

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

LONG TERM HOUSING PLANS, CLEAR INVITATION TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS WELL AS THE SOCIAL SECTOR TO DEVELOP HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND HOUSING MODEL INNOVATION

Worcestershire County Council with its district and borough council partners has developed a housing strategy for older and disabled people, which covers all areas of Worcestershire. This strategy sets out the framework for future development in Worcestershire until 2026.

Through this strategy the council's intention has been to make a range of different housing for older people, both in the social and private sectors, available in every district in Worcestershire. The intention has been to shape and manage the market to maximise choice, both for people who want to buy and for people who want to rent.

The council has taken a leading role in promoting a variety of housing for older people and it has encouraged providers and developers from the social, charitable and private sectors to deliver the housing required in Worcestershire to meet the needs of the local ageing population.

Housing and older people context

The council identified that the demographic pressures and the tenure mix of the older population in Worcestershire meant that a much wider range of housing options needed to be developed in order to meet older people's aspirations and requirements.

The key features of the ageing population in Worcestershire that are relevant to the council's approach to widening housing choices include:

- By 2031 there will be a 42 per cent increase in those over 60 and a 136 per cent increase in those over 85. Rates of growth vary between districts with higher growth in Wychavon and Malvern Hills.
- A rapid increase in dementia, due to the ageing demographic, is a significant issue for Worcestershire which has a higher proportion of people aged over 65 than the national average.
- The number of people aged over 65 with a long term limiting illness (LTLI) in Worcestershire is projected to rise over the next 15 years by 41 per cent. This has potential implications for individual health and wellbeing outcomes and also social care costs.
- Levels of owner occupation amongst older people in Worcestershire are very high at over 80 per cent in the 55-74 age range underlining the importance of planning for all tenures.



Worcestershire's Rooftop Housing scheme

How is it innovative?

The council's approach

To underpin its approach to widening housing options for older people, the council undertook extensive and comprehensive consultation with:

- groups of older citizens with an interest in retirement and extra care housing
- district council housing and planning partners
- a wide range of providers of retirement and extra care housing, from the private, social and charitable sectors.

As a result of this intelligence gathering alongside its analysis of future demographic related need, the council has set out its approach to the market to guide development of housing that will meet the full range of older people across Worcestershire, in summary:

- To meet the needs of the whole population of older people, a high proportion of retirement housing including extra care housing will need to be for sale, either outright or through some form of shared equity.
- In order for this to happen, older people who are currently owner occupiers will need to find new extra care developments sufficiently attractive to want to purchase an apartment/property.
- Most housing association older people's extra care housing schemes are expected to be mixed tenure.

- There is a requirement for different property types and a mix of one, two and three bed apartments within retirement housing developments.
- Developments need to cater for different cohorts within the older population in terms of housing equity and income levels.
- Housing developments should include as far as possible provision for people with dementia and people with significant care needs.

To reflect the need for a range of housing offers that will be attractive to older owner occupiers alongside the more 'traditional' approach to developing older people's housing in the social rented sector, the council has set out a clear statement of future need for older people's style housing development, with the focus on for sale units.

The intention has been to create attractive, aspirational housing options that are suited to people who either have or want to plan for changing housing requirements and potentially increasing care needs, including people living with dementia.

The strategic approach taken by the council to stimulating the market has deliberately not been overly prescriptive. Instead the intention has been to encourage imaginative and innovative approaches from providers and developers as a way of responding to the challenging economic climate at the same as there are substantial increases in projected need driven by demographic changes and a tenure mismatch in most districts.

The council has worked actively with developers and providers, both social and private, to identify potential sites that are suitable and viable for a mix of retirement housing, extra care schemes and care village type developments.

To help facilitate development, the council has worked with:

- Its district council partners to better understand and facilitate private sector development of retirement housing schemes.
- Housing associations to identify publicly owned sites suitable for retirement housing schemes and invested council capital funding in schemes where this has enabled development to take place.
- Developed a partnership approach to the delivery of care and support services, for example where the housing provider takes the lead in selecting its preferred care partner for extra care housing schemes, rather than the council selecting a domiciliary care provider for such schemes.

As part of this approach the council has developed a bespoke housing scheme specifically which is designed to be attractive to people living with dementia in partnership with Rooftop Housing and Redditch Borough Council. The resulting housing scheme is available to people across Worcestershire living with dementia who want to live in an attractive, well designed environment with extensive onsite care and support.

Outcomes

Since 2014/15 the council has facilitated and/or supported the development of:

- Seven housing schemes in the private sector creating 437 units of housing with a further two schemes and 213 units in the pipeline.
- Six housing schemes developed by housing associations creating 407 units of housing with 102 units being for shared ownership. There are three further schemes in development which will provide 163 mixed tenure units.

There are further plans for 447 units of mixed tenure older people's housing over the next few years.

The housing scheme that has been designed specifically for people living with dementia has been operational for over 12 months and has been very successful. The scheme was fully occupied soon after opening. It has been highly successful in providing an alternative to registered forms of care for individuals living with dementia.

This housing-based model has also provided financial efficiencies to the council, generating a net saving on care costs compared to the use of alternative settings of approximately £173,000 in the first year.

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