

Report to: Economy, Environment, Culture & Housing Scrutiny
Committee
Cabinet

Date: 29th July 2009
27th August 2009

Subject: Wigan Borough Housing Strategy

Report of: Executive Director of Environmental Services

Contact officer: Peter Layland 01942 828983

Purpose / summary: To seek member approval for the Wigan Borough Housing Strategy

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: The alternative option is not to approve the strategy which will result in delays in tackling wide ranging housing issues in the Borough

Recommendation / decision: Members approve the Wigan Borough Housing Strategy

Key Decision: This report involves a key decision within ground 2.

The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 8th September 2009

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	None
Staffing:	Within Existing Resources
Policy:	Housing Strategy
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	The Strategy considers the housing and support options for all minority groups.
Wards affected:	All

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	X
Discussion leading to a decision	
Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	

	X
Discussion	
Decision	X
Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
	February/March 2009 Issues Paper June 2009 Draft Strategy	February/March 2009 Issues Paper June 2009 Draft Strategy	February/March 2009 Issues Paper June 2009 Draft Strategy EECH Board July 2009
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
	29 July 2009	27 August 2009	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title of document	Which meeting did it go to?	Date of meeting	Copy available from?
Housing Issues Paper	Housing Partnership	3 February 2009	Members Library
Draft Housing Strategy	Economy, Environment, Culture & Housing Partnership Board	2 July 2009	Members Library

Proper Officer M Kimber

Date 13th July 2009

1. Background

- 1.1 The Borough Housing Strategy is the key way that housing problems are identified, priorities set and action undertaken. In recent years it has been supplemented by a range of specialist sub strategies eg homelessness etc. The previous Housing Strategy originally written under the old narrow “fit for purpose” government criteria was designed to run from 2002 to 2007.
- 1.2 Due to the unclear regulatory framework this strategy was then extended to run until 2008. In its later years this strategy has been subject to significant review reflecting the changing housing market and a summary of its performance is enclosed. Over last summer/ autumn it became apparent that government had decided not to issue new guidance and to allow Sub Regions and Districts the freedom of developing their own frameworks. In many ways the move away from prescription is welcome and it allows development of a wider strategy that emphasises housing’s wider contribution to overall borough regeneration / placemaking issues rather than the traditional focus on housing condition and affordable housing provision.
- 1.3 Discussions within the Council and the Housing Partnership then set out the target to develop a new strategy by Spring 2009. Whilst good progress has been made the timetable has slipped largely due to the more extensive consultative process than planned and the need to ensure it contributes to wider local strategies such as the 2026 Community Strategy and the emerging wider Regeneration Agenda. It also needed to be compatible to the emerging Sub Regional Housing Strategy.
- 1.4 Work on developing the new strategy has therefore been extensive, starting with Housing Partnership Event discussions on the successes and areas of concern from the old strategy and trying to identify emerging issues (July 2008). Following this and overseen by the Partnership Executive Group, work developing a comprehensive “Issues Paper” was undertaken. This took advantage of the excellent research base including the 2008 Needs Survey, Condition Surveys, Wigan & Leigh Housing needs information, housing market data / discussions information and wider studies such as the Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment etc. As mentioned earlier this was also combined with the emerging wider 2026 Community Strategy work / LAA. It would also be true to say that the dramatic changes in the housing situation as a result of the credit crunch and the subsequent recession have made the task more complicated.
- 1.5 As a result of this process a comprehensive Housing Issues Paper was produced in February 2009 setting out an analysis of Wigan’s housing situation, future short and longer term issues and proposals to tackle these.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 On the 3rd February 2009 a Housing Partnership Event took place attended by over 50 delegates. This meeting acted as a launch to the planned 6 week consultative process, but most of the day was spent discussing the Issues Paper and obtaining valuable feedback from a wide range of stakeholders.

2.2 The consultation has been wide ranging seeing a variety of audiences consulted using a variety of methods. During the consultation period the following consultation methods used:

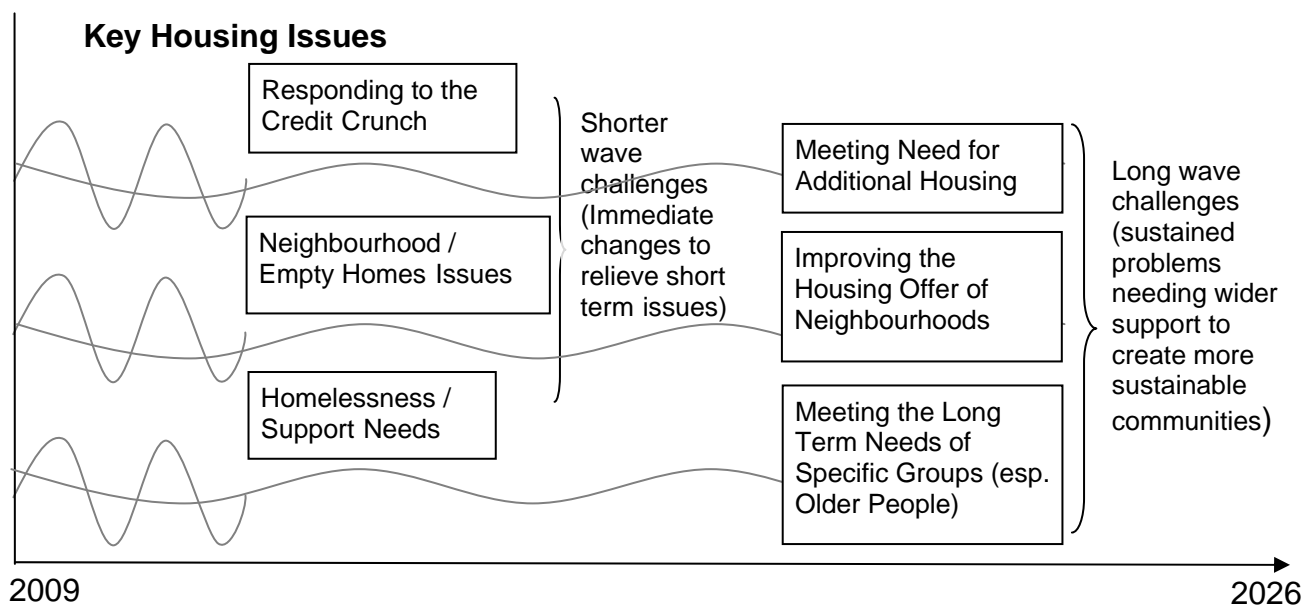
- Internet based questionnaire
- Door to door surveys by PACT teams in 10 wards across the Borough
- Attendance at Housing themed meetings
- Email circulation to Housing related networks
- Resident focus Groups
- Key Stakeholder consultation including discussion with all the thematic partnerships

2.3 The results of this consultative exercise are outlined within the appendices to the Strategy, but in essence it stressed the importance of wider issues eg neighbourhood concerns, as well as picking up on certain key topics such as the private rented sector. Using this feedback as well as the existing evidence the Housing Strategy Team produced a Draft Housing Strategy in May. Following discussion at the Housing Partnership Executive Group this has also been subject to a further shorter consultation period including:

- Key Stakeholder Consultation including the thematic partnerships
- Consultation with interested members of the public previously involved in the consultation exercise on the Housing issues paper
- Email circulation to Housing related networks
- Internet availability via consultation pages within the Housing Strategy Team web pages

3. Draft Housing Strategy

3.1 The revised Draft Housing Strategy can be viewed in the Members Library. The strategy itself has a long term vision for housing in the Wigan Borough but also has priorities that require more immediate action (next 2 years). The various appendices to the strategy, of which the most important is the Action Plan, can be viewed in the Members Library.



- 3.2 At its heart the strategy has identified the issues set out above as priorities for action, with three work streams themed on Quantity, Quality and People providing the basis for future programmes and investment. It is important to note that the overall Housing Strategy is strategic in nature and is backed by a host of sub-strategies designed to direct detailed elements of the programme e.g. homelessness, affordable housing etc.
- 3.3 This strategy is also very different to its predecessors in that it is designed not just a stand alone housing document. Its key role being the housing contribution to the 2026 Sustainable Communities Strategy and the associated delivery of wider regeneration initiatives. Its shorter term Action Plan also forms the basis of housing's contribution to the Local Area Agreement. Its aims are thus complementary to and linked to wider strategies and other key documents such as the Local Development Framework and Economic Strategies
- 3.4 Note that although the Strategy is almost complete there are gaps within its Action Plan. These will be completed and targets set once the performance information for 2008/09 have been finalised and submitted. The aim would be for all performance measures and the results of the diversity impact assessment to be included when it is ratified by the Local Strategic Partnership

4. Reporting Process

- 4.1 This draft strategy has already been approved by Environment, Economic, Culture & Housing Partnership Board. Following discussion at EECH Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet it will then be formally adopted by the Local Strategic Partnership.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That Members approve the Housing Strategy for adoption.

Vision 2026

Wigan Housing Strategy

Final Draft 29.06.09

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3. Understanding Wigan's Housing Market
4. Achievements of the Housing Strategy 2002 -07
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Introduction

The Wigan Borough's housing situation has undergone significant and beneficial change in recent years with:

- Significant numbers of new homes created, many of which have played a key role in the transformation of communities
- The condition of Council Housing has transformed since the formation of Wigan and Leigh Homes and access to additional funding
- The condition of private sector homes have dramatically improved especially for the most vulnerable
- The energy efficiency of homes has improved ensuring harm to the environment is reduced and residents are able to afford heating bills
- Support services to the most vulnerable have seen more investment and improved

All of this activity has not occurred by chance and has been the result of effective Housing Strategies which have directed investment and encouraged partners to maximise improvement.

However, times change and so do the challenges we face:

- The current recession has had dramatic effects on the housing market and its residents ranging from increased need for advice, increases in empty homes and additional homelessness pressures.
- We are facing immediate needs for more affordable housing and longer term pressures for more homes to accommodate our growing population.
- There is a need to improve the housing offer in neighbourhoods both in terms of conditions and desirability of the areas.
- We need to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, especially the growing number of older people.

The strategy seeks to achieved this by developing action around three main themes backed by shorter term action plans:

- Quality
- Quantity
- People

It will do this in an integrated way, looking how housing can contribute to the wider Sustainable Communities Plan in Wigan, with the action plan relating directly to the Local Area Agreement. The role of the new EECH partnership will be the key to ensuring delivery in combination with achieving wider regeneration and economic well being.

Miranda Allen, Chair of the Economic, Environment, Culture & Housing Partnership

Chris Harris, Chair of the Housing Partnership

Kevin Anderson, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing

Foreword

Our new Housing Strategy is set out within a new format and is designed to be clear and concise. It has been informed by robust research backed by extensive dialogue with partners and customers and provides an insight into our housing problems and most importantly, how these are to be addressed.

It sets out both the longer term challenges faced in the borough and recognises the challenging economic context over the short term. For these reasons it presents a future vision backed by a short term action plan.

Our strategy is designed to contribute to the transformational agenda set out in Wigan's Sustainable Communities Strategy "Vision 2026" and the priorities within the Local Area Agreement 2008 -11. These, along with other documents, such as the Local Development Framework and Worklessness Strategy will be used to drive our emerging Regeneration Strategy forward. It is backed by more detailed sub-strategies, such as the Homelessness Strategy and Affordable Housing Strategy are designed to be more operational in nature and will be used to drive the housing agenda forward.

We have seen that the housing market can change rapidly and so this strategy is designed to be flexible and the action plan will be refreshed annually to ensure it remains relevant.

It is hoped that this strategy provides a clear guide to how both the Housing Partnership and the wider Economic, Environment , Culture and Housing Partnership will transform the borough's housing, economic , environmental and cultural future.

Miranda Allen, Chair of the Economic, Environment, Culture & Housing Partnership

Chris Harris, Chair of the Housing Partnership

Kevin Anderson, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing

Chapter 1 – The role of the Housing Strategy

Our last Housing Strategy was prepared in 2002 in accordance with the Governments “Fit for Purpose” criteria. This was a very prescriptive approach that focused on process rather than outcome and adopted a relatively narrow role with an emphasis on existing and affordable housing.

The Government have signalled that this type of strategy is no longer appropriate and now expect a wider, more ambitious document. There have been significant changes to the housing issues affecting us locally and nationally, there has been transformation in our housing markets and the local and regional decision making context within which we operate has also moved on.

We now need to demonstrate how housing will achieve high level outcomes that contribute to the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular links to the priorities of the Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Communities Strategy vision 2026 and other Regional and Sub Regional Strategies. We have consulted widely during the preparation of this strategy and we will continue to consult during the life of this strategy, so that our actions continue to reflect the issues and needs of the community and stakeholders.

The Housing Green Paper “Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable” (Communities and Local Government 2007) set out a new agenda in terms of higher overall housing targets, increased investment in affordable housing and new partnerships and delivery mechanisms, setting a new vision for strategic housing;

“The Local Authority Strategic Housing role is made up of a series of strategic decisions and activities associated with effective planning and delivery, in order to meet the housing needs of all residents across all tenures. Strong performance in this role will support effective place making and help the delivery of the wider sustainable community.” (CLG 2007)

We also need to respond to the changing funding, enabling and regulation frameworks resulting from recent legislation, including the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, and in particular the formation of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Tenant Services Authority (TSA). These changes will drive housing in new and different directions which are more focused on integrated priorities aimed at wider regeneration / sustainability ambitions, regulating social landlords and ensuring high standards of service within the housing and regeneration sectors.

Particularly important will be the changing regional and Sub-regional policy and decision making frameworks, that will become increasingly important for us in demonstrating our contribution to achieving growth and increasing economic prosperity in the borough.

Against this background it is clear that this Housing Strategy will be very different from past templates, needing to be more widely based and integrated within a range of local, sub regional and regional objectives. As illustrated below in Figure 1, the new strategy focuses on how housing contributes to the “place making” of the borough, in terms of improving the build environment, supporting the wellbeing of residents and providing services that meet needs.

Figure 1: Old role of the Housing Strategy

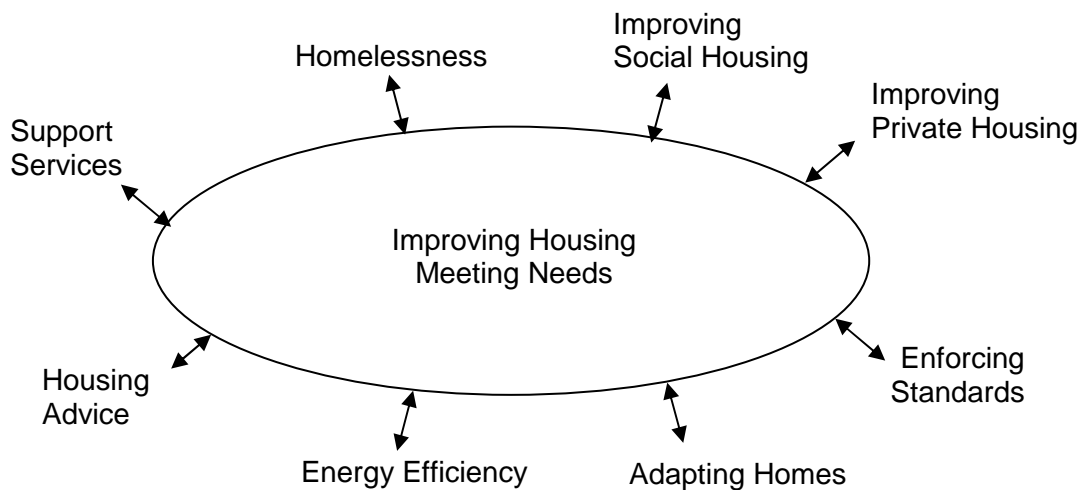
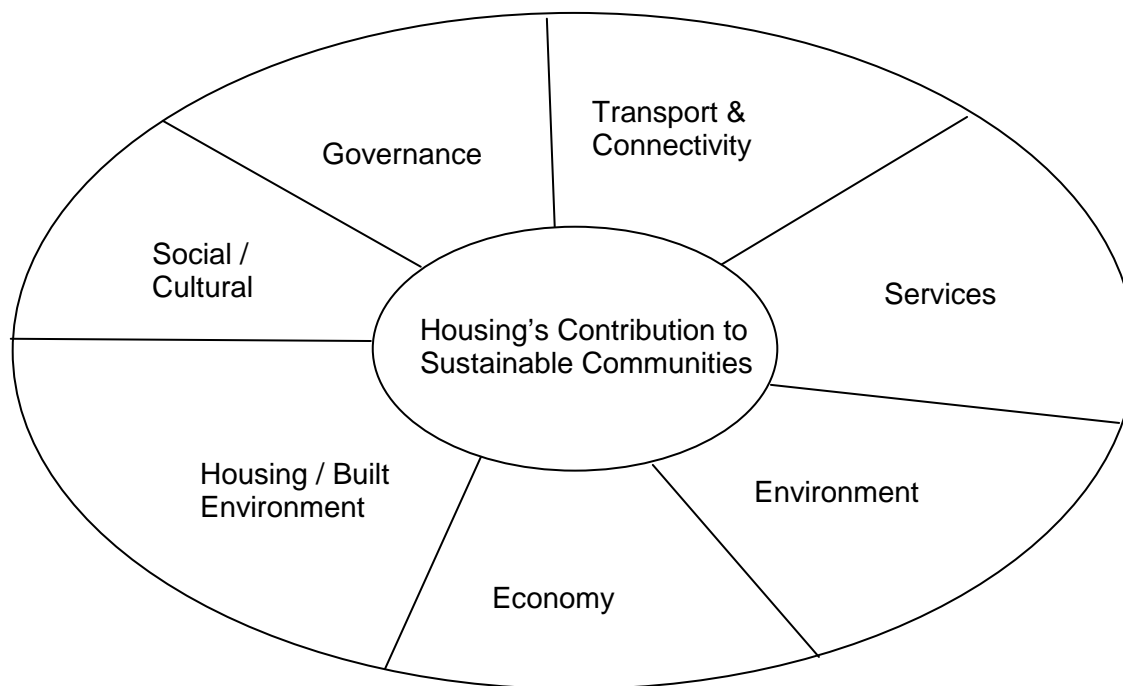


Figure 2: New role of the Housing Strategy



Transformation of our communities and the services we provide will not happen overnight and in order to achieve real change this strategy sets a long term vision for housing up 2026. We also recognise that certain issues require more immediate action and so we set out our "first steps" towards the vision in a series of realistic actions over the short term. We have developed our Housing Strategy Action Plan to cover the period 2009-11. We will monitor progress against this action plan before setting a new action plan in 2011 that will illustrate our progression towards the housing vision.

Demonstrating our contribution to Wigan's local priorities

This strategy demonstrates how our housing actions contribute to a range of wider priorities of the Council and its partners such as sustainability, safer communities, worklessness, health and social care. The main reference documents are the Sustainable Communities Strategy – Vision 2026 and the Local Area Agreement 2008/11 but there are links to many other corporate and departmental plans and strategies, such as the emerging Local Development Framework and the Supporting People Commissioning framework.

The Wigan Local Strategic Partnership have agreed a Sustainable Communities Strategy and a Local Area Agreement designed to deliver a more integrated approach to place making and developing more sustainable communities.

The Sustainable Communities Strategy sets a vision for 2026 built around 4 key priorities that will be the big issues for the next 18 years or more.

Ambitious Communities
Strong Communities
Living Healthier and Longer
Realising Aspirations

They will require long term commitment and investment from a wide range of people and organisations, ranging from education to spatial planners to housing all working together to create long term change.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2008 -11 has set out the first milestones towards achieving the vision 2026, delivery will be overseen by the four new Delivery Partnerships.

The agreed LAA housing measures being;

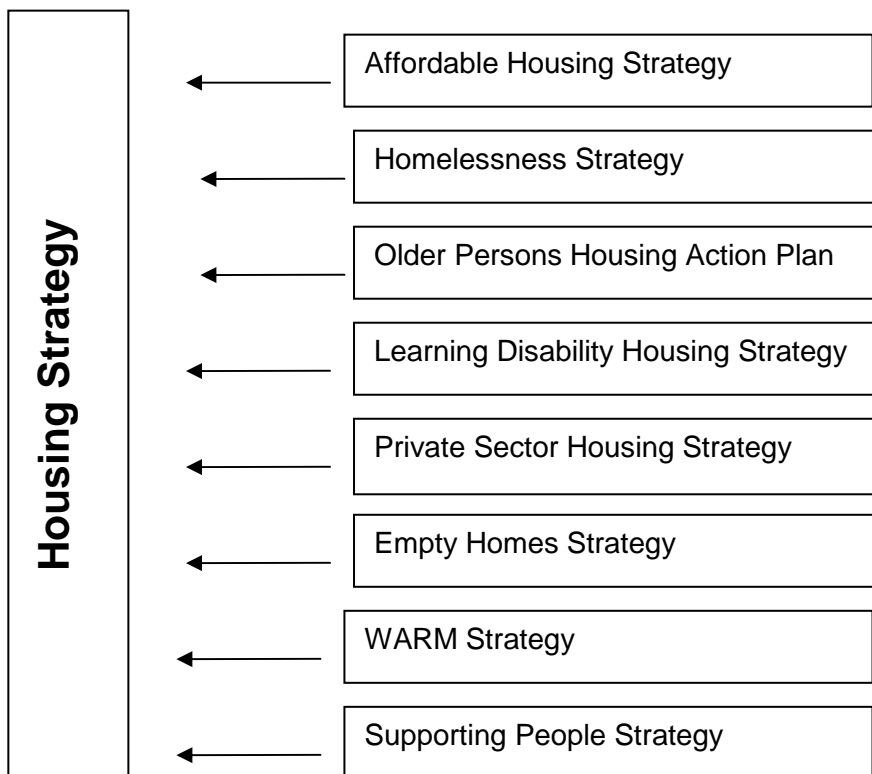
- | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Increase the overall supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of all its residents and the local economy– To strengthen our weaker housing markets by increasing choice and quality of the housing offer in these localities– To better meet the needs of vulnerable and homeless people by investing in better prevention and support services |
|---|

These LAA priorities have been developed through our improved information base and through a series of discussions at various forums and partnership events. Progress is being measured against agreed performance indicators and targets by the new Economic, Environmental, Cultural and Housing Delivery Partnership, of which the long established Housing Partnership forms a part.

This strategy sets out our high level actions which will contribute to achieving a number of LAA priorities and this strategy reflects our contribution to other agendas such as worklessness, tackling anti social behaviour, improving health and environmental performance.

The Housing Strategy will be our overarching strategy but it will be supported by a series of housing sub strategies, focusing on individual issues and setting out more detailed actions.

Fig 3: Housing Strategy and Sub Strategies



Linking with National, Regional and Sub-regional agendas

Wigan Borough interacts with and is affected by wider regional and sub regional issues and this strategy demonstrates how our priorities reflect priorities set across Greater Manchester and the wider area.

The new North West Regional Housing Strategy 2009 is an economically and market focused strategy which is not primarily driven by need, this is expected to be addressed at a more local level and via specialist strategies such as the Regional Strategic Framework for Housing Support in the North West . The North West Regional Housing Strategy seeks to support the wider ambitions of the North West and positions housing to assist in bringing about long term structural changes and to support the development of an integrated Regional Strategy, drawing together housing, economic development and spatial planning strategies in the North West.

This strategy will demonstrate how we contribute to achieving the overall vision of the North West Regional Housing Strategy

“to create balanced housing markets across the North West that support economic growth, strengthen economic and social inclusion and ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, well designed high quality, affordable housing in sustainable, mixed and vibrant communities”

It sets three key objectives, namely:

- Quantity** - Achieving the right quantity of housing
- Quality** - Continuing to raise the quality of the existing housing stock
- People** – Connecting people to an improved offer

Wigan borough forms part of Greater Manchester and is participating in its ambitious attempts to transform its economic and development aspirations, with both our Leader and Chief Executive having high profile roles within the sub region. This is being taken forward by the development of a Greater Manchester Strategy which is drawing heavily from the recent Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER). The strategy will set out a series of strategic priorities that are designed to help draw forward the sub regional economy in a sustained way.

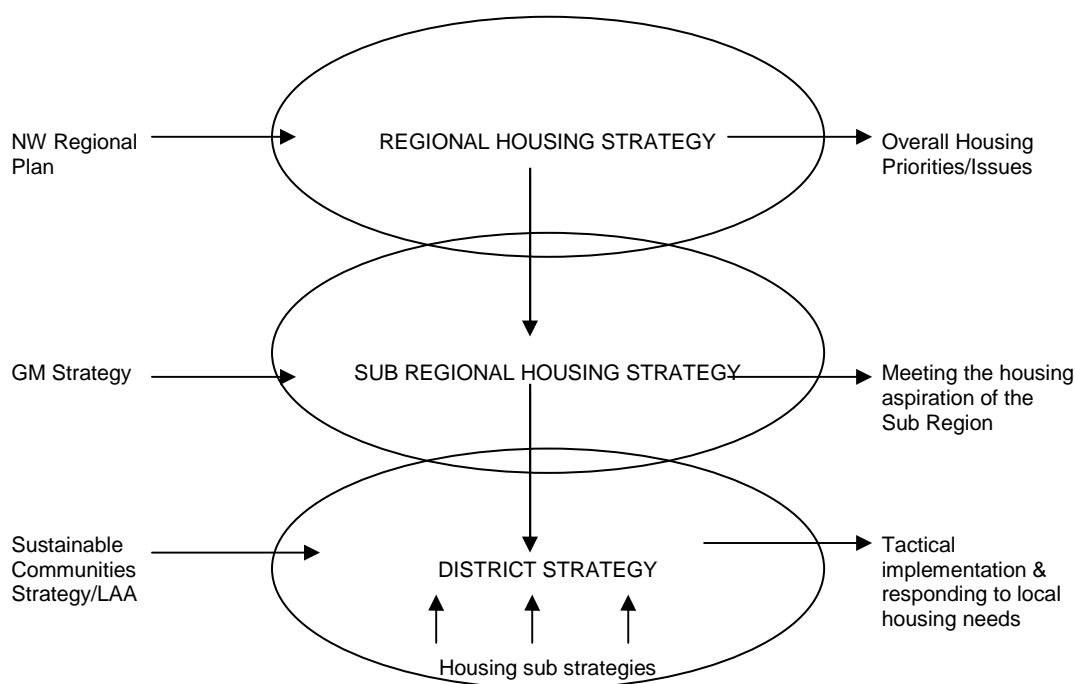
The housing element will centre on it becoming more flexible to changing market demands and the need to create more sustainable neighbourhoods. A sub regional housing strategy is due to be completed by the end of 2009. Its priorities are expected to be similar to those in the Regional Housing Strategy but it will provide a local context and will prioritise different areas of the sub region to meet the broader aims.

The objectives of the Greater Manchester Strategy will be driven forward by the recent designation of Greater Manchester as a City Region Pilot, this will give Greater Manchester more powers to make local decisions over a range of issues such as transport investment, employment and skills and investment in homes and communities.

Despite being within Greater Manchester, Wigan has long established strategic links with Merseyside and Lancashire and we are mindful of our strong links with St Helens and Warrington. We will continue to maintain links with the “Mid Mersey Housing Market Area” particularly in relation to the development of their housing Growth Point.

Figure 4 below illustrates how emerging needs and priorities will be embedded from the local level upwards and that strategic planning will work from a regional level downwards.

Figure 4: Housing Strategy Hierarchy



Informing funding allocations and discussions with the HCA and other bodies

As investment priorities are increasingly being determined by the regional and sub-regional strategies, we need to demonstrate how our strategic priorities meet the regional and sub regional investment priorities in order to maximise investment in the borough, both through housing and through linking with other investment in infrastructure, economic development and environmental improvement.

An important mechanism will be the “Single Conversation” with the HCA where we will need to demonstrate that our local actions support their North West regional priorities to:

- Link housing and regeneration resources to support growth, deliver housing renewal, tackle affordability issues and create sustainable communities where people want to live and work
- Adopt innovative approaches to investment in order to increase housing supply and deliver new and improved infrastructure.
- Reinforce quality, design and environmental standards for all new and existing developments.

Demonstrating that we are meeting needs and responding to communities

This strategy has been prepared following an extensive consultation period earlier in 2009, where we sought the views of a range of stakeholders and individuals within the borough including, with a variety of means;

- Issues paper and questionnaire available on line and at many locations throughout the borough
- Consultation with specialist groups and organisations – such as the Township Forums, housing providers and voluntary organisations
- Housing Partnership consultation event held
- Written requests for comment to key stakeholders
- Partnerships and Communities Together (PACT) consultation

This strategy has been developed from the views given during the consultation on the Issues Paper, see appendix 2 for full details.

We will continue to demonstrate the effectiveness of this strategy in achieving our vision and contributing to other outcomes by developing a robust performance framework and developing our engagement activities so that we can judge our progress better against the impact upon residents. We will also assess our strategy to judge its impact upon equality and diversity, health and sustainability by monitoring the outcomes for a range of groups and making use of existing mechanisms such as the Place Survey and the Council’s engagement strategy “Routes to Involvement”.

Chapter 2 – Housing Vision 2026

The Wigan Borough Sustainable Communities Strategy - Vision 2026 was developed following wide consultation across the borough. It asked the question;

What might Wigan look like eighteen years from now?

During the spring of 2008 the residents of Wigan were asked to imagine the eighteenth birthday party of a baby born in 2008, what are their hopes for their children? What kind of place would they be living in?

The homes and communities that we live in by 2026 will be crucial in realising these aspirations. Housing can contribute in many ways to achieving the type of place that residents of the borough aspire to live in for example through giving families a better choice in where they live, by building homes that are energy efficient and ensuring that vulnerable people are supported in our communities.

We need to establish a vision for housing that the Council and its partners can work towards in the long term and that will support the overall Vision 2026.

Earlier in 2009 we published a Housing Issues Paper and held extensive discussions with partners and residents of the borough and asked them what housing issues were most important to them and what their aspirations for housing in 2026 would be. A summary of our consultation responses is attached in appendix ii but some responses were:

“A stable Housing market where everybody can afford a home. Good quality design in new developments and the regeneration of parts of the borough that are suffering at the moment”

“Greener homes surrounded by open spaces and countryside”

“A good variety of affordable housing, close to amenities, enabling sustainable communities. Housing designed to help the environment and design out crime”

“Every Wigan resident regardless of socio-economic status is living in a property in a safe and secure neighbourhood of their choice with access to essential support services and local amenities and transport”

From the comments made we have adopted our Vision 2026 for Housing

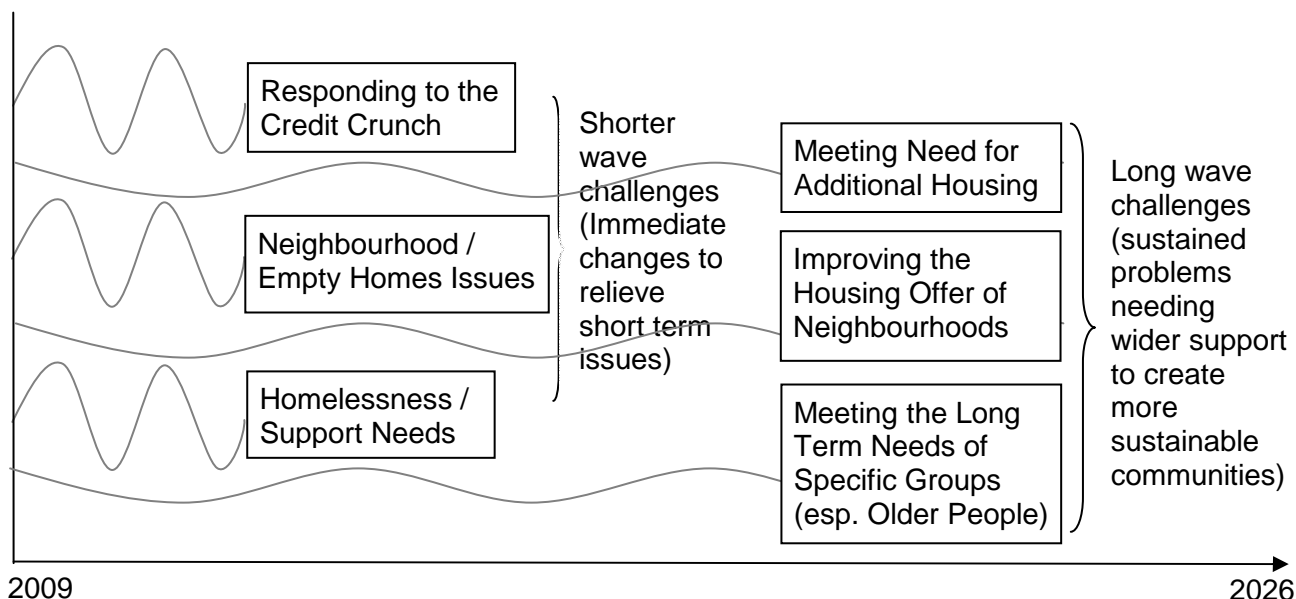
“Wigan is a place with a range of good quality, affordable housing that meets the aspirations of residents and supports sustainable growth. All areas of the borough are attractive places to live with neighbourhoods that are safe, clean and inclusive. People are healthy and active and receive the support they need. “

Our housing vision sets out what we hope to achieve in the long term but we will need to establish a series of actions over time that will contribute to realising the vision and also respond to current challenges. These will be delivered in the short term through the three housing strands of the current Local Area Agreement and the Housing Strategy Action Plan will form the basis of the LAA action plan against which our performance will be measured

From our analysis of evidence collated and from the comments received from partners and members of the community we have identified a number of challenges that need to be addressed

in order to achieve our long term vision. These issues are wide ranging but there are linkages between them.

Fig 5: Waves Diagram



There are shorter wave challenges largely driven by the current economic position and partly due to rapid changes in the local housing market, creating situations that requires short term intervention.

1. Responding to the economic downturn
2. Neighbourhood issues/ empty homes
3. Homelessness and support needs

These types of pressures tend to be cyclical and are likely to occur again before 2026. Whilst it is important to respond quickly and effectively to these acute issues, we need to consider the fundamental challenges that if addressed will make a real contribution to creating sustainable communities that are more resilient to short term pressures such as those above. The long term challenges we have identified are

1. Meeting the need for additional housing
2. Improving the housing offer of neighbourhoods
3. Meeting the long term needs of specific groups, especially older people

In the following chapters we will set out more detail how we plan to address these issues under the three themes of

1. Quantity
2. Quality
3. People

However, whilst we set out our actions under these themes, the themes are often interlinked and many of our actions will contribute to more than one theme. For example action to bring empty homes into use can contribute to all three themes by increasing the numbers of homes available to meet housing need, improving the appearance and safety of neighbourhoods and giving more choice of housing and helping reduce homelessness.

Resourcing the strategy

There are a number of direct funding streams that will contribute financially to achieving the actions within the strategy

Fig 6: Housing Strategy Resources

Funding Source	Amount £	Period	Area Funded
CLG: Homelessness Directorate	£230	2009/10	Tackling and preventing Homelessness
Disabled Facilities Grant	£2m per annum	2009/10	Aids & Adaptations
Supporting People	£8.7M £9.3M	2009/10 2010/11	Housing Related Support
HCA National Affordable Housing Programme	£4.76M	2008 -11	Affordable Housing Provision
Housing Capital Allocation	£4.5M	2009/10	Renewal Areas, Alleygating and Ince Remediation
Gypsy and Traveller site improvement grant	£180k	2009/10	Site improvement works
S106 Commuted Sums (NB projected income remains uncertain in the current economic climate)	£1.125M	2009/11	Affordable Housing Provision
CLG	£50k	2009/10	Tackling Overcrowding
Learning Disability Development Fund	£62772	2009/10 & 10/11	Housing Options Development for people with learning disabilities
Wigan Council	£51k	2009/10	Private Sector Leasing Scheme
Housing Benefits	Est £250k (income generated depends on no. units leased)	2009/10	Private Sector Leasing Scheme
DWP / Wigan Council	£57,174 / £85,761	2009/10	Discretionary Housing Payments / Homeless Prevention
Wigan Council	£52,275	2009/10	Homelessness Prevention / B&B costs

Whilst these funding streams are extensive, we recognise the financial contribution of partners across the borough and the flexing of their spending towards achieving the shared objectives contained within this strategy. We also recognise the significant contribution made to meeting our objectives in the private sector, particularly individual residents investing in their properties, and the role of public investment in acting as a catalyst to further encourage and direct private investment.

We will ensure that we make best use of all available resources and highlight areas where we need to attract additional resources or increase efficiencies, for example through participating in the Greater Manchester Council's with ALMOS. We will continue to maximise investment by proactively seeking additional funding streams, when opportunities arise, with our partners.

Our resources will be used to best support the corporate priorities of the Council contained in the LAA and Sustainable Communities Strategy, with some decisions being taken on the priority of spending across areas. There may be some areas where resource increases are prioritised, whereas, in others there is a recognition that existing services are being delivered in an efficient manner given the resources available.

It is becoming clear that reductions in public spending will become necessary in future and this may well reduce the sources of funding available to us. We will seek to reduce the impact through developing value for money in procurement, and maximising the potential of other assets, for example through public / private partnerships to achieve our wider aims.

Chapter 3 – Theme 1: Quantity

You told us

You said you want;

“Choice of quality affordable housing, with a range of house types for a range of different people with cross tenure integrated support”

“Community facilities within all new developments for residents to feel a sense of community”

“Homes linked to employment & services”

“Move away from boom and bust”

“Greener homes surrounded by open spaces and countryside would benefit us all within the borough”

“Flexibility of tenure”

“Options for older people to down size – need to be aspirational”.

And we need to take action to;

“Tidy up and get rid of all of the empty flats/apartments”

“Give everyone a chance to get a property young or old family or no family “

“Improve sustainability ...and in particular on no energy/low energy housing”

“Resolve transport issues, housing congestion/glut in certain areas needs to be better balance”

“Refocus away from home ownership – unsustainable aspiration for many”

“Develop properties that able to be used flexibly (akin to lifetime homes)”

“Focus on incentives to relet empties... NOT penalties”

(source: actual responses given during the Housing Strategy Issues Paper consultation)

Key challenges

Short term challenge – Responding to the economic downturn
Long term challenge – Meeting the need for additional housing

Responding to the economic downturn

In common with most areas in the country, there has been a rapid change in the housing market in Wigan as a result of the economic downturn. Prevailing trends of rising prices, increased house building activity and decreasing affordability have reversed in the past year. The length and severity of the recession are widely debated but the consensus is that there will not be a quick recovery and that activity in the housing market may not return to the levels seen in the last couple of years.

Demand for new homes has fallen and there has been a rise in the number of unsold and unoccupied new build homes over the last year. According to Hometrack data, house prices in the borough have fallen in 2008 by an average of 3.7%. However, price changes have not dropped uniformly across the borough, see map below, and have held or increased in some areas and for some property types. Surrounding boroughs have seen similar drops, for example St Helens - 2.4%, Salford -1.0% and Chorley -4.4% with Bolton seeing a small increase of 0.2% over the year.

The number of sales transactions has fallen by over 72% in the last year. Job insecurity and financial uncertainty have certainly impacted on residents desire to move. The restriction of

mortgage finance at reasonable rates is considered by many as the single most important factor and despite the fall in house prices this has not eased the problem of affordability due to the lack of availability of finance and the need for larger deposits.

The impact of the recession is now also being felt by local businesses and employers, particularly in the construction and manufacturing sectors. Wigan Council is developing a wide ranging package of measures to reduce the impact of the recession and to maximise opportunities when the recovery begins. We have identified a number of housing priorities and have developed an action plan setting out how we will tackle the priorities over the next year;

1. More affordable homes
2. Tackling private sector empty homes
3. Minimising repossessions and providing better advice
4. Fuel poverty issues

Actions to address these priorities have been incorporated into our Housing Strategy Action Plan in Appendix 1 but include:

- Working with house builders and the Homes and Communities Agency to direct grant funding at making unsold market housing available as additional affordable housing in the borough. Through this we have secured an additional 34 social rented homes and over 80 low cost home ownership units in 2008/09 to meet local need.
- Using the Council's land assets to support the delivery of affordable housing in partnership with RSL's and Wigan and Leigh Housing.
- "Fast tracking" our participation in the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
- Support for local businesses to retain and train their workforce
- Increasing housing options advice and available at court for those facing repossession
- Focus on developing a supply of suitable sites, infrastructure and skills base so that the local economy is not held back from recovery

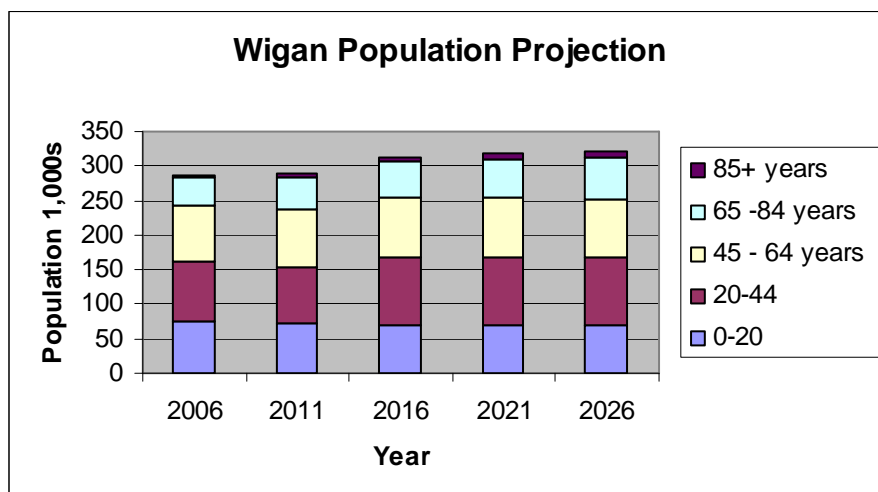
We will continue dialogue and engagement with key partners such as developers and the HCA to develop new interventions and offer support where possible.

Planning for demographic change

Despite the recent fall in housing activity, particularly in new build development, the longer term trends are for rising population and demand for accommodation. The population of the borough is forecast to continue to grow from 306,000 in 2008 to 320,000 by 2026. Increases are due both to our resident population increasing and migration into the borough from elsewhere. In addition, our population is becoming more culturally diverse as asylum seekers, economic migrants and their families settle in the borough.

Household formation rates are predicted to rise at a greater rate than overall population as the trend for smaller household size continues. Particularly there will be a greater number of single person households. We need to develop our evidence base and through the LDF plan to provide the types of housing required by these newly forming households, however, when planning for the needs of smaller households, it is important to consider their aspirations in terms of size, accessibility and access to services.

Fig 7: Population Projections



Wigan is an ageing borough, by 2026 the pensioner population will have grown by over 20,000 as health and life expectancy increases. Over 65s will make up 21.5% of our population by 2026 and 2.7% will be aged over 85. Our research has shown that many people wish to remain in their own homes as they become older. Whilst we are developing policies to provide more support in the home we also need to consider the types of new housing required by those older people who wish to move to a more suitable home, particularly meeting the aspirations of the next generation of older owner occupiers. We need to consider suitable locations for specialist provision and ensure that high standards of design and accessibility are achieved both in specialist and mainstream housing.

Planning housing delivery to support economic growth

The adopted housing targets for the borough within the Regional Spatial Strategy is for an additional 17,600 homes by 2021, an annual average of 978, with 80% provision targeted on brownfield sites. Although rates of completions have been high in recent years, the new target is a significant increase on the previous figure and will represent a key challenge, particularly in the current economic climate where rates of completions are likely to fall sharply in the short to medium term.

The emerging Wigan LDF will set out the planning policy framework to support the delivery of the housing target and other policies within the RSS. The Core Strategy Preferred Options has now been published shortly and sets out key issues such as;

- Spatial policy principles – including key development sites and zoning of development
- Core policy principles – on issues such as housing, economy, energy and waste
- Development management policy principles
- Alternative options

The Core Strategy will be crucial in establishing the framework for the future development of the borough in terms of meeting the future housing needs of the borough and facilitating economic growth and sustainable development. Through the Housing Strategy we need to work with planners to ensure new housing development offers the range of homes required by the population of the borough.

Within the LDF process the council will be required to demonstrate that there is a sufficient amount of land available to deliver the housing requirement set in the RSS and to demonstrate that the land is developable and deliverable within certain timescales. A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has recently been completed and a draft report will be published shortly.

Initial findings indicate

- A large supply of land will be required to meet the RSS housing targets over the period to 2021
- The potential (unconstrained) supply of sites is in excess of requirements
- There are considerable variations in the spatial distribution of potential sites, this does not necessarily correlate with the areas with most housing demand.
- Constraints on some sites could inhibit delivery if not addressed

As a consequence of Wigan's industrial past much of the older urban core is surrounded by areas of former industrial land, particularly coal spoils, flashes and landfill. Whilst the SHLAA indicates that the unconstrained supply of land is more than sufficient to meet long term requirements for housing and employment, the issues of remediation and infrastructure remain huge barriers to development in many areas of the borough.

The Local Development Framework is due to be published by the council by mid 2010 and is to be adopted by mid 2011, during this time we will continue to work together with planners to ensure that housing and planning policy work together to deliver our strategic objectives.

Investing in sustainable development

Wigan needs to be able to attract and retain a range of employers and to compete within Greater Manchester and nationally for investment and jobs. The recently published Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER) has found that productivity and earnings in the borough are lower than the sub-regional, regional and national averages. This reflects the traditional manufacturing base of the borough and indicates that there has been little diversification since the decline in manufacturing, with levels of employment in manufacturing, retail and logistics above average and knowledge, financial and professional sectors under-represented in the borough.

The MIER findings highlight a number of barriers including lower skills levels, low supply of quality office accommodation and, despite being near the motorway network and West Coast Mainline, the existence of poor transport links in many areas. The report looked at the sustainability of neighbourhoods and classed 16 neighbourhoods in the borough as "isolated" where there was a degree of entrapment of poor households, unable to break the cycle of living in a deprived area.

In order to initiate long term regeneration a co-ordinated approach to planning infrastructure, housing and employment is needed, by;

- Identifying strategic development sites and to assist in directing development and investment into these areas.
- Ensuring that investment in housing is linked to other funding in other areas such as education and training, health and economic regeneration in order to maximise the impact on communities.
- Closer dialogue within council departments
- Developing our relationship with housing providers, the Homes and Communities Agency and other regional bodies so that our aspirations for the borough are understood.
- The development of a local delivery vehicle that will co-ordinate master planning and funding for the development of strategic sites, working with both public and private sector partners to secure investment.

Maximising affordable housing provision

Whilst house prices have recently fallen this is unlikely to solve the affordability gap since high deposits are being demanded and a greater proportion of residents are likely suffer financial insecurity due to the recession. Our evidence shows that the supply of affordable homes has decreased leaving chronic shortages, thus the need for affordable housing is likely to remain an issue in the longer term.

Findings from both our Housing Needs Survey 2008 and the Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 show that the demand for affordable housing has increased substantially since 2005 and now far exceed our current target of an additional 530 homes by 2010. Delivery against this target has been steady but it is clear that delivery will fall short of needs.

Fig 8: Affordable Housing Delivery

Delivery of affordable housing (cumulative)			
Target	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
530	197	226	287
Number of new affordable homes			
	1	20	69

Our current affordable housing targets have become harder to achieve due to the slow down in housing developments as much of our planned delivery was to be through planning obligations on new housing developments, which are now stalling.

We will need to develop more innovative solutions to funding and delivery of affordable homes if we are to meet our targets. By;

- Continuing to maximise the supply via supporting bids to the Homes and Communities Agency through Regular Market Engagement
- Supporting initiatives to bring unsold market housing into the affordable housing stock where it will meet housing needs.
- Developing new opportunities with our ALMO, RSL's, developers and landlords to deliver affordable homes
- Encouraging the use the councils own assets, such as land, to support affordable housing delivery.

In response to the changed housing market and identification of further needs in the Housing Needs Survey and GM Strategic Housing Market Assessment, we will need to review our affordable housing targets and delivery mechanisms and also review our Affordable Housing SPD within the LDF process.

Making best use of the housing stock

We must develop a wider range of actions that reverse the trend of increased empty homes in certain areas of the borough. As well as addressing the environmental impact of empty homes, at a time when demand for social rented homes cannot be satisfied there is a renewed urgency to find alternative ways of re housing families.

Our allocations policy needs to reflect the changes in the housing market and to reflect the needs and aspirations of customers so that it both meets needs and makes best use of the housing stock.

Our research has shown that there are a number of types of empty homes including unsold new build stock, flats above shops and one off individual homes in family ownership, what is less clear are the reasons why some homes remain empty and what assistance owners may need to bring

them back into use. We will develop a new Empty Homes Strategy that will develop a range of actions on empty homes, including;

- Improving our intelligence and monitoring of empty homes
- Developing a package of measures that will offer assistance to owners of empty homes to bring them back into use, including a new Empty Homes Improvement Loan and a private sector leasing scheme
- Strengthening the enforcement action against those owners who do not engage voluntarily.

2026 strategic aims and links to other strategies

In response to these challenges we have established a number of strategic aims for the year 2026, as set out in the table below. We will require a range of actions to achieve these strategic aims and they will take a considerable time to achieve.

The first set of high level actions that will contribute to these aims are set out in our Housing Strategy Action Plan 2009 -11, this sets out how we will contribute to our strategic aims and the priorities of Sustainable Communities Strategy “Vision 2026” and also the housing targets contained within Wigan’s Local Area Agreement 2008-11.

The full Housing Strategy Action Plan is contained in Appendix 1.

In support of the high level actions within this Housing Strategy, we have written a range of supporting housing sub-strategies setting out detailed policy areas and actions such as affordable housing and Older People. Throughout the period of the Housing Strategy we will regularly review our sub strategies and will refresh them or where new gaps are identified, add new strategies in order that they align with this strategy.

In addition our actions support a number of other strategies and plans within the Council and our main partners. We will work closely with our partners to maximise opportunities to contribute to other strategic objectives and initiatives through housing actions.

Theme 1 – Quantity
<p>Strategic Vision – Wigan is a place with a range of good quality, affordable housing that meets the aspirations of residents and supports sustainable growth.</p>
2026 Strategic Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New housing development is linked to regeneration and growth to support the local economy to enable residents to access services easily and live more sustainably – There are a sufficient number of homes of the right type and location to meet needs of the community – Use of existing homes is maximised, with few empty homes – New housing development is well designed and safe, it supports active lifestyles and caters for the needs of vulnerable and minority groups – A range of affordable housing is available to meet the needs of emerging households and growing families
Objectives 2009-11
<p>LAA headline outcome - Increase the overall supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of all its residents and local economy</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the LDF and housing SPD's support sustainable housing development 2. Work with housing developers and providers to deliver the types of housing needed to meet the needs of the borough 3. Work in partnership with developers, Registered Social Landlords and the Homes and Communities Agency to maximise the delivery of affordable housing 4. Support developers during the recession to minimise the impact and to prepare for recovery 5. Develop a strategy to reduce empty homes in the borough
Housing sub strategies and plans
Affordable Housing Strategy 2006 -10
Council Housing Allocations Policy
Older Persons Housing Action Plan 2008 -11
Learning Disability Housing Strategy 2009-13
Empty Homes Strategy (Draft)
Other local strategies and plans
Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policy Principles (draft)
Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
Wigan and Leigh Housing New Build Business Plan
Worklessness Strategy

Chapter 4 – Theme 2: Quality

You told us

You said you want;

- “Equality between estates – no pockets of deprivation”
- “Safer communities”
- “Opportunities to engage – employment, education and training”
- “All areas of the borough are attractive places to live”
- “Quality design.....making people proud of their surroundings”
- “Handyman/gardening schemes to keep neighbourhoods looking good”
- “Support for private landlords on right responsibilities & problem solving”
- “Expansion of grants & loans to private landlords to improve homes”

And we need to take action to;

- “Change aspirations to move out of the current deprived area by improving the existing stock and the neighbourhoods and investing in schools”
- “Addressing problems in neighbourhoods ASB etc Ownership of community, young people etc”
- “Rejuvenate current housing stock that is in a state of disrepair”
- “Support PACT process – key to neighbourhoods”
- “Increase in facelift/block schemes / renewal areas”

(Source: Actual responses to the Housing Strategy Issues Paper consultation)

Key challenges

Short term challenge – Neighbourhood issues Long term challenge – Improving the housing offer of neighbourhoods
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Improving housing standards

Traditional approaches to improving existing housing have generally concentrated on “bricks and mortar” issues such as minimising unfitness and non decent homes. Such approaches in Wigan have proved to be successful and have resulted in huge improvements to the living standards of thousands of residents. The findings of a recent independent study on regional private sector decency published in August 2008 indicate that Wigan’s figures of 21% non decency, is only bettered by 2 affluent rural districts in the NW eg Ribble Valley, Macclesfield and is well below the regional average of 38%. However, in comparison with others, Wigan has more of a problem within the private rented sector as a proportion of failures

Fig 9: HHSRS Projection

	Non Decency (% of private stock)
Bolton	34%
Bury	24%
Manchester	34%
Oldham	78%
Rochdale	30%
Salford	35%
Stockport	37%
Tameside	48%
Trafford	51%
Wigan	21%
GM	37%
Region	38%

We now have some of the highest housing standards in the country both in the public and private sectors and in future years we need to ensure that decency levels are maintained through

- Investment in both the social and private sector to maintain standards achieved
- Target additional resources to the areas of most concern, particularly in the private rented sector.

We will review our current Private Sector Housing Strategy to ensure that it tackles the most problematic areas. As a first stage we are proposing changes to our Housing Assistance Policy, introducing a new range of assistance to

- Take account of the changes in the housing market,
- Target resources at the most vulnerable occupiers and neighbourhoods
- Achieve better value for money
- Support our new private sector initiatives such as the private sector leasing scheme.

Improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty

Currently over 30% of carbon emissions in the north west are through the domestic sector, whilst adopting high environmental standards in new build properties will go some way to reducing carbon emissions, the largest potential impact can be made through improving the energy performance of the existing stock and developing alternative energy generating technologies. The government has recently published a consultation document on its “Heat and Energy Saving Strategy” setting out proposals for how its target for carbon emissions from existing buildings to be approaching zero by 2050. The strategy recognises that quick gains can be made in the next few years through improving energy efficiency advice services and ensuring that all homes have high levels of loft and cavity wall insulation, where practical, but in the longer term more innovative solutions and greater financial resources will be needed to reduce emissions further.

Currently 8% of homes in the borough have poor insulation values (SAP rating below 40), which better than the regional average, However, despite relatively good performance we are falling short of our target to reduce the number of homes with poor energy efficiency to 3% by 2010.

Research has indicated that we need to target future activity on

- Private rented sector
- Certain property types
- Certain geographical areas

- Older and vulnerable households

Participation in the Greater Manchester Energy Efficiency Advice Centre has seen an increase in take up of assistance for energy efficiency measures and we have now joined the AWARM referral scheme, which allows assessment and referral on fuel poverty issues via a number of agencies including Health Visitors, Social Workers and voluntary agencies working with vulnerable people.

We are developing a multi agency approach to tackling fuel poverty in partnership with the PCT, Age Concern, Adult Services, housing providers and other voluntary and community groups. The strategy focuses on the wider impact of fuel poverty such as tackling chronic illness, excess winter deaths, debt and low incomes/ benefit take up.

Addressing fragile neighbourhoods

The recent history of house price increases has tended to mask the existence of under-performing housing markets. Recent evidence has shown a continued divergence between different areas of the borough in terms of popularity and house prices.

We have also found that action to improve the physical standards of properties alone, does not tend to change peoples perception of neighbourhoods or to create sustainable communities. Our future regeneration strategies need to focus on the underlying causes of deprivation, such as poor health and financial exclusion and to encourage resident to feel able that they have an influence on the future of their community.

Wigan is developing a partnership approach to neighbourhood management and community engagement through the PACT (Partners and Communities Together) process. The process aims to identify local issues through a bottom up approach that will link in to the business planning processes of the council and the LSP.

The community engagement PACT process aims to

- Increase participation in community and cultural activities
- Reduce crime, ASB, drug and alcohol related harm
- Improve cleanliness and greenness
- Improved public confidence and perceptions
- Join up local services

Issues are identified at ward level on a quarterly basis, priorities are then set at a local level through the ten Township Forums and addressed through an action plan agreed with an Area Manager Group, which is a multi-disciplinary group of local managers including housing, police and education. It is hoped that in the future joint accommodation for teams will be made available locally to better facilitate partnership working.

Increasing the quality and environmental performance of new housing development

Research by CABI in 2005 found that the majority of new housing development in the north west was of poor design. Accessibility of homes will become a pressing issue as the number of older and disabled residents increases, the Regional Spatial Strategy sets the aspirations for diving up the design quality of the housing stock and to support the Lifetimes Homes Standard. We will work with Planners to produce SPD's that focus on quality and accessibility within housing developments and the wider community through

- Improved transport links for sustainability – internal links and out of borough
- Focus on walking and cycling
- Needs of disabled people in terms of design
- Road safety, noise etc

- Parking provision
- Design codes and master-plans for large scale development
- Inclusive design
- Quality of public realm, focus on mixed uses, safe and vibrant
- Listed buildings
- Conservation areas

The introduction of the Code for Sustainable Homes represents an opportunity to increase environmental performance within the housing stock, with the target of all new homes being “zero carbon” by 2016. The code assesses the environmental performance of homes over a range of design principles, such as water use, materials and ecology not just in emissions levels.

Bickershaw South, a development of 650 homes in the borough is due to be developed under the Carbon Challenge initiative run by the HCA (formerly English Partnerships) this development will offer an opportunity to develop expertise in building homes with high environmental performance and developing new environmental technologies. We will support the development of this site and encourage the sharing of good practice with other developers.

Currently, all social rented homes funded via the HCA are to be delivered to the Code Level 3. We will encourage all affordable housing providers to adopt this minimum standard, regardless of whether homes are funded via the HCA and we will encourage higher standards to be adopted where feasible.

Improving standards within the private rented sector

There remain some areas, especially in the older urban cores, where there are less housing choices available, areas where too much of the housing is sub standard and in poor environments, where it seems that poorly managed private renting has begun to grow. Sustainable, long term recovery is unlikely in these areas without targeted and sustained intervention.

The role of the private rented sector in meeting housing needs has become more important as affordability issues have increased with the resultant pressure on the housing register. Despite the size of the private rented sector in Wigan being relatively small in comparison to other areas of Greater Manchester, we have seen a rapid increase in activity in this sector, partly as a result of the recent buy to let boom and an increase in amateur landlords.

We need to make use of the potential of this sector to meet housing needs, particularly to support economic mobility within the borough, and to house those in need but with insufficient priority for housing from the housing register and thus preventing homelessness. The private rented sector is often seen as the least secure form of accommodation, we, therefore, need to prevent the loss of private rented accommodation and improve its image. However, as well as potential benefits, the private rented sector can create additional problems that need to be tackled. Investment in buy to let property has resulted in a number of areas where there are concentrations of properties bought by investors, often with a number of properties standing empty and also areas with a proliferation of inexperienced landlords with one or two properties. This can contribute in complaints regarding empty homes, poor environmental standards and anti social behaviour.

We intend to work with private landlords to improve the standard and accessibility of private rented sector in the borough through

- Offering more support to landlords to become accredited
- Developing new housing management and private sector leasing schemes
- Linking our Empty Homes Improvement Loan into the private sector leasing scheme.

2026 strategic aims and links to other strategies

In response to these challenges we have established the following strategic aims that will contribute to achieving the Vision 2026.

The full Housing Strategy Action Plan is contained in Appendix 1.

Theme 2 – Quality
Strategic Vision – All areas of the borough are attractive places to live with neighbourhoods that are safe, clean and inclusive.
2026 Strategic Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater integration between housing and wider regeneration strategies to improve neighbourhoods and address deprivation. – Neighbourhoods are safe and clean with a high standard of housing management. – Residents feel that their concerns are addressed locally through targeted activity to strengthen vulnerable areas – Homes are safe and healthy and are easily adapted to the needs of the elderly and disabled. – High standards of decency and energy efficiency are achieved and maintained across all tenures.
Objectives 2009-11
LAA headline outcome - To strengthen our weaker housing markets by increasing the choice and quality of the housing offer in these localities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Ensure high standards of design and environmental performance in new developments and regeneration schemes 7. Target action in Housing Renewal Areas linked to wider regeneration strategies 8. Continue investment in social rented stock to maintain decency standards 9. Develop a range of services and support for private sector landlords 10. Support the development of a multi agency Affordable Warmth Strategy 11. Support the development of the PACT neighbourhood management approach to tackling local issues 12. Improve decency, accessibility and safety in the home for elderly, disabled and other vulnerable residents
Housing sub strategies and plans
Private Sector Housing Strategy 2006-10
Empty Homes Strategy (draft)
HRA Business Plan
DFG Policy
Older Persons Housing Action Plan 2008 - 10
Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy
Homelessness Strategy “A Place for All” 2001-13
Other local strategies and plans
Wigan and Leigh Housing Business Plan
Wigan Housing Solutions Business Plan
Affordable Warmth Strategy (proposed)
Community Engagement Strategy “Routes to Involvement”

Chapter 5 – Theme 3: People

You told us

You said you want;

- “High quality of support services to ensure people can remain in their own homes”
- “BME Communities totally integrated as a result in better support services, a revised infrastructure resulting in more cultural awareness and increased access to ESOL classes”
- “Support & advice for people without apparent vulnerability especially in current economic downturn – a little bit of help”
- “For everyone to have the resources (skills, money, confidence) to be able to live independently and securely”
- “Better help looking for a place to live”
- “Homelessness prevention linked to school and PSHE & C classes”
- “Education of 16-18 year old on housing and financial responsibilities”
- “An allocations policy that is sensitive to promote mixed communities not inequality”

And we need to take action to;

- “Link quantity and quality to the broader needs of vulnerable people (including the very many young people who are struggling to live independently)”
- “Develop family support services in order to prevent homelessness”
- “Focus on tenancy management of young tenants with appropriate support to enable a sustainable tenancy to be achieved”
- “encourage people to find work so that they can get nice homes”
- “take on board the needs of disabled people. It is not just people in a wheelchair or people with learning disabilities but people who are blind or partially sighted; deaf and hard of hearing etc”
- “Provide more homes and hostel for homeless people”
- “Raise awareness of cultural differences to enable people to get on with each other”

(Source: Actual responses to the Housing Strategy Issues Paper consultation)

Key Challenges

Short term challenge – Homelessness/ support needs

Long term challenge – Meeting the long term needs of specific groups, especially older people

Access and Choice

Efforts made to increase the quantity and quality of our housing stock will not be realised if people still struggle to access better homes or to maintain independent living. Giving customers the information and support that they need to make choices regarding the most appropriate housing option for them is essential to address housing need most effectively. In the current climate customers need to be realistic about their housing options. As well as housing, customers should be able to easily access information on financial support available, employment opportunities, availability of local schools etc in order that they are fully informed before making a decision to move or resolve problems in their current home.

In order to support this agenda we have begun to undertake a full review of our allocations scheme in order to:

- Support choice and mobility, particularly through the sub regional choice based lettings scheme, Pinpoint
- Better meet housing need
- Maximise the use of the housing stock, eg. tackling overcrowding and under-occupation
- Reviewing move on protocols and needs assessments for supported housing schemes
- Supporting the development of our housing options approach

Specialist housing and support

Since the introduction of the Supporting People programme in 2003 there has been increasing needs for housing related support services and pressures on funding of services due to a curtailed budget. The Supporting People service was inspected by the Audit Commission in 2007 and since then there has been a recognition of the need to transform housing related support in the borough, resulting in an increase in funding in the period 2008 -11. The three main issues to be addresses are:

- Under developed short term services, addressing the needs socially excluded groups including, homeless people, people with drugs / alcohol / mental health issues, young people and offenders.
- Over commitment in long term services which are jointly funded, providing support combined with care. The Wigan Supporting People program currently dedicates 43% of the annual spend in this area.
- An outdated model of older people services, based on vertical model of delivery that depends on location based staff, often one person, delivering services across a range of issues.

The new Supporting People Commissioning Framework seeks a move away from long term support services to greater investment in short term services, focusing on excluded groups, such as homeless people and those with complex needs. A transformation of services for older people is proposed from a “vertical” service tied to tenancies within the social sector to a “horizontal” service that is able to address low level needs across all tenures. Services will be needs led, offer choice and flexibility and achieve greater outcomes in terms of promoting independence.

The funding for services is to increase in the period 2008 -11 and the following levels are proposed.

Fig 10: Supporting people funding levels

Spend levels	2003/4		2007/8		2010/11	
	£m	%	£	%	£	%
Service areas						
Long term services	£3.44m	46%	£3.17m	43%	£2.63m	27.50%
Short term services	£2.62m	35%	£2.87m	39%	£4.78m	50%
Older People's services	£1.42m	19%	£1.62m	22%	£2.15m	22.50%
Total	£7.48m	100%	£7.36m	104%	£9.55m	100%

We need to ensure that the actions within the Housing Strategy support the

Supporting People Commissioning Framework through;

- Ensuring that capital investment in accommodation supports the strategic commissioning of Supporting People services
- Working with housing providers to transform their services in line with the commissioning strategy.

- Working in partnership with colleagues in health and social care to meet a range of needs presented by vulnerable groups, such as those with disabilities, with a focus on individualisation and choice.
- Meeting the expectations of the next generation of older people by offering more choice of quality accommodation with flexible support services. Also increasing the advice and preventative services available for older people.

Prevention of homelessness

Wigan has high incidence of homelessness and despite limited funding has made good progress in reducing the numbers of presentations, these are now at a ten year low, however, the pressure on services is likely to increase in the current economic climate.

Our recent Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 recognises that homelessness is often a symptom of other problems, such as unemployment, ill health, substance dependency or multiple debt, rather than a problem in itself. Those experiencing homelessness often have developed a range of issues over a long period of time and that as well as housing these complex issues need to be addressed to improve people's ability to cope with everyday living and to avoid further crises.

Its vision is;

“to prevent homelessness by tackling the main causes within the borough and to minimise the impact of its effects”

More specifically it seeks to

- Minimise the numbers of people that become homeless and those that sleep rough
- Reduce the need for temporary accommodation
- Ensure that where the use of temporary accommodation is unavoidable, the accommodation and support is of good quality and suitable for people's needs
- Ensure that when people are ready to move on, they are able to do so in a timely manner and with support to prevent them becoming homeless again

Early intervention is key to preventing homelessness before crisis point is reached, which can only be achieved through a partnership approach.

Addressing worklessness in deprived communities and vulnerable groups

The economic downturn has been seen to impact in the borough in a number of ways, including its effect on local businesses and in increased benefit claimants. The borough has seen an annual increase in the Job Seekers Allowance claimants of 70% between January 08 and January 09, this is substantially higher than the regional average. There are now 12.5 job seekers for every vacancy advertised in the Job Centre Plus, compared to 4 a year ago.

Wigan has produced a Worklessness Strategy to address the issues of lack of vacancies and poor skills base and to promote the start up of new businesses. The strategy is currently being reviewed to also focus on safeguarding jobs and offering support to local businesses during the recession.

The strategy is supported by funding over 3 years from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund to begin to tackle some of the issues around intergenerational worklessness, multiple deprivation and low aspirations seen in some areas of the borough. Initiatives are planned at a local level and through a multi-agency approach to identify and support the workless to train and access employment. We will develop links with this strategy through;

- The work of housing and support providers are already working in these communities and with target groups such as BME groups, ex offenders and young people
- Developing schemes that link housing, training and employment opportunities
- Developing advice services that offer joined up advice on housing, finance and employment.

2026 strategic aims and links to other strategies

In response to these challenges we have established the following strategic aims that will contribute to achieving the Vision 2026.

The full Housing Strategy Action Plan is contained in Appendix 1.

Theme 3 – People
Strategic Vision – People are healthy and active and receive the support they need.
2026 Strategic Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Residents are able to make better choices about where they live and work through a holistic approach to advice and information services that help tackle deprivation. – People of all ages, cultures and lifestyles feel part of the community and vulnerable people and minority groups are supported – A choice of specialist housing and support is available to meet the needs of the elderly, disabled and other vulnerable people in order that they can live more independently. – Agencies work together to provide advice and support to tackle the underlying causes of homelessness.
Objectives 2009-11
LAA headline outcome - To better meet the needs of vulnerable and homeless people by investing in better prevention and support services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Support the implementation of the Supporting People Commissioning Framework and ensure that capital investment supports its priorities 14. Develop new housing and support models for vulnerable groups 15. Improve housing options advice and information 16. Support the development of a holistic advice network for the borough 17. Target intervention with those most at risk of homelessness 18. Work to minimise the impact of the recession, particularly on repossessions and homelessness
Housing sub strategies and plans
Homelessness Strategy “A Place for All” 2008-13
Learning Disability Housing Strategy 2009 -14
Older Persons Housing Study 2005 and Action Plan 2008-10
Other strategies and plans
Supporting People Strategy 2005-10
Supporting People Commissioning framework 2008 -11
WARM “Wigan Welcomes Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrants” 2009
Worklessness Strategy “What Makes Wigan Work” 2008
SHAPE, Getting Wigan Borough Active Strategy 2006 -12
Adult Services commissioning plan (Wigan Council / PCT)
Wigan Advice Strategy (proposed)
Children’s plan

Chapter 6 –Measuring the Impact

It is essential that in assessing the impact of our interventions we don't just count the amount of housing built or the number of homeless cases, but demonstrate the contribution made over a wide range of areas that make a real difference to the places where people live and the lives they lead.

The Housing Strategy provides a housing linkage to the wider aim of realising the “Vision 2026” in supporting economic growth and tackling deprivation and at the same time our action plan sets out housing's contribution to the shorter term Local Area Agreement 2008-11. Therefore, we provide both a longer term vision of housing's contribution to the borough wide Sustainable Communities Strategy and yet set out realistic steps in the next few years aimed at achieving this. The Housing Strategy and the actions within the Action Plan are supported by a range of more detailed sub strategies and policy documents.

To support this corporate approach a new performance framework has been introduced for the Council and our key partners. The focus of the framework is the “place making” role of local authorities as demonstrated in “Vision 2026”. The framework gives us more freedom to agree key targets that reflect local priorities through the Local Area Agreement.

Local and sub - regional monitoring structure

The Wigan Borough Partnership leads on the delivery of the wider Sustainable Communities Strategy and Local Area Agreement 2008-11. It is led by the Partnership Board who are leaders drawn from a range of local organisations. It is supported by

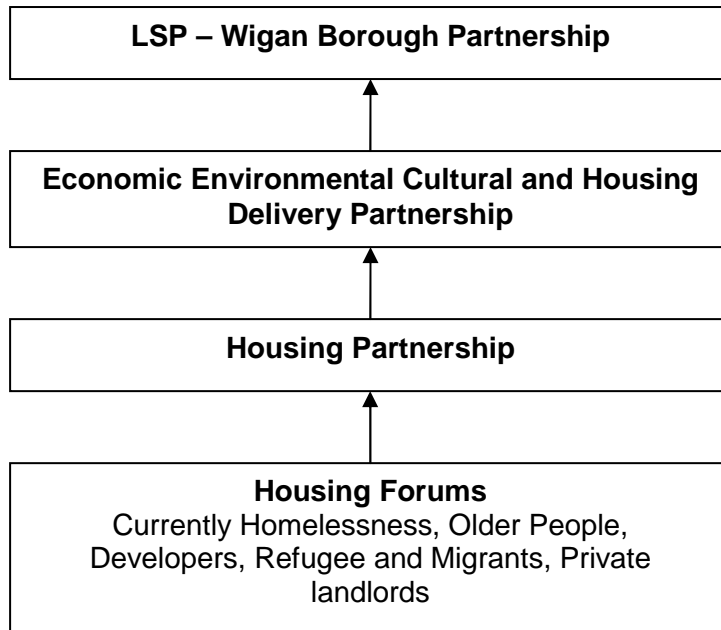
- Four Delivery Partnerships
- Township Forums
- Neighbourhood PACTs
- Community Networks

Our Housing Partnership has been in existence for a decade and has monitored progress against our previous Housing Strategy and one of the previous goals of the old Community Plan. As part of the need to integrate strategies and work more effectively together this Partnership now contributes to the wider Economic, Environment ,Cultural and Housing Delivery Partnership concentrating on delivering the 2026 priority of Ambitious Communities. Thus housing will work more closely with economic, transport and environmental services as part of a wider approach to creating sustainable communities.

The Economic, Environment, Culture and Housing Partnership will have a role in monitoring and updating this strategy and action plan and also ensuring that it is integrated with other strategies eg. worklessness, transport and the LDF. It will also have a more ambitious role in terms of commissioning services to support its aims.

We will of course continue to have links with other Delivery Partnerships in delivering other priorities most notably the Living Healthier and Longer block. The relationship between the various Partnerships set out below, which also includes the forums which develop and monitor the more operational housing sub strategies.

Figure 11: Wigan Partnership Structure



As the role of the sub-region develops, it will play an increasing role in setting priorities for Greater Manchester, it is expected that it will include high level monitoring of the contributions made at a local level to the priorities.

Performance Indicators

We have selected a range of indicators to measure our performance against the actions set in the Housing Strategy Action Plan. These indicators will also measure our performance within the National Indicators (Nix's) and local indicators set in the Local Area Agreement 2008-11 and against the Regional Strategic Housing Indicators (SHI's) set in the North West Regional Housing Strategy 2009. We will review these indicators at the end of the current LAA period to ensure that our indicators align with the wider corporate aims and national priorities.

Fig 12: Housing Strategy Performance Indicators

Quantity - High Level Performance Indicator
Number of net homes provided (NI154) (SHI1)
Supporting Indicators
Number of affordable homes delivered (NI155) (SHI2)
Number of additional affordable lettings (local)
% of private sector homes empty for more than 6 months (SHI6)
Number of empty homes returned to use or demolished (LAA local indicator)
% of homes built on previously developed land (RSS target)
Quality – High Level Performance Indicator
Percentage non decent Council homes (NI158) (SHI3)
Supporting Indicators
LA tenant satisfaction with LL services (NI160)
Number of non decent homes belonging to vulnerable owner occupiers made decent (LAA)
% private sector stock having Cat 1 hazard under HHSSRS (SHI4)
Av SAP rating of private sector housing (SHI5)
% households on income related benefits in fuel poverty (NI187)
People – High Level Performance Indicators
Number of households living in temporary accommodation (NI156) (SHI8)
Supporting Indicators
Percentage of households whose homelessness is prevented or relieved through positive action (local)
Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living (NI141)
Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living (NI142)
Net additional housing support services provided (SHI7)
% of social tenants of working age in work, education or training (SHI9)

We will also measure performance through achieving significant milestones and through evidence of achievement highlighted through periodic research such as stock condition surveys and Strategic Housing Market Assessments. The impact of our actions in addressing inequality, health and sustainability will also be assessed.

As well as the indicators measuring our outcomes directly, we will contribute to a wide range of priorities within the LAA 2008-11 and Sustainable Communities Strategy Vision 2026.

Fig 13: Other LAA indicators that we can contribute to that we will not measure directly

LAA 2008-11 indicator	How housing actions contribute
Vision 2026 Theme - Ambitious Communities	
NI167 – congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning NI175 - % people who have access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling NI198 – children travelling to school, usual mode of transport	By planning new housing development in sustainable locations, ensuring accessible design of new housing developments and regeneration schemes to cater for the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. Ensuring that new developments incorporate adequate provision of local services and employment opportunities for residents
NI153 – Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods NI163 - % of working age population qualified to a least Level 2 NI164 - % of working age population qualified to at least Level 3	By housing providers working with partners to support residents into training and employment By linking supported housing schemes to training and employment. By supporting local construction firms and workforce.

NI117 - % 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment	By linking supported housing schemes with training and employment. By increasing the number of apprenticeships available with the council and housing providers By providing advice and support to young people
NI188 – Planning to adapt to climate change	By increasing energy efficiency measures in existing homes across all tenures. By encouraging house builders to adopt Code for Sustainable Homes in new build homes, in terms of energy use and generation, sustainable use of materials and water usage etc.
Vision 2026 Theme - Strong Community	
NI1 - % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well in their local area	By ensuring that vulnerable people are supported in the community. By ensuring that a variety of homes are available to meet the needs of all residents, including minority groups. By tackling the causes of homelessness By supporting the actions contained in the WARM strategy
NI4 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	By consulting and seeking customer feedback on ours and our partners actions. By responding to the concerns of local residents in service planning.
NI195 – Improved street and environmental cleanliness	By adopting high environmental standards on council estates and taking action in the private sector, particularly private rented homes.
NI32 – Reduction in repeat incidents of domestic violence to those victims who are being managed by a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference system (MARAC)	By specialist supported housing schemes are made available. By providing specialist support for victims in their own homes. By housing providers working with other partners to support victims and their families.
NI21 - Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by local council and police	By taking tenancy enforcement actions against perpetrators of crime and anti social behaviour on estates. By working with partners to tackle local nuisance and crime. By adopting “secure by design” standards in new housing development and regeneration schemes
Vision 2026 Theme - Living Healthier and Longer	
NI120 – All age, all cause mortality rate NI124 - % of people with a long term condition who are supported by people providing health and social care services to be independent and in control of their condition	By ensuring that homes are decent and safe and can be adapted easily. Developing more care and support options for vulnerable people. By ensuring that new housing development and regeneration schemes encourage a healthy and active lifestyle (see above)
NI138 - Satisfaction of people over 65 with home and neighbourhood	By providing services that enable older people to remain in their own home. By providing more choice of specialist accommodation for older people. By working with other agencies to ensure older

	people are able to access advice and information.
NI7 – Environment for a thriving third sector	By working with third sector organisations to provide advice, support and training.
Vision 2026 Theme - Realising Aspirations	
NI112 – Under 18s conception rate	By providing advice and support to young people including existing teen parents
Mandatory education and early years National Indicators	By tackling overcrowding By preventing homelessness amongst families and young people. By ensuring that homes are decent and safe. By providing support and mediation services to families and young people.

Measuring our impact via the Comprehensive Area Assessment

A new inspection process has been introduced from this year. The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) is an assessment of how well the Council and its partners deliver services that meet local needs.

The assessment is undertaken in a series of stages on an annual cycle and asks three key questions;

1. How well do local priorities express need and aspirations?

We will answer this by;

- Consulting widely during the formation of our strategies and plans
- Undertaking periodic needs assessments and studies
- Developing a robust data set, tracking key trends, both across the borough and within the sub region and region
- Regularly review the Housing Strategy and Action Plan with reference to the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the LAA and the Sub Regional Housing Strategy
- Undertaking equality, health and sustainability impact assessments of the Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

2. How well are outcomes and improvements being delivered?

We will answer this by;

- Monitoring the corporate housing priorities within the LAA
- Annual evaluation of our progress against our 2026 priorities
- Conducting customer feedback and satisfaction exercises
- Producing regular reports /newsletters setting out good practice and case studies
- Considering value for money and efficiency of services

3. What are the prospects for improvement?

We will answer this by;

- Demonstrating a track record of setting and meeting challenging targets
- Building on the wealth of skills, expertise and good practice already existing within our local partnerships.

- Contributing to the many examples of good practice frameworks
- Joint working with other Councils/Partnerships on specific projects, where appropriate
- Contributing to the development of the Greater Manchester Sub Regional Strategies and the various Regeneration Commissions
- Co-operating and contributing to the new capital allocations monitoring framework developed by the Regional Housing Board
- Engaging with the various regeneration agencies such as the new Homes and Communities Agency
- Reviewing the structure of the Housing Partnership and sub Groups in order to develop better relationships within the different partnerships with the LSP to ensure maximum impact

Conclusion

This strategy clearly sets out our long term aims in achieving our Housing Vision 2026 and what our first steps will be in the period up to 2011. We will continue to monitor the delivery of the actions set out in the action plan (appendix 1) to ensure that we are able to respond to changing needs and that we maximise our contribution to the creation of sustainable communities across the borough.

Appendix 1: Housing Strategy Final Draft Action Plan 2009-11

Strategic Objectives

Theme 1 – Quantity

1. Ensure that the LDF and housing SPDs support sustainable housing development
2. Work with housing developers and providers to deliver the types of housing needed to meet the needs of the borough
3. Work in partnership with developers, Registered Social Landlords and the Homes and Communities Agency to maximise the delivery of affordable housing
4. Support developers during the recession to minimise the impact and to prepare for recovery
5. Develop a strategy to reduce empty homes in the borough

Theme 2 – Quality

6. Ensure high standards of design and environmental performance in new developments and regeneration schemes
7. Target action in Housing Renewal Areas linked to wider regeneration strategies
8. Continue investment in social rented stock to maintain decency standards
9. Develop a range of services and support for private sector landlords
10. Support the development of a multi agency Affordable Warmth Strategy
11. Support the development of the PACT neighbourhood management approach to tackling local issues
12. Improve decency, accessibility and safety in the home for elderly, disabled and other vulnerable residents

Theme 3 – People

13. Support the implementation of the Supporting People Commissioning Framework and ensure that capital investment supports its priorities
14. Develop new housing and support models for vulnerable groups
15. Improve housing options advice and information
16. Support the development of a holistic advice network for the borough
17. Target intervention with those most at risk of homelessness
18. Work to minimise the impact of the recession, particularly on repossessions and homelessness

Theme 1- Quantity				
Increase the overall supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of residents and the local economy				
High Level Performance Indicator	Baseline Performance (2006/07)	2008/09 outturn	2009/10 target	2010/11 target
Number of net homes provided (NI154) (SHI1)	1105	780	Being renegotiated with GONW	Being renegotiated with GONW
Supporting Indicators				
Number of affordable homes delivered (NI155) (SHI2)	1	69	85	106
Number of additional affordable lettings (local)	197	287	400	530
% of private sector homes empty for more than 6 months (SHI6)	2.17%	Anees to supply figures		
Number of empty homes returned to use or demolished (local)	56	52? Anees to supply figures		
Percentage of homes built on previously developed land (RSS target)	N/A	87.3%	80%	80%
Outcomes by 2011				
To meet the RSS target for housing delivery in the borough				
To continue to meet target for 80% of new homes to be built on previously developed land				
To deliver an additional 530 additional affordable homes (cumulative by 2010/11)				
To have brought x number of empty homes back into use				
All affordable homes are built to a minimum standard of Code For Sustainable Homes Level 3 regardless of how they are provided/ funded				
Maintain a sufficient housing land supply to meet the borough's RSS residual housing targets within the plan period				

Strategic Objectives	Action	Lead/ Partners	Milestones		Funding
			2009/10	2010/11	
1,6,7,12	Develop the LDF Core Strategy and Housing SPDs	Planning Policy/ Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation on Core Strategy preferred options and core principles (June 09) 2. Draft SHLAA consultation (June 09) 3. SPD reviews (timetable ?) 4. Develop methodology for viability studies for affordable housing and other planning requirements (June 09) 5. Updated SHLAA (Sept 09) 6. Publication of final SHLAA (Dec 09) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submission of LDF (2010) 2. Adoption of LDF (2011) 	Planning Policy Budget/ Housing Strategy Budget
2, 3, 4, 6,7,12,13	Review the Affordable Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy/ Planning Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence collated and consultation carried out (Nov '09) 2. Draft produced (Jan 10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated strategy produced and targets revised (Apr 10) 	Housing Strategy Budget
2,3,6,7,12, 13, 14	Deliver investment in affordable homes via the HCA's NAHP 2008-11	Housing Strategy/ HCA/ providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion Ph1 Durham St 2. Ensure completion of pipeline schemes 3. Look to develop bids tackling empty homes in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion Ph2 Durham St 	Homes and Communities Agency Grant plus other finance.

			priority areas		
2,3,6,7,8,12 13,14	Delivery of Wigan and Leigh Housing New Build Business Plan	WALH/ Housing Strategy	1. Bid approval and PP obtained for Kay Close, Scholes 2. Start on site at Kay Close 3. Further development programme in place	1. Completion of Kay Close development 2. Support further bids where business case demonstrated	Homes and Communities grant funding, Council capital contribution plus other finance
1,2,3,4,6,7,12	Maximise affordable housing provision via planning obligations, particularly during the housing downturn.	Housing Strategy/ Planning Policy/ Development Control/ developers	1. Increased number of approved applications with affordable housing obligations		S106 contributions
1,2,3,4,6,7,12,14	Identify opportunities to provide a range of housing to meet needs within strategic development sites.	Planning Policy/ Housing Strategy/ ERO/ HCA	1. Agreement on masterplans for strategic sites, including affordable housing and specialist housing requirements		HCA grant funding, Council capital/ land contributions plus other finance
1,2,3,4,6,7,12,14	Explore opportunities for the Council to deliver new housing development using its own assets, including the development of a Local Delivery vehicle	Housing Strategy/ ERO/ Other Council departments/ WALH.	1. Submit a bid under the HCA LA bidding round.	2. Explore opportunities to deliver on strategic sites	HCA grant funding, Council capital/ land contributions plus other finance
2,3,4,5,6,7,12,14	Work up priority bids for investment in 2011 NAHP bidding round in liaison with HCA and providers	Housing Strategy/ HCA/ providers	1. Identify priority sites including strategic sites for investment	1. Pre bid discussions held with HCA 2. Identify partners 3. Bids submitted (autumn 10?)	HCA grant funding, Council capital/ land contributions plus other finance
2,3,4,5,7,14	Develop robust and current evidence base	Housing Strategy	1. Key indicator set agreed (June 09)	1 Quarterly market update and annual report	Housing Strategy Budget

	in relation to the local housing market		2. Quarterly market update reports produced	produced.	
3,5,7,9,10,11,12,18	Develop an Empty Homes Strategy (Action Plan)	Housing Strategy	1. Research undertaken 2. Strategy produced 3. Solutions for issues 4. Action identified		Housing Strategy Budget Private Sector Housing Capital Allocation

Theme 2 – Quality				
Strengthen our weaker housing markets by increasing the choice and quality of the housing offer in these localities				
High Level Performance Indicator	Baseline Performance (2006/07)	2008/09 outturn	2009/10 target	2010/11 target
Percentage non decent Council homes (NI158) (SHI3)	15.9%	5%	3%	2%
Supporting Indicators				
LA tenant satisfaction with LL services (NI160)	83.5%	87%	87%	87%
Number of non decent homes belonging to vulnerable owner occupiers made decent (LAA)	101	80 Anees to supply		
% private sector stock having Cat 1 hazard under HHSSRS (SHI4)		Anees to supply		
Average SAP rating of private sector housing (SHI5)	56	Anees to supply		
% households on income related benefits in fuel poverty (NI187)	N/A	5.11%	5.05%	5.00%
Outcomes by 2011				
To have increased the number of accredited landlords in the borough to X				
To have 150 private rented properties managed or leased through Wigan Housing Solutions by 2011				
To have improved x number of homes in housing renewal areas				
To have carried out adaptations to x number of homes occupied by elderly and disabled residents?				
A multi agency Affordable Warmth Strategy is in place				

Strategic Objectives	Action	Lead/ Partners	Actions/ milestones		Funding
			2009/10	2010/11	
3, 4,5,6?, 7,9,11,12, 17,18	Revise the Private Sector Housing Strategy to reflect new priorities	Housing Strategy/	1. Introduce new Private Sector Housing Assistance policy. 2. Review Housing Renewal activities 3. Prioritise enforcement works	1. Undertake a full Stock Condition Survey 2. Develop a new Private Sector Housing Strategy	Private Sector Housing Budget/ Capital allocation
8,12	Continued investment in WALH stock to maintain current decency levels	Housing Strategy/ WALH	1. Complete the ALMO decency investment programme		HRA resources and Major Repairs Allowance
2,4,5,7,9, 11,12,18	Development of Wigan Housing Solutions, offering management and leasing services to private landlords	Housing Strategy/ CAB/ Wigan Housing Solutions	1. WHS set up (May 09) 2. Regular Monitoring and support	1. Evaluation of project contained in SLA (May 10) 2. WHS to be self financing by April 2011	Homelessness Directorate Monies, Housing Strategy Budget, Spark Challenge funding.
4,7,9,11,1 2 18	Re-launch of landlords accreditation scheme	Housing Strategy	Scheme up and running with future benefits "bolted on"		Housing Strategy Budget
4,7,9,11,1 2 18	Develop LL Forum with Wigan landlords to offer support and networking opportunities private landlords	Housing Strategy	LL Forum meet bi-annually	LL Forum meet bi-annually	Housing Strategy Budget

8,11,12,15,16,17,18	Ensure that Wigan and Leigh Housing deliver high quality services	Housing Strategy/ WALH	1. Quarterly performance data and annual meetings 2. Timely Board and Cabinet reports submitted Various	1. Quarterly performance data and annual meetings 2. Timely Board and Cabinet reports submitted Various	Housing Strategy Budget
6,10,12	Develop fuel poverty initiatives		1. Support the development of the AWARM scheme	1. Evaluate impact of initiatives in light of Stock Condition Survey 2. Identify gaps in service provision	?
2,3,5,7,9,11,12, 15	Further develop links between housing initiatives and the PACT process	Housing Strategy/ PACT team/ Providers	1. Provision of funding for neighbourhood initiatives such as alley gating. 2. Contribute to cross cutting teams identifying hot spots of activity.		Housing Capital Allocation/ WALH resources/ other resources

Theme 3 - People

To better meet the needs of vulnerable and homeless people by investing in better prevention and support services

High Level Performance Indicator	Baseline Performance (2006/07)	2008/09 outturn	2009/10 target	2010/11 target
Number of households living in temporary accommodation (NI156) (SHI8)	65	59	30	19
Supporting Indicators				
Percentage of households whose homelessness is prevented or relieved through positive action (local)	N/A	43.8%	45%	50%
Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living (NI141)	81.8%	84.1%	79.0%	79.0%
Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living (NI142)	98.6%	98.2%	98.7%	98.0%
Net additional housing support services provided (SHI7)	N/A	202 units	700	495
% of social tenants of working age in work, education or training (SHI9)	N/A	STATUS survey Sue Brocklebank to supply		

Outcomes by 2011

To end the use of B&B accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds and, for all other groups, in all but exceptional circumstances, and even then for no longer than 6 weeks (by 31st December 2010)

To meet the Government/ LAA target on use of temporary accommodation (by 31st December 2010)

Transformation of housing and support services for older people has been completed

A borough wide advice strategy has been developed that adopts a holistic approach to advice

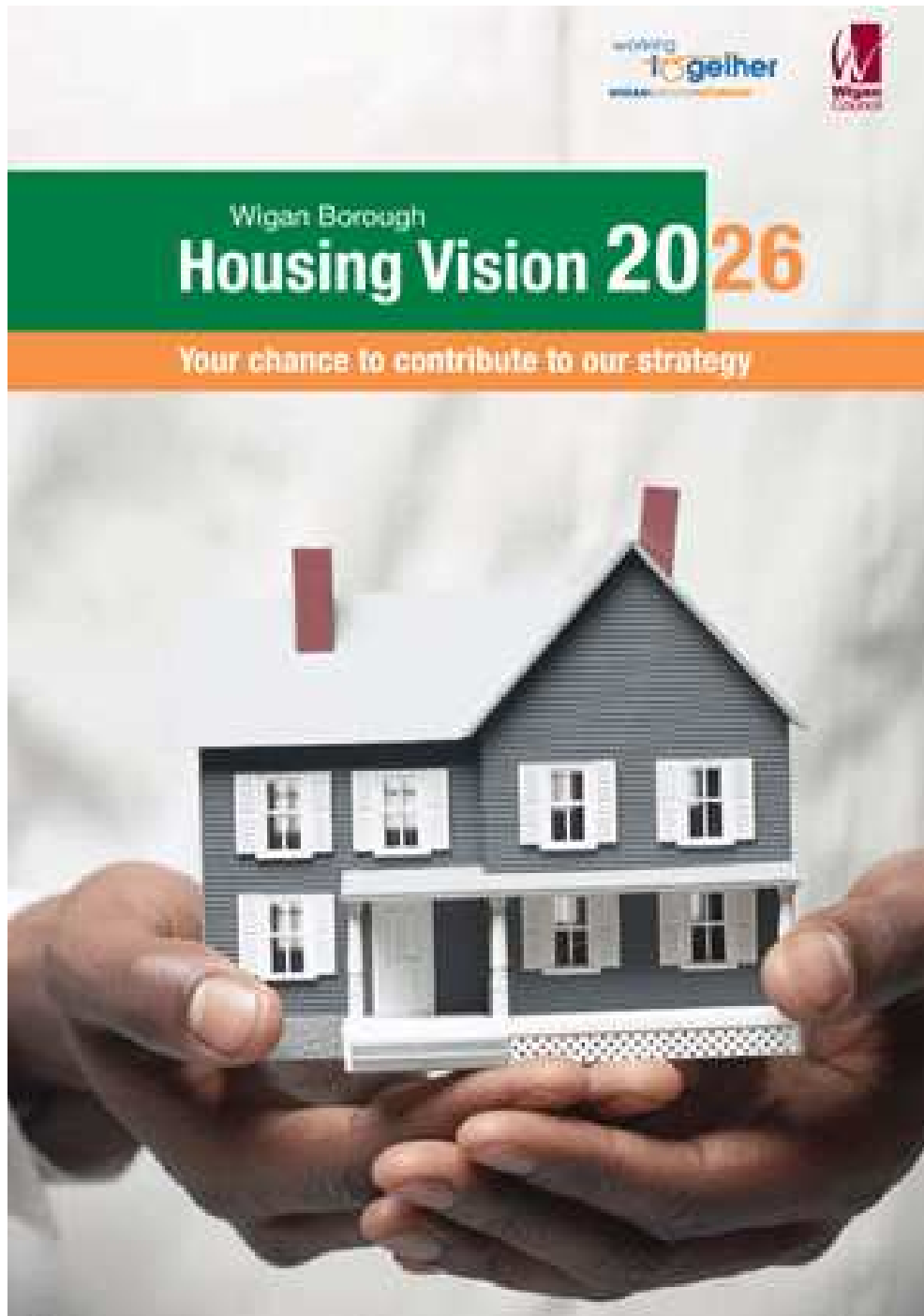
Strategic Objectives	Action	Lead/ Partners	Action/ Milestones		Funding
			2009/10	2010/11	
13,15	Develop allocations policies that offer choice and promote better use of existing accommodation	Housing Strategy/ providers/ Supporting People	1. Develop a strategy to tackle overcrowding 2. Participate in Regional Choice Based Lettings pilot, Pinpoint 3. Complete review of the Council's allocations scheme 4. Implement temporary accommodation reduction strategy	1. Implement overcrowding strategy	Housing Strategy Budget
9,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18	Review all published information on access to general needs and specialist accommodation in all tenures	Housing Strategy/ providers	1. Obtain information 2. Review and carry out recommendations Consistent information available		Housing Strategy Budget
9,11,13,14,15,16,17,18	Develop comprehensive housing options information on the Housing Strategy web pages	Housing Strategy	1. New pages are ready 2. Populate with information 3. Launch new site 4. Keep up to date		Housing Strategy Budget
2,3,13,14,15	Develop opportunities for new provision of specialist accommodation for older people	Housing Strategy/ Supporting People/ Adult Services providers/ developers	1. Complete S106 for Belong Atherton (May 09) 2. Development under construction	1. Development completed (Sept 10) 2. Develop bid for NAHP 11 bidding round	CLS own finance including S106 contributions
13,14,15	Develop new models of support for older people	Supporting People / Housing Strategy/	1. Successful expansion of community alarms (Sept	1. Review of OP pilots with a view to mainstreaming	Supporting People Funding

	including the new model for sheltered housing services.	Adult Services/ providers	09) 2. New model of provision for sheltered accommodation finalised (Sept 09)	Community alarms and housing related support available across all tenures (Apr '10) 2. SP Contract specification and new Sheltered contracts ready to be in place (April 10)	
2,3,13,14,15	Implement recommendations from AGMA Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment	Housing Strategy/ Planning Policy	1. Potential site viability assessments undertaken 2. New sites identified		Housing Strategy budget Grant funding to bring new sites online.
2,9,11,13,14,15,16,17,18	Launch WARM Strategy and Implement Action Plan	Housing Strategy/ other Council departments/ other agencies	Strategy is launched Action points implemented Contained in action plan	Contained in action plan	General Fund Working neighbourhoods Fund
13,14,15,16,17,18	Tackle the causes of homelessness and continue to promote a pro-active approach to prevention.	Housing Strategy/ Supporting People/ providers/ other agencies	1. Embed in joint protocols and provide staff training across relevant agencies	1. Develop/ expand services that prevent homelessness, targeting at risk areas. 2. support the development of a borough wide advice strategy.	Homelessness Directorate, B&B budget, PSL budget, Supporting People, miscellaneous income generated / funding bids
13,14,17,18	Improve the range of support available to those who are at risk of homelessness and make	Supporting People/ Housing Strategy/ providers	1. Identify a site for the Recycling Lives emergency accommodation / training/ worklessness project	1. Secure funding for Recycling Lives and commence development 2. Floating support for	

	best use of existing provision		2. develop supported lodgings for young people 3. Consider opportunities for re-locating accommodation based services to improve efficiency/ effectiveness.	substance misuse and rough sleepers 3. implement "move on plans protocol" across all supported housing.	
6, 12,15,17	Improve adaptations services and achieve better value for money	Private Sector Housing /Adult Services	Develop new procurement practices for adaptations		?
2,3,11,14,15,16,17,18	Consider options to link accommodation and support for offenders with the Worklessness and Homelessness agendas	Housing Strategy/ ERO/ providers	1. Research into possible links 2. Development of projects		Homelessness Directorate Funding Working Neighbourhoods Fund

Housing Issues Paper

Consultation Feedback



Housing Strategy Team
April 2009

Introduction

What is a Housing Strategy?

A housing strategy is a document that sets out the plans for housing in the borough based on the needs of its residents and an understanding of local housing markets. It should take account of current national, regional and local housing policy and the views of different housing service users and providers, and other stakeholders whose activities impact upon housing in some way.

It deals with both private and public sector housing, covering the plans for maintaining the housing stock and the provision of housing services to residents into the future. It also links with the Council's other key strategies in particular the Sustainable Community Strategy and its Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

Why Wigan Needs a New Housing Strategy

Wigan's current Housing Strategy 2002 - 2007 was awarded "fit for purpose" status by the Government Office North West in December 2003. It set out a series of improvements to make Wigan a better place to live. Since 2005, however, the housing challenges facing Wigan have changed whilst the national and regional housing agendas have also moved on. It is essential, therefore, that a new strategy is developed to meet the needs of Wigan residents now and into the future.

Developing the new strategy began with the Council commissioning a Housing Needs Assessment in 2008. The findings of this study will feed into the new strategy to ensure that it is underpinned by a robust evidence base detailing the housing aspirations and requirements of Wigan's residents.

Consultation with Residents and Stakeholders

To ensure the new Strategy identifies the right priorities for improving housing within the Borough, we commenced consultation in February 2009 with residents and different housing stakeholders on identifying the housing issues Wigan faces. As housing affects everyone in Wigan we therefore gave as many opportunities as possible for residents and stakeholders to input their views.

A full list of all the organisations consulted with is detailed at Appendix 1

Consultation

Five primary methods of consultation were used, the details of which are set out below. The consultation exercise was the largest ever undertaken by the Housing Strategy Team. Consultation commenced with the Wigan Borough Housing Partnership on February 3rd 2009 which was attended by over 50 key housing stakeholders.

Questionnaire

A Housing Issues paper (summary document) with attached questionnaires was prepared, made available and promoted online, and distributed at numerous locations throughout the Borough.

A full list of the locations that the Housing Issues Paper was made available at is detailed at Appendix 2

Groups

A broad range of organisations and interested groups were visited and asked to consider the Housing Issues paper to give their opinions on the housing challenges facing Wigan and how these should be tackled.

Groups that didn't meet during the consultation time period or couldn't be visited were sent the Housing Issues Paper and asked to respond accordingly

A full list of the groups that were visited, or sent the Housing Issues paper is detailed in Appendix 1

Key Stakeholder Consultation

There are numerous key housing stakeholders operating in the Wigan Borough. These were formally written to and asked to comment on the Housing Issues paper (full document).

A full list of the key stakeholders is detailed at Appendix 3

The Wigan Borough Housing Partnership

The full meeting of the Wigan Borough Housing Partnership on the 3rd February 2009 signalled the launch of the consultation period. The Housing Issues paper was the only agenda item and 2 interactive workshops were held throughout the day to gain the views of the members of the Housing Partnership.

A full list of the attendees at the Housing Partnership event is detailed at Appendix 4

Partnerships & Communities Together (PACT)

Residents in 10 wards were consulted with as part of the cyclical PACT process. This involved door-step interviews, electronic signposting as well as telephone surveys.

A full list of the 10 wards involved in the PACT process during February/March are detailed at Appendix 5

Results of the Consultation

The Housing Issues Paper identified 3 themes and all respondents overwhelmingly agreed with these themes:

Quantity

To increase the overall supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of all our residents and local economy.

Quality

To strengthen our weaker housing markets by increasing the choice and popularity of the housing on offer in these locations.

People

To better meet the needs of vulnerable and homeless people by investing in better prevention and support services.

The sections that follow correspond to these 3 theme areas and stress the key issues within each, followed by general feedback from the questionnaire and the group and Housing Partnership meetings, plus some suggestions for taking the issues forward

Quantity

Despite the recent downturn in the housing market, housing shortage remains a long term issue driven by forecast increases in population and household formation and through changes in demand and aspirations for different types of property.

Feedback from the consultation process indicated that the lack of affordable housing is still a major issue. Specific issues related to this theme are:

Empty Homes

There is an increase in empty homes in the private sector across the Borough. This needs to be addressed to ensure they are brought back into use.

Under-occupation

There is a perceived view that many houses are under-occupied thus preventing them from being available. Suggestions centre around incentives for people to move to more appropriately sized properties.

Infra-structure of new developments

Respondents state that any new developments of affordable housing should have the appropriate infra-structure in place prior to their development. There is also a strong emphasis on parks and green spaces being part of new developments.

Partnerships

Respondents feel that many of the immediate issues facing the housing market can only be resolved locally by a partnership approach between the Council, local RSLs and private developers.

Quality

Concerns over shortage and affordability have meant that often producing new housing has been at the forefront of housing policy. However, new development only contributes less than an additional 1% of the housing stock each year. Policies that support the best use of existing stock are also essential.

Feedback from the consultation process recognised the need to improve existing neighbourhoods and mentioned the following themes:

Private Rented Sector

Support for private landlords to ensure they offer a quality housing management service. The need for a local accreditation service and local landlord forum was identified. The need to make best use of the properties available in the private rented sector was also identified.

Neighbourhoods

To ensure neighbourhoods remain attractive to existing and potential residents the issues around crime and grime need continued focus and attention.

Community

Making best use of existing community facilities and instilling a sense of belonging/pride in the neighbourhood would help keep neighbourhoods looking and feeling attractive places to live.

Regeneration

Existing regeneration schemes are recognised as being very effective. Consideration should be given to attempting to secure finances to increase this work in areas where there are fragile housing markets.

People

Our new strategy will need to be economically focused if it is to bring about real change in our housing markets over an extended period. However, if it does not also address the needs and aspirations of local residents, particularly vulnerable groups, this would be in vain.

This will contribute to the appropriate housing of vulnerable people and reducing homelessness.

Feedback from the consultation process naturally revolved around specific groups, however the following themes emerged.

Advice

Advice shouldn't be categorised as vulnerable people often require advice on a whole host of issues – advice should be holistic. Advice should be widely available and accessible.

Prevention

More concentration should be given to prevention and intervention measures to prevent homelessness and major issues arising. A partnership approach is required.

Accessibility

Ensuring vulnerable groups can compete for affordable housing with the rest of the population on a level playing field.

Next Steps

The Housing Strategy Team will use the information and feedback provided as part of this consultation exercise, along with the information it already holds to write a new Housing Strategy for the Wigan Borough.

The Strategy will be launched in the summer of 2009.

The Housing Strategy Team would like to thank the many people that gave their time and effort to attend meetings, focus groups as well as complete and submit the questionnaire.

Your views are very welcome and have influenced the shape of Housing and Housing support services in the Wigan Borough for the next few years.

Appendix 1

Groups and Organisation consulted with.

Group/Organisation	Date
Housing Partnership – full meeting	3/2/09
Housing Partnership – via email for members who could not attend the full meeting	4/2/09
Wigan Borough Homelessness Forum	9/2/09
Wigan Borough Refugees & Migrants Forum	4/2/09
Township Forums – via the Township Managers	Various
Partnerships & Communities Together (PACT) process – 10 wards across the Borough	Various
RSL Partnership Group	9/2/09
Mid Mersey Housing Market Group	9/2/09
Young Persons Accommodation Group	3/3/09
Wigan Borough Partnership Convention	6/2/09
Older Persons Housing Working Group	16/2/09
4 Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Thematic Partnerships	3/2/09
29 Tenants & Residents Groups across the Borough	2/2/09
Wigan Council Staff newsletter	February 09
Wigan & Leigh Housing Staff intranet page	4/2/09
Beech Hill One Stop Shop event	10/3/09
Leigh Residents Focus Group event – group arose from the PACT process	8/4/09
Orrell & Winstanley Residents Focus Group event - group arose from the PACT process	15/4/09

Appendix 2

Locations the Housing Issues Paper and Questionnaire was made available in.

Site	Organisation
Wigan Town Hall Reception	Wigan Council
Leigh Town Hall Reception	Wigan Council
Unity House Reception	Wigan Council
Progress House Reception	Wigan Council
AS Engagement Team	Wigan Council
Community Notice Boards – poster only	Wigan Council
Civic Buildings Reception	Wigan Council
Civic Centre Reception	Wigan Council
Gateway House Reception	Wigan Council
Connexions Reception	Wigan Council
Carers Centre – Adult Services	Wigan Council
Hindley Surestart Childrens Centre	Wigan Council
Tyldesley Surestart Childrens Centre	Wigan Council
Atherton Area Housing Office	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Leigh Area Housing Office	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Platt Bridge Area Housing Office	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Wigan Area Housing Office	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Pemberton Area Housing Office	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Wigan Property Shop	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Leigh Property Shop	Wigan & Leigh Housing
All Libraries	Wigan & Leigh Leisure Trust
Leisure Centres & Swimming Pools	Wigan & Leigh Leisure Trust
Wigan Infirmary / Hospitals	NHS Acute Trust
Bryan House, Health Centres & GP Surgeries	Ashton, Leigh & Wigan Primary Care Trust
Age Concern Headquarters	Age Concern
Turner House Reception	Adactus Housing Association
Railway Road supported Housing	English Churches Housing Association
Pensioners Link, Leigh	Pensioners Link

Appendix 3

A list of all key stakeholders formally consulted with.

Organisation	Date	1st Reminder	2nd Reminder
Wigan & Leigh Housing Board of Directors	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Wigan Council – Planning	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Wigan Council – Children & Young Peoples Services	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Wigan Council – Adult Services	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Wigan Council – Environmental Services	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Wigan Council – Chief Executives	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Wigan Council – Business & Support Services	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Wigan & Leigh Leisure & Cultural Trust	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Wigan & Leigh Leisure & Cultural Trust SHAPE	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Leigh Sports Village Company	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Norfolk Property Services North West	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Homes & Communities Agency	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Government Office North West	3/2/09	13/3/09	
4 North West	3/2/09	13/3/09	
AGMA	3/2/09	13/3/09	
North West Housing Forum	3/2/09	13/3/09	
75 Elected Members	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Neil Turner MP	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Ian McCartney MP	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Andy Burnham MP	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Barbara Keeley MP	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Brian Simpson MEP	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Ashton, Leigh & Wigan Primary Care Trust	3/2/09	13/3/09	1/4/09
Tenant Participation Advisory Service	3/2/09	13/3/09	
4 Thematic Partnerships of the LSP	3/2/09	13/3/09	1/4/09
Greater Manchester Police	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Council Voluntary Services	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Citizens Advice Bureau	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Shelter	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Adactus Housing Association	3/2/09	13/3/09	1/4/09
Anchor Housing Association	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Arena Housing Association	3/2/09	13/3/09	1/4/09
English Churches Housing Association	3/2/09	13/3/09	1/4/09
Plumlife	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Contour Housing Association	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Hanover Housing Association	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Housing 21	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Great Places	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Northern Counties Housing Association	3/2/09	13/3/09	

Great Places	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Progress Care Housing Association	3/2/09	13/3/09	
Riverside Housing Association	3/2/09	13/3/09	

Appendix 4

A list of attendees at the Wigan Borough Housing Partnership on the 3rd February 2009.

Name	Organisation
Councillor Kevin Anderson	Wigan Council
Donna Barrow-Jones	Wigan Council Housing Benefits
Janice Barton	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Elsbeth Brighton	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Jonathon Chapman	Jones Homes
Eleanor Cribb	Anchor Housing Association
Ashley Crumbley	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Darren Cullen	Aqumen Planning Associates
Councillor Keith Cunliffe	Wigan Council
Samantha Davies	Sanctuary Housing
Angela Durkin	Wigan Council Housing Strategy
Roy Edwards	Roy Edwards Estate Agents
Terri Farrow	Homes & Communities Agency
Sarah Fontana	Wigan Council Private Sector Housing
Richard Foster	Wigan Council Children & Young Peoples Services
Margaret Gallagher	Riverside Housing Association
Rob Gray	Jones Homes
A P Hall	North West Landlords Association
John Hardy	Emerson Homes
Chris Harris	Citizens Advice Bureau
Sarah Houghton-Grimshaw	Arena Housing Association
Gary Jones	Happy Homes
Michelle Kemp	Wigan Council Supporting People
Perveen Khan	Ashton, Leigh & Wigan PCT
Karen Laithwaite	English Churches Housing Association
Peter Layland	Wigan Council Housing Strategy
Alo Lawler	McGhee Homes
Jason Lloyd	Umbrella Property Rentals
Janet McGinley	Riverside Housing Association
Anees Mank	Wigan Council Private Sector Housing
Jennifer Martlew	Wigan Council Housing Strategy
Steve Martlew	Wigan Council Housing Strategy
Jonathon Mitchell	West Lancashire DC Housing Strategy
Keith Molloy	Wigan Council Economic Regeneration
Abida Niaz	Greater Manchester Police
Ann O'Shea	Wigan Council Gypsy & Traveller Education
Michelle Price	Wigan Council Housing Strategy
Stuart Ratcliffe	Wigan Council Housing Strategy
Geoff Roberts	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Steve Sargent	Wigan Council Housing Strategy
Peter Schickoff-Brown	Ancer Homes
Maurenn Seward	Bury Council Housing Strategy

Eleanor Smith	English Churches Housing Association
Mike Sollars	Wigan & Leigh Housing
Lynn Stringfellow	Ancer Homes
Martin Stuart	Wigan Council Planning Policy
Andrew Thompson	Morris Homes
Peter Threlfall	Wigan Council Supporting People
Paul Weaver	Rainer Wigan
Ken Wardale	Wigan Council Environmental Services
Ian Wilson	Charles Wilson Developers

Appendix 5

- Ashton
- Atherleigh
- Bryn
- Golborne & Lowton West
- Leigh West
- Lowton East
- Orrell
- Shevington with Lower Ground
- Standish with Langtree
- Winstanley

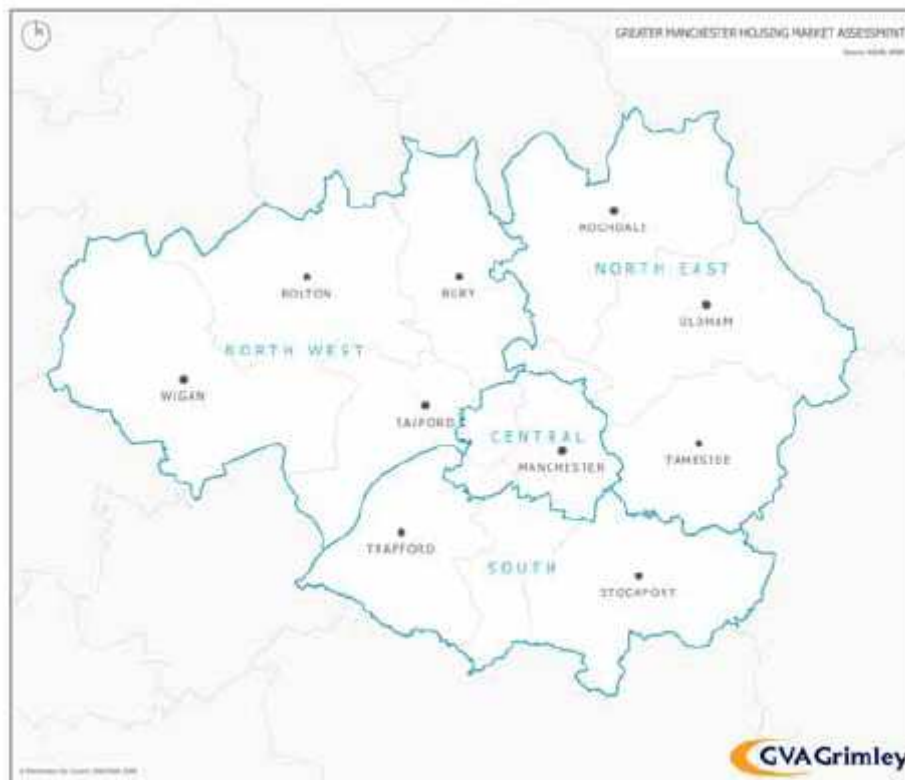
Understanding Wigan's Housing Markets

Background Information

Wigan Borough lies within Greater Manchester but borders extensive areas of Merseyside, Cheshire and Lancashire. It also lies on the north/south axis created by the M6 and the West Coast mainline. The Making Housing Count Report (2007) found that as a result Wigan related economically and functionally to a wide range of neighbours. However the links with Greater Manchester (GM) have meant that Wigan has been included within the Manchester Sub Regional area and within the recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment the borough has been linked with Bolton, Bury and parts of Salford to form the Greater Manchester North West area.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment found that GM North West had looser links with the City Region than other areas and whilst we have experienced household growth we have neither experienced the affluence of GM South nor the deprivation levels associated with GM Central.

Fig 1 – Greater Manchester Housing Market Areas



Source: NWRA, GVA Analysis.

Our Local Housing Needs Survey 2008 has shown that the borough's housing markets are relatively diverse with a market centred on Wigan in the west, one centred on Leigh and a third, more related to the rest of GM centred around Tyldesley. It also noted that there is a further degree of separation at township level.

It has been found that in overall terms the boroughs market has;

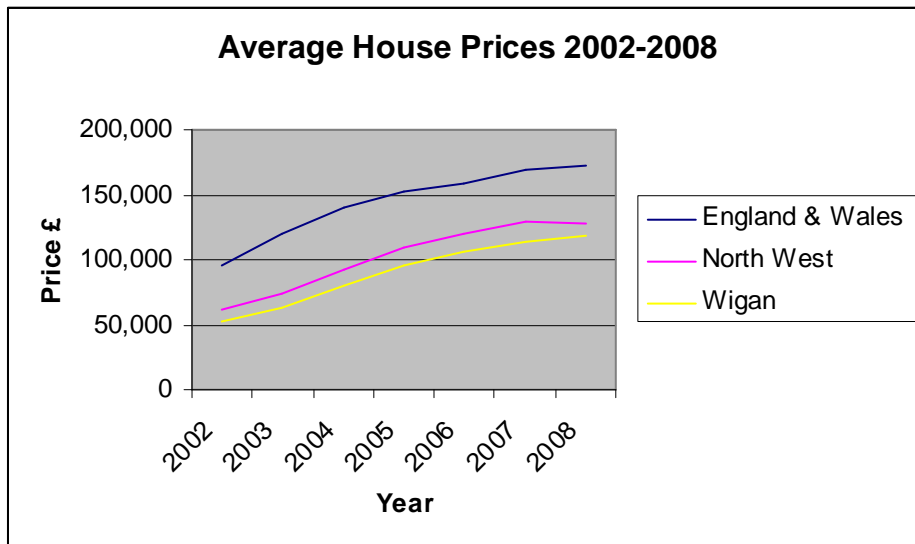
- Become less enclosed over time and has attracted more in-migrants than in the past (especially eastern parts of the borough)
- It is a relatively low priced area of housing compared to the regional and national average
- It also experiences considerably more economic mobility than residential mobility

Housing Trends 2002 -2008

Rising Prices

Since 2002 rapidly rising prices have occurred within the borough in common with elsewhere in the region. Prices have fallen somewhat in the second half of 2008 and are predicted to fall further however they still are much higher than in the past.

Fig 2 Average House Prices



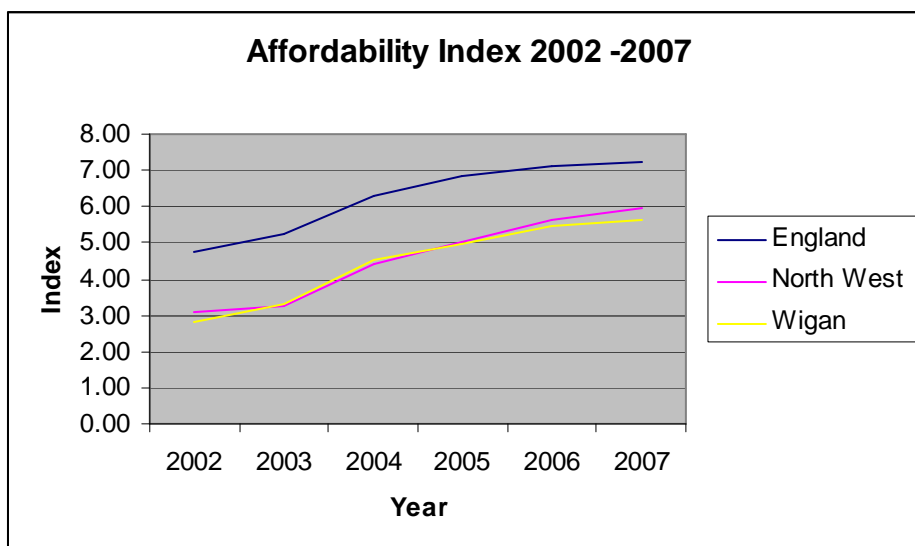
Source: CLG housing data

House price increases have been steepest at the lower end of the market, with lower quartile house prices rising by 154% in the period 2002 to 2008, compared to the average rise of 122%. Over the same period lower quartile earnings have risen by only 23.5%.

Declining Affordability

Fig 3 below shows the deteriorating ratio between lower quartile income and lower quartile house prices. This has made it increasingly difficult for many residents, particularly first time buyers to enter owner occupation. At the time of our previous housing needs survey in 2003 it was estimated that 50% of newly forming households could afford to buy but in 2008 this had fallen to only 18%.

Fig 3 Affordability



Source: CLG housing data

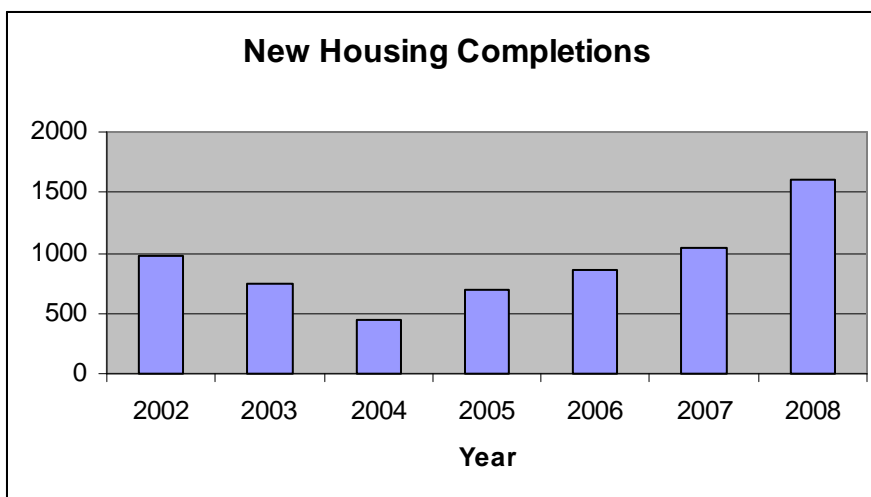
Whilst the recent falls in prices and the suppression of demand associated with the credit crunch should make properties more affordable in reality little is likely to change over the short term. This is partly due to current difficulties in obtaining mortgage finance without a large deposit and also because it would take a major and sustained fall in prices to enable this to occur. This would also have further adverse impacts trapping households in negative equity etc. As in the majority of the region Wigan needs a gradual rebalancing of prices and incomes and a rebuilding of confidence with an increase in affordable housing supply.

New housing completions

These increased difficulty of entering owner occupation has occurred despite the production of new housing in Wigan significantly exceeding the anticipated levels. New completions have averaged 1,059 per year since 2002, this is above both the previous and current housing target.

Fig 4 New Housing Completions

Update with 2008/09



Source: HFR returns

Increased demand for affordable housing

The increasing issue of affordability is illustrated by the massive increase in demand for social rented accommodation and the increased pressures on the homelessness service. At the same time the number of available social rented homes has decreased

This picture of a shortage of affordable housing can be seen in a range of ways including the significant drop in affordable housing supply (Fig 5), the major pressures faced in allocations and by the increased local activity relating to affordable housing.

Fig 5 Wigan's Affordable Housing Demand and Supply

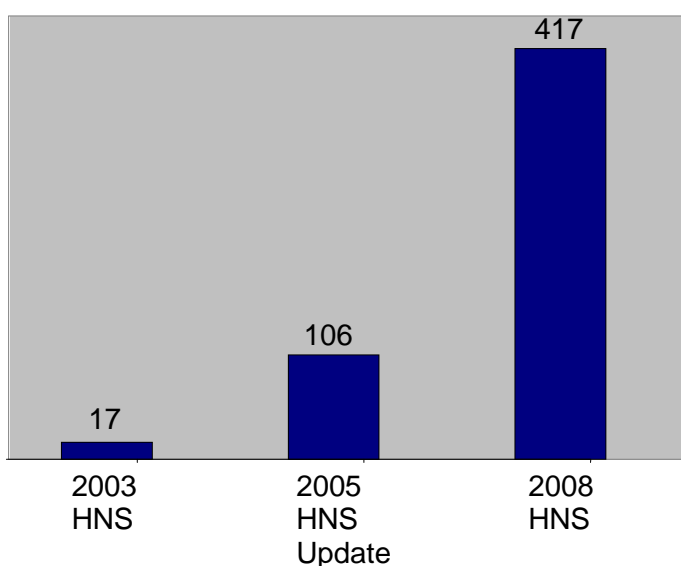
Update with 2008/09

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number on housing register	5019	5684	4035	5801	5059	5991
Number of LA relet properties	3039	2483	2337	1972	2337	2151
overall demand app/letting	1.65	2.29	1.73	2.94	2.16	2.78
Other social lettings	664	557	394	462	513	555

Source: HSSA data

Fig 6 below shows the growing gap between affordable housing supply and projected demand over time as illustrated by the various Housing Needs Surveys

Fig 6 Rising Annual Affordable Housing Needs



Source: Wigan Housing Needs Surveys

This information is now backed by the GM Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2008) which concluded that over 400 additional affordable housing units are needed per annum in Wigan. Whilst the Regional Housing Strategy Consultation paper estimates that the GM North West Housing Market Area needs to deliver up to 30% of all new housing as affordable housing units (905 units per annum for wider area).

Sustained increases in the number of households applying for social rented accommodation has increased the time taken to be rehoused substantially due to the backlog of households requiring accommodation. The Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment found that the turnover rate of the stock in Wigan was just 3% per annum, compared to the GM average of 8% and that only 21% of applicants could be re housed in the year.

The type of accommodation becoming available also impacts on the demand and waiting times, with the study showing that smaller bedsit and 1 bedroom accommodation and sheltered accommodation had a higher turnover rate at 16%. The result being that waiting times and the number of bids received through choice based lettings for these types of properties was much lower than for family size accommodation.

*Figures of types of homes becoming available
Ratio of bids per available re-let*

Fig 9: Average number of bids received per vacancy by property type

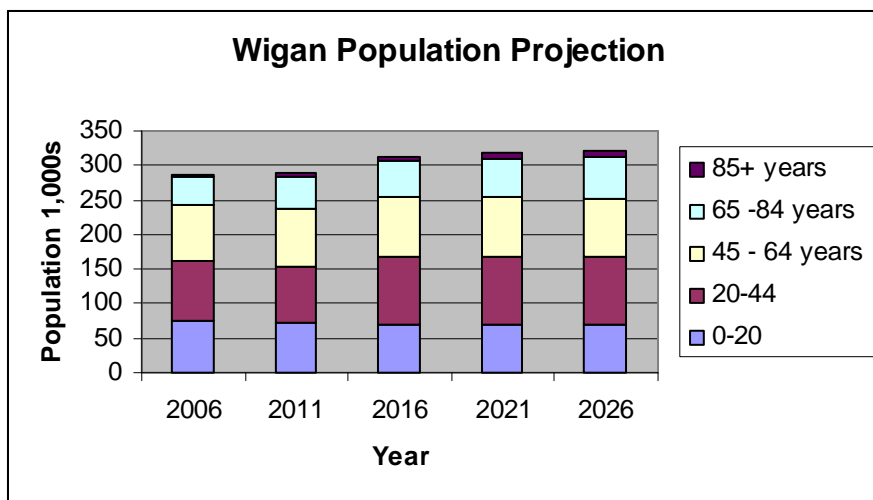
	Bedsit and 1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Sheltered
Greater Manchester	28	48	53	37	10
Wigan	28	61	82	94	13

Source: GMSHMA

Future Housing Trends

Whilst housing demand fluctuates with the economy the underlying prospects for future housing demand remains strong over the long term. This is because Wigan and the surrounding area expects continued population and household growth. Latest population projections for the North West predict an increase of 25,000 to 37,000 people per annum for at least the next 20 years, a much higher figure than previously suggested. Within Wigan the population is forecast to rise by 15,000 by 2026 This is illustrated by the latest population trends in fig 7.

Fig 7 Population Trends



Source ONS 2006 data

A significant element of this growth will arise from the ageing of the population brought about by improvements in health and longevity. Borough projections show a 45% increase in those aged 65 -84 and a 77% increase in over 85s by 2026. Over the same period the population of younger age groups is predicted to fall

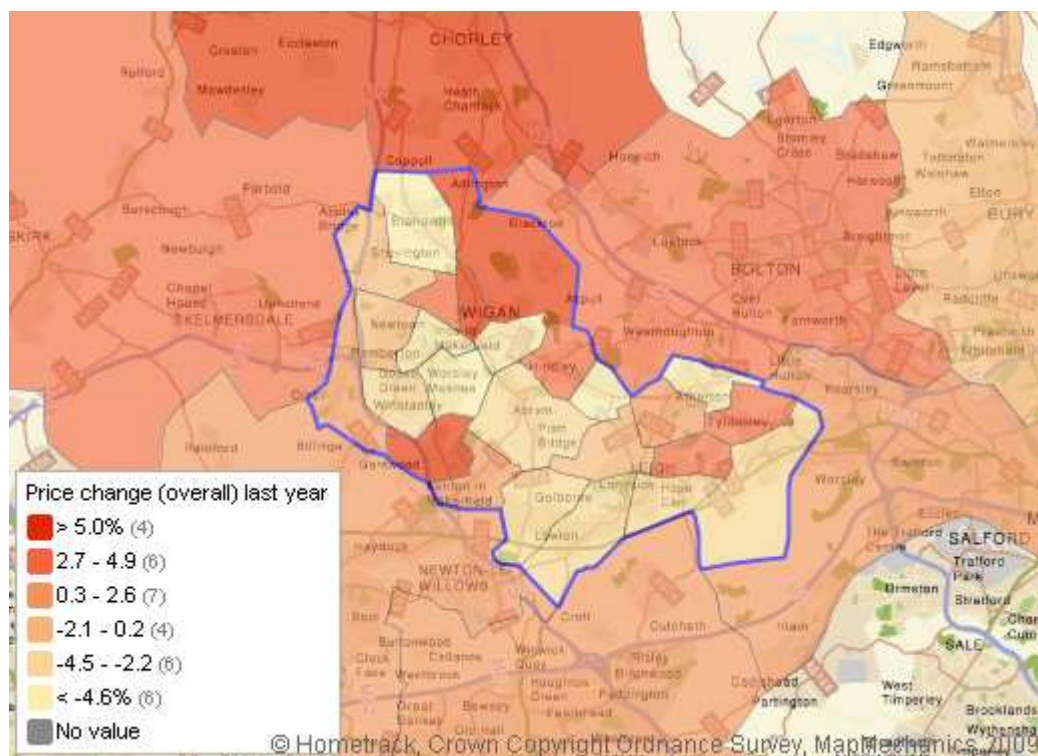
With the forecast increase in residents and the continued fall in household size, demand for housing will continue to grow. Whereas the population will grow by around 5% by 2026, the number of households is predicted to increase by 17% over the same period. This is likely to increase demand for housing and increase pressure on infrastructure and services.

Current housing pressures

the current economic slow down will clearly affect this optimistic picture of a growing housing requirement in the short term. The level of sales activity is extremely low, having fallen by 72% in the last year. Demand for new homes has fallen and there has been a rise in the number of unsold and unoccupied newbuild homes over the last year.

According to Hometrack data, house prices in the borough have fallen in 2008 by an average of 3.7%. However, price changes have not dropped uniformly across the borough, see map below, and have held or increased in some areas and for some property types. Surrounding boroughs have seen similar drops, for example St Helens -2.4%, Salford -1.0% and Chorley -4.4% with Bolton seeing a small increase of 0.2% over the year.

Fig 7: Average price change over year to January 2009 by ward



Affordability

Despite recent falls in house prices affordability problems persist in the borough with ratios of incomes to house prices remaining high, with around 35% of first time buyers still being priced out of the market for an apartment or terraced property. Demand for affordable rented homes remains high and it is likely that demand within the private rented sector may rise. The length of this economic and housing readjustment is open to question but the prospects over the next couple of years appears to remain difficult but it is hoped that the longer term demand drivers will mean that housing growth will continue in medium and long term.

First time buyer barriers

Whilst house prices have been falling over the past twelve months, prices remain at a high ratio compared to average incomes for concealed households. Reducing house prices have coincided with the crisis within the credit markets, with borrowers responding by asking for higher deposits from lenders. Currently, mortgage lenders are typically asking for a deposit of between 15 to 40% of a properties value. The Housing Needs Survey 2008 asked concealed households the level of savings they had available to meet a deposit, stamp duty and meeting costs on their new home. The majority (45.5%) had savings less than £1000, with only 5.1% having over

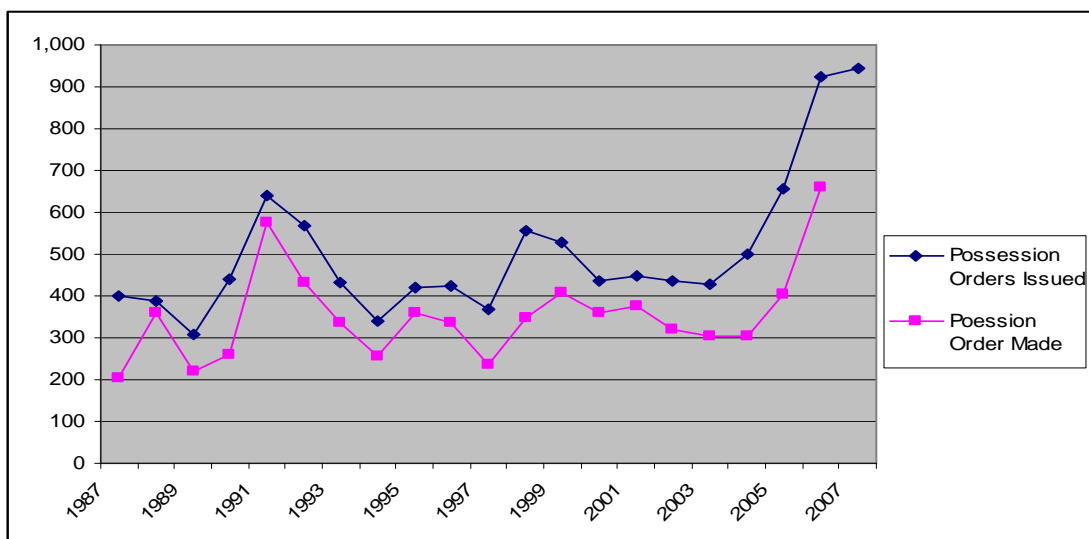
£10,000 in savings. To illustrate, the barriers a first time buyer has in accessing owner occupation, an entry level property valued at £85,000 could require a deposit of between £12,750 and £34,000. Based on the findings of the Housing Needs Survey, it is unlikely that first time buyers will be able to find such deposits unless they have additional support, such as from parents. Even if a deposit is raised, the amount is likely to determine the amount of interest on the loan, with those making the lower loan to value deposits being charged a higher interest rate, therefore increasing their outgoings from their income on housing costs. Mortgages that are available for a higher loan to value also tend to charge higher mortgage arrangement fees.

The Bank of England have reacted to the economic slowdown and credit crisis by reducing interest rates dramatically since October 2008 from 5% to 1.5% in January 2009. The fall in interest rates, has led to a reduction in the availability of popular tracker and variable mortgages that are linked to the Bank of England interest rate. Lower interest rates have also compounded the problems for first time buyers, in that accounts used to save for a deposit and associated house purchase costs have reduced their interest rates meaning less return on money saved.

Pressures for existing Owner Occupiers

Figure 8 shows activity in Wigan County for mortgage possession claims and orders issued from 1987 to 2007. When a mortgage lender issues a possession claim it is the stage where the mortgage lender is signalling their initial legal intention to regain possession of properties due to mortgagees failing to comply with terms of their mortgage arrangements. The second stage in a lender to gain possession is by applying to the court to make a possession order. It is worth noting that possession orders made against a mortgagee does not necessarily mean that properties have been or will be repossessed. Possession orders can be suspended if the mortgagee enters and keeps an agreement with their lender.

Figure 8 Mortgage Possession Action In Wigan County Court 1987 - 2007



Source: Department of Constitutional Affairs

The chart shows a history of mortgage possessions claims issued over a 20 year period and provides a comparative analysis between the current economic climate and the past. Unfortunately, due to a re organisation of the courts, no data is

available specifically for Wigan County Court for possession orders made after 2006. Both possession claims and order follow a similar trend from 1987 to 2007.

As can be seen, 2007 saw the highest level of mortgage claims issued over the twenty year period. An increase of almost a 100% in claims has been issued since 2003. Currently, at the end of September 2008, 813 claims have been issued, so it is likely that the end of year total will exceed the 947 claims in 2007 should trends continue. 2006 and 2007 have seen a greater number of claims issued than at the previous peak in 1991 during the last recession.

For mortgage possession orders again the most recent data shows the highest numbers for the most recent years, with 662 possession orders made in 2006, an increase of 118% since 2004. Whilst there is no localised data for Wigan County Court activity since 2006, as at the end of September 2008 mortgage possession orders have increased by 29% in the North West since the same period in 2007. .

There are distinct trends between the issuing of claims and orders for possession that may effect Wigan. In 1991 and 1992, the UK economy was in recession at the time of the last "peak" in possession activity in Wigan. It is only recently that the term recession has become used more frequently to describe the current economic climate in the UK, and there was little recognition of the possibility of a recession during 2006 and 2007. This begs the question the impact the recession the UK is now experiencing will have both nationally and locally, and the consequences on homeowners, particularly those who have entered the market when property prices have been high. Mortgage possession claims are already at a high since the 1987 records, and so far Wigan's local economy has not seen any major effects of the recession. Should the recession have a major impact, not just within Wigan but regionally and nationally, this could threaten households who experience job losses or changes in work circumstances and put their properties at risk.

The Bank of England has responded to the economic slowdown by dramatically reducing interest rates to their lowest level in its 315 year history to from 5.0% in October 2008 to 1.5% in January 2009. Interest rate cuts have been passed on by lenders in many cases to those with tracker and in some cases variable mortgages, therefore reducing mortgage payments for many households. However, there has been some reluctance from lenders to pass on rate cuts to borrowers, as they seek to balance the interests of borrowers and savers and manage the after effects of the credit crunch on their organisations. The effects of the credit crunch and the major reduction in interest rates recently has led to a major reduction in the mortgage products being offered. Popular tracker and variable interest mortgages have reduced in availability and this may prove a problem when households current mortgage deals come to end and they seek a new deal.

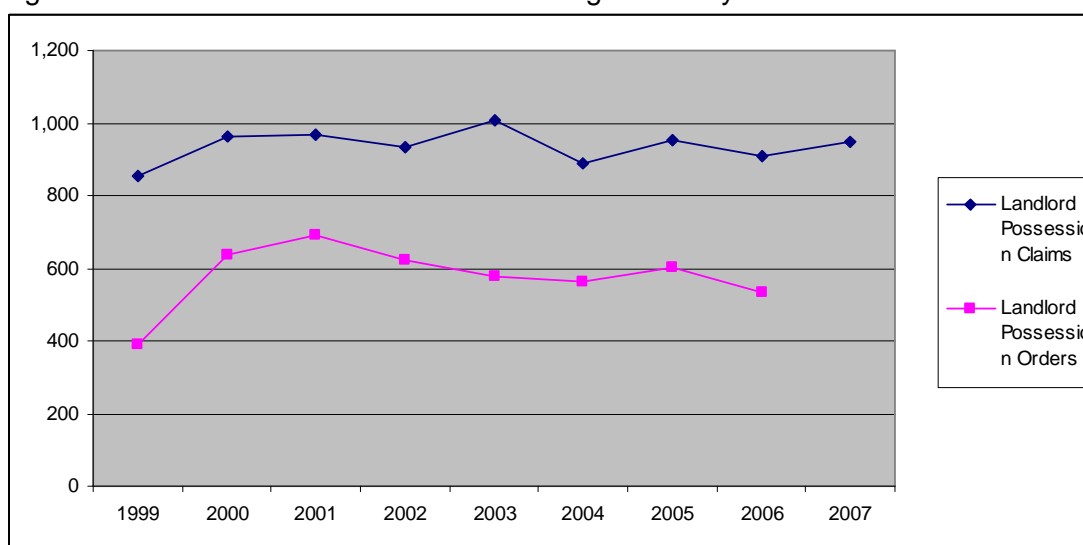
Pressures for existing tenants

Trends with the possession activity by landlords are less volatile than the action on home owners. However since the records for activity in Wigan County Court since 1999, landlord claims for possession have remained consistently high ranging from 856 to 1008 cases brought to court each year. Landlord possession claims are higher than mortgage possession claims generally, but 2006 and 2007 saw similar numbers. Possession orders granted to landlords follow the same trend as possession claims, but in comparison between mortgage claims and mortgage possession orders granted, there is a greater gap between the number of possession order claims and the number of possession orders granted. This can largely be explained in that the local authority and registered social landlords are the largest

landlords in the borough (social rented stock is approximately 20% of all tenures) and that despite issuing a claim for possession social landlords will work with those falling into arrears to give the tenant the best opportunity to remain in their home. Again when a possession order is made, it does not mean that the tenant will be evicted. Orders can be made to suspend possession, and social landlords will work with tenants so that they comply with the terms of the order and eviction will be a last resort. Again, as with the mortgage possessions, the recession may have an impact and this may be more profound in the private sector, where tenants will be paying higher rents that may not be covered by the local housing allowance should their employment circumstances change.

Figure XX shows the activity of landlord possession action against tenants between 1999 and 2007 in Wigan County Court.

Figure X Landlord Possession Actions in Wigan County Court 1999-2007



Source: Department for Constitutional Affairs

The extent and the structure of the private rented section in Wigan is largely unknown. The Housing Needs Survey indicated a private rented sector of 5.7% of all stock in Wigan. This is a 2% increase since the 2001 census. The last ten years has seen an expansion in the private rented sector through Buy to Let, again the extent of this activity in Wigan is unknown. Housing Strategy has for the last twelve months experienced a growing number of landlords approaching them for information and opportunities for renting their properties. Some of these enquiries have been from landlords who have multiple properties in the borough. The increased supply of properties available for private rent has made the private rented market more competitive and landlords or their letting agents have been reducing rents. The increased supply of properties through buy to let and reductions in rent places the buy to let landlord in a difficult situation. Rent being lost through properties being empty along with the reduction of rents in the present market, can often mean that the buy to let landlord is not covering the costs of their mortgage. Nationally the number of buy to let properties being repossessed has increased by 166% in the third quarter of 2008 to 2400 from 900 in the period for the previous year. For tenants of buy to let landlords, they can often know nothing about the possession action being taken against their landlord and repossession can happen without notice. In Wigan, the Housing Options Advice service has already been dealing with

cases that have experienced their homes being repossessed due to action against their landlord.

The Current Housing Offer

The vast bulk of future housing demand will need to be met from the existing stock. Part of the legacy of Wigan's industrial past is that a high proportion of stock will fall short of expectations and this will result in a failure to attract people into the borough and may contribute to people leaving the borough.

In comparison with the rest of the Greater Manchester sub region our overall housing stock compares favourably being on the whole slightly younger, having more owner occupied properties and being in much better condition. However the borough does have slightly more Band A properties and significantly less rented properties than across Greater Manchester as a whole. In national terms the boroughs stock is generally favourably represented especially in its condition. There are however some anomalies such as the predominance of family housing and whilst the private rented sector is small its stock condition is poor. Whilst having relatively good levels of insulation and heating the borough also faces fuel poverty issues due to its income profile.

Fig 8 HHSRS Projection

	Non Decency (% of private stock)
Bolton	34%
Bury	24%
Manchester	34%
Oldham	78%
Rochdale	30%
Salford	35%
Stockport	37%
Tameside	48%
Trafford	51%
Wigan	21%
GM	37%
Region	38%

Source: Regional Private Sector Decency Sstudy 2008, Penningtons

Fig 9 Age of Stock

	Built before 1920	1921 – 1960	1961 – 1990	1991+
Wigan	23%	34%	35%	8%
GM	25%	37%	31%	7%

Source GMSHMA 2008

Fig 10 Council Tax Band

	Band A	Band E to G
Wigan	49%	5%
GM	46%	8%

Source GMSHMA 2008

Fig 11 House Type

Type	Detached	Semi Detached	Terraced	Flat
Wigan	17%	46%	30%	7%
GM	13%	38%	33%	16%

Source GMSHMA 2008

Fig 12 Tenure

	Socially Rented	Private (owner occupied and private rented)
Wigan	19.1%	80.9%
GM	21.9%	78.1%

Source GMSHMA 2008

Energy Efficiency

Levels of energy efficiency are relatively high in Wigan, with local authority stock within the top quartile nationally. Efficiency in the private sector is also above average, however, there are particular issues with the standards of private rented and older stock in some areas of the borough.

Fig 13 Energy Efficiency

Energy Efficiency	% with poor insulation levels (<40 SAP)
Bolton	10%
Bury	5%
Manchester	8%
Oldham	25%
Rochdale	9%
Salford	15%
Stockport	20%
Tameside	4%
Trafford	8%
Wigan	8%
GM	11%
Region	20%

Despite good performance, fuel poverty remains a concern in the borough due to the relatively low incomes and this has increased recently with current high fuel prices, it is estimated that for every 1% increase in fuel prices a further 40,000 households fall into fuel poverty nationally. From the Census 2001 figures and the national poverty figure of 23%, there are an estimated 8,600 pensioners in fuel poverty in the borough.

New NI187 indicator performance

There is a close link to seasonal excess deaths as fuel poverty has an impact upon ill health, particularly circulatory and respiratory diseases and other long term conditions.

Warm Front Grant Take Up

	Investment	£ Per Non Decent Home
Bolton	£3.7m	£121
Bury	£1.7m	£98
Manchester	£3.1m	£100
Oldham	£3.3m	£118
Rochdale	£2.5m	£120
Salford	£2.1m	£90
Stockport	£1.8m	£45
Tameside	£1.9m	£54
Trafford	£1.5m	£37
Wigan	£3.6m	£157
GM	£25m	£88
Region	£75m	£84

Empty Homes

The number of long term empty homes is an indicator of both quality and demand for accommodation. There has been a reduction in the numbers of empty homes since 2001, particularly in the social stock. However, The proportion of homes being left vacant in the long term has increased over the period. In recent months we have seen a sharp increase, mainly due to the fall in completed sales for new properties.

Fig 14 Vacant Stock

Vacant Stock	2001				2007			
	Social stock	Private stock	All stock	All vacant >6 mth	Social stock	Private stock	All stock	All vacant >6 mth
Greater Manchester	12,601	39,043	51,644	19,366	7,250	41,205	48,455	17,082
Wigan	1,020	4,126	5,146	1,411	468	4,135	4,603	2,338

Source GMSHMA

Looking in more detail, the problem of empty homes varies substantially across the borough, with levels of long term empty homes ranging from 5.25% in Douglas ward to just over 1% in Winstanley. The recent downturn in the housing market appears to driving a

significant proportion of the increase in empty homes, particularly the numbers of new build homes left unsold and unoccupied. Approximately 3 quarters of the recent rises in the levels of vacant homes are due to major increases in the numbers of newly built homes lying empty. This has been caused by a combination of the housing recession with a local increase in new housing production. Thus as a result over 600 newly built homes are currently vacant and have been for over 6 months. These homes are concentrated in the following 4 wards:

- Douglas
- Atherleigh
- Tyldesley
- Atherton

Whilst all types of property are affected by these trends it is clear that there is a particular problem with the supply / current demand for apartments.

Geographical Variations

Whilst Wigan's overall housing offer seems relatively good, in reality there are major local variations across the borough that show major issues are faced in developing sustainable communities and balanced housing markets. This has been illustrated by a series of reports that look at Wigan's different townships (Wigan's Changing Housing Markets 2005 and Update 2008). There are significant concentrations of deprivation, and of weak unbalanced housing markets and the latest report shows that the situation is not improving as significant numbers of residents wish to move to more attractive areas in the borough.

Figure 15 below provides a summary of the analysis. Using a range of indicators ,it shows that the central older urban core of the borough suffers from having a weak housing market driven by concentrations of older property, rented homes, deprivation and poor transport links. In contrast the periphery of the of the borough exhibits many of the characteristics of successful housing markets / sustainable communities.

FIG 15 - ANALYSIS OF TOWNSHIPS BY WEAK HOUSING MARKET INDICATORS

	Ashton	Atherton	Golborne	Hindley	Leigh	Orrell	Standish	Tyldesley	Wigan North	Wigan South
Lower House Prices (entry level)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓✓
High Levels of Socially Rented Stock	X	✓✓	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓✓
High Terraced Stock	X	✓	X	X	✓✓	X	X	X	✓	✓
Poor Housing Condition	✓	X	X	X	✓✓	X	X	X	✓	✓
Low Incomes / High Benefit Levels	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓✓
High Long Term Vacancy Rates	X	X	X	✓	✓✓	X	X	✓	✓✓	✓✓
National Surplus Housing (Needs Survey)	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓
2007 Deprivation Index (Significant Worst 10% Areas)	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓✓
Significant Anticipated outflow of Residents 2008 – 11 (Needs Survey)	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	✓✓
Making Housing Count (AGMA) Recommendations on Housing Regeneration Interventions	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓✓	✓✓

ANALYSIS OF TOWNSHIP BY STRONG HOUSING MARKET INDICATORS

	Ashton	Atherton	Golborne	Hindley	Leigh	Orrell	Standish	Tyldesley	Wigan North	Wigan South
Higher House Prices (entry level)	✓	X	X	X	X	✓✓	✓✓	✓	X	X
Higher Proportion of Detached Housing	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓✓	✓	X	X
Higher Income Levels	X	X	✓	X	X	✓✓	✓	✓	X	X
Anticipated High Flow of Residents 2008 – 11 (Needs Survey)	X	X	X	X	X	✓✓	✓	X	X	X
Low Long Term Vacancy Rates	✓	X	X	X	X	✓✓	✓	X	X	X
High Affordable Housing Needs (need v current provision)	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓✓	✓✓	✓	X	X

Vulnerable People

Housing and support services

The Supporting People programme was introduced in April 2003 when it assumed responsibility for delivering Housing Related Support. A Supporting People Strategy was developed for the period 2005 -10.

Since the introduction of Supporting People there have been increasing needs for services and pressures on funding of services due to a curtailed budget. The Supporting People service was inspected by the Audit Commission in 2007 and since then there has been a recognition of the need to transform housing related support in the borough, resulting in an increase in funding in the period 2008 -11. The three main issues to be addresses are:

- Under developed short term services, addressing the needs socially excluded groups including, homeless people, people with drugs / alcohol / mental health issues, young people and offenders. The lack of adequate services in these areas increases the pressure on partner agencies. It also represents lost opportunities and lowered outcomes for service users.
- Over commitment in long term services which are jointly funded, providing support combined with care. The Wigan Supporting People program currently dedicates 43% of the annual spend in this area. The position regionally is moving towards a commitment of less than 30%. To achieve an appropriate balance within the program spend needs to be managed down in this area while working with funding partners to meet the personalization agenda.
- An outdated model of older people services, based on vertical model of delivery that depends on location based staff, often one person, delivering services across a range of issues. The majority of service provision is directly tied to social housing provision, is not delivered on the basis of service users need, but on occupancy of property which is allocated by the landlord. A move from this vertical silo provision to a horizontal model, delivered across tenures give equality of access and opportunity is required.

The new commissioning strategy will see a move away from long term support services to greater investment in short term services, focusing on excluded groups, such as homeless people and those with complex needs. A transformation of services for older people is proposed from a “vertical” service tied to tenancies within the social sector to a “horizontal” service that is able to address low level needs across all tenures. Services will be needs led, offer choice and flexibility and achieve greater outcomes in terms of promoting independence.

The funding for services is to increase in the period 2008 -11 and the following levels are proposed.

Spend levels	2003/4		2007/8		2010/11	
	£m	%	£	%	£	%
Service areas						
Long term services	£3.44m	46%	£3.17m	43%	£2.63m	27.50%
Short term services	£2.62m	35%	£2.87m	39%	£4.78m	50%
O P services	£1.42m	19%	£1.62m	22%	£2.15m	22.50%
	£7.48m	100%	£7.36m	104%	£9.55m	100%

The following principles will apply to all services:

• Needs based provision	Developing services and individual support that responds to an individuals needs
• Cross tenure provision	Delivering services to those who need them irrespective of their type of housing
• Equality of opportunity and access	Accessible services that promote independence and challenge discrimination
• Involvement and consultation	Focusing on service users, engaging them in the developing services
• Meets VfM and Quality standards	Meeting the QAF standards and pursuing continuous service improvement while delivering Value for Money
• Affordability	Maximising the range and effectiveness of services within the available finances
• Retaining and promoting independence	Enabling service users to enjoy the highest possible levels of independence

North west needs assessment model

There are a number of actions proposed to support the delivery of the Commissioning framework, one being to establish a baseline of provision and identify key gaps in relation to the designated vulnerable groups. Wigan's local needs data has been found to be robust and has been added into the North West Needs Model, although this has not been finalized, some key messages are emerging with regard to the borough.

Key messages from the NW needs model

Substantial under provision in drugs and alcohol services, accommodation and floating support	Substantial under provision for homelessness, particularly families and rough sleepers
Substantial under provision of offenders, including mentally disordered and those at risk of offending	Substantial under provision for physical and sensory disability, accommodation based and floating support
Under provision for mental health, accommodation based	Substantial under provision for teen parents
Substantial under provision for domestic violence services	Substantial over provision in accommodation based services for older people but greater under provision in floating support services, including frail elderly
Lack of service for HIV/Aids and refugees/ asylum seekers	Over provision for adults with learning disabilities accommodation based but under provision of floating support

Note – under provision above is in relation to the model used, the Wigan needs analysis is in comparison to provision by the other LAs in the region. There are some differences in the two positions.

The vulnerable groups are discussed in more detail below.

Homelessness

Homelessness continues to be a particular issue in Wigan with continued high presentations, although these are now falling back to 2003 levels the pressure on services is likely to increase in the current economic climate. There have been a number of pressures on the housing market in recent years that have contributed to the problem.

- Rising house prices have made it increasingly difficult for families to resolve their housing issues themselves
- As there is a lower than average proportion of private rented homes, people are more reliant on social housing to resolve their housing issues when owner occupation becomes un-affordable.
- Significant falls in the number of vacancies arising in the social sector have increased waiting times for family accommodation via the housing register. This has had an impact upon homelessness amongst families as the strain on parents and relatives becomes too much as they accommodate them for longer.
- This results in more homeless families requiring temporary accommodation and over half of those living in temporary accommodation in the borough are families with children.

Homeless Families

Main reasons for homelessness – Families with children	% of homeless acceptances
Parents no longer willing to accommodate	19%
Violent breakdown with partner	15%
Non-violent breakdown with partner	13%

Single Homeless

- Single people account for over half of all homelessness presentations but only a third of acceptances. Only a quarter of single people who present are accepted as being homeless and in priority need, which means that 75% of single people receive a negative decision.
- Supporting People data indicates that when provision for single homeless people is measured against population of the borough, Wigan has a quarter of the regional average and fifth of the national average.
- There are only 6 units of emergency accommodation in the borough for 'non-priority' single homeless. This means that homeless assessment process is more likely to be a negative experience for single people than any other group.

Young People, including those at risk and teenage parents

- Young people aged between 16 and 25 make up approximately 12% of the boroughs population but 34% of all homeless presentations and almost 36% of homeless acceptances. However, presentations by 16 and 17 year olds has fallen by 77% since 2003/04 and 16 and 17 year olds now represent around 2% of homelessness acceptances compared to 9% nationally.

Main reasons for	% of homeless
-------------------------	----------------------

homelessness – Young People	acceptances
Parents no longer willing to accommodate	45%
Relatives unable to accommodate	11%
Termination of shorthold tenancy	6%

- From April 2008, the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) has replaced Housing Benefit for people looking to rent privately who are on benefits or a low income. The new allowance means that private rented accommodation is an affordable option for more people. But for single people under 25, this is restricted to the equivalent cost of a room in a shared house. This inhibits young people on limited incomes entering the private rented sector with entry levels for a 1 bedroom flat ranging from £300 to £395 per month across the borough, with the “shared room” allowance being just £50 or £60 per week dependent upon location.
- House price rises have made it increasingly difficult for young people attempting to purchase their own property as many are on incomes below that needed to access the cheapest property, around £20,300 (HNS 2008)
- Teenage pregnancy rates (2006) in Wigan are high, 52.9 cases per 1,000 15-17 yr old, compared to the north west rate (44) and national rate (40.4). The target for 50% reduction by 2010 is currently being missed and reducing teenage pregnancy has high priority in the LAA 2008-11.
- Teenage parents and the children of teen parents are more likely to suffer multiple deprivation and have poorer life chances. Teenage pregnancy rates vary across the borough and hot spots tend to correlate with areas of highest multiple deprivation, eg Norley, Ince, Abram and Leigh.

Domestic Violence

- People fleeing Domestic Violence account for almost 9% of all homeless presentations.
- Although a third of people that present as homeless because of domestic violence are found to be ‘not homeless’ on completion of enquiries, this is because many return home. It is therefore essential that when people do present as homeless, they are offered appropriate support and advice.
- Many women at risk of violence are staying in non-specialist accommodation and current services do not meet the level of demand. There are two specialist schemes in the borough but referral data indicates that less than one in five cases access the refuges due to limited capacity.

Substance Misuse Clients Including Offenders

- Amongst clients starting a new treatment journey during 2008/09 (up to the end of quarter 3) 440 out of 578 new treatment journeys had the housing status completed (with 24% missing records). For those clients who had a value for accommodation status 17% had some housing needs; 9% were listed as having a housing problem and 8% of these were listed as no fixed abode and needed urgent housing need. Wigan is below the national (17%) and regional (15%) average for clients with a housing problem. However the percentage of clients recorded as being of no fixed abode is similar to the regional average (8%) and only slightly below the national average (10%).

Housing status	No. of clients	% of clients
NFA – urgent housing problem	34	8%
Housing problem	39	9%
No housing problem	367	83%
	440	

- Amongst offenders registered with substance misuse issues identified, there has been an increased number of clients have identified an urgent housing need and are classified as being of no fixed abode. The number of clients in temporary accommodation has fallen significantly.

Housing status	2007/08		2008/09 (to 31 st January 2009)	
	No. of clients	% of clients	No. of clients	% of clients
NFA	19	4%	25	7%
Settled	343	78%	281	80%
Temporary	76	17%	47	13%
	438		353	

- 42% of clients in settled accommodation lived in Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord properties, 22% are owner-occupiers, and 20% live in privately rented accommodation
- There is little difference between the core substance misuse clients and those clients who came into treatment via a criminal justice route with the majority in both cases stating that they have no housing problem. Clients living in suitable and settled accommodation are far more likely to succeed in their treatment with those clients with a housing need at a significant disadvantage.

BME, including asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants

- The 2001 census showed that Wigan had a relatively low BME population, making up just over 2.4% of the total population. Since then we know that there has been a considerable increase in the BME population due to the dispersal of asylum seekers and the arrival of economic migrants following the accession of the A8 countries into the European Union in 2004. Despite the increases the ethnic population remains below that of many other parts of Greater Manchester. Current accurate population figures are difficult to obtain and it is unlikely that precise figures will only become available following the 2011 Census. The data below should therefore be treated with a degree of caution.
- Since 2002, Asylum Seekers have been dispersed to the Wigan area as part of the national dispersal of asylum seekers. At its peak in June 2003 there were 921 Asylum Seekers dispersed to the Wigan Borough under the target contract. The numbers as at October 2008 are 539.
- All Asylum Seekers in Wigan are housed and supported in the private sector by three private providers contracted by the United Kingdom Borders Agency (UKBA) . Whilst Asylum Seekers are awaiting a decision on their application, they are well supported. Difficulties often only arise when people receive a decision on their Asylum application, whether this is positive (resulting in loss of accommodation and support) or negative (often leading to destitution if 'failed' applicants are not returned to their country of origin)
- There are significant deficiencies in data for Refugees and an accurate picture of numbers cannot be formulated. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that small numbers of Refugees remain in Wigan once they have received leave to remain – many leave Wigan for larger cities where established communities exist.

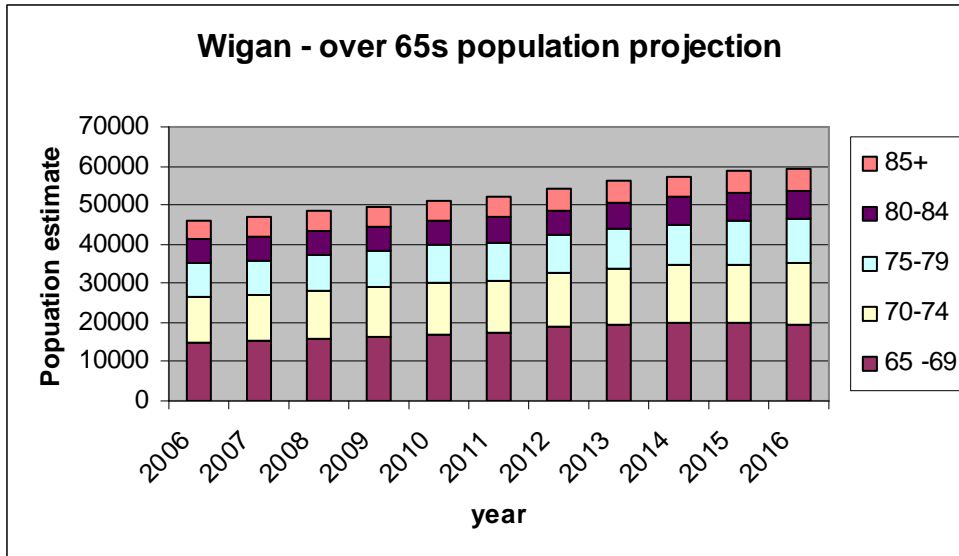
- An accurate picture of the numbers of Migrant Workers is difficult to obtain. The data available relies on Workers registering on the Workers Registration Scheme and acquiring a National Insurance number. The data is out of date as soon as it is published and so cannot be relied on. Again anecdotal evidence suggests approximately 2000 - 3000 Migrant Workers, largely Polish, living in the Wigan Borough.
- Housing conditions for migrant workers are largely unknown. Whilst many migrant workers have moved for economic reasons, several have also moved to avoid persecution in their own country. Subsequently many migrant workers are fearful of public authorities such as the Police or the Council and will suffer in silence rather than ask for help.
- The findings from the Housing Needs Survey 2008 indicated that in general the BME population had similar incomes and housing needs to that of the whole population. They were slightly more likely to suffer overcrowding (3% compared to 2.2% in the whole population) and all moving BME households expressed a need for larger accommodation with 4+ bedrooms, all expressed a desire for home ownership.
- A growing issue in the borough is the increased support needed for asylum seekers granted leave to remain. The UKAA policy changes have resulted in the reduction in the timescale of decisions from a number of years to only 4 weeks, this has resulted in successful asylum seekers having little time to familiarise themselves with the local area and how to access services before support is withdrawn.

Complex Needs

- According to estimates approximately 13,000 men and 18,500 women in the borough suffer mental health issues, around 1 in 5 people will experience some incidence of mental ill health at some time. Over 90% of sufferers do not access services available.
- Mental ill health has a strong correlation with deprivation eg unemployment, poor housing and poor physical health.
- In Wigan, there are only 6 emergency access beds for people over 25 (excluding women fleeing violence and priority need homeless) and no specialist provision for people with substance misuse problems. This inevitably has contributed to rough sleeping in Wigan.
- Research into rough sleepers in 2005 found that most rough sleepers were of White British origin and long term residents of Wigan.
- Two-thirds were known to have a history of drugs or alcohol misuse. Most, *but not all*, had a history of offending, 20% were known to have a history of violence.
- Time spent sleeping rough ranged between a few months and a few years. Most of those that had been sleeping rough for several years have spent various short periods off the streets with friends. None of those found on the night of the count appeared to be entrenched in the rough sleeping way of life; all wanted accommodation.

Older People

- The elderly population and particularly those living alone is forecast to increase



- Many health conditions are forecast to increase as the population ages, placing increasing pressure on health and social care services.

	2006	2010	2016	2020
Over 65s population	46,200	50,900	59,500	62,500
Limiting long term illness	27,500	28,900	33,600	39,200
Depression	7,300	7,700	8,900	9,500
Dementia	4,300	4,700	5,500	5,800
Heart Attack	3,400	3,500	4,100	4,400
Stroke	1,200	1,200	1,400	1,600
Bronchitis/Emphysema	1,000	1,100	1,200	1,400
Falls, A&E attendance	2,800	2,900	3,400	3,800
Visual Impairment	4,000	4,100	4,800	5,700
Mobility	7,000	7,400	8,600	9,600

estimates
POPPI figures rounded to nearest 100

- Dementia is a term used to describe various brain disorders that have common loss of brain function that is usually progressive and severe. Some forms are treatable and manageable. According to estimates, there will be a 65% increase in cases by 2025. There will be implications for the care and support of sufferers and their carers.
- Seasonal Excess Deaths effect a larger proportion of older people, 33% of cases are aged over 75. Risks are higher than European and Scandinavian countries. The risk in the North West is 17% greater than nationally.
- The majority of elderly people live in their own homes and wish to remain there as they age.
- According to the Census 2001, 65.7% of pensioners own their own home, this is less than for the borough as a whole. Pensioners were more likely to live in social rented accommodation than the borough as a whole.

Tenure of pensioner households	%
Owner Occupiers	65.7
LA rented	23.4

HA rented	3.2
Private rented or rent free	7.7

Source Census 2001

- However, the tenure profile of pensioners will change as in future, there will be more older people in areas with higher owner occupation and the next generation are more likely to be home owners.
- Around 12% of the older population of the borough currently receive homecare or other community services that help them remain in their own homes, 2.5% are in residential care, 1.4% in nursing care. Wigan's performance in helping older people to live at home is improving but we are still in the lower quartile nationally and rates for residential care are higher than comparators.
- Findings of the Housing Needs and Demand Study 2008 indicate a need for 3,433 sheltered accommodation units in the next 3 years. 1,186 would be in the private sector and 2,247 in the affordable sector. Current turnover rates are around 200-250 units per year indicating a shortfall of provision.
- The study indicated a need for an additional 641 extra care housing units

We have undertaken a review of current specialist accommodation for older people in 2007, main findings were

- There are currently 72 specialist schemes for older people in the borough, with over 2,000 units of accommodation in total. There are 9 providers, Wigan and Leigh Housing are the largest with 48 schemes.
- Overwhelmingly the accommodation is for social rent, with only 1 leasehold scheme. There are three extra care schemes, a total of 100 units, currently.
- Over half of sheltered stock is 1 bed flats, 12% of stock is bedsits and only 6% have 2 bedrooms
- The majority of the stock is over 25 years old. There is low demand for some accommodation and the quality of some accommodation does not meet the aspirations of older people.
- There is wide variation in distribution across the borough and range of size of schemes, in some areas there are many schemes, in others little provision.
- Two thirds of residents are female and only 20% of tenancies are couples.
- Over 99% White, British residents.
- Average age 77yrs in ordinary sheltered and 80 in extra care. Lot of 85+, particularly females resident.
- Over 40% of residents classed as independent by the scheme manager.
- 73.5% of sheltered residents receive family care and support.
- 10% of sheltered residents have gaps in service, mainly aids and adaptations, particularly level access showers.

Learning Disability

- An estimated 2% of the population have some form of learning disability, approximately 6,100 people in Wigan. Only 20% of cases may be known to social services.
- Wigan performs well nationally in helping people with learning disabilities to live at home, 4 per 1,000 18-64 age, compared to 3.5 in the North West and 2.9 in England
- People with learning disabilities tend to have poorer overall health than average.
- As people live longer there is predicted to be a larger increase in the number of over 65s with learning disabilities, (40% by 2025), this will have implications for commissioning housing, care and support for this age group.

- Research into the housing needs of people with learning difficulties found that there were a wide range of accommodation types and support and that different people identified with different models. These models of housing include examples such as individual tenancies, sharing with others, extra care housing and shared ownership schemes. All show how important good quality housing with the right support are to enable people with learning disabilities to truly gain citizenship and inclusion in society.
- The research showed a marked need for specialist information and advice for people with learning disabilities regarding housing options. Progress has been made eg. through a housing advice line and the housemates seminars and Wigan officers have been able to tackle some of the more difficult problems that people with learning disabilities were facing in the area. The housing sub group have also become far more aware of the problems facing people.
- Although the numbers of people advised and supported were small due to the accessibility and nature of the schemes, the problems were difficult and time consuming. Officers came across situations where people supported and helped were living in substandard housing or living inappropriately for their needs. Sometimes with too little support and sometimes with too much.
- From a relatively small sample survey and looking at national statistics and policy in this area we can conclude that without specialist help and support people with learning disabilities in the Borough could struggle to achieve the housing and support they require.
- Wigan is moving towards new ways of provision of support and care through the start of personalisation and individual budgets in line with national good practice and Government agendas. Good housing, advice and support are vital components of a good life plan.
- We found that there is a need for a minimum of 207 new living arrangements in the Wigan over the next five years and have been able to categorise how urgently people need to be housed. This does not mean we need to provide 207 new homes: if a person needs to move out of their home because it isn't really suitable, that property could be ideal for another person.

Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment

- The majority of recorded cases (78.5%) are over 65s
- Wigan performs well in helping people suffering from a physical disability or sensory impairment live at home, 5 per 1,000 population, compared to 4.7 in the North West and 4.5 nationally.

The Housing Needs and Demand Study 2008 found that;

- 26.6% (33,437 implied) households in Wigan include a member with a disability. This is high by comparison with other areas. Distribution varies across the borough from 34.5% in Atherton to 19.1% in Shevington
- Around 60% of these have a mobility problem
- Around 8% of households (10,918 implied) include a wheelchair user.
- Over 42% of people with a disability have support needs, support is primarily provided by family and friends
- 9.8% of homes are adapted

Gypsies and Travellers

- An estimate of Gypsy and Traveller Population (based on CRE, 2007) in Wigan showed there was a Gypsy & Traveller population of 1833 made up of 679 households.
- The AGMA Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Service Delivery Needs Study in Greater Manchester – 2007/8 highlighted that by 2015 there will be a shortfall in pitch supply for Gypsy & Travellers of 39.

Appendix 4: Achievements of the Housing Strategy 2002 -07

Progress against the Housing Strategy 2002 -2007 has been monitored on a six month basis throughout the 5 year period. These reports have consistently shown good progress against planned actions. This includes:-

- Progress on the Older Persons Housing Strategy
- Implementation of measures to increase affordable housing supply including choice based lettings, RSL nomination agreements etc
- Good implementation of investment programmes in both the public and private sectors
- Improvements in energy efficiency of homes
- Improvements in the service provided by Wigan and Leigh Housing
- Good satisfactory levels
- Expansion of services for homelessness/vulnerable people.

Areas of more limited progress have involved attempts to reduce homelessness and reduce housing shortages. This is largely due to the major changes in the local housing market and the scale of these trends. Both have attracted significant attention in terms of strategies and resources in these services.

The Housing Strategy contained 21 SMART targets upon which performance against the Strategic Aim of “An affordable home for all within a desirable community” can be judged. Overall, 15 of the 21 targets were met.

Theme – Quality

In terms of progress the most solid achievements occurred in improving the quality of homes in the borough, both within the Council and the Private Sector. This is enhanced by good progress in energy efficiency and most importantly in resident satisfaction with these improvement works.

Theme - People/Choice

The picture within the area of People and Choice is in little more mixed. Good performance occurred in meeting equality standards, in maximising the use of existing affordable housing and in helping the older people maintain their own homes. More limited progress was made in homelessness and we continue to have high levels compared with the national position. Despite this, progress has been made in reducing overall numbers, in reducing bed and breakfast and in helping to prevent homelessness. One area that worsened was the use of temporary accommodation. This is due to shortages of social housing but in comparison with other Councils we are still relatively low users of this accommodation.

Theme – neighbourhoods

Within the neighbourhood theme, the borough is still considered to have a relatively balanced housing market. Some of the targets are hard to determine due to changes in Government definitions but a narrow failure was the level of empty homes in the private sector (2.17% against the 2.1% target).

Appendix 5: Evidence and Supporting Documents

Local

Vision 2026 – Wigan Borough Community Strategy – Wigan Borough Partnership, 2008

Vision 2026 Community Views – Wigan Borough Partnership, 2008

Wigan Council Local Area Agreement 2008 -2011- Wigan Council 2008

Wigan Local Development Framework, Housing Topic and Issues Paper – Wigan Council, 2007

Update Report Wigan's Changing Housing Markets – Wigan Council, 2008

Wigan Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – Wigan Council 2008

“A Place For All” Wigan's Homelessness Strategy 2008-13 – Wigan Council 2008

Wigan Supporting People Strategy 2005 -10 – Wigan Council 2005

Supporting People Commissioning Framework 2008/09 to 2010/11 – Wigan Council 2008

Older Persons Housing Study 2005 – Wigan Council 2005

Strategic Review of Sheltered Accommodation Interim Report April 2007 – Wigan Council 2007

Older Persons Housing Action Plan 2008 -10 – Wigan Council 2008

Wigan Housing Needs and Demand Study 2008 – David Coutie Associates 2008

Wigan House Conditions Survey 2005 – Michael Howard Associates 2005

Wigan Affordable Housing Strategy 2006 -10 – Wigan Council 2006

Affordable Housing Provision SPD – Wigan Council 2006

ALMO performance 2007/08 including Business and Delivery Plan 2008/09 – Wigan Council 2008

Private Sector Housing Strategy 2006 -10 – Wigan Council 2006

Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) – Annually to April 2008

Learning Disability Housing Strategy 2009 -13 – Wigan Council 2009

Draft WARM; Wigan Welcomes Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrants Strategy – Wigan Council 2009

What Makes Wigan Work; Worklessness Strategy – Wigan Council 2008

Children and Young People's Plan 2006 -2009 – Wigan Council 2006

Wigan Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Draft – Ove Arrup & Partners, 2009

Wigan Community Engagement Action Plan – 2008?

Regional/ Sub-regional

North West Of England Plan Adopted Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 – North West Regional Planning Authority 2008

Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report – Deloitte MCS Ltd/ GVA Grimley 2008

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National

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Strong and Prosperous Communities, Local Government White Paper – CLG 2006

National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Single Set of National Indicators – CLG 2007

Housing and Planning; the crucial role of the new local performance framework – CLG 2008

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing – CLG 2006

Heat and Energy Saving Strategy, Consultation Document – DECC 2009

Appendix 6: Glossary

Affordable Housing	Housing that is made available to eligible households at a cost low enough for those who cannot afford to resolve their housing needs within the general housing market, due to the relationship between income and housing costs. It can include social rented housing, shared ownership, shared equity and discounted sale housing.
Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)	A company that is employed to manage the Council's housing stock and which is owned by the Council but operates at "arms length" ie with a degree of autonomy. Wigan's ALMO is Wigan and Leigh Housing.
Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA)	A group made up from representatives of the ten local authority areas in Greater Manchester, including Wigan
Code for Sustainable Homes	A set of sustainable design standards for new homes, covering areas such as water conservation, waste and energy use. There are six levels within the code, each demanding higher performance standards.
Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)	The Government department that sets policy on Local Government, regeneration, housing and planning.
"Fit for purpose" criteria	The framework use by the Government for assessing the previous housing strategy, this no longer applies.
Fuel Poverty	Where a household cannot afford to adequately heat their home. This is defined as when energy costs are at least 10% of household income.
Greater Manchester Sub-region	A defined geographical area surrounding the city of Manchester, which includes Wigan
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	The new national housing and regeneration agency that was formed on 1 st December 2008. It incorporates the previous remit of the Housing Corporation, English Partnerships and parts of the CLG for planning and enabling regeneration, including investment in affordable housing.
Housing Corporation	The former agency with a remit in allocation funding for the development of affordable housing and the management and regulation of Registered Social Landlords. The Housing Corporation has now been replaced by the Homes and Communities Agency and the Tenant Services Authority.
Housing Market Area	A contained area in which the majority of housing moves tend to occur.
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	A measure of deprivation covering a number of areas such as health, incomes, education and housing. The index covers the whole country and allows comparison between local authority areas and between neighbourhoods within the local authority.
Local Area Agreement (LAA)	A three year agreement between the Council, key partners and Central Government that sets out priorities for the local area. The new LAA contains 34 indicators from the National Indicator Set that reflect the priorities and will be the focus of activities over the period of the agreement.
Local Development	A portfolio of updatable planning documents which set out

Framework (LDF)	the planning policies that will deliver the long term aims for the local authority.
Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	A partnership between the Council and its key partners, such as Police, health, voluntary and community groups. The partnership has overall responsibility for performance against the Sustainable Communities Strategy
Mixed Communities	Neighbourhoods that contain members from a range of social backgrounds including tenure, ethnicity, age and income.
Partners and Communities Together (PACT)	A method of working adopted by the Council whereby local communities are engaged in agreeing priorities and actions for the council and partners, such as the police, in the local area. The PACT process aims to increase accountability to the local community and to build ownership of residents in identifying and tackling problems
Place-making	Influencing the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the borough. The Council and Housing Strategy have a role in this.
Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	An independent organisation providing affordable housing, regulated by the Tenants Services Authority. These may be charitable organizations or provident societies. Also Known as Housing Associations.
Standard Assessment Process (SAP)	Approved method for assessing the energy efficiency of a home. The higher the rating the better the performance.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	An assessment of the characteristics and performance of the local housing market, including estimates of future need and demand for accommodation, that assists in planning future provision. The assessment should be conducted in line with Government guidance.
Super Output Area (SOA)	A defined small geographical area or neighbourhood used for data collection in relation to the IMD and Census.
Supporting People (SP)	A fund provided to the Council to deliver housing related support for vulnerable groups, such as older people and homeless people, promoting independent living.
Sustainable Communities	Successful, thriving and inclusive communities that people want to live in.
Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)	A strategy produced by the Local Strategic Partnership setting out a long term vision and priorities for the borough as a whole. Wigan's strategy is named "Vision 2026".
Tenant Services Authority (TSA)	The new regulatory agency for social housing, formed on 1 st December 2008, it takes over the previous remit of the Housing Corporation.
Township	A sub area of the borough with a distinct local identity. Wigan has ten "townships", township plans and forums are in place to identify and address local issues.
Zero Carbon	Representing the highest standards of environmental performance ie. level six of the Code for Sustainable Homes Energy use in the home contributes no additional CO2 to the environment.