



**A Survey of Regional Housing Strategies and
Regional Spatial Strategies:
*Are these Addressing Population Ageing?***

**Carried out by Care & Repair England
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Background

Demographic ageing is one of the key policy challenges of the decade.

In Britain today, nearly 30% of households are headed by a person over 60 years old (*Living in Britain 2001, National Statistics*) and population ageing is the major driving force in the growth in the total number of households. It is expected that by 2026 there will be 2.4 million more older households than there were in 2007, accounting for 48 per cent of the increase in the total number of households (all ages) and as high as 90 percent in some areas (*Communities and Local Government commissioned research, 2007*).

Consequently, the ageing of the population is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed by housing and planning professionals as a matter of urgency.

The Government is expected to publish its new *National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society* in 2008, which will hopefully help to focus minds on this issue.

Two key Regional Government documents that determine the shape of housing, neighbourhoods and the wider environment are Regional Housing Strategies and Regional Spatial Strategies. Therefore the degree to which these key planning and housing documents address population ageing will largely determine whether or not suitable, inclusive housing and neighbourhoods are being created for older people. Put simply, are we planning and building the homes and communities needed for an ageing society?

The Survey

In order to consider the current position with regard to whether population ageing is being adequately addressed by housing and planning systems, and to track future developments and, hopefully, improvements, Care & Repair England has carried out a survey of the current Regional Housing Strategies (RHSs) and Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) which are currently available via the websites of each Regional Assembly.

The Regional Housing Strategies (RHSs) were published in 2005, with the exception of London where the RHS is now the responsibility of the Mayor of London and is currently being developed.

The situation with the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) is less clear cut. In searching for the current RSS some Regional Assembly websites lead to the Regional Planning Guidance, with publication dates ranging from 2001 to 2004 (the majority) but some now highlight the draft of the RSS currently under consideration relating to 2006-2026. These new Regional Spatial Strategies, looking ahead to 2026, are being developed in all Regions and are scheduled for completion in 2008. Where possible analysis of the RSS that is currently in place was undertaken, but where this was not possible, assessment of the new draft strategy was carried out.

All RHSs and RSSs were read through in detail to gain an overview of the extent to which they address the housing and related needs of older people. A word search was used as a cross check, looking for references to 'older people', 'ageing population', 'elderly' or similar derivatives (eg 'the elderly', 'the old and disabled'). The number of references mentioned in the table below encompasses all of these words and summarises the results of this survey.

Summary

The table below lists the regional housing strategy and regional spatial strategy by region and records all the specific housing issues/priorities given in each region affecting older people. These vary from references to older people and affordable housing and ownership, to inclusive design/Lifetime Homes to promoting health and well-being and the need to reflect future housing needs and aspirations of an ageing society. However, there was no common thread across the strategies.

The table also gives the total number of references to words associated with older and/or disabled people in each document; this ranges from zero, with the 'best' strategy mentioning older people in 37 clauses

Given the fact that the ageing of the population is the major driving force in household growth in most areas, we do not consider that any of the strategies sufficiently address population ageing.

There is clearly a significant amount of progress to be made if housing and neighbourhoods are to be created which meet national objectives of being inclusive, age-friendly places to live, with homes that enable and support independent living and offer a decent quality of life in older age.

Region	Regional Housing Strategy	Total References (to 'older people', 'ageing population', 'elderly' or similar derivatives eg. 'the elderly', 'the old and disabled')	Regional Spatial Strategy	Total References (to 'older people', 'ageing population', 'elderly' or similar derivatives eg. 'the elderly', 'the old and disabled')
North West	<p>Document Title: The North West Regional Housing Strategy 2005</p> <p>Briefly refers to issue of older people in four instances, none of which make any significant proposal for action. Main statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two briefly mention older people's need for supported housing • One mentions older people in connection with to being able to access affordable housing • One refers to the Right to Buy exemption of housing for older people. <p>Document length: 68 pages Page references: 8, 33,47, 52, http://www.nwrhb.org.uk/articleimages/RHS%20-%20final%20version%20signed%20off%20Final.doc</p>	5	<p>Document Title: The North West Plan: Submitted Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England Document Date: January 2006</p> <p>This document makes only a passing reference to older people and the impact of an ageing society on the region. There are however fourteen references to inclusion, which is defined as "<i>positive action taken to include all sectors of society in planning and other decision-making.</i>" The document also notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing demands on the infrastructure of an ageing population • Need for all services to meet the needs of the whole population, including older people • Housing development should meet additional needs. 	8

			<p>Document length: 120 pages Page References: 5, 29, 30, 31, 33, 92 http://www.gos.gov.uk/497468/docs/248821/396778</p>	
North East	<p>Document Title: A New Housing Strategy for the North East 2005</p> <p>This document addresses population ageing and housing in a more holistic way than the majority of other strategies. The main references include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people as the main client group of Supporting People • Both supported housing needs and wider housing need and aspiration • Older people as a socially excluded group • Home ownership as the major form of tenure amongst older people • A range of home tenure options required for older people • Lifetime homes standards will assist the more frail • Anticipated shortfall predicted in support for older people in their own homes • Provision of practical support and financial resources important for maintaining independence • Development of extra care housing will have an impact on existing supported housing • Importance of good housing management for groups with particular 	37	<p>Document Title: North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Document Date: May 2007</p> <p>This document gives mention to the fact that the North East is ageing faster than the rest of the country but then makes little further reference except for noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for inclusive design. • Cheap fares on public transport for children and older people • Higher proportions of older people in rural areas. <p>Document length: 261 pages (including introduction) Page Reference: 15, 62, 74, 111, 126, 129, 185 http://www.northeastassembly.gov.uk/document.asp?id=614</p>	7

	<p>needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in maintaining terraced properties to Decent Homes Standard. <p>Document length: 151 pages Page references: 30, 41, 45, 51, 58, 59, 69, 74, 75, 78, 82, 83, 87, 88, 91, 93, 102, 105, 118, 121, 130, 136, 142, 143, 146.</p> <p>http://goneweb.co.uk/nehb/key_documents/draft_rhs/draft_rhs_latest.pdf</p>			
Yorks & Humberside	<p>Document Title: Yorkshire and the Humber: Regional Housing Strategy 2005 – 2021</p> <p>The focus throughout this document is the additional needs for care and sheltered housing for older people. Involvement and consultation of tenants and residents at regional level and in renewal areas is mentioned but not apparently older people specifically. The remainder of the involvement is targeted at the private sector in remodelling the housing market.</p> <p>Strategy notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the need to meet both the housing needs of older people and their aspirations. • Acknowledging older people as a vulnerable group. • Older people are recipients of 15.8% of Supporting People funding and 82% of the SP funded bedspaces/units. 	15	<p>Document Title: Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber to 2016</p> <p>Document Date: December 2004</p> <p>The issue of a declining and ageing population in rural areas was the only mention made. There was recognition of the impact of the lack of a comprehensive and integrated transport system, which would result in social exclusion and isolation for those without access to a car.</p> <p>Document length: 214 pages (including introduction) Page Reference: 12.</p> <p>http://www.goyh.gov.uk/497763/docs/199734/199799/201898</p>	1

	<p>Document length: 108 pages Page Reference: 9, 10, 13,40, 53, 54, 55, 59, 61, 71, and 78.</p> <p>www.yhassembly.gov.uk/dnlds/Regional%20Housing%20Strategy%202005-11.pdf</p>			
East Mids	<p>Document Title: <i>The East Midlands Regional Housing Strategy 2004 – 2010</i></p> <p>There was a particular focus in this document on the “dependency ratio” i.e. the proportion of older people to younger people within the region. Also noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people’s changing aspirations and a growing expectation that services will support them to stay in their own homes • Poor access to services in some of the more remote rural areas is an important issue for older people • Housing providers must appreciate that the market changes and that what was acceptable once is not necessarily appropriate now or in the future eg. sheltered bedsits • The East Midlands has a high rate of accidents with the second highest death rate for accidental falls when compared to other English regions. <p>Document length: 54 pages Page References: 11, 26, 27, 35, 37, 39, and 41. http://www.goem.gov.uk/497296/docs/191913/</p>	12	<p>Document Title: <i>Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8)</i> Document Date: March 2005</p> <p>The East Midlands is described as an area with inward migration for retirement. This is the only oblique reference to older people.</p> <p>Document length: 108 pages http://www.goem.gov.uk/497296/docs/191913/237644/rss8.pdf</p>	0

	232488/288818/strategy			
West Mids	<p>Document Title: West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy 2005: Delivering a Housing Vision for the West Midlands in the 21st Century: Pathways of Choice</p> <p>This document ranged widely over the issues relating to older people and housing need, including the health impact of poorly maintained homes, support needs of older people from ethnic minorities, access to transport and the need for a range of tenures. While these broad issues were raised, there was little direction offered with regard to possible ways forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing diversity of Older People and particular needs of BME elders and housing options • Need to ensure choice is available • 75% of Older People are homeowners • Need for schemes to assist older owner-occupiers to maintain their homes • Issues of isolation and need for transport links • Lifetime home standards as a way of reducing adaptation costs. <p>Document length: 211 pages Page References: 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, 24, 44, 49, 66, 82, 85, 86, 88, 89, 98, 108, 117, 130, 135, 183. www.wmra.gov.uk/download.asp?id=289</p>	21	<p>Document Title: Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands RPG11 Document Date: June 2004</p> <p>The only mention of older people is their inward migration in some areas and the affect this has on the age profile.</p> <p>Document length: 154 pages Page Reference: 29.</p> <p>http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Uploadfiles/File/RSS_and_Annexes(1).pdf</p>	2

<p>Eastern</p>	<p>Document Title: Regional Housing Strategy for the East of England 2005 – 2010</p> <p>This strategy acknowledged the desirability of lifetime homes standards as a way of providing housing for older people in the community and minimizing social exclusion. Research by Care & Repair England into the needs of black and minority ethnic communities, and housing options services for older people are mentioned but the remainder refer to revisions in sheltered housing schemes and the possible need for extra care housing. Comments re older people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking empty homes with “under-occupation” • Use of Lifetime homes and Smart homes as mechanisms to minimize social exclusion • Housing providers should review their accommodation provision as part of the development of Older People Strategies • Local housing authorities are encouraged to use a Housing Options approach when giving housing advice. <p>Document length: 86 pages Page References: 25, 35, 37, 39, 45, 49, 54, 55, 72</p> <p>www.eera.gov.uk/Documents/About%20EERA/Policy/Housing/2006-09-05%20Regional%20Housing%20Strategy%20</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>Document Title: East of England Plan - Draft revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England* Document Date: December 2004</p> <p>The strategy refers only to the number of households growing and average household size decreasing as a result of the ageing population.</p> <p>Document length: 305 pages Page Reference: 7</p> <p>http://www.eera.gov.uk/Documents/About%20EERA/Policy/Planning%20and%20Transport/PlanHome/RPG/RPG14/View%20the%20Plan/RSS14Finalversion.pdf</p> <p>*The East of England Plan has been under construction and review since 2001 with a final version due out in 2008 according to the website.</p>	<p>1</p>
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	Final.pdf			
South West	<p>Document Title: South West Regional Housing Strategy 2005 – 2016</p> <p>This document acknowledges the larger numbers of older people in the region, particularly from migration, and emphasises fuel poverty as an issue for older people with related health impacts. There is mention of lifetime homes standards as a way of reducing later expenditure on adaptations. The use of Supporting People funding and home improvement agencies were identified as important ways of addressing the housing needs of older people.</p> <p>The conceptual framework for this strategy includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining quality of life, • Independence and inclusion, • Rebuilding lives, • Promoting opportunities for independent living and • Preventing homelessness. <p>These are all good starting points but are not subsequently reflected in relation to meeting the housing needs and aspirations of older people.</p> <p>Document length: 70 pages Page References: 6, 7, 32, 35, 41, 43, 45, 46, 55, 56, 57, and 69.</p>	12	<p>Document Title: SW Regional Planning Guidance (publ. 2001) The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 - 2026 Document Date: June 2006</p> <p>The South West has the largest proportion of older people of any English region. The 2001 RPG mentioned older people and population ageing 5 times, noting the threat posed by 'increased pressure on public services due to the growing number of elderly people'. Meeting the housing needs of older people is noted in a 3 instances.</p> <p>The new draft strategy addresses both the challenges and opportunities that population ageing presents. This document takes the most creative approach to consideration of an ageing population in any of the spatial strategies examined. Re: older people it noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for more older people to remain economically active • Opportunities for businesses to develop products and services for older people • Need for the retention of local retail, post office and community services alongside promotion of innovative community based initiatives 	22

	<p>www.southwesthousingbody.org.uk/media/SW/Regional%20Housing%20Strategy/strategy.pdf</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of voluntary based activity given the proportion of retired people with time and expertise available • Development of buildings and infrastructure to meet the changing needs of the population • Housing stock should be built with a proportion of new builds built to Lifetime Homes standard • Skills challenges and employment opportunities of an ageing population are as important as the promotion of life-long learning to the economic development of the South West. <p>Document length: 216 pages Page Reference: 2, 24, 25, 44, 131, 132, 135, 137, 173, 174, 182, and 196.</p> <p>http://www.gos.gov.uk/497666/docs/166217/regional_planning_guidance http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/media/SWRA/RSS%20Documents/Final%20Draft/draftrssfull.pdf</p>	
<p>South East</p>	<p>Document Title: 2006 onwards: South East Regional Housing Strategy</p> <p>This document identified older people living in non-decent private sector housing, both as owner-occupiers and tenants, as an issue which needs addressing before 2010 by local private sector housing initiatives. It also noted:</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>Document Title: A Clear Vision For the South East: The South East Plan Core Document</p> <p>Document Date: March 2006</p> <p>This (very large) document is aiming to address the range of issues brought about by an ageing population, particularly with regard to the need for services and support for carers.</p>	<p>18</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people tend to live alone • Supported housing needs of older people should be addressed using Supporting People funds • Older workers should be targeted to support the growth of the housing industry • Need for schemes to bring homes up to Decent Homes Standard • Lifetime homes are suggested as a way for RSLs meet the needs of vulnerable service users <p>This document did not address the wider issue of older homeownership nor mention sheltered housing or adaptations. It did note the valuable skills of older workers within the construction industry.</p> <p>Document length: 114 pages Page References: 18, 26, 27, 36, 39, 71</p> <p>www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/163661/179152/regHousingStrategy06.pdf</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It looks at access to services including leisure, recreation, education and health • Identifies the key role of transport. <p>Document length: 340 pages + annexes Page Reference: 8, 23, 24, 53, 65, 66, 67, 69, 72, 77, and 88.</p> <p>http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/plan/view_plan.html#core_doc</p>	
London	<p>Document Title: The Draft Mayor’s Housing Strategy</p> <p>As well as being a comprehensive strategy regarding housing and older people, this most recent of all the regional housing strategies uniquely has a comprehensive section on citizen involvement. The strategy advocates for more housing options services to assist all</p>	19	<p>Document Title: The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London Document Date: February 2004</p> <p>The outstanding feature of this document is the attention given to diversity and community involvement in design and new developments.</p>	10

<p>vulnerable and marginalised people and addresses issues affecting current housing stock, new developments and security in design. There is an emphasis not only on meeting housing needs but also on creating sustainable communities. Re: older people it mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frail elderly are one of the vulnerable groups most likely to live in private sector non-Decent Homes • Extension of the Seaside and Country Homes scheme • Older home owners may benefit from a housing options service • Provision of co-housing and shared ownership schemes for older people will be developed • Measures to increase security and safety will be built into new homes to reduce the fear of crime • Adoption of the Lifetime Homes standards for all homes • Desire to improve and speed up the delivery of disabled facilities grants • Sheltered housing and extra care should be developed so that older people have more choice • Tenants and residents should be enabled to take part in housing management. <p>Document length: 210 pages Page References: 5, 35, 72, 76, 77, 85, 87,</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people are recognised as contributors to communities and as well as users of community facilities • Accessibility is required to enable choice • It is proposed that all new housing will be built to ‘Lifetime Homes’ standards, providing homes that are adaptable, flexible, convenient and appropriate to changing needs. <p>Document length: 318 pages plus annexes. Page Reference: 25, 26, 71, 77, 83, 179, www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/lon_plan/lon_plan_summary.pdf</p>	
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	90, 110, 111, 113, 188, 201 http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/housing/strategy/docs/draft-housing-strat-full.pdf			
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Suggested Reading

Opportunity Age (2005)

Sets out the Government's overarching strategy for an ageing society. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/opportunity_age/

Older People's Housing Strategies: Key Policy Drivers (2006) and Delivering housing for an ageing population: informing housing strategies and policies (2005)

These reports examine the relationship between the housing agenda and the policy agenda for older age. Published by the Housing and Older People Development Group. <http://hopdev.housingcare.org/publications.aspx?>

Towards Lifetime Neighbourhoods: Designing Sustainable Communities for All (2007)

This report discusses how creating more age-friendly neighbourhoods can contribute to older people's quality of life. Published by the International Longevity Centre and Communities and Local Government
www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/lifetimeneighbourhoods

World Health Organisation's Global Age Friendly Cities Guide (2007)

Proposes affordable measures that can be implemented relatively quickly to make cities more age-friendly.
www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities/en/index.html

Assessing regional housing markets for older people (forthcoming)

This Advisory Note and Resource Pack from the Housing Learning and Improvement Network and funded by the Housing Corporation will offer advice and information for planners, commissioners and providers to help assess the market for housing for older people in the region.
www.icn.csip.org.uk/housing/

More Choice, Greater Voice (forthcoming)

This toolkit provides a template for local authorities and their strategic partners to produce an accommodation with care strategy for specialist housing for older people in their areas. Published by the Housing Learning and Improvement Network and Communities and Local Government. www.icn.csip.org.uk/housing/