

**Housing Strategy  
2011-2015**

***'Homes for Growth'***

**Strategy Context Paper**

**Incorporating  
Private Housing Renewal  
Strategy  
2011-2015**

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# FOREWORD

By Councillor Peter Baillie Cabinet Member for Housing

Welcome to the Housing Strategy for Southampton

Our strategy sets out our vision for housing priorities to support our work towards attracting more jobs for local people, securing more investment in the city and delivering high quality, low cost services that meet customer needs . Our Action Plan will be monitored regularly and reviewed annually to make change happen. We will ensure that housing in Southampton supports the health, safety, welfare, sustainability and distinct economic and social ambitions of our communities. We will do this by providing and maintaining good quality homes in places where people want to live, work and enjoy their leisure. Economic growth will generate the confidence for businesses to invest, including housing investment.

Our first strategic objective is to maximise homes for the city so that the right mix of housing to will support economic growth. Promoting home ownership will encourage community sustainability.

We want to ensure that all areas of the city are in a position to benefit from economic opportunity and increased prosperity and that this why improving existing homes and transforming neighbourhoods, particularly through our ambitious estate regeneration programme is of key importance. This includes a strong focus on energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty and improving poor conditions in the private sector.

We know housing-related support is important for vulnerable people of any age and prevents crises like homelessness or expensive hospital admissions. All our services in the city will continue to work together to provide extra support for those who need it and when they need it, for example to ensure that we meet the specific support and accommodation needs of our ageing population to maintain independent living.

Delivering the priorities in this strategy are dependent on our valued partnerships with agencies in the public, private and voluntary sectors and on available resources.

The council remains committed to improving its housing services and housing provision within the city for the benefit of its customers and all Southampton residents. It will ensure the city offers the highest quality housing in respect of design, condition, choice, value for money, affordability and management.

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

Southampton is a thriving City and a key gateway to the country. Despite the turbulent financial climate, Southampton retains a buoyant housing market and is supported by a dynamic business environment, excellent transport and infrastructure, exceptional education and learning establishments and is a centre of cultural and heritage diversity. Housing is the foundation for a good quality life. The housing strategy identifies plans which will support continued economic growth and prosperity for the city. The right mix of housing is important for a prosperous economy both to meet local needs in the city and keep wealthier residents in the city; this in turn will have socio- benefits such as improving school performance and contributing to making Southampton a more prosperous, safer, greener, healthier place to live.

Southampton is looking ahead to a period of opportunity over the next 20 years which will bring between 10 – 20,000 additional jobs, more than 16,000 homes; significant growth in commercial space, diverse and enhanced cultural experience and a new cruise terminal. The City of Southampton Plan 2011-2014 ([enter web link when available](#)) sets out the objectives the Council wants to achieve by 2014 and explains how the Council will develop with its partners, the organisation, its planning and focus to achieve key goals. The Council priorities are:

- More skilled local people
- More jobs for local people
- Better place to live in and invest in
- Better protection for children and young people
- More support for vulnerable people and families
- Better health
- Customer focus
- Rebalancing resources towards direct service delivery

The strategy brings the key elements of health, housing and the environment together supporting the provision of homes and environments where people will want to stay and form prosperous, sustainable communities. The Strategy (which is part of the council's policy framework) sets out plans to deliver future housing, improve or regenerate the existing local authority stock and how best to utilise private sector housing. Working in partnership with key stakeholders, partners and residents the strategy and its action plan sets out how priorities for housing will be met over the next 4 years. The vision is: **For Housing to work towards attracting more jobs for local people, securing more investment in the City and delivering high quality, low cost services that meet customer needs.** The three key priorities are:

- **MAXIMISING HOMES FOR THE CITY**
- **IMPROVING HOMES – TRANSFORMING NEIGHBOURHOODS**
- **EXTRA SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT**

The Strategy links with other key strategies and documents:

- Core Strategy (Adopted January 2010)  
[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Core%20Strategy%20FINAL%20ADOPTED%20VERSION%20JAN%202010\\_tcm46-270106.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Core%20Strategy%20FINAL%20ADOPTED%20VERSION%20JAN%202010_tcm46-270106.pdf)
- Health and Well Being Strategy 2009-2012 [http://www.southampton-partnership.com/images/06.09.21654%20FINAL%202009%20-2012%20Strategic%20Plan\\_tcm23-267884.pdf](http://www.southampton-partnership.com/images/06.09.21654%20FINAL%202009%20-2012%20Strategic%20Plan_tcm23-267884.pdf)
- JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment)  
<http://www.southamptonhealth.nhs.uk/aboutus/publichealth/hi/public-health-data/jsna/data/>
- Older Persons Housing Strategy 2009-2014  
[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20Strategy%20for%20older%20people%202009-2014\\_tcm46-234831.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20Strategy%20for%20older%20people%202009-2014_tcm46-234831.pdf)
- Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013  
[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Homelessness%20Strategy%202008-13\\_tcm46-209528.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Homelessness%20Strategy%202008-13_tcm46-209528.pdf)
- Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010  
[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/5%20Year%20Strategy%20\\_2\\_tcm46-252727.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/5%20Year%20Strategy%20_2_tcm46-252727.pdf)
- Housing Strategy for People with a Learning Disability Strategy 2010-2015  
[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20strategy%20for%20people%20with%20learning%20disabilities\\_tcm46-161332.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20strategy%20for%20people%20with%20learning%20disabilities_tcm46-161332.pdf)
- PUSH Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2007-2011  
[http://www.push.gov.uk/sub-regional\\_housing\\_strategy\\_-\\_homes\\_for\\_growth.pdf](http://www.push.gov.uk/sub-regional_housing_strategy_-_homes_for_growth.pdf)
- PUSH Annual Housing Monitoring Report  
[http://www.push.gov.uk/report\\_-\\_final\\_19jan10\\_.pdf](http://www.push.gov.uk/report_-_final_19jan10_.pdf)
- PUSH/HCA Local Investment Plan  
[http://www.push.gov.uk/push\\_local\\_investment\\_plan\\_-\\_website\\_document\\_.pdf.pdf](http://www.push.gov.uk/push_local_investment_plan_-_website_document_.pdf.pdf)
- Housing Needs and Market Study Update 2010  
[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20Needs%20and%20Market%20Survey%202010\\_tcm46-164870.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20Needs%20and%20Market%20Survey%202010_tcm46-164870.pdf)
- Local Transport Plan Revision 3  
[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/1.%20Executive%20Summary\\_tcm46-160637.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/1.%20Executive%20Summary_tcm46-160637.pdf)
- Community Safety Strategy  
[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/SCP%20Plan%202010\\_11\\_tcm46-271576.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/SCP%20Plan%202010_11_tcm46-271576.pdf)
- Children and Young Peoples Plan 2009-2012  
[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/3%2009%2021309%20CYPP%20FINAL%20PRINT\\_tcm46-233296.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/3%2009%2021309%20CYPP%20FINAL%20PRINT_tcm46-233296.pdf)
- The developing Local Economic Assessment which outlines the city's ambition for sustained economic growth  
[http://www3.hants.gov.uk/business/economic\\_data/economicassessment](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/business/economic_data/economicassessment)
- Southampton Partnership City Strategy and Vision to 2026  
[http://www.southampton-partnership.com/images/City%20of%20Southampton%20Strat\\_tcm23-196707\\_tcm23-249613.pdf](http://www.southampton-partnership.com/images/City%20of%20Southampton%20Strat_tcm23-196707_tcm23-249613.pdf)

- Climate Change & air Quality Strategy <http://www.southampton.gov.uk/s-environment/climatechange/default.aspx>
- Green City Strategy (enter weblink when available)

## 1.1 National context

The national policy context for housing is changing. A decline in regional influence and focus has been replaced with 'Localism' and the Government concept of 'Big Society' which will decentralise power as far as possible to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities greater control of housing and planning. The impact of change for housing are summarised below:

### 1.1.1 Localism Bill

**Social Housing Tenure Reform** – Local authorities will have the ability to grant 'flexible tenancies' (minimum 2 years) - local authorities freedom to determine who qualifies to go on waiting list and transfer applicants removed from the waiting list. This will require Southampton to review its Lettings Policy and develop a Strategic Tenancy Policy

**Reform of Homelessness Legislation** – provide local authorities flexibility to bring the homelessness duty to an end with an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector without requiring the household's agreement but this must be provided for a minimum of 12 months. Work will need to be further developed with private landlords to enable suitable homeless applicants in the private rented sector.

**Reform (self-financing) of Council Housing** - From April 2012 Councils will keep rental income and be able use it locally to maintain homes. This will give the council greater control over planning for the future management and maintenance of its council owned homes.

**Community Empowerment – community right to build and right to buy** – This could see local communities stepping in to acquire their own assets whilst increasing their independence and capacity to deliver local services.

**Reform of the Planning System** – The planning system is fundamental to delivering economic growth and delivering more homes. The country's current planning system has been regarded as complicated and being responsible for holding back investment by deterring development and growth. The Government plans to overhaul the UK's planning system including making applications more streamlined and developments more sustainable. The Community Infrastructure Levy is a new levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods want. Further incentives include Tax Increment Financing to create funding for public projects that may otherwise be unaffordable to localities, by borrowing against future property tax revenues. Local communities will be able to draw up neighbourhood development plans.

**New Homes Bonus** – This Government incentive will facilitate growth by offering ring fenced grant equal to the national average for the council tax band on each additional property with enhancement for affordable homes delivered. The New Homes Bonus will provide an incentive to promote a positive attitude to growth, and create an environment in which new housing is more readily accepted.

**Welfare Reform and Housing Benefit Changes** – Capped payments of Housing Benefit, increase in Housing Benefit non dependant deductions, an increased age limit for shared accommodation plus the introduction of Universal Credit may increase the demand for advice services and see a growth in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) in the city.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1818597.pdf>

### **1.1.2 Changes to University Funding**

Following Lord Browne's Review of Higher Education, there will be reductions in funding for higher education and Universities will be required to increase entry fees for courses. This will require universities to review corporate strategies (including their assets). The [University of Southampton](#) and [Southampton Solent University](#) together have a student population of almost 40,000. The University of Southampton is currently carrying out a review of their student accommodation as the universities will need to consider the impact of changes to funding on student housing.

### **1.1.3 Healthy Lives, Healthy People**

Improving the health of the public is a key priority. The Government White Paper sets out the Government's long-term vision for the future of public health in England. The aim is to strengthen local leadership by putting local government in the driving seat as well as create a 'wellness' service (Public Health England).

## **1.2 The Local Context**

### **1.2.1 Key Facts**

<http://www.invest-in-southampton.co.uk/Economy/keyfacts.asp>

The profile of the city's housing stock together with some of the issues of deprivation, particularly worklessness and low incomes it faces is unusual in the prosperous south-east. Key characteristics include:

- Southampton is ranked as one of the top five performing cities in England by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)
- The employment rate in Southampton is 68.9% and the unemployment rate is 7.8% based on 2009 information, compared to 70.5% nationally as at December 2010 (ONS)



- The median gross annual pay for Southampton is £20,462 based on the 2010 Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings (ASHE). Compared to the national median gross pay of £25,900.
- In December 2010 4,902 or 2.9% of Southampton's working age resident population are unemployed and claiming Job Seekers Allowance a rise of 161 people since November.
- There were 23,440 Southampton residents claiming 'worklessness' benefits in December 2009 which equates to 14% of the working age population. This figure includes 7,270 who were claiming incapacity benefit.

### **1.2.2 Deprivation and Regeneration**

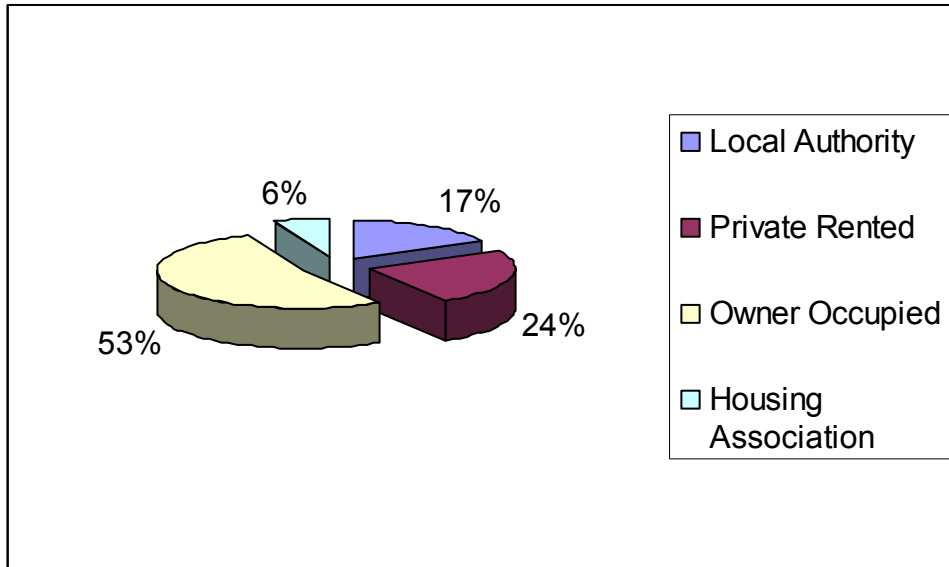
The Indices of Multiple Deprivation produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government, highlights poverty across a range of significant indicators to identify which places are the poorest; Southampton ranks 81<sup>st</sup> out of 326 local authority areas, with significant issues around education, training and crime.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1871208.pdf> published

The council has embarked on a major Estate Regeneration Programme that will play an essential part of a wider commitment to tackle economic deprivation and social disadvantage on Southampton's Council estates. Plans will not only ensure that new developments are of mixed tenure and that existing homes are improved but that physical changes will bring about job and training opportunities and improvements in health and education. Regeneration will also facilitate community involvement, helping to tackle fear of crime and improve the living environment to improve the quality of life for residents.

### **1.2.3 Housing in Southampton**

Southampton covers 51.81km<sup>2</sup> As at 1 April 2010, there are 99,606 homes in Southampton. The city has twice the national average of privately rented accommodation (including over 7,000 Houses in Multiple Occupation), below the average number of owner occupied homes and a higher proportion of council homes which equates to 1 in 6 homes or 17% compared to 10% nationally. Of the council stock (99%) met the Government's Decent Homes Standard (1<sup>st</sup> April 2011) and the council is the largest landlord in the south.



Housing Sector Breakdown

### 1.2.4 Looking Ahead

The 2009 mid year estimate of Southampton's population was 236,700. The city is growing with a forecast increase in the population of 53,600 people (22.9%) over the forecast period from 2008 to 2033 (compared to 18% nationally and 20.1% in the South East region). The 20-29 age range, who traditionally form new households requiring homes, will grow by 12.5%. The 30-44 age group, the main economically active and moving group also shows a rise of +26.8%.

A significant growth is in the over 65 age group with an increase of 13,500 people (+ 43.8%) over a period up to 2033 placing a need to plan housing, support and care solutions which will enable people to live independently. The effective adaptations in people's homes are an important part of this planning. Addressing under-occupation of homes across all tenures particularly amongst older people is an issue in the city. A range of options will enable older households to have realistic choices about suitable accommodation for the future. This includes making the best use of sheltered accommodation and the development of extra care housing. Planning for an aging population is set out in the Housing Strategy for Older People 2009-14. ([http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20Strategy%20for%20older%20people%202009-2014\\_tcm46-234831.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20Strategy%20for%20older%20people%202009-2014_tcm46-234831.pdf))

The need for a range of housing with support options have been identified through the Supporting People and other health and social care strategies. These identify the support and care required across the spectrum of needs including; young people, people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems and people fleeing domestic

violence. However, there is a need to better ensure housing and social care requirements are fully aligned so that the city is able to meet needs in the longer term.

By working with partners and stakeholders, the Council hopes to provide opportunities for council tenants and private housing households to reduce expenditure on fuel and power by maximising external funding for energy efficiency programmes. This will aim to reduce fuel poverty in the City.

### **1.2.5 Future Growth and Development**

Southampton is a part of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) (<http://www.push.gov.uk/>) which is a partnership of local authorities working on a cross boundary basis, and it is dedicated to sustainable, economic-led growth. The Government has endorsed the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership which will establish a partnership and commitment between public and private sector organisations in the area to make a positive difference to the lives of local people. There is the recognition of the need to focus on areas and communities that are currently dependent on the public sector ensuring they make the transition to sustainable private sector led growth. A responsive supply of land that supports business growth and increases housing supply, working with partners to help improve investment opportunities is crucial to the area. Key priorities for future work include:

- Establishing a single interface between PUSH and the Solent LEP
- Providing a coordinated sub-regional approach to land use planning, affordable housing supply and inward investment across the sub-region
- Developing a new framework for joint working to reflect the introduction of new partners such as the Isle of Wight

([http://www.push.gov.uk/solent\\_lep\\_outline\\_proposal\\_final\\_version-2.pdf](http://www.push.gov.uk/solent_lep_outline_proposal_final_version-2.pdf))

PUSH has developed a Local Investment Plan in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency. This provides a framework of local priorities for action and investment. It seeks '*to provide a balanced housing supply with the right kinds of houses in the right number and in the right places*' with the emphasis on providing family homes in preference to smaller dwellings, strategic sites such as estate regeneration and developing mixed communities. This will be used by the Homes and Communities Agency to inform the allocation of funds for affordable homes 2011- 15.

### **1.2.6 Homes for Growth**

The Construction Industry is critical to the city's economy. A healthy construction industry is synonymous with a healthy economy. Independent research by the authoritative LEK Consulting has shown that for every £1 spent on construction, £2.84 is delivered for the wider economy. Southampton has a target to deliver 16,300 homes over the period 2006-2026. Over the period 2005/9 a (net) average of 1057 homes were completed in the city.

During 2009/10 this fell to 525; housing completions are expected to rise again.

([http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20Mix%20Background%20Paper\\_tcm46-218453.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20Mix%20Background%20Paper_tcm46-218453.pdf))

For the future it is important that there is:

- The right mix of property sizes to meet existing needs as well as those of new populations within sustainable mixed communities; and
- Sufficient affordable homes

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) considers potential sites; the sites will be allocated within either the City Centre Action Plan or the Southampton Development Plan Document. The City Centre Masterplan will set out an urban design framework and an implementation plan to deliver high quality stimulating buildings and public spaces. The Core Strategy identified over 5,000 homes for the city centre and will be taken forward in the City Centre Action Plan. The City Centre Masterplan sets an urban design framework with the target of delivering over 5,000 homes for the city centre. This will require seeking creative opportunities for new housing such as mixed use developments and the conversion of unused offices to “live - work ” units and bringing empty property back into use. A key challenge will be to encourage mixed use development at higher density.

([http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/combined%20website%20report\\_tcm46-218765.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/combined%20website%20report_tcm46-218765.pdf))

### **1.2.7 Housing Market and Affordability**

In Southampton there are issues of affordability (i.e. the cost of property in a city of low incomes particularly for first time buyers), levels of income and access to finance both for the rental and home ownership market:

- The average cost of a home in the city has risen by 140% since 1999.
- The lower quartile price for a 1 bed home was around £95k which requires a single person to have an income of £26,200 and for a joint income of £31,600 in order to afford
- For a 2 bed property in the lower quartile which is around £124,950 a single person would need to earn £33,800 and for a couple would need a joint income of £40,800
- The availability of mortgage products including the level of deposits, (often 25%) required to secure a mortgage remains an issue for many first time buyers. With many excluded from home ownership the demand for affordable housing has increased over recent years.
- In the private rented sector on average an entry level 1 bed flat is approximately £480pcm and £650pcm for a 2 bed flat but prices vary across city. Based on a gross income of 25% or 30% net (national affordability model), £24,700 is needed to rent a 1 bed flat and £32,200 needed to rent a 2 bed flat. Of concealed households, 85% cannot

afford the cheapest entry level 1 bed flat, and 93% cannot afford the cheapest entry level 2 bed flat.

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## Chapter 2

# MAXIMISING HOMES FOR THE CITY

### 2.1 Promoting home ownership and Right to Buy

#### 2.1.1 Promoting Home ownership

The council is keen to help to make home ownership more affordable for a greater number of residents and, in so doing, increase home ownership in the city. This will help address the current tenure imbalances and ensure that more local people stay in the city and have a stake in its future. For example estate regeneration schemes will deliver mixed tenure projects of at least 50% owner occupied homes (subject to viability).

In particular the council is keen to continue to promote shared ownership (<http://www.homesinhants.co.uk/>). Whilst new developments will be limited in obtaining funding for shared ownership and home ownership products, Southampton will continue to promote these tenure options through planning policy CS15 within the Core Strategy which currently outlines a split of 65% rent and 35% shared ownership (subject to viability). ([http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Core%20Strategy%20FINAL%20ADPTED%20VERSION%20JAN%202010\\_tcm46-270106.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Core%20Strategy%20FINAL%20ADPTED%20VERSION%20JAN%202010_tcm46-270106.pdf))

The council will also promote home ownership including the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire. Direct marketing is planned to offer the Right to Buy to eligible tenants. (3,116 tenants could qualify). For those wishing to consider the option, support and advice is available throughout the process. The website is updated regularly with information on the process, forms and guidance. The discount available of 35% for houses and 50% for flats could be used as equity on the mortgage for the full market value of the property and is available for tenants living in their property for more than 5 years. (<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/living/housing/rtb/default.aspx>) ([http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/BuyingAndSellingYourHome/HomeBuyingSchemes/DG\\_066460](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/BuyingAndSellingYourHome/HomeBuyingSchemes/DG_066460))

### 2.2 Building more affordable homes

#### 2.2.1 Demand for Affordable Housing

Southampton has been successful in providing new affordable housing, with 472 new homes delivered in 2010/11 and 248 in 2009/10 for rent and shared ownership. A large proportion of the city's population are unable to meet their own housing needs within the private market and therefore require affordable housing options. Demand continues to outstrip particularly in a market with reduced mortgage products and borrowing for first time buyers being difficult to access. As at 1 April 2011 there were 14,608 households waiting for accommodation. This figure will reduce following a review of the Housing



Register. The Council accepts nearly about 200 households a year as homeless. The focus continues to be on the prevention of homelessness.

The city's Housing Need and Market Study Update concluded that there is an overall shortfall of 1,471 affordable homes over a 5 year basis.

([http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20Needs%20and%20Market%20Survey%202010\\_tcm46-164870.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20Needs%20and%20Market%20Survey%202010_tcm46-164870.pdf))

This evidence supported affordable housing planning policies and also identified the need to provide a range of sizes of home to meet the ongoing need for family homes as well as smaller homes.

(<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/s-environment/policy/localplanreview/planreview-textinweb/chapter7/regional-structural-plan/affordable-housing.aspx>)

## **2.2.2 Providing More Affordable Housing**

Central Government have made it clear that they intend to continue to invest in affordable housing – providing £6.5 billion through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) (<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/>) over the next four years, including £4.5 billion which aims to provide up to 150,000 new affordable homes nationally.

Southampton continues to work in partnership with developers and Housing Association partners to maximise opportunities including the availability of HCA grant. A new 'Affordable Rent' tenancy will be offered for new affordable homes and a proportion of re-let homes. Affordable Rent properties will offer fixed term tenancies at a rent higher than social rent - with landlords able to set rents at up to 80 per cent of local market rents. This will enable landlords to raise funds to build more affordable housing for those who need it.

The HCA are seeking to enter into four year (2011-2015) contracts with Registered Providers (RPs) of Affordable Homes (including Housing Associations) to provide an agreed number of homes at an agreed cost. Housing Associations will be expected to bid for grant funding over a 4 year period which will mean clear forecasting and maximising delivery.

The council has worked with Housing Associations locally to assist with development of bids using information from the Housing Needs and Housing Market Survey, the PUSH Annual Housing Market Monitoring Report 2010 and key priorities for housing investment identified in the PUSH Local Investment Plan which was developed with the HCA. The Local Investment Plan priorities are *'to provide a balanced housing supply with the right kinds of houses in the right number and in the right places'* with the emphasis on:

- a geographical spread of development across South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight supporting mixed communities

- strategic sites including Major Development Areas and, especially, estates renewal projects. The latter are likely to require grant to be viable and will support the 'cities first' policy
- family homes in preference to smaller dwellings
- homes for the most vulnerable
- a range of types of affordable housing including shared ownership

The council wants to secure maximum resources to develop affordable homes in the city.

Housing Associations will be expected to deliver Section 106 affordable homes grant free as well as look at opportunities and other sources of funding or means of reducing costs such as free or discounted public land, including Local Authority land for example from the New Homes Bonus, Community Infrastructure Levy.

Through the Housing Needs Survey evidence, Southampton will identify the range of need groups where new supply is required to assist e.g. larger homes, supported housing for vulnerable and older people etc. and be able to identify localised needs which will lead to appropriate types of properties being identified and therefore provided in these localities. The council will:

- Work with Housing Associations and developers to ensure a continued supply of new affordable homes that meet local need. It will do this through its enabling function - providing advice and support for those wishing to develop in the city
- Monitor the impact of providers supplying affordable homes at the 80% of market rent on all affordable homes; partnership working with registered providers and profiling future schemes is already taking place
- Support proposals from providers which include affordable home ownership as part of the overall mix and where such schemes fit with the local housing market
- Maximise Section 106 contributions to ensure all applicable schemes provide sustainable mixed communities
- Work with the future national HomeBuy agency to ensure local residents understand the options for low cost home ownership and take up the opportunities to buy
- Develop and promote new build schemes that target under occupiers, in turn releasing larger family homes
- Generate better use of land through estate regeneration schemes.



## 2.3 Tenancy and lettings policy

### 2.3.1 Choice

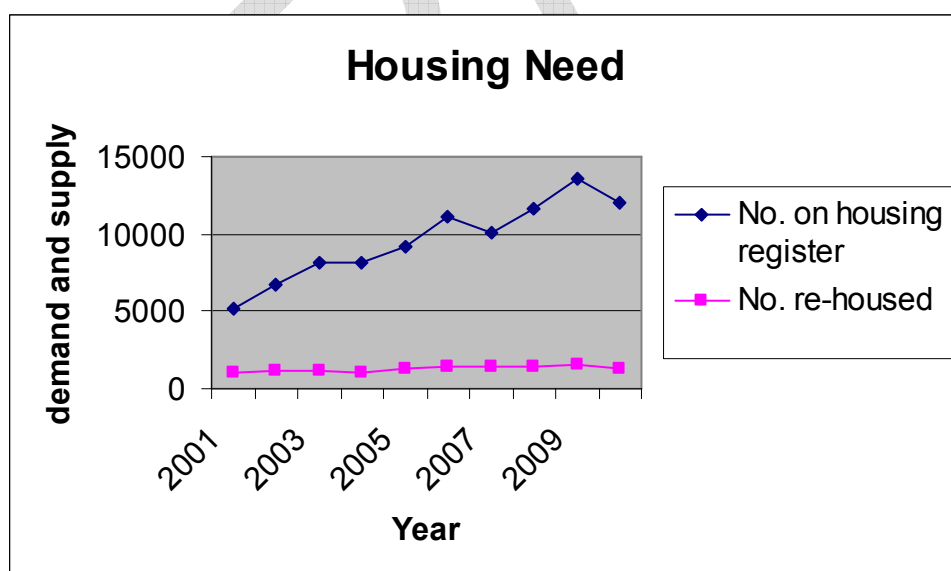
Southampton operates a Housing Register and Choice Based Lettings system called Homebid. This is a list of households who want to move into or between homes owned by the city council and participating housing associations.

### 2.3.2 Service Improvement

The Choice Based Lettings service is being developed continually. Information is now published highlighting results of applications to provide applicants with detailed information on the likely time they will be waiting for a particular type or size of property. This will reduce the expectation of customers and offer realistic information.

### 2.3.3 Managing the Housing Register

As at 1 April 2011 there were 14,608 households waiting for social housing in Southampton. The graph below highlights the number of applicants on the housing register over the last 10 years compared with the number re-housed. Like many authorities there has been a steady increase in the number of applicants since the Council introduced an 'open' Housing Register in 2003 (in response to a change to statutory duties). For the majority of applicants the Housing Register does not result in an offer of social housing as demand for housing far exceeds supply.



For many making a Housing Register application for social housing is not a realistic housing option as they are unlikely to get housed. The council has recently carried out a large scale review of Housing Register applicants. Non-active applicants have been removed from the Housing Register. Regular review of the Housing Register will be carried out to keep the list a manageable

realistic reflection of need. The council has also changed the way it provides advice for those seeking accommodation.

#### **2.3.4 Providing Options, Advice and Information**

Information for housing applicants now includes all housing tenure options available. If they decide to proceed with an application for social housing they are provided with detailed information about the process and information about waiting times. This will provide a much improved customer experience, improve efficiency and allow greater time to be spent with priority cases.

Information is published highlighting results to provide applicants with detailed information on the likely time they will be waiting for a particular type or size of property. This will help to manage the expectations of customers.

#### **2.3.5 Tackling Under-occupation – Freeing up family homes**

Tackling under-occupation of homes particularly in social housing is a key priority for the council. Information gathered from the housing database suggests 2,009 family size council homes are currently under occupied.

Southampton City Council invests resources to provide practical support to help and encourage under-occupiers to relocate to smaller accommodation. Work undertaken to date includes publicity for council tenants and liaison with housing associations to encourage tenants 'under occupying' a property to 'downsize' to a smaller home.

An incentive scheme is in place to encourage people to relocate to smaller, more appropriate properties to suit their housing needs. Regular contact is made with those under-occupying homes. A financial incentive offered to people moving from larger to smaller accommodation is currently £850. People over 60 are also offered financial assistance with removals, disconnection and reconnection of services. Marketing of new build schemes is targeted to those under-occupying to encourage take-up of more suitable housing options.

In addition to cash incentives it has been highlighted that individual support to tenants to help them make informed choices about preparing to move and moving generally is essential to the process and this will be developed further by the following:

- articles placed in the Tenants Link
- presentations to local housing office, Gateway and advice line staff
- distribution of leaflets and posters
- target letters to downsizing applicants regarding new developments

#### **2.3.6 Reviewing the Lettings Policy and a New Strategic Tenancy Policy**

The Localism Bill will introduce some key changes and freedoms for how tenancies are let:

- Flexible tenancies from a minimum of two years
- Ending 'open' waiting lists
- Introducing new Affordable Rents (up to 80% market rent) for new build Housing Association properties and some of their new re-lets

This will require Southampton to update its Lettings Policy and produce a new Strategic Tenancy Policy during 2011/12 setting out:

- In what circumstances flexible tenancies be granted
- In what circumstances flexible tenancies be extended
- The duration of any fixed term (flexible) tenancies and when these tenancies will be reissued when the fixed term has expired

# Chapter 3

## IMPROVING HOMES – TRANSFORMING NEIGHBOURHOODS

### 3.1 Estate Regeneration

Southampton City Council has embarked on a major Estate Regeneration Programme that is seen as playing an essential part in the wider commitment of delivering sustained economic growth and tackling deprivation on Southampton's council estates. It is a significant contributor to the council's target of delivering over 16,000 homes and 10 - 20,000 additional jobs. (<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/living/regen/estateregeneration/>)

The strategy for delivering the vision is articulated in a set of core principles:

#### 3.1.1 Outline principles

- Taking a comprehensive approach to renewal in order to transform neighbourhoods into places where people want to live for years to come improving the economic, health and educational well-being of residents.
- Maximising the number of new homes, including family homes, as part of the re-development.
- Promoting mixed communities made up of affordable and private homes.
- Involving local people in developing and designing their community for the long term.
- Providing shops and community facilities where needed and practicable.
- Opportunities for developing new sustainable energy networks in estates regeneration
- Sustainable development (CS20) planning principles in estate regeneration

Estate regeneration is focused upon delivering a wide range of initiatives to deliver physical and socio economic regeneration of Southampton's estates.

#### 3.1.2 Phases One and Two

Phase one of the Estate Regeneration Project started with the redevelopment of Hinkler Parade. Delivering 106 new homes (with 30% meeting Southampton City Council's 'Family Homes' policy), five new retail units and a community facility. 25% of the construction workforce will be local people. The project will help start up two new businesses, in two of the new

commercial units. The £16m redevelopment will continue to act as a vibrant centre to the local area. The project is scheduled for completion in May 2012.

As Phase two of estate regeneration projects are underway at Meggeson Avenue, Laxton Close, Cumbrian Way and Exford Avenue. They will deliver approximately 264 homes, of which 140 will be affordable, and 6 new shop units across two of the four sites.

### **3.1.3 Estate Regeneration Capacity Study**

Focusing on the city wide priority of sustained economic growth, and the target of delivering over 16,000 new homes, the Estate Regeneration Capacity Study recommended that to maximise housing growth through estate regeneration, the council would need to focus on those sites which offered the most potential for housing gain (net increase on the existing properties). The council will also look at this in the context of the condition of the housing stock and plans for asset management identified in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. The Capacity Study identified Townhill Park as the area with the greatest potential for housing gain.

### **3.1.4 Future Estate Regeneration**

Future estate regeneration is developing on a three staged approach, on the basis of further small sites leading to estate by estate regeneration and improvements to remaining stock. Consultation with residents has begun in Weston at, Ashton House, Kingsclere Avenue and Sombourne House in Weston.

Through the capacity study undertaken the Master Planning project for Townhill Park has commenced to regenerate the estate which comprises a mix of family housing and flats and maisonettes built in 1960s/early 1970s. Consultation for this is imminent. This process will set out a spatial vision for the area and how this will be delivered over 10 years.

Further areas of the city will come forward for estate regeneration over the next five years.

## **3.2 Improving the condition of the housing stock**

### **3.2.1 Public Sector - Housing Revenue Account Business Plan**

Southampton City Council is the largest Landlord in the South East of England with over 18,000 properties let to households including tenants and leaseholders. Nearly one in six of every household in Southampton lives in a home owned by the City Council. The Housing Revenue account has a “Big Impact on Southampton’s economy” by spending in various forms £61m per

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annum in the Southampton area and which provides local employment opportunities and a need for supplies and services to support this investment in the council's homes.

The Council produces a detailed HRA Business Plan every 4 years to define the asset management aims of the Council and its tenants.. The period between 2007 and 2011 has seen the Council meet the Decent Homes Standard for virtually all of its homes and make significant progress in the maintenance of its buildings and estates through the Decent Homes, Decent Homes Plus and Decent Neighbourhoods programmes. It sets out aspirations for Southampton's Council housing stock over a 5, 10 and 30 year timeframe to enable the council to track progress against priorities, meeting tenants' aspirations and responding to longer term investment needs.

During the period 2007-2011 the Council achieved decent Homes standard for all its homes and made progress in maintenance of building and estates through the Decent Homes, Decent Homes Plus and Decent Neighbourhoods programmes. Over that period £61.544m was spent on modernising, fitting new kitchens, bathrooms, rewiring and renewing roofs. In addition £22.211m has been spent on refurbishment of lifts, installing new electronic concierge, new door entry systems, replacement double glazed windows, new heating systems, disabled adaptations as well as refurbishing many of the supported housing schemes.

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2011-2041 'Investment in our Homes and Neighbourhoods' provides a long term plan for managing and improving the Council's own housing stock to contribute to the overall progression of wider corporate and city-wide goals. Social housing reform is a very important to this Housing Revenue Account Business Plan as it encourages flexible tenures and rent reform which will impact the income that the council can generate and the investment options that it makes for the future, such as improving the stock and funding for estate regeneration.

Information has been compiled on the condition of the city's housing stock to plan and prioritise immediate programmes and the investment strategy in this plan. All available financial resources have been identified to support plans for the management and maintenance of council housing - both now and in the future. One further resource which has been identified is the ability to sell a small number of empty properties, either through individual sales in the market or through trickle transfer to Registered Providers to facilitate investment in our estate regeneration plans for the future. Assumptions have been made in the preparation of this Business Plan over the 30 year period and resources aligned with the programmes being identified.

The Southampton Homes Standard has been agreed with tenants and leaseholds to ensure all homes being:

- Safe, Wind and Weather-tight
- Warm and will use as small an energy footprint as possible

- Have reasonably modern facilities inside the home, and
- Well maintained communal facilities.

Following extensive consultation, priorities for future investment have been identified below. However the “Guiding Principles” in delivering services and programmes of work for the future will be about providing choice wherever possible and reasonably practicable and providing the most effective and good quality materials which we are able to sustainably afford for the council’s homes:

**Safe, Wind and Weather-tight** – The first priority for Southampton as a landlord is to make sure that homes are safe, wind and weather-tight. It is important that homes stop wind and water penetration. The Council can do this by making sure roofs are replaced when required, that the external fabric of the home is in good condition and that windows and doors prevent wind and water from entering tenants’ homes. The council also needs to ensure that our homes have the correct safety systems in place and that we have tested gas appliances and supplies. The council will also undertake to make sure that all our tower blocks and other blocks of flats have the appropriate level of fire, electrical and other safety checks carried out.

**Warm and energy efficient** - Energy Efficiency and a reduction in the energy consumed by our tenants and leaseholders continues to be a main priority for the Council. A continued drive towards energy efficiency will facilitate a reduction in fuel poverty and reduce domestic lighting and heating charges for our residents. The Council also wants to enable residents to use “green” energy either generated by the Council or by providing “green” energy products. The Council will increase loft insulation, install cavity wall insulation, provide solid wall external insulation, install photo voltaics and solar thermal equipment as well as installing combined heat and power systems to certain blocks of flats. The council will give all tenants control of their heating by providing individual metering over the next five years and also to take advantage of the Feed in Tariffs available now and in the future. Water meter providers are installing water metering where appropriate for individual tenants and leaseholders.

**Have reasonably modern facilities inside the home** – Southampton will continue to refurbish the inside of tenants’ homes. 9,000 homes have had kitchens replaced over the past 6 years, whilst much of the investment is not seen externally, it is important to meet tenants’ aspirations - so this programme of investment will continue into the future and provide reasonably modern facilities for future generations.

**Well maintained communal facilities** – The council will invest in programmes of work specifically to refurbish communal corridors, bin stores, lifts, electronic concierge and door entry systems which will continue to be maintained and refurbished for the benefit of the residents.

**Repairs and Maintenance** - The quality and performance of the council’s day to day and programmed repairs services is key to maintaining housing conditions. The current Transformation Programme of the repairs and



maintenance service will modernise these service areas to achieve a reduction in cost and increase service standards.. Improvements in repairs performance has been significant in recent years with more repairs being completed first time and with higher tenant satisfaction levels. This has released funding for direct investment in capital funding but there is still room for improvement so we will increase performance further over the next five years to release further funding to meet tenants' aspirations.

**Re-letting empty Council properties** - The Council has halved the time it takes to re-let Council properties when they become empty. The council has introduced both a "Moving In" and a "Moving Out standard" and tighter control on the condition that empty properties are left in will reduce the overall cost of re-letting empty homes. Tenants will be expected to leave properties in good condition in accordance with the "Moving Out" standard.

**Housing Management** - - Providing excellent housing management services is integral to the successful delivery of the HRA Business Plan and achieving the Vision for Tenant and Leaseholder Services:

#### **Vision for Tenant and Leaseholder Services**

A modern home is the foundation for a good quality of life.

Decent homes in decent neighbourhoods give people a springboard to enable them to reach their full potential. A modern home provides a starting point for family life, for good health and for sustainable communities.

This is why the city council is committed to putting local people at the heart of our housing services. Our aim is to provide the best tenant and leaseholder services of any social landlord in the south east of England.

We want residents you to feel proud of the service they receive, their home and the neighbourhood they live in.

To make this happen we want to work closely with tenants, prospective tenants and leaseholders in order to:

**1. Raise standards and deliver high levels of customer satisfaction – homes, tenants and leaseholders feel proud of.** We will do this by:

- Involving residents in reviewing services, setting service standards, and participating in annual budget setting
- Driving continuous improvement by listening to the views of our tenants, future tenants and leaseholders through surveys, consultation, 'mystery shopping' exercises and learning from complaints
- Seeking efficiencies and cost effective ways to deliver services, enabling more investment in decent homes and decent neighbourhoods
- Ensuring an efficient and responsive repairs service –with repairs carried out at a time convenient to the resident, while encouraging people to look after their own homes and gardens



- Developing an incentive scheme to encourage all tenants to pay their rent, abide by their tenancy agreement and contribute to their local community
- Being responsive to our tenants and leaseholders' concerns for their property, street and neighbourhood and keeping them informed about what is going on

**2. Create safe and secure neighbourhoods where people want to live and where people respect each other.** We will do this by:

- Taking prompt and effective action to enforce the tenancy agreement
- Supporting residents' groups to represent local people and get involved in projects which improve the neighbourhood
- Working with the police and local people to improve security and reduce antisocial behaviour in our communities
- Working with local tenant representatives to encourage neighbourliness and community spirit and involvement in community based activities
- Investing in estate regeneration and decent neighbourhoods, and involving local residents in the design and implementation of local projects
- Promoting a positive image of tenant and leaseholder homes to the wider community in Southampton
- Supporting opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to enter training and employment
- Developing initiatives to provide sustainable parking solutions on our estates whilst encouraging residents to use alternative transport solutions

**3. Understand and meeting tenants and leaseholders' needs at an individual and a local level.** We will do this by:

- Collecting better information about our customers and future customers and using this to deliver more personalised, customer focused services
- Providing services which help support our vulnerable residents to feel safe and maintain a sense of well being and quality of life
- Improving customer access to our services by phone, through the internet and through digital TV so that customers can contact us when they want to
- Empowering housing staff to connect directly with their communities and to be seen regularly 'out and about'
- Using mobile working to equip housing staff with the information and technology they need to help customers in their homes

Priorities over the period of the Business Plan are to:

- plan for and implement flexible tenancies
- maximise rental and other income to help pay for the investments needed

- enforce tenancy conditions, particularly with regard to ensuring residents look after their homes, and do not cause anti social behaviour in their community
- provide support to new tenants moving into their homes, and a tenancy visit before the end of their introductory tenancy
- establish a sustainable programme of tenancy visits and estate inspections
- provide personalised support for residents in supported housing
- promote resident involvement
- ensure more staff are seen out and about on our estates
- support training and employment initiatives and projects to tackle social and economic disadvantage on our estates.

A programme of patch planning is underway to ensure that the right estate improvements are identified and actioned for each locality.

**Decent Neighbourhoods** - As well as improving your homes, Southampton is leading the way on improving estates and the wider landscape around homes. Much of the appearance of estates has remained largely unchanged. However, during the last four years the quality of the wider home environment has been changing as work with residents has changed the appearance of estates with some imagination and creativity, investment and hard work. Improvements include landscaping, parking, play areas, public art and community safety measures.

**Estate Regeneration** – The council’s major Estate Regeneration Programme reflects its wider commitment to tackle economic deprivation and social disadvantage on our estates. A number of sites have also been identified which would benefit from comprehensive regeneration to develop more and better homes.

As well as projects already underway or under consultation with local residents, the council will be embarking on a major transformation of the Townhill Park estate.

The programme will be funded in part by selling assets and utilising new funding to particular locations which are in a poor condition and which under-utilise the space in which these assets sit.

The estate regeneration programme will transform Southampton and provide modern affordable homes for future generations to come. This is the first part of an ambitious five year plan with further major plans for estate wide regeneration coming forward in the near future.

## **Resource Planning**

The current resources for investment in Council housing come from a variety of sources, mainly however from tenants’ rents. For the last four years the Council has been paying a subsidy to the Government and has been unable to spend all the money collected from tenants’ rents within the city on tenants’ homes and services. The subsidy would have inevitably increased over the

period of the Business Plan and would have left Southampton not being able to afford to maintain and manage its homes effectively. However, the recent plans to change the Housing Revenue Account to a “self financing” model is expected to improve the financial forecast for Southampton and allow the Council to maintain and manage its stock of homes and deliver the investments proposed over the next 30 year business plan period, as well as include for flexible tenures and rent reform which will possibly increase income in the future.

This change will mean that Southampton accepts a “one off” debt settlement from the Government which it will need to borrow monies to fund. However, all rents and service charges collected for our homes will be kept by Southampton to pay for services and investment provided to tenants and leaseholders. Southampton welcomes these new arrangements as it is likely to benefit from them compared to the previous subsidy arrangements.

The governments final self-financing proposals will not be published until January 2012 so it is not possible at this time to quantify the financial benefit or to have detailed plans for the annual investment levels, although they will follow the principles in this paper. It is expected that the budget report that is presented to Cabinet and Council in February 2012 will contain this information. One further resource which has been identified is the ability to sell a small number of empty properties, either through individual sales in the market or through trickle transfer to Registered Providers to facilitate investment in our estate regeneration plans for the future. Assumptions on this initiative will be included in the preparation of this Business Plan over the 30 year period and resources aligned with the programmes being identified.

### **3.2.2 Private Sector Housing and the Private Housing Renewal Strategy (Appendix 1)**

Poor private housing conditions can cause a range of physical and mental illnesses and unsafe housing can result in serious injury or death. Children growing up in difficult housing conditions are more likely to suffer ill health and disability during childhood and early adulthood. Living in a safe, warm and accessible home helps people of all ages to access employment education, health services and leisure opportunities. A large scale stock condition survey was carried out in 2008 which shows that 38% (28,400) of all private homes do not meet the Decent Homes Standard, of which 8,500 are occupied by vulnerable people.

14,000 private homes have a serious housing hazard, with a quarter of homes built before 1919 and a quarter of privately rented homes having a hazard that is likely to result in harm that needs medical treatment. The cost of dealing with a serious hazard is estimated at £5,000, rising to an average of £19,000 for more comprehensive repairs. Although 76% reported that they can't afford these repairs, all older home owners were found to have at least £20,000 equity.

[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Private%20Sector%20House%20Condition%20Survey%202008\\_tcm46-248600.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Private%20Sector%20House%20Condition%20Survey%202008_tcm46-248600.pdf)

Improving private housing helps the local economy by supporting and creating jobs for building contractors and installers of insulation and renewable energy. The city's Private Housing Renewal Strategy outlines how the council will approach maintaining and improving housing standards in privately owned and rented homes, including its work to remove the most serious hazards from privately rented homes in the worst condition in order to ensure that they are safe and warm, in particular for vulnerable occupiers.

Research suggests that the most effective use of council resources to improve private homes is to target energy efficiency and adaptations in all private homes and to focus on those privately rented properties in the worst condition.

The Council administers a mandatory licensing scheme for HMO's of three storeys and above occupied by five or more unrelated people. This helps ensure that minimum safety and management standards are met in these properties. New powers will allow the council to protect family homes and control where houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are permitted by using an Article 4 Direction to control HMOs (rented homes where three or more unrelated people live.) This means it will be able to refuse new HMOs in any one area in the future. Article 4 powers allow local authorities to implement strict planning rules in specific areas of cities or towns. In this instance landlords would have to obtain planning permission before turning homes into rented HMOs.

Welfare benefit changes are anticipated to result in additional properties being let as HMOs and it will be important for the Council to continue to work with private landlords and landlord organisations to ensure that minimum standards of safety and management are maintained in a competitive rental market.

### **3.2.3 An Excellent Housing Management Service**

The city is the largest landlord in the south. The housing management service provides both tenant and leaseholder services and carries out a range of activities to ensure that the homes that Southampton City Council provides quality services that support individuals and communities to thrive.

Decent homes in decent neighbourhoods provides a springboard to enable people to reach their full potential. A decent home provides a starting point for family life, good health and for sustainable communities. The council is committed to putting people at the heart of housing services.

The aim of the housing management service is to provide the best tenant and leaseholder services of any social landlord in the south east of England. Involving customers in this process it is key to ensuring that the right things get done in the right way and that residents have a real stake in their

community. A dedicated tenant involvement unit supports tenants to be able to influence the service and this thread runs throughout all of the activities.

### **3.2.4 Customer services**

The way in which the city's housing estates and tenancies are managed is changing rapidly. The council's housing management service has been restructured in order to increase accessibility and make use of modern processes which are more efficient and which residents find most convenient. The service aims to provide 80% of its interaction with customers either in their own homes or on estates. New methods of communication such as texting have been implemented and the introduction of payment cards has increased the number of locations for payment from 12 to over 100 places where people can make payments and are available over the weekends and evenings.

A dedicated income collection team has been set up to ensure the authority is able to maximise rental income. Improvements to the direct debit service and an enhanced range of payment methods (e.g. the use of telephone payments) have been implemented and provide greater choice for the customer. A financial inclusion strategy and access to a specialist welfare team help to ensure that tenants' income is maximised where possible.

Leaseholders now comprise a significant section of the authority's customers; over 2000 people now receive services as leaseholders from the authority. 2011/12 sees the implementation of a detailed action plan to modernise this service.

### **3.2.5 Tenant Involvement**

Customer involvement is also undergoing a period of change. The city's Tenants Federation is working with the authority to develop a new role concentrating on scrutiny of the service and this will form a core monitoring mechanism in the future. A range of involvement techniques allow a much wider range of people to be involved through mechanisms such as telephone surveys, tenant inspectors, estate inspections, texting and Facebook. More has to be done to ensure that customers across all age groups and communities are involved so this will form a key activity in the next few years.

### **3.2.6 Decent Neighbourhoods**

The authority has a program of improvement to the communal and external areas around tenant's homes with the aim of making people feel safe and proud of their neighbourhood. Funding will be invested over the next few years with the emphasis on resident involvement in specification, design and,

where practical; implementation. A range of projects have already been carried out over the past few years, these include community art, an outdoor gym, improvements to play provision and extensive reworking of both internal and external areas.

In addition to capital improvements the authority continues to invest in services to make our estates good places to live. Neighbour disputes can be referred to the award-winning New Forest Assessment Service which is able to resolve the vast majority (over 90% of referrals) without further intervention from the Council. Where necessary, firm action is taken, using the courts.

The Neighbourhood Warden scheme and the Junior Neighbourhood Warden scheme are key elements of our approach to neighbourhood management. The wardens provide a key link in the communication chain with local residents, getting involved in local events and building trust. They also provide a flexible response to issues such as minor repairs, graffiti, health and safety and block cleanliness. The Junior Neighbourhood Warden scheme provides opportunities to get involved in the community and to develop skills and friendship for local children. A number of activities took place during 2010/11 and the scheme now also includes opportunities for older children under the banner of Junior Neighbourhood Warden leaders. The authority will invest funding for the warden service during the period of this strategy.

### **3.2.7 Reform of social housing**

The localism Bill and proposals around reform of social housing will provide both opportunities and challenges for the housing management service. New arrangements for tenancies will be implemented and the service will need to further adapt. Changes to the way people access social housing and the range of options available to them will be introduced. The challenge for the council will be to make sure that resources are used in the most efficient way and that it can continue to help build sustainable and happy communities.

### **3.2.8 Tackling Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)**

Anti social behaviour within Housing Management is taken very seriously and this will feature in the new Tenants Handbook which is being developed. In May 2010 a report was carried out by Tenant Inspectors to review the policy and procedure in relation to tackling ASB on estates.

[http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Tenant%20Inspectors%20ASB%20Final%20Report\\_tcm46-264158.pdf](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Tenant%20Inspectors%20ASB%20Final%20Report_tcm46-264158.pdf)

From the report and recommendations, changes were put in place and training provided for staff. NFS Assessment Service which provides mediation has been successful in securing a further 5 year contract to continue to provide Southampton's Assessment Service. This is considered essential to

provide ongoing support as the service achieves a 90%+ success rate year on year. The success of the service has been recognised nationally which is a great achievement and provides an excellent service for tenants and residents.

In 2011/12 it is aimed to introduce a satisfaction survey for residents to report on ASB affecting them and who it has been dealt with. This will provide information to shape future services and training as well as benchmark the ASB service against others nationally. This will allow reporting to customers regarding the ASB work that the council does.

### **3.4 Providing 'Green' Homes**

Southampton City Council has a clear role to play in rising to the challenges climate change will present to the local area. It is therefore essential that the future housing provision considers the best opportunities for sustainability and mitigating environmental impacts. The Southampton Green City Strategy ([to be adopted in June - enter weblink](#)) The Southampton Green City Strategy outlines the City Council's vision for a low carbon city based around 8 key pillars of activity;

- Green Economy;
- Sustainable Energy;
- Flood Risk Management;
- Biodiversity;
- Carbon Reduction;
- Sustainable Procurement;
- Sustainable Travel and Transport; and
- Waste Management.

It sets out the key target to reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2020 and 80% by 2040. Plans for housing within its existing stock, new developments and through the regeneration programmes will help to deliver this target and tackle fuel poverty. A key challenge for the council is to access external funding to facilitate energy efficiency projects to improve homes in the public and private sectors and maximising the use of the Feed in Tariff for council buildings, promoting the Green Deal and assessing the opportunities of the Renewable Heat Initiative.

There is a Government requirement nationally for all homes to be zero carbon by 2016 and the Council is working closely with Housing Association partners and developers on new build social homes and regeneration projects to ensure that Modern Methods of Construction are utilised, local labour is utilised as well as homes being built to Code for Sustainable Homes minimum Level 4; delivery of which impacts on the overall sustainability of housing as it considers all of the following:

- Energy and CO2
- Water
- Materials
- Surface water run-off



- Waste
- Pollution
- Health and well-being
- Management
- Ecology

[\(http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/greenerbuildings/sustainablehomes/\)](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/greenerbuildings/sustainablehomes/)

The council is developing a tool called the Green Space Factor which enables the calculation of green space requirement across the city and how this can be delivered through green space interventions; this will mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2011-2041 further highlights the need to consider providing opportunities for residents to engage with more sustainable options. The council is committed to continuing to increase the level of thermal insulation across its homes. It has concentrated on the loft and cavity wall insulation to individual homes which have only a minimum level. By increasing the number of homes with cavity wall insulation, topped up levels of loft insulation, increasing the level of homes with fuel efficient condensing central heating systems and replacing all homes which have single glazed windows with new double glazed windows where the windows require replacement this has increased the thermal efficiency of the housing stock.

In the private sector energy efficiency has also improved over the last five years and the average SAP rating is 51 (equivalent to energy rating band E on a scale of A to G). However, there is the potential to improve energy efficiency in 95% of private homes and there remain 7,000 homes with a dangerously low SAP rating of under 35 and 6,000 vulnerable households in fuel poverty (with similar levels across owner occupied and privately rented homes). The council prioritises assistance and interventions aimed at improving energy efficiency (dealing with excess cold). Further information about improving energy efficiency is contained in the Private Housing Renewal Strategy.

### **3.5 Empty Homes**

It is estimated that 1.6% of the total private sector stock (1,210 homes) has been vacant for over six months, which is comparable with the national average of 1.5%. The private housing sector always needs some degree of vacancy, somewhere between 1% and 2% of stock for it to operate reasonably efficiently. Government have outlined that there will be new powers and resources to bring empty homes into use, which will be a useful tool to utilise those homes effectively.

Within the Localism Bill there is a requirement for local authorities to consider empty homes as a possible route to increase housing supply by being more proactive in bringing long term empty homes back into use through the legal system in place such as Empty Dwelling Management Order or Compulsory Purchase Order. The Government has also updated powers to give people



greater influence in getting publicly owned empty property and land back into use through Community Right to Reclaim Land, previously known as Public Request to Order Disposal (PROD).

Utilising empty homes is a key part of the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) approach to housing and regeneration and is making a significant capital contribution to tackling the problem. The council has bid for resources from the HCA (£100m of funds will be made available nationally from 2012) to target long term empty properties which are blighting neighbourhoods particularly in regeneration areas, and which would not come back into use without intervention.

### **3.6 Student Housing**

There are two universities within Southampton; Southampton University which is one of the top 15 research universities in the UK and Solent University which provides opportunities for vocational and professional learning. The council is committed to supporting the continued success of the city's universities and the opportunities that this brings for local people and employers as well as inward investment. The city provides a home for approximately 41,000 students attending the two universities.

Southampton University has established a 'Good Neighbour' Policy which aims to maximise the benefits of the University of Southampton to the local community and minimise any disruptions that come with having a university in the City. They recognise as a large organisation, occupying a number of sites and with many thousands of staff and students, that there is a significant impact upon local neighbourhoods. They are committed to acting as a good neighbour and ensuring that as far as possible activities are undertaken with due consideration for local residents.

Following Lord Browne's Review of Higher Education, the universities will need to review their corporate strategies (including their assets). Changes to the type and number of courses provided will impact on the type of accommodation student's require in the city.

This is significant to the housing strategy as there are a large number of private landlords providing accommodation to students in Southampton as well as the accommodation that the universities own and manage.

# Chapter 4

## EXTRA SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT

### 4.1 Promoting independent living

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment highlighted that in 2007/08 there were 3,003 adults (aged 18-64) and 5,952 older people (65+) receiving social care services in the Southampton. Of the 18-64 year olds there were 510 with learning difficulties, 1,135 with mental health problems and 1,235 with physical disabilities.

Supporting People provide housing related support to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in the community. This could be in their own homes or in hostels, sheltered housing or other specialised supported housing. The Supporting People Programme assists over 6,000 people in Southampton providing a variety of services which offer the opportunity to improve quality of life and a stable environment to enable greater independence for vulnerable residents.

There is an ongoing need to provide a range of housing, care and support solutions to enable vulnerable people to maintain independence in their own home within the community that they live. There are a range of different needs to respond to including:

- Short-term/emergency responses – particularly for people who are homeless
- Adapted housing – for those with disabilities and mobility issues
- Medium term options – for people who may remain vulnerable
- Longer term options – particularly for older people, those with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, and those with long term conditions and disabilities.

Inadequate housing can result in poor health outcomes and can often instil reliance on expensive social care and health services, and potentially shorten life expectancy. Quality, appropriate housing can help reduce the need for expensive care and health services and provide better outcomes for individuals and have a positive outcome in terms of:

- Independent living
- Personalisation and choice
- Raising expectations to enable individuals and communities to realise their potential
- Prevention of longer term needs
- Helping vulnerable people with learning difficulties and other vulnerabilities obtain education and employment, by providing a stable accommodation base.

Over recent years there have examples of developments within the city, improving the quality of life for individuals and reducing the impact of provision in higher cost services and placements. Including:

- New purpose-built extra care scheme at Rosebrook Court and significant investment in modernising Manston Court extra care scheme
- Investment in activities for older people to help them stay fit and active and reduce social isolation
- New self-contained accommodation suitable for people with learning disabilities
- Accommodation for homeless people refurbished and available for single people and couples
- Investment in homelessness services – accommodation and day centres

#### **4.1.1 Planning for Future Specialist Accommodation and Support**

Developments and initiatives are planned to response to identified needs in the city. The aim is to create opportunity for residents to be more independent and take more control, reducing social care costs, and creating better options for the longer term is key to supporting a move away from traditional models of care including:

- Planning for the growing number of people with learning disabilities and complex needs making the transition from children’s services to adult services
- Young people moving to adulthood (including care leavers)
- Homeless people in need of longer term accommodation
- The demographics of more older people, with many becoming frailer over time, and the increase in people with dementia will need creative solutions
- Providing safe communities which address social isolation which can be linked to the promotion of good mental health
- Development of appropriate housing, including extra care housing, and a more appropriate mix of accommodation for this group
- Provision of specialist housing in new social housing developments - particularly for people being discharged from hospital (reducing demand for residential care and promote independent living)
- Developing a flexible approach to adaptations and Telecare/Telehealth
- Continued development of extra care style accommodation - with care and support linked to tenants and others who may purchase care directly or use personal budgets as a more cost effective and better quality alternative to the current residential and nursing services.
- Sheltered housing offering support related services. To include some enhanced services and short stay units for re-ablement which support people to maximise independent living skills and abilities and with the overall aim to return home quicker and easier than at present.
- More traditional sheltered accommodation. Linked to general need sheltered-style accommodation for clients over 50. The option would not be supported by support staff but would be linked to an alarm call system.
- Other existing accommodation could be utilised for independent “move-on” accommodation for vulnerable single people. With Telecare

provided for individuals needing a level of support, and floating support if required. This model could be used across a range of client groups.

Further development with partners and stakeholders is needed to provide for people wishing to continue to live at home for longer, or to enable people to move out of care settings. As well as the need to consider the best support that can be accessed within the models outlined above. This will enable those in need to be provided with the right opportunities and best level of support and care.

#### **4.1.2 Helping Older People**

In Southampton, there are approximately:

- 40,900 people aged 60 years or over, representing 17.7% of the population
- 10,000 people aged 80 years or over, representing 4.3% of the total City population

Older people generally want to remain independent in their own home. As health and mobility can decline with age, adaptations and support can help some people to retain or re-establish their independence, and maintain their quality of life and wellbeing in their home. New developments in technology are also increasingly playing a part in helping people stay independent.

#### **4.1.3 Sheltered Housing**

Sheltered Housing offers one housing solution for older people. It is purpose built accommodation with either a resident warden or visiting warden. Southampton provides a 24-hour emergency service to all of its tenants. This is also available to clients in the private sector and the authority manages services for other authorities. It is intended to extend the provision of services to others over the coming period.

Since April 2009 there has been a significant change to the way in which supported housing services are provided for older people in council accommodation. A number of different packages have been created providing greater flexibility in the type of housing and services available to older people. A programme of capital investment is underway to transform the city's supported housing stock. A further £1.851M will be invested over the next year. The city's supported housing service has been nominated and won several awards during this period. Close working with Supporting People has enabled a more flexible service to be delivered within tight financial constraints.

Extra care housing offers people the opportunity to live in a home of their own, even when they have high levels of care and support needs. It is a realistic alternative to residential care and can be suitable for a range of age groups who have specialist needs. Three schemes have been developed across the city and the council is currently consulting residents over plans to provide a specialist dementia scheme and the coming period will see an emphasis on the provision of more extra care homes and an extension of supported housing to a greater range of clients. It is estimated that 300 individuals in the city would benefit from extra care services. This was based on analysis of residential care placements, but was also predicated on a change to the model of extra – including overnight waking cover.

#### **4.1.4 Adapting Homes**

Adaptations enable people to live independently in their home. There is a single point of access for customers and the council has a target to provide adaptations within a target of 12 months, Demand often exceeds available resources to fund adaptations

Demand for adaptation is forecast to increase. In 2010/11 there were 466 new cases requiring adaptations of which 236 were council tenants and 230 were private tenants. Of these requests, 354 were classed as substantial and 112 as critical.

There has been an increase in the number of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) awarded by the council. In 2008/09 109 grants were awarded and in 2009/10 this rose to 216. The number of grant funded adaptations was 169 in 2010/11 and is forecast to be 193 in 2011/12. The majority of these grants (over 90%) are awarded to adapt the homes of older people aged 60 and over. Currently demand has been accommodated within budgets.

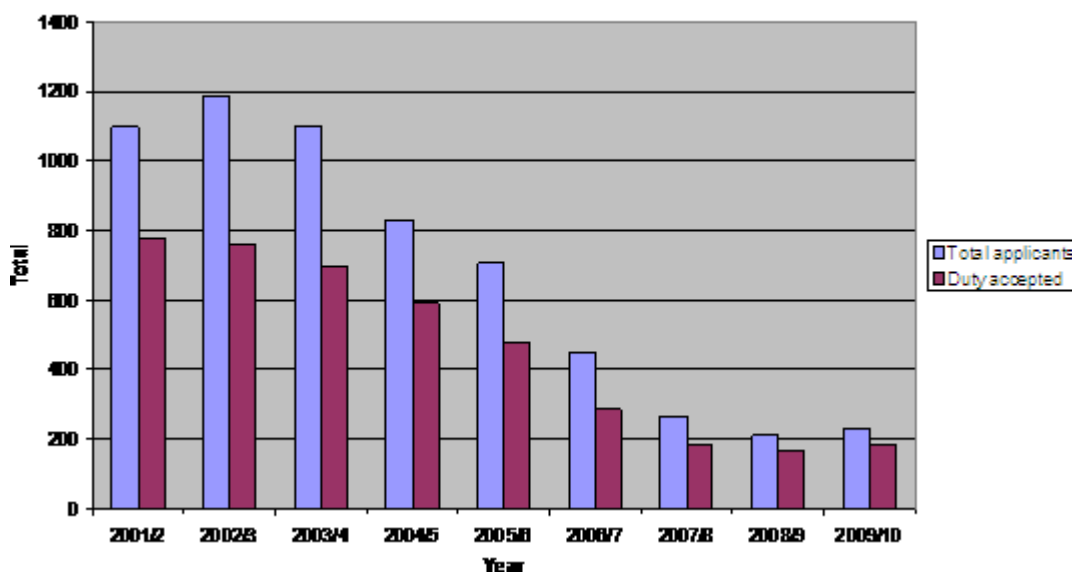
Adaptations for public sector homes has seen recent demand increase and budgets brought forward to avoid waiting times. Critical referrals take priority over Substantial referrals with cases being completed within timescales recently approved. Adapted homes are re-let to match the needs of tenants (rather than advertised on Homebid), wherever possible adaptations are recycled and reused. Any minor adaptation (i.e. grab rail) is carried out within 2-3 weeks with SCC in-house contractors carrying out the required works.

#### **4.2 Preventing homelessness**

Homelessness is the most acute form of housing need. The city has a Homelessness Strategy backed by a range of agencies including the voluntary sector. The most common causes of homelessness amongst those to whom the council accepted a duty continue to be parents/relatives no longer able to accommodate, relationship breakdown and end of Assured Shorthold Tenancy. It focuses on the prevention of homelessness which has seen success in reducing the numbers of homelessness acceptances. In 2009/10 there were 229 presentations with 186 acceptances. As the graph

below shows, these figures were over 1,000 a year in the early part of the decade.

**Homeless Applications/Acceptances 2001/2 - 2009/10**



In December 2010, Southampton conducted a full count of street homelessness (4 recorded), as part of the Homelessness Strategy a range of information is collected by the street homeless services. The Street Homelessness Prevention Services, enable access to accommodation in both the supported and private sectors, relocation where needed, and a range of health/support services, to ensure people do not return to street living, this work will continue to be supported through the strategy.

#### **4.2.1 Changing the Way the Council Helps Homeless People**

The Localism Bill will make significant changes to the homelessness duty owed by local authorities to unintentionally homeless people who are in 'priority need' (i.e. mainly those who have dependants or are considered particularly vulnerable). The local authority will now be able to discharge their duty fully by offering a private rented sector (PRS) tenancy of 12 months, without the consent of the tenant, where previously a social home had to be offered unless the tenant opted for a private tenancy. If the tenant becomes unintentionally homeless again within two years then the duty to house them will still apply even if they are no longer in 'priority need'.

#### **4.2.2 Responding to needs of homeless 16/17 year olds and care leavers**

Children's Services have highlighted a need for approximately 50 care leavers aged between 16/17 years old, who will require accommodation over the next 12-18 months. These young people require a range of housing options from intensive support to more independent self-contained accommodation, which would ideally include some support to offer consistent stability and support to enable transition towards independent adulthood.

Young people leaving care often can present with a range of complex needs and challenging behaviour such as criminal activity, drug and alcohol misuse, anti-social behaviour due to traumatising life experiences. A significant issue is matching suitable accommodation for young people when placements break down.

For care leavers and young people future joint planning is critical between key agencies, a protocol is in place between Children's Services and Housing to make maximum use of housing and support resources in the city; short-term crisis solutions are otherwise expensive. There is a need for a specialised provision for care leavers which can offer consistent, stable accommodation and support which is resilient to the complex needs and challenging behaviour of this group of young people.

The Children and Young People's plan 2009-2012 outlines key objectives for improving and the services available and there are close links with the Housing Needs teams to deal with individual cases.

#### **4.3 Promoting training, employment and social mobility for social housing tenants**

Good housing within good environments can be a start point for raising expectations and helping people to overcome multiple deprivation. However, people with the fewest advantages in life can often be concentrated in social housing. This means lower educational attainment levels can be concentrated here. Low income provides a direct link to lower educational attainment, poorer health outcomes, higher incidents of substance misuse and mental health problems, and greater incidents of domestic violence, antisocial behaviour and safeguarding all of which have an impact on public expenditure. Welfare reform has the potential to put pressure on both residents and social landlords particularly the need for money management skills to be increased as residents/tenants move from benefits to become independent financially.

Where there are concentrations of long term unemployment in social housing, landlords are ideally placed to take a proactive role and help tenants tackle barriers to employment. People need help with a variety of poverty related issues and/or training needs before they can begin to focus on looking for a job. Actions by social landlords include:

- Partnership working to promote work and training opportunities
- Staff training on changes in welfare benefits
- Investment in project workers dedicated to engaging residents to promote becoming work ready, provide further training opportunities, identify and mitigate barriers to working.
- Work with DWP Work Programme initiative
- Support the creation of social enterprises

- Create welfare to work arm of the organisation
- Create partnership with other social landlords and community organisations to pool resources and maximise benefit to large estates and areas
- Increase customer profiling and insight to target particular communities and individuals that are affected by the change to welfare benefits
- Policy CS 24 from the Core Strategy seeks measures from major employment generating development to promote access to jobs amongst residents of the city - this includes construction jobs related to major residential developments
- Targeted approach to new residents – prevention of worklessness

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## Chapter 5 RESOURCES

This section provides a summary of projected capital and revenue for the council for 2011/12 and 2012/13. The council would normally maintain a three year forward capital programme. However, with the uncertainties over the funding that would be available for the General Fund and the significant change to HRA finance due from April 2012 it was decided to limit the period covered by the financial plans. (For the HRA, the intention is to prepare a 30 year business plan under the new financial regime as part of the 2012/13 budget process.)

### Capital Expenditure by the City Council

	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000
<b>Expenditure on the Councils own stock</b>		
Decent Homes	6,916	5,771
Decent Homes Plus	7,088	10,181
Decent Neighbourhoods	3,054	1,887
LA New Build	1,754	0
Estate Regeneration	7,229	8,532
Other	100	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,141</b>	<b>26,471</b>
<b>Expenditure on the Private Sector Stock</b>		
Private Sector Grants/Loans	889	0
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,987	1,541
Support for Estate Regeneration	676	0
Other schemes	123	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,675</b>	<b>1,563</b>
<b>Total City Council Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>29,816</b>	<b>28,034</b>

### Revenue Expenditure by the City Council

#### Housing Revenue Account (for council tenants only)

<b>Expenditure</b>		
Repairs	15,773	16,143
Rents Payable	53	54
Debt Management	52	53
Supervision & Management	17,566	18,093

Debt Charges	2,916	3,833
Major Repairs Allowance	13,096	13,247
Direct Revenue Financing of Capital	6,813	6,906
Housing Subsidy paid to DCLG	7,553	8,013
Contingency	100	100
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>63,922</b>	<b>66,442</b>

**Income**

Dwelling Rents	60,650	63,094
Other Rents	1,259	1,265
Service Charge Income	1,315	1,341
Leaseholder Service Charges	677	691
Interest Received	21	51
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>63,922</b>	<b>66,442</b>

**Funded by the Council Tax**

Directorate & Portfolio Mgmt	50	50
Housing Development	161	161
Housing Needs	712	712
Housing Solutions Management	301	301
Housing Strategy	70	70
Other Services	23	23
Private Sector Housing	383	383
	1,630	1,630

# **Chapter 6**

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1 – Private Sector Renewal Strategy**

**Appendix 2 – Housing Strategy Action Plan**

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## Appendix 1

### Private Housing Renewal Strategy 2011-2015

#### *Southampton's commitment to safe, warm and accessible private homes*

##### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to set out how the council will improve private housing, taking into account local needs and priorities. The council's strategy to meet its wider housing objectives, such as private housing's contribution to meeting housing need, are contained in the broader Housing Strategy. Where assistance is provided by the council to improve private homes, this will be in accordance with the relevant policy adopted by the council<sup>1</sup>.

The quality of housing is crucial to health and well-being, especially for vulnerable, very young and old people, who can be particularly susceptible to poor health associated with unsafe housing. Poor housing conditions can cause a range of physical and mental illnesses and children growing up in difficult housing conditions are more likely to suffer ill health and disability during childhood and early adulthood. Tackling unsafe housing by removing hazards, in particular associated with excess cold, falls and fire, prevents injuries that require medical treatment and saves lives. Living in a home that is safe, warm and accessible helps people of all ages to access employment, education, health services and leisure opportunities.<sup>2</sup> Improving private housing also helps the local economy by supporting and creating jobs for building contractors and installers of insulation and renewable energy.

##### 2. Key features of Southampton's private sector stock

As at April 2010, Southampton has an estimated 99,600 homes, of which 53% are owner occupied, 24% are privately rented, 17% are local authority and 6% are housing association. The city has over twice the national average of privately rented accommodation (11% nationally) and below the average number of owner occupied homes (71% nationally). There are about 7,000 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) of all types, of which 444 of the largest have been licensed. There are an estimated 130 licensable HMOs that continue to operate without a licence.

A large scale stock condition survey carried out in 2008 shows that 38% (28,400) of all private homes do not meet the Decent Homes Standard, of which 8,500 are occupied by vulnerable people. 16,000 fail to meet the

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<sup>1</sup> The legal requirement for this is contained in article 4(a) of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002

<sup>2</sup> The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) of health and well-being needs in Southampton contains more information on the links between housing and health (this is available online at <http://www.southamptonhealth.nhs.uk/jsna>)

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standard because of poor insulation and heating and 14,000 because of one or more serious housing hazards – the most common are excess cold, falls (especially in owner occupied homes) and fire (especially in privately rented homes). The total cost of dealing with this is estimated at £111M. Older properties (pre-1919) and privately rented homes are generally in the worst condition. There is an estimated need for 3,900 adaptations for disabled people, at an estimated cost of £21M.

**The research suggests that the most effective use of council resources to improve private homes is to target energy efficiency and adaptations in all private homes and to focus on those privately rented properties in the worst condition.**

Although housing conditions have improved over the last five years, they continue to be worse than the national average – 38% (28,400) of Southampton's private homes fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard, compared to 33% nationally. 8,500 of these are occupied by vulnerable people. The situation is worst for older homes (built before 1919), privately rented homes and homes with a young (under 24) or old (over 85) head of household. Poor private housing is more concentrated in Bevois, Bargate and Portswood wards.

14,000 private homes have a serious housing hazard, with a quarter of homes built before 1919 and a quarter of privately rented homes having a hazard that is likely to result in harm that needs medical treatment. The cost of dealing with a serious hazard is estimated at £5,000, rising to an average of £19,000 for more comprehensive repairs. Although 76% reported that they can't afford these repairs, all older home owners were found to have at least £20,000 equity.

Energy efficiency has also improved over the last five years and the average SAP rating is 51 (equivalent to energy rating band E on a scale of A to G). However, there is the potential to improve energy efficiency in 95% of private homes and there remain 7,000 homes with a dangerously low SAP rating of under 35 and 6,000 vulnerable households in fuel poverty (with similar levels across owner occupied and privately rented homes).

### **3. Funding for improving private housing**

The council generally and private housing services in particular have seen significant reductions in government funding for improving private homes. Although funding for adapting the homes of disabled people has been relatively unaffected, other specific funding for works (capital funding) ended in March 2011. The council's previous scheme to offer loans to vulnerable people for essential home repairs has therefore come to an end, although the mechanisms for giving loans remain in place should additional funding be secured in the future. The government's Warm Front scheme for energy efficiency and heating improvements will also come to

an end by 2013. The council limits its private housing enforcement interventions to those where it has a statutory duty to act. In effect, this means usually only dealing with properties where there is a serious housing hazard<sup>3</sup>.

#### 4. Strategic approach 2011-2015

Taking into account the research findings and budget constraints outlined above, the council's approach to improving private homes is as follows:

- Overall, to focus resources on tackling properties in the worst condition, in both owner occupied and privately rented homes
- To prioritise assistance and interventions aimed at improving energy efficiency (dealing with excess cold) and adapting homes to meet the needs of disabled people
- Focus on providing statutory services only – intervening only where there is a statutory duty to do so (i.e. to deal with serious housing hazards<sup>3</sup>) and where a landlord or home owner has been given a reasonable opportunity to deal with the problem first
- To seek external funding to provide financial assistance to improve private homes
  - By providing repayable loans wherever possible to enable funds to be recycled in the future and
  - By providing funds to deal with urgent and essential repairs and improvements, rather than more comprehensive work
  - By providing funds to bring empty properties back into use
  - By providing loans or grants to improve private properties as part of wider estate or area regeneration schemes
- The council will support the provision of a handyperson service, which will provide straightforward repairs and home maintenance for vulnerable householders, to prevent falls, support independent living and help to prevent minor problems from escalating
- To work with other providers of financial assistance – for example, safe equity release<sup>4</sup>, high street lenders, credit unions, community finance schemes, the Green Deal – in order to signpost customers to appropriate assistance available at no cost to the council

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<sup>3</sup> Defined as a category 1 hazard when assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), the statutory way of assessing and dealing with poor housing

<sup>4</sup> Equity release providers which are members of the Safe Home Income Plans (SHIP) trade regulatory body, further details are available at [www.ship-ltd.org](http://www.ship-ltd.org)

- To make it easier and quicker for grant funded<sup>5</sup> adaptations for disabled people to be completed, including providing assistance with the process to those that need it
- Focus on improving health and well-being and, in particular, to pursue any opportunities brought by the new arrangements for improving public health<sup>6</sup>
  - This will include jointly exploring with commissioners of health services effective ways of spending budgets on interventions to improve the quality of people’s homes, in particular in relation to falls and excess cold
- Warn of the dangers of using disreputable builders and work with others, including the “Buy with Confidence” Scheme, to raise awareness of how to employ a trustworthy contractor for home repairs and improvements

## **5. Responding to complaints about poor housing**

The council will use the screening and prioritisation system it introduced in 2010 to determine the appropriate level of response to a complaint about poor housing, in accordance with the council’s reactive workload prioritisation policy for private housing. An in-depth telephone interview will be carried out to establish whether a serious housing hazard is likely to exist and property owners will be given a reasonable opportunity to resolve the problem before someone from the council visits. Less serious problems will be resolved on the phone or by giving advice and information.

Where enforcement is needed, the council will follow the approach already set out in its Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy<sup>7</sup>: regulation and enforcement of housing standards will be consistent, risk-based, targeted and proportionate. The council will not usually take formal enforcement action for owner occupied properties. There will also be a renewed focus during the life of this strategy on ensuring that landlords improve the worst performing homes in terms of energy efficiency.

## **6. Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)**

The council will work corporately to improve standards in multiply occupied accommodation where necessary and to tackle community concerns that

<sup>5</sup> The council is still required by law to give means tested Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to adapt privately owned and privately rented homes occupied by disabled people (with a landlord’s consent, where necessary)

<sup>6</sup> The council will take over the lead for improving public health from NHS Southampton City (primary care trust), after it is abolished in 2013

<sup>7</sup> The council’s Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy is available online at <http://www.southampton.gov.uk/living/housing/private/landlord/pshenforcementpolicy.aspx>  
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can be related to properties let in this way. This will involve housing, planning, waste, environmental health and other services, as necessary. The council will operate the mandatory licensing scheme, which requires HMOs containing three or more storeys and occupied by five or more people to apply for a licence. The council will focus resources on finding unlicensed houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and will carry out the statutory checks required before issuing a licence. Licensing of HMOs will be carried out in accordance with the council's HMO licensing policy.

## 7. Assistance for improving private housing

The following assistance may be offered by the council to support the strategic objectives outlined above:

<b>Assistance</b>	<b>Brief description/ eligibility</b>	<b>Comment/further information</b>
Home Improvement Loan and Accessible Home Loan	Interest free secured loan for essential home repairs or improvements. Available to home owners with a low income (receive a means tested benefit or have an assessed contribution using the statutory means test for Disabled Facilities Grants of less than £15,000)	The full terms and conditions of the loan are as set out in a document dated 26 June 2008 signed by the Head of Housing Solutions in line with delegated powers granted by Southampton City Council's Cabinet on 2 August 2004
Disabled Facilities Grant	Means-tested grant available to adapt homes to meet the needs of home owners and tenants of private landlords and registered providers of affordable housing (housing associations) who are registerable as a disabled person, as assessed by an Occupational Therapist or other competent assessor	The maximum grant is £30,000. Applications made on behalf of a disabled child are not means tested. The grant is administered in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and associated regulations



<b>Assistance</b>	<b>Brief description/ eligibility</b>	<b>Comment/further information</b>
Empty Property Loan	Available to landlords or property owners to carry out repair, improvement, energy efficiency and decoration work to bring a property that has been empty for over six months up to a standard suitable for letting	This is a new product that will be developed over the life of this strategy, subject to securing external funding. Full terms and conditions will be published in due course.
Empty Property Grant	Available to landlords or property owners to carry out repair, improvement, energy efficiency and decoration work to bring a property that has been empty for over six months up to a standard suitable for letting	This is a new product that will be developed over the life of this strategy, subject to securing external funding. Full terms and conditions will be published in due course.
Regeneration Grant	Available to property owners to carry out repairs and improvements to a privately owned or rented property to support the wider regeneration of an area	This is a new product that will be developed over the life of this strategy. Full terms and conditions will be published in due course.
Handyperson plus service	Available to home owners and private tenants to carry out small maintenance and repair jobs at low cost. Combined with a support identification and referral service.	Phone 0800 085 4802 for further details.
Cocoon insulation scheme	Available to home owners and private tenants to offer subsidised cavity wall and loft insulation	Phone 0800 80 48 777 for further details.
Warm Front Grant	Up to £5,700 for cavity wall and loft insulation, to upgrade boilers and/or to install central heating systems	The eligibility criteria are currently being reviewed. Phone 0800 316 2805 for further details.
The Green Deal	This will be available from 2012 to improve energy efficiency and to install renewable technology.	This is a new product that will be developed over the life of this strategy. Full terms and

<b>Assistance</b>	<b>Brief description/ eligibility</b>	<b>Comment/further information</b>
	Loan will be repaid over 20 years.	conditions will be published in due course.

## **8. Improving energy efficiency, tackling fuel poverty and saving water**

In addition to the Green Deal, opportunities for match funding from energy companies through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) will be sought to implement schemes that improve energy efficiency, tackle fuel poverty and promote saving water. These will be available throughout the city, but marketing and promotion may be targeted. Customers will be directed to the local Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre (0800 512012) for independent, expert advice and information on improving energy and water efficiency and installing renewable energy.

## **9. Resources**

As at 1 April 2011, the council intends to invest the following capital resources in improving private housing over the next two years. This forms part of the council's overall Capital Programme and will be managed and reported on in accordance with the council's usual financial procedure rules. Additional resources may be added to the programme if additional external funding can be secured and this will be reflected in the biannual update of the Capital Programme.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Total</b>
Disabled Facilities Grants	£1,835,000	£1,496,000	£3,331,000
Home Improvement Loans	£191,000*	-	£191,000
Accessible Home Loans	£133,000*	-	£133,000
Handyperson plus service	£30,000	£50,000	£80,000
Cocoon insulation scheme	£50,000	£50,000	£100,000
Targeted regeneration initiatives	£50,000	£55,000	£105,000
Energy efficiency initiatives	-	£75,000	£75,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,289,000</b>	<b>£1,726,000</b>	<b>£4,015,000</b>

\* These loans have already been approved

## 10. Review

This strategy will be reviewed annually or as required. Minor changes will be approved by the relevant Senior Manager after consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member.

DRAFT

**Housing Strategy Action Plan 2011- 2015 - The action plan below highlights the key actions required to deliver the 2011-15 Housing Strategy**

**1. MAXIMISING HOMES FOR THE CITY**

<b>Actions We will:</b>	<b>Timescales and milestones</b>	<b>Financial and other resource requirements</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Benefits and measures of success</b>
Investigate the use of the New Homes Bonus, CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) and TIF to deliver more homes for the City	March 2015	Within existing budgets. Planning, Communities, developers, RSL partners	Housing Development Manager	Bring forward sites (including establishing infrastructure) to provide more housing for the city.
Assist Housing Associations to bid for the maximum resources for affordable homes through the 2011-15 HCA bidding round	March 2015	RSL partners, developers, Planning, HCA £18.8m funding from HCA already in place for schemes completing in 2011/12. Attract maximum future funding for period 2011-15.	Housing Development Manager	Deliver 850 new affordable homes during 2011-2015 that meet HCA design guide and minimum Level 4 Code for Sustainable Homes
Deliver Phase 2 of Estate Regeneration  a) Laxton Close, Exford Avenue, Meggeson Avenue b) Cumbrian Way	March 2015	£6.4M enabling budget SCC working in partnership with HCA a) Lovells, First Wessex,	Estate Regeneration Manager	a) Delivering over new homes, 140 affordable homes and 6 retail units and wider socio- economic benefits. b) Deliver 50 units plus 2 commercial units and wider socio-economic benefits.

		b) Radian and Drew Smith		
Complete Local Authority New Build project	March 2012	£9M – Partnership of SCC, HCA, Drew Smith and Radian Housing	Estate Regeneration Manager	20 new council homes to be completed by March 2012.
Manage the Housing Register with a focus on households who will realistically be housed	March 2012	Within existing budgets. SCC in partnership with RSL partners, housing management and other support providers	Housing Needs Manager	Removal of applicants no longer in need of social housing and more reliable information about those in need to enable focus on assisting and prioritising applications. Improved offer process and reduced numbers of refusals.
Promote Shared Ownership, low cost home ownership and Right to Buy	Ongoing	Shared Ownership – resources from HCA, Partners - RSL partners, planning, developers	Head of Housing Management and Housing Development Manager	Shared Ownership and other low cost home ownership opportunities promoted to residents via partnership between council and HomeBuy agent.
Develop a new letting policy and Strategic Tenancy Policy to accommodate legislative changes and new affordable housing products	April 2012	Within existing budgets - Partners - tenants/ wider community. Housing Association Partners and neighbouring authorities	Housing Needs Manager	New policy agreed which is a simplified policy which will make it easier and less time consuming to explain and administer
Prioritise City Centre Masterplan housing ambitions	March 2015	Within existing budgets	Housing Development	Work towards delivering 5,000 homes in mixed use context within

		Partners - Housing Development, Estate Regeneration, RSL partners, developers working in the city	Manager	the city centre over the next twenty years
Review and establish a new affordable housing partnership	March 2012	Within existing budgets RSL partners	Housing Development Manager	New partnership in place for 1st April 2012 with all relevant RSLs signed up to a common agreement

## 2. IMPROVING HOMES TRANSFORMING NEIGHBOURHOODS

<b>Actions We will:</b>	<b>Timescales and milestones</b>	<b>Financial and other resource requirements</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Benefits and measures of success</b>
Implement Plans in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan to improve SCC stock and management	March 2015	Approximately £26M a year capital programme identified up to 2012/13 Partners, SCC, contractors	Head of Decent Homes	Achieve the targets set out in the HRA Business Plan
Commence Phase 3 Estate Regeneration projects at Weston and Townhill Park	March 2012	Funding, partner developers/RSLs, community, businesses	Estate Regeneration Manager	Consult community on proposals for Weston shopping parade redevelopment and Townhill Park (estimated 800 homes) estate wide regeneration proposal
Improve the open space and communal areas in our key estate	March 2015	Capital resources of approx £5m	Decent N'hoods	Improved appearance of areas around council blocks

areas but rolling out the investment in Decent Neighbourhoods		Project management resource already established	Project Manager	Improved security and safety for reduced and increase in satisfaction with local area Improvement are sustained through increased community engagement and empowerment
Attract investment to improve Southampton's private homes	31 March 2012	Work within existing budgets to attract funds Partners – SCC Contractors, PUSH, LEP, HCA	Private Housing Manager	Secure external funding to improve a minimum of 100 private homes in 2012/13
Reduce CO2 emissions and meet carbon reduction targets including feed-in tariff, district energy and renewables	March 2015	Subject to HRA Business Plan	Head of Decent Homes	Encourage and develop use of low carbon measures including developing feed-in tariff, district energy and renewables to assist in Council's overall reduction of CO2 emissions
Develop a pathfinder project to deliver eco-refurbishment of properties that brings together a mixture of public and private finance to fund energy efficiency measures and exploit Green Deal and micro-generation RHI and FiT opportunities fully	March 2015	Available external resources to be confirmed by government by 31 March 2012 – dependent on the Energy Company Obligation [ECO] and Green Deal	Private Housing Manager	Action plan in place to deliver insulation and renewables retrofit programme to save carbon and to remove 100 households a year from fuel poverty
Target empty homes to bring them back into use	March 2012	Within existing staff resources Partners, Legal, Private Sector	Empty Property Officer	100 empty homes brought back into use or demolished each year

		Housing and Housing Development, contractors (An expression of interest has been made to the HCA for £1m capital to bring empty homes back into use in the private sector (from 2012 if successful))		
Work with other partners and social landlords develop ongoing and sustainable projects that help tenants and residents into training and employment and reduce worklessness and financial exclusion	March 2015	Project funding currently available of £30k pa in Housing management – wider resources drawn in from third party funding and other partners	Head of Housing Management	Reduced demand on state benefits from Council tenants More tenants and family members in work and contributing to the local economy Reduction in arrears and evictions due to financial issues

### 3. EXTRA SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT

<b>Actions We will:</b>	<b>Timescales and milestones</b>	<b>Financial and other resource requirements</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Benefits and measures of success</b>
To oversee the implementation of the action plan from the Housing Strategy for people with Learning Disabilities. <a href="http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20strategy%20for%20people%20with%20learning%20disabiliti">http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Housing%20strategy%20for%20people%20with%20learning%20disabiliti</a>	Up to 2015	Accounted for in Strategy	Head of Housing Solutions	Deliver the housing aspirations and preferences of people with learning disabilities, and their families. As outlined in the strategy – ‘ <i>housing for people with learning disabilities</i> ’



<a href="#">es tcm46-161332.pdf</a>				
Manage the tender process for new support services for homeless people in the city	Up to March 2012	Within existing staff and Supporting People resources. £2.5million available in 2011/12, £1.9 million available from 2012/13	Commissioner for Adult Care Services	Measure – Tenders completed and awarded.
Develop and plan creative housing solutions for people with dementia	Up to March 2015	Within existing resources	Commissioner for Adult Care Services and Supported Housing Project Manager	Clear plan developed for managing the changed demographics within the city, leading to increase in older people and more people with dementia. Development of new options for housing and support provision.
Review of use of Telecare services to enable people to live safely at home for longer	March 2012	Within existing staff resources.	Equipment and Telecare Commissioning Officer	Review completed to identify future resources and access to Telecare. Plan developed and implemented for prioritising use in the future.
Develop housing options to support hospital discharges	Plan - March 2012 Options in place – March 2013	Within staff resources	Commissioner for Adult Care Services and Supported Housing Project Manager	Plan agreed to reduce delays in hospital discharges due to lack of appropriate housing options by 50%. New options developed by March 2013
Plan for increasing extra care housing options, including 24 hour cover in some schemes and non age-related services to meet a range of needs.	March 2012	Within staff resources. Any additional costs met from savings in	Commissioner for Adult Care Services and Supported	New model for care and support delivery in place - March 2012. To include options for future delivery of extra care to a range of groups,

		other spend areas	Housing Project Manager	non age related. Identify resulting reduction in residential care use. Result in a reduction in the need for residential and other care settings.
Plan to manage changes to housing options and access for older people.	March 2013	Within staff resources	Commissioner for Adult Care Services, Head of Housing Management, Head of Housing Needs	Plan developed to change existing accommodation options for older people and other need groups in the city. Includes reconfiguring sheltered housing services and access to these, to enable better care and support provision to meet the city's priorities.
Plan to increase housing options, with support for those who need it, including people with mental health problems, drug and alcohol users (to promote recovery), people fleeing domestic violence, and other need groups.	March 2013	Within staff resources	Commissioner for Adult Care Services, Head of Housing Management, Head of Housing Needs	Plan developed to manage increased and changed accommodation options for a range of groups in place. Action plan for delivery agreed.
Adapt people's homes more quickly	31 March 2012	Within existing staff resources £1.734M capital resources for 2011/12 – future years expected at the same level Partners SCC, Contractors	Private Housing Manager	Complete 100% adaptations within a year of original enquiry

Continue to focus on homeless prevention	According to legislative change implementation - ongoing	Within existing staff resources CLG funding £486K 2012/13– future years expected at the same level Partners SCC and voluntary sector	Housing Needs Manager	No increase in homeless acceptances – sustain current level of homeless prevention casework (700)
Help tenants and residents with the Government's Housing Benefits and Welfare Reforms	Key dates for changes: April 2011 New LHA non-dependant 30 <sup>th</sup> percentile Oct 2011 single room rent Universal Credit 2013	Within existing staff resources Partnership with voluntary sector organisations	Housing Needs Manager	Minimise impacts on households to help them sustain their current accommodation or move to alternative home to prevent homelessness and assist in rent income from council tenants.
Increase in the number of new affordable homes for disabled people	March 2015	RSL partners, developers, OT, Housing Needs. £18.8m funding from HCA already in place for schemes completing in 2011/12. Attract maximum future funding for period 2011-15	Housing Development Manager	Ensure 5% of affordable homes completed post April 2012 are fully wheelchair accessible and wheelchair livable where possible