7 care and support services & residential care.
- Taking forward the recommendations from the Sheltered Housing Options Review in terms of the future use of the current older persons' stock.
- Options for reducing rent loss and delivering cost-effective refurbishment / development opportunities.
- Identifying opportunities for delivery of new build accommodation.
- Delivery options including timescales.

## Project Structure

The research undertaken to develop this Strategy and its recommendations involved a comprehensive range of desk and field research elements. These are illustrated in the diagram below.



## Context

The brief for this research is to deliver a Strategy for Northampton and the recommendations made fall into two categories, namely those within the remit of NPH and those that are applicable to the Borough as a whole. Therefore, two Strategies have been drafted, both drawing upon the same evidence base but with different sets of recommendations that address the requirements of each party. This document, which focuses on the outcomes, is **specific to NPH** although we would submit that the 'vision' below is generic for Northampton.

## Recommendations

### *A Vision for Older Persons' Housing*

In terms of the above the key objectives are to:

- Enable older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible
- Improve the quality of older persons' housing to enable people to live happy and healthy lives in an enriched community
- Offer housing choices to meet the needs of current and future generations of older people
- Ensure that specialist housing and support is targeted to those most in need.

### *The definition of NPH's Older Persons' accommodation*

This research identified the impact of changes in this provision in terms of allocations and service delivery introduced over time. The key outcomes here are:

- The allocation of older persons' designated properties to younger people who are eligible for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and those allocated to properties to minimise voids.



## Older Persons' Housing Strategy

- The removal of the 'blanket approach' to service delivery which has been replaced by a 'housing related support' service for those tenants assessed as needing the service.

However, from the feedback from tenants neither of the above changes are popular and have resulted in a reduction of enjoyment in their homes and raised concerns over their personal security. This Strategy provides an opportunity to redress the balance in terms of allocations and service availability to some extent and set a clear direction for NPH's older persons' designated housing into the future. It is therefore **recommended** that:

- a) 'Sheltered housing' should be rebranded as 'older persons' housing' to better reflect the housing and services provided and new marketing material should be drafted to identify the changes in services
- b) The Allocations Policy is amended to define these properties as being for people aged 55+ and that they should only be allocated for younger people with a disability where no other suitable property can be made available for them. If there is no demand for some of the designated older persons' properties the suitability of this stock should be analysed and actions concerning their future determined.

### *Reclassifying NPH's 'Sheltered Stock'*

It is **recommended** that with specific reference to NPH's older persons' designed stock of 2,047 units of accommodation the circa 600 units identified as 'no longer fit for purpose' for older people should be reclassified in three phases. In addition, it is also **recommended** that the 444 bungalows, currently part of NPH's general needs stock, are reclassified as being designated older persons' stock as they become void, resulting in a total of 1,891 units of older persons' accommodation.

In terms of housing options for tenants whose homes are being reclassified there will be a choice of three possibilities, namely to:

- Move to another older person's designated property that meets their needs
- Remain in the property with a dispersed alarm plus a housing related support service if they are assessed as needing the support
- Remain in the property as a general needs tenant.

If the reclassification of the identified stock is to progress effectively it will be important for the following measures to be put in place:

- a) Progressing this programme and marketing it to tenants and the wider public will be challenging and it is **recommended** that a multi-disciplinary project group, with a clearly defined remit, is formed to take forward the implementation of the Strategy
- b) It is **recommended** that a dedicated staff member is identified to work with tenants whose homes are to be reclassified to assist their decision-making. Tenants should also be given an opportunity to amend their decisions over a reasonable time period.
- c) It is **recommended** that a protocol is established to ensure that staff identify stock for tenants whose homes are to be reclassified including, in particular, the current stock of general needs bungalows as they become vacant. In this regard two elements are important, namely:
  - That an agreed property standard is set for reletting which provides not only accessible accommodation but also an 'attractive offering' for the tenant; and
  - Meeting, as far as possible, the requirements of a tenant in terms of location which has been identified as a high priority for many tenants.
- d) It will be vital to address the budgetary implications of reclassifying the properties. The issues to consider will include:
  - The overall project management of the programme, e.g. the physical resources required
  - The capital cost of upgrading properties



## Older Persons' Housing Strategy

- The potential for disturbance payments to support tenants who move home.

### *Future stock requirements*

If, as set out in the Strategy, the projected population growth trends for people aged 65+ are applied, the potential increases in the development of new housing supply are unrealistic in practical terms. Therefore, a new model needs to be identified which, in addition to arriving at achievable housing supply targets, prioritises floating support and preventative service solutions that enable people to remain in their own homes. However, some decisions in this respect are, beyond the current remit of NPH and it is **recommended** that the Board takes note of the wider conclusions within the Strategy and identifies areas where the organisation may be involved in, for example:

- Developing new stock as suitable potential opportunities arise; and
- Assisting in meeting service delivery objectives within NPH's core business, e.g. delivering / facilitating preventative services.

### *Other considerations in relation to developing stock*

a) **Developing Mixed Tenure Older Persons' Stock:** it is **recommended** that:

Concept testing should be undertaken among people aged 50+ who have bought properties under the RTB to assess their views on moving to specialist housing as they age. This will seek to understand aspirations for future housing, including: price sensitivity, opportunities for outright sale and, shared ownership. Further similar concept testing would also be appropriate with NPH general needs tenants aged 50+ who rent their homes to understand their views on downsizing.

b) **Developing Extra Care Housing (ECH):**

ECH provision must meet the requirement to house recipients in most need **and** it is therefore **recommended** that a specification is developed in partnership with a multi-agency team, including NPH staff as they have a defined role in the allocation of this category of stock.

### *The Remaining Designated Older Persons' Housing Stock*

Clearly over time the remaining designated older persons' stock, following the reclassification of the stock, will require attention to meet the objective of reducing voids. It is therefore **recommended** that further work is undertaken to:

- a) Identify a 'standard' for this stock and assess a timescale for refurbishment or other appropriate measures
  - This standard should also address the provision of mobility scooter stores
- b) Analyse the waiting list for designated older persons' housing to further understand its 'make-up' and identify if any particular groups are experiencing challenges in accessing this housing.

### *NPH's Housing Related Support Service*

NPH fund this service and although as part of the brief there was not a requirement to review this service a 'light touch' analysis has taken place. **Recommendations** related to the service are as follows:

- a) Currently two options for delivering a robust evidence base for the service are being considered, namely to understand if the current Capita system can be utilised or whether a future 'add on' needs to be purchased from Capita. It is **recommended** that this work is completed within a three-month period.
- b) It is **recommended** that the purchase of suitable mobile devices [as set out in NPH's strategy Information Technology (IT) Strategy] for Support Workers to improve efficiency is an immediate priority.



## Older Persons' Housing Strategy

- c) Following the research undertaken for this Strategy concern has been expressed that many of the 'older old' tenants living in the stock are 'self-testing' alarms and therefore there are no welfare checks, on these tenants who are potentially vulnerable susceptible to deteriorating health within a short timeframe. It is therefore **recommended** that work is undertaken to understand how the staffing of the housing related support service can be reconfigured to offer 'welfare checks' for the most vulnerable tenants. It is recognised that this recommendation is challenging as it is possible that with the current staffing 'welfare checks' may not be for all the 'older old' without additional funding. It is therefore **recommended** that a phased approach is adopted with Phase 1 comprising tenants in designated and older persons' properties and Phase 2 extending the service to tenants living in general needs properties 25% of whom in consultation to support this strategy stated that they do not consider they receive enough support to remain independent.
- d) To be most effective this service needs to be holistic in nature and address a wide range of service offerings which improve client well-being and finances and so ensure that they maintain their tenancies and / or avoid / delay a move into residential care. To achieve this objective, it is **recommended** that a review of staff skills is undertaken and relevant training put in place where appropriate.
- e) In the longer term when this service is as efficient as possible and proven to be cost effective consideration should be given to extending it to older people living in other tenures to support independent living, if additional funding can be sourced and/or income generating opportunities identified.

### *Partnership Working*

The requirement for **Partnership working** with other agencies to avoid duplication, explore opportunities for integration of services and achieve joint funding cannot be underestimated. Therefore, it is **recommended that** a project, with multi-agency representation and defined outcomes should be instigated to identify potential areas for joint working, for example:

- Utilising NPH's community rooms for organisations to deliver services and arrange events for older people to reduce social isolation (including facilitating a befriending services), provide health and well-being activities and deliver services for those living with dementia (and their carers) It is also important to ensure that available activities meet the requirements of the community as a whole, including those from ethnic minority communities.
- Addressing the challenges some tenants are experiencing in maintaining their gardens and decorating their homes.



# MAIN STRATEGY REPORT





## BACKGROUND

### 1 Introduction

The development of this Strategy has taken place at a time of significant internal change within Northampton Borough Council (NBC) as in 2015 the management of its housing stock was outsourced to Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH), an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO). In addition, current and proposed Government policy changes will also have a significant effect within the older persons' housing and support sector. For example, the Government's agenda to increase housing development and the welfare reform legislation, coupled with budgetary constraints, have moved 'housing and services' up the priority agenda for statutory authorities.

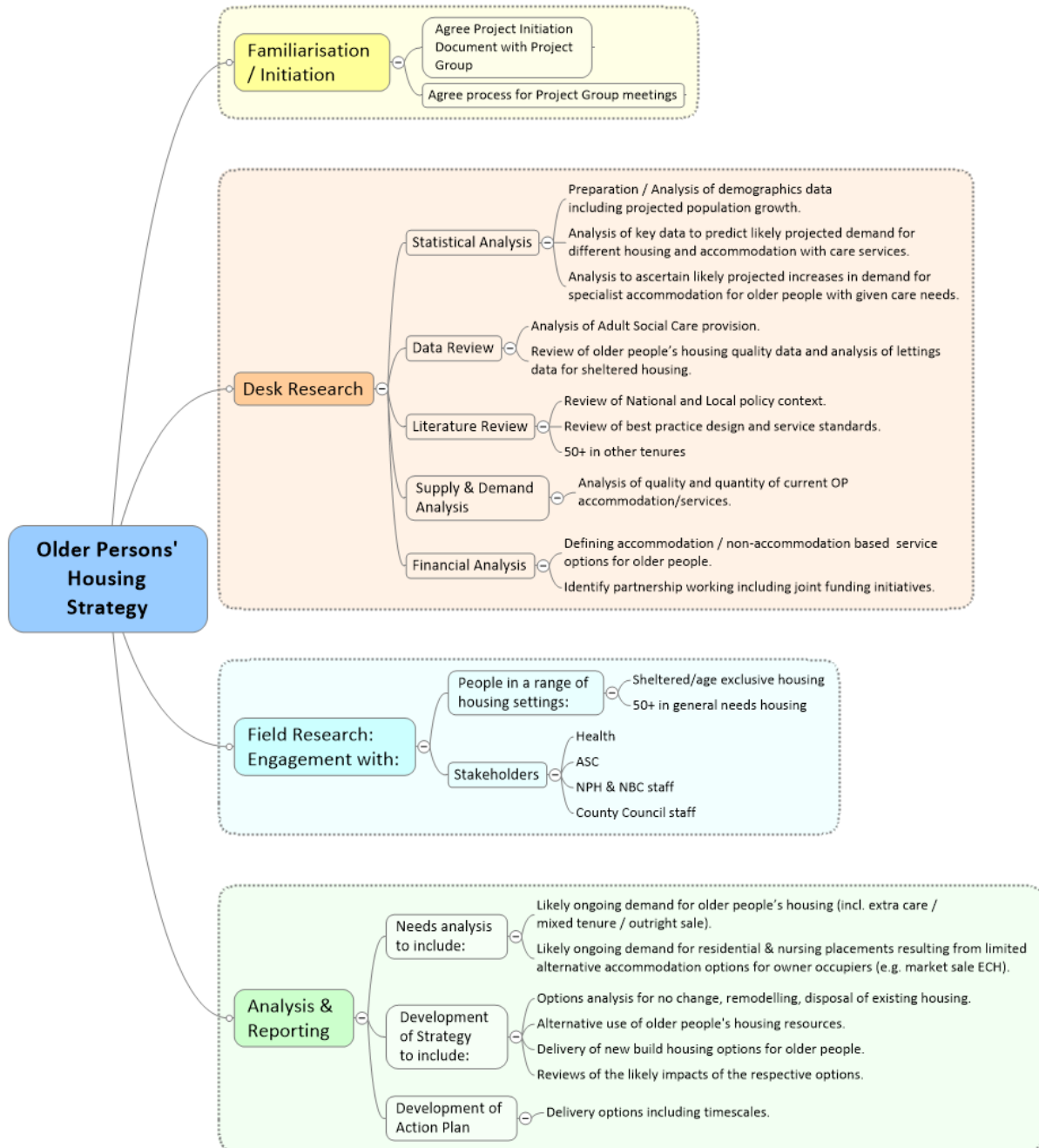
### 2 The Scope of the Strategy

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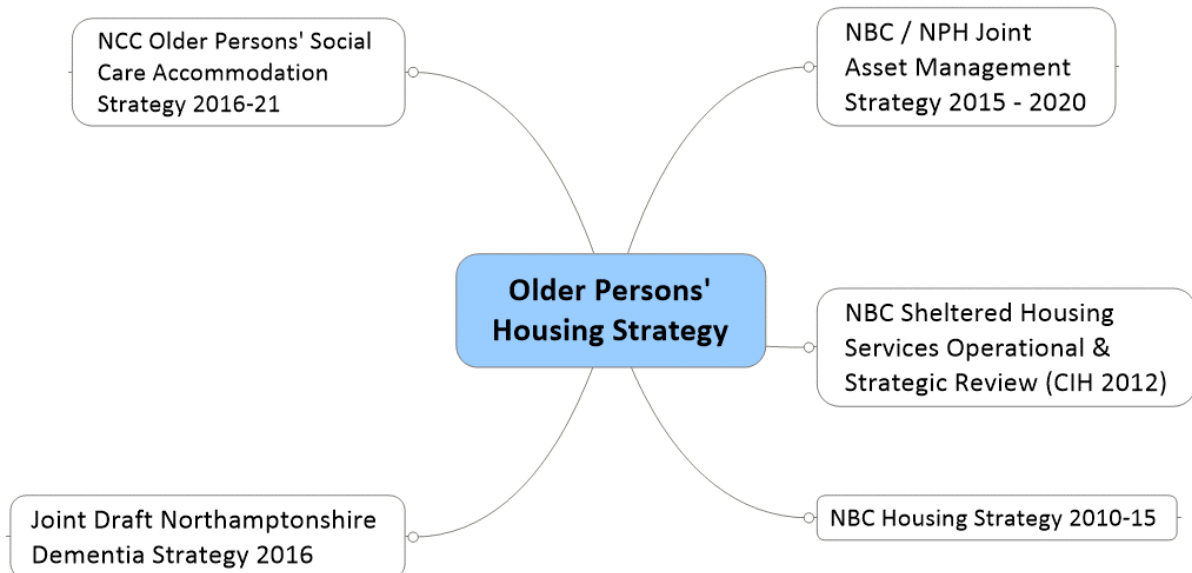
## 3 Methodology

The methodology framework employed to develop this Strategy is illustrated in the diagram below.



## 4 Key Strategies relevant to the new NPH Older Persons' Housing Strategy

The diagram below identifies the range of strategic source material that has contributed to the development of this Older Persons' Housing Strategy and further consideration of these documents (and any successors) will contribute to its ongoing delivery.



## 5 Context

### 5.1 Drivers for change

As stated above the development of this Strategy has taken place at a time of significant internal change within the Council given the formation of NPH. An external strategic review was undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) in 2012 who were commissioned to *'review the strategic and operational options available to the Council for improving upon the existing service model for the provision of sheltered housing accommodation and services in the Borough'*. In September 2014 an Interim Project Manager was appointed to analyse the CIH's recommendations and develop a vision for designated older persons' accommodation and support services (cross-tenure). Following on from this work the project to deliver a wider Older Persons' Strategy was commissioned. It should be recognised that the work undertaken in 2012 has now been superseded by this Strategy as housing policy has moved on significantly over the last four years. However, the outcomes from the research undertaken by the CIH which identified properties within the stock that would not meet the needs of older people has been reassessed as part of this research. And, in addition, further concept testing has been undertaken with tenants as part of the development of this Strategy.

### 5.2 External drivers for change

The housing, care and support sector is facing significant change due to new Government policy and the section below outlines the factors concerned:



### 5.2.1 The Impact of the Welfare Reform Act 2012

The reforms introduced can affect both older tenants living in general needs accommodation and the sheltered stock. The Welfare Reform Act represents the greatest change to the welfare state since its inception and reflects the Government's intention to save money by streamlining the welfare system through the introduction of Universal Credit which is to be implemented in stages up to 2017.

Of note, the DWP (Department of Works and Pensions) has announced that the housing component of Universal Credit for vulnerable people (or more specifically, people in Exempt Accommodation) is to be administered separately from Universal Credit in a similar way to which it is now, i.e. it will represent a locally based Housing Benefit system that acknowledges and funds the additional costs of supported and sheltered housing.

The Bill also included the introduction of the Spare Room Subsidy (often termed the Bedroom Tax) which affects older people predominately living in NPH's general needs housing who are under-occupying their accommodation. The result is that Housing Benefit payments are reduced by 14% if there is one spare bedroom and 25% if there are two or more spare bedrooms. However, there are exceptions for tenants who have special circumstances and also a temporary payment, Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), is currently available for tenants in financial difficulty.

### 5.2.2 Impact of the Housing & Planning Bill 2015

This Bill is currently going through its legislative processes and clearly the proposals contained within it will have significant impact on this Older Persons' Housing Strategy. Of particular note is the capping of Housing Benefit (HB) to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates which are likely to be introduced in 2016/17. There has been considerable concern across the sector that this will affect the viability of supported housing. At the time of writing the 1% rent cut that was to apply for all social housing has been delayed for one year for the supported sector while a review takes place. However, the decision on whether to implement this amendment remains with the provider and NBC have taken the decision to extend the 1% cut in rent to sheltered tenants.

Also of relevance to this Strategy is the proposal that homes on S106 sites will be available for sale with a 20% discount on market values which could provide a challenge in respect of building homes for affordable rent for older people on these sites within the Borough. Two other issues to consider are: an amendment in the Bill which proposes that planning applications could be processed by an appropriate 'designated person' rather than the local planning authority and the fact that Local Authorities (LAs) will be required to deliver local plans for new homes in their area by 2017 which could include identifying sites for older persons' accommodation.

Clearly the Bill has resulted in the social housing sector having to revise its business plans as a result of the loss of rental income and, as mentioned above, concerns have been raised over the possible reduction in new 'affordable' housing for rent being developed. However, others within the sector have accepted that there are some opportunities within the legislation.

## EVIDENCE BASE

### 6 KEY FINDINGS FROM EVIDENCE BASE

#### 6.1 Population, Health and Deprivation

- The 65 plus population (32,300/ 19%), despite being proportionally smaller than in the County (23%), is set to grow to circa 47,000 by 2030.
- Of particular note for this Strategy is the projected increase of the 75 plus population by 70% (from 14,100 to 23,900) by 2030.
- As would be expected for the 65 plus age group females are somewhat more numerous than their male counterparts.
- BME groups aged 65+ represent 5% of Northampton's total 65 plus population compared to an average of 8.5% for the 18 – 64 age group.
  - Of note, the number of people aged 55 plus on the waiting list is significantly higher (15%).
- Actual and projected health issues / challenges to independence are not significantly more common in Northampton than the County average but the projected increases in the number of older people points to a significant increase in aggregated need (e.g. the proportion of people unable to manage at least 1 domestic task is set to grow from circa 13,000 to 20,000).
- Additionally, there is a large projected increase in the number of people living alone.
- Northampton has a rank of 108 (out of 345) which places it just outside the 30% most deprived Local Authorities in England.
- Looking at the areas of significant income deprivation among older people in the Borough's Wards, the 20 most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) for this index are in: Billing (1), Castle (4), Spencer (5), St Crispin (4), Eastfield (1), St David (2), Delapre (1), St James (1) and, West Hunsbury (1).

The detailed evidence base for this section is set out in Appendix 1.

#### 6.2 Provision

- Almost 25,000 people aged over 65 own their homes outright or with a mortgage / loan and the average house price is circa £224,000.
- Almost 4,700 people aged over 65 rent from the Council with a further 1,200 renting from other social landlords.
- Circa 1,800 rent privately (a small proportion of whom live rent free).
- The average rental of a 2-bedroom property stands at circa £760 pcm.
- In total there 2,047 sheltered units managed by NPH and a further 542 provided by other registered providers resulting in a total of 2,589 units of accommodation.
- With specific reference to NPH's sheltered stock it is proposed that the 2,047 figure should be subject to a reduction of circa 600 units due to reclassification of the stock
  - In addition, it is proposed that 444 bungalows, currently part of the NPH's general needs stock, are redesignated as designated older persons' stock as they become void, resulting in a total of 1,891 units of older persons' accommodation.
- According to the needs mapping exercise conducted as part of this work there are high proportions of sheltered tenants receiving 'No Housing Related Support' (77%) and overall, 2%



receive Domiciliary Care.

- In addition to this sheltered stock records suggest that there are 559 units of leasehold retirement housing and 387 units of Extra Care housing (202 rented and 185 leasehold / shared ownership).
- In total there are 3,863 tenants aged over 50 living in NPH's General Needs stock representing 38% of the total.

The detailed evidence base for this section are set out in Appendix 2.

## 6.3 Market Analysis – Older Persons' Provision in Northampton

### 6.3.1 Overview

Through its management of Northampton Council's housing stock NPH is the Borough's dominant provider of designated older persons' housing. This currently represents a total of 2,047 units of accommodation, although 600 of these properties have been categorised as most unsuitable, unsuitable or relatively unsuitable for older people and have been recommended for reclassifying (see 6.5.2 below). Also, as noted above, it is concluded that the 444 general needs bungalows should revert to older persons' housing as this stock becomes void and so if the above recommendations are agreed the designated older persons' stock the provision will total 1,891. In addition, other Registered Providers (RPs) within the Borough own and manage 542 units of older persons' accommodation (see Appendix 3 for details).

### 6.3.2 Retirement Leasehold

With home ownership in the Borough running at 67%, and considering that many older people planning to retire would prefer to remain in the same tenure and locality, competition also exists in the form of retirement leasehold properties and currently, there are 559 units of leasehold retirement housing in the Borough (see Appendix 3 for a detailed stock list).

### 6.3.3 Extra Care Housing

Extra Care Housing (ECH), which provides care and support on site and can prevent / delay admission to residential care and allows residents to continue to live independently, is also an important option for older people and currently there are 202 units of rented ECH accommodation and 185 units of leasehold / shared ownership accommodation in the Borough (see Appendix 3 for a detailed stock list).

### 6.3.4 Residential Care

Then, for those either through need or by default seek accommodation offering higher forms of care there is a range of residential care provision in Northampton (see Appendix 3 for a detailed list). These establishments vary in size and specialisms and some are run by leading players.

## 6.4 NPH Stock

In considering future need this research has taken account of people aged 50+ in general needs accommodation as those aged 50 will meet the criteria for older persons' stock within 5 years.

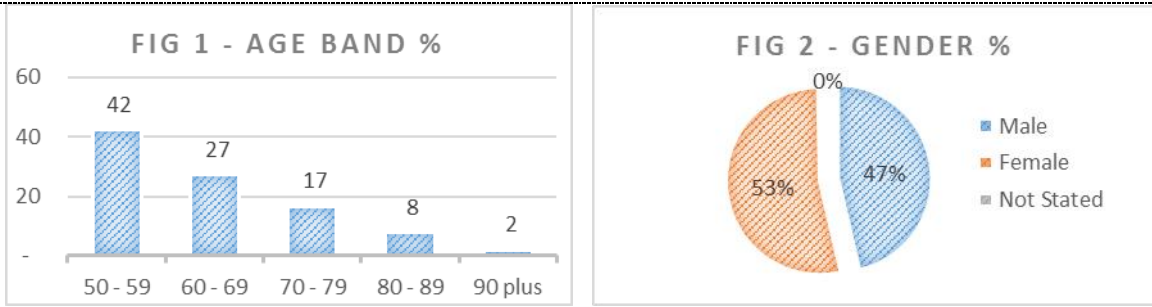
### 6.4.1 General Needs Overview 50 plus

#### Tenants

There are 3,863 tenants aged over 50 living in NPH's General Needs stock and a breakdown follows.



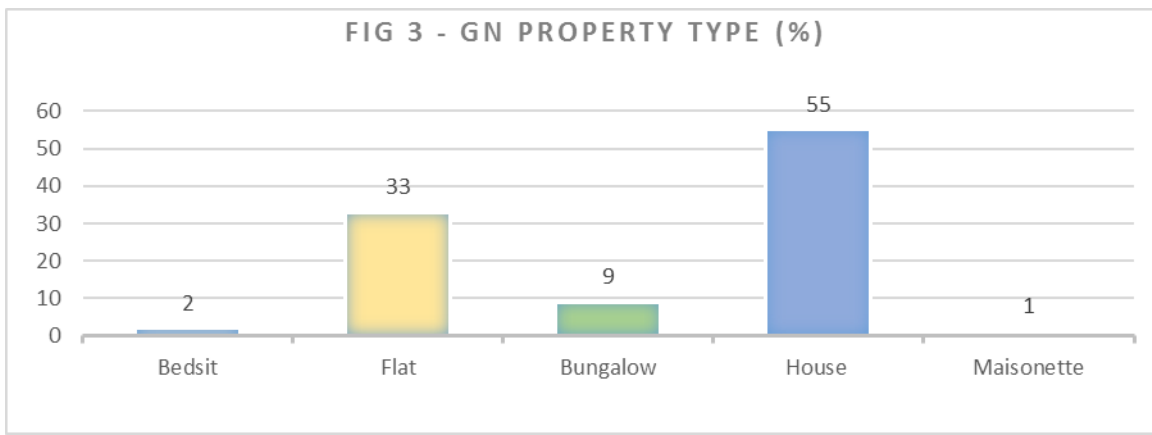
# Older Persons' Housing Strategy



This stock represents 38% of the total General Needs stock.

## Property Type

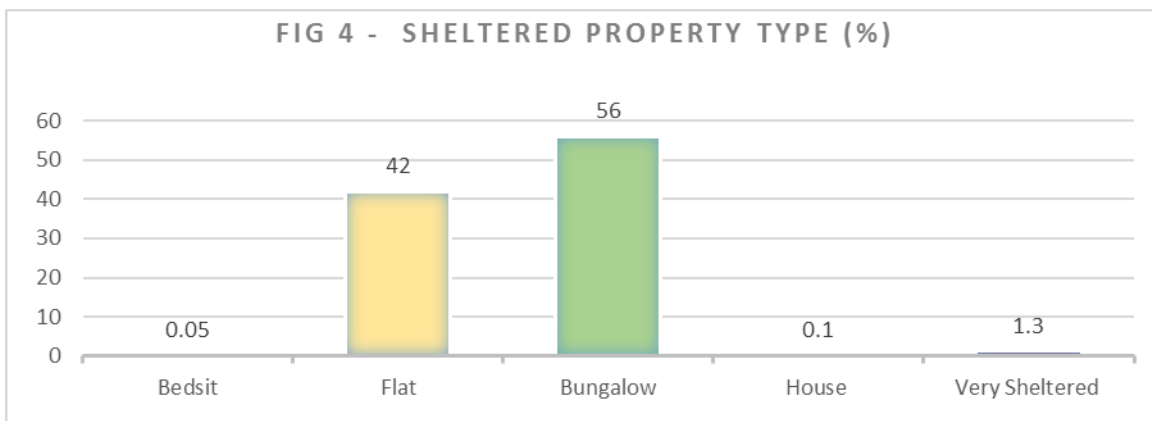
The chart below highlights the types of accommodation for this group.



## 6.4.2 Sheltered Stock

### Overview

According to records NPH has 2,047 sheltered units of accommodation, a combination of mainly flats and bungalows (see fig. 4 below). Of this stock only one scheme, Eleonore House, has internal communal facilities. This scheme is currently being remodelled and will provide 35 units of accommodation when the works are completed.

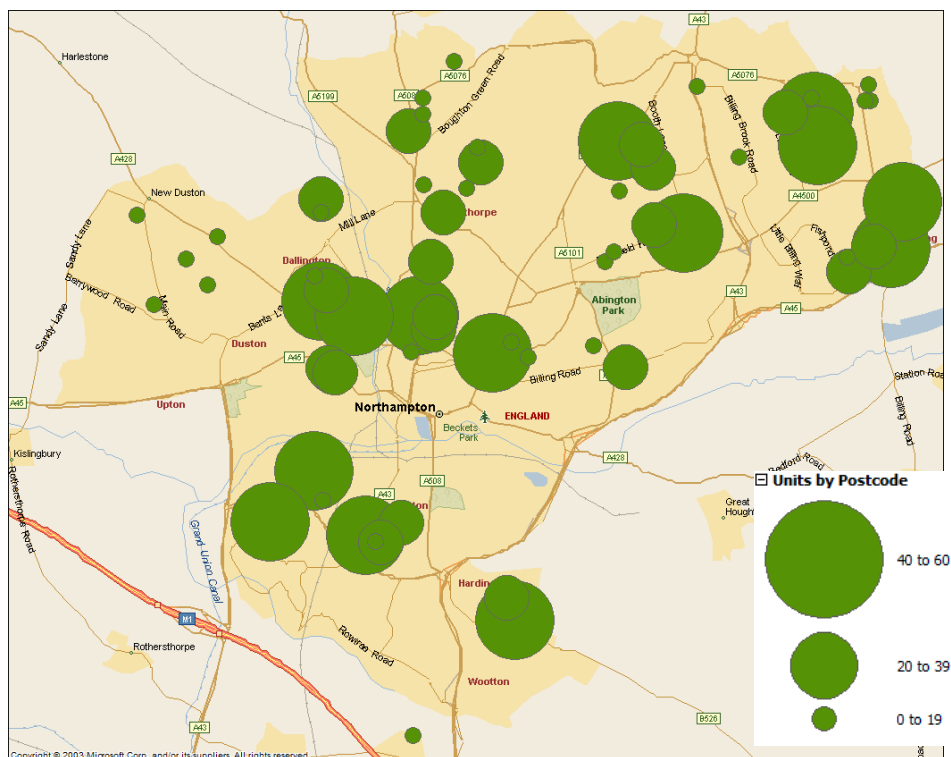


In addition to the 2,047 units highlighted above there are 444 bungalows currently being used for General Needs purposes that could be designated for older people as they become void.

## 6.5 Stock Mapping and the agenda for reclassifying older persons' stock

### 6.5.1 Stock Concentrations

The map below shows the current concentrations of NPH sheltered stock across the Borough. As can be seen the concentrations are relatively evenly spread with the exception of the western area.



### 6.5.2 The Agenda

In 2012 NBC undertook a review of its sheltered housing stock which was followed by a further, external, review by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) who were commissioned to 'review the strategic and operational options available to the Council for improving upon the existing service model for the provision of sheltered housing accommodation and services in the Borough'.

This work yielded a set of scheme rankings and subsequent analysis within NPH has led to the conclusion that a total of 600 individual sheltered housing homes should be considered for reclassifying as older persons' stock (see Appendix 4 for full ranking list). The table below shows key criteria for a phased approach to dealing with these properties. A detailed list of the schemes in each phase are set out in Confidential Appendix 14.

Phase	Total units
First Phase – namely those properties which are assessed as being the <b>most unsuitable</b> for older people. They are all flats. These have prioritised into 2 groups namely 1a and 1b	289
Second Phase – namely those properties which are assessed as being <b>unsuitable</b> for older people. Apart from 9 bungalows they are all flats.	155
Third Phase - namely those properties which are assessed as being <b>relatively unsuitable</b> for older people. They are all flats.	156
<b>Grand totals</b>	<b>600</b>

## 6.6 Needs Mapping outcomes

### Key findings from the needs mapping exercise undertaken across NPH's sheltered housing





## provision

- As a general point this work proved challenging/time consuming because it required combining two disparate databases.
- For this exercise the sheltered provision was grouped into geographic clusters
  - The largest was in the Town Centre and the smallest was in Lumbertubs.
- The majority of sheltered tenants are aged 60-69 and 70-79
  - However, 26% are aged 80+ and it likely that they will either currently or in the future need additional services to remain independent
  - As could be expected more than half (56%) of tenants are female.
- Overall, 46% of tenants were recorded as having no specified health issues and, among the remainder, the most regularly identified health condition category was mobility issues (35%)
  - This said, sight, hearing, diabetes and heart related issues affect between 10% and 18% of tenants.
- Also of note is that, by geographic cluster, there are some marked variations in levels of health conditions
  - For example, Pleydell Road, Far Cotton (the third smallest cluster) stands out as having the highest health condition incidence rates in terms of sight, mobility, heart and blood issues.
- On the question of support service delivery levels, of particular note are the high proportions recorded for the categories of 'No Housing Related Support' (77%) and 'Formerly had support' (68%)
  - The reasons behind these headline findings, it is suggested, is the withdrawal of Supporting People funding and the introduction of the housing related support service which is predicated on assessed need
  - It also emerged that, overall, 2% of tenants receive Domiciliary Care and, of note, there is no direct correlation between the amount of support and care received.

The detailed outcomes from this analysis are set out in Appendix 5.

## 6.7 Other Stock Related Factors

### 6.7.1 Waiting List analysis

At the time of writing there were 482 people aged 55 plus on the housing register. A summary follows and more detail is set out in Appendix 6.

- 169 applicants are categorised as 'emergency' in terms of priority
- A disproportionate number come from BME communities
- 86% are aged 55 to 74 with the remainder being 75 plus
- A larger proportion of applicants are female (perhaps in part explained by the fact that this gender is more numerous in older age groups)
- 14% are considered to have 'medical priority'
- Just under half of the applicants are existing council tenants
- 70% of applicants have been on the waiting list for over 6 months and 15% have been so for over 5 years.



## 6.7.2 Lettable Voids

At the time writing there are a total of 174 lettable voids of which 44 are sheltered / very sheltered.

Type	No.
Sheltered Bungalow	16
Sheltered Flat	13
Very Sheltered Flat (Eleonore House)	15

Of note, voids are being held at Eleonore House prior to the scheme being remodelled.

The table below shows the number of void days for the sheltered properties and of concern are the eight properties that have been void for between 50 – 100 days and it would be of interest to understand why these properties remain void considering there is a waiting list.

Total Void days	Number of Properties
Less than 50	21
50 -100	8
101 - 299	0
300 – 1200	15*

\*All except one are at Eleonore House

The table below shows the reasons why the properties became void. Of note are the 11 tenants who moved to a residential care home and it must be questioned whether these tenants could have maintained their independence for longer if Extra Care Housing was available.

Reason for leaving Sheltered Housing	No.
Deceased	12
Residential Care Home	11
General Needs Tenancy - LA	4
Transfer to other Sheltered Property	4
Evicted	3
Moved to Private Rented Accommodation	2
No Longer Required as DECANT Property	2
To live with family	2
Transfer - General	2
Moved to a Nursing Care Home	1
Moved to Other Housing Association - (General Needs)	1

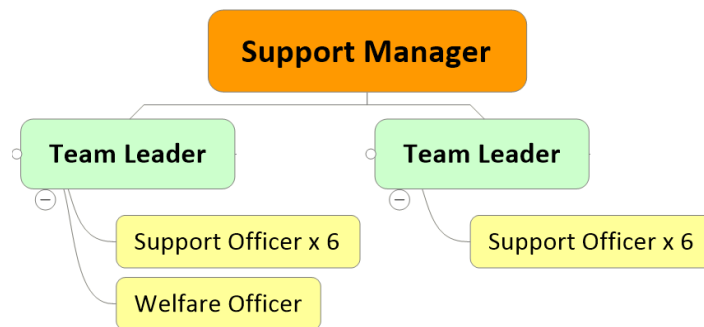
## 6.7.3 Housing Benefit Analysis

Of the estimated 2,047 sheltered tenants 1,611 are recipients of either full or partial Housing Benefit which equates to 79.5%. For what is considered to be a generally affluent area this is a relatively high percentage of recipients, although it should be recognised that there are significant areas of income deprivation among older people in the Borough and NPH older persons' stock is situated in a number of these wards namely, Billing, Delapre, Eastfield, Spencer, St David and St James.

£ per week	Number	%
More than 150	6	0.4
100 to 149	33	2.0
75 to 99	1336	82.9
50 to 74	130	8.1
0 to 49	106	6.6

## 6.8 NPH's Housing Related Support Service

NPH funds a housing related support service which was created following a reorganisation of the previous sheltered housing service after Supporting People funding was withdrawn. The service is short term in nature and assists those tenants assessed as being the most vulnerable living in the stock NPH manages. On the whole the service is accessed via internal referral by NPH officers and currently it supports approximately 300 vulnerable tenants. This is a relatively new service and as a result staff are currently working to streamline working practices to ensure that its outcomes can be measured. The current team structure is as follows:



## 7 Perceptions

### Key findings from the consultation with Sheltered Tenants

- Respondents appear to most value the 'peace and quiet' they experience in sheltered housing but also, friendly neighbours/ communities, convenient/pleasant locations and, to some extent, accommodation attributes.
- In terms of 'dislikes' poor accommodation quality/maintenance issues feature strongly as does the behaviour of some neighbours (often from younger age groups where there are mixed blocks of accommodation).
- Most respondents seem to value their accommodation, its location, the support they receive, community involvement and the reassurance of having an alarm service. Also the majority feel they understand what they are paying in terms of rent and service charges and perceive this as being good value for money. However:
  - Significant numbers of residents feel they could benefit now and in the future from support services that they currently don't receive
  - A quarter are not satisfied with the maintenance they receive
  - Involvement in community activities could be increased with a greater range of activities.
  - 70% of respondents express no wish to move in the future and of those who do the vast majority would favour a bungalow
  - There appeared to be limited desire to move to Extra Care housing (perhaps due to a low awareness of its benefits)
    - Overall 88% responded positively to the question: 'how happy are you living in your current home'.

The detailed evidence base is set out in Appendix 7.

### 7.1 Outcomes of Survey with General Needs Tenants

#### Key findings from consultation with a sample of people aged over 50 living in General Needs housing

- This survey was undertaken to establish the views of older people living in the general needs



stock who already meet the criteria for sheltered housing and those who will do so in 5 years.

- The vast majority of respondents feel that their accommodation is well located for local amenities and easily accessible.
- However, around 40% feel their home will not be suitable for the future and particularly with regards to accommodating mobility aids.
- Very low proportions access support services provided by NPH whilst 25% feel that they do not receive enough support to remain independent.
- 64% of respondents express no wish to move in the future. Of the 36% of those who do the vast majority would favour a bungalow. The most regularly mentioned for choosing to move home were:
  - Having more space in the home and downsizing due to the Spare Room Subsidy, where applicable.

Note: In terms of the latter, the spare room subsidy applies to people 'of working age' and is based on the number of people living in the accommodation and the size of the accommodation.

- Overall 86% respond positively to the question: 'how happy are you living in your current home'.

The detailed evidence base for this section are set out in Appendix 8.

## 7.2 Staff

### Key findings from views of Support staff on the Sheltered Housing service

- The support service is perceived to be invaluable for tenants underpinned by good information gathering, home visits and finding solutions to needs often via good coordination between departments / external agencies.
- Better back office systems for referrals, tracking support delivered and outcomes could improve the service further.
- With regards to improving accommodation the most commonly mentioned issues related to accessibility and adaptations.
- In terms of future developments, bungalows with level access and fully adapted self-contained Extra Care flats (like at St. Crispins) were seen as priorities.
- 

The detailed evidence base for this section is set out in Appendix 9.

### 7.2.1 Outcomes of Survey with Rehousing & Support and Tenancy & Estate teams

#### Views of Rehousing and Estate staff on the Sheltered service

- There is a general consensus that some of the current stock is suitable and where it is not currently there is scope for adaptations.
- However, there is a clear recognition that a good proportion of the stock is unsuitable and would remain so regardless of investment.
- There are challenges in allocating properties to people with mobility issues and the mix of sheltered and general needs tenants in one block (a product of recent allocations).
- There was a consensus that the service currently works well. However, better early identification and initial information gathering could help achieve better allocations to those in most need and make better use of scarce resources.
- With regards to the desired outcomes from the Strategy a view was expressed that the aim should be to maintain a register independent to the general housing register and to identify suitable properties to meet the specific needs, be they mobility or social isolation.

The detailed evidence base for this section are set out in Appendix 10.



## 7.3 Outcomes of consultation with stakeholders

### Stakeholders

- The vision for the Strategy should be to create good quality, fit for purpose housing for older people and achieving this requires a high level Action Plan with key milestones.
- There was a view that the stock in terms of numbers can be considered as adequate if allocated and managed correctly.
- Prioritise the work on the older persons' stock following reclassification of unsuitable accommodation, e.g.:
  - Futureproofing bungalows, which older people aspire to, is seen as a priority – this could assist with initiatives to promote downsizing from larger general needs properties
  - Create a void standard for stock to ensure that properties are attractive to prospective tenants
  - Undertake a robust assessment of properties to be reclassified and invest where necessary to provide stock for other client groups.
- Understand the demand for Extra Care Housing, dementia and retirement housing provision.
- In terms of Extra Care Housing and dementia provision develop and introduce information and marketing strategies.
- NPH should continue to improve the housing related support service, (e.g. extending welfare checking, improve IT systems) as it is important in terms of looking after vulnerable people.
- Partnership working is improving but there is a need to pool resources and so avoid the risk of duplication.
- Make better use of community rooms to reduce social isolation, including addressing the needs of minority groups / introducing a befriending service.
- Consider establishing a social enterprise to deliver services, e.g. gardening, decorating.

The detailed evidence base for this section is set out in Appendix 11.

## 7.4 Outcomes from Concept Testing

### Key findings from the concept testing with NPH sheltered housing tenants

This pilot exercise was undertaken by NPH staff to gain tenants' views on the options they would choose if some of the current older persons' properties are no longer designated as 'sheltered'.

#### The respondents:

- In all 31 individuals from 28 households participated and the length of tenancies ranged between 1 and 26 years (11 years on average).
- All those stating their age were over 70 (the average was 79) and in terms of gender 19 of the tenants were female.
- All respondents were (where stated) White British or Irish.
- Only two respondents said that they receive NPH's Support Service while 20 of them have adaptations of some form in their homes among which the majority feel helps them maintain their independence.

#### Future housing preferences:

- 22 respondents said they would like to stay put in their current sheltered property as a general needs tenant with an alarm and / or a NPH Support Service, if needed.
- Nine respondents would like to move to more suitable accommodation, e.g. a flat or a bungalow which has level access and is designated for older people.
- Tenants were asked to assess and rate, in terms of importance to them, the potential value of various ways that NPH could assist them. The responses to this are given are set out below.

	Essential	Desirable	Not	Not
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			Important	stated
A person to help me through the moving process, e.g. at the end of the phone	3	3	4	18
Disconnection / connection of utilities	2	4	4	18
Packing / unpacking and removals	3	3	4	18
New carpets	3	4	3	18
New curtains	2	4	4	18
New white good, e.g. cooker, fridge	1	4	5	18
Replacement of aids and adaptations if not in place	4	3	3	18

The detailed evidence base for this section is set out in Appendix 12.

## NEEDS ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

### 8 Projected Future Need across Northampton

#### 8.1 Overview

After the projected reclassification of the identified sheltered stock and recommissioning of general needs bungalows NPH would have circa 1,891 sheltered units which, if added to the units provided by other RPs, gives a figure of 2,433 units. This equates to 75 units per 100 aged 65 plus (compared to circa 50 per 1,000 in England as a whole). However, this apparent above average provision needs to be tempered by the fact that 77% of NPH sheltered tenants receive no housing related support even though some 26% of these tenants are aged 80+.

On face value the 65 plus population is set to grow by 47% by 2030 and the 75 plus population is set to grow by 70%. The table below simply takes the 65 plus growth (as representative of the older population as a whole) and projects how much accommodation (of various types) would be 'required' to match population growth.

Fig. 1 – Population Based Accommodation Extrapolation

	Existing Number	Estimated Requirement 2030 based on 65 + population increase
Sheltered Rent	2,433	3,577
Sheltered Leasehold	559	822
ECH units	387	569
Residential Care Bedspaces	910	1,338
Nursing Care Bedspaces	630	926

Clearly this kind of growth in provision is unrealistic but the key fact to note from this simple set of calculations and the evidence base above is that there will be proportionally more older people requiring suitable accommodation to meet their mobility and health requirements in addition to a range of services either delivered in-house or via floating support services and where possible backed up by telecare. This raises the following questions:

- How much suitable accommodation is required:
  - What percentage of the existing designated Older Persons' accommodation (following reclassification) can be utilised into the longer term and what works need to be undertaken to ensure its continuing suitability for older people?



## Older Persons' Housing Strategy

- How many older people living in non-designated accommodation will need to move home or have their existing homes adapted to enable them to live independently?
- How much accommodation for older people needs to be built in what format and in what tenure?

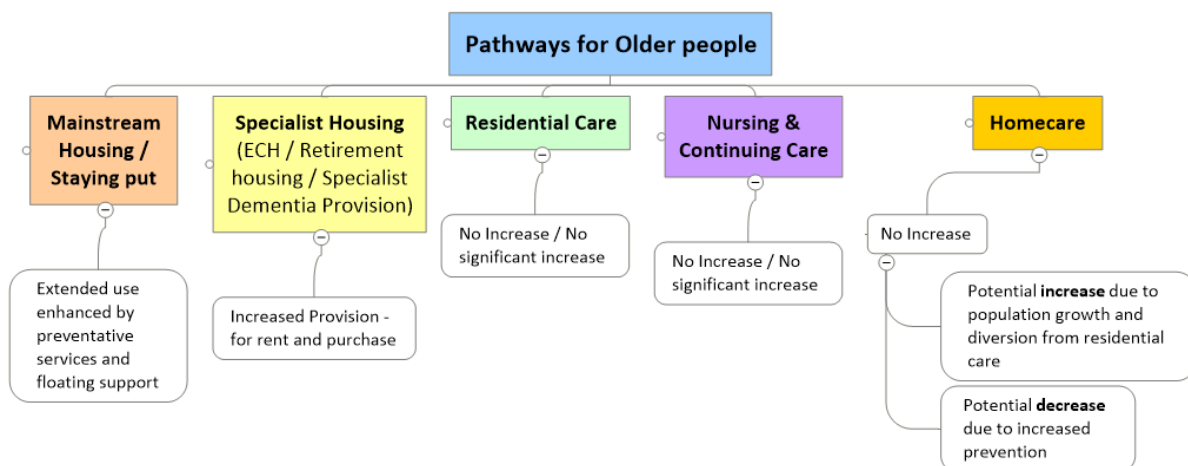
However, it should be emphasised that addressing the built environment requirements will not provide the whole solution in meeting the needs of older people in the future as a complex mix of **accommodation** and **services** will be required.

### 8.2 Addressing the challenges

The three concepts of Diversion, Prevention and Aggregation outlined below allow one to consider from a broader perspective the future provision of accommodation and services.

DIVERSION	PREVENTION	AGGREGATION
<p>A key to ensuring that people are not unnecessarily accessing residential / nursing care, with resulting high costs to the Adult Social Care (ASC) budget, and instead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stay at home with a combination of targeted care and support to prevent crises and deterioration</li> <li>▪ Access reablement at home or in short term accommodation after a crisis / hospitalisation</li> <li>▪ Receive support to promote social inclusion</li> </ul> <p>OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Less admissions to residential and nursing care = cost savings</li> <li>▪ Maintenance of independence – through remaining in own home in a community environment.</li> </ul>	<p>Effective assessments that focus on what people CAN DO (a strength based approach) and what support is required to do it.</p> <p>OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Co-produced packages of care &amp; support or support that enhances wellbeing and social inclusion and prevent deterioration / crises.</li> </ul>	<p>Integrated care and support services making best use of accommodation resources – deployed around a detailed assessment.</p> <p>OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Targeted use of resources</li> <li>▪ Better value for money.</li> </ul>

Applying these concepts to the questions raised in 8.1 above highlights the point that making best use of a full range of accommodation and services to target and meet the preventative agenda is a key way to address the challenges of an ageing population. With reference to the population growth provision extrapolation in Figure 1 above it is not realistic to approach the projected growth in older people by simply providing more accommodation in historic categories. Clearly there will be a need for high quality older persons' accommodation across tenures but, from a service perspective, NPH have established a non-accommodation based housing related support service which allows for greater flexibility and targeting of services which can, if built upon, assist with the challenges ahead. The diagram below outlines possible pathways for older people and the likely impacts / approaches.



This diagram above highlights the following considerations:

- Mainstream housing (i.e. people continuing to live in their homes) will play a key part in meeting the challenges of the future. With adaptations, preventative support services and home care many older people can remain in their own homes / communities without the need to enter designated housing for older people. Clearly the benefits of downsizing cannot be ignored and this could be addressed by the provision of suitable new build accommodation for older people to rent or buy.
- Specialist housing – clearly there is a need for more specialist housing for the those in higher need. The population extrapolation suggests an increase of circa 180 ECH units and furthermore, to meet the widely accepted rate of 25 units per 1,000 aged 75 plus, 220 additional units will need to be created by 2030. Additionally, other specialist housing, whether retirement housing with onsite support or more intensive specialist dementia provision, could contribute significantly to diversion away from often unsuitable nursing and residential care.
- Nursing and Residential care has a key role to play but it is generally the case that a significant proportion of people ‘end up’ in this form of accommodation because there is no other alternative. However, it lacks flexibility in terms of tenure choice and arguably is expensive and often not matched to need - for example, by people accessing the accommodation in crisis when with short term interventions they could remain living independently in their own homes.
- Homecare also has a key part to play in diversion from residential care but its use could be avoided / delayed with better use of targeted preventative services.

### 8.3 Future accommodation

The table below follows on from the population extrapolation in Figure 1 above and provides some options for a future direction for older persons' accommodation based on a set of criteria for each accommodation type.

Fig. 2 – Options for Future accommodation

	Existing Number	Estimated Requirement by 2030 based on 65+ population increase	Possible Future Criteria	Proposed Requirement by 2030	Proposed Change
Sheltered Rent	2,433	3,577	Increase of 25% to accommodate those who rent (principally for downsizing)	2,858	Increase of 425





## Older Persons' Housing Strategy

Sheltered Leasehold	559	822	Increase in line with population growth (market driven)	822	Increase of 263
ECH units	387	569	Based on 25 per 1,000 aged 75 plus	598	Increase of 211
ECH units – Specialist Dementia	N/A	0	Based on 5 per 1,000 aged 75 plus	120	Increase of 120
Residential Care Bedspaces	910	1,338	No increase due to diversion	910	No Change
Nursing Care Bedspaces	630	926	No increase due to diversion	630	No Change
<b>Total Units &amp; Bedspaces</b>	<b>4,919</b>	<b>7,231</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>5,937</b>	<b>1,018</b>

As can be seen the projections in the table above do not match the projected population growth extrapolation figure of 7,231. With a minor increase in older persons' provision for rent and other increases in retirement leasehold (market driven) and ECH and Specialist dementia provision we reach the figure of 5,937 (a shortfall of circa 1,300). While the likely increase in need which will accompany the growth in older people is addressed by a proposed increase and targeting of non-accommodation based services (support, care and adaptation) there will clearly be a need for increases to older persons' designated housing stock which, for older people today, means desirable and adapted properties that people from this age band can move into (including those who downsize). These properties will need to be mixed tenure given that 70% of older people in Northampton have equity in a property. To close the gap would require 1,300 units / bedspaces with predominately properties for sale. Of note, considerations for future accommodation configurations will need to take account of the fact that half of this growing number of older people are projected to be living alone.

### 8.4 The geographical location of the stock

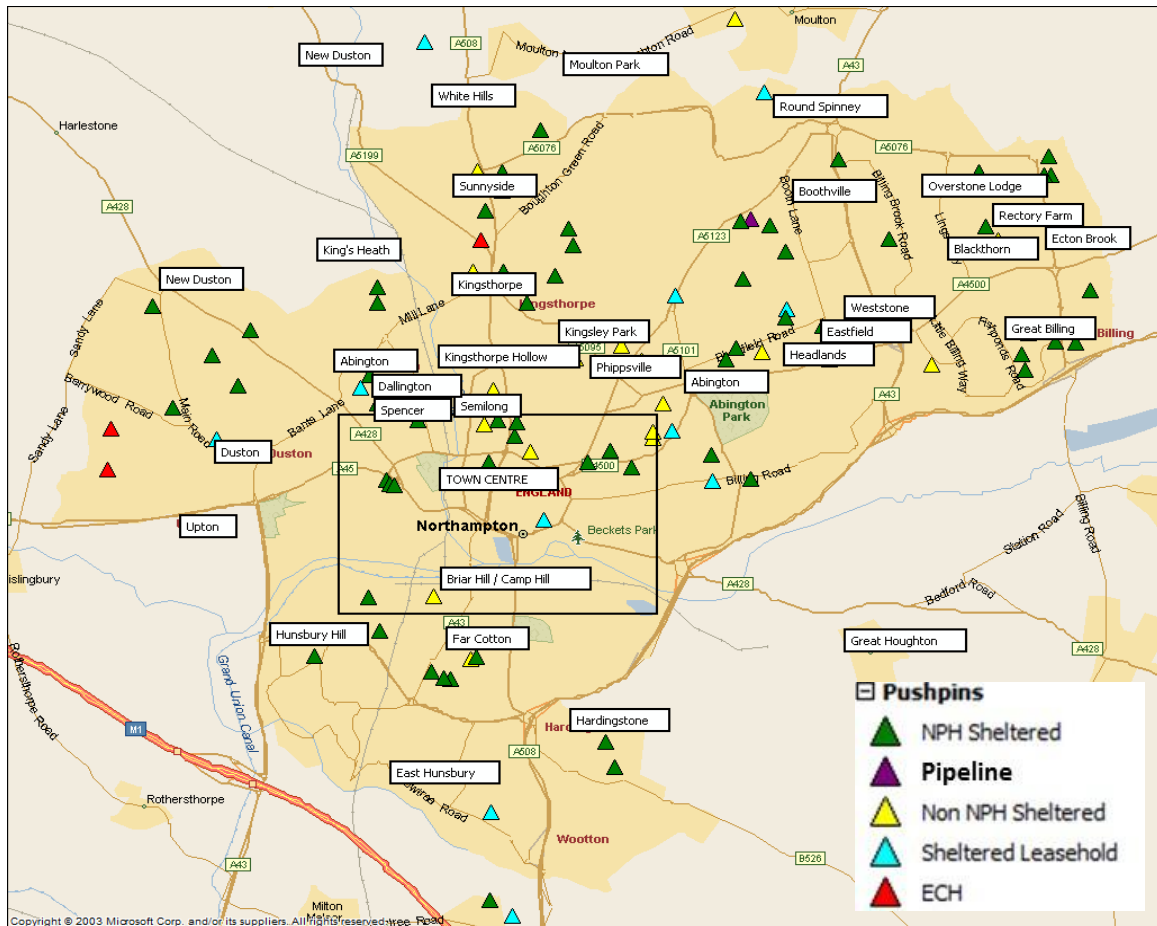
The map that follows shows the range of older persons' stock in Northampton, including a NPH pipeline older persons' scheme (Lakeview). Also highlighted are the sheltered schemes recommended for reclassifying. Not included is a possible development of Extra Care Housing (ECH) in Kingsthorpe with 80 units of accommodation in three blocks and a further block of another 40 units of accommodation on the same site. As can be seen from the map the stock is relatively well distributed and the recommended reclassification of stock also follows this pattern. In terms of the location of new provision for older people account needs to be taken of:

- The availability of land close to amenities
- The letting statistics
- The preferences of tenants, particularly when schemes are flagged for downsizing.

It is noticeable that the current ECH stock is predominately in the West of the Borough and that there is also the new scheme in the Kingsthorpe area in prospect. Therefore, ideally it is **recommended** that new ECH stock would be located in the South, the East and Town Centre locations. Clearly identifying suitable land will be essential and it will be important to work in partnership with Borough and County officers to establish opportunities and, where possible, seek to influence planning decisions.



# Older Persons' Housing Strategy



## 8.5 Accommodation plus care and support services for mainstream housing – why 'getting it right' matters:

- Most older people will continue to live in their existing homes in mainstream housing.
  - Supporting them to do so will influence how far they then need /wish to move on to other housing options, but the latter will be more costly and (insofar as such moves are the result of 'push' rather than 'pull' factors) may result in a lower level of wellbeing.
  - This group represents a prime target when considering investing to achieve savings and in particular addressing:
    - The prevention agenda for those who are not Fair Access to Care services (FACs) eligible
    - A wider assessment process for those who are FACs eligible, so addressing social isolation / wellbeing issues
    - The needs of those who require major aids and adaptations in general needs housing when specialist housing may be more suitable.
  - Joined-up services achieve cost savings and minimise the prospect of duplication of service provision.
  - Building on voluntary sector is acknowledged as a cost-effective approach.
  - More effective information giving and advice services will improve the 'customer journey'.
- 'Push factors' are those that lead to older people making, sometimes unplanned or urgent moves, quite often later in old age, and more 'out of necessity' rather than positive choice. For example, in the survey undertaken with sheltered tenants in NPH stock the top three potential reasons given for moving from their current location were:
- To be nearer family and friends
  - Onset of poor health and care needs
  - Safety and security.
- These were closely followed by:
- To have more space
  - A change in a partner's health
  - To be less socially isolated.
- In research undertaken with older homeowners (*Older Owners Research on the lives, aspirations and housing outcomes of older homeowners in the UK, The Strategic Society / Hanover 2015*) the key 'push factors' to move would be a result of problems or issues with their local environment, or local services. 'Pull factors' by contrast reflect the aspirations that people may have when considering a pro-active move.
- The opportunity to move within the current neighbourhood is a major 'pull factor' as was clear from the research undertaken with tenants in developing this strategy and was also reflected in the research with homeowners mentioned above.
- Clearly providing attractive and accessible accommodation is a further incentive for older people to move home and in this research the opportunity to move to a bungalow featured highly. This is not to say that well-designed flats with some outside space would not be favoured by some older people, particularly as they feel that they are more secure in such purpose-designed accommodation.
- However, it does appear that the 'pull factor' reduces with age. For example, anecdotal evidence from NPH staff who undertook 'concept testing' with tenants in sheltered housing indicated that advancing age was a significant disincentive in moving home and even incentives in terms of actual practical assistance appeared not to be sufficient to influence their decision. However, experience in remodelling schemes where decanting was necessary has shown that a dedicated officer to work with the tenant has proven to be a successful approach in reducing anxiety and smoothing the path for older tenants. This also applied to homeowners surveyed in the research undertaken for Hanover Housing which indicated that those aged 75+ '*are slightly more likely to prefer to stay where they are*'. Further information on 'move motivators' sourced from research into the topic can be found in Appendix 13.

## 9 Recommendations

The brief for this research is to deliver a Strategy for Northampton and the recommendations fall into two categories, namely those within the remit of NPH and those that are applicable to the Borough as a whole. To address this requirement two Strategies have been drafted, both comprise the same evidence base but have, respectively, recommendations that address the requirements of each party. This document is a specific NPH Strategy although we would submit that the 'vision' below is generic for Northampton.

### 9.1 A Vision for Older Persons' Housing

In terms of the above the key objectives are to:

- Enable older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible
- Improve the quality of older persons' housing to enable people to live happy and healthy lives in an enriched community
- Offer housing choices to meet the needs of current and future generations of older people
- Ensure that specialist housing and support is targeted to those most in need.

### 9.2 The definition of NPH's Older Persons' accommodation

The outcomes of this research have identified the impact of changes in this provision in terms of allocations and service delivery introduced over time. The key outcomes here are:

- a) The allocation of older persons' designated properties to younger people, namely those who are eligible for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and those allocated to properties to minimise voids resulting in blocks of accommodation with mixed aged groups.
- b) The removal of the 'blanket approach' to service delivery which has been replaced by a 'housing related support' service for those tenants assessed as needing the service. Of note, this service is non-age specific.

In terms of point b) above it is recognised that this was an inevitable decision following the removal of Supporting People funding. However, it is clear from the feedback from tenants that neither of the above changes are popular and have resulted in a reduction of enjoyment in their homes and raised concerns over their personal security, leading some tenants to state that '*this is no longer sheltered housing*'. This Strategy provides an opportunity to redress the balance in terms of allocations and service availability to some extent and set a clear direction for NPH's older persons' designated housing into the future. It is therefore **recommended** that:

- c) 'Sheltered housing' should be rebranded as 'older persons' housing' to better reflect the housing and services provided and new marketing material should be drafted to identify the changes in services, including clearly defining what will be offered and what will not
- d) The Allocations Policy is amended to define these properties as being for people aged 55+ and that they should only be allocated for younger people with a disability where no other suitable property can be made available for them. Where adapted properties are required identifying suitable stock should become easier for staff in the future as an exercise is underway to 'flag' these properties on the housing database\*
- e) If it is clear that there is no demand for some of the designated older persons' properties, i.e. among those that have **not** been earmarked for reclassifying, the suitability of these properties should be analysed and actions concerning their future determined.



\* Of note, as identified in Appendix 1 - Figure 8 growth is predicted in the numbers of people with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of in excess of 30 and it will be important to ensure that any properties adapted for this client group are also clearly identified on the database.

### 9.3 Reclassifying NPH's 'Sheltered Stock'

It is **recommended** that with specific reference to NPH's older persons' designed stock of 2,047 units of accommodation the circa 600 units identified as 'no longer fit for purpose' for older people should be reclassified in three phases (see 6.5.2. above / Confidential Appendix 14 for details). In addition, it is **recommended** that the 444 bungalows, currently part of NPH's general needs stock, are reclassified as being designated older persons' stock as they become void, resulting in a total of 1,891 units of older persons' accommodation.

To take these recommendations forward it will be important in the first instance to continue with the 'concept testing' piloted for developing this Strategy to further understand the views of tenants whose properties are earmarked for reclassifying. In terms of housing options for tenants whose homes are being reclassified there will be a choice of three possibilities, namely to:

- Move to another older person's designated property that meets their needs
- Remain in the property with a dispersed alarm plus a housing related support service if they are assessed as needing the support
- Remain in the property as a general needs tenant.

Outcomes from the pilot 'concept testing' undertaken (see 7.3 above) suggest that of the 31 tenants surveyed 22 stated that they would prefer to remain in their home with an alarm / support service. However, with the offer of desirable alternative accommodation combined with assistance to move home the proportion of those feeling they wish to 'stay put' could decrease.

If the reclassification of the identified stock is to progress effectively it will be important for the following measures to be put in place:

- Progressing this programme and marketing it to tenants and the wider public will be challenging and it is **recommended** that a multi-disciplinary project group, with a clearly defined remit, is formed at the outset to take this programme forward:
  - Of Note: A Project Group has undertaken sterling work overseeing this project and following the adoption of the Strategy this Group's work will be complete.
- It is **recommended** that a dedicated staff member is identified to work with tenants (and their families / advocates where appropriate) whose homes are to be reclassified to understand their 'choices' and assist them in decision-making processes. Tenants should also be given an opportunity to amend their decisions over a reasonable time period.
- It is **recommended** that a protocol is established to ensure that staff identify stock for tenants whose homes are to be reclassified including, in particular, the current stock of general needs bungalows as they become vacant. In this regard two elements are important, namely:
  - That an agreed property standard is set for reletting which provides not only accessible accommodation but also an 'attractive offering' for the tenant; and
  - Meeting, as far as possible, the identified requirements of a tenant in terms of location which, as identified in the research for this Strategy, is a high priority for many tenants.

Also of note in this area is that it will be vital to address the budgetary implications of reclassifying the properties. The issues to consider will include:

- The overall project management of the programme, e.g. the physical resources required
- The capital cost of upgrading properties
- The potential for disturbance payments to support tenants who move home.



It is understood that there will be concerns over properties becoming available for the 'right to buy'. However, it is **recommended** that this could be mitigated in the following ways:

- By undertaking further work to understand if any of the declassified stock can, with investment, be designated for other vulnerable groups
- By ensuring that all NPH's adapted stock is identified and is designated for vulnerable groups.

### 9.4 Future stock requirements

As set out in 8.3 above, if the projected population growth trends for people aged 65+ are applied, the potential increases in housing supply are unrealistic in practical terms. Therefore a new model needs to be identified which, in addition to arriving at achievable housing supply targets, prioritises floating support and preventative service solutions that enable people to remain in their own homes. However, decisions in this respect are, in many instances, beyond the current remit of NPH and it is therefore **recommended** that the Board takes note of the wider conclusions in 9 above and identifies areas where the organisation may be involved in, for example:

- Developing new stock as potential opportunities that meet organisational objectives, present themselves; and
- Assisting in meeting service delivery objectives particularly where they are within NPH's core business, e.g. delivering / facilitating preventative services.

### 9.5 Other considerations in relation to developing stock

1) **Developing Mixed Tenure Older Persons' Stock:** it is **recommended** that:

To understand the demand for this type of provision concept testing should be undertaken among people aged 50+ who have bought their properties under the RTB to assess their views on moving to specialist housing as they age. This concept testing will seek to understand aspirations for future housing, including: price sensitivity, opportunities for outright sale and, shared ownership.

Further similar concept testing would also be appropriate with NPH general needs tenants aged 50+ who rent their homes to understand their views on downsizing. Of note, instances of where downsizing has been successful is where potential occupants have been involved in the development of a scheme from the outset. The design of this accommodation meets suitably high specification levels to ensure that properties can evolve towards representing virtual extra care provision over time and provide a home for life as occupants age.

2) **Developing Extra Care Housing:**

ECH provision must meet the requirement to house recipients in most need **and** it is therefore **recommended** that a specification is developed in partnership with a multi-agency team, including NPH staff as they have a defined role on an ongoing basis in the allocation of this category of stock.

### 9.6 The Remaining Designated Older Persons' Housing Stock

Clearly over time the remaining designated older persons' stock, following the reclassification of the stock recommended in 10.3 above, will require attention to meet the objective of reducing voids. It is therefore **recommended** that further work is undertaken to:

- Identify a 'standard' for this stock and assess a timescale for refurbishment or other measures as appropriate
  - This standard should also address the provision of mobility scooter stores either as permanent structures or temporary ones that can be reused if no longer required
- Analyse the waiting list for designated older persons' housing to further understand its 'make-up' and identify if any particular groups are experiencing challenges in accessing this housing.



### 9.7 NPH's Housing Related Support Service

As stated in 6.5.2 above NPH fund this service and although as part of the brief there was not a requirement to review this service. However, its outcomes could contribute significantly to the preventative agenda which is a key strand within this Strategy therefore a 'light touch' analysis has taken place. Although anecdotally it appears that this service is effective currently appropriate IT systems are not in place to measure outcomes and evidence actual monetary savings and 'soft' outcomes for tenants and this is vital if funding of this service is to be justified into the future. The Manager is introducing interim systems to measure outcomes, however, these are spreadsheet based and therefore cannot be integrated within the Capita Housing system. Also staff are testing laptops so that client information can be entered 'realtime' to avoid duplication of work.

**Recommendations** related to the service follow:

- 1) Currently two options for delivering a robust evidence base for the service are being considered, namely to understand if the current Capita system can be utilised or whether a future 'add on' needs to be purchased from Capita. It is **recommended** that this work is completed within a three-month period.
- 2) It is **recommended** that the purchase of suitable mobile devices [as set out in NPH's strategy Information Technology (IT) Strategy] for Support Workers to improve efficiency is an immediate priority.
- 3) Following the research undertaken as part of the development of this Strategy concern has been expressed that many of the 'older old' tenants living in the stock are 'self-testing' alarms and therefore support staff do not call on them, i.e. there are no welfare checks, on these tenants who are potentially some of the most vulnerable as they are susceptible to deteriorating health within a short timeframe. It is therefore **recommended** that work is undertaken to understand how the staffing of the housing related support service can be reconfigured to provide 'welfare checks' for the most vulnerable tenants. These could comprise monthly checks on tenants aged 80 and over. If a tenant refuses this service they would be required to sign a disclaimer to this effect which would be renewed on an annual basis so reducing corporate risk for the organisation. It is recognised that this recommendation is challenging as following a review of the service it is possible that with the current staffing 'welfare checks' may not be able to be extended to all of the 'older old' residents across the stock without additional funding. It is therefore **recommended** that a phased approach is adopted with Phase 1 comprising tenants in designated and older persons' properties and Phase 2 extending the service to tenants living in general needs properties. However, it should be noted that of those general needs tenants responding to the consultation 25% stated that they do not consider they receive enough support to remain independent.
- 4) To be most effective this service needs to be holistic in nature and address a wide range of service offerings which improve client well-being and finances and so ensure that they maintain their tenancies and / or avoid / delay a move into residential care. To achieve this objective, it is **recommended** that a review of staff skills is undertaken and relevant training put in place where appropriate.
- 5) In the longer term when this service is as efficient as possible and proven to be cost effective consideration should be given to extending it to older people living in other tenures to support independent living, if additional funding can be sourced. It is **recommended** that concept testing is undertaken with a sample of these residents of Northampton to understand the demand for the service and their willingness to pay for it. Also research should be undertaken to understand where similar services have proven to be successful, e.g. in Bath & North East Somerset.

## 9.8 Partnership Working

The importance of working with other agencies (e.g. RPs, health, voluntary organisations) to avoid duplication, explore opportunities for integration of services and joint funding cannot be underestimated. It is therefore **recommended** that a project, with multi-agency representation and defined outcomes, is instigated to identify potential areas for joint working. For example, it is understood that NPH is investing in improvements to a number of its community rooms which could provide ideal locations for organisations to deliver services and arrange events for older people. Additionally, this could work to reduce social isolation (including befriending services), provide health and well-being activities and deliver services for those living with dementia (and their carers). Of note, Appendix 7 to this Strategy identifies the kind of activities that tenants said would like to see available within the community rooms although, of concern in this respect, is that among the 70% of tenants who responded to this area of the consultation survey only 30% said that they attended events in the community rooms accessible to them, potentially due to a lack of choice in terms of available activities / events. It is therefore vital that consideration is given to ensuring that available activities meet the requirements of the community as a whole, including those from the ethnic minority communities. Another issue raised as part of the research are the challenges some tenants are experiencing in maintaining their gardens and decorating their homes and this is another area where partnership working could provide solutions.

## 10 Key Recommendations

The key recommendations associated with NPH's Strategy are summarised below. With regard to the priorities identified, the associated implementation timeframes will be set out in an Action Plan with defined timescales.

	<b>Actions</b>
1.	<b>Rebrand NPH's 'Sheltered housing' as 'Older Persons' Housing'.</b>
2.	<b>Amend the Allocations Policy</b> to define designated older persons' housing for people aged 55+. Additionally, younger people with a disability will only be allocated these properties on an exceptional basis, i.e. where no other suitable property can be made available for them.
3.	<b>Reclassification</b> in 3 Phases circa 600 units of sheltered accommodation identified as 'no longer fit for purpose' for older people. Recommendations on taking this programme forward include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Identifying a budget for the project</li> <li>b) Forming an internal multi-disciplinary Project Group to implement the Strategy</li> <li>c) Identifying a dedicated staff member to work with tenants (and their families / advocates where appropriate) whose homes are earmarked for reclassification</li> <li>d) Establishing a protocol to ensure that staff identify stock for tenants whose homes are to be reclassified including setting an agreed property standard for reletting and addressing tenants' priorities in terms of location</li> <li>e) Undertaking work to understand if any of the declassified stock can, with investment, be designated for other vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Future stock requirements:</b> Decisions in respect of the new stock requirement in the Borough are, in many instances, beyond the current remit of NPH and it is therefore <b>recommended</b> that the Board takes note of the wider conclusions in 9 above and identifies areas where the organisation may be involved in, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Developing new stock as potential opportunities that meet organisational objectives present themselves; and</li> </ul>





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	<p>b) Assisting in meeting service delivery objectives, particularly where they are within NPH's core business, e.g. delivering / facilitating preventative services.</p>
5.	<p>To understand demand for <b>mixed tenure older persons' stock</b> 'concept testing' should be undertaken among:</p> <p>a) People aged 50+ who have bought their properties under the Right to Buy (RTB) to assess their views on moving to specialist housing as they age</p> <p>b) With NPH general needs tenants aged 50+ who rent their homes to understand their views on downsizing.</p>
6.	<p>ECH provision must meet the requirement to house recipients in most need <b>and</b> it is therefore <b>recommended</b> that a specification is developed in partnership with a multi-agency team, including NPH staff as they have a defined role on an ongoing basis in the allocation of this category of stock.</p>
7.	<p>To meet the objective of <b>reducing voids</b> in the remaining designated older persons' stock further work is required to:</p> <p>a) Identify a 'standard' for this stock and assess a timescale for refurbishment or other measures, as appropriate</p> <p><i>Note:</i> This standard should also address the provision of mobile scooter stores either as permanent structures or temporary ones that can be reused if no longer required</p> <p>b) Analyse the waiting list for designated older persons' housing to further understand its 'make-up' and identify if any particular groups that are experiencing challenges in accessing this housing.</p>
8.	<p>Work is required to enhance the performance of <b>NPH's Housing Related Support Service</b>:</p> <p>a) Currently two options for delivering robust IT-based evidence for the service are being considered – this work should be completed within a three-month period</p> <p>b) To improve efficiency, the purchase of suitable mobile devices [as set out in NPH's Information Technology (IT) Strategy] for Support Workers is an immediate priority</p> <p>c) Prioritise work to understand how the staffing of the housing related support service can be reconfigured to provide 'welfare checks' for the most vulnerable tenants</p> <p><i>Note:</i> A phased approach is recommended: with Phase 1 comprising tenants in designated and older persons' properties and Phase 2 extending the service to tenants living in general needs properties</p> <p>d) To ensure that the service can be holistic in nature a review of staff skills should be undertaken and relevant training put in place where appropriate</p> <p>e) In the longer term concept testing should be undertaken with a sample of residents living non-NPH accommodation in Northampton to understand the demand for a housing related support service and their willingness to pay for it. Also research is required to understand where similar services have proven to be successful.</p>
9.	<p>The requirement for <b>Partnership working</b> with other agencies to avoid duplication, explore opportunities for integration of services and achieve joint funding cannot be underestimated. Therefore, a project, with multi-agency representation and defined outcomes should be instigated to identify potential areas for joint working, for example:</p> <p>a) Utilising NPH's community rooms for organisations to deliver services and arrange events for older people to reduce social isolation (including facilitating a befriending services), provide health and well-being activities and deliver services for those living with dementia (and their carers) It is also important to ensure that available activities meet the requirements of the community as a whole, including those from ethnic minority communities.</p> <p>b) Addressing the challenges some tenants are experiencing in maintaining their gardens and decorating their homes.</p>

