

**Exeter City Council**

**Older Persons Housing**

**Strategy**

**2010-2015**

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# **Older Person's Housing Strategy 2010-2015**

## **1. Introduction**

**'The ageing society presents one of the most pressing challenges facing this country today'**

*Baroness Andrews (2008)*

The older population is growing in size and will continue to grow as people live longer. This is due to increasing wealth, demographic changes, improved health care and other improvements in people's quality of life.

In 2007 the UK experienced, for the first time, a population trend of more people over state pension age than children (HM Government, 2009b). Although the number of children (aged 5-15) is declining, more than half of the babies now born in the UK will live to the age of one hundred (Communities and Local Government et al, 2009).

The growing older population needs consideration in terms of housing options, support and services. The Government stated in '*Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: a national strategy for housing in an ageing society*' that they have made housing and planning communities for an ageing population a national priority.

Older people are generally taken to be aged 55 or above and are therefore not a homogenous group. They have a range of different life experiences, expectations, aspirations and needs. Services and housing options must therefore be flexible enough to meet this increasing variety of needs and a choice of housing options must be provided.

Some older people want to remain in their own home and the Council will help them achieve this through:

- Influencing design
- Funding adaptations
- Providing telecare
- Funding home repairs and home improvement agencies
- Influencing home support spending
- Providing garden and decorating assistance
- Providing home improvement loans and fuel grants.

For those who do not wish to remain in their home, the Council will help deliver Extra Care housing and older person accommodation schemes and provide downsizing schemes. Our housing advice service will inform older people of their housing options and provide help and guidance. Our services will help meet the Government's Prevention and Personalisation agendas and save health and social care costs by reducing prolonged hospital discharges and lowering the number of older people in need of residential and care homes and health care.

Exeter City Council recognises the implications of the increasing older population and wants to ensure that the older residents of the City age well and have good quality housing. Therefore, the need for an Older Person's Housing Strategy was recognised as a priority.

Older people and various agencies were involved in the production of this Strategy. They attended a specific focus group session and provided feedback during the consultation period. Feedback from the focus group can be found in **Appendix A**.

### **1.1 Steve Warran, Head of Housing Services**

Over the next 5 years this strategy seeks to put the housing needs of older people in the city at the heart of the work we do. With an increasingly older population it is essential that their needs are recognised and understood and that a range of housing and care options are available to provide the quality of life older people deserve.

The Council will seek to work in partnership with a range of statutory and voluntary agencies to enable services to join together to provide a more holistic service. This not only means ensuring there is a supply of good quality accommodation but that support services are in place to help people live independently in the way they choose.

Meeting the needs of all will be a tough challenge, particularly at a time when public sector finances are limited, but we believe that by working together we can ensure resources are targeted at the areas that make the biggest difference and that provide a range of services for those who require them

### **1.2 Councillor Laura Newton, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Community Engagement**

As we face the challenges of providing housing and services to an increasingly older population we need to take a closer look not only at national trends, but also at what life is like and may be like in the future for local people living in Exeter. We need to be addressing housing need now, as a matter of urgency, across the City and discover how we can make better use of our housing stock, land, community facilities and services.

As a matter of priority, Exeter City Council needs to be addressing the housing needs of this often more vulnerable or isolated group by providing prevention and support services and a good range of quality and affordable housing options. I would like to thank everyone involved in putting this necessary Strategy in place and especially the focus group of older people from in and around Exeter who took the time to share their views, concerns and ideas with us (please take time to read the full report in the Appendix A).

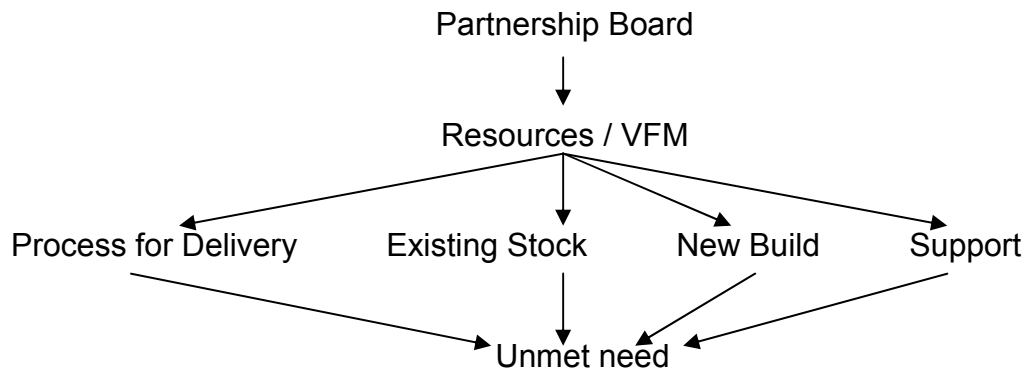
It is my hope that these views will be listened to alongside our national statistics and priorities and that everyone from Housing Enablers to Planners and Highway staff to Councillors will work together to create, maintain and promote the highest quality of housing and living for older people. Let's face it – we're all heading in that direction and we all share responsibility!

## **1.3 Aims for the Strategy's 5-year plan**

The aims of this strategy are to:

- Anticipate, plan and satisfy the housing needs of the ageing population
- Provide prevention and support services required for older people to remain living independently at home. Such services include tackling fuel poverty and providing adaptations, advice and information.
- Provide a range of good quality affordable housing options by making the best use of existing stock and suitable new build developments.

Action – The creation of an Older Persons' Partnership Board for the City consisting of relevant organisations including health, social care, housing and planning strategists, the voluntary sector plus customers. The Partnership will discuss the issues related to the ageing society, address them through the aims of this strategy and deliver solutions.



## **2. Projected growth in older population, their tenure and household make-up**

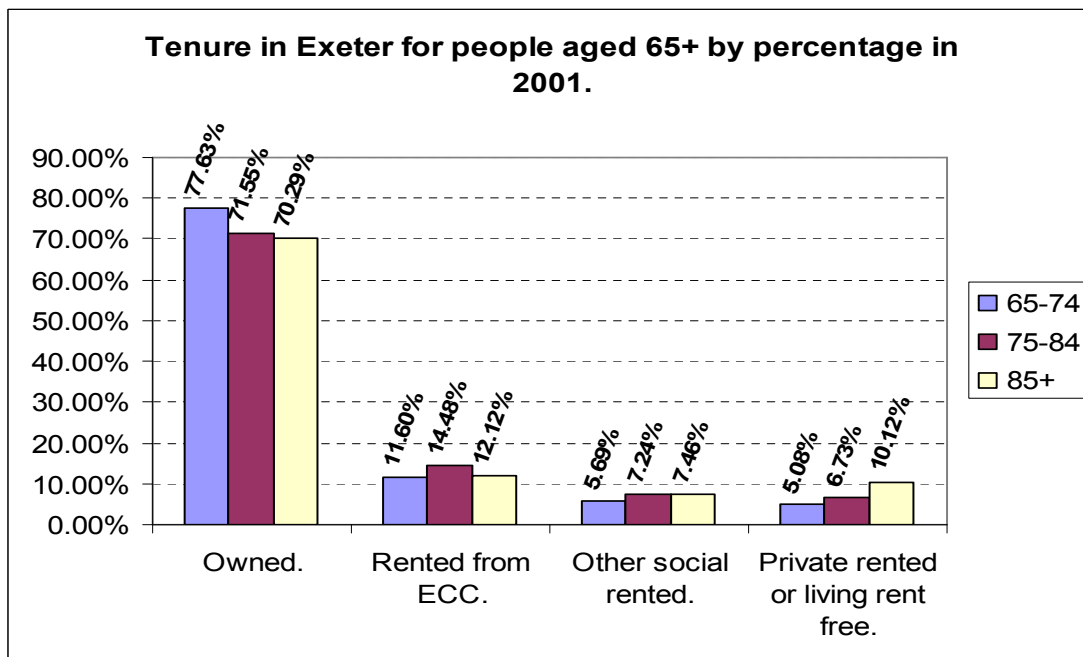
Over the next 30 years, the number of people aged 65 years and over is projected to increase by 75%. The number of people aged 85 years and over will increase by 184% (Communities and Local Government et al, 2009). This will result in an increase in the number of older people with disabilities and dementia (Housing Corporation, 2008).

### **Projected Population growth in Exeter**

Age Group	2009	2015	2020	2025	2030
65-69	4,600	5,700	5,000	5,300	6,100
70-74	4,100	4,300	5,200	4,700	5,000
75-79	3,600	3,700	3,900	4,800	4,300
80-84	2,900	3,000	3,200	3,500	4,300
85 and over	3,000	3,600	4,000	4,700	5,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18,200</b>	<b>20,300</b>	<b>21,300</b>	<b>23,000</b>	<b>25,200</b>

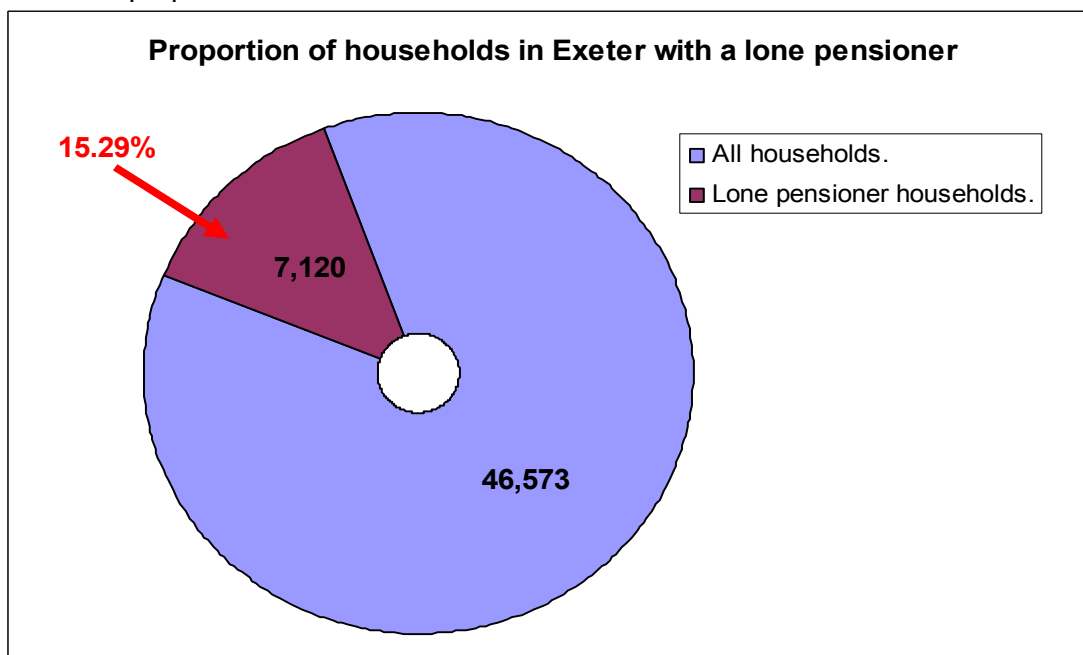
Department of Health Projecting Older People Population Information System  
 - [www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk)

The growth in the older population in Exeter will increase the demand for suitable accommodation and support. As this is such a varied group, these services must be tailored to meet the variety of needs.



*Department of Health Projecting Older People Population Information System - [www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk)*

The largest proportion of older people in Exeter are homeowners. Most research concludes that older people want to remain in their home as they age. However, many older homeowners are asset rich but income poor. Therefore the City needs adaptable properties and good quality prevention, aids and adaptations and support. The Council also needs to ensure that this group can access funds to maintain and heat their properties.



*CIVIS Research (2008)*

This percentage of lone pensioner households is likely to increase. Social isolation can affect well-being and cause mental health problems. Accommodation for older people, which acts as a hub and spoke model, can provide opportunities for members of the public to join in with social activities.

### **3. Drivers for ensuring older person’s housing needs are met**

#### **3.1 The National Context**

<b>Policy Document</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>	<b>Author</b>
Quality and Choice for Older People’s Housing: A Strategic Framework	2001	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
Opportunity Age: Meeting the Challenges of Ageing in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	2005	ODPM
Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: A New Direction for Community Services	2006	Department of Health (DOH)
Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing	2006b	Communities and Local Government (CLG)
Putting People First; a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care	2007	National Health Service (NHS) et al
Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: a national strategy for housing in an ageing society	2008	CLG, DOH and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
Shaping the future of care together (Government Social Care Green Paper – Consultation draft)	2009	HM Government

The above table outlines the main Government policy documents published over the last ten years. The key central Government policies on housing for older people can be summarised as:

- The urgency to increase the quality and delivery of housing and care to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of all older people.
- The prevention agenda, which focuses on the prevention of ill health and allows older people to remain living independently in their own home
- The personalisation agenda, which provides older people with a greater choice of tailored services. This will require housing services and health and social care to work in partnership.
- The Lifetime Homes Standard and a new policy initiative ‘Lifetime Neighbourhoods’. This is about the creation of neighbourhoods with access to public transport and amenities, safe streets, greener technology and connected places which help create and sustain social connections. Lifetime neighbourhoods must provide a high quality housing market for older people,



with choice of accommodation providers and programmes for maintenance, decent housing and adaptations for those living at home. Such neighbourhoods are to be achieved through the planning system, which Government claim is the most powerful tool for improving housing for older people. The principles of Lifetime Neighbourhoods are embedded throughout Exeter City Council's draft Residential Design Guide and the Building for Life design quality assessment which is used by the planning department.

Further details on the above documents can be found in **Appendix B**.

### **3.2 Regional and Sub-Regional Context**

#### *Devon Sustainable Community Strategy*

The Strategy requires improved housing options for vulnerable people by 2018.

#### *The Devon-wide Local Area Agreement*

LAA target 10 – Promote independence, choice and control. This target has a number of work streams which will impact on older people. This includes:

- Telecare – please see **section 5.3.6**
- Personal budgets for social care. This is part of the personalisation agenda. Please see **section 7**
- Rapid Equipment and Minor Adaptations Service. Please see **section 12.3**.

LAA target 11 – Improve support and services for carers and users. See **section 5.3.9**.

LAA target 27 - Improve housing options for homeless and vulnerable clients. One of the themes of this target is the modernisation of older persons housing and support services. **Section 9.3** explains how the Council is achieving this.

LAA target 33 - Improve the energy performance of the housing stock and reduce fuel poverty. For information on how the Council is achieving this, please see **section 12.8**.

#### *Devon Extra Care Commissioning Strategy (draft)*

For more information on this strategy, please see

[www.devon.gov.uk/comm\\_strategy\\_for\\_extra\\_care\\_housing-2.pdf](http://www.devon.gov.uk/comm_strategy_for_extra_care_housing-2.pdf) and **section 9.5**.

#### *Devon Affordable Warmth Strategy*

[www.exeter.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1388&p=0](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1388&p=0)

For more information on this strategy please see **section 12.8**.

#### *Putting Older People First in the South West - A regional housing market assessment*

This assessment concludes that housing and support options for older people will have to be transformed over the coming decade as the population ages

[www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/HousingRegions/SouthWest/?parent=1025&child=6668](http://www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/HousingRegions/SouthWest/?parent=1025&child=6668)

### 3.3 The Local Context

#### *Exeter City Council Corporate Plan 2007-2010*

The plan outlines all relevant performance indicators for 2008/2009. A new indicator is 'Over 65s who receive information, assistance and support to exercise choice and control to live independently'. The Place Survey carried out in 2008 asked 'In your opinion, are older people in your local area able to get the services and support they need to continue to live at home for as long as they want to?' The percentage of people who replied 'yes' was 27.9%, which compares to a national average of 30% and a district average of 31.2%. Exeter City Council wish to increase this percentage through the actions included in this Strategy.

#### *The Place Survey*

The national Place Survey 2008 also asked for the '*percentage of people aged 65 and over who are satisfied with both home and neighbourhood*'. The percentage of people who answered 'yes' in Exeter was 86.5%. This compares to a national average of 83.9% and a district average of 89.2%. Again, Exeter City Council wish to increase this percentage.

#### *Exeter Sustainable Community Strategy (Exeter Vision)*

[www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10771](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10771)

This document outlines the City's objectives for achieving a sustainable community, including reducing fuel poverty, supporting vulnerable people and assisting vulnerable people by supporting multi-agency initiatives. This Strategy outlines how Exeter City Council is trying to achieve these objectives.

#### *Exeter City Council Asset Management Strategy 2009-2015*

This Strategy explains how the Council's older person's accommodation will be reviewed. For more information on this please see **section 9.3**.

#### *Exeter City Council Equalities and Diversity Strategy 2009-2012*

[www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11842](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11842).

This Strategy looks at the six strands of diversity, one of which is age. For more information on this Strategy please see **section 17**.

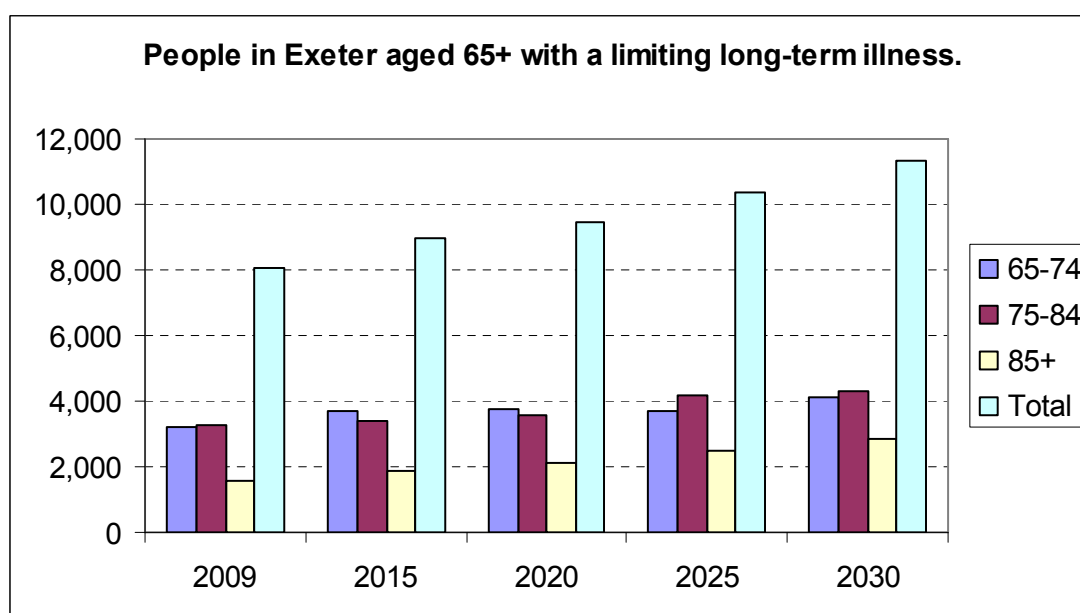
Local Development Framework (draft)  
[www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=9482](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=9482)

The various documents for this framework are still being developed. Currently, the following policies have the potential to help meet the needs of older people:

- CP5: Meeting Housing Needs - Aims to meet the needs of all members of the community and includes reference to lifetime homes and to meeting Elderly/Disabled needs.
- CP9: Transport - Identifies transport infrastructure requirements to accommodate additional proposed development and has a particular focus on the provision of public transport.
- CP10: Meeting Community Needs - Looks to retain existing community facilities and provide new and improved facilities to meet the needs of new development, make a positive contribution towards creating sustainable communities and promote social inclusion.

## **4 Health and Housing**

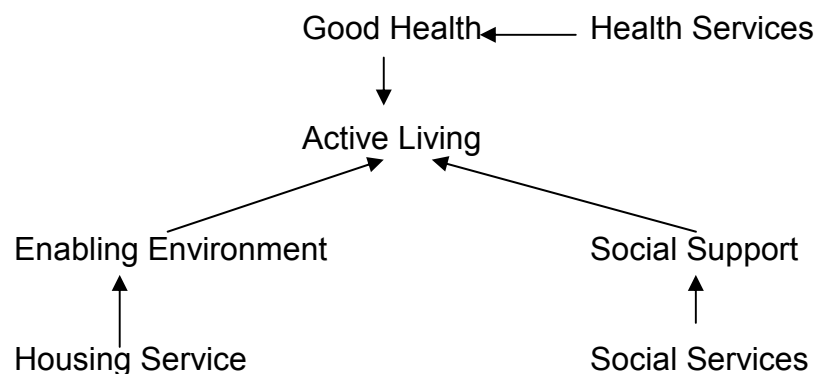
Evidence shows that we are living longer but experiencing more health problems. The average number of years that people are living with a disabling illness is increasing. For older people, daily living activities become harder with age as mobility deteriorates.



Department of Health Projecting Older People Population Information System  
- [www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk)

Housing plays a huge part in the health and wellbeing of older people. It has an integral role in ensuring people stay healthy, active and independent for as long as possible. It is common knowledge that decent housing is essential for good health. Improving the quality of housing can help residents avoid diseases, reduce the risk of accidents, increase independent living and improve their ability to manage long term illnesses. It also reduces anxiety about housing, which is one of the main causes of

mental health problems in older people (Jarman.R, 2009). It therefore can also affect the costs of the National Health Service.



### *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing*

Community care legislation of the 1990s led to a complex care system. The Government's social care reform grant will achieve the transformation required in adult social care. The new social care system is focused on the Government's prevention and personalisation agendas which encompass enablement, early intervention, care and support at home and personally tailored services (NHS et al, 2007). The aim is for tenancy sustainment to increase, with fewer people needing access to hospital and care based accommodation. This means that housing has a key role as part of the care pathway. This will require good quality housing such as homes which meet the Lifetime Homes Standard and Decent Homes Standard and extra care housing.

'Fully integrated housing, health and social support will enable increased independence, choice and control and can be highly cost effective' (Griffiths.R and Short. D, 2010). The report 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods' highlights the importance of housing and health services working together to provide joined up services. The Chartered Institute of Housing recently produced a report called '*Housing, Health and Care*'. This report looks at how all local authorities, health trusts, care providers and housing organisations need to work together to develop local policies and deliver local services. These enable older people to receive support and care closer to home and live more independently whilst also delivering greater efficiencies. This includes creating housing which prevents ill health and promotes good health.

The DOH Learning Improvement Network (LIN) has published findings on how resources can be pooled to achieve this. The Older Persons' Partnership Board will use this information to ensure closer and more effective working between health and housing services is carried out.

The DOH South West LIN network has created action learning sets as part of their 'putting older people first in the south west' innovation and improvement programme. Participants (commissioners and providers) present real life problems to the group and together they discuss and suggest solutions. It allows participants to share learning and carry out problem-solving activities together. Barriers to the development of innovative housing solutions for older people are identified and hopefully overcome. There are three groups which focus on meeting the needs of people with dementia through extra care housing; remodeling sheltered housing into

extra care housing and service models and funding solutions for extra care housing. The Council has a representative on this last group.

#### **4.1 Social, Health and Inclusion Partnership (SHIP)**

This partnership consists of various public and voluntary sector agencies including Exeter City Council, Devon County Council and NHS Devon. Together they oversee the implementation of work associated with health and social inclusion issues and address the service needs of older people in the City. The overarching aim of the partnership is to develop and support the delivery of the Exeter Vision Sustainable Community Strategy by focusing on various themes. This includes 'a City that is healthy and active' and 'a City with homes for everyone by tackling social, economic and environmental inequalities that affect the health and well being of Exeter's most disadvantaged residents'.

### **5. Prevention**

The DOH spent £305.5 million on acute care in 2005/6. Acute care includes care for falls, broken hips, diabetes and any unspecified injuries which mean patients are unable to use their legs. (Kearsley.J, 2009)

The aim of the prevention agenda is to allow older people to remain in their own homes, eliminating the need for prolonged hospital and residential care and increasing independence and well-being. It is also about allowing them to return home after receiving hospital care.

This can be achieved through various housing services, standards and improvements such as:

- Home improvement agencies
- Floating support
- Adaptations
- Assistive technology
- The Decent Homes Standard
- The Lifetime Homes Standard
- Energy efficiency and advice
- Information on housing options.

How the Council contributes to them is covered in detail in other areas of this Strategy.

The HAPPI report (Communities and Local Government et al, 2009) encourages the Government to recognise the savings this will create in health care and to reflect this in extra resources for housing. However, more evidence to support this is required. The Council is currently seeking funding for a research project which aims to provide an evidence base that identifies the barriers for older people to live independently. It will do this by identifying health inequalities created by housing conditions.

#### **5.1 Devon County Council and Devon Primary Care Trust Joint Health and Social Care Strategy - The Way Ahead, Five Years of Improvement**

This Strategy outlines how Devon County Council and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) intend to achieve the outcomes of the prevention agenda. Such approaches include:

- A Rapid Equipment and Minor Adaptation Service to keep people out of hospital. This is carried out by Devon Care and Repair which is partly funded by Exeter City Council (please see **section 12.3**)
- Home care support including 24-hour nursing
- Housing support services tailored to individual's needs (please see **section 8** for how the Council are involved in this service)
- Use of prevention technologies which allow people to remain at home (please see **section 5.3.6** on telecare)
- Joint carer's agenda which ensures that carers receive the support and care services required (see **section 5.3.9**).

## **5.2 Safeguarding**

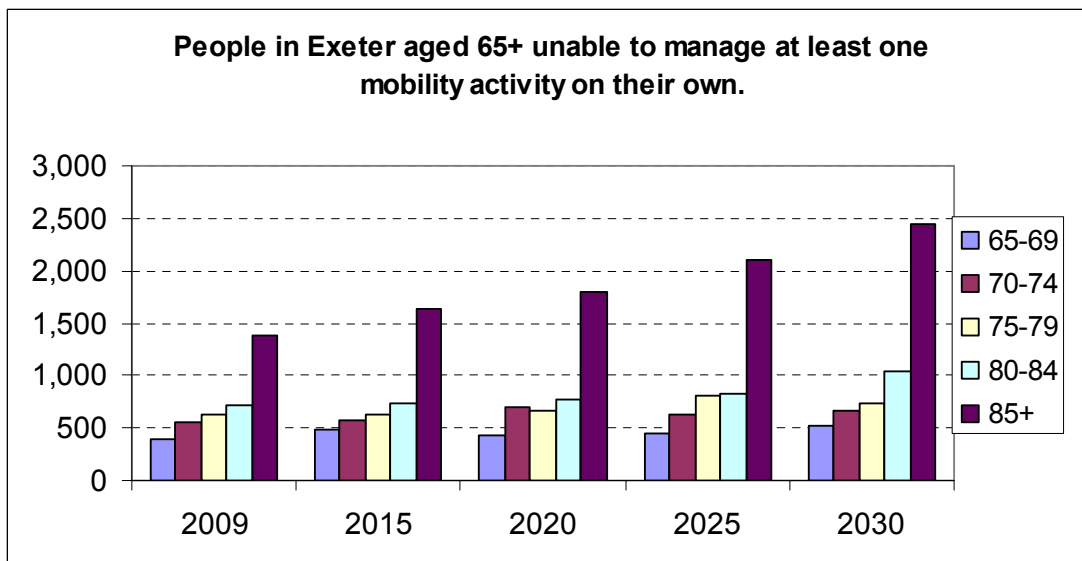
In order to safeguard our older tenants, Exeter City Council:

- Hold information on tenants and clients in relation to their vulnerability through customer profiling. This information is collected through the census and needs assessments.
- Attempt to ascertain the prospective tenant's support needs during accompanied let checks
- Carry out post accompanied let visits to identify vulnerability. Where concerns are identified, the Council will signpost
- Carry out vulnerability review visits and monitor alerts in sheltered housing
- Provide all Estate and Floating Support Officers with training on the indicators of abuse
- If abuse is suspected, an assessment will be carried out and action will be taken in co-operation with other staff, external agencies, doctors and the police
- Use statutory powers relating to tenancy agreements, injunctions etc. if required
- Make referrals to Devon County Council's Care Direct team when they identify vulnerable tenants.

The Labour Government had intended to produce new legislation which would ensure that the most vulnerable people in society are better protected by the police, NHS and local agencies such as councils. This was to be achieved through local Safeguarding Adults Boards. The Council hopes the new Government will continue forward with this proposed legislation and allow Councils to support this new approach by working with the relevant agencies and the new ministerial safeguarding group to ensure all vulnerable older people in the City are protected.

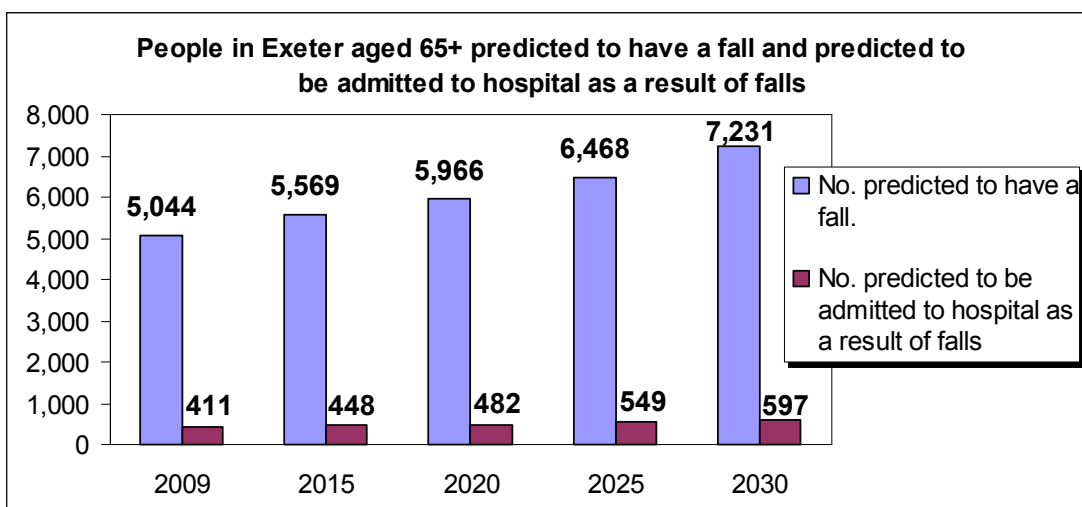
## **5.3 Aids and Adaptations**

It is estimated that by 2025, there will be nearly 1.5 million people aged 75 and over that will not be able to carry out at least one daily activity without help (Adam.S and Ellison.M, 2009). It is also estimated that the number of disabled older people will increase from 2.3 million in 2002 to 4.6 million in 2041, an increase of 98% (Heywood.F and Mackintosh.S, 2009). Daily activities include getting up and down stairs, getting around the house, getting to the toilet and getting in and out of bed.



Department of Health Projecting Older People Population Information System  
- [www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk)

One of the major causes of death and decline in health in older people is falls (Care and Repair England, 2009). In the UK, one older person dies at home every five hours as a result of a fall (Jarman.R, 2009). Often as a result of falls, 51% of older people go into care homes after hospitalisation as their home is not suitable (Husain.S, 2009)



Department of Health Projecting Older People Population Information System  
- [www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk)

As the older population grows and the number of older people with ill health and mobility problems increases, the Council needs to ensure that people are able to continue to live independently in their own home and deterioration of ill health is prevented. One third of all dwellings are occupied by older people, therefore it is important to ensure that all types of housing are suitable and adequately adapted (Adams.S and Ellison.M, 2009). Major adaptations can increase independence and improve health, confidence and self-esteem.

The demand for aids and adaptations is on the increase but this rise in demand has not been matched with equivalent funding.

Action – Establish whether Council Estate or Technical Officers would be able to carry out basic screening for falls for older tenants as part of their routine visits. Work with Devon County Council to see how this could join up with the health and social care community falls pathway.

### **5.3.1 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs)**

Between April 2008 and April 2009, 107 households in Exeter received publicly funded major adaptations (worth over £2,500). Of these, 74 were in the private sector and 33 were Registered Social Landlord (RSL) tenants. Total expenditure was £555,000.

The home improvement agency, Devon Care and Repair can assist people to apply for funds and make arrangements for the work to be carried out (please see **section 12.3**).

Although the DFG budget has increased each year, it still cannot meet the needs of everyone requiring adaptations. To make the best use of the DFG, equipment such as stair lifts and hoists are recycled. Evidence is needed to highlight the level of savings in the cost of health and social care as a result of adaptations. Once this evidence is obtained, the Health Service should then be able to help fund adaptations.

The average cost to the Health Service of a fractured hip is £28,665. This is five times the average cost of an adaptation and 100 times the average cost of fitting hand and grab rails (Colgan.K, 2009). Heywood and Turner (2008) outline the three ways in which adaptations save public money as reducing the need for home care and residential care; reducing hospital admissions and achieving better outcomes for the same cost. Due to the shortage in funding, a huge strain is being placed on benevolent funds.

The need for adaptations would decrease if the Lifetime Homes Standard was made mandatory. The Council's draft Residential Design Guide will require all new homes to be built to the Lifetime Homes Standard, which allows people to remain in their own home as they grow older and develop health or mobility problems.

The Council has regular meetings with occupational therapists in order to identify the level of applications being made and how needs are being addressed through other methods. Demand can then be quantified and a strategy put into place for the prioritisation of work.

The Housing Corporation (now known as the Homes & Communities Agency) stopped providing social housing grant for adaptations in RSL owned properties in 2008 and passed their Disability Equality Duty to RSLs. In their announcement they stated '*It is expected that RSLs build into their business plans the funding of adaptations as part of their core activities*'. This message is repeated in *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society*. However, more and more RSLs are advising their tenants to apply for DFGs rather than making the adaptations themselves. This can create issues over who is responsible for repairs and maintenance of the adaptations. Central Government should produce guidance on RSL's obligations and responsibilities in relation to home adaptations. With the removal of social housing grant funding, many argue that the DFG budget should be increased significantly to compensate.

The CLG good practice guide *Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People* encourages local housing authorities to make formal adaptation agreements with the



RSLs which operate in the area (Adams.S and Ellison.M, 2009). The Council has recently submitted a grant bid for a research project which aims to develop a common operating protocol with RSLs. It is intended that it will speed up the delivery of adaptations in RSL properties and make the most efficient use of the Council's capital funds.

Action – Use the evidence from the research project to develop a common operating protocol with RSLs

### **5.3.2 Exeter City Council Grant**

The Council offers discretionary grant payments to assist disabled applicants who are owner-occupiers to move to more suitable accommodation where adaptations would be more cost effective.

### **5.3.3 Exeter City Council Housing Adaptations**

In conjunction with the occupational therapists at Adult Community Services, the Council undertake a wide range of both major and minor adaptations to properties. These range from the provision of handrails to the conversion of bathrooms into wet rooms. The focus group was very happy with the adaptations carried out but felt that the whole process took quite a long time. This is partly due to budget constraints.

To speed up the assessments process, the Council's Occupational Therapist makes referrals to social services that are requests for assessments for adaptations. The Council is seeking innovative ways of reducing the cost of adaptations to its own housing stock. One approach is to 'trickle transfer' specific properties to RSLs, who then bear the costs of the adaptation. The Council's Resident Audit Team is currently reviewing the way the Council deals with aids and adaptations. The results of this will feed into an action plan.

Action – To improve waiting times, establish whether the Council could have a dedicated occupational therapist to carry out all assessments for adaptations to its own stock

### **5.3.4 Occupational Therapist**

Since April 2006, the Council and Adult and Community Services have jointly funded an occupational therapist post based within the Strategic Housing Services at Exeter City Council. The aims of this post are as follows:

1. Development of better ways of collecting information about the need for accessible housing and the availability of accessible housing. There is now a database of all housing applicants who have a need for some form of accessible housing, either to mobility standards or full wheelchair accessible standards. There is also a register of accessible homes. This includes:
  - All Council properties that have been adapted since 1997
  - All housing association properties that had a DFG funded adaptation since 2003
  - All new build wheelchair accessible properties built through affordable homes programmes.

This data provides us with evidence for the need and type of accessible homes required.

2. Working closely with Devon Homechoice and landlord services to ensure that all adapted and purpose built stock is let to those with the need for the adaptations the property offers.
3. Providing advice and information to Adult Community Services and health workers and by case working with applicants whose housing needs are complex, urgent or hard to resolve to ensure a positive outcome is reached. This includes enabling hospital discharges to suitable accommodation where it is unsafe for an elderly person to return to their home.

Through this post we are developing better systems for collecting information about the need for accessible housing and are able to match people in housing need to appropriate accommodation more effectively. For example, the Occupational Therapist has created a list of Council owned adapted units which allows the effective use of stock. However, when allocating these units we also consider the location of the tenant's support networks.

[Action – Secure funding for the occupational therapist post for 2010/11/12.](#)

[Action – Establish methods for identifying council stock with major adaptations prior to 1997 i.e. properties which have had extensions which were not recorded.](#)

### **5.3.5 Wheelchair Accessible Housing in Exeter**

There is currently a shortage of affordable mobility or wheelchair accessible housing becoming available in the City. In the year April 2008 – April 2009, 195 new applicants to Home Choice required some form of accessible housing. During the same period only 77 such properties became available. These figures are for one year and exclude any backlog of existing Home Choice applicants requiring accessible accommodation as at April 2008.

Given the shortage of affordable accessible housing in Exeter, the Council seek to enable the development of accessible affordable homes including dwellings which meet the needs of specific households. The Local Plan requires 5% of dwellings built on a site to be wheelchair accessible. Most private developers, however, only provide one-bed flats as they cost less to build than family units. This is not meeting Exeter's biggest need. The draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document therefore requires developers to build these units for specific people on the Council's in-house housing register. This will dictate the type of property (house/flat) and number of bedrooms required.

This document also requires the dwellings to meet the Council's Wheelchair Accessible Homes Design Standards, which build on the Habinteg Wheelchair Design Standard.

The development programme on Council owned land consists of nine fully wheelchair accessible homes which meet the Council's Wheelchair Accessible Homes Design Standards.

[Action – Produce a Wheelchair Accessible Homes Design Standards booklet.](#)

[Action - Amalgamate data on accessible homes to Devon Home Choice property data.](#)

### 5.3.6 Telecare

The Council's Occupational Therapist will assess applicants and determine which form of telecare they require. Such equipment can be leased, rented or purchased by the user, housing or care provider or by a commissioner. Devon County Council are focusing on widening access to telecare services for self-funders by working with community alarm providers in Devon, including the Council's Home Call service, to provide telecare (fall detectors and other telecare peripheral devices) as well as community alarm services.

### 5.3.7 Home Call

The Council operate a community alarm system for older and vulnerable people. Some members of the focus group felt that Home Call took too long to answer their calls and that the service was too expensive. However, last year Home Call took 39,913 alarm calls of which 99.29% were answered within 60 seconds. The average answer time was 9.22 seconds. A comparison of last year also showed that Home Call was the cheapest alarm provider out of the six neighbouring alarm providers. Other members of the focus group felt that Home Call provided an excellent service.

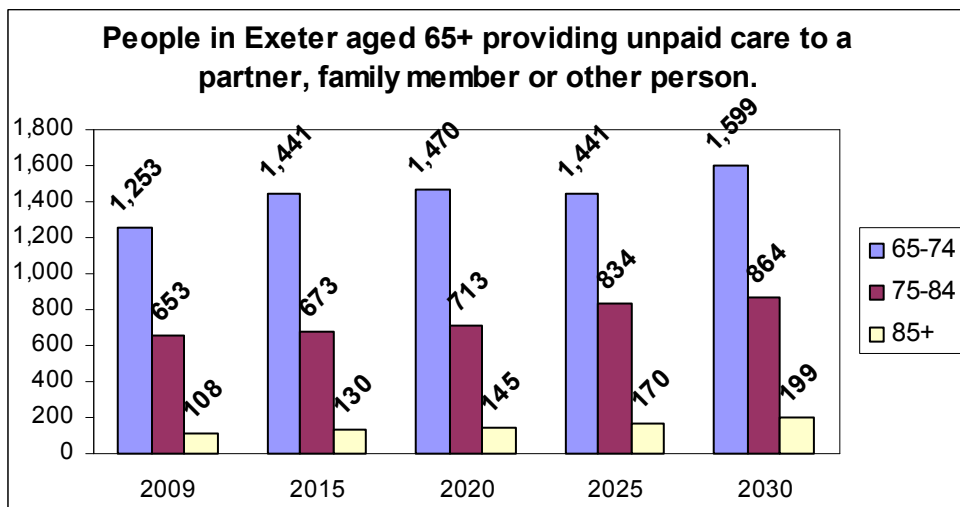
**Action – Home Call to explore funding options for Telecare to enable the wider public take up of remote monitoring devices.**

### 5.3.8 The South West Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST)

A study of local complaints data revealed that significant numbers of older people in older person's accommodation felt obliged at times to activate emergency services via their pendant alarm when they have serious but non-emergency problems. The SWAST therefore started a non-emergency call out service to all tenants in social older person's accommodation. This can be accessed by Council tenants via the Council call centre. This has helped address the problem of under provision of community services for frail older people living independently.

### 5.3.9 Carers

Carers save the Government around £87 billion per year (Justice for Carers, 2009) and without them, there would not be enough Government funding to provide support for everyone in need.



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The impact of suitable housing on older carers is just as important as the impact on the client. Many carers are at risk of back injury and other problems from lifting and supporting individuals. Aids and adaptations can reduce this risk (DOH LIN, 2008).

Devon County Council and the NHS have produced a carer's strategy which covers many housing related elements which affect the carer. The Council contributes to this by providing funding for adaptations and its choice based lettings system allows carers to bid on properties which are close to their support networks.

## **6. Building New Homes, Design and Exeter City Council Planning Service**

The design of homes has not kept up with the dramatic increase in the ageing population, despite the fact that this will affect whether people can manage in their home in later life. Design and build standards are particularly important to older people as they spend most of their time in their home. Those over 65 years old spend 80% of their time in their home and this rises to 90% for those over 85 (Jarman.R, 2009).

The recent HAPPI report (Communities and Local Government et al, 2009) asks Government to prioritise the building of new suitable homes for older people to achieve their housing, health and care policies. It also encourages private developers to recognise people's right to more desirable accommodation and the market demand for this. With the availability of suitable accommodation, older people under-occupying larger homes will be able to move and release these dwellings for young families. This will help to reduce the demand for such properties.

### **6.1 Lifetime Homes Standard**

Despite meeting the prevention agenda and reducing public spending in the long term, it is proposed that the Lifetime Homes Standard will not be mandatory on all new build social properties until 2011 and all private new build properties until 2013. The standard will only be mandatory on social properties funded by the Homes and Communities Agency and with their grant continuing to be cut; very few homes over the next few years will actually be funded by them.

The 2007 Housing Green Paper (Communities and Local Government, 2007) only promoted the use of the Lifetime Homes Standard and simply encouraged builders to adopt it. The implementation of this standard has therefore been incredibly low, especially in the private sector and individual local authorities have been left to decide whether it is adopted by local planning policy. Through the Council's draft Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, this standard should become mandatory for all new build schemes in the City. The Building for Life design quality assessment currently used by the Council's planning department looks at whether internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion or extension by examining the proportion of dwellings which meet the Lifetime Homes Standard.

The Building Regulations Advisory Committee is currently considering whether this standard should require lifts in apartment blocks. A different approach to the current high storey and high-density units is also being considered as they are often impossible to adapt.

It is believed that achieving the Lifetime Homes Standard is costly however, research carried out by the Chartered Institute of Housing in Northern Ireland and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on the cost of meeting the Lifetime Homes Standard compared

to current Building Regulations found that the additional cost ranged from only £165 to £545 per home. This depends on size, layout and specification of the property. The standard also rarely requires greater space standards and should not impact on the density of a development.

A diagram showing what a Lifetime Home may look like can be found in **Appendix C**.

[Action – Ensure that the Council’s Residential Design Guide requires all new dwellings to meet the Lifetime Homes Standard.](#)

## **6.2 Inclusive Design**

Inclusive design is about producing features which are usable, effective and attractive to everyone and not just people with disabilities. As part of the Council Own Build over 55's schemes, the Council is installing walk-in showers rather than baths, which are easily adaptable as people's mobility changes.

## **6.3 Space Standards**

Unlike our European neighbours, the UK has a history of building small accommodation for older people. Although the Homes and Communities Agency have space standards for social housing, private housing is unregulated. The Council’s Residential Design Guide will outline the space standards required for all housing in the City. These standards will be a vast improvement on those currently being built out by developers.

## **6.4 Public Realm Design**

The Council’s draft Residential Design Guide requires the public realm to be accessible to all users. This must be achieved by using the Inclusive Mobility design guide and ensuring that public spaces and streets are generously proportioned, consistent and simply designed and arranged.

## **6.5 Outdoor Space**

Accessible outdoor space which is useable for most of the year is particularly important for older people who often spend most of their time at home. Exeter City’s Council draft Residential Design Guide has a chapter on Residential Amenity which sets out the Council’s required standards on outdoor spaces including private and communal gardens and balconies. It covers three main areas:

1. The size of private gardens and private communal open space
2. How to achieve reasonable privacy
3. How to ensure adequate daylight and good quality outlook.

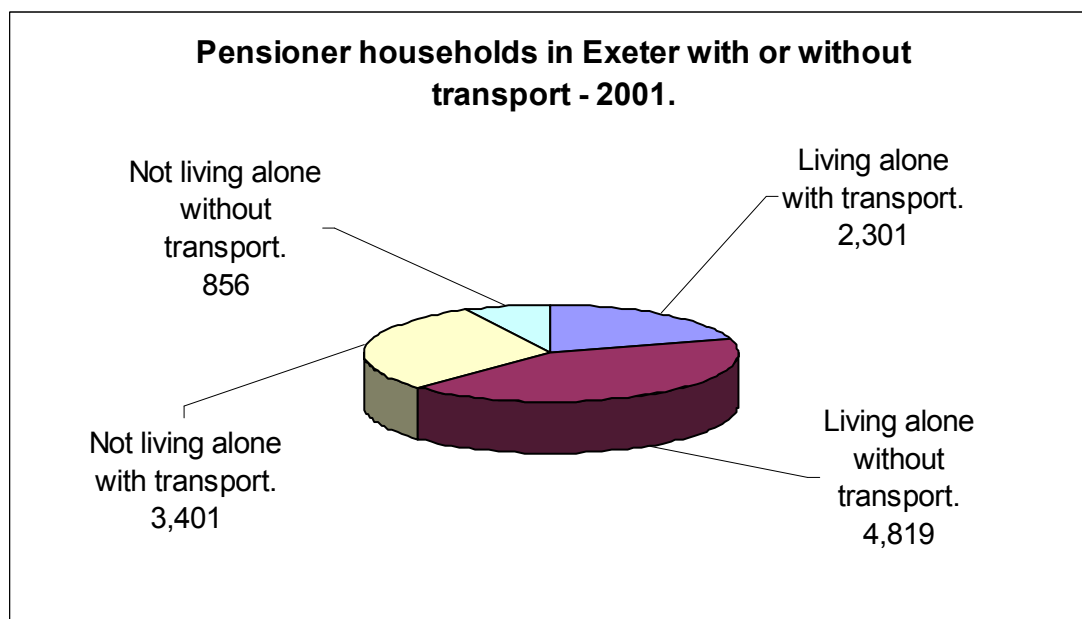
The quality and accessibility of outdoor space has been considered on all of the Council’s infill and own build sites. A landscape architect has been engaged on the Council own build schemes (74 homes) to design high quality and useable external spaces. All ground floor units will have private outdoor spaces and a communal garden has been designed for each development.

## **6.6 Exeter City Council Planning Service**

In order to develop and implement planning policies and development control practices which promote appropriate housing models and reflect changing demand, evidence on the level of need is required. The level of Extra Care Housing required is reflected in the draft Extra Care Commissioning Strategy (see **section 9.5**). The planning department will use this evidence in local policy documents. The Council is currently producing planning policy on housing mix, which will ensure that specialist housing is provided as part of mixed communities and in accessible locations.

The planning department use the Building for Life Design Quality Assessment, which assesses whether a planning application's accommodation and tenure mix reflect need. To determine this, the planning team will look at the percentage of affordable housing being provided, the mix of housing type and tenure and whether amenity and internal space is of a sufficient size. The percentage of affordable housing and the tenure mix is currently guided by local plan policy. This is likely to change with emerging new planning policies.

*Ensuring Properties are near Shops, Public Transport and other Facilities*



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The focus group stated that one of their top priorities for older persons housing is access to local amenities and transport. This can ensure that older people remain independent and can also reduce isolation. Access to leisure facilities also helps to increase wellbeing and encourages healthier living. The draft Residential Design Guide ensures facilities for the whole of the City will be located in the City Centre and local facilities (shops, community centres, doctor surgeries etc.) are accessible by public transport and/or walking and cycling. The policy sets out a spatial vision for the City and contains key strategic objectives and strategic policies for development.

The Building for Life design quality assessment also looks at whether a development provides (or is close to) community facilities such as parks, shops, doctor surgeries and cafes and whether the development has easy access to public transport.

In practice, most new build developments have a local shop and bus route within 400-800m (5-10min walk). If they do not, fewer points are awarded to the design. Most large developments provide the required facilities and most small developments are on infill sites where existing facilities are available locally or within half a mile.

The assessment process awards points and guidance suggests that developments which score less than 14 points are substandard. The Residential Design Guide will implement a minimum score required. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

require a minimum score of 12 (or 10 in rural areas). This may be increased to 14 in the future.

Building for Life also highlights the weaknesses of schemes. For example, it may show that the public realm is poorly designed, unsafe and dominated by cars. The public realm has been shown to have a direct impact on physical and mental health. This applies to all age groups, but the impact can be stronger on older people who spend a greater proportion of their time at home. The Residential Design Guide will therefore implement a minimum building for life assessment score for public realm. It also requires a public realm which is accessible to all.

[Action - Ensure access to local amenities and public transport is embedded in emerging Local Development Framework policy and the Residential Design Guide.](#)

#### *Rubbish Storage*

When the focus group discussed design of new dwellings, they felt that rubbish storage was a very important feature. This is considered as part of the planning process. The refuse department will make comments on planning applications and are included in any discussions.

[Action - Ensure requirements for refuse storage is included in Residential Design Guide.](#)

#### *Involving Older People in Policy Consultations*

Involving older people in housing gives them a voice and increases social interaction. It improves their well-being and ensures that the Council meets their future needs and requirements. Various representative groups such as Exeter Senior Voice, Senior Council for Devon and Devon Pensioners Action Forum are involved in policy consultations. Information is also provided in the central library, reference library, Civic Centre reception and on the Council's website. How the Council involves the public in consultations is outlined in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement document.

## **7. Personalisation**

Personalisation is at the top of the DOH's agenda and is part of their transformation programme. It has recently been brought into the world of housing through the introduction of individual budgets for housing support services and Choice Based Letting. Individual budgets consist of the different public funding streams (including Supporting People funding) an individual may receive. These are pulled together into one budget. The client uses this budget to purchase services themselves based on a new single assessment process. Individual budgets are different to personal budgets which only consist of social care funding.

An individual may receive their individual budget as a direct payment or, to avoid the stress of paying for various services themselves, older people can ask for virtual payments where the local authority commissions the service on their behalf. They can also have an Individual Service Fund whereby the local authority pays the chosen service provider the individual budget amount direct and the provider then enters into an agreement with the individual as to how they are going to deploy the Individual Service Fund in accordance with their wishes.

Exeter City Council has introduced individual budgets to a rough sleepers' project. This is a different approach to mainstream individual budgets for older people. Whilst we currently have no rough sleepers over the age of 55 and have not found anyone over 55 in any street count in the last two years, this method of working will inform other ways of providing a service to older people.

The objective of this project is to put in additional resources to work with those rough sleepers who are resistant to assistance by coming up with creative solutions to meet their needs. They will attend a multi agency meeting of statutory and voluntary agencies; agree who their 'lead professional' is going to be and devise a support plan. Alongside this will be a budget of up to £2,500 per individual to buy-in additional services that will enable the client to sustain their accommodation and adhere to their support plan. The objective is to promote the multi agency tool as an effective mechanism to work with individuals who have complex needs and to test the use of individualised budgets as a tool to build upon existing commissioned services to create sustainable solutions.

This pilot will also test the individualisation of support and the outcomes from this will inform the creation of new systems for commissioning services. The evaluation of the individual budgets pilot will inform future Supporting People commissioning for older people.

Personalisation is still in its early stages of implementation, but it is clear that links between the Care Quality Commission, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) and HCA will be required to allow the integration between health, housing and social care services (Manthorpe.J and Vallely.S, 2009).

This agenda will mean that the Council's housing services will need to provide older people with more choice on where and how they want to live. Decent suitable housing in neighbourhoods which allow mobility and activity to be maintained is required to allow this choice and independence.

[Action – Establish how housing services can be more tailored to the needs of older people.](#)

## **8. Housing Support**

### **8.1 Mapping Need and Supply**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population at risk</b>	<b>Population in need</b>	<b>Supply</b>	<b>Net Requirement</b>
2008	6,720	1,560	847	713

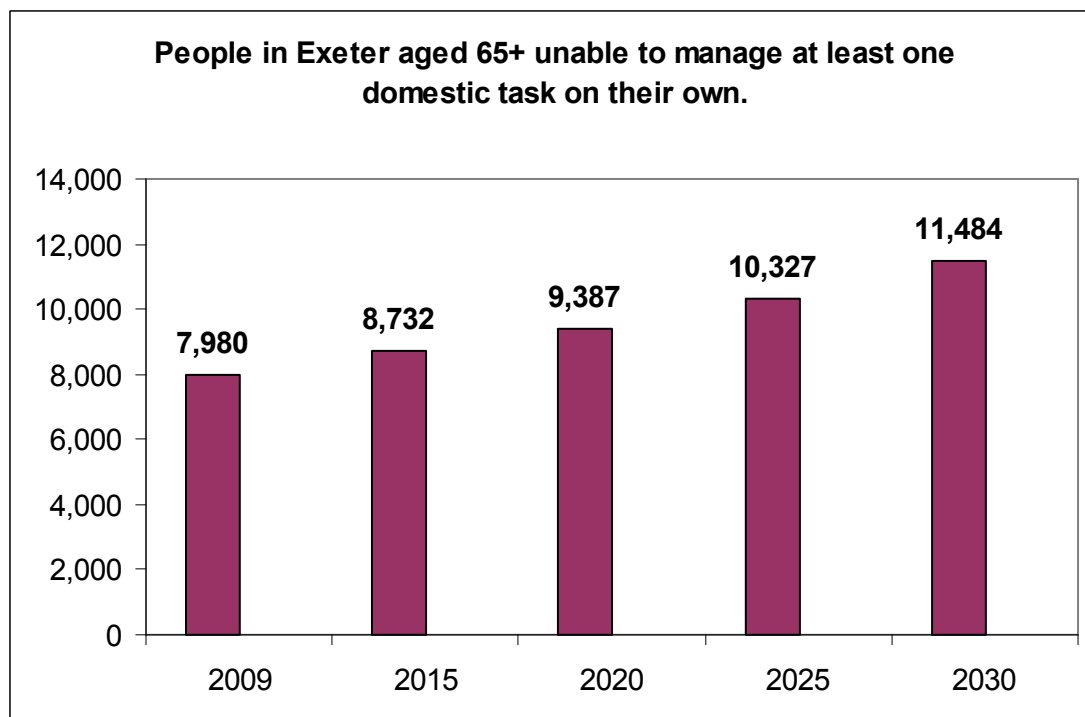
*(CIVIS Research, 2008)*

The above table shows the net requirement for housing related support services in Exeter for 2008. The population at risk figure shows the number of people over the age of 65 who are unable to manage at least one domestic task on their own. However, not all of these people will require housing support services, as some will receive help from a variety of other sources.

The 'population in need' figure is calculated as a percentage of the population at risk. It is based on the number of older people living in their own homes who may require support as identified by the Housing Need and Market Assessment. It also assumes



that 75% of sheltered housing tenants and 100% of those in receipt of floating support will need support. The supply is subtracted from the population in need to give the net requirement figure for 2008.



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With the older population increasing in size and the number of people over 65 who cannot manage at least one domestic task on their own increasing (see table above), the number of people in need of housing support is only going to grow.

## **8.2 Area Based Grant**

Supporting People grant has been integrated with the Social Care budget (which covers personal care services) and is now known as Community Based Support. The Strategic Policy Forum chaired by Devon County Council seeks comments from the District Councils on how this grant should be allocated.

Action- Obtain more information from Devon County Council on where this grant is allocated and ensure Exeter receives its fair share of funding.

## **9. Accommodation for older people**

Action – In partnership with Devon County Council, the planning service and the housing service, produce a process for collecting evidence of need for various specialised housing of all tenures. Such evidence will then be fed into planning policy and used as a basis for the production of specialised housing schemes. Various delivery methods need to be explored including Section 106 agreements.

### **9.1 Home Ownership**

The graph in **section 2** shows that most of the older people in Exeter are homeowners. They are therefore unlikely to be eligible for social housing and may

look for some form of private specialised housing. A large majority of this group, however, are on low incomes so they may require shared ownership.

According to Petch (2010), pension and council tax benefits are claimed by less than half of low-income homeowners who are entitled to these benefits.

[Action - Encourage homeowners to claim pension and council tax benefits](#)

#### *Shared Ownership*

Some RSLs provide shared ownership for older people with limited means. This product is the same as the HCA's Newbuild Homebuy model except that sales are restricted to people over 55, RSLs can only sell 75% of the freehold and there is no rent payable on the remaining 25%. Leasehold Schemes for the Elderly (LSEs) are also available from some RSLs. The conditions and restrictions which apply to shared ownership are also used here and applicants must also pay a service charge. With both schemes, when the property is sold, the resident receives the percentage they own of the current market value. RSLs can bid for grant from the HCA for these products.

[Action – Research the need for shared ownership for older people and provide such units through various initiatives.](#)

## **9.2 Private Renting**

Exeter City Council believes that renting privately has many benefits for older people. However, it recognises the problems that can occur with this tenure and seeks to minimise them.

Renting in the private sector can contribute to housing choices for older people. Its main benefit is that it provides choice of location so older people can move closer to support networks.

For those on a low income, affordability can be an issue as private rents continue to increase. This issue will become worse if the Government proceed with their proposal to drop local housing allowance (LHA) rates in 2011. Many older people do not understand how to calculate this complex benefit, especially when they have an income from a number of sources and savings. Research carried out by Rugg and Croucher (2010) on older people's experiences of renting privately found that none of the tenants they interviewed understood that LHA consisted of one standard payment based on the number of bedrooms relative to local rents. This lack of knowledge and uncertainty over future income levels (especially for those coming to the end of their working life) has resulted in a feeling of insecurity over long-term affordability and reduced people's desire to rent privately.

The Housing Advice team at the Council provides help and advice on how LHA works and benefit entitlements. To protect older people in the private rented sector, the team also offer help against landlord harassment e.g. visiting the property without the official 24 hours written notice, advice on the deposit protection scheme and assistance with checking and signing tenancy agreements.

Property conditions and management standards can be poor in this sector. Evidence from the English House Condition Survey has confirmed that properties in the private rented sector are in a worse state of disrepair than those in the social housing and owner occupied sector (Rugg.J and Croucher.K, 2010). This can affect the health

and wellbeing of tenants. Please see **section 12.5** on how the Council can help improve the condition of such properties.

The Council's Empty Homes Service hold two landlord forums each year. They provide information to ensure landlords are aware of good practice and mandatory regulations. Subjects are varied and can include anything from new legislation to dealing with refuse.

The main issue for older people renting privately is the need for aids and adaptations. Older people with limited mobility can find it very difficult to locate a suitable property. For example, many need a downstairs bathroom and good access. Many landlords in this sector are unwilling to have aids fitted or adaptations made to their properties.

Action – Create guidance on letting to older tenants to encourage landlords to specialise in renting to this age group.

Action – Create a Landlord Accreditation Scheme for landlords who provide settled, sustainable tenancies for people claiming LHA and achieve a decent standard of letting which meets or exceeds all legal requirements relating to various aspects of renting. Provide the registered landlords with information on good practice in renting to older people, LHA and grants for aids and adaptations.

Action – Hold a register of properties which are suitable for older people with limited mobility. Register to be jointly maintained by the Housing Advice team, the Empty Homes Service and Adult Community Services.

Action - Promote LHA take-up.

### **9.3 Exeter City Council's Older Person Accommodation**

#### *Accommodation review*

Exeter City Council currently has 22 older person accommodation schemes with a total of 557 homes. A review of the accommodation was required because most of the stock was built in the 1960s and 1970s and is no longer suitable. Increasing numbers of people applying for such accommodation, or already living there, are older and more frail than the properties were originally designed to accommodate. A significant reduction in the number of residential/nursing bed spaces available has placed further pressure on the design and availability of existing accommodation.

The schemes have been assessed and split into three categories of use:

- Category 1 – Older person's accommodation with support
- Category 2 – Older person's accommodation with no support
- Category 3 – Not viable for use in the medium term. Future use and classification to be reviewed and options appraisals to be undertaken.

Following a review of the Housing Revenue Account and our planned maintenance programme for the next five years, refurbishment of the older person's accommodation has not been given a high priority and is unlikely to proceed in the next five years unless there is a change in the subsidy system. However, work will be carried out at Amersham Court. This includes new kitchens and bathrooms and external painting.

Action - Produce a plan for improving and remodelling the Council's older person housing schemes.

Action- Review buggy power points and storage (as requested by the Focus Group)

Action – Explanation of scooter re-charge facilities in Chatterbox and as part of accompanied let checks (as requested by the focus group).

#### *Social and Medical Activities*

Activities are provided in partnership with health and social care professionals. These include social activities such as exercise classes and classes on the use of assistive technology. Medical needs are also catered for such as flu jabs, chiropody, malnutrition screening and help with the management of long-term conditions. However, social activities in the communal lounges have become unpopular and are therefore rarely organised. It is believed that this is due to the free bus passes issued to the over 60s. However, such activities can decrease social isolation so it is important that the Council re-assess the use of communal rooms in schemes.

Action - Re-assess the use of the communal lounges. Establish whether a hub and spoke model could be used which would allow other members of the public to make use of the communal rooms.

Action - Arrange more joint activities with the PCT

#### *Quality of service*

The Quality Assessment Framework recently scored B under this assessment. This means that the service can evidence good practice and the Council is therefore innovative in its approaches to delivering services.

Action - Tenant profiles are established via a census form completed at the sign up. The Council needs to use this information gathered to improve its housing management service.

Action - Service standards to be measured and method of measurement to be established

#### *Floating Housing Support*

The prevention agenda has highlighted the need for housing support for those living in their own home. Supporting People have therefore decided to re-commission floating housing support. With older person's accommodation, housing support was always attached to the tenancy regardless of whether the tenant actually required it.

The Council supports Supporting People's new approach and has removed housing support from the older person's accommodation tenancy agreement in order to allow such support to be delivered to just those who need it, including those who live at home.

The final structures and processes involved in floating support will be outlined in the Council's Housing Services Older Persons Strategy which is currently being drafted.

Action – Complete Housing Services Older Persons Strategy.

### **9.4 Enhanced Sheltered Housing / Assisted Living**

Such accommodation involves independent living with care and support services. Exeter City Council made a financial contribution to the development of Buller Court,

an enhanced sheltered housing scheme in Exeter. It promotes an independent lifestyle with 24 hour emergency support. It consists of 20 social rent one bed self-contained flats for people over 55 with a wide range of needs. The building is managed by Guinness Trust and the flats are allocated to those most in need on the Council's housing register.

### 9.5 Extra Care Housing

Extra care housing (ECH) is specialist housing which promotes independence and accommodates people with a range of lifestyle, health and care needs, including those of people with learning disabilities, dementia and mental health problems. ECH can reduce the use of residential care and the demand for hospital beds and provide better outcomes in a more cost effective way. It is therefore part of the prevention agenda.

#### *Devon Commissioning Strategy for Extra Care Housing*

Devon County Council and the district councils in Devon have produced a draft Extra Care Housing Commissioning Strategy. This document identifies the requirement for a partnership of stakeholders including housing, health, care providers, developers, planners and commissioners to produce ECH. Research carried out for this strategy identified those in need of ECH as:

- Older people who could be diverted from moving into residential care
- Older people who receive intensive home care and extra care housing would meet their needs more efficiently
- Older people who have mild to moderate levels of dementia
- Older people at risk because of their current housing, mental and physical needs
- Older people in the community in need of intermediate care at home.

The research identified the current need for ECH in Exeter by calculating a rate of 65 units per 1000 people aged 75 and over who are living alone and have a limiting long term illness.

	2008	2010	2015	2020
Total Population aged 75-84, with a limiting long term illness, living alone	1,510	1,519	1,538	1,596
Total population aged 85 and over, with a limiting long term illness, living alone	954	1,020	1,185	1,316

This identified a current need of 150 extra care units in Exeter.

### *Extra Care Housing in Exeter*

Exeter currently does not have any extra care housing. Due to the advantages offered by such accommodation and the identified need, Exeter City Council is trying to ensure its delivery. The Council is working with Devon County Council to identify areas in Exeter where extra care housing is needed. Once this has been established, the Council will try to ensure that such housing is developed through various initiatives.

The Housing Enabling team are currently negotiating the affordable housing obligation with the developers of the St Loyes retirement village and hope to be able to produce a 50 bed extra care scheme on this site for social rent. The Council has been working with Devon County Council on this scheme.

Devon County Council is producing an allocations policy, which Exeter, along with all the other district authorities in Devon will be signing up to. The allocations procedure ensures that care and housing needs are given due consideration in each allocation.

[Action - Work in partnership with Devon County Council, housing associations, charitable trusts and private developers to produce Extra Care schemes in Exeter.](#)

### **9.6 Downsizing**

The Council's downsizing scheme started in 2007. It allows Exeter City Council and RSL tenants to move from under-occupied, larger dwellings to smaller, more suitable properties by offering a financial incentive. It also encourages tenants who are not disabled or elderly to move out of adapted properties. The main users of this scheme are older people who cannot cope in a large family property due to financial pressures and/or mobility problems. This scheme not only helps people move to a more suitably sized property but it also frees up the larger properties for families on the Housing Register.

[Action – Promote the Downsizing Scheme to encourage more tenants who are not disabled or elderly to move out of adapted properties](#)

### **9.7 Devon Homechoice**

The Council ensures that the Devon Homechoice system is accessible for older people by advertising properties through direct mail outs, advocacy agencies and digital TV. Applicants who are unable to make bids themselves can have bids automatically placed on homes they are eligible for. They can also have someone else (family, friend, neighbour or support agency) bid on their behalf.

The Council's Occupational Therapist will assess any applicant, including older people, who feel that their home is not suitable on health grounds and place them in the appropriate needs band.

Properties are graded on their level of accessibility from part wheelchair access to full wheelchair access and minimal steps to step free accommodation. Applicants are also graded into a corresponding category and priority is given to people eligible for that level of accessibility.

This system also allows older people to move to areas that are closer to their support networks.

[Action - Ensure older people with higher support needs are case managed and supported through allocations processes.](#)

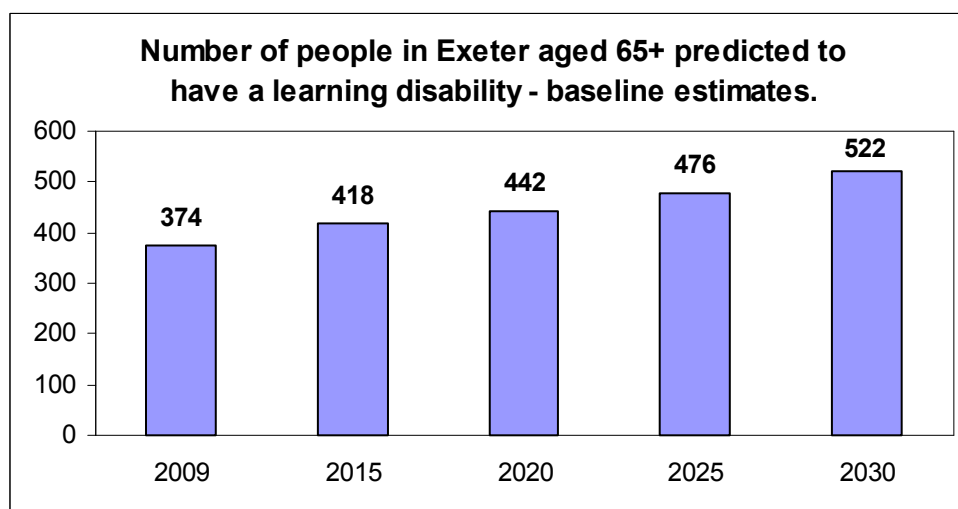
Action - Scan applications to reduce processing time.

Action – Promote the use of phone / advocate bidding since the removal of newspaper advertisements.

Action - Establish a method for identifying people who need help using the system.

## **10. Forms of Disability**

### **10.1 Learning Disabilities**



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- [www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk)*

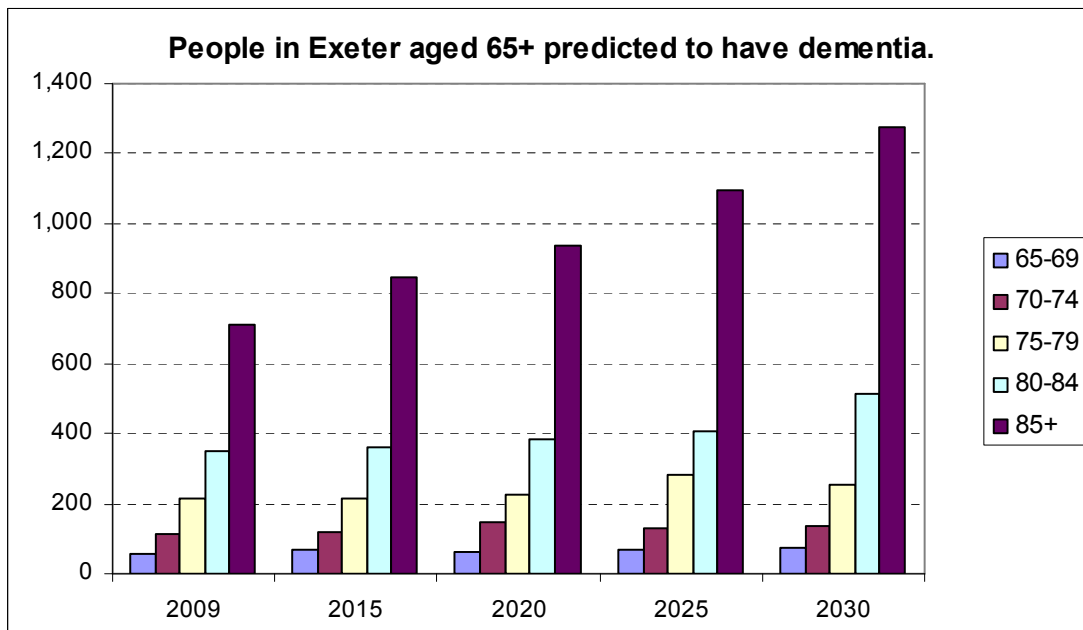
The Council supports the Supporting People strategy of helping people with learning disabilities achieve the greatest degree of independence possible. This includes various home ownership options, extra care, cluster schemes and floating support in general needs housing. Where possible, residential care in shared accommodation will be replaced by independent living. Support will be funded by the Supporting People programme.

The process of moving people with learning disabilities out of residential care in Exeter is underway. Each person is being assessed with a view to finding the right solution for them. There is a draft memorandum of the agreement with Devon Learning Disability Team and Supporting People and meetings are being held to discuss strategic development and operational procedures.

The Council is also encouraging private landlords to rent their properties to people with learning disabilities through the Key Ring project, which provides a network of self help.

### **10.2 Dementia**

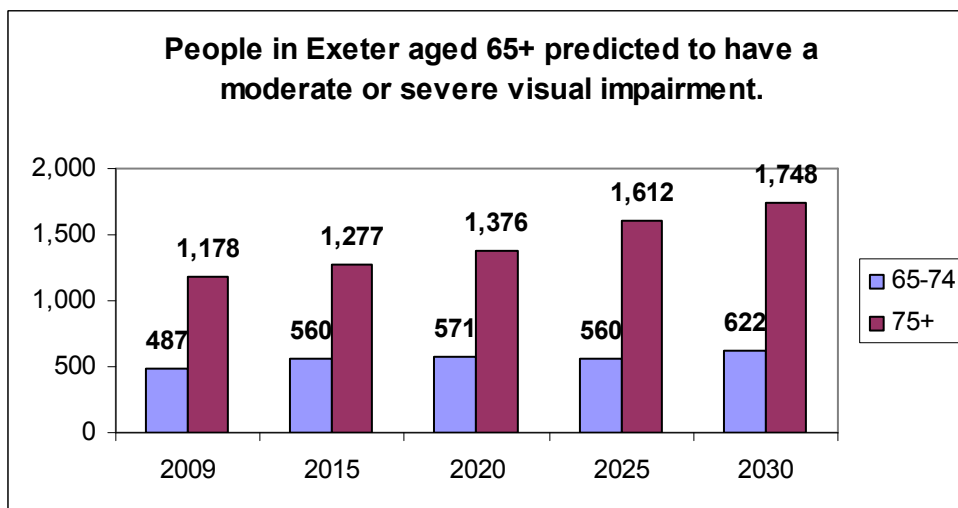
Dementia in all forms affects one in 20 people over the age of 65. One quarter of people over 85 develop dementia. With an aging population, it is likely that these numbers will increase. (Molineux.P & Appleton.N,2005)



*Department of Health Projecting Older People Population Information System - [www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk)*

Most older people with dementia can continue to live at home with support, however, some may need specialist accommodation. Currently, the only accommodation in Exeter suitable for people with mild dementia is Buller Court (please see **section 9.4**). Exeter City Council intends to have extra care housing in the City which will meet the needs of people with mild levels of dementia.

### 10.3 Visual Impairment



*Department of Health Projecting Older People Population Information System - [www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk)*

When a Council tenant requires adaptations to their property to counteract their visual impairment, an occupational therapist or a rehabilitation officer for the visually impaired will assess them and make a referral to an Exeter City Council technical officer. If the tenant needs to move, an assessment is made and the Council's



occupational therapist is provided with a statement of need highlighting the risks associated with their current property and what they require.

#### **10.4 Cognitive Disability**

Older people with cognitive disability as a result of head injury, stroke or conditions such as autism or aspergers require accommodation which provides a structured environment. Support is needed for reassurance and emergencies. This can be best achieved with a clustering of self-contained accommodation with a dedicated support provider. Such accommodation does not currently exist in Exeter.

Action: Establish the level of need for clustered accommodation and provide through various initiatives.

### **11. Homelessness**

The following table shows the reasons for homelessness for all applicants over 55 approaching the service in the last two years.

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>
Termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	19
Non violent relationship breakdown with partner	18
Relatives or friends unwilling to accommodate	17

Given the relatively short wait for older persons' accommodation in the City it is possible to prevent all but crisis homelessness for older people by providing additional priority through the Homechoice system. Whilst this provides a speedy housing option, it can become the only option. The Exeter City Council Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 commits to tackling the causes of homelessness for older people and seeks to prevent homelessness rather than just allocate accommodation (with help and advice from the Housing Advice Team). This is especially relevant given the above causes of homelessness where the termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancies can, in theory, be more readily prevented than evictions from the family home.

The Council will also provide emergency accommodation for older people when they are discharged from hospital and do not have any suitable accommodation to live in.

Further information on the Council's approach to dealing with homeless older people can be found in the Homelessness Strategy which is available at [www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10040&detailid=3641](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10040&detailid=3641)

### **12. House Conditions**

The link between poor housing and poor health has already been highlighted in this Strategy and has been acknowledged through the development of the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The condition and suitability of an older person's property can affect their mood and mental health, therefore good housing

conditions play an important role in meeting health and social care objectives and the prevention agenda.

### **12.1 Exeter City Council's Repairs and Maintenance Service**

The Council respond to the needs of older persons by allocating repairs based on individual needs. In this way, a repair can be resolved more quickly if the individual's circumstances require it. The Council closely liaise with the older person's accommodation support staff to ensure that repairs are undertaken in a timely manner. If required, a password system can be operated to improve security. The Council also has a code of conduct with contractors to ensure they provide the standards expected of them when working in older person's homes. For example, the hours of works in older person's accommodation are different from those in general needs accommodation.

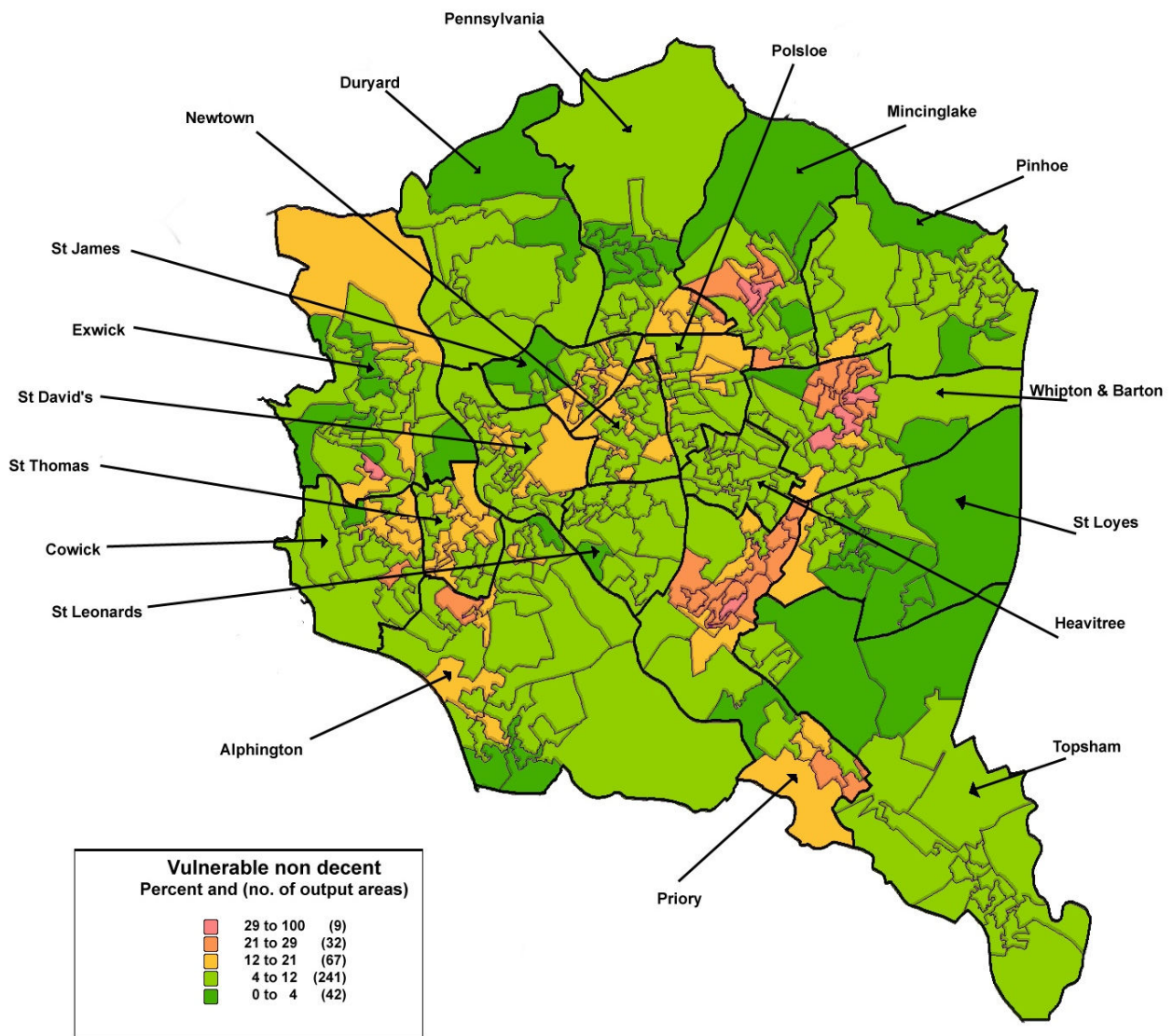
When undertaking major works, a survey is carried out before works start to ensure that it meets the requirements of the tenants. For example, baths are sometimes replaced with showers where required. Low surface temperature radiators are fitted in older person's accommodation to avoid possible scalding injuries and on the bathroom programme, all taps are fitted with levers so they are easier to operate.

When programmed works are carried out on areas such as bathrooms and kitchens, an officer will explain the process to tenants and deal with any questions and concerns they may have.

Feedback from the older person's housing focus group stated they were pleased with the service and the fully qualified trades people. The repairs and maintenance team always answer their phone and explain the procedure for the work clearly. Jobs are completed satisfactorily and the workmen always keep to their appointed times.

### **12.2 Decent Homes Standard**

Exeter City Council will meet the national target requiring all social housing to comply with this standard by the end of 2010. There is also a government target which requires decent homes occupied by vulnerable people in the private sector to increase to 75% by 2020. Exeter City Council hopes to achieve this through the activities of 'Cosy Devon' and the Wessex Reinvestment Trust Home Improvement Loans.



This map highlights areas of vulnerable householders living in non-decent private housing in Exeter.

### 12.3 Devon Care and Repair

Devon Care and Repair (DCR) provide a range of services for older people (over the age of 60), disabled people and the families of children with special needs. These services include:

- Advice, information and support on problems relating to the client's property and prevention and completion of necessary forms. They are hoping to extend this service to cover housing options. They can signpost clients to agencies providing advice on legal entitlements and other support services.
- Advice on financial issues such as availability of various grants, accessing charitable funding, benefit entitlement and insurance claims. They can also

signpost clients to agencies which offer independent financial advice on releasing equity and accessing loans.

- Technical advice can be provided on the scale and cost of necessary works, finding a reputable and reliable builder, monitoring a builder's performance and contracts and documentation.
- A handyperson and maintenance service which offers general household support such as putting up curtains, shelves and pictures, fitting safety devices and electrical and plumbing work.
- Free home safety assessment to identify minor adaptations and remove any hazards which will lead to ill health or accidents.
- Rapid Equipment and Minor Adaptations Service (REMAS). This service provides general aids for daily living and is prescribed by Devon Social Services. Care Direct will make an assessment over the phone. DCR will then visit the client, validate the assessment and install the equipment. The service also includes telecare which does not require programming. REMAS replaces the previous process of waiting for assessments and then the delivery of aids. As it is quicker, it is a more effective service for when people need aids or adaptations in order to return home from hospital. It therefore reduces delayed discharges.

These services are available to all homeowners and private sector tenants. RSL and council tenants can only access the handyperson service and REMAS.

This home improvement agency is funded by Supporting People, the PCT and all the local authorities in Devon.

Private residents who attended the focus group informed the Council that they were not aware of the services provided by DCR and those that were aware of these services claimed that they were very expensive.

Action – Feed the comments made by the focus group into the re-tendering process of the service next year.

Action - Inform DCR and Devon County Council of the need for a specific moving service for older people living in Exeter on a low income. A service is required to provide help and advice on options and the transition of selling a property and physical help moving.

#### **12.4 Decoration and Garden Assistance Schemes**

The Council offers a decorating and gardening scheme for council tenants aged 70 years and over (providing there are no other residents in the property aged 16 to 70), tenants under 70 receiving Housing Benefit, disabled people on Housing Benefit and single parents. All applicants must also have clear rent accounts. In 2008 the decorating service had 98% tenant satisfaction and the gardening scheme received 91% tenant satisfaction. Tenants who attended the older person's housing focus group were generally pleased with the service.

Action – Research services available for low income home owners and people renting privately and promote. If necessary, recommend that DCR provide a similar service for homeowners and private renters.

### **12.5 Private Sector Renewal Scheme**

Grants available under this scheme can finance the cost of home refurbishments for older people and disabled homeowners and tenants who are obliged to repair their homes. The Council provides a combination of loans and grants under this scheme.

[Action - Publicise the availability of grants linked to loans, targeting publicity in areas known to have the poorest housing conditions](#)

### **12.6 Home Repair Assistance Grant**

These discretionary grants can be used to address Category One Hazards and installation of stair lifts instead of a DFG if the DFG procedure should disadvantage the applicant. The grant can also be used for the installation of insulation.

### **12.7 Home Improvement Loans**

The Council has joined other local authorities in Devon and the Wessex Reinvestment Trust (WRT) to offer home improvement loans. Reduced interest loans will be available for low-income households who would not qualify for a normal high street loan. The loans are available so households can undertake repairs or improvements to bring properties up to the Decent Homes Standard and to fund discretionary elements for DFGs.

The applicant can choose to repay the full loan in monthly instalments, just the interest in monthly instalments or they can make no repayments at all. With the last two options the loan is secured on the house and repaid through the sale of the house after the death of the occupier. The loans can be as little as £1000 and, unlike other equity release schemes, are relatively inexpensive to set up for such a small amount. They are therefore suitable for home owners on pension credit.

The Council also provides discretionary renovation grants in conjunction with a loan provided by the WRT to address Category One Hazards and to achieve 'a reasonable state of repair' as outlined in the Decent Homes Standard.

[Action - Publicise the availability of loans, targeting publicity in areas known to have the poorest housing conditions.](#)

[Action – Use Joseph Rowntree Foundation results from the equity release pilot schemes in local authorities \(due to be published in Autumn 2011\) to establish whether Exeter City Council can improve its equity release loan service.](#)

### **12.8 Fuel Poverty**

Householders experience fuel poverty when they are unable to heat their home to the level required for health and comfort or when they have to spend more than 10% of their income on fuel to heat their home to an adequate standard for warmth. Of the 25,700 people who died in 2006 as a result of fuel poverty, 20,200 were over 75 (Jarman.R, 2009). Older people are less able to control their body temperature and therefore they get colder and hotter more easily. They also spend the majority of their time in their home.

Fuel poverty can be caused by homes with poor energy efficiency, high fuel prices, low household income and under occupancy. A cold home can intensify the risk of strokes and heart attacks and promote fungi and mould growth, which can cause bronchitis and asthma. The cost of energy inefficient housing to the NHS is estimated to be around £1 billion a year (Devon Local Authorities, 2003).

## Number of older people in Exeter living in a dwelling with no central heating – 2001

Age Group	Total 65 and over population in 2001	Number of 65 and over population with no central heating in 2001	% of 65 and over population with no central heating in 2001
65-74	8,829	1,660	9.31%
75-84	6,450	1,335	7.49%
85 and over	2,546	490	2.75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,825</b>	<b>3,485</b>	<b>19.55%</b>

*Department of Health Projecting Older People Population Information System*  
- [www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk)

### *Devon Affordable Warmth Strategy: Working together for warmer homes – 2003* *Devon Local Authorities*

This Strategy, which is in the process of being updated, outlines what local authorities in Devon are doing to combat fuel poverty. The Strategy is available at [www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3630](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3630)

### *Exeter Warm Up*

This scheme for loft and cavity wall insulation is available for households on low incomes. The grant will cover 50% to 100% of the cost of the works.

### *Private Landlord Energy Action grants*

These grants are for landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their rented properties. Exeter City Council fund 'Exeter Warm Up' grants and 'Private Landlord Energy Action' grants and promote them through targeted mail outs.

### *Cosy Devon*

The Council also promotes 'Cosy Devon' grants both by mail outs and referral through the South West Energy Savings Trust Advice Centre. This scheme is funded by the Council and offers all homeowners and private tenants free or discounted insulation.

[Action - Leaflets on schemes for homeowners to be made widely available.](#)

### *The Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH)*

The Council own build and infill schemes have all been designed using the CSH to produce healthy and comfortable homes for the over 55s. It is a requirement for government funding that all new build homes meet CSH level 3. Due to the highly sustainable nature of the design philosophy being followed, these schemes have easily achieved CSH level 4 on their pre-construction assessments.

Through its Residential Design Guide (which is currently in a draft format) Exeter City Council encourages the use of the CSH by developers to demonstrate the level of sustainability achieved by development proposals.

### *Aids*

Assistive technologies and telecare can help manage thermal comfort in the home. A 'smart' energy system can keep fuel bills down whilst diminishing the effects of excessive cold weather.

### *Council Housing*

Feedback from the older person's housing focus group stated that they were very satisfied that the Council was installing new efficient heating systems, insulating walls, fitting double glazed windows and insulating roofs.

## **13. Crime, Security and Safety**

Safety and security are a high priority for older people. Dwellings that would otherwise be highly satisfactory are unpopular where security is threatened.

To ensure safety and security in our estates, the Council takes part in the Partners and Communities Together (PACT) initiative. This is led by the Police and involves neighbourhood discussions over crime priorities in the area. The Police will then focus on tackling these issues.

Some of the security measures used in the Council's older persons accommodation schemes include well-lit entrances and door entry systems. The older person accommodation forums provide Council tenants with training on dealing with bogus calls and any current scams.

There are very few reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in older person's schemes. Those that are reported are dealt with in the stipulated time scales using the Council's ASB policy and procedures. The complainants are kept informed of how the case is progressing. A CCTV van is also available if required.

Tenants in the Council's older person's accommodation have the option of having an alarm. With the forthcoming change in housing support, clients in receipt of housing related support will also have the option of benefiting from an alarm. The intention is to broaden the service to general needs tenants and possibly private tenants.

To ensure new developments are designed to the 'Secured by Design' standard, the Council's planning department consult a Police Architectural Liaison Officer on all planning applications and strategic plans. This standard is referred to in the Council's planning policy. The Building for Life Design Quality Assessment also assesses whether public spaces and pedestrian routes are overlooked and feel safe. This relates to the safety and security of the public realm and includes meeting the Secured by Design standard. The Devon and Cornwall Constabulary are also consulted on all new policies.

All of the above actions carried out by Exeter City Council help to ensure older people feel safe and this reduces anxiety.

[Action – As requested by the focus group, arrange more Sheltered Housing Forum meetings with estate managers and the police.](#)

[Action – As requested by the focus group, door entry timings to be adjusted so that doors are locked from 6pm to 8am.](#)

## **14. Development / New Build**

### **14.1 Exeter City Council's Housing Enabling Role**

*Private sector and housing association development*

The Housing Enabling team at the Council work in partnership with private developers and housing associations to negotiate affordable housing on new build and regeneration schemes. This includes older persons housing schemes and extra care accommodation e.g. the Rugby Club site in St Thomas where Sovereign Housing Association is developing an older person's housing scheme consisting of 53 flats.

#### *Council own build and infill sites*

The Council has been investigating its own land to see whether any development opportunities exist. This project was first carried out with Sovereign Housing Association, but more recently the Council has been bidding for Government grant to develop some of these sites as new Council housing.

It is the intention that the developments will be designated for over 55s subject to demand / need and will be used specifically as part of the Councils downsizing initiative.

If all of the proposed schemes are successful in obtaining government funding and gain planning consent, the schemes in partnership with Sovereign Housing Association will yield up to 51 units for downsizing and the Council own build schemes will produce 21 homes for downsizing. There are also a further 53 homes at the design stage with the Council own build design team. These will be delivered either by the Council or in partnership with a Housing Association. This is a total programme of up to 125 high quality homes specifically designed for the over 55s.

All of these new homes will be built to level four of the Code for Sustainable Homes using Passiv Haus principles, high thermal mass buildings wrapped in thick layers of insulation that will not require a traditional heating system. All of the homes will be built to the Lifetime Homes Standard and most will have lifts servicing the upper floors.

## **15. Advice and Information**

### **15.1 Exeter City Council's Housing Advice Service**

In order to retain independence, older people need to be able to access advice and information regarding their housing options. The Council is leading on the promotion of Enhanced Housing Options as part of the trailblazing Devon-wide bid to central government to secure additional funding to meet housing need. In reality this means that the Council's Housing Advice Service aims to offer confidential and free advice to people with housing queries, including:

- Housing options
- Difficulties paying rent
- Difficulties managing the home
- Adaptations
- Other problems at home (such as problems with family members or a neighbour)
- Anti-social behaviour
- Renting privately
- Low cost home ownership schemes
- Moving house
- Downsizing.



The service provided takes a holistic approach to ensure that older people can move house or remain at home. It does not aim to simply move older people into older persons' accommodation to solve their housing need. The service also signposts people to other advice agencies for matters such as health and care.

Action – Work alongside Devon County Council and Age Concern to avoid duplication of housing advice services for older people and create a joined up service which offers advice on all aspects of housing.

Action - Promote housing advice services to older people as the focus group identified a lack of awareness. Pilot the use of Housing Care's housing options self assessment for older people.

Action – Strengthen the housing advice link with Devon County Council (over 50s website and leaflet) and monitor.

## **15.2 Age Concern**

The charity runs its advice service for older people in Exeter from a property owned by the Council. Exeter City Council provides Age Concern with a grant to cover the cost of the annual rent and some of its everyday running costs.

## **15.3 Newsletters, forums and committees for Council tenants and leaseholders**

Exeter City Council produce two newsletters for Council tenants (one of which is purely for tenants in older persons accommodation). The newsletters provide advice and information on various housing topics.

The Council has a forum for older persons accommodation tenants which looks at various topics related to service delivery. There is also a tenant and leaseholder committee.

Action - Council Resident Involvement Team and Strategy to be reviewed.

Action – Update tenants' handbook.

Action - Formal links to be developed between service user involvement and community development as part of the Council's Partners and Communities Together (PACT) initiative.

Action - Review the Council's tenant consultation process and produce a strategy.

## **16. Access to Council Services**

The older person's housing focus group stated that the customer service walk-in centre in the Civic Centre provided an excellent service and they liked the fact that hearing loops are installed in the centre. They felt that they were always able to access services via telephone, letter or email. However, the service provided by the central control team could be improved and the main switchboard did not always have up to date information about departments and staffing. Some members of the focus group did not realise that the Council had one main contact number.

Action – Central control team to undertake Telecare Service Association accreditation which is a nationally recognised quality audit.

Action – All managers to keep customer services updated on any staff changes and their roles.

Action – Promotion of the main customer services telephone number.

Action – As requested by the focus group, increase the number of estate officer site meetings

Action – Establish how we will support older people with a range of disabilities or failing mental faculties.

## **17. Equality and Diversity**

Older people's lifestyles and identities are increasing in diversity and circumstances as they age and this will affect their demand for housing services. Older people can experience many housing related problems associated with various elements of diversity including race, sexual orientation, disability, and gender/transgender. The Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy for Housing looks at the six strands of diversity including age. This Strategy is available from [www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11842](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11842).

Overcrowded housing largely affects BME groups as they often have three generations living together in one dwelling. Overcrowding can influence the following health conditions:

- Mental health
- Respiratory diseases
- Meningitis.

Whilst offering choice to applicants wherever possible, Devon Homechoice will give reasonable preference to applicants who fall into one or more of the following groups over those who do not:

- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing
- People living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.

A high housing need band will be awarded if occupants are lacking two or more bedrooms. A medium housing need band is awarded if the occupants lack one bedroom.

With regards to Council stock, we will also consider loft conversions and extensions if applicable.

Action – Promote resident involvement groups in order to make them more representative.

Action - Engagement with faith groups in the production of this Strategy has been unsuccessful. This has highlighted the need for our services to try different methods of engagement.

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**Exeter City Council**