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THE PLANNING BUREAU LTD

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McCARTHY & STONE (DEVS) LTD

APPENDIX 4



A Better Life:
Private Sheltered Housing
and Independent Living
for Older People

Foreword

Housing choice is an essential dimension of public policy to promote independence. Housing strategies need to ensure that a range of appropriate housing choices for older people is provided. This study with its focus on private sheltered housing reflects the views of over 1,500 residents and prospective residents and contains important messages.

The views reflected in this study show that the burden of unsuitable housing can threaten personal confidence, lead to restricted lives and increase dependency. Appropriate housing choice can be liberating to individuals who are often alone in houses that are too large and need regular maintenance. Residents value private sheltered housing for the security and peace of mind it brings, and with this comes the widening of choice. An 80 year old resident says "Life is so much easier and happier – financially, emotionally and physically".

This study also highlights the economic case for sheltered housing. These sections should give town planners food for thought. Not only will carefully designed sheltered housing be sympathetic to the local environment, but it gives positive

economic advantages to small businesses in the community. As a 65 year old resident says "We spend more money locally now – whereas before we would have gone further afield".

The social case is made by highlighting the health and social care benefits from living in sheltered housing. Residents are typically more active, have a greater sense of wellbeing and make less demands on health services while care can be organised more effectively within a larger complex if required. Independence can therefore be maintained through choice of both housing and care. A 91 year old resident says "Help is at hand if needed, otherwise one can still live an independent life".

This study presents evidence of the importance of private sheltered housing as a positive choice to promote the independence of older people. This choice is however only a real choice if schemes are widely available. The personal, economic and social benefits of this housing option are clear – the providers are prepared to invest, the challenge is to the planners to put these visions into practice.

Dr. Glenys Jones

Chair of the Older People Committee

Association of Directors of Social Services

