

Appendix A

Scrutiny Review – Housing and Accommodation Requirements for Adults with a Moderate/Severe Learning Disability

1. Introduction

The Scrutiny Committee seeks to review the current range of housing provision for adults with a moderate or severe learning disability in Harlow. The review will seek to understand what existing provision is in place, better understand joint working between Essex County Council and Harlow, review any existing needs data, identify gaps and opportunities, and make a series of recommendations as to how needs may be better met, alongside identifying any barriers to delivery.

Under the Care Act 2014 Essex County Council has the statutory responsibility for meeting the care and support needs of adults with learning disabilities, including the provision of accommodation and care.

Harlow District Council has the statutory responsibility for the allocation of social housing, and statutory responsibilities for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The Council has the legal duty to establish a housing allocations policy, using the framework set out in the government's Code of Guidance, and to ensure all housing allocations are made within this policy.

The Council has some freedom to choose its own local housing priorities, but these need to be framed within what are known as the "reasonable preference groups". Legislation requires that all local housing authorities must give 'reasonable preference' to households and individuals seeking affordable rented housing who are within one or more of the following groups:

- Some people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability); and
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

Housing people with moderate / severe learning disabilities would fall within these reasonable preference groups.

This report focuses on the role that Harlow Council can play in assisting the County Council with their statutory responsibilities through the provision of accommodation, alongside identifying any areas where improvements can be made in the service offer that Harlow makes to people with Learning Disabilities from a housing perspective.

2. Methodology

This review has been undertaken through one-to-one interviews with key personnel across Harlow Council and Essex County Council.

This has been supplemented by a desktop review of key documents and performance information, together with a review of best practice in relation to meeting the housing needs of people with learning disabilities.

The report identifies the number of individuals estimated to be living in Harlow with a learning disability, and identified existing specialist accommodation provision. It also reviews key documents at both a County Council and district level, before identifying both need and opportunities.

Best practice from elsewhere in the Country can be found as an appendix, and provides opportunities for Harlow and Essex to explore in partnership.

3. Understanding the Population Size of Adults with Learning Disabilities

3.1 Overview Across England

Children, young people and adults with a learning disability and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition have the right to the same opportunities as anyone else to live satisfying and valued lives and, to be treated with the same dignity and respect. They should have a home within their community, be able to develop and maintain relationships and get the support they need to live a healthy, safe and fulfilling life.

Around 1.04 million people aged 15 to 64 in England have learning disabilities or autism or learning disabilities and autism. This group experience disproportionate levels of inequality and their quality of life outcomes are lower than it is reasonable to expect. Across England 129,000 with a learning disability receive local authority social care support.

3.2 Understanding the Population across Essex

There are estimated to be 27,000 people who have a learning disability and/or autism living in Essex and approximately 4,100 people receive a service which is funded by Essex County Council.

By 2035 it is forecast that the amount of people living in Essex with a Learning Disability and/or Autism will increase by 10.8%.

3.3 Understanding the Population in Harlow

Harlow's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document identifies that in Harlow 10.1% of the population aged 18 to 64 years old has a moderate or serious disability.

Data taken from Harlow Local Authority Profile from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2019 identifies that exact figures for the number of residents with Learning Disabilities are not available; however modelled predictions from POPPI/PANSI suggest the level could be around **1558 people** of whom 1276 people are aged 18-64 and 282 people are aged 65+.

This total is equivalent to 2.36% of the age weighted population and is similar to the levels across England (2.36%) and Essex (2.34%).

Of this number it is estimated that a total of 329 (291 age 18-64; 38 age 65+) have severe learning disabilities thus may have additional support needs.

The two tables below taken from the JSNA 2019 predict the number of people in Harlow with a learning disability, and forecast future figures, indicating a projected increase from 1558 in 2019 to 1732 by 2035.

Table 6: Learning Disability Predictions 2019

	Number of people predicted to have a learning disability in 2019		
	Age 18-64	Age 65+	Total Age 18+

	Number	%*	Number	%*	Number	%*
England	826834	2.44%	216362	2.09%	1043196	2.36%
East of England	89212	2.43%	26011	2.09%	115223	2.34%
Essex	21059	2.43%	6487	2.09%	27546	2.34%
Basildon	2740	2.43%	683	2.09%	3423	2.36%
Braintree	2164	2.42%	659	2.09%	2823	2.34%
Brentwood	1110	2.42%	333	2.08%	1443	2.33%
Castle Point	1219	2.42%	486	2.09%	1705	2.32%
Chelmsford	2561	2.43%	725	2.09%	3286	2.35%
Colchester	2947	2.45%	713	2.10%	3660	2.37%
Epping Forest	1914	2.43%	546	2.09%	2460	2.34%
Harlow	1276	2.44%	282	2.07%	1558	2.36%
Maldon	870	2.41%	344	2.11%	1214	2.32%
Rochford	1210	2.42%	429	2.09%	1639	2.32%
Tendring	1828	2.41%	919	2.09%	2747	2.30%
Uttlesford	1237	2.42%	376	2.09%	1613	2.33%
	Number of people predicted to have a moderate or severe learning disability in 2019					
	Age 18-64		Age 65+		Total Age 18+	
	Number	%*	Number	%*	Number	%*
England	188444	0.56%	29128	0.28%	217572	0.49%
East of England	20343	0.55%	3488	0.28%	23831	0.48%
Essex	4797	0.55%	870	0.28%	5667	0.48%
Basildon	625	0.56%	92	0.28%	717	0.49%
Braintree	493	0.55%	89	0.28%	582	0.48%
Brentwood	253	0.55%	44	0.28%	297	0.48%
Castle Point	277	0.55%	65	0.28%	342	0.47%
Chelmsford	585	0.56%	97	0.28%	682	0.49%
Colchester	672	0.56%	96	0.28%	768	0.50%
Epping Forest	437	0.55%	73	0.28%	510	0.49%
Harlow	291	0.56%	38	0.28%	329	0.50%
Maldon	197	0.55%	47	0.29%	244	0.47%
Rochford	276	0.55%	57	0.28%	333	0.47%
Tendring	413	0.55%	123	0.28%	536	0.45%
Uttlesford	283	0.55%	50	0.28%	333	0.48%
<i>Source POPPI/PANSI 2019</i>						

Source: JSNA 2019

Table 7: Learning Disability Projections

Predicted Numbers of People with a Learning Disability to 2035				
	2025	2030	2035	Predicted Change 2019-2035

	18-64	65+	18-64	65+	18-64	65+	18-64	65+
England	833689	240660	839192	269064	842807	296050	15973	79688
East of England	90564	28952	91550	32438	92307	35875	3095	9864
Essex	21467	7179	21763	8011	22030	8855	971	2368
Basildon	2816	754	2880	844	2953	932	213	249
Braintree	2167	744	2166	842	2149	936	-15	277
Brentwood	1137	354	1155	397	1180	433	70	100
Castle Point	1217	520	1221	566	1230	614	11	128
Chelmsford	2590	797	2619	881	2650	958	89	233
Colchester	3078	784	3182	877	3254	976	307	263
Epping Forest	1961	594	1993	662	2034	733	120	187
Harlow	1292	319	1315	356	1341	391	65	109
Maldon	853	392	844	434	835	482	-35	138
Rochford	1213	467	1219	521	1218	570	8	141
Tendring	1856	1017	1879	1139	1893	1263	65	344
Uttlesford	1268	437	1283	506	1299	572	62	196
Predicted Numbers of People with Moderate or Severe Learning Disabilities to 2035								
	2025		2030		2035		Predicted Change 2019-2035	
	18-64	65+	18-64	65+	18-64	65+	18-64	65+
England	190642	31818	192706	35452	193757	38627	5313	9499
East of England	20718	3802	21027	4244	21222	4654	879	1166
Essex	4906	942	4994	1047	5064	1150	267	280
Basildon	645	100	663	112	680	123	55	31
Braintree	495	98	496	110	493	121	0	32
Brentwood	260	46	266	51	272	56	19	12
Castle Point	277	68	279	73	282	79	5	14
Chelmsford	593	104	603	114	610	123	25	26
Colchester	704	103	731	115	749	127	77	31
Epping Forest	449	78	458	87	468	95	31	22
Harlow	296	43	303	48	309	51	18	13
Maldon	194	52	192	57	191	63	-6	16
Rochford	277	61	279	68	280	74	4	17
Tendring	420	133	428	149	432	164	19	41
Uttlesford	290	57	295	66	299	74	16	24
<i>Source POPPI/PANSI 2019</i>								

Source: JSNA 2019

4. Specialist Provision

For people with a learning disability, appropriate accommodation has a strong impact on their safety and overall quality of life, while also reducing social exclusion.

At least half the adults with learning disabilities still live with their parents, without the opportunities to learn independent living skills and make choices about how they live their lives.

Person centred approaches mean moving away from larger residential care facilities and evidence suggests, and policy dictates, that local authorities should offer a broad range of accommodation and support to people with learning disabilities. This should encompass a spectrum of options from residential care, to floating support to enable people to live alone independently.

There is evidence that smaller scale residencies, based in the community which offer a higher level of choice and independence result in better outcomes for service users.

4.1 Essex County Council

Within Essex people with learning disabilities and autism live in a variety of different accommodation. The table below describes the accommodation types along with a description and where known, an approximate number of people who Essex County Council fund care and support needs for in each setting.

<u>General needs housing</u> The adult lives by themselves or with a partner in their own home, which could be rented or fully/partly owned by the adult.	Essex County Council does not know how many adults live in their own homes.
<u>Living with family</u> The adult lives with parents or other family members, within the family members home	Essex County Council does not know how many adults live with their families.
<u>Shared Lives</u> The adult lives with a family and the family receives payment to support the adult and receives rent from the adult.	There are approximately 47(4) adults funded by Essex County Council living in Shared Lives accommodation.
<u>Supported Living</u> A shared house or a cluster of self-contained accommodation, the adult holds a tenancy and their support is provided separately	There are approximately 1,137(5) adults with care and support packages funded by Essex County Council to live in supported living and there is a total of 360 supported living schemes in Essex.

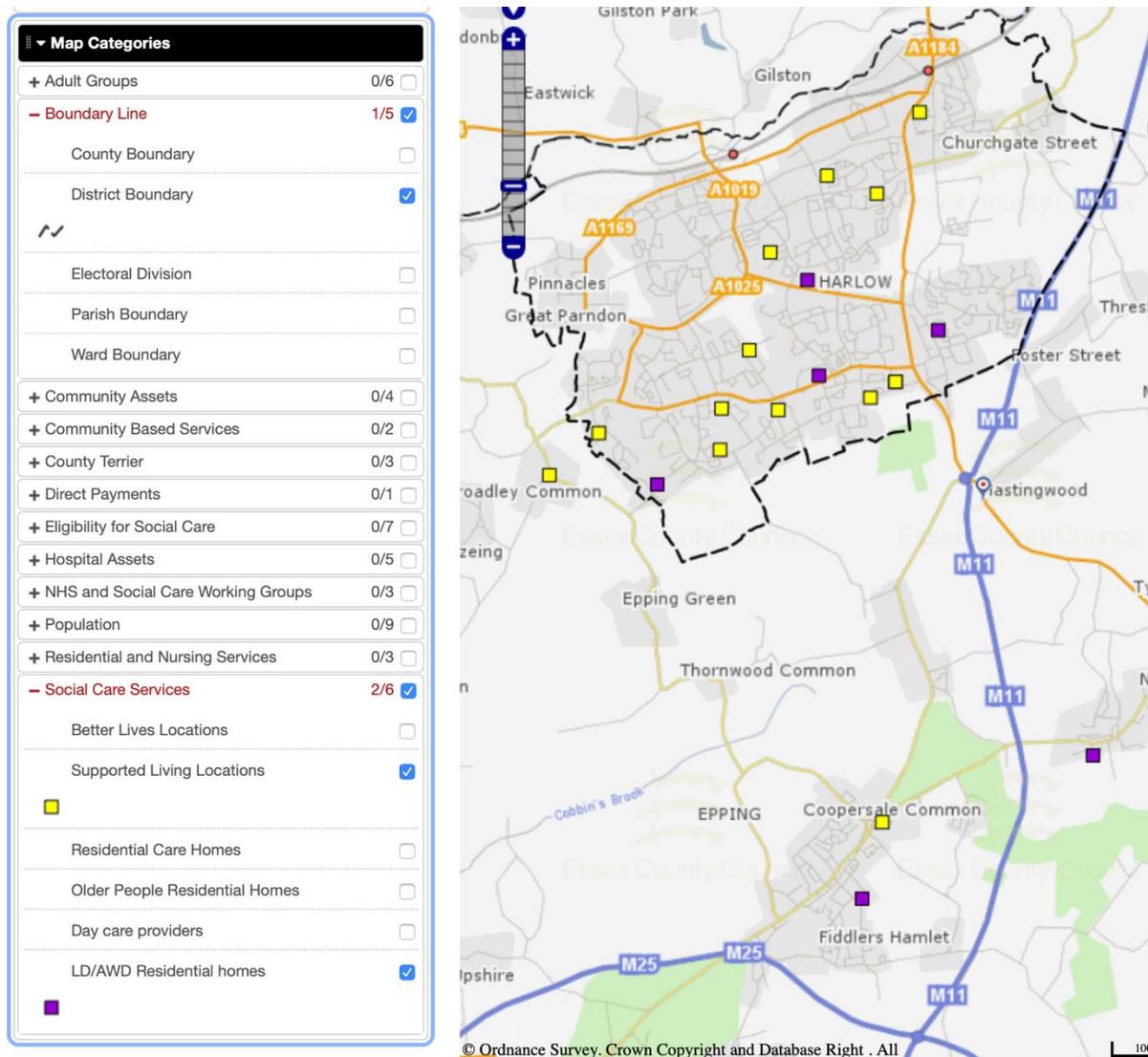
Source: A Place to Call Home: LDA Accommodation Strategy 2019-21

4.2 Harlow

Information from Essex County Council has identified that there is the following existing specialist accommodation provision for adults with learning disabilities.

- Supported Living – 11 schemes with 47 places in total
- Residential Care – 4 homes with 99 beds in total
 - Liveability Keefield (10 beds)
 - Liveability Nettleswell Rectory (9 beds)
 - Tye Green Lodge (61 beds)
 - Livingstone House (19 beds)

The map shows how this provision is distributed across the borough.



Source: Livingwell.essex.org

In addition to the above Shared Lives is a scheme that supports eligible adults aged 16 or over who need accommodation and care and support with an approved carer or have regular stays or visits with an approved carer.

The person needing care and support is matched to a compatible Shared Lives carer.

Shared Lives provide a service for a range of people with support needs, not just those with Learning disabilities. This includes older people, people with mental health problems, people with physical disabilities, people with substance misuse problems and care leavers

Their services and projects give people the skills and confidence they need to live independently. Essentially, the scheme operates like supported lodging where carers are recruited and can provide a room in their home, either on a permanent basis or during weekends, or they can simply provide emotional support.

5. County Council Key Strategic Documents & Policies

This section of the report reviews Essex County Council's key strategic documents and policies in relation to the housing needs of adults with learning disabilities.

5.1 A place to call home: LDA Accommodation Strategy 2019-21

The current Learning Disability and Autism Accommodation Strategy sets out the strategic commissioning intentions for accommodation and housing for adults in Essex who have a Learning Disability and/or autism.

Essex County Council aims to support adults to have access to housing which is a good home to live in, to be safe, for people to feel part of their community, have any support needs met and as a base for the person to lead a life which is meaningful to them. Essex County Council believe that adults should be enabled to live as independently as possible, reducing their reliance on paid for support and lead a life which is meaningful to them.

Essex County Council is intending, by the end of 2021, to:

1. **Enable adults so they can continue to live in their own homes or with their families** - To do this ECC will carry out a review of the contracts in place to support adults in their own homes or with their families, to ensure that these contracts provide an enabling, best value and outcome focused service.
2. **When an adult needs a higher level of support Shared Lives will initially be explored before other accommodation options.** - ECC will review the current service and its strategy towards the provision of the Shared Lives service to ensure that there is capability and capacity within the service to deliver this outcome and also influence operational practice to embed this approach.
3. **Support adults to move on from Supported Living to general needs housing when their needs have decreased to a level where they no longer need to live in Supported Living accommodation.** Operational practise within ECC will be reviewed and changed to reflect this and also ECC will build stronger links with the twelve borough, city and district councils in Essex to ensure that there is sufficient sustainable and suitable housing for adults to move to.
4. **Continue to minimise the use of Residential Homes as a place for adults to live** - Within the residential sector there will continue to be a need for services which meet very specialist and complex needs, though services outside of this area are unlikely to receive many or any new referrals. There will be an on-going programme of reviewing adult's accommodation needs to identify options for them as well as support for homes which would like to consider deregistering to supported living services.
5. **Ensure there is enough housing options for adults with complex support needs.**- A review is required of the housing needs for adults with complex support needs to identify gaps in provision across all accommodation types and ECC will develop demand profile for this area.
6. **Support targeted growth of additional Supported Living schemes in specific areas where they are required.** - There has been a large growth in supported living across Essex over the last five years, there is not a requirement now for more large scale growth but instead targeted growth in specific geographic areas to meet local demand. ECC will develop local demand profiles on where new services are required which will be shared with interested parties to promote new developments.
7. **Develop accommodation standards and minimise void levels in existing Supported Living schemes** - ECC will develop robust accommodation standards to ensure that all supported living properties are of a minimum quality standard and that

there is effective void management across all existing Supported Living schemes which have been approved via the Scheme Approval Process

8. **Ensure commissioned services represent best value, both for individual adults and as a sector** ECC will ensure that front line practice embeds best value as a principal in the review and assessment process for adults in all accommodation settings, and ECC will also review its contractual arrangements to ensure that best value is being achieved with the providers of support to adults.
9. **Develop closer working links with the borough, city and district councils in Essex** - Essex County Council will work closely with the twelve local authorities in Essex to build a long term constructive relationship to ensure that adults are able to access general needs housing , support the development of new Supported Living schemes, housing safety and quality issues are addressed and to share information.
10. **Reviewing adults living in residential and supported living services outside of Essex to ensure they are living in the right accommodation** - Essex County Council will carry out structured reviews of identified adults, particularly with large packages of support, to ensure that their present accommodation meets their needs and if there is now local options within Essex which could be considered for them.
11. **Needs assessment for older people with learning disabilities who have developed dementia and frailty** Adults are living longer in Essex, which is a key success though this is accompanied by a growth in the amount of adults with early on-set dementia and frailty from the age of 50 upwards. Essex County Council will carry out a needs assessment of the approach to best meet the needs of this group.

5.2 Meaningful Lives Matter Programme

Meaningful Lives Matter has been set up by Adult Social Care teams at Essex County Council to improve the lives of people with a learning disability and/or autism in Essex.

The Meaningful Lives Matter programme is based on a principle that many of the long-term solutions to people's care and support needs rest within themselves and with their families, social networks and surrounding communities. Person centred planning means developing together with the adult their strengths, skills, knowledge and assets so the adult can maximise both what they do for themselves and what they can access from others to live a meaningful life.

This should be linked to the specific outcomes that are most relevant to the person including their health, employment, connection to their community, aspects of recovery and wellbeing and relationships.

The project aims to change services to make the lives of people with autism or a learning disability more meaningful by:

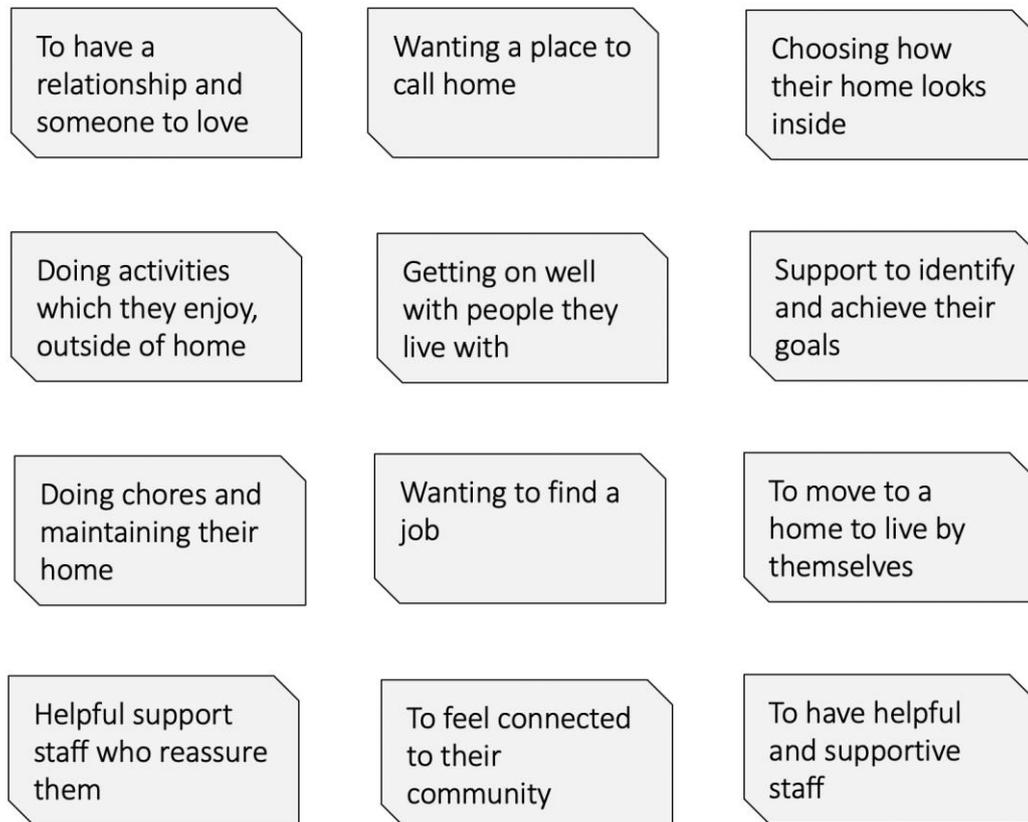
- identifying gaps in the support that people receive
- fixing problems in the support that people receive
- challenge negative perceptions around learning disabilities and autism
- training staff

5.3 Needs Assessment

Needs assessment data in relation to Learning Disabilities has been requested as part of this review, however to date no information has been provided. It is not clear if this work has yet been undertaken by Essex County Council

5.4 What are the aspirations of people with learning disabilities and autism in relation to housing

The Learning Disability Accommodation Strategy was co-produced with adults with a learning disability or autism. They identified the following as being important to them in relation to housing and 'having a home.'



Source: A Place to Call Home: LDA Accommodation Strategy 2019-21

6. Understanding the Need

Conversations with staff at the County Council provided an overview of the accommodation needs and identified gaps and issues.

6.1 Identified Need

The commissioning for Learning Disability Accommodation services, and the associated needs assessment to inform this is undertaken by Essex County Council on a quadrant basis, and as such Harlow comes under the West quadrant with Brentwood, Epping Forest and Uttlesford.

Therefore any identified need would be based on this area and the accommodation sourced may be within any of the districts in this quadrant, and will depend of land availability and land affordability.

The County is working closely with Essex Housing to identify redundant County owned sites for development opportunities, which will then be sold on to a Registered Provider to manage.

Highly Complex Needs

In relation to adults with highly complex needs there is an identified need for 24 units of accommodation across the County, although it is not possible to break this down to understand the need in Harlow.

The intention is to develop these homes near reasonably sized developments, rather than in a rural setting, but no specific areas have yet been identified.

For the highly complex cases the County intends to use new build, as the costs of conversion, given the very high specification required, is too expensive. Through new build the County can ensure that exactly the right types of properties are developed.

Medium Needs

In relation to capital development there is an intention to develop 6-8 self contained units of accommodation with sleep in overnight staff these will be in either Epping or Harlow.

Currently the County Council do not develop anything other than supported living or residential care.

The County Council consider that for individuals with low level learning disabilities, who are independent but vulnerable to exploitation, supported housing would be ideal provision.

There is currently no floating support Learning Disability service.

6.2 Identified Gaps & Issues

Move On

The County recognises that there is no structured approach to move on from Supported Living, and they struggle to be able to move people on who are able to live independently.

Partnership working with District Councils

The County Council also felt that they did not have strong or established relationships with the district councils , particularly in relation to procuring accommodation and identifying move on.

It is recognised that the County has not been joined up in its dialogue with the districts about their accommodation needs, in particular the combined needs of different service areas, i.e. Mental Health, Learning Disability, Leaving Care etc.

Historically conversations have been individual conversations, based upon each service's requirements; it has been recognised that a collective conversation is needed. In response to this a Supported Housing Partnership Board is in the process of being developed to enable these collective conversations through a co-ordinated approach with the districts.

7. Review of Harlow Key Documents

The section reviews Harlow's key documents in relation to either identifying or meeting the needs of adults with learning disabilities.

7.1 Harlow's Affordable Housing Supplementary planning document (SPD)

The SPD identifies that in Harlow 10.1% of the population aged 18 to 64 years old has a moderate or serious disability (general, not learning disability specific).

The 2015 SHMA presents evidence for the need for 10% of the market housing and 15% of Affordable Housing to meet M4(3) standards. This is on the basis that 3.3% of households in England had at least one wheelchair user as of 2011 (the figure is 7.1% for those living in Affordable Housing), and that these proportions are likely to increase in line with the ageing of the population.

The SPD states that the Council will consider the latest assessments of need, including the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment (SHMA) and the Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment .

The Council will also consult Essex County Council to seek their advice on their priority specialist residential accommodation needs.

There is no specific reference to adults with Learning Disabilities.

7.2 Corporate Plan

Harlow's Corporate Plan 2021 under Equalities and Fairness identifies the following goals:

- Enhance the quality of life and care for people with a learning disability, autism and/or mental health issues.
- Safeguarding adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable, protecting them from avoidable harm and acting in their best interests where they lack capacity.

There is clear support for improving life quality for residents with a learning disability, and this will include both support and accommodation (provision of homes and / or adaptations).

7.3 Draft Housing Strategy

Within the draft Housing strategy there are 4 priorities. The second of which is to 'address the housing needs of target and vulnerable groups'

Theme C within the Strategy is the provision of Housing for people with disabilities - This theme covers people with Learning Disabilities, although is not exclusive to this group.

The strategy highlights:

- the importance of supporting people with all disabilities to live independently in their own homes through the promotion of digital technology solutions and adaptations.
- the opportunity to explore housing solutions / schemes for people with LD
- the challenge of reduced housing support offered via ECC

7.4 Allocations Policy

The Allocations Policy does not specifically reference adults with learning disabilities, however this is not unusual.

There is provision in the policy for supporting residents with medical or social needs to move (which could cover LD applicants who need to move due to medical or social reasons), through the three bands detailed below.

Band 1 - A person or household that has a need to move from care or supported housing and rehousing has been agreed under a special quota scheme.

Band 2 - The household has a high need to move for medical or social reasons (assessed as a "high" priority) as defined by Harlow Council.

Band 3 - A person or household who has a need to move for medical or social reasons, assessed a „moderate“ medical priority, or because of unsatisfactory housing conditions such as insanitary conditions

Move on from supported housing (quota system) was introduced into the most recent edition of the allocations policy and is aimed at creating flow from supported housing schemes into mainstream housing, to prevent those schemes from becoming "bed-blocked". There is no specific mention of using this to support move on from Learning Disability Schemes, however there is clear scope to enable this to happen.

7.5 Housing Register & Homelessness

Housing Register

On joining the Housing Register applicants are asked 'Does anyone on the application have an illness or disability that affects their ability to live at home?' If they tick yes the Council will request further details and issue a medical form.

There is no direct question that asks applicants if they have a learning disability and as such there is no mechanism to report on the total number of applicants with an identified learning disability. Therefore it is not possible to understand the number of people on the Housing Register who have a learning disability or autism who wish to access social housing.

On the Council's website to join the Housing Register there is no accessible format which provides easily understandable information on how to join the Register or how housing is allocated. Updating the Council's website and creating a leaflet in an accessible format will provide more easily accessible and understandable information for people with learning disabilities wishing to access social housing. A guide to make information accessible can be found at <https://www.changepeople.org/getmedia/923a6399-c13f-418c-bb29-051413f7e3a3/How-to-make-info-accessible-guide-2016-Final>

Accessible information is information that people can understand. It means different things to different people. For some people it is information in large print or Braille. For others it might be information translated into their first language. However, in relation to learning disabilities accessible information means using easy words and pictures, using writing in short, simple sentences without any hard words or jargon. This can be supported by easy to understand pictures to complement the words.

This report has focused on access to housing; however they may also be a need to provide information in easily accessible format for Council tenants, or clients requiring assistance with a housing problem or who may be homeless.

In order to join the Housing Register an online form must be completed, there does not appear to be an easily identifiable alternative means of joining for customers who would find completing the form to be challenging.

Homelessness

Homelessness Statistics provide data where applicants have a self-identified support need. The table below shows the data for the last 2 financial years where the applicant has a support need in relation to a learning disability.

Year	Total number of Duties	Total with a support need due to a learning disability	% of those owed a duty
2018/19	445	4	0.9%
2019/20	259	7	2.7%

As can be seen in 2019/20 a total of 2.7% of homeless clients had a support need in relation to their learning disability, this compares with 4.3% across England.

8. Opportunities for Harlow to Support Accommodation Options for Adults with Learning Disabilities.

Section 7 clearly indicates that there is a drive from the top of the organisation to support people with learning disabilities, as well as other groups. The stepping stones to improving provision for this group are already therefore in place.

This section identifies opportunities for Harlow Council to work in closer collaboration with Essex County Council to increase both accommodation options and to improve access to available accommodation.

8.1 Understanding the Need

There is no available needs data from the County Council in order to be able to fully understand the housing needs of adults with learning disabilities.

Recommendation

Harlow Council should work closely with Essex County Council in the completion of any needs assessment work and commit to a strategy to meet the identified need.

8.2 Supported Housing Partnership Board

The newly established Supported Housing Partnership Board creates an opportunity to work with the County at a strategic level to understand the housing requirements of County Council clients, and to identify opportunities to meet these needs through the provision of existing buildings or the development of new.

As a number of the opportunities within this report cross cut both Housing and Regeneration it would be sensible to have joint representation on the Supported Housing Partnership Board.

Recommendation

Regularly attend the Supported Housing Partnership Board, working with the County to identify accommodation opportunities.

8.3 Provision of Accommodation

The County Council were very keen to enter into dialogue with Harlow Council to explore possible accommodation options and opportunities. This could include:

- Identifying small blocks of under-utilised accommodation/stock (ideally 4-6 units) that could be converted to meet the needs of learning disability clients.
- Identify any opportunities to convert old sheltered stock or low demand stock into accommodation for adults with learning disabilities. County Council have advised that they would not cluster more than 12 learning disability clients on anyone project, however for any larger schemes that are identified consideration could be given to a multiple use scheme.

- Identify any opportunities within the Council's own build programme or with developers to develop new build schemes for clients with learning disabilities.

Given the high demand for social housing in Harlow committing to provide units of accommodation for clients with learning disabilities needs to be balanced against the identified needs of other specialist client groups, homeless households and general needs applicants.

Essex County Council are considering how their own sites can be developed to meet the needs of Learning Disability clients and this may also provide opportunities for collaborative working in the development of mixed use schemes.

Recommendation

Engage in conversations with Essex County Council to better understand the need and explore opportunities as detailed above.

Ensure that the new Housing Strategy reflects any identified need and the new approach.

8.4 Access to Accommodation and Move On

As identified earlier within the report, applicants are not asked if they have a learning disability and as such demand for general needs housing from this client group is therefore not understood. It was also identified that there were barriers for potential applicants with a learning disability to easily navigate the application process.

Recommendation

Introduce a question on the Housing Register application form to identify if applicants have a learning disability or autism.

Update information on joining the Housing Register to create an accessible format.

Ensure that an alternative number or email address is available for those who are unable to complete the online form.

Harlow Council can support move on through the Allocations Policy, by using the existing move on quota within the policy. It can ensure that housing needs of clients with learning disabilities needing to access social housing can be met by using the existing medical and social banding scheme.

Harlow can also work closely with the County Council to develop individual housing plans for those who are in inappropriate accommodation and/or residential settings.

Recommendation

To consider the use of move on accommodation from supported housing (quota system)

within the existing Allocations Policy to support move on from learning disability provision.

Ensure that clients with learning disabilities who are in housing need are prioritised appropriately in line with the medical and social criteria.

Work with the County to develop individual housing plans for those in inappropriate accommodation.

9. Conclusions

In the Scrutiny Committee “Review Topic Submission Form”, Members identified the key objectives to this review. They were to have a clear understanding of the housing and accommodation needs of residents with a learning disability, and for residents with other additional needs and to have a clear plan as to how any gaps in provision will be met.

This paper has demonstrated that is some understanding of the accommodation needs of this client group in Essex, but that more work needs to be done to understand the specific needs of Harlow residents. This can be achieved through joint working at the recently formed Supported Housing Partnership Board.

There are a number of other recommendations relating to the housing register application process that will be able to provide a deeper understanding of individual needs in the future.

In terms of establishing a plan to meet gaps in provision, this can only be achieved by jointly working with Essex County Council, to develop schemes that provide appropriate accommodation and the use of quotas to provide move on accommodation where necessary. Because of the shared responsibilities relating to both accommodation and support, joint working will be key.

There are clearly a number of options for Harlow:

- Work with ECC to assess & identify need, specifically in Harlow
- Commit to a developing a strategy for meeting supported housing needs
- Develop housing plans for those who are in inappropriate accommodation / residential settings
- Identify a housing support provider (e.g. Sanctuary Supported Living) & work on bringing schemes forward
- Provide access to housing through the housing register
- Provide specific access through a quota scheme

Potential barriers to delivery

Members have asked that any potential barriers to delivery be identified. These include:

- Failure to work effectively with Essex County Council, with shared goals
- Lack of evidence of need.
- Lack of ability to identify potential sites or schemes that could facilitate the delivery of supported accommodation for the client group
- Shortage of appropriate social housing that can be provided as move on
- Lack of funding for support services (either at ECC or Harlow Council) to support independent living.
- Lack of staffing resources to move projects forward
- Difficulties in adapting current housing IT to enable the capture of additional needs information as part of the housing register application process.

10. Next Steps

Following approval of this report by Scrutiny Committee it is recommended that this report, its recommendations and the identified good practice be used as a platform for meeting with

and engaging in discussions with Essex County Council to explore the identified opportunities.

It is also recommended that Scrutiny Committee review progress against the recommendations within this report in 12 months time.

Recommendation

Officers to meet with Essex County Council to explore the opportunities detailed within this report.

Scrutiny Committee to review progress against the recommendations in 12 months time.

Appendix 1 – Best Practice

This section identifies best practice and innovation in meeting the housing needs of adults with learning disabilities elsewhere in the Country. The examples may provide Harlow Council and Essex County Council with a number of opportunities to explore in partnership.

The following points are key to delivering best practice:

- The person centred approach means moving away from larger residential care facilities.
- Evidence suggests, and policy dictates, that local authorities should offer a broad range of accommodation and support to people with learning disabilities. This should encompass a spectrum of options from residential care, to floating support to enable people to live alone independently.
- There is evidence that smaller scale residencies, based in the community which offer a higher level of choice and independence result in better outcomes for service users.
- Joint work on a housing plan model by ECC & Harlow Council would mean that each person who needs to move from a residential setting has a plan to do so
- A relationship needs to be developed with an RP who can help meet the housing

Partnership Working in Two Tier Authorities

Innovative Supported Housing Scheme developed in Partnership by Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council

Scheme Overview

St Edburg's Path in Bicester and Nickling Place in Banbury offer 12 purposefully designed apartments for adults with learning disabilities and autism.

All units are self-contained with private rear gardens and look out onto secure communal courtyards that have been designed to offer sensory areas for both play and relaxation. The schemes also provide communal kitchen and lounge areas alongside designated staff

offices and overnight accommodation.

The core aspiration of the scheme had two main requirements:

1. To provide well designed housing to meet the needs of clients who were either inappropriately housed in residential accommodation (sometimes out of area) or those who were living in family or other inappropriate accommodation but ready to move to a more independent lifestyle.
2. To produce revenue savings from the Oxfordshire County Council's Adult Services revenue budget.

How it was delivered

Recognising the need for better quality and more cost effective housing and the need to offer an alternative to residential care, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and Cherwell District Council (CDC) agreed to work in partnership through a joint commissioning approach. The work was formalised through a transfer arrangement whereby a number of OCC sites (which were surplus to requirements) were sold to CDC at a price which reflected the agreement to develop the supported housing.

It was recognised early on that the schemes would be more costly to build than typical residential units due to their higher specification requirements. As such, Homes England provided £440,000 of grant funding for these particular units under their Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund. Without this contribution the project may not have otherwise been deemed viable.

Sites were identified based on their suitability in terms of access to nearby amenities, a sense of community (it was important that there was the potential to integrate), surrounding noise levels and ability to offer the required level of privacy.

The structure and responsibility for project deliverables is illustrated below.

Project Phase	Joint Commissioning Board (Decision Making Body)	
	Cherwell District Council	Oxfordshire County Council
Design & Construction	Produce design proposals and manage construction of project	Advise on design features and specification
Post Practical Completion	Building and landscaping maintenance, management of leasehold contracts with tenants	Provision of care service and tenant needs management

A specification was then jointly produced with input from occupational therapists, industry

experts, care providers, end users and their families.

Since completion, CDC have provided ongoing building management as landlord and OCC have commissioned the care and support service for tenants via a third party.

Outcomes

- The developments have been hugely successfully with nearly all units now occupied and care managers and the provider seeing noticeable improvements in tenant wellbeing.
- The short term level of revenue savings has not been realised on the care contract at the outset as many of the tenants have needed one to one support at night on an individual basis but it is hoped that as the tenants become used to living more independently these savings will be realised in the longer term. However the supported housing model commissioned does compare favourably against the equivalent costs in a registered setting.
- These new developments allowed tenants to move back into Oxfordshire and to prevent people moving out of county so they could be closer to family as there was previously not a similar scheme on offer in Oxfordshire which catered for the level of complexity of need.

Lesson Learned

There were, however, a number of challenges faced during the delivery of the schemes which needed to be overcome and that will be used to shape any future projects. These are as follows:

- The need to appoint external design consultants with a suitable level of experience in supported housing. The lack of consultant knowledge put a huge strain on in-house specialists to assist with production of specifications and design proposals.
- The need to ensure Site Managers have experience in schemes of this nature. This will reduce the onus on a clerk of works/client to check the quality of the work and finish required for schemes of this nature.
- Short soft-landing periods require all work to be completed & snagged without overruns. Unlike other types of projects, flexibility cannot be built in to complete minor detailing post- completion.
- Need to co-ordinate and identify resources for hospital discharge and specialist health input.
- Need to review Nominations agreements for specialist schemes- naivety on everyone behalf as the scheme took longer to fill up due to the complexity of the transition to independence of some of the clients.
- A need to work with the wider community in the longer term over acceptance of those with more complex needs living in the community and to work with individual clients on becoming 'good neighbours'.

New Build Housing Development

Tregorrick Way - large housing development with a mix of privately owned, rented

and affordable housing in the heart of a large town in mid Cornwall.

As part of the Council's affordable homes programme, eight units (originally designated for commercial units) were purchased by the Affordable Housing Team to help Adult Care meet its priority to provide quality housing options for learning disabled adults.

Summary

Tregorrick Way is a large housing development with a mix of privately owned, rented and affordable housing in the heart of a large town in mid Cornwall. As part of the Council's affordable homes programme, eight units (originally designated for commercial units) were purchased by the Affordable Housing Team to help Adult Care meet its priority to provide quality housing options for learning disabled clients.



Background of Supported Living in Cornwall

Cornwall Council is committed to providing quality homes for adults with eligible adult social care needs that enable people to play an active role in local communities. As part of this approach the Council recognised the need to improve housing options for people with a learning disability. Consultation with people who use services was very clear in stating a desire for their own front door and that friends and family could visit whenever they wanted.

Partnership

This partnership includes WainHomes as the developer, and Cornwall Housing Limited (CHL) who is the landlord of this new Supported Living Scheme. All tenants have a secure tenancy and CHL provide the housing management function. A tripartite agreement was set up between Adult Social Care Commissioning, the care provider Havencare and Cornwall Housing Ltd. This agreement set out the principles for working together effectively for the benefit of all parties. It also made really clear which organisation was responsible for what.

Adult Social Care has a joint contract with NHS KERNOW CCG for care and support providers to deliver person centred quality care through the Supportive Lifestyles Service Specification. This is an outcome focussed, strength based specification that empowers

providers to deliver tailored support flexibly and creatively to enable individual tenants to live ordinary lives.

How the development was achieved

This Supported Living Scheme was designed and built in partnership with WainHomes, Cornwall Council Housing and Adult Social Care Commissioning. The units were purchased using Cornwall Council's HRA 1-4-1 capital receipts, Social Care Capital Grant, and funding following a successful bid to the Department of Health, Housing and Technology Fund to provide homes and assistive technology for adults with learning disabilities.

Each of the spacious 1-bedroom homes feature a range of assistive-technology, tailored to individual tenants needs. This enables proportionate care and support to be delivered and also provides tenants with independence building and least restrictive support. The technology involves a range of options, including Just Checking; Autonomie, a web based application that supports tenants to develop independence skills; and Eco Dot, which feed into the main community 'Hub'. The care and support team at Havencare provide a consistent staff team who work with tenants to achieve their individual outcomes and meet their daily needs. The staff team also champion the use of tech enabled care.

All the flats are fully accessible with some having specialist equipment such as tracking hoists fitted so that individual's needs could be met with dignity, and this was a partnership approach with Occupational Therapists, Health Professionals and Social Care teams locally.

Lessons Learned

Working together is sometimes easier said than done! Coordinating the development, design, different departments with different needs, commissioning the right care and support and assessing referrals for individuals to move in takes a lot of time, energy, understanding and patience.

One of the biggest differences is pace. Housing timelines and adult social care timelines are often very different and can be difficult to manage. The Council worked really hard to identify people that wanted to live at this scheme, as far in advance as possible. Lining this up with completion dates and snagging issues did cause some delays. The Council now has a Construction Project Manager from our Capital Projects Team to support negotiations between us and the developer. This role will help immensely in reducing staff time from adult social care commissioning and housing previously spent in these areas.

The amount of time it takes for social care to complete all the statutory work required to enable tenants without capacity to move into their own homes was underestimated. This work needs to take place as early as possible but also to recognise that statutory process and decision making can be complex. Good clear and timely communication with all parties is key.

The impact of this scheme has been significant. Some of the tenants never expected to have an opportunity to live more independently and some felt quite nervous about doing so. One of these individuals stated prior to moving in that she wouldn't want to use the hub and is now one of its main event organisers! In addition, it isn't just about the people living at Tregorrick Way; it's their families that have benefited too. Several parents were the main carers and now have opportunities to spend more time with other children, look

for work or look forward to retirement.

“Kerry has always wanted a flat of her own. Something I thought would never happen. She was very unhappy in residential care.

Since moving in on January 2nd this year, life has been totally changed for Kerry and myself. She loves her flat and her life there; I am amazed at the difference in her. She is much happier, more relaxed and active now”.

Joyce, Kerry’s Mum

Co-designing independent living for people with a learning or physical disability

New build development - Andover, Hampshire

NHS England’s ‘Building the right home’ provides a framework to encourage commissioners and providers to expand the housing options available for people with a learning disability, autism or both, who display behaviour that challenges.

Managed by The Enham Trust, Bradbury Place offers 8 one and two bedroom wheelchair accessible apartments and enables the Trust to fulfil its mission to provide support to disabled and disadvantaged people to live the life they choose with care support, access to work and an accessible home.

Project Background

Bradbury Place offers a secure environment for its occupiers, providing 8 one and two bedroom wheelchair accessible apartments, within 500 meters of the town centre of Andover, Hampshire. They benefit from flexible facilities that includes live-in care, couples and single occupancy.

At the heart of this project lies Enham Trust’s driving ambition to help people with disability to progress through a transition programme from supported living towards greater independence. This programme enables people who have relied on 24-hour or intensive care to have greater confidence to live their own lives in their own home with reduced reliance on others.

Enham Trust identified this site as one which, when developed, would offer choice for disabled people to access shops, services and public transport independently, giving greater opportunity to find suitable work and therefore achieve greater self-reliance.

Transforming lives through co-production

The success of the project was largely influenced by the Enham Trust client design panel. The group of clients, all with varying disabilities, were key influencers in each aspect of the development, from its location, its design and importantly its functionality and flexibility for people with a range of disabilities.

The client design panel have:

- Influenced the design of bathrooms to be positioned next to bedrooms, allowing dignified hoisting from one room to another
- Designed entrances that are both shared and independent to reduce loneliness
- Ensured real level access
- Influenced access to both private and communal gardens
- Influenced footpath improvements, including smooth drain covers
- Demonstrated the need to widen the footpath to the local community by meeting local residents who also needed a wider path for pushchairs.
- Influenced local residents to lower their garden fences that appear to be 6ft tall to someone in a wheel chair. Neighbours now have an eyeline that's not intimidating and give opportunity to talk and socialise.

Enham residents have also met the wider community and together are working in partnership with numerous agencies to improve disabled access and the environment for everyone that passes through this impressive building.

Through excellent communication with user groups and paying attention to detail, Bradbury Place is an inspiring place to live. Apart from the innovation and green credentials it is a most impressive building totally fit for its purpose.

Victoria Leesam, former Property Regeneration Executive, Enham Trust, said "We wanted to design Bradbury Place with disabled people. They wanted an inspiring place to live that didn't look disabled but still accessible. The design process was about how people feel in their home, what they can do, not what they can't. We encouraged disabled people to have a say, this helped us to develop homes which truly catered for their needs."

Design features

The site presented a number of constraints. It had no vehicular access and was truncated by a Public Right of Way. A tree belt to the north-east provided good protection from noise generated by the nearby highway but also restricted development owing to tree root protection areas and canopy spread. To the east and presenting itself to the Winchester Road is a nondescript two-storey development.



Form became an important consideration and in terms of townscape the building was used to 'bookend' Winchester Road in order that its presence on the corner site was

tangible when viewed from the nearby town centre. Two accommodation 'blocks' were created with strong gable ends to achieve this intent.

The two accommodation 'blocks' span the Public Right of Way to physically connect common areas and improve resident interaction and to enable all apartments to be serviced from a single lift. The Public Right of Way dissects the site but does not dissect the community living here.

To achieve commercial viability, the site needed to support 8 apartments. The height of the gables restricted the accommodation 'blocks' to three storeys; therefore two single-storey 'chalet' apartments were developed between the three storey blocks and the adjacent existing community of 'bungalows', creating enclosed entrance courtyards. These also assisted with the transition in scale and typology between the three storey 'blocks' and the existing 'bungalows'.

The buildings are clad above ground floor in anthracite zinc. Brickwork forms the walls of the ground floor storey and these are built to a datum which reflects the scale of the existing bungalows of the adjacent community. The zinc is intended to minimise maintenance and provide a strong material presence, reinforcing the 'bookend' concept.

All of the apartments are fully accessible and cater for the needs of wheelchair users according to current design standards for this type of accommodation. In addition, the project was designed in accordance with the DDA provisions, Building Regulations Approved Documents Parts B and M, and the Wheelchair Design Guide.

Lessons learned

The development of Bradbury Place was hugely successful, with all apartments fully occupied by people with disabilities enjoying their new found independence. However, as with any project, there are lessons to be learnt:

- The involvement of family and friends is critical to a successful transition to independent living. It isn't a short process, and their involvement provides reassurance and support, aiding the transition.
- Engagement with Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups ensuring changes to care packages are agreed and in place to fit the transition timescales is paramount.
- Moving from a residential care home or supported living environment to independent living can be a very daunting time, full of unknowns. The benefit of peer support from individuals who have moved to independent living was invaluable, and it has been identified that peer support networks for this purpose would be beneficial for future developments.

Remodelling of Sheltered Provision

Pennine Court, Salford Council– Remodelling of Sheltered Housing to include extra care for people with learning disabilities

The project was intended to demonstrate how choices could be increased for people with learning difficulties and their carers and unnecessary admission to more dependent

settings be avoided. It was particularly driven by:-

- belief that the choices available to people with learning difficulties as they age should link more closely to the broad range of housing and support services for older people
- recognition that existing older people's services need support in developing their services to cater appropriately for the leaning disabled older population
- recognition that people with a learning difficulty may develop early onset dementia and that existing services have difficulty meeting their needs appropriately - this had been identified as a particular pressure by the learning difficulty service
- recognition that, like other people, as they grow older people with a learning difficulty may find that their existing homes do not meet their needs – for instance for ground floor, accessible accommodation.

The project was also grounded in a recognition of the importance of partnership working between:-

- commissioners, housing providers and support agencies - to provide a more flexible range of housing and housing with support options, which in turn make better use of other health, care and support provision, for people with learning difficulties as they grow older
- commissioners and the providers of services for both older people and people with learning difficulties – to ensure that the needs of people with a learning difficulty are acknowledged within wider services for older people.

Reconfiguration of Pennine Court

The overall plan was to reconfigure a traditional largely bedsit sheltered scheme that, despite being well-located, had a history of being difficult to let.

The scheme comprised 21 bedsits, 2 one-bedroom flats and an integrated scheme manager's house plus a small common room/lounge, kitchen, laundry and a lift to the first floor. An L-shaped two storey building, it occupies a small and constrained site along a side road but close to facilities and has a private garden away from the road.

The plan was to relocate the scheme manager off site and to reconfigure and slightly extend the whole building to provide 15 one-bedroom and 2 two-bedroom flats and improved communal facilities to extra care standards. Four of the ground floor one-bedroom units were to be designated for older adults with learning difficulties, who would receive an extra care service.

Design

The partners and the selected architect were keen to agree a detailed design specification that would offer an environment which was both learning difficulties and dementia friendly but also suited to the circumstances and requirements of older people with general needs – thus promoting integration and retaining flexibility within the scheme.

It was agreed at an early stage that there was no need for the extra care flats to differ from the other units in terms of size and layout. However, considerable attention was given to ensuring the provision of appropriate facilities, design, fittings and decor for the tenants with learning difficulties – both within their own flats and in the communal areas. The latter was a particular challenge given that, to a greater or lesser extent, communal areas and facilities were intended to be used by all tenants. So, it was important to ensure that these

areas and facilities were as accessible and user friendly as possible for the tenants with learning difficulties while not reducing their appropriateness and attraction for other residents.

Commissioning the Extra Care Service

A 24 hour staffed care and support service is provided for the four tenants with learning difficulties. This was commissioned jointly by Supporting People and Community Health and Social Care. Although committed to the principle of joint contracting, this was the first time that Salford had actually developed a joint care specification or carried out a joint tender process across directorates. As such, it was an important pilot exercise.

The development of the specification for the provision of care and support services at Pennine Court involved professionals from the Joint Learning Difficulty team, the Community Health and Social Care contracts team, the Supporting People team and Housing Services.

Tenancy Arrangements

It was agreed that the Council would, through its Moving On Panel, have the nomination rights for the four extra care (learning difficulties) flats. The selected residents would hold assured tenancies.

It was also agreed to share the risk around voids. So, if and when a flat becomes vacant, there is an agreed notice and void period during which English Churches carries any rent and service charge loss. Beyond that time, the Council, having confirmed that it wants the flat to be held vacant until a new tenant with learning difficulties is identified/able to move in, meets these costs.

Integration

From the outset, this was intended to be an initiative in integration. It reflects Salford's commitment to people with learning difficulties having access to mainstream facilities and services for older people. There was a strong commitment from all stakeholders to ensuring that any barriers to integration were identified and worked on in partnership in order to achieve a real sense of inclusion and shared community.

Since the extra care tenants moved in, the scheme manager and the extra care staff have worked hard to promote integration, to encourage shared use of facilities and a sense of shared community – and this seems to be working