

Older Persons Housing Study

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1. Introduction

Wigan Council is one of 26 'Excellent' Local Authorities¹ throughout the country involved in the Innovation Forum. The Innovation Forum is an initiative introduced by the Government that provides the opportunity for new and innovative schemes to be developed. In Wigan the focus is on improving care and quality of life for older people, in line with the National Service Framework for Older People.

A service model has been adopted that seeks to:-

- Improve pathways within the acute hospital setting and upon discharge.
- Develop traditionally hospital based services within community settings.
- Integrate health and social care management within primary care settings, giving particular emphasis to proactive chronic disease management, the promotion of self care and enablement and the development of alternatives to hospital admission.
- Develop a multi-agency prevention strategy that promotes independence and empowerment.
- Focus on universal environment factors which impact upon well-being e.g. environment, housing, transport and community safety.

A sub-group of Wigan's Innovation Forum, the Older Persons Housing Study Group, was set up in August 2004 to specifically look at the housing needs of older people and to make recommendations that will support the work of the Innovation Forum. The group, led by Wigan Council's Housing Strategy section, consisted of representatives from Age Concern, Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency (HIA), the Social Services Department, Wigan and Leigh Housing, Supporting People and the Over 50's Forum. The group regularly fed back on their progress to the Older Persons Action Group, which is made up of a mixture of residents and organisations working with older people.

Aim of Study

The study's overall aim is:

"To develop a series of proposals that look to encourage a comprehensive network of services aimed at assisting older people's housing needs, and which are complementary to and integrated within the wider whole systems approach being adopted for older peoples services within the borough."

¹ Wigan Council is categorised as 'Excellent' by the Audit Commission's Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA). For more information go to www.audit-commission.gov.uk

This study is the culmination of work carried out by the Older Person's Housing Study Group. It aims to outline the range of research that has taken place around older persons housing within Wigan Borough, the North West region and the UK and to provide recommendations based on the current and future housing needs of older people within Wigan Borough.

From the nature of the recommendations it should be understood that this is still the start of the process with significant further work being required both in terms of researching specialist areas and implementing its findings.

Whilst this study primarily focuses on housing issues, it is important to recognise there are other significant factors that affect housing choice, such as transport, health, safety and local amenities. These wider issues are to be addressed in greater detail within the wider remit of the Innovation Forum.

2. National and regional context

The housing agenda

In February 2003 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister produced the document, 'Sustainable Communities: Building for the future', which outlines a number of actions the Government intends to take around housing policy. It promotes the creation of sustainable communities that have a number of aspects such as a strong local economy, strong leadership, effective involvement of local communities, safe and healthy environment, good transport infrastructure and so on.

Following this outline plan, a number of follow-up reports were written, including 'Sustainable Communities – Homes for All' (ODPM, Jan 2005), which outlines the Government's housing plans to develop sustainable communities over the next five years. It aims to offer "greater choice and opportunity in housing across the country" and outlines several themes:

- Homes where they are needed most
- Sustainable home ownership
- Quality and choice for those who rent
- Reviving communities and housing markets, and
- Enhancing the environment.

Various strategies exist at different levels that reflect the priorities outlined in the above reports.

The North West Regional Housing Strategy is currently being updated but sets out 4 main strategic priorities, which seek to achieve these broad aims:

- Urban Renaissance and Dealing with Changing Demand. In particular focusing on areas that previous interventions have tried but failed to arrest decline.
- Providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities
- Delivering decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods.
- Meeting needs for specialist and supported housing

At a Greater Manchester level efforts are being made with the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) to develop a complementary sub-regional strategy which will feed into the regional approach. In the recently published "Sharing the Vision: A Strategy for Greater Manchester" one of the key themes, 'Creating Sustainable Communities', gives housing a prominent role.

At a local level there are four critical existing strategy documents that strongly influence local housing developments, namely the local Community Plan, the Housing Strategy, the Unitary Development Plan and the Supporting People Strategy.

- The Community Plan, a multi-agency document, outlines the aims and objectives for the Borough for a range of issues such as education, regeneration, health, the environment and housing.
- The Housing Strategy focuses in more detail on the housing needs of the Borough and currently has three main themes:
 - People and Choice
 - Neighbourhood Renewal, and
 - Quality Homes.
- The Unitary Development Plan is the main planning document for the Borough and identifies potential development sites and areas where the environment should be protected. It guides developers and landowners and details the policies, which control both public and private development proposals, including housing developments.

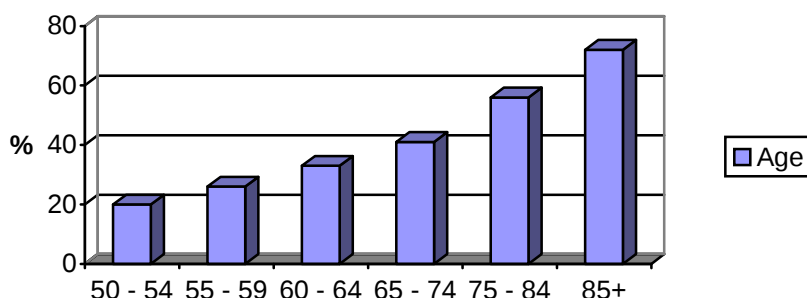
Whilst older persons needs and requirements feature in all these strategies it should be emphasised that the central thrust of them relates to regeneration, affordability and housing standards, which affect the whole community.

- Wigan's Supporting People Strategy has also recently been produced. This is particularly relevant to older people as it outlines the strategic plan for the housing support needs of vulnerable people in the Borough, which includes older people.

The Changing Needs of Older People

Much work has been done in recent years that highlights the potential impact of the country's ageing population and the need to plan in advance for this change. Most of these studies advocate the development of preventative services which should be used to enable older people to be independent and make a positive contribution to society for as long as possible. This is important both for the quality of life of older people themselves and also to ensure that public services can cope with future demand. National research has shown that the percentage of people with a limiting long term illness rises the older the population is (see Chart 2.1).

Chart 2.1 - Percentage over 50's with limiting long term illness (per age band)



The case for change can be illustrated by a report recently produced by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Oct 2004) which argues for a shifting of balance away from a focus only on acute care and the most frail older people. The report promotes 'an agenda which is about promoting quality of life and well-being, addressing ageism, recognising older people as equal citizens in society, and valuing the contribution older people make in their communities' (see Figures 2.1 & 2.2).

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in '*Quality and choice for older people's housing: a strategic framework*' acknowledges this agenda and sets out a framework as to how changes should be made in the housing sector to reflect the changing approach. It highlights five key areas for new policy and service development:

- Diversity and choice – promoting independence and responding to needs and preferences
- Information and advice – accessible to professionals and older people on the variety of housing and support options/solutions available
- Flexible service provision – encouraging housing reviews and flexibility of services in order to meet changing needs and views of older people
- Quality – encouraging quality in housing and service provision, and monitoring of services
- Joint working – improving the integration of local services.

The North West Forum on Ageing (NWFA) has used the basis of this report to produce a toolkit entitled *Sustainable Communities: Meeting the Needs of Older People in the North West (Housing)*. It highlights that there will be wider issues around an ageing population as there becomes an increase in diversity "in its characteristics, aspirations and attitudes", including an increasing BME population. Providing a range of housing options for older people will become even more crucial in the future to reflect the wants and needs of a more active and diverse older segment of the population. The key issues highlighted in the toolkit echo the ODPM's *Quality and choice for older people's housing: a strategic framework* key issues. However the NWFA has also included two more key issues:

- Specification and Design – ensuring buildings are accessible, internal layouts and design can address problems of restricted movement, alarms and communication equipment is conveniently located and easy to use.
- Planning Policy – older people should be considered when drawing up planning policy. Issues such as site location and encouraging ‘older people friendly’ developments. A toolkit entitled *Sustainable Communities: Meeting the Needs of Older People in the North West (Spatial Development)* has been written to focus in more detail on this issue.

Figure 2.1: Support for people today

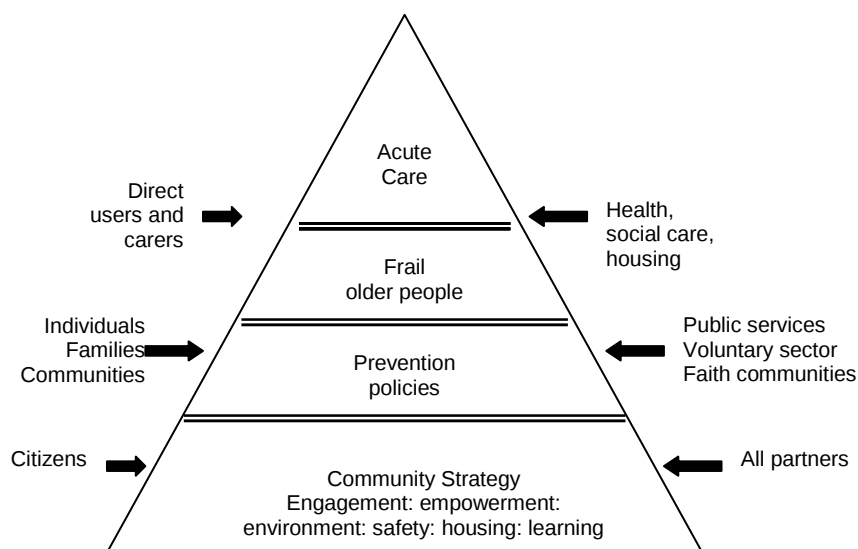
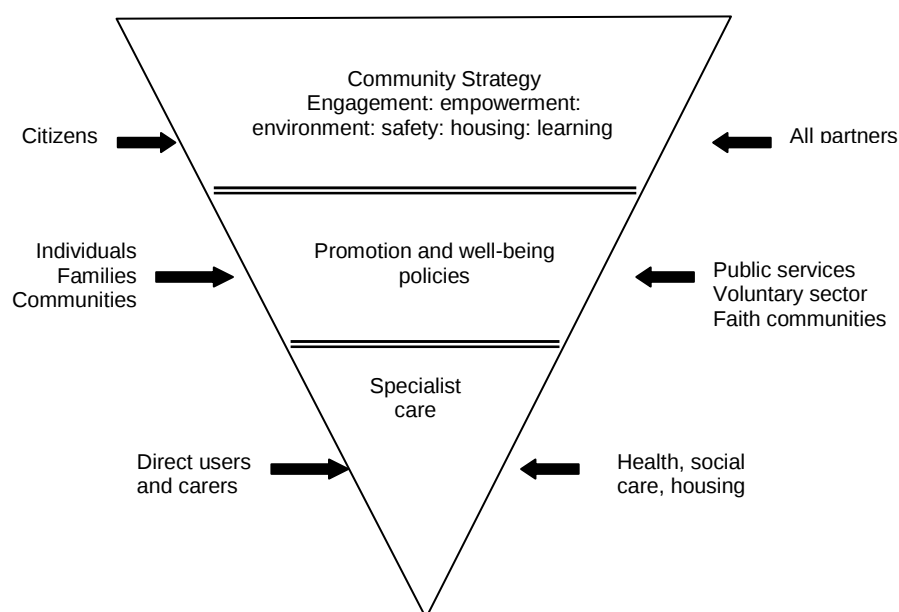


Figure 2.2: Support for people tomorrow



Taken from 'From welfare to well-being – planning for an ageing population'. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Oct 2004).

3. Housing demand from older people in Wigan Borough

Population change

Wigan, like the UK and North West region, has an ageing population and until recently, a projected declining population. However, most recent projections show a modest growth, with a general population increase from 304,000 in 2003 to 319,000 by 2021 (4.7% rise). However, the rise in the numbers of older people is much more dramatic with a 30% rise in the over 65 age group and more critically a 37% rise in the over 85 age group over the same period. This increase in the frail older population will have important consequences on acute care and support services. (See Appendix A for tables showing variety of population trend forecasts).

Appendix B shows the population distribution of older people throughout the Borough, taken from the 2001 Census. The largest proportions of older people live in the Hindley, Abram, Platt Bridge and Bickershaw; Leigh; Shevington, Standish and Aspull; Wigan North; and Wigan South townships. Wigan North in particular shows a high percentage of older people. Appendix C shows a map of the Township locations.

Housing choices and needs

Approximately 90% of older people in the UK live in their own home², approximately 5% live in sheltered accommodation and the other 5% live in care/residential homes. Wigan's Housing Needs Survey (2003) and figures from the 2001 Census suggest that Wigan's older population matches this pattern. A range of evidence from both national and local research indicates that the vast majority of older people who live in their own home would like to stay there. For example, consultation carried out by Wigan Social Services has found that the majority of older people would like to be supported to stay independent in their own home for as long as possible and that moving into a residential or nursing home is not a preferable option. The support older people suggest they need mainly centres around smaller maintenance jobs, gardening and cleaning.

There are several possible reasons why older people want to stay in their own home. Suggestions include attachment to the property they have lived in for a number of years, attachment to the local area and also a lack of information about alternatives. Within Wigan Borough, for example, there is evidence to show that people of all ages have a particularly strong attachment to their locality. Using guidelines from both the ODPM's 'The Housing Market Assessment Manual' and LGA's 'Improving Housing Needs and Market Assessment' it has been shown that Wigan Borough has a high proportion of residents who tend to remain in their township and who move home less often than either the region or nationally. An attachment to the locality specifically

² This study uses the term 'own home' to describe those older people that are owner occupiers or who live in the private or social rented sector. It does not include those that live in sheltered or other specialised housing.

from older people can also be observed in Wigan and Leigh Housing's waiting and transfer lists³ for sheltered housing. These show that 71% of people on the waiting list would like to stay within their own township and 86% of people on the transfer list would like to stay within their own township.

However, the preference from older people to stay in their own home is complicated by a number of issues. When questioned, most older people choose other issues before housing as important to their quality of life. In a recent workshop with older people, carried out by Age Concern Wigan and Leigh, participants were asked what was important to achieve a good quality of life. Responses included the environment, transport, access to amenities and services, feeling safe and not feeling lonely or isolated. Although these are issues that are linked to housing, housing itself was not mentioned until prompted by the workshop facilitator. Thus if policies aimed at helping older people living in their own home are to be successful, measures aimed not just at housing, but at personal support, neighbourhood management and transport issues are needed.

The Housing Needs Survey raises the issue of how the children of older people perceive their parents housing needs. Generally the children of older people tend to predict a higher level of support needs than their elderly parents. Table 3.1 shows the housing types respondents to the Housing Needs Survey 2003 predicted their elderly parents would need within the next 5 years. This illustrates a conflict between how older people feel their own housing needs should be fulfilled effectively and how their children believe they should be housed. The choice of the older person themselves must be of primary concern, whilst balancing the concerns of resources and cost to the family and the local authority.

Sheltered or residential housing may often be the most appropriate solution to an older person who is struggling to cope in their own home, however the ultimate choice of whether this should be the case is the individual older persons needs. One possible development that should be explored, in order to assist older people to stay in their own home, is the increased use of Assistive Technology. For example, older people and their families are often fearful of having a fall and being unable to call for help. New technology, such as help alarms attached to the users wrist or sensors placed around the home can monitor the individual and can trigger alarms at a central call centre if a fall takes place, allowing assistance to arrive as soon as possible. This type of technology can assist in reducing the number of people who are forced to move in to specialist accommodation and in reducing long term stays in hospital.

³ Transfer list refers to those who currently live in a Wigan and Leigh Housing (WALH) property and have applied for a WALH Sheltered housing placement. Waiting list refers to those who do not currently live in a WALH property and have applied for a place in WALH sheltered accommodation.

Table 3.1 – Accommodation required by elderly parents in the next 5 years

	% responses	% households	No's implied (all choices)
Live with respondent (need extension / adaptation)	23.0	23.3	406
Council / HA sheltered housing	20.4	20.6	359
Council / HA housing	19.3	19.5	340
Live with respondent (existing home adequate)	13.7	13.9	242
Residential care / nursing home	12.8	13.0	226
Private housing	8.5	8.6	150
Private sheltered housing	2.3	2.3	40
Total	100.0	101.2	1,763

Current figures indicate a reasonably high demand for sheltered accommodation within the Borough. However, as Table 3.2 shows the majority of people move into sheltered accommodation for medical reasons. If 'other' is excluded, the top three reasons for moving into sheltered accommodation are 'medical', 'poor environment' and 'neighbour problems', all reasons, it could be argued, that are out of the individual's control. Although these figures should be treated with some caution, due to the nature of how they are collated, they do provide some insight into why older people choose sheltered accommodation and should be the starting point to begin more detailed analysis. National research also tends to indicate that demand for sheltered housing varies depending on the quality and location of the accommodation. The extent to how quality and location affects demand for sheltered housing in the Borough is difficult to quantify. However, the geographic spread of sheltered schemes is reasonably comprehensive, although the quality of the provision may be a limiting factor, as research shows that older people tend to want an extra bedroom in order to have family and friends staying over or simply for extra space. Almost all the current provision consists of one bedroom units.

Table 3.2 - Reason for wanting transfer to Wigan and Leigh Sheltered Housing

Medical	110
Other	36
Poor environment	16
Neighbour problems	15
Receive support	11
To be near relatives	11
Under occupation	10
Retired to parental home	2
Fear of crime	1
Gone home (matrimonial)	1
Overcrowding	1

Other types of accommodation specifically designed for older people are becoming increasingly common elsewhere in the country, such as retirement villages, or private sector retirement flats. This market is relatively underdeveloped in Wigan, largely due to relatively low incomes and the attachment to current home and place. However, recent developments of high quality apartments in more affluent, peripheral areas of the Borough seem to be largely selling to older people, indicating an increasing demand for such accommodation. This trend of private provision is likely to be an important provider of accommodation in the future, as the proportion of older people who own their own home increases with time. For example, the proportion of older people aged over 75 who are owners is currently approximately 46%, whilst for those aged 60-74, over 66% are owners and this proportion will grow to over three quarters in the longer term. This will have important implications for the future provision of specialist housing.

It is unclear if older people are aware of all of the different housing choices that are now available, but recent consultation carried out by Wigan's Supporting People team suggests that knowledge is quite low. In a questionnaire sent out to all members of the Over 50s Forum the following percentages of respondents knew about the following services (see Table 3.3):

Table 3.3 – Awareness of different types of accommodation

Accommodation type	Total	Percentage
Extra care / very sheltered	29	21.5
Sheltered	106	78.6
Home care	75	55.6
Day care	71	52.6
Floating / tenancy support	14	10.4
Careline/ community alarms	56	41.5
Residential homes	104	77
Nursing homes	96	71.1

There is also the issue of how easy it is for older people to find out about all of the choices available to them. Moving home can be notoriously stressful for any person and currently there is no one point within Wigan where older people can get comprehensive advice on all of the different housing options available, both in the public and private sector, and other related issues such as financial implications. Various organisations offer support to older people on a variety of issues, however it is sometimes difficult for them to keep up to date with all of the different available options. Help and advice to older people would be particularly valuable if available following a 'life event', which tends to mean that older people often need to move at short notice following illness or bereavement .

4. Housing supply for older people in Wigan Borough

General housing supply

As mentioned above the majority of older people in Wigan live in their own home. The type and size of properties older people are most likely to live in is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 – Property types of older people in Wigan (HNS, 2003)

	Aged 60 - 74	Aged 75+
Owner occupied with no mortgage	56.6%	43.6%
Owner occupied with a mortgage	8.5%	2.4%
Semi – detached	30.7%	24%
Terraced	32.8%	33.1%
Bungalow	22.7%	25.8%
Property built pre-1975	82%	73.6%
2 Bedrooms	34.7%	45%
3 Bedrooms	51.8%	35.9%

When looked at next to other evidence from the Housing Needs Survey and the Stock Condition Survey, this table implies that older people, on average, are more likely to live in rented accommodation than the rest of the population and that their property is likely to be both older, smaller and in poorer condition than average. Whilst this is beginning to change over time, with greater proportions of ‘younger’ older people living within their own home, the picture of relative housing deprivation of older people is likely to continue.

This is also compounded by the nature of the borough and the population distribution of older people. A recent research report entitled ‘The Changing Nature of Wigan’s Housing Market’ shows how the relative gap between the borough’s more central areas and its peripheral areas is growing. Thus, in housing terms, the older central areas, such as parts of Wigan, Leigh, Atherton and Hindley, tend to have higher proportions of older poorer housing, suffer from lower house prices, have higher perceived community safety problems and often have declining populations. In contrast, peripheral areas such as Lowton, Standish and Shevington tend to have newer more highly priced housing, lower community safety issues and are sought after.

In broad terms, a greater proportion of older people tend to live in the older more established urban areas and thus tend to suffer the difficulties of these areas eg. neighbourhood decline, anti-social behaviour. This is despite major efforts to reverse this neighbourhood variation via area based initiatives and investment. National research by the Economic and Social Research Council found that older people who live in deprived neighbourhoods are especially disadvantaged with 70% of older people in these areas being vulnerable to or experiencing some form of social exclusion.

It has also been shown by the English Stock Condition Survey that older people are more likely to live in properties that are in worse conditions than average. However, in Wigan, housing conditions are better than in most areas. The percentage of unfit properties in the North West is 8.5%, but in Wigan it is estimated to be approximately 3.0%. This is largely due to the successful investment policies by Wigan and Leigh Housing within social housing and the targeted approach to home improvement the Council has implemented in the private sector. Older people as well as the rest of the population have benefited from these approaches, and although housing situations are better than most other areas of the country, it is still true that older people tend to suffer poorer housing conditions than the rest of the population.

The Housing Needs Survey 2003 also illustrates the scale of the problem of the suitability of older people's homes. For example, it found that whilst the overall numbers of adapted properties (9%) was comparable with other areas, there are over 9,000 older households who felt they had a need of an adaptation or further adaptations. To put this into perspective, this would be the equivalent of doubling the proportion of adapted property in the borough and cost approximately £54m. This demand for assistance is also demonstrated by the high number of applications received by the Council and by the high number of jobs completed by Wigan Care and Repair. Despite this gap, there are a number of initiatives that have been put in place in order to assist older people in coping with this

need. For example Wigan Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal section work with Social Services and Wigan and Leigh Care and Repair to target help at vulnerable people, and have grants specifically for older people. Wigan and Leigh Housing also work with Social Services to provide adaptations for council tenants. Care and Repair also provide advice to older people on how to commission work to their own property even if they are not eligible for a grant. It should be noted, however, that some of the borough's preventative services, such as handyman services to help with general home maintenance, are underdeveloped and do not satisfy current demand.

In addition to adaptations and maintenance there are a number of other support needs that older people may need in order to stay independent within their own home. Social Services currently offer a range of home support services such as Careline, loaning of aids and befriending. However, it is

"Research by Heywood (2001) into the costs and benefits of adaptations concluded that adaptations are value for money. The study took 30 relatively large adaptations and found that on average, an adaptation was in place for 3.57 years and had a cost of £10,569. Broken down into weeks, it cost an average of £4.74 per week to reduce the burden of care on either a family member or to provide an alternative to paid care. This £4.74 per week compares very favourably to the average cost per week of keeping an older person in residential care, which is £338."

(Taken from ODPM, *Excluded Older People – Social Exclusion Unit Interim Report*, 2005)

clear from the Housing Needs Survey 2003 that most older people who receive extra care within their home get help from friends, family or neighbours and not statutory or voluntary agencies. If this support were to diminish, this would clearly have implications in the future.

Specialist housing supply

Approximately 10% of the older population do not live in their 'own home' but live in specialist accommodation such as sheltered, extra care sheltered or residential care homes. Table 4.2 shows the distribution of specialist accommodation.

Table 4.2 – Number of specialist units per Township

Township	Number of residential / nursing schemes	Number of residential / nursing bed spaces	Number of sheltered / extra care schemes	Number of sheltered / extra care units
Ashton and Bryn	4	181	2	38
Atherton	6	185	8	222
Golborne & Lowton	4	103	7	199
Hindley, Abram, Platt Bridge & Bickershaw	11	324	10	310
Leigh	9	402	11	298
Orrell, Billinge & Winstanley	2	90	6	173
Shevington, Standish & Aspull	8	228	5	145
Tyldesley & Astley	2	44	4	133
Wigan North	7	245	12	336
Wigan South	6	335	10	291
Total	59	2,137	75	2,145

There are currently 75 sheltered schemes in the Borough (including 4 extra care schemes) with a total of 2,145 units, which is broadly comparable with the rest of the country. Almost two thirds of the schemes are provided by Wigan and Leigh Housing, with the remainder provided by Housing Associations. In terms of geographical coverage, there is a relatively good spread of sheltered housing with most neighbourhoods having provision. However, in certain peripheral areas such as Shevington, there is no provision and thus people would be forced to move out of their established areas if they required sheltered housing.

One issue that needs to be explored further is the quality and suitability of much of the specialist accommodation within Wigan Borough. The bulk of the provision was built some time ago and is in need of investment. Whilst works aimed at achieving a decent home standard are currently underway, some other aspects of sheltered accommodation across the borough needs modernising and updating due to peoples changing requirements. For example, there are some simple works that could be done to improve the

accessibility of sheltered accommodation such as replacing steps leading up to, or within the properties. Also important to independence are bathroom adaptations, which can often mean just small adjustments to existing fixtures making a big difference to people's lives. However, the largest problem is the current understandable desire by older people to have two bedroomed accommodation whilst almost all existing sheltered and bungalow accommodation currently has only one bedroom.

A further issue with the current supply of sheltered housing concerns the changing needs and desires of older people. For example, at present the bulk of the sheltered housing provision is provided by the socially rented sector and with the exception of four extra-care sheltered schemes aimed at those with greater support needs, it provides a relatively traditional service to customers. In the future, this is likely to be challenged in a number of different ways. Firstly, in national terms, there is a clear drive to develop the range of services provided by sheltered housing in an effort to reduce the need for residential homes. Secondly, older people are quite rightly becoming more aware of what they require and as a result, a whole host of different types of housing provision is emerging such as retirement villages and innovative services which are directly geared to older people's needs. Finally, in the future, greater numbers of older people who are owner-occupiers and who are relatively asset rich, will emerge and they may well choose private sector provision.

In residential care and nursing homes the need for modernisation is more acute and demanding with the introduction of Care Standards, which are set and monitored by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). The standards have introduced a minimum standard of care that residential and nursing homes must provide including single rooms, a minimum number of trained staff and a minimum size of room. This has affected the older and smaller homes to such an extent that some homes have had to either greatly increase fee levels or to close due to the loss of bed spaces making staff costs impossible to pay and the home non-viable.

By far the biggest provider of residential care homes within Wigan Borough is CLS Borough Care, who took over the management and ownership of the Council homes. In addition to the recent pressures faced following the introduction of the care standards, CLS Borough Care have adapted a policy of closing homes and redistributing residents in response to a small number of vacancies appearing across a number of care homes. This is a response to the reducing residential care home market in Wigan Borough and reflects the commitment of Wigan Council and partner agencies to reduce "admissions of supported residents aged 65 or over to residential/nursing care". However this policy could mean that a greater number of older people who want or have to move into residential care will be forced to move a long distance from their home, increasing their stress and the stress on family members, especially if there is an elderly spouse left at home.

Finally there is an issue around short term accommodation that needs to be explored. As already mentioned the majority of older people who receive

support at home are supported by family, friends or neighbours. However, there is currently a shortage of respite bed spaces available within the borough, which provide a break for carers and the individual being cared for. In addition to this there is no move on accommodation for older people who have been in hospital but could move out with temporary low level support (ie sheltered or extra care accommodation) until they are able to maintain full independence at home. The introduction of a relatively small number of temporary bed spaces could provide much needed short-term support for a large number of people either preventing crisis situations or moving people out of expensive and much needed hospital beds.

5. Learning Points / Identification of Areas Requiring Action

This section summarises and integrates the learning from our analysis of older persons' housing in Wigan.

■ The Ageing Population

Whilst it is a well known and documented trend, the single biggest issue facing older persons housing is that of a generally ageing population. Over time the proportion of the population that is older will significantly increase and at the same time the population of younger people will reduce. This is illustrated by the fact that the numbers of people aged 65+ will increase by nearly a third by 2021 and the 85+ age group will increase by 37%. Especially important will be the significant increase in the numbers of frail elderly with the major increase within this group occurring between 2010 and 2020. This will mean an increased demand for services and has major implications for health, welfare and housing services. In all the supporting literature the increased emphasis on preventative services for older people is advocated as the favoured way forward in trying to sustain services.

■ Relative Disadvantage of Older People

Relative to the rest of the borough's population, older people are disadvantaged. This can be seen by the fact that more older people tend to live in older housing which is in worse condition than average. They also tend to live within the older built up areas which disproportionately face population decline, lower house prices, high fear of crime and relative deprivation. This disadvantage is reinforced by the high numbers of older people who need adaptations to their current home to make them suitable due to illness or disability. However, this relative disadvantage does need to be viewed against Wigan's broad favourable housing position, as it has low levels of unfit / non-decent housing and properties with good heating arrangements than in most parts of the country.

■ Desire to remain in their own homes

In terms of the current housing demand the overwhelming bulk of older people want to continue to live in their own home as long as possible. This is due to a combination of reasons including:-

- ◆ a very strong sense of identity with their local township,
- ◆ support from neighbours and relatives
- ◆ being close to local facilities.

Given the strength of this desire it is predicted that this trend will largely continue. To enable people to meet this desire most would like more help in coping to live at home in terms of relatively low level support. Whilst this includes help with housing maintenance and the provision of adaptations, other factors such as neighbourhood difficulties eg, anti-social behaviour,

lack of transport and local facilities seem to be major issues. The promotion and expansion of services aimed at helping people stay in their homes would seem to be a cost effective and highly beneficial way of meeting the needs of older people.

- Sheltered Accommodation

The current and future provision of specialist accommodation is probably the most complex and difficult area to analyse and one which is difficult to predict. However, the study found the current size of the sector in line with expectations and there is currently high demand for the accommodation. There is also significant investment in raising standards and a start on diversification has been made via the provision of extra care/ specialist schemes.

However, the situation is complex with some key concerns and trends which will affect the types of accommodation needed. For example, it is suspected that many older people view sheltered housing negatively tending to only move there due to illness or neighbourhood issues, although this needs to be investigated in more detail. Secondly there is a future issue over the quality of current provision particularly in terms of the current provision being one bedroomed and demand is for at least two bedroomed accommodation. There is also a government move to encourage extra-sheltered housing as an alternative to traditional residential homes. Finally more and more older people in the future will come from an owner-occupied background thus they may opt for some type of private provision. This latter point being evidenced by the recent growth of private sector “apartment” building. The current innovation in the sector in response to older people’s views is also an issue with the development of new types of provision such as retirement villages. The current trend to live abroad or partially abroad in retirement also needs to be noted.

All these trends combined with financial constraints from Supporting People means that more detailed work on this sector is needed to plan for the longer term. However, in the interim this study would feel confident enough to judge that measures aimed at maximising the value of the existing provision, at taking opportunities to diversify the current provision by widening the traditional role of sheltered schemes and to actively promote the development of private provision for older people within the area should be actively encouraged.

- Housing / Non-housing linkage

Throughout this study it has been very clear that housing and non-housing issues are totally interlinked. For example, the ability of people to stay in their own home is strongly influenced by health and social care policies and the role of specialist accommodation is equally critical to welfare services. Also wider issues such as neighbourhood management, community safety and transport are key issues in people’s housing

choices. Thus it is vital that “whole systems” approaches are used to improve services and for non-housing objectives to be linked with the key housing aim of providing affordable and decent housing.

From these learning points it is felt that action needs to be considered on the following issues:

- To increase the number of properties that have been adapted to make them more suitable for their older occupants.
- To maximise value for money for adaptation works for vulnerable people and to encourage private investment in this area.
- To encourage new housing developments to build to lifetime standards.
- To ensure that help is provided to vulnerable older people to improve their homes to a decent standard.
- To explore ways of extending services aimed at helping older people maintain their home.
- To maximise private investment to help improve housing conditions/suitability.
- For housing services to link within a wider prevention strategy with health and care services to enable older people stay in their own home, utilising the use of assistive technology in this regard.
- To explore ways of extending community safety initiatives aimed at older people.
- To ensure the importance of wider non housing issues that affect older people’s housing decisions are discussed with relevant partnerships and agencies.
- For the different providers of specialist housing for older people to co-operate and develop services to maximise the value of existing accommodation.
- To maximise the bidding opportunities to improve both services and accommodation via new development or utilising existing resources.
- For supporting people reviews on older persons’ services to improve the efficiency and value for money for supported schemes.
- To encourage private development of older persons accommodation via the planning system and in dialogue with developers.

- To develop links between the housing providers and advice agencies to ensure older people can access the full range of information and advice on housing choices.
- For a major study on the future direction of specialist housing for older people. This study needs to take account of the rising number of frail elderly, the innovative models of provision now developing, the expected increased participation by the private sector and the role of existing services. It also needs to take account of the costs of change, especially on how costs within the public sector can be managed. Key debates within this study should be the merits of different models of provision eg. retirement villages and the extent a growth in services can be met via private provision and via savings in more acute care.

6. Aim and Objectives

This study has presented the available evidence on older people's housing issues, it has discussed key learning points and has set out a number of areas requiring action. In order to develop these into reality, this next section sets out an overall aim and a number of objectives.

Aim

"To develop a network of housing services and provision to ensure older people have access to an affordable home of choice within a safe well-kept neighbourhood which is complementary to and integrated within the wider approach being adopted for older people's services within the Borough."

Objectives

- 1) To enable people to stay in their home, by:
 - (i) Making their homes suitable through adaptations and advice.
 - (ii) Helping them maintain their home through advice and the development of services.
 - (iii) Enabling them to cope with living through preventative and support services and the use of assistive technology.
- 2) To provide a suitable choice of home for those who wish to move, by
 - (i) Maximising the use of existing provision through investment and joint working with providers.
 - (ii) Looking at the future requirements for specialised housing and developing a choice of provision.
- 3) To co-ordinate agencies in the provision of housing, housing support services and advice for older people, by
 - (i) Continuing to work with and develop current partnerships, such as the Innovation Forum, to develop policies around older persons housing.
 - (ii) Developing greater links between housing providers and advice agencies to ensure older people are receiving up-to-date and accurate information and advice.

Resources

Forecast mainstream capital and revenue availability for the Housing and Supporting People Strategies are contained within those published strategy documents. However, it should be noted that both the revenue and capital resources are likely to reduce over time, thus creating pressures. In addition, other special project funding may be available over the short to medium term eg. Partnerships for Older People grant.

Whilst known existing resources can be utilised to improve the Older Persons Service, and better co-ordination and partnership arrangements can add to greater efficiency, there are still likely to be some elements of the service which cannot be provided without substantial new resource input.

It is the view of this study that a strategy of “thinking whole and building piecemeal” should be adopted. Progress may be variable and depend on opportunistic funding yet at the same time we need to know the direction we need to travel in.

More detailed discussion of possible resources to achieve the strategic objectives is provided within the Action Plan.

7 Action Plan / Performance Framework

In order to measure the success of this study, the aims and objectives have been developed into an action plan that sets out how these objectives are to be achieved and over what timescale. In addition to this a performance management framework has been developed that seeks to measure the improvements made to services on an annual basis which then sets a series of key 5 year SMART targets to assess whether a difference has been made.

Given this study is part of the wider Innovation Forum Appendix D also sets out how the document contributes to the Older Person's Forum and in particular the Older Peoples Policy Framework.

Action Plan

What do we need to do?	How is it to be achieved?	Timescale	Responsibility	Resource Implications
1 Enabling people to stay in their own home (i) Making homes suitable	- To review current Council adaptation policies to ensure fairness in access and to ensure procurement practices secure best value. - To maximise the resources for adaptation by lobbying government and ensuring funding opportunities from all sources are utilised. - To explore alternative ways of ensuring people's homes are suitable - To encourage all housing development especially specialist accommodation to build to lifetime standards.	Review adaptation policies March 2006 Immediate and continuing To include such proposals within the Adaptation Review (March 2006) Ongoing	Community Protection Dept / Wigan and Leigh Homes / Social Services ↓ Community Protection Dept / Planning and Regeneration Dept	Existing resources. Additional resources sought Existing resources. Existing resources.
(ii) Maintaining the home	To explore ways of extending services concerned with helping older people maintain their homes. Priorities within this key area being Handy Person Scheme, greater capacity to help older people with smaller maintenance jobs, energy efficiency promotion, gardening initiatives and schemes promoting	Expansion of existing services by March 2007	Range of agencies. Community Protection Dept to form working group.	Additional resources required and sought

What do we need to do?	How is it to be achieved?	Timescale	Responsibility	Resource Implications
	reliable contractors.			
	- To review help provided to older people in private housing via the Council's Housing Assistance Policy - To work proactively to create choices for older people in utilising some of their housing wealth to help maintain their housing and quality of life eg equity release schemes etc.	Review by April 2006 Explore local and regional opportunities and consider packages by March 2006.	Anees Mank ↓	Existing resources. Existing resources.
(iii) Enabling people to cope with living	- For housing services to be linked into a wider prevention strategy with health and care services with the aim of enabling older people stay in their home via low level support / care services. - To explore the greater use of supporting technology in helping people stay in their home and in targeting help to those most in need.	} } } } } } } } } } Review and report by April 2006	Community Protection Dept / Social Services	Not known
	To explore ways of extending Community Safety initiatives aimed at older people.	Expansion of existing services by March 2007	Community Protection Dept	Additional resources sought.
	To ensure the importance of non-housing issues that affect older people's housing decisions are made known to the relevant services and partnerships and discussion occur on action eg community safety, transport, street scene, environmental services	Discussion with all relevant partnerships by April 2006.	Community Protection Dept	Existing resources.

What do we need to do?	How is it to be achieved?	Timescale	Responsibility	Resource Implications
	To link with the review on a wider prevention strategy and on the use of assistive technology with a view to maximising the role of existing specialist accommodation.	Develop initial proposals by March 2006	Community Protection Dept / Social Services	Not known.
	For the Supporting People reviews on older people's housing to look to improve the efficiency and value for money of the existing schemes.	Ongoing.	Sheltered providers group	Existing resources.
(ii) Developing a choice of specialised housing in the future.	To explore the various models of providing a variety of purpose-built accommodation in the borough and to develop a clear vision of the future specialist housing requirement.	Develop a vision on the future provision of specialist housing for the elderly by March 2006.	Sheltered providers group	Not known
	To look to bidding opportunities to provide a choice of specialised accommodation via new development or utilising existing schemes.	Develop initial proposals by June 2006.	Community Protection Dept / Social Services	Not known

What do we need to do?	How is it to be achieved?	Timescale	Responsibility	Resource Implications
3 Co-ordination of all agencies on the provision of housing, housing support services and advice for older people. (i) Developing partnerships	To seek ways of providing a greater variety of accommodation by looking to encourage private development of older persons' accommodation via the planning system and via dialogue with developers within a strategic approach.	Ongoing scope for intervention within Affordable Housing policy (summer 2006 onwards)	Community Protection Dept / Planning and Regeneration Dept	Existing resources.
	Continue the existing framework of developing services via the Innovation Forum, the Older Person's Action Group (sub-group of the Housing Partnership)	Ongoing		Existing resources.
	To develop these links via setting up a group to maximise the use of existing accommodation and to drive forward more information on the future direction of the older people's housing in Wigan.	Set up group by August 2005.	Community Protection Dept / Supporting People	Existing resources.
(ii) Developing information and advice services	To ensure the above services are developed in liaison with the wider Innovations Forum Preventative Agenda.	Ongoing within Innovation Forum		Existing resources.
	To develop links between the housing providers and advice agencies to ensure older people can access the full range of information and advice on housing choices.	Develop contacts and information base by September 2006.		Existing resources.

Performance Management Framework

Aim	High Level Performance Indicator	Annual Indicators	Contribution to the Older Person's Framework
(a) Enabling People to stay in their own home			
(i) Making homes more suitable	To increase the number of suitably adapted homes in the borough from 9% to 12% by 2010.	Number of properties adapted with help from the Council Number of properties constructed to lifetime homes. Satisfaction levels of residents with Council services.	Primary Aim 5.
(ii) Maintaining the home	For all socially rented properties to meet the decent home standard by 2010. For 70% of private homes containing vulnerable people (inc older people to meet the decent home standard by 2010).	Proportion of WALH homes decent. Number of private houses made decent with help from the Council Number of people in fuel poverty helped.	Primary Aim 6

Aim	High Level Performance Indicator	Annual Indicators	Contribution to the Older Person's Framework
	To increase the number of older people being helped to maintain their home by 50% by 2010.	Number of people helped to maintain their home by: ◆ Council ◆ Care & Repair ◆ Age Concern ◆ Other	Primary Aim 5
(ii) Enabling people to cope with living	To increase the number of older people being enabled to live in their own home by low level housing support services by 10% by 2010. To increase the number of people who feel that they live in a safe clean neighbourhood by 10% by 2010	Number of older people in receipt of Supporting People services. Number of older people provided with / linked into assistive technology. Citizens Panel: Fear of becoming a victim of crime. Perception of anti-social behaviour Satisfaction with neighbourhood	Primary Aim 5. Primary Aim 6.
(b) Providing a choice of home for those who wish to move.			
(i) Maximising the use of existing accommodation.	To ensure all sheltered accommodation for older people is accessible by 2010.	Number of sheltered schemes accessible for older people.	Primary Aim 5.
		Satisfaction of WALH tenants with the sheltered housing service.	Primary Aim 5.

Aim	High Level Performance Indicator	Annual Indicators	Contribution to the Older Person's Framework
(ii) Providing a choice of specialised housing	To increase the proportion of new development suitable for older people by 20% by 2010.	Number of accessible flats built Number of bungalows built. Number of extra sheltered housing units. Number of private sheltered provision Number of "other" specialist housing for older people.	Primary Aim 5.
(c) Provision and sharing of information	Increase the number of older people receiving advice by 10% by 2010.	Number of older people provided with housing advice by:- ◆ WALH ◆ Care & Repair ◆ CAB ◆ Age Concern ◆ Other	Primary Aim 5.

8. Useful Reading

Local documents

David Couttie Associates, *Wigan Borough Housing Needs Survey 2003*
(Contact Housing Strategy Section for more information)

Michael Howard Associates, *Wigan Borough Stock Condition Survey 2005*
(Contact Housing Strategy Section for more information)

Wigan Local Strategic Partnership, *Wigan Borough Community Plan*

Wigan Council, *Wigan Housing Strategy 2002 – 2007*

Wigan Council, *Wigan Supporting People Strategy 2005*

Wigan Council, *Wigan Unitary Development Plan*

Regional documents

Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, *Sharing the Vision: A Strategy for Greater Manchester (2003)*

Government Office North West, *North West Regional Housing Strategy*

Lancaster University – North West Regional Research Laboratory, *An Ageing Population, Impacts for the North West* (June 2000)

North West Forum on Ageing, *Sustainable Communities: Meeting the needs of older people in the North West (Health and Social Care)*

North West Forum on Ageing, *Sustainable Communities: Meeting the needs of older people in the North West (Housing)*

North West Forum on Ageing, *Sustainable Communities: Meeting the needs of older people in the North West (Spatial Development)*

National documents

Audit Commission, *Independence and well-being* (2004)

Department for Work and Pensions, *Link-Age – Developing networks of services for older people* (2004)

Housing Corporation, *Strategy for Housing Older People in England* (2003)

Housing Corporation, *The Big Picture – Older People* (May 2002)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *From welfare to well-being – planning for an ageing population* (2004)

Local Government Association, *All Our Tomorrows, Inverting the Triangle of Care* (2003)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future* (2005)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Sustainable Communities: Homes for all* (2005)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Quality and choice for older people's housing: a strategic framework*

Appendix A

Projected population aged 65 and over, 1996 – 2021 (North West, Greater Manchester & Wigan)

	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	% Change
N.W.	854,905	844,666	853,913	897,896	996,810	1,051,103	18.7
G.M.	381,448	367,523	364,005	375,357	411,201	429,993	11.3
Wigan	43,258	42,902	44,412	48,181	53,753	55,350	21.8

ONS population projections, 1996 – 2021 (North West, Greater Manchester & Wigan)

	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	% Change
N.W.	6,891,277	6,870,496	6,842,587	6,820,443	6,812,590	6,807,544	-1.22
G.M.	2,575,535	2,559,937	2,544,161	2,533,332	2,528,583	2,525,953	-1.93
Wigan	309,786	307,061	303,330	299,348	296,005	292,628	-5.54

Projected change in Wigan's population 2003 – 2021

	Aged 0 – 19	Aged 20 – 29	Aged 30 – 44	Aged 45 – 64	Aged 65+	Total
Projected change in population 2001 - 2021	- 8,300	+ 1,400	- 7,700	+ 11,100	+ 18,600	+ 15,100

Projected households, 1996 – 2021 (North West, Greater Manchester & Wigan)

	1996	2001	2011	2021	% Change
N.W.	4,503,493	4,624,465	4,858,752	4,858,752	12.72
G.M.	1,056,508	1,074,105	1,113,205	1,150,858	8.9
Wigan	125,572	127,691	130,486	133,143	6.0

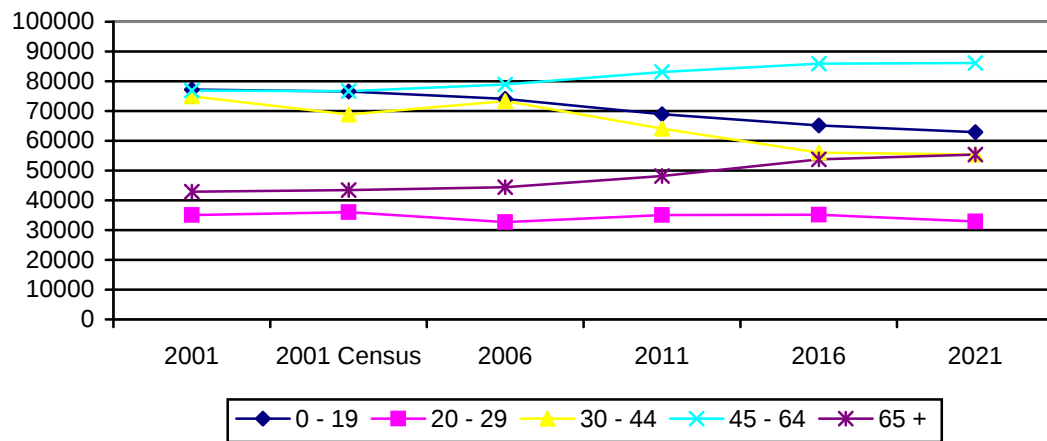
Percentage of one and two person older households

	Aged 60 - 74	Aged 75+	Total
One person living in the property	29.9%	63.7%	93.6%
Two people living in the property	60.8%	35%	95.8%

Projected change in population aged over 80 years

	2001	2001 Census	2006	2011	2016	2021	Overall Change
Aged 80+	10,603	10,355	10,892	10,769	11,266	12,684	
Change in population		- 248	+ 289	- 123	+ 497	+ 1,418	+ 2,081

Wigan Borough Population Forecast

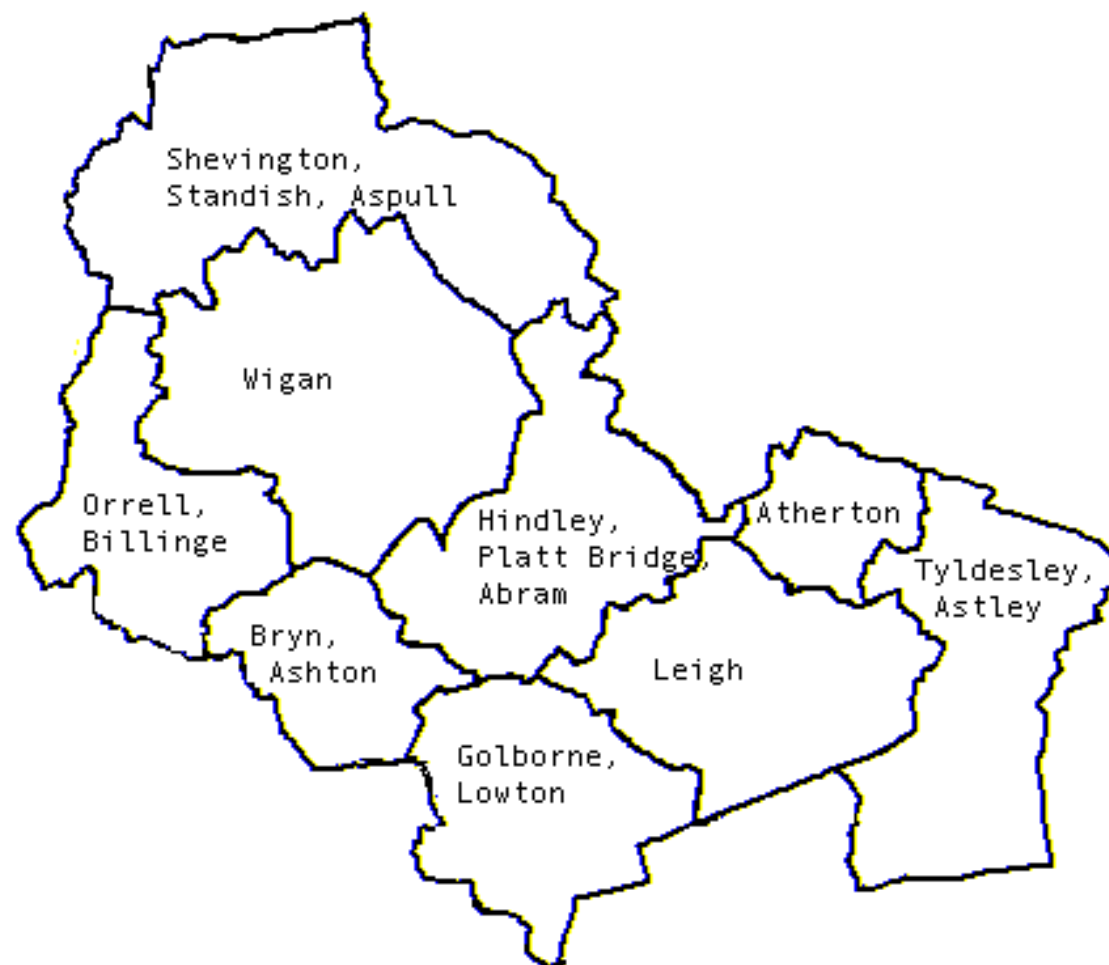


Appendix B

Wigan Borough older population – Distribution by Township

Township	Total population	% of Borough population	Total population aged 65+	% of Township population	% of Borough population	Total households	No. pensioner households	% of total households
Ashton and Bryn	23,568	8%	3,217	13.6%	7.4%	9,682	1,982	20.5%
Atherton	23,746	8%	3,689	15.5%	8.5%	10,231	2,390	23.4%
Golborne & Lowton	23,438	8%	3,278	14%	7.6%	9,664	2,061	21.3%
Hindley, Abram, Platt Bridge & Bickershaw	36,121	12%	4,771	13.2%	11%	14,593	3,020	20.7%
Leigh	40,163	13%	5,820	14.5%	13.4%	15,700	3,599	22.9%
Orrell, Billinge & Winstanley	21,174	7%	2,815	13.3%	6.5%	8,426	1,740	20.7%
Shevington, Standish & Aspull	36,330	12%	5,198	14.3%	12%	14,691	3,129	21.3%
Tyldesley & Astley	24,888	8%	2,963	11.9%	6.8%	10,033	1,869	18.6%
Wigan North	35,589	12%	6,232	17.5%	14.4%	15,555	3,967	25.5%
Wigan South	37,124	12%	5,422	14.6%	12.5%	15,658	3,548	22.7%

Appendix C



Please note, since the creation of this map Wigan Township has been split in to Wigan North and Wigan South. Wigan North includes Ince, Whelley, Scholes, Springfield and Beech Hill. Wigan South includes Worsley Mesnes, Worsley Hall, Kitt Green, Marsh Green, Pemberton, Newton and Lamberhead Green.

Appendix D

Linkage / Contribution of Housing to Older People's Framework

Older Person's Framework Key Objective	Description of Housing Contribution	Assessment of the Housing Linkage with Key Objective
1 Improve pathways within the acute hospital setting and upon discharge.	Housing's contribution lies in attempting to reduce admissions via wider preventative exercises and by ensuring homes are suitable upon discharge. (See key objectives, 3, 4, 5.)	Contributory linkage.
2 Prevent avoidable hospital admissions and facilitate early safe discharge.	Housing's contribution lies in attempting to reduce admissions via wider preventative exercises and by ensuring homes / services are suitable upon discharge. (See key objectives 3, 4, 5.)	Contributory linkage.
3 Develop traditionally hospital based services within the community	-	No linkage.
4 Integrates health and social care management within a primary care setting giving particular emphasis to proactive chronic disease management, the promotion of self care and enablement and developing alternatives to hospital admission.	-	No linkage
5 Develop a multi-agency prevention strategy which promotes independence and empowerment.	Housing's contribution includes work in developing services aimed at:- ◆ adapting properties ◆ helping people maintain their home ◆ provision of low level services to help maintain their home ◆ use of assistive technology	Direct linkages

Older Person's Framework Key Objective	Description of Housing Contribution	Assessment of the Housing Linkage with Key Objective
	◆ supporting people policies ◆ using existing sheltered accommodation ◆ developing a variety of choice of housing for older people including different types of specialist accommodation ◆ providing full access to services via greater information	
6 Focuses on universal environmental factors which impact upon well being eg environmental, housing poverty and community safety	Housing's contribution includes work in developing services aimed at: ◆ improving housing to decent homes levels ◆ reducing fuel poverty ◆ improving neighbourhoods ◆ helping to improve community safety ◆ improving quality of life ◆ consultation with older people	Direct linkages