

A HOUSING STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN GOSPORT

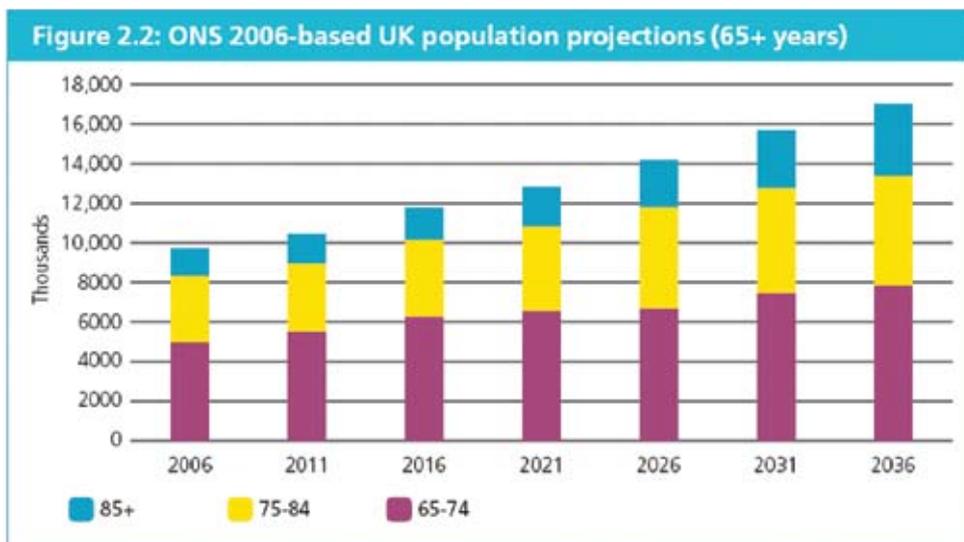
2009 - 2011



Introduction

This strategy has been written so that Gosport Borough Council (GBC) and its partner agencies respond to the specific housing needs of older people living in the Borough. The overall aim is to consider the role of housing and the impact of the Council's strategic priorities around the promotion of well being, linked to health, environment and prosperity. As a Council we need to ensure that older people in Gosport have access and choice to appropriate housing with the support to live independently if needed. With this in mind, the strategy sets out a long term vision for the future of our community and paves the way for Gosport to become an even better place for older people to live in.

National figures from the Office of National Statistics show that the population growth of people who are 75 years and older will rise by 47% in the next 25 years. Therefore it is crucial that new houses being built today will meet the needs and aspirations, today and in the future, of older people living in the borough.



Setting the Scene

The borough of Gosport is located in Hampshire on the South Coast of England and is set on a Peninsular of just 27.5 km², making it one of the most densely populated urban areas in the South. We have the benefit of over 27 km of beaches, as well as inlets, marinas and a waterfront bordering Portsmouth Harbour.

The town's heritage is primarily a product of the Borough's long associations with the Royal Navy and the defence of Portsmouth Harbour, with many of its naval and military establishments now of national historic importance.

Land use and employment have, in the past, been dominated by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). This influence has declined over the last decade, releasing land for regeneration and development. It is estimated that at one stage over two thirds of the Gosport economy was dependent on the MoD, but with the recent decline, many local people are forced to seek work outside the Borough. There is a single carriageway access road (A32), no train line and only pedestrian and cycle/motorcycle ferry access to Portsmouth.

It is now clearly acknowledged that the population profile of Hampshire, like the rest of the country, is changing. In 2008, 21% of the population was over 60 years of age, but this is set to rise by 27% by 2026. The largest growth is going to be in the 'older old' i.e. those over the age of 85 years of age. In Gosport the growth in this age group between 2008-2025 will be from 1,900 to 3,500 people, a rise of 84%.

The table below shows all households in Gosport at the time of the 2001 Census, whose Household Reference Person was of pensionable age, (pensionable age is 65 and over for males and 60 and over for females).

All Households where HRP is of Pensionable Age (Households)	Count 8,883
Owned (Households)	Count 6,343
Rented from council (Households)	Count 1,501
Other social rented (Households)	Count 573
Private rented or Living rent free (Households)	Count 466

The predicted growth of older people as a proportion of the population will create new challenges for Gosport in terms of providing services that will be needed, so that older people can make active, informed choices with regard to their housing, health and care needs.

Developing the strategy

Any strategy cannot be adequately developed in isolation of service users and service providers. This strategy is the result of a multi-agency approach to delivering improved and sustainable services to support older residents living in Gosport.

As part of the Hampshire wide consultation on the Older People's Wellbeing Strategy a consultation event was held at the Town Hall in Gosport during January 2008. The event was held as a joint project between GBC and Gosport Voluntary Action and was attended by partner agencies and the voluntary sector.

The event was structured around a framework using the 7 Dimensions of Independence (2004) from the Audit Commission's Better Government for Older People model. Older people of Gosport were asked to comment on what is important to them using the dimensions in the table below. The dimensions provide simple and clear headings within which to balance the complex interaction between what individuals can do and what the wider community needs to address in order to affect older peoples well being and quality of life.

Dimension	What older people in Gosport say is important	What are we already providing?
Housing and home	Access to a handy person scheme, sufficient income to live on, maintenance of the house and gardens, adequate heating, financial advice, assistance to downsize property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Persons Support Services: Gosport Lifelines and signposting to other agencies • Telecare • HomeCheck scheme • Referrals to Gosport Voluntary Action, who run schemes such as a handyperson service and gardening schemes • Winter Warmth Roadshows • Information and assistance on downsizing property • Make a Difference gardening and painting scheme • Energy Advice • Development of an extra care scheme with facilities for use by the community
Neighbourhoods	Feeling safe in the community, adequate lighting, visible policing, footpath maintenance, the need for all ages to mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident Associations and Road Representatives • Access to the in-house Community Safety Team • Partnership working with the local Police • NAGs – Neighbourhood Action Groups

Dimension Social activities, social networks, keeping busy	What older people in Gosport say is important Access to social groups, access to affordable leisure activities, good neighbour schemes, voluntary work opportunities	What are we already providing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering opportunities at our Gosport Resource Centre • Free training to tenant and leaseholders • Community Development Worker to engage specifically with older people
Getting out and about	Access to public transport and disabled parking, transport to hospital, bus passes, storage with power points for mobility scooters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is taken into account in our local and regional planning policies to ensure that existing and new homes are linked to local services. • New developments for older people contain storage and charging facilities for mobility scooters.
Income	Financial advice, part-time work opportunities, benefits advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals to the Pension Service • Benefits advice • Home visits by the Department of Work and Pensions to maximize income • Debt and Money Advice Group: Gosport Savers – extending the services of the Portsmouth Savers Credit Union into Gosport, offering advice on debt and money management • Home Trust Loan – a unique Home Improvement Loan Service provided <i>*Home owners only</i>
Information	Easily accessible information, use of computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided in a variety of formats (Braille, large print, different languages) • Leaflets about all aspects of the housing service, as well as information on the Gosport Borough Council Website • Free use of computers and access to the internet at the Gosport Resource Centre • Directory on local services specifically for the over 60's
Health and healthy living	Information on diet, social activities, easy access to GP surgeries, walking for health, knowledge of aids for independent living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Disabled Facility Grants • Mature Movers training Gosport Lifelines/Telecare • Walking to Health • Directory on local services specifically for the over 60's

Agencies that have worked together to shape this strategy are:

- Gosport Borough Council
- Hampshire County Council - Adult Services, including Strategic/Operational, the Hampshire Supporting People Team and the Joint Older People's Well-Being Steering Group
- Hampshire Primary Care Trust including community hospitals
- Older person's resident representatives
- Gosport Voluntary Action
- Housing Associations
- Hampshire Partnership Trust.

Engaging with Older People

There is an established framework for involving and engaging with older people that uses the views of older people in service planning and delivery. Historically this was the Local Implementation Team. However, since the reconfiguration of the Council and health services, other forums are now being established.

Older people have also been engaged directly when making contact with partner agencies. Specific involvement in the development of this strategy has taken place via the consultation on the Hampshire Health and Well Being Strategy, the Councils Resident Involvement Framework as well as through the tenants Sheltered Housing Panel and Housing Forum.

Older BME resident's needs are addressed via the Councils Race Equality Scheme and the Crime and Disorder Strategy covers issues of racial harassment. The Council also employs a Community Development Officer who works specifically with BME groups in the Borough.



Gosport's Housing Needs

Unless stated otherwise, the data in this strategy has been taken from the Housing Needs Assessment 2007, in particular the section that examines the housing and support needs of households with a member aged 60+. One of the recommendations from the assessment was to look at the need for extra-care accommodation for the elderly and to re-assess the existing sheltered stock to meet today's housing standards. As a result of this, one sheltered scheme, The Leisure, has been demolished and a new extra care scheme is being built on this land and another scheme, Rogers House, is due to be demolished and redeveloped in the near future. Both new developments will provide homes for older people with high quality communal facilities so that residents have the opportunity to participate in a range of activities.

B:Where do we want to be?

Our vision

Our vision is to:

- Improve the quality of life, independence and well being for older people in the borough, and promote the benefits of doing so
- Ensure that older people are listened to, their views are acknowledged and respected and their needs are appropriately met, irrespective of who they are, where they live and the services they may need
- Empower older people so they can make valid and informed choices and have control over their own lives
- Provide opportunities for all older people to become involved with the improvement of services in Gosport
- Provide opportunities for all older people to have access to, and participate in, their community as useful and respected citizens and to fully enjoy their social and leisure activities and interests.

Aims of the Older Persons Housing strategy

The specific aims of the older persons housing strategy are to:

- Promote wellbeing and minimise the impact of unnecessary ill health and deterioration
- Prevent avoidable hospital admissions and admissions to long term care
- Provide an overview of the care, housing and support services
- Enable older people to have the information to choose their preferred home and to know what support is available to enable them to make that choice
- Promote social inclusion as part of the wider agenda to enable older people to enjoy full citizenship
- Inform and contribute to the 2008-2011 Older People's Well-Being Strategy to ensure that Gosport has an optimum range of housing related support services

C: How are we going to get there?

To realise the vision, a series of principles are needed which all agencies and older people understand and adopt. In this way we will all be working in the same direction towards the common goals of improving the health and wellbeing of older people in Gosport. The principles reflect the key issues emerging from consultations with agencies and older people and are listed below:

- **OPPORTUNITY:** Older people want an environment in Gosport that encourages opportunity
- **INDEPENDENCE:** Older people have the right to accessible information and advice, so that they can remain independent and in control
- **WORKING TOGETHER:** The people who provide services should work together to meet the need of the individual older person
- **DIGNITY:** Ensuring that there is no ageism or discrimination towards older people and valuing the experience that comes with age
- **RESPECT:** Older people deserve to be treated with courtesy and respect by all citizens. Older people wish to be asked for their views and listened to, rather than others assuming they know best
- **EQUALITY:** Ensuring that older people are not adversely affected by changes in services and that Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on strategies, policies and procedures
- **LOCALITY:** Gosport has a number of distinct geographical communities across the borough. Service providers need to take into account the different needs of these communities and equality of opportunity
- **PARTNERSHIPS:** Partnerships between older people and agencies are necessary at all levels of decision making and involvement
- **BE REALISTIC:** Realistic timescales and adequate funding are required to develop and implement agreed actions.

Lifetime Homes and Accessible Housing

GBC is working with Housing Association partners to ensure that any housing built in the borough conforms as far as possible to Lifetime Homes Standards. This set of standards aims to provide accessible and adaptable accommodation for everyone, from young families to older people and individuals with a temporary or permanent physical impairment for tenants to live in for as long as possible without having to move. There are sixteen design & accessibility criteria that would need to be met to make a property fully compliant with the Lifetime Homes Standards and it is acknowledged that all criteria are not always possible to meet in every property. However GBC is keen to incorporate the lifetime homes principles where possible in all new properties that are built as affordable units in Gosport.

Decent Homes

The Government standard for Decent Homes for all Council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) properties is on target to be met for 2010 and will contribute to the aims of this strategy for older people, as it benefits many of the residents in the Borough by improving the quality of accommodation.

In terms of the private sector Decent Homes Standards, there is still a long way to go. We are working with partners, including the Home Improvement Agency (Intouch), the Regional Housing Board, other local authorities and energy providers to offer a range of initiatives to improve homes in the private sector. These initiatives include:

- Warmfront
- Loft Clearance (Intouch)
- Handypersons scheme
- Thermal Imaging project

GBC and Intouch also offer a wide range of services and advice to residents, including information on welfare rights and signposting to a range of services which promote the independence and wellbeing of older and disabled people. In Hampshire, funding for HIA comes from Supporting People, Adult Services and each of the district & Borough Councils.

Gosport has employed a Decent Homes Project Officer to develop strategies and encourage improvement to private sector properties in order to meet the decent homes standards.

Gosport Choice

For those wanting to move to sheltered accommodation or designated elderly social housing, the Council provides the Gosport Choice register. Anyone is entitled to join the register and bid for properties that have been advertised. People may only apply for those properties advertised as being suitable for their household size but the system does enable applicants to choose the location or sheltered housing scheme they want. Although the number of people over 60 on the housing waiting list was 495 in November 2009, applications for certain sheltered schemes remains low. Measures will be developed to promote the range of older persons housing available locally within the borough.

Sheltered Housing Review

In June 2006, the Housing Board decided that the Council does not have the resources to make all the investment we would like into the eight existing sheltered schemes.

A Sheltered Housing Review Working Group was set up to discuss and consider a range of solutions for the future of the GBC sheltered housing service. A mix of solutions for the different schemes was agreed. This included the retention, investment and redevelopment of schemes, in partnership with an RSL and identifying an alternative use for one scheme.

The Working Group also reviewed service standards and made visits to schemes managed by alternative providers to see what different services may be provided in the future. The revenue contributions towards the costs of the service from the Supporting People system was reduced in April 2007, so it was necessary to implement changes to the service whilst minimising the impact to residents.

It was agreed by the June 2007 Housing Board that in future more people in the community should be able to benefit from their local sheltered housing service, using it as a location for immediate service provision.

Gosport Sheltered Housing and Lifeline service

GBC provides a low level support service to older people in sheltered accommodation and in the wider community. Residents can benefit from:

- Gosport Lifelines in the community – an alarm service which provides peace of mind for older people. It connects easily to the telephone line and at the touch of a button enables residents to obtain help in an emergency.
- Weekly welfare visits from Housing staff to provide practical support to older people to help them maintain their independence in their home.

For more information on this service, contact Mary Burgess on 023 9254 5453.



Telecare

Telecare alarms and sensors are a low cost risk management option for people who want to live safely and independently in their own home for as long as they feel able. Each Telecare package is tailored to meet the needs of the individual, and as their needs change the package can be modified. The alarm and sensors are simple to use, providing reassurance and support from the knowledge that friendly and professional assistance is there every minute of the day.

The Hampshire Partnership & Well-Being team are set to meet their target of helping 2,400 additional people benefiting from Telecare technology through the Preventative Technology Grant by 2008/9. In Gosport, 259 Telecare systems have been installed since the beginning of the project in August 2007.

Success Story:

Mrs D lives alone and is suffering from Parkinson's disease. She has no family living nearby. She was referred for Telecare by her Occupational Therapist who recommended her to have an alarm, falls detector and key safe. She had already fallen twice; the last time she fell she was alone for almost 8 hours until found by a neighbour who was concerned he had seen no lights on. Feeling shocked and suffering from severe cold and dehydration Mrs D was taken to hospital. Since having Telecare installed she has fallen twice more, each time she has been responded to by her neighbour and friend who live close. She was attended to within 25 minutes and has had no repeat visits to the hospital.

Locality Housing Officers (LHOs)

The employment of LHOs by Hampshire County Council Adult Services has already resulted in 360 people who requested a move being helped to move into general needs accommodation from supported housing during this year. As well as providing an improved quality of life for people with care needs there has been a saving during 2006 of over £1.16 million in the cost of providing residential care. The target for the third year is 264 new people, the cumulative number of people who have care needs identified through care management and housing need identified through a district council housing needs assessment

Success story:

Mr. P's marriage had broken down and he was living in a touring caravan out of county due to limitations on length of stays in caravan parks.

Mr. P is in his sixties and had numerous medical conditions including diabetes, dual sensory loss and severe arthritis in his lower limbs. Each time the Locality Housing officer spoke with Mr. P his mood was low and he didn't think he could continue much longer living in the conditions he was. His finances were suffering due to driving to and from Gosport each week to visit and maintain as much contact with his children as possible.

Several agencies had been working with Mr. P to ensure he maintained as much of a balanced life style as possible but with these services being based in Gosport it has proved difficult at times. Mr. P was overwhelmed when he was referred to the LHO and with her assistance was recently allocated a fully adapted property in Gosport near his children, which would meet his needs now, and in the future.

Older Persons Visiting Support Officer and Community Development Officer (Older People)

Two new jobs have been created this year with funding from Hampshire County Council. The role of both officers is specific to older people in the community.

The Community Development post will provide help, advice and support to enable older people to play a full part in developing sustainable community based projects. There will particular focus on community involvement in the Bridgemary area of the borough, linked to the opening of the new extra care scheme for older people in Cunningham Drive.

The Older Persons Visiting Support Officer will assist older people to maintain their independence and maximise their health and well-being on a long term basis. This will be done by assisting them to move into alternative accommodation should they wish to do so, or assisting them to access support services suited to their needs to maintain their current home.

Support Services

Supporting People is a national programme introduced by the Government in April 2003 which enables people to live independent lives with the help of housing related support services. At GBC we provide:

- Visiting support – helping to maintain the wellbeing of a person by developing domestic or life skills or helping with finances
- Floating support – helping to maintain the independence of a person in their own home

Currently GBC receives approximately £375,000 of Supporting People services funding which helps to support around 470 vulnerable people.

Other Support Services

As well as Supporting People there are already a variety of services operating in the Borough which provide support to older residents:

- Gosport Voluntary Action provides services such as decorating, gardening, housework and the Befriending Service
- Gosport Lifelines and Telecare
- Ability Housing Register (joint funded via Hampshire County Council Adult Services and Gosport Borough)
- The Bobby Trust providing a complete change of locks for people who have been burgled
- Home Safe provides smoke alarms
- The Council provides bus passes and travel tokens for older people.
- The provision of sheltered housing and extra care homes for older people.
- Many other services are detailed in the directory of services for the over 60's

Adult Services

As well as providing information about what community care services are available, Adult Services can also provide an assessment of people's needs. Residents can either refer themselves or be referred by other professionals.

Adult Services uses the national eligibility criteria, Fair Access to Care Services, splitting needs into four categories - critical, substantial, moderate and low. Adult Services will usually only provide or arrange services for people who are in either the critical or substantial categories. For other categories people can be directed to other services provided in the community.

Adult Services either provide or commission a range of services including domiciliary care, day services, meals at home, residential and nursing care. For more information, phone 0845 6004555 or visit www.hants.gov.uk

Key Organisations in Gosport

For more information on the services provided by organisations in Gosport please use the following contact details:

Organisation	Contact Details	
Gosport Voluntary Action Gosport Disability Information Centre	Tel: 023 9258 3836 Tel: 023 9258 0373	www.gosport-voluntary-action.org.uk www.gosport-voluntary-action.org.uk/disability_info_centre.html
Age Concern The Citizens Advice Bureau The National Health Service The Pension Service The Discovery Centre (Gosport Library) The Gosport Resource Centre	Tel: 023 9251 1109 Tel: 023 9252 0112 Tel: 0845 46 47 Tel: 0845 60 60 265 Tel: 0845 603 5631 Tel: 023 9252 5821	www.thepensionservice.gov.uk www.citizensadvice.org.uk www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk www.thepensionservice.gov.uk www3.hants.gov.uk/gdc.htm www.gosportgrc.co.uk



Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

The role of the Energy Efficiency and Sustainability (EES) Officer at GBC is to be proactive and educational, offering advice on energy efficient measures and initiatives as well as information on grant aid. Most households in Gosport could save a substantial amount on fuel bills by using energy in an efficient way, resulting in warmer homes and healthier households. Grants and discount schemes are available to help with fuel efficiency measure and even if residents have to meet some of the costs themselves, the savings on fuel bills can quickly repay the initial cost.

A **fuel poor** household is defined as one which spends more than 10% of their income on fuel. This could result in damaging the health of those living in a cold home and can affect the quality of their life. Older people are especially vulnerable and the EES officer is working towards reducing fuel poverty within Gosport and ultimately improving the health and wellbeing of older people in the community.

For more information on energy efficiency, contact Carol White on carol.white@gosport.gov.uk or phone 023 9254 5655.

Other Strategies

This housing strategy for older people links with the Council's;

- Corporate Plan
- Community Plan
- Housing Strategy
- Crime and Disorder Strategy
- Vulnerable Adults Policy

Conclusions

This Strategy will evolve in response to changes in local needs and in the national agenda. There are several key issues for us as a landlord to work on:

- A reduction in the numbers of people being admitted to long term residential care
- Increased choice and flexible range of housing options
- Improving working partnerships between housing, care and support services
- Assistance in the delivery of the Supporting People programme
- Supporting speedy discharge from hospital to accommodation with appropriate support (Hospital Discharge Policy)
- Efficient use of housing stock

As a result of the research and consultation carried out for this strategy, five key areas for improvement have been identified for older people within the Borough of Gosport.

Improvement	How are we going to achieve this?
Diversity and choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to increase informed choice in appropriate housing, care and support solutions and greater responses to the diverse needs and aspirations of vulnerable groups.
Information, advice and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will provide advice and information that is appropriate for all older people in different settings, formats and languages. • We will promote the use of the Gosport Resource Centre, which includes free use of the internet to tenants. • We will visit sheltered schemes twice yearly to listen to any concerns or issues that older residents may have. • We will provide a newsletter, At Your Service, which is sent to all residents biannually and includes articles specifically for older people. • We will set up an Older Persons Forum to encourage older people to share views and be a part of planning regional services.
Flexible service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are aiming to provide an accessible system for all groups of older people to help them stay in their homes for as long as possible or live in a home that best suits their needs and aspirations. This will be achieved through joint working and taking a strategic approach to meeting the needs of older people.
Quality and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will promote greater involvement of older people in setting and monitoring the quality of the housing and support services they receive from us. The monitoring role would be carried out in detail by an Older Persons Forum and in general through the Tenant & Leaseholder Consultation Framework.
Joint working	<p>We aim to achieve more integrated user-led services and to shift the barriers that prevent holistic service provision for older people. We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting on the results of the Best Value Sheltered Housing Review • Promoting Extra Care • Using Locality Housing Officers • Increasing the standard of homes



The Head of Housing Strategy & Enabling will be responsible for the implementation of the Strategy Action Plan and for frequently reviewing access to services for older people. In addition, the Housing Management Team and the Housing Forum will monitor the strategy. An annual progress report, along with the Action Plan, will be produced and given to the Corporate Management Team.

Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all.

If you need this document in large print, on tape, in Braille or in other languages, please ask.

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