



PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY

2006-2011

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INTRODUCTION

Cambridge Background

Cambridge has an estimated population of 118,500 people, and of the 46,000 households, over 80% live in private sector housing, in a combination of owner-occupied, private rented and Housing Association accommodation.

The city is a popular place to live and work, as well as being an important historic tourist centre. It occupies an important strategic position within the East of England, with good transport links to London, Stansted airport and other parts of the country, although traffic congestion within the city is a major concern.

The city is characterised by a high student population, and a relatively high proportion of younger people and single occupant households. Around 14% of residents have a long term limiting illness.

There is a higher than average proportion of older dwellings – mainly concentrated in the central city areas.

Average house prices are high in relation to the rest of the eastern region and higher than many parts of the country, and there is a high demand for privately rented accommodation. Although unemployment is low, average incomes tend to be low, and deprivation levels (as measured by the 2004 Index of Deprivation) are on a par with the rest of the country. This raises serious concerns around the affordability of housing, and the ability of property owners to keep their properties in a good state of repair.

Although Cambridge appears from the outside to be a thriving, wealthy and vibrant city, it is important to recognise that there are real issues around providing and maintaining good quality, affordable housing to all of its residents.

Why the Strategy is Needed

This strategy stems from the Council's Housing Strategy 2004-2007, and is focussed on improving housing conditions and meeting housing needs within the private sector.

There are a number of other strategies which address the whole range of housing issues, including private sector housing, but there has not been one specific document or statements outlining the Council's overall approach to private sector housing.

Recent changes in legislation and national focus have introduced new opportunities for the service – for example the introduction of a Decent Homes standard for private sector housing, the imminent replacement of the fitness standard by a new Housing Health and Rating System, new powers granted by the Regulation Reform Order for housing assistance etc.

The Council was given an 'Excellent' rating in its most recent CPA inspection, and there is a strong desire to maintain this rating, and to ensure continuous improvement across the range of housing services.

These factors, together with mixed success in some of the Council's private sector initiatives over the last couple of years means that now is an ideal time to bring together existing policies in a coherent way, and to review the approach to the private sector in conjunction with stakeholders.

Aim and Scope of Strategy

The aim of this strategy is to improve housing conditions and meet the needs of people living in the private sector, and should enable the Council to make best use of the resources available to it to meet national and local objectives and priorities.

The strategy covers dwellings which are owner-occupied, private rented – including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) - and Housing Association dwellings owned by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), including general and special needs housing. It also encompasses occupants of caravans used as permanent dwellings, as well as privately owned dwellings which are vacant on a long-term basis.

There is a whole range of other stakeholders with an interest in this area of service, although consultation and involvement with these stakeholders has, in the past, been patchy and has varied across the different areas of service. Consultation on the draft strategy, including a consultation event, took place in September 2005, and ongoing consultation and involvement with stakeholders will be critical to the delivery and ongoing review of an effective strategy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Private Sector Housing Strategy was put out to consultation in the autumn of 2005, and the agreed strategy will commence in April 2006.

Private sector housing includes housing which is owner-occupied, private rented (including Houses In Multiple Occupation), owned by Registered Social Landlords, and privately owned long-term empty homes.

Chapter 1: Service Users, Partners and Other Stakeholders.

Working with partners and stakeholders is key to the strategy's success, in terms of setting objectives, service delivery and ongoing improvement. Key stakeholders include residents, landlords, other service users and potential users, partnership agencies such as the local Primary Care Trust and Supporting People, and other sub-regional authorities.

Chapter 2: National and Local Requirements

The strategy will be influenced by a range of national and local requirements and objectives.

Some of the statutory requirements are in the process of changing, with the current Fitness Standard being replaced by a new Housing Health and Safety Rating System, the introduction of a new statutory licensing scheme for larger Houses in Multiple Occupation, and new requirements to meet national Decent Homes targets.

There are a range of statutory and national requirements in relation to energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions and eradication of fuel poverty, and duties under Landlord and Tenant law.

The strategy contributes to achieving the Council's Medium Term Objectives. Relevant local strategies include the Regional and Sub-Regional Housing Strategies, the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Single Homeless & Rough Sleepers Strategies, as well as a number of city and partnership plans, strategies and policies.

Chapter 3: Stock and Occupant Profiles.

The worst conditions and safety standards and the lowest energy efficiency ratings tend to be within the private rented sector, particularly within Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

Older people (particularly single pensioners), people with special needs and households on low incomes often live in the poorest housing, and it is these groups who are particularly in need of help. At the same time, home owners and landlords need to be encouraged to invest in improving their homes.

The Council is on track to meet the national target for 65% of vulnerable households to live in Decent Homes by 2006 according to the current decent homes definition.

There are a number of long-term empty homes in the city which need to be brought back into use to help tackle the housing shortage.

More information is required on the profile and needs of owners and residents, including information on income levels, ethnicity etc, especially in the private rented sector. Stock condition data needs to be improved and collected more frequently. More accurate energy efficiency data and clear identification of homes which need to be tackled in terms of energy efficiency are needed to ensure that national and local targets and objectives can be met.

Chapter 4: Housing Conditions – The Current Approach

The service is more effective in some areas than in others.

Around 15 homes were made fit last year, but overall fitness levels remain high.

The current HMO registration scheme has worked reasonably well, although there are still a number of properties not identified or registered, and there has been a growing suspicion that some landlords might be withdrawing from the private rented market because of the works required. (The Council's scheme will have to be revoked when the new statutory HMO Licensing scheme comes into force).

The Safer Homes scheme carries out small safety works for around 300 elderly households a year, contributing alongside other schemes to improved home safety. A campaign has been run to install fire safety equipment in older people's homes.

A total of 26 long-term empty dwellings have been brought back into use over the last two years, although grants offered to owners to carry out works and lease the property to a Registered Social Landlord have proved unpopular.

The grants and loans scheme for people on low incomes helped around 120 households last year, following changes to the original scheme.

The new preferred partnering scheme is expected to make the carrying out of improvement and adaptation works more cost-effective. However, demand for Disabled Facilities Grants is continuing to increase, and additional funding is required to meet demand.

Tackling energy efficiency is an important area of work which has been under-resourced up until now, and there are concerns over the amount and accuracy of data available. This should improve now that the Council has a temporary externally funded Home Energy Officer.

There is a requirement that all new-build social housing is built to Lifetime Home standards, and the need for disabled adapted and wheelchair accessible housing for individuals as required is taken into account in the development of new schemes.

Chapter 5: Other Private Sector Housing Services

There is a range of additional services provided by the Council with regard to landlord and tenant relations, improving access to the private sector, prevention of homelessness etc.

The Tenancy Relations Service provides information, advice and assistance to tenants, landlords and the general public, and monitoring is now under way to establish the effectiveness of the existing service.

The Rent Access and Rent Deposit Guarantee schemes have been highly successful in helping to prevent over 100 households from becoming homeless, saving the Council around £170,000 in homelessness costs.

The Private Sector Leasing Scheme run in partnership with King Street Housing Association provides homes leased from private landlords for temporary homeless accommodation, reducing the need to use bed and breakfast accommodation

The Independent Living Service (Care Call) has recently been reviewed and will need to be monitored closely.

Provision of low cost home ownership was intended to be through a Do It Yourself Home Ownership scheme, but this is no longer going ahead in light of the new government Extending Home Ownership initiative, and complexities in setting up the scheme on a firm legal footing. More funding will be requested to make the Council's own shared ownership more affordable, and to halt the decline in the supply of this stock. In addition funding will be allocated to the provision of affordable new-build housing which does not receive Housing Corporation grant.

More focus is required on tackling anti-social behaviour within the private sector, and better links with landlords and tenants are needed.

Chapter 6: Access to Quality Services

The need to provide quality services which are accessible is extremely important.

How quality is monitored and measured varies across the service, as do the use of customer feedback, the existence of and input of customers into setting standards and targets. There is a need for improvement in this area.

There is a range of ways in which customers can access the service, but again, signposting and promotion varies across the service.

There is a need to reconsider what information should be provided, and in what formats, to ensure that services are accessible to all. A Corporate Access Strategy is being developed which will inform this area of work.

Chapters 7 & 8: Future Priorities and Resourcing the Service

All the recommendations contribute to achieving the Council's Medium Term Objectives.

Addressing the overall housing shortage: Bringing long-term empty homes back into use is important, and financial assistance should continue to be offered to owners for improvements on the basis that they then lease to a Registered Social Landlord. The amount available for this should be reduced from £100,000 to £30,000 per year due to low take-up to date. Further options also need to be explored.

Maximising the supply of affordable housing: The government is introducing a new scheme to extend home ownership, although the full details are not yet known. The Council's proposed Do It Yourself Shared Ownership scheme, with £533,000 capital per year allocated for five years is no longer going ahead but capital will be made available for new-build affordable housing, for one-off purchases for disabled households and for buying back equity in the Council's shared ownership properties to make them more affordable.

Safe Homes: Statutory responsibilities for safer homes are changing, which may require additional capital IT funding.

Provision of fire safety and home security equipment should be increased for older people and people with disabilities, at an average capital cost of £30,000 per year. (This would be dependant on the grants and loans staff being revenue funded from 2009).

The Safer Homes Scheme contract should be renewed for a further three years at a cost of £30,000 revenue over that period.

The Council will no longer be able to continue with its HMO registration scheme once mandatory licensing comes into force. The impact of the new HHSRS and licensing regime on the supply of private rented housing will be monitored.

A new Landlord Accreditation scheme is proposed at a revenue cost of £40,000 per year once the scheme is up and running, and a Tenant Accreditation Scheme also needs to be considered. T

Provision of fire safety equipment to landlords has been considered but rejected.

Decent Homes: Additional capital funding is required to meet the increasing demand for Disabled Facilities Grants – £200,000 per year based on current levels of demand.

The provision of wheelchair accessible homes needs to be increased, and new homes built to Lifetime Homes standard wherever possible.

The policy of offering grants and loans for home improvements makes an important contribution towards the decent homes requirement, but whether better value for money can be achieved needs to be investigated.

A Home Energy Strategy is required to plan how to meet statutory requirements and local objectives in terms of reduction of carbon emissions, energy efficiency, and fuel poverty and affordable warmth.

More focus is needed on tackling anti-social behaviour in the private sector.

Tackling Homelessness: The Rent Deposit Guarantee and Rent Access schemes should be continued to help prevent homelessness, and will require an additional revenue input. The private sector leasing scheme should be maintained to help minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, and consideration should be extending the lease period to provide more settled accommodation, and making the scheme more attractive to landlords.

Affordable Housing

The focus of providing affordable housing should be on new-build provision, with some additional finance being put into the Council's own shared ownership scheme to make properties more affordable.

Quality of and Access to Services: Customer care standards and targets need to be reviewed and access to and information on services needs to be improved, in consultation.

Partnership Working: Partnership working needs to be strengthened, and opportunities to generate external income and achieve value for money must be maximised.

Further Research: Better information is required about the stock, and about the profiles and needs of residents, landlords and service users to ensure that resources continue to be targeted effectively.

Chapter 9: Implementing and Monitoring the Strategy

The strategy has been consulted on, and consultation will continue to review deliver the strategy effectively.

Clearer action plan targets will be developed, and monitoring will be carried out alongside monitoring of the Housing Strategy.

CHAPTER 1

SERVICE FRAMEWORK :

SERVICE USERS, PARTNERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Relevant stakeholders who need to be involved include users and potential users of the services, other service providers, multi-agency groups, service delivery partners etc.

Partnership working is very important in setting objectives and priorities and in effective delivery of the strategy.

Key stakeholders include:

- **Local residents**, including private rented and RSL (Registered Social Landlord) tenants, and home owners including owner occupiers and owners of long-term vacant properties.
- **Private Landlords**, and **Landlord Associations**
- **Lettings Agencies**
- Approximately 40 **RSL landlords** have homes in the city. The Council will work with them to help achieve their aims, but also has an enforcement role to ensure that they fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The Council also runs a private sector leasing scheme through **King Street Housing**.
- **Potential service users** wanting access to housing and services are important to engage to ensure that services are accessible and the Council is not discriminating against particular groups or individuals.
- The joint funded Cambridge Home Improvement Agency – '**Cambridge Home Aid**' – sits within the Housing Service and is monitored by Supporting People. Home Aid works with the **Social Services /PCT** Occupational Therapists to design and commission adaptation works and administer Disabled Facilities Grants, as well as administering a grants and loans scheme for repair and renovation of owner-occupied dwellings. The **Home Aid Management Board** and **Foundations** have an input into the direction and work of the Agency.
- The **PCT** joint funds Home Aid (as does **Social Services**) and the Safer Homes scheme, and works in partnership with the Council on a number of strategic, planning and operational groups.
- The Council is a commissioning partner for **Supporting People**, as well as providing services funded by them – eg support to older or people with disabilities whose homes need to be adapted.
- The Council works actively with the **Cambridge and Anglia Polytechnic Universities**, and their **Student Unions**

- **Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service** and a number of **voluntary groups** representing service users, including Citizens Advice Bureau, Cambridge Independent Advice Centre, Directions Plus, Age Concern, COPE etc are also important stakeholders
- There are a number of **energy agencies and suppliers** who provide advice and grant funding to householders. The Council is in the process of appointing a company to co-ordinate the provision of home energy advice and services through such agencies.
- **Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service** is a statutory consultee in tackling fire safety in HMOs, and work also takes place with the **Cambridgeshire Constabulary** in improving home security.
- The importance of working more closely with **Sub-Regional local authorities** is increasing all the time to ensure a consistent approach in areas where this is appropriate, and to maximise cost-effectiveness.
- **Other Multi-Agency Groups** include the Older People's Planning Forum, the Improving the Health of the People of Cambridge Partnership, the Fuel Poverty Group, the Falls Collaboration (looking at how falls can be minimised/prevented), the County Officer Group and so on.
- As with most areas of service there are a number of cross-cutting issues which require **internal partnership** working within the Council to ensure that objectives and targets are met.

PRIORITIES

All of these stakeholders have a potential role to play in deciding what services the Council should provide and how they should be provided, and they need to be effectively engaged in the decision making process. Up to now, their involvement in decision making and their views on the services provided have been more actively sought in some areas of the service than in others. In addition, some groups have proved easier to engage than others.

It is also important that service users and potential users know what services are available and have easy, fair and equal access to those services.

Close partnership working with community groups and key agencies is critical to ensure that services are publicised, that agencies are working to common objectives and in order to maximise and make most effective use of the resources available. The Council also needs to consider whether the relationship with certain agencies can be developed on an advocacy basis.

Chapter 2

SERVICE FRAMEWORK: NATIONAL AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

As with any Council service, the Private Sector Housing service works within a wider framework which influences its service objectives and how these objectives are to be achieved.

The national and legislative framework and corporate objectives and strategies will be key influences on the agreed strategy and its delivery.

Statutory Requirements

Locally set objectives inevitably need to take into account national priorities. Some of these impose legal requirements on the Council, some set national targets which authorities are required to achieve, etc.

The Council currently has a duty to assess housing fitness under the Housing Act 1985's Fitness Standard and to take appropriate action to ensure that dwellings are made fit. This scheme is being replaced under the Housing Act 2004 by a new **Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)** and the new **Decent Homes Standard**.

The new **HHSRS** will help to identify faults in dwellings in terms of health and safety implications, and the severity of the hazards identified will determine whether a response - either 'mandatory' or 'discretionary' - is required by the Council.

It is anticipated that a larger number of dwellings is likely to be identified as potentially requiring a response than were previously assessed as unfit.

The national target is for 65% of 'vulnerable' households (ie households in receipt of any of the principal means tested or disability related benefits) living in the private sector to occupy 'decent homes' as defined by the **Decent Homes Standard** by 2006. Around 63.5% of homes in Cambridge currently meet this standard, and the Council should be in a position to meet the target by 2006, but the longer term position will need to be reviewed if, as anticipated, the standard changes in the future.

The Council will require a period of adjustment in moving over to achieving the new standards, but welcomes and supports this new person-centred approach.

The Council currently operates an HMO registration scheme, under which landlords are legally required to seek registration. The Council has a duty to deal with failure to register, and to ensure that dwellings, once registered, continue to meet the criteria. This scheme will have to be revoked when the Housing Act's **mandatory HMO licensing scheme** comes into force, which will require Councils only to register larger HMOs.

There are a whole range of responsibilities in relation to increasing **energy efficiency, conserving energy, reducing CO² emissions and tackling fuel poverty.**

The **Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA)** requires local authorities to develop strategies for improving energy efficiency and to report on progress in implementing these strategies, with a target to achieve a 30% improvement in energy efficiency by 2010. The **Housing Act 2004** requires a 20% improvement in energy efficiency by 2010 as compared with 2000.

The **Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000** imposes a duty on local authorities to work to eradicate fuel poverty within 15 years through adopting a comprehensive Affordable Warmth Strategy.

The **Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) Rating** is the government's recommended system for measuring the overall energy efficiency of dwellings. The rating for a dwelling is determined by a range of factors, including the type and extent of thermal insulation present, the efficiency of the heating system, etc.

There are various legal obligations on landlords under **Landlord and Tenant Law** in terms of maintaining premises, tenancy agreements, harassment by landlords, illegal eviction etc. The Council's role is to provide advice to tenants and landlords on their rights and obligations, help to resolve disputes, and use enforcement powers where necessary to resolve issues.

Other new schemes under the Housing Act 2004 include new provisions in relation to tenancy deposit schemes, overcrowding notices and Empty Dwelling Management Orders. It also introduces a requirement to consider the needs of travellers.

National Priorities

There are a number of schemes which are currently high up on the national agenda, and which need to be considered within the local context. These include **Community Safety**, providing **Sustainable Communities** and tackling **Fuel Poverty**, as well as **Improving Health Outcomes** for residents.

The government has issued a set of guidelines for local authorities in provision of housing services – known as **Key Lines of Enquiry**, which give guidance on providing high quality services, and against which authorities will be inspected under the Audit Commission's inspection regime.

There is one **Best Value Performance Indicator** covering this area of service relating to tackling vacant dwellings. The previous 'fitness' indicator will be retained as a local indicator to help to assess ongoing improvements.

The government's **Energy White Paper** aims to reduce UK Greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2050.

Regional and Sub-Regional Strategies

The **sub-regional housing strategy** (based on the **Regional Housing Strategy**) recognises the need to invest in private sector housing. However, it clearly states that affordable housing takes priority, and in the absence of national or regional funding being allocated to private sector renewal, the onus remains on local authorities and RSLs to resource this area of work themselves using existing resources and powers and sharing good practice.

However, it does give priority to increasing the supply of affordable housing and making the case to the government for increased funding for DFGs.

Local Strategies

This private sector housing strategy flows directly from the Council's Housing Strategy, which in turn is based on the Council's **Medium Term Objectives (MTOs)**.

The Council's **Community Strategy** includes helping older people to live more independently and to feel safe and secure in their own homes, reducing crime and fear of crime, tackling homelessness, increasing supply of affordable homes, and improving social inclusion and addressing inequalities. The **Community Safety Strategy** details the Council's approach to community safety issues such as reducing property crime and anti-social behaviour and there is also an **Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy** and related policies in place.

The **Improving the Health of the People of Cambridge Plan** seeks to improve health through a number of different channels. These include tackling HMOs and unfit dwellings; bringing long-term empty homes back into use; using renewable energy; safety and affordable warmth for older people; supporting families and children with disabilities, etc. The priorities in this plan are currently under review, and this private sector strategy will need to be kept under review in light of any changes.

The three main priorities under the **Council's Housing Strategy** are dealing with homelessness, increasing the supply of affordable housing, and responding to the poor condition of the housing stock, and this private sector strategy has a key part to play in addressing each of these priorities. There are clear links between this private sector strategy and the Council's **Homelessness Strategy** and **Single Homeless & Rough Sleepers Strategy**. The draft **Local Plan** also refers to the provision of decent housing.

There are a number of energy objectives under Cambridge **Sustainable City's Environment Plan**.

The Council also has a **Comprehensive Equality Policy**. Actions required under the policy include targeting resources to the most excluded groups, ensuring information is available in other languages, appropriate consultation with people from ethnic minorities and people with disabilities etc. The Council is committed to carrying out **Equality Impact Assessments** on all its strategies and policies to ensure that they are not discriminatory and that minority groups have equal access to services.

The Council has adopted a corporate **enforcement policy** based on the principles of sound enforcement, flowing from the national **Enforcement Concordat**.

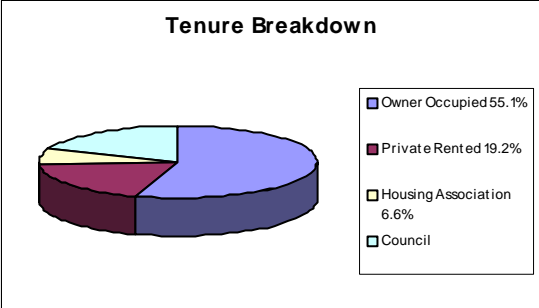
PRIORITIES

These statutory, national and local objectives and priorities point towards the strategy focusing on the following areas:

- Meeting legislative requirements.
- Moving away from concentrating on dealing just with poor housing, and towards focussing on particular groups who are vulnerable or in some way at risk.
- Ensuring that vulnerable people have Decent Homes.
- Improving home safety.
- Tackling anti-social behaviour in and around private sector housing
- Prevention of homelessness.
- Providing aids and adaptations for people with disabilities.
- Improving energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions and tackling fuel poverty.
- Maximising the supply of housing, affordable housing in particular.
- Ensuring fair and equal access to services.
- Ensuring full consultation with stakeholders, and working in partnership.
- Ensuring sustainability and the promotion of sustainable communities.

Chapter 3 STOCK AND OCCUPANT PROFILES

The main pieces of research which currently inform our approach to private sector housing are The Council's Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2002, the 2001 Census figures and the Council's Housing Needs Survey 2002.

<p><u>Stock Profile</u></p> <p>Around 55% of the city's households are in owner occupied accommodation, 19% are privately renting and just under 7% are Housing Association properties (including standard and special needs accommodation, homeless hostels etc)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tenure Breakdown</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Source: Census 2001 & Cambridge City Council Private Sector House Condition Survey 2003</i></p>																		
<p>The city has larger proportions of pre-1919 and terraced dwellings, and of private rented dwellings than the national average.</p> <p>Around 45% of private rented dwellings are Houses in Multiple Occupation.</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Age</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Cambridge</th> <th style="text-align: center;">England</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pre-1919</td> <td style="text-align: center;">30.5%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">23.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1919-1944</td> <td style="text-align: center;">17.7%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">19.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1945-1964</td> <td style="text-align: center;">18.8%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Post-1964</td> <td style="text-align: center;">33.0%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">36.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ALL AGES</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100.0%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Source: Cambridge City Council Stock Condition Survey 2002 & EHCS 1996 Table A2.3</i></p>	Age	Cambridge	England	Pre-1919	30.5%	23.4%	1919-1944	17.7%	19.2%	1945-1964	18.8%	20.9%	Post-1964	33.0%	36.6%	ALL AGES	100.0%	100.0%
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Unfitness

Over 7% of dwellings fail the current fitness standard, with the main problem being in the private rented sector and in the central area of the city. Around 10.7% of private rented dwellings, and around 65-70% of HMOs are deemed not to be up to standard.

Unfitness levels are also higher amongst older dwellings, with around 55% of pre-1919 dwellings being unfit.

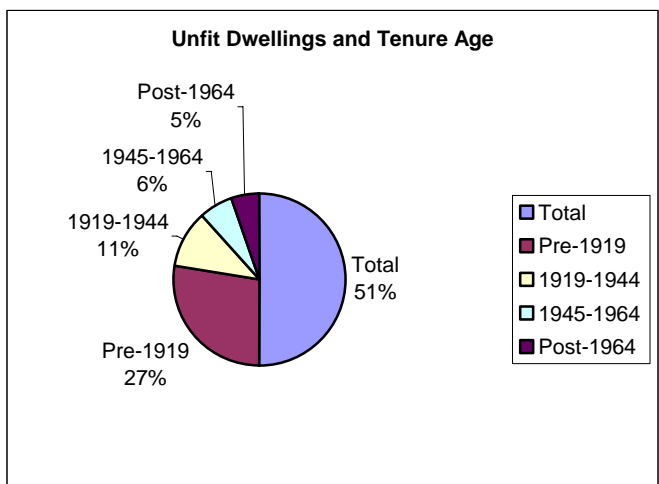
A further 11% are fit (within the statutory definition) but in substantial disrepair, and 1.4% of dwellings lack basic amenities.

Single pensioner households appear particularly likely to be living in unfit housing, and special needs households are more likely to be in unfit housing than non-special needs households.

Tenure of unfit dwellings

Tenure	Unfitness				
	In unfit housing	Not in unfit housing	Total	% of group in unfit housing	% of those in unfit housing in group
Owner-occupied (no mortgage)	996	9,171	10,166	9.8%	38.7%
Owner-occupied (with mortgage)	588	12,886	13,474	4.4%	22.9%
Housing Assoc	113	2,718	2,831	4.0%	4.4%
Private rented	877	7,351	8,227	10.7%	34.1%
TOTAL	2,573	32,126	34,699	7.4%	100.0%
Vacant dwellings	258	1,127	1,385	18.6%	10.0%

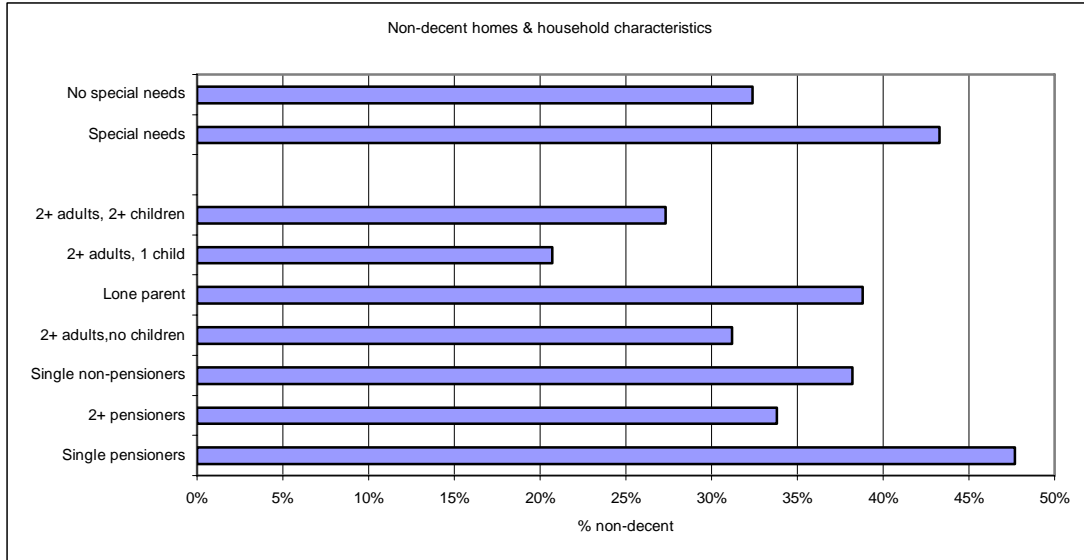
Source: Cambridge City Council Stock Condition Survey 2002



Source: Cambridge City Council Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey 2003

Decent Homes

An estimated 63.5% of 'vulnerable' households occupy Decent Homes as defined by the Decent Homes Standard – around 1.5% short of the target to be achieved by 2006.



Source: Cambridge City Council Housing Needs Survey 2002

Safety

The Stock Condition Survey identified more safety hazards within dwellings which are:

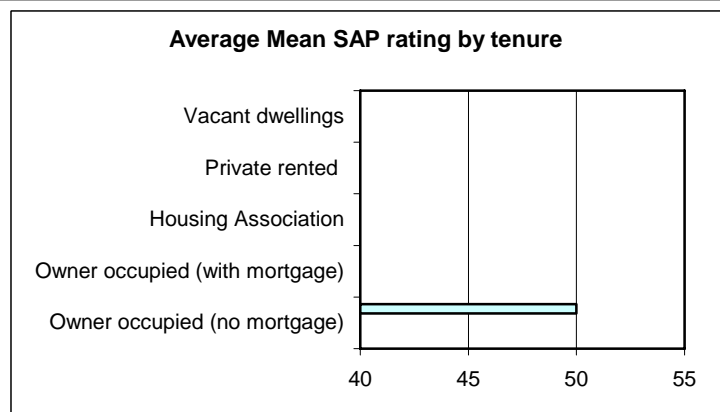
- Older
- privately rented
- converted flats
- in the central and western parts of the city.
- Occupied by single people (especially pensioners), and people with special needs

Over 47% of HMOs do not have any provision for escape from fire, and around 18% have no fire or smoke detection systems.

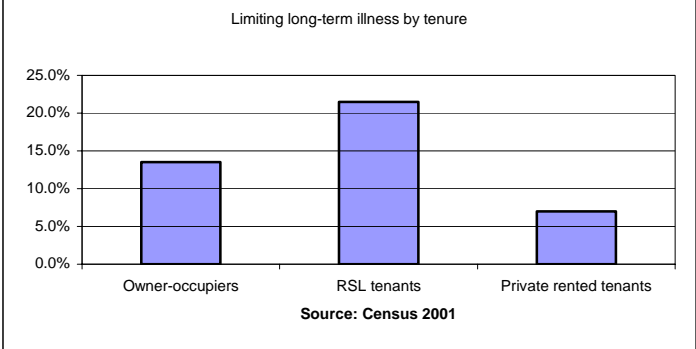
Energy Efficiency

The least energy efficient properties appear to be within one or more of the following categories:

- Older properties
- In the private rented sector,
- Converted flats,
- Occupied by single non-pensioner households, students, and /or people



Source: Cambridge City Council Housing Needs Survey 2002

<p>on low incomes</p> <p>(More work needs to be done to accurately assess average SAP ratings).</p>																												
<p><u>Empty Dwellings</u> The Stock Condition Survey estimated that around 72 dwellings had been empty for more than six months, although better data is now available, and once analysed, this figure is expected to be higher.</p> <p>These homes tend to be in poor condition, and may lack basic amenities.</p>																												
<p><u>Caravans & Houseboats</u> There are 44 caravans on two licensed sites in the city, which are inspected regularly to ensure they continue to meet their site condition license.</p> <p>There are a number of houseboats moored on the Cam, although this strategy is not currently concerned with housing conditions in relation to houseboats. (Houseboat residents can, however, access other services, such as Disabled Facilities Grants, housing advice etc).</p>																												
<p><u>Health</u> Census figures show that RSL occupants and owner occupiers tend to have poorer health overall, with 21% of RSL occupants and 13% of owner occupiers having limiting long-term illnesses.</p>	 <p>Limiting long-term illness by tenure</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Tenure Type</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Owner-occupiers</td> <td>13.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RSL tenants</td> <td>21.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Private rented tenants</td> <td>7.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Census 2001</p>	Tenure Type	Percentage	Owner-occupiers	13.0%	RSL tenants	21.0%	Private rented tenants	7.0%																			
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<p><u>Ethnicity</u> Just over 10% of the population of Cambridge described themselves as non-white in the 2001 census, the largest groups being of Chinese and Indian origins. (More analysis is required as to how this relates to private sector residents).</p>																												

PRIORITIES

- The worst conditions and safety standards, and the lowest energy efficiency levels, tend to be within the private rented sector, particularly within HMOs, and in older dwellings in the central area of the city. However, we need to find out more about the profile and needs of residents in order to target resources most effectively. Landlords also need to be encouraged and supported to invest in improvements.
- There is a need to enable the improvement of conditions for older people, people with special needs and households on low incomes, in order to meet the Decent Homes target. However, investment by owners themselves will continue to be required
- Inspections and hazards under the HHSRS will need to be prioritised according to the level of risk present or likely to be present.
- Once the new HHSRS scheme is underway, the type and extent of hazards identified through inspection will lead to better information about the stock and where to target resources
- In order to maximise the overall supply of housing, it is important that long-term empty homes are brought up to standard and back into use.
- It appears that RSL landlords tend overall to be tackling conditions – eg under their Decent Homes responsibilities. However, complaints about conditions are still received, and relatively high levels of DFG money are being spent on RSL dwellings. There is a need to work much more closely with RSLs to consider how needs can be met most effectively.
- Information on the stock as a whole and on individual properties is not as up to date as it ought to be, as the stock condition survey is only carried out every five years. The Council is investigating the commissioning of an annual survey in partnership with other sub-regional authorities. We also need to ensure that data on changes to individual properties - eg Building Control information - can be harnessed and input on an ongoing basis.
- More accurate energy efficiency data is needed urgently, as well as clear identification of which properties need to be tackled in this area.

Chapter 4

HOUSING CONDITIONS: CURRENT APPROACH

There are a number of ways in which conditions within the private sector are tackled through current services. Effectiveness is measured in some areas through Best Value and local performance indicators, but there is a need to consider how effectiveness can be measured and performance improved across the board.

Unfitness

The Council currently deals with house conditions through inspections, provision of information and advice, and taking appropriate enforcement action.

26 unfit dwellings were made fit over the last two years, although overall unfitness levels remain quite high.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

These are dealt with through a combination of inspection, information and advice to landlords and tenants and enforcement, as well as the Council's HMO registration scheme.

There are currently an estimated 3700 HMOs. Of the 2000 which have been inspected, 376 are registered under the current scheme. (The scheme allows for a number of exemptions, including education establishments). Around 1700 are still to be located and inspected.

Although the registration scheme has been effective in improving conditions, there is growing anecdotal evidence that the stringent registration requirements and an emphasis on enforcement may have been causing, or at least contributing to, landlords withdrawing from the market.

The Council's scheme will be revoked when the new statutory HMO licensing scheme for larger HMOs comes into force, and the proposed introduction of a Landlord Accreditation scheme, although focusing on the management of rented housing, should help to encourage landlords to improve conditions within their properties.

Home Safety.

The Council is responsible for ensuring that safety issues are picked up in tackling fitness standards, and this responsibility will be extended under the new HHSRS.

The Council funds, in partnership with the PCT, a **Safer Homes** scheme carrying out minor safety works for older people. An average of 70 jobs per month are being carried out under the scheme. This 3 year partnership is due for review and although there have been issues around the management of the scheme, it is considered an effective way of reducing falls and improving home safety.

A joint campaign has been run through the local Fire Service to provide advice and install fire safety and home security equipment in older people's homes.

The current grants and loans scheme also contributes to improving home safety.

Empty Homes

The current approach to dealing with long-term empty dwellings is through advice and encouragement to owners and offering improvement grants to landlords who undertake to lease the property to a Housing Association. If this approach does not work, the Council will take appropriate enforcement action, including compulsory purchase.

A total of 26 dwellings have been brought back into use over the last two years. Only one landlord opted to carry out grant-funded works last year, although take-up may increase now that better information is available on the location of empty homes.

The 2004 Housing Act will introduce new powers to tackle empty homes in the form of Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs).

Renovation grants and loans to owner occupiers on low incomes.

A new means-tested grants and loans scheme was introduced in 2004-2005 to help owner occupiers on low incomes to fund repairs and improvements to their homes. Although available to anyone below a certain income, the scheme has been targeted more at older people. Low take-up necessitated changes to the scheme to make it more attractive, and take-up is expected to continue to increase. Last year approximately 120 households were assisted under the scheme.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

Procurement of disabled adaptation works has recently been reviewed, and a new preferred partnering scheme has been introduced. The scheme will be monitored to assess improvements, especially in terms of cost and quality of work.

The demand for DFG funding is increasing, and we need to consider whether some works could and should be funded from elsewhere, but also consider other ways of providing suitable housing for people with disabilities.

Exploring further partnership working is becoming increasingly important in maximizing resources.

A county-wide Core Specification for Home Improvement Agencies has recently been agreed with clear and challenging targets which should provide a much clearer picture of the effectiveness of the service and whether it is achieving value for money.

Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth

When dwellings are inspected – either on programmed inspection or on request – an energy survey is also carried out, and advice given to landlords and occupants as appropriate. The Council does not directly fund private sector housing energy schemes, but refers owners and landlords to other sources of funding.

The data currently available to the Council to assess whether national and local targets are being met is very limited, and there are also concerns about its accuracy.

Although this is a large and strategically important area of work, there has, over the last few years, been insufficient staffing resource allocated to tackling the issues. A Home Energy Officer is now in post, with external funding available for 2005-2007, and consideration needs to be given to how this area of work is to be funded in the future.

Standards in new-build dwellings

All new-build dwellings must meet up to date Building Regulation requirements, and RSLs must meet stringent government scheme development standards. Where possible, all new RSL homes must meet Lifetime Home standards.

The Private Sector Housing service will need to work closely with the Council's Building and Development Control services to ensure that all new dwellings meet the new HHSRS standards.

PRIORITIES

- The introduction of the new HHSRS scheme will need to be managed and monitored carefully, and additional resources may be required.
- Research has started on whether the current Council HMO registration scheme is causing landlords to withdraw from market, and monitoring will continue to be required within the context of the new HHSRS and HMO Licensing regimes.
- The introduction of a Landlord Accreditation Scheme is important to ensure that private rented accommodation is managed and maintained appropriately.
- Home Safety is a high priority for the Council and other key stakeholders. The new HHSRS, renewing the Safer Homes scheme and campaigns to install fire and home safety equipment should make a significant contribution to improving home safety and crime prevention, as well as helping people to feel safer in their homes.
- Grants to owners of long-term empty homes have not proved popular, although take-up may increase now that more homes have been identified. Further consideration is required on how empty homes can better be targeted, and consideration needs to be given to using the new Empty Dwelling Management Order powers once detailed government guidance is available

- In addition to the scheme for grants and loans to owner occupiers, whether there are other sources of home improvement funding available needs to be investigated. The Council will also review whether there are other ways of improving value for money within the grants and loans scheme.
- Demand for Disabled Facilities Grants is likely to continue to rise, and there is an urgent need to increase the resource going into this area of work, as well as continuing to lobby the government and maximise funding from elsewhere.
- The need for disabled adapted properties needs to continue to be considered when new developments are planned – either through the provision of one-off properties on demand or through more flexible design – especially on larger scale sites.
- There is a need to ensure that newbuild RSL homes are, built to at least Lifetime Home standards, and that the need for disabled adapted and wheelchair accessible properties is taken into account in the planning of new developments.
- There is a need to develop a clear strategy for dealing with Energy Efficiency, and a Home Energy Strategy will be developed over the coming months.

Chapter 5

OTHER PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING SERVICES

In addition to services relating to improving housing conditions and management of tenanted properties, the Council also has a role to play in landlord and tenant relations, improving access to the private sector, prevention of homelessness etc.

Tenancy Relations Service

The Council powers and responsibilities in terms of providing advice and support to landlords, tenants and prospective tenants include:

- Providing advice and information to landlords and tenants about their legal rights and responsibilities, as well as general advice to the public.
- Providing specific advice to tenants and those wanting access to housing– eg financial advice, how to access housing etc.
- Investigating allegations of harassment, illegal eviction and overcrowding, and helping to resolve disputes wherever possible.
- Taking any necessary enforcement action against landlords in breach of their obligations.
- Acting as an advocate on behalf of individual tenants, and, if necessary, representing tenants in court proceedings.

Monitoring the service has only recently begun, so we only have limited knowledge of the profiles of users and sorts of enquiries received. Further monitoring will be developed to measure the effectiveness of the current approach.

The proposed Landlord Accreditation scheme will be used to improve the advice and information provided to landlords and tenants.

Rent Deposit Guarantee and Rent Access Schemes

The Council manages a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme and Rent Access scheme aimed at preventing individuals and households from becoming homeless. The schemes offer a combination of deposit guarantees and payment of rent deposits and first installments to landlords on behalf of prospective tenants who cannot afford to pay deposits themselves. Tenants are required to pay the money back to the Council, usually from their Housing Benefit payments.

Since starting, these two services have, between them, accommodated over 100 households who would otherwise have required temporary accommodation. With the estimated cost of the schemes being around £42,000 per year, and the cost of providing temporary accommodation being an estimated £2,000 per household, the schemes have so far saved the Council £170,000 over the last 18 months. This, combined with avoiding the stress and disruption caused to households who are made homeless, makes the ongoing use of these services an important priority.

Private Sector Leasing Scheme

This is run in partnership with King Street Housing, who leases properties from private landlords on behalf of the Council for use as temporary homeless accommodation.

Other Homelessness Services

There are a whole range of other services provided to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, provided under the Council's Homelessness and Single Homeless and Rough Sleepers strategies.

Independent Living Service

The Council's Independent Living service (previously known as Care Call), offers personal alarms to older people and people with disabilities to help them to live independently in the community.

This service is currently being restructured and the effectiveness of the new regime will need to be monitored closely.

Low Cost Home Ownership

The Council approved capital and revenue funding for a Do It Yourself Shared Ownership (DIYSO) scheme, whereby people eligible for housing through the Council's housing register would be able to apply to select and purchase a home on the open market on a shared ownership basis.

However, officers have been unable to come up with a long-term workable scheme, and in the meantime, the government has announced its new Homebuy scheme which plans to introduce a new shared equity scheme to enable first-time buyers to get onto the housing ladder. The Council will need to consider whether additional resources can and should be put into this scheme once the details are known.

The Council also has its own shared ownership stock, although some of these properties have been lost as some owners have been able to purchase a 100% share in the property. Further investment is required in this Council stock to maintain supply.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is inevitably an issue within private sector housing, and is dealt with through the Council's Anti-social Behaviour Strategy. There is a need to build closer links with private sector tenants and landlords in tackling and prevention anti-social behaviour.

PRIORITIES

- There is an ongoing need for information and advice to landlords, tenants and the general public, and target setting and monitoring need to be improved.

- The Rent Deposit and Rent Guarantee schemes are clearly a cost-effective means of preventing homelessness, and ongoing funding is required to sustain both schemes.
- The private sector leasing scheme also needs to be continued, providing approximately 55 units of accommodation and therefore contributing significantly to minimising the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. Consideration should be given as to whether more properties should be brought into the scheme, and if so, how this might best be achieved.
- Consideration needs to be given to how more landlords can be encouraged to use the private sector leasing scheme – eg through providing better information and advice, incentives, longer term leases, etc.
- Although the DIYSO scheme in its proposed form will not go ahead, funding should be made available for properties to be purchased on a shared ownership basis for people with disabilities if this is the best option.
- The Council needs to work more closely with landlords on dealing with anti-social behaviour in and around their properties.

Chapter 6

ACCESS TO QUALITY SERVICES

It is important to provide high quality services that suit the needs of users, and to ensure that the services provided are accessible to all.

Quality of Services

There is a range of ways in which the Council can ensure that services provided are of high quality.

Written service standards and target response times for dealing with enquiries exist for parts of the service, and county-wide standards and targets have just been introduced for disabled adaptation work.

Customer feedback is requested via customer surveys from users of some parts of the service, and from landlords accessing parts of the service. Where feedback is sought, satisfaction levels are generally quite high both with the service itself and the way in which it is provided. Where customers or landlords are not satisfied or recommend changes to the service, these responses are used to inform service improvements.

The Housing Standards team has also been awarded Chartermark status and has recently been highly commended by the Chartermark inspectors for its approach to customer care.

However, the existence of customer care service standards and targets, and the input of service users into setting standards and targets and improving services varies across the teams working in private sector housing. There is a clear need to address this imbalance to ensure that a quality service is provided across the board and that services continue to be improved.

Where feedback is sought, response levels tend to be low, and may not give an accurate picture of users' views. Response rates need to be improved if possible, demonstrating to respondents and others that their input is valued and used to improve services.

Research on needs of vulnerable and minority groups needs to include identifying service standard needs for those groups – eg whether there are particular needs amongst certain ethnic groups.

Access to Services

There are various ways in which the Council tries to ensure that everyone who needs to can access its services, although there is room for improvement.

Information on services is available via the Council's website and a range of written information and promotional literature. This is either generally available or targeted at certain groups or towards particular areas of need. Promotion is better for some

parts of the service than others, and there is concern that a significant proportion of private sector residents do not appear to know about the Council's private sector housing services.

Signposting from other sections and departments of the Council is important, and we need to ensure that the existence of the services available are widely recognised by all the Council's frontline staff.

We also rely on external partners to advise on and refer clients to services – eg referrals from the PCT, Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern etc.

Translation of written information into other languages or formats (eg large-print) is available as required. There is also quick and easy access to interpretation services. However, only limited information is provided in other languages or formats as a matter of course. Further research is needed amongst service users and potential users on what is required in this area.

Better knowledge is required as to the profile and needs of users and potential users - particularly in relation to ethnicity, vulnerability and special needs - to ensure that certain individuals or groups are not being discriminated against or excluded from using the services available. Better use also needs to be made of the information already available to us.

The Council is developing a corporate Customer Access Strategy which will impact on this area of service. An Equality Impact Assessment on this private sector housing strategy is underway.

PRIORITIES

- It is important in the drive to meet the Council's housing objectives that the Council does not lose sight of the need to provide high quality services to its customers, and to ensure that those services are available and accessible to everyone who may need them.
- Customer Care Service Standards and targets need to be reviewed and new ones introduced through consultation with a range of individuals and groups.
- Improvements in customer feedback and response rates will give a clearer view on services required and the quality of services provided.
- Feedback to those individuals and groups who are consulted is essential to encourage further involvement.
- Improvements in service information and accessibility of that information are important, although the potential subsequent increase in demand must be anticipated and monitored. Links need to be made with the corporate Customer Access Strategy currently being developed.
- Better contact with community groups need to be established to reach a wider range of people and needs and to help to target services appropriately.

- Better information on the profile and needs of users is required.
- The outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment will be acted upon to ensure equality of service provision.

Chapter 7

FUTURE PRIORITIES AND OPTIONS

This chapter summarises the recommended way forward, in line with the Council's **Medium Term Objectives (MTOs)**, (See also the Priority Action Plan at Appendix 3). Some of the recommendations would require additional resources, and whether they are made available will depend on other housing priorities.

Chapter 8 addresses how the strategy is proposed to be resourced.

MTO: Work to address the City's overall housing shortage, to maximise the supply of affordable housing in the city and to ensure Cambridge residents have safe and decent homes, whether in supported housing, or with aids and adaptations to live in their own homes.

a)Address the overall housing shortage

The main contribution that this strategy can make to addressing the overall shortage of housing is to ensure that long-term empty homes are brought back into use.

Financial assistance should continue to be offered to owners on the basis that the dwelling then be let to an RSL, and enforcement and compulsory purchase should continue to be used if owners are unwilling to take up this option.

Further options need to be explored with partners and stakeholders, and the Council needs to consider whether the use of the new Empty Dwelling Management Orders would be an appropriate way forward once more government information is available.

The Council also needs to monitor the reasons why landlords withdraw from private letting to ensure that the new regulations and the Council's approach to enforcement does not have an adverse effect on the market.

b)Maximise the supply of affordable housing

It is not yet clear what opportunities the new government scheme to increase access to home ownership will present, or what impact, if any, it will have on Council resources. The Council's proposed Do It Yourself Home Ownership scheme will not now be introduced because of this and the legal and procurement complexities of introducing the scheme.

However, some capital should be available for one-off purchase of properties for disabled households whose needs cannot be met appropriately through other channels. Capital is also being sought to buy back equity in the Council's own shared ownership homes which have been purchased outright and are to be sold on, and to buy back equity on resale of properties which are still in shared ownership so that new purchasers have the opportunity to purchase a smaller share than was owned by the previous owners at the point of resale.

Otherwise the focus will be on the provision of new-build affordable housing in partnership with RSLs.

c) Safe Homes

As well as being a city priority, the transition from dealing with unfitness to the new Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) will increase the Council's statutory responsibilities to improve home safety. Health and Safety inspections will be prioritised according to the extent of the likely impact on health and safety on a case by case basis.

Whether an area-based approach is appropriate will be considered once up to date stock condition information is available.

The Council should continue to provide some financial assistance to owner occupiers on low incomes, particularly targeting older and disabled people. Safety works will continue to be carried out as required as part of DFG funded works.

Provision of fire safety and home security equipment should be increased for older persons and disabled households on low incomes, in partnership with the local Fire and Police services. Continuing this beyond 2009 would require ongoing revenue funding for the grants and loans staff.

The joint Council/ PCT Safer Homes Scheme should be continued for a further three years to carry out minor safety jobs in the home for older people.

The approach to private rented accommodation will continue to be one of promotion, encouragement and enforcement, in line with the Council's Enforcement Concordat, rather than providing financial assistance, but with the introduction of a Landlord Accreditation Scheme. Close monitoring will be required to ensure that the supply of good quality rented accommodation is maintained.

Alternative options identified include:

Option 1: Provision of fire safety and home security equipment could be extended to other special needs groups – eg families on low incomes, people with mental health problems etc. With limited resources available this is not currently considered a high priority, but may become so if research and ongoing consultation identifies it as such.

Option 2: Extending financial assistance to landlords and/or tenants to carry out safety and improvement works, and/or installing safety equipment in rented homes. Members have made it clear that in view of the relatively low levels of special need in the private rented sector, and private rented accommodation being provided on a business footing by landlords, this would not be considered a good use of resources. Existing measures and the proposed Landlord Accreditation Scheme are considered sufficient at the present time. However, if the new legal requirements on landlords are found to be having an adverse effect on the private rented market, then the issue of incentives for landlords may need to be reconsidered at a later date.

RSLs have their own responsibilities and sources of funding, and it is considered inappropriate to extend any additional Council funding into this area.

d) Decent Homes

Demand for Disabled Facilities Grants is increasing, and is likely to continue to increase in future years.

The Council is not legally permitted to refuse to fund eligible works, and although lobbying of the government for additional resources will continue, additional Council capital funding will be required.

The Council needs to explore with partners and stakeholders how future needs can be met, and how the supply of disabled adapted dwellings can be maximised through existing and newbuild housing.

Making homes more energy efficient and tackling fuel poverty, as well as reducing carbon emissions, are also important priorities, and a dedicated Home Energy Strategy needs to be developed in line with broader Council priorities. Energy efficiency will be one of the issues included in the Landlord Accreditation scheme.

To achieve the national Decent Homes target the Council needs to target vulnerable people on benefits living in poor conditions.

MTO: Work with Voluntary and Statutory agencies to prevent homelessness in the city and tackle its consequences

Much work has been done to tackle homelessness over the last few years, and the success of the Rent Deposit and Rent Access schemes in reducing homelessness, and the private sector leasing scheme in reducing the need to use bed and breakfast accommodation make the continuation of these schemes a priority. Consideration should be given to whether the scheme should be extended and made more attractive to landlords.

MTO: Work with Partners to achieve better health outcomes for those who live and work in Cambridge

The links between the conditions in which people live and the health of those people are well documented. However the Council does need to improve the monitoring of health outcomes within private sector housing services to ensure that this objective is being met, and to work with partners to agree and achieve outcomes

MTO: Deliver high quality services in a fair and equal way to all sections of the community

To meet this objective the Council needs to review customer care standards and targets across the service, improve access to and information on services available, and benchmark effectively against other authorities' services. All of these need to be done in consultation with service users, potential users and other stakeholders.

MTO: Deliver services through grant aid, external contracts or partnerships with others where these are the best option, and where possible, generate income for investment in frontline services by maximizing the opportunities we have to trade with other agencies.

As already identified, many services are provided in partnership with other agencies. There is a need to develop new partnerships and strengthen existing ones, as well as further exploring ways of maximising funding from other sources.

Need for Further Information and Research

In order to meet these identified priorities and to continue to review this strategy there is a need to increase and improve the information available to the Council to enable well informed decisions to be made. These research priorities include improving the quality and timeliness of stock condition data, researching further the profiles and needs of residents - private sector residents in particular - and landlords, and accessing better and more accurate energy efficiency data.

Summary

Our vision for the service, in line with the Council's overall objectives is to:

Enable people to live in safe and decent homes, by providing support and encouragement to those who have the resources to make their own properties safe and decent, and by providing financial and other assistance to those who are less able to do so.

Direct assistance should be aimed primarily at people on low incomes, older people and people with disabilities, whilst exploring, through consultation whether other groups should be given priority.

Maximise the supply of housing by bringing long-term empty homes back into use through a combination of financial support and enforcement.

Maximise the supply of affordable housing through the Council's shared ownership scheme and through joint funding of new-build schemes.

Minimise homelessness through the private sector leasing scheme and by offering direct help in paying and/ or guaranteeing to pay rent deposits for potentially homeless people.

Make homes more energy efficient and minimise fuel poverty by harnessing external resources and by developing and implementing a more detailed and focussed home energy strategy.

Enable all potential service users to have **fair and equal access to good quality services**, and to be involved in setting standards and planning and developing services.

Maximise partnership working to ensure that services are effective in working to common goals and to ensure value for money.

Improve the information we have about the city's housing and the people who occupy and own it to ensure that the Council continues to focus resources on areas of greatest need.

Demonstrate ongoing improvements within the service through having clear targets and seeking the views of customers, and **Contribute to the Council's aim of retaining its 'excellent' CPA rating**

Chapter 8

RESOURCING THE STRATEGY

The current service is resourced through a combination of Council and external funding and other resources.

The private sector housing service is funded through a combination of:

- Council revenue funding
- Council capital contributions
- Disabled Facilities Grant funding from the government
- Joint funding by Supporting People, the PCT etc.
- Income from Landlords registering under the HMO registration scheme
- Agencies promoting and providing funding for Energy works

The overheads related to the service – IT, accommodation and renewal costs, services from other departments etc are more difficult to calculate, and there is work going on corporately to work out how to allocate such costs more accurately.

Future use of Resources

This draft strategy has identified a number of areas where additional resources will be required to achieve its objectives, and others which could be funded by reallocating existing resources.

Following the recent Gershon Review on improving government efficiency, the public sector is required to make efficiency savings of 2.5% per year between 2005-2008. Most of these savings are expected to come from improved procurement, and from reduction in staffing levels due to the development of e-government.

It is therefore critical that we work in partnership to improve procurement of services, explore how better use can be made of external funding sources, and to investigate how we can improve services through use of IT systems.

The main area where savings are anticipated is through the new preferred partnering scheme for grant funded works, although no detailed projections have yet been made as to likely savings. This needs to be done as soon as possible to establish whether efficiency requirements can be met, and whether savings can be used to fund additional works required – eg to meet some of the increased demand for DFGs

Particular Priority Areas

Disabled Facilities Grants

The government sets the amount available for Disabled Facilities Grants for each authority each year, with the government paying 60% of the cost of carrying out disabled adaptation works and the Council required to pay the remaining 40%.

During 2004/2005 this total amount eligible for 60% government grant was cut from £500,000 per year to £388,000 per year. The Council is not permitted to refuse applications for mandatory grants on financial grounds, and during 2004/2005 the Council was required to contribute an additional £130,000 which was taken from the underspend on grants and loans to owner-occupiers. An additional £200,000 per year is projected to be required in future years.

Demand for grants is expected to continue to increase due to an ageing population and increased client expectations. Although the new preferred partnering scheme is expected to reduce costs, this is unlikely to be sufficient to offset the increase in demand, and there is a critical need for additional funding in this area. The Council, jointly on a sub-regional basis, has been lobbying the government for additional funding, although it is not yet clear how much, if any, will be available.

There is also an issue around the amount being spent on adaptations for Housing Associations – 30% of last year's budget, and we need to work with RSLs to consider how these costs can be met in the future.

Grants and Loans to Owner-Occupiers

The owner-occupiers' grants and loans scheme was set up under Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) powers. It was originally established with the emphasis on offering loans rather than grants, so that once loan repayments started being received, this money would be fed back into the scheme. Grants were only intended to be used for smaller works. Unfortunately, loans proved unpopular, and the scheme was amended so that the first £5,000 of any work is grant funded, and works over and above this require a loan.

Grant payments are repayable on homes sold within 12 years (extended from 3 years), but not repayable after that time.

During 2004/2005, around 70% of the capital money available was spent on grants, and 30% on loans. The amount recycled into the scheme is likely to be less than originally anticipated, although the uptake of the scheme is likely to be less than originally anticipated.

Revenue for the scheme (for 2.5 FTE posts) is funded through interest generated from £2,014,000 capital set aside until April 2009. Whether the scheme can continue after that will depend on whether ongoing revenue funding can be made available being made available.

Home Energy Works

There are a number of sources of funding, both nationally and through the EU, for funding energy works, which the Council has, to date, been unable to tap into sufficiently due to lack of staffing resources. This should improve now that a Home Energy Officer is in post from May 2005, funded for 2 years through the EU.

Long-term Vacant Grants

The take-up of grants for long-term vacant dwellings has been much lower than originally anticipated, and although still a priority, the Council needs to consider how the money can be better spent. £30,000 of the £100,000 should be retained each year for this purpose, and the remainder of the capital available used in a different way, either to tackle long-term vacants more effectively way, or for other private sector housing priorities.

Unfitness Grants to Landlords

£85,000 per annum has been allocated to this scheme but so far there has been no take-up at all by landlords. With the move away from tackling 'unfit' properties, this money needs to be more effectively allocated elsewhere within the private sector.

DIYSO

The £533,000 capital per year allocated for five years to run a Do It Yourself Shared Ownership Scheme needs to be reallocated.

However, some funding should be available for one-off provision of homes for disabled households as required, and for buying back equity in the Council's own shared ownership properties

Safer Homes

Revenue funding of £30,000 over 3 years for the Safer Homes initiative is available up until March 2006, and if this scheme is to continue following consultation, an additional revenue funding bid will be required.

Access Scheme

The access scheme will require an additional £30,000 per year revenue in order to continue to offer cash incentives to landlords to take homeless referrals from the Council.

Compulsory Purchase Orders

There is a capital fund for compulsory purchases and associated fees.

Value For Money

Whilst in some areas the Council is clear that value for money is being achieved (eg, there is a rigorous procedure for carrying out compulsory purchases of dwellings), whether value for money is being achieved in other areas is not so obvious.

Cost and service-related benchmarking against similar authorities is under way, and should help to give a clearer picture of which areas need to be worked on.

The new preferred partnering scheme is expected to achieve better value for money in carrying out disabled and improvement works.

The Council needs to ensure that maximum use is made of resources available externally through partnership working, joint bids with other service providers etc.

Allocation of Resources

The above shows that some areas of work are overspent and some underspent in terms of the amounts initially anticipated. Some of the capital funding could be reallocated, but additional revenue funding will be required if this strategy is to be implemented fully.

CAPITAL REQUIRED

To fully implement the strategy, the following is required in terms of capital:

- Retention of £30,000 per year for grants for long-term vacant properties, and reallocation of the remaining £70,000 capital.
- Abolition of grants for unfit properties, and reallocation of the £85,000 capital
- Increased annual funding for mandatory DFGs. Initially an additional £200,000 per year capital would be required, increasing if necessary in line with demand. (The amount required may reduce if any additional government funding is forthcoming).
- Allocation of an average of £30,000 per year to carry out fire safety and home security work for older and disabled owner-occupiers. This would be done on a two year rolling programme, with fire safety work one year and home security the next.
- Costs of IT systems for introducing the new HHSRS, Decent Homes, HMO licensing etc – cost not yet known.
- Reallocating the £533,000 per year capital available for the DIYSO scheme.
- Resourcing one-off shared ownership purchases for people with disabilities where other solutions are not available.
- £1 million per year for affordable housing
- Costs of carrying out compulsory purchases to be bid for as required. (The legal and property costs for each property can only be capitalised if the purchase goes ahead)

Suggested reallocation of existing capital resources:

Available capital	Reallocate	
Empty property grants (total £100,000 pa)	£ 70,000pa	Retain £30,000 pa for grants
Unfit grants(total £85,000 pa)	£ 85,000pa	
DIYSO	£533,000pa	
Private sector grants and loans	£250,000pa	Retain £600,000 per year
TOTAL	£938,000	

Capital funding required

	Funding required	
DFGs	£200,000 pa	Subject to any savings made through preferred partnering. Likely to increase year on year as demand increases.
Fire Safety & Home Security works	£30,000pa average	Fire and security works to be carried out alternate years. Cost in fire safety works year will be higher than in home security year.
Empty property grants	£30,000pa	Current budget of £100,000 underspent
Newbuild affordable housing	£1,000,000pa	To be funded from reallocated private sector housing strategy capital, and from commitments already made in the housing capital programme for spending on affordable housing.
TOTAL	£1,260,000pa	
IT costs for new HHSRS & Decent Homes scheme	Cost not yet known	
Cost of implementing schemes recommended during consultation	Cost not yet known	
CPO purchase costs	As required	
Implementation of statutory HMO licensing scheme	Not yet known	

The Council's Housing Capital Investment Strategy 2006-2016 gives more detailed information on the allocation of capital expenditure.

Revenue Required

In addition to funding already built into the base budget, implementation of this strategy will require the Council to fund:

- **£15,000 one-off** revenue funding for training and purchase of equipment to implement the requirements of the 2004 Housing Act, consulting on customer care standards, improving service signposting, and marketing and researching the needs and profiles of residents and landlords. (*Will now be done with existing resources*)
- **£30,000 one-off** funding to extend the Safer Homes scheme for a further 3 years.
- **£20,000 one-off** to fund additional research into the profiles and needs of residents and landlords, and the location of households which are non-energy efficient or at risk. (The Council's Housing Strategy recommended research in particular on the profiles of private rented sector households).
- **£40,000 per annum** to be built into the base budget to run a Landlord Accreditation scheme. (Initial set-up funding being applied for 2004/2005)
- Ongoing funding for the Home Energy Officer post if it cannot be funded from external sources.
- Revenue funding of **£73,350 per annum** for staff costs from 2009 onwards to make the grants and loans scheme permanent and to administer the proposed fire safety and home security schemes.
- Possible additional funding for meeting the new HHSRS requirements and achieving the Decent Homes target
- Revenue and/or capital costs of introducing the new mandatory licensing scheme, improving stakeholder consultation and involvement, and implementing the proposed Home Energy Strategy and Equality Impact Assessment outcomes are not yet known.
- **£30,000 per year** to continue the Access Scheme.
- **£10,000** to renew the stock condition survey one year earlier than planned to get up to date information and to allow future surveys to be carried out annually.

(See action plan in appendix 3 for further information)

Cost of Alternative Options

Most of the alternative options cited in chapter 8 would incur no cost to the Council.

However, carrying out fire safety works in rented properties would cost around £2,000 per property. It is estimated that improvements could be carried out to 100 properties per year at an annual capital cost of £200,000pa.

The cost of carrying out other improvement works to rented homes would need to be assessed based on up to date data on the condition of rented homes. (The last Stock Condition Survey gave repair costs for bringing properties up to fitness standard, but this will need to be revisited based on the new regime).

Costs of using the new Empty Dwelling Management Orders will be assessed once the details of the new scheme are known.

Chapter 9

IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE STRATEGY

The draft of this strategy was agreed by the Executive Councillor for Housing in July 2005, and, consultation carried out with users and stakeholders.

The implementation of elements of the strategy requiring additional resources are subject to those resources being approved by the Council through the Housing Capital Strategy to be submitted to the Executive Councillor in November 2005, and the revenue bid to be submitted in January 2006. Whether such approval can be gained will depend on where those elements, and the private sector housing service as a whole come in relation to the Council's other spending priorities.

The agreed strategy will come into effect from April 2006.

The action plan will be reviewed regularly, and clearer targets developed.

There will be ongoing consultation with and involvement of users in reviewing and delivering the strategy.

The strategy will be monitored quarterly by the Housing Management Team (HMM) in line with the current monitoring of the Housing Strategy 2007, and recommended actions will be fed into the annual service plan process.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Appendix 2 List of related Documents

Appendix 3 Priority Action Plan

Appendix 1

Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment – a framework used by the Audit Commission when inspecting a local authority's performance
DFG	Disabled Facilities Grants provided by the Council to carry out works for people with disabilities
DIYSO	Do It Yourself Shared Ownership where applicants select and purchase a property on the open market on a shared ownership basis.
EDMO	Empty Dwelling Management Order - introduced by the Housing Act 2004 to help deal with long-term empty homes.
EU	European Union
FTE posts	Full time equivalent posts
HECA	Home Energy Conservation Act 1995
HHSRS	Housing Health and Safety Rating System – a new regime introduced by the Housing Act 2004 to replace the existing Fitness standards.
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation – a single building which is let as separate units, bedsits or similar. There will be several separate tenancies within one HMO.
MTO	Medium Term Objectives – The Council's objectives in the Medium Term Strategy
PCT	Cambridge City and South Cambs Primary Care Trust
RRO	Regulatory Reform Order – refers to the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2003
RSLs	Registered Social Landlords – Housing Associations providing social housing.
SAP rating	Standard Assessment Procedure rating – a standard rating to assess energy efficiency

Appendix 2

List of Related Documents

Document	Available From
Cambridge City Council's Housing Strategy 2004-2007	www.cambridge.gov.uk - follow housing strategy & research link. Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Medium Term Financial Strategy & Capital Plan	www.cambridge.gov.uk follow About the Council, How the Council works, Council Policies and Plans link The Guildhall, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ Tel 01223 457000
Cambridge City Council's Housing Capital Investment Strategy 2006-2016	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Housing Act 1985 (as amended) provisions	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Housing Act 2004 provisions	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
A Decent Home – The Definition and Guidance for Implementation	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 provisions	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Warm Homes & Energy Conservation Act 2000 provisions	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Energy White Paper	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Regional Housing Strategy for the East of England	www.goeast.gov.uk Government Office for the East of England, Eastbrook, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 2DF Tel: 01223 372500
Cambridge Sub-Regional Housing	www.cambridge.gov.uk - follow housing

Strategy	strategy & research link. Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Cambridge Community Strategy	The Guildhall, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ Tel 01223 457000
Improving Health of Cambridge Plan	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Cambridge City Council's Homelessness Strategy	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Cambridge City Council's Single Homeless & Rough Sleepers Strategy	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Cambridge Local Plan	www.cambridge.gov.uk - follow the environment and planning links. The Guildhall, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ Tel 01223 457000
Cambridge Environment Strategy	www.cambridge.gov.uk - follow the environment and sustainability links to Cambridge Sustainable City The Guildhall, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ Tel 01223 457000
Cambridge City Council Comprehensive Equalities Policy	www.cambridge.gov.uk - follow the Communities and Living, Equalities and Diversity links. The Guildhall, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ Tel 01223 457000
Enforcement Concordat	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Cambridge City Council Enforcement Policy	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Cambridge City Council Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey	Housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk Hobson House, 44 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AS Tel 01223 457000
Census 2001 data	www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk Follow the Business, Research, Cambridge Observatory link

Appendix 3 PSH Strategy – Priorities/ Actions For Next 3 years.

This action plan will be firmed up through consultation, and clear outcomes and targets laid down.

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
MTO: Better Housing: Work to address the City's overall housing shortage, to maximise the supply of affordable housing in the city and to ensure Cambridge residents have safe and decent homes, whether in supported housing, or with aids and adaptations to live in their own homes.					
MTO: A Healthy and Thriving Community: Work with partners to achieve better health outcomes for those who live and work in Cambridge					
Move from dealing with Unfitness to HHSRS & Decent Homes Standards	Train Staff Agree local standards and priorities Implement new statutory schemes. Discontinue grants and loans for unfit properties	Effective implementation of the new legal regime Meet Decent Homes Targets re vulnerable groups	Training 2005 Statutory Commencement Year 1.	Equipment £3,000 (capital) Training £2,000 (revenue) IT resources – amount not yet known. (May be available from 2004/2005 underspend).	RC
Improve health and safety for individuals and groups at risk.	Extend Safer Homes scheme contract for further 3 years	All identified risk groups to live in safe and decent homes	Years 1, 2 & 3 New Safer Homes contract	Safer Homes Scheme £30,000 pa (Revenue)	RC

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
	<p>Provide fire safety equipment to elderly and disabled owner occupiers in partnership with Fire Service.</p> <p>Provide home security equipment to elderly and disabled owner occupiers in partnership with police.</p> <p>Use Landlord Accreditation Scheme to improve safety through joint working.</p> <p>Enforcement where required.</p> <p>Investigate use of assistive/ telecare technology to improve home safety</p>	<p>Reduce risk of hospitalisation & admissions to care</p> <p>Increased number of HMOs brought up to standard</p>	<p>to run Y1 to Y3.</p> <p>Fire Safety – Y1, Y3 Home Security – Y2, Y4. (or vice versa)</p> <p>Assistive/ telecare technology to be investigated</p>	<p>Home Security and Fire Safety campaign and works average £30,000 per year (cost in home security year less than that in fire safety year) (Capital) Longer term dependant on revenue funding for grants and loans staff.</p> <p>Landlord Accreditation £40,000 per annum Revenue, (Subject to start up cost of £55,000 being available prior to Y1)</p>	

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
	Consider including private rented housing in Choice Based Lettings		Y2/Y3. Introduction Y4 subject to demand and availability of funding.		
Improve conditions for people on low incomes	Continue financial assistance through RRO	Meet Decent Homes target		Capital already allocated – reduced amount required.	DW
	Seek additional sources of home improvement funding.	Improved value for money within grants and loans scheme	Y2		
	Consider whether repayment of home owner grants and loans can or should be linked to the value of the property. Investigate practicability of	Increased returns for recycling into scheme	Y3 Investigation prior to Y1.		DW

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
	<p>approved list of contractors for small works.</p> <p>Consider area-based approach to improvements and area-based community partnership work to improve house conditions.</p>		<p>Introduction Y1 if agreed by contractors concerned.</p> <p>Area-based partnership approach to be considered Y3 once up to date stock condition information available</p>		
Bring long-term empties back into use	<p>Continue advice and encouragement to owners.</p> <p>Compulsory purchase where necessary</p> <p>Explore further partnership working</p>	<p>Fewer long terms vacants in the city. (Targets to be set.)</p>	Y1, 2 & 3 & ongoing	<p>£20,000 pa for legal and property services for CPOs (based on anticipated 1 per year). (Capital if purchase is completed, Revenue if purchase is aborted)</p> <p>Additional capital required for</p>	YO'D

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
	<p>with RSLs</p> <p>Investigate use of new Empty Homes Management Orders(EDMOs)</p> <p>Continue to offer grants, but at reduced level of funding</p> <p>Explore other options</p>			<p>individual properties to be CPO'd as required.</p> <p>£30,000 grant per year (capital) – reduced from £100,000 per year current allocation</p>	
Maximise supply of affordable housing	Act on outcome of government's Extending Home Ownership initiative		Due to start Y1 – scheme details not yet available	Opportunities and costs not yet known	SMcB
	One-off shared ownership purchases for people with disabilities		As required	Likely to require around £500,000 per purchase, with some of this being recouped by Social Services contributions and shared ownership purchase by client. Any such purchases would require an individual financial appraisal.	DW

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
Develop strategy for dealing with residents in fuel poverty	<p>Include in Home Energy Strategy</p> <p>Maximise external funding and partnership working</p> <p>Enforcement</p>	Meet HECA targets	To be agreed.		BH
Consider impact of growing demand for DFGs and how to resource housing needs of people with disabilities	<p>Increase Council funding to meet demand for DFGs.</p> <p>Continue to lobby government for increased funding to meet demand for DFGs</p> <p>Low cost home ownership for disabled people where other suitable housing solutions cannot be found</p> <p>Work with RSLs to make provision of</p>	<p>Meet demand for DFG funding</p> <p>Individual's needs met for disabled adaptations</p> <p>Better value for money</p>	<p>Funding to be increased from Y1</p> <p>Government lobbying Y1 and ongoing</p> <p>LCHO purchases as and when required.</p> <p>Work with RSLs to commence</p>	£200,000 capital per annum required for DFGs. Increased amount may be required in future years. (Subject to any additional government funding which may become available))	DW

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
	grant funding more cost effective in RSL properties Investigate whether Lifetime Homes standards can be introduced to private new-build schemes		Y1 Lifetime homes investigation Y3		SD
Implement new mandatory HMO licensing scheme	Introduce new scheme Set targets to demonstrate improvement Monitor impact of mandatory licensing and HHSRS on private rented market and act on recommendations Revoke Council	Improve safety within larger HMOs. Clear targets and improvement demonstrated Work to maintain private rented	Set up year 1 – dependant on government commencement date and guidelines . Targets to be set once mandatory scheme in place Y1 Monitoring to commence prior to Y!	Not yet known.	YO'D

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
	scheme.	stock at current levels provided demand remains	Council scheme to be revoked Y1		
Improve quality and timeliness of stock condition data	<p>Improve interdepartmental information sharing and develop systems to record information</p> <p>Proposed annual stock condition survey in partnership with sub-regional partner authorities. (Subject to sub-regional agreement)</p>	Stock condition data kept up to date	<p>Full Stock Condition Initial Survey Y1 – brought forward from Y2.,</p> <p>Annual surveys proposed to start Y2</p>	£10,000 revenue required to bring survey forward one Bringing survey forward to Y1 – cost £10,000. Annual surveys expected to be achievable within existing resources. (Subject to further investigation)	YO'D

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
Work with landlords to maximise availability of good quality private rented housing	<p>Landlord Accreditation Scheme.</p> <p>Develop use of Landlord Forums</p> <p>Monitor impact of HHSRS & Licensing on private rented market, and act on any adverse outcome.</p> <p>Consider tenant accreditation scheme</p>		<p>Landlord accreditation scheme Y1</p> <p>Landlord forums and monitoring Y1</p> <p>Monitoring to commence prior to Y1</p> <p>Tenant Accreditation scheme to be investigated Y3</p>		
Deal with anti-social behaviour within private sector housing	<p>Anti-Social Behaviour team to develop links with landlords.</p> <p>Information to landlords and tenants</p> <p>Closer links with RSLs</p>	<p>Contribute to achieving objectives and targets laid down in Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy</p>	<p>Start Y1 then ongoing</p>		
MTO: Work with Voluntary and Statutory agencies to prevent homelessness in the city and tackle its					

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
consequences					
Minimise homelessness and use of bed and breakfast accommodation	<p>Continue with Rent Access and Rent Deposit Schemes</p> <p>Continue to promote private sector leasing scheme amongst landlords</p> <p>Investigate extended floating support for private rented sector</p> <p>Investigate providing support services to landlords to accept homeless households.</p> <p>Investigate possibility of longer leases for</p>	<p>Contribute towards meeting homelessness targets.</p> <p>More attractive to landlords</p>	<p>Investigate floating support Y2</p> <p>Investigate landlord support Y1</p>	<p>£30,000 per year for Rent Access and Rent Deposit Schemes to cover non-recoverable debts.</p> <p>Leasing scheme finance in place.</p> <p>Dependant on resources – cost to be identified.</p> <p>Longer leases would have cost implications – not yet known</p>	JF

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
	leasing scheme, and other ways of increasing landlord participation eg incentives	and more cost-effective longer term	Decision on longer leases to be made Y2. Commencement Y3 if workable and finance made available.		
MTO: A Strong Economy and Attractive Environment: Protect and enhance... the... environment of the city					
Produce Home Energy Strategy		Meet HECA targets. Clear local objectives and targets	Y1	Initial strategy to be developed within existing resources. Additional funding may be required.	BH
MTO: Better Services: Deliver high quality services in a fair and equal way to all sections of the community					
Review customer care standards, timescales and targets across the whole service	Benchmark services with other authorities. Produce Draft standards Consult service users and publicise approved standards	Service standards produced in accordance with service users needs	Year 1. Review ongoing.	£4,000 for public consultation. (Revenue) £1,000 service standards publication. (Revenue)	RC
Improve service	Review existing	Better	Year 1	£5,000 per annum publicity	JF

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
information and signposting	<p>leaflets, literature and website</p> <p>Use landlord accreditation scheme to improve information to landlords and tenants.</p> <p>Training for Council and stakeholder staff.</p>	informed public resulting in improved take-up of services	Training to commence Y2	and marketing (Revenue)	
Ensure groups/ individuals are not being discriminated against	<p>Stage 1 EIA completed. Stage 2 to be carried out. Action plan required.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring and consultation</p>		<p>EIA prior to Year 1</p> <p>Further actions to be programmed in once identified</p>	Not yet known.	JF
MTO: Better Services: Deliver services through grant aid, external contracts or partnerships with others where these are the best option, and where possible, generate income for investment in frontline services by maximizing the opportunities we have to trade with other agencies.					
Develop and improve stakeholder consultation/ involvement.	<p>Use results of strategy consultation</p> <p>Ensure results of consultation are fed back to those</p>	Improve services and maximise access to alternative resources	<p>Initial consultation on strategy prior to Y1.</p> <p>Then ongoing.</p>		SMcB

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
	consulted Review use of customer surveys	Improve customer and stakeholder involvement.			
	Increase use of landlord forums to include both housing and wider related issues.		Start Y1 then ongoing		
	Engage private tenants		Start Y1 then ongoing		
	Develop closer partnerships with community groups, and consider advocacy role		Links with community groups to start Y1. Advocacy role to be explored and any decision made Y2		
Develop and improve	Strengthen links with RSLs, statutory	Improve services and	Strengthening of links to start Y1		SMcB

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
partnership working	<p>agencies etc.</p> <p>Develop services and standards at a sub-regional level where appropriate – particularly private landlord services.</p> <p>Strengthen links with internal services – planning, building control, anti-social behaviour & community safety etc.</p>	<p>maximise access to alternative resources</p> <p>Cross-cutting decision making.</p> <p>Consistent standards for landlords and tenants.</p>	<p>then ongoing.</p> <p>Sub-regional discussions to commence Y1.</p>		
MTOs: All of the above					
<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Profiles, needs, service requirements & living conditions of residents - Profiles, needs & service 		<p>Be able to target resources effectively to meet outcomes above</p>	<p>Research re residents Y1</p> <p>Research re landlords Y2</p>	<p>£20,000 to research areas not picked up through strategy consultation, satisfaction surveys etc. (Revenue)</p>	HR

Priorities	Actions	Outcome	Timescale and Milestones (Year 1, 2 or 3)	Resources likely to be required	Lead Officer
requirements of landlords - Location of households at risk and non-energy efficient households			Energy efficiency research will be part of Home Energy Strategy – to be programmed in.		
Develop firmer targets within this action plan		SMART action plan and measurable improvements in service.	Y1 and ongoing	Within existing resources	