

Report of the Public Service Provision for Older People Task and Finish Group

Introduction

People are living longer. By 2020, half the population of the UK will be aged 50 or over.

During our research we found the definition of 'older' varied! The Task and Finish Group did not dwell on the definition of older but broadly looked at services for people over 65. We recognise that getting older is different for everyone. There is no single point at which a person becomes old and ageing affects people in different ways. Some changes that come with ageing can be seen as positive and some less so.

Whilst this report concentrates on some of the challenges that later life can bring, we need to do more to change attitudes about ageing, older people and to value the contribution that older people make. We also need to recognise the huge contribution older people make to their families and communities in the district.

An Ageing Population

The population is ageing. It is anticipated the number of people living in the district aged between 65 and 69 will increase by 29% between 2010 and 2015 and the number of people aged 85 and over living in the district is expected to increase by 20% over the same period. The table below shows expected increase in population of older people in the district between 2010 and 2030:

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
People aged 65-69	7,300	9,400	8,500	9,100	10,800
People aged 70-74	5,500	6,800	8,900	8,000	8,700
People aged 75-79	4,400	5,100	6,300	8,200	7,500
People aged 80-84	3,400	3,700	4,500	5,600	7,300
People aged 85 and over	3,500	4,200	5,100	6,500	8,400
Total population 65 and over	24,100	29,200	33,300	37,400	42,700

(Source: Projecting Older People Population Information system, November 2010)

In 2007/2008 the council commissioned Fordham Research to carry out a Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the district. For the purposes of their report, Fordham use retirement age as the definition of 'older persons'. The table below summarises some of the key points that arose from the report regarding older people:

	Number of households	% of all households
Households with both older and non-older persons	4,956	8.4%
Households with older persons only	14,218	24.1%

(Source: SHMA 2007, Fordham Research Braintree HMA 2007)

With the older population increasing and less available resources, providing services to meet the needs of older people is becoming more challenging. Reviewing current service provision across organisations and identifying any areas where needs aren't being met will help the council to consider how resources can be used most effectively in supporting residents in later life.

The Public Service Provision Task and Finish Group were appointed in January 2010 to carry out a study looking at public services for older people. Members of the group included seven district councillors supported by three members of staff.

The following terms of reference for the study were agreed by the group:

- (1) to identify and understand the current issues surrounding the ageing population at both national and local levels
- (2) to take note of and achieve a better understanding of the existing national policies and strategies regarding older people
- (3) to identify existing Council provided and commissioned services, and any new services that may be required to cater for an ageing population
- (4) to build a simple pictorial representation of older persons services and which organisations/agencies are responsible for providing them
- (5) to make recommendations to the Council/Cabinet on any actions that the Council could take that would support well being in later life.

How We Conducted Our Study

Project Initiation Document

A project initiation document was completed and agreed by members of the group at the beginning of the study. The document identified the:

- terms of reference;
- key stakeholder groups to consult with;
- key contacts; and
- outline schedule

Consultation

An advert was placed in the local press and on the council's website inviting comments about service provision for older people from the public. The following stakeholder groups were contacted directly in writing for their thoughts and views:

- BDC Officers;
- BDC Members;
- Organisations involved with older people; and
- Parish and Town Councils

Feedback and comments received were compiled into an information pack which was then considered and discussed by the group. Copies of the information pack are available on request.

Meetings with Key Organisations

The PID identified specific areas for research and organisations to be contacted. A number of guest speakers attended group meetings and delivered presentations outlining the services provided by their organisations for older people and answered any questions raised by members.

The table below summarises the meetings held between January and October 2010.

Date of meeting	Content
9 th February	Group consider the Project Initiation Document
2 nd March	Guest speakers from Essex County Council (Community Wellbeing)
20 th April	Guest speakers from NHS Mid Essex
18 th May	Guest speakers from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age Concern Essex; and• Braintree, Halstead and Witham Citizens Advice Bureau
29 th June	Guest speaker from Care and Repair England
24 th August	Guest speaker from Essex Fire and Rescue Service

	Presentation of findings from Community Needs Assessment
12 th October	Guest speakers from BDC Community Services, Community Transport and Environmental Services
1 st November	Meeting with Greenfields Community Housing

Braintree District Community Needs Assessment for Older People 2009/2010

A Community Needs Assessment (CNA) to investigate the health and wellbeing of people aged 60 and over was commissioned jointly between BDC and NHS Mid Essex during 2010. The study was undertaken by group member, Clare Lawrence as part of her role as Health and Wellbeing Development Officer (NHS Mid Essex and Braintree District Council).

The CNA involved direct consultation with older people through attending day centres and social groups as well as with professionals working in the area of later life and people who have regular contact with older people.

Interviews and questionnaires were used to gather information and data from the following stakeholder groups:

- Hanover at Home, Home Improvement Agency
- Essex County Council
- Guinness Trust and Dengie Project Trust
- NHS Mid Essex Carers Champion
- Mid Essex Village Agents
- Age Concern
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Central Essex Community Services
- CareCall
- Essex Police
- Gypsy and Traveller community
- Braintree District Voluntary Services Agency
- BDC Services
- Witham Luncheon Club
- Halstead Day Centre
- ECC, Make My Community Work Group
- Braintree and Bocking Community Centre
- Falls prevention class
- BDVSA Greenfingers client
- Age Concern at Halstead Community Centre

Brief Outline of National Context Surrounding Service Provision for Older People

There are a number of policies, strategies and guidance documents available to help councils develop services to meet the changing demographics. These documents provide an outline of the national context for meeting the needs of an ageing population, and the three main publications used as part of the background and preparatory stages to the study are summarised in the table below.

<p>Don't Stop Me Now, 2008, Audit Commission</p>	<p>The report makes the following recommendations for councils to be more prepared to cater for the needs of an ageing population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review their local demographic profiles and reassess their approach to the ageing population • Identify how they can work with older people and local partners to make more efficient use of public and community resources; • Link local demographic profiles and community needs in age-proofing mainstream services and designing targeted services; • Tackle stereotypes and myths that prevent older people being fully engaged in the community and receiving appropriate services; and • Target spending to have the most impact
<p>Building a Society for all Ages, 2009, Department of Work and Pensions</p>	<p>The report recognises the diversity amongst older people and their integral role with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering • Caring for grandchildren or partners; and • being an active member of their local community
<p>Housing our Ageing Population, 2009, HAPPI</p>	<p>The report acknowledges the relationship between housing, health and wellbeing and by addressing housing needs of older people their capacity to live independently and in good health increases.</p>

Although each report has a different focus on later life, there is a common thread supporting the prevention agenda through better provision of services within the home to promote good health and wellbeing and to enable older people to remain living independently in their own homes.

Consultation and Research

Services and Providers

Identifying services available for older people and service providers was an initial task undertaken by the group and helped to provide a direction for the research.

A draft outline of services provided for older people by Essex County Council, NHS Mid Essex (formerly known as Mid Essex PCT) and BDC was compiled as a table. Services provided by agencies, charities and other groups were also included.

The table was circulated to providers to ensure accuracy before being discussed by members of the group.

As a result of carrying out this exercise the group felt better informed to participate with discussions about service provision with stakeholders.

The topics covered by each presentation from stakeholders during January and October 2010 have been summarised in the following section along with the key messages arising from the meeting and key considerations for BDC.

Broad areas: Prevention, Housing and the Home, Caring for Older People	<p>Guest speakers:</p> <p>Andy Payne, Community Wellbeing Strategy Manager Brid Boraks, Community Wellbeing Operations Manager</p>	<p>Topics covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics • Population needs and interventions • Access to ECC services • Eligibility for services • Self Directed Support • Further services • Community Wellbeing • Be Smart Be Safe • Making My Community Work • Village Agents 	<p>Key Messages:</p> <p>The County Council has pledged to deliver Freedom and Choice in Adult Social Care</p> <p>Self Directed Support: Phase one will come into effect on September, and will apply to all new customers (service users and carers) only. From that date, customers will be able to choose the kinds of support they feel best meets their needs and put together their very own Support Plan. Once agreed, they will also be given a Personal Budget to be used in the agreed ways set out in their Support Plan (means tested).</p> <p>Mid Essex Village Agents (pilot project) October 09. The Village Agents pilot in Essex is funded by a partnership between ECC, the Braintree Local Strategic Partnership and NHS Mid Essex. The partnership has commissioned Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) as the pilot project delivery partner.</p> <p>The Village Agents signpost vulnerable hard to reach members of rural communities to advice, information and services.</p> <p>ECC run a “Making my Community Work”; a scheme enabling older people to have a direct role in how to improve their neighbourhoods.</p> <p>The ‘Be Smart Be Safe Handbook’: A handbook designed to help older people feel safe in their homes or out and about in the local community was distributed to around 187,000 Essex residents over the age of 65 in April 2009, in over 109,000 homes. 20,000 copies were also distributed via other outlets such as libraries.</p>
	<p>BDC Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The redesign of the BDC website allows people to navigate more easily to information about services available for older people; • A simple directory of services for older people and access to more detailed local information. • To ensure our housing strategies and policies support older people to remain living independently in their homes and consider housing solutions that would enable this. 		

NHS Mid Essex

Broad areas: Health and Prevention	Guest speakers:	Topics covered:	Key Messages:
	Jane Kinniburgh Interim Assistant Director, Clinical Service Redesign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision of NHS Mid Essex • Strategic context • Commissioning for Health and Well Being 	To move away from a hospital setting of service provision towards a community setting.
	Jane Richards, Assistant Director of Public Health (Health Improvement and Inequalities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign and Commissioning Health Improvement Services 	Integrated Community Teams to be set up and headed by a Community Matron. Each Community Matron to have approximately 50 clients each with differing needs.
	Sallie Mills-Lewis, Director of Commissioning also in attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives • Context • Key Initiatives • Palliative and End of Life Care Commissioning 	<p>Community Pharmacies to support the signposting role of the Community Matrons.</p> <p>To provide a more cohesive service by maximising joint working opportunities across teams and reduce fragmentation of services.</p> <p>Develop a preventative approach/culture to administering health care.</p> <p>Target to reduce hospital admissions by 15% in the over 65's.</p>
BDC considerations:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDC is aware of the new approach and structure being taken to administering health care • BDC visiting officers are able to advise and signpost older people to a range of services that are available to them. • BDC consults with Integrated Community Teams and shares relevant information to assist the development of effective strategies. • Key links again to housing strategies and policies to support the provision of suitable housing that is warm and also supports the housing needs of people with physical disabilities. 			

Age Concern Essex

Broad areas: Health and Wellbeing	Guest speakers	Topics covered	Key Messages
	Presentations from Tony Southam, CEO Age Concern Essex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and information • Home Support Service • Advocacy • Toe nail cutting • Befriending service • Counselling • Local challenges 	<p>Braintree District clients: 600 = enquiries for advice and information 230 = Home Support Service 250 = Advocacy 232 = Toe Nail Cutting 100 = Befriending 25 = Counselling</p> <p>A key priority for Age Concern Essex is to identify the needs of older people by locations. Age Concern Essex is working with the University of Kent on a study to try and establish this.</p> <p>Provision of facilities in public places can play a role</p>

			<p>in older people having the confidence to go out and about and maintain independent lives. For example, town centres should have adequate seating throughout so they are able to take a moment and rest if required. Equally toilet facilities should be easily accessible, of a good standard and secure (not a hotspot for crime or anti-social behaviour).</p> <p>One of the biggest challenges for the organisation is funding. Some services they provide with grant funding will be subject to tender processes.</p>
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<p>BDC Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure older people and/or groups representing older people are consulted when designing public spaces. • Support Age Concern with identifying the needs of older people in specific locations across the district. BDC has use of demographic profiling software which may help Age Concern to target areas. • The housing register can also provide information about needs of older people living in the social sector which could help indicate the kind of services and support needed and where.
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Braintree, Halstead and Witham Citizens Advice Bureau

	Guest speakers	Topics covered	Key Messages
Broad areas: Income	Frances Harper, CAB Supervisor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of service • Promotion of services • Key achievements • The future 	<p>Services to older people include benefit advice including home visits as part of the Disability Outreach Service.</p> <p>Debt problems are increasingly being seen in the over 65's and are typically being acquired through unsecured loans, credit cards and loans within the family.</p> <p>It is particularly difficult for older people to increase their income by any significant amount to clear debts.</p>

<p>BDC considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDC Benefits Team (Housing Benefit and Council Tax) continue to promote services to older people through Community Awareness Days and advertising at doctor's surgeries etc. • Ensure our staff involved in advice services for older people know where to signpost for all types of benefits advice and debt concerns. • Ensure the Benefits Service is well promoted amongst older people. • Ensure the council supports our partners to promote their services.

Care and Repair England

	Guest speakers	Topics covered	Key Messages
Broad areas: National Policy	Pat Strachan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of ageing population • Key policies of former government • Emerging policies of coalition government 	<p>Older people want:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to facilities • a social life • choice • staying put schemes • adaptations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What older people tell us • How are older people involved • Key issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical services • information <p>There appears little mention of later life in the emerging policies of coalition government.</p>
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<p>BDC considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to consult with Care and Repair England on housing strategy for the district • Consider how older people are consulted and engaged with and their involvement with shaping our services. • BDC to explore possible opportunities to work with Care and Repair England to providing workshops that can help prepare older people for later life.
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Essex Fire and Rescue Services

	Guest speakers	Topics covered	Key messages
Broad areas: Housing and the Home	Stuart Hare, Community Safety Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services provided • Joint working with other organisations • Targets • Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with making contact with older members of communities. • Demographic profiling systems to help target older person households have been used in the past but information contained on the system is now out of date. • Home Safety visits are available, this is more than just fitting smoke alarms; it is a fire safety plan for the home. • There is an annual target to fit 1,000 smoke alarms across Braintree and Uttlesford districts.

<p>BDC considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDC officers that visit people in their homes are able to offer residents brief details about the services available by Essex Fire and Rescue services. • Share contact details of key organisations with Essex Fire and Rescue Services to help support the promotion of their service amongst older people.
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BDC Services			
	Guest speakers	Topics covered	Key messages
Broad areas: Getting Out and About, Housing and the Home, and our	Charmaine Dean, Head of Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of Community Safety and Development teams • Older Person Community Awareness Days • Hate Crime Panel • Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team work with communities as a whole and have helped coordinate events to bring different generations together. • Community Awareness Days have been popular. • The Community Development team is working in specific communities to promote intergenerational integration.
	Tracey Corcoran, Community Transport Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social car scheme • Minibus hire • Dial-a-ride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Transport services are widely used. • Vast majority of users are older people. • The service is significantly relied upon by older people to remain living independently.

	<p>Lee Crabb, Head of Environmental Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopper bus • Budget • Major Housing Grants • Minor Works Assistance • Disabled Facilities Grants(DFG's) • Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grants can help support older people to remain living in their homes across tenures. • Some grants are means tested and are repayable on the sale of a property. • The DFG budgets are a mandatory grant, our funding from the government is often topped up from other housing grant budgets. • The current Handy Person Service run by Hanover at Home for home owners and private tenants will cease to operate from April 2011 and we need to look to how it can continue to be provided. The service provides advice, support and action for homeowners and private tenants who are disabled or aged over 60 years, with regard to their home by way of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ technical advice about repairs or adaptations required ○ help to seek appropriate financial assistance ○ assistance to source reliable contractors to carry out works ○ oversee building works ○ offer practical support and provide information about other sources of help <p>600+ handyman jobs were carried out during 2009 and typical spend of works is usually between £150,000 to 200,000 each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With restricted financial resources the council is exploring alternative ways to continue to provide existing services recognising demand will increase.
	<p>Joanne Albini, Head of Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Stock Transfer • Housing for older • Choice based lettings • Disability Working group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stock transfer will enable over 8,000 social rented homes to be brought up to the Decent Homes Standard by December 2012. As at the 31 March 10, 59% of homes were decent. • It was agreed as part of the stock transfer for a handyperson service to be provided by Greenfields for their tenants. • The council has worked with key partner organisations to help enable the provision of two extra care sheltered schemes for the district, Gt. Bradfords in Braintree and more recently Helen Court in Witham. • Older people are supported to use the Housing Register - Gateway to Homechoice service and to find more suitable accommodation. Applicants downsizing are given a higher priority band to help them find a suitable home more quickly and Greenfields Community Housing have a 'Tenants Transfer Incentive Scheme' that offers small grants and practical

	<p>Information received from BDC Communications department</p>	<p>Older person representation on the Peoples Panel</p>	<p>help to move.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council operates a Disability Working Group which includes staff from BDC Housing and Environment Teams, Greenfields and ECC Social Care. The group consider unique cases with specific housing needs and considers the options available. • The Peoples Panel was set up to assist the Council with consulting directly with service users to help inform decision making. Surveys are sent to panellists 4 times a year seeking their views and comments on a number of issues concerning service delivery and improvement. • Members of the panel are people from local communities across the district of all ages and backgrounds. Of the 426 members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 48% are aged between 45 and 64 years old; ○ 19.7% aged between 65-79; and ○ 3.7% aged over 80 • Members of the Peoples Panel represent the broad areas of Braintree, Halstead, Witham and Rural areas. Of the 99 members aged 65 and over: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 29.5% represent Braintree; ○ 13% represent Halstead; ○ 15% represent Witham; and ○ 42% represent rural areas • The Peoples Panel encourages people from all different ages and backgrounds to become members and therefore ensures materials are available in a number of different formats including large print.
<p>BDC considerations:</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess how the financial situation could impact on the current service provision and consider ways which would allow services to continue to be provided with less resource. • BDC to consider participating with the Age UK Excess Winters Deaths campaign to help ensure older people remain in good health throughout the winter months. • Ensure our housing policies support people to downsize to more suitable housing. • Consider how the Peoples Panel could be used in future consultation about issues affecting older people.

Greenfields Community Housing

Broad areas: Housing and the Home		Topics covered	Key Messages
	<p>Greenfields:- Sandra Crosby, Housing Director Pam Richardson, Head of Neighbourhoods Steven McNally Sheltered Housing Manager</p> <p>BDC:- Cllr Ron Ramage Clare Lawrence, Community Health and Wellbeing Officer Joanne Albini, Head of Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving residents in developing services • Sheltered housing • Support for older residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sheltered Housing Forum is well attended. It meets quarterly at schemes around the district. • In April 2010 tenancy visits commenced to all tenants over a three year period. So far over a third of the visits have identified either repairs, adaptations or a need for referral to ECC for social care advice. • Greenfields can place a vulnerability flag on tenant's records which would enable them to give a welfare call in instances of extreme weather to check the person is ok. • Handy person service is very popular. • 27% of customers have access to IT. • Financial Capability Advice – work to combat fuel poverty including providing tenants with advice and information on the best tariffs available. GCH promote the Holdfast Credit Union • Work with BDC to help residents downsize to suitable housing. £25,000 budget to provide the tenant transfer incentive scheme that include small grants and practical help to move. • Three Area Forums – Three groups of residents who work together to improve the town and the surrounding villages. By working together as a committee, they meet monthly to discuss environmental improvement priorities for the area. By consulting other residents to gather a view on the local needs, they are able to spend their annual £100,000 on things that really matter to the local residents. Witham Area Forum has decided to look at issues for Older People.
	<p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenfields are developing their services well and residents are actively involved in shaping these. • Hospital discharge arrangements were discussed. (Clare to seek clarification as to the arrangements with housing providers). • BDC needs to ensure residents living in the private sector are also well informed about services they can also access. 		

Comments from stakeholders (contained in the Information Pack)

Over 20 responses were received from stakeholders regarding the study and some of the key comments made are listed below:

- A number of comments were made about the need for information to be more easily accessible and centralised. There was a general feeling information was often difficult to find because there are so many different sources.
- It was reported approximately 1,304 applications for housing benefit and/or council tax benefit were received from people of pensionable age in 2009/2010. This represented 23% of all applications received.
- A point about domiciliary care was raised regarding the quality of service being received as some service users have inconsistent routines and often to not receive the full amount of allotted time from their carer.
- Membership at a number of day centres and community groups around the district can range significantly depending upon the area but there was significant support for such groups and recognition of their role in supporting health and wellbeing in older people.

Community Needs Assessment: The Findings

As outlined previously the community needs assessment involved consultation with a number of stakeholder groups through interviews, questionnaires and focus groups. The full write up of the report is available on request but key extracts have been included to support the evidence base for work of the task and finish group.

General observations from the Community Needs Assessment

The study made the following general observations:

- Majority of older people who participated with the study preferred the term 'senior citizen' as opposed to 'older people' or 'elderly person'.
- There was a higher level of participation in social clubs from women compared to men.
- There was significant support for the role of the third sector and provision of social clubs however many providers of such commented on how future need will be met given the ageing population. In many instances current usage/membership has already reached the maximum level.
- Majority of respondents raised issues with accessing information and being unsure as to their eligibility to receive certain services.

Recommendations of the Community Needs Assessment

Based on the results and findings the recommendations that arose from the community needs assessment included:

- Developing a leaflet listing local activities, services, clubs and volunteering groups available to older people;
- Investigating possible funding opportunities to help support local agencies and expand their capacity;
- Investigating how a home from hospital service could be introduced across the district;
- Hospital transport needs to be more accessible and available to older people;
- Looking at ways of encouraging more men over 60 to participate in social activities;
- Further investigation needed into the quality of services delivered by paid carers; and
- To explore alternative funding streams to maintain services provided by the Home Improvement Agency

Public Service Provision for Older People Task and Finish Group - Summary

Since January 2010 the group has gathered information from a range of organisations about service provision for older people, gaps in service provision and how services should be developed to meet increasing demands with restricted financial resources.

The group met with senior members of staff responsible for key service areas across the council including Community Services, Community Transport and Environmental Services and discussed how their services meet the needs of older people and how services may need to change in the future.

Through the work carried out as part of the Community Needs Assessment, comments, feedback and points of view from older people themselves have also been considered by the group and provided an insight into what older people want and value.

Information gathered throughout the study was summarised under the following broad areas:

- Information and Access to Services;
- Independent living;
- Prevention;
- Housing and the Home; and
- Health

Information and Access to Services

Many of the points and comments raised with reference to gaps in service provision often related to a lack of information and awareness. Research suggested older people living in the social sector generally felt better informed about services and opportunities available and how to access them compared to older people living in private tenure. Consultation highlighted many older people living in the private sector often assume they will not be entitled to receive services.

Many stakeholders commented on the difficulty of sourcing and using information given the multitude of service providers, eligibility criteria and locality restrictions to consider. In many cases it was felt useful information was available but locating it was not always clear and straightforward. The group recognised the important role of Village Agents in supporting the distribution of information to vulnerable people living in isolated areas.

The comments received during the study supported the findings of the Community Needs Assessment where it was recommended a leaflet containing details of local services and opportunities available to older people should be developed to help older people and their families become more informed.

The internet is an important source of information but we must still design and provide information for people who do not have access to the internet.

Independent Living

Consultation with stakeholders indicated older people generally want to remain living independently in their own homes and highly value services which enable them to do so such as handyperson services. There was limited feedback from older people specifically commenting on care services received in the home; however other stakeholders including

Age Concern Essex and district councillors highlighted quality issues with provision of such services. Consultation indicated reluctance amongst older people to report unsatisfactory services received by carers as many feel uncomfortable in doing so and grateful for the service they do receive.

The design and provision of facilities in public areas was raised as a factor supporting independent living. Ensuring public areas are well designed and equipped with basic facilities such as adequate seating and accessible toilet facilities is key to enabling and encouraging older people to lead active lives promoting good health and wellbeing.

The group gathered information throughout the course of the study indicating the vital role of transport in helping older people maintain social networks and to live independently. The group heard from the councils Community Transport Manager about how the services provided enable older people to carry out general but essential day to day tasks such as shopping, collecting prescriptions, getting to doctors etc as well as maintaining links with family and friends.

The group were informed of how the new approach to providing health care through Community Matrons and Community Pharmacies will also help support older people to remain living independently.

Prevention

As outlined previously key organisations such as Age Concern Essex and Essex County Council support the prevention agenda through the provision of services such as toe nail cutting, handyperson service and the Be Smart Be Safe handbook. The group were informed how services such as these help older people to remain living independently in their own homes.

A further example of prevention work being undertaken by AgeUK to further support older people living independently is the launch of the Excess Winter Deaths campaign this year. The campaign aims to highlight the number of deaths of older people caused by cold weather and to raise the profile within communities of how cold weather can impact older people. Basic measures that should be taken to help older people cope better in times of cold weather are also outlined as part of the campaign.

Based on findings from the study the task and finish group recommend the council considers how it can support AgeUK's Excess Winter Deaths campaign and promote the measures to be taken by older people to help keep safe and healthy at home this winter.

Housing and the Home

As the local housing authority the council is committed to improving the housing conditions and provision for older people in the district. The housing stock transfer in November 2007 ensured that all the 8000 homes transferred to Greenfields Community Housing will meet decent homes standard by December 2012.

Approximately 46 % (3,700) of Greenfields properties have at least one older person living within them. Of these 3,700 properties there are approximately 4,400 older people of which over 2,000 are estimated to be aged 75+. The 'housing transfer promises' also included the provision of a handy person service for their older tenants.

Greenfields handy-person service is aimed at their older tenants and those with mobility difficulties, who may be unable to do odd jobs around their home. The current charge for the handyman service is £5.00 per hour, for a maximum of 3 hours plus cost to materials. The type of work carried out could include:-

- Fitting/re-fitting curtain rails;
- Fixing bolts to rear gates;
- Minor fixing jobs (e.g. fitting door numbers);
- Picture hanging;
- Moving beds downstairs;
- Minor garden lopping (not grass cutting);
- Minor decorating (e.g. touching up small areas of paintwork);
- Replacing washing lines;
- Fitting chains to doors;
- Connecting washing machines;
- Fitting doorbells;
- Putting flat pack furniture together; and
- Fixing loose carpets

The housing transfer also made provision for investment to improve the former council owned sheltered housing schemes and these improvements are now underway in many schemes and remodelling work in two of sheltered housing schemes in Halstead and Hatfield Peveler is in progress.

The district also now benefits from two extra care sheltered housing schemes:-

- Gt Bradfords House, Braintree - The Braintree and Bocking Abbeyfield Society – A scheme of 35 flats that opened December 2007.
- Helen Court, Riverview Witham – Hanover Housing Association – A scheme of 55 flats that opened August 2010

An Extra Care Scheme is not a residential care home but has a higher level of support and care provided than in sheltered. Everyone living there will have Assured Tenancies with full security of tenure but with housing related support and care provided in their home.

The table below summarises the tenure breakdown of older person only households as estimated in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment carried out in 2007:

Total number of older person households	14,218	% of total number of older person only households
Tenure		
Owner occupiers no mortgage	9,048	64%
Owner occupiers with mortgage	707	5%
Social rent	3,978	28%
Private rent	485	3%

(Source: Braintree SHMA 2007, Fordham Research)

As shown in the table the majority of older person only households in the district are in the private sector and therefore may not be aware of the information, support and services available and may find it challenging to access them.

Health

General health of the population has improved consistently over previous years however there remains a gap in the number of deaths, life expectancy and general health inequalities between those living in disadvantaged groups and those in more advantaged groups. Those in disadvantaged groups typically have a shorter life expectancy and poorer general health compared with the rest of the population.

The Braintree Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008 reported no large concentrations of multiple disadvantage in the district although small pockets of deprivation in north-east areas of Braintree town and south Halstead were identified.

Being aware of the more deprived areas across the district can help the council and other organisations promote the services available to older and vulnerable people and target the provision of services for people within these communities.

Public Service Provision for Older People Task and Finish Group - Recommendations

Based upon the research and consultation carried out regarding public service provision for older people across the district, the Task and Finish Group would like to put forward the following recommendations:

- 1) The council considers how it can support the Age UK campaign 'Excess Winter Deaths'. The aim is to raise awareness amongst communities through MP's and local authorities of the impact cold weather can have on older people and advise on measures to be taken to help ensure older people remain in good health throughout the winter months.**
 - 2) Ensure the needs of older people are considered into the planning and design of public places, for example ensuring there is adequate seating available in town centres.**
 - 3) We need to identify how we can work with older people and local partners to make more efficient use of public and community resources and acknowledge the differences in the needs of older people living in rural and urban areas.**
 - 4) *Information and Access to Services:* - The council reviews its website to:-
 - a. Ensure information is easy to find and focused on customers' needs rather than service based.**
 - b. Enable people to easily access links to information about services for older people provided by other organisations through the council's website.**
 - c. Consider developing a simple directory of core services in the district and also information about local services, clubs and events can be made easily accessible to people.****
- The council also needs to ensure hard copies of information are available if required.
- 5) Consider how our officers that visit people in their homes can be briefed on a wider range of key information that will also enable them to sign post to other agencies.**
 - 6) *Housing and the Home:* -
 - a. Investigate the continuation of Handy Person Service in the district. (In excess of 600 handyman jobs were carried out by the service in 2009).**
 - b. Ensure owner occupiers and private tenants have access to housing advice and help (we estimate more than 60% of older person only households across the district live in the private sector).****

- 7) *Income:* - Ensure we continue to help older people maximise their income.**

- 8) ***Neighbourhoods:*** - Continue to ensure we support community work aimed to bring different generations together and encourage people to volunteer their time to help support the provision of key services for older people.

Closing Summary

The members of the Public Service Provision for Older People Task and Finish Group would like to thank to the organisations and individuals who been contributed to the study.

Members of the Public Service Provision for Older People Task and Finish Group 2010

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Appendix 1 – Diagram of services provided for older people

Appendix 2 – Summary of responses received during consultation period

Older People Services Provision



This diagram shows the providers which go to support the provision of Older people services in the Braintree district, apologies to any associations or organizations we have left out of the diagram.

We do hope you find it useful!

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TASK & FINISH GROUP 2010