Rural Housing Policy: Past, Present and Future

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Overview

- NIHE and Rural Housing Policy

- Past
  - Introduction of Rural Housing Policy
  - Replacement Grant

- Present
  - Examples of current work targeting vulnerable older people

- Future?
  - “Analysis of the future need and demand for the provision of appropriate models of accommodation and associated services for older people” - Prof Chris Paris
Northern Ireland House Condition Survey 2009

- Just over 7,000 occupied unfit rural properties (1.2% of all occupied dwellings)
- 60% of occupied unfit rural properties occupied by people over 60
- 46% of rural households found to experience fuel poverty; 50% of rural households in fuel poverty were aged over 60 (app 48,000 households)
NI Housing Executive (NIHE)

- Established 1971 as Northern Ireland’s strategic housing authority.
- Range of services to people living in socially rented, privately rented and owner occupied housing e.g.
  - Landlord to approximately 90,000 social rented dwellings including just under 15000 rural tenanted properties
  - Home improvement grants to homeowners and private tenants
  - Provides support to help improve energy efficiency of private dwellings
Introduction: Rural Housing Policy

- NIHE Urban Focus
- Developing Rural Agenda – Mid-Late 1980s
- 2007 -‘Rural Homes and People’
Past Policy

- 1987 House Condition Survey: 16% v 4% Unfitness

- Roslea Study
  - 583 houses - a third in retired age-group
  - 43% lacked a basic amenity
  - 89% rejected outright a move as a way of improving their housing conditions
  - Improvement Costs/Replacement
Replacement Grant

- Unfit, Rural and unsuitable for Renovation
- Owner-occupiers and landlords
- Means tested - Up to a maximum of £31,500.
DVD
Housing Unfitness in N. Ireland (1974-2009)

- Urban Unfitness
- Rural Unfitness

Year:
- 1974
- 1979
- 1984
- 1987
- 1991
- 1996
- 2001
- 2006
- 2009

% Unfitness:
- 0
- 5
- 10
- 15
- 20
- 25
- 30

www.nihe.gov.uk
The Regional Housing Authority
Present

- 2007 Rural Homes and People
- Funding Issues
- Targeting Rural Services
  - Supporting People
  - Maximising Access
Supporting People

- UK wide since 2003
- Aims to develop a range of housing support services to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible
- Floating Support
Ards Floating Support (Age Concern)

- People over 65, who are, or are at risk from social isolation.
- £40k per year - 26 clients
- Services:
  - Advice and support on repair / home improvement work
  - Help maintaining the safety and security of the dwelling
  - Help in managing finances and benefit claims
  - Advice, advocacy and liaison e.g. on home improvement, repair, safety and security
  - Developing domestic/ life skills
- Support for up to 2 years but usually shorter
Maximising Access to Services

- Fermanagh Project (150 Older People)
- Statutory- Community Partnership
- £6 in benefits/grants/services for participating households for every £1 invested.
- NI wide project now underway based on this model
Demographics: Present and Future

- NI Population >65: just under 240,000
- From 2001-2008, rural population grew by 11% (2% in urban areas) - similar disparity across all age groups
- NI population projected to increase by 127,000 (2006-2016) with most growth likely in the older population, especially over-85s.
- Projected growth has a strong geographical bias
Future Challenges (Prof. C. Paris)

- Continuum of housing options for older people

- Older people wish to maintain independence
  ‘What I want is to be boxed out of here…I never want to leave”

- Housing is not perceived as a major problem by older people in Northern Ireland - High home ownership outside Belfast

- ‘Ageing in Place’ policy
Future Challenges

- Health-related frailty is major reason for move

- Rapid growth in the number of older people (esp. > 85s)
  - more care-related residential accommodation
  - more, rather than less, expenditure.

- Concentration of specialised age-related accommodation in Belfast especially sheltered dwellings

- Projected increase in the aged population is predominantly *outside* Belfast.
Projected increase in those aged 55+ in Northern Ireland, 2006-2016

Source: NISRA 2006-based population projections 2006 to 2031
Concentration of specialised social housing (Source: Paris, C)
Summary

- **Past** (1991-2006)
  - Major activity especially to reduce unfitness

- **Present** (2007-Present)
  - Initial funding restrictions – Targeting

- **Future**
  - Ageing in Place/ Specialised Housing
Thank You

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