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During questions on 8 November about the Conwy constituency, I promised to provide you with information about plans to increase sheltered housing provision to meet the needs of the area's ageing population.

A commitment was made in the Assembly Government's Strategy for Older People in Wales to promote an adequate supply of special forms of housing that can meet the varying and changing needs of older people and ensure that they remain an independent for as long as possible.

One of the ways this can be achieved is through the provision of Extracare housing. Extracare schemes provide a self-contained flat for each resident specifically designed for the needs of older people and have a range of facilities on site such as hot meals, assisted bathing and hairdressing salons. Care is available from an on-site team and the level of care can be varied depending on the needs of the tenant at any particular time. Evidence suggests that Extracare housing works for people with dementia if the condition develops subsequent to moving in.

In February 2006, I announced funding of £41m over three years to fund eleven Extracare schemes across Wales. These new facilities will build on the existing programme of eight schemes, five of which are already complete, and which were supported by £25m of Assembly Government funding.

Conwy County Borough Council has submitted bids for the development of two Extracare schemes, one in Llanrwst and one in Llanfairfechan in partnership with local housing associations. Funding for the scheme in Llanrwst, which will provide 40 flats, was included in my announcement earlier this year and construction work is scheduled to commence in the summer of 2007. The second scheme at Llanfairfechan will involve the redevelopment of existing Local Authority sheltered housing / residential care provision which has become outdated into a new Extracare facility and will provide a further 46 flats. In principle support for this scheme to commence in 2008/2009 has been given subject to confirmation of Social Housing Grant budget resources.

These two new schemes will make a significant contribution to increasing the provision of specialised, affordable housing for older people in Conwy.