

Creating Homes, Building Communities

DRAFT

**York Housing Strategy
2011-2015**



Contents

Foreword	X
Executive summary	X
Introduction	X
The York context	X
Local housing priorities:	X
• Improve access to housing services, advice and support	X
• Make best use of the existing housing stock	X
• Maximise the supply of decent, environmentally sustainable homes	X
• Improve the condition and energy efficiency of existing homes and create attractive neighbourhoods	X
• Reduce homelessness	X
• Strengthen partnership working	X
Making sure we deliver	X
Contact details and further information	X
Appendices	
1. Strategy Action plan	

Foreword

Executive Member

Plain English:

We've tried to make this document as readable as possible by minimising 'jargon' and technical words. However, there may still be words you are not familiar with, so we've produced a helpful guide. This available on the council's website at X or by requesting a hard copy using the contact details listed on page X.

Executive summary

This strategy sets out what City of York Council and its partners will do to address key housing issues facing York. It provides the framework within which investment priorities will be made up to 2015. Excellent progress was made delivering the last housing strategy 2006-9, contributing significantly to people's health, prosperity, wellbeing and the wider York economy.

We know there is still more to do. Like many areas, York faces a number of ongoing challenges, such as a lack of affordable homes, pockets of poor house condition, a need to reduce carbon emissions and homes and neighbourhoods not designed to meet the needs of older people.

These are challenging times. The national economic backdrop and moves to cut the budget deficit are bringing additional pressures on household incomes. We can anticipate growing demands for housing and housing services at a time when the supply of new homes remains constrained. Services that help people make informed housing choices, plan ahead, sustain their homes and make best use of the existing housing stock will be critical to ensure demand for more expensive homelessness services is minimised.

National housing policy is changing fast, presenting new challenges and opportunities, such as those that transfer more power to local communities.

Housing issues cannot be addressed by one agency alone but are often best tackled by pooling knowledge, expertise and resources. Joint working between key agencies now exists at the regional, sub-regional and local levels, backed up by detailed strategies and investment plans.

A review of the housing market, housing conditions and housing needs in York highlighted areas we need to prioritise over the next few years:

- **Improve access to housing and housing services, including appropriate information, advice and support:** Knowing what housing options are available and where to go for help are set to become increasingly important in the years ahead so people can plan, make informed choices and avoid a housing crisis.
- **Make best use of the existing housing stock:** The economic slowdown presents challenges to new housing supply. Making better use of the existing homes is one way of minimising future demand.
- **Maximise the supply of decent environmentally sustainable homes that people can afford:** We must maintain a strong focus on the key housing sites, such as York North West, which in turn will underpin future economic growth.
- **Improve the condition, energy efficiency and suitability of homes and create attractive, sustainable neighbourhoods:** Ensuring homes remain suitable to our needs as we get older helps maximise use of the existing stock and underpins good quality of life. Cutting carbon emissions is good for the environment and means people spend less on energy.
- **Reduce homelessness and tackle the causes of homelessness:** By preventing homelessness we can help households avoid its damaging affects and reduce overall costs.
- **Develop effective partnership working:** Joint working on housing issues has been key to the achievements made to date. We know there are partnerships we can strengthen further, particularly around housing and health.

Introduction

Overview

Good housing is central people's health, prosperity and well being. There is strong evidence that poor housing results in educational under-achievement, contributes to crime and offending and leads to poor health outcomes that cost the NHS £2.5 billion per year.¹ Over a third of greenhouse gasses come from domestic energy consumption, so ensuring our homes are well insulated and sustainable can contribute significantly to carbon reduction. Improving the quality of the local housing 'offer', delivering a level of housing supply that meets demand and tackling the problems of housing affordability underpins economic growth and the competitiveness of the city.

This strategy sets out what City of York Council and its partners will do to address the key housing issues facing York. As an overarching strategy, it picks up some of the key priorities within existing plans. It provides a framework around which investment decisions will be made, coordinated action taken and progress measured.

Excellent progress was made delivering the last housing strategy 2006-2009. Whilst celebrating these achievements, we know there is more to do. The supply of new homes has not kept pace with demand, fuelling house prices and preventing aspiring homeowners gaining a foot on the property ladder. The demand for affordable homes is high with over 2,800 households waiting for a social rented home. Whilst house conditions are generally good we know there are pockets of poor condition, particularly in the private rented sector. We know that most of our homes and communities are not designed to meet people's needs as they grow older and that older people's housing options are often too limited. These and many other issues are explored in more detail throughout this document and form the basis of our future priorities.

¹ Social impact of poor housing – ECOTEC 2010

Key achievements 2006-09

- Over 250 new affordable homes delivered
- A significant increase in households prevented from being homeless
- A significant reduction in households placed in temporary accommodation
- Almost 80 per cent of vulnerable households living in homes classed as Decent
- The proportion of unfit² homes at well below the national average
- A significant increase in the energy efficiency of homes to levels well above the national average
- Very low rates of long-term empty properties³

² An unfit home is one that fails to meet Section 604 of the Housing Act 2005. Proportion dropped from 4.9 per cent in 2002 to 2.1 per cent 2008 compared to a national average of 3.0 per cent

Policy context

This strategy has been developed at a time when public finances are increasingly tight. Government has announced significant cuts across many public sector programmes. National housing policy is changing fast, presenting additional challenges and opportunities for local councils and partner agencies. Tackling the budget deficit is a key government objective and this, as well as a general slowdown in the wider economy, will undoubtedly translate into additional demands on housing and housing services.

The government has announced measures aimed at stimulating new housing supply. These include working with banks to improve access to borrowing; abolishing regional housing targets; financial incentives for council's that deliver housing growth and changes to the planning system to give more local control. The impact of such measures will take time to come through and the likelihood is new housing supply will remain constrained for some time to come.

The national economic slowdown, rising household costs and government efficiency drives are putting increasing pressure on household incomes. In York, 34 per cent of the workforce is employed in the public sector. Planned changes to Housing Benefit could also add pressure on people's ability to meet housing costs. These and other factors are likely to bring additional demands on housing advice, housing debt and related services. Effective planning will be required to ensure this does not translate into demands for more expensive homelessness services.

Uncertainty over household incomes could curtail people's willingness or ability to fund necessary home repairs and adaptations. This in turn could result in declining stock condition and overcrowding. For now, low interest rates are dampening the impact for homeowners and government has signalled its commitment to low carbon homes through various 'green deal' schemes.

As well as additional constraints and needs there will be opportunities. Government has signalled a shift towards more local control and accountability. It wants to see greater deregulation of public services

and a bigger role for the community and voluntary sectors. It wants to enable greater mobility for those in social rented homes, and more flexibility in the tenures offered by social housing providers. It is committed to changing the finance system for council housing, which could give wider scope for local control and more creative use of the existing housing stock.

Partnership working and strategic links

Many of the housing issues faced by York are common to districts across the region. Increasingly, councils and other agencies are working together within broad partnerships to tackle these issues. City of York Council is a member of the Leeds City Region, the North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Partnership and the York Local Strategic Partnership. Partnerships such as these can exert stronger influence, develop joint investment plans, share good practice and achieve better integration between housing, regeneration and economic development.

In 2008, organisations from across York came together to set out their collective long term ambitions for York. They consulted local residents and listened to those who work and do business in York. The ambitions are summarised under several headings including York;

- the sustainable city
- the thriving city
- the learning city
- the healthy city
- the inclusive city
- the safer city

It is clear housing has a important contribution to make in all these areas. For example, better housing contributes significantly to improved public health⁴. Every £1 spent on housing support to vulnerable people can save nearly £2 in reduced costs of health services and residential care. Poor housing can exacerbate levels of social exclusion, homelessness and crime and is often associated with increased risk of community breakdown and anti social behaviour. Poor housing has a particularly damaging effect on young peoples life

⁴ Spending between £2,000 and £20,000 on adaptations that enable an older person to remain in their own homes can save £6,000 per year in care costs. University of Brighton 2000.

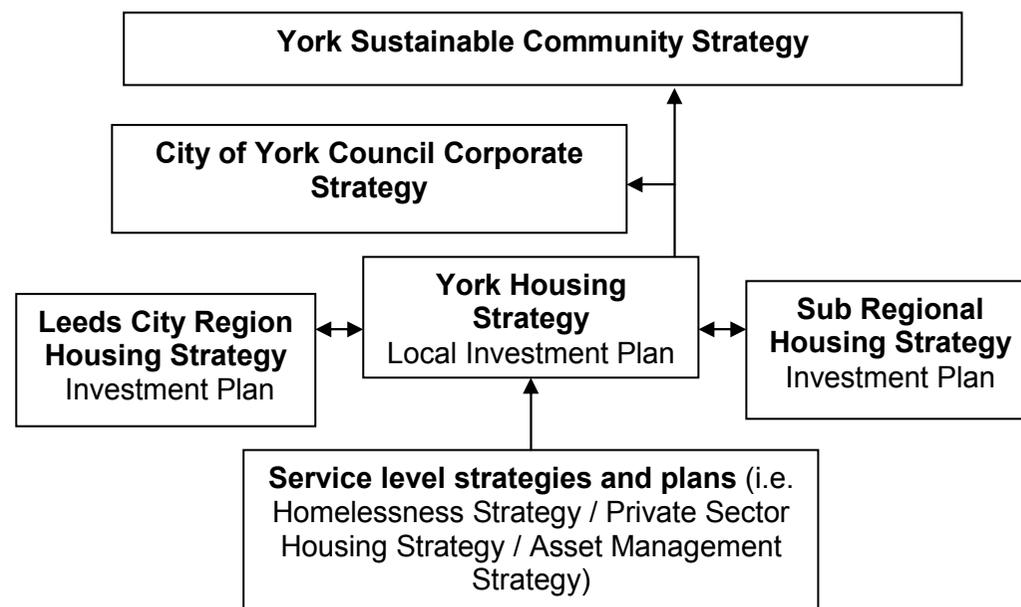
chances. It impacts on their health and emotional well being and affects their ability to perform well at school. Poor housing is also the source of significant carbon emissions so improving the housing stock will go a long way to achieving York's carbon reduction targets.

York also has a number of local partnerships responsible for implementing more specialised strategies and plans including:

- York Private Sector Housing Strategy 2008-13
- York Homelessness Strategy 2008-13
- York Older People's Housing Strategy 2011-15
- Climate Change Framework and Action Plan 2010-15
- Community Safety Plan 2008-11
- Local Development Framework
- Children and Young People's Plan 2009-12
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Health) 2010

Delivering the York Housing Strategy will require joint working between a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations. We know there are some partnerships critical to the housing agenda that could be strengthened further, such as those around poor housing and health. We will seek to continually develop these partnerships to achieve our shared goals.

Hierarchy of strategies and plans



Consultation

This strategy has been shaped by wider regional and sub-regional strategies and lower level service plans for York. Each has involved significant consultation with customers, service providers and wider stakeholders. This strategy was consulted on widely during September and October 2010.

Equalities and diversity

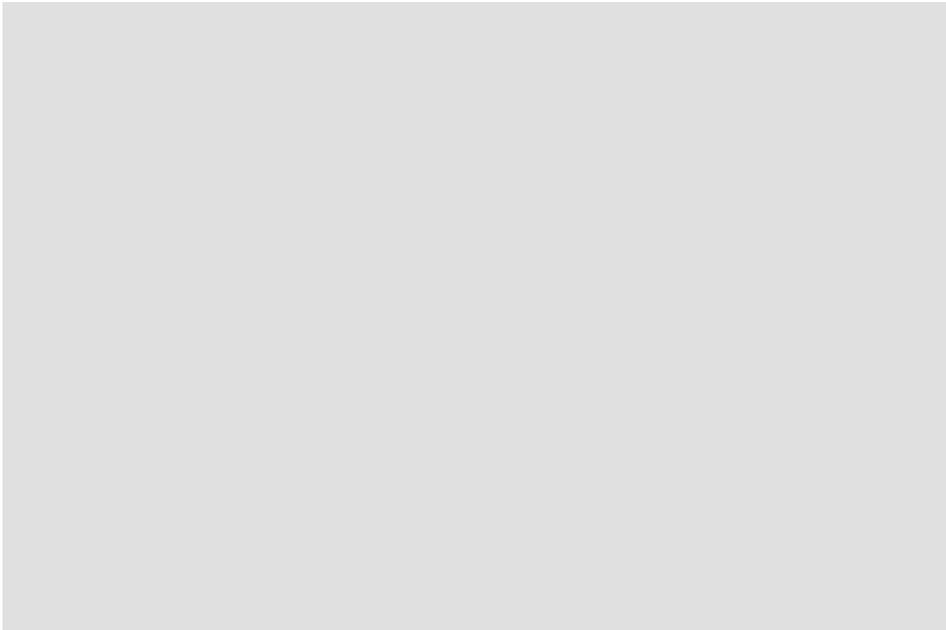
This strategy has been assessed to ensure it helps further the aims of the One City strategy 2011-14, which lays out York's approach to becoming a fairer, more inclusive and cohesive city. We know that some types of households can have very different housing outcomes to others. This strategy shows how we will work towards tackling the disparities in outcomes for people where these are not a result of personal choice. We will work to actively remove the barriers some households face in accessing particular types of housing and the

advice, information and support required to make informed housing choices.

We aim to ensure the housing and related services our partners and we provide are available to, and used by, everyone regardless of their age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or race.

Reviewing the strategy

Given the challenging policy and financial environment it will be important to regularly review the priorities set out in this strategy to ensure they remain focused on the right areas. We must make the most of opportunities that present themselves, look to constantly innovate and continue to direct the limited resources we have to where they are most needed.



The York context

The City of York is a modern commercial city renowned for its heritage. It covers an area of approximately 105 square miles made up of the historic city centre and the surrounding urban area along with a number of villages and semi rural settlements. Around 190,000 people live in the city within 87,000 households.⁵

York is increasingly diverse. The black and minority ethnic population is officially put at around 6 per cent, although a recent study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation suggests this could be a significant under estimation.⁶

The population of the city is projected to increase significantly over the next 10 years. Within this there is forecast to be a significant increase in the number of households, fuelled in part by a growing population, a trend towards smaller household size and an increasing number of older people.⁷ The higher growth rate is in the context of the many constraints, such as the 85 square miles of Green Belt that surround the city.

York is more economically prosperous than many surrounding areas and is classed as a sub-regional centre. Although recently the economic downturn has affected the York economy, employment growth is still anticipated in the future.

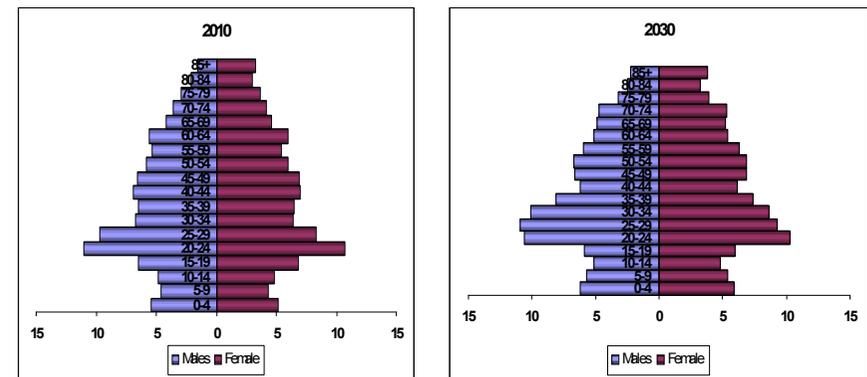
York's economy has changed significantly over the past 20 years from a strong manufacturing base towards science and technology, financial services and tourism. Almost 90 per cent of all working people in York are employed with the service sector. A thriving tourist industry services 4 million visitors to the city each year.

Whilst York is regarded as a relatively affluent city, pockets of deprivation do exist. Of the 22 council wards, 8 contain areas that are within the 20 per cent most deprived in England.⁸

Population and household growth is placed pressure on the housing market. Affordable housing is scarce and house prices are well above the regional average at around £200,000. This is against a median annual gross wage in the city of around £21,000.⁹ Given the historic nature of the city's built environment, planning and development are sensitive issues.

Around 1 in 3 households in York is an older person only household. Though large this is typical both regionally and nationally. The number of older people is expected to increase by over 30 per cent in the next 20 years, with the biggest rise being in those aged 85 and over. The highest number of older households is in the suburban areas of York.

Figure 1: Population Projection Pyramids 2006 – 2030



⁵ Based on 2006 households projections, ONS 2009

⁶ JRF report - Mapping rapidly changing minority ethnic populations: a case study for York Feb 2010.

⁷ The number of households is expected to increase by 30,000 between 2009-31. ONS 2008 projections

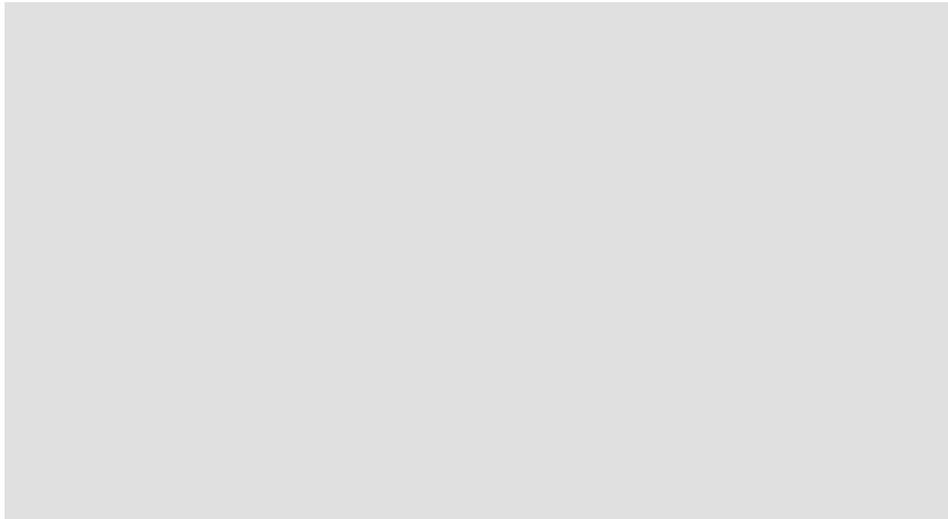
⁸ Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007

⁹ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2009

Each year around 20,000 higher education students make up approximately 11 per cent of York's population in term time. This accounts in part for the fact that York is a relatively young city, with around 10 per cent of the total population between the ages of 20-25. The student population is set to increase further as the University of York and other colleges expand.

The well being of children and young people is a key priority. York performs well by comparison to other areas but there is a continuing need to tackle variations between different groups of young people and between different parts of the city.

Overall the health of the City's population is very good, with life expectancy significantly higher than the national average. However, there is a disparity in health outcomes between the more affluent and more deprived area and closing this gap is a priority.



Local housing priorities

During the autumn of 2010 we undertook a review of housing and housing services in York. The review highlighted areas we need to make further progress on in future.

We referred to our comprehensive evidence base showing housing needs in the city, the nature and condition of the housing stock and the workings of the local housing market. We also looked at how well we delivered against the objectives set out in our last housing strategy.

We set our review against what we know about pressures facing us in the future, such as economic slowdown and the resultant threat to household incomes, public sector funding cuts, reduced supply of new homes, growing number of older households and rising demand on homelessness services.

Improve access to housing and housing services, including appropriate information, advice and support

Access to good information, advice and support is critical if people are to make informed housing choices and plan ahead. Growing economic uncertainty means more people will be anxious about how they will meet their housing costs. In the worst cases, households may need access to specialist advice and support to help prevent them losing their homes. All indications are there will be increasing demand for housing advice and information in the future, including access to debt advice and related support.

Historically, housing advice and information services have been mainly used by those facing an immediate housing crisis. Once crisis has occurred it can be much more difficult to find the right long term solution. It's much better that people access services early, so they can plan their housing moves. Of course, life doesn't always work like that, but many people, such as older households could benefit from thinking earlier about their housing options.

Sometimes those in a housing crisis have just left care or prison. It should be possible to help these people sooner. Similarly, young people should be encouraged to seek timely advice to help them plan ahead. We must develop specialist advice and information around the needs of these particular groups.

For every £1 spent on preventing a housing crisis £4 is saved for other public services. Shelter estimates the typical cost of evicting a tenants for rent arrears is between £1,900 and £3,200.

Develop an 'advanced housing options' service, linking housing advice with a much wider range of help and advice.

Quite often there are underlying issues at the root of a persons housing needs, be it worklessness, money or health problems. It is good if those seeking housing advice and information can also be guided towards help with these wider issues. Recently the council's housing advice and information service has transformed into a 'Housing Options' service. This not only seeks to broaden the range of people seeking housing advice but also assesses wider needs and helps makes links with other agencies able to offer advice and support. A priority is to continue to develop the Housing Options service so that it appeals to a wider range of customers and acts as an effective gateway into a wider range of advice and information. A key part of this process will be the move into the council's new headquarters building in 2012.

Increase awareness of the housing options for particular groups, such as older households and people with disabilities

We must ensure a the housing options of specific groups are widened. Part of this is about ensuring the right types of homes are built or adapted, and part of it is about ensuring households have access to the right information to enable them to make informed housing choices.

Older people need access to more comprehensive and trusted housing advice and information, closely linked to information about 'stay at

home' services and supported living. We must develop a range of resources aimed at older people that meet these needs.

People with learning disabilities are under represented in tenures such as private renting and home ownership compared to other households. We must develop greater awareness of these options and support people into them. In particular we must help raise the expectations and aspirations of younger disabled people about their future housing choices. There will be a significant increase in the number of young people with learning disabilities coming through to adulthood in the near future.

Increase awareness of the York social rented housing allocations framework (otherwise known as choice based lettings) and ensure all types of households are able to use it effectively

A key project over recent years has been to develop a York and North Yorkshire allocations framework. When people seek a social rented property such as a council house they need to apply to be on the York Housing Register. Once registered they are entitled to 'bid' on properties that become vacant across the York and North Yorkshire area (excluding Harrogate). Of those that 'bid', the household in the highest needs band for the longest time will be offered the property. This is called *choice based lettings* as it gives people more choice about the properties they are considered for.

A priority is to ensure widespread awareness of how this process works. We must regularly highlight the types of households obtaining accommodation through this route and be pro-active in offering those who are not successful access back to our Housing Options services.

Increase awareness of housing advice and information services for black and minority ethnic (BME) households

When we looked at the housing needs of black and minority ethnic households¹⁰ we found that their needs were largely being met in terms of the accommodation they occupied. However, we found a

¹⁰ Black and minority ethnic and migrant worker housing needs assessment 2009

need to increase awareness of, and access to, housing advice and information services for these groups.

Make best use of the existing housing stock

There are over 2,800¹¹ households on the York Housing Register waiting for an affordable social rented home and there are many others looking to access a home they can afford in the private sector. Given the constraints we face, focusing solely on building new homes will not be the answer. With the national slowdown in new housing supply we know we cannot build our way out of this problem. We must re-double our efforts to ensure existing homes are used to best effect.

Tackle under occupation

We know that around 30,402 (40 per cent) of homes in York are currently under-occupied.¹² By far the largest proportion are in the owner-occupied sector (particularly older households), with a lower but still significant proportion in the social rented sector.¹³

In 2009 twelve households benefited from a successful downsizing initiative, in which households received a small grant plus practical support to move to smaller accommodation. This in turn freed up much needed family accommodation in the social rented sector. Customers that took part in the scheme were delighted with their new homes. We must seek to replicate such initiatives where possible and develop incentives that support people to free up larger homes where this is their choice.

The government has recently announced Housing Benefit changes whereby working age social tenants deemed to be in homes bigger than they need could see reductions in the money they receive. At the

¹¹ October 2010

¹² York Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2007

¹³ Almost 100 council tenants indicated a wish to move to smaller accommodation in a recent Customer Profile survey (2010)

time of writing a parliamentary committee is examining these proposals.

Tackle long-term empty properties

In June 2010 official records showed there were under 420 long-term empty properties in York, representing 0.5 per cent of overall housing stock. When we visited these properties we found 136 were vacant for good reason, such as awaiting probate or the subject of ongoing work. Of the remaining 279, some were now occupied by the owner or being rented out. We estimate a more accurate level of long term empty properties in York is less than 250, or 0.3% of the existing housing stock. Whilst the level of long term empty properties in York is very small compared to other areas, we must continue to work with owners to return properties to use where we can. We will continue to use a combination of encouragement, support and enforcement action. Returning long-term empty properties back into use can be a long, intensive process and a balance always needs to be struck between the resources invested and likely outcomes.

Swiftly re-let homes that become vacant in the social rented sector and tackle illegal sub-letting

We must continue to re-let social rented properties swiftly to ensure the stock of social homes is playing its full part in meeting local housing need. The government has recently announced its intention to crack down on social housing tenants who are subletting their properties unlawfully, costing the industry millions of pounds each year and depriving people in genuine need of a home. We must continue to play an active part in this process.

Increase the role of the private rented sector in meeting housing need

Over recent years there has been a focus on the role the private rented sector plays in meeting housing needs. The sector offers the choice and affordability many seek, and is vital to support a flexible labour market. Though the private sector has grown in recent years, some believe there is scope for further growth, particularly as high house

prices, tighter finance and job insecurity present increasing barriers to home ownership for many.

We must continue our support to the sector and address its sometimes poor image. Whilst the sector as a whole is well managed, we know that some of the worst conditions in the city can be found here. We also know that whilst private renting offers welcome flexibility for many, others are put off by the perceived insecurity of tenure.

Private rented accommodation in York is generally geared towards 'professional' households and the large student market. Other households can sometimes face barriers to the sector, particularly the more vulnerable households. In the past year we have set up a social lettings agency (Yorhome) to help break down these barriers, increase professionalism and remove tenure insecurity. Initially this has been targeted at households at risk of homelessness but we will look to expand this in future to include a wider range of vulnerable groups.

Over the past 10 years there has been growth in buy-to let market. We must continue our work to help the sector offer the very best management standards. There have been calls recently for more 'corporate' or institutional investment in the private rental market and we must remain ready to progress these opportunities when they arise. Recently some housing associations have been moving into this area of business.

In recent years we have developed strong partnerships with local landlord bodies. Together we have organised an annual programme of landlord fairs, and developed thinking around landlord accreditation¹⁴.

Where landlords refuse to work with us we must be ready to use enforcement powers to raise standards. The York Private Sector Housing Strategy 2008-2013 outlines our priorities in greater detail. We review this strategy annually to ensure it remains focused on the right issues.

¹⁴ Accreditation means landlords must meet certain minimum standards. Accreditation schemes are used successfully in other areas and are said to help improve management standards.

Maximise the supply of decent environmentally sustainable homes that people can afford

Demand for housing in the city remains high. As we've seen, York's population is growing, as is the number of households, and in common with most places the supply of new homes in York has not kept pace with demand. This mismatch impacts on house prices, which are well above the regional average.¹⁵ The gulf between average house prices and average earnings is significant, making home ownership beyond the means of many aspiring first time buyers.¹⁶

Social housing and private renting offer alternatives to home ownership, though some people can find accessing these tenures difficult. York has a relatively low proportion of social rented homes at just 15 per cent of total stock. The proportion of private rented accommodation is slightly lower and entry-level rents are more than twice those in the social sector.

A study in 2007 found the level of housing need in the city to be amongst the highest in the North of England.¹⁷ It concluded the city had a need for an additional 1,218 affordable homes per year.

Increase housing supply, especially the supply of additional affordable homes

Whilst over 2,500 additional homes have been delivered over the past 5 years there has been a recent and rapid slow down in development activity, due in large part to the economic recession. This has had an impact on the number of affordable homes being built. Work is underway to help kick-start some of the stalled development, and a

¹⁵ The average price of a house in York is now £206,000 compared to a regional average of £166,000 (June 2010). Entry-level prices (bottom quartile) are currently £151,000. Hometrack June 2010

¹⁶ The house price to earnings ratio is around 7:1 - 2010

¹⁷ York Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2007

recent review of the council's affordable housing policy aims to encourage an uplift in planning applications.

Key to the provision of additional homes is land supply. We have identified sufficient sites for the next 5 years, and future growth options are currently being agreed through the Local Development Framework process. The challenge is to identify sufficient land to meet demand balanced against constraints such as York's historic fabric, transport infrastructure and green belt policies.

Of the sites already identified, York North West remains a top priority, the location as it is for the proposed urban eco settlement. Other key sites able to deliver significant numbers of new homes are Derwenthorpe, Nestle South, Terry's and Hungate. We must ensure these sites deliver the agreed proportion of affordable homes or appropriate commuted sums to re-invest in housing elsewhere.

Recently, the council bid for government funds to build 19 new family homes for rent in Clifton.¹⁸ The bid was successful and work to complete the scheme is now underway. The homes are due to be ready by 2012.

The coalition government has abolished 'top down' regional housing targets and is looking to local communities to play a bigger role through the planning process. It has recently announced a 'New Homes Bonus' incentive scheme to reward authorities delivering housing growth. We must be ready to explore these ideas and others to maximise additional supply. Capital grant for new affordable homes was significantly cut as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010. Instead, social housing providers will be able to offer 'affordable rents' at around 80 per cent of the local housing allowance rate to help bridge funding shortfalls.

City of York Council owns around 8,000 dwellings across the city and we must ensure these assets and those of other public sector bodies are used effectively to maximize housing supply. The council must undertake a comprehensive review of its housing assets and explore long-term development options. Other public bodies in York should

¹⁸ The outcome of the bid is unknown at the time of writing.

continue to review their asset base and ensure they register surplus land with the Homes and Communities Agency. The government has signaled its commitment to reviewing the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system and this could bring new opportunities for social sector new build.

We must continue to encourage and enable the supply of new homes across a range of tenures and prices to meet the specific needs identified. Average household size is expected to drop over the next 10 years signalling a shift in demand towards smaller dwellings. At the same time we need to redress the focus on apartments and flats over recent years to provide more family homes in attractive sustainable neighbourhoods.

High house prices mean we must continue to provide access to alternative tenure options such as low cost home ownership and flexible tenure that enable people to gain entry to owner occupation. There is likely to be a much bigger role for low cost home ownership schemes in the years ahead.

We must ensure additional affordable homes in rural neighbourhoods. Sustainable villages require a mix of household types able to support a range of local amenities such as shops, schools and other services. We must continue our work to highlight rural housing needs and work with local stakeholders to identify land for new homes.

Ensure all new homes are built to high environmental standards

York's agreed Climate Change Framework¹⁹ forcibly outlines why we must act to tackle climate change through reductions in carbon (CO2) emissions. Over a third of all CO2 emissions come from the homes we live in. We must ensure new homes meet high environmental standards. New council homes in Clifton will be built to Code for Sustainable Homes level 5²⁰ and, together with the planned 'eco settlement' on the York North West site, will act as a useful

¹⁹ A Climate Change Framework for York: Creating a Low Carbon Sustainable City Together 2010-2015

²⁰ Code for Sustainable Homes – there are 6 levels to the code with 6 being the highest (zero carbon). Currently all homes in York are built to code level 3.

demonstration of what can be achieved. We must build on and review our planning policies and set new targets to reduce CO2 emissions in new homes in line with the government's zero carbon homes target by 2016.

High standards should also include new homes and neighbourhoods that design out crime from the start. We must continue to ensure the principles of Secured By Design²¹ are considered on all new housing developments as a vital tool in creating safe and sustainable homes.

Tackle worklessness and financial exclusion

Minimising demand also means addressing some of the root causes of housing need, such as worklessness, household debt and financial exclusion. Whilst these are issues all households can face from time to time we know the risk and incidence of financial exclusion is higher in the social rented sector.

Current economic forecasts predict a rise in unemployment, at least over the next few years, which could translate into a rise in the number of people having difficulties meeting their housing costs and possibly losing their home. Significant job losses are predicted in the public sector. As York has around 34 per cent of its workers in this sector the effect here could be particularly pronounced. Support for homeowners and tenants during these difficult times needs to be a top priority.

We must continue to support initiatives that link housing advice and information to help with employment and training and continue our work preventing people losing their homes in the first place due to money problems. Recent evidence suggests a growing number of households facing housing related debt problems. One advice agency in York has reported a significant increase in the number of enquiries concerning housing possession proceedings.²² Services that help people keep their homes are likely to experience increased demand in the future and we need to plan for this.

²¹ Secured by Design - see Glossary (jargon buster)

²² Keyhouse – formerly Housing Advice Resource Project (HARP)

We must seek to encourage greater mobility within the social rented sector so that those wishing to move for employment related reasons are able to do so without any detriment to their housing.

Where we have strong evidence to show particular pockets of worklessness and/or financial exclusion we must seek to develop multi-agency responses, such as those successfully delivered in the Westfield ward over recent years. We must develop a comprehensive financial inclusion action plan showing priority areas and intended actions.

Increase the range of housing options available to older households and those with disabilities

One of the highest levels of household growth is amongst older households. The changing aspirations of older people mean they wish to remain independent in their own home for longer, rather than go into traditional 'specialist' provision. Much of the existing housing stock does not meet the needs of older people. Much of it will require some form of adaptation to ensure the occupier can remain independent and safe.

A high proportion of older households are under-occupying their homes. The reasons for this are complex, though a recent study found many older households wishing to downsize, with strong interest in continued home ownership.²³ We need homes that are low cost, low maintenance and built with the needs of the growing older in mind. Where new housing is built we must ensure it is to a 'lifetime home' standard,²⁴ in places that are well connected to local amenities and transport networks.

Where specialist provision is required by those needing higher levels of care we must ensure it serves to maximize independence by being a minimum of two bedrooms, self contained and well connected to local amenities and transport networks. A recent study of older persons

²³ It is estimated there are 15,000 older person households under occupying their homes. Almost 700 of these are within the social rented sector. Fordham Research 2007.

²⁴ Lifetime Homes Standard – see Glossary ('jargon buster') at back of document

specialist affordable housing provision in York found that much of it did not meet modern expectations and was largely offered on a rental only basis. There must be a greater range of tenure options available, including full and shared home ownership. We must develop an asset management strategy outlining options for future specialist affordable housing in York given what we know.

It is estimated there are around 4,000 adults in the York area with a learning disability and around 500 of these are known to social services. Increasingly these households aspire to the same housing choices as everyone else. Until recently the options were limited, with a significant number of households living in 'residential care' settings²⁵ with very few enjoying private rented or owner occupied homes.

The growing trend is for households to live independently in their own home with appropriate support. We must ensure greater access to a wider range of housing options for people with learning disabilities, including access to home ownership through the government's HOLD scheme.²⁶ Linked to this is the move towards personalised budgets, enabling those that receive support to have greater choice and control over how their support is delivered.

In addition, there are a number of key challenges in planning future housing and support for such households. There are a growing number of people with complex needs and people living longer with the possibility of early dementia. Whilst supported living within mainstream housing is increasingly the norm it points to the need for some further specialist housing options for a proportion of households. We must ensure our housing investment priorities reflect the requirements for specialist housing.

Address the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople

There is a wide range of housing needs in York. One of the largest minority groups in York is Gypsies and Travellers. The Council

²⁵ In York around 27 per cent of people with a learning disability live in the family home and 12 per cent live in residential care against national averages of 55 per cent and 30 per cent respectively.

²⁶ HOLD = Home Ownership for People with Long Term Disabilities

currently provides 54 pitches on 3 sites across the city. Good quality permanent sites reduce unauthorized encampments and help improve the health, education and social outcomes. A recent study identified a net need for 19 additional pitches in York up to 2015. The housing needs of Showpeople were also assessed. This identified a need for 54 permanent pitches across York and North Yorkshire, with 13 in the York area.

The government expects local authorities to plan for the provision of sufficient permanent sites to meet identified needs and to reduce the impact unauthorized sites have on the wider community. Whilst central funding to support the delivery of new sites has been heavily cut, there could be opportunities through the proposed New Homes Bonus scheme. We must explore options for addressing this need within the emerging Local Development Framework and with our North Yorkshire partners. The recently agreed Gypsy and Traveller action plan outlines how we will work with our partners to continually improve sites and the health and wellbeing of Gypsy and Traveller households.

Ensure a planned approach to student housing

Student households represent a significant and growing proportion of all households in York. Whilst many students live in university accommodation, others live in the wider community, mainly in private rented dwellings. Whilst students are regarded as a valuable asset to the city, contributing heavily to the York economy, there has been debate about the impact student households have on the wider housing market. Part of the debate has centered on the impact concentrations of student households can have on the sustainability of host communities. A study completed in August 2010 suggests the impact student homes had over a range of environmental indicators was minimal, even when concentrations were over 25 per cent as they are in one ward in York. Further work is required to understand the impacts on a scale below ward level such as a street or super output area²⁷.

²⁷ A super output area (SOA) is an officially recognised cluster of streets below ward level boundaries.

Legislation has recently changed enabling local planning authorities to require planning permission for shared dwellings where 3 or more unrelated residents live. The council is currently considering this option subject to the more detailed analysis mentioned above. In the meantime the council must continue to work closely with landlords and higher education bodies to fully implement the Voluntary Code of Practice on Student Housing.

Improve the condition, energy efficiency and suitability of existing homes and create attractive, sustainable neighbourhoods

Newly built homes will always represent a tiny proportion of the overall housing stock. For this reason it's important to ensure existing homes are well maintained so they can continue to serve the city's housing needs well into the future. We must seek to promote and support measures that make existing homes more environmentally sustainable, to help reduce York's greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent by 2020.

Older households in particular may need additional advice and support to maintain their homes to ensure they provide a safe environment in which they can maintain independence.

We need to maximise people's housing choices by making sure all neighbourhoods in York are attractive, desirable and safe places to live.

The location, type and quality of the homes we occupy can have a significant impact on all aspects of our lives. Investing in our homes and ensuring standards are maintained goes a long way in delivering a wide range of positive outcomes.

Improve the condition and energy efficiency of existing homes

The majority of homes in York are of a good standard, in terms of both general condition and thermal efficiency. More than 80 per cent of private sector homes are classed as decent²⁸ and almost all of the 8,000 homes owned by City of York Council meet the government's Decent Homes Standard. Average energy efficiency (SAP)²⁹ ratings have risen from 47 in 2002 to 65 in 2008, well above the national average.

Where poor conditions are found, these tend to be associated with low energy efficiency and hazards such as risk of falls and excess cold. Such problems are generally found in dwellings that are either privately rented, have been poorly converted, in the inner city areas and in homes occupied by vulnerable households.

In the private sector it is primarily the responsibility of homeowners to maintain their properties. There are a number of agencies providing advice and support to homeowners and private sector tenants to help improve or adapt their homes. These include the Energy Savings Trust, the Home Improvement Agency, Safer York Partnership and Age UK.

The coalition government has stated it will encourage energy efficiency improvements to the existing private sector housing stock through initiatives such as the 'green deal' scheme. We must continue to work with government and local agencies to promote these opportunities and maximise local take up.

The total cost to address all non-decent homes in the city is estimated at around £63 million. Average equity levels for owner occupied households living in non-decent homes are estimated at £155,500 whilst average improvement expenditure for each non-decent home is £4,750. We must encourage and support access to a greater range of funding options, such as equity release, or home appreciation loans to help fund improvements, adaptation and repair.

²⁸ There are 13,700 (19.2 per cent) dwellings classed as non decent

²⁹ Energy efficiency is measured using the Standard Assessment procedure (SAP) SAP is expressed on a scale of 1-100, the higher the number the more energy efficient.

A particular focus will be on targeting poor conditions in the private rented sector. We must continue to work closely with local landlords, through regular landlord fairs and day-to-day advice and guidance. Landlord accreditation³⁰ will be something we will develop and test out in the next few years. Where must be prepared to use our enforcement powers when necessary to improve standards.

City of York Council implements an ongoing programme of planned maintenance and improvements, including those delivered through the Tenants Choice scheme. These are programmes funded through tenant's rents and help ensure the social rented housing stock is maintained to a high standard and is energy efficient.

We are on track to ensure all council owned homes meet the Decent Homes standard by 2010. We need to develop new and ambitious plans showing how we will go beyond Decent Homes over the next 5 years. Some housing providers are looking to develop 'future fit' schemes aimed at retrofitting energy efficiency improvements to existing housing stock to increase environmental sustainability. We should look to learn from these pilots and consider the scope of its application in York.

The three Gypsy and Travellers sites have undergone significant refurbishment in recent years, resulting in high levels of customer satisfaction, and we should look to ensure this is maintained by developing a set of agreed site standards.

Tackle fuel poverty

Households that spend more than 10 per cent of their income on keeping warm are said to be in fuel poverty. Whilst the incidence of fuel poverty in York is lower than that found nationally we know there are still around 6,000 private sector fuel poor households representing around 8.7 per cent of private sector households. We do not have accurate figures for fuel poverty within the social rented sector, but as around 60 per cent of social households claim some form of benefit we can assume the percentage struggling to meet their fuel bills will be at least this if not higher.

³⁰ See Glossary

Research shows the incidence of fuel poverty is not evenly distributed across the city. Not surprisingly the highest incidence is found in areas of higher economic vulnerability and with large student numbers, such as Acomb/Westfield and Fishergate wards. We know that fuel poverty in York is largely down to low household incomes rather than poor energy efficiency of homes. The long-term trends suggest energy prices will become increasing less affordable for those on low incomes.

A key challenge is to further reduce overall fuel poverty at a time of rising fuel bills and a severe slowdown in the national economy. We need to focus our work on raising household incomes through benefits, employment and training advice. Our 'Hotspots' referral scheme has brought positive outcomes for over 300 households, through generating additional benefit take up of £5,400 a year,³¹ 133 home fire safety checks, improved health outcomes and increased energy savings.

Help people remain in (or safely return to) their homes, especially those that may be at risk

A significant number of households in York have at least one member affected by a long-term illness or disability and over 3,000 require adaptations to their homes to support independent living. A large proportion of these households are elderly owner-occupiers, often with lower than average incomes but significant equity tied up in their home, and many are classed as economically vulnerable. Much of the existing housing stock was not designed with the needs of older people in mind, so a priority must be to look at how we enable people to repair and adapt their homes to support continued independence. We must invest in 'stay at home' services, such as the Handyperson scheme and home improvement advice.

As people increasingly choose to stay independent in their own home rather than live in a specialist scheme the need for effective floating support services increases, as does the need for effective home screening as people return home after a period in hospital. Meeting the costs of this support will require a wider range of funding sources,

including equity release for those that have this option. Assistive technology, such as tele-care and warden call services ('Lifeline') will play an increasing role in supporting independent living. We need to promote the benefits of this approach and ensure wider awareness of, and access to, it. The recently agreed York Older People's Housing Strategy 2010-2015 outlines in greater detail what the council and its partners will do in these areas.

There are a growing number of families with children who have complex needs. The Disabled Facilities Grants can be used to meet some of these demands, however the amount available each year is set by the government and limited. We must encourage owners to look to a wider range of funding options, such as Home Appreciation Loans to release equity. For those with the lowest financial capacity we must look to develop more mixed loan plus grant packages.

We must continue to recognise the role carers play supporting people to remain in their own home. The York carer's strategy calls for a higher profile for carers and greater awareness of the support available to them in their important role. More households with support needs means a growing number of informal carers to support them.

A priority rolled over from the last housing strategy is to develop an adapted property register. This would ensure best use of the existing housing stock and resources by directing households needing adaptations to appropriate dwellings.

Reduce anti social behaviour

The first anti social behaviour strategy for York is currently being developed. This outlines the incidence and nature of ASB and what agencies in York are doing to prevent and address it. The effects of ASB are felt not only by individuals and their families but also impact on the wider community. A review in 2008-9 found that our enforcement record was strong but that we need to develop our prevention and support activities further.

ASB services in York seek to take early intervention, prevent ASB from continuing, take enforcement action when other options have been

³¹ 2009/10

considered and promote safe neighbourhoods. We work closely with a range of other agencies in implementing this approach.

One aspect of ASB has been the growth in houses in multiple occupation (HMO). This growth is set to continue as households get smaller, student numbers increase and Housing Benefit rules change to restrict the types of accommodation people can access whilst on benefits. Occasionally such households can give rise to ASB in the form of low level environmental problems. As we've seen, recent changes to the licensing rules for such households give more powers to councils to limit the number of such homes in any one area.

Improve home security

Our research shows there are variations in levels of home security across the city. These include a greater absence of core measures in the private rented sector, converted flats, pre 1919 housing and in Micklegate, Fishergate and Guildhall wards. Elderly households and young single person households are least protected. These must be our priority areas for the future.

The Safer York Partnership (SYP) Community Safety Plan 2008-2011 sets out what agencies in York will do to create safer neighbourhoods and reduce crimes such as burglary and domestic violence. SYP do lots of work to improve home security, such as the Safer Homes handyperson scheme, alley gating schemes³² and free timers and low energy bulbs so householders can keep their lights on when out. Home safety improvement should be guided by the principles of Secured by Design.

Increase resident's involvement in decisions about their homes and neighbourhoods

There is a strong tradition in York of involving residents in the management of their neighbourhoods. Over 20 ward committees across the city agree ward-based actions plans identifying key

³² Alley gating schemes involved putting gates across the entrance to back alleys to deter burglaries and anti social behaviour

priorities for their local area, and use devolved budgets to fund improvements.

Alongside this is a framework of residents associations that work to improve the management and maintenance of local housing estates. These are supported by dedicated estate improvement grants allocated by council tenants.³³

City of York Council Housing Services is committed to using these structures and others to increase the number of people involved in the management and maintenance of their homes and neighbourhoods.

We have recently published a Housing Services Customer Engagement Strategy 2011-2014 that sets out our ambitions for customer involvement. This includes new standards against which our customers can scrutinise performance over time and determine the types of services they want in future. In our assessment of current involvement patterns we found that only a small section of our customers got involved on a regular basis. We must seek to address this by providing a wider range of ways in which people can make their views known and help direct the way services are delivered in future.

Reduce homelessness and tackle the causes of homelessness

Homelessness is the most extreme form of housing need. It can affect anyone, including families, childless couples and single people. Homelessness has many causes, some relating to the wider economy and the housing market and some more personal to the individual or household.

There is a wide range of services meeting the needs of homeless and potentially homeless people. These include housing advice and information services, the provision of temporary and permanent

³³ The estate improvement grant is funded through council house rental income.

accommodation³⁴ and services that support people to live independently and sustain their accommodation.

The three main causes of homelessness in York are:

- Parents, relatives or friends no longer able or willing to accommodate
- Relationship breakdown
- End of assured short hold tenancy

There are a number of housing policy changes planned that could see extra demands placed on homelessness services in the years ahead. These relate principally to the economic slowdown and the impact on jobs, though government spending cuts and resultant policy shifts play a role. In particular, proposed changes to Housing Benefits and the Local Housing Allowance will add additional pressures to the housing system.

The York Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 outlines how homelessness is being tackled in York and the current priorities. This is reviewed annually and will be refreshed completely during 2012 to ensure homelessness is minimised.

Prevent homelessness, particularly amongst households that most frequently present as homeless or are most vulnerable

In recent years our approach to reducing homelessness has been to focus on tackling its causes. As a result there has been a significant decline in the number of people presenting as homeless³⁵ and a large increase in the number of successful homeless preventions.³⁶ The number of people accepted as homeless has also reduced dramatically, from 433 in 2005-6 to 130 in 2009-10, signalling the success our focus on prevention has had.

³⁴ During 2009/10 almost 30 per cent of all council homes that became vacant were let to homeless households.

³⁵ 130 households were accepted as homeless in 2009/10

³⁶ In 2009/10 there were 1076 successful preventions, this is a 66 per cent increase on 2008/09

However, within these figures there are still too many young people coming through the homeless route and too many vulnerable households³⁷ whose housing needs could have been planned for much earlier. Tackling this will remain a key priority in the years ahead. Key tools are family intervention, mediation, parenting skills, tenancy support, owner occupation floating support, teenage parent housing support and joint working with Housing Benefits staff to prevent homelessness

Reduce the use of temporary accommodation

The number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced dramatically to 79 at the end of year 2009-10, far exceeding the government maximum target of 121 and a significant improvement on levels only a few years ago. There has been increased emphasis on preparing people for independent living, through increased housing support. A priority is to maintain this downward trend in the use of temporary accommodation.

End rough sleeping

The number of rough sleepers was zero the last time it was measured in March 2010. York was recently awarded regional champion status and hosted a number of 'show and tell' events. We need to focus on keeping this figure as close to zero as possible in the years ahead.

Significant advances in services have been made since publication of the last Housing Strategy for those who are homeless. York now has state-of-the-art hostel accommodation at the Arc Light and Peasholme centres.

Increase specialist provision for young people and teenage parents with babies.

³⁷ Such as those with mental health problems, drug or alcohol misuse or those leaving prison.

A key priority now is to establish a Foyer scheme³⁸ aimed at addressing the housing, training and employment needs of young people.

in achieving improved health outcomes. We must continue to develop our links with health colleagues to ensure more effective service planning and delivery.

Strengthen partnership working between key agencies where there are clear shared outcomes

Delivering this strategy effectively depends on strong local partnerships. Multi-agency groups already exist around affordable housing delivery, private sector housing, homelessness and specialist needs such as older people and people with learning disabilities. These partnerships work well in developing joint approaches to many shared issues.

Housing is a social determinant of health and many other 'social goods'. Inequalities in housing and neighbourhood conditions contribute to poor physical and mental health and wellbeing, hold back investment and undermine economic growth.

Improve partnership working with the health sector.

February 2010 saw the publication of the Marmot Review *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*, a year-long independent review into health inequalities in England which recommended, amongst other things, that housing policies should be integrated locally with health, alongside planning, transport and environmental policies to address the social determinants of health. The housing sector understands the relationship between housing and health but to date has found it difficult to engage health partners in developing integrated policy and practice.

The recent NHS White Paper, *Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS* presents the housing sector with an opportunity to establish a role

³⁸ A foyer provides affordable and safe accommodation linked to employment and training opportunities, support and a range of other services

Making sure we deliver

Funding the strategy

This strategy provides the framework within which housing investment priorities will be made up to 2015. As part of this, the strategy has informed York's Local Investment Plan for housing. The plan has been submitted to the government's Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), a body that provides financial help to local councils to deliver local priorities, centred around new affordable housing supply.

The HCAs budget was significantly reduced in the Comprehensive Spending Revue 2010. At the time of writing it's uncertain what level of funds the HCA will have to distribute locally. Government is looking to give more freedoms and powers to local authorities and other public bodies to address the expected shortfall in funds.

The Local Investment Plan makes certain investment 'asks' of the HCA to help deliver the following priorities in this strategy:

- A comprehensive housing advice and information service with strong links to wider support that help people avoid a housing crisis, given the challenging economic backdrop
- Ongoing improvements to the housing stock to tackle poor conditions, adapt properties to sustain independent living and to ensure high environmental standards
- Delivery of new affordable homes on strategic sites including York Central, British Sugar, Derwenthorpe, Terry's and Nestle South.
- Ongoing development of 'stay at home' services for older people to support independent living
- The provision of dedicated accommodation for vulnerable young people, teenage parents and those with mental illness

Other sources of funds to support this strategy include area based grants provided by central government, income raised from local taxes, and fees and income from council rents (currently ring fenced in the Housing Revenue Account).

Action plan

The action plan at the back of this document sets out our strategic aims and objectives. (NOTE: actions designed to deliver these objectives will be developed once the strategy has been agreed and in the context of the increased financial pressures arising from the Comprehensive Spending Revue 2010).

Making sure we deliver

We are committed to ensuring this strategy is delivered and that customers help monitor our progress against the action plans and targets. We will establish a steering group made up of key partners to regularly review progress and we will feed this back to customers via the council's website. We would welcome your views on any aspect of this strategy at any point so please get in touch.

Contact details and further information

Copies of this document are available to download from the City of York Council website www.york.gov.uk/housing

Printed copies and further information about this strategy are available from:

Housing Strategy Manager
City of York Council Housing Services
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Tel: 01904 554379

Appendix 1: Strategy Action Plan

Strategic Aim 1 - Improve access to housing and housing services, including appropriate information, advice and support

Priority outcomes and key actions	Why important	Target / date	Lead
Develop an 'advanced housing options' service, linking housing advice to a wider range of help and advice. Encourage people to access these services sooner, prior to the onset of a housing crisis.	Enabling people to make planned moves rather than dealing with a housing crisis results in better outcomes for people and better use of resources. An enhanced housing options service will consider the wider causes of housing needs and seek to make appropriate referrals to other sources of help and support.	Advanced Housing Options services fully in place by March 2014	HOM
Increase awareness of the housing options of particular groups, such as older households and people with disabilities.	Older households want easy access to trusted information about their housing options so they can plan ahead and make informed choices. Vulnerable groups and those with disabilities need access to specialist information to help access a wider range of housing options.	Comprehensive information available about older peoples housing and support options by October 2011.	HOM
Improve access to Housing Options services for black and minority ethnic households.	Studies have shown BME households can be isolated and not know where to go to access housing advice and information services.	Take up of services by BME households is more in line with the proportion of BME households in the city by 2015.	HOM
Increase awareness of the York social rented housing allocations framework and ensure all types of households are able to use it effectively. Ensure those that are not successful in securing a social tenancy are offered access to appropriate advice and support services.	CBL is the new framework by which households access affordable homes in York. It is important that awareness of the system is high and the process by which people access social housing is transparent. Those who bid repeatedly but are not successful should be identified and helped to consider other options.	95% customer satisfaction with CBL by March 2015.	HSEM

Strategic Aim 2 - Make best use of the existing housing stock

Priority outcomes and key actions	Why important	Target / date	Lead
Tackle under occupation.	We need to maximise use of the existing housing stock by supporting those who want to move to smaller homes.	No. of households helped to downsize = 6 per year.	HSM
Maintain, and where possible reduce, the low level of empty properties.	We need to maximise use of the existing housing stock by ensuring properties are not left empty.	Proportion of long term empty properties less than 0.5% of total housing stock annually.	HSAM
Minimise re-let times in the social rented sector and tackle illegal sub letting.	We need to ensure affordable homes are re-let as soon as possible to take pressure off the Housing Register.	Re-let times of council properties is in top 25% performance annually when compared with other similar organisations.	HOM
Increase the role of the private rented sector in meeting housing need by improving access for those who traditionally face barriers to it.	The private rented sector plays an important role in meeting local housing need, but some people find access to it difficult and sometimes standards can be poorer than those in other sectors.	No. of people helped into private rented sector through YorHomes - to be confirmed following review in December 2010	HOM

Strategic Aim 3 - Maximise the supply of decent environmentally sustainable homes that people can afford

Key objectives	Why	Target / date	Lead
Increase housing supply, especially the supply of additional affordable homes.	There is high demand for housing and affordable housing in York.	No. of additional affordable homes by March 2015 = 476.	HSM
Ensure new homes are built to high environmental standards.	We must reduce CO2 emissions to meet international targets.	All homes built to a minimum Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 / Deliver 19 Code level 5 council homes by March 2012.	HSM
Minimise demand for affordable social housing and help people avoid a housing crisis through tackling financial exclusion, worklessness and other causes of housing need.	We need to reduce demand for the limited number of affordable homes available. More and more households will be facing financial pressures in coming years and they will need access to trusted advice, information and support.	No. of households helped to remain in their home through provision of appropriate advice and support - to be confirmed December 2010	HOM
Increase the range of housing options available to older households and people with disabilities.	We need more homes suitable for older people to support independence and choice. People with disabilities can sometimes face barriers to certain types of housing.	All homes built to Lifetime Homes standard by 2013 / Reduced disparities in housing outcomes for different types of households during the lifetime of the strategy.	HSM
Address the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Show people.	Research has shown additional need for Gypsy, Traveller and Show people sites across North Yorkshire.	Appropriate additional provision identified through the LDF by 2011.	HSM
Ensure a planned approach to student housing.	Ensure a managed approach to student housing to ensure sustainable, mixed communities.	Study into impacts of student homes completed by March 2011.	PPM

Strategic Aim 4 - Improve the condition, energy efficiency and suitability of existing homes and create attractive, sustainable neighbourhoods

Key objectives	Why	Target / date	Lead
Improve the condition and energy efficiency of existing homes.	New homes represent only a small proportion of the housing stock. 25% of CO2 emissions arise from domestic energy consumption and national targets mean we need to reduce this.	Proportion of homes classed as non decent in top quartile performance by 2015 / Average private sector energy efficiency rating in top quartile performance by 2015.	HSAM
Tackle fuel poverty, particularly in the worst performing areas and amongst most vulnerable households.	Pockets of fuel poverty exist, more often related to household income rather than poor energy efficiency measures.	Under 8.7% of households in fuel poverty by 2016.	HSAM
Help people remain in (or return to) their homes, especially those that may be at risk.	Some homes are in poor condition, are poorly insulated and many are unsuitable for an ageing population. Our review found a growing need for home adaptations and help with small repairs.	No. of vulnerable people helped to stay at home: to be confirmed Dec 2010	ASCM
Tackle anti social behaviour (ASB) and improve home security.	Tackling ASB ensures neighbourhoods remain safe and attractive, widening housing choice. Ensuring people feel safe in their homes is vital to health and well being.	Community Safety Plan fully implemented by 2011 / ASB strategy agreed and fully implemented by 2013.	SYP
Increase resident involvement in decisions about their homes and neighbourhoods.	Only by working closely with residents can we ensure the right priorities have been identified and services delivered.	Housing Services Customer Engagement Strategy fully implemented by 2014.	NMU

Strategic Aim 5 - Reduce homelessness and tackle the causes of homelessness

Key objectives	Why	Target / date	Lead
Ensure homelessness services are developed and delivered within a clear strategic framework.	Preventing and addressing homelessness requires a wide range of interventions from many agencies and it's important these interventions are coordinated around agreed shared objectives.	New Homelessness Strategy agreed by March 2013.	HoSM
Prevent homelessness, especially amongst young people and households that most frequently present as homeless or are vulnerable.	Preventing a housing crisis occurring in the first place is better for households and more cost effective.	No. of people prevented from being homeless - to be confirmed Dec 2010	HoSM
Reduce the use of temporary accommodation, and develop dedicated accommodation to meet the needs of specific vulnerable groups.	The number of households in temporary accommodation has fallen significantly but we want to minimise further to improve outcomes for people.	No of people in temporary accommodation - to be confirmed Dec 2010	HoSM
End rough sleeping.	Rough sleeping is the most extreme form of housing need.	No. of people rough sleeping for sustained period = 0 annually	HoSM

Strategic Aim 6 - Strengthen partnerships between key agencies, where there are clear shared outcomes

key objectives	Why	Target / date	Lead
Ensure effective partnership working across the housing agenda	Housing problems cannot be solved by one agency alone.	Minimum of 70% of stakeholders satisfied with the way the council keeps them informed (new measure)	HSM
Establish much closer links with health colleagues	We know there are lots of shared objectives between the housing and health agendas.	Health impact assessments on housing strategies from 2013.	HSEM
Ensure the strategy remains relevant and keeps pace with changing policy.	Housing policy and legislation is changing rapidly. The reputation of the council depends on it meeting its statutory obligations and remaining at the forefront of good practice.	Annual review of Housing Strategy by September each year.	HSM

Notes: HSEM = Housing strategy and enabling manager / HSM = Housing strategy manager / HSAM = Housing standards and adaptations manager / SP = Supporting People manager / CSM = Carers strategy manager / HO = Housing Options manager / HCSCM = Home care services manager / LDFM = Local development framework manager / Comm M = Adults Social Services Commissioning Manager