

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY

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Foreword

By Winchester City Council Portfolio Holder for Housing

We welcome this strategy as one of a suite of strategies that compliments the Housing Strategy and underlines Winchester City Council's vision for Private Sector Housing.

Many advances have been made in this vital area, and this strategy demonstrates the great work undertaken by the Private Sector Housing Team, in ensuring that the quality of accommodation accessible within Winchester remains strong, and that the citizens of Winchester can enjoy a good quality of accommodation.

This Strategy sets out the Council and Boards visions and strategic priorities for the next 4 years and we will review it annually to ensure that it is kept relevant.

There have been new legislation and a number of new initiatives that have been created since the last strategy was implemented and this strategy seeks to maximise its usefulness in implementing and undertaking these new challenges such as tackling fuel poverty.

In implementing this strategy, we can seek to demonstrate our commitment to ensuring our communities are sustainable and inclusive.

This can only be done by public, voluntary and private sectors working closely together in partnership and we must seek to provide the right environment for this to happen.

Finally the Council are grateful for the effort, information and contributions from the organisations and individuals who have contributed to developing this strategy.

Cllr Tony Coates

**Winchester City Council Portfolio holder
For Housing & member of the Winchester
Housing Board**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Private Sector Housing Strategy is part of a suite of strategies which support the Housing Strategy, and compliments its vision and objectives.

This document helps to support the Housing Strategies vision by ensuring that communities are sustainable and inclusive. This strategy is able to assist that vision through a range of initiatives and statutory functions which derive from national and regional objectives.

The Housing Act 2004 has replaced the fitness standard with the present Health and Housing Safety Rating System, and the new legislation on Empty Dwellings provides local authorities with more tools on which to help make sure communities are sustainable and inclusive.

Regionally, the PUSH4Safer Homes initiative has been added to help tackle fuel poverty in an increasingly challenging economic climate.

Disabled Facilities Grants remain the corner stone of helping people to remain living in their current properties by undertaking vital adaptations.

The focus of this document is to support the vision of the Housing Strategy through implementation and undertaking of the legislative and regional initiatives and therefore helping Winchesters Communities to be sustainable and inclusive.

Top Priorities

- To promote high standards in private housing and affordable housing, including taking action on climate change
- To promote independent living and provide support for vulnerable and disadvantaged households
- To ensure that communities are sustainable and inclusive

Other Priorities

- Prevent homelessness wherever possible
- To communicate the benefits of new housing and promote a positive image of affordable housing
- More energy efficient homes
- Equality in the delivery of the service

2. INTRODUCTION

The Private Sector Housing Strategy sets out Winchester City Council's proposals for improving the quality of the private sector housing stock and how it intends to deliver the vision of a decent, safe and warm home for all residents living in the district. Good quality housing is vital to our personal health and well being. Private sector housing makes an essential contribution to meeting the problems of housing need, affordability and the alleviation of homelessness.

It is recognised that the private rented sector in particular is a valuable asset in helping to provide housing choice and availability. A robust and viable private rented sector is a vital part of a balanced housing market. In the Winchester district, this accounts for about 14% of the private housing sector. However, it is also recognised that lower housing standards are often found within private rented accommodation and houses in multiple occupation.

The Strategy is focused on housing quality and safe, sustainable communities and the necessity to work with our partners and key stakeholders to implement and achieve the Council's objectives. We provide a high level of service delivery with emphasis on maintaining a very helpful, accessible, and impartial customer care approach for all our residents.

The challenges for housing strategies vary across the country. The major issue that most areas face is a shortage of affordable housing which in many urban and rural areas now threatens the sustainability of communities.

Winchester City Council has a unique role through the use of creative and innovatory powers to secure, promote, and influence the quality of private sector housing and the general well being of its residents. The strategic housing function involves the Council taking a considered approach based on a range of current information and making detailed plans which effectively utilises all available resources to help achieve specific objectives and outcomes.

The Private Sector Housing Strategy is a supporting document to the overarching Housing Strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to support and carry out the Housing Strategy's vision.

The Housing Strategy identifies its main themes as;

- Improved Supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of all sections of the community
- Improved Choice of Housing
- Better quality housing stock and neighbours
- Reduce homelessness
- Improved Housing and support for vulnerable and disadvantaged people
- More sustainable and inclusive communities

- More energy efficient homes
- Equality in the delivery of services

The Housing Strategy reflects Winchester City Council's corporate priorities which are

- Economic Prosperity
- Safe and Strong Communities
- High Quality Environment
- An Efficient and Effective Council

This strategy complements and supports a range of other initiatives and strategies. These include the

- **Local Development Framework (LDF)** (that sets out land-use planning strategies and policies).
- **The Sustainable Community Strategy** (that identifies five outcomes to support the vision – *health and wellbeing, freedom from fear, prosperous economy, high quality environment and inclusive society*)
- **The Local Area Agreement (LAA)** (that sets a range of housing targets and indicators) and those of other agencies and stakeholders, for example the Supporting People Strategy.

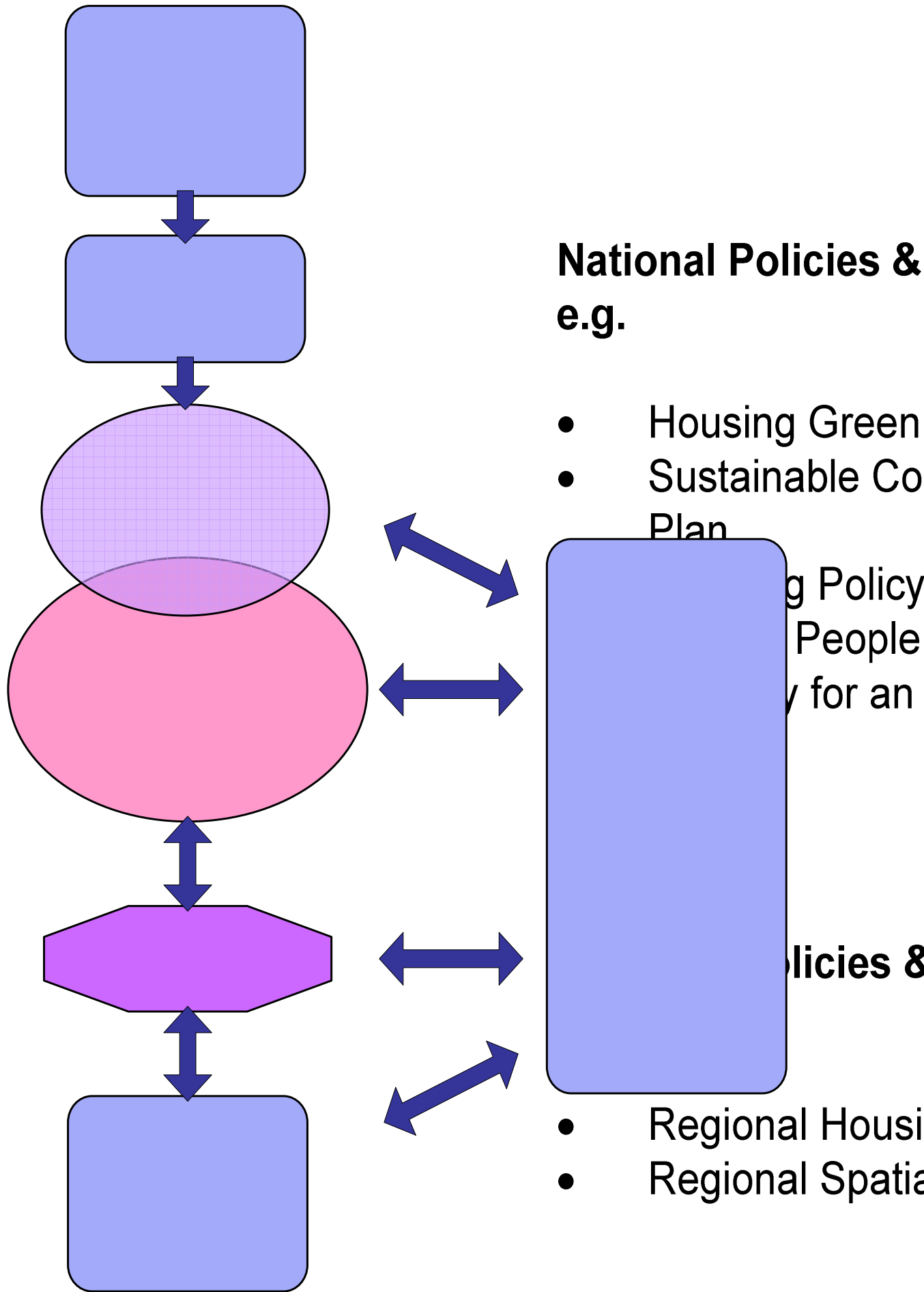
Consultation

A key element in undertaking a comprehensive review of the PSH strategy was to conduct wide ranging consultations with a cross section of stakeholders, partners and interested organisations. Consultation and participation was facilitated through a specific Review and Workshop day and a Workshop session during the annual Winchester Housing Board Forum. In addition, a series of participating focus groups with accompanying questionnaires were held with partner organisations.

Both the Review Workshops and focus groups generated considerable interest and resulted in a range of views, comments and suggestions on the direction of Strategy and on priority services that the private sector housing service should deliver. The outcomes were collated, assessed and cross referenced to produce an overview of priority issues and objectives based on stakeholders preferences. The overall objective of the consultation exercises was to help inform the strategy review and where feasible, to incorporate these priorities within the revised PSH strategy.

Appendix 2 provides details of the various consultations and focus groups and summarises the outcomes, priorities and relevant comments or suggestions.

Table 1 Strategic Links to the Private Sector Housing Strategy



The following also has been considered in compiling this strategy,

- Winchester's Private Sector House Condition Survey 2007
- Private Sector Housing Consultation Day in 2007
- The outcome of the Strategic Housing Services Audit Commission Report undertaken in March 2007
- The Rugg Report and the Governments response to that report
- Observation of Housing Act 2004 and all relevant legislation related to Private Sector Housing
- Central Hampshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Partnership For Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) South Hampshire Housing Market Assessment – Part II
- Relevant supporting and overarching strategies

Equality and Diversity

Winchester City Council's Equality Policy and Plan recognises and values the diversity of the local community and believes that equality is central to the provision of modern quality services.

The Local Government Act 2000 requires public sector bodies such as Winchester City Council to promote equality. The duty to promote equality of opportunity as well as the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination is embedded in various equality legislation including the Race Relations Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2006.

To ensure that services provided by Winchester City Council meet the needs of all its customers and are delivered in a fair and accessible way, the Council is undertaking 'equality impact assessments' to identify any discrimination, unmet needs and opportunities to improve services to specific groups.

Future Comprehensive Area Assessments will place more emphasis on Local Authorities engaging with hard to reach and disadvantaged groups. The Audit Commission expects Local Authorities to undertake equality impact assessments in order to achieve level 3 of the Equality Standard.

To be able to provide appropriate and accessible housing and housing services it is important to take account of the individual needs of particular groups, including (but not exclusively) those covered by the 6 equality strands outlined below

- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Disability and health
- Sexuality
- Religion and Belief

Equality Impact Assessment Report on this strategy

To be undertaken

Sustainability

To be undertaken

Rural proofing

To be undertaken

Key Partners

In addition to the above we will continue to foster and improve relations with our key partners, these include

- HCC Occupational Therapists, Adult Services and Supporting People
- Home Improvement Agency
- Primary Care Trust
- Southampton Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
- Southern Home Energy Conservation Network
- Warm Front
- Winchester Landlords forum
- University of Winchester
- Winchester Housing Board
- Hampshire Housing Advisory Group
- Hampshire CC and Local Authorities Gypsies and Travellers Panel
- Hampshire Fire and Rescue
- Pension Service
- Citizens Advice
- Age Concern Hampshire
- Leonard Cheshire Foundation
- Private Contractors and Suppliers
- Winchester Citizens Advice Panel

3. A PICTURE OF WINCHESTER DISTRICT

Winchester District lies in the centre of Hampshire covering an area of just under 66,000 ha. It has a population of around 115,000 people made up of over 47,000 households. The district is predominantly rural in character with Winchester being the largest settlement (with its Town wards home to around 36,000 people). There are several other large settlements of over 5000 people; Bishops Waltham, Denmead and New Alresford. The eastern part of the district lies within the proposed South Downs National Park.

The District is well served by some transport links, with mainline railway stations and motorways. Southampton Airport and Southampton and Portsmouth sea ports are close by and offer international connections.

In 2007 Winchester City Council commissioned a Private Sector House Condition Survey. The sample looked at 1000 private sector homes which represented just under 3% of all private homes.

The measurement was conducted to the Decent Homes framework. This is the Governments housing objective to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home and so promote social cohesion.

The decent homes framework stipulates that a home must;

- ***meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing.***
- ***It is in a reasonable state of repair.***
- ***It has reasonably modern facilities and services.***
- ***It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.***

Private Sector Stock Condition Survey

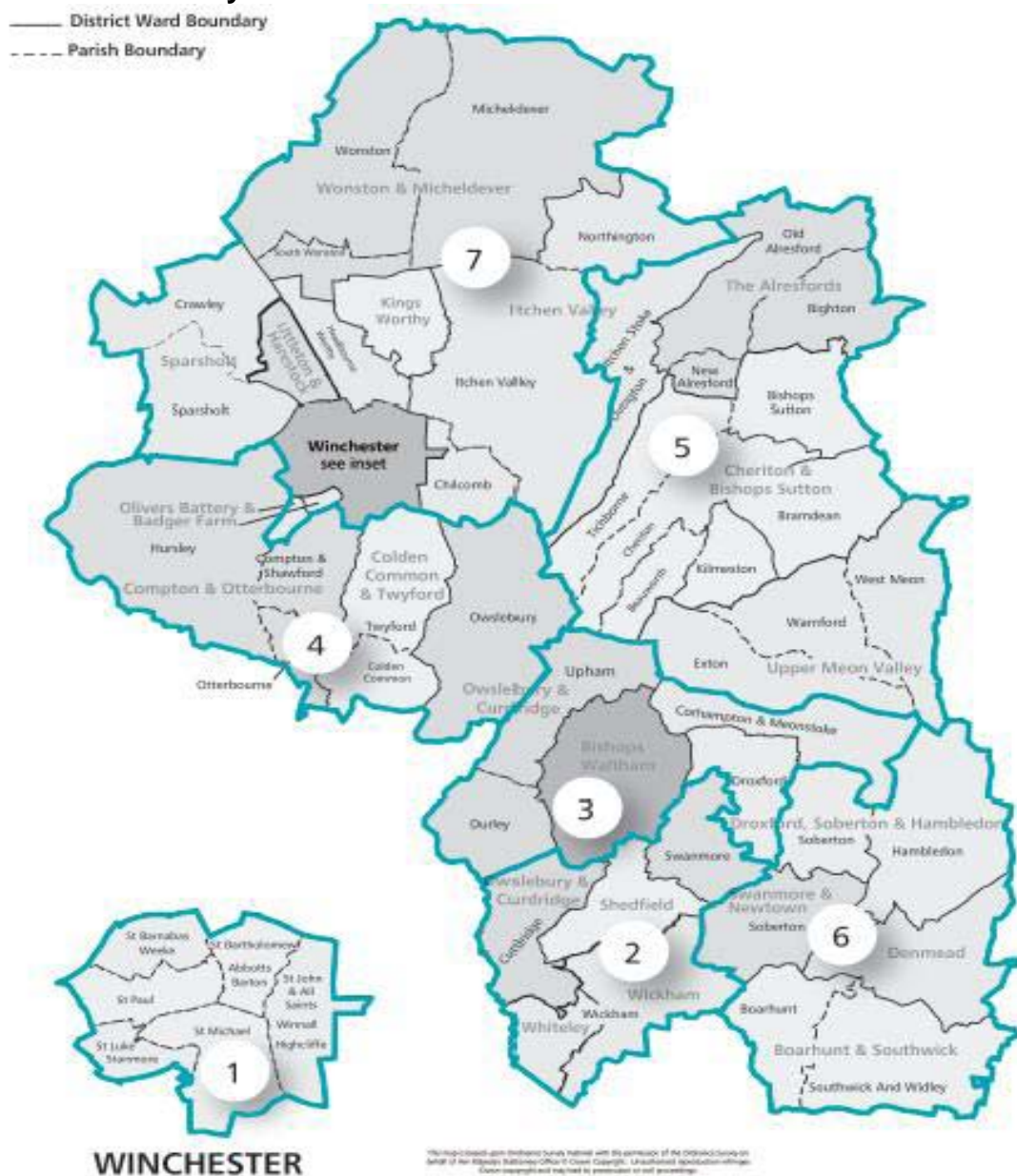
The Private Sector House Condition Survey provided us with further knowledge regarding our local housing conditions. We thank R. L. Harrison the Director of David Adamson & Partners Ltd for compiling the report.

The report informed us that the City of Winchester comprises of 36968 private dwellings. At the time of survey 34854 dwellings (94.3%) were occupied; the remaining 2114 dwellings (5.7%) were vacant. All vacant dwellings are transitional in nature and are expected to return to occupancy in the short term, vacancy rates in general are in line with normal housing market turnover conditions.

The tables on the following page demonstrate the break geographically for how the stock condition survey was undertaken, there are specific references to some of these areas to show the geographical areas of the survey.

TABLE 1 : SURVEY SUB-AREA STRUCTURE BY PARISH	
SUB-AREA	PARISH
Group 1	Weeke, Winnall, Stanmore, Highcliffe, Abbotts Barton, Central
Group 2	Wickham, Shedfield, Curdridge, Swanmore
Group 3	Droxford, Bishops Waltham, Durley, Upham, Corhampton and Meonstoke
Group 4	Hursley, Compton, Otterbourne, Twyford, Colden Common, Owslebury
Group 5	Exton, West Meon, Kilmeston, Bramdean, Cheriton, Bishops Sutton, New Alresford, Bighton, Old Alresford, Itchen Stoke and Ovington, and Warnford
Group 6	Soberton, Denmead, Boarhunt, Soutwick, Hambledon
Group 7	Micheldever, Wonston, Headbourne Worthy, Kings Worthy, Sparsholt, Littleton, Harestock and Crawley, Itchen Valley

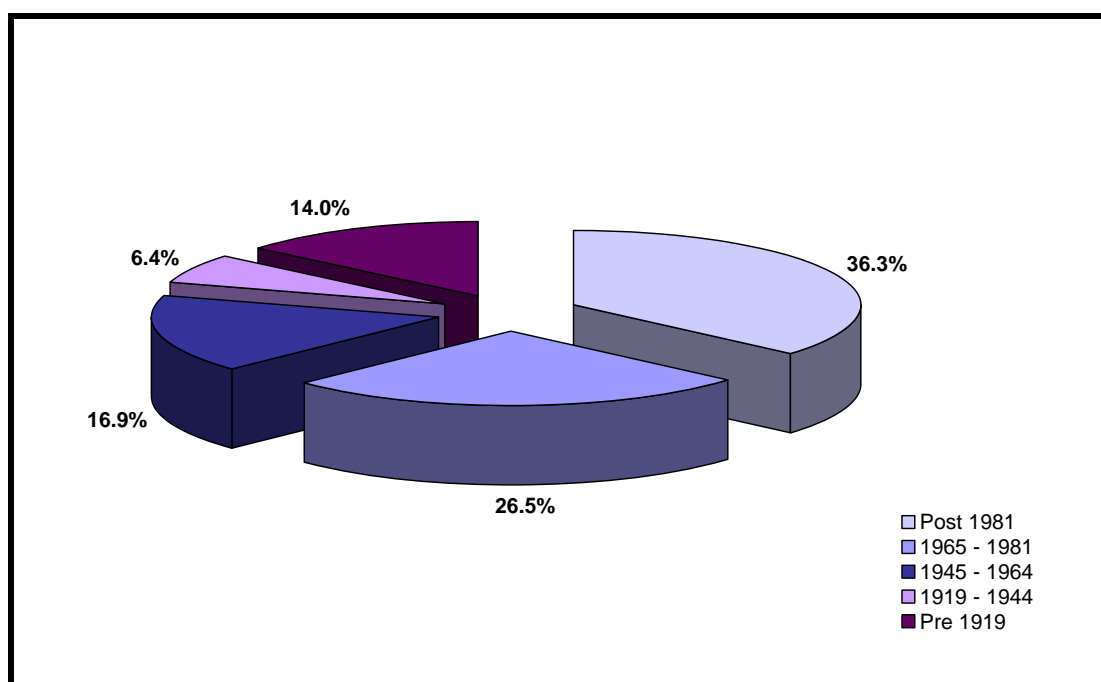
Fig 7. The Geographical breakdown for the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey



Private dwellings in Winchester are of mixed origin but predominantly of post second World War construction;

- 29445 dwellings (79.6%) were constructed Post-1944.
- Of which 13432 dwellings (45.6%) were constructed post-1981.
- Pre-war construction remains significant with 7523 dwellings (20.4%) constructed pre-1945.
- The pre-1919 sector comprises 5160 dwellings or 14.0%, with 2363 dwellings (6.4%) constructed in the inter-war period. The proportion of pre-war housing locally is below the national average for private housing (43.3%).

Figure 2: Housing Stock by Date of Construction

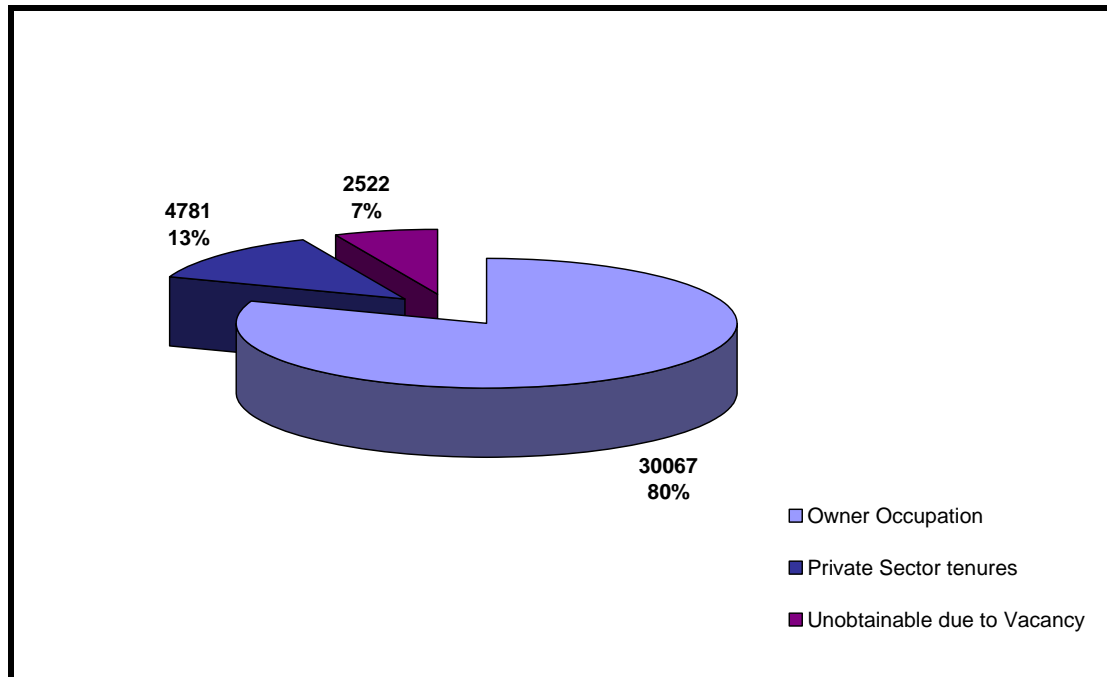


Owner-occupation is the predominant form of private tenure accounting for 30067 dwellings (80.4%) in Winchester. Dwellings rented from a private landlord account for an additional 4781 dwellings (12.9%). Tenure was unobtainable in 2522 dwellings (7%) due to vacancy.

The Stock Condition survey tells us that there are 4781 private sector homes which makes up 12.9% of the overall private sector stock. Private rented properties varies by area from 2.5% in Group 6 to 50.8% in group 1.

This tells us that there is still a significant and thriving private rented sector within Winchester district.

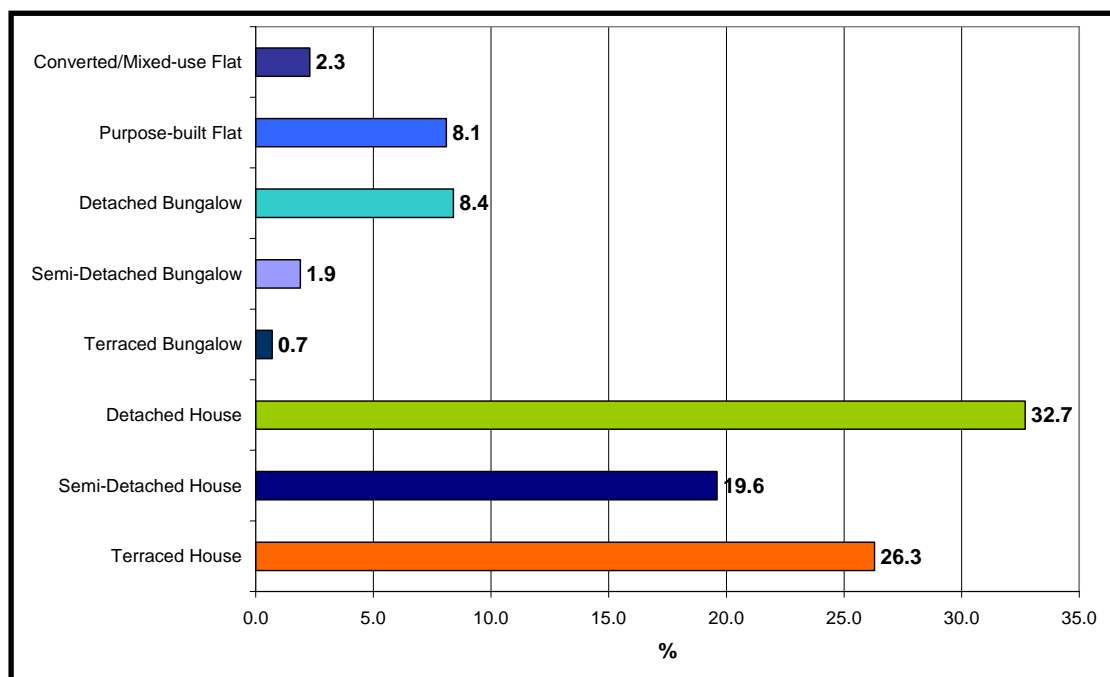
Figure 3: Type of Housing Tenure



Houses and bungalows comprise 33129 dwellings (89.6%) with the remaining 3837 dwellings (10.4%) in flats. Houses and bungalows offer a range of terraced, semi-detached and detached configurations with flats predominantly in purpose-built blocks.

Allowing for housing vacancy and multiple occupation the effective housing stock of 36968 dwellings contains an estimated 34854 households and a household population of 89098 persons. Average household size is estimated at 2.56 persons.

Figure 4: Housing Stock by Type

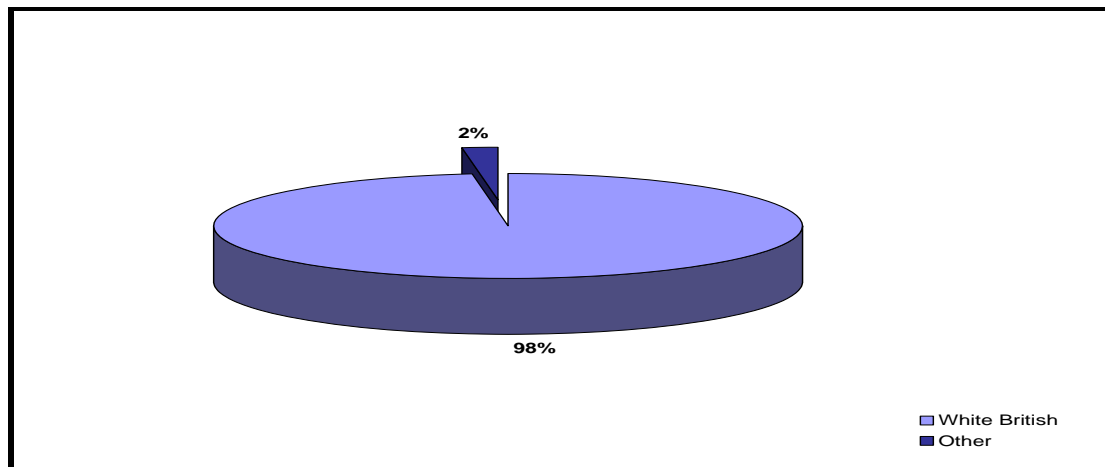


Household Composition

Small households predominate. 7563 households (21.7%) contain a single person, with an additional 12693 households (36.4%) containing two persons. Only 2719 households (7.8%) contain five or more persons. This shows us that there is an increasing demand for smaller accommodation, due to shifts in people's lifestyle choices.

34147 households (98.0%) are of white British origin; the remaining 707 households (2.0%) represent a range of minority ethnic groups

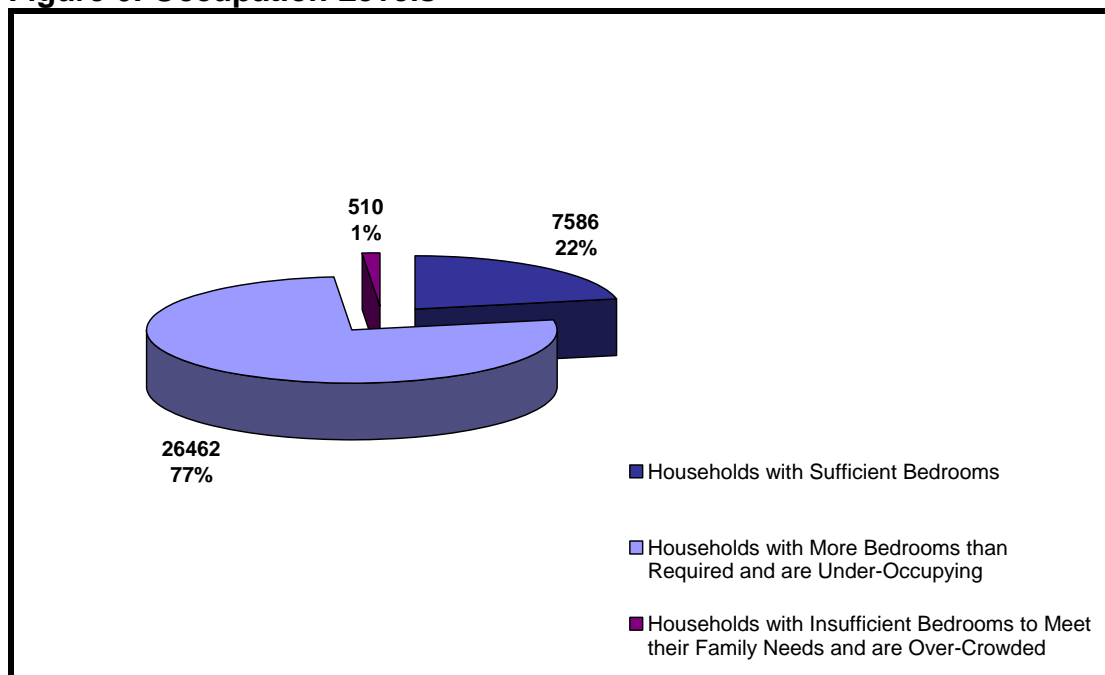
Figure 5: Ethnicity



Housing Occupancy

7586 households (21.8%) have sufficient bedrooms to meet their family needs. 26462 households (77.0%) have more bedrooms than required and are under-occupying while 510 households (1.2%) have insufficient bedrooms to meet their family needs and are over-crowded.

Figure 6: Occupation Levels



Economic Circumstances

Rates of economic activity within the private housing sector are mixed and influenced by the demographic profile of private households. 23641 households (67.8%) are headed by a head of household in full or part-time employment. In 273 households (0.8%) the head of household is unemployed and in 9672 households (27.8%) the head of household is economically retired.

28.7% of the private rented sector are economically vulnerable in comparison to 15.3% of owner occupiers. 5958 households (17.1%) are in receipt of some form of means tested or disability related benefit and are classified as economically vulnerable; 2215 households (6.3%) have an annual head of household income of under £8,000. Rates of economic vulnerability are higher for households in the private rented sector (28.7%). These people who are economically vulnerable will be the people we try to reach through this strategy through various initiatives such as PUSH4safer Homes.

The private rented sector also houses the younger generation within Winchester, the head of household under the age of 34 representing 35.6% of tenants overall. 71.3% of tenants overall are under the age of 44. This demonstrates the difficulties that the younger generation have in accessing mortgaged accommodation within Winchester. 9.9% of age of head of household is over 65, which equates to 1 in 10 private sector rented properties.

As a previous Public Service Agreement (PSA Target 7), linkages between vulnerable households and Decent Homes have provided an important focus for private sector housing strategy. 5958 private sector households in the City of Winchester are economically vulnerable. 4852 vulnerable households, or 81.4%, currently live in Decent Homes. This exceeds the previous PSA Target 7 guideline target for 2010/11 as 70%.

Residential Stability

Private households exhibit a high degree of residential stability. 14106 households (40.4%) have been resident in their current dwelling over 10 years. Of these households, 6948 households, or 19.9% have been resident over 20 years. 31658 households (90.8%) have no intention to move within the next year, 1273 households (3.7%) expressed a definite intention to move.

However there is also a lot of relocation within the private rented sector, with 59.7% of tenants having moved within the last 2 years. This can be further evidenced by 20.1% of people thinking of possibly moving with a further 8.7% expressing a wish to definitely move.

Decent Homes

29783 dwellings (80.6%) meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard and can be regarded as satisfactory. The remaining 7185 dwellings (19.4%) are therefore non-Decent

However the quality of accommodation accessible to the residents of Winchester remains high when comparing it with the Decent Homes Repair Criteria with 97.7% showing compliance and only 2.3% being non compliant.

Housing Conditions

In terms of hazards under the Health & Housing Safety Rating System, which derives from the Housing Act 2004, 1354 properties (3.7%) showed signs of a category 1 excess cold hazard, with 2.9% for category 2.

In Winchester alone 916 private rented dwellings have a category 1 hazard which represents 19.1% of the overall private rented dwellings with a category 1 hazard, demonstrating the need for awareness on fuel poverty and assistance to those on low incomes.

The majority of non-decent dwellings (6656 dwellings - 92.6 %) experience a single item failure on the standard with the primary areas of failure represented by the presence of Category 1 Hazards (43.8%), and Energy Efficiency (36.4%). 529 non-Decent dwellings (7.3%) experience two or more defects on the Decent Homes Standard. The most common combined element failure comprises Category 1 Hazards and energy efficiency (291 dwellings - 4.0%)

Housing conditions in The City of Winchester are significantly better than the average for private housing in England when measured within the Decent Homes standard. Using HHSRS, 37.5% of private homes in England were non-Decent in 2006. This compares to 19.4% of private housing in the City of Winchester in 2007. Conditions locally are better than the national average across all categories of the Decent Homes Standard.

Home Energy Conservation

The Standard Assessment Procedure (known as the SAP rating) using information on appliances and insulation to profile energy efficiency. This permits the grading of homes on a score of 1-100, with 100 being the highest. The UK average SAP score is 47, and Winchester's SAP rating is measured at 57, with the lowest SAP rating existing in the pre 1919 stock.

1.0% of the stock lack any form of insulation within the private rented sector, whereas 96.5% have some form of heating, which is higher than the national average of 85%.

The stock condition survey revealed that 9.6% of private rented properties in the Winchester area suffer from fuel poverty. This climbs to 15.2% in group 3. Properties built inter was rise again to 21.6% and 21.4% of single parent families suffer from fuel poverty.

The ages most at risk the survey concluded are those where the Head of Household under the age of 25 which represents 12.1% of all properties and the over 65s, where the percentage of over 65's in fuel poverty is 22.1%.

Average annual CO2 emissions are estimated at 6.09 tonnes per dwelling resulting in total annual emissions of 225059 tonnes. Average annual energy

expenditure is estimated at £946 per dwelling giving a total annual household energy bill of £34.973M

- 33,337 dwellings (89.8%) have an energy efficiency rating above the national average
- 3,786 dwellings (10.2%) have an energy efficiency rating below the national average
- 3,564 dwellings (9.6%) are in fuel poverty (spending over 10% of income on fuel costs)
- 3,526 dwellings (9.5%) have none or inadequate loft insulation
- 1,633 dwellings (4.4%) have none or only partial heating

This demonstrates that there is low levels of properties that do not meet the criteria which needs addressing to reduce this low number further.

4. THE WIDER STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The National Context

The Department of Local Government and the Regions has targets that regions and councils must address:

- Sustainable Communities — tackling disadvantage and narrowing gaps between the most deprived areas and the rest of England in health, education, crime, worklessness, housing and liveability outcomes
- Affordability and Choice — achieving a better balance between housing availability and demand, including improving affordability
- Decent Homes — bringing all social sector housing into a decent condition and for vulnerable households in the private sector
- Respect Agenda — building respect in communities by tackling the causes of anti-social behaviour as well as the effects.

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 gave local housing authorities wide ranging powers to provide assistance for housing renewal which had to be formally adopted and published.

As a result of the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 the Government published the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2001 setting out how it proposes to ensure affordable warmth for all households. Following this, in 2003 the Government published the Energy White Paper - Our energy future - creating a low carbon economy. One of the four key energy policy goals in the white paper is the need to 'ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated', with the aim that as far as reasonable practicable no household in England should have to live in fuel poverty by 2016.

The Government published '*Sustainable Communities: Building for the future*' often referred to as the 'Communities Plan' in 2003. This laid out proposals for tackling the fundamental problems of housing supply, housing conditions, deprivation and community sustainability. The document extended the Decent Homes standard to private sector housing.

A revised Public Service Agreement (PSA 7) stated: '*By 2010, to bring all social housing into a decent condition with most of this improvement taking place in deprived areas, and for vulnerable households in the private sector, to increase the proportion who live in homes that are in a decent condition.*' PSA 7 has now been incorporated within the 'New National Performance Framework for Local Authorities' which established a Single Set of National Indicators.

The subsequent Decent Homes Target Implementation Plan introduced targets for the proportion of vulnerable households in the private sector whose homes achieve the decent homes standard:- 65% by 2006, 70% by 2010, and 75% by 2020. This has since been abandoned, but Winchester City Council has kept this targets as a benchmark.

A decent home is one which is wind and weather tight, warm and has

modern facilities. In particular a decent home must:

- meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing;
- An Enhanced and Protected in a reasonable state of repair;
- have reasonably modern facilities; and
- provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

The Government has challenged local authorities to tackle many associated issues within the private sector, these include:

- to reduce the number of vulnerable households living in non Decent Homes
- to make best use of private sector housing to tackle problems of affordability, homelessness and reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and temporary accommodation
- help disabled, elderly and vulnerable households to remain living in their own homes
- improve choice and accessibility to a range of housing tenures
- to reduce the numbers of empty homes within the private sector
- to eliminate fuel poverty, improve energy efficiency and reduce green house gas emissions

In 2007 the Government issued a consultation paper '*Homes For The Future: more affordable, more sustainable*', the opening statement reads as follows:

'We want everyone to have access to a decent home at a price they can afford, in a place where they want to live and work. Good quality, affordable housing enables stable and secure family lives: we are all healthier, happier and wealthier when we have decent homes close to schools, healthcare and transport links.

Good housing creates better communities that can attract investment and skilled workers. Getting the design right can also improve the environment and reduce our carbon footprint. Therefore, the strategic housing decisions we take collectively over the next few years are critical to the life chances of the next generation.'

The Housing and Regeneration Bill was laid in parliament on 15 November 2007 and received Royal Assent on 22 July 2008. It will help to deliver the commitments set out in the Housing Green Paper of July 2007 to provide more and greener homes, in mixed and sustainable communities.

The Act established the Homes and Communities Agency, which focuses on delivering more new and affordable homes across all tenures and will drive and invest in regeneration. It will support regeneration and provide decent places as well as decent homes, eg by grant funding social housing and investing in infrastructure.

It implements the changes proposed in the Green Paper to give councils more freedoms and incentives to build new homes, and makes rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes mandatory for new homes.

Tenants are being given more choice and a voice over how their homes are

managed, by reforming social housing regulation, giving tenants a stronger say in stock transfer decisions by making a tenant ballot mandatory and giving local authority tenants greater powers over options for the future management and ownership of their homes.

The Rugg Report

The Rugg Review is a major independent review of the private rented sector commissioned by the Government Minister for Housing and Planning. The review carried out by Dr Julie Rugg and David Rhodes of the University of York, is likely to influence government policy and legislation over the next few years.

The review highlights the positive aspects of the private rented sector, such as its flexibility. It also recognises the need to support good landlords and to take action to remove rogue landlords from the market. Dr Julie Rugg makes several recommendations such as

- licensing of private landlords
- mandatory regulation of letting agents
- independent complaints and redress procedure
- tax changes (including changes to stamp duty)
- steps to better understand the sector

The Rugg Report was released in November 2008 and the Government's response to the Rugg report came out in June 2009.

This strategy attempts to align itself towards this theme and in working with the Homelessness Strategy, aims to integrate both the Private Sector Housing Team and the Homelessness team by seeking to work closely together.

Although this is not law currently, some of the themes within this strategy are devised at seeking to coincide with this thinking such as the accreditation scheme in the private rented sector.

The Homelessness Strategy aims to prevent homelessness by assisting people into the private rented sector. It is for the Private Sector Housing Team and this Private Sector Housing Strategy to ensure that the quality of accommodation in the private rented sector is suitable for those people to live in.

Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's)

The Housing Act 2004 has also changed the definition of houses in multiple occupation (HMO) and introduced a national HMO licensing scheme. The scheme covers larger dwellings used as HMO's which will have to meet minimum standards for amenities, management and fire precautions

As this strategy is being prepared, the government are seeking a planning response to Houses in Multiple Occupation and their proposed changes.

The Community Action Plan has identified that there are a number of HMO's in Stanmore. Winchester City Council are working with the local community to address those matters which include car parking and anti social behaviour.

Therefore the community action plan will be reviewed annually in line with this strategy to see if there are any close working relationships that can be forged.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) came into effect in October 2006 and replaced over 70 pieces of fire safety law.

The FSO applies to all non-domestic premises in England and Wales, including the common parts of blocks of flats and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). Under the FSO, the responsible person must carry out a fire safety risk assessment and implement and maintain a fire management plan

Winchester City Council are also working in partnership with the fire service to implement the new Fire Safety Regulations

Licensing of Mobile Homes

All mobile home sites (subject to planning permission) have to be licensed by the Private Sector Housing Team under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. Site licence conditions are based on the Communities and local Government's (CLG) 'Model Standards 1989' and an inspection of sites is undertaken on an annual basis to ensure that standards are being satisfactorily maintained and managed.

Immigration

The Private Sector Housing Team periodically undertakes immigration visits in response to requests from members of the public who are intending to have relatives from abroad live with them, and who have applied to the Home Office for UK residency. The visit involves an inspection of the sponsor's home to ensure that it is of a satisfactory standard, free from significant hazards and will not be statutorily overcrowded.

Home Energy Conservation Act 1994 (HECA)

Since 1995 councils have been expected to comply with the Home Energy Conservation Act 1994 (HECA) by reporting annually on progress towards a 30% improvement in domestic energy efficiency between 1995 and 2010.

In 2006, the Local Government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* introduced a new performance framework for local authorities and at the same time highlighted the importance of climate change as an issue that local authorities should be focusing on.

The new national indicator (NI) set contained four indicators on climate change, two of which the Private Sector Housing Team is responsible for reporting on:

NI 186 (Domestic element)

Under NI 186, local authorities have to report on the, “percentage reduction of the per capita carbon dioxide emissions in the local area”. The Private Sector Housing Team is responsible for reporting on the domestic element of this indicator which covers direct emissions from the burning of fuels in domestic premises and indirect emissions associated with the production of electricity and other fuels for domestic use.

NI 187

This is the government’s fuel poverty indicator. The purpose of National Indicator 187 is to monitor the proportion of households containing someone on means tested benefits (MTBs) that occupy a dwelling with a SAP rating of less than 35 (low energy efficiency rating) or greater than 65 (satisfactory energy efficiency rating). Through the promotion of the Warm Front Scheme and the PUSH 4 Safer Homes Initiative, the desired effect over time will be to observe a reduction in the number of properties with a SAP of less than 35, and an increase in the proportion with a SAP greater than 65. The assessment is via a form that the householder completes, and which is then assessed and given a rating as to the property’s ability to deliver affordable warmth. SAP is the Government approved Standard Assessment Procedure for the energy rating of dwellings.

The Private Sector Housing Team works closely in collaboration with the Environment Centre in Southampton to promote energy efficiency and carbon saving in order to achieve reductions in the above indicators.

This indicator helps us demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that communities are sustainable and inclusive, by reducing fuel poverty.

Empty properties

Winchester City Council is currently in the process of looking at producing an empty property strategy. From our Private Sector Stock Condition Survey it found that there were 100 dwellings (0.27%) are estimated to be of a long-term nature (in excess of 6 months). However we will seek to explore and develop a strategy which will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine the need for it.

The Housing Health & Safety Rating System

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) replaces the fitness standard as the tool for assessing the health and safety standards of a dwelling and defining the parameters for intervention by the local authority, this derives from the Housing Act 2004. The principle behind the HHSRS is that ‘Any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for the occupants and any visitors’. Implementation of the HHSRS requires a

strategic approach to assessment and enforcement, in line with national and local priorities, a focus on the most vulnerable households.

The HHSRS assesses 29 categories of housing hazards divided into 4 main groups: Physiological hazards (e.g. excess cold and heat, and pollutants such as asbestos), Psychological hazards (e.g. overcrowding and noise), protection against infection (e.g. hygiene and water supply) and protection against accidents (e.g. falls on stairs and electrical hazards). The HHSRS assessment determines and informs enforcement decisions by taking into account the likelihood of a hazardous occurrence and its potential severity. The assessment provides a numerical value of the level of danger enabling the authority to prioritise intervention where the hazards are most severe. A Category 1 hazard will trigger a duty on the authority to take appropriate enforcement action and will also trigger action in the context of decent homes. The standard includes a requirement that a decent home should be free of Category 1 hazards.

Enforcement action will therefore remain a key part of the strategy to deal with unsafe or non-decent homes, particularly those in the private rented sector. We will seek to offer enforcement notices to those properties which suffer from category 1 hazard.

Disabled Facilities Grant

The capital funding of mandatory and discretionary financial assistance for eligible and approved home improvement works is allocated from the funding secured through the annual Housing Investment Programme. Funding of mandatory Disabled Facilities grants was until 2007 ring fenced but this has been lifted to allow greater flexibility and each approved grant receives a subsidy from central government. Discretionary grant assistance is provided from the Council's own single-pot annual allocation.

During 2007/08 the City Council approved 41 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) in the private housing sector, 11 of which related to Housing Association tenants. The maximum grant that can be paid is £30,000.

The most common adaptations related to WC and bathroom adaptation, level/ramped access and the installation of chair/stairlift/hoist facilities. The removal of means testing for grants relating to disabled children has resulted in an increase in applications relating to this specific client group with 8 completed during 2007/8. Disabled facility adaptations for children have an additional emphasis on addressing both the child's immediate and longer term requirements given their condition, prognosis and growth rate. This means that necessary adaptations tend to result in more expensive works being undertaken, such as building extensions. The Council works in partnership with Hampshire County Council Adult Services and all referrals for DFG's are forwarded to the City Council by Adult Services Occupational Therapists. There is not currently a waiting list for DFG's in the private housing sector but as they are mandatory grant it is important to monitor any increase in demand.

In terms of its own homes in 2007/08, the Council completed significant adaptations such as walk in showers and stair lift installations to 100

properties and in total 397 tenants benefited from adaptations to their properties to assist them with every day living.

Accessible Home Loan

The Accessible home loan can either be used alongside a Disabled Facilities Grant or own its own to pay to adapt a home to meet the needs of a disabled occupier. The loan works in the same way as a home improvement loan as in it is interest free and doesn't have to be repaid until the property is sold. The loan may also be used to pay a disabled persons contribution to the Disabled Facilities Grant

The Regional Context

Push4Safer Homes

The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) consists of 11 local authorities in the South Hampshire area. Its vision is for sustained economic growth to create a more prosperous, attractive and sustainable South Hampshire, offering a better quality of life to all who live, work and spend leisure time there. The vision translates into nine key objectives, including providing quality housing for all. Governance arrangements for PUSH are firmly established and the partnership is overseen by a group comprised of the leaders of all member authorities

Member authorities have identified that in order to meet shared long term aims there needs to be a more unified and joined up approach across the sub-region. PUSH is therefore committed to improving efficiency and delivery through joint working. This is being led by the housing theme group, which is tasked with delivering PUSH's housing aspirations, with housing contributing towards its wider economic, social and environmental aims.

The housing group has led on the production of a sub-regional housing strategy (2007-2011). One of the four key priorities for the sub-region is to improve the condition and management of the existing housing stock and to make better use of it. The objectives of this programme are fully consistent with the sub-regional housing strategy and will help meet specific actions to develop and promote a range of assistance measures to help make the private homes of vulnerable people decent. The sub-regional housing strategy is supported by the PUSH business plan and delivery programme and by individual local authority housing strategies

Each authority has its own housing and private sector housing renewal strategies, which integrate with local strategic partnerships and other local strategies, and contain commitments to remove or reduce the most serious housing hazards from homes, make the homes of vulnerable people decent, tackle fuel poverty, improve energy efficiency, reduce empty homes and maintain independent living.

The loan is available for properties which fail the government's Health and Safety Hazard Rating System. This could include roof repairs, dealing with rising damp and replacing dangerous electrics and heating or insulation.

The Home Improvement Loan is an interest free loan with no monthly repayments. In most cases the loan is only repaid to the council when the property is disposed of.

Handyman Scheme

Extra funding has been secured by Supporting People for a Handy Man scheme which will be fully operational in July 2009. This scheme has been operating in other authorities in Hampshire but with this extra funding it will be rolled out across all of the other authorities. The scheme is available to all over 65 year olds with a reduced rate to those on benefits for a variety of small works such as leaking taps repairs, putting up shelves, replacing light bulbs all to be undertaken within the maximum two hour period.

The Local Context

Homecheck and Under 5s

The purpose of the Council's Homecheck scheme is to help reduce the number of accidents in the home suffered by elderly occupants and children. It is recognised that many such accidents, or potential accidents could be prevented or pre-empted if safety hazards in the home are identified and removed.

The Scheme provides for a home visit to anyone aged over 65 years and families with children under 5 years old by a Council officer, on request or by referral, to undertake a home safety check survey. Advice and practical guidance will be given to the occupant/s and to relatives or neighbours if present on hazards/potential hazards identified or similar matters of concern. Where necessary, minor/essential items of repair, re-fixing or other safety measure can be undertaken, as part of the free service.

.At the present time this is an in-house service provision which is subject to a joint funding arrangement with the Adult Services Department of Hampshire County Council. The future delivery of the Scheme will be considered as it could be merged with the Handyman scheme.

Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grants (HRA)

Home Repair Assistance grants may be offered to occupants in receipt of a recognised benefit and these are:

- Works of necessary repair or improvement to a dwelling to enable the occupant/s to remain living in their own home or to return to their own home from residential care, hospital etc.

- Works to secure the basic fabric of a property from the entry of wind or rain, or protect the occupants from immediate exposure to dangerous and/or insecure building elements or services.

This service is operated by InTouch Home Improvement agency who are funded by Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council Supporting to provide a support service from completing the forms to obtaining the estimates and supervising the works. Each grant approved a service charge of 10% of the works is paid as a fee.

The contract for this period is due to expire in June 2010 and presently all councils within Hampshire are presently negotiation the new contract with Hampshire County Council Supporting people.

Accreditation

Accreditation is a set of standards relating to the management of privately rented accommodation. Landlords wishing to join the scheme and abide by the set of standards can become accredited. There is no compulsion to join, but landlords can find advantages by having their properties accredited.

Winchester City Council already has an accreditation scheme for student accommodation where they are Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's).

All properties that are approved by Winchester Accreditation Scheme for housing students within Winchester are subject to being accredited to ensure that minimum standards are observed.

In addition to continuing the accreditation scheme, Winchester City Council will also seek to accredit properties in the private rented sector.

Therefore Winchester City Council will seek to offer an accreditation scheme to landlords wishing for their property to be accredited. The scheme will run based on the property only, rather than the landlord themselves and will be offered on a 3 yearly renewable basis.

In order to satisfy the accreditation scheme, properties will be assessed and landlords will be advised of any works necessary for it to be fully accredited.

This scheme will give prospective tenants the opportunity to know that the properties they can potentially rent have been fully assessed and have satisfied the requirements of the scheme.

We will also review the fire and safety regulations in light of a recent change to the regulations within the last year.

Heatseekers

Heatseekers is an initiative undertaken by a partner of Winchester City Council to investigate energy efficiency amongst the homes within Winchester. Heatseekers are an energy efficient organisation working in Partnership with Winchester City Council to monitor the energy efficiency of houses within Winchester.

Each Heatseekers vehicle is capable of assessing over 1,000 properties an hour by surveying on the move typically surveying 3,000 to 5,000 properties per night. It automatically detects and determines the insulation condition of each property and the address. Each area is followed up by a team of surveyors equipped with the personalised thermal images of each home requiring insulation. Surveys are then carried out on properties with interested householders & quotation issued. This is intended to run from 2009 until 2011.

Overall Strategic Context

By undertaking these initiatives Winchester City Council can demonstrate its commitment to its priorities derived from the Housing Strategy which include;

- Improved Choice of Housing
- Better quality housing stock and households
- Less Homelessness
- Improved housing and support for vulnerable and disadvantaged people
- More sustainable and inclusive societies
- More Energy efficient homes

By working with Heatseekers, and continuing to provide disabled facilities grants, to undertaking HHSRS assessments to properties that may be in disrepair, we can demonstrate our commitment to the priorities that Winchester City Council has set itself.

5. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY VISION

The Private Sector Housing Strategy sets out Winchester City Council's proposals for improving the quality of the private sector housing stock and how it intends to deliver the vision of a decent, safe and warm home for all residents living in the district. Good quality housing is vital to our personal health and well being. Private sector housing makes an essential contribution to meeting the problems of housing need, affordability and the alleviation of homelessness.

It is recognised that the private rented sector in particular is a valuable asset in helping to provide housing choice and availability. A robust and viable private rented sector is a vital part of a balanced housing market. In the Winchester district, this accounts for 14% of the housing sector.

Today's economic climate tells us that more households will rely on the private sector market as properties remain unaffordable to buy. With nearly 3 million households privately renting nationally; the highest since 1980; the importance of a thriving private rented sector in Winchester is paramount.

The take up of mortgaged accommodation will be increasingly purchased by buy to let landlords leaving many who cannot afford to buy, therefore accessing the private rented sector.

Winchester has already met its decent homes target, and seeks to build on that by working more closely with landlords in the private rented sector, not only through this strategy, but through the homelessness strategy also.

With an anticipated 5 million people nationwide being on a housing register by 2010 (source Local Government Association), the importance of the private sector cannot be understated in meeting the needs of those seeking accommodation. Whilst the Homelessness Strategy seeks to work closer with the private rented sector in finding places for people to live, the Private Sector Housing Strategy must seek to ensure that when they seek that accommodation, the accommodation they choose must meet the decent homes standard and be free from disrepair and hazards.

Therefore this strategy, in conjunction with the homelessness strategy seeks to ensure that the private sector in Winchester is easily accessed and finds the accommodation that is accessible meets the decent homes standard.

Winchester City Council will review the potential for a property accreditation scheme which will serve prospective tenants looking for good quality properties to rent from prospective landlords. This will be based solely on properties, and not on landlords. This will help good landlords with good properties access tenants by demonstrating that their property is fit for purpose, and meets the decent homes standard, and is free from hazards.

This will be an extension to the accreditation scheme it currently runs aimed at the student market within Winchester.

For those already living in private rented accommodation, the Health and Housing Safety Rating System (HHSRS) can ensure that any potential

hazards are considered, and where appropriate, can be remedied through the legislative measures to ensure that it is free from disrepair.

Although Winchester has met its targets for the decent homes standard, it still has 19.4% of houses that do not meet the standard which roughly equates to 1 property in 5. Therefore through the range of measures at Winchester's disposal, it can seek to reduce this number further through its initiatives such as;

- Push4Safer Homes
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Homecheck
- Handyman Service
- HMO licensing
- HHSRS

Therefore the vision for the Private Sector Housing Strategy is to increase energy efficient homes, to reduce properties in disrepair or those that suffer category 1 and 2 hazard as prescribed by the HHSRS.

Therefore our vision is

- To increase energy efficient homes and to work with our partners at PUSH4Safer homes
- To accredit all forms of private rented sector properties, and not just HMOs
- To offer DFGs to those needing assistance to remain in their homes
- To offer a handyman service to assist vulnerable people to remain in their homes
- Work closely with the Homelessness team to ensure that there is good quality accommodation for those who wish to rent in the private rented sector

By achieving this, we will be demonstrating the commitment to the Housing Strategy by

- Enhancing access to housing of the right type in the right location
- Ensure housing is of a high quality and meets the needs of households
- Support vulnerable and disadvantaged people to meet their housing needs
- Limit the environmental impact of housing

We recognise that there are resource implications with being able to achieve our vision and so we will be looking to focus our resources on reducing the level of fuel poverty, cold homes and improving home energy efficiency.

We will also be looking to continue providing DFG's and consult on the benefits of a private rented sector accreditation scheme.

The action plan reflects what we believe can be achieved within this documents life and we will strive to achieve those goals whilst helping Winchester City Council demonstrate its aims of an sustainable and inclusive society.

This document will help us improve housing conditions in Winchester by introducing the measures mentioned within a context that allows us to move forward with improving housing conditions, whilst recognising any resourcing restrictions.

6. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Private Sector Housing Priorities

This strategy sets out the vision for this strategy and compliments the vision laid out in the Housing Strategy. This strategy also intends to compliment the Homelessness Strategy by utilising its functions to reduce homelessness.

The overarching priorities are

- Improved Supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of all sections of the community
- Improved Choice of Housing
- Better quality housing stock and neighbours
- Reduce homelessness
- Improved Housing and support for vulnerable and disadvantaged people
- More sustainable and inclusive communities
- More energy efficient homes
- Equality in the delivery of services

The Private Sector Housing Priorities are

- increasing the number of decent homes occupied by vulnerable households
- helping to address the problems of affordability
- supporting home owners to maintain the condition and quality of their homes
- action to secure improved living conditions in private rented accommodation, houses in multiple occupation and student lettings through our Accreditation scheme
- reducing the level of fuel poverty, cold homes and improving home energy efficiency
- setting out the policy and arrangements for funding and implementing adaptations to homes of people who are disabled to assist them to remain living at home
- working with our Home Improvement Agency to expand and enhance our services

These priorities help demonstrate the vision of the Housing Strategy whilst setting the vision of the Private Sector Housing Strategy. They also demonstrate that by undertaking these priorities, that they will be ensuring that communities are sustainable and inclusive.

Implementation

Whilst many of these initiatives are implemented by legislation, such as the Health and Housing Safety Rating System, which was brought in by the Housing Act 2004, this Strategy is also reliant on the number of partnerships forged in order to implement this strategy.

Further detailed strategies and action plans have been produced in order to achieve the Private Sector Housing Strategy. These include

- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- Homelessness Strategy
- Older Persons Strategy
- Rural Housing Development Plan
- Housing Strategy

As well as close working across service areas within the council, including housing, planning, community development, social services, estates and legal teams, many housing priorities will be addressed through partnerships between the City Council. Of particular importance are

- PUSH4safer Homes
- Handyman Scheme
- Heatseekers
- Homecheck
- Home Improvement Agency
- The Environment Centre

7. MONITORING

Review and Evaluation

The Strategy is a dynamic working document and the priorities and actions will be kept under regular review. The purpose of a review is to ensure that the Strategy continues to deliver effective services and is developed to take account of changes in demand, customer needs and available resources. New legislation and government or regional policy will have a direct affect and often requires changes to be introduced and implemented.

This Strategy is intended to have a service life of up to four years. A detailed review will then be undertaken to assess its viability and to introduce any changes necessary to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Monitoring and evaluating achievements and outcomes is a vital part of a successful Strategy. We do this by maximising software recording and monitoring systems that provide detailed progress reports, analyse trends and expenditure position. Update reports are presented to the respective Scrutiny Committee and to provide data for annual reports and returns to Government Office and Ministerial Departments and for budget monitoring purposes.

We evaluate responses to our services through a series of customer satisfaction questionnaires. These provide an opportunity for feed back and comments from our residents as to the quality and effectiveness of our services. The responses are monitored and help shape and develop service delivery ensure that a high standard of customer service is maintained.

This strategy is intended to be reviewed in conjunction with the Homelessness Strategy and the Housing Strategy.

Appendix 1

Action Plan: Private Sector Housing Strategy: 2009 - 2013

Action	Links to other Strategies	Responsible Officer	Support	Principle Partners	Resources	Start	Finish	Progress	Comments
Objective: To improve conditions in unsafe and sub standard dwellings									
<p><u>Decent Homes</u></p> <p>To reduce the number of vulnerable households living in non decent homes</p> <p><u>Target:</u> 30 dwellings per year</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	Head of Strategic Housing	<p>Home Improvement Agency</p> <p>WCC Legal Services</p>	Home Improvement Agency	Within existing resources	September 2009	April 2012		
<p><u>Houses in Multiple Occupation</u></p> <p>To inspect HMOs requiring a mandatory licence; issue licenses to ensure satisfactory standards are achieved and monitor annually the Community Action plan</p> <p><u>Target:</u> 10 HMOs per year</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p> <p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p>	Head of Strategic Housing	<p>Private landlords</p> <p>Winchester Landlords Forum</p> <p>WCC Legal Services</p>	<p>Winchester Landlords Forum</p> <p>University of Winchester (Accommodations Team)</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>	September 2009	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>		

<p><u>Accreditation Scheme</u></p> <p>To assess student lettings on demand, and re-assessments; issue accreditation certificates where satisfactory standards are met</p> <p><u>Target:</u> 50 accreditations / re-accreditations issued per year</p>	<p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>Winchester Landlords Forum</p> <p>University of Winchester (Accommodation Team)</p> <p>Heatseekers</p>		<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>September 2011</p>		
<p><u>Housing Renewal</u></p> <p>Respond to requests regarding complaints of sub standard housing conditions;</p> <p>Investigate complaints and implement most appropriate course of action</p> <p><u>Target:</u> 60 housing complaints dealt with per year</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>Landlords Forum</p> <p>WCC Environmental Protection Team</p> <p>WCC Legal Services</p>	<p>Private Landlords</p> <p>Letting Agents</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>April 2012</p>		
<p><u>Housing Health and Safety Rating System</u></p> <p>Apply and enforce the HHSRS where necessary when undertaking assessments of dwelling conditions</p> <p>Serve enforcement notices on all those that appear to be category dwellings</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>WCC Legal Services</p>		<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>April 2012</p>		

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Objective: To provide help and assistance to enhance sustainable communities

<p><u>Home Repair Assistance</u></p> <p>In conjunction with Home Improvement Agency - to provide grant aid to vulnerable households (i.e. low income families, elderly and disabled occupants) towards the cost of essential repairs or renovations.</p> <p><u>Target:</u> 40 HRA approvals per year</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>WCC Finance Services</p> <p>Planning Development</p> <p>Building Control</p> <p>Contractors</p>	<p>Home Improvement Agency</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>April 2012</p>		
<p><u>Disabled Facilities Grant</u></p> <p>To provide mandatory grant aid to adapt and improve disabled occupants' dwellings</p> <p><u>Target:</u> Spend budget per yr.</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>WCC Finance Services</p> <p>Planning Development</p> <p>Building Control</p> <p>Contractors</p>	<p>Occupational Therapist team (HCC Adult and Children's services)</p> <p>Private Architects</p>	<p>Within existing resources*</p> <p>(*subject to any increase in DFG expenditure)</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>April 2012</p>		

<p><u>Home Energy Conservation and Fuel poverty</u></p> <p>To meet statutory requirements of the Home Energy Conservation Act</p> <p>Organise, promote and support home energy saving and efficiency projects</p> <p>Provide help, guidance and assistance to reduce the number of fuel poverty households (Home Repair Assistance; Warm Front ; external funding for insulation measures, etc.)</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p> <p>Climate Action Plan</p> <p>High Quality Environment policy</p> <p>Fuel Poverty Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>Energy Efficiency Advice Centre</p> <p>Home Improvement Agency</p>	<p>Energy Efficiency Advice Centre</p> <p>Southern Home Energy Conservation Act Network</p> <p>'Warm Front' (national grant aid service)</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>April 2012*</p> <p>(*subject to the outcome of the DEFRA review of the Home Energy Conservation Act)</p>		
<p><u>Homecheck scheme</u></p> <p>To reduce the number of home accidents for the over 65s and improve home security</p> <p><u>Target:</u> 60 Homecheck visits per year</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>Home Improvement Agency</p>	<p>Appointed contractor (to undertake approved works)</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>April 2012</p>		
<p><u>Under 5s scheme</u></p> <p>To reduce home accidents in young family households</p> <p><u>Target:</u> 40 Under 5s visits per year</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>		<p>Appointed contractor (to undertake approved works)</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>To be determined</p>		

<p>Home Loans To make funding, provided through a 'PUSH' partnership, available for essential home repairs, renovations and energy efficiency measures</p> <p><u>Targets:</u> To spend allocation of £211k over 3 years</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>Regional Housing Board</p>	<p>Local authorities in the 'PUSH' partnership /allocation for private sector housing renewal</p>	<p>Within existing resources (to expend external funding from the Regional Housing Board)</p>	<p>January 2009</p>	<p>April 2011* (*3 year funding allocation)</p>		
<p>Empty Dwellings</p> <p>To review the requirement for an Empty Dwellings strategy to bring such properties back into occupation</p> <p><u>Target:</u> to review and consider a strategy if the requirement is necessary</p>	<p>Corporate and Community strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>Housing Enablement Team</p> <p>WCC Legal Services</p> <p>WCC Planning and Development Control</p>	<p>Winchester Housing Board</p> <p>Winchester Landlords Forum</p> <p>University of Winchester (Accommodations Team)</p>	<p>Additional resources may be required to implement the strategy</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>September 2010</p>		

Objective: To ensure that communities are inclusive and that every resident has a sense of belonging and is supported, as and when their circumstances require this

<p>Housing Points assessments</p> <p>To assess accommodation conditions of applicants to the Choice Based Lettings Scheme</p> <p>To determine the appropriate banding to be awarded and to advise the Housing Needs team</p> <p><u>Target:</u> estimated at 10 assessments per</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>		<p>WCC Housing Needs Team</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>April 2013</p>		
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year									
<p><u>Gypsies and Travellers</u></p> <p>To assist with planning to provide sufficient pitches and transit sites in Hampshire local authority districts in accordance with SEERA guide lines and within the requirements of the Local Development Framework</p> <p>To liaise with land owners, HCC and police in response to unauthorised gypsy and traveller encampments</p> <p>Potential target: 2/3 unauthorised encampments per year</p>	<p>Corporate and Communities Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>WCC Planning and Development Control</p>		<p>Within existing resources*</p> <p>(*joint working with Planning and Development Control)</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>April 2013</p>		
<p><u>Heatseekers</u></p> <p>Heatseekers to undertake energy efficiency monitoring over the 2 years from 2009 - 2011</p>	<p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>WCC legal Services</p>		<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>July 2011</p>		

<p><u>Review Of Strategies</u></p> <p>To continually review working relationships between Private Sector Housing Team and the Homelessness Team</p>	<p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>WCC legal services</p> <p>Housing Needs Team</p> <p>Planning Team</p>		<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>		
<p><u>Accreditation Scheme</u></p> <p>To look into the possibilities of an accreditation scheme for the private sector</p> <p>On the basis of research and consultation, implement accreditation scheme</p>	<p>Corporate and Communities Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p> <p>Corporate and Communities Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p> <p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>WCC Legal Services</p> <p>WCC Legal Services</p>	<p>Lettings Agents</p> <p>Lettings Agents</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p> <p>September 2009</p>	<p>February 2010</p> <p>February 2010</p>		

<p><u>Mobile Homes and caravans</u></p> <p>Statutory duty to issue, renew or transfer site licences</p> <p>To inspect mobile home parks and enforce site licence conditions</p> <p><u>Target:</u> 12 site inspections per year</p> <p>To carry out occasional spot-check visits to individual caravan sites.</p> <p><u>Target:</u> 4 site visits per year</p>	<p>Corporate and Community Strategies</p> <p>Winchester District Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Housing</p>	<p>WCC Planning and Development Control</p> <p>WCC Legal Services</p>	<p>Hampshire Local Authorities</p> <p>Hampshire County Council</p> <p>South East of England Regional Assembly (SEERA)</p> <p>SE Regional Housing Board</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>April 2012</p>		
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Appendix 2

Consultation on the review of the Private Sector Housing Strategy

Consultation is a key requirement to inform the development of a Strategy that reflects the views and comments of our partners, stakeholders, customers and supporting organisations.

We undertook wide ranging and cross cutting consultations through a series of events organised, facilitated and assessed in preparation for the Strategy review:

- Private Sector and Homelessness Strategy Consultation Day/Work shops
- Winchester Annual Housing Forum and Work shops
- Focus group: Winchester Landlords Forum
- Focus group: Solent Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
- Focus group: Occupational Therapists bi annual meeting

The outcomes of the above events are summarised as follows:

Private Sector and Homelessness Strategy Consultation Day/Workshops

A cross section of stakeholders and partners attended from:

- Local authorities,
- Social Services, Occupational Therapists, Adult Services, Supporting People,
- Home Improvement Agency,
- Landlords Forum, National Federation of Residential Landlords
- Solent Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
- Housing Associations: Kingfisher, A2, Stonham, Atlantic.
- Pension Service
- Area Health Authority
- Winchester Tenants Association
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Council members
- WCC officers

The major part of the consultation was conducted during the work shop sessions when delegates considered and debated a series of questions relating to the development of the Council's PSH strategy. Each group was tasked with choosing their priority objectives for taking the strategy forward. Delegates were given an opportunity to select their final choice of priorities identified from the work shops.

The final choices were collated and the following list of priorities, in order of preference, was produced; these will be used to inform and develop the PSH strategy review:

- *ensure affordable housing is affordable*
- *empty dwellings – under occupancy issues needs addressing and issue penalties and incentives*
- *adaptations – better use of adapted properties and a disabled adapted properties register*
- *landlords forum*
- *to engage private rented sector - .e.g. compulsory accreditation*
- *better use of other options - .e.g. mobile homes, ikea homes*
- *ps strategy – to include / prioritise - 'warm homes' and fuel poverty*
- *home improvement agency – increase*
- *planning properties for downsizing*
- *all households a right to a decent home*
- *expanded role – advice / guidance*
- *expansion of partnerships – joint funding / investments*

- *financial help for landlords*
- *retain LA statutory duties – intervention role*
- *grant – dfg / grants for fuel poverty*
- *floating support for older persons*

- *telecare use in private rented accommodation*
- *loss of tax due to student population*
- *quality standards of letting agents*
- *funding for extra care*
- *is the private sector a real alternative or are we moving the problem from local authority to the private sector*

Winchester Annual Housing Forum and Work shops

Delegates took part in a series of work shops which included a session titled ‘Existing Homes’ and this posed questions relating to the adequacy of private sector dwellings and sustainability; maintenance and repair; accessibility and suitability; effective and affordable heating.

Delegates made their final selection as to their priorities or key issues that the Winchester City Council should be addressing. The key issues highlighted, which will be incorporated in the review, were:

- *provide improved incentives and assistance for downsizing*
- *more focus on infrastructure/community facilities*
- *better engagement with private landlords, mortgage lenders and estate agents*
- *be more planned and systematic in how/where disabled adaptations are fitted*

Focus group - Winchester Landlords Forum

A discussion on the Council’s role and the future of the Accreditation scheme raised several issues regarding the development of the PSH strategy. This was supported by a questionnaire requiring views on possible changes and improvements for both the Winchester City Council (“WCC”) and landlords.

The number of Questionnaire returns was encouraging and the responses and choice of priorities are summarised as follows:

	Agree	Disagree
• Does WCC have a positive role to play in helping to maintain safe/acceptable standards within the private rented sector:	100%	
• The private rented sector should regulate itself:	50%	50%

- WCC should continue to provide a financial incentive to landlords to achieve Accreditation: 95% 5%
- WCC should extend Accreditation to all private rented dwellings: 95% 5%
- The Accreditation scheme changes to a compulsory scheme: 76% 23%
- Closer links/improved communication by WCC 62% 38%
- Landlords should undertake appropriate training: 50% 50%
- Should tenants receive instructions on their responsibilities: 85% 15%

The top three priorities which landlords proposed which will be incorporated in the review were:

- *that Winchester City Council has a positive role to play in helping to maintain safe and acceptable standards within the private rented sector*
- *that the Accreditation scheme changes from a voluntary to compulsory scheme*
- *that the private rented sector should regulate itself and Winchester City Council should continue to provide a financial incentive to achieve Accreditation for student lettings*

Focus group - Solent Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (EEAC)

The working relationship with EEAC, and forward development of the Council's role for home energy saving and climate change issues was examined.

A questionnaire was distributed to the EEAC team and a full response demonstrated that they fully agreed with the following:

- That WCC has a positive role to play in helping to maintain safe and acceptable standards within the private sector housing stock
- That energy efficiency improvements in private sector dwellings is a priority objective
- WCC to continue to enable, promote/ campaign for energy efficiency improvements
- WCC to give priority to eliminating fuel poverty for all households
- That the WCC implement their Climate Change plan in 2008
- Closer working partnerships be developed with agencies/organisations/energy suppliers
- The Council maintain a front-line responsibility to enable the delivery of home energy savings, efficiency awareness, a reduction in emissions and the impacts of climate change

The top priorities which the EEAC team proposed and will be incorporated in the review were:

- *targeting fuel poverty – distributing information, community events/road shows, more partnership working with other agencies and organisations*
- *wider promotion of EEC (energy efficiency commitment) funding to help more, vulnerable households obtain free or discounted home insulation measures*

- *closer working relationships with partner organisations, including the EEAC to assist with work programming and the delivery of action plans for tackling fuel poverty, renewable energy projects, climate change plans, etc*

Focus group - Occupational Therapists (OTs).

This group reviewed the Council's Disabled Facilities grants (DFG) service and considered possible changes and options for improvements in the level of service provision and delivery.

A collective response to the questionnaire was submitted and the outcomes were as follows:

Agree:

- WCC has a positive role to provide and administer the DFG service
- If the service is outsourced, the Council should exercise supervision/monitoring
- That close and effective team working with WCC staff and OTs is essential
- Better communication/working relationship with contractors to ensure higher standards

Disagree:

- The service could be effectively developed by outsourcing through an external agency
- There are more advantages for WCC to utilise in-house OTs
- That closer working partnerships be developed with other agencies or organisations

The top priorities which the OT team proposed and will be incorporated in the review were:

- *that WCC continue to deliver the DFG service*
- *that outsourcing DFGs is not instigated in the interest of the customer due the quality of service maintained by WCC*
- *that the WCC seek to achieve better understanding and communications with contractors engaged to undertake adaptation works*