

Housing Strategy
for the Borough of Fareham

2010-2015

Approved & Adopted 22 April 2010

FAREHAM HOUSING STRATEGY

2010-2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fareham Housing Strategy 2010-2015 describes the actions that the Borough Council intends to undertake over the next five years in order to achieve its housing objectives and aspirations. The document is supported by a number of sub-strategies which provide a more detailed analysis of different aspects of the housing situation in Fareham.

The strategy has been developed at a time of great uncertainty following the credit crunch, the down-turn in the economy. The recession and financial crisis have prompted the severest downturn in the house building sector for decades. The full impact is uncertain, but there are likely to be implications on aspects such as the provision of affordable housing, the level of homelessness, individuals' investment in energy efficiency measures and private sector renewal, mortgage repossessions and the number of empty homes.

The actions which are being given the highest priority include the following:

- To review potential development sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and work with developers, landowners, RSLs and the Homes & Communities Agency to enable 100 affordable homes to be completed per annum;
- To review the viability of the Council building new homes under the Homes & Communities Agency Local Authority New Build programme.
- To develop the joint approach to affordable housing provision with neighbouring authorities in the PUSH region, particularly with regard to the Strategic Development Area to the North of Fareham;
- To reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation beyond 6 weeks to nil, except in the case of emergencies;
- To review the effectiveness of the existing supported housing schemes and services in Fareham and Gosport;
- To identify sites for new good quality schemes for the elderly which will provide housing, support and care in the heart of local communities;
- To progress a new Core and Cluster approach to older persons' housing provision across the Borough;
- To use the multi-agency / multi-tenure approach to service delivery to reduce the length of time to undertake housing adaptations;
- To support vulnerable householders living in non-decent private sector homes to improve their property;
- To continue to direct Council financial resources to reduce fuel poverty and to meet NI 187 targets;
- To work with social housing providers and private landlords to ensure that new affordable housing schemes continue to achieve the highest levels of energy efficiency and work towards zero-carbon housing by 2016;
- To ensure that the Council's housing stock meets Decent Homes standard;

Whilst the overall aims and objectives should remain constant, it will be necessary to monitor and review the strategy on an annual basis as national or regional priorities and targets may change, resources may become larger or smaller and there are a variety of influences both internal and external which will need to be responded to.

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the strategy

The Fareham Housing Strategy 2010-2015 describes the local housing needs within Fareham and sets out a series of priorities for meeting these needs. These priorities are then broken down into a number of actions and targets and a detailed Action Plan describes how these will be achieved, by when and by whom.

The new strategy is based on the principles of the Fareham Housing Strategy 2006-2009, the success of the measures set out in its Action Plan, the changes that have occurred since then and the current profile of need in the borough. Since the previous Housing Strategy was adopted in June 2006; there have been a number of significant changes in the way that we provide the housing service in Fareham. The major issues that need to be taken into account are as follows:

- The credit crunch and down-turn in the economy and resultant effect on the housing market, the provision of affordable housing and homelessness.
- The national agenda is focussing increasingly on issues relating to quality, sustainability and sense of place. This includes the implications of ensuring all new-build homes are zero carbon from 2016
- The move towards a sub regional approach to housing through the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH).
- The requirement to commence developing plans for a Strategic Development Area North of Fareham.
- The Government target to reduce the use of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010.
- The formation of the Homes & Communities Agency bringing together a series of investment streams and powers, with the aim of providing more and better homes.
- The formation of the Tenancy Services Authority and its future role over the regulation of social housing.

The overall purpose of the strategy is to make firm, but realistic, plans which will:

- Provide more decent and affordable housing for local people;
- Continue with initiatives to prevent homelessness;
- Secure the satisfactory provision of advice, information and assistance for homeless people;
- Provide flexible housing that continues to meet people's needs as their lifestyles change;
- Enable older people to remain at home for as long as possible;
- Meet the housing needs of vulnerable people;
- Ensure that all homes in the borough reach the decent homes standard and are energy efficient and sustainable.

We recognise that this is not a Fareham Borough Council Housing Strategy but a Strategy for Housing in Fareham. It therefore needs the consent and co-operation of all interested parties in order to develop it, carry it forward and achieve its objectives. It has been developed both corporately within the Borough Council and as part of a wider multi agency context. A range of external agencies, including

housing associations, house builders, supported housing partner agencies, the voluntary sector and other local authorities have been involved in the production of the strategy.

Aims and objectives

The strategy is based on an overall aim from which stem a set of 8 objectives. The principal aim is:

To work in partnership with a range of agencies to give all of the residents of Fareham the opportunity of a decent home that they can afford

Within the context of this aim, the objectives are to:

- **facilitate the provision of good quality affordable housing to meet local needs and achieve a mixed and balanced community;**
- **provide a sensitive and responsive prevention based service which gives good quality advice, assistance and support to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and, where appropriate, to secure good quality accommodation;**
- **support vulnerable people to access and maintain housing appropriate to their needs;**
- **provide older people with a range of housing and support options, to maintain their independence with an aim to keeping them in their own home wherever possible;**
- **provide a multi-agency adaptations service which enables local people with physical disabilities to live independently in their own home for as long as is practicable and desirable**
- **improve the condition and make better use of the existing private sector housing stock;**
- **promote and implement cost effective measures that will help reduce fuel poverty, achieve significant improvements in home energy efficiency and a reduction in carbon emissions;**
- **provide, manage and maintain the Council's Housing Stock. In so doing ensure that properties meet the decent home standard and that housing management and maintenance services are delivered effectively and efficiently.**

Sections 2 and 3 of this document set out the strategic context and the current profile of the housing service in Fareham. Sections 4-11 set out the proposals designed to achieve the objectives. These are summarised in a challenging, but realistic, Action Plan with key tasks, milestones, performance indicators, timescales and responsibilities.

2 THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Good quality housing is recognised as an important determinant of successful balanced communities and for the quality of life for individuals and families. The provision of new housing also has a significant effect on the local economy.

Housing in Fareham does not exist in isolation from the rest of the country or the rest of the South East Region, nor does it exist in isolation from other service areas. Indeed there are very few areas of service provided by Fareham Borough Council, or its partners in the public, private or voluntary sectors which do not impact upon housing in one way or another. Therefore Fareham's Housing Strategy has been developed within a strategic context which has national, regional and local dimensions. The following paragraphs briefly explain the background.

The statutory position

The Council has a responsibility to consider the housing needs of everyone in the community. There are a number of important housing and planning powers that have an impact on how the Council delivers its strategic housing role. The major legislation that affects the housing service is as follows:

Housing and Regeneration Act 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing local authorities with incentives to build new homes • Mandatory rating for new homes against the Code for Sustainable Homes • Greater powers to local authority tenants over options for the future management and ownership of their homes. • Establishing the Homes & Communities Agency and Tenant Services Authority.
Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the national contribution to combating climate change by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improving energy efficiency; ○ Increasing the amount of electricity generated, or heat produced, by plant which relies wholly or mainly on low-emissions sources / technologies; ○ Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases; ○ Reducing the number of households living in fuel poverty.
Housing Act 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using planning and housing powers to address poor housing • Bringing empty properties into use including enforcement options • Promoting design and access standards • Licensing on Houses in Multiple Occupation • Tenancy Deposit Schemes • Adequate housing management standards • Accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers

Local Government Act 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for promoting well-being
Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty to provide housing to people who are homeless through no fault of their own and who are in priority need. • Preventing and reducing homelessness • Allocation of accommodation
The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power to provide assistance for improving living conditions • Assessing quality, condition and management of housing stock in social and private sectors.
Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing accommodation and financial support for care leavers (16 - 17 year olds) • Providing of help and support for care leavers until they are at least 21
Housing Act 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing anti-social behaviour on housing estates • Setting standards for housing • Administering and awarding grants for house renovation and repair
Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administering Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants
Home Energy and Conservation Act 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting energy efficient homes • Administering grants for energy efficiency
Housing Act 1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing housing needs • General provisions relating to housing conditions • Assistance for owners of defective housing • Acquisition / appropriation of land for housing purposes • Consulting with tenants with respect to management
Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting equality of access to housing
Equality Act 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting awareness of discrimination and respect for human rights
Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing housing and housing related needs of vulnerable people and minority groups

The national context

The statutory powers listed above are supported by a number of Government publications providing guidance on different aspects of the housing strategic role:

- Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing and Delivering Affordable Housing (CLG 2006)
- Planning Policy Statement 12: Creating Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities through Local Spatial Planning (CLG 2008)
- Delivering Affordable Housing (CLG 2006)
- Code for Sustainable Homes (CLG 2008)
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Practice Guide (CLG 2007)
- Strong and Prosperous Communities: The Local Government White Paper (CLG 2006)
- Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes; Changing Lives (ODPM 2005) -
- Sustainable Communities: Homes for All (ODPM 2005)
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2006)
- Code of Practice on allocation of accommodation (ODPM 2002)
- A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation (CLG 2006)
- Housing Health and Safety Ratings Scheme Guidance (ODPM 2006)
- Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for housing in an ageing society (CLG 2008)
- Housing and planning: The crucial role of the new local performance framework (CLG 2008)
- Landlords Accreditation Guidance (ODPM 2002)
- Facing the Housing Challenge: Action Today, Innovation For Tomorrow (CLG 2008)

The regional context

In recent years the Government has placed strong emphasis upon taking a regional and sub regional approach to housing issues. National policies and priorities feed into the development of regional priorities through the South East England Regional Housing Board. The Board has produced a regional Housing Strategy to cover the period 2008 – 2011. This sets out an overall objective of ensuring that everyone in the region has access to a decent home at a price they can afford.

Fareham has been active in helping to inform and influence the ways in which these regional priorities have been developed and will be further developed in the future. In particular it has been instrumental in setting up the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), a sub regional consortium of local authorities. It is part of the vision of PUSH to provide sufficient homes to ensure that housing availability does not constrain economic growth. PUSH has developed a sub-regional housing strategy for 2007-11 "Homes for Growth". The document can be found on the PUSH website: http://www.push.gov.uk/what_we_do/housing/intro.aspx

The four strategic housing priorities for PUSH are:

1. To support economic growth by increasing the supply of housing to deliver a balanced housing market including family and affordable homes.
2. To improve the condition and management and make better use of the existing housing stock.
3. To drive long-term economic prosperity through the principles of sustainable development.
4. To meet the needs of everyone including homeless and vulnerable groups.

PUSH is currently developing a single unified Housing Strategy for the sub-region, which is expected to be implemented from 2012. However in the interim period it is important that the Council continues to have a local housing strategy. From 2012 onwards there will remain a number of particular local issues to be addressed and the need to undertake work to fill any gaps based on a district needs analysis. The Fareham Housing Strategy will continue to describe how the Borough intends to respond to the sub-regional housing agenda.

The local context

The Housing Strategy has been developed to ensure that it is consistent with other local strategies irrespective of whether they originate from the Council or its partner agencies. The Council has produced a corporate vision and values and a five-year priority action plan which is reviewed annually. The overall vision is based on Fareham continuing to be a safe, attractive and prosperous place in which to live and work. This vision is guided by a set of five values which in turn are supported by seven corporate priorities. These are as follows:

- Protecting and enhancing the environment.
- Maintaining and extending prosperity.
- A safe and healthy place to live and work.
- Leisure for health and for fun.
- A balanced housing market.
- Strong and inclusive communities.
- A dynamic, prudent, progressive, best practice council.

The corporate priorities have varying degrees of relevance to the Housing Strategy but the most significant is the achievement of a balanced housing market which provides good quality housing through the planning process, with a range of dwelling types to meet local needs, and to ensure that there are supporting social facilities. This includes affordable housing for residents on lower incomes and those who otherwise could not obtain housing and enables public and private sector employees to live and work in the Borough.

There are a number of other strategies and plans, both internal and external with which the housing strategy needs to dovetail. Proposals in this strategy should not conflict with other plans, and need to be complementary and consistent with them. Similarly, as these plans are revised and updated they will need to take into account the objectives of the housing strategy.

Other strategies and plans which have a bearing on this strategy and which have therefore been taken into account in its development include:

- Sustainable Community Strategy for Fareham 2009-2020
- Fareham's Community Strategy 2004-2014
- Fareham's Community Safety Plan 2008-2011
- Fareham Borough Local Development Framework
- Fareham Borough Local Plan Review 2000
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2005
- Economic Development Strategy
- Capital Strategy
- Asset Management Plan

- Fareham's Older Persons Strategy
- Tackling Climate Change in Fareham 2010

The multi agency approach to the development of this strategy has ensured that its objectives and Action Plan are fully in line with these other strategies and Action plans.

Working Together

In delivering the Fareham Housing Service, the Council works in partnership with a number of external agencies. The key organisations are as follows

Government Office for the South East
Homes & Communities Agency
Tenant Services Authority
Networkfareham (Fareham's Community Partnership)
Housing Associations
Developers / House Builders
Neighbouring local authorities
Hampshire CC Adult Services
Hampshire CC Children's Services
Hampshire CC Supporting People Team
Supported housing providers
Probation Services
In-touch Home Improvement Agency
Hampshire Primary Care Trust
Voluntary Sector Agencies
The Environment Centre, Southampton

3 PROFILE OF THE SERVICE / LOCAL ISSUES

Location

Fareham covers an area of 30 square miles of South Hampshire almost midway between the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton. It is a mainly urban area, with pockets of countryside and farmland, centred on the old market town of Fareham. It includes a number of other important local centres based on former villages. Some of these retain their former identities but have been surrounded by new development during the post war period.

Population Profile

According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), mid year population estimates for 2008, the population of Fareham was 110,400. This has increased by 2,400 since the 2001 Census.

19% of the population are of school age, 63% are of working age and 18% are of retirement age. Whilst these proportions do not deviate hugely from county, regional and national averages, the number of people in the younger age groups (0-29) is lower than average and the number in the 30+ age groups is higher. Most of the projected population increase to 2014 is predicted to be as a result of a growth of those of retirement age. The population aged 60-74 years is expected to rise by 780 (4.3% increase) and those aged over 75 to rise by 1165 (10.8%). Conversely the population aged under 30 years is set to fall slightly.

98.3% of the population are white, whilst 1.7% are from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) groups, one of the lowest proportions in Hampshire. This compares with a national BME population of around 10%. The largest BME grouping in Fareham is Asian (0.5%) and Chinese (0.5%), with those of mixed race accounting for 0.6%.

The Gypsy & Travellers Study 2006 conducted on behalf of all Hampshire authorities by David Couttie Associates confirmed that there were no permanent local authority nor authorised private encampments within Fareham. The supplementary Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment 2008 carried out across Hampshire by Southampton City Council established that there were no permanent travelling show person sites in the Hampshire South area which includes Fareham.

Household Profile

There were 47,115 households in Fareham in January 2010. The average household size of 2.43 persons is slightly above the average for Hampshire. Significantly, although there has been a rise in the number of single person households to 23.6%, this is still one of the very lowest percentages both nationally and in the South East region. The number of households with dependent children is slightly higher than the national average (30.3% compared with 29.5%) and the number of lone parent households is lower (4.6% compared with 6.5%).

Whilst the average household size of 2.43 is similar to the national average of 2.36, the average number of rooms per household is higher (5.8 compared with 5.3).

The number of households with no car or van (14.4%) is much lower than nationally (26.8%) and the number of households with two or more cars or vans is much higher (43.2% compared with 29.4%).

Housing Stock

Fareham's residents are, on the whole, well housed. The proportion of owner occupied homes (86.1%) is the highest in the region and fourth highest in the country. In contrast, the proportion of social and private rented housing is very low, with 5.0% renting from the Council and 2.5% from a housing association. Private sector rented housing accounts for only 3.7%, the lowest in Hampshire.

There are 27 housing associations who between them own 1,300 dwellings in the borough. Only one housing association has a management presence within the borough; however a further 14 of them have a head office or a local office in South Hampshire. The merger of two of the Council's preferred partners: Portsmouth Housing Association and the Atlantic Housing Group to form the First Wessex Housing Group has led to a rationalisation of both development and management services offered to Fareham through single dedicated teams.

A very high proportion of the housing stock (37.4%) is in the form of detached houses, compared with 22.8% nationally whilst 19.4% is terraced and a low proportion (9.8%) are flats. The number of detached houses has grown significantly since 1991, reflecting the growth in private sector development particularly in the western wards of the Borough.

60% of the total stock was built after 1961, with only 7% built before 1919. 16.8% has four bedrooms, 44.9% has three bedrooms, 29.4% has two bedrooms and only 6.5% is a one bedroom or bedsit property.

The housing stock is generally in good condition with few properties requiring major repairs or improvement or lacking standard amenities. The number of properties without central heating (5.5%) is much lower than the national average (8.5%) and the number of properties without sole use of a bath, shower or toilet is much lower (0.2% compared with 0.56%).

The 2009 House Condition Survey concluded that generally Fareham's private sector stock scored relatively highly on the energy efficiency scale and similarly the levels of investment in the Council's own stock has resulted in a high average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating. The housing association stock is predominantly recently constructed and also scores high in respect of SAP rating. The average SAP rating for public and private sector housing is 78.6.

The review of sheltered housing provided by the Council and housing associations confirms that accommodation available for older people doesn't always meet their needs and aspirations.

The Housing Market

Average house prices are significantly higher than for neighbouring local authorities in South East Hampshire, but are lower than in Hampshire as a whole.

In common with the rest of the South East, house prices rose significantly over the period up to the first quarter of 2008. However this trend has been reversed since the credit crunch and average house prices have fallen over most of the subsequent

quarters. The average house price in Fareham in March 2010 was £228,500 which, despite current housing market conditions was still significantly above the average for South East Hampshire. House prices in Fareham fell by 9% between September 2008 and 2009 which is below the average for urban South Hampshire (13%) but in line with the national picture. The average house prices for different types of housing ranged from £91,970 for a one bedroom flat to £287,140 for a four bedroom detached house.

The Local Economy

Fareham's position on the M27 corridor has meant that it has been able to achieve a high level of employment growth in recent years. High growth sectors have included computer software, telecommunications and high level precision engineering.

The unemployment rate was 2.3% in January 2010, compared to the national average of 7.8%. There is a higher than average proportion of households with members who are in employer, managerial or professional positions (34% compared with 30% nationally) and consequently a lower than average proportion of households within skilled and semi skilled manual groups (29.7% compared with 36.9%).

Approximately 60% of the working population of Fareham work outside of the Borough with the western wards being mainly within the Southampton and Winchester travel to work areas and the eastern wards within the Portsmouth travel to work area.

Fareham has a higher gross personal income per household than its three nearest neighbours in south east Hampshire (£42,913) although this has fallen by over £4,000 since 2008. It is about the same as the national average, but lower than the average for the rest of Hampshire and the South East region.

Deprivation

The preceding paragraphs clearly indicate that in terms of deprivation, Fareham does not rate highly. The English Indices of Deprivation ranks all of the local authority districts in the country from 1 (the most deprived) to 354 (the least deprived). The most recent indices published in 2008 indicate Fareham average rank across all indices of deprivation at 338. Since the previous 2004 Indices of Deprivation were published, Fareham's position has moved upwards 36 places from the previous rank of 302. This was the highest district level improvement in the South East and fifth highest in England. However the data at a more localised level demonstrates that there are small pockets of deprivation in some areas, predominantly in those wards with a higher proportion of social housing (Fareham South and Fareham North West).

Networkfareham is leading a project to investigate the underlying causes of pockets of deprivation in Fareham, and in particular parts of Fareham North West. The project involves a range of local partners including Community Action Fareham, Hampshire Police, Churches Together, First Wessex Housing Group, Hampshire County Council and the Borough Council. The Council has agreed to introduce a new planned improvement under its corporate priority of strong and inclusive communities to support the project.

The Council has mapped the take up of Housing and Council Tax Benefits across the borough to help identify hidden pockets of deprivation and to target services more specifically to reduce social exclusion. In a seemingly prosperous area those that are deprived are often more at risk of social exclusion to the wider gulf between the "haves" and the "have nots". There is also concern that although incomes in Fareham are higher, they are only marginally so than the seemingly more deprived neighbouring authorities of Portsmouth and Gosport.

Housing Affordability

Land Registry has published information on housing affordability for first time buyers. It compares the lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings. The ratio for Fareham is 10.12, which places the borough in 293 position out of 347 local authorities. This places the affordability ratio in Fareham significantly below the level for other authorities in south east Hampshire. A review of housing need and affordability commissioned by the Council in 2009 (see below) demonstrated that the ratio between earnings and house prices, although reducing slightly in 2008, remained in excess of eight times earnings.

Identification of Need

Information on housing need in Fareham has been compiled from a variety of sources. Through the authorities that make up the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), the South Hampshire Housing Market Assessment was commissioned. This was the first study of its kind on a sub-regional basis and it reported in April 2005. The Study looked particularly at the need for housing over the period 2006-2026 if the aim of achieving economic growth of 3-3.5% per annum was to be achieved over that period. It concluded that providing enough new homes to enable this economic objective to be met would be a major challenge to the PUSH authorities. An updated South Hampshire Housing Market Annual Monitoring Report (December 2009) reflected on the effects on the downturn in the national economy and housing market. In 2009 the Council commissioned a Housing Needs and Affordable Housing Viability Study to inform the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and a new Affordable Housing Strategy. This identified a range of housing needs both in terms of size of dwelling and the income needed to access housing. It has recommended the introduction of a lower affordable home threshold (below the national minimum of 15 units) where viable and practical.

Conclusion

These local characteristics play an important role in our understanding of housing needs and provide information on which we can base future plans. The overall picture of Fareham is one of relatively high house prices, a modern housing stock in good condition, a high level of owner occupation, a relatively buoyant local economy, a significant recent growth in population and in employment and relatively high levels of prosperity. However the level of housing need and homelessness amongst those on lower incomes means that the stock profile does not currently match the requirements of the Borough and changes are necessary in order to achieve the Council's aim of a Balanced Housing Market.

4 PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Key Objective:

To facilitate the provision of good quality affordable housing to meet local needs and achieve a mixed and balanced community.

Introduction

The provision of affordable housing across all tenures is a prime objective of the Fareham Housing Strategy. The Council is committed not only to maximising quantity but to ensuring that affordable housing contributes good quality dwellings with good housing management and the development of balanced and sustainable communities.

Current affordable housing policies arose from a Best Value Review of the Balanced Housing Market conducted in 2004, which fed into the development of the Affordable Housing Strategy and the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The table below summarises the current affordable housing targets as set out in the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document in December 2005, as amended by Planning Policy Statement 3 from 1st April 2007.

Site Size (Net increase in number of dwellings)	Proportion of affordable housing sought	Required tenure split for affordable housing	
		Social Rental	Low cost home ownership &/or intermediate market housing
15 - 24	30%	80%	20%
25 - 49	35%	70%	30%
50+	40%	60%	40%

The Council is currently reviewing these targets in light of the impact of the recession (including the increased demand for social housing) and a Viability Study undertaken by consultants in 2009. The results of the Viability Study and proposals for a revised affordable housing policy will be discussed with the Fareham Housing Market Partnership (part of the Local Strategic Partnership) in the near future and this will help inform a new Affordable Housing Policy which will be set out in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy. Any new policy will need to be flexible to ensure it responds appropriately to the need for affordable housing and the viability of development at the point delivery (i.e. when the new homes are being constructed).

The new Affordable Housing Policy will form part of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy will replace the policy set out above and will be regularly reviewed and updated.

Achievements since the 2006 strategy

- Exceeded target of 100 affordable homes for 2006/07 (131 Homes), 2007/08 (121 homes) and 2008/09 (140 homes);
- Secured consent for 401 affordable homes through the planning system;
- Attracted £10.4m grant funding from the former Housing Corporation for 2006/09 to deliver the affordable housing programme (compared to £3.1m over the previous 3 years).
- Attracted £15.1m from Homes & Communities Agency for 2009/11 to deliver the affordable housing programme.
- Secured funding of £325k from the Homes & Communities Agency to deliver five new Council homes through the Local Authority New Build Programme.
- 199 new affordable homes (51% of output) in the past 3 years achieved as a result of the planning process (compared to 53 homes (39% of output) over the previous 3 years).
- 70 new affordable homes (17% of output) in past 3 years achieved on sites owned by the Council (compared to 18 homes over the previous 3 years).
- PUSH -wide Housing Market Assessment (HMA) published in 2006 and updated annually.
- Housing Needs and Affordable Housing Viability Study published in 2009.
- Fareham Housing Market Partnership set up February 2010.

An Affordable Housing Strategy for 2010-2013 is being developed concurrent with the LDF Core Strategy, which is considering policies for delivering affordable housing through the planning system. A further local Housing Market Assessment (HMA) was commissioned to inform these documents and to supplement the sub-regional Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Housing Market Assessment.

A priority of the previous Fareham Housing Strategy was to deliver 100 new affordable homes per annum and to pursue options to increase this to 175 in the medium to long term. Although the Council has delivered in excess of 400 units over the 4 years since the objective was set, the aspiration to increase the target has not been met due to the credit crunch and downturn in the housing market. The Council has reassessed its target in the light of the significant backlog of need, the likely land supply over the next 5 years and the uncertainty over financial resources that will be available over that period.

The existing housing market is broken and the reliance on the provision of the volume of affordable housing through the planning system. A number of existing schemes with planning consents are no longer proceeding and there has been a significant fall in new applications. We are considering new ways of working in order that affordable housing development can take place and Fareham can maximise affordable housing provision with difficult market conditions ahead. This may require enhanced partnership working with developer and land owner whereby they delay receiving the full return on the development until the market recovers. The need for greater flexibility to provide wider affordable housing choices whilst working within planning constraints is paramount. The viability testing of affordable housing quotas will become increasingly important, but measured against the need to develop balanced communities and to maximise provision.

With a reduction of affordable homes coming forward through the planning system the Council and its housing association partners will be looking increasingly at other methods of programme delivery. The Council is exploring the opportunities of releasing the remaining developable plots of Council land and working with RSLs to acquire small private sites for affordable housing schemes. In order to continue to achieve balanced communities it will be necessary to ensure that new schemes reflect a mixed income approach to housing provision. This will cater for the needs of households that previously would have accessed housing through full home ownership or shared ownership but are currently unable to meet the financial commitment. The development of intermediate (sub-market) options will assist local people unable to purchase in the current housing market. Although maximising housing quantity is a key consideration, this should not be at the expense of quality and the creation of sustainable, balanced communities.

The Council has reaffirmed the need to continue to deliver at least 100 affordable homes per year, if it is to avoid significant homelessness and housing supply problems in future years. However, it is acknowledged that given the current uncertainty over land availability and funding this target may not be achievable and therefore it will be reviewed annually in the light of changing circumstances.

Good working relationships with other key agencies, especially the Homes & Communities Agency, partner housing associations and developers are important to aid delivery of the affordable housing programme. The Council has established the Fareham Housing Market Partnership involving developers, housing associations, planning and housing consultants, Hampshire County Council Estates Department and other housing professionals willing to share and pool information and intelligence aiding the preparation of sound Development Plan Documents, as well as the Council's future Housing and Affordable Housing Strategies. We are also involved in the Single Conversation discussions with the Homes & Communities Agency and the other Partnership for Urban South Hampshire authorities and the development of a Local Investment Plan.

The North of Fareham Strategic Development Area (SDA) has expressed its formal interest in joining the second wave of the eco town programme announced by the Housing Minister in March 2010. The inclusion within the expanded Eco-Town Programme will assist the Council in securing a high quality sustainable development, including affordable homes. Early revenue funding for 2010/11 will enable the Council to undertake studies on issues such as green infrastructure, waste, water and renewable energy to progress the SDA proposals through the Local Development Framework.

Priorities for future action

- Work with developers, landowners, RSLs and the HCA to enable 100 affordable homes to be completed per annum (and deliver a total of 500 new affordable homes over the next five years);
- Review potential development sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment;
- Monitor policies for affordable housing provision through the Local Development Framework Core Strategy;
- Produce policies to provide wider affordable housing choices and new approaches to programme delivery through intermediate rental options;

- Review the provision of affordable housing on sites identified through the Asset Management Plan and the Corporate Action Plan;
- Complete the regeneration of the Broadlaw Walk area, including options for Mitre Court and other adjacent land;
- Develop the joint approach to affordable housing provision with neighbouring authorities in the PUSH region, particularly with regard to the North of Fareham SDA.
- Develop eco town proposals for the North of Fareham SDA.
- Review, in partnership with Housing Associations whether there is any scope to rationalise the management and ownership of their stock in the Borough.

5 PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

Key Objective:

To provide a sensitive and responsive prevention based service which gives good quality advice, assistance and support to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and, where appropriate, to secure good quality accommodation.

Introduction

The development of a Homelessness Strategy is a requirement of Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002. The Council updated its initial 2003 strategy in 2007. The strategy for 2007-10 is the subject of an annual review of its action plan. The overall purpose of the strategy is to make firm, but realistic, plans which will:

- Continue with initiatives to prevent homelessness.
- Ensure that sufficient accommodation is available for people in Fareham who are or may become homeless.
- Secure the satisfactory provision of advice, information and assistance for homeless people.

A new Homelessness Strategy is being developed for adoption by autumn 2010.

Achievements since the 2006 strategy

- Developed the Housing Options Service as part of a preventative approach to homelessness.
- Introduced LetSelect the Council's Choice Based Lettings scheme in May 2008.
- Developed the AFFORD scheme to enable potentially homeless people to access suitable private sector property through a Rent Deposit Guarantee and rent in advance.
- Kings Road Project opened September 2008, providing a 'dry house' for vulnerable people who have completed a treatment programme for alcohol or drug misuse.
- Implemented a supported lodging scheme to end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for 16/17 year olds in September 2008.
- Family Mediation Service introduced in June 2008
- Reduced the use of Temporary Accommodation to 28 as at 31 December 2008 from a baseline figure of 130 in December 2004
- Introduction of Homelessness Visiting Officer Role
- Achieving a target of no homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation. (5 year corporate action plan achievements)
- Work to prevent homelessness over the past two years has resulted in 60% fewer people presenting themselves as homeless to the Borough Council.
- Commissioned research to establish the scale of youth homelessness in the Borough
- Enabled a household to remain in their home which had been adapted to meet their needs through the Council purchasing the property and granting a shared ownership lease to the family. This was before the Government's national Mortgage Rescue Scheme was established.

Within the context of the key objective, the five objectives are to:

- **Wherever possible to prevent homelessness from occurring in Fareham by working in partnership with other statutory and independent sector agencies.**
- **Improve the level of advice, assistance and support which enables homeless and vulnerable people to lead independent lives.**
- **Develop initiatives to reduce the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation.**
- **Secure good quality permanent and temporary accommodation in Fareham to help those people who become homeless.**
- **Monitor the levels of homelessness in the Borough and regularly review the impact on the community.**

The credit crunch and current difficulties in the housing market may have repercussions in terms of the homelessness service that were not envisaged when the strategy was developed. As a result of the economic climate, the following actions are currently being pursued

- Implementing the new mortgage rescue scheme,
- funding a Money Adviser based within the Citizens Advice Bureau,
- investigating the extent of rough sleeping in the Borough to establish the need to carry out a formal Rough Sleepers Count.

These actions will be carefully considered in the new Homelessness Strategy.

Priorities for future action

- Reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation beyond 6 weeks to nil, except in the case of emergencies;
- Reduce and monitor the number of evictions in Council and Housing Association properties from a 2006/07 baseline;
- Continue to work in partnership with landlords using the private rented sector as a means of housing people threatened with homelessness;
- Continue an inter agency awareness raising programme to improve understanding of housing and homelessness issues;
- Ensure a Mortgage Rescue Service is available to local people in partnership with the CAB, housing associations, building societies and the courts.

6 SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Key Objective:

To support vulnerable people to access and maintain housing appropriate to their needs.

Introduction

Since April 2003 local housing related support services for vulnerable people have been commissioned through the government's Supporting People Programme. The programme is implemented at a county level in partnership with a variety of agencies, including health, probation, and the district councils.

Fareham Borough Council works closely with Gosport Borough Council, the Hampshire Supporting People Team based within Hampshire County Council, and its partners in the statutory and independent sectors to ensure that resources are available locally for the provision of housing support services that promote choice and independence to people with a range of needs. The Council is a lead partner in the District and County Core Groups and the District Inclusive Forum.

A local joint strategy covering the Fareham and Gosport areas was produced to cover the period 2004-09. The document set out the strategic direction for the future provision of supported housing and housing related support to guide those organisations involved in the development of their own plans. A County wide strategic approach is articulated in the 2005-2010 Hampshire Supporting People Strategy.

Over the past three years Hampshire County Council supported by the district councils has carried out a full strategic review of each service (Disability, Homelessness and Older Persons) and this has determined the current local level of provision and funding.

The county-wide needs for permanent and transit sites for gypsies and travellers were identified through the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Accommodation Assessment (June 2007) carried out by David Couttie Associates. A further Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment conducted on behalf of all Hampshire authorities by Southampton City Council was also conducted. The results of the surveys have been fed into consideration of needs across the region conducted by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA). The main issues under consultation were the proposed number of spaces for sites up to 2016, how many spaces should go to each local authority area and how each authority would meet its required provision. Fareham will continue to work with neighbouring districts to consider how to meet the requirements arising from the review.

Achievements since the 2006 strategy

- Kings Road Project (Clean & Dry House) opened September 2008
- Contributed to the countywide Strategic Reviews and arising Implementation Plans for the Homelessness Service, Disabilities Service and Older Persons Service.
- Surveys of Gypsies & Travellers / Travelling Show People completed across Hampshire and fed to SEERA.

- Enabled 26 households with care and support needs to access general needs housing in meeting the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2) target.
- Increased the capacity of local floating support services

As part of the Council's commitment to ensuring the needs of vulnerable households are met the existing Supporting People Strategy requires a review as part of the Action Plan. It has been decided to develop a unique Fareham Vulnerable Person's Strategy, which will focus on local issues and needs. This sub-strategy will later feed into a new cross authority Fareham & Gosport Supporting People Strategy. Workshops that focussed on each individual client group have taken place in order to inform the development of this strategy.

Supporting People funding is changing. For the financial year 2009-2010 it took the form of a non-ring fenced named grant but from 2010-2011 it will be included in Hampshire's Area Based grant. Funding beyond 2012 is unclear and will be the subject of national policy and the results of on-going service reviews. It will be important for Fareham to be clear about its local priorities and ensure that services for vulnerable people continue to be funded after this time. One of the recent changes agreed by the County Core Group is that funding allocated to Districts within the existing contracts can be used more flexibly to meet specific local needs and pressures.

Following a recent High Court judgement the housing responsibility to house young homeless people under the age of 18 has shifted from Borough Councils to Children's Services and this will require new joint working arrangements to be established together with a fundamental review of how housing and support is delivered to young people in Fareham and Gosport.

Priorities for future action

- Review the effectiveness and extent of the existing supported housing schemes and services in Fareham and Gosport;
- Review the operation and administration of the Supported Housing Panel to ensure the needs of vulnerable people are understood, ensure that best use is being made of existing supported housing services and that gaps in service can be easily identified;
- Increase move-on opportunities for those currently living in supported housing and who are ready to take the next step in their housing pathway towards independent living;
- Work with neighbouring authorities to meet the identified housing needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling show people;
- Review the information and options available to those experiencing domestic abuse.

7 MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE

Key Objective:

To provide older people with a range of housing and support options, to maintain their independence with an aim to keeping them in their own home wherever possible.

Introduction

This section describes the housing needs of older people and how the Council proposes to respond to the projected increase in the number of older people in the future. In addition the Strategy will detail the Council's proposals to improve the sheltered housing stock owned by the Council and Housing Associations in the Borough.

There are 630 sheltered housing units owned by the Council and a further 130 owned by Housing Associations in the Borough. A Borough-wide sheltered housing review has been carried out which has identified that the housing stock owned by the Council and Housing Associations is in need of investment to bring it up to 21st century standards.

The demographic trends in Fareham indicate that the population aged over 65 years is projected to increase from 19.2% in 2008 to 25.6% in 2025. This will result in more older people living longer and healthier lives and a requirement for more housing options available to meet their needs. In addition there are approximately 400 Council tenants aged over 60 who live in family accommodation in the Borough.

Matched with this increase in demand there is recognition that many of the current sheltered units owned by the Council and housing association providers are no longer fit for purpose. These include upper floor flats with no lift access and unpopular bedsits. As a result of the poor quality of the housing stock the demand for these units has fallen and all providers have difficulty in finding tenants for any vacancies that arise in their stock. Following the Sheltered Housing Review decisions need to be made about the future of some of the units which are not fit for purpose and what improvements can be made to the existing schemes.

Achievements since the 2006 strategy

- Sheltered Housing Review Group established to review the quality of all of the existing sheltered housing in the Borough
- Extra Care Pilot established at Downing Court in partnership with Hampshire County Council's Adult Services
- Telecare has been expanded to older people in the private sector
- Financial Consultants have been appointed to advise on the funding options to improve the Council's sheltered housing stock
- Older Persons' Consultation day held with a range of different agencies to discuss the priorities
- In partnership with HCC Supporting People team undertook a strategic review of housing and support for older people.
- Secured funding for additional support for tenants wishing to downsize.

- Produced a Vision for Housing for Older people for the Borough which has been subject to wide consultation with the community, stakeholders and tenants.

The overall housing strategy is supported by the Supporting People Older Person's Strategic Review which was completed in summer 2008.

The strategy is being developed in accordance with the national context regarding the housing needs of older people highlighted in "Lifetime Homes Lifetime Neighbourhoods – National Strategy for an Ageing Society" and the Regional Housing Board's requirement that new approaches are developed reflecting demographic changes and the associated increase in the number of older people throughout the south east.

There are a number of important challenges to be faced including a significant increase in the older population of the Borough in the coming years and the need for considerable investment in the sheltered housing stock owned by the Council and housing associations. A draft Vision setting out the issues for Older Person's Housing in the Borough was agreed for wider consultation with the local community, tenants and Housing Associations. The key components of the Vision are as follows:-

- Core and Cluster Approach - a core scheme has been identified in each of the main centres of population in the Borough together with neighbouring cluster schemes within a mile radius. The proposal is that the Core scheme will have a range of communal facilities which could be accessed more widely by other tenants in the cluster schemes and that they would cater for frailer older people.
- Housing Standards - the new standards include a requirement that all flats within a core scheme should be accessible to the disabled; all new schemes should provide 2 bedrooms and consideration should be given that any new scheme should have a mix of different tenures.
- Care and Support - it is proposed to have a mix of care and support needs within schemes and that there should be a higher level of support needs in core schemes.
- Technology - it is proposed to make core schemes more accessible through free Wi-Fi using the new HPSN2 network being developed in the county.

Priorities for future action

- Undertake improvements to some of the Council's existing sheltered schemes;
- Identify sheltered housing units which are not fit for purpose and to make decisions about their future use;
- Provide additional support to Council and Housing Association tenants who choose to move to more suitable accommodation;
- Identify sites for new good quality schemes for the elderly which will provide housing, support and care in the heart of local communities;
- Progress a new Core and Cluster approach to sheltered housing provision across the Borough.

8 PROVIDING HOUSING ADAPTATIONS

Key Objective:

To provide a multi-agency adaptations service which enables local people with physical disabilities to live independently in their own home for as long as is practicable and desirable

Introduction

The needs of people with physical disabilities are largely met through adaptations to existing homes, either from the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme for council property or a Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) in respect of other tenures. In either case, the need for work is identified by local occupational therapists and in the private sector is mainly carried out with the assistance of the local home improvements agency. With an ageing population, the number of households requiring disabled adaptations is likely to increase putting pressure on the existing budgets.

Since the last Housing Strategy was adopted, the Council has conducted a full review of the adaptations service with the aim of developing a local strategy to include all aspects of housing for disabled people. The final report "Housing Adaptations for Independence: A Strategic Review of Fareham's Adaptations Service" recognised that good operational working relationships exist between the agencies involved in delivering the service. The report identified that closer strategic working would be beneficial, particularly in developing a multi-tenure, multi-agency approach to service delivery. This resulted in an eleven point action plan, which included establishing regular strategic meetings to support the operational role and to move forward the delivery of an efficient, effective and seamless adaptations service across departmental and organisational boundaries. This streamlined approach will provide better opportunities for joint funding and added value to be explored.

Achievements since the 2006 strategy

- Completed strategic review of the Adaptations Service (November 2006)
- Set up the multi-agency Adaptations Strategy Group
- Secured additional resources from Communities & Local Government to enhance the disabled facilities grant programme for 2008/09 and 2009/10.
- Through PUSH 4 Safer Homes bid, secured funding of £40,000 over 3 years to introduce Accessible Home Loans (DFG top-up).
- Introduced new policies arising from the government's Independent Review.
- Established a requirement that housing associations that wish to develop affordable housing in Fareham offer increased financial support to tenants requiring disabled adaptations (fund up to £5,000)

The Government implemented changes to the national DFG programme from May 2008 and there are indications that further changes will be made in the longer term. The Council has already responded to the challenges ahead, initially by conducting

the local review and through the commitment to develop a strategic approach to service delivery.

In view of the new multi-agency, multi-tenure approach to delivering the disabled adaptations service it has been decided to separate this function from private sector housing renewal and to develop a separate Adaptations Strategy. This approach reflects that adaptations for housing association tenants are funded through the DFG regime and the likelihood that in future there will be funding convergence between private sector and Council housing stock.

The Adaptations Strategy Group has made progress in ensuring a multi-agency approach to delivering the adaptation service. This includes:

- Introducing customer-focused service standards and Code of Practice to be adopted by all agencies.
- Using information technology to keep the client informed of progress in implementing the grant process, including an on-line tracking system, enabling the client to clearly identify the stage reached.
- Developing bespoke publications tailored to the needs of the client irrespective of tenure.
- Developing a Disabled Adaptations Policy for the Council's Housing Service.
- Jointly promoting the service using a range of media methods.
- Using a common approach to User Satisfaction Surveys in order that direct comparison of performance can be monitored.
- Liaising with housing associations on a consistent approach in funding disabled adaptations for their tenants.
- Developing an Adaptations Strategy through a multi-agency approach.

This work is being supported at a County level with a group of senior officers looking at a common approach to service delivery including standard performance targets, using a standard schedule of rates approach and over-seeing the re-commissioning of the home improvement agency contract.

The maximising of available funding is essential to the delivery of a comprehensive adaptations service in Fareham. The Adaptations Strategy Group will work to ensure that the service uses the full capacity of partners to secure additional funding not available to the Council. The introduction of an Accessible Home Loan through the PUSH 4 Safer Homes consortium now provides a top-up to meet a client's contribution towards a DFG and removes one of the barriers preventing home owners from proceeding with adaptations. Funding for this programme is only assured until 2010/11.

Priorities for future action

- Use the multi-agency / multi-tenure approach to service delivery to reduce the length of time to undertake housing adaptations by 5% per annum from a baseline of April 2010 (25% improvement by 2015);
- Work with housing associations to develop new homes that can be easily and economically adapted to meet the needs of the disabled occupants;

9 IMPROVING HOUSING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Key Objective:

To improve the condition and make better use of the existing private sector housing stock

Introduction

Given the high proportion of private sector housing in Fareham, the Council has a particular commitment to ensure it is maintained in a good condition that contributes to a high quality environment and to focus on those private households in greatest need. The Private Sector House Condition Survey (2009) concluded that the overall condition of the stock was very good. The percentage of private sector homes that failed the fitness standard or presented a "serious hazard" was significantly below the national average. 11.1% of the stock has a serious hazard, compared to 23.2% nationally. The highest rate was found in the private rented sector (13.9%).

Fareham has a relatively low number of empty properties. The Council Tax Register indicated that at the end of September 2009, there were 284 private sector homes which had been vacant for more than six months compared to 120 in 2006. There has been a recent rise in the number of properties due to the downturn in the housing market and increase in the number of properties for sale.

The Regulatory Reform Order enables local authorities to review the financial assistance it is able to offer vulnerable home owners. The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy recognises that many owners of private stock are older people and may fall into the asset rich / cash poor scenario. To assist this group, the Council introduced its interest free Home Improvement Loans. Initially the maximum loan available through the Council was £5,000 but in certain instances this has since been raised in line with the PUSH 4 Safer Homes Criteria (see below). Demand for loans has increased due to the higher level of loans available, promotional activity and increased awareness.

The Council works closely with the local Home Improvement Agency to provide assistance to households needing to bring their homes to a decent standard. In addition we work with the Home Improvement Agency to provide the Homecheck and Handyperson services, whereby agency front-line staff visit the homes of vulnerable people, to identify and remove hazards and carry out minor repairs.

Achievements since the 2006 strategy

- Secured additional £265,000 external funding over three years for enhanced and new initiatives under the "PUSH 4 Safer Homes" bid to the Regional Housing Board.
- Council's Home Improvement Loan Policy introduced and subsequently modified.
- 128 empty properties returned to use through the Council's intervention;
- 10 Home Improvement Loans made available for private sector housing renewal.
- Conducted a Private Sector House Condition Survey in 2009.

Since the last Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy was developed, increased funding has been made available through PUSH 4 Safer Homes, a consortium of seven South Hampshire authorities working together to develop and deliver three loan products to improve private sector housing renewal, a further loan linked to the Disabled Facilities Grant programme and a grant to assist with improving energy efficiency. PUSH 4 Safer Homes offers an opportunity to help more local vulnerable households to improve the condition of their home, whilst providing better targeted information and the engagement across the consortium of a Loans Co-ordinator to offer advice to customers and promote activity across the sub-region. A working group has been formed to consider how any barriers to programme delivery can be overcome and to investigate whether common loan criteria can be set across all local authority partners. The funding is in place for 2008/2011; however the consortium will need to consider how the programme can be developed, assuming that further funding will be made available in future years.

The additional PUSH 4 Safer Homes funding gives the Council the opportunity to reassess its existing criteria for providing assistance to vulnerable home owners' however any proposals to enhance the scheme must be balanced against the current uncertainty as to whether the scheme will continue beyond March 2011.

With the downturn in the housing market, it is already evident that there has been an increase in the number of empty properties. The introduction of the Empty Property Loan through the PUSH 4 Safer Homes initiative provides limited funding to assist the owners to carry out essential repairs in order to return them to use. However there are concerns that the owners of some of the empty properties in the poorest condition continually disregard all persuasive attempts by the Council to improve their property and return to use. In developing a new Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy, the Council will explore whether it needs to adopt robust enforcement action to achieve the return of empty property to use.

Priorities for future action

- Use the results of the Private Sector House Condition Survey 2009 to review the condition of the private sector stock and develop future policy;
- Increase the number of properties which meet the Decent Homes Standard (including Housing Health & Safety Rating System);
- Support vulnerable householders living in non-decent homes to improve their property;
- Research the possible introduction of enforcement action to enable the Council to make the best use of properties that have been empty for more than 12 months;
- Support the PUSH 4 Safer Homes consortium approach to delivering private sector housing renewal, developing further loan products and bid for funding for 2011/14.

10 IMPROVING HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Key Objective:

To promote and implement cost effective measures that will help reduce fuel poverty, achieve significant improvements in home energy efficiency and a reduction in carbon emissions.

Introduction

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) established a duty on local authorities to act as "energy conservation authorities" and in this capacity to develop and implement local home energy efficiency strategies. The Act required local authorities to consider practical and cost effective measures that would bring about a significant improvement in the energy efficiency of housing in all sectors and all tenures in their areas. Its aim was to achieve a significant improvement in energy efficiency of 30% over 10 years, subsequently extended to 15 years.

The national commitment has been reinforced by the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) which came into effect on 1 April 2008 and will run until 2011. CERT is an obligation on energy suppliers to achieve targets for promoting reductions in household carbon emissions. It is the principal driver of energy efficiency improvements in existing homes thereby reducing household carbon emissions.

In 2006, the Council commissioned the Environment Centre in Southampton to conduct a full review of progress in meeting the HECA target. This has been followed up by regular updates by the Environment Centre in order to inform the annual Home Energy Conservation Act Report. As a result of this independent study it has been established that the overall percentage improvement achieved between 1 April 1997 and 31 March 2008 was 23.9% and the Council is on track to achieve the target 30% improvement in energy efficiency over a 15 year period.

Achievements since the 2006 strategy

- Commissioned independent review of progress in meeting the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 target.
- Overall improvement in energy efficiency rose from 9.91% (March 2005) to 23.9% (March 2008).
- 314 households in fuel poverty received improved heating systems
- 562 households received improvements to thermal insulation.
- Funding of £28,000 for a top-up Warm Home grant achieved through the PUSH 4 Safer Homes bid.
- Commissioned a Private Sector House Condition Survey in 2009 to update information on the energy efficiency of private housing;

Fareham has the fourth highest rate of owner occupation in the country and the highest in the region. A large majority of private sector owners are fuel rich and therefore, the Council's main role is to encourage households to invest in energy efficiency measures through offering advice and promoting available initiatives.

A key issue in reducing energy consumption is tackling fuel poverty. The occupiers of a dwelling are considered to be in fuel poverty if more than 10% of their net household income would need to be spent on the adequate provision of warmth and hot water. Not only do dwellings in fuel poverty represent energy inefficient dwellings, they are occupied by residents who are least likely to be able to carry out improvements due to low incomes. The Fareham Private Sector House Condition Survey 2009 identified that an estimated 3,770 households in fuel poverty of which approximately 2,320 were ineligible for help under the national Warm Front Scheme. The Council's strategy has been directed at identifying this relatively small group of households and targeting its own resources to help them out of fuel poverty.

The national sustainability agenda has been recognised corporately by the Council with the development of a climate change strategy and action plan, "Tackling Climate Change in Fareham - A Local Response to a Global Problem" (2010). The Housing Strategy is an integral part of the Council's commitment to sustainability. Plans to reduce domestic energy consumption include a programme of retrofitting existing homes and raising awareness of energy saving measures including investment in renewable and low carbon energy technology.

The Government has announced its intention that all new housing should be rated according to the Code for Sustainable Homes with a view to achieving "zero-carbon" housing as a mandatory minimum standard by 2016. The Council will continue to work with housing providers especially within the affordable homes sector to ensure that the highest standards are achieved over the lifetime of this strategy. Proposals are being drawn up to develop a small environmentally friendly low carbon home project in order to promote various eco features and monitor carbon consumption and environmental impact.

As described in Section 4, the Council has expressed its formal interest in joining the second wave of the eco town programme for the Strategic Development Area North of Fareham. The government is keen to ensure that the funding is used not only for the people who go on to live in the new eco-town but to introduce greener living to those already living nearby, through the construction of demonstrator projects and "eco show homes". The Council will investigate the potential for proposals to promote the advantages of investing in energy efficiency, which could potentially create and support local jobs, including apprenticeships to help advance green building skills.

Priorities for future action

- Direct Council financial resources to reduce fuel poverty and to meet NI 187 targets;
- Continue to work with external agencies, particularly the Environment Centre, Warm Front and PUSH 4 Safer Homes to reduce domestic energy consumption across all tenures
- Work with social housing providers and private landlords to ensure that new affordable housing schemes continue to achieve the highest levels of energy efficiency and work towards zero-carbon housing by 2016.
- Investigate the potential for developing "eco show homes" and other projects linked to the eco-town funding in order to demonstrate greener living options to the wider population.

11 DELIVERING A SERVICE TO COUNCIL HOUSING TENANTS

Key Objective:

To provide, manage and maintain the Council's Housing Stock. In so doing ensure that properties meet the decent home standard and that housing management and maintenance services are delivered effectively and efficiently.

Introduction

Council Housing services to tenants are provided by the Tenancy Services and Building Services Divisions. The Tenancy Services Division is responsible for the delivery of a range of tenancy and estate management services including tenant and leaseholder participation, rent collection and debt recovery, support to elderly tenants in sheltered housing and administering the right to buy scheme. The Building Services Division is responsible for the delivery of council housing maintenance services and carrying out improvements to stock, including planned and responsive maintenance and cyclical repairs.

Although the condition of the Council's housing stock is good and over 97% of the housing stock meets decent homes there is a need for investment in the Council's sheltered housing stock to meet the needs of older people and this is likely to have significant impact on the Council's capital programme.

The Council has a housing stock of 2,375 units (October 2009) of which 630 (27%) are in the form of sheltered accommodation. In addition there are more than 400 tenants over the age of 60 living in family housing in the Borough, which means that nearly 50% of the Council's tenants are aged over 60. The issues regarding older persons housing provision have been considered through the Borough wide sheltered housing review and these are detailed in section 7 "Meeting the Housing Needs of Older People".

Achievements since the 2006 strategy

- Updated Tenants Handbook in 2008/09 and Leaseholder Handbook in 2009/10
- Introduced a Racial Harassment Policy in 2007/08
- Updated Rent Collection & Debt Recovery Policy in 2009/10
- Introduced policies relating to parking, satellite TV dishes, anti social behaviour in 2009/10.
- Implemented programme of works to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010
- Procured building maintenance works and services through partnership agreements
- Carried out risk assessments and introduced new management practices in relation to Asbestos, Fire Risks and Legionella
- Introduced a Disabled Adaptations Policy
- Appointed to new posts of Tenant Involvement Officer & Leasehold Management Officer in 2008/09
- Set up an Extra Care Housing Pilot Scheme in 2008/09

- Introduced a new Social HomeBuy scheme for Council tenants as an alternative to the Right to Buy
- Re-purchased a long term empty shared ownership property and undertook improvements to bring it back into use.

The credit crunch and economic downturn have had some effects on the delivery of Council housing service with an increase in rent arrears and the need to focus on tenancy sustainability. A key issue will be to make more efficient use of stock. The results of a Tenant Information Survey (Autumn 2009) will be used to establish the extent of under occupation and the development of policies and incentives to encourage older people to downsize thereby freeing up family sized accommodation; a strand of the sheltered housing review. Issues around managing void properties are being addressed with certain works required to re-let properties now being carried out after the new tenant has taken up occupation.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan will be reviewed and the financial model updated by March 2010. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is currently in surplus but projections worsen over the next 30 years. The housing stock is in good condition and the Council remains on target to meet the Decent Homes Standard as long as the financial streams are maintained in accordance with the Asset Management Plan.

From spring 2010, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) will become the regulatory agency for local authority social housing. The updated Business Plan will need to be flexible in terms of responding to any housing standards set by the TSA. In addition the Council will need to review and update its Tenant Participation Compact to reflect the TSA's requirements.

Given the ageing profile of the Council's tenants there is an increasing demand for disabled adaptations which has placed considerable pressure on the adaptations budget. This has led to the re-prioritising of works in order to focus on urgent cases and bringing about economies of scale by delivering adaptations through a single contractor.

In February 2008, the Department for Communities and Local Government published the document "Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) –The Package of Changes to Modernise the Programme". This proposed that, from 2010-11, the DFG would be paid to local authorities as an un-ring fenced payment. Following the evaluation of several pilots, and the outcome of a review of the HRA subsidy system, a decision would be taken on allowing all local authorities to access the Single Capital Pot for adaptations for council tenants.

Priorities for future action

- Review how support is provided to tenants in sheltered housing schemes;
- Ensure that the Council's housing stock meets the Decent Homes standard;
- Improve the efficiency of the voids process by 10% from a baseline of 2008/09;
- Follow Council guidelines towards rent restructuring targets and rents convergence;
- Undertake an assessment of the extent of illegal sub-letting in the housing stock
- Evaluate the pilot of building 5 new Council properties using HCA resources, with a view to developing an on-going programme.

12 RESOURCING THE STRATEGY

This section analyses the resources, both capital and revenue, which are projected to be available to the Council and provides a brief analysis of the likely resource gap and how that gap might be bridged.

Funding plans have been developed up to April 2012. Over that period, it is anticipated that the Council will have total available resources of £13.4m from its own resources for capital expenditure on the various strands of housing. This is largely comprised of accumulated capital receipts which will be released as a result of the Council's decision to go "debt free" and the Major Repairs Allowance. The capital receipts will be used to support the enabling programme and private sector housing renewal. The Major Repairs Allowance helps to fund the Decent Homes Programme. The Council is also undertaking a small amount of prudential borrowing subject to the revenue income being able to support the borrowing.

At present, the financial resources which the Borough Council is either committing directly or indirectly is set out in the following tables.

	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	2011/12 £000
Affordable Housing Provision	500	2,338	2,338
Council Housing Improvements	2,116	2,116	2,085
Private Sector Housing Renewal	281	162	162
Disabled Facilities Grants	396	420	445
Home Energy Conservation Act	20	10	10
Total	3,313	5,046	5,040

Capital Resources 2010-2015

In addition to the above, there are other potential sources of funding to meet housing needs. Primary amongst these are the funds available from the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA), determined by the priorities of the Regional Housing Board for affordable housing provision by RSLs. The Council has attracted grant funding of £15.3m from the HCA to deliver 229 homes, being the bulk of the affordable housing programme for 2009/11.

Other potential sources of finance include contributions by RSLs towards the capital cost of their own schemes, either from reserves or other sources of private funding, contributions from developers through Section 106 Agreements and capital contributions from partner agencies to help develop schemes which assist them in meeting their own objectives. In the private sector, the maintenance and improvement of homes is largely funded by private landlords and homeowners themselves.

In revenue terms, the main sources of finance are the Housing Revenue Account for the management and maintenance of council housing, the Supporting People budget to help with the costs of housing with support for vulnerable people and RSL rental income to help them manage and maintain their own housing stock.

Affordable Housing Provision

The Council has reaffirmed its target for the provision of 100 new affordable homes per annum. It is recognised that this will not fully meet the identified need but that it is nevertheless ambitious in the light of the current economic conditions and the likely effect on land supply and availability of financial resources.

Based on the proposed mix of dwelling tenures and sizes for the future programme and an average Social Housing Grant requirement of £55,000 per unit, then the total funding requirement to support such a programme over the period 2011/14 is £15m. The Council will be making a significant additional contribution from its own resources towards the delivery of this programme over the life of this strategy as a result of the decision to go "debt free". This contribution, as set out in the above table is forecast to be in the region of £6.3m. However, there is uncertainty regarding the long term availability of sufficient social housing grant through the HCA in order to deliver the programme.

Improving Private Sector Housing

Private sector housing renewal activity concentrates on providing advice and assistance to help owners repair and maintain their homes using their own resources and through the provision of Home Improvement Loans to help vulnerable home owners unable to meet the cost of essential repairs to bring their homes up to the Decent Homes Standard. The additional funding for 2008/11 achieved from the Regional Housing Board and invested through the PUSH 4 Safer Homes consortium has greatly enhanced the private sector housing renewal budget and contributed towards an improvement in stock condition. There is uncertainty as to whether there will be a further round of bidding for resources for 2012 onwards.

The amount of resources devoted to the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants has increased yearly in order to meet the growing demand of an ageing population requiring adaptations. The future programme proposes a year on year budgetary increase in the region of £25,000.

Supporting People

Through the Review of all supported housing schemes and support in the last few years a total of £3,772,536 is invested in supporting vulnerable people in the Borough. This is broken down by cluster as follows:-

- Disabilities Cluster - £1,185,667
- Social Exclusion Cluster (previously Homelessness) - £2,188,123
- Older Person's Cluster - £398,745

There is now some flexibility as to how the Supporting People budget is spent within the Borough in conjunction with Gosport Borough Council and we will be taking an active role in the review of each of the Clusters to ensure that any service is meeting local housing support needs.

Home Energy Conservation

Resources of £10,000 per annum will be invested by the Council in energy efficiency measures for private sector homes and an additional £7,000 for promotional activity. Through PUSH 4 Safer Homes, funding of £28,000 in 2009/11 is available to invest in further energy efficiency measures including a top-up grant to meet a client's contribution towards a Warm Front Grant. Home Improvement Loans are also available to fuel poor households that are ineligible for a Warm Front Grant. We will ensure that residents are aware of the various grants and discounts that are available through the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) funding through a comprehensive promotional campaign.

FAREHAM HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2015 ACTION PLAN

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Work with developers, landowners, RSLs and the Homes & Communities Agency to enable 100 affordable homes to be completed per annum (and deliver a total of 500 new affordable homes over the next five years);	2010 - 2015	High	Deliver an average of 100 affordable homes per year between 2010 and 2015.	Access to funding from Homes & Communities Agency and Council's capital funding. Failure to secure sufficient funding and/or developers not proceeding to implement existing planning consents would affect programme delivery. Council to seek to acquire sites where appropriate.	Housing Strategy Manager
Review potential development sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	Review Dec 2010	High	Complete review by Dec 2010.	No specific issues. Officer time to be allocated	Housing Strategy Manager / Head of Planning Policy & Development
Monitor policies for affordable housing provision through the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.	Annual review / update	High	Carry out an annual review based on market conditions.	No specific issues. Officer time to be allocated	Housing Strategy Manager
Produce policies to provide wider affordable housing choices and new approaches to programme delivery through intermediate rental options	Nov 2010	Medium	Policy document prepared by Nov. 2010	No specific issues. Officer time to be allocated	Housing Strategy Manager
Review the provision of affordable housing on sites identified through the Asset Management Plan and the Corporate Action Plan.	Aug 2010	Medium	Suitable sites identified for development by Aug 2010	No specific issues. Officer time to be allocated	Head of Strategic Housing

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Complete the regeneration of the Broadlaw Walk area, including options for Mitre Court and other adjacent land.	March 2012	High	Ensure a sustainable, mixed and balanced community created.	Funding secured for first phases from Homes & Communities Agency. Further capital and revenue funding required.	Housing Strategy Manager
Develop the joint approach to affordable housing provision with neighbouring authorities in the PUSH region, particularly with regard to the Strategic Development Area to the North of Fareham.	April 2011	Medium	Sub-regional partnership approach developed by April 2011	No specific issues. Officer time to be allocated	Head of Strategic Housing
Develop eco town proposals for the North of Fareham SD	Up to 2015 and beyond	High	Achieving demonstrator projects within the Borough by 2015	Amount of available funding currently unknown. Officer time to be allocated.	Head of Strategic Housing / Head of Planning Policy & Development
Review, in partnership with housing associations whether there is any scope to rationalise the management and ownership of their stock in the Borough	Ongoing	Medium	No. of housing associations with stock in the Borough	No specific issues. Officer time to be allocated	Housing Strategy Manager

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation beyond 6 weeks to nil, except in the case of emergencies.	Annual review	High	No. of households in bed & breakfast accommodation.	Revenue funding required. Important to ensure that a range of suitable alternatives are available.	Housing Options Manager
Reduce and monitor the number of evictions in council and housing association properties from a 2006/07 baseline.	Annual review.	High	No. of evictions in council and housing association properties.	Revenue funding required. Availability of floating support.	Housing Options Manager

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Continue to work in partnership with landlords using the private rented sector as a means of housing people threatened with homelessness.	On-going	High	No. of new AFFORDs and Private Sector Leases per annum.	Revenue funding. Housing benefit subsidy levels.	Housing Options Manager
Continue an inter agency awareness raising programme to improve understanding of housing and homelessness issues.	On-going	Medium	1 school presentation / 1 inter-agency training event per year.	No specific issues. Officer time to be allocated	Housing Options Manager
Ensure a Mortgage Rescue Service is available to local people in partnership with the CAB, housing associations, building societies and the courts.	Annual review	High	No. of households prevented from losing their home.	Staff Resources. Revenue funding to Citizens Advice Bureau. Inter-agency working.	Housing Options Manager

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Review the effectiveness of the existing supported housing schemes and services in Fareham and Gosport.	Mar 2011	High	Homeless Cluster by Dec 2009 / Disabilities Cluster by Mar 2010 / Older Persons Cluster by Mar 2011	The existing resources available through the Supporting People Programme will be scrutinised to ensure that it provides value for money and is targeted to address local priorities.	Head of Strategic Housing
Review the operation and administration of the Supported Housing Panel to ensure the needs of vulnerable people are understood, ensure that best use is being made of existing supported housing services and that gaps in service can be easily identified	April 2010	Medium	Completion of review by April 2010	Within existing staff resources, some additional funding may be required if additional monies are available.	Housing Options Manager

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Increase move-on opportunities for those currently living in supported housing and who are ready to take the next step in their housing pathway towards independent living	On-going	Medium	No. of move-on's achieved per annum	Within existing staff resources	Housing Options Manager
Work with neighbouring authorities to meet the identified housing needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling show people	2011 and beyond	Medium	No. of locally defined gypsies and travellers found suitable permanent / temporary sites	Officer time to be allocated. Central Government funding would be sought to meet identified housing needs.	Head of Planning Policy & Development / Housing Strategy Manager
Review the information and options available to those experiencing domestic abuse.	November 2011	Medium	To offer more options for people experiencing DV	Within existing staff resources	Housing Options Manager

MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Undertake improvements to some of the Council's existing sheltered schemes	2010-2012	High	a) Agree specification b) Consult tenants	Capital costs and void loss while works underway Increase in construction costs	Head of Building Services
Identify sheltered housing units which are not fit for purpose and to make decisions about their future use	2010-2012	Medium	Completed review of existing provision by March 2012	This could result in a loss of revenue income if flats are kept vacant. There will also be capital implications in terms of new units.	Tenancy Services Manager

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Provide additional support to Council and Housing Association tenants who choose to move to more suitable accommodation	On-going	Medium	Ensure that any tenant who has to move receives support to help them deal with any upheaval.	Additional SP funding has been awarded for a part time post to assist with this initiative.	Tenancy Services Manager
Identify sites for new good quality schemes for the elderly which will provide housing, support and care in the heart of local communities	April 2010	Medium	Minimum of two sites to be identified by 2010	If new sites can't be found then could compromise the outcome of the sheltered housing review	Housing Strategy Manager
Progress a new Core and Cluster approach to sheltered housing provision across the Borough.	March 2010	High	Establish core and cluster schemes in the Borough by end of 2010	This will require some changes to the philosophy of some of the existing core schemes which will need to be reviewed in light of tenants' feedback	Tenancy Services Manager

PROVIDING HOUSING ADAPTATIONS

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Use the multi-agency / multi-tenure approach to service delivery to reduce the length of time to undertake housing adaptations by 5% per annum from a baseline of April 2010.	On-going	High	5% reduction per annum in average time to complete an adaptation.	In order to achieve this action point the full involvement of all agencies is essential. Performance targets and monitoring arrangements are being put in place.	Housing Strategy Manager
Work with housing associations to develop new homes that can be easily and economically adapted to meet the needs of the disabled occupants.	On-going	Medium	No. of new affordable housing units built to Lifetime Homes Standard.	Lifetime homes required additional grant funding in order to achieve the enhanced space standards.	Housing Strategy Manager

IMPROVING HOUSING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Use the results of the Private Sector House Condition Survey 2009 to review the condition of the private sector stock and develop future policy.	June 2010	High	New Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy adopted by June 2010	No specific issues. Officer time to be allocated	Housing Strategy Manager
Increase the number of properties which meet the Decent Homes Standard (including Housing Health & Safety Rating System)	On-going	Medium	No. of homes improved per annum to meet the Decent Homes Standard	Funding availability through PUSH 4 Safer Homes and the Council Private Sector Housing Renewal Budget	Housing Strategy Manager
Support vulnerable householders living in non-decent homes to improve their property.	On-going	Medium	No. of improvements per annum	Funding availability through PUSH 4 Safer Homes and the Council Private Sector Housing Renewal Budget	Housing Strategy Manager
Research the possible introduction of enforcement action to enable the Council to make the best use of properties that have been empty for more than 12 months.	June 2010	Medium	No. of long term empty properties return to use through the intervention of the Council	No specific issues. Officer time to be allocated	Housing Strategy Manager
Support the PUSH 4 Safer Homes consortium approach to delivering private sector housing renewal, developing further loan products and bid for funding for 2011/14	December 2010	High	No. of private sector dwellings improved through the PUSH 4 Safer Homes initiative.	Further regional funding through the PUSH 4 Safer Homes consortium is essential for the Council to meet its private sector housing commitments.	Housing Strategy Manager

IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Continue to direct Council financial resources to reduce fuel poverty and to meet NI 187 targets.	On-going	High	0.5% pa reduction in no. of fuel poor households with SAP rating below 35. 2% pa increase in no. of fuel poor households with SAP rating above 65	Officer time to be allocated to promote and co-ordinate activity. External resources through the Warm Front Scheme and CERT initiatives. Funding through PUSH 4 Safer Homes (Warm Home Grants) and FBC Home Improvement Loans.	Housing Strategy Manager
Continue to work with external agencies, particularly the Environment Centre, Warm Front and PUSH 4 Safer Homes to reduce domestic energy consumption across all tenures.	On-going	Medium	No. of properties improved through the efforts of the Council and external partners.	Officer time to be allocated to promote and co-ordinate activity. External funding streams are essential to deliver improvements.	Housing Strategy Manager
Work with social housing providers and private landlords to ensure that new affordable housing schemes continue to achieve the highest levels of energy efficiency and work towards zero-carbon housing by 2016.	On-going	Medium	Code Level 4 by 2013 Code Level 6 by 2016	Units provided with enhanced levels of energy efficiency require higher levels of social housing grant support.	Housing Strategy Manager
Investigate the potential for developing "eco show homes" and other projects linked to the eco-town funding in order to demonstrate greener living options to the wider population	March 2011	High	Number of properties improved through eco-town demonstrator projects funding	The availability of additional funding would enhance the existing IDEAS Home / retrofit projects enabling higher levels of energy efficiency to be achieved.	Housing Strategy Manager

DELIVERING A SERVICE TO COUNCIL HOUSING TENANTS

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND RESOURCES	LEAD OFFICER
Review how support is provided to tenants in sheltered housing schemes.	March 2011	Medium	Tenant Satisfaction levels with the support service.	It's likely that the revenue funding will decrease in real terms over the next 5 years which will require the service to be reviewed.	Tenancy Services Manager
Ensure that the Council's housing stock meets Decent Homes standard.	March 2010	High	For all of the housing stock to meet Decent Homes Standards	There will be increased pressure on the Council's HRA and unless the national review improves the position this could worsen over the next 5 years.	Head of Building Services
Improve the efficiency of the voids process by 10% from a baseline of 08/09.	March 2012	High	A 5% improvement in void turnaround each year for 5 years	Measures have been put in place to improve the void turnaround times	Tenancy Services Manager
Follow Council guidelines towards rent restructuring targets and rents convergence.	2012	Medium	Meet Government targets for rent convergence	No major impact as included within HRA Business Plan	Tenancy Services Manager
Undertake an assessment of the extent of illegal sub-letting in the housing stock.	2011	High	Undertake a survey to determine scope of problem	Could free up accommodation for those in greater housing need.	Tenancy Services Manager
Evaluate the pilot of building 5 new Council properties using HCA resources, with a view to developing an on-going programme.	Oct 2010	Medium	No. of affordable homes built through the Local Authority New Build programme.	Funding to be sought from the Homes & Communities Agency, supported where necessary from the Council's own resources. Provision of Council land at nil cost.	Housing Strategy Manager