

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION DEPARTMENT**

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Date July 2003

Dear Sir/Madam

Housing Strategy 2002 to 2007

Thank you for the interest you have shown in the Borough's housing issues. Attached is a copy of the Housing Strategy, where we look at the Borough's housing problems and set out how we will tackle them over the next five years.

The document is written for three audiences:

- the Government, who assess the Strategy to ensure it is "fit for purpose";
- our partners, such as Residents' Associations, the voluntary sector, Housing Associations and the Police; and
- the residents of the Borough.

Regrettably, the document is too long for most residents, but this is unavoidable if we are to meet the Government's "fit for purpose" standard.

To make the information in the document more accessible to our partners and residents, we have taken the following steps:

- The Strategy is set out in a diagram on a single page (see page 43).
- There is a summary providing a "bird's eye" view of the main points of the Strategy on pages 1-3.
- The Strategy document follows the pattern of:
 - what are the Borough's problems (pages 4-8);
 - how well have we done so far in tackling these problems - our past performance (pages 9-20); and
 - what we plan to do next - the future (pages 22-30).

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2002-2003
Neighbourhood Renewal



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



- Each section begins with a box providing an outline of what it is about and ends with a box listing the main points. We suggest you read these two boxes first. Then, if you want to find out more, dip into the main text.
- We know from talking to you that many found the traditional means of referencing a document confusing. The Citizens Panel and other research also tell us that residents best access information through the local newspaper, leaflets and increasingly the Internet. So this year, to make the Strategy more accessible, we are:
 - putting a summary of the Strategy in local newspapers;
 - publishing a “Plain English” leaflet;
 - using the Internet to make background documents available, such as the findings from our research into housing needs and important policies on asylum seekers, homelessness and housing assistance - see:
<http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp/eh/housing/hs.htm>
 - holding two Housing Partnership events a year, which are open to everyone. The first event, in May of each year, will look at the Borough’s housing issues and identify where the Strategy needs improving. The second event, in November of each year, will look at how well we are performing. We were pleased to see over 50 people attending this year’s May event and that 82% were either satisfied or very satisfied with it and felt the presentations were jargon free. We have written to those who attended telling them how the Strategy has been improved to include issues they saw as important, such as on crime and anti-social behaviour.

If you want the Strategy explained to you, want more information, or want to come to future Housing Partnership events, please contact Anees Mank - telephone 01942 827446 or e-mail a.mank@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Yours faithfully

David Molyneux

Councillor David Molyneux
Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Housing



WIGAN BOROUGH HOUSING STRATEGY 2002 TO 2007

Produced by Wigan Borough Housing Partnership

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Date: July 2003

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SECTION 1: SUMMARY

This section summarises the Borough's Housing Strategy document. It sets out the problems and issues, explains what we have achieved so far and then sets out what it is we seek to achieve by 2007.

Wigan Borough and its housing – the problems and issues

- Wigan is a large metropolitan borough with a population of 301,417 (Census 2001).
- Despite restructuring the local economy, multiple deprivation remains a problem.
- There are 127,156 dwellings, 72% are owner occupied, 21.5% are Council owned (HCS 2000).
- The most pressing housing needs issues revolve around homelessness and vulnerable people.
- Our stock condition survey 2000 reveals 5% (about 5,000 homes) are still unfit. £48.5 million is needed to tackle unfitness and urgent disrepair in the private sector.
- 41% of Council homes fail to meet the Government's Decency Standard. Our stock condition survey identifies an investment of £274 million is needed.
- The last two decades have seen high levels of house building (850 to 950 each year).
- Despite recent price rises, affordable homes are available for both renting and purchase.
- Our research also reveals decline and abandonment to be a significant challenge, with over 20,000 socially rented dwellings in areas classified as "hotspots" or "vulnerable".
- The causes of decline revolve around high levels of new house building, crime and disorder and the street scene ("Crime and Grime").

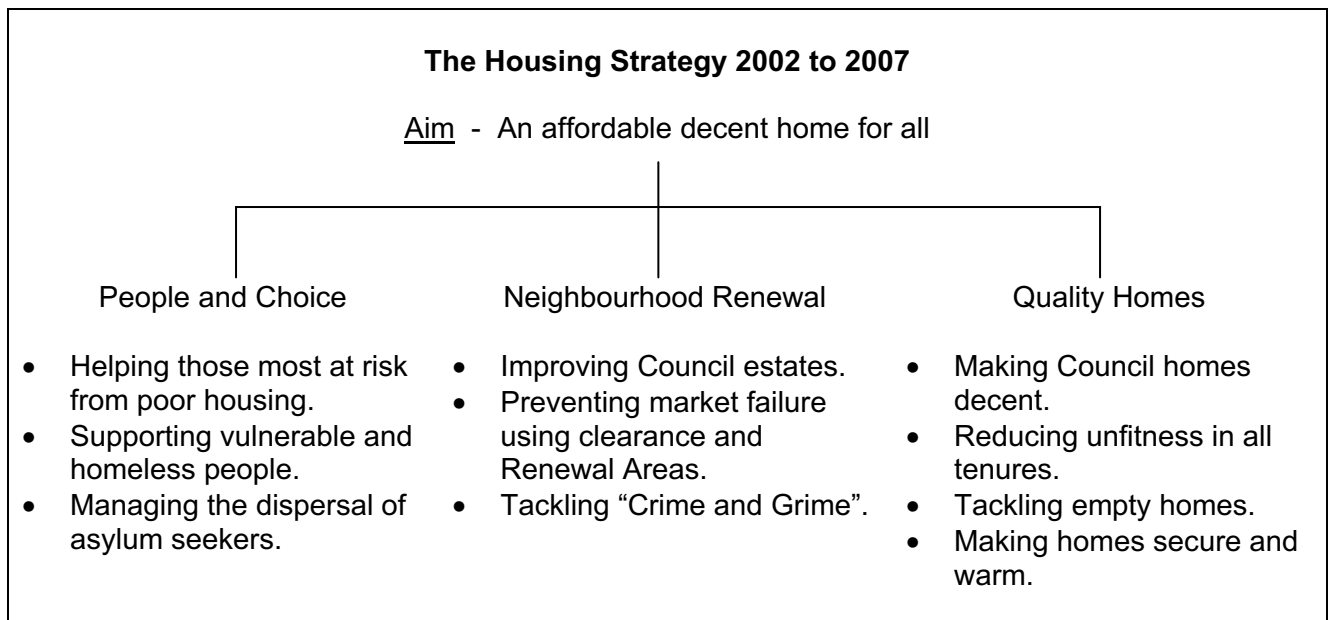
The Borough's policies, structures and past performance

- Both the Government and Wigan Council's policies and plans are helpful to addressing our local housing issues.
- The causes of decline such as community safety and street scene are included in the Council's service priorities and this is reflected in the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and other high level plans.
- The Housing Strategy feeds into and is influenced by these high level Council plans and strategies.
- The Housing Partnership is an important player in the Local Strategic Partnership and the Leader's Forum. It has set itself clear priorities for the next three years covering both Government policy and important local issues.
- The Council has separated its strategic housing role and continues to use a strategic planning process to develop robust solutions involving the Housing Partnership, stakeholders, residents and tenants.
- Our major achievements include establishing an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO). Having secured a "Good" (2 star) Best Value assessment, the Council will have an additional £137 million over the next four years to bring the Council housing stock up to the Decency Standard.

- Wigan Council is a good performer. It has been rated as Excellent under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework, has achieved Beacon Council status for its approach to Neighbourhood Renewal and has the Charter Mark for all of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (which includes the Council's strategic and retained housing functions).
- Reflecting Wigan Council's good overall performance, Wigan's housing services have emerged as top performing under the rigorous Best Value framework with all housing services having been rated as "Excellent" (3 star) or "Good" (2 star). The reality checks by Inspectors revealed many strengths, including effective mechanisms for engaging tenants and residents.
- There are areas for improvement, our priorities are our services to the most vulnerable (including Supporting People services and adaptations), homelessness services, Council house repairs, certain Best Value Performance Indicators and Neighbourhood Renewal.

The Housing Strategy 2002 to 2007

- Wigan Borough's Housing Strategy has been developed within the context of the Community Plan, a good understanding of the Borough's housing circumstances and of local capabilities.



- The Housing Strategy is summarised in a single diagram shown above and includes:
 - an aim of having an accessible affordable decent home for all by 2010;
 - strategic objectives to enable us to measure progress;
 - three themes clearly linked to the Community Plan of "people and choice", "neighbourhood renewal" and "quality homes";
 - clarity on the big problems we face and priorities on how these should be addressed, including further work on supporting the most vulnerable and black and minority ethnic groups;
 - key "enablers" to ensure essential management processes are in place to deliver the Strategy and the best possible services;
 - a five year Action Plan which is built into annual business/service planning processes and performance management systems to ensure delivery and continuous improvement;

- realistic investment plans, where we only make commitments if there are resources to deliver, such as in reducing unfit levels; and
 - continued partnership working with residents, Registered Social Landlords, the private sector and others on issues such as regeneration, supporting people and community safety.
- The year (2002/03) has seen considerable consultation around housing issues and focus on hard to reach groups. Examples of the consultation include:
 - the annual Housing Partnership convention (with workshops);
 - the Older Persons' Forum;
 - introduction of a Homelessness Forum and Asylum Seekers Forum;
 - Council tenant involvement on the Arms Length Management Organisation ("ALMO") Boards being extended into working groups to formulate priorities and programmes for "ALMO" resources;
 - using the new township framework to develop neighbourhood plans;
 - using consultants to survey residents and hard to reach groups on issues such as housing need and homelessness; and
 - using the Citizens' Panel to better understand how residents best access Council information, plus assessing the community views on the "Crime and Grime" agenda.

However, gaps still remain, notably around areas of decline and homelessness. We also want to improve people's access to and influence of this Housing Strategy.

KEY POINTS

Wigan Borough's Housing Strategy looks at the problems affecting all housing tenures. It then looks at the past to understand what we were trying to achieve and how well we did. With this understanding of problems and our capabilities, we then set out what it is we seek to achieve over the next 5 years (the strategic aim and objectives) and how we will do it (the Action Plan). Objectives and targets are set so that we can see how well we are doing year by year.

SECTION 2: WIGAN BOROUGH AND ITS HOUSING - THE PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

This section provides information on Wigan Borough – its size, location, population and economy.

The section then moves on to look at the extensive research that has already been undertaken on the current state of housing. It covers key issues such as tenure, the housing market, affordability, housing need, homelessness and stock condition.

The section finishes with the big local issues of declining estates and low demand and identifies the issues causing this decline such as community safety and the street scene (“Crime and Grime”).

Context

Wigan Borough is large, some 188 square kilometres (77 square miles) in size with a population of 301,417 (Census 2001). Most people live in our fourteen towns, which are located midway between the North West Region’s strategic centres of Manchester and Liverpool but which retain a close affinity with Lancashire. This location and changes in the sub-regional housing market are resulting in the Borough increasingly becoming a location for commuters. The key facts about the Borough, its housing condition and needs are set out in Appendix 1.

Our industrial past was built around coal mining and textiles and part of this legacy still impacts on us both directly, with subsidence damaging our housing, and indirectly through deprivation and social exclusion. Recent years have seen a major restructuring of the Borough’s economy. Our regeneration partnerships have helped revive the economy, assisted by European and Government Funds. This has led to a fall in unemployment and a more skilled and qualified workforce. This has meant more people can afford to buy their own homes and has led to a lower demand for social rented housing. However, after years of falling demand, we have seen an increasing demand for Council housing over the past 12 months. Wigan Borough is still the 57th most deprived Borough in the country (of the 387 boroughs) and this impacts on housing through issues such as low incomes, ill-health and multiple deprivation which are concentrated on Council housing estates, as shown by the research undertaken by the Anti-Poverty Strategy Group.

Housing Tenure

The total housing stock is 127,156 (HCS 2000) and, as Figure 1 shows, the local housing market is dominated by the owner occupied and Council sectors.

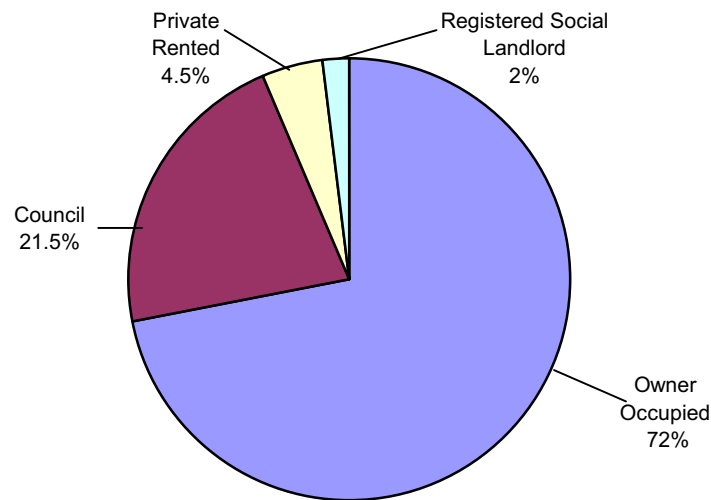


Figure 1: Housing Stock by Tenure (HCS 2000)

Housing Market Factors/Need

The main factors impacting on the local housing market are:

- High levels of new house building for owner occupation, with between 850 to 950 new homes built each year over the last two decades.
- The local housing market remains relatively weak. Latest market data reveals Wigan has one of the lowest property values in Greater Manchester and the North West. This appears to be a key factor in the emerging commuter market. However, our concern has increased on the potential of market failure in a few areas, notably former coal mining communities. This is confirmed by the latest research on the subject ("Changing Housing Markets in Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire" - CURS 2003).
- Whilst house prices in Wigan have risen, the increase has been lower than the regional average increase. Furthermore, the rate of increase is expected to slow and homes are expected to remain affordable in many areas of the Borough.
- Unemployment has reduced and whilst local earnings remain relatively low, many households in full-time employment can afford to buy their own home.
- Rent levels in public rented housing remain relatively low and affordable. Low demand continues for parts of the stock, reflecting the pattern revealed in the North West Region Housing Statement 2001 update and other research ("Changing Housing Markets and Urban Regeneration in the M62 corridor" - CURS).
- Within the sub regional context there is a modest level of net migration into Wigan, with the Borough's good transport links having led to the emergence of a "commuter market". Unfortunately, Wigan also tends to lose significant numbers of young people.
- There is a distinct pattern of existing households remaining within their current township and house moving tends to be localised (i.e. within neighbourhoods) creating discrete local housing markets.
- The key determinants of the popularity of estates are image and reputation, based on perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour and a poor street scene.

The Council's research reveals some problems of overcrowding. In 2002 the Housing Partnership's Homelessness Forum commissioned Salford University to undertake baseline research into homelessness. This revealed that after years of steady decline, homelessness presentations were on the increase, due largely to relationship breakdowns and young people. There was also a severe shortage of emergency/direct access and supported special needs facilities for specific client groups – those with mental health and drug/alcohol related problems, ex-offenders and those

with chaotic lifestyles. The Homelessness Review also established links with the hard to reach. As a consequence the Council has now revised its figures on the numbers "roofless" from 2 to 60. Some of this increase appears to have occurred recently and may be due to the movement of homeless people out of the regional conurbations.

Thanks to close partnership working between Housing, Social Services and Health agencies, good information exists on the needs of vulnerable people. The Community Care Housing Strategy predicts the level of older people requiring support will remain constant up to 2005, after this demand will increase. The needs of other vulnerable groups have also been identified, including people with mental health problems, disabilities, substance misuse, HIV / AIDS, vulnerable women, vulnerable young people (including pregnant teenagers), Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and asylum seekers.

The Government recognises Wigan Council has made significant progress in implementing the Supporting People Framework and the Strategy has been classified as "Excellent". Work is well advanced on mapping services and the existing information on needs is being supplemented with findings from the 2003 Housing Needs Survey. This survey was designed to provide information on the needs of vulnerable households and the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community. This research is being shared with the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy group to improve sub-regional information and assists in determining the key issues which require cross boundary working.

Housing Conditions

The Housing Partnership also has excellent information from surveys in 2000 and 2001 on housing conditions and on the social, economic and health status of households. The 2000 survey also included information on the causes of area decline such as crime and the street scene environment.

The surveys reveal some £48.5 million is required to address unfitness and serious disrepair in the 5,000 unfit homes in the private sector. They also revealed disproportionate levels of unfitness, disrepair and cold conditions in:

- certain wards which have clusters of pre-1919 terraced housing,
- the homes occupied by vulnerable (e.g. older) people, and
- the private rented sector.

The public rented housing stock condition survey 2001 conducted by FPD Savills revealed an investment of £274 million was needed over the next ten years, with 41% of the stock of 26,500 not meeting the Government's Decency Standard.

Overall Conclusions and the main problems facing us

At present affordable housing is available for those who wish to own their own homes or rent. The main housing issues within the Borough are:

- crime, anti-social behaviour and street scene issues making neighbourhoods unpopular to live in;
- low demand in certain public sector estates;
- the potential for decline in pre-1919 terraces around the town centres and in former coalfield communities;
- homelessness;
- the needs of vulnerable people; and
- housing conditions and investment needs in both the public and private sector.

The biggest concern is the potential for decline and abandonment. From elsewhere in the North of England, it is known that the failure to address these at an early stage has major implications for local communities and the solutions are extremely expensive. The CURS Study (2003) identifies 53,000 properties in Wigan as being at risk from this process, split equally between the public and private sectors.

As part of our Best Value on housing we have worked hard to understand what causes the decline and what then happens to neighbourhoods in decline. These findings are contained in the Council's report "Halting the Spread of Decline – an evidence based approach". This provides us with a good insight into the key issues and a range of indicators have been established to enable hot spots and vulnerable areas for both the private sector and council stock to be identified and monitored. The biggest causes of decline revolve around poverty, crime and a poor street scene – what we call the "Crime and Grime" agenda.

Reflecting the data available, different indicators are used to identify decline in the private and council stocks. On the private sector, use is made of house sale prices and levels of empty homes. Within this sector the current picture is:

- 4 Renewal Areas ... which were either hot spots or vulnerable at declaration - only one now remains vulnerable (Ince).
- 3 "hot spots" ... one in Abram and two in areas adjoining the Firs Renewal Area; and
- 3 vulnerable areas (Norley plus north and west of Leigh Town Centre – estimated 2,000 to 3,000 dwellings).

The distribution of asylum seekers within the Borough has emerged as a significant issue. Private sector housing providers have acquired low cost properties, mostly pre-1919 terraced houses or houses in multiple occupation in areas vulnerable to decline. Combined with the high proportion of young male asylum seekers, this has caused instability within some communities and confrontation between groups of young males. This has further weakened local housing markets to a critical point where intervention is essential to avoid market collapse in at least one area of the Borough.

On Council estates, ten indicators are used to identify decline. These include voids, property crime data and tenants' satisfaction with their estate. The 121 Council estates have been ranked into "hotspots", "vulnerable" and "secure" and through this process the changing circumstances at estate level are constantly monitored. Almost all these estates have had a disposal or demolition programme. Despite the areas of unpopularity, most of these estates also have substantial areas which are more settled and popular. There are firm indications that the demand for Council housing is strengthening, enabling a suspension in the disposal and demolition programme. However, the Housing Partnership conferences in 2002 and 2003 were firmly of the view that further work is needed to tackle the causes of decline – the "Crime and Grime" agenda.

The main conclusion is that, for neighbourhoods to remain viable and offer a good quality of life, the Housing Partnership must give greater emphasis in preventing market decline by working with and supporting other Borough Partnerships, particularly in tackling the causes of decline. The key issues where linkages are required to bend mainstream programmes and develop joint initiatives have been identified (see Appendix 2). There was considerable overlap in the views of Council tenants and residents in other tenures. The clear and consistent priorities to emerge from the community through the Tenants' Survey, Residents' Survey and Citizens' Panel consultative mechanisms were:

- community safety issues (e.g. burglaries, anti-social behaviour); and
- the street scene issues (e.g. litter, dog fouling, damaged footpaths, run-down fencing and street lighting).

KEY POINTS

- Wigan Borough is large – some 188 square kilometres in size and a population of 301,417 (Census 2001).
- Despite major restructuring of the local economy, deprivation remains and this along with other legacies from the former mining and textile industries impact on housing e.g. low incomes, ill-health and mining subsidence.
- The total housing stock is 127,156 (HCS 2000) and the local housing market is dominated by owner occupation (72%) and Council housing (21.5%).
- New house building has been particularly high, with between 850 to 950 new homes built each year over the last two decades. The local housing market remains relatively weak, with amongst the lowest average house prices in the North West region. Whilst house prices are projected to increase, they are expected to remain affordable to most households in full-time employment.
- Given the size of the Council housing stock and its low rents, affordable homes to rent are available.
- The Borough's housing market reflects some patterns revealed in the North West Region Housing Statement, such as low demand for housing. The Borough has a distinct feature of households remaining within their townships and population movement appears limited compared with other areas.
- In terms of general needs housing, there are no significant issues within the Borough other than homelessness (with some 60 people roofless) and vulnerable people (such as young people, older people and people with alcohol related problems).
- Our research reveals serious concerns within the private sector. There are still some 5,000 homes unfit to live in, a significant proportion of which are occupied by older people or private tenants and some £48.5 million is needed to tackle this unfitness and urgent disrepair.
- We also have serious problems with Council homes, where 41% fail to meet the Government's Decency Standard. Our research reveals an investment need of £274 million over 10 years.
- Decline and abandonment remains a significant challenge, with some 53,000 dwellings being at risk (CURS 2003). The potential for market decline remains our biggest concern.
- The linkages needed with other Borough Partnerships to improve the quality of life in areas at risk from decline are identified. The priorities include restricting new house building, Community Safety, the Street Scene issues and Regeneration.

SECTION 3: THE BOROUGH'S POLICIES, STRUCTURES & PAST PERFORMANCE

Housing problems do not exist in isolation nor do their solutions. In developing solutions we need to understand relevant Government, regional and local policies, what our capabilities are and how well we have performed in the past.

The section finishes by reflecting on what has been delivered and is honest about the areas where we need to improve our performance.

As the previous section reveals, the Borough's housing problems have arisen from broader factors such as:

- the regional and local economy with unemployment and low incomes creating a relatively weak housing market, and
- areas in decline where high levels of new house building, the fear of crime and the state of the street scene are the critical drivers of the decline.

This means we need to understand the broader picture of Government, regional and local strategies, which are delivered. We also need to be clear on where performance is good so we can build on our strengths and learn where performance is less good. With this wider understanding the Partnership is more likely to produce a clear and robust Housing Strategy which focuses on the issues critical to achieving success.

National policies and the local strategic context

Within the regional context, the Community Plan for the North West reflects the Wigan aspirations of a joined up approach to tackling deprivation, better housing, preventing crime, improving health and the wider environment. This joined up approach, together with the housing challenges identified in the Plan of the mismatch of supply and demand plus stock condition problems, reflect well the findings of the sub-regional research Wigan Council has participated in ("Changing Housing Markets and Urban Regeneration in the M62 corridor", CURS). The problems identified in the Regional Community Plan, CURS study and the Regional Housing Strategy heavily influence Wigan Council's Housing Strategy to the point where there is a clear link between the Region's strategic vision for housing and Wigan's vision. A "golden thread" exists taking these high level strategies down into the Borough's three strategic housing themes (that is People and Choice, Neighbourhood Renewal and Quality Homes) and the Action Plan set out in Section 4.

At national level, the Government is providing greater leadership and clarity on housing policy through its Housing Policy Statement - "The Way Forward for Housing", revised Planning Policy Guidance for housing, homelessness, private sector housing renewal and cross cutting issues such as supporting people, community safety and the "liveability" agenda. We particularly welcome the greater clarity the Government have provided on older people issues ("Preparing Older People Strategies", Office of Deputy Prime Minister 2003), which we feel reflects the approaches we have been taking in recent years, thanks to our Older Persons' Forum.

The Government also has clear priorities in other areas – maintaining a stable economy, social inclusion (through its National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal) and modernising public services. This modernisation agenda is impacting on all public services including local authorities and health services.

For councils such as Wigan, these national and regional policies are much welcomed. Many strengthen the Council's leadership and strategic roles and extend its remit to address the much broader social, economic and environmental issues which impact on housing.

Locally, Wigan Council is fully committed to the Government's policies and the modernisation agenda and has for many years concentrated on trying to provide the best possible services. This has not happened by chance, but emerges from the Council's commitment to performance contained in the Council's Political Principles (the "4Ps"):

- **Place** – to make the Borough a more attractive place for people to live and to attract new employment and investment.
- **Performance** – to secure the best possible services that meet the expressed needs of citizens.
- **People** – to provide opportunities for all citizens to develop their full potential – whatever their background – and without discrimination.
- **Partnership** – to act in the interests of the whole community by working in partnership.

Considerable evidence now exists which demonstrates the Council is delivering the best possible service to meet the needs of its citizens. Notably, under the Government's Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the Council was assessed as "Excellent" and the Housing element achieved the maximum score of 4 out of 4. This is important, as it means we can be confident that the Council can deliver on key cross cutting issues which impact on housing, such as the street scene.

Wigan Council's service priorities which influence both its revenue budgets and capital budget (such as the Capital Strategy) also help the Housing Partnership by including both housing and other key issues which impact on housing. These Council service priorities are:

- improving our physical environment and housing;
- protecting vulnerable people and promoting health;
- growing the local economy;
- lifelong learning;
- maximising our use of resources; and
- using partnerships to deliver a wider range of quality services.

"Managing in Wigan"

The Leader's Forum looks outwards to its residents and partnerships and then uses the Council's key processes to translate community needs into action through directly provided, commissioned services or by "enabling". Figure 2 shows how the Community Plan is informing the Council's Capital Strategy, Statutory Plans (which include this Housing Strategy) and the mainstream services (such as the Departmental Service Plans).

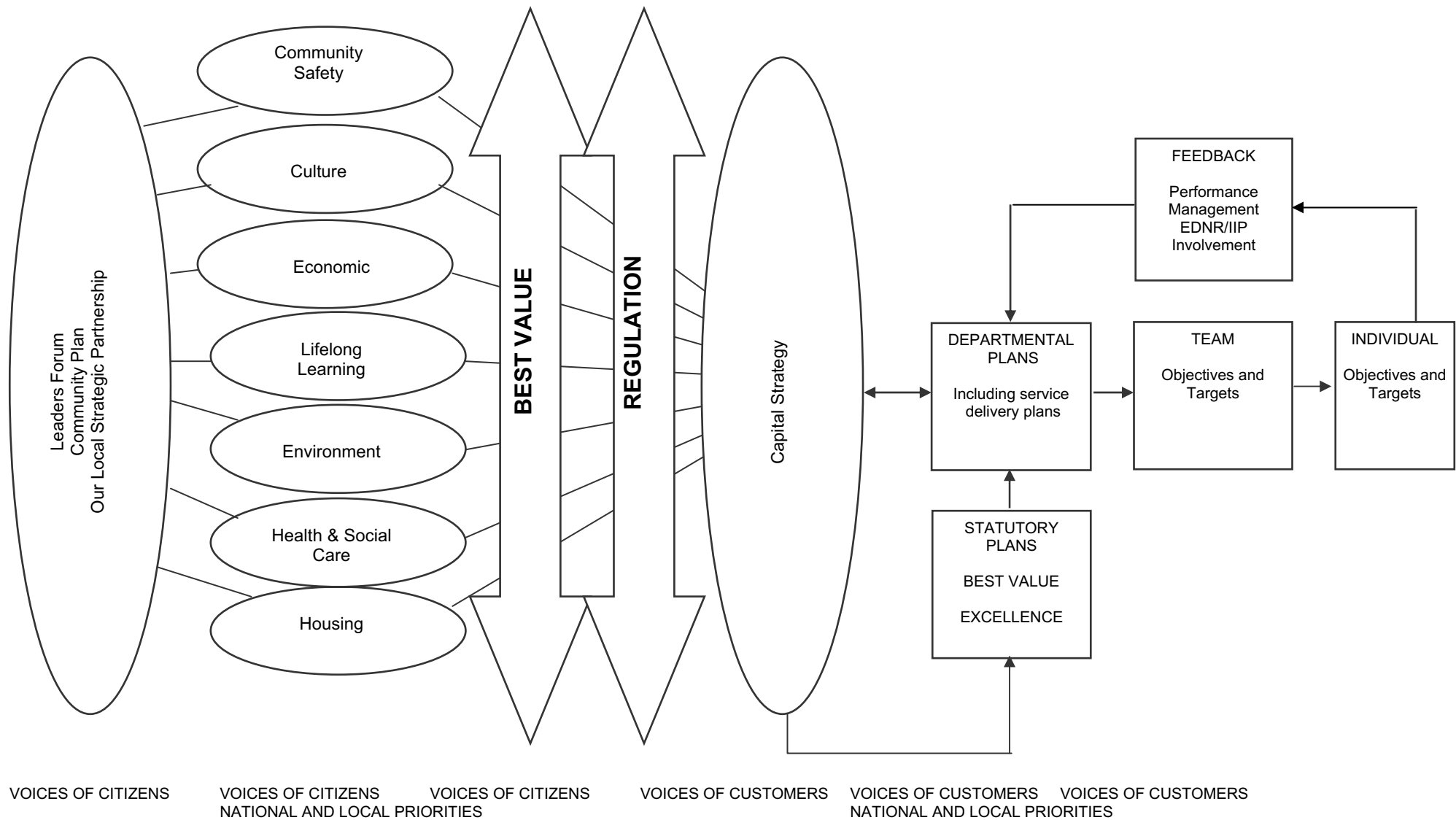


Figure 2: Managing Wigan – the Borough Partnership Structure and Key Processes

The Council's seven partnerships are also shown in Figure 2 and include the Housing Partnership. Up until 2002, the Council's modernised "leader and cabinet" structure had cabinet portfolios aligned to the seven partnerships. However, this has been adjusted to separate the Council's housing roles as follows:

<u>Cabinet Portfolio</u>	<u>Housing Roles</u>
Regeneration	Housing Strategy, enabling and retained roles
Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and Community	Housing Management Service

"Managing in Wigan" facilitates working both corporately and across partnerships. The Housing Partnership and its Housing Strategy feeds into and is influenced by the Community Plan and other high level strategies. For example, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is proving particularly important in tackling the drivers of decline in our most deprived communities (i.e. the Council estates and pre-1919 terraces). This has enabled action on both community safety and the street scene, with new intensive area based initiatives such as on the Trees Estate, Westleigh which "bend" mainstream services including estate management.

With clarity given by the Community Plan and having identified the main linkages needed with other Partnerships (see Appendix 2) considerable progress has been made in ensuring the Housing Strategy contributes to and benefits from these opportunities. Figure 3 provides examples of this interface with the Community Plan and the last year has seen considerable progress on issues benefiting residents. For example, the first Street Scene Action Area has delivered a "step change" improvement to the Worsley Mesnes estate and at the same time the Worsley Mesnes gang who were terrorising an estate were issued with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

The Borough's strong partnership ethos has enabled us to work with the Primary Care Trust in undertaking a health impact assessment of the Housing Strategy. This assessment identifies the contribution it is making to preventing excess winter deaths, reducing respiratory illness and reducing falls amongst older people. Gaps also emerge and further liaison has taken place resulting in amendments to the Council's Housing Assistance Policy to provide "Hospital Discharge Grants" for vulnerable low income households likely to cause "bed blocking" in hospitals.

	Community Plan	Contribution by Housing Partnership
People	Improving Standards of Living	Raising incomes directly through creating jobs. For example, Council and private sector renewal programmes use Metrolite (windows, doors, fencing etc.) who employ people with disabilities.
	Reducing Health Inequalities	Improving home energy conservation to reduce excess winter deaths/fuel poverty.
	Investing in Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good start • Lifelong Learning 	School rationalisation programme has the potential to remove schools from Council estates – liaison established between Education and Housing on options and implications.
Place	Growing the Local Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local business • Inward investment 	Considerable emphasis in Housing Investment Programmes for long term partnering with the building industry, linking to local training and employment using the Egan principles.
	More Efficient and Sustainable Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic location • Internal links 	Housing and Road Transport specialists link strategically (i.e. Local Transport Plan/Housing Strategy). Includes using road schemes to jointly clear obsolete terraced housing and the use of Home Zones, safe routes to school etc.
	Better Environment	Rolling programme of Street Scene Action Areas involving residents and services in improving areas in decline.
	Safer and more pleasant Neighbourhoods	Two major themes – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical measures to reduce crime such as ensuring homes are secure by design. 2. Jointly tackling crime and anti-social behaviour using both “positive action” and enforcement (ASBOs and injunctions).
Lifestyle / Image	Lifestyle / Play / Culture	Support to culture partnership includes joint initiative on engaging youths in positive behaviour, regenerating parks and local play amenities.
	Image	Council housing and private sector housing renewal schemes include strong emphasis on positive visual impact to increase attractiveness, linking with the “Crime and Grime” agendas.

Figure 3: The Housing contribution and interface with the Community Plan

The Housing Partnership

The Housing Partnership is the main way we bring people together to reach a shared view on the Borough's housing problems and how, by working together, we can tackle those problems. The Partnership is currently chaired by the Chief Executive of a Housing Association and has a very wide membership including residents, tenants, the voluntary sector, the business sector and various public agencies. It involves people through various methods including:

- an executive group, which meets four times a year to determine work programmes, review progress and to feedback on major policy issues;
- the full Partnership, which meets twice a year, has an open invite - the first meeting (in May/June) considers the Housing Strategy and the second (in October/November) reviews performance;
- Task Groups, such as on homelessness, older people and asylum seekers, to look at specific issues and engage people with specialist interests;
- the Internet, where increasingly we use the Housing Strategy website to share information and receive feedback on policies; and
- improving access to the Housing Strategy, explaining how it is laid out and who to contact for further information.

The Older Persons' Housing Forum is the longest established of the forums and continues to involve older people directly, through workshops and their "champions" (i.e. Age Concern and Pensioners' Link) in determining priorities and programmes. Much of the Forum's activity reflects the recently published Government guidance on how to produce an Older Persons' Strategy. The themes emerging from research and older people revolve around the fear of crime, money, warmth and maintaining their homes. These issues are embedded within the Housing Strategy and service delivery. From the Care and Repair Agency to the Pensions Service, links are established to ensure issues such as money and the fear of crime are addressed. So, for example, all field staff encourage older people to use the "safety chain code", produced with the help of the Greater Manchester Police.

Work within the Housing Partnership culminated in 2002 with a challenge of the draft Housing Strategy. The main issues, objectives and solutions were agreed and the Partnership then set out a programme to keep improving the Strategy. This programme focused on the three themes in the Strategy - People and Choice (a priority for 2002/03), Neighbourhood Renewal (for 2003/04) and Quality Homes (for 2004/05). As is explained later, we have made good progress on this programme thanks to our task groups.

The Council, in its strategic role, provides a "toolkit" to enable the task groups to systematically assess and quantify other problems, analyse options and then determine a preferred option. The preferred option is required to have clear priorities, identified resources and risks, set outcome measures and objectives, and an action plan. The toolkit is based on the Audit Commission model of strategic planning which has been "Wiganised" (see Appendix 3).

The use of the Strategic Planning Process provides a systematic approach to developing robust solutions and includes both option appraisal and risk management using evidence based research. For example, for the major strategic decision on the future of Council stock, the Council utilised leading external consultants to evaluate options and advise the "Future Options Group" comprising of Councillors, officers and tenants.

Another example is the Council's consultation on a future policy for housing assistance. In this we set out the implications, strengths and weakness on five main options, which are shown in Figure 4. Apart from the normal consultative mechanisms, the staff also took "market soundings" by consulting with clients who were currently going through the existing house renovation grant system. Feedback from these "market soundings" led the Council to increase the level of assistance per property, which had originally been based on findings from the Housing Market and House Condition Survey 2000.

POLICY OPTION	IMPLICATIONS	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1. A blanket “no assistance” policy – no grants or loans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government would consider that an authority was failing in its duty as a housing enabler. • Vulnerable households would remain in unfit housing. • Risk of market collapse in areas of pre-1919 housing. • Bottom quartile performance on Best Value Performance Indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With “single capital” pot resources could be used elsewhere e.g. improving roads or leisure facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of revenue support subsidy for activity. • Unfit housing remains – impact on health of occupiers. • Risk of market collapse leading to more expensive alternatives e.g. slum clearance. • Detrimental impact on next Comprehensive Performance Assessment.
2. Assistance targeted at only one or two issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications as above. • Crucially, the current balance between the big themes of areas, vulnerable people and empty homes is lost leaving an unbalanced Strategy. These elements interlink and are mutually reinforcing (e.g. empty homes are tackled in Renewal Areas, failure to do so undermines local market). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength, as above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaknesses as above.
3. Grants only assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would ensure Council achieves its Strategy and objectives but possibly slower than could be achieved with owners also investing. • Loose longer-term potential of recycling loans repaid back into housing renewal – which should lead in time to a reduced call on the Council’s capital resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current policy has worked well evidenced by significant outcomes and outputs on key issues of unfitness and empty homes. • Simple to implement – can just reproduce existing forms and processes. • More acceptable to home owners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As implications but crucially fails to make the link that owners must take responsibility for their own homes and release equity where possible.
4. Loans only assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council unlikely to achieve its Strategy and objectives. • Owners unlikely to take out loans only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partly because some will have low equity - Others will not be attracted to spend on their housing. - Most vulnerable on low income will suffer the most – they are least able to raise loans and meet repayments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System would be simpler to administer. • Potential for any loans repaid to be recycled back into housing renewal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As implications but also likely to have to cut services and staff losing what is evidenced as an Excellent Service. • Detrimental impact on Best Value performance indicators and next Comprehensive Performance Assessment.
5. Combination of Grants and Loans targeted at the priorities set out in the Council’s Private Sector Housing Strategy (e.g. Renewal Areas and vulnerable households).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could achieve Council’s Strategy and objectives faster than a grants only policy. • Longer-term potential for recycling loans repaid back into housing renewal. • Provides support to most vulnerable on low incomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As implications plus - • Releases equity and makes the link with owners being responsible for maintaining their own home. • Grant offers the carrot of attracting owners into the scheme of releasing equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New framework, no guarantee of uptake so potential to damage impact of Strategy, Best Value Performance indicators and CPA. • Needs a major change to existing policy and procedures. • Loan administration will be resource intensive and delay processing of applications.

**Figure 4: Extract from policy options presented in the Council’s consultation paper
“Enforcement and Assistance on Housing Renewal” (December 2002)**

We continue to review and improve our approach to providing access to the Housing Strategy and involving people in its development. As the most recent event (the May 2003 Housing Partnership conference) reveals, attendance is good with over 50 people attending from a wide background and satisfaction levels are high. (See Appendix 4 for attendees and evaluation). We were particularly pleased to find that people found the briefings on the Housing Strategy largely jargon free and that 82% were either very satisfied or satisfied with the event. However, there is still room for improvement and we intend to extend the length of time for workshops at future events.

Delivery and Performance on Housing

The Housing Strategy and Council Housing Business Plan are implemented through:

- the Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Department Service Plan; and
- the Wigan and Leigh Housing Company Annual Delivery Plan.

One of the Council's four political principles is "Performance" and the Housing Strategic Planning Process (Appendix 3) ensures that once the Strategy is produced, it is then implemented and performance is measured to ensure we continuously improve. The Council has a quarterly reporting framework where Councillors receive reports on budgets and performance covering the Housing Strategy Service, Urban Renewal and the Arms Length Management Organisation.

In addition to this, continuous improvement is also achieved through the rigorous use of Best Value Reviews and the introduction in 2002/03 of:

- a performance management framework for the Wigan and Leigh Housing (WALH) contract; and
- the Council's innovative corporate performance management system (a computer software package known as "Performance Plus" P+™).

Details of the Wigan and Leigh Housing Contract performance management framework and quarterly performance are available from the Housing Strategy Service website:

<http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp/eh/housing/almo.htm>

The "WALH" performance framework includes:

- a detailed annual questionnaire in which Wigan and Leigh Housing has to identify strategic, operational and contractual performance issues;
- an extensive range of performance targets (covering Housing Strategy, corporate health, national Best Value Performance Indicators and local performance indicators); and
- a cycle of monthly, quarterly and annual performance meetings.

So, just how well is Wigan Council performing on housing?

In the last couple of years the Government either directly or through the Audit Commission has inspected the Council as a whole (through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment) and individual services (using "Best Value" Reviews) plus assessed its high level plans (i.e. the Housing Strategy and Council Housing Business Plan). Figure 5 summarises the results – in overall terms this represents one of the very best performances in the country. However, one authority has done better – Derby City Council.

Links have been established with Derby so we can learn from each other. This includes working with Derby and external consultants to jointly disseminate our best practice around the country.

<u>Government Assessment / Inspection Regime</u>		<u>Result and Areas for Improvement</u>
Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2002		A top rating of "Excellent" with the Housing Domain also top scoring. Improvement needed on community engagement.
Single Capital Pot / Housing Performance		A top rating of "Well Above Average". Improvements needed on Action Plan and Access.
Supporting People		A top rating of "Excellent".
Best Value:	- Urban Renewal Service 2001	A top rating, "Excellent" (3 star) service, which will improve. Some improvements on providing information.
	- "who gets a Council House" 2001	A "Good" (2 star) service, which will improve. Improvements on decorating allowances and void repairs.
	- Arms Length Management 2002	A "Good" (2 star) service, with promising prospects for improvement. Improvements included better management of complaints.

Figure 5: Wigan Council's Performance under Government Inspection regimes

These external assessments contain many compliments. Notably, the Housing Best Value Inspectorate attributes the Council's success to "a strong ethos of performance management and using data and intelligence to drive future performance". This success is reflected on the progress the Council has made in the last year in implementing the Housing Action Plan, where no part of the plan has slipped. The focus was improving the Housing Strategy theme of "People and Choice":

- On Homelessness - Needs survey was completed, consultative forum established and a Strategy published in February 2003.
- On Supporting People - Strategy published, Housing Investment and Supporting People mechanisms integrated to provide a seamless approach. Commissioning of a Housing and Supporting People Needs survey.
- On Adaptations - After a series of attempts, service now rapidly improving with a 50% reduction in time taken between initial assessment and completion of adaptations.
- On Asylum Seekers - An innovative local policy framework which involves all housing providers, statutory agencies (police, health, education, NASS), voluntary sector (CAB, churches, CVS) and asylum seekers. Includes regular intelligence meetings, managing dispersal and initiatives on community cohesion. The approach covers all tenures and is being shared across Manchester (through AGMA) and more widely through the Police, Immigration Service and local authority networks.
- On Choice - The introduction of choice based lettings with shops in the Borough's two major towns.
- On Anti-social Behaviour - A major "cranking up" of activity, notably Wigan and Leigh Housing's specialist unit has established a tough but proportionate response to problematic tenants, making full use of legal options (injunctions, possessions and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, etc.)

Whilst establishing the housing strategic function and the Arms Length Management Organisation and undergoing the "ALMO" governance Best Value Inspection, the Council has made progress on the 2003/04 agenda, which focuses on the strategic theme of Neighbourhood Renewal:

- On Housing Assistance / Renewal - Following consultation, the Council has announced a new Enforcement and Housing Assistance policy framework, which comes into effect on 18 July 2003. Five main forms of assistance are provided, covering "Home Fitness", "Hospital Discharge", "Face Lift" schemes, Empty Homes and Discretionary Disabled Facilities. Assistance is in the form of combined grants and simple capital appreciation loans (see Appendix 5 for a summary of the policy for Housing Assistance).
- On new Area Based Initiatives to reverse decline: - The Housing Partnership is working closely with the Community Safety Partnership in developing with local residents a new Area Based Initiative targeting "Crime and Grime". Involving the Trees Estate in Westleigh, the "Crime" aspects are innovative and, whilst partly based on the "Communities that Care" model, the approach is identifying the criminal networks and targeting them using both support and enforcement (i.e. "carrot and stick"). The "Grime" aspects use the inter-agency/residents "Street Scene Action Area" model.

A comparison of the Borough's performance on housing services with other similar Boroughs (Metropolitan Authorities) on the National Best Value Performance indicators is set out in Appendix 6. Of the 17 Best Value performance indicators, Wigan Council was:

- in the top quartile on nine;
- above average on three; and
- had only two in the bottom quartile.

The Council emerges as a low cost high performing authority and it will be using these results to further improve, notably on "urgent repairs completed within time".

	Performance 2001/02	Target 2002/03	Performance 2002/03	Target Met ☺ Not Met ☹ Nearly met ☺
Compliance with CRE code for rented housing	No	No	No	☹
Percentage of stock empty	2.3%	2.3%	2.21%	☺
Working days lost through sickness (days)	12.6	10.5	10.4	☺
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days	92.3%	100%	84%	☹
Tenants in arrears	3.2%	3%	3.04%	☺
Average re-let time (days)	63	60	60	☺
Urgent repairs completed within time	83%	83%	91%	☺
Tenant satisfaction with overall service	79.2%	80%	79.2%	☺
Percentage of reported performance targets met	N/A	None	48%	☺

Figure 6: Aspects of WALH's performance for 2001/02 and 2002/03

Throughout 2002/03, the Council monitored the performance of Housing Company's management of the Council's housing stock. Figure 6 summarises the performance of the Company. The Council considered this to be a credible first year performance, where the staff's energies were focused on establishing the new company and undergoing an extensive Best Value inspection. The Council's priorities of reversing the long-term trend of deteriorating performance on empty stock and rent arrears were delivered. Whilst full compliance of the Commission for Racial Equality code for renting was not achieved, the Company made major improvements and will achieve compliance as planned in 2003. The percentage of reported performance targets was 48%, which compares reasonably with the target of 65% for 2003/04. Further details and targets are set out in the Council Housing Business Plan.

Private Sector Housing	Year 2001-02		Year 2002-03		Year 2003/04
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
User satisfaction	85%	90%	90%	91% ☺	91%
Customers responded to within 3 days	95%	92%	95%	93% ☹	95%
Dwellings improved with grant	369	381	373	394 ☺	418
Numbers of houses cleared	17	11	12	14 ☺	12
Enforcement Inspection	917	824	970	821 ☹	891

Figure 7: Private Sector Housing Performance for 2001/02 and 2002/03 plus targets for 2003/04

In terms of performance, private sector housing will decline partly due to the reducing levels of Housing Capital Allocation available for housing renewal. The major concerns revolve around:

- the lack of Supporting People funds to support the creation of new emergency accommodation for the homeless despite clear evidence of need; and
- reducing resources for the Private Sector Housing Strategy despite clear evidence of need, particularly to prevent market decline rather than the considerably more expensive alternative (namely Market Renewal).

This is disappointing, particularly since in terms of outcomes the Council's approach was proving highly effective:

- no large areas of market collapse despite considerable risk factors (historically the lowest house prices in Greater Manchester and high levels of house building);
- unfitness down from 8% to 5%;
- empty homes down from 5% to 3%; and
- homes with poor energy rating down from 58% to 26%.

(Source: House Condition Surveys 1996 and 2000)

In terms of spending programmes, there were no significant variations on the revenue and capital programmes, with one exception – the capital spend on adaptations. This was a much welcomed anomaly, as long standing backlogs in assessing and then providing adaptations are being addressed with the consequence of higher than planned expenditure impacting in 2002/03 rather than 2003/04.

The overriding conclusion on performance is that Wigan Council and its partners deliver what they set out to do and are amongst the very best.

However, from our determination to provide the best possible services, feedback through consultative mechanisms (e.g. the Citizens' Panel) and Best Value performance reviews, the following specific priorities for action or improvement in 2003 have emerged:

- implementing the Homelessness Strategy;
- implementing the Council's new Policy Framework for Enforcement and Assistance in Housing Renewal;
- developing even more effective models of Neighbourhood Renewal to arrest and reverse decline in both the private and public sectors, notably tackling the "Crime and Grime" agenda;
- improving performance on rent collection, efficiency of repairs, re-let times and the speed of the adaptations service; and
- further developing the already good practices on community and tenant consultation and involvement.

KEY POINTS

- In developing solutions to the issues identified in the previous section (Section 2) we need to understand the broader picture of policy - how Wigan is managed and reflect on our past performance.
- At the strategic and policy level, national policies and local strategies are conducive to addressing local housing issues. The Council's priorities in the Borough's Community Plan, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and Capital Strategy include housing and other key issues such as community safety and the street scene.
- "Managing in Wigan" is clear - the Council looks outwards to its residents and partnerships and then through its key processes translates needs into action. The Borough's Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Capital Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and Housing Strategy feed into and influence each other.
- The Housing Partnership remains an important part of the Leader's Forum and, in forming the local Housing Strategy, it has set itself clear priorities for the next three years covering both Government policy and important local issues.
- The Housing Partnership has improved the way in which residents and others can get involved in the Housing Strategy. We now have two open meetings a year, several Task Groups and have better explained how to access and use the Housing Strategy and background information.
- The Council has separated its strategic housing role and continues to use a strategic planning process to develop robust solutions through forums involving the Housing Partnership and others. The forums currently include the most vulnerable, namely older people, those who are homeless and asylum seekers.
- The Government's rigorous Best Value framework reveals Wigan Council, with the support of its partners, as a top performing authority on delivering housing services. The Government's Inspectors have recognised we have effective mechanisms for engaging tenants and residents.
- There are numerous major achievements, securing ALMO status opens up the prospect of substantial capital resources for improving public rented houses to the Government's Decency Standard. The "ALMO", Wigan and Leigh Housing, became fully operational on 1 April 2002. We have also achieved Beacon Council status for our approach to Neighbourhood Renewal and Charter Mark for all of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (which includes Housing Strategy and Urban Renewal).
- Benchmarking using National Best Value Performance Indicators further confirms Wigan Council's good performance on housing. In addition, the rigorous performance management framework for the "ALMO", i.e. Wigan and Leigh Housing, is helping to keep the focus on driving up performance on key issues such as void rates and rent arrears.
- There are areas for improvement and our priorities are to improve on our HIP submission, services to the most vulnerable, adaptations, homelessness services, Council house repairs, housing benefits and certain Best Value Performance Indicators. We also want to improve our approach to Neighbourhood Renewal.

SECTION 4: THE HOUSING STRATEGY 2002 TO 2007

This section sets out how the Housing Partnership will address the Borough's housing problems and related issues over the next 5 years. It sets out our aim, strategic objectives, key performance indicators and then outlines how each of the priorities will be addressed. The section concludes with an updated position on resources and a five-year action plan, which sets out how the Strategy will be achieved including a programme to ensure continuous improvement.

In Section 2, the problems the Borough is facing on housing and related issues were outlined and Section 3 explained the progress the Housing Partnership has made in tackling these problems. It is within this context, underpinned by sound research of housing markets, stock condition and needs, plus learning from the Best Value Reviews and performance monitoring, that the Housing Strategy has been developed.

The emerging Strategy was initially published in 2000 and since then it has been developed through the Housing Partnership, broader consultation and the use of Best Value Reviews. The strategic management process (Appendix 3) means that the Partnership systematically develops robust solutions to address the main strategic gaps which then flow into the delivery mechanisms (the Council Housing Business Plan and Departmental Service Plans). These are then monitored through performance management systems including the innovative corporate "PerformancePlus" P+™ computer based system, which was explained in Section 3.

The Partnership's Housing Strategy is summarised in a single diagram (Appendix 7). Under each of the three themes of "People and Choice", "Neighbourhood Renewal" and "Quality Homes" the main priorities have been identified. Reflecting the views of the Housing Partnership and residents, we have included the issues of community safety and the street scene (the "Crime and Grime" agenda).

Unlike many other Councils' housing strategies, Wigan's identifies the key enablers (or processes). These are critical to the successful implementation of any Housing Strategy – even the best Strategy is useless in the real world unless high quality service providers deliver the actions identified. This explains the great emphasis given by the Housing Partnership to Best Value Reviews. These Best Value Reviews involve Wigan Council, County Palatine Ltd and other Registered Social Landlords working in partnership and sharing best practice (such as on neighbour nuisance / anti-social behaviour) to produce the best possible services.

The remainder of this section sets out the Housing Strategy, its aim, the objectives (set out in Figure 8), the three dimensions, the priorities and an Action Plan.

Strategic Aim

The strategic aim or “vision” we aspire to achieve by 2010 is:

“To ensure people have access to an affordable, decent home of choice in a good neighbourhood.”

Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives translate key words in the strategic aim into measures, which are used to assess performance. These objectives are as follows:

On “affordable homes”:

1. In the social rented sector, at least 85% of homeless people to be resettled within one year and, from 2004/05, a year-on-year reduction in the numbers of homeless people.
2. In the private sector, the average annual household income to be more than two-fifths of the average price of an older terraced house.

On “decent homes”:

3. In the social rented sector, all homes to meet the Government’s “Decency Standard” by 2010.
4. In the private sector, no more than 2% of homes to be unfit and no more than 10% to have a poor energy efficiency rating (“SAP” below 40) by 2010.

On “good neighbourhoods”:

5. In both the social rented and private sectors, the number of empty homes to be less than 2% by 2007.

Figure 8: The Strategic Aim and Objectives**The Three Themes, Main Issues, Priorities and Solutions**

As Appendix 7 shows, there are three themes to the Housing Strategy. Under each of these themes, a number of main issues have been identified from our research and consultation. These issues are listed in Figure 9 and, within the next section, a brief outline is given on each of these issues, the priorities and solutions. The agenda includes the main causes of decline affecting the housing market – community safety and the street scene. Further information is available from the relevant lead officers (Appendix 8). Increasingly, this information is being made available together with the Housing Strategy on Wigan Council’s website:

<http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp/eh/housing/hs.htm>

				THEMES		
				People and Choice	Neighbourhood Renewal	Quality Homes
Main Issues	Access to Housing				Declining Council Estates	Decency Standard in:
	Homelessness				Declining pre-1919 terraced Neighbourhoods	– Public rented homes
	Supporting People					– Housing Association homes
	Adaptations				Housing Market	Fitness in:
	Older People				Community Safety	– Private rented homes
	Black and Minority Ethnic Groups				Street Scene	– Owner occupied homes
	Asylum Seekers					Energy Conservation and Home Security

Figure 9: The Three Themes and the Main Issues

People and Choice – Access to Housing

Current information indicates a sufficient supply of affordable homes for rent or owner occupation. The key issue is to provide more choice on Council housing and this is being achieved through choice based letting and making more furnished lettings available. Monitoring and continuous improvement are the key action points. A needs survey has been completed, which included looking more closely at the needs of the most vulnerable in society and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. Results are currently being analysed and will facilitate a dialogue with partners on further adjustments needed to the Strategy and Action Plan.

People and Choice – Homelessness

A new Homelessness Strategy has been introduced to minimise and reduce homelessness through:

- preventing the occurrence of homelessness;
- ensuring there is sufficient accommodation for those who are homeless;
- ensuring there is sufficient support; and
- co-ordinating and facilitating joint working.

Plans for a much-needed new Homeless Hostel have received a set back, with no "Supporting People" funds being available to support the scheme. This scheme included initiatives around young people and those with alcohol and drug problems. Other aspects of the Strategy are being progressed and performance will be evaluated using nine performance targets which are being monitored and reported quarterly.

People and Choice – Adaptations

Both customer feedback and performance monitoring revealed this to be an unsatisfactory service in terms of speed of service, though the quality and customer satisfaction levels were high. Led by the Deputy Chief Executive, the key services have undergone a major programme of change. "Completion times" have reduced by 50% in the last year and continue to fall. We have also worked with other Boroughs to make the best use of resources by making joint bulk purchases of aids.

People and Choice – Older People

Our research reveals that houses occupied by older people have improved through a number of successful initiatives, many of which are continuing. However, this vulnerable group still live in the worst housing conditions. The Older Persons' Housing Forum co-ordinates a wide range of services and through its chairperson (an older person), a further workshop took place in 2003, where older people and service providers reviewed progress and identified priorities. The Care and Repair Agency is now a top quartile national performer, but can no longer cope with demand. Additional revenue funds were not secured through Supporting People. The Housing Needs Survey and workshops are being used to redesign Housing Services for Older People. The Council's sheltered housing is also being redesigned to better meet the needs of older people in partnership with others such as the Health and Social Care partners.

People and Choice – Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups and Asylum Seekers

The arrival of asylum seekers has created difficulties with community cohesion. Following a Scrutiny Review, an Asylum Seekers Forum has been established and an innovative policy framework introduced with targets to ensure dispersal does not impact disproportionately on deprived neighbourhoods. Housing Strategy staff and Police meet regularly to determine future dispersal as well as agree responses to issues such as race-hate crime. The issue has stimulated research and dialogue with the Borough's small BME community. A BME Forum has been established and further community cohesion initiatives are being developed in a partnering arrangement with Leicester City Council.

Neighbourhood Renewal – Declining Council Estates

The Regional Housing Statement, the CURS reports and extensive local research provides a clear model of why decline occurs. This aligns well with the views of residents, as demonstrated by the 2001 tenants' satisfaction survey, which attracted over 9,000 respondents. This showed the central importance of community safety and street scene issues impacting on appearance and image. The Council Housing Business Plan sets out how it is intended to redirect resources to tackle these causes of decline. The Housing Partnership is working closely with the Community Safety Partnership and Environment Partnership on a new Area Based Initiative at the Trees Estate, Westleigh, focusing on the "Crime and Grime" agenda.

Neighbourhood Renewal – Declining Housing Markets

The latest market intelligence reveals Wigan has amongst the lowest house prices in the North West. So far the Council has been successful in managing the decline in all tenures using a mix of interventions including:

- disposal and clearance of Council stock;
- Slum Clearance, Renewal Areas, Empty Homes Challenge Fund and Landlord Portfolio Initiatives in the private sector; and more recently
- the use of Planning Development Control to limit new house building.

Concerns exist for a central swathe of housing ranging from Ince, the Bickershaw area of Leigh Central and Abram which includes Platt Bridge, where there is a mix of low demand pre-1919 terraces and Council estates. Whilst various measures have been taken in recent years to restructure the housing market in Abram, the market remains fragile, not helped by an influx of large numbers of single male asylum seekers in 2002. The Council's Asylum Seeker Policy has now implemented a managed approach to dispersal, ensuring deprived areas such as Abram are not overly burdened in the future. However, further intervention is likely to be necessary to avoid market collapse. Detailed research is being commenced in October 2003 to provide an accurate position and an understanding of the causative factors. These factors are likely to originate with the closure of coal mines, the loss of traditional industries and the current problems of crime and disorder.

This research will enable an options appraisal, which is likely to revolve around using a mix of tried and tested measures of Renewal Areas, selective Slum Clearance, the new tools available within the Council's Housing Assistance Policy and the Area Based Initiative currently being trialled on the Trees Estate, Westleigh (see below).

Neighbourhood Renewal – a new Area Based Initiative model

A new approach is being developed for Area Based Initiatives building on the Beacon Council status for Neighbourhood Renewal. Developed within the context of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and our research into the causes of decline, the new approach to Area Based Initiatives is now being trialled on the Trees Council estate, Westleigh. The innovation includes a radically different approach to community safety (partly based on the "Communities that Care" model), evidence based research of what works and using a combination of:

- targeted and joined up enforcement action, such as dealing with crime, anti-social behaviour, nuisance and truancy; and
- "personal action plans" for disruptive residents to secure a long-term change in their behaviour (again involving joined up working with Connexions, the Probation Service, Youth Offending Team, schools, etc).

Quality Homes – Decency Standard for Public Rented Homes

In 1999, a major problem was identified where the Council's existing Strategy simply could not provide the level of investment needed to improve and maintain the stock. PricewaterhouseCoopers were commissioned to carry out an option appraisal and recommend the best way forward. Our consultants concluded that Arms Length Management was the best available option and, in consultation with tenants, this status has now been successfully achieved, along with additional resources to improve the stock.

The Council will use up to £137 million in Supplementary Credit Approvals over the four year period to March 2006, to ensure that at least 95% of Council homes reach the Decency Standard by March 2008 and to maintain them at that standard until 2010. The Council Housing Business Plan sets out the spending programme developed with residents and milestones for achieving the Government's Decency Standard.

Quality Homes – Decency Standard for Registered Social Landlords

The House Condition Survey 2000 reveals the best housing to be that held by the Registered Social Landlords. Whilst not a local priority, the Council is encouraging Housing Associations to improve their stock.

Quality Homes – Fitness in the Private Rented Sector

Registration schemes for the private sector have been evaluated but are not considered cost-effective. The Landlord's Accreditation Scheme trialled in Wigan Borough by the Residential

Landlords' Association did not progress to the satisfaction of the Council. A new accreditation scheme has been adopted in July 2003 and will be run by the North West Landlords Association. The initiative involves close liaison and joint working involving all Greater Manchester boroughs and Leeds City Council.

The Council's inspection and enforcement programme continues to use a risk-based approach, which focuses on Houses in Multiple Occupation and the worst landlords. This "landlord portfolio" approach has proved highly effective, with the latest portfolio having successfully been concluded following extensive use of Compulsory Purchase Orders and Slum Clearance.

Quality Homes – Owner Occupiers

Significant in-roads into reducing unfitness in the owner-occupied sector have been made. Unfitness has been reduced from 8% in 1996 to 5% in 2000 and, since then, the Council has consistently delivered a top quartile performance against all local authorities on the percentage of unfit homes improved (Best Value performance indicator, BVPi 62). Research has revealed that disproportionately high numbers of the most vulnerable (such as older people, people with disability) live in unfit homes. The new Housing Assistance Policy targets these groups.

Quality Homes – Energy Conservation and Home Security

The Council is broadly on course to achieve its energy efficiency savings objective of 22.8% by 2005. The House Condition Survey (2000) revealed that in the private sector stock, poorly insulated homes (SAP rating of 40 or less) reduced dramatically from 58% in 1996 to 26% in 2000. The SAP rating for Council dwellings has also improved dramatically, with the Council achieving a SAP rating of 59 in 2001 compared to 40 five years earlier. In the context of the Fuel Poverty Strategy, more still needs to be done and energy conservation is a priority for the ALMO Boards. Research has revealed a strong correlation between vulnerable / low income households, unfitness and poor energy efficiency. This has enabled the production of "joined up" interventions which are designed to tackle these multiple deprivation factors on a "client by client" basis.

With older people continuing to express concerns over the fear of crime, close links with the Community Safety Partnership are ensuring existing schemes continue (such as the "Safe as Houses" scheme run by Victim Support providing home security measures, "Secured by Design" standards for all housing improvement schemes and the multi-agency "safety chain code" / bogus callers initiative). Following option appraisals, new initiatives have been agreed between the partnerships and are to be progressed in 2003/04. These include "alley gating" (the gating of back alleys) and "Smartwater" (using new technology to uniquely fingerprint/mark personal effects).

The Key Enablers

The key enablers summarised in Appendix 7 are critical to the successful implementation of the Housing Strategy. Behind each enabler is a considerable commitment by management, staff and others. Much of this is documented and the results are tangible outcomes, which can be both evidenced and measured. So for example on "staff", the Council Department leading on Housing Strategy and Urban Renewal has Investors in People status and regular staff appraisals are used to provide a well-skilled workforce to deliver the best possible services.

Other key points are:

- On Community Participation - residents are heavily involved in the Arms Length Management Organisation. Forums exist for the most vulnerable and hard to reach (such as Older Persons, Homeless, Asylum Seekers and Black and Minority Ethnic groups) and the new Townships framework is proving helpful.
- On Quality Services - the Council's retained housing functions have Charter Mark and are seeking third party accreditation on quality assurance.

Resources

Details of both capital and operational resources (for budgets, staffing, administration, etc.) are set out in the Business and Service Plans. The planned use of revenue funds and capital investment in maintaining and improving assets (houses and the infrastructure) are summarised in Figure 10 (for Council Housing) and Figure 11 (for Private Sector Renewal). Apart from adaptations, there have been no significant underspends or overspends on either the public or private sector programmes for a number of years. Within the Council house sector, the revenue picture has been transformed by the additional ALMO monies, which will be sufficient to sustain both the investment and revenue programmes over the planning period (up to 2007). Figure 10 provides a breakdown of the asset related spending.

Worktype	Actual		Planned		
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Externals (roofing, external repairs and environmental works)	12.0	19.3	20.0	20.0	22.5
Internals (kitchens/bathrooms, re-wiring)	2.4	16.2	17.2	17.2	17.0
Insulation	0.4	1.8	1.8	1.8	0
Heating	4.9	4.7	3.5	2.5	2.5
Demolition	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Miscellaneous	2.7	4.0	3.1	3.8	3.0
TOTAL INVESTMENT EXPENDITURE	23.4	47.0	46.6	46.3	46.0

Figure 10: Five-Year Investment Programmes (£m)

Assistance		Actuals		Planned			
		2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Disabled Facilities Grants		571	873	850	850	850	850
Slum Clearance		554	441	570	600	600	550
"Fitness" grants/loans		456	489	400	450	450	490
Renewal Areas:	– grants/loans	2,579	2,084	2,111	2,075	2,100	2,110
	– area works	300	398	316	400	400	400
Empty Homes – grants/loans		125	125	125	125	0	0
TOTAL		4,585	4,500	4,372	4,500	4,400	4,400

Figure 11: Investment Plans for Private Sector Housing Renewal (£000)

Figure 11 sets out the investment plans for Private Sector Housing Renewal. Given the size of the private stock, it having the worst housing conditions and mindful of the likely significant increase in resources available for public rented housing, the Corporate Capital Plan assumes that the “Single Capital Pot” allocation will be used solely for Private Sector Renewal. No account is taken of private sector investment and the potential impact of the Regulatory Reform Order on grants and loans can only be determined with any degree of confidence in 2004/05. However, progress is already being made with the option to create an Empty Homes Regeneration Fund where grants are replaced by low cost loans, which are recycled on sale of the asset. The main changes on the Private Sector Renewal Programme are:

- the increased demand for Disabled Facility Grants; and
- the need to continue a rolling programme of Area Based Initiatives involving housing renewal to address weakness in the local housing market and obsolescence (some 180 dwellings need demolition by 2005/06 at a cost of £4 million).

The new Regional Housing Board and Registered Social Landlords will play a major role in the success of the Borough's Housing Strategy. They will be encouraged to apply their resources to the following strategic gaps:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| People and Choice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An emergency access hostel for the homeless. - Special needs housing to support the most vulnerable and people with challenging behaviour or complex needs. - Supporting People accommodation and floating support particularly for ex-offenders and people with alcohol and substance abuse. |
| Neighbourhood Renewal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint intervention in Renewal Areas and involvement in Area Based Initiatives. - Tackling obsolete houses where market forces are unlikely to stimulate regeneration, notably in former coalfield areas. |
| Community Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with both the Housing Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership in Home Safety measures and jointly tackling Anti-social Behaviour. |

Forward plans assume a Regional Housing Board allocation of about £6 million per annum. This will include resources for Registered Social Landlords of around £1.5 million, with an initial split of 90/10 between People and Choice and Neighbourhood Renewal. With there being an adequate supply of affordable general needs housing, the Council is not seeking to secure affordable housing through the planning system (i.e. Section 106 agreements).

Progress, Action Plan and Performance Targets

The progress on implementing the Action Plan is set out in Appendix 9 and shows that 27 actions were delivered as planned. Of the seven remaining actions, three related to activities due to commence at a later date and only one issue had not been progressed as planned.

As Section 3 explained, the Council's performance remains good with a strong commitment to get even better. One national Best Value Performance Indicator had been “qualified” and was treated as a bottom quartile performance – this was for private empty homes returned to use (BVPi 64). The “qualification” was due to under counting arising from an interpretation of the indicator's definition. Even with this error, the indicator was top quartile so the only corrective action has been around the data reporting process.

This reflects the Council's good performance both overall and under the Housing Best Value regime. However, reflection has resulted in changes to Best Value Improvement Plans (to rationalise them into a single programme) and the Housing Action Plan to include more milestones and targets.

The revised Housing Action Plan 2003 to 2007 is set out in Appendix 10. The Action Plan brings together the issues/problems identified in Section 2 and the solutions (i.e. the Strategy, programmes and resources) in Section 4 and uses reflections of performance (in Section 3) to set objectives, targets and milestones. The Action Plan is set out under the 3 strategic themes and includes:

- On People and Choice - reducing homelessness, improving the Care and Repair Service and asylum seekers.
- On Neighbourhood Renewal - reducing empty homes, a new initiative in Platt Bridge and action on "Crime and Grime".
- On Quality Homes - decent Council homes, reducing unfit, warmer and securer homes.

Detailed operational and budget plans are produced on an annual basis, which contain finer grain performance targets linked to systematic performance management. These finer grain documents are available on Wigan Council's website as follows:

- Environmental Health & Consumer Protection - Departmental Plan 2003/04
<http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp/plan2003.pdf>
- Wigan and Leigh Housing Delivery Plan
<http://www.walh.co.uk/index.htm>
- Housing Related Strategies
<http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp/eh/housing/strategies.htm>

KEY POINTS

- A Strategy developed within the context of a good understanding of the Borough's housing circumstances, the broader picture and local capabilities.
- A clear Strategy with:
 - the aim for an affordable decent home for all by 2010;
 - ten strategic objectives to assess progress;
 - three themes of "People and Choice", "Neighbourhood Renewal" and "Quality Homes";
 - clarity on the main issues, the priorities and how these should be addressed; and
 - key enablers identified to ensure the Strategy is delivered by the best possible services involving residents, tenants and partners.
- Clarity and realism on investment plans and resources.
- A high level five-year Action Plan, which is an integral part of the organisation's annual business/service planning processes and performance management systems to deliver continuous improvement.
- Clear measures for assessing delivery and performance.

Appendix 1: Wigan Borough – Key Facts

BOROUGH CONTEXT

Geography

- Metropolitan borough – located at the centre of the North West transport network, bounded by the M6, M61 and East Lancs Road and linked with the West Coast and Trans Pennine rail lines.
- Area of 188 square kilometres (77 square miles).
- Nearly two thirds of land is green open space with the population located around 14 townships, the largest towns being Wigan and Leigh.

Demographics

- Population of 301,417 (Census 2001).
- Deprivation – 15% residents live in the most deprived 10% of wards in the country. Borough is the 57th most deprived in the country (of 387 boroughs).
- 90% of residents live in the worst 20% of wards nationally for health deprivation.
- Black and Minority Ethnic population is small – 1.3% (Census 2001), there has been a small increase from Asylum Seekers.

Local Economy

- Borough's industrial past was built around coal mining and textiles, part of the legacy remains including contaminated and derelict land, subsidence, older terraced housing linked to ill health and multiple deprivation.
- Recent years have seen a major restructuring of the Borough's economy. New investment has led to a growth in employment and a more skilled and qualified workforce stimulated by European Funds, City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget.
- Unemployment has fallen to 4.4% and is predicted to fall further.
- Gross average hourly wage levels are below those for the North West and the UK.
- Most employment is concentrated within the manufacturing, retailing and business service sectors.
- Employment growth is predicted, notably in business services but contraction is expected, notably in traditional industries such as mechanical engineering and textiles.
- Wigan Borough falls behind the North West and UK average for higher level qualifications. 24.3% of Wigan's residents are estimated to have no formal qualifications.

HOUSING STATISTICS (2000 base year)

<u>Stock and Tenure</u>	(Year 2000)	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Key Issues</u>
	Owner Occupied	91,600	72	<i>Increasing</i>
	Council	27,447	21.5	<i>Declining</i>
	Registered Social Landlord	2,403	2	<i>Static</i>
	Private Rented	5,706	4.5	<i>Doubled since 1996</i>
	Total	127,156		

<u>Age of stock</u>		<u>Private</u>	<u>Council</u>
	Pre 1919	27%	1.7%
	1919-1964	28%	69.2%
	Post 1964	45%	29.1%

<u>Building Type</u>		<u>Private</u>	<u>Council</u>
	Terrace	33%	33%
	Semi-detached	45%	45%
	Detached	20%	0%
	Flats	3%	23%

<u>Condition</u>		<u>Private</u>	<u>Council</u>
	Unfitness	5%	-
	Below Decency Standard	-	41%
	Cost to make fit/urgent repair	£48.5 M	-
	Cost to improve	-	£274 M
	Stock with poor energy rating (SAP 40 or less)	26%	4%
	Homes without basic security measures	62%	-

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY DATA (2003)

1,116 concealed households:

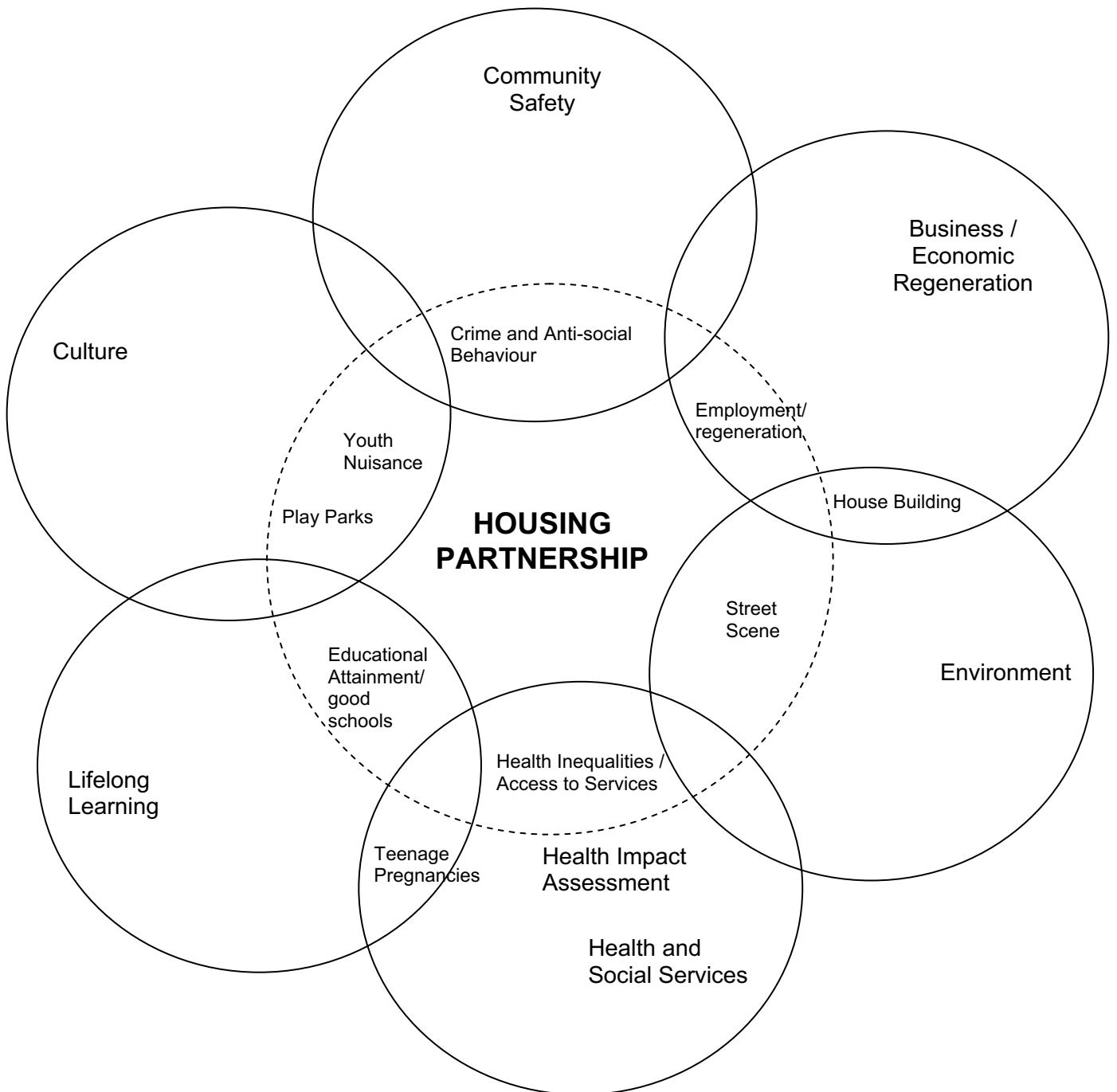
- 84% are children of existing households;
- 82% are aged over 20 years;
- 9% contain children;
- 16% are on a waiting list (96% on Wigan Council's list);
- 77% prefer to be owner-occupiers, ideally not of a flat.

7,488 households who want to move could not afford to do so.

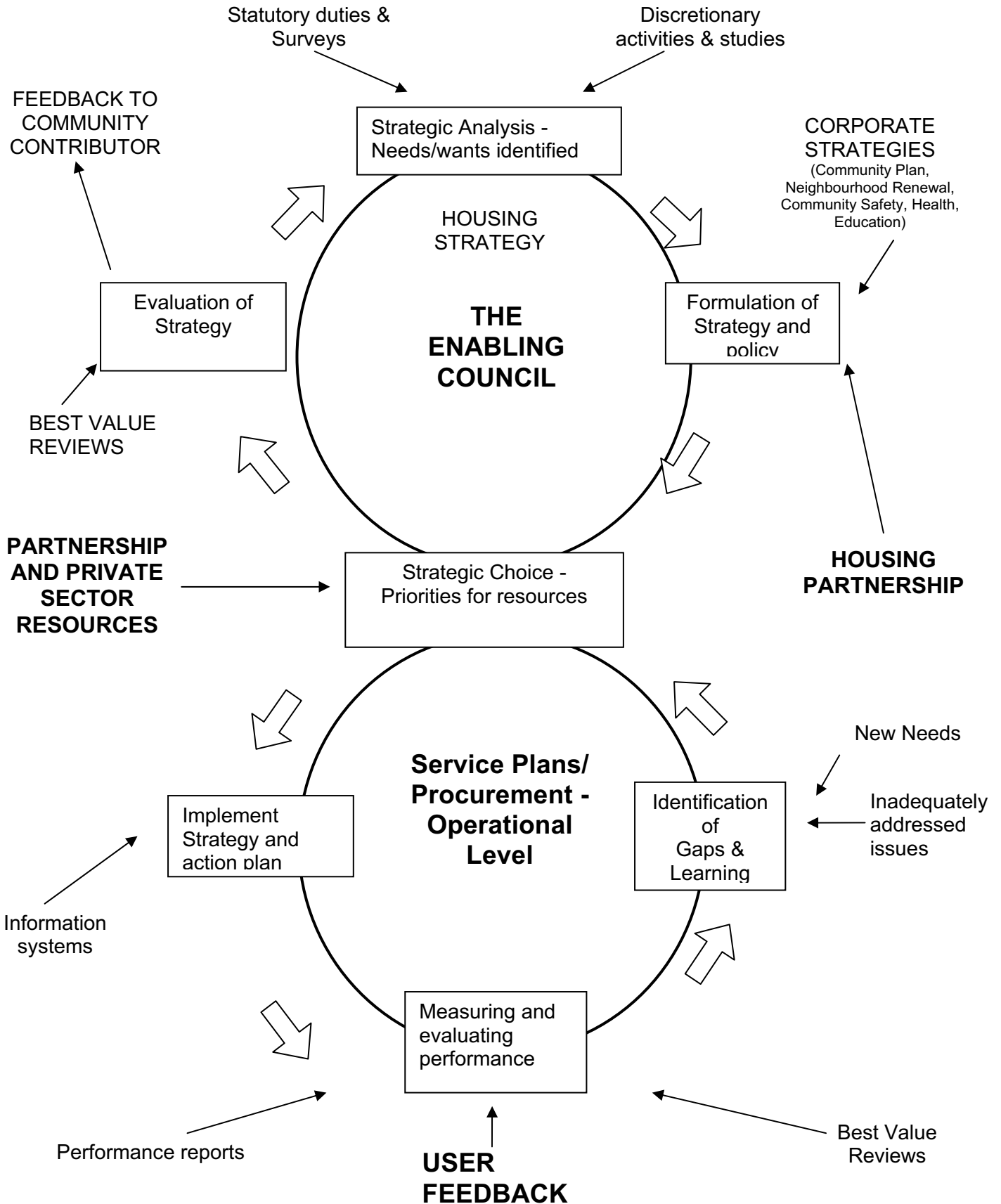
35,286 special needs households (28% of population):

- 58% were aged over 60 years (23% are over 75);
- 45% had mobility problems;
- 27% had outstanding support needs.

Appendix 2: Housing Partnership
Key issues where linkage is needed with other Borough Partnerships



Appendix 3: The Housing Strategic Planning Process Model



Appendix 4: Housing Partnership Convention held on 30th May 2003**ATTENDANCE LIST**

Forename	Surname	Organisation
Christine	Ashton	WAVE Domestic Violence Centre
David	Barber	Salvation Army
Cathy	Barrett	Substance Misuse Service
Janice	Barton	Wigan and Leigh Housing Ltd
Eileen	Bradshaw*	One Voice
Suzanne	Bullock	County Palatine Housing Association
Phil	Bullock	Social Services
Cllr Ron	Capstick	Wigan Council
Denise	Chambers	Victim Support*
Margaret	Cromarty	Atherton Probation Service
Katy	Crowson	Wigan and Leigh CVS
Dr Rona	Cruickshank	Primary Care Trust
Ashley	Crumbley	Wigan Council
Pat	Cummins*	Joint Chair - Wigan and Leigh Housing Ltd
Jane	Dillon	Shelter
Adrian	Dolphin	Greater Manchester Police
Phil	Dunne*	
Katherine	Fairclough*	Chief Execs Dept
Tony	Fearnley	Stephensons Solicitors
Sarah	Fontana	Wigan Council
Vincent	France	Tenant representative
Phil	Gibbs	North West Residents Landlord Ass.
Brian	Goulding	Greater Manchester Police
Peter	Greenall	Outreach worker - Scholes
Leanne	Hallinson	Victim Support
John	Hammond*	Bramall Construction
C	Harrison	District Nursing Sister - NHS
John	Hobbs	RPS Rainer
Cllr Joan	Hurst	Wigan Council
Iris	Jay	Social Services
Catherine	Kelly	County Palatine
Peter	Layland	Wigan Council
Paul	Lees	County Palatine
Leanne	Mallinson	WAVE Domestic Violence Centre
Anees	Mank	Housing Strategy, Wigan Council
Julie	Marshall	Arena Housing Association
Stuart	Murray	Age Concern
Barbara	Nettleton	One Voice
Alison	Plested*	Assistant Director of Care - PCT
Ray	Potts*	Positive Futures / Connexions
Dave	Qualter	Hindley Citizens Advice
Eleanor	Richardson	Housing Strategy, Wigan Council
George	Robinson	Chair Firs Renewal Area Steering Group
Bob	Saunders	Wigan Council
Chris	Singletary	FOTARA

Forename	Surname	Organisation
Margaret	Somers	Health Visitor
Chris	Steele	English Churches
Collette	Thomas	English Churches
June	Trumble	Social Services
Jackie	Turnley	Age Concern
David	Willis	Regeneration Panel
Katherine	Withington*	Anchor Trust
Nicola	Yates	Community Safety
Lorraine	Yates	

FEEDBACK

1 = Very satisfied

5 = Not very satisfied

Question 1 – What was your overall satisfaction with this event?

1	2	3	4	5
7	20	6	0	0

Comments:

- Although wrong name badge produced.
- At least I got some idea about the Housing Partnership.
- Should have been full day.
- Informative and good to be involved with.
- I am pleased to have been invited. Need to catch up with past events etc.
- As relatively new to the Housing Strategy I found the discussions very enlightening.
- Still coming to terms but very worthwhile day.
- Getting better every time – well done.
- Found it very interesting.

Question 2 – How satisfied were you with the presentations?

1	2	3	4	5
16	12	3	1	0

Comments:

- Found some comments by Ashley Crumbley in relation to anti-social behaviour problem worrying – main objective was to move 'problem' individuals out of the Borough – no mention of trying to work with such individuals.
- Informative.
- Good, enjoyed this – interested in all aspects – Housing Strategy / Homeless Strategy.
- Easy to understand.
- Yes.
- Very clear and used very little jargon!
- Very informative. Not too much jargon.

Question 3 – How satisfied were you with your workshop?

1	2	3	4	5
11	12	9	0	0

Comments:

- Too much discussion about the 'fear of crime' and not on the fact that level of crime is decreasing – no discussion on how we tackle the perception that criminal acts are increasing.
- There is a clear need for more focus and direction.
- Not enough time unfortunately.
- Workshop 1 – not enough time to discuss, but glad that another meeting.
- Rushed due to lack of time.
- Workshop 2. Good group participation.
- Obviously a lot of concern re. ASB etc. from others but I felt couldn't contribute as I work with most of the people on ASB and other offences so didn't feel I could contribute.
- Enjoyed it.
- Good opportunity to express real concerns.
- Felt at times I didn't know enough detail about housing to contribute.

Question 4 – How satisfied were you with the venue?

1	2	3	4	5
15	12	1	4	0

Comments:

- Room was rather cool!!
- A little noisy as groups close together.
- No problems.
- Excellent.
- Okay.
- Good.
- Air conditioning cooled room down too much!
- Too cold.

Question 5 – What did you find most beneficial about this event?

- Being new to housing it was a good opportunity to familiarise myself with housing issues / overview / Strategy.
- Meeting people from communities – hearing their views. The opportunity to network with staff from other agencies. To have a greater insight in the Housing Partnership and learn more about the Council.
- Networking opportunities.
- Workshop sessions to explore the issues.
- Finding out history of Housing Partnership.
- Very informative, learned issues I didn't know about. This is the first I have attended.
- Networks. Ideas generated in the group.
- Discussions of all relevant issues, where health of housing occupiers come into issues.
- Is healthy to review what works and accept what doesn't. A general acceptance I think that it is the commitment and input of the partners that makes the partnership working effective.
- Very positive.
- Workshop discussion. Networking.
- Information discussed in the workshop and information provided in the presentation.
- The amount of information gained from different groups.

- Taking time out to revisit approach / priorities.
- The information on Housing Strategy and the forward also networking with others.
- As a new organisation to the area it was very beneficial to find out the different areas within housing that it concerns.
- Communication. Networking.
- Networking. Info gathering.
- Knowledge of what is going on in the Borough.
- Helpful to have the wider debate and freedom to criticise. The realisation that the 'other' agencies need to be more aware of what's going on across the Borough – e.g. Trees Estate.
- Networking.
- The background to the Strategy and the rationale behind the Housing Partnership.
- Networking opportunities.
- Ashley's lovely grey suit.

Question 6 – What could have been improved?

- Opportunity to join other workshops to discuss the other 2 issues.
- More community reps and voluntary reps to be invited for next event.
- List of contacts for members present.
- Possibly a split workshop. Housing providers in one and service providers in the other would have provided the opportunity to identify specific agendas.
- Not clear on what the specific future priorities are in terms of additional / new services required in housing in the Borough.
- I was interested in knowing about whether certain areas are still declining. Also what is going to be done if social rented housing is declining. Is there an over supply of certain types of accommodation as opposed to a growing need for supported housing.
- More time for discussion and liaising.
- Actual participation from relevant groups, ex. Asylum Seekers, resident groups.
- Very difficult to contribute re homelessness and ex-offenders, maybe in the wrong group!?
- Well run event. Ice breaker early may help people feel engaged at beginning of event.
- Not much. Well organised.
- Enjoyable. Nil to any improvement. Well organised.
- The purple shirts. ☺
- Ashley's tie!
- Ashley's suit!

Any other comments:

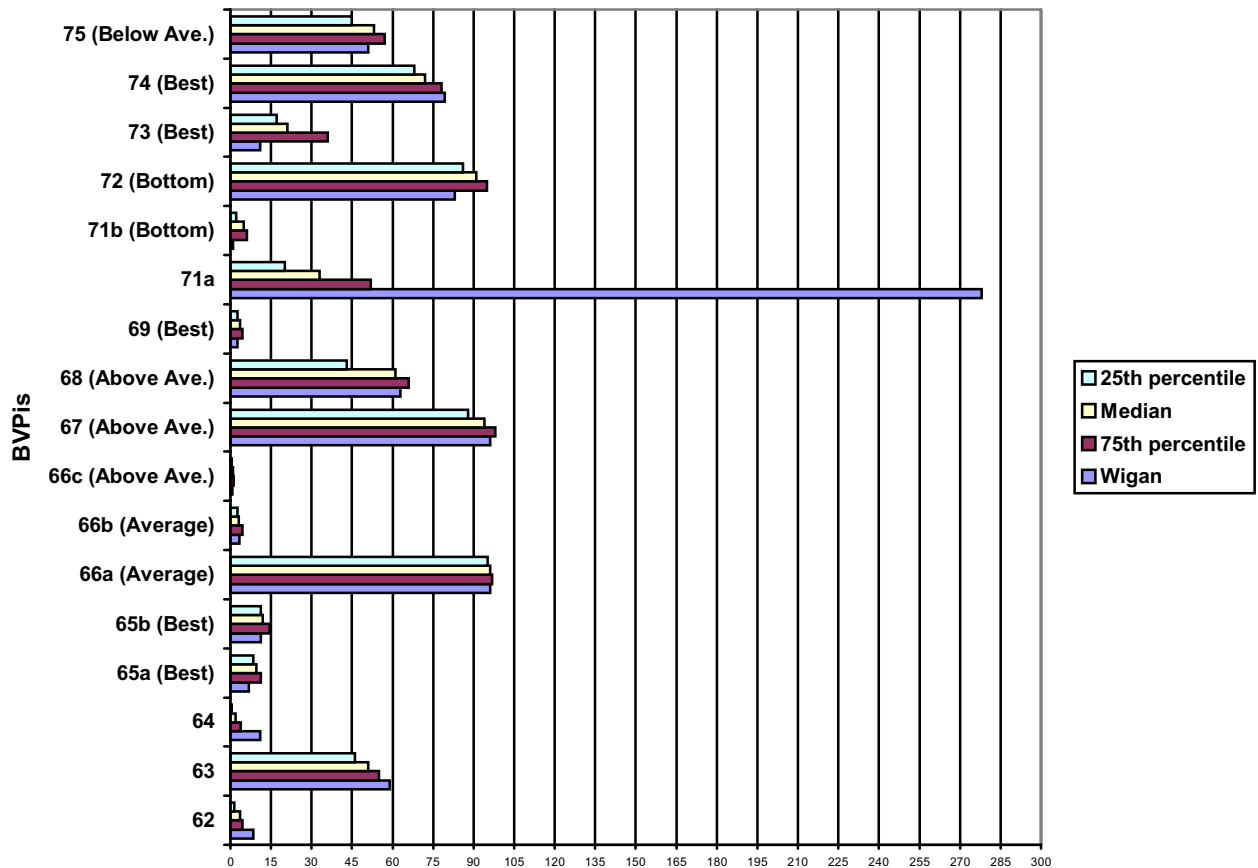
- We like Ashley's grey suit – wonderful!!
- Thanks.

Appendix 5: Summary of the policy for providing Housing Financial Assistance

- The policy framework for providing Housing Financial Assistance reflects the existing successful approach which targets the most vulnerable low income households living in unfit homes, Renewal Areas, empty homes and home security measures.
- Housing Financial Assistance will not normally be provided to landlords (private or social rented) for flats over shops, energy conservation, conversions/extensions and houses in multiple occupation. Landlords would also not be eligible for Home Fitness Assistance but consideration will be given to the other four forms of assistance.
- The approach to mandatory Disabled Facility Grants and Slum Clearance are mandatory legal frameworks and no policy changes are proposed at this stage.
- The five main forms of financial Housing Assistance are:
 - Home Fitness Assistance targeted at unfit dwellings occupied by specified vulnerable low-income owner occupied households subject to a £6,000 maximum. An additional top up loan normally up to £4000 may be made available in exceptional cases.
 - Hospital discharge assistance targeted at specified vulnerable low income owner occupiers living in unfit dwellings needing urgent repairs, a one-off £2,000 grant assistance.
 - Renewal Area Assistance ("face lift" schemes) for improving externally blocks of properties in Renewal Area. The maximum assistance will be a grant of £3,000 plus fees and a loan of £2,000. No transitional arrangements will be made for existing Renewal Areas.
 - Empty Homes Assistance for bringing empty homes into use subject to a maximum of £10,000 grant and £10,000 loan per property (restricted to the successful bidder under the Empty Homes Challenge Fund).
 - Discretionary Disabled Facility "top up" loans in certain cases where the costs of essential works on a mandatory Disabled Facility Grant exceeds the statutory maximum (currently £25,000) subject to a maximum loan of £10,000 (or £20,000 in exceptional cases).
- The Housing Assistance for Home Fitness and Empty Homes Assistance will normally be a combined grant/loan on the ratios of:
 - 60/40 for owner occupiers
 - 50/50 for Empty Homes Challenge Fund.
- Grants provided under Housing Fitness Assistance are subject to a means test based on that used for mandatory Disabled Facility Grants.
- In cases of owner occupiers in hardship living in low equity properties a means tested grant of up to 100% will be available as an alternative to the 60/40 combined grant/loan.
- The Council will offer simple capital appreciation loans. These will be secured on the title of the property. The loan will be a simple low interest loan where the loan plus interest will be repaid on sale or disposal of the property (along with the grant if the sale or dispersal is within 5 years of completion of works).
- Procedures and processes include a rapid assessment of initial enquiries and minimising the risk of fraud.
- Conditions will be attached to all financial assistance including only using registered builders, the requirement to improve energy efficiency and the recovery of the financial assistance where a breach of conditions occurs.
- Successive applications will not normally be considered.
- Mechanisms are continued which deal with requests to waive or reduce repayment of assistance and grievances/appeals.

Appendix 6(a): Wigan’s Performance against Metropolitan Boroughs on the National Best Value Performance Indicator 2001/02

Housing BVPi returns for 2001/02 and quartiles for Mets



Definitions

- 62** Private unfit dwellings made fit/demolished
- 63** Average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings
- 64** Private dwellings 6 months empty - returned to occupation
- 65a** Weekly management cost
- 65b** Weekly repair cost
- 66a** Rent collection
- 66b** Arrears
- 66c** Write offs
- 67** Homelessness sec 184 decisions in 33 days
- 68** Average relet time
- 69** Rent loss from vacant dwellings
- 71a** Dwellings renovated equal to or < £5,000
- 71b** Dwellings renovated equal to or > £5,000
- 72** Specified repairs completed in time limits
- 73** Average time for the rest of responsive repairs
- 74a** Tenant satisfaction - overall service
- bn** base number
- ci** confidence interval
- 74x** Year of last survey for BV74
- 75** Tenant satisfaction with opportunities for participation
- bn** base number
- ci** confidence interval
- 75x** Year of last survey for BV75
- 164** CRE code of practice in housing

Out of 17:
 9 Best
 3 Above Average
 2 Bottom quartile

**Appendix 6(b): National Best Value Performance Indicators,
2000/01 and 2001/02, 2002/03 and targets for 2003/04**

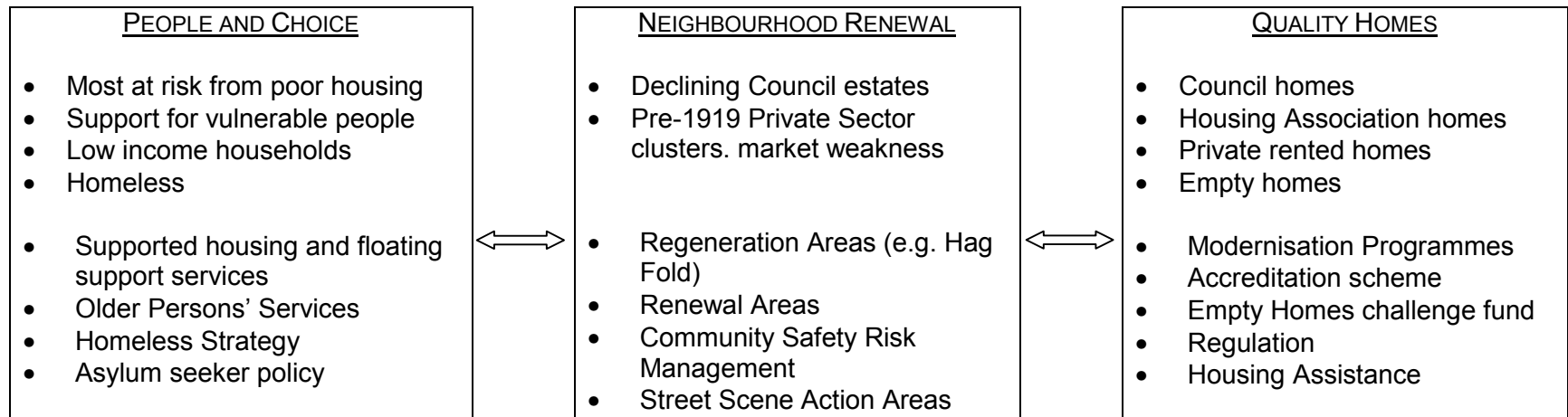
Ref	Description	2000-01		2001-02		2002-03		2003-04
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
BV62	Private unfit dwellings made fit/demolished	4.50%	9.30%	9%	8.35%	7%	7.3%	8%
BV63	Average SAP rating of local authority owned	40	49	50	59	60	60	61
BV64	Private Dwellings 6 months empty – returned to occupation	6.50%	7.70%	11%	11%	8%	7.3%	8%
BV65a (old)	The average weekly management costs per local authority dwelling	£6.07	£5.87	£6.90	£6.89	£8.12	£8.81	£8.36
BV65b (old)	The average weekly costs per local authority dwelling of repairs	£15.92	£15.66	£24.27	£11.30	£13.15	£10.17	£13.54
BV66a (old)	Local authority rent collection and arrears: proportion of rent collected	93%	97.2%	95.04%	96.1%	96%	97.8%	97.8%
BV66b (old)	Local authority rent collection and arrears: rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	4%	2.60%	3.56%	3.20%	3%	3.04%	2.9%
BV66c (old)	Local authority rent collection and arrears: rent written off as not collectable as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	1%	1%	1%	0.63%	0.84%	0.64%	0.7%
BV67 (old)	The proportion of homelessness applications on which the authority makes a decision and issues written notification to the applicant within 33 working days	97%	94%	95%	96%	97%	93%	97.5%
BV68 (old)	Average re-let times for local authority dwellings let (days)	28	41	38	63	60	60	51
BV69 (old)	Percentage of rent lost through local authority dwellings becoming vacant	2.55%	2.70%	2.73%	2.6%	2.6%	2.37%	2.4%
BV72 (old)	The percentage of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	87%	90%	90%	83%	83%	91%	86%
BV73 (old)	The average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs (days)	12	14	13	11	13	12	12
BV74a	Tenant satisfaction	New indicator				80%	79.2%	80%
BV75	Participation	New indicator				52%	51.3%	55%
BV164	CRE Code of practice in housing	New indicator				No	No	Yes
BV183	Homelessness average stay (days) for families with dependant children or pregnant women i. Bed & breakfast accommodation ii. Hostel accommodation	New indicator				i.4 wk ii.0 wk	i.0 wk ii.0 wk	i.0 wk ii.0 wk
BV184 a	The proportion of homes which were non-decent at the beginning of the year	New indicator				58%	41.3%	42.5%
BV184 b	The percentage change in proportion of non-decent homes	New indicator				41%	-2.76%	29.4%
BV185	Responsive (not emergency) repairs for which an appointment was made and kept	New indicator				60	50%	55%

Appendix 7: The Housing Strategy 2002 to 2007 Strategic Aim: “An affordable and decent home and neighbourhood for all”

Themes:

Priorities:

Main Interventions Examples:



Key Enablers

		<u>Enabler</u>		<u>Achieved through</u>		<u>Outcomes</u>
	↑	Community Participation	→	Tenant Participation/Consultation Strategy and Compacts	→	Ownership/Involvement in solutions
	←	Partnerships	→	Community Safety Strategy	→	Reduction in crime/anti-social behaviour
	←	Quality Services	→	Best Value Reviews and performance management	→	Overall Top quartile performance
	←	Accountability	→	Capital programme, Council Housing Business Plan and Service Delivery Plan	→	Quarterly and annual reports
	←	Robust Solutions	→	Strategic planning process driven by research and evaluation	→	5 yearly House Condition and Needs Surveys
	←	Staff	→	Investors in People	→	Continuous learning / well skilled

Appendix 8: Contact Officers for Further Information on Strategic Gaps

(All telephone contacts are Wigan Council except those marked with the abbreviation "WALH" i.e. Wigan and Leigh Housing contact)

	Contact	Telephone (01942)
Housing Strategy	Ashley Crumbley	827072
People and Choice		
Access to Housing	Janice Barton (WALH)	827423
Homelessness	Peter Layland	404135
Supporting People	Peter Layland	404135
Adaptations	Public Rented: Elspeth Brighton (WALH)	827421
	Other: Barry Hailwood	733338
Older People	Anees Mank	827446
Asylum Seekers	Anees Mank	827446
Neighbourhood Renewal		
Declining Council Estates	Elspeth Brighton (WALH)	827421
Declining pre-1919 terraces	Barry Hailwood	733338
Housing Market	Peter Layland	404135
Community Safety	John Hutchison	827440
Street Scene	Paul Dandy	705244
Quality Homes		
Decency Standard		
Public rented homes	Elspeth Brighton (WALH)	827421
Housing Association homes	Peter Layland	404135
Fitness in		
Private rented homes	Barry Hailwood	733338
Owner occupied homes	Barry Hailwood	733338
Energy Conservation and Home Security	Anees Mank	827446

Appendix 9: Progress Report on the 2002/03 Housing Action Plan

WHAT we need to do	HOW we will do it	WHEN we wish to do it		WHO was responsible	PROGRESS
HOUSING PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION PANEL					
Continuously improve the Housing Strategy:		<u>Start</u>	<u>Finish</u>		
THEME: People and Choice					
- Homelessness	Review using Strategic Planning Process	1 Feb 2002	1 Apr 2003	Bob Saunders Janice Barton (WALH)	☺ Completed – Strategy published.
- Supporting People	Follow Government guidance	-	1 Apr 2004	Peter Layland / Tricia Anderson (Social Services)	☺ Completed – Strategy published.
- Adaptations	Using gap analysis and Service Improvement Planning	1 Feb 2002	1 Apr 2003	Frank Costello (DCE)	☺ On target – 50% improvement in completion time.
- Asylum Seekers	Using gap analysis and Service Improvement Planning	1 Feb 2002	1 Apr 2003	Ashley Crumbley	☺ New policy developed and implemented.
- Choice based lettings	Introduce two “shops”	1 Apr 2002	1 Nov 2002	Tony Gerrard (WALH)	☺ Two shops opened – new lettings policy implemented.
THEME: Neighbourhood Renewal					
- New models to reverse decline	Review using Strategic Planning Process			Ashley Crumbley	☺ New model developed and being trialled ahead of schedule.
- Housing Market/Need	- as above -		Start 2004/05	Peter Layland / Nick Taylor (Planning)	☺ Survey completed.
- Community Safety	- as above -			Anees Mank / Dave Bowman (Community Safety)	☺ New approaches being progressed
THEME: Quality Homes					
- Public Rented and Social Housing	- as above -			Peter Layland / Elspeth Brighton (WALH)	☺ ditto -
- Privately owned housing	- as above -		Start 2005/06	Peter Layland / Residential Landlords' Association	☺ ditto-
- Health and Cold Conditions	- as above -			Anees Mank	☺ ditto-

WHAT we need to do	HOW we will do it	WHEN we wish to do it	WHO was responsible	PROGRESS
HOUSING STRATEGY AND URBAN RENEWAL SERVICES				
Ensure we deliver the best possible services	Using Performance Management System, cyclical performance reports covering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery of Housing / Capital Strategy - Delivery of Service Plans (Urban Renewal, Housing Strategy) - The Wigan and Leigh Housing performance 	Ongoing: Quarterly and Annually	Ashley Crumbley Barry Hailwood Peter Layland Tony Gerrard	☺ New framework designed and implemented.
Try and ensure house prices of older terraced houses remain affordable	Monitor terraced house prices and average incomes, develop potential interventions if affordability gap emerges.	Ongoing	Anees Mank	☺ Monitoring in place.
Reduce unfitnes in the private sector to 4% by 2005 and 2% by 2010.	Implement Private Sector Housing Strategy – mix of Renewal Areas, Clearance, assistance, enforcement and promotion	Phase 1: 2001-2005 Phase 2: 2005-2010	Barry Hailwood	☺ Top quartile Best Value Performance Indicator. On target.
Reduce homes with poor energy rating (SAP below 40) in the private sector to 15% by 2005 and 10% by 2010.	Implement Home Energy Conservation Strategy – mix of promotion, Warm Front Grants, Energy Efficiency Commitments	As above	Anees Mank	☺ Progressing well but indications that targets will prove difficult.
Reduce homes of older people with inadequate home security measures living in the private sector to 56% by 2005.	Partnership with Victim Support / Home Repair Assistance used for labour costs, owners pay for materials.	Phase 1: 2002-2005 Then evaluate	Anees Mank	☺ Scheme re-launched.
Reduce number of private sector dwellings in areas of decline to 1,000 by 2010 and empty homes to 3% by 2005 and 2% by 2010	Use of Renewal Areas, Slum Clearance, landlord portfolio initiatives, enforcement and the Empty Homes Challenge Fund.	2001 to 2010	Barry Hailwood	☺ Top quartile Best Value Performance Indicator. On target.

WHAT we need to do	HOW we will do it	WHEN we wish to do it	WHO was responsible	PROGRESS
HOUSING STRATEGY AND URBAN RENEWAL SERVICES				
Improve the quality of life in areas of decline	In Renewal Areas – residents determine programmes, partnerships with Engineers and Leisure using Street Scene Action Areas.	2001-2010	Barry Hailwood Tony Gerrard (WALH)	☺ Three Street Scene Action areas in place, first declared delivered significant improvements.
Ensure we deliver the Best Possible Services	Urban Renewal and Housing Strategy Services will produce annual service plans setting out performance indicators (including customer satisfaction), outputs and resource utilisation (staff, revenue and capital) with the aim of maintaining upper quartile performance.	Annually	Barry Hailwood Peter Layland	☺ Quarterly and annual review reveal continued good performance.
	Implement the Best Value Improvement Plan for Urban Renewal	2001 – 2005	Barry Hailwood	☺ Slippage on one issue – replacement computer system, will be in place in 2003/04.
	Submit cyclical performance reports to both the Housing Partnership forum and the Regulation Panel	Quarterly/Annual	Barry Hailwood Peter Layland	☺ Submitted.
Responsiveness to all in our community	Achieve Commission for Racial Equality Level 3	2003	Ken Wardale	☺ Good progress, anticipate 2003 target met.
Increase investment in private sector housing	Implement the Regulatory Reform Act – new grant/loans policy	1 April 2003	Barry Hailwood Ashley Crumbley	☺ Consultation paper published. Implementing on 18/07/03.

WHAT we need to do	HOW we will do it	WHEN we wish to do it	WHO was responsible	PROGRESS
WIGAN AND LEIGH HOUSING				
Ensure public rents remain affordable	Implement the Government's rent policy and advise Wigan Council of any emerging affordability gap	-	Elspeth Brighton	☺ Rent increase as planned.
Ensure all Council housing meets the government's Decency Standard by 2010	Arms Length Management		Elspeth Brighton Tony Gerrard (Best Value)	☺ Secured ALMO status – on target.
Reduce the number of Council housing in areas of decline to 1000 by 2010	Includes use of "Area Based Initiatives" including Street Scene Action Areas, Community Safety Improvement Areas and mainstream resources to address drivers of decline	2001 to 2010	Elspeth Brighton	☺ Good progress, indication of rising demand.
Ensure we deliver the best possible housing services	Produce annual delivery plans containing performance indicators agreed with Council striving to achieve upper quartile performance.	Annually	Elspeth Brighton Tony Gerrard	☺ Some slippage on rent arrears and voids. Current indications are positive.
	Complete the Best Value Reviews of Housing Services	July 2002	Tony Gerrard	☺ Completed on time. Obtained 2 stars.
	Implement Best Value Improvement Plans and report quarterly to the Council's client officer and the ALMO Boards.	Quarterly/Annual	Tony Gerrard	☺ Following dialogue ALMO rationalising Improvement Plans into a "plan of plans".
	Submit cyclical performance reports to the Council's client officer, ALMO Boards and the Housing Partnership	Quarterly/Annual	Tony Gerrard	☺ Cyclical reports delivered.
On responsiveness to all in our community	Achieve Commission for Racial Equality level 3 and fully comply with the CREs Code of Practice for Housing	2003	Janice Barton	☺ Given top priority by ALMO.

Appendix 10 The Housing Action Plan 2003 to 2007

What is the issue / problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it? (priorities for action)	What additional resources do we need?	How will we know we have been successful?				Who is leading on this?
			Milestones / Targets				
			2003 / 04	2004 / 05	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	
THEME: PEOPLE AND CHOICE							
Tackling and minimising homelessness	Objectives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing the numbers of people homeless, - Resettling most homeless within 1 year. 		80%	(Targets to be set) 82%	84%	85%	P Layland (Housing Strategy)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing homelessness through improved advice, assessment and support with a customer charter. 	£70k per annum		•			P Layland (Housing Strategy)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring sufficient accommodation is available linking to a new direct access/emergency/specialist protocol for scheme/site selection. 	£2.5 million per annum	7 units	20 units	To Reset		English Churches Manchester Methodist
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing support to potentially and recently homeless by 50% (over October 2002 base). 	£1 million per annum		50%			P Layland (Housing Strategy)
Ensuring have access to affordable decent homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the Housing Needs Survey results particularly looking at the most vulnerable and minority groups (e.g. BME) and readjusting Action Plan and targets to ensure accessible housing. 	Currently nil	•				P Layland (Housing Strategy)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring housing market and Action Plan to ensure average annual income is no more than two-fifths of the average price of an older terraced house. Develop interventions if prices exceed target. 	Currently nil	•	•	•	•	A Mank (Housing Strategy)
Ensuring people with disability receive the best possible adaptations service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring continuous improvements to the response time for providing major adaptations (was 621 days in 1999). • Monitoring performance and listening to customers to ensure high customer satisfaction. 	Maintaining Disabled Facility	305 days	280 days	270 days	260 days	B Hailwood (Urban Renewal) E Brighton (WALH) (As above)
		Grant expenditure at £850k a year.	90%	90%	90%	90%	

What is the issue / problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it? (priorities for action)	What additional resources do we need?	How will we know we have been successful?				Who is leading on this?
			Milestones / Targets				
			2003 / 04	2004 / 05	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	
KEY ENABLERS							
<p>Ensuring older people have access to an affordable decent home of choice and have the choice of remaining in their own home. Older people are particularly worried about home security, safety and money issues.</p> <p>Ensuring Asylum Seekers are appropriately dispersed and assimilated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the Housing Needs and House Condition Surveys with the involvement of the Older Peoples Housing Forum we are redesigning Housing services for older people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign Care and Repair, Reorganise Council's sheltered housing. Implementing the Policy Framework for Asylum Seekers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum number of asylum seekers, Number of wards exceeding the "Nominal Review Level" (i.e. 1:200 plus 1/5th). 	<p>£30k per annum</p> <p>Any growth to be submitted to Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Endeavour to ensure no costs to General Fund or Housing Review Account.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>1553</p> <p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>1553</p> <p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>1553</p> <p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>1553</p> <p>2</p>	<p>A Crumbley (Housing Strategy)</p> <p>J Barton (WALH)</p> <p>J Chan (Urban Renewal)</p>
<p>Giving residents greater choice in the rented sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extending the accommodation available through Choice Based lettings shop and implementing the new Council Lettings Policy. 	<p>No growth implications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>T Gerrard (WALH)</p>
<p>Continuously improving the Housing Strategy's theme of "People and Choices".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having focused on the issue in 2002/03 looking at the problems and needs, the emphasis for the next two years is implementing the improvements identified using Performance Management to drive further improvements. 	<p>No additional implication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>A Crumbley (Housing Strategy)</p>

What is the issue / problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it? (priorities for action)	What additional resources do we need?	How will we know we have been successful?				Who is leading on this?
			Milestones / Targets				
			2003 / 04	2004 / 05	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	
THEME: NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL							
<p>The Borough has the lowest house prices in Greater Manchester. In Wigan, as well as elsewhere regionally there is the potential of market decline and abandonment.</p> <p>Continuously improving the approach to Neighbourhood Renewal.</p>	<p>Objectives include reducing the percentage of empty homes in all tenures.</p> <p>On Council housing – continuing estate by estate monitoring of demand etc. and using where necessary demolition or sale of surplus stock.</p> <p>– new Area Based Initiative tackling the causes of decline (e.g. community safety and street scene).</p> <p>On pre 1919 terraces – continuing existing Renewal Areas and declaring 3 others.</p> <p>– creating a housing market renewal fund to bring empties into use.</p> <p>– landlord portfolio enforcement where needed.</p> <p>Linking with GONW, other government departments, other local authorities (through Beacon Status) and other partnerships to further develop the radical different approach to Area Based neighbourhood renewal and evaluating effectiveness. Particular emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community safety • street scene 	<p>See below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Review Account / ALMO • bending mainstream resources. • Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. <p>£125k per annum</p> <p>£30k for baseline and evaluation.</p>	<p>3%</p> <p>•</p> <p>1 Area</p> <p>4</p> <p>15 units</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>2.7%</p> <p>•</p> <p>1 Area</p> <p>7</p> <p>20 units</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>2.5%</p> <p>•</p> <p>2 Areas</p> <p>7</p> <p>20 units</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>2%</p> <p>•</p> <p>3 Areas</p> <p>6</p> <p>35 units</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>B Hailwood (Urban Renewal)</p> <p>E Brighton (WALH)</p> <p>A Crumbley (Housing Strategy)</p> <p>K Spencer (WALH)</p> <p>D Bowman (Community Safety)</p> <p>P Dandy (Street Scene)</p> <p>B Hailwood (Urban Renewal)</p> <p>B Hailwood (Urban Renewal)</p> <p>B Hailwood (Urban Renewal)</p> <p>A Crumbley (Housing Strategy)</p> <p>D Bowman (Community Safety)</p> <p>P Dandy (Street Scene)</p>

What is the issue / problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it? (priorities for action)	What additional resources do we need?	How will we know we have been successful?				Who is leading on this?
			Milestones / Targets				
			2003 / 04	2004 / 05	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	
THEME: QUALITY HOMES							
Only 59% of Council homes meet the Decency Standard and 5% of private dwellings are unfit. (See above for expenditure and targets)	Objectives include: All Council housing meeting the Decency Standard. All Social housing meeting the Decency Standard by 2010. No more than 2% of private homes unfit by 2010.	£137million over 4 years £3.1million per annum. Housing Capital, plus private investment.	57%	70% (Targets to be set)	76%	82%	E Brighton (WALH) A Crumbley (Housing Strategy) B Hailwood (Urban Renewal)
Too many houses are cold, fuel poverty and excess winter deaths are a consequence.	On Council housing, in consultation with tenants implementing a major improvement programme for Council dwellings.			(To be set)			A Crumbley (Housing Strategy)
	On Registered Social Landlord stock, meeting with RSLs to set an improvement programme to reach the Decency Standard by 2010.						
	On private rented sector, to drive up standards by introducing a new landlord accreditation, continuing a risk based inspection programme of houses in multiple occupation, renewal areas and clearance.	Private sector resourcing 790 staff days	1	1	1	1	B Hailwood (Urban Renewal) J Chan (Urban Renewal)
	On providing housing assistance to improve, demolish, adapt or bring into use dwellings – the introduction new policy for Housing Assistance (i.e. combined grant and loans).	4.5 million per annum Housing Capital	•				A Crumbley (Housing Strategy) / B Hailwood (Urban Renewal)
	Objectives include: – Improving energy efficiency across all tenures (“HECA”), – Improving the “SAP” energy rating of Council homes (average SAP rating) – Improving the percentage of private dwellings with SAP rating of 40 or more.	See below	18%	20%	22.8%	–	A Mank (Housing Strategy) E Brighton (WALH)
			61	63	68	69	
			74%	80%	85%	86%	A Mank (Housing Strategy)

What is the issue / problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it? (priorities for action)	What additional resources do we need?	How will we know we have been successful?				Who is leading on this?
			Milestones / Targets				
			2003 / 04	2004 / 05	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	
The community and older people in particular are fearful of crime and domestic burglaries.	Achieving the objectives by implementing the Home Energy Conservation Strategy, which includes schemes for Council dwellings, promotion and education particularly using the Local Energy Advice Centre and government "Warm Front" grant.	£63million between 1995 to 2006	•			Reset Targets	(As above)
	Reducing domestic burglaries in conjunction with Community Safety including:		1270	1280	2000	2000	A Mank (Housing Strategy)
	– all Council and Housing Assistance to "Secured by Design" standards,	Included in ALMO and Housing Assistance Programmes.	-10%	-15%	-25%	Reset Targets	B Hailwood (Urban Renewal) and E Brighton (WALH)
	– introduction of resident led "alley gating" schemes.	To be quantified (Average £1500 per scheme)	•	•	•	•	
	– trial and evaluate "SMART WATER"	£22k trial	•				
	– continue "safe as houses" and safety chain code.	Contained within Care and Repair budget.	•	•	•	•	
Continuously improving on the theme of Quality Homes.	Major review commencing in 2005 linked to a further all tenure house condition survey to evaluate impact of current Housing Strategy.	£40k in 2005			•		A Crumbley (Housing Strategy)

What is the issue / problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it? (priorities for action)	What additional resources do we need?	How will we know we have been successful?				Who is leading on this?
			Milestones / Targets				
			2003 / 04	2004 / 05	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	
KEY ENABLERS							
Ensuring communities participate in particular hard to reach groups.	Targets for Council tenants satisfied with opportunity in decision taking (BVPi 75).	-	55%	60%	65%	70%	T Gerrard (WALH)
	Achieved through involvement on Boards, investment group, residents and tenants fora, estate inspections, area based schemes (e.g. community safety, street scene) etc. Continuing use of Housing Partnership and forums for vulnerable and hard to reach groups: - Older people, Homeless and Black and Minority Ethnic people (including Asylum Seekers), - Achieving Equality Standard Level 3.		•	•	•	•	T Gerrard (WALH)
Developing and maintaining partnerships to improve the quality of life particularly of those who are socially excluded or are in poverty.	Wigan and Leigh Housing achieving Equality Level 3, and CRE Code of Practice for renting	-	•	•	•	•	A Crumbley (Housing Strategy) / R Saunders (Director) / P Layland (Housing Strategy)
	Priorities for partnership working are Community Safety – continuing joint action on Anti-Social Behaviour. Extending action on area basis and domestic burglary. Environment – extending the rolling programme of Street Scene Action Areas targeted at low demand housing neighbourhoods.		4 Level 2 Achieve	5 Level 3 Maintain	6 Level 3 Maintain	6 Level 3 Maintain	D Herschal Wigan and Leigh Housing
Ensuring residents receive the best possible services.	Targets include: Percentage of Council tenants satisfied with the Housing Management Service (BVPi 74a).	-	•	•	•	•	T Gerrard (WALH)
	Percentage of customers satisfied with the Urban Renewal Service.	-	4	5	6	6	B Hailwood (Urban Renewal)
			83%	85%	87%	90%	
			90%	90%	90%	90%	

What is the issue / problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it? (priorities for action)	What additional resources do we need?	How will we know we have been successful?				Who is leading on this?
			Milestones / Targets				
			2003 / 04	2004 / 05	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	
	<p>This is achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing the 3 Best Value Review Improvement Plans (% of plans implemented), Further Best Value review (Homelessness), Self assessment against housing criteria in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The Performance Management framework for Wigan and Leigh Housing Company (WALH) with challenging targets for national and local indicators. Achieving / retaining Charter Mark status and Quality Assurance for retained services and WALH. 	<p>WALH</p> <p>EH</p>	<p>30%</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>50%</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>80%</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>100%</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>Barry Hailwood (Urban Renewal)</p> <p>R Saunders (Director)</p> <p>P Layland (Housing Strategy)</p> <p>P Layland (Housing Strategy)</p> <p>T Gerrard (WALH)</p> <p>K Wardale (Environmental Health / Housing)</p>
<p>Accountability – telling people what it is we plan to deliver and how we have performed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Housing Strategy and Council Housing Business Plan will be published on the web, presented to various forums, promoted through the media. Progress will be reported quarterly and annually, with reports focusing on the priorities but also making transparent any significant variations. All reports are public and are subject to challenge by either the Scrutiny or Performance Panels which include residents. 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>•</p> <p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>Council systems – R Saunders (Director)</p> <p>Wigan and Leigh Homes Peter Gee (Chief Executive)</p>
<p>Robust Solutions are developed based on sound research, option appraisal and risk management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually Wigan and Leigh Housing will send to all tenants a report on the plans and performance. Continuing to use the Strategic Management Process to systematically identify gaps, develop solution implement and monitor performance. 	<p>–</p>	<p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>•</p> <p>•</p>	<p>T Gerrard (WALH)</p> <p>A Crumbley (Housing Strategy)</p>

What is the issue / problem we need to address?	How will we deal with it? (priorities for action)	What additional resources do we need?	How will we know we have been successful?				Who is leading on this?
			Milestones / Targets				
			2003 / 04	2004 / 05	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	
To ensure we have well skilled staff with the key competences for delivering the best possible service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to use Investors in People (IIP) to systematically assess staff and then develop and deliver training etc. 	-	•	•	•	•	K Wardale (Environmental Health / Housing)