

Wigan Council

Housing Strategy Review and Revised Action Plan 2005-2007

Background

The current Housing Strategy for Wigan covering the period from 2003 to 2007 was submitted to Government and this resulted in it being awarded "Fit for Purpose" status in October 2003. As part of this status the strategy document was designed to last 4 years without being re-submitted. However following significant changes in the local housing market and after consulting the Government Office (NW) it was agreed that whilst the overall Housing Strategy framework should remain, the Strategy Action Plan should be updated to take account of these new circumstances. This document sets out the reasons for the changes, the process undertaken and sets out the new action plan.

Reasons for the Housing Strategy Review

When the strategy was submitted it was the intention that the Action Plan would only be subject to minor amendment. However, this more extensive review has been necessary for the following reasons:-

- Recent changes in the housing market meaning that new needs are not fully addressed.
- Need to re-focus on areas not making good progress.
- The need to take account of the changing national / regional background as well as changing local policies e.g. new Community Plan.
- The need to take account of the better research / information available about the local housing situation (e.g. Stock Condition Survey, Housing Needs Study, SP Strategy etc.).

Review Process

The review has featured:-

- Agreement on the need for a review from all stakeholders.
- Commissioning of research and the collection of housing market information
- Discussion at the Housing Partnership conferences
 - December 2004 concentrating on affordability / housing markets / vulnerable people.
 - June 2005 concentrating on stock condition / older people's housing.
 - October 2005 concentrating on the proposed affordable housing policy.
- Detailed consideration of key elements of the strategy has occurred within the following frameworks.
 - Homeless Forum including the revision of the Homelessness Strategy.
 - Older Persons' Group including the development of the Older Persons' Housing Strategy.
 - Supporting people.
 - WALH Consultative Frameworks.
 - Joint work with the Planning within the Affordable Housing Policy.
 - Corporate discussions on Neighbourhood Renewal.

All this work has culminated in the development of a report providing the background to the Action Plan (Appendix A), and the Draft Revised Action Plan itself (Appendix B).

These documents were "challenged" within 3 workshops at the last Housing Partnership Event on 14 October. This proved successful with stakeholders from all aspects of housing providing feedback on the proposals and the Action Plan has been modified as a result of this consultation.

Main Review Proposals

The main features of the revised Action Plan are set out below, with the key themes of the existing Housing Strategy being retained namely People / Choice, Quality Homes and Neighbourhood Renewal.

People / Choice Theme

The largest changes are within the People / Choice theme with new action plans being created on affordability / choice, vulnerable / socially excluded groups and on BME groups. The existing plans on Homelessness, Older People, and Asylum Seekers are being updated. Details are outlined below.

Main Action Plan Changes People / Choice	Reason for Change	Evidence	Consultation
Updating and development of homelessness action plan.	Continuing increases in the problem of homelessness largely created by the increase in housing demand.	Homelessness Strategy Update. Housing Needs Study Update (2005)	Homelessness Forum
Update of the older person action plan.	Increase in our knowledge of older person issues in liaison with The Innovations Forum.	Older Person Housing Study.	Developed by inter-disciplinary Officer Group / Older Person's Forum which included extensive consultation Housing Partnership Workshop
Development of the asylum seeker action to include refugees and economic migrants.	Significant numbers of refugees and economic migrants arriving in the borough for the first time.	Knowledge of local accommodation providers.	Information based update to assess the size of the issue.
Creation of a new action plan on affordability / increasing choice.	Increasing evidence and concern over levels of housing affordability in Wigan	Housing Needs Surveys 2003 and 2005. Wigan's Changing Housing Markets	Discussions at the Housing Partnership and within workshops Consultation within UDP processes.
Creation of a new action plan on vulnerable / socially excluded groups.	Increasing evidence of service gaps within information / services for vulnerable / socially excluded groups.	Supporting People Strategy. Housing Needs Study (2003)	Consultation arrangements within Supporting People and in Housing Partnership workshops.
Creation of a new action plan on BME groups.	Evidence shows BME groups are small and extremely diverse in terms of culture and in geographical location. Need to gain further information about housing accessibility and possible	Housing Needs Study	Information based action plan to assess the extent of the issue.

isolation.

Of the changes within the People / Choice theme probably the most fundamental is the new emphasis on affordability / choice which reflects the dramatic changes in the local housing market.

Neighbourhood Renewal Theme

The Neighbourhood Renewal theme also proposes changes which look to develop a geographical aspect to the strategy aimed at tackling those communities in housing market decline and providing a more balanced affordable housing stock in more popular areas. Details are outlined below.

Main Action Plan Changes Neighbourhood Renewal	Reason for Change	Evidence	Consultation
Development of strategies aimed at intervention to balance the local housing market.	The recognition that to provide affordable good quality housing in line with demand requires knowledge and wider-ranging interventions to be effective, linking housing, planning and the local economic agenda together.	Wigan's Changing Housing Markets. Housing Needs Study Update 2005.	Discussions at the Housing partnership and within workshops. Corporate overview and scrutiny report on affordable housing.
To develop a geographically sensitive strategy aimed at tackling housing market decline.	Reflects the need to concentrate investment and intervention strategies at those areas suffering from housing market decline.	Wigan's Changing Housing Market Housing needs Study Update 2005 Regional & Sub-regional Housing Research (CURS)	Discussion at Housing Partnership and within workshops
To develop a geographically sensitive strategy aimed at providing a more balanced affordable housing stock in more popular areas.	Reflects the need to provide more affordable housing in certain parts of Wigan and to ensure development doesn't contribute to decline in adjacent areas.		Consultative procedures within UDP

Quality Homes Theme

The Quality Homes theme proposes less change due to the significant progress made on this theme in recent years. The main change is the inclusion of a sustainability action plan. Details are shown below:

Main Action Plan Changes Quality Homes	Reason for Change	Evidence	Consultation
Development of the decent homes (socially rented) action plan.	To update progress on the requirement for all council homes to be decent by 2010.	Stock Condition Survey 2005. WALH monitoring.	Strategy developed by WALH via the Stock Investment Group involving tenants.
Development of the decent homes (private) action plan.	To reflect on the evidence provided by the Stock	Stock Condition Survey 2005.	Discussions at the Housing Partnership and

	Condition Survey (2005) and to develop a new Private Housing Strategy.		within workshops. Consultation will take place on the new Private Sector Housing Strategy.
Development of the energy efficiency action plan.	To reflect the increasing need for sustainability.	Stock Condition Survey.	No major change in strategy implied.
Creation of a new sustainability action plan.	To reflect the increasing need for sustainability.	Wigan's Changing Housing Market UDP	Consultative procedures within UDP.

Enablers

Finally the Enablers designed to help implement the strategy have again largely been retained but with increased emphasis on empowered efficiency and procurement.

Main Action Plan Changes Enablers	Reason for Change	Evidence	Consultation
Updating of the enablers with regard to hard to reach groups, partnerships, good services accountability, research and staff.	To keep the enablers up-to-date.	WALH reviews Community Plan.	WALH reviews
To create a new action plan on maximising efficiency gains and to improve procurement.	To reflect the evidenced needs to improve procurement and maximise efficiency.	WALH Inspection Report Geysion Report. Audit Commission publications	WALH review mechanisms implicit in discussions on homelessness, Supporting People, Older People and Affordable Housing.

Conclusion

This document sets out the reasons why the Housing Strategy Action Plan needed updating, has set out the process of how the revisions were agreed and describes the main changes. Attached is the background report that outlines the changed nature of the housing situation in the Wigan Borough and the revised Action Plan itself.

Appendix A

Housing Strategy Action Plan Update

1 Introduction

In 2003 the Council developed a revised Housing Strategy that was accepted by government as being “fit for purpose”. This approved strategy was for the period 2003-07 and was supported by an Action Plan, which set out the key milestones and targets. Regular monitoring reports have been provided to the Housing Partnership and the Council, which have shown reasonable progress. However given the strategy is at its midpoint it is felt appropriate to update and review the Action Plan.

This note sets out the context to this revision in terms of:

- changing national / regional policy background
- changing local policy background
- changing local housing market / better information

It then proceeds to describe how this context has informed the ongoing policy development and how consultation / development of detailed strategies has resulted in a revised Housing Strategy Action Plan for the period of 2005-07.

2 Changing National / Regional Policy Background

National Position

The key national developments since 2003 have been:-

- The growing influence of the government’s “Sustainable Communities” strategy which sets out housing’s role within the wider aim of “creating communities people want to live in and which are economically prosperous, have decent affordable homes, safeguard the environment and which are well governed”.
- The Sustainable Communities strategy for the North West region sets out the challenges of the region and provides a picture that some areas suffer acute deprivation where demand for housing is poor, but in others demand continues to outstrip supply.
- The Government Barker Review (2004) set out the links between housing, the economy and planning to develop responsive balanced housing markets.
- Within “Homes for All (2005)” government set out proposals to tackle the different needs of high and low demand housing markets, to widen choice and to create housing for vulnerable groups.

Regional Position

Key developments within the regional position have been:

- Publication of the new Regional Housing Strategy that looks to deliver the national agenda of balancing housing markets in a NorthWest context. It sets out the following priorities:-
 - Urban renaissance
 - Affordable homes to maintain balanced communities
 - Decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods
 - Meeting the needs of communities and providing support for those who need it.
- A Regional Spatial Strategy and an Economic Strategy will also be developed with a merger between the Regional Housing Board and Planning arrangements likely.

- Development of the “Northern Way” which promotes a vision for the north as being a vibrant city region by 2025 with growth being encouraged within the main population areas.
- Proposed development of sub-regional housing strategies with the closer co-operation between councils on a wide spectrum of interests.

Key Learning Points

- Growing awareness of the need to provide an analysis based on local housing markets developing interventions to balance local markets.
- Key inter-relationships between housing, planning and the development of the local economy
- Need for different local strategies to be complementary, all aimed at delivering the local community plan.
- Growing national emphasis on home ownership initiatives and on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable groups, whilst meeting the decent homes target.
- Need for councils to work together to develop effective localised responses.

3 Changing Local Policy Background

The key local policy developments since 2003 have been:-

- The publication of Wigan’s new Community Plan 2005-2010. This sets the vision of “A place where people matter and you can afford to live the life you want”. This is to be achieved via 8 goals, each of which is complementary to the achievement of this vision. The housing goal “Provide access to decent homes in clean, safe neighbourhoods” is aimed at the need to provide accessible / affordable, good quality housing, to improve the quality of the local street scene and to reduce crime. Thus it combines the key issues of community safety and housing together.
- Besides the housing goal the Community Plan also focuses on developing a strong modern economy, on improving the health of vulnerable groups, transport and environmental quality, all of which are vital for a healthy local housing market. It also recognises the need to take positive action within Wigan’s most deprived areas.
- The Unitary Development Plan / Local Development Framework review has continued to develop since 2003 and it is hoped that it will be adopted in early 2006. This, combined with the changes in planning legislation and with the publication of the Regional Spatial Strategy will set the policy context for new development. A key element within this will be the determination of the new housing development limits for the borough.
- The local Economic Partnership has also recently published a new Economic Development Plan for the borough. This sets out the strategy for increasing employment and living standards in the borough and specifically addresses the needs of the more deprived areas.
- Since 2003 the new Supporting People Strategy has been developed. This provides an analysis of the housing support needs of the most vulnerable groups in the borough. It increases the knowledge of the needs of these vulnerable groups and sets out a clear action plan.
- The Council’s relationship with Wigan and Leigh Housing has developed since 2003. This is shown within the developing performance framework, the improved customer linkages, participation within wider strategies e.g. community safety and the successful investment programme that is bringing homes up to decent standards whilst engaging with the wider neighbourhood agenda via

improvements to the street scene. The recent Audit Commission inspection awarded a good 2 star score and criticisms aimed mainly at governance and efficiency are being addressed.

Key Learning Points

- Need to focus on the direct housing objectives of the revised Community Plan and to contribute to the wider agenda in order to carry forward its vision.
- Need for the Housing Strategy to increasingly link with the UDP / LDF and other strategies in order to provide a balanced local housing market.
- Need to extend information and the provision of services to vulnerable groups.
- Need to progress with Wigan and Leigh Housing over its future vision / role, and on efficiency matters.

4 Changing Local Housing Markets / Better Information

Since 2003 the level of information and the analysis available on housing in Wigan has improved significantly with the publication of:-

- Housing Needs Study (2003)
- Housing Needs Study Update (2005)
- Wigan's Changing Housing Markets (2004)
- Stock Condition Survey (2005)
- Older Person's Housing Study (2005)

The findings of this research can be found on the Council's web site and builds on previous research such as the WALH Stock Condition Survey and the Homelessness Study.

Besides these studies it is also clear that the local housing situation has undergone major changes since 2003 largely caused by increasing house prices driven by the national and local economy.

The main issues highlighted by this better information and by monitoring the local market are:-

- Wigan's housing market is relatively enclosed, with very high levels of housing movement occurring within the borough and relatively low levels of interaction with surrounding areas. There is also a very high loyalty to township with extremely localised sub-markets occurring especially within the older industrial settlements.
- Whilst the Regional Housing Strategy concludes that Wigan's housing market is currently relatively balanced in terms of its overall housing supply and demand. research has shown that most of the borough displays symptoms of a weak housing market. These indicators include relatively low prices, concentrations of socially rented / older terraced housing, community safety issues and of general deprivation. There has tended to be out-migration of residents from these areas mainly to other parts of the borough.
- However, there are other parts of the borough especially on the fringes that display indications of being a strong market such as high prices, choice in the housing available and relatively low levels of socially rented / older terraced housing. There has tended to be in-migration of residents to these areas both from other parts of the borough and from outside.
- The stock condition in Wigan has been shown to have improved significantly in recent years. For example the stock condition survey has shown that the level of unfitness dropped from 4.2% in 2000

to 2.1% in 2005, that the proportion of housing with poor SAP rating (below 40) fell from 26% in 2000 to 5% in 2005 and that the number of vacant houses dropped from 4% to 2.6% over the same period. However problems still arise from geographic concentrations of unsatisfactory housing within deprived communities, within the condition of privately rented housing and within certain vulnerable groups. e.g. older people.

- The stock condition survey has also showed that the council is in line to meet the PSA Target of all Council Housing meeting the decent home standard by 2010 and that the private sector target of 70% of vulnerable households in private housing to live in a decent home by 2010 is currently being met.
- Mirroring the national trend Wigan's house prices have increased significantly since 2003 with increases of over the last few years. These increases have had a dramatic effect on affordability with the two needs studies showing that whilst in 2003 there was a negligible need for more affordable housing by 2005 this had grown into a substantial shortfall. Whilst our prices remain relatively low within the region increased prices and a surge in housing demand has changed the current nature of the local housing market. This is despite the recent cooling of the housing market.
- This increase in prices has also altered the demand for social housing and homelessness. Up to 2003 the main issues facing social housing were of managing the decline in demand for housing. However since then the demand for social housing has increased creating shortages. Alongside this, levels of homelessness have dramatically increased with the number of presentations increasing by 50% over the past 3 years to over 3000 in 2004/05.
- The increase in the numbers of homelessness combined with the reduction in the socially rented supply caused by the right to buy and a reduction in the re-let rate means that the ratio of homeless acceptances to the number of socially rented houses available has increased from 17% in 2000/01 to 64% in 2004/05.
- This has led to a growth in the use of temporary accommodation and the need to develop homelessness services further.
- Both the Stock Condition Survey and Housing Needs Study have shown that whilst the conditions of people's housing are improving and people are relatively satisfied, there has been little change in people's perception of neighbourhood and place. For example people's concerns over anti-social behaviour and their local street scene are still strong, especially in areas of lower housing demand.
- The Older Person's Housing Study has shown the continued need to increase services to enable people to live in their own homes and for the need for greater numbers of adapted property. It has also highlighted the need to provide a greater range of housing options to people and to improve information to them.
- The Housing Needs Study has shown that Wigan's BME population is both very small and diverse in terms of its makeup and geographic spread. It also showed that the economic background of the BME population broadly mirrored the borough as a whole and that the usual housing issue of overcrowding and concentration within the poorest housing doesn't occur in the borough. The only significant housing variation being a greater proportion within rented accommodation, due to their high levels of mobility.

Key Learning Points

- Need for the Housing Strategy to link with the UDP and other strategies to help balance housing markets.
- Need for policies to be incorporated in the strategy that are geographically specific aimed at addressing the specific housing market issues in different parts of the borough.
- Need to continue to target resources at the worst housing in the borough to

increase decent homes standards. But for this to be increasingly targeted at the most deprived areas, tenure types and vulnerable groups to maximise its effect and for this activity to be linked to neighbourhood street scene and wider community improvements.

- To reduce shortages of housing via an Affordable Housing Policy within the UDP and other measures
- To increase our attention on meeting the needs of vulnerable groups especially in areas of current considerable stress due to the nature of our housing market.

5 Consultation / Developing the Action Plan

This analysis provides a very clear view of national, regional and local developments since 2003. It also sets out the changes in the local housing market backed by extensive up to date research information. However the key task is translating these changes into an effective action plan that maximises our impact on these changing issues.

In reality much of this work has already occurred within the discussions and detailed plans within the following groups and strategies. These have all occurred within the context of the better information and wider policy debates.

- Homelessness Forum/ Homelessness Strategy
- Older Person Group/ Older Person Housing Study
- Asylum Seekers Forum / Policy Framework
- Supporting People Strategy
- UDP / LDF Consultation
- Wigan & Leigh Housing Consultation Framework / Board
- Residents / Community Framework within Renewal Areas

However, much of the work for this update has been achieved by the Partnership itself over the past twelve months. Thus at the Partnership Event in November 2004 the Housing Market research was shared and the following workshop discussion came out strongly on the need to continue to invest within the areas of decline but that we should develop policies to address the growing affordability problems. It also identified the needs of key vulnerable groups such as the homeless and older people. At the event in July more detailed and specific proposals were discussed and commented on. This included approaches to affordable housing, how to further improve the housing stock after receiving information from the stock condition survey and the development of older person housing.

Thus the development of this overarching Housing Strategy Action Plan has been informed by excellent research information, by detailed work within the various sub strategies / related strategies, with the main thrust of the changes being guided by Partnership discussions.

6 Conclusion

These national, regional and local changes along with the ongoing discussions over the last 12 months have resulted in a revised Housing Strategy Action Plan. The key changes include

People / Choice

- 1 Major developments within the homelessness and older people action plans.
- 2 The development of the asylum seeker action plan to include refugees and economic migrants.

- 3 The creation of a new action plan centred on affordability and increasing choice.
- 4 The creation of a new action plan for other vulnerable / socially excluded groups.
- 5 The creation of a new action plan for BME groups.

Quality Homes

- 1 Development of the decent homes and energy efficiency action plans.
- 2 The creation of a sustainability action plan.

Neighbourhood Renewal

- 1 Development of this section to reflect the need to develop interventions aimed at balancing housing markets and widen the scope of the Action Plan to include wider issues e.g. UDP.
- 2 To develop a geographically sensitive strategy aimed at combating housing market decline in parts of the borough and in creating a more balanced affordable housing stock in other more popular areas.

Enablers

- 1 To update the enablers to the strategy.
- 2 The creation of a new action plan for efficiency.

Appendix B

Housing Strategy Action Plan (2005-07) Theme – People / Choice

What is the issue/ problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it (priorities / objectives)	Resources	Milestones / Targets		SM T _a
			2005/6	2006/7	
To tackle and minimise homelessness and the causes of homelessness in the borough	<p>The key objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate and facilitate joint working of all agencies in the provision of a homeless service • Preventing homelessness. • Ensuring there is sufficient accommodation for the homeless. • Ensuring support for the homeless or to prevent it. <p>This is being achieved within the Homelessness Strategy and major progress has occurred in the provision of services by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better co-ordination • development of a Web based directory • adopting quality standards • improving advice services • increasing the supply of temporary accommodation • successfully bidding for additional funding via Invest to Save process • launching a Bond scheme • doubling the level of support 	<p>Mainstream funding</p> <p>Homelessness funding</p> <p>NRF</p> <p>Invest to Save</p>	To implement the Homelessness Action Plan (2005/06)	To implement the Homelessness Action Plan (2006/07)	<p>To end of bed breakf 2007.</p> <p>To red level o homel</p> <p>To red use of accom quarte 2007 (2010)</p>

	<p>available to the homeless</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • successful inspection of services in 2005 • Key project / reduction in street homelessness • Appointment of a prevention officer. <p>Despite all this activity due to changes in the housing market, homelessness levels are still high.</p> <p>Within the recently revised Homelessness Strategy an increased emphasis is placed on the prevention of homelessness and specific action plans are in place for rough sleeper prevention and B&B reduction</p>				
<p>Ensuring older people have access to decent affordable homes and have the choice of remaining in their own home. Older people are particularly worried about home security, safety and support</p>	<p>The Older Person's Housing Study has set the following objectives:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable people to stay in their own home • To provide a choice of home for those who wish to move • Co-ordination of agencies in the provision of housing support and advice <p>This is being achieved by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking to make homes more suitable • looking to extend the existing schemes developed by Care & Repair and Age Concern to help people maintain their home 	<p>Mainstream monies Supporting People (SP) monies</p> <p>Other special programmes / bidding opportunities</p>	<p>5%</p> <p>To implement the Older Person's Housing Study's Action Plan for 2005/06</p>	<p>25%</p> <p>To implement the Action Plan for 2006/07</p>	<p>To increase the number of older people being able to maintain their own home by 2006</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via the Council's Housing Assistance Policy • Via participation in the borough- wide Older Person's Innovation • Forum to develop prevention strategies • Targeting older people within Community Safety initiatives. • Sheltered housing reviews of service • Taking advantage of bidding opportunities e.g. POPPS. • Looking to promote greater diversity in provision • Encouraging partnership links to help develop links with advice agencies to provide better housing information 				
<p>Ensure access to affordable homes</p>	<p>Given the recent changes in the housing market, the Housing Needs Update 2005 and discussions within the Housing Partnership have shown that the borough now has a shortage of affordable housing. The key objective is to increase the supply of affordable housing and ensure the current supply is used efficiently.</p> <p>Progress is being made by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of a choice based lettings system • Measures to reduce voids within the socially 	<p>Mainstream monies</p> <p>Homelessness monies</p> <p>Section 106 monies</p> <p>Housing Corporation monies</p> <p>Private Sector</p>	<p>Review the choice based letting system</p> <p>Introduce the Affordable Housing Policy within the Unitary Development Plan / Local Development Framework.</p> <p>Maximise RSL nominations</p> <p>Introduce Private Sector Leasing schemes</p> <p>Consider affordable housing schemes which involve the flexible use of</p>	<p>Consider the government's request for wider Choice-Based Lettings systems</p> <p>To fully implement the Affordable Housing Policy</p> <p>Introduce Accredited Private Landlords to the Property Shop.</p> <p>Pilot the use of Empty Homes Management Orders</p>	<p>To ensure voids in council are below 1.4%</p> <p>To increase the supply of Affordable Housing by 530 by 2010</p>

	<p>rented stock</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The creation of affordable housing via Empty Homes Challenge Fund Adoption of a Bond scheme Linking with local private investors <p>Given the worsening of the affordability position a range of further measures are being developed including an Affordable Homes Policy and various further measures.</p>		<p>council resources.</p> <p>Bid for Housing Corporation allocation for new property</p>		
<p>Ensuring Wigan's BME population have fair access to decent and affordable housing</p>	<p>Our key objective is to ensure fair access for BME groups to decent and affordable housing.</p> <p>Our research has shown that Wigan's BME Community is relatively small and very diverse. They have similar levels of income as the rest of the population and are not geographically concentrated. In housing terms the only distinguishing feature is that a higher proportion are within the rented sector.</p> <p>Thus typical BME housing issues found within the region, of economic deprivation, overcrowding and geographic concentration within poorer housing areas are not present in Wigan.</p> <p>Key policy measures are therefore to ensure fair access to housing and services and to explore possible issues of</p>	<p>Mainstream monies</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>✓</p> <p>To extend links with the BME network to establish more detailed awareness of issues in this area.</p> <p>To work with WALH to ensure monitoring systems on key housing services are in operation.</p> <p>To participate in wider community cohesion policies</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>Wigan to meet 3 of the Equality Standard 2007.</p> <p>WALH meet 1 of the Standard 2007.</p> <p>WALH meet to revise of Guide for Rental Housing 2006</p>

	<p>isolation.</p> <p>Our key objective of housing and assimilating asylum seekers is implemented via the Policy Framework for asylum seekers. This has been successful at ensuring asylum seekers are appropriately dispersed and assimilated. However evidence now points to significant new issues arising from refugees and economic migrants.</p>	<p>Mainstream monies</p>	<p>To research the issues being faced by refugees and economic migrants Renegotiate with NASS re accommodation contract</p>	<p>To develop policies to tackle key issues faced by refugees and economic migrants</p>	
<p>We know that significant gaps in provision occur within a number of vulnerable/ socially excluded groups</p>	<p>The key objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to develop a full picture of the needs and gaps in housing services for various vulnerable / socially excluded groups • to use this knowledge to develop relevant housing and support services for these groups <p>Knowledge of both the need and service provision for vulnerable / socially excluded groups has developed considerably over the last couple of years</p> <p>Especially relevant has been the Needs Survey and the development of the Needs Analysis within the Supporting People Strategy</p> <p>From this analysis joint action plans within Supporting People exist for the following groups</p>	<p>Mainstream monies</p> <p>Supporting People</p>	<p>To carry out the actions identified within the Supporting People Needs Analysis for 2005/06.</p> <p>Evaluate govt guidance on needs analysis for travellers</p> <p>To develop funding bids in support of prioritised gaps in services.</p>	<p>To carry out the actions identified within the Supporting People Needs Analysis for 2006/07</p> <p>To carry out a needs analysis for travellers on a subregional basis.</p> <p>To develop the Supporting People Needs Analysis and to extend its scope to include all housing issues for vulnerable /socially excluded groups</p>	<p>To inc the nu suppo indepe living t by 200</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ex offenders • people with alcohol problems • people with drug problems • people with HIV • people with learning difficulties • people with mental health problems • people with physical disabilities • teenage parents • travellers • women at risk of domestic violence • young people at risk 				
<p>To try to ensure people with disability receive the best possible adaptation service</p>	<p>The key objectives are to provide an efficient adaptation service to those in greatest need and within the resources available.</p> <p>There has been a major increase in the demand for adaptations within Wigan and this has exceeded the resources available. This is especially true in the private sector.</p> <p>Whilst additional funding has been obtained it has been necessary to prioritise applications for the agency service based on the level of need of the application.</p>	<p>DFG allocation Mainstream monies</p>	<p>To seek further resources from Government to meet the increased need. To continue to look at different options of procurement in an effort to reduce costs.</p>	<p>To implement the findings of the Govt review into DFGs</p>	<p>To shc waiting all high needs applica 20% b</p>

Housing Strategy Action Plan (2005-07) Theme – Quality Homes

What is the issue/ problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it (priorities / objectives)	Resources	Milestones / Targets		SM/ Tar
			2005/6	2006/7	
Below quality standards within the council / RSL stock	<p>The key objective in this area is to ensure all social housing meets the decency standard by 2010.</p> <p>The programme to meet the decent homes standard is well established with additional monies secured via the ALMO route in 2002.</p> <p>It was devised in liaison with tenants and whilst its prime focus has been to meet the decent homes standard it has taken account of local deprivation factors, the need for environmental improvements and community safety issues. It has also taken advantage of improved procurement practices via partnering arrangements.</p>	<p>Additional £137 over 4 years.</p> <p>Ongoing WALH resources</p>	<p>18% non-decent</p> <p>93% satisfaction</p> <p>To adjust the programme in light of available resources / decent homes target and the need for wider estate works.</p> <p>Assess effect of health rating system on decent homes target</p> <p>To independently check progress against the decent homes target via Stock Condition Survey</p>	<p>12% non-decent</p> <p>95% satisfaction</p> <p>To update information on RSL stock condition to ensure decent homes target met.</p> <p>WALH Stock Condition Survey to be carried out to define future WALH programmes to maintain decency</p>	<p>For all council housing meet the decency standard 2008. (9)</p> <p>For residential satisfaction within the improve works to exceed</p>
Below quality standards within the Private Sector Housing Stock.	<p>The key objective is to maximise the proportion of decent housing in the private sector and ensure we meet the government target of 70% of homes with a vulnerable person meeting the decency standard by 2010.</p> <p>Stock Condition Survey results have shown the significant improvements in the condition of the private housing stock over the past 5 years. This has been maximised by our policies aimed at targeting help to the most deprived areas and vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>Mainstream allocations (£3M - £4M per annum)</p>	<p>74%</p> <p>85%</p> <p>To revisit the Private Sector Housing Strategy and RRO to target resources on the key areas identified in the stock condition survey.</p> <p>To adopt the Housing Health and Safety Rating system.</p>	<p>76%</p> <p>87%</p> <p>To fully implement the new strategy and policies</p> <p>To assess implications of the HHSR on the Decent Homes Target (adjust if necessary)</p>	<p>For 76% private housing vulnerable person the decent homes standard 2007</p> <p>For residential satisfaction with Private Sector to exceed by 2007</p>

	<p>However, problems in the condition of properties remain within</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • private rented sector • specific localities • the oldest stock • vulnerable groups such as older people 				
<p>Too many houses are cold, fuel poverty and excess winter deaths are a consequence.</p>	<p>The main objective is to improve the energy efficiency across all tenures and targeting those with a SAP rating of less than 30</p> <p>This is being achieved via:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in the energy efficiency of Council housing occurring within the stock investment programme. • Improvements in the energy efficiency of private sector housing via the Council's RRO Policy. • Signposting / targeting households in the private sector to gain help from Energy conservation grants / advice. • Via improved training e.g. staff being energy advisers • Via improved benefit advice work? <p>The Stock Condition Survey 2005 has confirmed the dramatic improvement in the energy efficiency of the stock over the last 5 years but warns of increasing fuel poverty as energy prices rise.</p>	<p>Mainstream monies</p> <p>Energy efficiency monies</p>	<p>17%</p> <p>62</p> <p>1%</p>	<p>18%</p> <p>63</p> <p>1%</p>	<p>To achieve energy efficiency savings the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA)</p> <p>For Council housing achieving a rating of 30 or above by 2007</p> <p>For private sector to reduce number of properties with a SAP rating of less than 30 by 2007.</p>
<p>Ensure works to the existing stock and the development of new housing is environmentally sustainable.</p>	<p>The key objective is to minimise the effect on the environment of the existing housing stock and any new housing development.</p> <p>This is being achieved</p>		<p>To introduce the Design Guide to Residential Development into the UDP</p> <p>To reassess</p>		<p>To be a target in the UDP to achieve 80% of development on brownfield sites (2005-2016)</p>

	<p>via:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imposition of tight standards within the UDP for new development within the construction / maintenance, location and running costs of new housing• Maximising the use of brownfield sites for new housing.• Energy efficiency improvements in existing stock• Building in improvements in the construction / maintenance within refurbishment activity in both the public / private sector• Ensuring materials are procured from sustainable sources.		practises within Private Sector review		
--	--	--	--	--	--

Housing Strategy Action Plan (2005-07) Theme – Neighbourhood Renewal

What is the issue/ problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it (priorities / objectives)	Resources	Milestones / Targets		SMAF Target
			2005/6	2006/7	
We need to fully understand our local housing market, its influences and how it interacts with surrounding areas.	<p>The key objective in this area is to ensure that Wigan's housing market is as balanced as possible and caters for the needs of all its residents.</p> <p>To achieve this we have:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • been fully involved in the national, • regional and sub-regional housing context • extended our knowledge of own housing markets and their inter-relationships both within and outside of the borough via research • worked in a wider way with planners and economic development to maximise impact • developed broad intervention policies aimed at balancing the local market. 	Mainstream monies	<p>Incorporate the analysis of the housing needs survey update and new sub-regional research within our market analysis</p> <p>Participate in the development of the sub – regional housing strategy</p>	<p>To carry out a Housing Needs analysis in 2007</p> <p>Incorporate the sub – regional research findings into the strategy</p>	Maintain assessment of a relatively balanced housing market with the 2007 Regional Housing Strategy
The borough still has relatively low house prices within the region and there is still the potential of market decline in certain local housing markets.	<p>The key objective is to ensure that market decline in certain housing markets is prevented and indeed is reversed.</p> <p>To achieve this we are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looking to minimise the % of empty homes of all tenures via such measures as the Empty Homes Challenge Fund • Investing in Council housing and ensuring that issues 	<p>ALMO monies.</p> <p>Mainstream allocations.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Renewal Fund</p>	<p>2.2%</p> <p>54%</p> <p>Review approach and areas covered within the Private Sector Housing Strategy. Taking note of wider neighbourhood and health inequality factors</p> <p>To extend links</p>	<p>2.1%</p> <p>54%</p> <p>Pilot the use of Empty Home Management Orders. Implement the revised strategy</p> <p>Evaluate private landlord low demand powers</p>	<p>Reduce level of empty homes over months to 2.1% by 2007.</p> <p>For the period gap of 54 property (access point) between townships to widen by 2007</p>

	<p>of community safety and environmental issues are dealt with.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing an Area Based initiative to tackle causes of decline within a Council housing area (Community Safety led) • Protecting and maintaining older private sector housing by concentrating resources within 8 renewal areas incorporating visual, environmental and community safety initiatives e.g. block improvement, alleygating etc. • Working with private landlords in terms of an accreditation scheme / enforcement of standards • Looking to discourage development that replicates existing local housing profile and encouraging development that extends housing choice within areas. • Looking to intervene where housing is unlikely to have a viable future. • Intervening within housing to help reduce the levels of health inequality in the borough. 		<p>with the Community Safety Team to reinforce work on neighbourhoods</p> <p>To extend links with health on health inequality issues</p>		
<p>The borough has a number of popular localised housing markets which don't provide the range of affordable property needed and</p>	<p>The key objective is to try to ensure that areas of strong demand provide the range of housing needed by their communities and to attempt to restrict development which could undermine adjacent housing areas.</p>		<p>11%</p> <p>Introduce the affordable housing policy within the UDP</p>	<p>11%</p> <p>To develop an overall Affordable Housing Strategy and explore options to maximise affordable</p>	<p>Ensure Wigan's affordability index rises 11% more affordable than the regional average</p>

<p>where further development could undermine adjacent housing areas.</p>	<p>To achieve this we are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking to develop affordable housing in these areas • Looking to influence the type of housing developed in these areas • Ensuring that new development sites are not overly concentrated within popular areas. 			<p>provision where it is most needed</p> <p>Formally adopt the Unitary Development Plan / Local Development Framework in 2006</p>	
--	--	--	--	---	--

Housing Strategy Action Plan (2005-07) Theme – Enablers

What is the issue/ problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it (priorities / objectives)	Resources	Milestones / Targets		SM Ta
			2005/6	2006/7	
Ensuring communities participate in particular hard to reach groups	<p>Objective is to maximise participation within the housing process</p> <p>This objective is taken forward via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WALH resident involvement on its Board, investment groups, residents' forum and estate inspections. • Continued development of the Housing Partnership and forums for hard to reach groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Older People – Asylum seekers – Homelessness – Other vulnerable groups 		<p>Ensure residents participate in the WALH review over its future role</p> <p>To evaluate involvement within the existing framework to identify gaps in participation</p>		
Developing and maintaining partnerships to improve the quality of life particularly of those who are socially excluded or are in poverty.	<p>Significant progress has been achieved in developing and maintaining partnerships within all the housing stakeholders.</p> <p>This has been especially true within homelessness and for vulnerable groups via the Supporting People Process</p> <p>Progress has also occurred in developing close links with key related partnerships such as Community Safety and Health and with key departments such as Planning in the development of area based housing initiatives.</p>		To form an Affordable Housing Sub Group within the Housing Partnership		
Ensuring residents receive the best possible	<p>Significant progress has been achieved in this area via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection (2 star) 		<p>83%</p> <p>Carry out the recommendations</p>	85%	For 85' Council tenants satisfie

services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BV Reviews • Self-assessment against CPA • Performance Monitoring of the ALMO • Chartermark status for both the Council and WALH • Quality Assurance systems for Housing strategy 		of the recent AC inspection		the Ho Manag service 2007.
Accountability telling people what we plan and how we perform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Strategy published on the web • Progress reported half yearly. • Regular newsletters • WALH reports and tenant literature. 				
Robust solutions are developed based on sound research option appeal and risk management	Continue to use the strategic management process to systematically identify gaps, develop solutions, implement and monitor performance To test new research and the above process via discussion at the Housing Partnership		Stock Condition Survey Housing Needs update. Supporting People - Needs Action Plan	Evaluate new Sub Regional research Supporting People - Needs Action Plan.	
Ensure we have well skilled staff with the key competencies for delivering the best possible service.	Continuing to use Investors in People to systematically assess and develop staff.				
Ensure we maximise efficiency and improve procurement	Significant progress has been made in this area with the use of partnering contracts within WALH works Within private sector policies the use of combined loan/grant and in innovative policies such as the Empty Homes Challenge Fund show progress.	ALMO Monies Mainstream Monies	WALH Access to Services Review WALH programme of contracting bought in services Private Sector Review	Evaluation of VFM across all housing services and develop a prioritised action plan	