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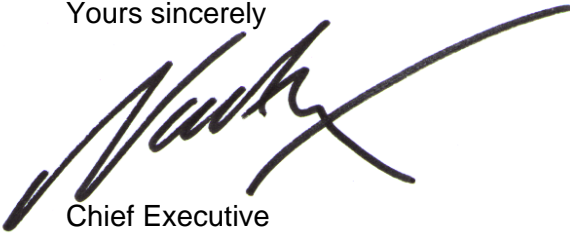
31 March 2010

Dear Councillor

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT a meeting of the **STRATEGIC HOUSING COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE** will be held in the Council Chamber at these Offices on 12 April 2010 at 1.30 pm when the following business will be transacted.

Please note that this meeting will be held in public.

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive

Strategic Housing Committee of the Executive Membership:

Councillor S S Chandler	Portfolio Holder for Community, Housing & Youth
Councillor N S Kenton	Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste & Planning
Councillor F J W Scales	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy & Special Projects
Councillor I H Ward	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources & Performance
Councillor P A Watkins	Leader of the Council

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are required to disclose the existence and nature of a personal interest at the commencement of the item of business to which the interest relates or when the interest becomes apparent. An explanation in general terms of the interest should also be given to the meeting. If the interest is also a prejudicial interest, the Member should then withdraw from the room or chamber.

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

To note appointment of Substitute Members.



3. **DECISIONS** (Pages 4-10)

The Decisions of the Strategic Housing Executive Committee held on 11 January 2010 numbered CAB (SH) 07 to CAB (SH) 13 (inclusive) are attached.

4. **REGIONAL HOUSING AND REGENERATION BOARD**

To receive a verbal report from Councillor S R Nicholas regarding Regional Housing and Regeneration Board matters.

KEY DECISIONS – BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK

5. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2015** (Pages 11-77)

To consider the attached report of the Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety.

6. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN 2010-2015** (Pages 78-136)

To consider the attached report of the Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety.

7. **HOUSING STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE 2010-2015** (Pages 137-199)

To consider the attached report of the Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety.

8. **DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2015** (Pages 200-245)

To consider the attached report of the Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety.

Access to Meetings and Information

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- All meetings are held at the Council Offices, Whitfield unless otherwise indicated on the front page of the agenda. There is disabled access via the Council Chamber entrance and a disabled toilet is available in the foyer. In addition, there is a PA system and hearing loop within the Council Chamber.
- Agenda papers are published five clear working days before the meeting. Alternatively, a limited supply of agendas will be available at the meeting, free of charge, and all agendas, reports and minutes can be viewed and downloaded from our website www.dover.gov.uk. Minutes are normally published within five working days of each meeting. All agenda papers and minutes are available for public inspection for a period of six years from the date of the meeting. Basic translations of specific reports and the Minutes are available on request in 12 different languages.

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REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

RESPONSIBILITY – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND YOUTH

KEY DECISION

BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC HOUSING COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE – 12 APRIL 2010
EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2015

Recommendation

<i>That Members approve the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015, attached at Appendix A.</i>
--

Contact Officer: Robin Kennedy, extension 2221.

Reasons why a decision is required

1. The Plan is one of a number of new plans and strategies that underpin the new Housing Strategy for 2010-2015. It has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and has been subject to wider public consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Dover District Compact
2. The new strategy reflects the changes that have taken place in recent years including new powers contained in the Housing Act 2004. It also takes into account the Private Sector Housing Condition survey of 2008 whose results have been used in the preparation of the Strategy.

Evaluation of options available to the Council

3. (a) To approve the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015.
(b) To make amendments to the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015
(c) To reject the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015.

Information to be considered before taking a decision

4. Over 85% of housing in the district is in the private sector, either owner occupied or privately rented. Despite recent initiatives much of this stock remains in poor condition and as much as 41% requires improvement. This strategy, covering the period 2010-2015, sets out our priorities over the next five years to secure such improvements in Dover's private sector housing.
5. The strategy has been written taking account of the Private Sector House Condition surveys in 2001 and 2008. These reveal a stock built predominately before 1944, which is below average condition with a high proportion in poor repair. Consultation with key stakeholders has already been undertaken to identify priorities for the future.
6. The strategy also reflects the changes made in 2006 with the Housing Act 2004, which requires homes to be accessed in respect of their influence on health and safety rather than its physical condition. It is also influenced by the large numbers of

homes in our district that do not meet the Decent Homes standard and the increasing needs of an older population wishing to remain safely in their home.

7. The Strategy is a key supporting document to the higher level Housing Strategy 2010-2015.

Background Papers

None

Resource Implications

The strategy recognises the benefits to Dover of area renewal linked to areas of poor housing and other regeneration strategies. This is an ideal solution, which if the Council wished to adopt would require additional resources. If this was not adopted then no additional resources would be required.

Requirement from Current Budget	Requirement for Additional Budget	
	Current Year	Full Year
Requires existing budget	None	None

Consultation Statement

Consultation has taken place with key stakeholders including Homes Improvement Agency, Registered Social Landlords, Dover Society, landlords, agents and their comments have already been used to help shape the strategy.

The Strategy has been subject to further and wider consultation with stakeholders and the public including KCC, East Kent Councils, members, parish and town councils, Fire Services, RSL's, landlords, estate agents and various community groups. Details of the consultation feedback and consideration of the matters raised is set out in a table attached at Appendix B. Where amendments have been made to the Plan in response to the comments received this is highlighted in the table.

Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks

Both the *Corporate Plan* and the *Housing Strategy* recognise that regeneration and the need to improve private sector housing is a key objective of the Council.

Customer access Review

A CAR screening form has been completed.

Attachments

- Appendix A: Draft Private Sector Strategy 2010-2015.
- Appendix B: Analysis of consultation feedback

CHRISTINE WATERMAN

Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety

DOVER PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010 - 2015

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DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010 – 2015

Executive Summary and Action Plan

Introduction

We believe that all residents, whether in public or private sectors, should have the opportunity to live in a good quality, affordable home which is decent, warm and secure. Over 85% of housing in the district is in the private sector, either owner occupied or privately rented. Despite recent initiatives much of this stock remains in poor condition and as much as 41% requires improvement. This strategy, covering the period 2010-2015, sets out our priorities over the next five years to secure improvements in Dover's private sector housing.

The Condition of Dover's Private Housing Stock

Private Houses in Dover District are much older compared with most other areas and there is an above average percentage of rented accommodation. Both these factors are associated with poorer housing conditions. Our House condition Survey in 2001 found that we had the highest percentage of unfit homes in the south east.

In 2008 a further survey was carried out. Comparisons with the 2001 figures are difficult to make as the condition of housing is now measured in very different ways based on a hazard rating system rather than unfitness measure. However, this new system shows that the rate of serious (category 1) hazards at 25.2% is above the national average of 21.7% and the overall rate of non decency at 41.2% is worse than the national figure of 35%. Of particular concern is the low number of vulnerable households living in decent homes which is only 50.6% compared with the target for 2010 of 70%. An estimated 3,040 homes occupied by vulnerable households would have to be made decent to meet the 2010 target set previously by Government.

The district also has above average levels of empty private sector homes compared to England and the South-East and the problem has been getting worse. From 2005 to 2009, the number of long term empty homes rose by 41%. These issues are covered in more detail in our recent Empty Homes Strategy

Our Key Objectives

In delivering private sector housing services, we have seven key objectives. These are to:

- target resources at areas having the worst housing condition and support and link into other national ,regional and local regeneration projects
- take appropriate and necessary action to ensure that properties are free of serious hazards and meet statutory standards;
- provide services which assist older and disabled residents to maintain independent living in their homes;
- bring long term empty homes back into use;
- improve energy efficiency in homes and reduce fuel poverty;
- provide financial assistance in the areas of greatest need to help provide decent, safe, secure homes.
- give effective advice and information to residents with housing problems

The Strategic Context

No Council strategy will be effective unless it is consistent with policies at national, region and local level, and this strategy has been developed to achieve that.

At national level, there are three key policy drivers:

1. The Regulatory Reform Order 2002, which allowed local authorities flexibility to offer discretionary financial assistance taking into account local needs and resources.
2. The Housing Act 2004, which replaced the housing fitness standard with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), introduced mandatory licensing for higher risk houses in multiple occupation and gave local authorities stronger powers to deal with long term empty homes.
3. The Decent Homes Standard, which requires a property to meet the minimum legal standard to be in reasonable repair, have modern facilities and amenities and reasonable thermal comfort.

This strategy also has to fit with plans developed by the South East region, the East Kent sub-region, Kent County Council and all other local plans. A number of consistent themes emerge from the regional and local strategies:

- reducing the number of non-decent homes;
- reducing the number of long term empty homes;
- promoting equity release;
- improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty;
- supporting vulnerable people and promoting independent living;
- regenerating run down Dover town centre areas;
- increasing the number of affordable homes;
- reducing homelessness and promoting access to the privately rented sector

The Core Strategy of our Local Development Framework identifies a need for 10,000 new local homes by 2026 but making best use of existing housing is also a priority in order to achieve our corporate aim of *"providing a wide range of quality and accessible housing which meets the needs of the whole community"*.

We have endeavoured to reflect all of these themes in our revised approach to the private sector.

What We Do Now

The strategy looks at what we do now and there are many areas where we feel that we deliver services well;

Grants and loans for cold homes and other improvements

In recognition of the poor condition of much of its private stock the district has received over £5.4m in project funding allocations from the Regional Housing Board since 2006 to address cold homes and houses needing substantial improvements. These programmes continue to 2011 and to date 361 homes have been improved and a further 288 will be by 2011.

Whilst this has made a significant difference to the lives of many individuals, it is recognised that a great deal still needs to be done and that in some areas, especially in urban Dover, wholesale area renewal would be the best solution.

Enforcement

Between 2007/8 and 2008/09 we more than trebled from 26 to 88 the number of notices served on properties in poor condition or with hazards and these are set to be increase again in 2009/10

Empty properties

For the two year period 2007/09 we have enabled 44 empty properties in the district to be brought back into use and for 2009/10 we have a target of 25 properties being brought back into use which we are on course to exceed.

Waiting times for disabled facilities grants in the Private Sector.

These have been substantially reduced to the point where following an approved application no more than 5 months should elapse before the work is completed, depending on the nature of the adaption

SAP Rating

The SAP is the Government's recommended system for energy rating of dwellings. The SAP average for this district is 57, higher than the national average of 50 despite high numbers of older properties with solid walls in this area.

The Future

The strategy introduces changes in the ways we offer information, advice & specialist support, financial assistance and for further improvements in our enforcement procedures. We have been mindful of the resources currently available to us and of the fact that we are likely to be entering a period of reduced public spending. Major progress since 2006 has been made because of substantial additional funds from the Regional Housing Board, allowing us to assist many property owners with decent homes loans. Whilst this funding remains in place for the next financial year, we will explore new ways to facilitate equity release.

Over the next five years, we will keep focused on our statutory responsibilities – category 1 hazards, houses in multiple occupation, long term empty homes and mandatory DFGs. (Disabled Facilities Grants) We will look closely for and at opportunities for area based housing renewal to tie in with wider regeneration programmes in Dover. However, our main driver will be to increase the number of vulnerable households living in decent homes, and we aim to take action to make 400 properties occupied by such households decent each year. This will be achieved through enforcement, housing assistance and warm front activity. These figures will be reported to the quarterly Homes Improvement Board.

Information, advice and specialist support: We will increase access to energy efficiency information focusing on those in greatest need, review and seek to expand Handyperson services, explore way to offer advice to offer repairs and maintenance advice to householders and also link the Bond Guarantee Scheme to accreditation standards.

Inspection and Enforcement: We will adopt a fast track approach to enforcement, introduce charging for statutory notices, dedicate Officer time to planned inspections in areas of

unsatisfactory housing, link proactive work to regeneration and continue to enforce high standards in Houses in multiple occupation.

We will increase staff resources for at least two years to tackle long term empty homes by using the performance reward grant we recently obtained and increase the budget for compulsory purchase and introduce and follow all measures in our 2010-2015 Empty Homes Strategy.

Financial assistance: We will continue to target financial assistance on arrears of unsatisfactory housing and link this to planned enforcement inspections, look at the introduction of a minor works loan, explore the opportunities to offer energy efficiency under the Community Energy Savings Programme and start looking now at alternative ways to facilitate equity release drawing on private sector funds.

These aims are spelt out in more detail in the action plan attached to this strategy, which will be reviewed annually.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

What is this strategy about?

- 1.1 Owner occupied and privately rented properties make up over 85% of homes in Dover, and over half were built before 1945. This strategy sets out our plans for achieving good quality housing across the existing private sector stock - we believe that all residents should have the opportunity to live in a decent home.
- 1.2 This strategy explains:
- where the Council may offer financial help to repair, improve and/or or adapt homes;
 - how the Council will provide advice, assistance and specialist support to householders and landlords;
 - how the Council will use, where appropriate, enforcement powers to ensure unsatisfactory properties meet minimum legal standards.

Our Overall Vision and Objectives

- 1.3 Research has shown clear links between sub-standard homes and poor health.¹ Damp homes can lead to allergic disease such as asthma, rhinitis and eczema. Cold homes make the circulatory system work harder; studies have shown that heart attacks and strokes increase significantly during the winter months. The condition of a home can also present a serious hazard to its occupants – falls, burns, scalds, electric shock, carbon monoxide poisoning, etc. The new Housing Health and Safety Rating System² has been introduced to help local authorities tackle hazards in residential properties.
- 1.4 This strategy is important not just because it sets out action to deal with poor quality housing but because it will help to tackle health inequalities.
- 1.5 *We want every resident of Dover to live in a property that allows them to be healthy and safe, and we want to give all Dover residents the opportunity to live in a good quality, affordable home which is decent, warm and secure.*
- 1.6 Like all local authorities, what we can do is limited by resources. Although there are constraints, our key objectives are to:
- 1.7 Take appropriate and necessary action to ensure that properties are free of serious hazards and meet statutory standards;
- 1.8 Provide services which assist older and disabled residents to maintain independent living in their homes;

¹ Good Housing Leads to Good Health Sept 2008-CIEH/BRE
Housing and public Health Evidence Briefing December 2005 NHS- NICE

² Details of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) are set out in Appendix 2.

- 1.9 Bring long term empty homes back into use;
- 1.10 Improve energy efficiency in homes and reduce fuel poverty;
- 1.11 Provide financial assistance in the areas of greatest need to help provide decent, safe, secure homes;
- 1.12 Target resources at areas having the worst housing condition and support and link into other regeneration projects.
- 1.13 Give effective advice and information to residents with housing problems

2.0 THE WIDER PICTURE – THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

National Policies

- 2.1 The Regulatory Reform Order 2002³ abolished most of the national framework for offering grants and other assistance (apart from mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants) and gave local authorities much greater flexibility to offer financial assistance tailored to local needs, circumstances and resources. The Government has emphasised that the prime responsibility for the condition of a private sector home rests with its owner. In particular, the Government now feels that in most cases the equity in private sector homes should be used to finance essential repair and improvement works. Since 2006, the majority of the discretionary financial assistance offered by Dover Council has been through a combination of interest free loans with a limited grant element.
- 2.2 Along with moves to improve housing, the Government brought out its 2003 Sustainable Communities Plan aimed at building cohesive communities, updated in January 2005 with “Sustainable Communities: Homes for All” and “People, Places, Prosperity”. These highlighted the need to:
- Promote sustainable home ownership;
 - Provide quality and choice for those who rent;
 - Revive communities and housing markets;
 - Support those who need it – promotion of independent living and reduction of homelessness.
- 2.3 The Housing Act 2004 introduced a number of substantial changes including the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)⁴ to replace the out of date housing fitness standard, mandatory licensing of higher risk HMOs, and stronger powers to deal with long term empty homes.
- 2.4 The Decent Homes Standard is key part of Government policy and is an important benchmark. To meet the standard⁵ a home has to:
- a. be free of serious hazards under the HHSRS;
 - b. be in a reasonable state of repair;
 - c. have reasonably modern facilities & services; and
 - d. provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (effective insulation and efficient heating).
- 2.5 The Public Service Agreement (PSA) 7 target for the private sector set targets relating to the numbers of vulnerable households (essentially those in receipt of income or disability related benefit) living in decent homes:

³ The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002

⁴ Details of the HHSRS are set out in Appendix 2

⁵ Full details of the Decent Homes Standard are given at Appendix 1

- 70% living in decent homes by October 2010
 - 75% living in decent homes by October 2021
- 2.6 Although since April 2008 this target is no longer a national indicator for private sector housing, all Councils are still required to provide this information annually and we feel the target acts as an essential benchmark on our past and future performance. It also remains important to funding applications and so will remain an important feature of this strategy. The 2008 House Condition Survey report showed that we fell short of the 2010 target and this strategy sets out what we intend to do to deal with this.
- 2.7 “Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods”⁶ sets out the Government’s response to the challenges posed by a society with increasing numbers of older people. It included significant changes to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), an expanded role for home improvement agencies and further promotion of equity release schemes.
- 2.8 The strategy links closely with the “Independent Living Strategy”⁷ which commits the Government to increasing funding for DFGs and other measures to promote independent living. The need for a coherent approach linking housing, health and care is also emphasised in the White Paper “Our Health, Our Care, Our Say”⁸ and the cross Government statement “Putting People First”⁹.
- 2.9 Government policies continue to reinforce the role of home improvement agencies (as in Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods) and also rapid repairs and adaptations services.
- 2.10 Energy efficiency and especially fuel poverty (where a household has to spend 10% or more of its income on domestic fuel¹⁰) are growing Government priorities. The Government wants to eradicate fuel poverty by 2016 and realistically progressively harder targets for energy efficiency will be set as concern over climate change grows. Thermal comfort is a criterion in the Decent Homes Standard and, as nationally, ‘excess cold’ is the most common HHSRS hazard in Dover.
- 2.11 The Audit Commission has released a report “Lofty Ambitions: The role of councils in reducing CO₂ emissions”¹¹. The document examines the role of local authorities in seeking to both improve domestic energy efficiency and drive down CO₂

⁶ February 2008 (Department for Communities and Local Government, Department of Health, Department of Health, Department for Work and Pensions)

⁷ March 2008 (Office for Disability Issues)

⁸ March 2006

⁹ December 2007

¹⁰ Fuel poverty statistics estimate the number of households that need to spend more than 10 per cent of their income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, as well as meeting their other fuel needs (lighting and appliances, cooking and water heating) Office of National Statistics.

¹¹ September 2009

emissions. It contends that spending has not always been well targeted or sustainable. It states in particular:

- funding to address domestic energy could be better targeted at areas or households most in need of support;
- spending on fuel poverty that does not also tackle CO2 emissions is not sustainable.

2.12 As well as dealing with its own stock, the report urges local authorities to:

- use planning powers to set standards for sustainable energy use;
- ensure building regulations are enforced;
- use the powers in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to improve energy efficiency.

2.13 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 all impose duties on local authorities to ensure fair treatment. This strategy has been prepared in accordance with these requirements, including the preparation of equality impact assessments.

Regional, Sub Regional and County Strategies

2.14 Dover is one of 55 district authorities in the South East region (there are 7 county councils and 12 unitary authorities).

2.15 The region is very diverse and has been divided into nine sub-regions. Dover falls into the East Kent and Ashford sub-region along with Canterbury, Thanet, Dover, Shepway, and parts of Swale and Ashford. The South East Plan recognises that this sub-region is a key international gateway to Europe. However, it is relatively remote from both London and the rest of the region and includes some of the poorer economic areas.

2.16 The South East Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) focuses very much on the provision of new affordable housing but also specifically targets making better use of the existing stock. Policies that are particularly relevant are:

- Producing empty homes strategies to bring properties back into use
- Adopting policies and programmes to improve or redevelop areas that are becoming outworn

2.17 The South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11 describes the task of ensuring that everyone in the region has access to a decent home at a price they can afford as 'an enormous challenge'. The main focus of the strategy is again on the provision of affordable housing but it also highlights the considerable problem with non decency in the private sector, especially in properties with vulnerable households.

- 2.18 The strategy supports strongly:
- moves to develop the equity release approach;
 - energy efficiency measures
- 2.19 The Regional Housing Strategy recognises that absence of an effective heating system is the main reason for failure of the Decent Homes Standard in private sector homes in the region; improving energy efficiency in dwellings has a positive effect in terms of both non decency and fuel poverty.
- 2.20 Strategies at County level are highly relevant to this strategy, in particular Vision for Kent, the community strategy produced by the Kent Partnership. Shorter term priorities in the vision document include:
- increasing the proportion of homes, in both the public and private sectors, that meet or exceed the Decent Homes standard;
 - creating incentives and enforcing responsibilities that drive homeowners and private landlords to repair and maintain their property;
 - increasing the number of long-term empty properties that are returned to use as homes;
 - improving energy efficiency and affordability in the home, minimising waste and the consumption of natural resources;
 - working towards a situation where no vulnerable household is in temporary accommodation
- 2.21 The Kent Partnership is also responsible for the Kent Agreement 2 which contains the cross Kent performance indicators agreed with Government. Indicators particularly relevant to this strategy are NI 141 (number of vulnerable people achieving independent living) and NI 187 (fuel poverty - people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating)
- 2.22 The Kent Supporting People Strategy 2005 – 2010 is very relevant, not least because of the contribution made towards the cost of the In Touch Home Improvement Agency as is the county wide Affordable Warmth Strategy (due for updating) delivered in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust.
- 2.23 The No Use Empty campaign is a collaboration between Kent County Council and all District and Unitary Council. Launched in November 2005, Dover was one of the four founding members. Using a range of methods primarily about giving advice and assisting with finance, but also about effective use of enforcement powers, the campaign has seen over 620 properties brought back into use in East Kent.

- 2.24 'Lighting the Way to Success' is the Sustainable Community Strategy 2009 produced by the East Kent Local Strategic Partnership (Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet along with the County Council, Police and Fire Authorities and other partners). The Strategy highlights affordability issues, the high proportion of fuel poverty and the high proportion of properties failing the former housing fitness standard (with Dover having the highest rate in the South East). It sees the regeneration of acutely deprived neighbourhoods (especially in Dover) including the upgrading of poor housing as a key priority.
- 2.25 The five East Kent authorities along with their home improvement agencies also work together as the East Kent Triangle. It is this body which was responsible for the bid to the Regional Housing Board which led to the substantial increase in capital funding to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Local Strategies

- 2.26 This strategy has to link effectively with strategies at local level. Key amongst these are:
- Dover Corporate Plan 2008 - 2020
 - Dover Core Strategy 2009 – 2026 (subject to outcome of public examination)
 - Dover Pride Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan 2004
 - Dover Masterplan 2006
 - Dover Housing Strategy 2005 – 2009 (currently being revised)
 - Dover Housing Assistance Policy 2009
 - Dover Draft Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015 (Subject to approval)
- 2.27 The Dover Corporate Plan sets out a number of challenging targets, with a particular emphasis on regeneration, spanning the period up to 2020. Specific objectives relevant to private sector housing are:

by 2012, to have

- started a major housing renewal for urban Dover
- enough good quality housing to meet the ambitions of Dover residents, including the most vulnerable residents

By 2015, to have

- no long term empty dwellings within the district¹²

¹² The usual definition of 'long term empty' is a property that has been vacant for 6 months or more. In practice, many properties empty for this length of time may still be undergoing renovation, improvement or sale and so as described in Part 5 we focus action on properties vacant for 12 months or more.

- 2.28 In its portrait of Dover as it now is, the Core Strategy Document again emphasises the sharp contrast between the generally prosperous South East region and the pockets of severe deprivation in parts of Dover (in common with other parts of East Kent). The Core Strategy also highlights the fact that the Dover's population shows a much stronger than average trend of aging, with the proportion of people over 65 set to double over the life of the strategy with the proportions of children and people of working age set to shrink. This does have significant implications for future housing strategies (as well, of course, as for the sustainability of the economy and local communities).
- 2.29 Housing issues raised in the Document include:
- a weaker housing market than in Kent and the region;
 - very significant affordability problems;
 - lack of choice with significantly more terraced housing than the norm;
 - high levels of long term empty homes;
 - a significant amount of the housing stock is in poor condition.
- 2.30 The Core Strategy emphasises that the problems are of the greatest magnitude in Dover town and that this is where a high degree of changes is needed.
- 2.31 Building on the Dover Pride Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan, the Dover Masterplan 2006 sets out a challenging vision:
- 'By 2035 Dover will be one of the most prosperous towns on the South Coast characterised by a highly skilled and enterprising community that is proud of its town, its port and its heritage.'*
- 2.32 The Masterplan sets the scene for major regeneration activity, with housing a key element in this. The plan highlights two large residential communities in need of renewal – Tower Hamlets and St Radigunds. It also says that clear action should be taken to deal with empty homes.
- 2.33 The Housing Strategy has been in place since 2005 and is now being reviewed. It set out six strategic priorities which remain highly relevant to this strategy:
- meeting the need for affordable housing;
 - raising standards in the private sector because of urgent need;
 - supporting the increasing numbers of older people;
 - preventing homelessness (with lack of access to the privately rented sector a particular problem because of deposits and high rents);
 - supporting vulnerable people – many vulnerable households living in poor quality rented accommodation and many have difficulty maintaining their tenancies;
 - meeting Audit Commission recommendations for improvement in the quality of the housing service.

3.0 DOVER - THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Location, Population and General Characteristics

- 3.1 Dover District lies at the eastern most point of the East Kent peninsula. It adjoins the districts of Thanet to the north, Canterbury to west and Shepway to the south west. Dover town is situated at the narrowest point of the English Channel, and is major focus for continental surface travel. Covering 315 sq kilometres (121 sq miles), our current population was estimated to be 106,900 in June 2008, an increase of 2.2% since the Census in 2001.
- 3.2 Dover District remains a mix of rural and urban areas (over 84% of the District remains rural). Dover and Deal are the two main urban population centres, with the market town of Sandwich and the many villages in rural hinterlands housing approximately one third of the population. Whilst containing areas of great natural beauty, our District also has the legacy of areas of derelict land resulting from earlier industrial and mining activity, in particular the former East Kent coalfield.
- 3.3 The South East region is generally seen as affluent. However, as acknowledged in regional, sub regional and local strategies, East Kent and Dover in particular are to an extent isolated from and have weaker economies than the rest of Kent and the region. There are significant pockets of deprivation. Whilst Dover acts an international gateway with millions of domestic and commercial users each year, few of them actually visit the town.
- 3.4 The District is served by major road routes (A20/M20, A2/M2 and A256) although traffic congestion around Dover is a major problem and the District has the only remaining single carriageway sections of the A2. There are good rail links, although the service to London remains slow, although this will of course change with the arrival of the High Speed Rail Link. Whilst there are reasonable bus services between population centres, there is heavy reliance on the car in rural areas.
- 3.5 Dover is close to Ashford and the Thames Gateway areas where major growth is planned; the centres of Dover and Deal also have to compete with Folkestone, Ashford, Westwood Cross and especially Canterbury. These centres tend to draw people from Dover and they have been improving at a faster rate than the two Dover towns.
- 3.6 In July 2008 Dover was successful in gaining Growth Point Status following a bid to the Community Infrastructure Fund with a number of partners including the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), Homes and Community Agency, Kent County Council, Dover Harbour Board and Dover Pride. This will help support an anticipated 10,100 new homes, predominantly in the Whitfield area.

- 3.7 The economy in Dover District has improved from the difficult times in the 1980s caused by the closure of the coal field and the contraction in Port activities. The pharmaceutical, ferry and manufacturing industries have all grown (especially Pfizer) but the level of unemployment in Dover (currently 3.5%¹³) is equivalent to that in Kent although higher than the region figure of 3.1%.
- 3.8 In three wards the unemployment rates are particularly high; the rate in Castle is 8.3%, Tower Hamlets 7.4% and St Radigunds at 6.9%. Castle ranks 6th of 305 wards in Kent, Tower Hamlets 11th and St Radigunds 17th. The rate has shown generally signs of increasing, although at a lower rate than the other East Kent authorities and there were recent falls in the Castle and St Radigunds wards.
- 3.9 However, along with our neighbours in East Kent, the District performs worse than the rest of Kent and the region in terms of indicators such as business start ups, economic activity rates and especially skill levels.
- 3.10 The Government publishes Indices of Deprivation, built up from information about levels of income, employment, health, education, crime, barriers to housing, etc to indicate the relative extent of deprivation in different areas. These again show the sharp contrasts between different parts of our District.
- 3.11 Information is commonly shown by Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs - typical population 1,500). Of the 1,047 LSOAs in Kent and Medway, 14 fall within the top 20% nationally. These are concentrated in the St Radigunds, Tower Hamlets, Town and Pier and Castle wards in Dover. Some of the LSOAs also lie in parts of the Maxton, Elms Vale and Priory and the Buckland wards in Dover town, in parts of the Sholden and Middle Deal wards in Deal and in part of the largely rural Aylesham ward. The majority of the LSOAs are located in a small geographic area close to the centre of Dover town, another factor highlighting the need for an effective regeneration programme.
- 3.12 The Kent & Medway Public Health Observatory produced an inequalities profile for Dover in 2008. This showed that life expectancy figures also varied significantly between wards (8.7 years difference between the highest and lowest). The average District life expectancy is 77.8 years, the live expectancy in the three worst wards was Tower Hamlets (74.1 years), St Radigunds (73.9 years) and Castle (73.5 years). This illustrates clearly the importance of a strategy which includes reducing health inequalities within its aims.
- 3.13 A major issue in the District, and for this strategy, is the age profile of the Dover population. The table¹⁴ below shows the distribution by age band:

¹³ Kent County Council Monthly Unemployment Bulletin August 2009

¹⁴ ONS population estimate June 2008

Figure 1 – Age Profile & Profile

Age Band	Dover (%)	England (%)
Pre-1919	37.6%	21.5%
1919-1944	17.1%	17.4%
1945-1964	19.4%	19.6%
1965-1980	14.7%	21.7%
Post 1980	11.2%	19.9%

3.14 The table shows clearly that the proportions of residents in the age bands over 60 years are higher than both the regional and national positions, with proportionately lower figures for working age adults and for children. Obviously this has major implications for the sustainability of the local economy in future years but also for this strategy because older residents are often less able to maintain their home and are much more likely to require assistance to maintain an independent lifestyle.

Housing Market

Tenure, Age and Build Type Profiles

3.15 There are currently an estimated 49,340 dwellings in Dover¹⁵. The table below shows the tenure profile contrasted with the national position:

Figure 2 – Tenure Mix

Tenure	Dover (%)	England (%)
Owner Occupied	70.5%	70.1%
Privately Rented	14.9%	12.3%
Local Authority	9.4%	9.0%
RSL	5.2%	8.6%

3.16 Owner occupation is at a very similar level to the national average, although the proportion of privately rented properties is over 20% higher than the national figure. The proportion of social housing is appreciably lower than nationally, which does have implications for Dover people seeking affordable housing.

3.17 The table below¹⁶ shows the age profile is significantly different:

¹⁵ HSSA 2008 and House Condition Survey 2008; English House Condition Survey 2007

¹⁶ House Condition Survey 2008; English House Condition Survey 2007

Figure 3 – Age Profile

Age band	Dover (%)	South East (%)	England (%)
0 - 14 years	17.2	17.7	17.6
15 - 24 years	11.9	12.8	13.3
25 - 49 years	30.1	34.4	35.1
50 - 59 years	13.4	12.3	12.0
60 - 74 years	17.6	14.6	14.2
75 - 84 years	6.8	5.8	5.6
85 years and over	2.9	2.5	2.2

3.18 We have substantial numbers of private sector homes built before the First World War, nearly 75% more than the national average. The figures show that almost 55% of our private sector homes were built before the Second World War compared with 39% nationally. A consequence of an older housing stock is that many are likely to have architectural features of importance that need preserving. In the Dover District area there are around 2800 listed building most of which are residential and 56 conservation areas. More than 10% of the private housing stock is subject to these designations. This does have major implications for this strategy as older houses generally require more maintenance, are often harder to heat and improvements will be more challenging where the character of the building has to be protected.

3.19 Lastly, as would be expected from the age profile, the proportions of build types also vary significantly from the national position:

Figure 4 – Build Type

Build Type	Dover (%)	England (%)
Detached	23.8%	17.9%
Semi-detached	30.3%	27.5%
Terraced	36.7%	28.1%
Flat/maisonette	9.2%	17.0%
Bungalow	Included in the above	9.5%

3.20 The most striking feature about the private sector stock in Dover is the high proportion of terraced homes, substantially higher than the national average and the low proportion of flats. These factors have implications for the housing market in terms of choice.

Empty Properties

3.21 Short term empty properties are part of the normal housing market. However, long term empty properties are a wasted resource, have a negative impact on neighbouring properties and often act as a focus for anti social behaviour. Using June 2008 figures¹⁷, overall the proportion of empty properties in Dover at 3.7% is

¹⁷ HSSA June 2008

above the national average of 3.1% and the figure for the South East region of 2.5%. However, when private sector properties only are considered, the rate rises to 4% (compared with 2% in public sector properties only).

- 3.22 More significant is the rate of long term empty properties (empty for 6 months or more). In Dover the overall rate in the private sector was 2.1% (870 properties).. This is significantly above the national average of 1.6% and is the second highest rate in Kent. These long term empty homes are a very significant wasted resource and are a major priority for the Council and for this strategy. We are about to finalise an Empty Homes Strategy to focus resources on this problem.

Housing Market Assessment

- 3.23 The Core Strategy acknowledges that the housing market in Dover is weaker than in Kent and the South East as a whole with average lower house prices and the lowest sales price per square metre in Kent. The average Dover house price in the second quarter of 2009 is £176,400 compared with the Kent average of £209,800, the South East region average of £240,600 and the national average of £224,000¹⁸. Of the thirteen councils, only Swale, Thanet and Medway have lower average prices.

- 3.24 The low average house prices reflect in particular the weaker economy. The East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (please see paragraph 2.21) identified a number of issues which affect the overall East Kent housing market:

- An increasingly aging population (homes need to be made attractive to those of working age whilst also meeting the needs of older residents);
- Increasing numbers of single person households;
- A weak, low wage local economy;
- A 'two tier' wage levels – many households on lower incomes than Kent and South East averages but with some high income households through access to well paid jobs and savings;
- The rural dimension – high house/land prices hand in hand with low wage local households.

- 3.25 Whilst the overall average price is low, there are areas within our District with very high house prices, with implications for affordability. Sandwich in particular experienced very high house price inflation during the recent house price boom.

- 3.26 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified four market areas covering most of the Dover District :

- Dover
- Deal
- Sandwich
- Rural

¹⁸ Land Registry Figures April – June 2009

- 3.27 The assessment showed that the Dover town has a poor market image as a place to live, although there were elevated prices in parts of the rural area, especially in the east. There are particular problems in the inner areas of concentrated terraced housing. Part of the plan to improve these areas in the Core Strategy is the allocation of four areas for new housing to encourage people to migrate into the area.
- 3.28 The housing market in Deal, a coastal urban area surrounded by rural areas, was more robust with higher house prices than Dover but with the aging population and affordability both matter of concern. The Core Strategy does not envisage any major economic ambitions for Deal.
- 3.29 Sandwich has higher house prices, driven by a large local employer, but affordability is a particular problem with development constrained by flood risk, difficult access and the landscape.
- 3.30 In all three cases the Strategic Housing Assessment recommended high targets for contributions for planning gain (under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).
- 3.31 As in many areas, the growth of the privately rented sector has had a marked impact on the housing market. The Housing Strategy described the increase in the privately rented sector because of national interest in the buy to let market and the fact that this sector was further stimulated by the decline in the guest house trade.
- 3.32 Privately rented properties are concentrated in the urban centres of Dover and Deal, with high proportions of poorer quality rented accommodation especially in the more deprived areas of Dover. Higher levels of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs - normally properties where facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms are shared between different households within one house) were found in the Castle ward.

Housing Conditions in the Private Sector

Dover House Condition Survey 2008

- 3.33 Stock condition surveys are carried out to give an accurate picture of housing conditions in a district using a sample of properties chosen at random. The overall results are analysed to give a clear picture of housing issues – hazards, disrepair, compliance with Decent Homes Standard, etc, along with information on social issues. The Government carries out a national stock condition survey every year now with the English Housing Survey (EHCS).
- 3.34 A House Condition Survey covering all tenures was carried out by a specialist survey firm on behalf of Dover during 2008. House condition surveys will normally draw a sample of 1,000 dwellings; 1,016 dwellings were in fact inspected.

- 3.35 This was the first house condition survey carried out since 2001 and the first to look at the impact of the new Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The new survey could not give a direct comparison with the results from the 2001 survey because the housing fitness standard that applied in 2001 has now been replaced in 2006 by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which also affects assessment under the Decent Homes Standard.
- 3.36 As described already, there are significantly more older and more terraced properties in Dover than nationally and this is reflected in the findings of both the 2001 House Condition Survey and the findings of the 2008 House Condition Survey.

Unfitness and The Housing Health and Safety Rating System

- 3.37 The first criterion of the Decent Homes Standard is that a property should meet the minimum legal standard for housing. Up until April 2006, this was that a property should be fit for human habitation. A standard which dated back 80 years, it has now been replaced by the HHSRS.
- 3.38 The 2001 House Condition Survey did not measure conditions against the Decent Homes Standard as the standard was not formalised when the field work was done. However, it did measure unfitness and found that 13% of the private sector housing stock was unfit, three times higher than the national rate at the time of 4.2%¹⁹. There was a strong association with property age; 20% of pre-1919 properties were unfit. With property type, 15% of terraced properties were found to be unfit with the rate 36% in converted flats.
- 3.39 The replacement for the fitness standard, the HHSRS concentrates on assessing the potential hazards that a dwelling may present to potential occupiers and visitors of a property (i.e. not just actual occupiers at the time of the inspection). Details of how the system works are given at Appendix 2.
- 3.40 As with unfitness, a local authority has a *duty* to take statutory action to deal with a Category 1 hazard (i.e. it is mandatory). With Category 2 hazards, an authority has a discretionary *power* to statutory action.
- 3.41 The 2008 condition survey found the overall proportion of properties with category 1 hazards is 25.2% (10,765 homes) compared with a national average of 21.7%²⁰ (23.5% in the private sector only). Obviously this is a priority for future action.
- 3.42 Key findings from the 2008 house condition survey in respect of category 1 hazards are:
- the main reasons for category 1 hazards were excess cold and falling on stairs etc;

¹⁹ English House Condition Survey 2001

²⁰ English House Condition Survey 2007

- the rate in the privately rented sector at 40.4% was higher than for the owner occupied sector (22.0%) – the national figures are 30.5% and 22.2% respectively;
- the rate in properties built pre-1919 was 55.6% and in interwar properties 12.5% - the rate was 7% or less in all other property types (the national figures are 44.5% and 24.0% respectively); and
- the rate in terraced properties varied between 23.3% and 39.5% (nationally the rate in terraced properties varies between 23.3% and 28.0%)

The Decent Homes Standard

3.43 The Decent Homes Standard is the main Government benchmark of housing condition. Paragraph 2.4 set the four criteria of the standard; the detail is set out at Appendix 1.

3.44 The survey found that 17,600 dwellings (41.2%) failed the Decent Homes Standard. This is appreciably higher than the national average of 35%²¹ (36% in the private sector only) from the EHCS 2007.

3.45 The table at below shows the reasons for failure of the standard. Category 1 hazards are the main reason for failure; as already described, the main reason is the presence of a category 1 hazard. This is followed by properties that fail criterion (b) because of disrepair – at 20.8% this is almost three times greater than the national average. The other two indicators are significantly below national averages.

Figure 5 – Reasons for Failure of the Decent Homes Standard

Reason	Dwellings	Dover 2008 % Private Sector Stock	EHCS 2007 % Stock (All Tenures)	EHCS 2007 % Private Sector Stock Only
Category 1 Hazard	10,765	25.2%	21.7%	23.5%
In need of repair	8,890	20.8%	7.1%	7.3%
Lacking adequate facilities	330	0.8%	3.2%	2.9%
Poor degree of thermal comfort	2,390	5.6%	15.4%	15.9%

3.46 Key findings by tenure, property age and build type were as follows:

- as nationally, the rate of non decency in the private rented sector at 65.7% is significantly higher than in the owner occupied sector at 36.0% (national figures 45.4% and 34.1%²² respectively);
- The rate of non decency in pre-1919 properties was 73.1% in pre-1919 properties and 32.3% in interwar properties. Surprisingly a rate of 38.2% was found in properties built between 1981-1990, with the rates below 20% in all

²¹ English House Condition Survey 2007

²² English House Condition Survey 2007

other age bands. The national figures are 57.9%, 38.3% and 24.3% respectively. The high proportion of non decent properties in the 1981-1990 age band is probably due to a combination of electric heating and inadequate insulation.

- The rate of non decency in terraced properties varied between 39.1% and 56.6%. Nationally figures in terraced properties vary between 38.2% and 39.2%.

3.47 The findings in respect of the non decency and category 1 hazards in particular in privately rented and in older, terraced properties are obviously very significant factors in the formulation of new strategy.

The PSA7 Target

3.48 The Government set a very clear target for all homes in the social housing sector to be made decent by 2010. In the private sector, the targets related to the numbers of vulnerable households²³ in non decent homes. In Dover, the survey estimated there to be 15,670 vulnerable households.

3.49 In April 2008, the Government removed the requirement for local authorities to meet the PSA7 target. However, it remains relevant to funding applications and we also feel that it is a very useful benchmark to gauge our performance.

3.50 The first PSA7 target was 65% to be achieved by 2007, followed by a target of 70% by 2010. The 2008 House Condition Survey gave the following results in respect of vulnerable households in non decent homes; the figures show the numbers of vulnerable heads by tenure, the proportions in decent homes and the number of properties occupied by vulnerable households that need to be made decent to meet the 70% target.

Figure 6 – Vulnerable Households in Non Decent Homes

Tenure	Number Vulnerable Households	Number Vulnerable Households in Decent Homes	Percent Vulnerable Households in Decent Homes	Shortfall for 70% Target
Owner occupied	11527	6868	59.6%	1,200
Privately rented	4146	1062	25.6%	1,840
Total	15673	7930	50.6%	3,040

3.51 The figures show very clearly that that a major priority for this Strategy has to be to increase the numbers of vulnerable households living in decent homes, especially in the private rented sector, where only 25.6% of vulnerable households live in decent homes. At 3,040, the shortfall is substantial, especially the 1,840 shortfall in the private rented sector and presents a challenging target.

²³ Households in receipt of income or disability related benefits

3.52 The table also emphasises very clearly the message from the figures in respect of overall non decency and category 1 hazards that the private rented sector must also be a very clear priority. The figures for the shortfall in pre-1919 properties (2,710 of the 3,040 total shortfall) and for terraced properties (1,660 of the 3,040 total shortfall) also emphasise the earlier messages that older terraced homes must be a priority.

3.53 The cost of making homes decent does present a very big challenge – the survey estimated the cost of works just to put right failures of the Decent Homes Standard at just over £78 million. The cost just to make the PSA7 target shortfall is over £17 million. These potential costs reinforce our view that we should increase measures to facilitate equity release and bolster enforcement.

Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

3.54 The house condition survey looked closely at energy efficiency issues and in particular at fuel poverty. Key findings were:

- The mean SAP rating²⁴ (an energy efficiency score running from 0 – 100) for Dover is 57 higher than the national figure of 50. (The Government target SAP rating is 65).
- The least energy efficient homes are older homes (pre-1919 homes have an average SAP of 50) and maisonettes. Privately rented homes are less energy efficient than owner occupied dwellings (54 compared with 58)
- The cost to rectify failures of the thermal comfort criterion of the Decent Homes Standard is over £13 million (average cost per dwelling £2,390).
- There are an estimated 2,910 households (7%) in fuel poverty (2006 national estimate 14%).
- Fuel poverty was highest with households in the private rented sector and in pre-1919 properties.

Retrofitting

3.54 Despite the significant new housing planned for the district, the existing homes that were designed and built with much lower fuel efficiency measures in mind, will continue to form the greatest proportion of the housing stock in the district. Typically, an existing home gives off more than double the carbon emissions (and has twice the fuel costs) of a new house.

3.55 In order for the government to achieve its target of cutting carbon emissions in the UK by 80% by 2050 attention will have to be given to how these existing homes can be made more energy efficient.

3.56 Retrofitting existing housing to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and help tackle fuel poverty provides gives better energy and carbon savings per pound spent than any new build measure or renewable technology. Key retrofit measures we may want to consider are:

²⁴ (A SAP rating for a dwelling is a score from 0 - 100 derived from survey information on the heating system and controls, type of fuel, construction details, levels of insulation, etc; the higher the score the better)

- controlling ventilation by draught proofing, blocking up unused chimneys, sealing leaky timber ground floors and introducing humidity controlled extractor fans where needed;
- insulating solid walls, replacing single glazed windows with new high performance double glazed windows, filling cavity walls, and insulating lofts and roofs;
- installing new highly efficient gas condensing boilers with thermostats and programmers and thermostatic radiator valves.

3.57 As part of any retrofitting approach we will need to consider more than the physical changes to an individual house including:

The wider effects of each measure

Retrofitting measures need to be considered as a package. This will achieve maximum energy savings but will also avoid adverse effects such as increasing dampness and mould by excessively reducing ventilation or creating cold bridges (areas that are especially cold, as partial insulation of some areas can result in others becoming colder than before).

The bigger picture

Experience suggests that the greatest efficiencies can be made by taking a wider approach to refurbishment with a focus on the desired overall outcome. Some of the worst housing in energy terms is also occupied by the poorest people, both low income renters and homeowners. Carbon reduction may be the priority but retrofitting can also have a positive impact on individual and community well-being and water use.

Linkage to an area-wide strategy

It may be more economically viable to undertake retrofitting on a large scale. Studies suggest that greater financial savings (and equivalent carbon savings) can be achieved by retrofitting a 'cluster' of homes.

An approach tailored to different housing types

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to retrofitting existing homes. The large variety of different house types means that different approaches may be necessary in terms of the planning consent that will be required.

A whole-house approach

This can result in cost savings as trades can work together to ensure works are undertaken in the most logical order. Using multi-skilled professionals can also create cost savings, for example one tradesperson may be able to install both wall and loft insulation.

Households Where There is a Person With A Disability

The house condition survey found that 22% of households (9,230) felt that there was at least one household member who had a disability. This does indicate that the current high demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (please see paragraph 4.36) will not reduce.

4.0 WHAT WE DO NOW

Inspection Of The Housing Service

- 4.1 Changing times and challenges mean that we have adapted our services to deliver more within existing resources. The private sector services we currently offer cover informing, advice & specialist support, inspection and enforcement and financial assistance.
- 4.2 The Housing Inspectorate of the Audit Commission carried out an inspection of our strategic housing service in April 2008. This covered the work of the Private Sector Housing Team as well as the Housing Needs and Strategy Teams. Overall, their report concluded that the service was fair, but with uncertain prospects for improvement
- 4.3 With regard to the private sector housing service, the Inspectorate acknowledged the success of the programmes to offer financial assistance, the handyperson service and aspects of the enforcement work. However, the Inspectorate did state that:
- Enforcement activity was limited compared to the demands upon the service
 - Empty homes are not being tackled effectively
 - Vulnerable people have to wait a long time for disabled adaptations to be fitted.

The action and plan recommended by the audit commission has been completed and substantial improvements made in all these areas.

Offering Information, Advice and Specialist Support

- 4.4 The overriding aim of our Private Sector Housing Team is to secure the best possible standards in private sector housing. The Team's core function is to ensure that statutory standards are met using enforcement powers when necessary. However, its work goes beyond that, advising and intervening to help tenants, owner occupiers and landlords with a wide range of housing issues.

Engaging with Landlords

- 4.5 As in many parts of the country, the privately rented sector makes a very valuable contribution to the supply of affordable housing. At 14.9% of the total stock, Dover's privately rented sector is larger than the 14.6% of the Council stock and RSL stock combined. We think a well managed, well maintained private rented sector can play a very valuable role in Dover in helping:
- to make more properties available to vulnerable households;
 - help vulnerable households to find suitable accommodation;
 - to reduce homelessness.
- 4.6 In recent years, Officers in both the Private Sector Housing Team and the Housing Needs Team have worked to develop a positive working relationship with landlords

who want to deliver good quality housing. A Landlords Forum is run jointly with Shepway District Council and there is an annual Landlords Forum with the other East Kent authorities. The Forum allows a positive exchange of information on housing issues and standards.

- 4.7 Deposits required by landlords are often a major obstacle to potential tenants. The Deposit Bond Scheme run by the Housing Needs Team underwrites the risk of rent default and/or damage to the property. The scheme makes a significant contribution to matching homeless households or those threatened with homelessness with suitable, affordable housing, as acknowledged by the Audit Commission report.
- 4.8 Accreditation schemes are increasingly used by local authorities. Here, advice and assistance is given to both landlords and tenants to promote satisfactory management standards. Dover is now part of the Kent Landlord Accreditation Scheme, KLAS. Landlords participating in the scheme:
- attend a one day development course to obtain or reinforce the knowledge/skills important in ensuring their business meets necessary standards;
 - agree to follow a code of conduct and
 - demonstrate they are a 'fit and proper person' to act as a residential landlord.

Home Improvement Agency/Handyperson

- 4.9 The drive to encourage equity release is linked with moves to promote independent living and a coherent approach linking housing, health and care. It is clear that home improvement agencies must play a key part in this. For some years now, the administration of most financial assistance has been assisted by the In Touch Home Improvement Agency, part of the Hyde Housing Association. The service is jointly funded by the County Council, the Occupational Therapy Service and the Council.
- 4.10 In addition to the home improvement agency service, In Touch also provide the Handyperson Service. This is now funded jointly by The County Council, the East Kent PCT and the Council. This offers direct assistance with minor, low cost jobs for householders who are over pension age or who are disabled. Most older people want to remain in their own home but as health and mobility decline many need occasional help with minor jobs such as changing tap washers, putting up curtain rails, etc. The householder is charged the cost of materials and a low labour charge of £5.00 per hour if not in receipt of benefit. There is no labour charge if a person is in receipt of benefit. The service is proving very popular.
- 4.11 The service has recently been expanded to 2 handypersons each with a fully equipped van after success in applying for additional funding offered by the Government. The funding for the additional post, however, is not permanent and we will need to consider other possible options in the event that this is not renewed.

- 4.12 The Agency also operates the Homesafe Handyperson service offering a conventional Handyperson service to vulnerable households who have been a victim of crime or potential target of crime (including domestic abuse where there are appropriate referrals from external organisations). A Handyperson would assess security and fit a variety of security and safety products including window locks, door locks, spy holes, door chains, smoke alarms and fire proof letter boxes.
- 4.13 *Energy Efficiency:* The Council takes positive action to promote home energy efficiency and has a specialist Climate Change Officer. Domestic energy efficiency especially fuel poverty is a growing Government concern, particularly in the context of global concern over climate change and we intend to drive further improvements forward. The success of action so far is shown in the fact that the average SAP rating in Dover is 57 compared with the national average of 50. Dover would be expected to have a lower than average score because of the high numbers of older properties with solid walls. The Housing Inspectorate report noted that we were performing well in this area.
- 4.14 Nonetheless, we still have to acknowledge that there is a still a substantial amount of work to do to improve energy efficiency in our private sector stock – and also that the recent House Condition Survey estimated that there are almost 3,000 households in fuel poverty.
- 4.15 We have close working partnerships with other Kent local authorities and Energy Saving Trust
- 4.16 We are currently looking at proposals for the Community Energy Savings Programme where funding is likely to be available for local areas which are in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country. Parts of the St Radigunds ward fall within this category.
- 4.17 Our work goes beyond just informing and advising; we give both grants and loans for energy efficiency works.
- 4.18 Improving energy efficiency is vital for health reasons; there are very clear links between cold homes and ill health, especially heart attacks, strokes and respiratory problems. However, policies at national, regional and local level are increasingly directed at moves to help reduce the impact of climate change and the Council believes strongly that it should give a lead in this area, and a formal Carbon Reduction Plan has been prepared.

Inspection and Enforcement

General Approach

- 4.19 Enforcement is a core function of the Private Sector Housing Team. Under the Housing Acts and related environmental health and building legislation, local councils have both legal powers and duties to deal with unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private sector.
- 4.20 Statutory notices can be served on both owner occupiers and landlords to require work to be carried out or in extreme cases for properties to be closed or demolished. In practice, nationally the great majority of notices are served on landlords to require repairs or improvements to be carried out for the benefit of tenants.
- 4.21 As outlined in Part 3, the main enforcement tool now is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Subject to certain mandatory requirements (for example dealing with Category 1 hazards) local authorities do have wide discretion in the way they use these powers. Appendix 2 sets out details of how the HHSRS operates and sets out a framework to be incorporated in our enforcement policy.
- 4.22 The approach to enforcement can be reactive (i.e. responding to complaints made) or proactive (inspections on a planned, regular basis). The proactive approach is recognised as being more efficient and effective and authorities generally seek now to make a significant proportion of inspections proactive. Because of previously limited staffing resources, the bulk of inspections in Dover have been reactive, although a proactive approach has been taken to mandatory licensing.
- 4.23 It is usual to adopt an informal approach with landlords before statutory notices are served, with contact through telephone and letters and this approach is encouraged by the Government through the national Enforcement Concordat. Our approach has been mainly informal, as in most cases property owners tend to carry out work after an informal approach.
- 4.24 In 2008/09, 226 complaints about housing conditions were made and it was necessary to serve Housing Act notices in 26 cases. (Since 2006, there have generally been around 210 – 230 complaints per year excluding empty properties).
- 4.25 We do not currently charge for statutory notices as allowed by the Housing Act 2004.
- 4.26 The prime responsibility for dealing with complaints of illegal eviction and harassment currently rests with the Housing Needs Team.
- 4.27 We recognised in 2007 that staffing levels were not adequate for enforcement and an additional specialist officer was appointed in April 2008. From the table below you can see the effect has been to increase the number of enforcement notices served. This increased enforcement activity increased the number of homes made decent from 17 in 2007/08 to 70 in the following year 2008/09.

Year	Housing Act Notices	Other	Total
2007 -8	3	23	26
2008-9	26	62	88
2009 (9 months only)	31	41	72

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

- 4.28 Across the country, conditions in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)²⁵ tend to be less satisfactory than in homes occupied by single households, especially in terms of fire safety. In such properties, residents commonly share facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms, although some converted flats²⁶ now come within the definition. The total number of HMOs in the District is estimated at around 200, with the majority converted flats rather than properties with shared facilities. Many of the properties were formerly guest houses serving the holiday trade.
- 4.29 At around 0.5% of private sector properties, the proportion of HMOs is less than the national average but this is still a key staff responsibility. Over past years, the Council has inspected many of the HMOs, focusing in particular on fire safety issues and the majority now comply with necessary standards. The limited numbers of complaints now received from HMO residents appears to reflect this.
- 4.30 There are significantly greater risks associated with houses in multiple occupation and additional powers and duties exist for HMOs. These include mandatory licensing provisions for higher risk HMOs (where there are three or more storeys, five residents in at least two households).
- 4.31 Prior to mandatory licensing, we operated a registration scheme for higher risk properties and we have generally good information on such properties. We have currently licensed 32 higher risk HMOs. The Housing Inspectorate report acknowledges our understanding of the HMO position in the District.

Empty Homes

- 4.32 At an estimated 2.1%, the proportion of long term empty properties in the District is a significant concern. It is significantly above the national average of 1.6% and the estimated 870 properties represent a substantial wasted resource. They are also a potential source of nuisance and anti social behaviour. Our focus on tackling such properties was an area criticised by the Housing Inspectorate.

²⁵ Houses containing bed sits, or non self contained flats or flats described below in footnote 26.

²⁶ Generally converted flats where the conversion was carried before the 1991 Building Regulations and the conversion work does not meet the standard required in those Regulations.

- 4.33 Whilst we have taken informal and formal action to bring long term empty properties back into use (including the offering of financial incentives) and have played a very active role in the county wide 'No Use Empty' campaign, we recognise that this area needs greater priority and we set out later in this section our proposals for doing so, including the introduction of a formal Empty Homes Strategy.

Financial Assistance

- 4.34 For many years, financial assistance offered by local authorities to home owners to repair, improve or adapt properties took the form of grants. The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 gave local authorities much greater freedom to tailor a framework for offering financial assistance taking into account the specific needs and resources of their area. In addition, the Government has emphasised strongly its view that the prime responsibility for the repair and/or improvement of a home should rest with the owner. In guidance, the Government continues to make it clear that it wants to see equity release schemes promoted.
- 4.35 Since 2004, the majority of financial assistance offered by Dover has been by way of loans. In 2006, we were successful in obtaining from the Regional Housing Board 3.5 million for 2006/2008. A successful bid has provided a further 1 million for subsequent years. This allowed us to increase substantially the assistance offered.

Mandatory Assistance

- 4.36 The majority of adaptation works to a property where there is a person with disabilities remain mandatory. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) account for a substantial capital spend each year. The number of grants was typically around 50 to 60 each year between 2004 – 2008 with total expenditure around £420k; in 2008/09 there were 86 grants with a spend of £600k and we anticipate that in 2009/10 the number of grants will rise to over 90 with an estimated spend of £680k. We do not currently impose any charge on a property where a mandatory DFG is given.
- 4.37 In recent years delays were experienced by many DFG applicants mainly due to lack of grant funding. We have taken steps to address this both with our own procedures and with the In Touch Home Improvement Agency and there is currently no waiting list.

Discretionary Financial Assistance

- 4.38 In addition to mandatory DFGs we offer a range of discretionary loans and grants. Where loans are offered, these are interest free. The assistance falls into four broad groups:
- discretionary assistance for households where there is a person with disabilities;
 - decent homes assistance;

- energy efficiency assistance; and
- empty property assistance

4.39 There are two types of discretionary assistance for a person with disabilities.

4.40 Disabled Home Loan Assistance: A person receiving a mandatory DFG can receive an interest free loan of up to £6,000 to carry out essential ancillary works for example electrical works. The loan is repayable on sale of the property.

4.41 Disabled Relocation Loan: On occasions a property may be unsuitable for adaptation and a move to an alternative property may be much more cost effective. Where the applicant would otherwise be eligible for a DFG, a loan of up to £10,000 may be offered to cover legal and moving costs. The loan can also include any agreed figure for additional purchase cost and is repayable on sale of the property.

4.42 There is now just one form of Decent Homes Assistance. This is not restricted by geographical location but we do target information and publicity campaigns on the inner areas of Dover town where housing condition problems are concentrated. The Housing Inspectorate report acknowledged that we had focussed effectively on distributing this form of assistance.

Decent Homes Loan: Properties have to fail the Decent Homes Standard. Owner occupiers in receipt of means tested or disabled benefit can apply for a loan of up to £30,000 repayable on sale. Landlords can apply for a loan of up to £15,000 repayable after 10 years with accredited landlords and after 3 years with non accredited landlords.

4.43 There are now two main forms of energy efficiency assistance:

Heating and Insulation Grant: Properties have to fail the thermal comfort criterion of the Decent Homes Standard. This is a non repayable grant available to certain owner occupiers and tenants (predominantly householders over 60 years or with dependent children or pregnant) in receipt of specified means tested benefits. The maximum grant is £4,000 (£8,000 in hard to heat rural homes). In rural locations, works can include the provision of renewable technologies such as solar heating. The grant can be given in association with other forms of assistance. The scheme is managed for the Council by Creative Environmental Networks (CEN), part of the Energy Saving Trust.

Heating and Insulation Loan: Again properties have to fail the thermal comfort criterion of the Decent Homes Standard. This is a loan available to owner occupiers in receipt of less than £30,000 gross income and to landlords who agree to let to tenants in receipt of specified benefits for heating and insulation works. The maximum loan is £5,000 (£8,000 in hard to heat rural properties). In rural locations, works can include the provision of renewable technologies such as solar heating and again the scheme is managed by CEN. The loan is repayable by owner occupiers on

sale within 10 years, after 10 years by accredited landlords and after 3 years with non accredited landlords.

4.44 Currently there is only one form of empty property assistance:

4.45 Empty Property Assistance: This is a grant to pay the interest incurred on a Kent County Council No Use Empty Loan. (These loans are made available to properties owners to bring long term empty properties back into use. They are repayable on completion of the works.)

4.46 The table below shows the broad pattern of expenditure on financial assistance over the past 4 years and anticipated expenditure over the remainder of this financial year.

Figure 7 – Financial Assistance Expenditure

Financial Year	2006/07 (£k)	2007/08 (£k)	2008/09 (£k)	2009/10 (£k)
Mandatory DFGs	382	439	600	680
Discretionary Disabled Assistance	0	24	6.6	15
Decent Homes Assistance	110	374	1245	1670
Energy Efficiency Assistance	180	224	126	700
Empty Property Assistance	64	0	27	30

4.47 The table shows clearly the increasing spend pattern on mandatory DFGs and the very substantial expenditure on Decent Homes Assistance after the successful bid for additional funding. The Decent Homes Assistance has proved very successful in making homes decent – 89 properties in the first six months of this financial year.

4.48 As described at paragraph 3.54, the 2008 House Condition Survey did show that 22% of households felt there was at least one member with a disability and realistically demand for mandatory DFGs will not reduce, particularly as the proportion of older households increases.

4.49 Whilst the spend on Empty Property Assistance appears low, this is the catalyst that makes the No Use Empty loans work effectively. Now that the downturn in the property market appears to be easing, the numbers of properties brought into use with this assistance is increasing sharply – 12 properties have been brought back into use in the first six months of this year using this route (and a further 12 through advice alone).

- 4.50 Almost all loans and DFG grant applicants are assisted through the In Touch Home Improvement Agency, although applicants are not required to use the agency. The Council still inspects, approves all grants and loans and authorises payments. The agency currently deals with around 240 live cases at any one time (roughly half and half DFGs and Decent Homes loans). In Touch charges a fee rate of 10%, for which a non repayable grant is given.
- 4.51 With the sudden increase in workload after the additional decent homes funding was obtained, problems with backlogs and other issues were experienced. The Agency and the Council have worked together to resolve these backlogs and there are no longer waiting lists. Applications are processed immediately and once verified normally wait no longer than 5 months for the work to be completed depending on the scale of the job.
- 4.52 Neither the Council or the agency offer independent financial advice when discussing loans; residents are always advised to seek their own independent financial advice.

Diversity and Inclusivity

- 4.53 The Council is committed to ensuring that there is equal access to all services by all residents of the District. This Strategy concerns the delivery of services and allocation of resources to many vulnerable groups including low income households, households with older residents, residents with disabilities and residents from minority communities. The Strategy has been developed to ensure that limited resources are allocated as fairly as possible and delivery will be in accordance with the principles of the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 4.54 We already have in place procedures to assess customer satisfaction and diversity in respect of financial assistance and complaint investigation. We also record customer information upon receipt of a request to determine if we are reaching all diverse groups.
- 4.55 Neighbourhood meetings are attended by officers of the Private Sector team such as the Folkestone Road group which includes local residents and representative from a non British ethnic group.
- 4.56 It is believed that some of the worst rented accommodation is occupied by non British ethnic groups in the town centre of Dover. Unfortunately we rarely receive enquiries from them. We work with the Community Liaison Officer to help identify these residents and a more pro-active approach in the roads believed to house these groups should help us target them for help in the future.

The requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 including the preparation of Equality impact assessments have been met in the preparation of this Strategy

Consultation

- 4.57 We have consulted widely and taken into account views received when preparing this new strategy. Initial consultation was with a group of invited stakeholders. Those who attended included representatives of local landlords, letting agents, The National Landlords Association, RSLs, Municipal Charities of Dover, the Dover Society and In Touch. Votes were taken on a series of structured questions giving options for future action in respect of housing assistance, enforcement action, empty homes, engaging with landlords, energy efficiency assistance and disability adaptations.
- 4.58 A draft strategy was circulated to a wide stakeholders group and was also made available for comment on the Council's website. Again, views received were taken into account in drafting the final version.
- 4.59 A summary of the views received during consultation is given at Appendix 3; they cover a range of issues we should adopt we offer advice and financial assistance and our approach to enforcement.

THE FUTURE

5.0 Future Priorities

- 5.1 To achieve our previously stated objectives and in response to the findings from the Private Sector Stock Condition survey and consultation feedback, we have identified the following priorities for action over the next five years:
- Improve our response to meet statutory responsibilities.
 - Reduce the number of long term empty properties
 - Increase the number of decent homes for vulnerable households.
 - Develop a neighbourhood renewal policy to improve areas containing poor housing

Improve our effectiveness at meeting our Statutory Responsibilities

- 5.2 It is clear that priorities from national, regional and local plans drive this Strategy, along of course with the consultation outcomes. However, whilst seeking to meet the strategic priorities within resources which will always be limited, we cannot lose sight of the fact that we have to meet a range of statutory obligations: category 1 hazards, mandatory licensing, and responding to complaints which will take a substantial volume of our staff time.
- 5.3 The House Condition Survey showed that 25.2% of properties (an estimated 10,765 homes) have category 1 hazards. The House Condition Survey figures show that the proportions of these hazards are high in privately rented homes, in pre-1919 properties and in terraced properties.
- 5.4 Effective enforcement is crucial as 21.6% of privately rented properties contain a category 1 hazard. Advice, specialist support and offering financial assistance all play important roles, especially as the majority of category 1 hazards are excess cold where financial assistance is often the key to removing the hazard especially for the 2000 homes in the owner occupier sector.
- 5.5 Whilst we feel that previous work has ensured that we have maintained effective control over standards in houses in multiple occupation, and that we have dealt effectively with mandatory licensing, the numbers in Dover mean that this will always be a significant part of our work. We intend to maintain the standards that now prevail in this sector.
- 5.6 Our Service Plans already set a number of specific targets for the Private Sector Housing Team. These cover areas such as homes made decent through financial assistance and enforcement, category 1 hazards dealt with (and timescales), empty homes brought back into use by direct local authority action, and HMO licensing. We have reinforced these targets (especially in respect of empty homes) as part of this Strategy.

Reduce the Number of Long Term Empty Homes

- 5.7 Our statutory powers also extend to dealing with long term empty homes and we acknowledge that this is a major priority for Dover. Our actions have increased the numbers of long term empty properties bought back into use but the overall numbers continue to rise and we have higher percentage of long term empty homes than the rest of England.
- 5.8 Our empty property strategy for 2010-15 sets out our priorities and actions to deal with empty properties which includes more resources and a focus of action on the worst properties.

Increase the number of Decent Homes for Vulnerable Households

- 5.9 The House Condition Survey showed that only 50.6% of vulnerable households live in decent homes, well below the 70% PSA7 target for 2010. In the privately rented sector, the proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes is only 25.6%.
- 5.10 At the moment, we need to make 3,040 properties occupied by vulnerable households decent to meet the 70% target. Of this shortfall, 1,840 properties are in the privately rented sector and 1,200 in the owner occupied sector. Even allowing for the numbers of properties that will have been made decent since the House Condition Survey was carried out last year and those that will be made decent before the new Strategy takes effect, to do this over the five year life of this Strategy we will need to make 400 such properties decent each year.
- 5.11 Reducing the number of vulnerable households in non decent homes requires a fully comprehensive approach. Even acknowledging that effective enforcement will be a key factor because of the concentration of vulnerable households in non decent privately rented homes, a mix of advice, financial assistance and informal and formal enforcement to tackle category 1 hazards, disrepair, lack of modern facilities and inadequate thermal comfort will be required. The overall target therefore informs and drives all aspects of the work of our Private Sector Housing Team.

Develop a neighbourhood renewal policy to improve areas containing poor housing

- 5.12 The house condition surveys especially the 2001 survey indicated that poor housing was concentrated in particular wards in Dover urban areas. The health inequalities of deprived areas can be illustrated by the Dover Health Profile 2009 produced by the Department of Health which states the life expectancy for women living in the most deprived areas is nine years lower for those in the least deprived area of Dover.
- 5.13 The Council has already identified areas such as St Radigunds will require regeneration as being the most deprived ward in Dover. Local community concerns with Folkestone Road area and the condition of properties particularly those rented

are regularly voiced to the Council. Both these areas have a high percentage of rented accommodation and older housing.

- 5.14 It is recognised that not all homes can be improved economically to meet current and future standards. Improvements could also include clearance and redevelopment. This would require considerable resources.
- 5.15 The need to carry out area renewal is considered a priority to tackle the poor conditions in Dover. Although it is recognised that currently there is insufficient resources to carry out this work we need to explore ways of funding this work and take advantage of possible funding. We also need to see how improvements to private sector housing can be undertaken to support and compliment other regeneration projects in the area.

We Will Address These Priorities By

Offering Information, Advice and Specialist Support

- 5.16 We feel that in general terms our teams offer very valuable information, advice and specialist support to private sector residents but we need both to take account of change and also to look to improve where this is possible.
- 5.17 With energy efficiency, we will continue to increase public access to good information and in particular to target energy efficiency information on fuel poverty households. We will continue to promote access to grants such as Warm Front and our own assistance packages. In particular, we are now working with estate agents to link with the Home Information Packs (HIPs) produced with new sales and lettings.
- 5.18 In line with the Audit Commission “Lofty Ambitions” report, we will seek to ensure that advice is targeted in particular at those in greatest need.
- 5.19 The Handyperson service has proved popular and successful in giving specialist support to vulnerable households. The addition of the second Handyperson has been of great value. We wish to see this service maintained and reinforced and, given the uncertainties over future funding, we intend to work with our partners involved with this project at the charging regime. Other local authorities charge rates which, whilst still well below commercial rates (especially in terms of no minimum callout fee), make reliance on public funding much less.
- 5.20 In Touch is currently trialling ways of extending the Handyperson approach to gardening and decorating through social enterprise schemes. If these prove successful and can be funded at low cost in Dover, we will work with the agency to promote the service. We will also explore ways of giving householders advice on repairs and home maintenance.

- 5.21 The Deposit Bond Scheme is proving very successful in allowing vulnerable households access to suitable affordable housing. Many local authorities link bond schemes, which do benefit landlords, with accreditation. We see the advantage in this especially where the accreditation involves property standards²⁷. Equally we do not want to discourage responsible landlords who may not wish to become accredited. As a first step, we shall introduce a requirement that landlords should be accredited or meet accreditation standards. We may move this on to require properties to reach set standards.
- 5.22 Continue to promote the Kent Landlord Accreditation Scheme and landlords training schemes to encourage best practice. Explore ways of encouraging landlords to become accredited by linking to other initiatives such as the bond guarantee scheme.

Information, Advice and Specialist Support - we will:

- Increase public access to energy efficiency information targeting households in greatest need especially those in fuel poverty.
- With our partners, review the charging for the Handyperson service to bolster its funding.
- Support the low cost gardening and decoration services to vulnerable households through the Handyperson service.
- Explore ways to give householders advice on repairs and maintenance
- Link the Bond Guarantee Scheme to accreditation standards.

Inspection and Enforcement

- 5.23 We are always seeking improvement to improve housing standards and feel that some positive changes can be made. In line with the Enforcement Concordat, informal action is the most appropriate approach in the great majority of cases where residents are concerned about unsatisfactory housing. We also believe strongly in engaging positively with those landlords who recognise and observe the considerable responsibilities involved in letting out residential property.
- 5.24 We also recognise that we have a duty to deal with unsatisfactory housing and in particular to take action with category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The importance of this has been heightened by the figures from the House Condition Survey in respect of non decency and category 1 hazards in the private rented sector.
- 5.25 We shall now be adopting a more fast track approach to housing enforcement, moving promptly to take formal action using the Housing Act 2004 powers where it is clear that this is warranted – a policy of being fair but firm. We will review our service standards to reflect this and will monitor enforcement work to ensure the tighter timescale are adhered to.

²⁷ A practice recommended in the May 2001 DETR Good Practice Guide on developing voluntary accreditation schemes

- 5.26 We shall at the same time introduce charging for statutory notices. Investigating housing complaints does take time and resources and if property owners do not respond to informal action we feel it is appropriate that we should recover the reasonable costs incurred as allowed by the Housing Act 2004. Details of the circumstances in which we will charge are set out in Appendix 2.
- 5.27 The Housing Health and Safety Rating System does allow a great deal of discretion. We will now revise our Enforcement Policy to clarify the guidelines to be used by our Officers when exercising powers under the HHSRS. The guidelines are set out in Appendix 2.
- 5.28 The majority of Officer time is spent in reactive work (responding to complaints) rather than proactive work (planned inspections). There are areas in Dover town centre (in particular parts around Folkestone Road and parts of London Rd) where there are concentrations of poor housing. We feel that planned inspections would be appropriate in these areas. We intend to have Officer time dedicated to carrying out inspections on a planned basis in areas where unsatisfactory housing is concentrated. This will be linked with targeting advice on energy efficiency and on financial assistance.
- 5.29 The move to a proactive approach in the areas where unsatisfactory housing is concentrated will link with the broader regeneration proposals as set out in the Dover Corporate Plan and the Dover Master plan. If the proactive inspections show that housing conditions warrant some form of area based intervention, detailed area assessments may be undertaken to determine whether we should consider any Renewal Area declarations. We recognise that to go down this route will involve securing extra capital resources and will also require additional staffing to be successful.
- 5.30 We feel that great progress has been made in recent years in dealing with HMOs. Regular inspections will continue to build on this and an accurate database of all known HMO's produced.
- 5.31 We have produced a new Empty Homes Strategy for 2010-15. By implementing the strategy we expect to increase our achievements in reducing the number of long term empty properties
- 5.32 The Private Sector Officers already work closely with the Officers of the Housing Needs Team when dealing with homeless or other vulnerable households. This can involve dealing with cases of illegal eviction or harassment by landlords. One change we will make is for closer working in such cases. Where prosecution is warranted, in some cases the Private Sector Housing Team Officers will take the lead.

Enforcement - we will:

- Adopt a more formal approach to enforcement – fair but firm.
- Introduce changing for statutory notices.
- Dedicate the time of Officers to proactive planned inspection work focused on areas of unsatisfactory housing.
- Take steps to ensure that prosecution is used where warranted in cases of alleged illegal eviction and harassment.
- Carry out proactive work in areas of regeneration.
- Ensure sufficient resources are devoted to HMOs to maintain current standards.
- Implement new Empty Property Strategy.

Offering Financial Assistance

- 5.33 Our Housing Assistance Policy has been regularly revised and we feel that in general terms the framework for discretionary financial assistance gives a very good balance between the needs of the District and the resources available. Very substantial progress has been made both with making homes decent and with energy efficiency improvements since the additional Regional Housing Board capital funding which started in 2006/07.
- 5.34 The eligibility criteria targets vulnerable households and, whilst we no longer target specific geographical areas with ring fenced allocations, in practice the majority of financial assistance is given in areas of poorer housing because of information and advice campaigns. This will be reinforced through the designation of an Officer to carry out planned inspections in areas of unsatisfactory housing We will also seek additional funding streams to carry out any area based intervention.
- 5.35 One area which the present Housing Assistance Policy does not cover is any form of replacement for the former Home Repairs Assistance. This was a flexible grant aimed at vulnerable older householders who needed small scale urgent works – a broken boiler, leaking roof, dangerous electrics, etc. Most local authorities retain assistance of this type in some form or other. The full Decent Homes Assistance involves a time consuming procedure to put a full charge on the property to secure the loan.
- 5.36 Consultation indicates that we should look at revising the Housing Assistance Policy to include for a Minor Works Loan available to low income households with a maximum limit of £4,000 for these type of works. The loan could be offered quickly as it would be secured with a Local Land Charge only.

- 5.37 Whilst our Housing Assistance Policy has worked very well since 2006/07 in increasing the number of decent homes and improving energy efficiency, we recognise that it is heavily reliant on the additional Regional Housing Board funding . This appears to be secured for 2010/11 but it is realistic to suppose that any future Government will seek to make significant reductions in public sector spending. It is also realistic to suppose that future cuts will have a significant impact on additional funding of this type.
- 5.38 Our loans are consistent with the Government policy to promote equity release as in effect the money lent is recycled when the property changes hands. However, in practice it is often many years before the money is available to lend again. Any significant reduction in the Regional Housing Board funding would have a major impact. Because of this, we think it is prudent to start exploring other forms of equity release that make available funds from private sector lending funds.
- 5.39 Whilst the Heating and Insulation Grants and Loans come from our capital programme, much energy efficiency assistance comes from other sources such as Warm Front or from partnerships with other organisations. We shall look thoroughly at opportunities to provide assistance to areas of high deprivation in the new Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP). This is totally consistent with the recent Audit Commission “Lofty Ambitions” report which urges local authorities to focus energy efficiency assistance on the most deprived areas.

Financial Assistance - we will:

- Continue to target areas of unsatisfactory housing and link this with the work done on planned enforcement inspections.
- Seek additional funding stream to enable area renewal to be carried out.
- Consider the introduction of a Minor Works Loan at the next review of the Housing Assistance Policy.
- Examine thoroughly the opportunities to provide assistance to households in areas of deprivation through the Community Energy Savings Programme.
- Start exploring now alternative ways to facilitate equity release that draw on funds from private sector sources.

Resourcing The Priorities

- 5.40 Clearly our future priorities have to be based on a realistic assessment of the likely resources that will be available to us. The total estimated cost of bringing homes up to decent homes standard is £66m which is clearly far more than can met through finance by Local and Central Government alone.

- 5.41 In 2008 – 2009 we spent £2,005,000 on mandatory and discretionary financial assistance. This was made of £1,245,000 specifically targeted at assisting property owners to meet the Decent Homes Standard, and £30,000 from the Council's Capital Programme. The £600,000 spent on mandatory DFGs was funded 60% by Specified Capital Grant from the Government and 40% from the Council's Capital Programme. Provision of £87,000 is also included in our Capital Programme to fund the compulsory purchase and resale, if necessary, of long term empty homes. We will also have £150,000 from the Performance Reward Grant.
- 5.42 We shall benefit in future years as the Decent Homes loans made since 2005 are redeemed; however, as these become repayable on sale of the property it is unlikely that significant sums will be available for relending for some years.
- 5.43 We currently have the benefit of empty property loans through the Kent County Council No Use Empty campaign . During 2008/09 and 2009/10 this amounts to a current annual value of approximately £600k. Unless the scheme is extended this assistance will finish in 2013.
- 5.44 The KCC through the No Use Empty Campaign also offer a consultant dedicated to empty property work and capital to undertake the purchase of empty properties.
- 5.45 Whilst Regional Housing Board funding for our loan programme for 2010/11 appears to be in place, we have been informed this will be reduced. This trend may well continue in a climate where any future Government may be seeking to achieve significant reductions in public spending. This could obviously have a profound effect on the delivery of this Strategy and we describe at paragraph one the approach we will explore to minimise the risk of this.
- 5.46 There are currently 3 full time equivalent members of staff working offering advice and financial assistance which includes two temporary staff posts (one post until March 2010 and the other until March 2011) and 3.5 full time equivalent members of staff engaged in enforcement. Using the performance reward grant we intend to strengthen the staffing resource to deal with long term empty homes by an additional part time post for up to two years.
- 5.47 The majority of the changes can be accommodated within existing staff resources. Additional staffing will be required if area renewal proposals are developed and implemented.

Implementation and Review

- 5.48 The following pages set out the Action Plan the Council will follow to implement the changes described in this Private Sector Housing Strategy.

- 5.49 The Council is committed to improving private sector housing standards. We will review progress against the targets set out in the Action Plan on a quarterly basis. There will be a formal annual review as part of the Corporate Planning process.
- 5.50 We already have in place procedures to assess customer satisfaction after completion of financial assistance and complaint investigation. We will monitor the responses from this as part of our review process.

ACTION PLAN

Ref	Specific Objective	Priority	Links to Other Strategies / Legislation	Work to be Done	Resources Required	Target Date	Indicator(s) of Outcome Achieved/Performance Measure	Lead Officer
1. INFORMING, ADVICE AND SPECIALIST SUPPORT								
PSHS 1.1	Increase public access to energy efficiency by information provision	High	Home Energy Conservation Act 1995; Decent Homes Standard; Audit Commission: Lofty Ambitions; Regional Housing Strategy; Lighting the Way to Success	Increase publicity campaigns using leaflets, newspaper advertisements and internet presence targeted at households most in need.	Additional revenue for budget for leaflets and advertisements. Time input from Climate Change Officer	1 April 2011	## referrals to Warm Front, ## take up of Heating and Insulation Loans	Climate Change Officer
PSHS 1.2	Review operation of Handyperson service.	Medium	Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods; Independent Living Strategy; Regional Housing Strategy	Review existing charging regimes, with partners review alternative charging regimes, test customer reaction.	Officer time	1 December 2010	Revised charging regime introduced.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 1.3	Improve ways to give householders advice on repairs and maintenance	Low	Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods	Contact other local authorities offering and/or publishing such advice to research delivery mechanisms.	Officer time	1 December 2011	New advice service developed.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 1.4	Link the Rent Deposit Scheme to accreditation standards	Medium	Decent homes standard; DETR: Good Practice Guide on Voluntary Accreditation	Develop framework for assessing compliance, consult with local landlords and landlord representative organisations.	Officer time	1 April 2011	Bond Scheme amended to include requirement for landlords to meet accreditation criterion	Private Sector Housing Manager; Housing Needs Manager
2. INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT								
PSHS 2.1	Adopt a more fast track approach to enforcement	High	Housing Act 2004; Decent Homes Standard; Regional Housing Strategy	Publicise new enforcement policy, review existing service standards relating to enforcement action, monitor performance against revised standards	Officer time	1 August 2010	Publicity measures undertaken, service standards revised, monitoring arrangements in place.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.2	Introduce charging for statutory notices	High	Housing Act 2004; Regional Housing Strategy	Develop new charging criteria, revise literature and statutory notices, establish charging & recovery procedures, publicise changed policy.	Officer time	1 October 2010	New charging regime in place and publicised, recovery procedures in place.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.3	Identify and target resources at areas of worst housing using proactive inspections	Medium	Housing Act 2004; Decent Homes Standard; Regional Housing Strategy	Devise programme of planned inspections focusing on areas of unsatisfactory housing	Officer time	1 December 2010	Planned inspections programme in place.	Private Sector Housing Manager

PSHS 2.4	Take more formal action of illegal eviction and harassment.	Medium	Protection from Eviction Act 1977; Protection from Harassment Act 1997	Review working arrangements between Officers of Private Sector Housing Team and Housing Standards Team	Officer time	1 November 2010	Effective arrangements in place to ensure that prosecution initiated where warranted with illegal eviction and harassment	Private Sector Housing Manager; Housing Standards Manager
PSHS 2.5	Link proactive work to development of area regeneration proposals	Medium	Housing Act 2004; Decent Homes Standard; Dover Corporate Plan, Dover Pride Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan; Dover Masterplan	Ensure programme of planned inspections as set in Objective 7 above is in place. Establish procedures to feedback information from planned inspections to identify neighbourhoods where area intervention warranted	Officer time	1 December 2010	Arrangements for both planned inspections and information feedback procedures in place	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.6	Ensure HMOs meet current standards	Medium	Housing Act 2004; Decent Homes Standard; Regional Housing Strategy	Review existing HMO records and compile up to date database. Programme inspections based on risk assessment.	Officer time	1 August 2011	Updated database in construction and pro active inspections are carried out.	Private Sector Housing Manager
3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE								
PSHS 3.1	Continue to target financial assistance to areas with high levels of unsatisfactory housing.	Medium	Regulatory Reform Order 2002; Housing Act 2004; Decent Homes Standard; Regional Housing Strategy	Monitor awareness campaigns and take up of financial assistance; link monitoring information with information from planned inspections and identify neighbourhoods where area intervention warranted	Officer time; significant additional capital resources if potential area intervention identified	1 April 2011	Increased number of loan applications in targeted areas.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 3.2	Evaluate the introduction of Minor Works Loans at next review of Housing Assistance Policy	Low	Regulatory Reform Order 2002; Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods; Independent Living Strategy; Regional Housing Strategy; Decent Homes Standard	Review take up of existing financial assistance and resource; determine whether provision for Minor Works Loan can be made	Officer time	1 April 2011	Decision taken whether to implement.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 3.3	Investigate opportunities to provide assistance to households areas of deprivation through CESP	Medium	Home Energy Conservation Act 1995; Decent Homes Standard; Audit Commission: Lofty Ambitions; Regional Housing Strategy; Lighting the Way to Success; Decent Homes Standard	Consider funding opportunities in CESP, develop a bid carry out research for application, and devise assistance programmes	Officer time	1 October 2010	Funding bids made and assistance programmes in place	Climate Change Officer

PSHS 3.4	Explore alternative ways to facilitate equity release drawing on private sector funds	Medium	Regulatory Reform Order 2002; regional Housing Strategy	Research and evaluate opportunities for assisting property owners to release equity from their property to carry out works without reliance on public sector funding	Officer time	1 December 2012	Research done, evaluation of alternative opportunities in place and recommendation for future action made	Private Sector Housing Manager
4. Enforcement								
PSHS 4.1	Increase staff resources devoted to tackling long term empty homes	High	Housing Act 2004; Regional Housing Strategy; Dover Draft Empty Homes Strategy	Establish funding available for additional staff (Performance Reward Grant), recruit additional staff resource	Officer time and Performance Rewards Grant funds.	1 July 2010	Additional staff resource in place	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 4.2	16 Explore the possibility of additional resources to carry out area renewal.	Medium	Housing Act 2004; Regional Housing Strategy;	Research availability of funding	Officer time additional staff to implement	1 July 2011	Additional funding in place	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 4.3	17. Introduce and follow measures in Empty Homes Strategy	High	Housing Act 2004; Regional Housing Strategy; Dover Corporate Plan	Complete development and approval of Empty Homes Strategy; review all procedures for delivery of information and specialist support, financial assistance and enforcement	Officer time and Performance Rewards Grant funds.	1 August 2010	Strategy approved and implementation procedures in place	Private Sector Housing Manager

APPENDIX 1: THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government has introduced the Decent Homes Standard in order to link increased funding for housing with clear improvements in standards. The first guidance on the Decent Homes Standard was issued in July 2001, with revised guidance in February 2004 and June 2006.
- 1.2 The Decent Homes Standard was originally applied only to homes owned by local authorities and registered social landlords. However, the standard was then applied by the Government to vulnerable households in the private sector by Target 7 of the Public Services Agreement. Although now formally dropped as a target by the government, it remains a relevant benchmark.
- 1.3 “Vulnerable” groups are considered by the Government to be those who may suffer health problems as a result of living on poor housing conditions which they do not have the resources to remedy themselves. Examples include those over 60, people with long term illness or disability or families with young children. In addition they are in receipt of income or disability related benefits.
- 1.4 Measurement of progress against the target is achieved through the annual English Housing Survey (formerly the English House Condition Survey). The EHS measures both property condition and the social circumstances of the household. To measure progress against the decent homes target in the private sector, the Government target refers to analysis of EHCS results in two consecutive years (to give robust figures).
- 1.5 The target applicable to private sector homes is:-
- To secure a year on year increase in the proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes;
 - Proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes to be more than 65% in 2006-07;
 - Proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes to be more than 70% in 2010-11;
 - Proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes to be more than 75% in 2020-21

2.0 What is the Decent Homes Standard?

- 2.1 The most recent definition of the Decent Homes Standard was given in guidance from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in June 2006. The guidance is based on four main principles:-
- a) It meets the current minimum standard for housing;
 - b) It is in a reasonable state of repair;
 - c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services;
 - d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
- 2.2 The standard is a *minimum* standard. The Government expects both social landlords and local authorities responsible for securing standards in the private sector to aim for the best standards attainable. The meaning of the individual criteria are explained in more detail below:-

a) *It Meets The Current Statutory Minimum Standard For Housing*

- 2.3 Previously the minimum standard for housing was the “fitness standard” set by the Housing Act 1985. The Act listed nine factors to take into account when a local Council is deciding whether a home is “reasonably suitable for occupation” and so “fit for human habitation”. (The factors included freedom from damp, structural stability, lighting, ventilation and amenities.)
- 2.4 The standard, which dates back 80 years and was last revised in 1989, is described in detail at Appendix E
- 2.5 The fitness standard has now been replaced by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, prescribed method of assessment which applied risk assessments to hazards to health and safety found in the home. The system is described in detail at Appendix C.

b) *It Is In A Reasonable State Of Repair*

- 2.6 A home is in a reasonable state of repair unless:
- One or more key building components are old **and** because of their condition need replacing or major repair; **or**
 - Two or more other building components are old **and** because of their condition need replacing or major repair.

What are ‘key’ and ‘other’ building components?

- 2.7 Building components are the
- Structural parts of a dwelling (e.g. wall structure, roof structure),
 - Other external elements (e.g. roof covering, chimneys) and
 - Internal services and amenities (e.g. kitchens, heating systems).
- 2.8 **Key building components** are those which, if in poor condition, could have an immediate impact on building integrity and cause further deterioration in other components. They are the external components plus internal components that have potential safety implications and include external walls, roof structure and covering, chimneys, windows/doors, chimneys, fixed heating appliances and electrics.
- 2.9 If any of these components are old and because of their condition need replacing, or require immediate major repair, then the dwelling is not in a reasonable state of repair and remedial action is required.
- 2.10 **Other building components** are those that have a less immediate impact on the integrity of the dwelling. The standard takes into account their combined effect - a dwelling is not in a reasonable state of repair if 2 or more are old and need replacing or require immediate major repair.

What is old and in poor condition?

- 2.11 A building component is treated as 'old' if it is older than its expected or standard life. The Government lists the lifetimes that may typically be expected for individual building components e.g. 50 years for a roof structure.

2.12 Components are in poor condition if they need major work, either full replacement or major repair. Again the Government sets out definitions for different components. For example, with a wall structure this would mean replacing 10% or more or repairing 30% or more, and with a wall finish replacing or repointing more than 50%.

2.13 One or more key components, or two or more other components, must be both old and in poor condition to render the dwelling non-decent on grounds of disrepair. Components that are old but in good condition or in poor condition but not old would not, in themselves, cause the dwelling to fail the standard e.g. a roof structure that was less than 50 years old but which had failed because of a fault.

c) *It Has Reasonably Modern Facilities And Services*

2.14 A dwelling is considered non decent under this heading if it lacks three or more of the following facilities:

- A kitchen which is 20 years old or less
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout
- A bathroom which is 30 years old or less
- A bathroom and WC located in an appropriate place
- Adequate noise insulation
- Adequate size and layout of common entrance areas for blocks of flats

2.15 These standards have been measured in the English House Condition Survey (EHCS) for many years. Examples in practice would be:-

- A kitchen with adequate space and layout would be too small to contain all the required items (sink, cupboards cooker space, worktops etc) appropriate to the size of the dwelling.
- A main bathroom or WC located in a bedroom or accessed through a bedroom (unless the bedroom is not used or the dwelling is for a single person).
- A dwelling would also fail if the main WC is outside or located on a different floor to the nearest wash hand basin - or if a WC without a wash hand basin opens onto the food preparation area.

d) *It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort*

2.16 The revised definition requires a dwelling to have both **efficient heating** and **effective insulation**.

2.17 Efficient heating is defined as any gas or oil programmable central heating or electric storage heaters or programmable LPG/solid fuel central heating. Heating sources which provide less energy efficient options fail the decent home standard.

2.18 Because of the differences in efficiency between gas/oil heating systems and the other types of system, the level of insulation considered appropriate also differs:

- For dwellings with **gas/oil programmable heating**, at least 50mm loft insulation (if there is loft space) and cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively)

- For dwellings with the less efficient **electric storage heaters/LPG/programmable solid fuel central heating**, at least 200mm of loft insulation (if there is a loft) and cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively). Loft insulation thickness of 50mm is an absolute minimum which will trigger action.

APPENDIX 2: THE HOUSING HEALTH AND SAFETY RATING SYSTEM

- 1.1 Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 replaced the housing fitness standard set out in the Housing Act 1985. The fitness standard is now to be replaced with an evidence-based risk assessment process, carried out using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Local authorities now base enforcement decisions in respect of residential premises on the basis of assessments under HHSRS.
- 1.2 Action by authorities will be based on a three-stage consideration:
- (a) the hazard rating determined under HHSRS;
 - (b) whether the authority has a duty or power to act, determined by the presence of a hazard above or below a threshold prescribed by Regulations (Category 1 and Category 2 hazards); and
 - (c) the authority's judgement as to the most appropriate course of action to deal with the hazard.
- 1.3 The Act contains new enforcement options which are available to local authorities. The choice of the most appropriate course of action is for the authority to decide, having regard to statutory enforcement guidance.

2.0 The Assessment System

- 2.1 The purpose of the HHSRS assessment is not to set a standard but to generate objective information in order to determine and inform enforcement decisions. Technical guidance is given by DCLG in the February 2006 document "Housing Health and Safety Rating System: Operating Guidance".
- 2.2 HHSRS assesses twenty nine categories of housing hazard, including many factors which were not covered or covered inadequately by the housing fitness standard. It provides a rating for each hazard. It does *not* provide a single rating for the dwelling as a whole or, in the case of multiply occupied dwellings, for the building as a whole.
- 2.3 The HHSRS scoring system combines the probability that a harmful occurrence (e.g. an accident or illness) will occur as a consequence of a deficiency (i.e. a fault in a dwelling (whether due to disrepair or a design fault). If a harmful occurrence is very likely to occur and the outcome is likely to be extreme or severe (e.g. death or a major injury) then the score will be very high.
- 2.4 The hazard rating is expressed through a numerical score which falls within one of ten bands. Scores in Bands A to C (score 1,000 or above) are Category 1 hazards. Scores in Bands D to J (score below 1,000) are Category 2 hazards. The 29 hazard types are as follows:

A. Physiological Requirements

- Damp and mould growth etc
- Excessive cold
- Excessive heat
- Asbestos (and MMF)
- Biocides
- CO & Fuel combustion products
- Lead
- Radiation
- Uncombusted fuel gas

- Volatile organic compounds

B. Psychological Requirements

- Crowding and space
- Entry by intruders
- Lighting
- Noise

C. Protection Against Infection

- Domestic hygiene, pests & refuse
- Food safety
- Personal hygiene sanitation & drainage
- Water supply

D. Protection Against Accidents

- Falls associated with baths etc
- Falls on the level
- Falls associated with stairs and steps
- Falls between levels (e.g. from windows),
- Electrical hazards
- Fire
- Hot surfaces and materials
- Collision and entrapment
- Explosions
- Poor ergonomics
- Structural collapse and falling elements

2.5 The HHSRS assessment is based on the risk to the *potential occupant who is most vulnerable to that hazard*. For example, stairs constitute a greater risk to the elderly, so for assessing hazards relating to stairs persons aged 60 years or over are the most vulnerable group. In contrast, the most vulnerable group for falling between levels are children under 5 years. The very young as well as the elderly are susceptible to low temperatures. A dwelling that is safe for those most vulnerable to a particular hazard is safe for all.

3.0 The Enforcement Framework

3.1 Local authorities have a duty to act when Category 1 type hazards are found. They have a discretionary power to act in respect of a Category 2 hazard. The courses of action available to authorities where they have either a duty or a power to act are to:

- Serve an improvement notice requiring remedial works;
- Make a prohibition order, which closes the whole or part of a dwelling or restricts the number or class of permitted occupants;
- Suspend Improvement or Prohibition notices.
- Serve a Hazard Awareness Notice
- Take Emergency Remedial Action*
- Serve an Emergency Prohibition Order*
- Make a demolition order*
- Declare a clearance area*

* Only in respect of Category 1 hazards

3.2 While the HHSRS hazard rating is based on the most vulnerable potential occupant, authorities will be able to take account of the circumstances of the actual occupant in deciding the most appropriate course of action. Where an authority takes action and the property owner does not comply, the Act retains the powers available to authorities to act in default (i.e. carry out the work themselves and recover the cost from the owner of the property) and/or to prosecute. It also enables them to charge and recover charges for enforcement action.

4.0 Use of Discretionary Power: Decision Rules

4.1 *The Housing Health and Safety Rating System: Enforcement Guidance*, statutory guidance made under section 9 of the Housing Act 2004 gives advice on how local housing authorities should use their discretionary powers.

4.2 An authority must take appropriate action in respect of a Category 1 hazard and may do so in respect of a Category 2 hazard. In deciding what is the most appropriate course of action, the statutory guidance states that they should have regard to a number of factors. It is important to note that in both cases an authority is obliged to give a formal statement of reasons for the action it intends to take.

4.3 It is also important to stress that for the purposes of assessing the hazard, it is assumed that the dwelling is occupied by the most vulnerable household (irrespective of what household is actually in occupation or indeed if it is empty). However, for the purposes of deciding the most appropriate course of action, regard is had to the actual household in occupation.

4.4 An authority has to take account of factors such as:

- Extent, severity and location of hazard
- Proportionality – cost and practicability of remedial works
- Multiple hazards
- The extent of control an occupier has over works to the dwelling
- Vulnerability of current occupiers
- Likelihood of occupancy changing
- Social exclusion
- The views of the current occupiers

4.5 Having regard to the statutory guidance and to the provisions of the Enforcement Concordat which Dover District Council has adopted, in addition to the Council's duty to take action where a Category 1 hazard exists, the Council will generally exercise its discretion to take the most appropriate course of action where a Category 2 hazard exists in the following situations:

The Most Appropriate Course of Action – Category 2 Hazards

A. Band D Hazards

There will be a general presumption that where a Band D hazard exists, Officers will consider action under the Housing Act 2004 unless that would not be the most appropriate course of action

B. Multiple Hazards

Where a number of hazards at Band D or below appear, when looked at together, to create a more serious situation, or where a property appears to be in a dilapidated condition, the Private Sector Housing Manager may authorise the most appropriate course of action to be taken.

C. Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances where A and B above are not applicable, the Private Sector Housing Manager may authorise the most appropriate course of action to be taken.

Level To Which Hazards Are To Be Improved

The Housing Act 2004 requires only that the works specified when taking the most appropriate course reduce a Category 1 hazard to Category 2 hazard. For example Band C and Band A hazards need only be reduced to Band E. The Council will generally seek to specify works which, whilst not necessarily achieving the ideal, which achieve a significant reduction in the hazard level and in particular will be to a standard that should ensure that no further intervention should be required for a minimum period of twelve months.

Tenure

In considering the most appropriate course of action, the Council will have regard to the extent of control that an occupier has over works required to the dwelling. In normal circumstances, in most cases taking the most appropriate course of action against a private landlord (including a Housing Associations) and will involve requiring works to be carried out. With owner occupiers, in most cases they will not be required to carry out works to their own home and the requirement to take the most appropriate course of action will be satisfied by the service of an Hazard Awareness Notice.

However, the Council may in certain circumstances require works to be carried out, or serve a Prohibition Order, or use Emergency Remedial Action or serve an Emergency Prohibition Order, in respect of an owner occupied dwelling. This is likely to be where there is an imminent risk of serious harm to the occupiers themselves or to others outside the household, or where the condition of the dwelling is such that it may adversely affect the health and safety of others outside the household. This may be because of a serious, dangerous deficiency at the property. Another example is a requirement to carry out fire precaution works to a flat on a long leasehold in a block in multiple occupation.

Enforcement Concordat

The Council has adopted the Enforcement Concordat and observes its principles. With specific regard to Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004, the principles of the Enforcement Concordat mean that the Council will take an informal approach to the Act. However, this will not be appropriate where:

- (a) there is a risk to health and safety from a hazard of a nature which requires prompt formal action, or
- (b) there is evidence of previous non compliance with statutory provisions made under the Housing Acts or other housing related legislation

Charging for Notices

In accordance with Sections 49 and 50 of the Housing Act 2004, the Council reserves the right to charge and recover the reasonable costs incurred in taking the most appropriate course of action.

The Council will charge where:

- (a) A formal notice is required to remove a serious threat to health and safety unless the threat arose because of circumstances outside the control of the person receiving the notice, order or action, and/or
- (b) There is evidence of previous non compliance with statutory provisions made under the Housing Acts or other housing related legislation, and/or
- (c) No adequate action has been taken in response to informal requests from the Council to take action or do works.

APPENDIX 3: CONSULTATION

At the consultation meeting held on the 12 October 2009, the following stakeholders attended:

P G Sherratt	– The Dover Society
Glen Virtue	– Private Landlord
D Matika	– Southern Housing Group
Mr Bob Humphreys	– Bank House Property
L J Brooman	– Municipal Charities of Dover
Marion Money	– N L A
Simon Crowley	– Tersons
Julie Curtin	– Cherry Tree Property Services
Donna Crozier	– In Touch
Karen Leslie	– In Touch

The following a presentation, delegates were asked to vote on 14 specific decision points and the following options were preferred – that the Council should:

1. Assist vulnerable homeowners where major repairs are required with mixture of grants and loans.
2. Focus offers of affordable loans on combination of areas with poorest quality housing and older/vulnerable people.
3. Offer an interest free or low interest loan for small works (up to £4k).
4. Focus assistance with minor works on urgent repairs.
5. Provide advice on repairs and home maintenance to home owners to help them maintain their home.
6. With Category 2 hazards Council should serve notices where score is close to 1,000 or otherwise serious.
7. Encourage owners to return long term empty homes back into use but use EDMO if not successful.
8. Give long term empty homes high priority.
9. Charge for service of statutory notices.
10. Offer advice and help to landlords and tenants.
11. Assist people in fuel poverty, but not on benefits.
12. Offer assistance discretionary assistance for DFG works by grant repayable when property is sold.
13. Place a charge when mandatory DFG given (equal split on whether when home is extended or work other than stairlift).
14. Not to offer assistance to cost of renewable technologies with energy efficiency grants (but fair support of idea for yes where no access to mains gas).

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
All ¹	Walmer Parish Council [walmerparish@btconnect.com]	1. Objection	(a) No need for these strategy documents when such issues have already been addressed in the Local Development Framework.	Members would like to make the following representations in relation to the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015; the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015: (i) Members would like to query the following issues:- (a) the necessity for production of these strategy documents when such issues have already been addressed in the Local Development Framework.	The Local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities to prepare a Housing Strategy and these are key underpinning strategies which provide a more detailed analysis of issues and set out specific actions to address them.
Private Sector Housing Strategy	KCC Brian.Horton@kent.gov.uk	2.Observation	Needs to make specific reference to 'Retrofit', and identify potential methods of funding.	The (Private Sector Housing) Strategy has a number of references to energy use and fuel poverty, but does not make any explicit references to 'Retrofit'. I would suggest that specific reference to 'Retrofit' and some thought to potential methods of funding would be relevant to this Strategy.	Retrofitting is the current terminology being used in relation to private sector stock improvements which seek to make homes more energy efficient. Reference to retrofitting has been included at paragraph 5.14 of the Strategy. Accepted and Strategy amended
Private Sector	KCC carolyn.mcke	3.Observation	Needs to make specific reference to 'Retrofit', and	Could I just reiterate Brian's point. Retrofit is a key issue for Kent, and Dover are doing	As above

¹ Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015; the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
Housing Strategy.	nzie@kent.gov.uk		identify potential methods of funding.	some good work.	
Private Sector Housing Strategy.	CAB Deal districtmanager@dealcab.co.uk abnet.org.uk Jan Stewart	4. Observation	CAB national body to provide information to the Government about the condition of housing in England.		
		5 Observation	CAB local office to provide information to DDC about the condition of housing in the district	- see Summary (left) - Evidence of our clients needs to feed into the system on a regular basis not all tenants will inform the council or the landlord but they do tell CAB.	
		6 Observation	Several comments about the poor condition of housing in the district	- CAB Clients living in substandard accommodation - People living with water pouring into the property is common still. - Damp conditions still a major problem	The strategy acknowledges a need to develop a fast track approach to enforcement and to target resources at the worst housing. Part of this process is to develop an Enforcement Policy and is included as an action within the Strategy action plan. In view of CABs comments we will look to involve them in the development of this policy and work with them to target our resources at the worst landlords. No amendment required Enforcement has increased in recent years
7 Observation	Strong emphasis on Enforcement - several comments relate to ensuring that landlords comply with the rules, etc	- How do you enforce the rules and ensure that landlords comply. - Focussing your efforts on category 1 hazards, etc is great but you need a carrot and a big stick approach. - What sanctions can you put in place? - Landlords who ignore the council and other bodies are not really targeted in any major way, they get away with sub standard housing because they are fully aware that no can really do much about them. - Great if you can deliver the best possible standards in the private housing sector but who will police this. - Code of conduct with penalties is essential			

Strategy/ Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		8 Observation	Strong emphasis on the amount of work still to be done with the limited resources available	<p>again something we could feed into and assist with.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enforcement exists but is not followed up efficiently always. - Landlords keeping deposits because they blame the tenants for the state of the property is common. - our clients are scared of landlords - Landlords are not following procedure <p>- still a high mountain to climb with limited resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there actually enough staff and money to deliver the strategy as written? - What level will the financial help be for landlords? 	with some recent prosecutions.
		9 Support	New PSHS welcomed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Key objectives are paramount but delivering them is difficult. - we would be very happy to participate further in this with you 	The resource implications of delivering the Strategy are considered in the document and resources identified in relation to the specific actions in the action plan. No amendment required
		10 Support	In addition to Statutory bodies, DDC to work with CAB, Shelter and SHACK		We will be happy to work with the CAB and other bodies in delivering the actions within the Strategy.
		11 Support	DDC has worked hard to achieve success		A scheme is already operational but will be developed further. This is referred to in the Strategy. No amendment required
			An accreditation scheme (is) essential.		

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		12 Observation	Education for landlords as part of this is essential and CAB would be happy to help with this.		<p>This will be dealt with as part of the promotion of the scheme. No amendment required</p> <p>The Council's responsibility for decent homes assessment is set out in the Strategy. No amendment required</p> <p>We have no evidence to support this observation. The aim of the Strategy is to improve housing conditions in the private sector. No amendment required</p>
		13 Support	Ensuring landlords can see they will gain in the long run is essential		
		14 Observation	Who assesses the homes as decent?		
		15 Observation	(CAB) clients see living on the streets as the only alternative (to sub standard accommodation and landlords they are afraid of).		
		16 Observation			
Langdon Parish Council Hyde167@btinternet.com Jannine Hyde		17 Support	Strategies address issues of housing stock (and future needs in the town area).	Most of the strategies address issues of housing stock and future needs in the town area.	Our Housing Assistance policy already provides higher assistance in rural areas for homes off the gas supply to provide insulation and efficient heating.
		18 Observation	(More) people living longer and on their own	The changing patterns of people living longer and on their own (divorce or choosing not to	We acknowledge in the Strategy that some of the

Strategy/ Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		19 Observation	<p>will put pressure on need for a wider range of housing in both to buy and rented sectors</p> <p>Some housing stock in rural locations is sub-standard and should be targeted for upgrades or improvements... Often the older villagers live in these houses and so may suffer from complaints related to the poor housing stock</p>	<p>have long relationships) will put pressure on the need for a wider range of housing in both to buy and rented sectors</p> <p>Some housing stock in rural locations is sub-standard and should be targeted for upgrades or improvements. Since the quantity of new builds in rural areas tends to be less than in towns, the existing housing stock tends to be old and so reflects building practices which now fall short of current energy-efficient standards. Poor insulation, lack of cavity walls, inefficient method of heating and lack of mains gas services are not uncommon. Often the older villagers live in these houses and so may suffer from complaints related to the poor housing stock</p>	<p>most energy efficient homes are in our rural areas. Services are equally available in both the rural and urban areas. No amendment required</p> <p>As above</p>
<p>NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Helen.Miller@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk</p>		20 Observation/ Recommendation	<p>It is important to ensure that people who have learning difficulties, are illiterate, have low literacy, or have English as a second language are able to access the help and advice available. Research in to methods to support this, for example Easy Read versions of leaflets and website pages, would help to give</p>		<p>Action HS2 in the draft Housing Strategy action plan refers to Implementation of the Learning Disability Action Plan with Improved advice and information and easier and fair access to services. Action HS3 of the draft Housing Strategy refers to the need to develop mechanisms for engaging</p>

Strategy/ Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		23 Observation	<p>equal access to all</p> <p>In the private sector housing conditions report 2008 the second most common hazard was falls on stairs. Work to target this hazard, by the handypersons schemes or other methods, will yield a health gain in reducing falls.</p>		<p>with BME groups leading to improved housing options, easier and fairer access to services No amendment required</p> <p>A new action has been included in the Older persons Housing Strategy stating our commitment to working with the Eastern & Coastal NHS to reduce falls in the home. No amendment required</p>
		24 Recommendations:	<p>Recommendations: To use Health Impact Assessments as a tool when planning a neighbourhood renewal policy and other key policies or strategies</p>		<p>We are currently working with the PCT on a possible Health Impact Assessment of the new Housing Strategy which includes the actions set out in this sub strategy. No amendment required</p>
		25 Recommendations:	<p>To investigate widening access to the handypersons scheme</p>		<p>We are currently in discussion with KCC – Supporting People who are carrying out a review of the Handyperson service in Kent. Recently an additional</p>

Strategy/ Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		<p>26 Recommendations:</p> <p>27 Recommendation</p>	<p>To require that rent deposits are only granted on homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard</p> <p>To work with Health to prevent falls in the home The rent deposit scheme helps vulnerable households access the private rented sector.</p>		<p>handyperson post has been created to our local agency to widen access to the service. The strategy also looks to widen the service to cover more areas of assistance</p> <p>The strategy seeks to link rent deposits for landlords who are accredited. This will increase the likelihood of such properties meeting the Decent Homes Standard to responsible landlords. We already check to make sure homes meet the minimum legal requirements. In most cases this will mean the Decent Homes Standard is being achieved. No amendment required</p> <p>A new action has been included in the Older persons Housing Strategy stating our commitment to working with the Eastern & Coastal NHS to reduce falls in the home. No amendment required</p>
	Eythorne PC	28 Observation	More emphasis should be given to bringing empty		Our strategic approach to tackling empty homes is

Strategy/ Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
			homes back into use		set out in detail in the Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015 which is referred to in the Private Sector Housing Strategy. No amendment required

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

RESPONSIBILITY – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND YOUTH

KEY DECISION

BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC HOUSING COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE – 12 APRIL 2010
EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN 2010-2015

Recommendation

That Members approve the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015, attached at Appendix A.

Contact Officer: Paul Whitfield, extension 2258.

Reasons why a decision is required

1. The Plan is one of a number of new plans and strategies that underpin the new Housing Strategy for 2010-2015. It has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and has been subject to wider public consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Dover District Compact.

Options available to the Council with assessment of preferred option

2.
 - (a) To approve the proposed Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015.
 - (b) To make amendments to the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015.
 - (c) To reject the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015.

Information to be considered in taking the decision

3. The Council has ambitious plans for housing growth and therefore has both the potential and need to deliver more affordable homes.
4. The need to provide more affordable homes in the district is clearly evidenced in the East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which identified an existing need to provide an additional 5,968 affordable homes together with a requirement for the provision of a further 578 homes per annum to meet newly arising need.
5. The need to provide affordable housing as evidenced by the SHMA is reflected in the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Submission Document 2009.
6. The Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015 Plan sets out how the Council, through its enabling and planning roles, will try to deliver high quality affordable housing to meet the needs of all sections of the community, across the whole of the district. The plan sets a target for the delivery of new homes within a context of economic uncertainty and considers the resources that will be required to deliver the target. The Plan also recognises the need to make best use of the existing housing stock.

7. An action plan identifying specific actions that will help deliver the Plan's key objectives is attached to the Plan.
8. The Plan is a key supporting document to the higher level Housing Strategy 2010-2015.

Background Papers

East Kent Strategic Housing Market 2009

Resource Implications

The Plan identifies the likely level grant funding that will be required from the HCA to deliver the targets within the Plan. It also identifies how developer payments 'in lieu' of the provision of affordable housing on-site might be used.

The Plan identifies that there will be a need to consider the potential resource implications of having to test development viability appraisals where planning applications do not include the provision of affordable housing.

Consultation Statement

There has been a significant amount of public consultation in relation to both the SHMA and LDF Core Strategy.

Additional consultation has taken place with key stakeholders including Registered Social Landlords, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, land agents, house builders and developers and feedback has already been used to help shape the Plan.

The Plan has been subject to wider consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Dover District Compact. Details of the consultation feedback and consideration of the matters raised is set out in a table attached at Appendix B. Where amendments have been made to the Plan in response to the comments received this is highlighted in the table.

Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks

The Corporate Plan includes objectives to provide enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households and to provide the right numbers and choice of housing to support economic growth as well as meeting the needs of the community.

The SHMA clearly demonstrates that many people are unable to afford market housing and therefore the Plan will help the Council achieve its stated objectives.

Customer Access Review

Primary research into households housing needs and aspirations was undertaken by ECOTEC which collected a wide range of information including ethnicity, long term illness and disability. This information together with local needs evidence which is being used to develop a new Kent-wide Supporting People Strategy has provided supporting evidence for the development of the Plan.

A CAR screening form in respect of the Plan has been completed.

Attachments

Appendix A: Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

Appendix B: Analysis of consultation feedback

CHRISTINE WATERMAN

Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety

The officer to whom reference should be made concerning inspection of the background papers is the Housing Initiatives Manager, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent CT16 3PJ. Telephone: (01304) 821199, Extension 2258.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN 2010 – 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our Corporate vision for Dover District is a *“future of strong economic growth within safe and sustainable communities”*. There is recognition that *“the provision of good quality and accessible housing that meets the needs of the whole community”* will play a key role in achieving this.
- 1.2 The South East Plan has set a target for the overall delivery of 10,100 new homes within Dover district by 2026. In our Local Development Framework Core Strategy we have adopted this target but have also set a higher growth target of 14,000 new homes.
- 1.3 Our planning policy will seek that 30% of the new homes within developments of 15 homes or more should be affordable in order to meet the housing needs of people who can't afford to buy a home in the market and to ensure a balanced housing market and the development of mixed, inclusive communities. Consequently, there is likely to be the potential to deliver a significant number of new affordable homes over the Core Strategy period, provided that we can secure the financial resources that will be required.
- 1.4 The main recommendations within the Plan are:
- That in the current uncertain economic climate, we set a target for the delivery of 650 affordable homes over the next five years, which will be reviewed annually to take account of changing conditions.
 - That we make better use of the existing housing stock through measures identified in the Plan and in our Private Sector Housing and Empty Homes strategies.

2. Aims & Objectives

- 2.1 Our overall aim is to work towards ensuring that all households in the district have access to good quality homes, which meet their needs and are affordable.
- 2.2 Our objectives are therefore to:
1. Work effectively with partners to increase the supply of affordable homes across the district in support of the Council's wider regeneration and economic development objectives.
 2. Ensure that affordable housing positively contributes to attractive, secure and sustainable mixed communities.
 3. Deliver a range of affordable homes that will meet the needs of all sections of the community.
 4. Ensure that new homes are designed to be as affordable as possible.
 5. Make best use of the existing housing stock.

3. The Need for Affordable Housing

- 3.1 The East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009 (SHMA) identified 21 local housing market areas within the East Kent sub region and ranked all three of the urban LHMA's within Dover district (Dover, Deal & Sandwich) within the top 6 areas of local housing need.
- 3.2 The SHMA calculated that in order to meet the backlog of housing need and newly arising need over the government's recommended timescale (5 years) we would have to deliver 1,489 new affordable homes per year.
- 3.3 We know that even in a more stable economic climate this would be very difficult to achieve but the figure highlights the scale of the problem and provides the evidence which supports the Council's planning policies in respect of affordable housing and the need for the necessary financial resources to deliver a significant increase in delivery.
- 3.4 Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. It therefore meets a wide range of needs from those households who are especially vulnerable and need to be supported in their home, through to households who want to get their foot on the home ownership ladder and key public sector workers such as nurses and policemen who initially, may only be able to buy an equity share in a property.
- 3.5 In addition to the issue of the number of affordable homes that the district needs, the Plan also sets out how we will deliver affordable homes of the right size and type and ensure that they are of a high quality and sustainable.

4. Meeting the Need

- 4.1 We will meet the need for affordable housing in two main ways:

- Enabling the building of new affordable homes
- Making better use of the existing housing stock

Enabling the Building of New Homes

- 4.2 Our role in relation to the delivery of affordable housing is primarily an enabling one. Through the use of planning powers and effective partnerships with Registered Social Landlords and the Homes & Communities Agency we will ensure that the right type of homes are provided to create mixed and sustainable new communities. We will also work with our partners to ensure new homes are of a high quality and through good design will remain affordable.

Rural Homes

- 4.3 Whilst much of the planned housing growth will be within the urban areas we recognise that many households are affected by the shortage of affordable housing in the district's rural area. We are also aware that affordable homes can benefit rural communities by helping to sustain village amenities. We will therefore work with our partners to develop a manageable programme for the delivery of affordable rural homes.

- 4.4 We appreciate that general conditions in the housing market continue to be challenging and therefore recognise that we need to be flexible and innovative in our approach to delivering the affordable housing needed and accessing any new resources that may become available.

New Homes Target

- 4.5 Housing market uncertainty means that it is impossible to forecast, with any degree of precision, the number of new affordable homes that will be delivered over the life of the Plan. However, there are schemes which have been progressed to a stage where we are reasonably confident they will be delivered. On the basis of these known schemes, we have set ourselves a target to deliver 250 affordable homes over the next two years with an aspiration for the delivery of a further 400 over the remaining three years of the Plan. This will be a significant increase on the 239 affordable homes that were delivered between 2004 – 2009.

Grant Funding

- 4.6 The relatively low sales values in parts of the district, particularly in Dover and Deal, means that many potential housing schemes are only marginally viable and that without grant funding for the affordable homes they may either not be deliverable or will only be delivered with a reduced amount of affordable housing. We anticipate that over the longer term as market conditions improve and regeneration schemes progress, values will improve and the requirement for grant funding will reduce. In the meantime, it is likely that most affordable housing coming forward over the life of this plan will require grant funding.
- 4.7 We have estimated the grant requirement in order to achieve our first two year's target to be approximately £16m and given clearly evidenced need for more affordable housing in the district combined with our commitment to housing growth and planned regeneration we believe we can make a strong case to the Homes & Communities Agency for the funding required.
- 4.8 We recognise that many households aspire to home ownership and while problems in the housing market have adversely affected the provision of Homebuy (shared ownership) products we will work with partners to raise awareness of the products as the market recovers.
- 4.9 The marginal economic viability of many development opportunities within the district means that public subsidy in the form of grant from the Homes & Communities Agency will be required for most of the affordable housing delivered over the life of this Plan. We have estimated the grant requirement in order to achieve our first two year's target to be approximately £16m.

Making Best Use of the Existing Stock

- 4.10 As well as delivering more new affordable homes we believe there is scope to deliver some of the affordable housing needed by making better use of the existing stock of private sector and affordable homes. We will explore such areas as private sector leasing, utilising long term empty homes, improving access to private rented housing and reducing under occupation in the affordable housing sector so as to 'free up' family homes. These are covered in more detail in our recent private Sector Housing and Empty Homes strategies.

5. Action Plan

- 5.1 An Action Plan is attached to the Delivery Plan and progress against the various targets will be monitored will be regularly monitored by the Affordable Housing Working Group and Strategic Housing Executive. The Plan will be subject to an annual review and targets adjusted to reflect new opportunities and the availability of resources.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN 2010-2015

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's vision for Dover District is a *"future of strong economic growth within safe and sustainable communities"*. There is a recognition that *"the provision of good quality and accessible housing that meets the needs of the whole community"* will play a key role in achieving this.
- 1.2 The Council's intention to secure housing growth in order to support its economic development and regeneration aspirations for the district are backed by planning designations such as International Gateway, Regional Hub and Growth Point. We recognise that the delivery of the right type and number of affordable homes will be essential to ensuring balanced and sustainable new communities.

2. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

- 2.1 The preparation of this Plan coincides with the finalisation of our Local Development Framework Core Strategy document which sets out the Council's vision for change and how it will seek to shape the District as a place to work, relax and visit. It will determine the future pattern of development in the Borough and the way in which the social, economic and environmental needs of the area can be delivered in the most sustainable way. The Core Strategy adopts a high growth approach to the provision of new housing generally and recognises the importance of addressing the need for affordable housing. This Plan therefore seeks to translate the higher level objectives within the Core Strategy, into specific affordable housing delivery actions and targets
- 2.2 The Core Strategy provides the basis for achieving a step change in the delivery of affordable housing to enable us to address the significant need for affordable homes

2.3 The Plan considers:

- Why affordable housing is needed
- The number and type of affordable homes required.
- The Council's role in enabling the delivery of affordable housing.
- Our partnership approach to delivering affordable housing.
- The resources available to support delivery.

2.4 The Plan will provide a reference document for 'The Single Conversation' which is the new process by which the Homes & Communities Agency will engage with local authorities in a designated area and develop a coordinated approach to investment planning resulting in a Local Investment Plan.

2.4 The Plan will also inform RSLs and developers of our approach to affordable housing delivery so they are fully aware of the Council's expectations in relation to affordable housing when planning new housing schemes.

3. AIMS and OBJECTIVES

Aim

3.1 To ensure that as many households as possible who are unable to afford market housing can access good quality, affordable homes.

Objectives

- 3.2
1. Work effectively with partners to increase the supply of affordable homes across the district in support of the Council's wider regeneration and economic development objectives.
 2. Ensure that affordable housing positively contributes to attractive, secure and sustainable mixed communities.
 3. Deliver a range of affordable homes that will meet the needs of all sections of the community.
 4. Ensure that new homes are designed to be as affordable as possible.
 5. Make best use of the existing housing stock.

3.3 We will achieve these objectives through our Strategic Planning, Strategic Housing and Landlord roles.

3.4 An action plan linked to these objectives is attached to the Plan.

4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

National

- 4.1 The Government believes everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home, which they can afford, within a sustainable mixed community. This means providing a wide choice of housing to meet the needs of the whole community in terms of tenures and price ranges. This should include affordable housing, both social rented and intermediate¹.
- 4.2 The Government's 2007 Housing Green Paper, '*Homes for the future, more affordable, more sustainable*' called on all Local Authorities to play a stronger role in addressing the housing needs of all residents. It encouraged authorities to develop their strategic housing role by using the full range of housing and land use planning powers to ensure the delivery of new and affordable housing whilst making the best use of existing stock.
- 4.3 Planning Policy Statement 3, published by the Government in 2006, sets out the Government's national policies with regard to planning and the planning policy framework for delivering its housing objectives. It requires Regional Spatial Strategies "*to set out the regional approach to addressing affordable housing needs, including the affordable housing target for the region and each housing market area*".
- 4.4 It also requires that Local Planning Authorities should:
- Aim to set an overall target for the amount of affordable housing to be provided based on an assessment of the likely economic viability of land development and likely levels of finance available for affordable housing.
 - Set separate targets for social-rented and intermediate affordable housing.
 - Specify the size and type of affordable housing to be provided.
 - Set out the range of circumstances in which affordable housing will be required.
 - Set out the approach to seeking developer contributions.

Regional & Sub Regional

- 4.5 In terms of overall housing growth, the South East Plan sets a target for the provision of 654,000 new homes across the region between 2006-2026 with 56,700 homes to be delivered in the East Kent and Ashford sub region.
- 4.6 The Plan target for Dover is 10,100 new homes by 2026 an average of 505 homes per annum. The annual average is not a target but is used as a benchmark for monitoring progress towards the overall Plan target.
- 4.7 Policy H3 of the Plan states that "*a substantial increase in the amount of affordable housing in the region will be delivered*".
- 4.8 The importance of affordable housing delivery is also recognised in the South East Regional Housing Strategy which recognises the need to increase the supply of affordable housing across the region "*because prices and private sector rents are out of reach of people on low and even average incomes and homelessness remains a significant issue*"²

¹ Communities & Local Government: Delivering Affordable Housing (November 2006)

² South East Regional Housing Strategy 2006

- 4.9 The Strategy states that the most acute need is for social rented housing where supply has declined in recent years and that the delivery of new affordable, particularly affordable rented, homes is of over-riding importance.
- 4.10 The Kent Partnership's Community Strategy document 'The Vision for Kent' (2006), states that *"Kent will be a county...where housing needs are met and decent, high quality homes, help create attractive safe and friendly communities"*.
- 4.11 The emerging East Kent Sustainable Community Strategy seeks to ensure that the sub region will be *"home to stronger and healthier communities enjoying high quality housing and an enviable quality of life"*. In achieving this, the Strategy recognises the need for *"a balanced housing supply which serves the needs of current and potential residents"*.
- 4.12 The Strategy also recognises that housing affordability is a key issue in terms of access to appropriate housing and fuel poverty.

Local

- 4.13 Dover District Council's commitment to providing high quality, sustainable homes can be shown by its successful bid for Growth Point status. Linked to this are ambitious plans to regenerate key parts of Dover town and to create additional employment opportunities. The provision of new housing, including affordable housing, will be essential to help meet the needs of an expanding labour force and will therefore play a key role in helping the Council achieve its economic development objectives.
- 4.14 The Dover Pride Regeneration Strategy, which sets out a 30 year vision, strategy and action plan for the regeneration of Dover, highlights the role that new housing provision can play in helping to *"shift, diversify and balance the character of the town and attract new investment"*. The Strategy recognises that *"new house building in Dover has been limited to small scale developments at prices well below national average"* and that *"Despite the relatively low prices, low levels of earnings in the local economy mean there is insufficient affordable housing in the town"*. It also highlights the negative impact that the lack of good quality housing in the town has had on inward investment.
- 4.15 The Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy is a key corporate document which seeks to influence the processes that shape how the district will look and function and the characteristics that make one place distinct from another. The delivery of affordable housing will therefore take place within the policy context set out in the Strategy and support its overall aim and objectives.

5. THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 5.1 A definition of affordable housing is provided in Appendix A.
- 5.2 The Council's strategy for delivering new homes and affordable homes has to be underpinned by a robust analysis of local housing markets and the need for different types of affordable housing to ensure these markets are balanced.

Number of Affordable Homes Needed

- 5.3 The East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009 (SHMA) carried out by ECOTEC, an independent consultant, provides a key evidence base on which our housing related strategies and plans are based.
- 5.4 The SHMA has identified a need to provide 1,489 new affordable homes per annum in order to meet the backlog of need for affordable housing and newly arising need over a five year period. This is the approach recommended in CLG Guidance but we know that it will be impossible to achieve this level of delivery within this time period.
- 5.5 A summary of the SHMA needs analysis together with some key findings from this and other data sources regarding the affordability of housing in the District and the need for affordable homes are set out in Appendix B.

Types of Affordable Housing Needed

- 5.6 Decisions on the affordable housing to be provided on individual sites will take account of the recommendations in the SHMA report and the approach to unit types and tenure set out in Appendix C of this Plan. However, while this will provide overall direction we will need to allow some flexibility and to consider specific aspects of the site including its location, suitability for certain households, access to transport, schools and other amenities when determining the type of housing to be provided. Through our regular monitoring processes and Plan reviews we will ensure that the overall delivery of affordable house types is consistent with the SHMA report recommendations.
- 5.7 Affordable housing includes various intermediate housing products such as shared ownership, also referred to as HomeBuy. Generally, the SHMA found very low awareness of these intermediate housing products within Dover district with only 1.3% of respondents to the survey having considered them and with no social tenants having considered them at all. Having said this regular monitoring statistics provided by the HomeBuy zone agent (Moat Housing Group) shows that what demand there is, still significantly exceeds supply. Appendix D shows the breakdown of intermediate housing applicants across the County, by local authority area, and while this table is just a snapshot of demand at a particular moment in time, the data is updated on a regular basis and will be used to inform our guidance regarding the type of affordable units to be provided. We also intend to work closely with Moat to develop a better understanding of the intermediate market, identify which parts of the district are in greatest demand for shared ownership and together with our other RSL partners responsibly promote HomeBuy and other intermediate tenures so as to provide choice and meet aspirations.

Equality & Diversity

- 5.8 We will try to make sure that housing is accessible for people with physical disabilities by enabling the development of specialist, wheelchair accessible affordable housing. We will also ensure that homes can be readily adapted to meet changing needs as people grow older, by requiring homes to be built to Lifetime Homes standards wherever this is practically possible.
- 5.9 The SHMA report includes an analysis of the housing requirements of specific groups and this together with the priorities identified in the new Supporting People Strategy, as well as specific local research, will inform our approach to the provision of supported housing to meet the needs of vulnerable households. Two of our

- 5.10 We are aware that there is a strong demographic trend nationally, which is also reflected locally, in respect of increasing numbers of older person households (over 65) and of particular significance is the increasing number of frail older people. In response to this we have also developed an Older Persons Housing Strategy.
- 5.11 With regard to the provision of new affordable housing to meet the needs of older people, we will continue to work in partnership with Kent County Council to deliver a second 40 unit 'extra care' scheme through the PFI initiative and will explore further opportunities for the delivery of a further 100 units of extra care housing. In addition, while we recognise that most older people would prefer to remain in their own homes for as long as possible we also believe that this choice is sometimes influenced by a lack of attractive alternatives. Consequently, on suitable sites, such as the proposed town centre regeneration project, we will explore the possibility of providing housing for older people that will meet their aspirations in terms of the design of individual homes and the surrounding environment and infrastructure. We will also explore the potential that shared ownership housing may have in meeting the housing needs of older people. Additional information regarding our approach to meeting the housing needs of older people is set out in our Older Persons Housing Strategy.
- 5.12 The delivery of an increased proportion of larger, family homes referred to in Appendix C, will help the Council to tackle the problem of overcrowding an issue that was highlighted in the CLG action plan on this topic in 2007³. We are aware that overcrowding is a problem that can disproportionately affect black and ethnic minority households.

Where Affordable Housing Is Needed

- 5.13 As well as assessing the need for affordable housing across the District as a whole, the SHMA identified 4 distinctive local housing market areas (LHMAs) and included an analysis of the need for affordable housing in each area. Of the 21 LHMAs identified by the SHMA within the sub region, the three urban areas within Dover district (Dover, Deal and Sandwich) were all ranked within the top six areas in terms of the assessed need for affordable housing. The rural part of the district was ranked 11th.
- 5.14 While Deal was ranked 2nd, in broad numerical terms the SHMA has found that the greatest annual unmet need for affordable housing is in Dover town, followed by Deal, East Kent Rural South (the rural area within Dover District) and Sandwich.
- 5.15 Annex four of the SHMA report sets out the annual unmet need in each LHMA and a breakdown of the type of affordable homes required. In conjunction with other housing needs data this will enable us to give guidance to developers and RSLs regarding the appropriate mix of affordable house types and tenures to be provided within the LHMAs. The findings will also be reflected in the LDF Site Allocations Document.

³ Tackling overcrowding in England: An action plan. CLG Dec 2007.

Rural Housing

- 5.16 Dover District covers a large rural area which includes a wide range of settlements. It is important that, while we recognise the housing problems affecting the urban areas and Dover in particular, we also understand and respond to the need for affordable housing in many of our rural settlements.
- 5.17 The Regional Housing Strategy (2006) states that the *'lack of affordable housing in rural communities is believed to be the most important issue threatening the viability of rural communities'*.
- 5.18 In 2007 the HCA published its latest Rural Housing Strategy which highlighted the high level of need for affordable housing in many local authority areas and recognised the vital contribution that small, sensitively designed schemes can make to the sustainability of rural communities. This is reflected in the fact that the delivery of affordable rural homes is one of the three geographic priorities identified in the HCA's South East Investment Statement (2008-11). Despite this funding priority it seems likely that there will be shortfall of rural schemes coming forward to enable the HCA to meet its target.
- 5.19 The SHMA identified a significant level of need for affordable housing in the rural part of the district and the report highlighted the lack of suitable development sites, high land costs and land values and environmental considerations as being key factors impacting on the supply and demand for affordable homes. The report also highlighted the impact that the lack of affordable housing can have on the viability of local amenities such as shops, schools and transport networks. As well as on individual households who are forced to move out of villages to find suitable housing elsewhere.
- 5.20 Over the years the Council has enabled the delivery of a number of high quality affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites⁴ and has specific planning policy and guidance to support this approach⁵.
- 5.21 We will work closely with Parish Council's and Action with Communities in Rural Kent to enable the identification of suitable sites, assist the Rural Housing Enabler in relation to village needs surveys and provide support to RSLs involved in rural housing development. We understand the need for a properly coordinated and managed approach to rural housing especially where potential schemes are being led by a private developer.
- 5.22 We will also investigate the development of Community Land Trusts as a vehicle that can deliver affordable housing so that it remains a community asset in perpetuity.
- 5.23 Opportunities for the development of rural affordable housing are generally limited and while the affordable homes provided should reflect the need identified through village surveys we will look to see how homes can be designed to offer flexibility in

⁴ Sites that are granted a planning consent as an exception to normal planning policy subject to a requirement that the homes are affordable.

⁵ Policy DM 6 of the LDF Core Strategy Document 2009 & Affordable Housing Rural Exception Schemes Supplementary Planning Guidance

order to meet changing needs. This will be achieved by providing Lifetime Homes, but we will also encourage the provision of homes with easily convertible roof spaces to meet the needs of growing families.

- 5.24 Where there are no suitable sites within a village, but an urgent need for affordable housing has been identified, we will investigate the possibility of enabling an RSL partner to purchase existing, satisfactory properties. These are likely to be former Council homes and the Council may be able to assist with funding through its 'off site contributions' pot referred to in paragraph 11.2.

6. PAST PERFORMANCE

- 6.1 Historic provision of affordable housing in the district has been significantly below the level that will be required in the future by the Council's plans for overall housing growth.
- 6.2 The numbers of new affordable homes delivered in the district over the previous five years is shown below.

	2004/0 5	2005/0 6	2006/0 7	2007/0 8	2008/0 9	Total
Social rented	53	14	35	15	37	154
Intermediate rent	0	0	0	0	6	6
Shared ownership (RSL)	12	12	29	0	23	76
Shared ownership (non RSL)	-	-	-	0	3	3
Totals	65	26	64	15	69	239

Source: HSSA returns

While these new affordable homes were being delivered the following homes were lost from the affordable housing stock as a result of Council house sales.

	2004/0 5	2005/0 6	2006/0 7	2007/0 8	2008/0 9	Total
Right to Buy sales	65	27	27	22	5	146

Source: CLG live tables on affordable housing supply

- 6.3 The net increase in the number of affordable homes for social rent over this 5 year period has therefore been 8 homes.
- 6.4 The Council expects 122 new affordable homes to be delivered this financial year which is a significant increase on previous years despite difficult market conditions.

7. HOW WE WILL DELIVER THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIRED

7.1 The Council's role in relation to affordable housing is delivered through its responsibilities for:

- Planning
- Strategic housing and enabling
- Council housing

The Council also relies on key partners to help it meet housing need, in particular the Homes & Communities Agency and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)

7.2 The main sources of supply of affordable homes will be:

- New affordable homes built as part of a larger development under a S.106 planning agreement or developed directly by RSLs on land they control
- The existing housing stock.

The Council's Enabling Role

7.3 While the Council is the largest provider of affordable housing in the District with a stock of just under 4,600 homes it hasn't built any new affordable homes for many years and this role has been taken over by Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations).

7.4 The Council's role has therefore become one of enabler rather than developer and central to this role is partnership working. Successful implementation of this Plan will be dependent on effective co-ordination and co-operation within the Council and across a number of statutory, non statutory and voluntary organisations.

7.5 We already have a protocol for working relationships between Housing and Planning but we will monitor the effectiveness of this and ensure that we have a 'joined up' approach across all parts of the Council involved with affordable housing. As part of this we will look at examples of best practice elsewhere⁶.

Partnership Working

7.6 In 2006 Dover District Council together with Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council selected a small number of RSL development partners with whom the local authorities would develop stronger working relationships in respect of development and management services and who would be promoted to developers for S.106 development opportunities.

7.7 The four preferred RSL partners selected were:

Amicus Horizon Group
Southern Housing Group
Orbit Group
Town & Country Housing Group

⁶ The I&DeA publication New Housing Provision and the Strategic Housing Role 2009 provides examples of good practice.

- 7.8 Currently only three of the partners are actively developing general needs affordable housing in the district and this combined with a general scaling back of RSL development programmes raises concern about the capacity of our partners to deliver the amount of affordable housing needed.
- 7.9 We are also aware of the Government's concern that it does not want local authorities to adopt restrictive practices which could preclude innovation and competition between affordable housing providers.⁷
- 7.10 However, we also recognise that Dover town has a poor market image and that there is a need to deliver high quality new homes to counteract this. It is therefore essential that the quality of affordable homes is also of a high standard and it is important that we work with RSL partners who have a clear understanding of the Council's corporate objectives and a long term commitment to the district not only in respect of providing new homes, but also the quality of their post development management services. We will therefore seek to increase RSL development capacity within the district while having a robust process in place to ensure RSLs deliver high quality management services. In identifying potential new partners we will seek to ensure that we there is the range of expertise to help deliver the wide range of different schemes required.
- 7.11 To address the competition issue, we will, for large strategic developments, invite RSLs, or RSL consortia, to submit competitive proposals for their selection as the preferred RSL partner(s). A selection panel comprising the Council, developer and HCA will assess proposals against a range of criteria including grant requirement, design standards and achieving sustainable communities. This will help build a strategic partnership approach to delivery and establish a long-term commitment from the RSL partner(s) and HCA. This approach may also be applied to major regeneration projects where a close partnership working and engagement with the community is necessary e.g. Coombe Valley in Dover.
- 7.12 These strategic developments should provide RSL partners with an attractive business development opportunity and in return we will expect RSLs to demonstrate a willingness to help deliver more challenging, higher risk schemes.
- 7.13 We are aware of effective partnerships operating elsewhere which have enabled the delivery of an increased number of affordable rural homes. For example, the Rural Housing Partnership operating in Oxfordshire, is significantly out performing all the other County areas in the South East. This partnership comprises four district authorities and selected RSL, developer and consultant partners who have an expertise in relation to affordable housing. This is an approach we will explore with our East Kent local authority partners.

⁷ Communities & Local Government: "Delivering Affordable Housing – Annex to PPS3 Housing" (2006)

Other Partners

- 7.14 In addition to the preferred RSL development partners we work with a range of other organisations to enable the delivery of affordable housing. These include:

English Rural Housing Association: An RSL partner specialising in the provision of affordable homes in rural communities.

Action with Communities in Rural Kent: An independent voluntary organisation that works with rural community organisations on a range of projects, including village housing need assessments.

Moat: An RSL that operates the HomeBuy Zone Agency.

Brownfield Land Assembly Company: Supported by the Regional Housing Board and funded by the HCA, BLAC are a not for profit organisation which invests in small brownfield sites in urban areas which would not otherwise come forward for redevelopment due to uncertainty of the cost of remediation. The sites are remediated, planning consent obtained and then sold to an RSL partner. Receipts are recycled into further site purchases. BLAC are often able to purchase and bring forward sites which would be seen as high risk by other developers and RSLs.

- 7.15 Private developers are also able to secure public subsidy so that they can provide new affordable housing directly themselves. Once built, the developer normally transfers homes to an RSL. Where this approach is proposed we will work closely with the developer to ensure that the right type of homes are provided and influence the choice of RSL management partner.

Local Authority Partners

- 7.16 The Council recognises the benefits of working with neighbouring authorities to address common issues, share good practice and make best use of resources. We therefore regularly participate in a number of cross authority forums and working groups. Those with a specific affordable housing focus include:
- Kent Housing Officers Group and the Strategy & Enabling Sub Group
 - East Kent Triangle RSL Forum

Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG)

- 7.17 This is the partnership body set up by the Council to address affordable housing issues and monitor the delivery of affordable housing. The Group is Chaired by the Council's portfolio holder for Strategic Housing and attended by other Council members, officers, HCA and RSL representatives and representatives from those organisations referred to at 7.14.
- 7.18 In addition to its monitoring role the AHWG will encourage the sharing of good practice and develop local standards to be achieved in relation to development and management services.
- 7.19 We recognise the need to have good market intelligence to help deliver and the Plan and respond to changing circumstances. We will therefore look at how the AHWG can help provide this and we will look at expanding representation on the Group to include developers and land agents.

8. DELIVERING NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES

- 8.1 While this Plan sets out our approach to the delivery of affordable housing over the next five years we recognise the longer term context within which the provision of affordable housing in the district should be considered.
- 8.2 As mentioned above, the South East Plan includes a target for the delivery of an additional 10,100 homes in Dover District over the period 2006- 2026. The Plan recommends that 30% of these new homes should be affordable and therefore suggests that we should be aiming to deliver in the region of 150 homes new affordable homes per annum.
- 8.3 The Council's aim is to secure a higher level of housing growth than set out in the South East Plan and the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Document includes a commitment to a high growth strategy which would see the provision of 14,000 new homes with a minimum of 10,100 being delivered by 2026. This will provide the opportunity to deliver a significant amount of new affordable housing in the future and help reduce the backlog of need. While most of this additional housing will be delivered beyond the life of this Plan it is important to highlight the opportunities that will exist in the future to address the need for affordable housing.
- 8.4 The Core Strategy Document forecasts a progressive build-up of housing development which would reach maximum delivery during the period 2016-2021 and starting to tail off during 2021-2026. The projected housing delivery set out in the Strategy indicates that there is potential for the delivery of 3,027 new homes over the period 2010/11-2014/15. This indicates that there is the potential for the planning system to deliver 908 affordable homes over this same period (181 per annum). However, not all of these will be above the planning threshold which triggers the requirement for affordable housing.

Delivery Via S.106 Sites

- 8.5 Over recent years, sites where there is a planning requirement to provide affordable housing, have become the most important supply stream of affordable homes for most local authorities.
- 8.6 Policy DM 5 of the Council's Core Strategy Submission Document states that *"the Council will seek applications for residential developments of 15 or more dwellings to provide 30% of the total homes proposed as affordable homes"*. More detailed guidance on how this policy will be implemented is provided in the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.
- 8.7 There are four strategic development sites identified in the Core Strategy that are of a scale and significance that they are key to delivering the South East Plan target. They will also be key to the delivery of additional affordable homes in the District over a period which extends beyond the life of this Plan. These sites together with the potential number of affordable homes they could deliver based on Policy DM5 are shown below.

Site	Total New Homes	Affordable %	Potential No. Affordable Homes	Timescale
Dover Waterfront	400	30%	120	2011-2016

Mid Town	100	30%	30	2011-2016
Connaught Barracks	500	30%	150	2011-2016
Whitfield Expansion	5,750	30%	1,725	2016-2026

- 8.8 While the Council can enable and facilitate these larger developments, it requires developers to deliver them and consequently, economic considerations will influence the development timescale. Current market uncertainties therefore make it difficult to forecast precisely when the affordable homes will be delivered. Due to their scale the sites will also be developed in phases over a number of years and it is likely that the first affordable homes won't be delivered until towards the end of this Plan. These key sites will require significant infrastructure investment and potential 'up front' HCA investment in the affordable housing element may help address some of the financial issues. Other funding to help unlock sites may be available through programmes such as the Community Infrastructure Fund and consequently we recognise the importance of developing a strategic partnership approach to delivery and being 'joined up' corporately.
- 8.9 The graph in Appendix E shows the total potential affordable housing delivery via S.106 sites, assuming 30% provision, for the period up to 2016 and how it relates to the projected average delivery based on the South East Plan. It also shows previous performance and clearly illustrates the step change in delivery that is required to meet identified need but also the potential that we have over the period to 2026 for increased delivery. However, what is also evident is that even if we deliver the maximum number of affordable homes on S.106 sites we will still fall short of the number of homes that the SHMA has identified.
- 8.10 In recognition of the substantial need for affordable housing and to equitably apply the requirement for affordable housing, the LDF Core Strategy Document includes a requirement for residential development below the 15 unit threshold to make a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing. The intention is to pool these contributions and, in partnership with RSLs, fund other affordable housing schemes in the District.

Economic Viability

- 8.11 This Plan has been developed at a time when, although there is some evidence that the housing market has stabilised, conditions are still difficult and the future uncertain. Because S.106 sites are private developer led, the delivery of affordable homes through this route depends heavily on the buoyancy of the housing market. Nevertheless, it is important that our plans not only take account of current conditions but will place us in a strong position to benefit from the recovery.
- 8.12 Consultation with local developer, land agent and RSL stakeholders has highlighted the economic viability of residential development being a key issue in many parts of the district. Brownfield sites where there are higher development costs related to site clearance, remediation of contaminated land and flood mitigation are particularly marginal in terms of viability due to relatively low sale values. They advise that for many of these sites it can be difficult to generate a land value in excess of the site's existing use value. A requirement to provide a proportion of affordable homes will also impact on viability depending on whether or not the affordable homes are subsidised with grant funding.

- 8.13 Reference has already been made in paragraph 8.4 to the fact that in order to deliver affordable housing some form of subsidy is needed. The Council recognises that public subsidy in the form of Social Housing Grant is limited and that on *“suitable” sites it should be possible to deliver affordable housing without grant and still achieve a realistic land value. Developers should therefore “take affordable (housing) provision and other known requirements and constraints into account when negotiating the purchase of land”*.⁸
- 8.14 However, it is also recognised that there will be sites where property prices, land values and development costs will be such that grant funding will be essential to achieve an economically viable development which will deliver the percentage of affordable housing required.
- 8.15 The economic viability of providing affordable housing on a range of different sites within the District has been the subject of analysis by consultants CBRE. The study found that currently the relatively low sales values in Dover and Deal means that social housing grant will be necessary in order to achieve a realistic land value and ensure viability of the development. The analysis of local housing markets in the SHMA suggests that approximately 67% of the unmet need for affordable housing is in Deal (28%) and Dover (39%).
- 8.16 Consultation feedback has reinforced the findings of the CBRE study with developers, in particular, highlighting the fact that low relatively sales values means that the economic viability of many sites in the District is marginal. Consequently, they are of the view that, given current market conditions, providing 30% affordable housing on such sites, without social housing grant, would make them financially unviable.
- 8.17 While the preferred affordable housing tenure mix is set out in paragraph 3.4 the Council recognises that current housing market difficulties have resulted in a substantial reduction in the provision of shared ownership homes and that while other intermediate tenures are being provided, the higher level of grant funding for rented homes may mean that some schemes are only viable where the percentage of homes for rent is increased. While current conditions may require a degree of flexibility to prevent schemes stalling we will be very mindful of the need to ensure that new communities are balanced and sustainable.
- 8.18 Although economic viability may be a justifiable reason for developers seeking a reduction in S.106 contributions (especially affordable housing), on some sites, it will be necessary to robustly test the financial assumptions behind any developer request to reduce the proportion of affordable housing. It will also be necessary to develop mechanisms for calculating the financial contribution to be made for affordable housing on sites below the 15 unit threshold and determine a process by which any requests to reduce contributions on viability grounds should be tested. While this policy could be extremely beneficial in terms of providing additional resources to deliver more affordable housing and support other corporate objectives, there are also significant implications in respect of the staff and financial resources that may be required to implement it.

⁸ Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2007 (Paragraph 5.32)

Direct Provision By RSLs

- 8.19 The acquisition and direct development of sites is regarded by some RSLs as preferable to the acquisition of homes via developer led S.106 sites. This is because they control the development timescale and the design and quality of the homes.
- 8.20 RSLs normally find it difficult to compete with private developers for land in a buoyant market. The current market may appear to offer opportunities but the reality is that they have also been affected by the 'Credit Crunch' through more expensive borrowing and a dramatic fall in shared ownership sales.
- 8.21 Relatively low house values also impact on the rents RSLs are able to charge for new affordable homes and, while this helps make them affordable, it affects the amount that RSLs can borrow against the future rental income stream and therefore the financial viability of RSL led development. This, combined with shared ownership issues referred to above, means that, without some form of subsidy, RSLs are continuing to find it difficult to generate land values that enable them to secure sites.

Ensuring New Homes Are Well Designed and Contribute to Safe, Sustainable Mixed Communities

- 8.21 Through our enabling role we will ensure that new affordable housing is of a high quality, built in places where people want to live, effectively managed and consequently contributes to the development of cohesive and sustainable communities.
- 8.22 Through close partnership working with RSL partners, the use of letting plans and encouraging their active participation in community consultation and development we will help build balanced communities that will remain attractive places to live in years to come.
- 8.23 Where affordable housing is delivered as part of a larger housing development we will ensure that new affordable housing includes an appropriate mix of tenures and is evenly distributed across sites with a view to making it indistinguishable from market housing (tenure blind). We will therefore encourage developers to work with RSLs on the design of schemes at an early stage. Our proposed approach to RSL partner selection for larger S.106 schemes, as set out in 7.11, will help achieve this.
- 8.24 We expect our partner RSLs to share good practice, learn from, and build upon the high quality of design achieved on other affordable schemes in the district and assist in delivering new exemplar schemes.
- 8.25 We will expect all new affordable housing to meet the requirements of the HCA's Design & Quality Standards (2007) and meet the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes in order to qualify for HCA grant funding (Code Level 3 until 2011). However we will work with RSL partners to try and achieve higher Code Levels where it is economically viable. Our aim will be to deliver our first Code level 5 scheme within the first 3 years of the Plan.
- 8.26 We will also expect RSLs to design schemes with a view to achieving at least 16 out of the 20 'Building for Life'⁹ criteria which exceeds the current minimum standard of 14.

⁹ A scheme promoted by CABE and Home Builders Federation which sets out 20 design criteria and a process for assessing schemes against the criteria.

- 8.27 The Council will aim to ensure that affordable housing schemes provide a safe and secure environment for households by encouraging RSL partners to work towards achieving 'Secure by Design' accreditation.
- 8.28 We will only work with RSL partners who can demonstrate that they provide high quality housing management services, have effective procedures for tackling anti social behaviour and can make a positive contribution to the development of sustainable communities.
- 8.29 We will also seek to ensure long term affordability of homes by working with RSL partners and developers to design schemes that minimise household running costs, tackle fuel poverty and minimise service charges.
- 8.30 We will develop monitoring arrangements with our RSL partners to ensure that the affordable homes being delivered meet the standards required. This will help us learn from mistakes, refine our guidance and identify and share good practice.

9. DELIVERY TARGET FOR NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 9.1 The Kent Partnership (the county-wide local strategic partnership for Kent) has developed a target for the delivery of new affordable homes and this is set out in Kent Agreement 2 (2008-11). This is a cumulative target based on individual local authority targets for this period. Dover's target for this period is 120 new affordable homes per annum and reflects the target within the 2005-2009 Housing Strategy.
- 9.2 We expect to achieve our KA2 target this year (2009/10) but we think there is likely to be a shortfall for 2010/11 of about 40 units. The position appears more positive from 2011/12 onwards but forecasting with any certainty is extremely difficult given current market conditions.
- 9.3 We know it isn't realistic to expect that we can deliver the number of affordable homes required to meet the total need identified by the SHMA, both in terms of the projected development opportunities and the resources likely to be available. However, we also recognise the need to improve our performance and, subject to the necessary resources being available, we will be aiming to deliver at least an additional 250 affordable homes over the first two years of the Plan. The schemes we are forecasting for delivery over this period together with the indicative grant funding requirement are shown below. While we are reasonably confident that these schemes can be delivered within the timescale, this can't be guaranteed and consequently the target will need to be regularly reviewed. In addition to these schemes we anticipate a number of HomeBuy purchases.

2010/2011			
Scheme	Location	No. Affordable Homes	Indicative Grant Requirement
Magnus House	Deal	14	£880,000
College Road	Deal	16	£1,040,000
Northwall Road	Deal	4	£260,000
Eastry Hospital	Rural	12	£800,000
Maison Dieu Road	Dover		3,600,000
		46	£3,780,000

2011/2012			
Scheme	Location	No. Affordable Homes	Indicative Grant Requirement
Astor Avenue	Dover	59	£4,000,000
Anselm Road	Dover	8	£600,000
Westmount School	Dover	25	£1,625,000
Extra Care (PFI)	Dover	40	£?
Aylesham (Phase 1)	Rural	38	£2,640,000
Eastry Hospital	Rural	12	£800,000
Goonestone	Rural	8	£500,000
		190	£10,145,000

9.4 Our longer term target will be to deliver a further 400 affordable homes over the remaining three years of the Plan and this should include the early phases of some of the strategic developments identified at 8.7. Clearly this will be subject to developers bringing forward identified sites and again, the necessary resources to deliver the affordable homes. The resource implication of these targets is considered in paragraph 11.7. Beyond the life of this Plan and up to 2026 we believe that there will be the potential to increase average annual delivery to around 150 new affordable homes per annum. This is based on estimated delivery via S.106 sites and doesn't include additional sources of supply.

9.5 Because it is not possible to forecast housing delivery with any certainty we will as mentioned previously, regularly review the targets, not only to identify potential slippage, but also to identify new opportunities for increasing delivery.

10. MAKING BEST USE OF THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

10.1 In addition to building new affordable homes we recognise the need to look at how we can make better use of the existing private sector and social housing stock within the district

Private Sector Stock

10.2 Our Private Sector Housing Strategy identifies the need to tackle the problem of long term empty homes (empty 6 months or more) as one of its priorities for action. A Private Sector House Condition Survey carried out in the District in 2008 found the rate of long term empty properties in the private sector was 2.1% (870 properties). This is significantly higher than the national rate of 1.6% and is the second highest in Kent. These homes represent a wasted resource.

10.3 While our primary focus will be to bring long term empty homes back into use there may be scope to make some available as affordable homes and specific actions related to this are set out in our Empty Homes Strategy.

10.4 We also recognise that the private rented housing stock in the district (14.9% of the total housing stock) can make a valuable contribution to the supply of affordable

- 10.5 Consultation feedback has highlighted a ready supply of private rented housing in Dover at present, although access can be restricted to certain groups of people. We currently assist people in housing need access private rented housing through schemes such as the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme and Private Sector Leasing Scheme and we will continue to explore other ways in which private sector housing can help meet housing need while working to improve standards in this sector.

Social Housing Stock

- 10.6 The Council and a number of RSL currently own a manage a range of affordable housing across the district. The existing stock of social rented homes broken down by number of bedrooms is shown in the table below:

	Bedsit	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 or more	Total
Dover DC	140	946	1937	1497	72	2	0	4594
RSLs	17	293	651	509	26	0	1	1497
Total	157	1239	2588	2006	98	2	1	6091

- 10.7 From this stock there is a regular supply of Council and RSL homes that become vacant and available for re let. The number homes re let in the period 2004/05 to 2008/09 is shown below.

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Council	366	244	285	218	140
RSL	183	256	227	215	206
Total	549	500	512	433	346

Source: CORE Lettings Data

- 10.8 This shows that over the past five years there has been a steady reduction in the number of Council homes becoming available for re let.
- 10.9 A recent Housing Quality Network briefing "*What does excellence look like? Allocations and lettings*" highlights the approach taken by organisations to address under-occupation as a key area that will be assessed as part of any Audit Commission inspection. This has been followed by a report published by the South East England Partnership Board¹⁰ which restates the need for more family sized (3 & 4 bedroom homes) and recommends that local authorities should be looking at the needs of under occupying older households with a view to making best use of the available stock. As part of the forthcoming review of our Allocations Policy we will look at examples of best practice in relation to reducing under occupation.

¹⁰ Releasing Larger Social Rented Homes in the South East; meeting the needs of older people and families (2009): Regional Housing Forum

- 10.10 In addition, our Older Persons Accommodation Strategy considers how we can provide attractive housing options for older people which will enable us not only to meet their housing needs but also potentially 'free up' family housing.
- 10.11 We will be working with the other East Kent authorities to develop a better understanding of the issue and explore potential actions to reduce under occupation.
- 10.12 There may also be opportunities to 'free up' social housing and meet tenant's aspirations through the provision of affordable home ownership options.

11. RESOURCES

- 11.1 A range of resources will be required to deliver the Plan objectives, both financial and staff.

Grant Funding (National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP))

- 11.2 The NAHP is the main source of capital funding to support the delivery of affordable homes. Funding is provided by Government and the programme is managed by the HCA through their various regional teams. The investment priorities for the region are set out in their South East Investment Statement 2008-11.
- 11.3 The geographic investment priorities in the Statement are:
- Rural affordable housing
 - Growth Areas
 - Growth Points
- 11.4 The thematic priorities are:
- Supported housing
 - Larger homes
 - Meeting the needs of BME communities
 - Design & quality
 - Affordability of low cost home ownership
- 11.5 At this point in time it is extremely difficult to predict what funding may be available via the HCA in the future and as previously mentioned, we will need to regularly review the Plan in the light of funding availability and changes to HCA strategic priorities. However, many of the HCA's current priorities are reflected in this Plan and this should help ensure we maximise the potential for bids being approved.
- 11.6 The HCA has an expectation that bids for grant funding will be subject to economic viability testing and that the need for grant funding can be clearly demonstrated. The district wide viability assessments carried by CBRE indicate that the vast majority of sites coming forward in Dover and Deal are likely to require grant funding to achieve viability. These are the same areas where there is greatest unmet need. The schemes identified to help us achieve our delivery target of 250 new affordable homes over the next 2 years will, on the basis of the CBRE analysis, all require grant funding. We also anticipate that many of the schemes likely to come forward over the life of the Plan and help deliver the 650 new homes target, will also require grant.

- 11.7 However, as previously referred to, our longer term aim is to improve the housing market image in these areas and this combined with a general housing market recovery, the impact of key regeneration schemes and the high speed rail link should have an impact on house values and help to deliver affordable housing with reduced grant. The Communities and Local Government document '*Delivering Affordable Housing*' (2006) recognised that where housing commands much higher prices there is greater scope for securing affordable housing through developer contributions or "planning obligations".
- 11.8 Our minimum estimated grant funding requirement to meet our 2 year target is approximately £16m with an estimated further £23m required to deliver the target for the remaining 3 years. This has been calculated using regional average grant per unit figures for rented and shared ownership units but given market conditions, higher than average levels of grant may be required to achieve financial viability on some sites over the short term. However, we recognise the uncertainty regarding future grant funding and as explained above, our medium to long term aim will be to balance our local housing markets so that as general market conditions and sales values improve, these factors combined with a more stable shared ownership market, should improve the value for grant position.
- 11.9 We believe that we will be able to make a strong case to the Homes & Communities Agency, through the Single Conversation, for the required level of investment. We can clearly demonstrate the significant level of need for affordable housing that exists and that we have well advanced plans to deliver housing growth including affordable homes. We can also demonstrate that currently the majority of affordable housing development opportunities are currently unviable without grant funding.
- 11.10 We recognise that the future availability of grant funding is uncertain and therefore, given our longer term aim set out above, we will ensure that affordable housing which forms part of a development with a regeneration or economic development focus, is identified as high priority for grant funding.

Planning Policy – Financial Contributions from Developers

- 11.11 From time to time the Council may receive commuted sums for the off-site provision of affordable housing especially as we will be seeking contributions on sites below the 15 unit threshold.
- 11.12 We will explore various schemes through which this money can be spent including:
- The funding of known affordable housing schemes where HCA funding is not available.
 - The joint funding of schemes where this will help to lever in the required investment to deliver affordable housing
 - The acquisition of land for the development of affordable housing
 - The acquisition of existing satisfactory dwellings (ESDs) targeted at specific property types or areas e.g. villages where there are no opportunities for new development, areas of poor quality housing or with a high proportion of empty properties where the acquisition and improvement of homes may help lever in private investment and create a more balanced market

Land

- 11.13 The Council owns land which may be suitable for residential development and the provision of affordable housing. We will carry out a site identification exercise to identify all HRA owned sites and assess their development suitability.
- 11.14 The Council can make this land available for less than market value to facilitate the provision of affordable housing. This would enable the Council to demonstrate a level of strategic commitment to a high priority scheme thereby increasing its priority for HCA funding. However, such an approach would have to be weighed up against the impact the reduced capital receipt may have on other aspects of the Council's business.
- 11.15 Another approach might be to sell sites at market value but conditional on a higher percentage of affordable housing being provided. Again this is likely to reduce the value of the land and careful consideration would have to be given to achieving an appropriate balance of tenures.
- 11.16 Some land (small sites in low value areas) may have not be attractive to private developers and may only have a relatively low value. They may however, be of interest to an RSL partner although the scale of the development may present viability issues. Following completion of the site identification and assessment process referred to above we will consider whether or not there is scope to package these sites in such a way that would make them attractive to an RSL partner.
- 11.17 An alternative option is to explore opportunities such as the Local Authority New Build programme by which the Council could develop such sites directly, with an RSL acting as its development agent. Although the Council wouldn't receive a capital receipt it would benefit from the long-term rental income stream.
- 11.19 In addition to vacant sites the Council will look at potential opportunities to re develop existing housing where it is possible to increase the housing density and where this will result in the provision of higher quality homes of the right type and a more balanced community.

Private Finance Initiative

- 11.20 The Council is one of 10 district authorities involved in a partnership with Kent County Council to build affordable homes via a Private Sector Finance Initiative project know as 'Better Homes Active Lives'. Housing 21 has been commissioned by the partnership to provide across the County 275 extra care apartments for older people, 58 supported flats for people with a learning disability and seven for people with mental health problems. The project has already delivered 40 affordable extra care flats and 7 flats for people with a learning disability in Dover. The next phase of the project will deliver a further 40 extra care flats. We will continue to work with partners on PFI initiatives where they can help meet housing needs and demonstrate value for money.

12. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- 12.1 An Action Plan linked to this document is attached and progress against the actions will be monitored on a regular basis with monitoring reports submitted to quarterly meetings of the Affordable Housing Working Group.

- 12.2 An annual review of the Plan and Action Plan will also be carried out, including a review of the affordable housing targets referred to at 9.3 and 9.4.
- 12.3 Progress on schemes will also be monitored through individual bi monthly meetings with RSL partners.

Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

Action Plan

Action	Outcome	Target	By When	Resources Required	Lead
1. Objective: Work with Partners to Increase the supply of affordable homes					
1.1 Enable the delivery of new affordable housing	Meeting housing need, reduced housing waiting list and homelessness	250 new affordable homes delivered 650 new affordable homes	March 2012 March 2015	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
1.2 Coordinated corporate approach to negotiation of affordable housing provision on S.106 sites	Developers aware of Council policy on affordable housing and therefore less scope for disputes	30% affordable housing achieved unless proven economic viability reasons for reduced %	Effective from April 2010 and then every year	Officer time Consultancy costs re viability assessment	Housing Initiatives Manager
1.3 Increase the number of RSL development partners	Increased affordable housing development capacity, competition and ability to share risk	Develop new process for RSL partner accreditation. At least 2 additional RSL partners active in the district	December 2010	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager
1.4 Produce a portfolio of HRA owned land with development potential	Additional potential affordable housing land identified	Portfolio produced and development potential and financial implications assessed	June 2010	Officer time	Senior Valuer/ Housing Initiatives Manager
1.5 Explore initiatives that will enable the delivery of new rural affordable homes	Affordable housing need in rural communities addressed	Consider the possible development of an East Kent rural affordable housing partnership. Investigate potential development of the Community Land Trust model	April 2012 April 2012	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager
1.6 Work with the Rural Housing Enabler to promote affordable rural housing and develop managed programme	Rural housing opportunities identified and brought forward	Programme for 2 village needs surveys per annum	Effective from January 2011 and then every year	Officer time/RHE financial contribution	Housing Initiatives Manager/ RHE
1.7 Develop a planned approach to	Affordable housing need in rural	2 new rural schemes per	April 2011	HCA grant	Housing Initiatives

the delivery of affordable rural housing	communities addressed	annum	and then every year	funding	Manager
1.8 Utilise 'off site' developer financial contributions	Increased provision of affordable homes	Possible schemes identified, appraised and reported to AHWG	October 2010	Officer/RSL time HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager/Development Control Manager
1.9 Actively monitor the progress of schemes and facilitate their development	Closer partnership working and greater certainty of delivery	Bi monthly 1-2-1 meetings with all RSL partners and quarterly meetings of the AHWG	April 2010	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager
1.10 Update the evidence bases which support the delivery of affordable housing	Types and tenure of homes delivered which meet local need. Strengthened position in terms of S.106 negotiations and funding bids	SHMA updated	April 2014	Cost shared across EK LAs. Estimated cost £15,000	Housing Initiatives Manager/Forward Planning Manager
		Analysis of the demand for intermediate housing within the district	August 2010		Housing Initiatives Manager/Moat Housing Group
2. Objective: Ensure that affordable housing positively contributes to attractive, secure and sustainable mixed communities					
2.1 Affordable housing is well integrated within a mixed community	Social inclusion and sustainable communities	Develop a process for the selection of partner RSLs for strategic sites	December 2010	Officer/HCA time	Housing Initiatives Manager
2.2 All new schemes to contribute to achieving a balanced community	Overall provision of new homes will accurately reflect the type, size and tenure specified in the Plan	Regular monitoring report prepared and reported to AHWG	Effective from April 2010 and then every year	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager
2.3 New affordable homes and neighbourhoods to be well designed	Improved social well being, quality of life and sustainable communities	All new affordable homes to achieve 16 out of 20 'Building for Life' score	Effective from April 2010 and then every year	Officer/RSL time	RSL partners
2.4 Enable the development of safe & secure neighbourhoods	Reduced crime and fear of crime	All new schemes to achieve 'secure by design' accreditation	April 2010	RSL	RSL partners
2.5 Assess levels of customer satisfaction with new affordable housing	Better understanding of occupiers needs, best practice shared and improved design	Customer satisfaction monitoring process developed and reported to AHWG	April 2011	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
3. Objective: Deliver a range of affordable homes that will meet the needs of all sections of the community					
3.1 Ensure all new affordable homes are designed to be flexible to the changing needs of occupiers	Reduced need for transfers and reduced DFG/adaptation costs	•All new affordable homes to meet the Lifetime Homes Standard where	Effective from April 2010 and		RSL partners

		practically achievable	then every year		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where practical and financially viable, new affordable rural homes to include convertible roof spaces 	Effective from April 2011 and then every year		
3.2 Enable the development of new housing that meets the needs of physically disabled people	Reduced waiting times for transfers to suitable accommodation and reduced DFG costs	Deliver 4 wheelchair standard units per annum	Effective from April 2010 and then every year	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
3.3 Enable new supported housing provision that will meet the needs of other vulnerable groups	More balanced and socially inclusive communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a dual diagnosis scheme for people with a mental health/substance misuse problem Deliver 2 schemes for people with mental health needs Deliver 2 schemes to meet the needs of young homeless people Deliver 40 unit extra care scheme 	<p>April 2011</p> <p>April 2011 & April 2015</p> <p>December 2011</p> <p>April 2012</p>	<p>HCA grant funding</p> <p>HCA , KCC and Supporting People funding</p> <p>HCA and Supporting People funding</p> <p>PFI</p>	<p>Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners</p> <p>KCC/Housing Initiatives Manager</p>
4. Objective: Ensure that homes are designed to be as affordable as possible					
4.1 Ensure new homes are cheap to run with low carbon emissions	Homes that will remain affordable for people on low incomes	Where financially viable new affordable housing schemes to achieve Code Level 4.	Effective from April 2010 and then every year		RSL partners
4.2 Minimise service charges by influencing the design of schemes	Homes that will remain affordable for people on low incomes	No unreasonably high service charges	Effective from April 2010	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
5. Objective: Make best use of the existing housing stock					
5.1 Revised allocations policy giving additional priority to under occupying households.	Increased number of family homes becoming available for re letting. Reduced housing waiting list and overcrowding	Revised allocations policy in place			Housing Initiatives Manager/Housing Needs Manager

5.2 Increase housing options for older people	Affordable family homes released	In partnership with KCC, deliver PFI Extra care scheme. At least 50% of homes in any new older persons schemes to be 2 bedroom.	April 2012 Effective from April 2010	PFI funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
5.3 Increase the options and pathways available for people with a housing need to access the private rented sector	Reduced housing waiting list and homelessness	Identify best practice and develop potential schemes	April 2012	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager/Housing Needs Manager

WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable Housing is defined in the Government's Planning Policy 3 (PPS3): Housing document as follows:

'Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
- Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision'.

Affordable housing is essentially housing for people who can't afford to buy or rent a home in the local market. Therefore an affordable home is one where the cost has been reduced below market rates.

Affordable housing includes social rented housing and intermediate affordable housing.

PPS3 defines these in the following way:

Social rented housing is:

'Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. The proposals set out in the Three Year Review of Rent Restructuring (July 2004) were implemented as policy in April 2006. It may also include rented housing owned or managed by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Housing Corporation as a condition of grant'.

Intermediate affordable housing is:

'Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market prices or rents, and which meet the criteria set out above. These can include shared equity products (eg HomeBuy), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent'.

The definition does not exclude homes provided by private sector bodies or provided without grant funding. Where such homes meet the definition above, they may be considered for planning purposes, as affordable housing.

The Council's affordable Housing Supplementary Document (2007) also provides a definition of affordable housing within the context of Dover district.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND HOUSING NEED

AFFORDABILITY

Market House Prices & Rent Levels

House prices in England have increased significantly over recent years and this has been mirrored in East Kent and Dover District. The mean house price increases in the District over this period are shown in the table below.

	2001	2007	% Increase
Detached	165,878	316,072	91%
Flat	60,694	129,249	113%
Semi	92,351	190,713	107%
Terraced	73,489	162,925	122%
Average	97,010	194,936	101%

Source: Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report 2009

As house prices have increased so have weekly rents in the private sector. The following table shows minimum, maximum and average weekly rents charged for different sized homes in Dover District in 2008.

	Ave	Min	Max
1 bed	£85	£65	£125
2 bed	£115	£85	£165
3 bed	£140	£120	£205
4 bed	-	£155	-
5 bed	£230	£195	£300

Source: Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report 2009

Market Housing Affordability

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report 2009 highlights the problem of housing affordability generally within the East Kent Sub-region.

The mean, median, lower and upper quartile household incomes in Dover District in 2007 were:

Mean: £32,049

Median: £27,445

Lower Quartile: £17,181

Upper Quartile: £41,676

The Government's SHMA guidance recommends that for a market home to be affordable, it should cost no more than 3.5 times the gross household income. The SHMA found that in Dover a home in the lower quartile price range cost over seven times a lower quartile income.

As regards private renting, a household is considered to be able to afford a market rented home where the rent payable doesn't exceed 25% of their gross household income.

The SHMA found that this was an unaffordable option for those households with lower quartile incomes but was affordable for households with higher incomes.

THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) defines housing need as '*the quantity of housing required for households who are unable to access suitable housing without financial assistance*'. Further to this PPS3 Annex B states that...'*Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market*'.

It is expected that affordable housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices; and
- Include provision for the home to be retained for future eligible households: or if these restrictions are lifted for any subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

The assessment of housing need is a key component of the East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The study followed Government guidance in respect of the methodology used to calculate the need for affordable housing over the period 2006-2010.

The formula used was:

Reduction of Gross Backlog Need

Plus

Gross Annual Newly Arising Need

Minus

Gross Supply of Affordable Housing

Equals

Net Annual Housing Need

Households are considered to be able to afford to buy a home if it costs 3.5x the gross household income for a single earner or 2.9x the gross household income for dual-income households. With regard to private renting, a household can be considered able to afford a private sector market rent where the rent payable is up to 25% of their gross household income. Consequently, it is the relationship between local house prices and incomes which is the key determinant to whether or not a household is in housing need.

The SHMA uses market entry level prices for different dwelling types and number of bedrooms related to household requirements as the basis for the calculation. For example single person households were matched with one bedroom flats, couples without children with two bedroom flats etc.

The market entry prices for dwellings in Dover District in 2007 are shown in the table below.

Dwelling Type	Entry Price £
Market Sale	
1 bed flat	£91,000
2 bed flat	£115,000
2 bed house	£124,000
3 bed house	£125,000
Market Rent (p.m.)	
1 bed flat	£256
2 bed flat	£348
2 bed house	£475
3 bed house	£480

Backlog Need

This comprises existing households who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing (current need) and can't afford to meet their need in the market (including homeless, concealed and overcrowded households and those living in deficient accommodation) less those households in social housing who will have their needs met through transfers within the social stock.

The backlog calculation for Dover District is shown in the tables below:

Current Need

		No. Households
	Homeless households	105
A	Overcrowded households	407
A	Concealed households	201
A	Unfit dwellings (private)	5260
A	Other groups	27
	Total	6000

Backlog Need

		No. Households
A	Total current housing need	6,000
B	Of which current occupiers of social housing	32
C	Backlog need (A-B)	5,968

Newly Arising Need

This was calculated by modelling demographic data to produce projections for gross new household formation each year. This exercise calculated that the gross new household formation in Dover District during the period 2006-2010 would be 795.

The study then matched these newly forming household projections with income data obtained from the Survey of English Housing to arrive at an approximation of the income profile of newly forming households.

By matching the income levels of newly forming households with market entry prices for the appropriate dwelling type and using the affordability criteria referred to above, the study calculated the number of households who can't afford to access market housing.

The table below shows the projection of newly forming households during the period 2006-2010 by household type and the number requiring affordable housing.

HH Type		No. Households
Single Person	Newly forming HH	201
	% who can't buy	88%
	% who can't rent	53%
	Can't buy but can rent	70
	Can't buy or rent	107
Couples No children	Newly forming HH	141
	% who can't buy	76%
	% who can't rent	14%
	Can't buy but can rent	87
	Can't buy or rent	20
Couples No children	Newly forming HH	316
	% who can't buy	95%
	% who can't rent	67%
	Can't buy but can rent	88
	Can't buy or rent	212
Single Parent	Newly forming HH	137
	% who can't buy	100%
	% who can't rent	100%
	Can't buy but can rent	0
	Can't buy or rent	137
All households	Newly forming HH	795
	% who can't buy	91%
	% who can't rent	60%
	Can't buy but can rent	246
	Can't buy or rent	475

The calculation also needs to include existing households who fall into need. The approach used in the study was to identify those households that had moved from the private sector into the social sector. The report acknowledges that this may not capture the real level of need as some households leaving the private may not have been able to secure a social rented home.

The overall calculation of newly arising household need per annum in Dover District is shown in the table below:

		No. Households
D	Gross new HH formation per annum 2006-2010	795
E	% of newly forming HH unable to afford market housing	60%
F	Newly forming HH unable to afford market housing	475
G	Existing households falling into need	103
H	Total newly arising need (F+G)	578

Annual Supply of Affordable Housing

The average supply of social sector re lets in Dover District was calculated to be 283 per annum. This is based on Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix and CoRE data returns.

Total Annual Housing Need

Using all the above information it is possible to calculate the net annual housing need for the District. The calculation is shown below:

		No. Households
C	Backlog Need	5,968
J	Annual quota of backlog reduction over 5 years (C÷5)	1,194
H	Total newly arising need	578
I	Annual supply of social sector re-lets	283
K	Net annual housing need (J+H+I)	1,489

The annual housing need identified by the study is considerably higher than that calculated by previous housing need studies (322 households per annum). The study's authors believe that this can be mainly attributed to the low provision of affordable housing, a lack of social sector re-lets and a consequent increase in backlog need. Over the ten years from 1998 to 2008 a total of 670 new affordable homes were provided in the District and between 2005/06 and 2007/08 affordable housing only accounted for approximately 9.3% of the 1,103 net additional dwellings with the result that the backlog need for affordable homes has continued to grow.

Potential Future Supply of Affordable Housing

The South East Plan sets targets for housing development over 20 years. It recommends that for the East Kent sub-region, 30% of newly developed homes should be affordable and gives an option for reducing the backlog of housing need over ten years rather than five.

The SHMA calculates the number of new affordable homes that could be delivered through new developments and the shortfall against the net annual housing need figure shown above. The calculation is shown below:

2006-2026 SE Plan Total New Homes	No. affordable based on 30%	No. affordable per annum	No. affordable needed as per Housing Need Calculation (5 year)	Annual difference (5 year)	No. affordable needed as per Housing Need Calculation (10 year)	Annual difference (10 year)
10,100	3,030	152	1,489	1,337	781	629

What is clear is that a 30% provision of affordable housing on new developments will still leave a significant backlog of unmet need whether the 5 year or the 10 year option is adopted.

Due to the considerable backlog of need the report recommends adoption of the five year approach which is recommended in the CLG Guidance but it also accepts that the scale of the backlog is such that it would be unrealistic to expect that it could be met even over a ten year period.

The study recognises that any increase in the affordable housing percentage to try and address the backlog would have to be carefully considered with regard to development economics and ensuring the creation of balanced communities.

TYPE, SIZE & TENURE OF AFFODABLE HOMES NEEDED

Size

As well as identifying the total amount of affordable housing required to meet backlog and newly arising need, the SHMA looked at the type of homes required for different household sizes. This took account of the supply of social sector lettings for different sizes of home and found that just over 50% of total need is for larger family homes (3 and 4 bedroom houses). This is partly due to the fact the re-let rate for larger family houses is much lower than for smaller flats. The consequence is that larger families are generally waiting longer for their needs to be met.

Because the provision of new affordable homes can't realistically address the level of need identified by the Assessment there is a need to recognise that proportionately there will be fewer larger family homes becoming available for let and that this should be addressed when determining the mix of affordable house types to be provided on future developments.

This is supported by an analysis of CORE lettings statistics for the three years 2006/07 – 2008/09 which shows that the number of larger, 3 and 4 bedroom family homes re let each year, typically averages at just over 20% of the total.

The Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2007) states that the Council will seek to negotiate with developers a range of unit types to be provided on S.106 sites including, where the site is suitable, larger family units. This is underpinned by the Council's emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy which sets out the following proportions of affordable homes to be sought on new developments:

Home Type	Social Rented	Intermediate
One and two bed flats	25%	5%
Two bed houses	10%	35%
Three bed houses	55%	60%
Four bed houses	10%	-

The increased emphasis to be given to the provision of larger family homes also accords with priorities identified in the Regional Housing Strategy as well as the Homes & Community Agency investment priorities. Consequently affordable housing schemes which reflect the recommended unit size percentages should be given more favourable consideration with regard to bids for National Affordable Housing Programme grant funding.

Tenure

As described in Appendix A, affordable housing can take the form of rented homes and intermediate homes.

Intermediate homes generally require less financial subsidy to deliver, provide choice and help people achieve home ownership aspirations. They also help to achieve a better balance of households within new communities.

Communities and Local Government Department guidance states that “*A household can be considered able to afford intermediate housing when rental payments (on the landlords share) and mortgage payments (on the part they own) do not exceed 25% of gross household income*” Consequently, homes that do not meet the definition, even if offered at less than market price, should be considered ‘low cost market housing’ and outside the definition of affordable housing.

The SHMA found that Dover has the most affordable intermediate market in the sub-region and that a large proportion of couples with no children could afford a 1 or 2 bedroom shared ownership flat. However, the study shows that a significant proportion of single people and families can’t afford shared ownership.

The SHMA report recommends that the target tenure split for affordable housing should be 70% social rented and 30% intermediate housing and recommends the following proportion of dwelling types for intermediate housing.

1 bedroom	5%
2 bedroom	35%
3 bedroom	60%

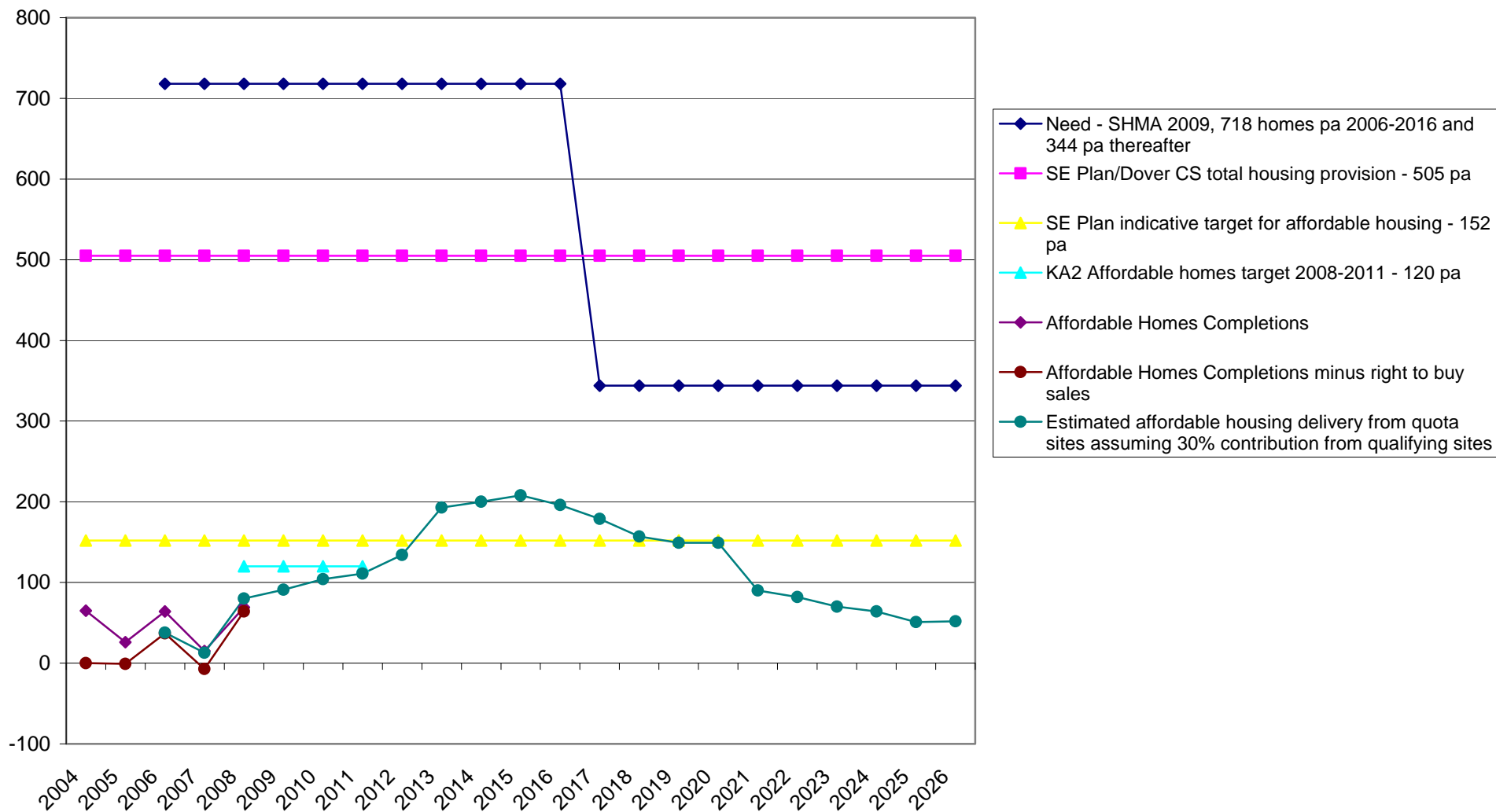
The tenure split accords with that recommended in the South East Plan.

Breakdown of applicants who have indicated an interest in Intermediate Housing in Kent as at October 2009

Interested in Local Authority	No. of apps eligible			No. key workers	No. social tenants	Minimum number of bedrooms required...					Financial requirements				Number of apps requiring a wheelchair adapted property
	No. active apps	Buy and rent	Rental only			1bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	Av single income	Av joint income	No. apps with a deposit	Av deposit	
Ashford	382	302	80	92	30	230	99	48	4	1	£22,211	£31,838	322	£8,637	1
Canterbury	373	275	98	140	18	250	84	37	2	0	£22,864	£32,333	291	£8,447	1
Dartford	636	497	139	40	20	393	172	65	5	1	£25,289	£35,848	520	£9,387	2
Dover	148	96	52	44	12	99	35	12	2	0	£20,570	£30,209	108	£9,303	1
Gravesham	326	238	88	85	26	198	95	29	3	5	£24,296	£34,529	259	£9,745	0
Maidstone	757	597	160	23	72	486	188	75	7	1	£23,444	£33,938	646	£9,288	3
Medway	853	638	215	209	74	479	227	140	7	0	£23,114	£33,544	425	£13,165	1
Sevenoaks	368	306	62	72	8	207	94	64	3	0	£23,290	£36,498	322	£12,883	1
Shepway	129	102	27	39	5	74	35	18	1	1	£21,995	£30,547	107	£7,977	0
Swale	330	254	76	84	31	195	80	54	1	0	£22,086	£31,553	263	£10,139	0
Thanet	190	168	22	61	11	120	43	25	2	0	£22,513	£29,884	172	£7,684	1
Tonbridge and Malling	505	407	98	89	54	310	136	52	6	1	£23,134	£35,156	438	£12,868	2
Tunbridge Wells	292	251	41	53	33	181	67	43	1	0	£23,813	£35,996	265	£12,523	2

Source: Moat LA Demand Statistics October 2009

APPENDIX E



Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
All ¹	Walmer Parish Council [walmerparish@btconnect.com]	1. Objection	(a) No need for these strategy documents when such issues have already been addressed in the Local Development Framework.	Members would like to make the following representations in relation to the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015; the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015: (i) Members would like to query the following issues:- (a) the necessity for production of these strategy documents when such issues have already been addressed in the Local Development Framework.	The Local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities to prepare a Housing Strategy and these are key underpinning strategies which provide a more detailed analysis of issues and set out specific actions to address them.
(ADHP)		2. Objection	(b) No need for such a high proportion of family homes when demographic projections predict an increasingly ageing population.	(b) the necessity for such a high proportion of family homes when demographic projections predict an increasingly ageing population.	The AHDP and LDF Core Strategy explain the rationale for the provision of family homes based on the need for a balanced population which can support economic growth. The HSOP sets out how we can best try to meet the housing needs of the growing population of older people. No amendment required
(ADHP)		3.Observation	(c) the viability of the	(c) the viability of the timeframe for	

¹ Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015; the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

Strategy/ Item	Respond ent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
(ADHP)		4.Observation	<p>timeframe for delivery of the new homes against the backdrop of the current uncertain financial climate.</p> <p>(ii) greater provision should be made for the production of suitable retirement accommodation, such as bungalows and warden-assisted units, which would 'free up' family homes</p>	<p>delivery of the new homes against the backdrop of the current uncertain financial climate.</p> <p>(ii) Members consider that greater provision should be made for the production of suitable retirement accommodation, such as bungalows and warden-assisted units, the occupancy of which would naturally lead to family homes becoming available.</p>	<p>The relationship between the delivery of affordable housing, and housing growth generally, is acknowledged. The fact that this is largely driven by market conditions is also accepted. The relatively modest delivery target for new affordable homes is however based on schemes that are already in the pipeline and which therefore offer a higher degree of certainty. No amendment required</p> <p>The need to provide housing which meets the needs of older people is covered by the OPHS and is acknowledged in the draft Housing Strategy 2010-2015. Extra care provision is specially referred to and the action plan within the OPHS includes a set of actions related to new homes provision and addressing under occupation of family housing. No amendment required</p>
	Penny.S			It does have an equality and diversity	The specific affordable

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
(AHDP)	outhern@kent.gov.uk	5.Observation	Needs reference to people with a learning disability or to the 'Valuing People Now' strategy... ...and the Action Plan	section which aims to help make housing accessible to certain groups focusing in particular on people with physical disabilities, dual diagnosis, and young people. However, I couldn't find any particular reference to people with a learning disability or to the 'Valuing People Now' strategy which aims to help people with learning disabilities have more choice about where they live and whom they live with. Plus the Action Plan which was formally adopted in 2009 at the Kent Joint Policy and Planning Board (JPPB) and the Kent Partnership Board. and nothing about carrying out housing needs survey with every known person with a learning disability in the district so that the outcome of this can feed into future plans for housing provision and inform a Kent wide picture of need. Are you planning to get this in such a strategy? I hope so	housing needs of people with learning disabilities living in the district has not been identified at the moment and therefore it wasn't considered appropriate to include any actions within the AHDP. However, reference to Valuing People is included in the in the consultation draft Housing Strategy 2010-2015 together with the County wide analysis of possible gaps in provision. A specific action to implement the Kent Housing Action Plan for people with a learning disability is included in the action plan. This will provide more information about specific needs within the District. No amendment required
(AHDP)		6.Observation	Needs to refer to work to understand the housing needs of people with a learning disability in the District/ County.		
(AHDP)	CAB Deal districtmanager@dealcab.co.uk Jan Stewart	7 observation 8 observation	Meeting the need for affordable housing means a re think in the planning strategy for the district. Ensure that developments planned	Meeting the need for affordable housing means a re think in the planning strategy for the district as well. Ensure that developments planned do not by pass the need to include affordable housing by only building small	The need for affordable housing has been given detailed consideration as part of the development of the LDF Core Strategy. No amendment required This issue is addressed by Policy DM5 of the

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
			do not by pass the need to include affordable housing by only building small developments under 15 homes.	developments under 15 homes.	Core Strategy which refers to affordable housing contributions to be made in respect of developments under 15 homes and is also referred to in the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan. No amendment required
AHDP	Langdon Parish Council Hyde167@btinternet.com Jannine Hyde	9 Support 10 Observation 11 observation	Strategies address issues of housing stock and future needs in the town area. (More) people living longer and on their own will put pressure on need for a wider range of housing in both to buy and rented sectors, and choice of smaller housing units at affordable price In the rural areas, to maintain a viable village community...the need for affordable rural housing remains as strong as	Most of the strategies address issues of housing stock and future needs in the town area. The changing patterns of people living longer and on their own (divorce or choosing not to have long relationships) will put pressure on the need for a wider range of housing in both to buy and rented sectors. Choice of smaller housing units, one or two bedroom, which are at an affordable price. In the rural areas, to maintain a viable village community, there is a requirement to permit controlled building development. There is a critical minimum population size	Acknowledged The need to provide choice and a range of house types is accepted but increased emphasis needs to be given to the provision of family housing for the reasons explained in the East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment and set out in the Core Strategy. No amendment required The Core Strategy's Settlement Hierarchy (policy CP1) has identified settlements where development

Strategy/ Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		12 Observation	<p>ever to encourage young people to live and raise families in the villages</p> <p>Where older people are unable to live totally independently but wish to remain in their village, there could be more small-scale sheltered housing developments to meet the need.</p>	<p>which can sustain and ensure that local amenities remain viable in a rural location. Otherwise the community becomes "old" and develops a commuter/dormitory aspect. In particular, the need for affordable rural housing remains as strong as ever to encourage young people to live and raise families in the villages</p> <p>Where older people are unable to live totally independently but wish to remain in their village, there could be more small-scale sheltered housing developments to meet the need</p>	<p>should be focused and indicates the appropriate scale and type of development. The need for affordable housing provision in the rural area is accepted and any affordable housing provided through the Council's Rural Exception Site policy will be expected to reflect the housing need identified by a local housing need assessment. No amendment required</p> <p>Where a local housing need assessment identifies a need for housing for older people as part of an affordable housing development we will aim to meet this need through the provision of appropriately designed housing. No amendment required</p>
All	Southern Housing Group Annabel McKie [Annabel.Mckie@s	13 Support	We support your stated aims and objectives	<p>Thank you for consulting us about the proposed housing strategies including the draft affordable housing delivery plan.</p> <p>We support your stated aims and objectives, and we also consider that it is particularly valuable to have the three</p>	

Strategy/ Item	Respond ent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
AHDP	hgroup.or g.uk]	14 Support	We think you have correctly identified the key issues and broadly agree with your priorities	documents produced in parallel, so that links between the strategies can be picked up.	The need for grant funding and issues relating to economic viability is covered in the Plan. No amendment required The grant calculation is based on regional averages but the comment is accepted as
		15 Support	Rural housing schemes are essential for meeting housing need in the District. We support the programme type approach for the delivery of affordable rural homes.		
		16 Observation	We agree that grant is going to be necessary if new affordable homes are going to be delivered. However, there are unlikely to be any S106 schemes in the District which are viable without grant input until market conditions change significantly.		
		17 Observation	We believe the amount of grant necessary to achieve delivery has been underestimated		

Strategy/ Item	Respond ent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		18 Support	We welcome the flexible approach that the Council are proposing regarding the use of the SHMA recommendations on mix and tenure. We agree that the desired profile of dwelling types should be an accumulation across a number of sites.		some schemes may require a higher than average level of grant. The plan has been amended at paragraph 11.8 to show that the total grant calculation is based on the minimum we believe will be required to deliver the Plan target. Plan has been amended
		20 Observation	Given the reduced financial capacity of many RSLs, it is probably unlikely that a step up in the rate of delivery can be achieved in the short term.		The Plan delivery target is based on schemes that are in the pipeline and that we are reasonably confident can be delivered while accepting there cannot be absolute certainty. No amendment required
		21 Observation	The delivery plan should describe a mechanism		There is an existing

Strategy/ Item	Respond ent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		22 Support	<p>whereby when developers are considering site purchase they approach the Council for definitive guidance on the required dwelling type profile, and also grant level assumptions.</p> <p>We are pleased to see the references to the importance of providing wheelchair housing and lifetime homes. This needs to link to negotiations with developers over the unit types required under Section 106 quotas</p>		<p>Affordable Housing Protocol which sets out how affordable housing enquiries should be dealt with and which addresses this point. The Strategic Housing web site is being updated and developers will be clearly signposted to this and other guidance on affordable housing. No amendment required</p> <p>The Plan includes a specific action related to the delivery of 4 wheelchair standard units per annum. This will be dealt with through site specific negotiations with developers. If the inclusion of specialist housing impacts on land take or build cost, policy DM5 is sufficiently flexible to take account of this. No amendment required</p> <p>The importance of infrastructure investment is referred to in the Plan.</p>
		23 Observation	<p>We think the funding of infrastructure is going to be critical to the supply of land. The means of funding this is therefore very important. The</p>		

Strategy/ Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		24 Observation	<p>Section 106 model is unlikely to be adequate for this purpose, and high infrastructure costs could of course influence the scope for affordable housing quotas on sites.</p> <p>Reduced S.106 contributions particularly where schemes are comprised of only affordable housing</p>	<p>We agree that low sales values in the District mean that economic viability of many sites in the District is marginal. As the levying of other Section 106 contributions on all affordable housing is an additional viability problem, we would welcome anything the Council can do to achieve reduced developer contribution requirements on all-affordable schemes. This is also relevant to enabling local needs rural housing schemes to be delivered. We consider that there is sufficient grounds for exempting affordable homes from contributions since the occupants will already be living in the District and they do not represent a net increase in households</p>	<p>The future of S.106 agreements as a mechanism for securing developer contributions is not known at present. However, government proposals re a Community Infrastructure levy would continue to enable S.106 agreements to secure a quota of affordable housing while introducing a new funding stream to contribute towards the provision of local infrastructure. No amendment required</p> <p>Affordable housing schemes can generate a demand for other local authority services and it is appropriate to consider the financial contribution that should reasonably be sought to help pay for this. However, this will also need to take account of scheme viability on a site by site basis and will form part of the normal planning negotiations. No amendment required</p>
		25 Observation	<p>Greater emphasis on the need for wheelchair standard homes,</p>		

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
			including a target for delivery of new homes and action point(s) to achieve this. (Subject of course to the level of need identified.)		As above. No amendment required
AHDP	Forward Planning	26 Observation	Clearer identification of options for the use of developer financial contributions in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision		The range of potential options to be explored is more clearly stated at paragraph 11.10. Plan amended
The following comments arrived after the deadline expired for papers to be submitted to CMT (Lunchtime, 26.3.10)					
All	Cllr Keith Gowland Sarahgowland01@aol.com	27 Support	I agree with the aims and objectives set out		The uncertainty regarding the availability of grant funding in the future is referred to in the Plan but that we will try to ensure that affordable housing is aligned with the HCAs strategic priorities so as to maximise the opportunity for funding.
All		28 Observation	My main concerns are cost, funding and deliverability and in the case of the AHDP especially the funding		
All		29 Observation	Answers to points 1-4 are yes , although all three strategies/ plan must be governed by an aggressive skills upgrade and employment led strategy as per the LDF		

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
AHDP		30 Observation	Core Strategy How would the tie up between DDC, Thanet DC and Canterbury CC tie in with the allocation of units for the social rented units?		New affordable homes would be allocated through choice based lettings. A new Kent wide CBL assessment policy is being developed which should provide some increased opportunity for cross boundary mobility.
AHDP		31 Support	All in all a sound strategy which should assist the early part of the economic regeneration programme.		
All	The Deal Society Robin.green220@o2.co.uk	32 Support	We Welcome and affirm the links between the housing strategy and the demographics in the Local Development Strategy		This will be clarified and Plan amended as necessary.
All		33 Observation	At several points in the documents it is not clear whether Dover District or Dover Town is being referred to.		
AHDP		34 Observation	Affordable Housing is not well defined		

Strategy/ Item	Respond ent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
AHDP		35 Observation	The relationship between the LDF core strategy and the DDC Affordable Housing targets is not clear.		of the Plan which includes the definition set out in PPS3. No amendment required.
AHDP		36 Observation	In light of the international financial crisis, we have doubts about the Council's ability to deliver the targets		The Core Strategy does not set specific targets for affordable housing but provides the planning policy basis for the delivery of affordable housing as part of housing growth. This policy reflects the evidence provided by the EK SHMA. No amendment required
AHDP	NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Helen.Mill	37 Support	We support the Council's aim to provide affordable housing in line with the recommendations within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.		We believe the opportunities will exist to deliver the target but accept that the availability of grant funding will be a significant determinant of whether the target is achieved. It is important that we set a realistic but stretching target. No amendment required

Strategy/ Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
	er@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk	38 Support	We support the investigation into Community Land Trusts as a vehicle for providing affordable housing.		
		39 Support	We support the planning policy aim to ensure that in each development of 15 homes or more 30% of homes should be affordable.		
		40 Support	We support investigating measures to reduce the number of older people under-occupying social housing, and so making family homes available for younger families, that include suitable support for the older people during the transition phase.		
		42. Observation	<p>If the HCA do not fund the full £16 million required to support the delivery plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would the possible outcomes be if the grant funding is not obtained? • What are the 		<p>If grant funding is not available some schemes may not be financially viable with 30% affordable housing and a lower percentage may have to be negotiated. Conceivably, there may be some sites where schemes could be</p>

Strategy/ Item	Respond ent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		43 Observation	contingency plans for providing some affordable housing without the grant funding? How could DDC assist RSLs to access land or funds in a more favourable way?		delivered without grant funding although the CBRE Economic Viability Assessment Report suggests that this is likely to be the exception rather than the rule. The likely future availability of grant funding is uncertain and we will need to influence the Single Conversation process to try and secure the necessary resources. Developer financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision may provide an alternative source of top up funding. This is referred to in the Plan. No amendment required The possible use of developer financial contributions to assist with land acquisition is referred to in the amended paragraph 11.12. No amendment required
		44 Observation	Support should be provided to older people, who vacate under -		We are aware that this can be key to successful under-occupation schemes and we will ensure that it is

Strategy/ Item	Respond ent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		45 Recommendation	occupied properties, during the transition phase. Use Health Impact Assessments on a regular basis to reduce any negative impacts of the implementation of this delivery plan		considered as part of the under-occupation project being developed in partnership with other East Kent local authority partners. No amendment required We are currently working with the PCT on a possible Health Impact Assessment of the new Housing Strategy which includes the actions set out in this sub strategy. No amendment required
		46 Recommendation	Consider any recommendations in the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy (awaited) on methods for providing affordable housing that are less reliant of grant funding		We will of course be very keen to explore any new initiatives for securing affordable housing with less reliance on grant. This is also likely to be explored as part of the Single Conversation process. No amendment required
		47 Recommendation	Consider how this area of work will progress if full funding for the work is		The Plan refers to making more effective use of the existing stock as another way of

Strategy/ Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
			not forthcoming		ensuring provision of affordable housing and the use of developer contributions. No amendment required
	Eythorne PC	<p>48 Observation</p> <p>49 Observation</p> <p>50 Observation</p>	<p>Overall agreement with the aims & objectives but stress the difference between rural and Dover urban needs</p> <p>Emphasis needs to be given to bringing empty homes back into use especially those in the rural areas</p> <p>Housing growth alone is not an answer. New homes must be of a high quality</p>		<p>The Council's Empty Homes Strategy 2010-15 has been adopted and provides the strategic direction for tackling the problem of empty homes across the district. No amendment required</p> <p>This is acknowledged in the Plan. No amendment required</p>

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

RESPONSIBILITY – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND YOUTH

KEY DECISION

BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC HOUSING COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE – 12 APRIL 2010
EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

HOUSING STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE 2010-2015

Recommendation

That Members approve the Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015, attached at Appendix A.

Contact Officer: Paul Whitfield, extension 2258.

Reasons why a decision is required

1. The Plan is one of a number of new plans and strategies that underpin the new Housing Strategy for 2010-2015. It has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and has been subject to wider public consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Dover District Compact.

Options available to the Council with assessment of preferred option

2. (a) To approve the proposed Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015.
(b) To make amendments to the Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015.
(c) To reject the Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015.

Information to be considered in taking the decision

3. The projected older population of Dover district is larger than the housing market and county averages. By 2026, it is expected that those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%. This highlights the need to tackle the housing needs of older people now and in the future.
4. Older people are part of a larger group of vulnerable households and a recent survey of private sector housing conditions found that more than half of these households are living in homes that fail the decent homes standard. This is primarily due to homes being cold and the risk of falling within the home.
5. Given this context, the Housing for Older People Strategy 2010-2015 sets out how the Council will meet the housing needs of older people in the future through the provision of new homes which provide choice and meet aspirations, improving the condition of existing homes and by providing comprehensive information and a range of support services that will enable older people to live independently for as long as possible.
6. An action plan identifying specific actions that will help deliver key objectives is attached to the Strategy.

7. The Strategy is a key supporting document to the higher level Housing Strategy 2010-2015.

Background Papers

None

Resource Implications

The action plan attached to the Strategy identifies the resources that will be required to deliver the specific actions.

Consultation Statement

The Strategy has been informed by local, regional and national consultation. In May 2008 a consultation event was held in the district which was attended by members of Dover's Senior Citizens Forum and key agencies working with older people.

Specific consultation with older people was also undertaken as part of the East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009 and a South East Regional Forum on Ageing event in May 2009. Further consultation has taken place in relation to the emerging new Supporting People Strategy for Kent.

The Plan has been subject to wider consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Dover District Compact. Details of the consultation feedback and consideration of the matters raised is set out in a table attached at Appendix B. Where amendments have been made to the Plan in response to the comments received this is highlighted in the table.

Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks

The Corporate Plan includes objectives to provide enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households and to provide the right numbers and choice of housing to support economic growth as well as meeting the needs of the community.

It is clear that older people form a significant part of our community and that as life expectancy increases we will need to meet the needs of an increasing number of frail and vulnerable households.

Customer Access Review

The Strategy has not identified any specific issues that need to be addressed with regard to ethnic elders. A CAR screening form in respect of the Strategy has been completed.

Attachments

Appendix A: Housing for Older People Strategy 2010-2015
Appendix B: Analysis of consultation feedback

CHRISTINE WATERMAN
Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety

Dover District Council

Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015

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Executive summary

Our vision for older people in the Dover district is that:

Older people live as independently as possible in homes that support good health and well being

Context

This strategy has been prepared in the context that:

- There is a significant older population living in Dover, Deal, Sandwich and the villages of the district of Dover; a higher proportion than national and regional averages, and this proportion of the population will increase significantly over the next fifteen years
- There is substantial investment from the region into housing growth in Dover district; we need to know what housing is needed by our older population so we can deliver what people need and want
- The Local Development Framework is progressing and we need to ensure that the right policies are in place to support the delivery of homes and neighbourhoods that support independence for older people
- The population country-wide is ageing and the government has developed two major strategies to ensure that central and local government and other agencies are ready for and responding to these changes.

Priority areas

The **priority areas** we have identified in the course of drawing up this strategy are:

1. That new homes and neighbourhoods meet the current and future needs of Dover's population and support independence
2. That there is help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living
3. That there is ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.

1. Needs and issues for older people and the implications for housing activity

We have used the available evidence, including feedback from older people themselves, to identify the specific needs and issues for our older people. These are summarised below.

The projected older population of Dover district is larger than the housing market and county averages. By 2026, it is expected that those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%. This highlights the need to tackle the housing needs of older people now and in the future. There are significant variations in the proportions of older people across the district, but evidence from adult social care indicates that levels

of dependency do not match the distribution: we need to understand this further in order to effectively target services

Older people want, and expect, to stay in their own homes and most expect to stay in their current home for the rest of their life. To enable this, older people see the following as crucial:

- Neighbourhoods that are easy to get around and provide a full range of facilities
- Accessible and reliable information and advice that enables a choice of housing options and ways to meet needs
- Prompt practical help, including help with adaptations and repairs
- Ways of meeting people and socialising - contact with the outside world

Where older people choose to move, or may have to move to meet their changing needs, they want homes that are acceptable to them, including:

- at least two bedrooms
- accessible standards, with no steps or stairs
- well designed and accessible bathrooms and kitchens
- a small garden

Currently, 48% all single person households in Dover district are aged over 65 years and this will increase over time, so it is particularly important that new smaller homes should meet lifetime standards including lift access to upper floors. People currently living in social rented housing are somewhat more prepared than owner occupiers to consider a move, and these would release family-sized homes, but they will only move to the right home and only if this is made easy for them to cope with, both practically and financially.

There is already unmet demand for affordable rented homes amongst older people; mostly for non-sheltered units of two or more bedrooms. The projected demand by 2026 represents 78% of all additional affordable homes expected to be built across the district. There is no indication that there is a need for any additional sheltered housing units: good quality retirement housing that includes provision for assistive technology and is well sited for local social and other facilities would, with visiting support, better meet the needs of most older people.

To meet the needs of the most dependant older people there is a need for almost 190 additional units of extra care housing: half of these would be for people with existing high dependency levels and half for people who are likely to require substantial care in future but whose presence on schemes now will provide a more mixed and lively community.

22% all households in private housing include someone with a disability and this proportion is likely to be much higher in social housing. These numbers will increase as the population ages, indicating increasing demands for adaptations. Falls are the leading cause of injury and death amongst the over-75s; adaptations and falls prevention advice and practical measures would significantly reduce disabilities arising from falls.

Over 8,000 retired households live in homes that are more difficult to keep warm, and over 1,100 live in homes that are very cold and expensive to heat. This places occupiers at severe risk of ill health. People who are 85 or over are more likely than the average to live in private rented properties. 40% all private rented homes fail the decent homes standard so there is a need to ensure that all agencies visiting older people at home are aware of and refer issues to the private sector housing team.

Although relatively well off now, the number of older people on lower incomes will increase over time and this has implications for the ability of people to meet their own housing needs

2. How we are responding to these issues

We have identified what is currently being delivered against the needs and issues we have identified and have identified activities that are being developed or need to be addressed in order to fill the gaps and improve outcomes for older people. These activities are grouped under the three priority areas we have identified through our review of the evidence.

New homes and neighbourhoods that meet the current and future needs of Dover's population and support independence

There is an unmet need for around 1,500 and, by 2026, around 2,370 general needs units of housing at affordable rent that provides one or, preferably, two bedrooms built to lifetime home standards. The majority of these should be ground floor properties including bungalows and in locations that older people want. This supply would help to meet needs amongst families who are overcrowded now or are planning to have children in the future. However, a well-designed under-occupier scheme is also needed if this is to be achieved.

There is a need for around 180 units of extra care, beyond the 40 already delivered but including the scheme now being planned

While there has been an overall reduction in the stock of sheltered housing in the district, evidence suggests that demand for many of the traditional sheltered housing schemes is relatively low and that this type of provision may no longer meet the aspirations of many older people. It is the location, design and quality of housing which seems to be of greatest importance when older people are considering moving. We will however, keep monitoring the needs and supply balance of sheltered housing so that we identify significant unmet need and progress this through the additional homes programme.

New market housing in places that older people want to live should include a proportion of homes that meet the aspirations of older people, including lifetime homes standards. Whilst these may not all be purchased by older people, they would also meet the needs of other households.

Master planning and site briefs for regeneration areas and new developments should include requirements that will help the neighbourhood to be sustainable for lifelong living. These will also support stronger safer communities.

All planned work in the public realm of any area should include consideration of how it can be delivered in a way that improves the area for local people. These could include such measures as dropped kerbs, improved pavements, access to shops, protected pedestrian ways and enhanced community facilities.

Help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living

We are already working to improve affordable warmth across the private sector in the district, but we are also acting to further target our efforts on areas with higher levels of issues around thermal comfort and those most in need of help with affordable warmth

We are currently meeting the demand for adaptations and are providing a swift and timely service. Given the increases in older people and therefore people with disabilities, we will continue to monitor demand for adaptations so that unmet need is quickly highlighted and tackled

We intend to review our grants and loans policy to improve accessibility to funding for older people on low incomes and we will also explore best practice in helping people to repair and maintain their home.

We will work across the Council and with partners to raise awareness of the issues of safety and security in the home and to make referrals to agencies that can provide advice and practical assistance. We are also working with the In Touch Home Improvement Agency to see how the Handyperson service can be further expanded and its funding secured into the future.

Ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.

We will work with the Supporting People programme and the INVOKE project to ensure that housing- and health-related support is available to older people in their own homes so that those who would benefit from advice and support get access to this.

We will work with other agencies to help older people to maximise their incomes so they are able to afford the costs of running their homes and of living life to the full. We will also explore how reliable and responsible equity release schemes can help people to afford the costs of repairs and maintenance

We will work with older people to assess the relevance and usefulness of the FirstStop advice service (a new government funded advice service offering one stop advice and information) for local people and provided it meets older people's requirements will develop and publicise this service across the Dover district.

An action plan for the short to medium term to start to deliver these activities is included towards the end of the full document.

1. Introduction

Why have a housing strategy for older people in Dover district?

The context within which this strategy has been written is:

- The significant older population living in Dover, Deal, Sandwich and the villages of the district of Dover; a higher proportion than national and regional averages
- Investment from the region into housing growth in the district
- The process of the Local Development Framework and the requirement to establish what older people in the district want from their future housing
- The government's national strategies; 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - a national strategy for housing in an ageing society'¹; published in February 2008 and 'Building a Society for all Ages'², published in July 2009.

Demographic changes, general advances in health care, increasing wealth and other improvements in people's quality of life mean that people in the UK are living longer. In 2008³, 18.3% of the national population was aged 65 and over. In our district, this figure was 22.8% and by 2026, it is expected that those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%. As a consequence, increasing numbers of people need a home environment that enables them to remain independent. Just as importantly, people's aspirations as they grow older are also increasing.

Life expectancy has increased dramatically over the last fifty years - one in four children born now will live to be 100. More than half of us can expect to spend at least 20 years in retirement: an expectation that our grandparents certainly didn't have.

We must not forget the population of people well into their retirement who need help now. The reality is that older people often live in the worst housing conditions - nationally over 2.1 million older households live in non-decent or hazardous housing.

In older age a wide range of housing choices are needed including appropriate mainstream housing as well as more specialist provision, such as retirement housing or more specialist accommodation that enables the most frail older people to be supported. More people also need support to remain in their own home, with facilities that meet their physical and welfare needs and their aspirations for an enjoyable and fulfilled old age. Plans for housing made today will set the scene for housing until at least 2026.

These and other drivers mean that we need to consider and plan how we will:

- respond to the current housing needs of older people and
- ensure we are prepared for the needs that are likely to arise in the future.

This strategy therefore sets out a vision that:

¹ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - a national strategy for an ageing population; CLG Feb 08

² See <http://www.hmg.gov.uk/buildingasocietyforallages.aspx>, DWP July 09

³ Source – 2008 mid year population estimates ONS

Older people live as independently as possible in homes that support good health and well being

This document aims to:

- identify the issues for our older people
- raise the profile of older people's housing issues within the broader context of East Kent's sustainable community strategy and Dover District Council's housing strategy
- establish how housing and housing-related activity needs to be directed

To focus our attention on the areas that are most pressing and will make the most difference to older people, the strategy identifies three priorities for housing and housing-related activity. These are:

1. New homes and neighbourhoods meet the current and future needs of Dover's population and support independence
2. Help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living
3. Ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.

An action plan for the short to medium term to start to deliver these is included towards the end of the document.

How the strategy has been developed

We have developed this strategy by first considering the evidence of need and the issues that are arising for older people. Having identified the main issues, we have then looked at how these are being responded to; in terms of both housing supply and services to meet housing-related needs. This has enabled us to establish the priority areas on which we need to focus to improve the housing contribution to the health and well being of older people and in particular enabling older people to live as independently as possible.

We have taken into account:

- national and local strategies and policies
- needs data and information – this includes demographic and public health information, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment⁴, Supporting People data, information on housing needs including from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for East Kent⁵ and regional documents, and information on the condition of privately owned homes⁶ in Dover district
- supply information – this was drawn from Dover District Council, registered social landlords and private housing companies working in Dover and Supporting People
- the views of older people – these were drawn from a local consultation event held in May 2008, a regional consultation event held in March 2009 and a regional study published in May 2009, together with a wealth of recent national studies on older people's views and aspirations
- what works well elsewhere; seeking to learn from others to improve the local response.

⁴ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Adults in Kent, March 08

⁵ Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the East Kent Sub-region, July 09

⁶ Dover DC Private sector stock condition survey, Dec 09

A wider consultation is required, which may prompt amendments, before the strategy can be finally approved and this will be completed over the next three months, with the strategy then being adopted to the suite of documents that provide specific focus for Dover District Council's housing strategy.

Who are 'older people'?

In line with the government's national strategies, the older people we refer to in this strategy are in general those over the age of fifty; an age when most of us start to consider our options for where we will live and what we will do as we age and move into retirement. Most people over fifty can expect to work at least until 65 years old and most increasingly believe that they will need to work for longer. However for most at fifty, families have grown up and moved away from home, there is more available income with which to make choices so that (short term) loans for housing improvement seem manageable and less restricting. At that age, we recognise that we will grow older and perhaps less able and that over time we may have less freedom to do as we want with our lives: the decisions we make now are important to our future ability to enjoy life and living.

2. The national and local context

There is an increasing challenge to local authorities and providers from the changing views and opinions of older people themselves. Older people are not a homogeneous group in terms of their housing circumstances. The range of ages encompassed by the term 'older people' means that we are considering two or more generations and there will be different needs and aspirations for and views about housing requirements both between and within age groups. This market fragmentation will intensify in coming years and housing providers will need to be clear who they are targeting. People across all tenures seeking housing for their later years are becoming more discerning and demanding in terms of what they find acceptable or desirable. There needs to be a range of options available across these age and, more significantly, dependency groups.

The following key national facts⁷ explore some of the main issues for older people and housing:

- 90% of older people live in 'ordinary' housing, with only 5% living in sheltered or other supported housing and a further 5% in residential provision
- The level of home ownership amongst older people has been growing. 70% of all older people now own their own homes (74% of 65-74 years olds dropping to 57% of over 75's)
- Those who bought their council home under the "right to buy" in the 1980s were mostly aged between 45 and 64 years – the 65 and 75 year olds now
- The numbers of older people owning their own house is set to grow - in 2001 nearly 82% of people aged 55-59 owned their own home
- Six in ten people aged over 65 own their homes outright: this equity could be released to fund home improvements
- 22% of 65-74 years olds live in social rented housing but this increases to 33% of the over 75s
- In overall terms, older homeowners live in the poorest standard housing stock in the country. This reflects the high number of older people living in

⁷ A Sure Start to Later Life, Ending Inequalities for Older People; Social Exclusion Unit Jan 06

unimproved pre-1918 properties, and the number of older home owners who have low incomes

- One in ten older people have problems with their accommodation, such as damp, infestation (e.g. insects/mice/rats) or being too dark
- There is a national trend towards single person households and almost half of these are older people
- Older people spend between 70-90% of their time in their home.
- Research into the costs and benefits of adaptations concluded that they represent good value for money. One study⁸ found that it cost an average of £4.74 per week to reduce the burden of care on a family member or to provide an alternative to residential care.

National strategic context

The government's strategic direction for housing for older people revolves around two main objectives:

- To support older people to make active and informed choices by providing:
 - access to appropriate housing and services and
 - advice on suitable services and options.
- To ensure older people are able to secure and sustain their independence in a home that is appropriate to their needs.

These objectives fit with broader policy developments for older people that cross all public services and shift from focusing on those who have most care and health needs towards promoting choice, well-being and improved quality of life for all. The main policy drivers are:

Rooting out age discrimination in service provision:

To ensure that older people play an active role within society, contributing to the communities in which they live. In practice, this starts with an assurance that older people are treated equally and fairly in the services that they receive.

Flexible service provision directed to the needs of the individual

With services moving away from providing historic housing models and forms of care and support and instead offering services that are tailored to the individual person and their unique requirements

Increased prevention with services delivered closer to home

Delivering a wider scope of low level services at an earlier stage and preventing crises and rapid deterioration through early recognition and targeted interventions

Choice and control about where, how and by whom support and care is delivered

Supporting older people to make choices through impartial advice and information. A specific initiative to give people control of individualised care and support budgets to buy the services that they believe will make the most difference to their lives.

Improving the quality of new and existing housing

Housing is recognised as central to retention of independence and health for all of us but especially older people. The needs of older people must be addressed in Local Development Frameworks and Core Strategies. There is a specific requirement for all new affordable homes to be built to lifetime standards by 2011 and an intention to

⁸ Money Well Spent: The effectiveness and value of housing adaptations; F Heywood 2001

introduce this standard to all new market housing by 2013. In addition, investment to improve the quality of existing homes through insulation and heating improvements, adaptations and handy person services.

Two national strategies focus on delivering these policies for older people and these are described below.

*Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods*⁹

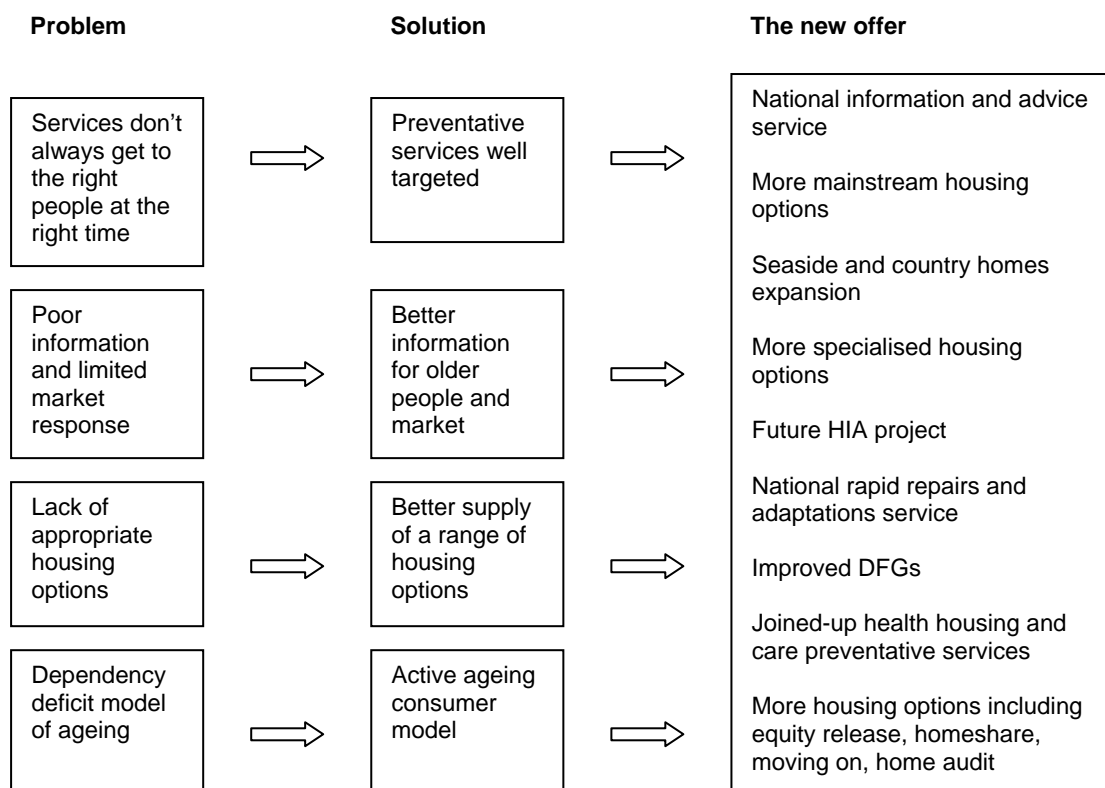
This is the government’s strategy for older people’s housing, published in February 2008 by Communities and Local Government (CLG). The strategy is based on two drivers:

- Economic sustainability – Housing must maximise public and private resources and empower older people to remain economically active.
- Social sustainability – Housing must promote equality, social connection and inclusion, and the health and well-being of older people.

The objectives are:

- To plan at all levels so that older people can live independently with and without support within their own communities
- To ensure earlier interventions and better advice and information is provided so that appropriate choices can be made by an ageing population
- To ensure the right range of choices and opportunities in housing are available for older people.

The strategy diagnoses the problems and proposes solutions together with a new offer for meeting the housing needs of older people:



Based on our consideration of the needs and issues identified for our district, the problems and solutions have local resonance.

⁹ Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - a national strategy for an ageing population; CLG Feb 08

The government has since introduced funding to explore services that deliver rapid repairs and adaptations and increased handyman services and has increased funding for disabled facility grants for adaptations in privately owned homes. Changes have also been made to the regulations governing disabled facility grants to reduce administration (particularly financial assessment) and increase funding flexibility to enable more creative solutions to problems.

In relation to new homes, the strategy commits that all new affordable homes are to be built to lifetime homes standards by 2011 and that the government will seek through encouragement, and if necessary regulation to achieve the same standards in market housing by 2013.

*Building a Society for All Ages*¹⁰

This follows on from the government's 2005 strategy for an ageing society, 'Opportunity Age – meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21st century' and was published by the Department for Work and Pensions in July 2009. It presents the government's vision for a society where people should no longer be defined by their age but where their skills and experiences are harnessed for the benefit of Britain as a whole. Six themes develop the overall strategic direction of older people as key players within mainstream society, the expectation of longer, healthier and more independent living and extended economic activity:

1. Having the later life you want
2. Older people at the heart of families
3. Engaging with work and the economy
4. Improving financial support
5. Better public services for later life
6. Building communities for all ages

'Building communities for all ages' reiterates the Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods' priorities including for lifetime homes standards in new housing and also highlights that the following have been or are being progressed:

- additional funding of £33million for handyman schemes from 2009 to 2011
- continued exploration of assisted living through technology (telecare and telehealth)
- 'FirstStop'¹¹; a free, independent information and advice service for older people delivered by the third sector to help people decide between the various options and services available to help them with regards to housing, care, finance and rights. This is provided via a website and through a telephone helpline
- Practical guidance is currently being developed to help local authorities to deliver lifetime neighbourhood standards
- support to reduce fear of crime through home security advice including through a further £15million in 2009/2010 for the 'Securing Homes: Action Against Burglary' initiative.

*Don't stop me now*¹²

This report was published by the Audit Commission in 2008 and aims to help local authorities to respond to challenges and opportunities and ensure that approaches and

¹⁰ See: <http://www.hmg.gov.uk/buildingasocietyforallages.aspx>

¹¹ See: www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk

¹² Don't stop me now – preparing for an ageing population: Audit Commission July 08

services are in place that will ensure a successful environment for people to thrive as they age. In general it supports delivery of the national strategic direction for an ageing population. It focuses on:

- engaging older people in planning and improving services and understanding what they want and need
- age-proofing mainstream services to eliminate age discrimination, and
- building services that support independence.

Regional and Sub-Regional strategic context

South East Plan and Housing Strategy

The context for housing development in Dover district is set by the South East Regional Spatial Strategy¹³ (or South East Plan), the final version of which was published in May 2009 and by the Regional Housing Strategy¹⁴ which was published in 2006. Both of these highlight the need to consider the needs of older people, particularly in the context of the higher proportion in the region, in planning new homes and neighbourhoods and in finding options for housing that older people will want to choose. Desirable housing alternatives for older people are important because these will enable:

- Freeing-up of family homes to help larger households
- Healthy living environments for older people that promote good health and well being
- Continuing independent living in a home of choice

South East Health Strategy

The South East Health Strategy supports the need for good housing options and highlights that existing housing in poor condition adversely impacts on the health of older people. Fuel poverty is specifically linked with ill health. There is a need to link better between assessments under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and access to health and social care services. Wider use of assistive technology (such as telecare and telehealth), adaptations and enabling warmth, safety and security inside and outside homes would support older people in their homes. Income maximisation including through good access to welfare benefits also strengthens older people's ability to live well.

Sustainable Community Strategies

Kent Partnership's sustainable community strategy the 'Vision for Kent' states that Kent will be a county where 'Housing needs are met and decent, high quality homes help create attractive, safe and friendly communities' and housing is a key contributor to the theme of 'healthy living'.

The new East Kent sustainable community strategy, under the aegis of the East Kent Local Strategic Partnership, highlights the need to improve the poorest housing conditions, particularly in Dover, and to tackle fuel poverty.

Active Lives 2007 to 2016

Kent's adult social care strategy makes a range of commitments that support our housing strategy for older people including:

- Supporting easier access to better advice and information and services that enable home improvement

¹³ See: <http://www.gos.gov.uk/gose/planning/regionalPlanning/815640/>

¹⁴ South East Regional housing strategy from 2006

- Enabling choice and control including through developing shared assessments, working across agencies to provide a comprehensive response to the needs of older people and enabling access to housing-related support across the range of tenures
- Supporting people to live in their own home by working in partnership to develop a range of housing solutions and increasing access to adaptations

Supporting People strategy

The Supporting People (SP) strategy for Kent is being reviewed so is in draft at the time of writing. The key implications for our older people are:

- There is a need to redistribute support provision across the county. Dover district, with the fourth highest numbers of people aged 65 and over, has the third fewest units of supported accommodation. The intention is to shift funding to reflect the needs in each area and under this proposal there would be support available for more of the older people in our area
- There is a need to move support away from being restricted solely to those in sheltered accommodation and towards a more 'floating' service that enables people to get support wherever they live
- Home Improvement Agencies and Handyperson services need a review to ensure that they are providing consistent and effective services in all areas
- There is a need for peer support to be developed to minimise isolation of older people in the community
- All support providers need to develop links with community-based day services to help reduce isolation

Local strategic context

Dover District Council is committed to enabling a wide range of good quality and accessible housing that meets the needs of the whole community. The council successfully bid for growth point status in the South East Plan and as a result can expect to deliver 10,100 homes by 2026, of which 30% should be affordable homes. This provides opportunities to rebalance housing across the area, including new affordable housing that provides desirable homes for older people. How these opportunities can be maximised is being developed in the draft affordable housing plan.

The council's corporate plan¹⁵ commits to achieving enough good quality homes to meet residents' ambitions, including the most vulnerable households. With the Dover district attracting substantial resources for regeneration, there are opportunities to improve existing housing and neighbourhoods as well as building new homes.

The planning framework for our area is well progressed and includes a supplementary planning document (SPD) for affordable housing that recognises the need for one and two bedroom homes to meet the needs of smaller households, including older people. It seeks to balance provision of sheltered, or other supported housing, in accordance with recognised need. The SPD draft affordable housing plan requires that homes are built to lifetime homes standards, in accordance with government policy, and identifies a need for wheelchair standard units to be provided across the district.

The draft Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 draws together the issues for privately owned housing across the Dover District Council area and sets out six objectives that are key to enabling older people to live independently in good quality homes and which provide good strategic fit with the wider strategies discussed above. The objectives that are particularly relevant to this strategy are to:

¹⁵ Corporate Plan 2008-2020, Dover DC

- take whatever action is appropriate and necessary to ensure that properties are free of serious hazards and meet statutory standards;
- provide services which assist older residents and residents with disabilities to maintain independent living in warm, safe and comfortable homes;
- improve energy efficiency in homes and reduce fuel poverty;
- provide financial assistance in the areas of greatest need to help provide decent, safe, secure homes;
- give effective advice and information to residents with housing problems

This strategy also adopts the former public service agreement (PSA) 7 target to achieve improvements in private sector housing conditions for vulnerable people, so that

- by October 2010, 70% of all vulnerable people will live in a decent home and
- by October 2021, 75% of all vulnerable people will live in a decent home

‘Vulnerable’ in this context refers to people reliant on means tested benefits but this encompasses a large number of older people and therefore is very relevant to this strategy. The strategy also looks to develop additional assistance for older (and other vulnerable) people in relation to repairing and adapting homes.

In summary

The wider strategic and policy context aligns well and supports a local housing approach that delivers choice and control for older people in the context of eliminating age discrimination and enabling older people to play a full and active part in society supported by:

- Accessible advice and information
- New homes built to lifetime standards
- Development of specialist housing for some older people in the form of ‘extra care’ schemes and exploration of other retirement housing options
- New developments to lifetime neighbourhood standards and the same standards being delivered wherever possible in existing neighbourhoods, for example where highway changes or replacements are required, or in major works for communal entrances (which also support delivery of Disability Discrimination Act commitments)
- Assistance for older people to make use of their own resources, including the equity in their homes, to be ready for their later years
- Helping older people to stay in their own homes through assistance with repairs, adaptations, safety and security measures
- Providing housing-related support across tenure including technological support through enhanced community alarms

As importantly, this strategic alignment means that the priorities we have identified for our area are shared by our key partners so that we can expect that our work will be supported and contributed to by them. This is vital if we are to make a significant difference for older people in our area.

3. The needs of and issues for older people in Dover District Council

Demography

Age profile and predicted change

Almost 38% of Dover district's total population is currently over 50 years old and 27.4% are over 60 years old¹⁶. This is substantially above the average for Kent and East Kent where 23.5% and 26.6% respectively are over 60.

In our area, by 2016:

- The population of over 55s will have increased by almost 17% against an overall population increase of only 0.75%.
- The majority growth will be in the 65 to 74 year old age band which will have increased by almost 38% - an addition of 4,000 people in this age group.
- Over 75 year olds will increase by around 16% or a total of 1,500 people
- Over 85's will also increase by 16%; around 500 people
- Generally the working age population (and children), including the 55 to 64 age band, will have declined significantly.

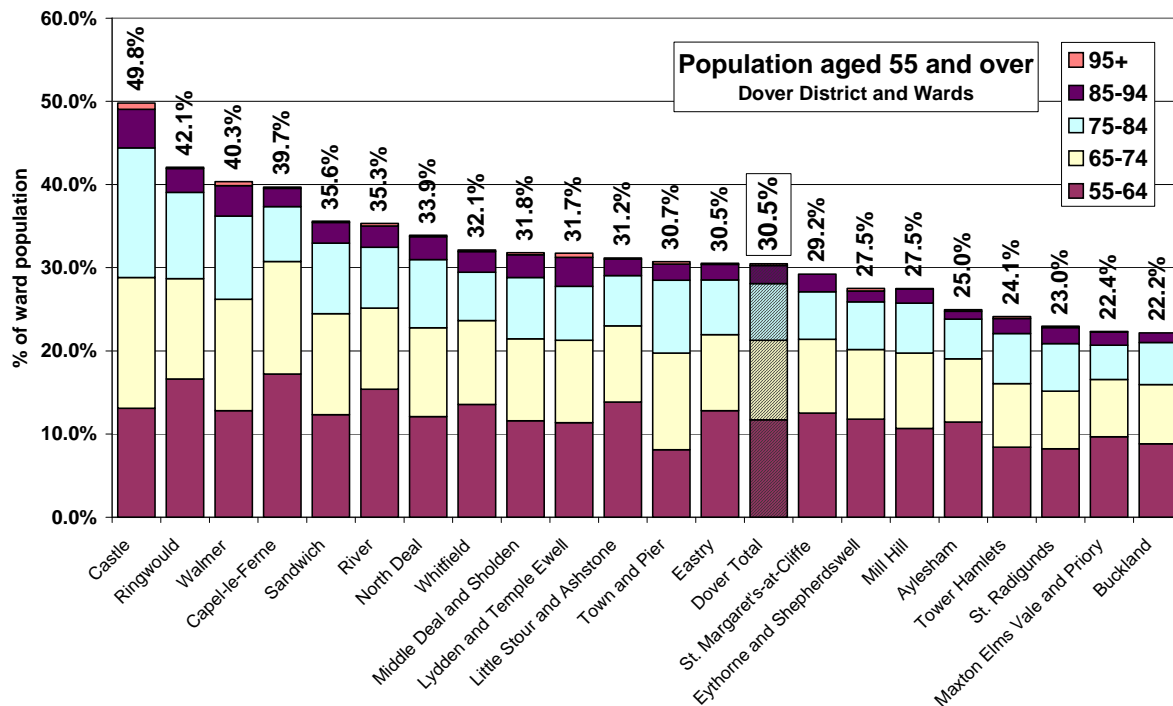
By 2026, those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%.

This picture does not take into account the anticipated growth in Dover district's population from inward migration as part of the South East Plan and Dover District Council's local planning intentions, which should work to rebalance the population. However, it does focus attention on the ageing population in Dover district compared to other areas and the need to consider housing requirements in the longer term.

The distribution of older people varies across the district; chart 1 shows the proportion and age split by ward for over-55 year olds.

Chart 1: distribution of people over 55 years across Dover DC wards

¹⁶ Source: ONS mid year estimates 2008



Ethnicity

Around 94% of our population is White British or Irish and these groups are more predominant amongst the older population. The most significant minority ethnic group is 'other White' (2.3%); with all other minority ethnic groups each equal to or less than half a percentage point.

Income

Although our economy has struggled in the last ten years or so, in fact the current older population is relatively well off: only 12.2% over 60 year olds live in income deprived households which is well below the national average and just below the national median. This does not mean there is no cause for concern; rather it reflects the previous local experience which was a relatively high wage rate from mining and port activity; both now declined. This picture is therefore likely to change over time. The indications are¹⁷ that the proportion of people across Kent who are over age 65 and rely on manual and other lower paid work will increase by 16% by 2021 (on 2001 base). This means that incomes on the whole will be lower, given the pattern of employment in the area, and the older population is likely to be disproportionately affected. This has implications for the ability of future older people to meet their own housing needs as well as for general health (which has strong links with income).

Around 5,000 older households living in private sector housing are in receipt of pension credits¹⁸, so are on a low income, and a fifth of these live in the private rented sector.

Health, care and well being

Life expectancy for men in the district is only just above the lowest national quartile, reflecting the past employment in the area which has shortened life expectancy for men compared to many other areas and despite relative wealth. For women, however, life expectancy is slightly above the national average. Those in the most deprived wards are likely to live 6.5 years less than those in the least deprived wards. The implications

¹⁷ Joint Strategic needs Assessment for Kent, 2008

¹⁸ Source: private sector stock condition survey

are that higher than average numbers of older women can expect to live alone as they grow old, this could disproportionately affect women with lower incomes. Currently, 48% all single person households in the district are aged over 65 years; highlighting that new homes designed for single person households should particularly be designed to lifetime standards including lift access to upper floors.

Isolation is recognised to be a high risk factor in mental and physical health and other well being issues in older populations because single people are less likely to make efforts around preparing meals, have less social contacts, suffer higher rates of depressive illnesses and are more likely to suffer ill effects from relatively minor accidents in the home. Work in East Kent has shown that, after dementia, the most significant mental illness affecting older people is depression. The causes of this are often very complex but it is a reasonable contention that inadequate income and therefore an inability to participate in mainstream living is a significant contributor.

People in our area are more likely to have long term limiting illnesses; slightly worse than areas with comparative deprivation indicators. However, the rates of illnesses that particularly affect older people indicate that older people here are relatively healthy compared to similar areas, with the exception of respiratory illnesses which are relatively higher. Good housing conditions including warm homes are particularly important in maintaining health in people with these problems.

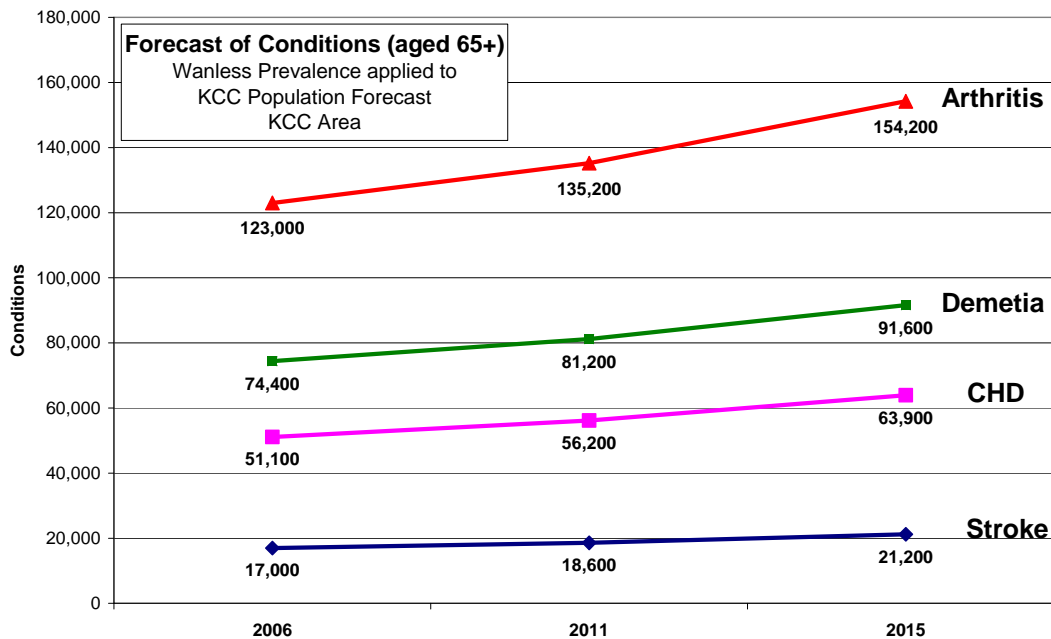
For people aged over 75 falls are the leading cause of injury and death. Long term illnesses and events such as falls often prompt the need for adaptations to homes to enable older people to stay independent. Minor adaptations (up to a cost of £1,000) are supplied by adult social care but larger adaptations across tenure are primarily the responsibility of the housing authority. The private sector stock condition survey identified that 22% all households in private housing include someone with a disability and as the proportion of older people increases, the demand for adaptations will grow.

Dementia will be an increasing issue as the older population grows. Specialist housing solutions such as extra care housing need to include the right facilities and services (including telecare functionality, colour coding and layouts that are straightforward so easy to navigate) to ensure that people with confusion are able to be supported and cared for in a homely setting that is familiar to them. Telecare is an important and developing resource that also enables people to stay in their familiar home with distant monitoring for the risks associated with short term memory loss and confusion, such as main door and gas alerts. This enables people to live much longer and more safely in a home that they recognise and averts the increased confusion that often results from having to move to get the right care. The council and its developer partners need to ensure that, especially, specialist housing design reflects good practice around supporting independence for people with confusion and that the partnership as a whole is responding to the needs of people with dementia living in their own homes.

Chart 2 shows how the numbers of people with conditions mainly affecting older age groups are likely to change across Kent. Dementia is a particular issue for future older people and specialist housing solutions will be needed as this develops.

Chart 2: increasing prevalence of conditions mainly affecting older people¹⁹

¹⁹ Kent Public Health Annual report 2008

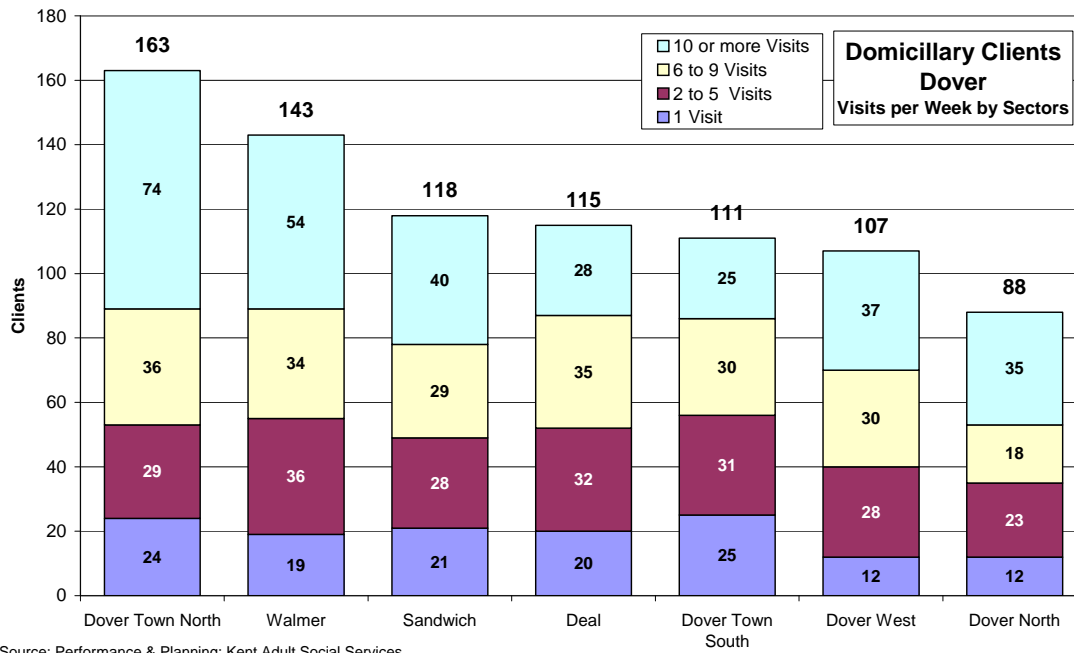


Unscheduled admissions to hospital are a valuable indicator of both the health status of older people, and of the quality of the health and social care they receive. The average for East Kent PCT is much the same as for Kent as a whole but the Dover district rate falls well below both. However, considering causes that are more common for older people, admissions for stroke and diabetes are amongst the lowest in the county whereas heart failure admissions are only just below the county average and admissions for chronic obstructive airways disease are around the county average.

Domiciliary care is provided in people's own homes and can include help with any personal care tasks such as washing, dressing, help into and out of bed, meals and so on. Multiple visits imply that people need a great deal of personal care, being unable to manage personal care tasks for themselves, and ten or more visits a week is classified as 'intensive'. Chart 3 shows the distribution of domiciliary care inputs across Dover District Council (with wards grouped into sub areas).

Chart 3: Domiciliary care inputs across Dover DC area²⁰

²⁰ Source: KCC Adult Social Services



Dover Town North area, which includes the wards of Buckland, St. Radigunds and Tower Hamlets, has the second lowest proportion of older people in the council area but both the highest number of domiciliary care clients and the highest number of intensive inputs. Dover North and West, encompassing Aylesham, Eastry, Ringwoud, St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Capel-le-Ferne, Eythorne and Shepherdswell, Lydden and Temple Ewell, River, Town and Pier have the highest populations of older people and the lowest inputs of domiciliary care.

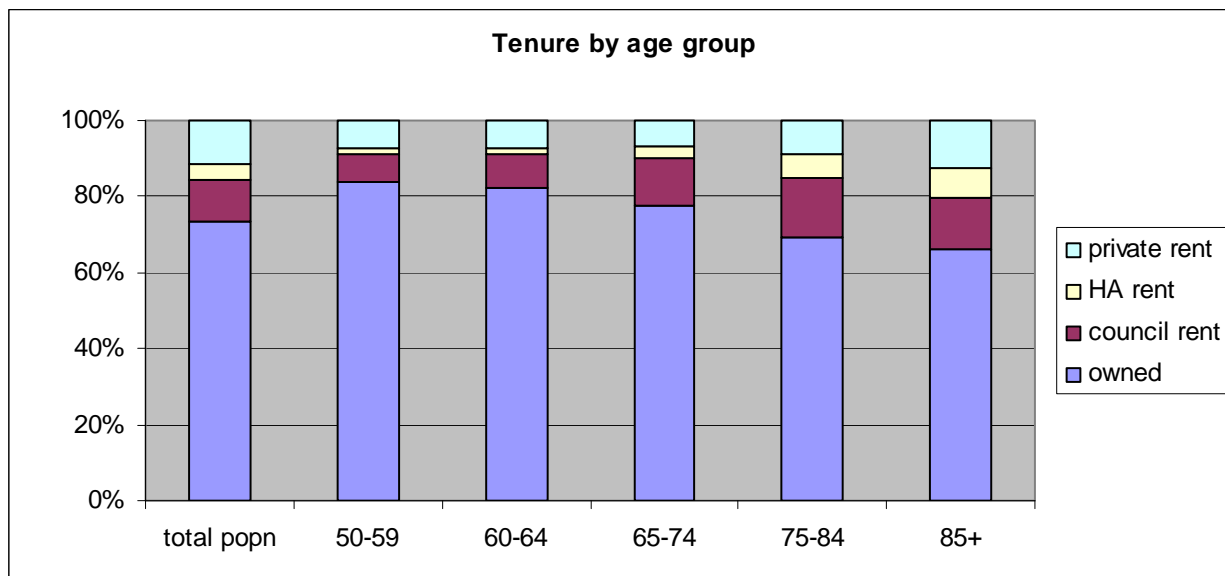
Housing issues

Tenure

Dover district reflects national tenure trends in that people over the age of 50 are more likely to own their own home - and more own their own home outright. However, people over 75 years are much more likely to live in council and housing association rented homes than the average across all ages. Dover (in particular Dover town) has a substantial private rented sector compared to national averages but amongst older people only the 85+ age group are more likely than the average to live in this tenure.

Chart 4: Tenure of older people compared to the total population in Dover DC²¹

²¹ Source: Census 2001



Housing demand

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), finalised in July 2009, identified need for housing across all tenures and carried out some specific work on housing need and demand amongst older people. A housing aspirations survey was completed with a total of 603 people, of whom 264 were over 55 years old. The results confirm findings in similar surveys of housing aspirations amongst older people.

All participants were asked whether they are likely to move within the next three years. Around 90% of those over 65 identified that they would probably or definitely not want to move. A higher proportion of the 55 to 64 age group said that they would probably or definitely want to move – about 18%; with another 8% saying they didn't know.

The study also asked about what type of housing older people would prefer. Overwhelmingly older people said that they want to stay in their own homes; preferably in the homes they occupy now. Where a move becomes necessary the preference is for two bedroom accommodation or larger, and more preferred bungalows or houses with a small garden, with few wanting a flat. The views and preferences of older people are discussed in more detail later in this section.

Demand for affordable housing

The SHMA assessed housing need into the future, based on 2006 data for existing housing need for people over 65 years old. In 2006, there was an identified unmet need of 1,535 homes and this is projected to increase by 54% to 2,371 by 2026. These figures exclude people who are housed appropriately or have sufficient resources to meet their own housing needs in the open market. This figure represents almost a quarter of all housing growth in this area and over 78% of all affordable homes and is clearly unrealistic. It is clear though that a significant proportion of all new affordable homes should be designed to meet the needs (including quality living standards such as good storage space and two bedrooms) of older people and confirms that Lifetime homes standards would provide this flexibility.

Demand for sheltered housing

This section considers 'classic' sheltered housing; i.e. schemes which are designed with flats off an internal corridor, which also have communal lounges, laundries and may have other communal facilities such as guest rooms. The main source for

understanding demand for sheltered homes is the council's housing waiting list. With the choice-based lettings scheme that has operated since November 2008, we can gain a much better understanding of the real demand for sheltered housing, as expressed by the number of bids for certain schemes and we have used this information to consider the demand for sheltered housing. Only three schemes attracted more than single figures of bids at any stage during the last year. The three that are more popular are schemes that are relatively well-located and offer attractive homes. We need to bear in mind that single people and couples are only considered for one bedroom homes unless there is a need for a second bedroom, for example if a couple need separate bedrooms or there is a carer staying overnight on a regular basis. This does mean that we are considering demand for what is available rather than people's preferences, which may be different to what they are allowed to have. The over-riding message is that older people only want sheltered housing if the home offers good space standards in a location that enables people to be part of their local community and enjoy facilities.

We have also learned from our recent experience of closing schemes as this tells us where older people wanted to move to, and what sort of accommodation they wanted. The majority of the 90 people who moved from sheltered housing schemes wanted to live in towns or local centres of population. The design of their new home and its proximity to local facilities was far more important to them than moving into another sheltered housing scheme. Many did still want to receive support but this can be provided in their own home.

All housing associations providing housing in the Dover district were approached about demand for older persons' housing in their stock. All seek nominations from Dover District Council's housing list for at least 50% of re-let homes and although some hold their own lists, they identify that most people are on both theirs, and the council's housing lists. All reported higher levels of demand for bungalows, where they have this type of stock and half reported some lack of demand for sheltered units, at least from time to time. However, none of the respondents identified chronic problems letting any particular scheme.

Based on our findings, we do not consider that additional sheltered housing is required at present. It would be better to focus on good quality, well located 'retirement' housing which provides 2 bedrooms, good storage space and lifetime standards.

Home ownership

The table below compares average house prices for 2008 across Dover district, East Kent Triangle and all Kent²².

Average house prices	Dover DC	East Kent	Kent (all)
Detached	324,879	312,686	398,419
Semi	189,013	196,592	220,662
Terrace	159,454	174,858	184,070
Flat/ Maisonette	122,201	138,626	156,362
Average (all)	196,142	202,781	234,136

Except for detached houses, the purchase price for homes in Dover district falls below the average even for neighbouring areas. Older home owners who want to downsize to a flat, for example, will release sufficient equity to be able to afford the costs of moving.

²² Source: Land Registry of England and Wales

The purchase prices of retirement housing compare reasonably favourably although the purchase price range is very wide. With recent market challenges, there is little 2009 data but prices in 2008 ranged from £90,000 for a shared ownership flat managed by a housing association to £250,000 outright purchase for a two bedroom flat in a privately managed scheme. Most purchase prices fell between £100,000 and £130,000, usually for a one bedroom outright purchase flat. Private management agencies are reluctant to identify problems with demand but most flats were on the market for some months and problems selling leasehold flats have been widely reported nationally.

While purchase prices compare reasonably well with general house prices, the key to affordability of retirement properties is the service charge. The retirement housing for sale identified in Dover district usually included communal facilities and a scheme manager and service charges cover at least all external property-related repairs plus communal and window cleaning, grounds maintenance and staffing. Prices range from around £1,300 to £2,000 per year although there are outliers at both ends of the range. This means that older people need either good levels of pension income or to release sufficient equity in order to afford ongoing costs of these properties. Those selling large family homes should have little difficulty in affording purchase price and service charges for the majority of homes available on the market.

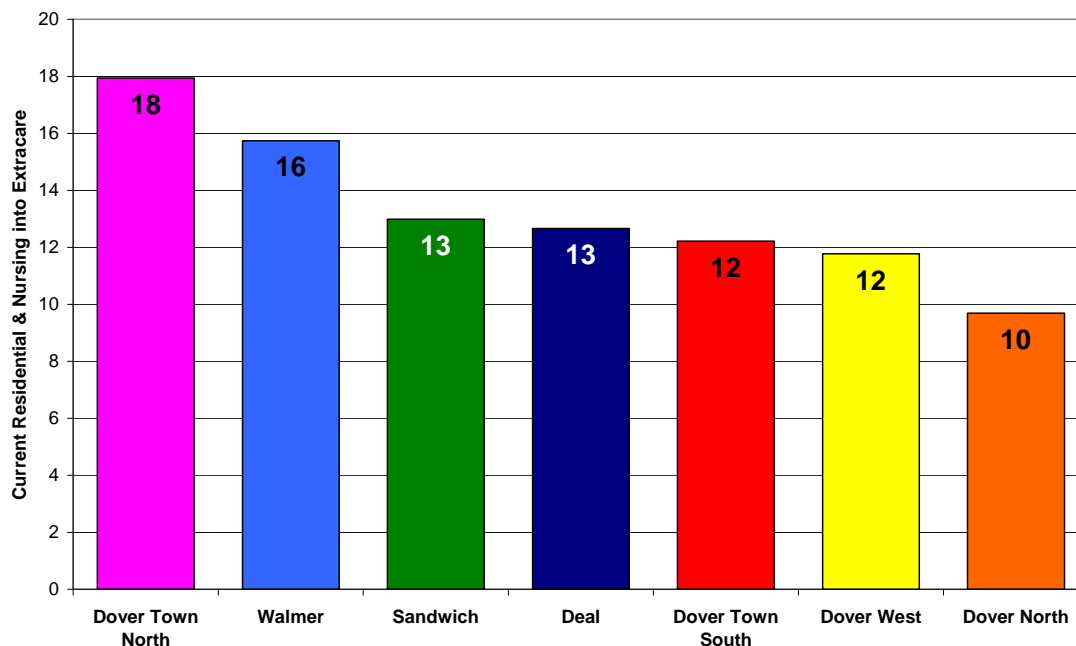
Affordable homes for purchase that are suitable for older people are available through the 'HomeBuy' scheme, for which Moat Housing Association holds the list. At present there is little demand from older people and this will reflect the difficult market conditions.

Extra care housing

This type of specialist housing has been developed to meet the needs of older people who have both a housing need, and a need for care provision. This type of development is mainly aimed at reducing the number of older people who have to be admitted to residential and nursing care. Schemes include a range of additional facilities to enable care to be provided on site and these have been very successful on the whole in meeting the needs of more dependant older people.

Kent adult care services have assessed the need for extra care housing using the methodology developed by the Housing and Older People Development Group (HOPDEV) – the specialist unit sponsored by the government to develop good practice in housing for older people. The chart below shows unmet need for 94 units. This is at 2008 figures as the 40 units provided by our first extra care scheme then being developed, and now opened, have been netted off.

Chart 5: Need for extra care housing in areas of Dover DC



It should be emphasised that extra care schemes are successful in providing quality of living where they build a community of older people; offering a quality living experience as well as essential care and support. Housing only those with substantial care needs means that this sense of community is far less likely to develop: a mix of people is needed including a good proportion with lower dependency levels who are more able to build and participate in the community. The total demand for extra care units should therefore be increased to represent this mix of dependency levels: good practice indicates that the scheme should provide a 50:50 mix of highly dependent and less dependant customers (although most of the latter will be expected to need higher levels of care as they age). This implies a total need for extra care units of just short of 190 units.

Decent homes

The 2009 private sector stock condition survey for Dover district highlights that 36.7% all those living in private sector housing are vulnerable households. The term 'vulnerable' is defined as those who are in receipt of means-tested benefits across all ages. Of households who are vulnerable, almost half live in homes that fail the decency standard and a quarter live in homes with a Category 1 hazard, which are those likely to place the occupier at high risk.

Almost 40% of vulnerable people living in non-decent homes live in the private rented sector, which raises concerns about the higher than average population of over-85 year olds in this sector.

The vast majority of Category 1 hazards are excessive cold, with danger of falls being the second most prevalent. More than 1,100 people over retirement age live in homes with a SAP rating of under 35, which indicates very poor insulation and heating, and a further 7,000 older people live in homes with SAP ratings of 54 or less, which is below the average for the area. Almost 3,000 households are identified as being in fuel poverty (which is defined by the requirement to spend 10% or more of the household income on domestic fuel) and of these, almost half are vulnerable households. Half of all vulnerable households in fuel poverty live in pre-1919 homes and over 38% live in the private rented sector.

The survey identified a total of 7,344 homes that are occupied by people who are retired and which fail the decent homes standard. Almost 60% of all vulnerable people living in homes that fail the decent homes standard live in properties built before 1919, the majority of which are terraced properties, although it is not currently clear what proportion of these are people over retirement age. Flatted homes are also more likely to fail the decent homes standard, for the most part because they are fitted with electrical heating which is more expensive to run and less effective. Over half the occupants of flats are vulnerable people.

Around 21% of privately owned homes require major repairs or replacement of components and over 44% of these are occupied by vulnerable people who by definition are unlikely to be able to afford to have repairs completed.

Older people who are on low incomes are least likely to be able to afford to upgrade or update their own homes and, whilst some issues may be less pressing, excessive cold and major repairs and replacements can place people at risk of serious ill health including through accidents in home.

What older people say about their needs and aspirations

We have used a range of sources to develop our understanding of the views of older people. We invited all members of Dover's Senior Citizens' Forum and some of the key agencies working with older people to a consultation event in May 2008. There was a relatively small attendance of around 25 people (mostly older people) but a lively discussion across a wide range of topics. The full report of the event is at [Annex 1](#).

The consultant appointed to complete the Strategic housing Market Assessment, ECOTEC, also undertook some consultation with older people in Dover district and their views are included in the SHMA report.

There has been local²³ and regional²⁴ work to understanding the motivations and obstacles for older social housing tenants, who could by moving release a family home.

Kent Supporting People programme has been undertaking consultation with service users to inform its strategic review. By definition all those involved already receive support services, and for older people this is usually in sheltered housing.

A range of regional statutory and voluntary groups came together to establish the South East Regional Forum on Ageing (SERFA)²⁵ and held a large consultation event in March 2009. The South East England Partnership Board subsequently published a study on the needs and aspirations of older people²⁶ in May 2009 to inform housing development for older people across the region.

There is a substantial body of research on older people's views from across the country and regionally. In addition to a range of studies commissioned by local authorities and specialist agencies to inform policy and service development, the government commissioned studies on the views, needs and aspirations of older people in developing, and since publication of Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods. HOPDEV has also carried out studies into older people's views about their needs and aspirations and also their experiences in specialist housing.

²³ Housing Needs and Aspirations of Long Standing Council Tenants, Canterbury City Council March 09

²⁴ Releasing Larger Social Rented Homes in the South East: Regional Housing Forum 2009

²⁵ See: <http://www.gos.gov.uk/gose/publicHealth/improvement/701129/790925/>

²⁶ The Housing Needs and Aspirations of Older People: SE partnership Board, May 09

Findings

In February 2008, Baroness Andrews introduced 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods' by describing what older people had told the government:

'We want:

- To stay in our homes as long as possible, but to do this we need support - a reliable repairs and adaptations service, that bit of help around the home*
- Access to independent information and advice about our housing options*
- Safe, accessible homes that are low-maintenance and affordable to heat*
- Good space standards - so we can have family to visit, or a carer, and storage space is important too. And we need our homes to be adaptable, if we need to install a stair-lift, or a walk-in shower*
- Neighbourhoods that are safe, with good access and transport links to the places we need to go to, and the places we would like to go to*

Most of all, we want to be listened to - involved in the design and delivery of everything in our homes and neighbourhoods that will affect us.'

These messages reflect findings in national and local consultation with older people and are consistent with the views expressed at the consultation event in Dover.

Overwhelmingly older people want, and expect, to stay in their own homes and most expect to stay there for the rest of their life.

A minority of people anticipate having to move into residential care (although many fear this) and expect to be able to access support and care that helps them to stay in their own home. Very few people over retirement age expect to move as they get older, although some think that they may be forced to move if they become disabled. If people have not moved away from their family home by early retirement, the proportion who would move without being forced to do so is only about 10%.

People living in social rented housing are more likely to be prepared to move but only to a home that meets their needs and aspirations (see next point), and only if the move itself is relatively easy to cope with. They cite practical help to pack and unpack and arrange the move including utilities and reconnection of cookers etc. and financial assistance with the costs of moving (carpeting and curtains and the costs of removal firms) which are often seen as unaffordable.

To be attractive to older people, alternative homes must provide the right space and facilities

Overwhelmingly, people want homes with a minimum of two bedrooms, with good design that makes maintenance of and movement around it easy, and facilities (such as bathrooms and kitchens) that are attractive and easy to use. Most people want their own small garden or, as a minimum, easy access to a communal garden. Few express a particular interest in sheltered or extra care housing (few know what this is), although some are attracted by the idea of a 'retirement village'. For home owners, retirement housing for example in specially designed flatted blocks has some attractions but, again, only if forced to move. There is a suspicion that specialist housing schemes for older people are likely to be populated by very old and frail people who will not be able to socialise, so any potential social advantage of moving into these is mitigated by this perception.

Neighbourhoods need to be easy to get around and provide a full range of facilities

People cite poor pavements, lack of road crossings and inconsiderate parking as major obstacles to being able to get out and about in their locality. Most value their car and

anticipate (or experience) that having to rely on public transport to get to the shops and social activities causes significant problems. This is because public transport is seen as unreliable and inaccessible, and services are sparse in more rural areas. The optimum is to live in a neighbourhood that provides a range of shops, particularly food shops, and community facilities for socialising.

Accessible and reliable information and advice that enables a choice of housing options and ways to meet needs is vital

Older people want to know what is available and then make their own choices about what will best meet their requirements. They express resentment that they are sometimes not treated as responsible adults and are told what is best for them. However, in order to be able to make good choices, they want to know what all the options are without trekking from one advice source to another: joined-up advice and information is crucial in enabling choices to be made to best meet needs.

Older people are less likely to have access to the internet and, even where they do, place a high value on being able to talk to someone face to face. People with limited mobility want this to come to their homes rather than have to travel to a centre. There is suspicion about financial advice being offered in the market place; most do not trust this and refer to the well publicised instances of poor money advice and dire consequences. People do trust well known voluntary agencies such as the CAB and Age Concern, and they also trust local councils to do 'what is right'.

To be able to stay in their own homes, people want prompt practical help

People cite adaptations as the most likely help needed in their homes and see these as crucial to maintaining independence and a good quality of life. Some are also concerned about major repairs – both the cost and the practicality of getting work done. Mistrust of builders and other contractors means that having to commission any work on the home is fraught with doubt and difficulty so people want to be able to use contractors that have been assessed as trustworthy and reasonable in price. While some people are happy to assess and commission what is needed, the majority would value advice on the work required and practical help to arrange it. Some are concerned that they would not be able to afford major work but few trust the equity release schemes they know about: a council-backed scheme would be far more acceptable.

Small repairs and work around the home (for example putting up curtain rails, replacing fittings) are more often a source of concern: it is expensive and difficult to get someone in to do small jobs and again there are concerns about reliability. Most older people are used to doing work like this themselves and find it hard to see their home deteriorate without being able to address this.

Isolation is a major threat and concern

People fear becoming isolated in their own home and unable to see friends and neighbours. Daily contact with 'the outside world' is highly valued, particularly by people who live alone, and this also provides a sense of safety and belonging. The best way to achieve this is to be able to get out and about but older people who are unable to do this want to have contact with other people, even if only phone calls.

Summary of findings on needs and issues

- The older population of Dover district is larger than the housing market and county averages. By 2026, those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those

- Proportions of older people vary across the district by over 100% but intensive domiciliary care inputs indicate that levels of dependency do not match the distribution: this needs to be further investigated in order to effectively target services
- Although relatively well off now, the number of older people on lower incomes will increase over time and this has implications for the ability of people to meet their own housing needs
- Currently, 48% all single person households in the Dover district are aged over 65 years and this will increase over time, so it is particularly important that new smaller homes should meet lifetime standards including lift access to upper floors
- A higher than average proportion of our older population is likely to live alone, with implications of isolation and mental ill health. It is important that this is considered when making decisions about local community facilities and support services
- Rates of respiratory illnesses are relatively high; these are particularly linked to cold and damp conditions, so improving these issues will particularly contribute to better health amongst older people
- 22% all households in private housing include someone with a disability and this proportion is likely to be much higher in social housing. These numbers will increase as the population ages, indicating increasing demands for adaptations
- Falls are the leading cause of injury and death amongst the over-75s; adaptations and falls prevention advice and practical measures significantly reduce disabilities arising from falls.
- Increasing rates of dementia need to be considered when designing supported housing and services for older people
- Over 8,000 retired households live in homes that are more difficult to keep warm, and over 1,100 live in homes that are very cold and expensive to heat. This places occupiers at severe risk of ill health
- People who are 85 or over are more likely than the average to live in private rented properties. 40% all private rented homes fail the decent homes standard so this highlights the need to ensure that all agencies visiting older people at home are aware of and refer issues to the private sector housing team.
- There is unmet demand for affordable rented homes amongst older people; mostly for retirement (but not sheltered) units of two or more bedrooms. The projected demand by 2026 represents 78% of all additional affordable homes expected to be built in this area.
- There is no apparent unmet need for market retirement housing, although this may change over time as the housing market recovers and the older population grows.
- There is a need for almost 190 additional units of extra care housing: half for people with high dependency levels and half to provide a more mixed and lively community.
- Older people want, and expect, to stay in their own homes and most expect to stay in their current home for the rest of their life. To enable this, older people see the following as crucial:
 - Neighbourhoods that are easy to get around and provide a full range of facilities
 - Accessible and reliable information and advice that enables a choice of housing options and ways to meet needs
 - Prompt practical help, including help with adaptations and repairs
 - Ways of meeting people and socialising - contact with the outside world

- Where older people choose to move, or may have to move to meet their changing needs, they want homes that are acceptable to them, including:
 - at least two bedrooms
 - accessible standards, with no steps or stairs
 - well designed and accessible bathrooms and kitchens
 - a small garden
- People living in social rented housing are somewhat more prepared to consider a move but only to the right home and only if this is made easy for them to cope with, both practically and financially.

4. Meeting needs and demands

This section considers the findings on needs and issues from section 3, and looks at how and whether these are currently being met.

New homes and neighbourhoods that meet the current and future needs of Dover's population and support independence

Although older people for the most part do not want to move, there is already unmet demand for, particularly, affordable rented housing and this will grow by around 54% by 2026. To assess the extent to which demand is being met, we considered the supply of affordable rented homes, both specialist (sheltered and extra care) and non-specialist housing. Non-specialist housing is usually termed general needs housing but here we are considering only the supply of homes that would be more suitable for older people, given the higher rates of mobility issues and smaller household sizes.

We also considered the requirements around neighbourhood design and facilities that will support older people to remain independent.

Specialist housing for older people

Sheltered housing

As part of the review underpinning this strategy, all social landlords with homes in Dover district were contacted about the supply of properties in the area that are either sheltered housing or designated for older people. Information was also sourced from the Elderly Accommodation Council.

In summary, our area has around 320 sheltered homes for affordable rent from housing associations and other affordable providers, usually charitable trusts. The majority of these are confirmed as meeting the decent homes standard. Some schemes do have bedsits and these are more difficult to let. In addition, Dover District Council has 266 sheltered flats across the district and all these meet the decent homes standard, giving a total 586 affordable rented sheltered units across the district. 577²⁷ of these have support provided through contracts with Supporting People and the remainder are almhouse-type accommodation with limited support on site.

Although we could not establish the full turnover of sheltered housing, data from some housing provider and national data²⁸ indicates that around 12% of sheltered units are available for letting each year, indicating a supply of about 70 sheltered units per annum. Housing providers fed back that they commonly experience making an offer of sheltered (and other) housing to be told that the older person doesn't want to move at this time. This confirms that older people may register in case they need to move but

²⁷ Supporting People Needs Analysis November 2008

²⁸ Source: sheltered housing benchmarking club, HQN

will only do so if the time and the property are right for them. Experience of bidding and decanting people from sheltered housing indicates that there is no pent-up demand for sheltered housing except where it provides a good quality home in a location of choice; both of which could be met by well-designed retirement housing in the right place (such as in Dover town, or other town centres).

There is no apparent need for additional 'traditional' sheltered housing schemes: needs and aspirations would be better met with retirement housing providing good space and lifetime standards in the right locations.

Extra care housing

Dover District Council with Kent County Council has one extra care scheme of forty units for older people that opened this autumn. Another scheme of the same size is planned for start on site next year so together these would provide around 80 units leaving a shortfall of around 54 units on the basis of the 2008 needs assessment. However, we know that such schemes are only able to develop a good community if occupants are not all very dependant on care and limited in mobility. The mix of occupiers found in studies, most recently one published in November this year by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation²⁹, to be more successful is 50% highly dependant people with 25% each of moderate to low dependency. The unmet need of 54 is based on high dependency and therefore an additional 50 or so units would allow the optimum mix across all schemes. Turnover rates in extra care are much higher than in sheltered housing (up to 40% has been reported) so a total supply of 220 units would provide a supply of perhaps 50 or 60 units per annum. Given the increasing ageing population and the issues around dementia, this supply level would go a long way to meeting future levels need.

There is a need for around 180 units of extra care, beyond the 40 already delivered but including the scheme now being planned

General needs housing for older people

Affordable rented homes

Over 1,300 properties are designated for allocation to older people across Dover district; these tend to be bungalows or flatted blocks originally built for older people. These may have no particular merit in terms of special design features or good location but bungalows are particularly popular with older people and many of the flats built for older people have good space standards. However, most flats do not have lifts to upper floors and most flats and bungalows provide only one bedroom. As a result the upper floor flats in particular are far less popular with older people.

Providing desirable affordable rented homes for older people would help to release family homes for households including children. This would also contribute to meeting the demand for larger family homes for affordable rent since most older people on the waiting list will be under-occupying their home (although this has not been properly assessed). However, to achieve this there also needs to be an under-occupier scheme that provides practical help and assistance and covers the costs of moving.

There is an unmet need for around 1,500 and, by 2026, around 2,370 general needs housing at affordable rent that provides one or, preferably, two bedrooms built to lifetime home standards. The majority of these should be ground floor properties including

²⁹ The development of social well-being in new extra care housing schemes: JRF Nov 09

bungalows or flats with lift access and communal gardens and in locations that older people want. This supply would help to meet needs amongst families who are overcrowded now or are planning to have children in the future. However, a well-designed under-occupier scheme is also needed if this is to be achieved.

Market homes

Around 10% of older people indicate that they may want to move to a more suitable home. In most cases, this would release a family home onto the open market which would help to rebalance the market across the district. There is no current indication that there is a lack of supply of either retirement or general housing to meet the demand but we can anticipate that demand will grow. We can also anticipate that attractive, well designed homes in the right location and of the right size will in fact attract people who are in their fifties and sixties to move so providing a good balance of housing in market developments would have the desired effect. However, one bedroom homes, or with small space standards, step access or above the ground floor with no lift will not achieve this.

New market housing in places that older people want to live should include a proportion of homes that meet the aspirations of older people, including lifetime homes standards. Whilst these may not all be purchased by older people, they would also meet the needs of other households.

Neighbourhoods

Older people identify that, for the most part, they want to stay in their current locality even if they move. A minority of people attending the consultation event in May 2008 living outside town centres (but not those in villages) said they would consider moving to an area that provides better facilities, including shops and social facilities.

Our regeneration and development sites provide real opportunities to ensure that neighbourhoods are designed to provide what older people (and younger people) want and, more importantly, need. Master planning and site briefs should therefore include consideration of the extent to which these needs can be met, with a mix of commercial and community facilities being designed into the plan.

For existing neighbourhoods, the government is preparing a good practice note that will help local authorities to think through how areas can be brought closer to lifetime standards through small changes and taking opportunities as they arise. The important message is that any work in any area provides opportunities to upgrade or improve mobility standards and improve the life of local people.

Master planning and site briefs for regeneration areas and new developments should include requirements that will help the neighbourhood to be sustainable for lifelong living. These will also support stronger safer communities.

All planned work in the public realm of any area should include consideration of how it can be delivered in a way that improves the area for local people. These could include such measures as dropped kerbs, improved pavements, access to shops, protected pedestrian ways and enhanced community facilities.

Help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living

Our needs and issues review highlighted five areas that are particularly relevant to older people.

Affordable warmth

All social housing should meet the decency standard, including affordable warmth, by the end of 2010. The main issues are in the private sector where home owners and, particularly, private tenants are at risk of ill health because of cold living conditions and are more likely to be in fuel poverty because of the costs of keeping their home warm. Amongst attendees at the consultation event in Dover there was a high level of recognition of help to insulate homes and many owner occupiers had taken advantage of this already.

The Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership (KEEP), which includes Dover District Council, includes a Home Energy Visitors Scheme which has led to 194 households receiving a wide variety of energy efficiency measures with referrals onto Warm Front and Coldbuster grants. We also give both grants and loans for energy efficiency works for homes that fail the decency standards on grounds of thermal comfort. Grants are available to householders over 60 years old and who are in receipt of means tested benefits. Loans are available to households on low incomes and to landlords who agree to let their homes to tenants who are on means-tested benefits. The loan for home owners is repayable on sale of the property within ten years.

We are currently looking at proposals for the Community Energy Savings Programme where funding through the Community Energy Savings programme is likely to be available for local areas which are in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country; part of the St Radigunds ward comes into this category. We are also working to identify areas with high heat loss using thermal imaging so we can better target assistance with home insulation. We promote the Kent Action to Save Heat (KASH) scheme. This provides a one stop referral system irrespective of a household's means.

While we are already working to improve affordable warmth across the private sector in the district, we are taking action to further target our efforts on areas with higher levels of issues around thermal comfort.

Adaptations

Dover District Council has a mandatory duty to provide Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) to people living in the private sector and this includes housing association tenants. Council tenants' needs for adaptations are paid for by the council's Housing Revenue Account (the rent account) and are outside the DFG system.

Between 2004 and 2008 we made around 50 to 60 grants per year to a value of around £420,000 and there was a substantial backlog, which was highlighted at the consultation event in Dover. However, we have worked with the In Touch Home Improvement Agency and have done much to address these delays and the under-funding that exacerbated them. In 2008/09 we processed 86 grants, spending £600,000 and in 2009/10 will make over 90 grants with an estimated spend of £680,000. As a result of increased expenditure and process efficiencies, there is no current waiting list for DFGs in our area.

To help with other necessary costs that fall outside a qualifying adaptation we can offer a loan of up to £6,000 which is only repayable on sale of the property. Where the home

is unadaptable, or uneconomic to adapt, we can also make a loan of up to £10,000 towards the costs of moving, including purchasing a new home that meets needs, and this again is only repayable on sale of the property.

For council tenants, adaptations must be paid for from Housing Revenue Account (and housing capital) resources and the lack of resources has meant that adaptations are taking many months (currently around fifteen months) from someone identifying a need for an adaptation to the time it is provided. This is a matter of serious concern to tenants and the council alike and although work has been done to try to meet needs, for example by offering rehousing to a more suitably designed home, there are concerns that older people are living in homes that do not support their independence. As we highlighted at the start of this strategy, adaptations can save many thousands of pounds in care and other costs over the years following a home being made suitable for independence. It also helps to relieve pressures on carers who may end up with health problems of their own from trying to help the person with a disability with personal care tasks.

We are therefore committed to working further, with adult social care and the PCT, to address the backlog and place council tenants on an equal footing with people living in the private sector.

We have done much to address the need for adaptations in private sector housing and related assistance and there is no current waiting list. We will continue to monitor demand for private sector adaptations so that unmet need is quickly highlighted and tackled.

However, council tenants can expect to wait well over a year for an adaptation and we recognise that this is unacceptable, both for them and their carers and in terms of the costs to the public purse. We will tackle this situation by undertaking a full and fundamental review of the process of providing adaptations in council homes, including identifying what resources are needed to keep pace with demand and looking for ways to fill this gap.

Repairs

Older people told us that they are concerned about having to afford and arrange for larger repairs and would appreciate help with smaller repairs. The main concerns are around the identifying reliable tradespeople who will provide a fair service and the difficulty of getting small repairs completed, especially where people were used to doing these for themselves but can no longer manage.

We work with the In Touch Home Improvement Agency (part of Hyde Housing Association) which is jointly funded by Supporting People, the Occupational Therapy service, the Primary Care Trust and Dover District Council to help people, mainly older home owners, with repair work. The In Touch service is available to any older person, although it had a lower profile amongst attendees at the consultation event. The agency can advise on work, liaise with contractors (including specifying what needs to be done and administering quotes) and will help people to monitor and approve the work.

We currently provide financial assistance to people who are on means-tested benefits such as pension credit through a Decent Homes loan. We target information and publicity campaigns on the inner areas of Dover town where housing condition problems are concentrated, but this is available to any home that fails the decent homes standard.

Owner occupiers have to be in receipt of means-tested benefits and we offer loans of up to £30,000 which are only repayable on sale of the property. For private rented homes, landlords can apply for a loan of up to £15,000 which is repayable after 10 years for accredited landlords and after 3 years for non accredited landlords.

This offers a good quality of help for more fundamental problems but the present Housing Assistance Policy does not cover grants for vulnerable older householders who need repair work such as a broken boiler, leaking roof and dangerous electrics. Even where the home would fail the decent homes standard as a result of the repair needed, it is a time consuming and administratively intensive procedure to put a full charge on the property to secure the loan. We are considering how the Housing Assistance Policy can be revised to include a Minor Works loan of up to £4,000 for these types of works which would be available to low income households.

We provide help with small works in partnership with In Touch through the Handyperson service. This offers direct assistance with minor, low cost jobs for householders who are over pension age or who are disabled. The householder is charged the cost of materials and a low labour charge of £5 per hour (free where people are in receipt of a means tested benefit). The service has recently been doubled to two handypersons using additional funding from the Government. The funding for the additional post, however, is not long term and we will need to consider other possible options, such as a different (but still affordable) charging regime, in the event that this is not renewed.

In Touch is currently trialling ways of extending the Handyperson approach to gardening and decorating through social enterprise schemes. If these prove successful and can be funded at low cost, we will work with the agency to promote the service. We will also explore ways of giving householders advice on repairs and home maintenance.

Home improvement agencies and handyperson services across Kent are shortly to have a full strategic review led by the main funder, Supporting People, to identify what should be delivered, best practice and potentially make changes to contracts. We will work in partnership as part of this review to ensure that the needs and interests of older people in our area are represented and acknowledged and the district continues to have an excellent service.

We are reviewing our grants and loans policy to improve accessibility to funding for low income older people.

We are working with In Touch to look at how the Handyperson service can be further expanded

We will explore ways to offer repairs and maintenance advice to householders

Safety and security in the home

Homes that offer good safety standards, for example eliminating trip hazards, will support healthy living into old age. People who are more vulnerable may also benefit from community alarms and the more specialist technology now available, including telecare and telehealth. Older people are also generally concerned about being vulnerable to crime, although they are less likely to be the victims of crime than younger people.

In Touch operates the Homesafe Handyperson service offering a service to vulnerable households who have been a victim of crime or are a potential target for crime. This

includes assessment of the security of the home and fitting a variety of security and safety products including window locks, door locks, spy holes, door chains, smoke alarms and fire proof letter boxes.

Visitors to the homes of older people are increasingly aware of the issues of falls and accidents in the home and the Primary Care Trust has run some falls prevention awareness training for some specialist agencies. The Handyperson service can carry out the, usually minor, works needed to make trip and other hazards safe. Housing-related support in people's own homes also improves falls prevention and health promotion, especially as older people living alone are more likely to suffer from accidents, mental health issues (particularly depressive illness) and poor physical health - often prompted by poor nutrition and failure to adhere to prescribed medication. Well trained support staff can apply a risk-based approach to identifying and addressing such issues. This is addressed more fully under the next section on advice and information.

We could improve the long term health of older people by working with our partners to make sure that everyone who is likely to visit older people in their own homes, across all tenures, is aware of falls prevention and has received the training to identify and address potential hazards.

Telecare provides support to people in their own homes with the help of community alarm and response services. Trained operators are alerted within seconds of an accident or emergency and are able to respond in the best way. It has already brought reassurance to hundreds of users who wish to be able to live in their own homes for as long as possible and who now have help available at a touch of a button, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is particularly helpful for people with dementia; allowing remote monitoring of the extra risks when someone is confused or forgetful. The Telecare project in Kent aims to improve people's quality of life by helping vulnerable people manage the risks of living in their own homes.

TeleHealth is aimed at people with long term chronic conditions, specifically chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic heart disease and type 2 diabetes. It is currently being piloted in Kent with 250 people using tried and tested equipment designed for this purpose which has an emphasis on ease of use. This enables people to measure their vital signs in their own home and send these through their home telephone to a community-based clinician who then monitors them much more frequently. This reduces hospital admissions and health crises and helps people to better understand and manage their condition and its impact on their daily lives.

We will work across council staff and with partners to raise awareness of the issues of safety and security in the home and to make referrals to agencies that can provide advice and practical assistance.

Ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.

Older people have confirmed that they need to be able to get comprehensive information and advice, as and when it is needed, and in a place they can easily get to (which may mean their own home). They also need to be able to trust the advice they get, especially financial advice, and for many this means they want the council or a respected voluntary agency to deliver this.

Housing and health related support services

Housing related support is currently available mainly to older people living in sheltered housing, where the sheltered housing worker works with the person to identify what their needs are and to support these to be met, including working with other agencies to arrange practical help and care, for example. There is no support service specifically for other older people in the Dover district, although more general support services will accept older people who are referred to them. However, few referrals are made for older people, possibly because those who may identify a support need are less aware of the service that could be provided or believe that existing services are for younger people.

The Supporting People (SP) programme, which funds these services, has identified that not all those living in sheltered housing need this support or need it on an ongoing basis. The revised SP strategy identifies a need to shift support from being tied to sheltered housing and offer it to older people living in their own home across any tenure. Although this will take time to achieve, and there are some funding constraints, this would substantially improve the provision of advice and information where people need support.

We will continue to work with the Supporting People programme to ensure that older people who would benefit from advice and support get access to this.

INVOKE (Independence through the Voluntary Action of Kent's Elders) is an East Kent multi-agency partnership project led by Kent County Council that supports the residents of Dover district to live independently in their communities. The project is funded through the Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPPs) and consists of three elements:

- Community Matron Support Workers who are accessible through the Community Matron Service and work with people who have long term conditions.
- Community Information and Liaison Assistants have produced an information directory of services available in Dover district³⁰. The service also offers activities that support independence and health.
- The Care Navigator Service visits people in their own home, exploring the range of solutions that will help to resolve needs.

This service had very low recognition at the consultation day and we will therefore work with the INVOKE project to improve its profile amongst council staff and partner agencies to ensure best use is made of these services.

Income maximisation and affording work in the home

There are concerns that older people's income will reduce over time as people reliant on manual and other lower paid work reach retirement age. We know that there are around 5,000 people in private housing who rely on pension credits; we are less clear about the numbers in social housing but we would expect a higher proportion in this tenure. Income is important to being able to afford the things people want to do and it also makes a big difference to health and well being through healthy eating, good levels of warmth and being able to afford to keep the home in a good condition. Deteriorating homes are a cause of isolation and depression because people with few resources to keep them looking good become ashamed of their home and reluctant to let anyone into it.

³⁰ See: www.shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/adult-Social-Services/invoke/dover-directory.pdf

A number of people raised the issue of being able to trust equity release schemes; most home owners knew that they have substantial equity locked into their home but were concerned about the reliability and safety of schemes to release it.

The Pensions service is very active in reaching out to older people to help them to claim means-tested and disability-related benefits. However, they cannot reach every older person and need to be directed to those most in need of advice. Specialist council and other agency staff are trained in benefit maximisation and budget management, and the CAB also offers debt advice, but again older people need to know where to go or be referred for the service.

We will work across the council and with partner agencies to identify older people who would benefit from income maximisation work to help older people to afford things that are important to them.

In terms of equity release, Dover District Council has a partnership with the Home Improvement Trust, which runs HouseProud (a not for profit advisory and intermediary service ensuring that a product is suitable for the needs of the individual older person) but this is virtually unknown to the older people to whom we spoke. Searches on Dover District Council's or Kent County Council's websites for 'equity release', 'home improvement trust' or 'houseproud' produce no relevant hits (except for advertisements carried on Dover's website which didn't include one for this service). Effectively this is a council-backed service that should therefore be trustworthy and meet the needs of those people who would otherwise be very cautious about making the most of the equity in their home.

We have already identified the need to review our grants and loans policy which will then help to meet the needs of older people on low incomes.

We will publicise the HouseProud service through In Touch and other agencies that come into contact with older people who may need to invest in their home.

Getting the help older people need, when they need it

Whilst we know that there is a host of advice and information available for older people, what people said is that they want this to be available in a joined-up and easily accessible way, and it needs to be timely. Most people (at any age) do not remember things that aren't relevant to their lives; so leaflets and magazine articles are binned unless they immediately strike a chord. We can improve the way that older people are directed to information and advice by exploring a single access route; working with partner agencies to use a directory to help with signposting. In relation to this we need to test out whether the government sponsored advice website and telephone helpline for older people 'FirstStop', which only recently launched, will provide what older people want. If this works well and provides sufficiently locally-tailored advice, we will develop our relationship with the providers, Counsel and Care, Elderly Accommodation Counsel, Age Concern and Help the Aged and NHFA (a funding advice agency) so that information is kept up to date and relevant to older people living in our area. We will also work with our partners to promote the service across the district.

We will work with older people to explore the relevance and usefulness of the FirstStop advice service for local people and provided it meets older people's requirements will develop and publicise this service across the Dover area.

5. Delivering our strategic priorities

We have identified three priorities for development that will help us to deliver our vision for older people in Dover district, both now and in the future. Our vision is that:

Older people across the Dover district live as independently as possible in homes that support good health and well being

Our priorities are:

1. New homes and neighbourhoods that meet the current and future needs of Dover's population and support independence
2. Help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living
3. Ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.

We now need to work to deliver these and to this end an action plan has been drafted that we will discuss with partner agencies to ensure that they can commit to the actions within it. The action plan looks forward for the first three years, as some activities and outcomes will require a longer timescale. All the activities require close working with older people themselves in order to ensure that we respond to changing needs and views of older people. The action plan should be considered to include this level of consultation in each activity.

Action plan for the Strategy for Older People in Dover District Council area

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
Priority 1: New homes and neighbourhoods that meet the current and future needs of Dover's population and support independence						
HSOP 1.1	New affordable homes include properties that older people want to occupy	All social rented and intermediate tenure new homes are built to Lifetime standards to specifically meet the needs of older people on our waiting list	See Affordable Housing Delivery Plan	Housing Initiatives Manager	Registered social landlords (RSLs) developers, funders (including the Homes and Communities Agency)	HCA grant funding
HSOP 1.2	An effective under-occupier scheme supports older people to move from family sized homes	An effective under-occupier scheme	Explore good practice elsewhere and assess this in the context of Dover – by Sept 2010. Draft out and consult older people to see whether it would be effective – by Dec 2010. If approved, run as a well-advertised pilot from April 2011. Assess and adjust and roll out final scheme by Oct 2012	Housing Needs Manager as Dover rep. with E. Kent group developing joint scheme	Other local authorities, VCS	Unclear at present – will need to be reviewed as the scheme is designed
HSOP 1.3	New market housing includes a proportion of homes that are attractive for older people and meet their needs	Two bedroom, ground floor, one level homes are built to lifetime standard and include small	TBA	Forward Planning Manager	Developers, funders	None

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
		gardens				
HSOP 1.4	Deliver sufficient new extra care units to meet needs and enable a sustainable community within schemes	180 units of extra care across Dover district	40 units by October 2011	Housing Initiatives Manager	Adult social care services, Primary Care Trust, Supporting People, RSLs, developers, funding agencies	Private Finance Initiative / HCA funding
HSOP 1.5	All regeneration areas should consider how a lifetime neighbourhood can be achieved as part of master planning and delivery plans	Lifetime neighbourhoods in all regeneration areas	Linked to regeneration delivery plans	Regeneration manager	Regeneration partners, wider communities	None outside regeneration funding
HSOP 1.6	Planned work across existing neighbourhoods are completed in such a way as to deliver lifetime neighbourhood elements	Lifetime neighbourhoods achieved across the district	TBA	Regeneration and Transport managers	Utility companies, commercial companies, highways and highways agency, wider communities	None outside mainstream funding
Priority 2: Help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living						
HSOP 2.1	Further target affordable warmth resources to reach those most at risk of cold homes and in fuel poverty	Homes occupied by older people achieve good levels of affordable warmth	Thorough and targeted publicity towards areas with high levels of energy loss and towards older people – by April 2011	Climate change officer	Warm Front	Identified in Private Sector housing action plan
HSOP 2.2	Carry out a fundamental review of adaptations for council tenants to remove	Prompt adaptations that enable people to remain independent	With social care and health partners, process map	Adaptations manager	Adults social care; PCT; customers (not	Likely to be substantial capital resources to remove the backlog –

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
	the long waiting time and meet needs as they arise		adaptations provision in council homes, looking for ways to reduce demand, improve delivery and assess ongoing resource requirement – by July 2010: resulting from this, amend the process to provide optimum deliver – by April 2011: work with partners to identify sufficient resources to remove the backlog and keep pace with demand – by April 2011		just older people); In Touch and other relevant VCS	to be assessed and reported
HSOP 2.3	Monitor needs for adaptations and delivery times in private sector housing to ensure that needs for adaptations continue to be met	Prompt adaptations that enable people to remain independent	Quarterly monitoring	Private Sector Manager	Occupational Therapy and related VCS agencies	None
HSOP 2.4	Review grants and loans policy to improve accessibility to funding for low income older people	Loans scheme provides funding for minor works in older people's homes	Review by April 2010	Private Sector Manager	None	None for review, may be call on resources for loans
HSOP 2.5	Identify how the Handyperson service can be expanded and secured	Long term secured funding for a wide variety of small	Review of the Handyperson scheme and its funding by	Private Sector Manager	In Touch, Supporting People, PCT,	None for review, may be call on resources dependant on

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
	in the longer term	works via the Handyperson scheme	April 2011. Confirmation of new scheme arrangements by June 2011		Adult social care	outcome of review
HSOP 2.6	Work to expand the availability of advice on repairs and maintenance	Older people have routes to improve the maintenance of their home	Identify good practice elsewhere to look for ideas and opportunities – December 2011	Private Sector Manager	Other local authorities, advice agencies	None for review, may be call on resources depending on findings
HSOP 2.7	Work across staff and partners to raise awareness of the issues of safety and security in the home and encourage referrals to agencies that can provide advice and practical assistance.	Older people are not placed at additional risk because of insecure or unsafe homes	Engage PCT and SP providers in this project - by April 2010 Agree a training programme and deliver to a wide range of staff across agencies – from October 2010 to April 2012	Supported housing manager?	PCT, SP, adult social care, VCS agencies,	None for engagement; may be some funding required to enable training to be delivered
HSOP 2.8	Explore joint working with the NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT on initiatives to enable older people to live independently and reduce the incidence of falls	Engage with PCT in a joined up strategic approach to develop initiatives that enable older people to live independently & safely	April 2010	Private Sector Manager/Housing Initiatives Manager	PCT	None for engagement
Priority 3: Ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.						
HSOP 3.1	Work with the Supporting People programme to expand the housing related	Older people across Dover district have access to housing-	TBA with SP	Supporting People with Supported	SP Commissioning Body, VCS,	None

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
	support to older people living outside sheltered housing	related support as and when a need is identified		housing manager	support providers,	
HSOP 3.2	Work with the INVOKE project to improve its profile amongst council staff and partner agencies to ensure best use is made of these services.	There is high recognition, and best use is made of the INVOKE project across council staff, partner agencies and older people	Engage INVOKE in the activity – by April 2010. Agree what needs to be done to achieve the outcome – by June 2010. Delivery of agreed actions – from July 2010 onwards	Supported housing manager	INVOKE, VCS partner agencies	None anticipated
HSOP 3.3	Ensure that older people and wider agencies are aware of reliable and responsible equity release schemes such as the HouseProud scheme	Older people have confidence in taking forward equity release to meet their requirements for maintaining and improving their home	Complete research into and evaluation of HouseProud and other schemes by October 2010. Council backing of HouseProud confirmed or other option agreed, by April 2011. Publicity to ensure that all agencies and older people have the relevant information completed by April 2012	Private Sector Manager	Equity release schemes, VCS,	None anticipated until later stages of the project
HSOP 3.4	Work with older people to explore the relevance and usefulness of the FirstStop advice service for local people and provided it	Older people receive comprehensive information and advice as and when they need it and with	Establish with older people how the FirstStop service can best be tested – by June 2010	Supported housing manager	VCS, older people (specifically as delivery partners), FirstStop	Resources to pay for expenses of older people engaged on the project

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
	meets older people's requirements will develop and publicise this service across the Dover district.	least inconvenience to them	Carry out testing to decide whether the service meets the needs of older people in Dover district, and evaluate – by April 2011. Agree way forward – by July 2012			

Annex 1. Report of a consultation event with older people and stakeholders Ageing Well in Dover, Friday, 23rd May 2008

This was a half day event with invitations issued to members of Dover's Senior Citizens' Forum and to a range of stakeholders (largely voluntary agencies from the district). Around 25 people attended in total and after short 'thought-prompting' presentations, the following topics were discussed within small groups.

Hot topics

What makes you hot under the collar?

- What are the main issues for you?
- What makes it a pleasure or a pain to live:
 - In your home?
 - In your neighbourhood?
- What ideas do you have to improve things?

Our homes

- What are the main issues:
 - Now?
 - In the future as you get older?
- How do you expect to deal with those issues?
- What help, advice or assistance would make a difference to how you deal with things?
- Any ideas to improve how people manage in their home?

Our neighbourhoods

- What are the main issues – now and as we get older?
- What makes a neighbourhood 'liveable'?
 - Good for older people to live in
 - Practical to live in
- What do we want to see changed for the better?
- Any practical suggestions?

New homes and 'specialist' housing

- What would motivate you to move?
 - A positive choice or only if you had to?
- What sort of home would you want?
 - New home design – messages for planners?
 - Specialist housing – of interest to you?
- What sort of area would you look for?
 - New or more settled communities
 - Rural or town
 - Lively or quiet
 - Mixed generations or all older people

Facilitators took notes and these have been brought together into the following record of the discussions on the day.

A. Housing and Neighbourhoods - hot topics

Money and finances

1. Council tax bears no relationship to services in any particular village
2. Local income tax would be better way of paying for local services

3. Pensions are really important - should be getting advice out to 30-40 year olds!

Getting around

4. Transport is a really hot topic!
5. Lack of buses; no point in having a free bus pass if there are no buses to catch! For example, people drive from Shepherdswell to Lyden to catch the bus because the service from Shepherdswell is so poor (2 buses a day).
6. Free bus passes are really helpful but you can't use them on trains
7. No direct public transport to the hospital
8. No public transport in rural areas generally and particularly on Sundays
9. Road network - it's hard to get from north to south
10. Poor access to shops, particularly steps – both local and national retailers are aware of their obligations, and some have made provision for better access at the rear of their properties. But some, e.g. Dolland & Aitchison, show a shocking disregard for the law! Apparently, Gwyn Prosser Labour MP for Dover & Deal has campaigned on the issue.

Leisure

11. Quite well provided in local rural community
 - Twinning association
 - WI
 - Quiz nights in community hall
12. Rural communities are relatively well off for pastimes that the community organises itself
13. Luncheon clubs - Age Concern bus people in. The socialising (reducing isolation) is more of an issue than the food (i.e. the lunch) itself.
14. Older people tend to more reserved
15. Church-based communities can provide greater social capital

Community and neighbourhoods

16. Communities suffering from loss of post offices etc.
17. Need caring neighbourhoods and neighbours
18. Concerns about decanting people into areas where they don't know the neighbours;
19. Post office closures are a real problem
20. Villages have a stronger local identity
21. It's good to have a post office and decent local shop - do main shop at Tesco's but they've withdrawn the free bus they used to run.
22. Out of town shopping just isn't convenient
23. Dover DC is a good council
24. Isolation is a really big issue - many people don't know their neighbours any more. Turnover of neighbours because of short term lets makes it even more difficult
25. There is little help to overcome isolation. Vicars used to visit people at home but can't now they cover more than one parish and as communities grow

Security and crime

26. Vandalism is a real problem - plagued by hordes of youths and feel threatened. If we stand up to them, we get persecuted even more.
27. Systematic theft of lead flashings.
28. Community Wardens have been really good.
29. Local policing issues - PCSOs are '9 to 5'

30. Need to feel secure - not just locks on a door - neighbourhoods need to be safe
31. Perception is the main issue with crime
32. Town in the evenings - over-reliance on CCTV cameras instead of much-needed police presence
33. Poor street lighting is problematic
34. Older people are frightened of groups of younger people

Our homes

35. Home owners get no help with repairs (or do they?) although handyvans are very good
36. Length of wait for adaptations
37. People want to stay in their own place - their own home!
38. It's ridiculous to split up couples when they have to go into care homes
39. It's very difficult to find good residential care when it's needed. There is a lack of good information
40. Need a selection of different accommodation within a reasonable area
41. Security is an issue once you move away from your own home
42. Limited numbers of smaller homes in villages and all new homes seem to be going into urban areas. People don't want to leave their village as they grow older but nowhere to move to when home or garden gets too much

Health

43. They are talking about closing down A&E in Dover - but we need a hospital in Dover. It's a long way to Ashford or Canterbury and there are big transport issues too.
44. Need a major hospital in Dover or Folkestone
45. Parking problems at the hospitals.
46. Access to services - transport issues and exorbitant parking fees for people attending hospital
47. Local GP has a new health centre (White Cliffs) and provides van transport - really good
48. Older people now are so much younger than the previous generation - 70 is young now!
49. Well man/woman clinics are important

Advice and assistance

50. Concerns about communicating with the disabled and elderly, particularly those that are in rural areas or that don't get out much (either by choice or infirmity);
51. Withdrawal of service provided by Careline – some customers thought the service was being withdrawn altogether.
52. Concerns about national organisations such as Bluebird (a domiciliary care company) 'mis-selling' (e.g. scaring the customer into buying) products that customers don't need
53. Over-reliance on the internet to get advice to people - it's expensive to buy a computer and pay for broadband
54. People avoid social services - bad image (old 'workhouse' hangover - might get put in a home)
55. People are not well aware of the equipment and adaptations for disabilities that can help them stay in their home
56. Like the idea of CILAs [Community Information and Liaison Assistant - part of the INVOKE project]

Suggestions (note, where relevant some of these have been copied into topic headings lower down)

Travel

- *Introduce concessionary (i.e. nominal) fare for local travel on train*
- *Post van could maybe double up as public transport*
- *Be able to use free bus passes before 9.30*
- *Need more spaces at hospitals - Ashford (William Harvey) or Canterbury*
- *Free passports for older people*
- *Dial-a-ride is better*

Community and Neighbourhoods

- *Need to do more for younger people to distract them from vandalism (though we note that sometimes older people object to plans to help younger people)*
- *Need more social life - clubs, events, fun days*

Our homes

- *More information about help with home repairs for owner occupiers*
- *Need to put out more information about equipment and adaptations/modifications to cope with ageing and disabilities*
- *Need more supported and sheltered housing so that people can grow old in communities that they know and feel comfortable in.*
- *Stop people expanding smaller homes in villages into family-sized homes so there is somewhere to move to as you get older but want to retain your community*

Advice and assistance

- *Need a range of information - not just the internet e.g.:*
 - *via notices in community and Parish halls*
 - *parish and community magazines - the one thing people are likely to look through because it's local*
 - *villages have a local correspondent for the Dover Express - should try to make use of them*
 - *Simpler leaflets - most are too detailed. Just want a simple message*
 - *Information people in community halls to give better access to advice and information*
 - *Decent access to advice over the phone*
- *Needs to be more regulation against mis-selling; especially to older, more vulnerable people*
- *Social services need to update their image!*
- *Needs to be help with financial issues, e.g. equity release schemes*
- *Advertise help with insulation and heating more widely - especially as bills rise*

B. Our Homes

Money issues

1. People above poverty line but not wealthy often need financial help as they don't have enough money to meet all the demands of home maintenance/garden etc.
2. As a pensioner may end up with enough money for 'needs', but insufficient for 'wants'
3. Difficult to release equity in home - too many bad stories about untrustworthy schemes.
4. Equity release is easier to organise if you are well and able - more difficult if you are more vulnerable or don't have access to internet etc.

Inside

5. DFGs – waiting times are too long; alternative is to use SAAFA and they offer help throughout the process. Particular concerns about bathrooms, stair lifts (because people don't stay long)
6. People know about adaptations but it can be a real hassle to get them sorted out
7. Lots of Victorian terraced housing with steep stairs and stair lifts are expensive (though point made that climbing stairs also keeps you fit!)
8. Need to have walk in showers rather than baths
9. Cleaning, painting and window cleaning are all issues that people can find difficult or impossible - and hard to find help with
10. Changing net curtains is a big issue for older generation of older people - face presented to outside world
11. Simple things like being able to re-set own fuse trip switches - impossible if above head height or awkward places (often are) - designers don't think about things like that
12. Careline services currently 'free' to Council tenants – big debate about whether this is in fact the case (wider community believe that they are) and whether they should be, e.g., non-Council tenants have to pay.
13. Handyvan/handyman schemes are good (including security issues)
14. Can secure homes from the inside but that makes emergency access difficult - but a constant worry about burglary
15. People don't realise how decayed their home is getting unless they have visitors who can point it out to them. If you have few visitors, there's nobody to prompt you on things
16. Insulation issues - not everyone realises how effectively insulation can cut down bills

Outside

17. Maintenance of large gardens - contractors can be expensive and provide poor service
18. Letting the garden go often isn't an option for people who are proud - rather let the inside go than their 'public face'
19. Difficult to get reliable and affordable help with gardens
20. Volunteer Bureau does gardening help
21. Help the Aged Handyvan is excellent but most handyvan services are for inside jobs

Advice and assistance

22. CAB is fabulous - really helpful!
23. INVOKE project is brilliant [but needs guarantee that it will continue]
24. Coastal guide was good but quickly became out of date and only partial guide.
25. Information - need to know where to go for help, e.g. DISC, CROP CARENAVIGATOR;
26. Deal Centre for the Retired is a good model
27. Age Concern does lots of really good things but not everybody knows about the variety of services and interests
28. Some people feel left out in the internet age - it isn't only email addresses but access to phone numbers too.
29. Difficult to know which broadband scheme is the best - confusing deals, how do you know you're not being ripped off?

30. Example of Smarden (Ashford area) - village 'workforce' voluntary group. Tends to be younger old people only; not younger people from the community
31. Need decent advice on equity release - can use money to pay for adaptations, maintenance and upgrading etc. but only if can rely on the product

Suggestions

Outside

- *DDC to set up and run an approved gardening scheme comprised of approved contractors;*
- *Garden maintenance is a big growth area - to keep lawn cut and plants under control - Economic Development should be interested as a new business idea*
- *Encourage people to plan ahead and develop low maintenance gardens.*

Inside

- *Encourage people to invest when they can afford it - to think ahead if they want to stay put*
- *Show how people can release equity from their homes to get essential and desirable work - plenty of choice on the market*
- *More information about help with home repairs for owner occupiers*
- *Need to put out more information about equipment and adaptations/modifications to cope with ageing and disabilities, insulation and heating grants and assistance*

Advice and assistance

- *Update coastal guide*
- *Make better use of GP surgeries [although there are so many leaflets it's hard to find what you want without guidance]*
- *Need more help to fill in the confusing forms of the different agencies (particularly Housing Benefit)*
- *Free broadband for everyone!*
- *If anything goes wrong, have one number to call for advice who deal with your problem; available in emergencies. In East Kent, that's what INVOKE can do*
- *Reliable equity release scheme - people trust councils, for example*
- *Take a community development approach to involving people in social activities to decrease isolation - no good just telling people what's going on, need volunteers to talk to people, find out what they like and arrange for someone to go with them at least the first time - feel welcome and not intimidated!*

A future vision?

- *everybody gets the chance to have an assessment at 50+ and upon request via a central agency that acts as a one stop shop for all the different agencies;*
- *update the Coastal guide;*
- *introduce a token system;*
- *Make better use of European funding to introduce/ make improvements to intelligent housing via pressure mats, services delivered via TV etc.*

C. Our neighbourhoods

1. Ideal neighbourhoods:

- i. Should be able to walk to local food shop (e.g. Co-op), Post office, leisure facilities (e.g. village hall)
- ii. Flatter areas - not too hilly!
- iii. Decent pavements
- iv. A bus service
- v. Green, pleasant environment with no graffiti!
- vi. A safe environment
- vii. Good street lighting
- viii. Somewhere to meet friends or new people
- ix. A local food shop (but note that price can be an issue - pay for convenience) - including able to get stamps, weigh parcels (now there are no post offices)
- x. A farmer's market or similar - somewhere for local people to gather and meet
- xi. Good neighbours
- xii. Mixed communities and generations comprised of young and old to share experiences etc. (however, need to manage communication and expectation)
- xiii. Mixed tenures - too much private housing is leading to 'class' estates
- xiv. Access to health care - e.g. a visiting health clinic in smaller villages - doing check-ups, chiropody.

Security, fear of crime

- 2. I wouldn't go out at night unless I was being picked up and 'escorted'
- 3. At bingo club, the numbers drop in the winter because of the dark nights.
- 4. PCSO and Community Wardens are great - and means there's someone to contact
- 5. Neighbourhood Watch can be good
- 6. Buckland - good results with PCSOs but people have to understand what they can do, e.g. they go and see people
- 7. PCSOs have a 'public relations' job - perhaps like community support but not policing
- 8. Police aren't always responsive - on other hand, some areas have bigger problems than others
- 9. Anti-social behaviour problems destroy communities and neighbourhoods
- 10. Private landlords are often poor at sorting out tenants who cause neighbour nuisance - just want the money not the hassle
- 11. Trouble in the streets and noisy groups enhances fear of crime

Getting around

- 12. Lack of pavements can be dangerous
- 13. Car drivers parking up kerbs and on pavements and wheelchairs can't get through.
- 14. Cyclists treat pavement like 'their' road
- 15. Traffic is a big worry - busy roads and difficult to cross
- 16. We think that more people would use buses now that's there's the free pass

Public areas

- 17. Impact of superstores has led to closure of local stores; not everyone can get to the superstores
- 18. Litter on Sundays from takeaway food places (and the food is terrible!)
- 19. Perception of an area is the most important thing - things that bring the area down are litter, dereliction, dumped goods, - all show lack of respect for an area and encourage others to behave the same way

Community issues

20. Need to arrest decline of volunteers – increasing number of 50+ still at work, can't get there or have moved to Spain! CRB assessments have important role but too complicated and too slow
21. Buckland Community Centre is wonderful for community cohesion - daily events.
22. Lunch clubs can be clique-y - fear of sitting in someone's chair!
23. Need more 'joiners in' - community champions - is there a class issue? The same people always get involved.... Can't force people though.
24. 'Community Days' might prompt voluntary work but champions from the community are needed. Also need a community building - a hub like a school, church, community centre to make it happen
25. Why don't some people come to community events? Inward-looking people. Perhaps too scared to come along for first time though?
26. It's important to get community events - organised by volunteers, which should be the parish council's role.
27. Difficult to know whether growing areas mean good or bad for older people - can be fewer people you know and more problems but also often means more community facilities.
28. Need to learn to live with younger people - things like graffiti walls and youth groups to get people away from nuisance. Older people often have good ideas for diverting young people.

Suggestions

- *Learn lessons from France – slower pace of life; Nationalistic, community based economy and family orientated;*
- *Need to do more for younger people to distract them from vandalism (though we note that sometimes older people object to plans to help younger people)*
- *Should tap into older people's ideas (through community meetings or whatever) to bring areas up, divert youth problems etc. Use talents of older generations more.*
- *Use sporting activities to encourage interaction between young and old e.g. snooker*
- *Improve CRB checks - more simple, quicker, to improve flow of volunteers.*
- *Need more schemes where voluntary drivers will pick you up if you phone*
- *Need more social life - clubs, events, fun days*
- *Fund community groups to provide local people/volunteers to provide local services e.g., horticultural societies to upkeep local villages*
- *Encourage post office to diversify activities e.g. dry cleaning, etc to keep them open*
- *Need more affordable housing to allow young people to live where they grew up;*
- *More or bigger litter bins*
- *Why can't GP surgeries pool their resources and pay for 75+ check-ups for the village at one 'sitting', flu jabs etc. on a more local basis? Means people won't have to travel to surgery and more likely to keep their health under review too.*

D. Moving home and design of new homes

1. Generally, older people don't want to move, but may be forced to, due to physical, financial or health reasons;
2. It is best to move when you're 50 or so - gives you time to settle into community and feel established

3. However, few people predict the need to move - like most people's attitudes about distasteful things, it will never happen (till it does - and then it's too late!)
4. Not always a good idea to move closer to sons and daughters who may not have time.
5. Retirement apartments in Shepherdswell? Yes please!
6. Sheltered housing is good if you already live locally but it isn't so good for people who have to move some distance to it - need to keep sense of family and friends and community, especially when younger people move away
7. If you have to move, it can be good to move somewhere with people of around the same age as more likely to have common interests and way of life
8. Older people don't want to lose their support network; but staying in a village, which may be preference, becomes difficult when you can no longer drive
9. Nice homes in a nice neighbourhood partly makes up for having to move away from a village to get access to amenities
10. Affordable housing seems to be bought by affluent people e.g. part ownership housing that can't be sold is being put onto the market for 100% sale.
11. Equity locked into homes - issue for downsizing to release some equity. Shared ownership is a useful model if you can afford the rent
12. For affordable homes for local people - suggestion that the Jersey model be adopted to be run by Parish Councils: top 10% can buy in, but rest have to qualify by working and living in area over time, etc
13. Need more supported and sheltered housing so that people can grow old in communities that they know and feel comfortable in.
14. Stop people expanding smaller homes in villages into family-sized homes so there is somewhere to move to as you get older but want to retain your community
15. Design issues:
 - a. *Lifetime homes standards - all new homes need to be that basic standard so that people have full choice of where to live (not just a token gesture in a few new homes)*
 - b. *Certainly need two bedrooms - absolute minimum especially now families don't live near.*
 - c. *Two bed bungalows are the most popular choice and more availability may persuade more people to move and release large family homes*
 - d. *If building flats, having a communal garden is important plus security of the block and preferably a community space. No more than three stories with two lifts, not just one.*
 - e. *Electrical fuse boards should be easy to reach*
 - f. *Big, deep drawers in new kitchens instead of lots of cupboard space makes storage easier to reach and less likely to fall trying to get to things*
16. Important themes:
 - a. *Social networks*
 - b. *Mixed generations*
 - c. *Specialist housing would be attractive if it was in the right place (good local amenities, close to where we lived before) - with support and a handy person available*
 - d. *Need financial advice about selling or renting options. Worried about money running out if renting.*
 - e. *Unfair to have to sell home to pay for care, if needed.*

- f. *Want absolute choice of area, design, when to move and what to move to - choices shouldn't be limited because someone is pigeon-holed as 'old'*
- g. *Choice is the most important thing!*

Individual stories from attendees

We planned ahead and moved 20/25 years ago! If we were forced to move again, we'd want to be in a town where all facilities are close to hand, no need to drive/catch bus, etc. Ideal place, if we could afford it, would be in an adapted bungalow in Canterbury or a ground floor flat.

We moved in our fifties into a bungalow in the same village where we had our social connections and daughter and grandson. We know that we won't be able to manage the garden eventually. The village has doctors (who also run a mini-bus) and a decent shop. We've also got a mobile library - but it's not there long enough!

I'd want to move somewhere flat, near to doctors and would therefore want to move into town because of facilities. Eventually I'll have to move because I live on a steep hill.

I'd want to be in a town with lots going on that is walkable to. Perhaps abroad! Or Canterbury (it's a small city and you can walk around easily)

I would hate to move, but will have to eventually as I live on a steep hill with steep steps. I'd like to live in River because of my social networks, shops, Post office, good transport into town - but I couldn't afford it! Anyway - somewhere on the flat and in a bungalow.

I've lived in my house 50 years and don't want to move but I don't need 3 bedrooms and I've got steep stairs. Otherwise it's good - on the flat, good neighbours - I like everything about it

I wouldn't want to move unless I had to for accessibility reasons. I'd want easy access to facilities.

We've just invested a lot of money (through equity release) in our home to make sure it is fit for the next 30 years. If I had to move I'd want to stay in a village - I don't want to move to a town. I'd want complete choice of how, when, where, what to move to - and its design if a new build place. We have just spent quite a bit on having our home upgraded so we don't have to spend lots of money on it over the next 30 years as we get older.

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
<p>All¹</p> <p>Refers to AHDP but impacts on OPHS</p>	<p>Walmer Parish Council [walmerparish@btconnect.com]</p>	<p>1. Objection</p> <p>2. Observation</p>	<p>(a) No need for these strategy documents when such issues have already been addressed in the Local Development Framework.</p> <p>(ii) greater provision should be made for the production of suitable retirement accommodation, such as bungalows and warden-assisted units, which would 'free up' family homes</p>	<p>Members would like to make the following representations in relation to the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015; the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015:</p> <p>(i) Members would like to query the following issues:-</p> <p>(a) the necessity for production of these strategy documents when such issues have already been addressed in the Local Development Framework.</p> <p>(ii) Members consider that greater provision should be made for the production of suitable retirement accommodation, such as bungalows and warden-assisted units, the occupancy of which would naturally lead to family homes becoming available.</p>	<p>The Local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities to prepare a Housing Strategy and these are key underpinning strategies which provide a more detailed analysis of issues and set out specific actions to address them. No amendment required</p> <p>Both the Older persons Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing Delivery Plan recognise the need to provide a range of housing that will meet the needs and aspirations of older people. Extra care provision is specially referred to and the action plan within the OPHS includes a set of</p>

¹ Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015; the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
					actions related to new homes provision and the added benefit of releasing family homes. The need for 'traditional' sheltered housing has been assessed and is not considered to be an appropriate model for future provision. No amendment required
OPHS	ADB	3.Observation	Clarify terminology ⇨	'Dover' v 'Dover District' Population	
OPHS	Langdon Parish Council Hyde167@btinternet.com Jannine Hyde	4.Observation 5.Observation	Needs to be an improvement in out-reach services to support the growing older population There could be more small-scale sheltered housing developments to meet the need	People are living longer and often like to stay in their rural location where their family and friend surround them. Unfortunately many small rural communities have few local health and welfare care facilities. Attending a health centre or hospital often involves difficult and infrequent travel services which older people find stressful. If the strategy is to encourage older people to remain in their own homes and live relatively independent lives then there will need to be an improvement in out-reach services to support the growing older population. This should include flexible travel services. Where older people are unable to live totally independently but wish to remain in their village, There could be more small-scale sheltered housing developments to meet the need	We acknowledge and appreciate this issue, but as this strategy is focused on housing, this needs to be picked up in health and care strategies around our ageing population, and in any transport plans. No amendment required The need to consider the provision of specially designed housing to meet the

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
					needs of older people on appropriate sites is accepted but as stated above 'traditional' sheltered housing is not considered to be an appropriate model for future provision. No amendment required
OPHS	Councillor	6.Observation	More detail regarding the issue of dementia	There is a need for a more detailed reference to the issue of dementia and how this problem needs to be addressed now and in the future	The significance of this issue is accepted and the Strategy has been amended accordingly. Strategy amended.
The following comments arrived after the deadline expired for papers to be submitted to CMT (Lunchtime, 26.3.10)					
All	Cllr Keith Gowland Sarahgowland01@aol.com	7 Support	I agree with the aims and objectives set out		
All		8 Observation	My main concerns are cost, funding and deliverability and in the case of the AHDP especially the funding		
All		9 Observation	Answers to points 1-4 are in the yes, although all three strategies/ plan must be governed by an aggressive skills upgrade and employment led strategy as per the LDF Core Strategy		
All	The Deal	10 Support	We Welcome and affirm		

Strategy/ Item	Respon- dent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
OPHS	Society Robin.green220@o2.co.uk	11 Observati on 12 Support	the links between the housing strategy and the demographics in the Local Development Strategy At several points in the documents it is not clear whether Dover District or Dover Town is being referred to. We endorse the principles being pursued here especially in relation to increasing independent living for older people		This will be clarified and Plan amended as necessary.
OPHS OPHS	NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Helen.Miller@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk	13 Support 14 Support	A comprehensive strategy which clearly shows a good understanding of the housing issues for this sector of the population. The main aim of the strategy compliments NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent's objectives to keep older people living as independently as possible in homes that support good health and		

Strategy/ Item	Respon- dent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
OPHS		15 Support	well being.		
OPHS		16 Support	<p>The strategy clearly underlines the importance of the links between health and housing and provides a platform for joint working which we welcome.</p>		
		17 Recommendation	<p>Although the vision appears ambitious the intentions set out with respect to building standards, warm homes and information we feel are realistic.</p> <p>To use Health Impact Assessments on a regular basis to reduce any negative impacts of the implementation of this delivery plan</p>		<p>We are currently working with the PCT on a possible Health Impact Assessment of the new Housing Strategy which includes the actions set out in this sub strategy. No amendment required</p>
		18 Recommendation	<p>To align NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent's Strategic Delivery Plan (SDP) with the District plans to facilitate future opportunities for closer collaborative working</p>		<p>We will arrange discussions with the PCT to explore how we can work with them to deliver their recommendations. This has been added to the Strategy Action Plan (HSOP2.8). Plan</p>

Strategy/ Item	Respon- dent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		19 Recommend ation			amended
		20 Recommend ation	To consider how health and housing can work closer together to enable older people to live as independently as possible as set out in this strategy		Acknowledged. Recommendations 19 & 20 are addressed by a new action HSOP 2.8. Plan amended
		21 Recommend ation	To link with Health on Falls Prevention as is particularly relevant to the age profile of the local population. Where measures to reduce the number of older people under-occupying social housing are taken ensure that suitable practical support for the older people is provided during the transition phase.		We are aware that this can be key to successful under-occupation schemes and we will ensure that it is considered as part of the under-occupation project being developed in partnership with other East Kent local authority partners. No amendment required

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

RESPONSIBILITY – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND YOUTH

KEY DECISION

BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC HOUSING COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE – 12 APRIL 2010

DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2015

Recommendation

1. *That the Strategic Housing Executive approves the draft Housing Strategy 2010-2015, attached at Appendix A, for further public consultation.*
2. *That following consultation an analysis of all comments is to be reported to the Strategic Housing Executive together with an amended final strategy document for approval prior to submission to Council.*

Contact Officer: Paul Whitfield, extension 2258.

Reasons why a decision is required

1. The Local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities to prepare a housing strategy. The previous Housing Strategy 2004-2009 has expired and consequently a new strategy needs to be prepared and a draft approved so that it can be made available for wider consultation.

Options available to the Council with assessment of preferred option

2.
 - (a) To approve the draft Housing Strategy to enable public consultation to commence.
 - (b) To make amendments to the draft Housing Strategy before undertaking consultation.
 - (c) To reject the draft Housing Strategy.

Information to be considered in taking the decision

3. The Local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities to prepare a Housing Strategy. It has to be “high level” and concise (guidance indicates no more than 30 pages). A Housing Strategy should also cover a three to five year time period and should fit with the Government’s National and Regional Housing and Planning Policies.
4. In 2005 the Council submitted its Housing Strategy to the Government Office for the South East (GOSE). The Strategy covered the period 2005-2009 and GOSE approved it as being “fit for purpose”.
5. The Housing Strategy has now expired and needs to be renewed. Housing strategies are no longer assessed against the “fit for purpose” criteria giving local authorities greater flexibility over format and allowing for their inclusion (where possible) in local Sustainable Communities Strategies. Publication of the East Kent Sustainable

6. The new Strategy needs to reflect changes in strategic context, address the key housing issues in the district and show clear links to the suite of housing sub strategies that have been developed and other key corporate and county wide strategies.
7. The draft Strategy presented with this report identifies key priorities and objectives and shows the strategic links. It is supported by an action plan which is predominantly an amalgamation of the actions set out in the sub strategies but includes a small number of new actions linked to the analysis of key issues in Appendix B.
8. The housing priorities set out in the draft Strategy are:
 1. Delivering housing growth in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives.
 2. Delivering more affordable homes to ensure we meet the housing needs of the whole community.
 3. Improving the condition of the existing housing stock and making better use of it.
 4. Addressing social and health inequality and enabling vulnerable people to access good quality housing and to live independently.
9. The Strategy appendices provide a summary of the wider strategic context within which it has been developed as well as the key housing issues the Council needs to address. Web links are provided to the sub strategies and other supporting documents which provide even more detailed analysis of many of the issues.
10. The various underpinning and supporting strategies have been subject to extensive consultation and, if approved, the draft Housing Strategy will also be subject to a twelve week public consultation process.

Background Papers

None

Resource Implications

Requirement from Current Budget	Requirement for Additional Budget	
	Current Year	Full Year
None	None	None

Communication Statement

An activity brief has been completed and a member of Corporate Communication Group notified.

Significant stakeholder and wider public consultation has already been undertaken in relation to the development of the supporting sub strategies and other key supporting documents.

Specific consultation meetings have been held with representatives of young people and BME households.

It is intended the draft Strategy will be subject to the normal 12 week public consultation process.

Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks

The Corporate Plan includes objectives to provide enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households and to provide the right numbers and choice of housing to support economic growth as well as meeting the needs of the community.

Customer Access Review

The Housing Strategy is a high level document informed by a range of other sub strategies and key corporate documents all of which have been subject to a CAR screening process.

The consolidated action plan within the Strategy contains a number of actions that are related to the equality strands and it is these actions that will form the basis of the CAR action plan.

The CAR action plan will therefore be monitored in accordance with the monitoring arrangements for Housing Strategy action plan as a whole.

Comments from Equalities Officer

This overarching strategy is informed by other specific strategies. An action plan has been developed through individual CARs and consultations, which will monitor delivery of these strategies including reporting on Equality issues. Actions are being monitored by the housing section and outcomes will be reported to the Equality Officer for inclusion in CAR and Equalities outcome reporting.

Attachments

Appendix A: Consultation draft Housing Strategy 2010-2015

CHRISTINE WATERMAN

Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety

DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2015

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FORWARD BY DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL & PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMY AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Council recognises that access to good quality housing which people can afford is at the heart of achieving the social and economic well-being of communities. Its Housing Strategy should therefore identify the key housing issues that matter most and set objectives for the Council and its partners to achieve which will make a real difference to local people.

Our current strategy was written to cover the period 2005-2009 and set out a number of priorities with related actions. We have successfully delivered many of the actions that were originally identified and many of the housing issues we now need to address are the same. However, the context within which we need to plan for the future has changed at the national, regional and local level.

In February 2009 the Council adopted the Local Development Framework Core Strategy which had been approved by the Government's Planning Inspector following its Examination in Public. This key document sets out the Council's 'big picture' development objectives for the District as a place to live, work, relax and visit. An assessment of the current housing market and future need for housing in relation to regeneration objectives, economic growth and associated population growth is a key element of the Strategy. The Strategy provides a rationale for a 'high growth' policy in relation to housing with an overall target of 14,000 new homes, 10,100 of which are to be delivered by the end of 2026 in accordance with the requirements of the South East Plan.

In addition to setting a broad target for housing growth the Core Strategy considers where housing should be provided, the need for different types of home to help balance local housing markets, the need for affordable and housing quality and sustainability in terms of design and construction.

We therefore recognise that the Housing Strategy must reflect the key strategic aims of the Council as a whole and support the objectives of all parts of the Council as well as addressing local housing needs. Equally, we understand that delivering the Strategy will require strong partnership working with a wide range of different partners.

The Strategy identifies key priorities and broad objectives which reflect the Council's corporate goals and delivery of the Strategy will be via a range of specific actions. Many of these originate from work undertaken in preparation of the suite of housing sub strategies and are set out in a single, consolidated action plan.

Councillor Frederick Scales

Deputy Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Economy and Special Projects

1. STRATEGIC CHANGES SINCE 2005

There have been a number of key developments since 2005 in terms of strategy and policy at the national, regional and local levels.

National

Key publications include:

- **Homes for the future (2007):** more affordable, more sustainable (Housing Green Paper on increasing the supply of new homes with a strong emphasis on providing more affordable homes).
- **Sustainable communities (2005):** settled homes; changing lives (national strategy on dealing with homelessness).
- **Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (2008):** (the national Strategy for housing in an ageing society).
- **Creating strong, safe, prosperous communities (2008):** (statutory guidance on the central and local government, partners and citizens working together through Local Strategic Partnerships, delivery of Sustainable Community Strategies, etc).

Regional & Sub Regional

Strategic direction for the region and sub-region has been set out in the following:

- **South East Plan 2006-2026:** identifies housing growth targets for local housing authorities across the region.
- **Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11:** strong emphasis on the delivery of affordable homes.
- **Vision for Kent 2006:** the sustainable community strategy for Kent developed by the Local Strategic Partnership delivered through the **Kent Local Area Agreement** targets (recognises the need for regeneration in coastal towns, delivering a range of high quality new homes and improving the condition of homes across all sectors)
- **Lighting the Way to Success 2009:** the sustainable community strategy for East Kent (focus on regeneration, access to quality housing, building strong communities and tackling health and social disadvantage).
- **Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015:** new strategy at final draft stage which sets out commissioning priorities for housing related support services designed to help vulnerable people live independently
- **Homes & Communities Agency - Single Conversation:** this is the new sub-regional investment planning process which will lead to the development of a local investment plan identifying priorities for investment in housing, regeneration and associated infrastructure. Work on this is currently in progress.

Local

Key local strategic documents include:

- **Dover District Council Corporate Plan 2008-2020:** the Plan places strong emphasis on economic development, regeneration and building safe, sustainable and inclusive communities. Specific housing priorities and targets include the provision of 'a wide range of good quality and accessible housing that meets the needs of the whole community', improving the existing housing stock and meeting the housing needs of vulnerable households.
- **LDF Core Strategy:** recently approved by the government's planning inspector and adopted by the Council this is the key local development strategy which sets a course for development and regeneration that will shape the district over the next twenty years including a key housing growth objective of 14,000 new homes.
- **East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009:** a robust assessment of the need for affordable and market housing of different types across East Kent with an analysis of the need within the four main local housing market areas in the District. A key finding is the very significant need for more affordable homes.

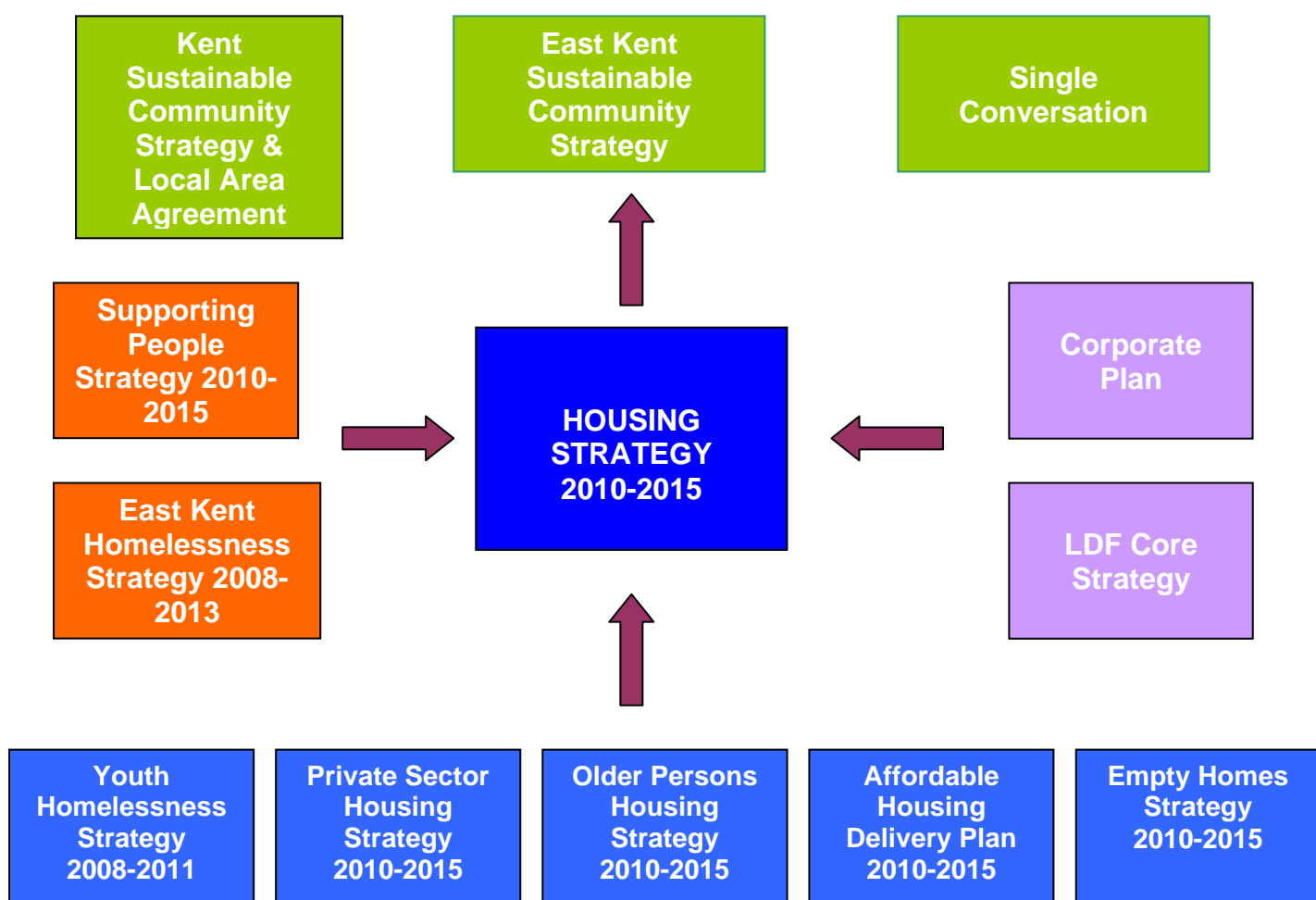
In addition to the housing growth and regeneration objectives set out in these strategies, the district has also been awarded 'Growth Point' and 'Regional Hub' status.

Growth Point status was awarded by government in recognition of the Council's commitment to delivering higher rates of new housebuilding. In return, the government provides funding for related infrastructure projects and essential studies to support sustainable growth.

Regional (Transport) Hub status has been conferred by the South East Regional Assembly and prioritises the district for transport and related infrastructure investment in support of planned sustainable development and regeneration.

Appendix B provides a more detailed summary of the above documents.

2. STRATEGIC LINKS



3. KEY ISSUES

As well as developing a Strategy which reflects the strategy and policy changes above there are a number of key housing issues which the Council will need to address over the next five years:

- Delivering overall housing growth to support regeneration and economic development objectives within safe, sustainable and inclusive new communities.
- Meeting the need for affordable housing.
- Delivering good quality market housing and affordable housing at a time when the future direction of the economy, housing market and public investment remains uncertain.
- Improving the particularly poor housing conditions in the private sector (especially Dover town) and tackling fuel poverty.
- Responding to the climate change agenda.
- Making best use of the housing stock including bringing empty homes back into use.
- Addressing the housing needs of a growing population of older households. By 2026, it is expected that those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%.
- Addressing housing causes of social and health inequality and ensuring that vulnerable people are able to access good quality housing and housing services.
- Continuing to address the problem of homelessness and especially youth homelessness.

More detailed consideration of these issues can be found in Appendix B.

In response to these issues the Council has developed a suite of sub strategies which consider these in greater detail and set out proposed actions to address the issues. A number of these are currently being consulted on. Details of the strategies, together with their web link, are as follows:

- East Kent Homelessness Strategy 2008-2015
- Youth Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/Youth%20Homelessness%20strategy.pdf>
- Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/Empty%20Homes%20Strategy%20-%20DRAFT.pdf>
- Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 (consultation draft)
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Dover%20Draft%20PSHS%20Consultation%20Draft%20final.doc>
- Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015 (consultation draft)
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Consultation%20Draft%20ADHP.doc>
- Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 (consultation draft)
(<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Consultation%20draft%20OPHS%20strategy.doc>)

4. PRIORITIES

Based on our analysis of the key housing related issues the Council will be facing over the next five years and the wide ranging consultation already undertaken we believe that the key housing priorities for the new Housing Strategy should be:

1. Delivering housing growth in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives.
2. Delivering more affordable homes to ensure we meet the housing needs of the whole community.
3. Improving the condition of the existing housing stock and making better use of it.
4. Addressing social and health inequality and enabling vulnerable people to access good quality housing and to live independently.

The broad objectives which reflect these priorities and how they link to other key strategic aims are set out below.

1. Delivering housing growth in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives	
<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards the delivery of the housing objectives set out in the LDF Core Strategy. • Take a 'place-shaping' approach to new housing development to create sustainable, inclusive communities where people want to live. • Play a proactive role in the development of the single conversation process and promote the district's housing growth and regeneration potential. 	
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient homes of the right type built in the right places to meet identified housing need and help re-balance the housing stock. • New housing makes a positive contribution to regeneration and economic development in the district. • New housing is of a good quality, within sustainable new safe communities and designed to minimise impact on the environment. 	
Strategic Links	
<i>South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-2011</i>	Sustainable development
<i>South East Plan 2006-2026</i>	Closer alignment between jobs and homes growth Sufficient level of housing development will be delivered Reductions in the consumption of water and energy Development will be delivered in a manner which mitigates the effects of, and adapts to, climate change Development will be of high quality sustainable design and construction
<i>The Vision for Kent 2006-2026</i>	High Quality Homes
<i>EKLSP Sustainable Communities Strategy – 'Lighting the Way to Success' 2009-2029</i>	Fairer, stronger and healthier communities, in resurgent coastal towns, enjoying high quality homes and an enviable quality of life
<i>Kent LAA</i>	National Indicators 154, 159, 188 & 186
<i>DDC Corporate Plan 2008-2020</i>	World-Class Town: Enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households World Class Economy & Environment: Communities that are strong and safe with a sense of identity

LDF Core Strategy	<p>Deliver sufficient additional housing (14,000 new homes) to broaden the range and improve the quality and market perception of the District's, and especially Dover's, housing offer and meet the changing needs of the population.</p> <p>Ensure the delivery of the Strategy through active intervention by the Council and through continuous partnership working with public, private and voluntary sectors.</p>
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2. Delivering more affordable homes, including low cost home ownership, to ensure we meet the housing needs of the whole community

<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the specific actions set out in the (draft) Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015 • Work effectively with a range of partners to increase the supply of affordable homes across the district and take a proactive role in exploring new housing delivery initiatives • Work with partners to deliver high quality sustainable homes that are designed to be as affordable as possible • Select affordable housing delivery partners who can 'add value' to the development of sustainable communities and long term management of homes

<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced and sustainable communities • Reduction in homelessness • Reduction in the housing waiting list • Increased housing choice
--

Strategic Links

South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11	Provide more affordable homes Raise standards of sustainability in design, construction and access for new affordable housing
South East Plan 2006-2026	Substantial increase in the supply of affordable housing will be pursued
The Vision for Kent 2006-2026	High Quality Homes
Kent Local Area Agreement	National Indicators 154, 159, 186 & 188
EKLSP Sustainable Communities Strategy – 'Lighting the Way to Success' 2009-2029	Fairer, stronger and healthier communities, in resurgent coastal towns, enjoying high quality homes and an enviable quality of life
DDC Corporate Plan 2008-2020	World-Class Town: Enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households World Class Economy & Environment: Communities that are strong and safe with a sense of identity

3. Improving the condition of the existing stock and making best use of it

<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the specific actions set out in the (draft) Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015. • Bring all Council owned homes up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. • Target private sector housing resources in areas where there is a concentration of poor quality housing and take a pro active approach to exploring potential area focused initiatives. • Meet our statutory obligations in relation to the enforcement of standards, ensuring housing is

free from serious hazards and that HMOs are licensed.

- Work with partners to develop new approaches to reducing under-occupation
- Work with private sector landlords and provide advice and assistance that will enable them to provide good quality housing.
- Work with partners to further develop the range of tools that can be used to bring empty homes back into use.

Outcomes:

- More homes, across all tenures, achieving the decent homes standard
- More people, especially vulnerable people living independently in safe, warm, healthy homes
- Fewer households in fuel poverty and reduced CO2 emissions
- Areas of poor quality housing improved and increased long term sustainability of communities
- Less under-occupation and fewer empty homes

Strategic Links

South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11	Improve the quality of the existing housing stock Reduce the percentage of non-decent homes in private ownership.
The Vision for Kent 2006-2026	Improved health, care and well-being
Kent Local Area Agreement	National Indicators 21, 186, 187 &188
EKLSP Sustainable Communities Strategy - 'Lighting the Way to Success' 2009-2029	Fairer, stronger and healthier communities, in resurgent coastal towns, enjoying high quality homes and an enviable quality of life
DDC Corporate Plan 2008-2020	World-Class Town: Enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households World Class Economy & Environment: Communities that are strong and safe with a sense of identity

4. Addressing social and health inequality and enabling vulnerable people to access good quality housing and live independently.

Objectives

- Implement the specific actions set out in the (draft) Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015, East Kent Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 and Youth Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011.
- Work with partners to identify unmet need and develop appropriate housing solutions.
- Provide new housing that meets the needs and aspirations of older people including frail older people.
- Within new schemes, seek to incorporate a range of housing, including different tenures, which will meet the needs of vulnerable people and people with disabilities.
- Play an active role in the Supporting People Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group and the Kent Joint Planning & Policy Board.
- Provide effective advice and information to residents with housing problems in ways that enable vulnerable households to access services and live independently.
- Improve housing conditions in the private sector, reduce the number of Category 1 hazards, increase the number of vulnerable people living in decent homes and reduce fuel poverty.
- Work with private landlords, agents and other partners to develop pathways into private sector housing for vulnerable people.
- Strengthen engagement with local BME groups to better understand and address any specific housing needs.

Outcomes:

- A wider range of good quality housing options and housing advice that meets diverse needs.
- Reduction in social and health inequality.
- Vulnerable people are able to access housing which meets their needs.
- A range of housing related support services available which help people live independently.
- Effective housing advice which helps prevent homelessness together with a range of specialist accommodation where housing provision is required.
- A strong partnership approach to assist with the identification of need and development of new services and housing solutions

Strategic Links	
<i>South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11</i>	Meeting the housing needs of an ageing population Increased provision and improved standards of accommodation for gypsies and travellers
<i>South East Plan 2006-2026</i>	Economic and social disparities within the region will be reduced
<i>The Vision for Kent 2006-2026</i>	Stronger and safer communities Improved health, care and well-being
<i>Kent Local Area Agreement</i>	National Indicators 39, 40 & 141
<i>Eastern & Coastal Kent PCT Strategic Commissioning Plan 2008-2013</i>	Revolutionise services for older people Promote well being and good mental health
<i>Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015</i>	Target resources on clearly evidenced housing related support needs of vulnerable people Ensure that vulnerable people can maximise their independence by moving onto independent living in a timely fashion
<i>EKLSP Sustainable Communities Strategy - 'Lighting the Way to Success' 2009-2029</i>	Fairer, stronger and healthier communities, in resurgent coastal towns, enjoying high quality homes and an enviable quality of life
<i>DDC Corporate Plan 2008-2020</i>	World-Class Town: Enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households World Class Economy & Environment: Communities that are strong and safe with a sense of identity Reduce the amount of Super Output Areas within the top 20% most deprived nationally
<i>LDF Core Strategy</i>	Have no areas falling within the 20% of those most deprived in England

DELIVERY & MONITORING

Successful delivery of the strategy will depend on effective joint working with local people and a range of public, private, community and voluntary services across the district, and also by working in wider partnerships at a regional and national level. We understand that we need to work with all those that have a knowledge and stake in our local communities to achieve the aims of this strategy and achieve real improvements in the lives of our residents.

The action plan is a key delivery mechanism which has been developed in consultation with our partners. The plan shows the role that a number of our partners will play in delivering the actions.

The monitoring of delivery will be undertaken through the various partnership forums that meet on a regular basis as well as by the Council's Strategic Housing Executive.

HOUSING STRATEGY CONSOLIDATED ACTION PLAN

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
Priority 1: Delivering housing growth in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives					
HS 1	Pro-active engagement in the 'Single Conversation'	Local housing, regeneration and economic development priorities reflected in the Local Investment Plan	On-going from February 2010	Officer time	Head of Regeneration Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.2	Coordinated corporate approach to negotiation of affordable housing provision on S.106 sites	30% affordable housing achieved unless proven economic viability reasons for reduced %	Effective from April 2010 and then every year	Officer time Consultancy costs re viability assessment	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.4	Produce a portfolio of HRA owned land with development potential	Portfolio produced and development potential and financial implications assessed	June 2010	Officer time	Senior Valuer/ Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.3	Increase the number of RSL development partners	Develop new process for RSL partner accreditation. At least 2 additional RSL partners active in the district	December 2010	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager
Priority 2: Delivering more affordable homes, including low cost home ownership, to ensure we meet the housing needs of the whole community					
AHDP1.1	Enable the delivery of new affordable housing	250 new affordable homes delivered 650 new affordable homes	March 2012 March 2015	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.5	Explore initiatives that will enable the delivery of new rural affordable homes	Consider the possible development of an East Kent rural affordable housing partnership. Investigate potential development of the Community Land Trust model	April 2012 April 2012	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.6	Work with the Rural Housing Enabler to promote affordable rural housing and develop managed programme	Programme for 2 village needs surveys per annum	Effective from January 2011 and then every year	Officer time/RHE financial contribution	Housing Initiatives Manager/ RHE
AHDP1.7	Develop a planned approach to the delivery of affordable rural housing	2 new rural schemes per annum	April 2011 and then every year	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.8	Utilise 'off site' developer financial contributions	Possible schemes identified, appraised and reported to AHWG	October 2010	Officer/RSL time HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager/Development Control Manager

AHDP1.9	Actively monitor the progress of schemes and facilitate their development	Bi monthly 1-2-1 meetings with all RSL partners and quarterly meetings of the AHWG	April 2010	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.10	Update the evidence bases which support the delivery of affordable housing	SHMA updated Analysis of the demand for intermediate housing within the district	April 2014 August 2010	Cost shared across EK LAs. Estimated cost £15,000	Housing Initiatives Manager/Forward Planning Manager Housing Initiatives Manager/Moat Housing Group
AHDP2.1	Affordable housing is well integrated within a mixed community	Develop a process for the selection of partner RSLs for strategic sites	December 2010	Officer/HCA time	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP2.2	All new schemes to contribute to achieving a balanced community	Regular monitoring report prepared and reported to AHWG	Effective from April 2010 and then every year	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP2.3	New affordable homes and neighbourhoods to be well designed	All new affordable homes to achieve 16 out of 20 'Building for Life' score	Effective from April 2010 and then every year	Officer/RSL time	RSL partners
AHDP2.4	Enable the development of safe & secure neighbourhoods	All new schemes to achieve 'secure by design' accreditation	April 2010	RSL	RSL partners
AHDP2.5	Assess levels of customer satisfaction with new affordable housing	Customer satisfaction monitoring process developed and reported to AHWG	April 2011	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
AHDP4.1	4.1 Ensure new homes are cheap to run with low carbon emissions	Where financially viable new affordable housing schemes to achieve Code Level 4.	Effective from April 2010 and then every year		RSL partners
AHDP4.2	4.2 Minimise service charges by influencing the design of schemes	No unreasonably high service charges	Effective from April 2010	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
Priority 3: Improving the condition of the existing stock and making best use of it					
PSHS 1.1	Increase public access to energy efficiency by information provision	## referrals to Warm Front, ## take up of Heating and Insulation Loans	April 2011	Additional revenue for budget for leaflets and advertisements. Time input from Climate Change Officer	Climate Change Officer

PSHS 1.2	Review operation of Handyperson service.	Revised charging regime introduced.	December 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 1.3	Improve ways to give householders advice on repairs and maintenance	New advice service developed.	December 2011	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 1.4	Link the Rent Deposit Scheme to accreditation standards	Bond Scheme amended to include requirement for landlords to meet accreditation criterion	April 2011	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager; Housing Needs Manager
PSHS 2.1	Adopt a more fast track approach to enforcement	Publicity measures undertaken, service standards revised, monitoring arrangements in place.	August 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.2	Introduce charging for statutory notices	New charging regime in place and publicised, recovery procedures in place.	October 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.3	Identify and target resources at areas of worst housing using proactive inspections	Planned inspections programme in place.	December 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.4	Take more formal action of illegal eviction and harassment.	Effective arrangements in place to ensure that prosecution initiated where warranted with illegal eviction and harassment	1 November 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager; Housing Standards Manager
PSHS 2.5	Link proactive work to development of area regeneration proposals	Arrangements for both planned inspections and information feedback procedures in place	1 December 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.6	Ensure HMOs meet current standards	Updated database in construction and pro active inspections are carried out.	1 August 2011	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 3.1	Continue to target financial assistance to areas with high levels of unsatisfactory housing.	Increased number of loan applications in targeted areas.	1 April 2011	Officer time; significant additional capital resources if potential area intervention identified	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 3.2	Evaluate the introduction of Minor Works Loans at next review of Housing Assistance Policy	Decision taken whether to implement.	1 April 2011	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 3.3	Investigate opportunities to provide assistance to households areas of deprivation through CESP	Funding bids made and assistance programmes in place	1 October 2010	Officer time	Climate Change Officer
PSHS 3.4	Explore alternative ways to facilitate equity release drawing on private sector	Research done, evaluation of alternative opportunities in place and recommendation for future action made	1 December 2012	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager

	funds				
EHS 1.1	Develop improved information gathering processes including: i. Mapping empty homes to identify trends, and proximity to regeneration activities ii. Add back empty homes 'excluded' (ie exempt) from Council Tax List iii Invest in software to enable an accurate database of empty homes to be held and prioritised	Improved information which will provide a more accurate picture of the problem and enable more effective targeting of resources	April 2010	Officer time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 1.2	Identify unused commercial space that could be used for residential use	Potential of additional homes provided by the conversion of commercial space	April 2011	Officer time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 1.3	Risk rate all active empty homes using new risk scoring system and record on database	Resources more effectively prioritised upon those properties giving rise to greatest concerns	October 2010	Officer time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 1.4	Set up quarterly cross departmental meetings to gather and share relevant information	'Joined up' approach to new initiatives such as Street Scene and regeneration projects. Provide a more effective co-ordinated action between sections of the council, More considered approach in taking the most effective action on the worst properties	Meet every 6 to 8 weeks	Officer Time	Private Sector Housing Manager
EHS 1.5	Continue with the regular meetings with KCC and other authorities to develop best practice	Improved cross boundary working, training and sharing of best practice with East Kent local authorities & KCC	Meet every 6 to 8 weeks	Officer Time	Private Sector Housing Manager
EHS 2.1	Carry out review of how the Empty Homes Service is publicised,	Raised awareness of the empty homes issue & advice/assistance available.	October 2010	Officer Time. Regional Housing Board Budget	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 2.2	Actively promote the strategy through key Council communication channels including DDC website,	Raised awareness, greater understanding of how we prioritise our actions, increased reporting of empty homes and reduction in the number of	March 2011	Officer Time	Empty Homes Officer

	residents newsletter and community and landlord forums	empty homes			
EHS 2.3	Continue to work with partners such as KCC- No Use Empty Campaign to raise awareness in Kent of the issues with empty homes.	Raised awareness, increased reporting of empty homes and reduction in the number	Ongoing	Officer time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 3.1	Produce and distribute an information pack for for empty home owners	Empty home owners better informed regarding assistance available and possible sanctions. More empty homes brought back into use.	November 2010 & on going	Officer Time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 3.2	Build links to other professional bodies who can provide additional advice services	Empty home owners will have access to a wider range of specialist advice services.	August 2010	Officer Time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 3.3	Maintain a list of potential purchasers interested in buying empty homes	Increased options for empty home owners	August 2010	Capital and officers time.	Private Sector Housing Manager
EHS 3.4	Provide loans or grants to carry out Improvements and repairs to properties.	Property improved to enable it to be re-occupied. Conditions for assistance can provide additional social housing to the council.	August 2010	Capital and officers time	Private Sector Housing Manager
EHS 4.1	Commence use of Section 215 notices	Improved external appearance of properties	Identify priority cases and serve notices during 2010	Liaise with KCC & Planning and legal sections in DDC to determine resource implication	Private sector Housing Manager/ Development Control Manager. Principal
EHS 4.2	Identify properties where the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO) can be used and obtain approval from tribunal to serve an order.	Most problematic empty homes brought back into use, problems of anti-social activity resolved, and neighbouring property values increased	July 2010	Liaise with KCC & Managing Agent to determine resource implication	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 4.3	Continue to use Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers for high priority cases where owner is not cooperating	Most problematic empty homes brought back into use, problems of anti-social activity resolved, and neighbouring property values increased	Identify suitable properties and seek Cabinet approval to take action. June 2010	Officer Time and CPO budget	Empty Homes
EHS 5.1	To explore possible joint initiative with Housing Association (HA) partner	Homes improved and brought back into use for people in housing need. Problems of anti-social activity resolved,	September 2010	Officer & HA staff time. HA private finance and Government (HCA)	Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer

	aimed at acquiring and refurbishing empty homes for social rent or intermediate tenures.	and neighbouring property values increased		grant funding.	
EHS 5.2	5.2 In conjunction with forthcoming review of East Kent private sector leasing scheme to consider how scheme might be targeted at bringing empty homes back into use.	Homes brought back into use for people in housing need.	September 2010	Officer & HA staff time.	Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer
EHS 5.3	5.3 Examine the use of private sector expertise and resources in relation to enforcement action including: i. external surveys ii. preparation of schedules of work	More efficient of resources and quicker response times	October 2010	Additional cost based on agreed price per survey	Private Sector Housing Manager

Priority 4: Addressing social and health inequality and enabling vulnerable people to access good quality housing and live independently

AHDP3.1	Ensure all new affordable homes are designed to be flexible to the changing needs of occupiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new affordable homes to meet the Lifetime Homes Standard where practically achievable 	Effective from April 2010 and then every year		RSL partners
AHDP3.2	Enable the development of new housing that meets the needs of physically disabled people	Deliver 4 wheelchair standard units per annum	Effective from April 2010 and then every year	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
AHDP3.3	Enable new supported housing provision that will meet the needs of other vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a dual diagnosis scheme for people with a mental health/substance misuse problem Deliver 2 schemes for people with mental health needs Deliver 2 schemes to meet the needs of young homeless people Deliver 40 unit extra care scheme 	<p>April 2011</p> <p>April 2011 & April 2015</p> <p>December 2011 April 2012</p>	<p>HCA grant funding</p> <p>HCA , KCC and Supporting People funding HCA and Supporting People funding PFI funding</p>	<p>Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners</p> <p>KCC/Housing Initiatives Manager</p>
AHDP5.2	Increase housing options for older people	In partnership with KCC, deliver PFI Extra care scheme. At least 50% of homes in any new older persons schemes to be 2 bedroom.	<p>April 2012</p> <p>Effective from April 2010</p>	PFI funding	Housing Initiatives Manager

AHDP5.3	Increase the options and pathways available for people with a housing need to access the private rented sector	Identify best practice and develop potential schemes	April 2012	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager/Housing Needs Manager
EKHS 3.1	Promote management standards within the sector - promote it as a viable long-term housing solution to applicants	Increased accessibility to the private rented sector for vulnerable households	Ongoing	Existing Resources	EKHF partner Local Authorities
EKHS 3.2	Continue to provide rental deposits and bonds to enable applicants to access private rented accommodation	Increased accessibility to private sector rented housing	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities
HSOP 1.1	New affordable homes include properties that older people want to occupy	See Affordable Housing Delivery Plan		HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
HSOP 1.2	An effective under-occupier scheme supports older people to move from family sized homes	Explore good practice elsewhere and assess this in the context of Dover. Draft out and consult older people to see whether it would be effective. If approved, run as a well-advertised pilot from. Assess and adjust and roll out final scheme	September 2010 December 2010 April 2011 October 2012	Unclear at present – will need to be reviewed as the scheme is designed	Housing Needs Manager as Dover rep. with E. Kent group developing joint scheme
HSOP 1.3	New market housing includes a proportion of homes that are attractive for older people and meet their needs	TBA		None	Forward Planning Manager
HSOP 1.4	Deliver sufficient new extra care units to meet needs and enable a sustainable community within schemes	40 units by October 2011	40 units by October 2011	Private Finance Initiative / HCA funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
HSOP 1.5	All regeneration areas should consider how a lifetime neighbourhood can be achieved as part of master planning and delivery plans	Linked to regeneration delivery plans		None outside regeneration funding	Regeneration manager

HSOP 1.6	Planned work across existing neighbourhoods are completed in such a way as to deliver lifetime neighbourhood elements	TBA		None outside mainstream funding	Regeneration and Transport managers
HSOP 2.1	Further target affordable warmth resources to reach those most at risk of cold homes and in fuel poverty	Thorough and targeted publicity towards areas with high levels of energy loss and towards older people	April 2011	Identified in Private Sector housing action plan	Climate change officer
HSOP 2.2	Carry out a fundamental review of adaptations for council tenants to remove the long waiting time and meet needs as they arise	With social care and health partners, process map adaptations provision in council homes, looking for ways to reduce demand, improve delivery and assess ongoing resource requirement – by July 2010: resulting from this, amend the process to provide optimum deliver – by April 2011: work with partners to identify sufficient resources to remove the backlog and keep pace with demand – by April 2011	April 2011	Likely to be substantial capital resources to remove the backlog – to be assessed and reported	Adaptations manager
HSOP 2.3	Monitor needs for adaptations and delivery times in private sector housing to ensure that needs for adaptations continue to be met	Quarterly monitoring	Quarterly	None	Private Sector Manager
HSOP 2.4	Review grants and loans policy to improve accessibility to funding for low income older people	Review by April 2010	April 2010	None for review, may be call on resources for loans	Private Sector Manager
HSOP 2.5	Identify how the Handyperson service can be expanded and secured in the longer term	Review of the Handyperson scheme and its funding by April 2011. Confirmation of new scheme arrangements by June 2011	April 2011 June 2011	None for review, may be call on resources dependant on outcome of review	Private Sector Manager
HSOP 2.6	Work to expand the availability of advice on repairs and maintenance	Identify good practice elsewhere to look for ideas and opportunities	December 2011	None for review, may be call on resources depending on findings	Private Sector Manager
HSOP 2.7	Work across staff and partners to raise awareness of the issues of safety and security in the home and encourage referrals to agencies that can provide advice and practical	Engage PCT and SP providers in this project Agree a training programme and deliver to a wide range of staff across agencies	April 2010 October 2010 - April 2012	None for engagement; may be some funding required to enable training to be delivered	Supported housing manager?

	assistance.				
HSOP 2.8	Explore joint working with the NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT on initiatives to enable older people to live independently and reduce the incidence of falls	Engage with PCT in a joined up strategic approach and initiatives that enable older people to live independently	April 2010	None for engagement	Private Sector Manager/Housing Initiatives Manager
HSOP 3.1	Work with the Supporting People programme to expand the housing related support to older people living outside sheltered housing	TBA with SP		None	Supporting People with Supported housing manager
HSOP 3.2	Work with the INVOKE project to improve its profile amongst council staff and partner agencies to ensure best use is made of these services.	Engage INVOKE in the activity – by April 2010. Agree what needs to be done to achieve the outcome Delivery of agreed actions	June 2010 from July 2010 onwards	None anticipated	Supported housing manager
HSOP 3.3	Ensure that older people and wider agencies are aware of reliable and responsible equity release schemes such as the HouseProud scheme	Complete research into and evaluation of HouseProud and other schemes Council backing of HouseProud confirmed or other option agreed Publicity to ensure that all agencies and older people have the relevant information completed	October 2010 April 2011 April 2012	None anticipated until later stages of the project	Private Sector Manager
HSOP 3.4	Work with older people to explore the relevance and usefulness of the FirstStop advice service for local people and provided it meets older people's requirements will develop and publicise this service across the Dover district.	Establish with older people how the FirstStop service can best be tested Carry out testing to decide whether the service meets the needs of older people in Dover district, and evaluate Agree way forward	June 2010 April 2011 July 2012	Resources to pay for expenses of older people engaged on the project	Supported housing manager
YHS 1	Consult with stakeholders (incl YP) and design and roll out advice infrastructure: a (suite of) leaflet(s), FAQs, scripts for advicelines and possibly web-based material for sites	Consistent advice and information is available to young people, their parents and advisers	March 2010	Design input free from DDC Design Studio Cost of printing suite of leaflets	Catch22, Steve Woods

	accessed by young people and their parents				
YHS 2	Add Youth Homelessness web page to DDC website	Consistent advice and information is available to young people, their parents and advisers. Easier access to services	March 2010	Officer Time	Housing Needs Manager/YHA
YHS 3	Investigate, develop and roll out programmes and materials for work in schools and youth centres	A programme of focused work with children and young people is in place to develop their awareness about home and options for their route to independence	March 2010	Officer time £1,200 to St Edmunds school towards production cost of DVD	Porchlight
YHS 4	Monitor effectiveness of new multi agency housing team to agreed indicators.	No young person is accepted as homeless without a thorough investigation, involving their parents or carers, of their housing options	Report quarterly to YHF	Officer time	Housing Needs Manager
YHS 6	Ensure existing B&B accommodation, for use in an emergency, is of an appropriate standard (ensure accommodation is inspected on a regular basis)	Ensure emergency accommodation is of an appropriate standard	Report annually(?) to YHF	Officer time	Housing Needs Manager
YHS 7	Explore options, develop and introduce additional emergency (short term) accommodation alternative to bed and breakfast	To meet Government target: to eliminate the use of B&B accommodation for 16/17 year olds except in an emergency	2010 SP input to determine timescales	Officer time SP funding	DDC & Supporting People
YHS 8	Introduce additional schemes of (longer term) accommodation for YP	To meet Government target: to eliminate the use of B&B accommodation for 16/17 year olds except in an emergency	2010/11 (first year of operation of alternatives, allowing time to research, raise funding and develop)	Officer time SP funding	DDC & SP
YHS 9	Collate and provide information for young people about practical arrangements for moving to their own accommodation . Evaluate option of introducing conditions for young applicants (e.g. completion of life skills . tenancy-ready certificate) before awarding	Help support YP into own accommodation	Original timescale 01/06/2009 Extend timescale to March 2010	Cost of courses TBA Cost of producing (ie printing) resource pack	Housing Needs Manager/YPA

	additional points on allocations scheme, and introduce if viable				
YHS 10	Engage local authority and RSL social housing managers in programmes of action to improve sustainability of vulnerable young people's tenancies (early days support, debt advice, eviction policy, signposting to support networks, etc.)	Social housing landlords actively support vulnerable young tenants in maintaining their tenancy	Original timescale June 2009 (engage them in review and evaluation of second part of outcome below) Extend timescale to March 2010	Officer time	Housing Needs Manager/YPA
HS 2	Implement the Learning Disability Action Plan	Better understanding of needs leading to increased housing options Improved advice and information and easier and fair access to services		KCC funding	Housing Needs Manager
EKHS 1.0	Implement the Kent Reconnection Policy		Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities Provider Agencies
EKHS 1.1	Support vulnerable homeless households to bid through Kent Homechoice	Easier and fair access to housing for vulnerable people	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities and Support Provider Agencies
EKHS 1.3	Implement the Ex-offender protocol		Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities and other agencies
EKHS 1.4	Continue partnerships with local housing advice agencies to maximise options available to clients		Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities
EKHS 1.5	Explore the options for introducing an East Kent wide set of Housing Options information leaflets	Improved information for vulnerable households and easier and fair access to services	April 2011	Existing Resources	Local Authorities
EKHS 2.0	Continue to quantify levels of rough sleeping within East Kent	Up to date understanding of the issue	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities Porchlight
EKHS 2.1	Report emerging homelessness trends to the EKHF	Early awareness of emerging issues	Ongoing	Existing Resources	All agencies

EKHS 2.2	Continue to support the Kent Wide Rough Sleeper outreach Service		Ongoing	Existing Resources	All EKHF partner agencies
EKHS 5.0	Carry out study into the outcomes of single people leaving temporary accommodation in East Kent	Better understanding of issue to help address revolving door issue	April 2011	Existing Resources	Porchlight
EKHS 5.2	Implement the Countywide Temporary Accommodation Protocol	Reduced concentrations of vulnerable households in temporary accommodation and improve services to them.	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities
HS 3	Develop mechanisms for engaging with BME groups	Better understanding of BME housing needs, improved housing options, easier and fairer access to services	April 2011	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager

Key to Strategy References

HS: Housing Strategy 2010-2015

AHDP: Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

HSOP: Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015

PSHS: Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015

EHS: Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015

YHS: Youth Homelessness Strategy 2010-2015

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Key developments at a national, regional and local level in terms of context since the Council's last Housing Strategy was prepared include:

National

- Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable (Housing Green Paper on increasing the supply of new homes)
- Sustainable communities: settled homes; changing lives (the national strategy on dealing with homelessness)
- Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (the national Strategy for housing in an ageing society).
- Creating strong, safe, prosperous communities (statutory guidance on the central and local government, partners and citizens working together through Local Strategic Partnerships, delivery of Sustainable Community Strategies, etc)

Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable

This Green paper was published in July 2007 and sets out the government's vision that '*everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford, in sustainable communities where they want to live and work*'. It also set out plans for increasing housing supply including more affordable homes and included proposals for accelerating the rate of new housing delivery, establishing new growth points, making the most effective use of existing housing and ensuring homes are well designed and greener.

Homes & Communities Agency

In December 2008 the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) was formed bringing together the functions of English Partnerships, the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities, and key housing and regeneration programmes previously delivered by Communities and Local Government. The HCAs housing, regeneration and infrastructure investment role means that it will be a key partner in relation to how the Council will deliver many of its housing and wider corporate objectives. This investment required will be planned as part of a 'single conversation' process that the HCA will engage in with the Council and other local authorities in the South East sub region.

Other potentially relevant national policies and strategies which are anticipated but not yet published, include:

- A Housing Reform Green Paper to provide a better system for those living in rented housing. This will respond to some of the challenges set out in the Hills Review of Social Housing, the Cave Review of Social Housing Regulation, and the Rugg and Rhodes Review of the Private Rented Sector. It will aim for greater fairness in social housing and making the best use of resources including getting better use out of the existing stock; increasing housing supply, choice and quality in the private rented sector; clarifying the government's approach to mixed communities, etc.
- A Review of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System.
- Changes to the Revenue and Capital Rules for New Council Housing which would enable Councils to build social housing
- A Single Equalities Bill which will combine existing anti-discrimination legislation and statutory instruments into a single Act of Parliament to give everyone 'a fair chance regardless of gender, race, sexuality or disability.

Regional

South East Plan

The South East Regional Assembly formally submitted the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (The South East Plan) to Government in March 2006. The Strategy included an assessment of the number of new homes needed in the region each year up until 2026 and set growth targets for individual local authorities. The target set for Dover district is 10,100 new homes.

Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11

This sets out the housing priorities for the region and a framework for investment. The Strategy's key priorities are:

- To build more affordable homes
- Bring decent housing within reach of people on lower incomes
- Improve the quality of new housing and existing stock.

Increasing the supply of affordable housing is considered to be especially important.

Vision for Kent

In April 2006, the Local Strategic Partnership for Kent published its county wide Sustainable Communities Strategy setting out its 'Vision for Kent' over a twenty year period in terms of improvements to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the County. Among the key themes identified in the Strategy are; housing growth, economic development, the ageing population and tackling disadvantage and promoting independence.

This Strategic aims are delivered through the Kent Local Area Agreement (LAA) which comprises targets relating to an agreed set of National Indicators which partners have agreed to work together to achieve.

Lighting the Way to Success

More recently, the Local Strategic Partnership for East Kent published its Sustainable Communities Strategy '*lighting the way to success*' in 2009 which places strong emphasis on the regeneration of Dover as well as picking up the Kent LSP themes of tackling social disadvantage and the need for economic growth.

Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015

A new strategy has been produced by the Supporting People Commissioning Body for Kent setting out priorities for the future delivery of housing related support services that will enable vulnerable people to live independently in their community. A key focus of the strategy is on prevention and providing support within people's own homes.

Local

Regeneration and Growth Plans

The Council has ambitious plans to regenerate parts of the districts and stimulate economic growth. This regeneration priority is consistent with the Kent wide and East Kent Sustainable Community Strategies and is embodied in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

Dover Masterplan 2006

Dover Pride the local independent regeneration and economic partnership comprising public authorities, businesses and the voluntary and community sectors has produced a strategy for the regeneration of Dover Town in 2005 which has been further developed through a master planning process and subsequent report in 2006. The report sets out various options for housing growth linked to population and economic growth. A high growth strategy for the district as a whole was subsequently identified in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy as the preferred option.

Along with specific, planned development and regeneration projects we anticipate that the formal opening of the high speed rail link to London in 2009 will act as an important catalyst in helping Dover realize its full potential.

One of the overarching themes of the Plan is *'Improving existing neighbourhoods and creating new communities'* with *'A well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes'*.

A wealth of underpinning evidence has been gathered which demonstrates the essential link between housing growth, regeneration and economic development in the district. These key corporate objectives are clearly established, based on robust research and reflect national and regional priorities. The Council is therefore well positioned to achieve its objectives with an approved Core Strategy in place and having obtained growth point and regional hub status

The key national and regional themes of housing growth, regeneration and economic development are therefore reflected at the local level in these and a range of key corporate documents.

Dover District Council Corporate Plan 2008-2020

This is a long term plan with a strong emphasis on economic development, regeneration and building safe, sustainable and inclusive communities. Specific housing priorities and targets include the provision of *'a wide range of good quality and accessible housing that meets the needs of the whole community'*, improving the existing housing stock and meeting the housing needs of vulnerable households.

LDF Core Strategy

The Core Strategy was approved in January 2010 following an examination in public and formally adopted by the Council in February 2010. The strategy sets out the Council's long term vision for the district as a place to live, work, relax and visit and how this will be achieved. An assessment of the key issues as well as the interventions that will be needed to achieve the strategic objectives is underpinned by robust research and wide ranging consultation.

The aim is to *'transform Dover into a leading town in the region and regenerate the District so that economically and socially it equals or out-performs the region'*. Once again the economic development and regeneration ambitions of the Council are strongly to the fore but with housing growth seen as playing a key role in achieving the overall aim. A stated objective within the Strategy is to *'deliver sufficient additional housing to broaden the range and improve the quality and market perception of the District's, and especially Dover's housing offer and meet the changing needs of the population'*. To achieve this and the other strategic objectives a high growth strategy has been adopted based on a delivery target of 14,000 new homes.

The Core Strategy identifies four key development opportunities which are "of such scale and significance that they are central to the success of the Strategy". These are:

Dover Waterfront
Mid Town, Dover
Former Connaught Barracks, Dover
Expansion of Whitfield, Dover

These developments have the potential to deliver around 7,000 new homes and are therefore key to the delivery of the Housing Strategy.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

In 2008 consultants were appointed to carry out a Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the East Kent sub-region the purpose being to help determine the location and amount of affordable and market housing needed across East Kent and within each local authority district.

The results were published in a report in 2009, and in addition to highlighting the need for more housing generally which has provided the supporting evidence for the high growth strategy in the Core Strategy, it also revealed a very substantial need for affordable housing within the district. The research identified 21 local housing markets within the sub region and four operating in the district:

- Dover

- Deal
- Sandwich
- East Kent Rural South

The report ranked the 21 local housing market areas in terms of the relative need for affordable housing and Dover, Deal and Sandwich were all found to be in the top 6 with Deal and Sandwich ranked 2nd and 3rd respectively.

KEY ISSUES

This appendix provides a summary of our understanding of the key housing issues we need to address. This is informed by the work undertaken in relation to the related sub strategies and by key documents such as the LDF Core Strategy, East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Supporting People Strategy

Demographic Trends

The overall household population has been growing at a slower pace than the national and regional rate and the following chart shows a reduction in the number of younger people and a significant increase in the number of people aged 65 and over.

This demographic trend is identified in the Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment as one of the main challenges that local authorities will face given its potential impact in terms of a declining working age population and increased public spending in areas of health and social care.

The proportion of older households (60 and over) within the district has been increasing over a number of years and currently there is a higher than national and south east average population of older people in the district.

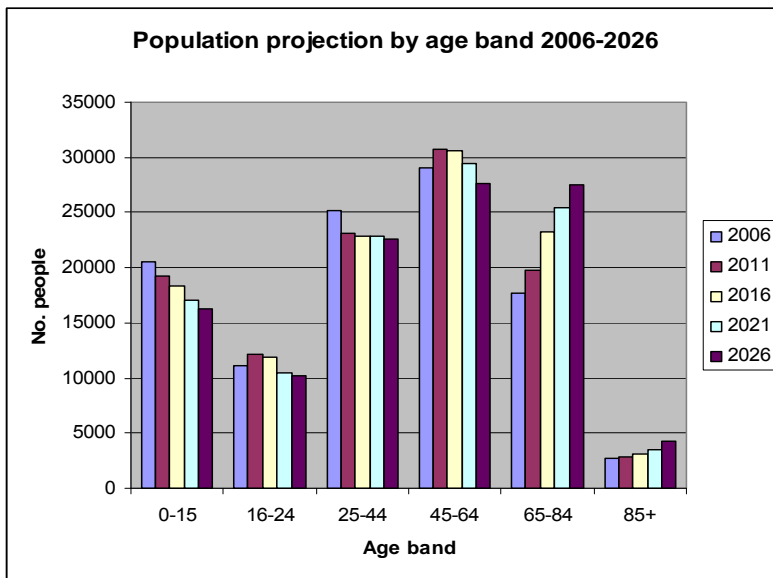
The projection for the district is that by 2016

- The population of over 55s will have increased by almost 17% against an overall population increase of only 0.75%.
- The majority growth will be in the 65 to 74 year old age band which will have increased by almost 38% - an addition of 4,000 people in this age group.
- Over 75 year olds will increase by around 16% or a total of 1,500 people
- Over 85's will also increase by 16%; around 500 people

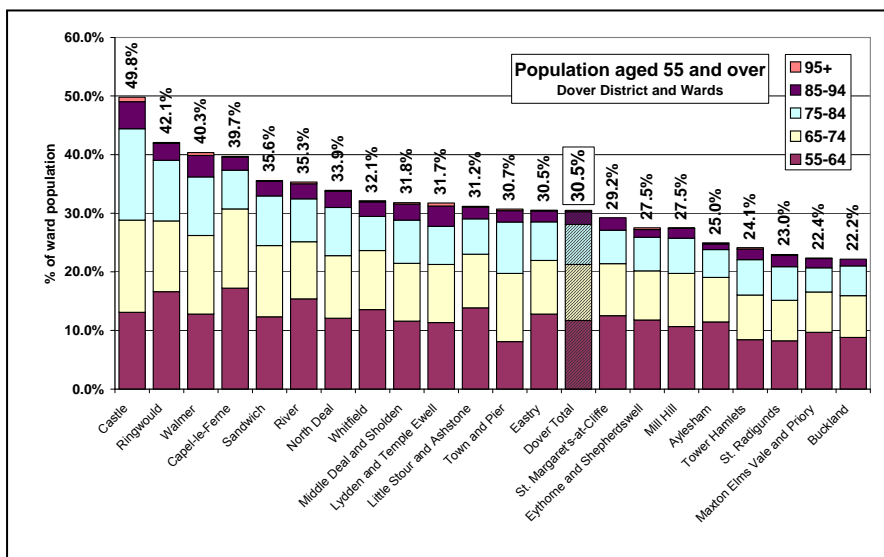
The forecast is that by 2026, the number of households aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%.

This projected growth in the proportion of older households will be a significant issue and is highlighted within the SHMA report as being a *“critical factor for the future housing markets and economy of East Kent”*.

This trend will have implications in terms of how we will ensure the provision of appropriate housing and support services to enable older people to live independently for as long as possible and at the same time try to maintain a sustainable population balance by making sure we provide housing that will be attractive to working age households in order to maintain a local workforce and support economic growth.



Source: South East Plan Strategy forecasts 2007 Kent County Council



Housing Growth

The Council has adopted a high growth approach to the provision of new housing and the underpinning rationale together with the framework for delivery is clearly set out in the LDF Core Strategy. Overall housing growth is seen as being a key element in the regeneration of parts of the district, delivering economic growth and helping to re balance the housing market and facilitate the delivery of affordable homes.

The relationship between jobs and housing growth together with milestones for delivering key elements of the Strategy is clearly set out in the Core Strategy. The delivery mechanism highlights the need for effective partnership working across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The Council's Housing Strategy and Enabling Team is committed to working corporately to help strengthen this approach and deliver the Core Strategy objectives.

The development of 14,000 new homes across the District is a challenging target and will require significant investment in supporting infrastructure development and improvements. The quality of new developments will also be important in terms of delivering new homes designed to minimise impact on climate change and new communities which are sustainable and well connected to key employment sites as well as retail and leisure amenities. The Single Conversation with the Homes & Communities Agency will provide a mechanism by which we can highlight to government the

intrinsic link between essential infrastructure investment and housing delivery in order to achieve national, regional and local priorities.

While the growth agenda presents many opportunities we also need to be aware of the potential impact that substantial amounts of new housing may have on existing areas of poorer quality housing in terms of outward migration and because the poor amenity within those communities will be even more apparent when compared to new communities elsewhere. This risk may need to be managed to ensure that housing growth and maintaining the existing housing stock complement each other.

The Core Strategy provides more detailed information regarding the Council's approach to future housing growth and the mechanisms for delivering the strategic objectives:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/Adopted%20Core%20Strategy%20February%202010.pdf>

Housing Aspirations

As referred to previously the LDF Core Strategy recognises the need to provide *'an improved range, flexibility and quality of housing which will also better accommodate local needs. Growth will be used to promote higher quality design that reinforces local distinctiveness and sense of place, a more efficient use of natural resources, more healthy lifestyles and a reduction in social inequalities'*.

The East Kent SHMA included survey of housing aspirations which found that the most popular property type amongst Dover respondents were semi detached houses (30.6%) followed by detached homes (20.7%). Dover residents who responded also indicated that they were much more likely to want to buy a new home (15.7%) than residents in the other 4 districts.

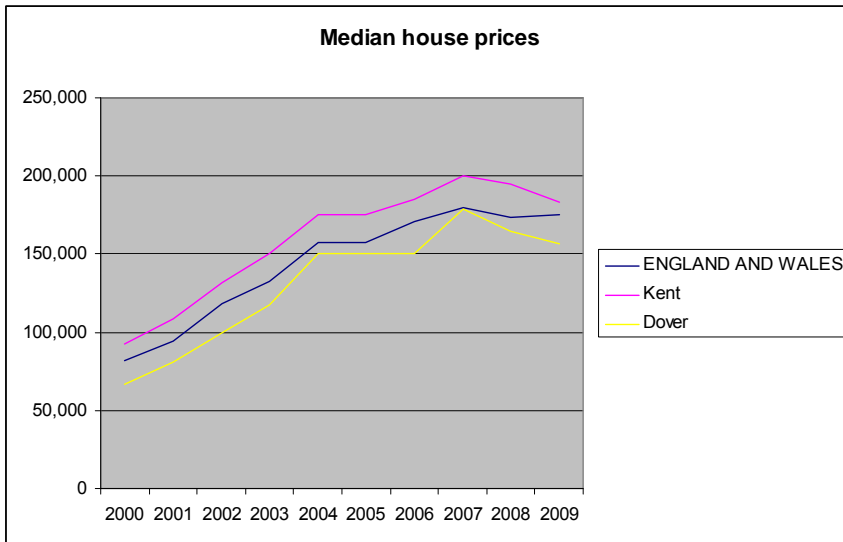
A more detailed analysis of the housing stock and how housing growth will help deliver greater choice and a more balanced stock profile can be found in the Core Strategy. The approach set out in the Strategy accords with the recommendations set out in the East Kent Futures Study 2008 which provides the underpinning analysis on which the East Kent Sustainable Communities Strategy 2009 is based.

Economy and The Housing Market

Unfortunately, while the Council has been putting the building blocks in place to deliver its growth and regeneration objectives this has coincided with a dramatic economic downturn which has had a significant impact on the housing market. The 'credit crunch' and tighter lending criteria imposed by mortgage lenders has resulted in a significant reduction in house buyers and a consequent fall in house prices and loss of confidence amongst buyers and house builders. Although there appears to have been some slight improvement in the mortgage market recently and a stabilisation of house prices, the general economic position remains fragile and the speed of recovery remains very uncertain.

We anticipate that bank lending will continue to be constrained in the short to medium term which will impact on house builder confidence and house prices while at the same time we expect public expenditure in respect of infrastructure and affordable housing subsidies will also come under pressure.

Locally, Land Registry data shows that median house prices during the period 2007 to December 2009 fell more sharply in Dover district than nationally but that the fall was broadly in line with Kent as a whole.

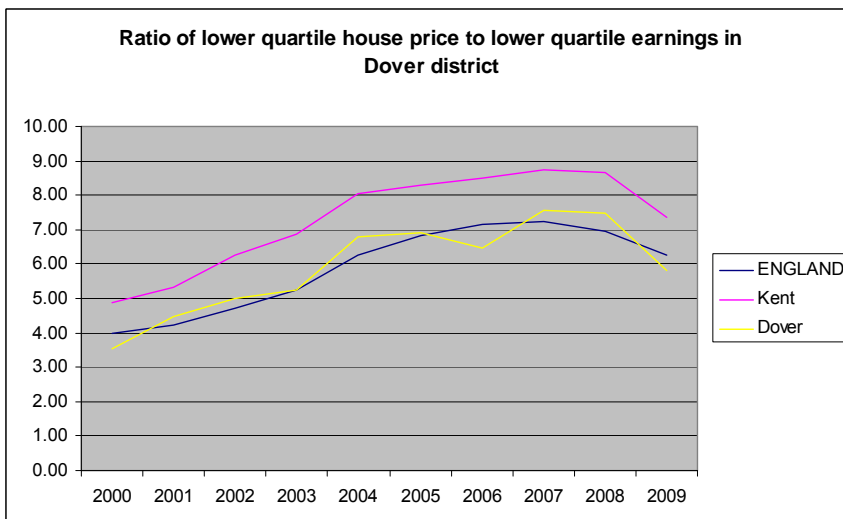


Source: CLG Live Tables

House price falls, market uncertainty and the increased cost of finance has impacted on the financial viability of many proposed new housing developments with many developers including housing associations scaling back their house building programmes.

Average house prices and sale prices of new homes have historically been lower in the District than other parts of Kent and the region. While this may help to some extent in terms of affordability of housing it has, in the past, acted as a disincentive to volume house builders especially in respect of Dover where prices are generally amongst the lowest in the region. This is especially problematic as Dover is identified in the Core Strategy as the focus for future housing growth.

The importance of housing delivery in respect of achieving wider corporate objectives means that we will closely monitor market conditions and provide support where we can. In the 2009 budget, the government announced a financial package called Kickstart designed to help developers progress 'stalled' housing schemes. A successful bid for financial assistance was made under Round 1 of the programme for a scheme in Deal and a further bid has been submitted under Round 2 in respect of Aylesham.



'Housing Need' - The Need for Affordable Housing

"Housing need" is defined by Government as "the quantity of housing required for households who are unable to access suitable housing without financial assistance". It includes people who do not have a home of their own because they cannot afford to buy or rent, and people whose housing is unsuitable (eg: because it is too small or in poor condition) and who cannot afford to make it suitable or to move to alternative accommodation.

Indicators of housing need include the cost of market housing relative to incomes, and the demand for affordable housing. The Government defines affordable housing as "social rented and intermediate housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market".

The large number of new homes to be built provides good opportunities to secure the provision of new affordable housing through approved planning policies.

Affordability

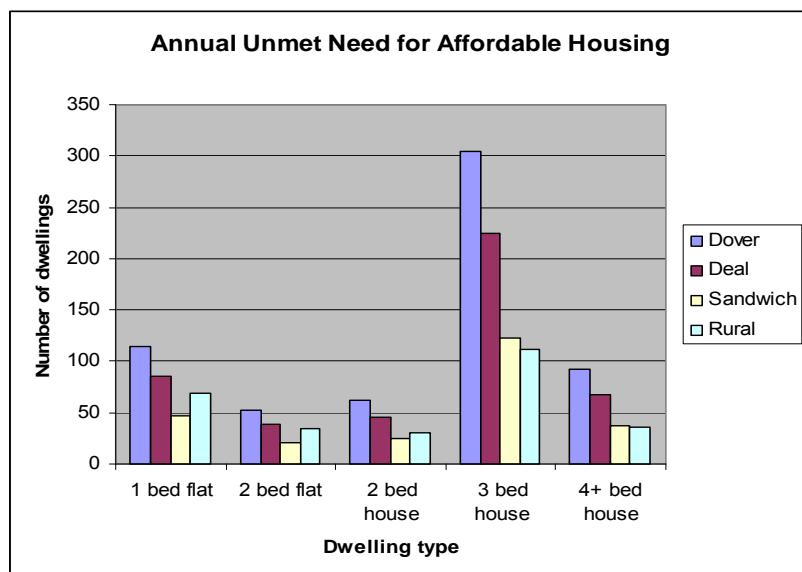
While the fall in house prices since 2007 and the reasons behind it, have had an adverse impact on the delivery of new housing it has resulted in a reduction in the ratio between lower quartile house prices and earnings. However, while this helps make housing more affordable for some households at the margins of affordability, the steep price increases in previous years means that the current ratio is still more than five times lower quartile average income. Recent indications also suggest that house prices are starting to increase once more and this combined with stricter mortgage lending criteria will continue to result in many households finding it difficult to access housing they can afford.

East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report 2009 (SHMA)

The assessment of the need for affordable housing was a key component of the SHMA and was carried out in accordance with government guidance. The assessment has identified a need for 1,489 new affordable homes per year in order to meet the backlog of unmet need and newly arising need over the next five years.

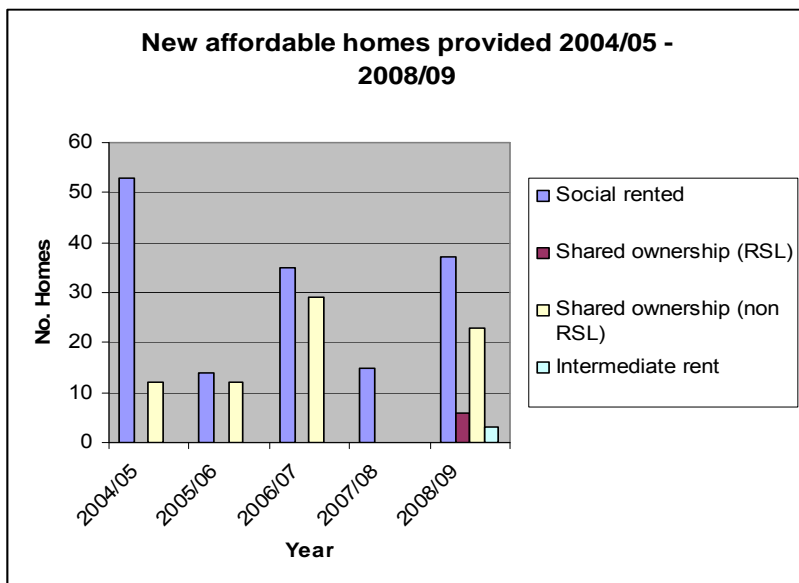
The SHMA report also highlighted a general need to provide more family homes which would be attractive to economically active households in order to support economic development and help offset the demographic trend towards an increasingly older population.

There is also an identified need for affordable family sized homes which can clearly be seen from the chart below.



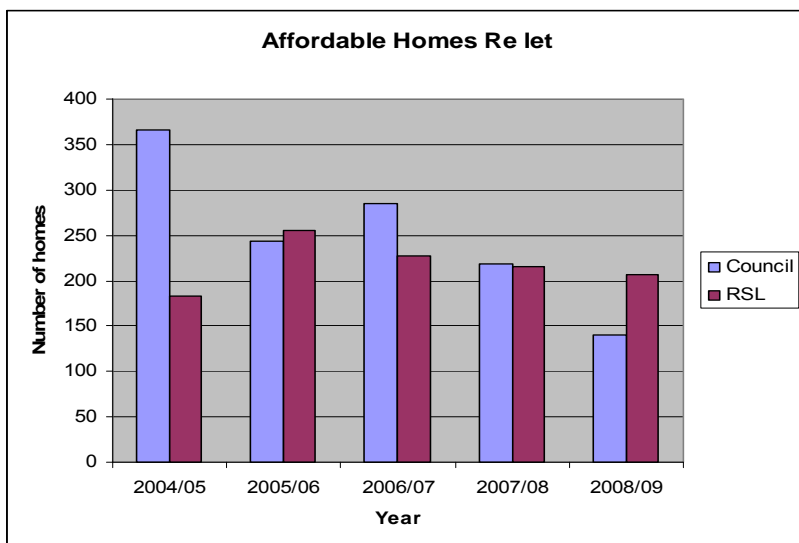
Source: East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report 2009

The need for affordable homes has outstripped supply for many years resulting in an increasing backlog of need. The supply of new affordable homes has been relatively modest with 239 homes delivered in the 5 year period 2004/05 – 2008/09 although we expect a further 110 homes to be delivered this year (2009/10).



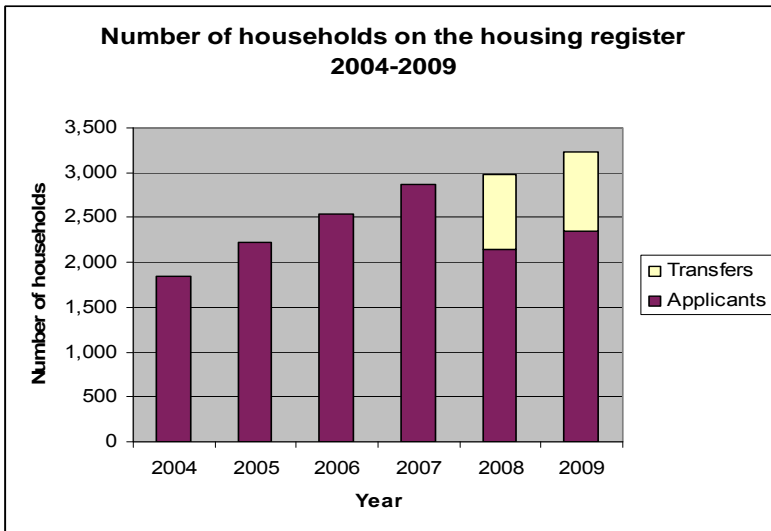
Source: CLG Live Tables (data from Local Authority Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns)

Fortunately, the supply of new homes is bolstered by existing affordable housing becoming available for re let on a regular basis becoming available on a regular basis. Over the period 2004/05-2008/09 2,340 affordable homes (Council and housing association) were re let, but as the chart below shows the number of homes becoming available for re letting has been reducing in recent years.

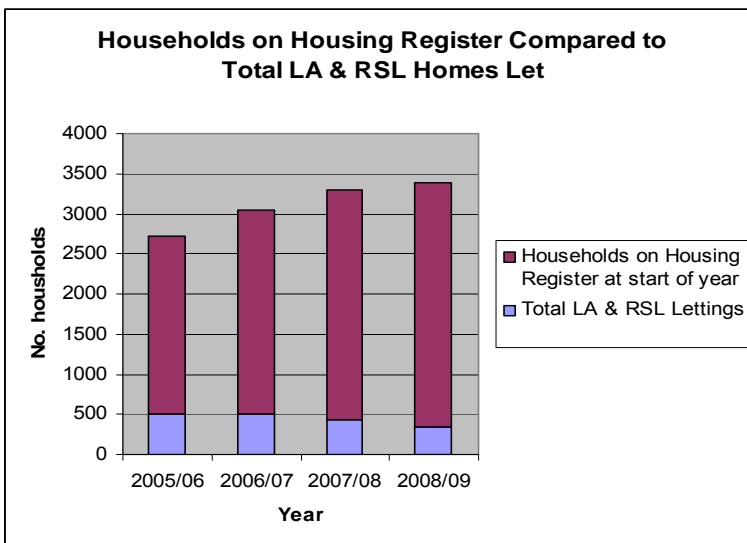


Source: CLG Live Tables (data from Local Authority Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns)

At the same time the number of people waiting for housing on the Council's Housing Register has been growing as can be seen from the table below. The register comprises existing tenants seeking transfers as well as first time applicants although the statistical breakdown for the two categories is only available for 2008 and 2009.



Source: CLG Live Tables (data from Local Authority Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns)



Source: CORE Data and CLG Live Tables

Rural Housing Need

Low incomes and disadvantage are not confined to the urban areas within the district. House prices are generally higher in the rural areas and household incomes can be low. Consequently, the accessibility of affordable housing is a significant issue in many rural settlements as is the general sustainability of important community facilities.

Future Delivery

Policy DM5 of the approved Core Strategy states that the Council will 'seek applications for residential developments to provide 30% of the total homes proposed as affordable home'.

Given the high growth approach to new housing and the identification of a number of strategic developments there will be a significant opportunity to deliver more affordable homes over the life of the Strategy and beyond. However, the future availability of public subsidy to assist with the delivery of affordable housing is very uncertain and the HCA has already indicated that it expects output of new affordable homes to fall by 34% next year from the 45,500 target for the financial year 2019-10 to 29,900 in 2010-11. The output of social rented homes is expected to half from 30,390 in 2008-09 to 14,500 in 2010-11. This is largely due to higher grant levels and pulling forward expenditure in the current Comprehensive Spending Review period to offset falling private sector building.

Our Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015 sets a target for the delivery of 650 new affordable homes over the life of the Strategy with 250 homes being delivered in the first two years.

More information about the need for affordable housing and how it might be delivered across the district is set out in the following documents:

East Kent SHMA 2009:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/East%20Kent%20Main%20Report%20Final.pdf>

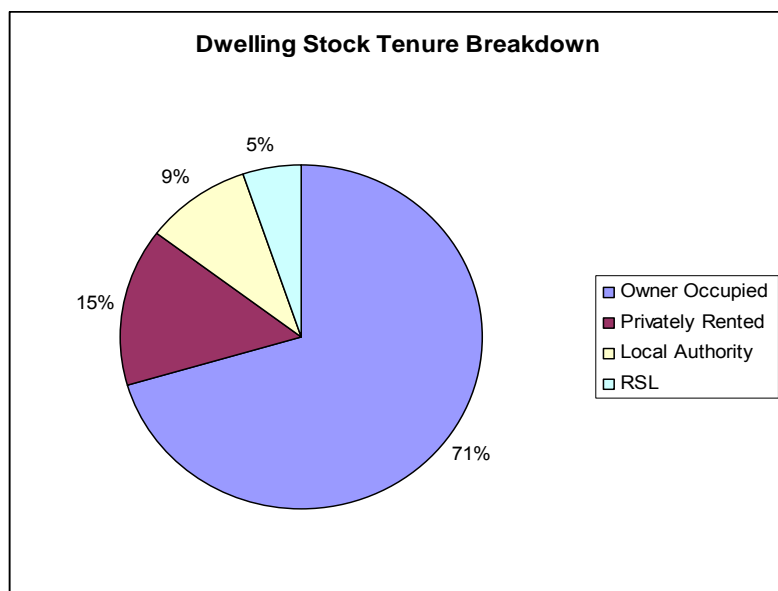
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/East%20Kent%20Annexes%20Final.pdf>

Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Consultation%20Draft%20ADHP.doc>

Improving the Existing Housing Stock

Approximately 85% of the housing stock in the District is privately owned, which is consistent with the Kent and South East average, but slightly higher than the average for England (83.6%)¹. The privately rented stock is over 20% higher than the national average and the proportion of social housing is appreciably lower than nationally.



Source: HSSA 2008 & House Condition Survey 2008

We have substantial numbers of private sector homes built before the First World War, nearly 75% more than the national average. The figures show that almost 55% of our private sector homes were built before the Second World War compared with 39% nationally.

One of the most striking features of the private sector stock in Dover is the high proportion of terraced homes, which is substantially higher than the national average and the relatively low proportion of flats. The stock profile imbalance and the relatively high proportion of terraced homes is identified as a particular issue in the Core Strategy in terms of its impact on Dover's housing market appeal and the Strategy recognises the need to "broaden the range and improve the market perception of the District's and especially Dover's housing offer"².

Stock Condition

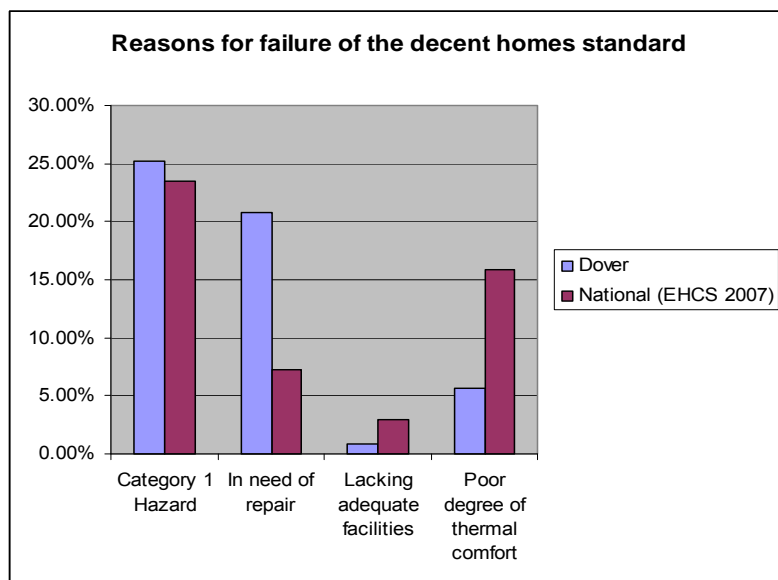
¹ CLG, Local authority housing strategy and business plan data

² LDF Core Strategy

A house condition Survey carried out in 2001 found that Dover district had the highest percentage of unfit homes in the south east.

In 2008 a further survey was carried out. Direct comparisons with the 2001 figures are difficult to make as the condition of housing is now measured on the basis of a hazard rating system rather than unfitness measure. However, this new system shows that the rate of serious (Category 1³) hazards in the district's homes is 25.2% and above the national average of 23.5%⁴.

The overall rate of non decency at 41.2% is worse than the national figure of 35%. Of particular concern is the low number of vulnerable households living in decent homes which is only 50.6% compared with the target for 2010 of 70%. An estimated 3,040 homes occupied by vulnerable households would have to be made decent to meet the 2010 target previously set by Government.



Source: Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2009 & English House Condition Survey 2007

The other key findings in relation to tenure, property age and build type were as follows:

- A relatively high percentage of non decent homes in the private rented sector (65.7% compared to 45.4% nationally);
- 73.1% of pre-1919 homes are non decent and surprisingly 38.2% of homes built between 1981-1990 were also found to be non decent probably due to a combination of electric heating and inadequate insulation.
- A relatively high rate of rate of terraced homes are non decent.

The house condition surveys especially the 2001 survey also show that there is a concentration of poor housing in particular wards in Dover urban areas. These are also areas where there are relatively high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

Because of significant issues relating to the age and decency of sizeable pockets of private sector housing and the impact on vulnerable households, the Council has developed a Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 which analyses the issues in more detail and sets out specific actions for addressing many of the problems.

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Dover%20Draft%20PSHS%20Consultation%20Draft%20final.doc>

Making Best Use of the Housing Stock

³ Highest hazard rating as defined by the Housing Health & Safety Rating System

⁴ English House Condition Survey 2007

Empty Homes

The Council recognises the need to make best use of the available housing stock and that empty homes are a waste of a valuable resource and can have an adverse impact on the community. It also understands that homes may become empty for short periods of time whilst they are renovated or improved prior to letting or sale. These homes do not generally represent a problem. It is the number of homes that have been empty for more than six months (long term empty homes) that we are particularly concerned about.

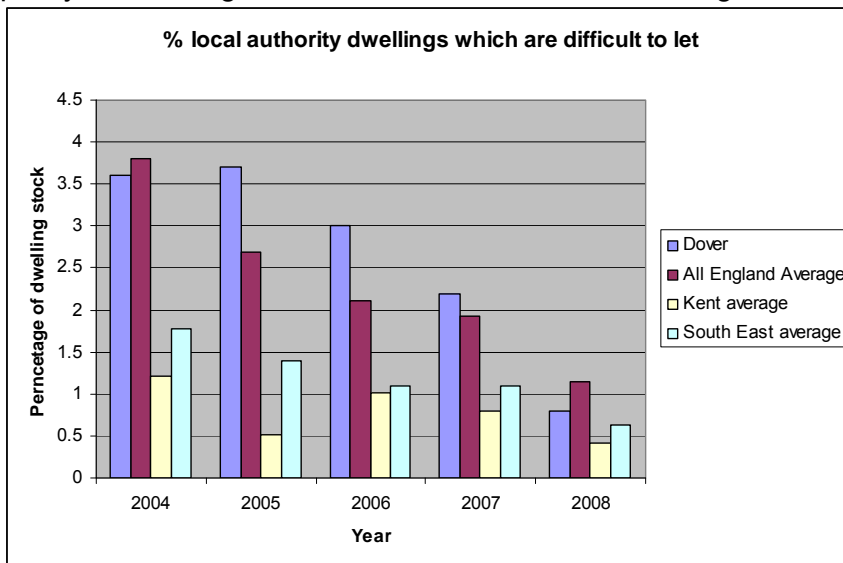
As at 1 April 2009 there were 2006 empty homes in Dover district, of which 951 had been empty for six months or more. The proportion of empty homes (1.8% of the total stock) was higher than the national average (1.3%) and Dover district had the second highest percentage of long term empty homes in Kent.

In recognition of the scale of the problem and the wasted resources the Council has adopted an Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015 which provides more detailed information about the issue, the tools that the Council will use to tackle the problem and a range of actions it intends to carry out:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/Empty%20Homes%20Strategy%20-%20DRAFT.pdf>

Local Authority Stock

The Council has taken action in recent years to address the problem of sheltered housing which was no longer 'fit for purpose'. This has followed a tenant centered approach to the closure of schemes and re housing of residents designed to minimise the impact on tenants as much as possible. The project is nearing completion and the table below shows the effectiveness of the policy in reducing the number of difficult to let dwellings.



Source: CLG, Local authority housing strategy and business plan data

Under occupation

Underoccupied social housing inevitably means that it isn't being used to its full potential. However some level of under occupation of stock is not necessarily a bad thing. Our primary concern must be to consider whether or not we making the very best use of our stock in the context of wider policies on tackling social exclusion and on building mixed and sustainable communities. Some level of underoccupation may be an appropriate way to reduce child densities in an area with high numbers of children.

We are currently working with a range of partners across East Kent to explore the issue in more detail and to develop an approach to reducing underoccupation where this is appropriate.

Adapted Homes

Adaptations to homes play an important role in helping disabled people remain in comfort and safety in their own homes. The Council plays a key role by carrying out adaptations directly within the Council's own housing stock and working with a local Home Improvement Agency to provide Disabled Facility Grant adaptations in the private sector.

Adaptations range from small items such as handrails through to specialist showers and major alterations to provide a downstairs bedroom or bathroom. It is important that where social housing has been specially adapted and subsequently becomes vacant and available for letting, we should try to make best use of it. This is also referred to in the Supporting People Needs Assessment Report 2009 which states that there is a need to '*ensure that the existing supplies of supported housing or adapted accommodation is effectively utilised*'.

The Council maintains a comprehensive database of all homes that have been adapted over the past 16 years and uses this information when letting homes to try and select tenants with an appropriate need. We will look to see how we may be able to develop and share good practice with other providers of social housing in the district.

Social & Health Inequality

Social and economic disadvantage is a significant issue although there is great variance across the district with the problem concentrated in a small number of wards. There are six wards within the district that are in the top 20% of most deprived wards in Kent and Medway.

We know that '*the people most affected by long term health problems and disability are more likely to live in the deprived areas of Kent*'⁵ which includes parts of Dover town. This is shown in sharp relief by average life expectancy figures which show a difference of 8.7 years between the best and worst wards in the district⁶.

There is a strong cyclical relationship between housing, health and education and a '*close link between inequalities and poor health outcomes*'⁷. Therefore, as part of the development of this Strategy we will undertake a Health Impact Assessment in partnership with the Eastern & Coastal Kent PCT to better understand the relationships between housing and health and identify any specific actions we can take to help reduce health inequality.

⁵ Eastern & Coastal Kent PCT Strategic Commissioning Plan 2008-2013

⁶ Kent Public Health Observatory: Dover Local Authority Inequalities Profile Report 2008

⁷ Eastern & Coastal Kent PCT Strategic Commissioning Plan 2008-2013

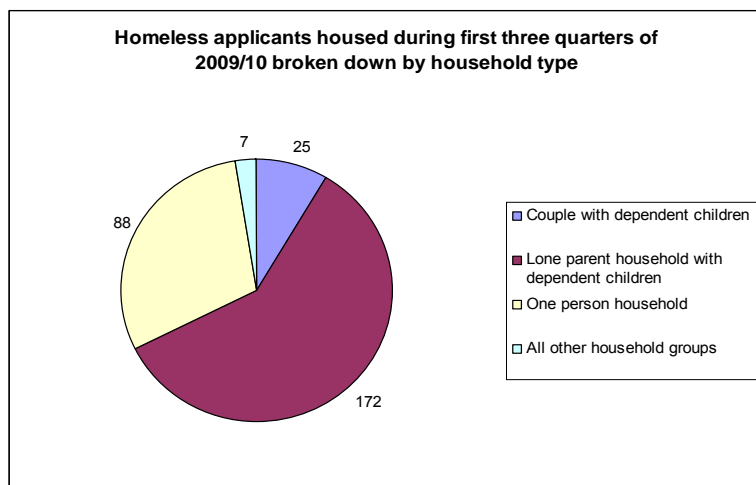
number of homeless households in 'priority need' falling consistently year on year over the past 4 years.

In 2008, together with other local authority partners and a range of key stakeholders the Council helped develop an East Kent Homelessness Strategy with a range of actions designed to address the problem homeless across the sub region. Delivery of the action plan is monitored by the East Kent Homelessness Forum. The Strategy is currently being refreshed and the action plan reviewed.

	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010*
Households accepted as homeless and in priority need	97	90	83	61	49
Eligible homeless and in priority need but intentionally homeless	6	2	11	1	1
Eligible homeless but not in priority need	3	2	6	4	1
Eligible but not homeless	34	34	52	30	37
Total decisions	140	128	152	96	88

Source: P1E returns *Data is for first three quarters of the year

We are acutely aware that we cannot afford to be complacent in addressing homelessness and that official statistics can often mask significant numbers of 'hidden homeless', for example people who don't meet the definition of being in priority need (single people in the main) and concealed households who may be living in severely overcrowded conditions with friends or family.



Source: P1E returns

We must also be prepared for the potential impact of adverse economic conditions both directly, in respect of home repossessions and also indirectly in terms of the health and social impact of unemployment. Increased unemployment and higher mortgage interest rates have resulted in an increase in the number of house repossessions nationally with many regions seeing repossessions increase by more than 15% between the first quarters of 2007 and 2008.

While the overall trend in respect of homelessness has been downwards in recent years we have more recently seen a worrying increase in the number of young people (under 18) becoming homeless.

According to a research summary published by Communities and Local Government in 2008, young people aged 16 and 17 accepted as homeless were an extremely vulnerable group who had often experienced educational and/or family disruption, violence at home and mental health and/or substance misuse problems.

In the first three quarters of 2009/10 14 young people aged 16 or 17 were accepted as homeless and in need of housing. This is a trend which is reflected across Kent and which is identified as a major issue in the Kent Supporting People Strategy.

The Supporting People Needs Analysis Report 2009 recognises that the highest numbers of acceptances for this particular client group were recorded in Shepway, Dover, and Dartford-all districts without or with only minimal dedicated provision for this client group. The report identifies a

need for more appropriate accommodation-based support services, including some type of emergency provision, for young people at risk and recognises that there is currently only minimal provision in Dover district.

The issue of homelessness and youth homelessness are addressed in the East Kent Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 and the Council's Youth Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/Youth%20Homelessness%20strategy.pdf>

Older People

The importance of addressing the issue of an increasing proportion of older households has already been referred to. In response to this the Council has developed an Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015. The Strategy's key findings are as follows:

- The older population of Dover district is larger than the housing market and county averages. By 2026, those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%. This highlights the need to tackle the housing needs of older people now and in the future.
- Proportions of older people vary across the district by over 100% but intensive domiciliary care inputs indicate that levels of dependency do not match the distribution: this needs to be further investigated in order to effectively target services
- Although relatively well off now, the number of older people on lower incomes will increase over time and this has implications for the ability of people to meet their own housing needs
- Currently, 48% all single person households in the Dover district are aged over 65 years and this will increase over time, so it is particularly important that new smaller homes should meet lifetime standards including lift access to upper floors
- A higher than average proportion of our older population is likely to live alone, with implications of isolation and mental ill health. It is important that this is considered when making decisions about local community facilities and support services
- Rates of respiratory illnesses are relatively high; these are particularly linked to cold and damp conditions, so improving these issues will particularly contribute to better health amongst older people
- 22% all households in private housing include someone with a disability and this proportion is likely to be much higher in social housing. These numbers will increase as the population ages, indicating increasing demands for adaptations
- Falls are the leading cause of injury and death amongst the over-75s; adaptations and falls prevention advice and practical measures significantly reduce disabilities arising from falls.
- Increasing rates of dementia need to be considered when designing supported housing and services for older people. Research indicates that the incidence of dementia will grow by up to 50% over the next 20 years.
- Over 8,000 retired households live in homes that are more difficult to keep warm, and over 1,100 live in homes that are very cold and expensive to heat. This places occupiers at severe risk of ill health
- People who are 85 or over are more likely than the average to live in private rented properties. 40% all private rented homes fail the decent homes standard so this highlights the need to ensure that all agencies visiting older people at home are aware of and refer issues to the private sector housing team.
- There is unmet demand for affordable rented homes amongst older people; mostly for retirement (but not sheltered) units of two or more bedrooms. The projected demand by 2026 represents 78% of all additional affordable homes expected to be built in this area.
- There is no apparent unmet need for market retirement housing, although this may change over time as the housing market recovers and the older population grows.
- There is a need for almost 190 additional units of extra care housing: half for people with high dependency levels and half to provide a more mixed and lively community.
- Older people want, and expect, to stay in their own homes and most expect to stay in their current home for the rest of their life.

The Supporting People Needs Assessment Report 2009 identifies a likely future need for more extra care accommodation for frail elderly people across the districts/boroughs where the highest proportions of older persons live. The Council has already worked in partnership with Kent County Council to enable the delivery of one extra care scheme in Dover through a Private Finance Initiative and a further scheme is planned.

A more detailed analysis of housing issues relating to older people can be found in the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Consultation%20draft%20OPHS%20strategy.doc>

People with Mental Health Problems

Mental ill health has a well established link with deprivation. In terms of specific aspects of deprivation, unemployment is associated with social exclusion, which has a number of adverse effects, including reduced psychological wellbeing and a greater incidence of self-harm, depression and anxiety.

Research estimates that:

- 300 out of 1000 people will experience mental health problems every year and over two thirds will consult their GP.
- 102 out of 1000 people will be diagnosed with a mental health problem.
- 24 out of 1000 people will be referred to specialist psychiatric services

Dover has a significantly worse than England average in respect of the number of people claiming incapacity benefit for mental illness⁸.

The Supporting People Needs Assessment Report 2009 recognises that housing-related support services will be an important element in the on-going shift towards community-based alternatives to hospital admission and that there may be a need for longer-term accommodation-based services in some districts such as Dover where there is currently no or only minimal provision.

Kent & Medway Partnership Trust has been developing a new model to deliver mental health services in the community, part of which includes the development of intensive supported housing for people with severe mental health problems. These are people who have traditionally been unable to sustain tenancies either at an independent level or within current supported accommodation, but do not require residential care. The East Kent Local Housing Authorities, KCC and KMPT have supported the development of this service. They have committed to developing 33 units of accommodation across the 6 East Kent local authorities. This service is known as Horizons and will provide this vulnerable group of people the opportunity to reintegrate with their local communities with the level of support that they need to ensure that this is successful.

A problem highlighted by the KMPT is the discharge of patients who no longer require hospital treatment but who find it difficult to sustain tenancies either at an independent level or within traditional supported accommodation. A census of adult in-patients carried out during 2005 identified 145 inpatients whose 'home' locality was Dover/Deal but who had no discharge address. This indicates that there is a need to provide a level of supported accommodation for a complex and hard to move on group of people.

We also know from research that 8-15% of people on their caseload are likely to have a combined mental health and substance abuse (dual diagnosis) problem. There is currently no provision for this group and the development of services is identified as one of the highest priorities in the draft Supporting People strategy 2010-2015.

We are currently working with KMPT to deliver specialist housing to help meet these identified needs.

People with Learning Disabilities

⁸ Association of Public Health Observatories and Department of Health

The Government's strategy 'Valuing People' identifies over 1.4 million people with learning disabilities aged between 18-74 of whom 1.2 million have some form of mild to moderate Learning Disability (or about 2.5% of the population) and 160,000 to 210,000 have a severe or profound learning disability.

Research shows that the health of people with learning disabilities is much worse than the rest of the population (they are 58 times more likely to die before the age of 50 than the rest of the population). There is also a link between people with mild to modest learning disabilities and poverty; rates are higher in areas of deprivation and urban areas, and we know that many people with mild learning difficulties have a complex range of needs with many also having mental health problems or misusing substances.

The Supporting People Needs Assessment report 2009 identifies gaps in service provision in relation to the level of choice of supported accommodation for people moving on from residential care to more independent accommodation and a need for transitional supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities currently living with ageing carers both in the form of long and short-term supported housing.

We know that People with learning disabilities can live successfully in many different kinds of housing and that in many cases they can cope with a full range of tenures, including owning their own homes.

Additional specialist accommodation has recently been provided in Dover through a Private Finance Initiative partnership and we are currently implementing the Kent Housing Action Plan for people with a learning disability. This has involved setting up regular local meetings of key stakeholders and a survey to establish the housing needs of people with a learning disability. Further work will include the provision of information in new easy to read/access formats and inter agency and stakeholder training.

People with a Physical Disability

As referred to previously, the Council meets the needs of many physically disabled people through its own Council house adaptations programme and the Disabled Facilities Grant programme providing adaptations in the private sector.

DFGs are part government/part Council funded (60/40) and we recognise that the cost of future adaptations could be significantly reduced when new homes are designed and built. The additional 'up front' build cost is relatively small compared to the potential future cost of adaptations. We will therefore work with housing association and developer partners to maximise the number of new homes that are built to a recognised 'Lifetime Homes' standard.

Core⁹ data in respect of local authority lettings indicates that over the three year period 2006/07 – 2008/09, 48 homes were let to households where at least one member is a wheelchair user. We will therefore also seek to provide a small number of specially designed homes for wheelchair users within future affordable housing schemes.

People with Substance Misuse Problems

Alcohol and drug misuse is commonly linked to housing problems with 14% of people who accessed structured treatment in the County in 2008/09 classed as having no fixed abode or having housing problems, i.e. were in unsettled short-term accommodation.

Floating support services can provide an effective means of helping people with a substance misuse problem to sustain tenancies and continue living independently. Between April 2008 and March 2009 the highest referral rates of 'people with drug problems' for floating support were

⁹ The COntinuous REcording System for England (analysis of local authority and RSL lettings)

recorded in Dover. The needs assessment carried out by Supporting People indicates that current specialist floating support services seem to meet existing need.

Ex-offenders

Being released from prison without a home to go to is a common cause of homelessness and offenders are one of the client groups least likely to be accepted as statutorily homeless. A significant proportion of ex-offenders have drug and alcohol problems. National research suggests that up to 55% of prisoners have no stable home to return to and that a homeless ex-offender is twice as likely to re-offend as one with a stable home.

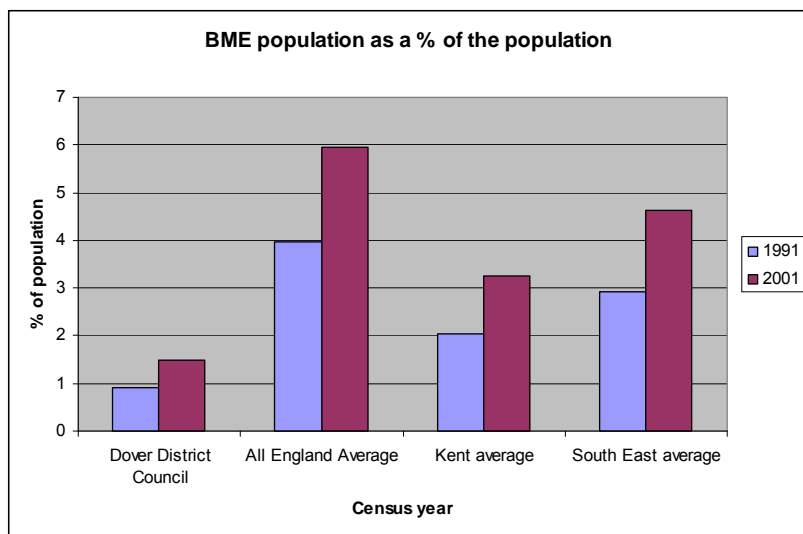
Currently Dover District has 16 units of short term supported accommodation to meet the needs of this group, which is more than all other Kent local authorities with the exception of Maidstone.

The Supporting People Needs Assessment Report 2009 highlights a need a need for more dedicated accommodation-based provision for ex-offenders.

Equality & Diversity

Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Households

On the basis of 2001 Census data the percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic households living in the district is relatively small, significantly less than the South East average and only grew by 0.6% between 1991 and 2001.



Source: Census 2001

However, we are aware that this information is old and that the situation may well have changed. Ethnic group population estimates for mid 2007 produced by the Office for National Statistics indicate that the non white British population of the district is 6.7% and that the non white population is 3.6%.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there may be a significant Eastern European community living in a specific area within Dover. Our Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 refers to our belief that some of the worst privately rented accommodation is occupied by non British ethnic groups in the town centre of Dover but, that because we rarely receive enquiries from them, our understanding of any specific needs they may have is very limited.

There are recording mechanisms that we can use to monitor some key aspects of service delivery to BME households such as lettings and homelessness and we have undertaken a customer profiling survey of our own tenants so that we can ensure our management services

are responsive to BME needs. However, we recognise the need to take a more proactive approach in understanding BME housing needs whether this is in terms of improving access to information and services or to specialist housing. We will therefore be identifying ways that we can most effectively engage with these groups in the future.

Gypsies & Travellers

Gypsies and Travellers are recognised as amongst the most disadvantaged BME groups¹⁰ in the country, and it is as important to try to meet their housing needs, as it is for the settled community.

In 2007, the four East Kent local authorities (Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Shepway District Council, and Thanet District Council), undertook a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). The aim of the GTAA was to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the sub-region from 2007 – 2011; and then from 2012 –2017 in accordance with CLG guidance.

The study found quite high proportions of households suffering poor health especially those who were living on the roadside.

In terms of additional pitch provision the study identified a need for an additional 3 pitches up to 2012 and a further 4 during the period 2012-2017.

In terms of accommodation preferences, 97% of Gypsies and Travellers who responded to the survey indicated that they would prefer to live on either a private or local authority site. None said that they wanted to live in a house or bungalow.

Since the East Kent study was conducted the South East Regional Assembly has, as part of a partial review of the South East Plan carried out its own consultation and formulated preferred options in respect of site provision across the County. These will be subject to an Examination in Public scheduled to take place in February 2010 and it is anticipated that a report will be published in Spring/early Summer 2010.

¹⁰ The 1976 Race Relations Act recognises Gypsies and Irish travellers as an ethnic group