

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 28th September 2011

9

Title: Over 50s Housing Needs Study

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Item for decision

Summary

1. The report summarises the findings of the over 50s housing needs study of Uttlesford residents, which was conducted in July and August 2011.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board note the findings of this report
3. That the Housing Board recommends officers produce a long term Older Persons Housing Strategy to deal with some of the current issues in the quality and quantity of older persons accommodation in the district, and the issues raised in this research.

Financial Implications

4. This report does not have any immediate financial implications.

Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Uttlesford Over 50s Housing Needs Study 2011

Impact

6.

Communication/Consultation	All households in the district were consulted as part of this study.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Assistance was available from the Council for those with who needed assistance completing their forms.
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	No personal data is contained in the summary report.
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

7. In June 2011, the Council lost an appeal on an older persons housing scheme. One of the contributing factors for losing this appeal was the lack of evidence on older persons housing need within the district. This study was undertaken in July and August 2011 in order to address this gap in knowledge.
8. This issue also has additional significance with the impending changes in housing benefit, which will impact on under occupiers. The provision of older persons housing in the district could become a key issue in the near future, and this report will help the Council to write an Older Persons Housing Strategy which provides a clearer picture on the demands for older persons housing in the district.
9. The age range of over 50 was chosen as this is a long term issue. It is important to consider the needs of the future older people of the district in order to write an effective strategy.
10. The report highlights that there is a need for older persons housing in the district. The response rate was useable, estimated at 7%. As the survey was voluntary, and with reference to research highlighting that 5% or more represents a useable sample size, this was declared a usable amount of information. This Housing Needs Study was carried out in Uttlesford in 2011. Forms were sent out within the Uttlesford Life magazine to ensure district wide

coverage. The study had 1,116 respondents, representing a useable amount of information.

- a. Only 6.9% of respondents stated that they did not feel Uttlesford required more housing for the over 60s.
 - b. 45.8% were unsure and 47.2% thought that more housing for the over 60s was needed. Over 38% of households were either in affordable housing, renting, or still had a mortgage.
 - c. 93% of households were living in a home with two or more bedrooms, and three quarters of respondents were currently living in a house.
 - d. 18.5% of households stated that they were currently in receipt of benefits, and over 40% of respondents are currently marginally able to afford, or cannot afford the costs of running their household.
 - e. 44% of respondents said that they would consider downsizing in the next 10 years, and 32% of households said that if they were to move, they would be looking to move into affordable housing.
 - f. If the sample size is representative of the district, this could potentially equate to around 3,000 people over 60, looking to move to affordable housing in Uttlesford in the next ten years.
11. This is the first of two background papers that will result in an effective Older Persons Housing Strategy as laid out below:
- a. Over 50s Housing Needs Study – Background Demand Study - to explore housing need and give an evidence base for a changing and expanding need for older persons housing in Uttlesford.
 - b. Older Persons Housing Background Study – Background Supply Study – to analyse the current levels of private and affordable housing stock, and how they meet the perceived needs of the older population. This should also examine the resources available for older persons housing, such as funding for people to remain in their own homes, and how County Council budget reduction will impact on service provision.
 - c. Older Persons Housing Strategy – Future Plan – This will look at the supply and demand issues, and provide a concise and realistic plan on how older persons housing can be improved in the medium-long term in the district in order to effectively meet housing need.
12. It is proposed that Members note the findings of this study, and recommend that officers continue with further study to result in an effective Older Persons Housing Strategy that is fit for purpose, realistic, and reflects the needs of older people in the district.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The Council is not aware or prepared for potential issues in older persons housing	2 – There is currently no policy or background studies relating to older persons housing in the district	3 – If forward planning is not effective, the Council could develop older persons housing that does not meet demand	Continuing to research in order to prepare the Older Persons Housing Strategy will ensure that the strategy takes account of local supply and demand needs.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.