

# ‘Keeping Control of Our Lives’ How Housing Co-ops Make a Difference for Older People

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# Growing Old: Hopes

We live in an ageing society...

1. For many people growing old is a positive experience
2. With more time for family and friends
3. And for activities and for reflection

# And Fears

But older people have understandable concerns

1. Loneliness and isolation
2. Inability to cope; financially or practically
3. Declining health and ending up in institutional care

# Who Will Provide?

Society as whole should provide for its older members but...current approaches are fragmented and unsustainable and, even worse, they tend to disempower older people

There must be a better way?

# A Better Way

A way that...

1. Puts older people in control
2. Enables them to shape their future
3. Makes better use of limited resources?

# The Case for Mutual Housing Solutions

A number of reports have highlighted the potential for mutual housing and care solutions for older people...inc:

- The HAPPI report
- The CCMH enquiry and report
- And 'Keeping Control of Our Lives'

# Evidence from the CCMH Report

*My co-op has recently lost its last original member. He had been active into his nineties, carrying out day-to-day activities for the co-op as a member of the management committee. Involvement in the co-op gives elderly people an ongoing challenge in their lives and helps to prolong active living.*

**Brian O'Hare, Chair of Huyton Community Co-operative for the Elderly**

# The Report on Mutual Retirement Housing

*Mutual retirement housing would remove these worries (of unsuitable housing, of loneliness and isolation) and would provide residents with a better quality of life. It would ensure that everyone would have an equal say in how the place is run. Experience in existing co-ops has shown that residents look out for each other and provide companionship for those who feel they need it.*

**Glyn Thomas, Vice Chair CDS Co-ops, in 'Keeping Control of Our Lives'**

# Feasibility Study into MRH

- Feasibility study into MRH for CDS Co-ops completed in April 2011
- Various potential models; ownership, part ownership, rented
- The study emphasised the importance of capturing 'the mutual advantage'

# The Mutual Advantage: Evidence From Three Co-ops

- ❖ Key members of three co-ops that cater for older people were interviewed and/or researched in July 2011
- ❖ The co-ops were Starley Housing Co-op in Coventry, Perryview Housing Co-op in Crayford, Kent and Huyton Community Co-op for the Elderly

# An Inclusive Co-op

- **Starley Co-op**...is an inclusive co-op...catering for everyone 'from the cradle to the grave'...it offers 'care **by** the community' to all its residents



# Two Older Persons' Co-ops

- **Perryview Co-op**...a self-run community for older people
- **Huyton Community Co-op for the Elderly**...a co-operative sheltered housing scheme



# The Respondents

- ❖ Pat Tolmer, Mary Connolly and Joan Hughes from Huyton Community Co-op for the Elderly
- ❖ Mary McGuire, Jacqui Dumbleton and Frances Skyte from Starley Housing Co-op
- ❖ James Steed, Perryview Housing Co-operative

# What Mutuality Offers

1. Control/independence
2. Active living
3. Neighbourliness
4. Social activities
5. Practical help
6. Mutual care
7. Adaptable living
8. A sense of place
9. Responsive staff
10. A secure future

# Being in Control

- ✓ *Is extremely important...I've been on the committee 25 years and I'm still attending meetings, even though I need a lift to go three doors up!...Frances*
- ✓ *We put things forward and we get things done...Mary and Joan*
- ✓ *Things happen quickly here...it's the perfect place to live...James*

# Remaining Active

- ✓ *It stops you getting stale...Pat*
- ✓ *Our Treasurer is 90 and still going strong...Mary and Joan*
- ✓ *I'm almost housebound but going to meetings keeps my brain going...Frances*

# Huyton - Pat, Joan and Mary

QuickTime™ and a  
decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

# Good Neighbours

- ✓ *It feels like a village...someone is always knocking on the door...Mary and Joan*
- ✓ *Everyone says 'hello' if you walk out...and the children ask if they can help with anything...Mary and Jacqui*
- ✓ *When we had the snow storm everyone got involved...we were laying salt to make it safer...James*
- ✓ *When my husband died I was homeless...but I am now part of new community...Jacqui*

# All Together

- ✓ *We all do things together in Starley...young and old...every year we have a big summer garden party for all our residents and everyone joins in...Frances*
- ✓ *We have bingo and all sorts of activities in our community room and a Christmas party at the Adelphi...last week we went on a 'Scouse Afternoon'...Mary and Joan*

# A Helping Hand

- ✓ *Pat is great..he always helps out with odd jobs, gardening and other things...Mary and Joan*
- ✓ *We have our own handyperson, Rob, and he always takes me to collect my pension...Mary*
- ✓ *The children often ask 'Can we do your shopping'...we have a fine crowd of kids here...Jacqui*

# Starley - Frances



# Care by the Community

- ✓ *We had one member, Gladys, who had terminal cancer...she didn't want to leave her home and so, together with her family, we organised 24 hour care...the Macmillan Nurses said they had never seen anything like it...she got her wish...and I have inherited her cat!...Frances*

# Adaptable Living

- ✓ *I used to live in an upstairs flat but my wife had problems with the stairs and so we arranged a swap to a downstairs flat with another couple...James*
- ✓ *Rob fits handrails, grab handles, steps, anything, as soon as anyone needs them...it's kept me in my bedsit...Frances*
- ✓ *Our 1 bed flats were difficult to let and so we converted them into 2 beds...Mary and Joan*

# Our Place

- ✓ *I'm on the Gardening Committee...every year we have a fine display of hanging baskets in the road...one year we won a Britain in Bloom award...Jacqui*
- ✓ *We've built a rose garden with seating and a fish pond...we plant flowers and it's always kept clean...James*

# Starley - Mary and Jacqui



# Our Staff

- ✓ *We have terrific scheme manager (who we interviewed) and a really helpful housing officer...Pat, Mary and Joan*
- ✓ *Our handyman Rob, who took over from Pete - he still visits us - is brilliant...he will do anything...and we have a great office team...Frances*

# Looking Ahead

- ✓ *I'm still going strong and I'll take an overdose before they get me out of here!...Frances*
- ✓ *It makes a great difference living here...Joan*
- ✓ *I've lived on this street for 64 years...there's now 4 generations of McGuire's in Starley...the co-op is my second family...Mary*
- ✓ *The perfect place to live...James*

# Perryview - James

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# A Strong Case

- ❖ All of this provides a strong case for developing various forms of co-operative and mutual housing for older people
- ❖ It shows how mutual housing offers high quality, economical and sustainable living for older people
- ❖ No other form of housing can match it...



- Mutual housing addresses key priorities for housing and care for older people
- There is a major opportunity to develop new co-op housing for older people; with a variety of tenures