



Housing Commissioning Strategy 2013-2016



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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Housing Commissioning Strategy for Kirklees 2013-2016 has been developed in consultation with our key partners and stakeholders. It builds on the work that has been undertaken as described in the council's previous housing commissioning strategy. Setting out the national and local housing context, the strategy identifies the current housing challenges faced in Kirklees, the outcomes we want to achieve and details the actions that the council and its partners will take, or will continue taking, to respond to challenges.

The Housing Commissioning Strategy is underpinned by, and contributes to, the council's wider priorities for tackling poverty, stimulating economic growth and inward investment and improving the health and well being of all residents in Kirklees. It supports and contributes to the Vision for Kirklees, as set out in the Sustainable Communities Strategy. It also complements the council's accommodation strategies for older people, people with mental health issues, people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

The strategy provides an overarching framework for housing and housing related activity in Kirklees, taking account of changes at a national, regional and local level and drawing on evidence sources such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012 and Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010.

National context

The rebalancing of the economy has had a substantial impact on the housing market. Developers and potential buyers have found it difficult to secure the finance required to build or purchase new homes. Many first time buyers have been priced out of the market because of the large deposits required to secure a mortgage, this in turn has led to new households struggling to get on to the housing ladder and demand for housing outstripping supply.

Government Policies

Since coming to power in May 2010, the Coalition Government has initiated many new pieces of legislation and consolidated them within their housing strategy "Laying the Foundations". Many of the reforms proposed for Housing, Council Tax and Welfare Benefits are impacting on every aspect of housing within Kirklees. The Localism Act will also have an impact on tenancies and local authority housing allocation policies, with social housing providers having powers to grant new tenancies on a fixed term, to operate a restricted housing register which excludes those people with no statutory priority for social housing, and to offer accommodation in the private rented sector to meet the need of people who are accepted as homeless, and in housing need.

Housing, Council Tax and Welfare Benefit changes

The Government has announced significant changes to Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance. They estimate that the changes will result in an annual reduction of £2,810 million of Government help with housing costs, the vast majority of which (£2,745 million) will be made from reductions to housing benefit. These changes to housing benefit will affect tenants, social and private landlords and strategic housing authorities across the UK¹. The impact of the changes on claimants and the council will include:

- Movement of low income tenants to cheaper properties from more expensive ones
- Greater levels of overcrowding as people may move back to live with family
- Increased applications for social housing especially single people aged 25-35 years
- Increasing repossessions. Locally the number of mortgage and landlord possession claims is 1,300 for 2011/12 which affects 1 in 136 homes²
- Greater demand on the council's housing options and support services
- Increased homelessness presentations by single people aged 25 – 35 years and a rise in the number of people in bed and breakfast accommodation.

The first of the changes was introduced on 1 April 2011. Others will follow in subsequent years with the full reform programme due to be completed by 2017. The council has already seen growing pressure on housing options services and advisory services such as Citizens Advice Bureau and debt advisers, as a result of the economic impact on people affected by the welfare reforms and job losses. The council and its partners are working proactively to inform people about the changes and to support them find appropriate solutions to meet their housing need.

¹ CIH Briefing Paper, April 2011

² Shelter, December 2012

Local Context

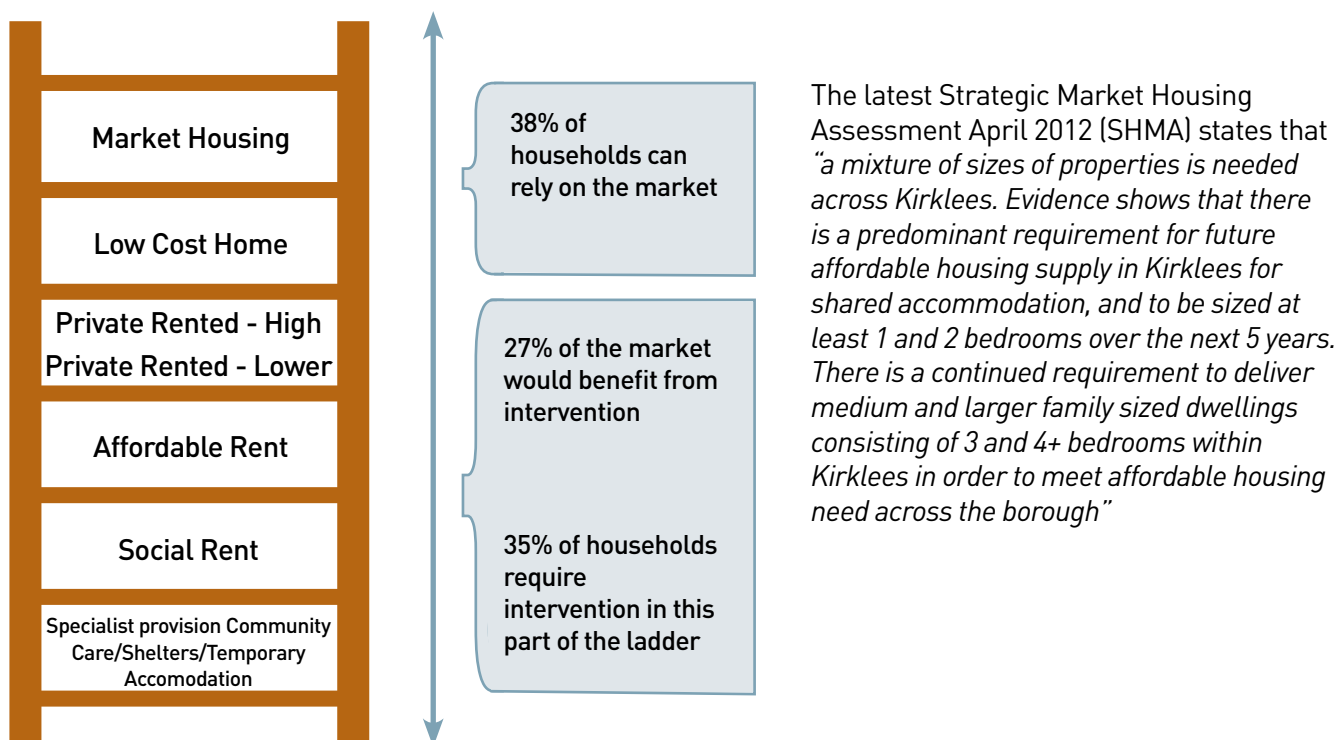
In revising the Housing Commissioning Strategy we have taken account of a number of key challenges for Kirklees. We have already done much to tackle these challenges, as illustrated by the examples below but we realise there is still more to do. Kirklees has a growing population with a predicted sharp rise in the number of older people. The district also has a higher than average proportion of households on low incomes, which means affordability of housing is an issue, with many households (particularly younger people) being unable to access market housing. The demand for social housing, including registered housing provision, far exceeds supply. Unemployment is rising; more people are coming to the council for advice and support to meet their housing need, and this trend is expected to increase as the welfare reforms impact. There is a continued need for us to work with partners to provide targeted early intervention and support to vulnerable groups of people, and to jointly commission services that enable people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, to access and maintain a settled home.

The proposed Core Strategy sets out how much new development there should be, broadly where it should be provided and policies to ensure that the strategy is delivered in a sustainable way. It represents the council's chosen way forward having considered possible alternatives and the public's comments on them and is supported by an evidence base. At this stage the council's proposals for the Core Strategy have to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for examination.

The economic crisis has had a significant impact within Kirklees. To buy a house in the lower quartile of house prices in Kirklees requires a household income of £23,143 per year. If a person or couple can't afford to buy and want to rent a house (again, lower quartile) on the open market, they need a household income of £19,152.

35% of households in Kirklees are either priced out of a market solution to their housing needs, or are living in a part of the market they cannot afford. 62% of households in Kirklees earn less than £25,000 per year. This means that for the majority of Kirklees households meeting their housing needs is absorbing a disproportionate amount of their income, leaving less money to buy goods and services.

The diagram below illustrates the housing market and ladder within Kirklees.



Evidence

We need to address the need for more homes, including affordable homes, the quality of homes particularly in the private rented sector, the effects and impacts of welfare reform and the local economy, and the needs of vulnerable people in finding and keeping a home that is right for them.

The evidence shows that in Kirklees:

Our residents

- The number of households is rising to 41,600 additional households by 2028
- Almost 20% of the population of Kirklees will be over 64 years old by 2030
- There are nearly 13,000 people actively bidding on the Housing Register –nearly 24% of applicants are under 25 years of age and 60% of applicants are under 40 - and around 2,500 property allocations per year
- 2,246 council tenants will be affected by the under occupancy changes to Housing Benefit with a total of £27,814 lost housing benefit to these tenants
- Nearly 10% increase year on year in the number of people claiming unemployment benefit – 23.9% of claimants aged 16 to 24 in the worst performing Lower Super Output Area
- 35% of Kirklees households unable to meet their housing need through “market housing”
- 62% of households in Kirklees earn less than £25,000
- 46% of respondents to Your Place Your Say (2011) said their home was not suitable for their needs
- An increasing number of people accessing council housing options and support service with over 7300 in the past 12 months.

Our homes

- Kirklees overall housing stock 179,239 properties
 - Approximately 70% of stock is owner occupied (about the same nationally)
 - 17% is affordable (slightly less than nationally)
 - Private rented sector has grown to 15% (slightly more than nationally)
- 1457 new affordable homes are needed every year, for the next 5 years
- Funding for Affordable Housing in the Yorkshire and Humber region of the Homes and Communities Agency reduced from £315 million from 2008-11 down to £181 million for 2011-15
- 3,162 homes are long term empty properties
- £246 million required to bring stock in the private sector up to standard – almost 26% of private stock is “non decent”
- Poor quality housing leading to an adverse impact on peoples’ health and wellbeing.

Celebrating success

Successful outcomes from the Housing Commissioning plans within the 2009-12 strategy include:

Enabling new homes to meet needs:

- A successful bid to the Homes and Communities Agency that resulted in a grant for £2.8 million to convert empty commercial properties in Huddersfield and Dewsbury town centres into residential accommodation
- Over 800 affordable properties were delivered between 2009 and end of March 2012 by the Regeneration and Development team working with Registered Providers, Developers and other partners.

Improving private homes and neighbourhoods:

- Reduction in the number of empty properties from 5000 at the start of the last strategy to 3162 at the end of the strategy on 31st December 2012, this is a reduction of 1838 properties over the course of 3 years.

Enabling people to meet their housing needs:

- Excellent Homes for Life PFI has provided 44 homes, 10 of which are suitable for people with disabilities. A further 422 will be completed by the end of 2014, including 140 Extra Care properties
- First Local Authority in the country to offer new affordable housing products through Quality Social Housing, who use private investment to fund new affordable homes.

Support to achieve independence and well being:

- At any one time, around 7,500 vulnerable people are being supported to access and maintain settled accommodation through housing related support
- We have reviewed the provision of housing related support in light of reducing resources and identified alternative funding streams to maintain support services for refugees, older and younger council tenants.

Embedding an early intervention and prevention approach to tackling homelessness:

- Successful mediation with over 75 young people and their families has prevented homelessness and we are working with partners to extend this capacity to continue with this approach
- Over the last 12 months we have successfully supported 34 people off the streets of Kirklees in to settled accommodation
- 240 households at risk of losing their home have been supported by specialist debt advice to prevent homelessness.

Timely and customer focused adaptations:

- Disabled people are more able to remain living independently in their own home through a more efficient adaptations service. Waiting times for an assessment have been reduced from over 32 weeks to less than 12.

Our outcomes – responding to the challenges

We recognise that we can't do everything. Nor can the Council achieve its ambitions in isolation. So, we have worked closely with our partners and stakeholders to identify the top three outcomes that we want the strategy to achieve. We have developed action plans which describe how, together with partners, we will achieve our outcomes, and who will take lead responsibility for achieving key tasks and activities within those outcomes.

Outcome 1 An appropriate supply of homes and jobs to meet the needs of a growing and aging population

There is a shortage of homes in Kirklees, with a particular need for housing that is affordable for people who cannot buy or rent a home on the open market. This means working towards achieving the target for new homes within the core strategy and supporting owners of empty homes to bring them back in to use. There is a requirement for more accommodation options that are suitable for the needs of a growing elderly population. We also need to increase the accessibility and availability of training and employment opportunities through housing development and the housing supply chain so that people are more able to rent or buy, where this is right for them.

Examples of how Outcome 1 will be achieved include:

- Implementation of the proposed core strategy will provide more land for developers to build on and therefore more sites delivering new homes, jobs and training opportunities for residents in Kirklees. In addition the core strategy will secure up to 40% affordable accommodation on all sites larger than one property. We will continue to support registered housing providers and developers in the negotiation of the amount and price of affordable housing (S.106)
- An event will be held in June 2013 to launch the Housing Commissioning Strategy and provide developers with detailed information of the affordable housing and specialist older person housing required in the district and the standards that it should be built to
- We will continue to innovate to maximise housing options and private investment within the District. We are the first Local Authority in the country to develop two new affordable housing products with Quality Social Housing providing new, high quality affordable homes to rent or buy without grant
- Empty properties have reduced significantly during 2009 to 2012, we will continue this trend through the pilot of a national loan scheme to bring empty homes back into use and further events for the owners of empty properties, building on the success of the event held in October 2012
- Excellent Homes for Life (EHL) will provide 466 affordable council homes by the end of 2014 including 140 Extra Care.

Outcome 2 Improved places to live by reducing inequalities and worklessness

We know that a safe, sustainable community, where people live in successful, thriving neighbourhoods is an important priority for people in Kirklees (Your Place Your Say survey 2011). In some areas, this is particularly challenging and we need to develop a more integrated and inclusive approach to joint working, and have policies in place that support mixed, supportive and resilient communities. There is work to do to find ways to improve the quality of some of the private stock in Kirklees, which will contribute to improved neighbourhoods and the health of people whose accommodation may be cold, damp, unsafe or overcrowded. Our approach to housing options focuses on the wider issues that affect peoples' ability to access and maintain housing, such as training, education and employment opportunities, debt advice and money management.

Examples of how Outcome 2 will be achieved include:

- Developing and agreeing with our partners an improved Housing Allocations Policy which supports and encourages successful communities
- Bringing together Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing and Streetscene and Housing services to develop an area based approach to work in a more responsive and coordinated way that delivers a service resulting in attractive and vibrant neighbourhoods
- Supporting the council and wider partnership's approach to better connected communities through engagement with pilot projects in North Kirklees to develop a sense of commonality and shared belonging and understanding and managing the perception of fairness
- Continuing work to improve access to, and the quality of, private rented sector accommodation through the use of the bond scheme and Accreditation Scheme which encourages more private landlords to improve the condition of their properties and rent them out to those in receipt of Local Housing Allowance
- Continue working with partners including, Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing, and Mears to tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency to support peoples health and wellbeing. This will be done through the Kirklees Energy Saver project, ECO and the Green Deal
- A specialist advisor from the JobCentre Plus located within the Housing Options Service to support customers into employment.

Outcome 3 Improved life chances for people by supporting them to find and keep an affordable, good quality home

People who are vulnerable or socially excluded, for example people with mental health issues, learning or physical disabilities, people with addictions to drugs and alcohol, older people and people leaving a care setting or prison, need appropriate and timely support to increase their independence and help meet their housing need. Where support is needed, budget pressures mean we must focus on a preventative approach; tackling issues promptly to prevent escalation and ensuring services are flexible and responsive, efficiently targeted and delivered appropriately. We need to develop a more cohesive and innovative approach to preventing homelessness, especially in the face of increasing numbers of households being more at risk of losing their home. Welfare reforms such as under occupancy benefit caps and changes to Local Housing Allowance means the council must consider and respond to these to mitigate impact.

Examples of how Outcome 3 will be achieved include:

- Supporting the most vulnerable people to live as independently as possible through the development of 2 hostels that will provide accommodation and support, for young people including care leavers and for single homeless adults
- Commissioning housing support that enables vulnerable people to develop the skills they need to live independently, such as budgeting, looking after their health and wellbeing, accessing training and employment and understanding tenancy rights and responsibilities
- Together with our partners, develop and have in place a Preventing Homelessness Strategy which focuses on early intervention and the development of new, creative prevention tools which target and tackle the main causes of homelessness
- Further improvements to the adaptations service. This includes introducing a key point of contact and the further streamlining of roles to provide a more effective and efficient service for our customers who need adaptations to maintain independent living at home
- Working with partners to provide support to households affected by welfare benefit changes to take action which mitigates the impacts. KNH and the Council have written to each household likely to be hit by the changes to Housing Benefit and this is being followed up by intensive engagement work with local families affected by the changes.

How will we know that outcomes have been achieved?

For each of the three outcomes that the Housing Commissioning Strategy seeks to achieve, an action plan has been developed. This identifies the key tasks and activities needed to deliver outcomes, the timescale of each objective and who will lead or be involved in making this happen.

Our performance in working to achieve outcomes will be kept under review by the Housing Executive Commissioning Group (HECG). The HECG will also ensure that the strategy remains relevant and on track in consideration of future challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Kirklees Commissioning Strategy 2013 - 2016

Introduction

This strategy is a framework for housing commissioning which sets out the key outcomes that we aim to achieve through housing and housing related activities in Kirklees.

Given the fundamental changes which are affecting housing, including changes to planning, the Localism Act, the Governments Housing Strategy – “Laying the Foundations” - and the impact of the welfare reforms, we have reviewed the previous housing commissioning strategy and amended it to reflect the new challenges facing Kirklees. In consultation with our partners and stakeholders, we have captured the changing face of housing and housing need and developed action plans to meet those challenges.

Three outcomes have been developed for Housing in Kirklees from 2013 to 2016 following the collation and review of a comprehensive evidence base. This strategy illustrates the key issues affecting Kirklees, our response and the actions we will take or will continue taking in order to achieve our outcomes. Part of the evidence based used to develop this strategy are key documents that have already developed some common issues, goals and aspirations. They are:

The proposed Core Strategy

The strategy will be adopted in early 2014, sets out how much new development there should be, broadly where it should be provided and policies to ensure that the strategy is delivered in a sustainable way. It represents the council's chosen way forward having considered possible alternatives and the public's comments on them and is supported by an evidence base. At this stage the council's proposals for the core strategy have to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for examination.

Housing Demand

Housing demand has been calculated taking into account demographic trends, leading to growth in household numbers as projected and the impact of economic factors of the ability of new households to buy or rent privately. It also factors in the expected capacity for social housing provision. This demand has been called the “effective demand”.

To meet the effective demand for new homes, 22,470 new homes are to be planned for the period 2010 to 2028.

Location of Housing

The location of the proposed housing will support the strategic approach to settlement growth by concentrating new homes in the higher tier settlements, making full use of non-green belt land supply, especially previously developed land (brownfield sites) to support regeneration, and releasing land in the green belt to secure the delivery of the strategic initiatives to provide employment land and to relieve housing pressures in south Dewsbury.

Specific sites will be identified later in a separate document as housing allocations. These will need to be developable sites capable of being delivered by certain dates within the period of the plan. It will be necessary to show that the supply can be maintained throughout the period of the plan based on the assessments of deliverability contained in Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

Core Strategy Policies

The core strategy sets out policies which will be used to determine planning applications and guide investment in infrastructure, they are:

Policy SCS27 Housing mix

Housing proposals should provide a mix of size, type and tenure which reflects changes in household composition, especially the needs of an aging population, taking into account the mix of housing in the locality. In the case of proposals on sites of 0.5 hectares or more, the council will expect the inclusion of homes incorporating design elements to ensure that they are suitable for the needs of people into later life, in accordance with the Accommodation Strategy for Older People in Kirklees.

Policy SCS28 Affordable housing

The council will negotiate with developers for the inclusion of an element of affordable homes in planning applications for market housing development of more than 1 home, including proposals involving grouped housing. The proportion of affordable homes should be sufficient to meet identified need up to a maximum of 40% of the total. The proportion may be less than the maximum where it is demonstrated that there are development costs which would otherwise prejudice the implementation of the proposal. The provision should:

- a) Cater for the type of affordable need identified in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment; and
- b) Incorporate appropriate arrangements to retain the benefits of affordability for initial and subsequent occupiers.

The affordable homes should be incorporated within the development except on small sites of 2 to 4 homes where a financial contribution is more practicable.

Exceptionally planning permission may be granted for affordable homes in small freestanding settlements on land which would not normally be permitted for housing development, where there is otherwise little prospect of meeting identified local needs particularly for housing to rent by people who work locally.

The Kirklees Partnership and sustainable community strategy

The Kirklees Partnership brings together the wide range of organisations that work together for the benefit of the people and communities of Kirklees. The Partnership has used information from a variety of sources to bring together a vision for Kirklees which is expressed and discussed in the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Kirklees. The Partnership's vision is shown below:

By 2020 Kirklees is recognised in West Yorkshire and beyond as an area of major success. Its strong economy is supported by an attractive, high quality environment, offering the best of rural and urban living. Creativity and learning are highly valued. Communities are proud of their past, but enjoy diversity, re outward looking and face the future with optimism. Both young and old find it a safe, healthy and supportive place, where there is a clear commitment that all should share in this success.

Kirklees Integrated Investment Strategy (IIS)

The IIS is the framework for investment which sets out Kirklees Council's priorities for allocating resources and attracting investment to improve the lives of residents.

It draws together shared social, economic and environmental priorities and incorporates aspects of housing, transport and connectivity, economic development, spatial planning and environmental activity for the sustainable development and regeneration of the district.

The strategy outlines the priorities needed to ensure that future growth is balanced and sustainable, making Kirklees more resilient and better placed to realise our full potential. To do this we need to "raise the bar" to encourage economic growth, develop, regeneration and a higher quality of life and "narrow the gap" by unlocking the potential in our most deprived neighbourhoods, raising aspirations, tackling under achievement and providing the right housing options.

Kirklees has many assets that we must ensure we utilise, some of which are listed below:

- Huddersfield is one of our biggest assets, serving the wider South Kirklees area with its good quality of life, successful university, diverse and talented workforce, distinctive architecture and rich cultural heritage. The town has a broad retail offer, a strategic location and connections between Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield and good cultural and leisure facilities, as well as an emerging office market which puts it in a favourable position to exploit future growth
- Dewsbury is a town with great potential and a wealth of unrealised assets including its accessible location to neighbouring towns and cities. It is the business and service hub for the north of the district
- World class manufacturers - Kirklees has particular strengths in manufacturing (it has the third largest number of people employed in the sector in the country) with a number of advanced manufacturers trading in established international markets
- We benefit from a relatively highly qualified resident population
- Kirklees already has a positive reputation for its "green" credentials and for its flourishing creative economy, both of which can be built upon
- Attractive and distinctive – Kirklees has an enviable mix of urban and rural settlements, a rich built heritage, a vibrant cultural offer, extensive green infrastructure and ready access to areas of outstanding and diverse natural beauty. As a consequence, our numerous small towns and villages have a unique and distinctive attraction for visitors and residents alike.

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Health and Wellbeing Board bring together representatives from the council and Clinical Commissioning groups and other partners. The Board is responsible for developing and delivering the Kirklees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS). The JHWS will set out how local partners will tackle the key health and wellbeing issues highlighted in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The JSNA highlights the critical role housing plays in promoting health and wellbeing; this is reflected in the vision and outcomes of the JHWS. The JHWS is particularly focussed on changing the way organisations and individuals work together to recognise the interdependence between issues, such as housing and ill health, to focus on the root causes of issues, to make the best use of reducing resources and to build resilience in individuals and communities.

Tackling Poverty Strategy

The council's activity and ambition around tackling poverty is underpinned by taking an approach that is both involving and empowering. Residents are encouraged to be more involved and engaged in the solutions, seeking to do things with people rather than to or for them.

Five strategic challenges have been developed through analysis of current local strategies and policies and by identifying where further cross service and partner contributions are required. Action plans have been developed for each strategic challenge and will be monitored and reported on quarterly basis. (See diagram 1 below).



Housing is one of the five strategic challenges and this strategy has been developed to include actions that support the delivery of the Tackling Poverty Strategy.

The Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) also has a key role in supporting individuals to take more control over their own lives. Senior Housing and Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH) staff are part of the group which meets regularly.

The FISG will co-ordinate and encourage partnerships and holistic approaches to the delivery of the four main identified strands of work which together will form the focus of the financial inclusion strategy:

Access to debt/money advice - the aim of reducing poverty, develop a strategy to maximise residents' income through the tax credit and benefit system, and reduce their expenditure through debt and other advice. Increase awareness of the organisations that provide this advice and develop effective referral systems

Access to affordable credit, banking and insurance services - Developing and implementing a strategy to increase access to appropriate affordable credit and banking services primarily, but not exclusively, through credit unions. Increase the number of people with home contents insurance.

Financial capability - Promote awareness of community based education for all age ranges to support improved financial capability.

Fuel poverty - Working with the Affordable Warmth Strategy and other partners to address fuel poverty.

Local issues, needs and trends

When refreshing this strategy we have used the best available evidence. Analysis of this evidence has identified a number of critical issues, needs and trends that informs where we are now and what can be addressed through the provision and improvement of housing and housing related activities in Kirklees.

They include:

- The need for 1457 affordable homes every year for the next 5 years ³
- Funding for Affordable Housing in the Yorkshire and Humber region of the Homes and Communities Agency reduced from £315 million from 2008-11 down to £181 million for 2011-15
- A lack of a range of all housing options, which means that peoples' accommodation choices are severely restricted
- Poor quality housing especially in the private rented sector, and the lack of capital funding available to tackle the £246 million required to bring the private sector up to standard ⁴
- Poor quality housing leading to an adverse impact on people's health and well being and as a result, increased pressure on health and social care services
- Increasing numbers of people who are vulnerable and socially excluded coupled with reducing budgets for housing related support, which will further marginalise the most vulnerable groups of people
- A substantial and increasing number of older people; the Department of Health estimates that the population of Kirklees is close to 410,000 with an over 64 population representing around 1 in 7 (14.9%) of the total. By 2030 that proportion will have risen to almost 1 in 5 (19.7%) with associated needs such as dementia friendly, accessible accommodation ⁵
- Increasing numbers of disabled people, people with mental ill health and adults with a learning disability, needing more appropriate accommodation such as supported living arrangements which meets their needs and avoids or reduces the need for residential care
- Increasing fuel poverty as a result of higher energy prices and adverse impact of the government's energy subsidy arrangements
- Rising levels of unemployment. This, coupled with Housing Benefit reductions for under 35 year olds is hitting younger people especially, making it harder for this group of people to move towards and maintain, secure accommodation
- An increasing pressure on families and individuals, particularly as a result of the welfare reforms and forthcoming Universal Credit arrangements
- Small proportion of areas experience significant and disproportionate amount of tension, crime and disorder issues.

³ *Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2012*

⁴ *Private Sector House Condition Survey, 2010*

⁵ *Projecting Older People Population Information System (POPPI)*

Context for strategic housing

National context

The rebalancing of the economy has had a substantial impact on the housing market. Developers and potential buyers have found it difficult to secure the finance required to build or purchase new homes. Many first time buyers have been priced out of the market because of the large deposits required to secure a mortgage this in turn has led to new households struggling to get on to the housing ladder and demand for housing outstripping supply.

Since coming to power in May 2010, the Coalition Government has initiated many new pieces of legislation and consolidated them with their Housing Strategy “Laying the Foundations”. Many of the reforms proposed for Housing, Council Tax and Welfare Benefits will impact on every aspect of housing within Kirklees. The Localism Act will also have an impact on tenancies and local authority allocations structures, with social housing providers having powers to grant new tenancies on a fixed term, to operate a restricted housing register which excludes those people with no statutory priority for social housing, and to offer accommodation in the private rented sector to meet the need of people who are accepted as homeless, and in housing need.

“Laying the Foundations” – A Housing Strategy for England

The coalition government has consolidated several policies and legislation into their Housing Strategy. The Government hopes the strategy will “unlock the housing market, get Britain building again, and give many more people the satisfaction and security that comes from stepping over their own threshold”. Some of the strategy’s key points are:

- A new £500m Growing Places fund to support infrastructure
- £400m earmarked for First Buy, to help 10,500 first time buyers with the help of an equity loan up to 20%
- Reform of social housing management through the Localism Act which includes changes to tenancies and allocations
- Right-to-buy owners will be offered a discount of as much as half the value of their homes
- £51m invested in handy person schemes for repairs and adaptations
- £20m to implement the No Second Night Out programme across the country, and £10m to charity Crisis to support single homeless people
- Councils now able to discharge their duties to homeless households into the private rented sector.

The council will ensure that it engages with its partners including the Homes and Communities Agency to access and utilise any new routes to enable the funding of development or regeneration. An example of this is the successful bid to the Clusters of Empty Homes Fund which has resulted in new investment of £2.8 million for Kirklees.

Housing, Council Tax and Welfare benefit changes

The Government has announced significant changes to Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance. Their own estimates are that the changes will result in an annual reduction of £2,810 million of Government help with housing costs. The vast majority of these savings (£2,745 million) will be made from reductions to housing benefit. These changes to housing benefit will affect tenants, social and private landlords and strategic housing authorities across the UK ⁶. The impact of the changes on claimants and the council will include:

- Movement of low income tenants to cheaper properties from more expensive ones
- Greater levels of overcrowding as people may move back to live with family
- Increased applications for social housing especially single people aged 25-35 years
- Increasing repossessions. Locally the number of mortgage and landlord possession claims is 1,300 for 2011/12 which affects 1 in 136 homes ⁷
- Greater demand on the council's housing options and support services
- Increased homelessness presentations by single people aged 25 – 35 years and a potential rise in the number of people in bed and breakfast accommodation.

The first of the changes was introduced on 1 April 2011. Others will follow in subsequent years with the full reform programme due to be completed in 2017. In the process of refreshing the strategy, there have been several changes to specific details and implementation dates since the original announcement. It is likely that there will be further changes to come. A timetable of these changes to date is available in Appendix 2.

As a result of the economic impact on people affected by the welfare reforms and job losses, we are seeing growing pressure on our housing options services and advisory services such as Citizens Advice Bureau and debt advisers. The council and its partners are working proactively to inform people about the changes and to support them find appropriate solutions to meet their housing need.

Localism Act

The Localism Act sets out fundamental changes to local public service provision. The Act is a major piece of legislation encompassing a number of policy areas. It represents only one part of a wider programme of 'localism' activities which the Government sees as part of the journey towards the "Big Society". Some aspects have been achieved without the need for legislation, such as the removal of the ring fence on local authority budgets and ending the National Indicator set and the requirement to report against Local Area Agreement targets. Key aspects of the reforms contained in the Localism Act include:

- A requirement for local authorities to publish a tenancy strategy, which registered providers must have "due regard to" in determining what sort of tenancies are granted and in what circumstances
- Allowing fixed term tenancies for a minimum of two years
- Local authorities determining who can apply for council housing
- Creation of a mandatory National Home Swap Scheme
- Ability to discharge homelessness duties through an offer of a privately rented home
- Creation of a new "Affordable Rent" tenancy which will be up to 80% of market rent
- Abolition of the Tenant Services Authority and the creation of tenant panels.

The implementation of the Act could have some far reaching impacts for the council and for those households living in social housing or private rented housing. There is potential for the reforms to lead to a general instability within neighbourhoods as local authorities potentially limit the length of a council tenancy

⁶ *[CIH Briefing Paper, April 2011].*

⁷ *Shelter, December 2012*

to five years or as little as two years. The potential restriction of who can apply to the Housing Register may affect those who wish to move to Kirklees in search of employment for example. The council is working closely with KNH, the Kirklees Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (KFTRA), registered housing providers and other partners through a steering group to make sure that all aspects of the Localism Act are understood, consulted on and implemented accordingly.

Review of strategic housing issues in Kirklees

A full review of strategic housing issues in Kirklees identified four overarching outcomes which were published in the 2009 – 2012 Housing Commissioning Strategy. In carrying out this 'strategy refresh' we have considered current and future needs, trends, pressures, gaps and housing related issues. With limited resources, it is clear that the council will have to ensure that action and resources are targeted at those areas, groups or individuals who are most in need and that every effort is made to maximise the impact of our actions by combining our efforts with those of our partners.

Following on from our work, and in support of the Kirklees Partnership's vision and the aims of the council's Integrated Investment Strategy, we have developed the following vision with our partners for the Housing Commissioning Strategy:

To work in partnership to deliver services that contribute to successful and thriving communities where people have real choices that meet their housing need, are supported and are enabled to lead healthy, fulfilling lives in attractive, safe and inclusive neighbourhoods.

Celebrating success

This strategy is a "refresh" of the Housing Commissioning Strategy for 2009 – 2012. Some of the successes of this strategy are listed below. The Strategy from 2013 – 2016 will build on the following achievements:

Enabling new homes to meet needs:

- A successful bid to the Homes and Communities Agency that resulted in a grant for £2.8 million to convert empty commercial properties in Huddersfield and Dewsbury town centres into residential accommodation
- Over 800 affordable properties were delivered between 2009 and end of March 2012 by the Regeneration and Development team working with Registered Providers, Developers and other partners.

Improving private homes and neighbourhoods:

- Reduction in the number of empty properties from 5000 at the start of the last strategy to 3162 at the end of the strategy on 31st December 2012, this is a reduction of 1838 properties over the course of 3 years
- A range of measures have been carried out to 551 hard to treat properties (329 council homes and 222 in the private sector) in order to improve the thermal efficiency of the buildings and help to reduce fuel poverty.

Enabling people to meet their housing needs:

- Excellent Homes for Life PFI has provided 44 homes, 10 of which are suitable for people with disabilities. A further 422 will be completed by the end of 2014, including 140 extra care properties.
- First local authority in the country to offer new affordable housing products through Quality Social Housing, who use private investment to fund new affordable homes.

Support to achieve independence and well being:

- At any one time, around 7,500 vulnerable people are being supported to access and maintain settled accommodation through housing related support
- We have reviewed the provision of housing related support in light of reducing resources and identified alternative funding streams to maintain support services for refugees, older and younger council tenants.

Embedding an early intervention and prevention approach to tackling homelessness:

- Successful mediation with over 75 young people and their families has prevented homelessness and we are working with partners to extend this capacity to continue with this approach
- Over the last 12 months we have successfully supported 34 people off the streets of Kirklees into settled accommodation
- 240 households at risk of losing their home have been supported by specialist debt advice to prevent homelessness.

Timely and customer focused adaptations:

- Disabled people are more able to remain living independently in their own home through a more efficient adaptations service. Waiting times for an assessment have been reduced from over 32 weeks to less than 12.

Our outcomes

Through the work we have undertaken to refresh the strategy, and in recognition that we can't do everything for everybody, we are prioritising three housing commissioning outcomes for Kirklees. These have been agreed with our partners and stakeholders. Our outcomes are;

- 1. An appropriate supply of homes and jobs to meet the needs of a growing and aging population**
- 2. Improved places to live by reducing inequalities and worklessness**
- 3. Improved life chances for people by supporting them to find and keep an affordable, good quality home**

Each outcome is discussed in detail in the next section. We outline the issues we face and how we will address them. Action plans and timescales for each of the priorities are shown as appendix 4.

Outcome 1 An appropriate supply of homes and jobs to meet the needs of a growing and aging population

This section of the strategy sets out the key issues that relate to the provision of jobs and homes. It also contains our current response and action plans for the future to achieve the outcome. The key issues in this section are:

- A shortage of homes
- More older people living longer
- Need to increase jobs
- Empty homes
- Overcrowding and under-occupation.

Key Issue: A shortage of homes

There is an increasing need for housing (particularly affordable housing⁸) that meets the needs and aspirations of Kirklees residents. By 2026, there will be an estimated additional 38,000 households, rising to 41,600 by 2028. There is already a significant shortfall in the number of homes available compared to what is needed for our communities now and in the future. Already many people cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market and our latest figures show that we need an extra 1457 'affordable' homes for the next 5 years⁹ – that is homes that are subsidised so they cost less than the market price to buy or rent – to meet the needs of our current and future population.

Demand for social housing is increasing; in April 2011, 476 housing applications were received, and this grew to 617 in March 2012. There are nearly 13,000¹⁰ households actively bidding on the council's housing register. Of these, 20% of households (2,387) are within the reasonable preference category, which means they are in significant housing need.

The latest Your Place, Your Say survey (November 2011), asks respondents what they feel is the most important aspect of making somewhere a good place to live. 31 % of respondents placed "affordable, decent housing" in their top 5 and 24 % included it in their top 5 that needs improving.

Figure 1 below is taken from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012 and shows the amount of income required to access each level of housing. It is important to note that **35 % of households in Kirklees earn less than £20,000 per year.**

Figure 1

Authority	Affordability Benchmarks - Annual Income Required					
	To purchase LQ House (3.5 * income - 10% deposit)	Private Rented LQ 2-bed Dwelling (25% income)	Private Rented LQ 3-bed Dwelling (25% income)	Social Rented - 2 Bed Dwelling (25% income)	Social Rented - 3 Bed Dwelling (25% income)	% of All Households Earning Less than £20,000
Kirklees	£23,143	£19,152	£22,800	£15,558	£16,912	35%

⁸ affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market

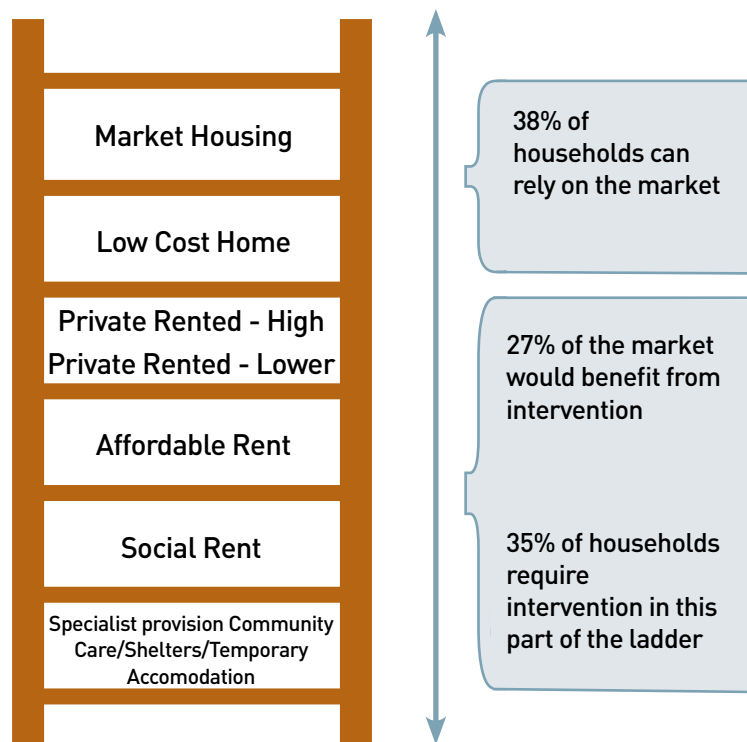
⁹ Kirklees Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012

¹⁰ "Snapshot" of the Housing Register as at December 2012

Figure 1 also highlights the income required to rent or purchase a lower quartile home (the cheapest on the market). Anyone wishing to rent or buy a more expensive home would require considerably more income and only 27% of the households in Kirklees earn more than £30,000 per annum ¹¹.

The diagram at Figure 2 (below) shows the different types of housing on the 'Housing Ladder'. The significant disparities between the costs of different housing options have resulted in restricting choice and access to housing for approximately two-thirds of households in Kirklees. There is a huge differential between highest and lowest earners and also significant ethnic imbalances in pay which, given the forecast of higher than average growth in minority ethnic populations, suggests a growth in the proportion of people who are income-deprived with severely limited housing choice. It is recognised that homeownership is not the aspiration for every household or the right choice in every circumstance. The housing ladder also recognises that people who are homeowners may wish to change their tenure as their circumstances change.

Figure 2



In the period 2008/11 £315m of funding was available through the National Affordable Housing Programme in Yorkshire and Humberside. In the period 2011-15 this funding has been reduced to £181m and is for a new product that will fund "Affordable Rent" houses to be let at 80% of open market rent.

The proposed Core Strategy will be the main planning document for the council. It sets out how much new development there should be, broadly where it should be provided and policies to ensure that the strategy is delivered in a sustainable way. It represents the council's chosen way forward having considered possible alternatives and the public's comments on them and is supported by an evidence base. At this stage the council's proposals for the core strategy have to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and local Government for examination.

New affordable housing is largely reliant on delivery through the planning system and the current economic downturn with reduced levels of new development is leading to significant problems in new housing supply, and with that new affordable housing. The Ministerial Announcement in September 2012 announcing changes to the contribution of affordable housing by developers has the potential to reduce affordable housing through the planning process to zero.

¹¹ 2010 Private Sector House Condition Survey

In addition to these overarching issues there are additional local pressures to consider. The latest Strategic Market Housing Assessment April 2012 (SHMA) says;

"A mixture of sizes of properties is needed across Kirklees. Evidence shows that there is a predominant requirement for future affordable housing supply in Kirklees for shared accommodation, and to be sized at least 1 and 2 bedrooms over the next 5 years. There is a continued requirement to deliver medium and larger family sized dwellings consisting of 3 and 4+ bedrooms within Kirklees in order to meet affordable housing need across the borough."

Location and proximity to community and religious facilities is a strong determinant of housing choice for some minority ethnic groups. In some locations there are indications that populations of Asian origin will outgrow existing settlements with demand significantly outstripping supply. This could potentially push prices up and put pressure on the existing housing stock. An example of an area where this could happen is Savile Town in Dewsbury which is home to a predominantly Asian community. Many people wish to live here to be close to family and the Mosques that they visit and Madrassa's that their children attend. The majority of housing in the surrounding area is of poorer quality and tends to be overcrowded. To alleviate overcrowding issues, many families have extended their homes leaving very little outside space. Evidence suggests that there are not enough properties in Savile Town and as a result, younger professional people, are moving away a short distance to Thornhill Lees where there are several new housing developments.

In south Dewsbury there are issues of overcrowding, poor housing stock, a younger than average population, and poor mobility. There is a concentration of relatively deprived private sector neighbourhoods where lack of housing and tenure choice has created intense mismatches between household demand and housing supply. There are also opportunities to create attractive neighbourhoods linked to the adjoining countryside, with good access to retail, leisure and employment opportunities in Dewsbury town centre. Land along the river and canal have potential for recreation and amenity as well as providing pedestrian and cycle routes into the town centre.

Overcrowding and under occupation

The recent Your Place, Your Say survey for Kirklees residents found that the 46 % of all respondents who stated that their property was not suitable stated that it was too small for their needs. This was particularly an issue in Heckmondwike (65 %), Golcar (61 %), Dewsbury West (58 %) and Batley East (56 %). The majority of respondents who stated their property was too small are from South Asian families, overcrowding appears to be a problem faced disproportionately by people from this community.

A "snapshot" of the Kirklees Housing Register shows that in December 2012 there were 11,910 applications registered by active bidders. Of these, 803 applications were from people living in overcrowded houses (either as a tenant or a lodger). Although we do not have equivalent information for local housing associations, informal intelligence shows they are also receiving high numbers of applications from overcrowded households.

There is concern that overcrowding could rise further as changes to the welfare and housing benefit systems are introduced and unemployment and repossessions increase. Overcrowding is closely related to health problems, under-achievement in education, and homelessness. We are aware that many small households – single people and small families – are staying with their own or other families, either briefly or on a longer term but nevertheless temporary basis, and that in these instances overcrowding may lead ultimately to homelessness.

The increase in overcrowding could also lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour and noise complaints as more people live in higher densities in close proximity.

In contrast, having a home that is too big creates problems in managing and affording to live in it. This is an issue in Kirklees because of the growing older population. Table 1 is taken from the results of the Kirklees "Your Place, Your Say" survey which was conducted in October 2011. Respondents over 65 were most likely to say that their property was unsuitable as a result of mobility needs (42%, n=55), closely followed by the property being too expensive to heat (41%, n=53). For residents over 65 years, the property being too large is also a key factor in unsuitability.

As at June 2012, 296 households on the housing register were under-occupying their homes. More council tenants are applying to move to a smaller home because they are under occupying; this is a positive trend as it demonstrates that people are becoming more aware of the need to live in a property that better suits their needs, and is linked to promotion of Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing's Homefit scheme. Benefit changes which affect people of working age who are in receipt of housing benefit, will also have an impact on peoples' ability to pay their rent, if they are considered to be living in a property that has more bedrooms than their requirements.

Table 1

Response to the question "why is your house not suitable" in respondents aged 65 plus.

Unsuitable for my/ our mobility needs	55	42%
Too expensive to heat	53	41%
Too large for me/us	38	30%
Badly in need of repairs/improvements	33	25%
Unsuitable for me/ us to cope with physical or mental health conditions or illnesses	32	25%
Local public transport is inadequate	24	18%
Damp, cold or uncomfortable	16	12%
Too small for me/us	14	11%
The rent/ mortgage is too expensive	9	7%
Not safe/ secure enough	7	5%
Base	129 respondents	

Building homes is good for the economy

Kirklees has strong economic and job growth prospects; however, overall it is still a relatively low wage economy. In the third quarter of 2011 there were 12,993 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). In the same period in 2007 there were 5,885 people claiming JSA. Unemployment figures for 16-24 year olds have risen from 1,925 in 2006 to 3,350 in 2011. Young people are also more likely to be in jobs that are temporary or insecure. This financial insecurity is one of a range of factors that create increased risk for young people moving towards, or trying to maintain, independent living.

Housing is regarded as an essential part of the infrastructure needed to support economic growth as well as a critical component of the Government's sustainability agenda which is unsurprising given that £1 million of new housing generates 20 new jobs and pays double in economic outputs¹². The Local Development Framework Core Strategy has identified a new job requirement of 37,500 by 2028. This requirement has been determined to take into account the demographic and pension age changes and also a reduction in the number of people who are unemployed. It also sets out a vision for Kirklees, aspects of which relate to employment, economic growth and resilience:

All Kirklees residents have convenient access to jobs, shops and services, good community facilities and open spaces. They enjoy the benefits of proximity to Leeds and other cities and towns outside Kirklees and can use good quality transport connections. People can travel on a well maintained and safe transport network which provides convenient and affordable public transport

A diverse and resilient local economy, with strong manufacturing, low carbon and creative sectors, offers residents well paid job opportunities and contributes to the prosperity of the Leeds City Region

¹² HCA cost per job best practice note 2nd Edition, 2011

Huddersfield and the north Kirklees towns are attractive places for business growth, taking advantage of a well educated and skilled workforce. Pleasant town centres, with a distinctive heritage and character, provide a focus for shopping and leisure facilities which attract both residents and visitors

Our response:

We need to make sure that the right size and type of homes are built in the right places to match needs. At the same time we need to be engaging effectively with local communities so they understand and support the need for additional homes.

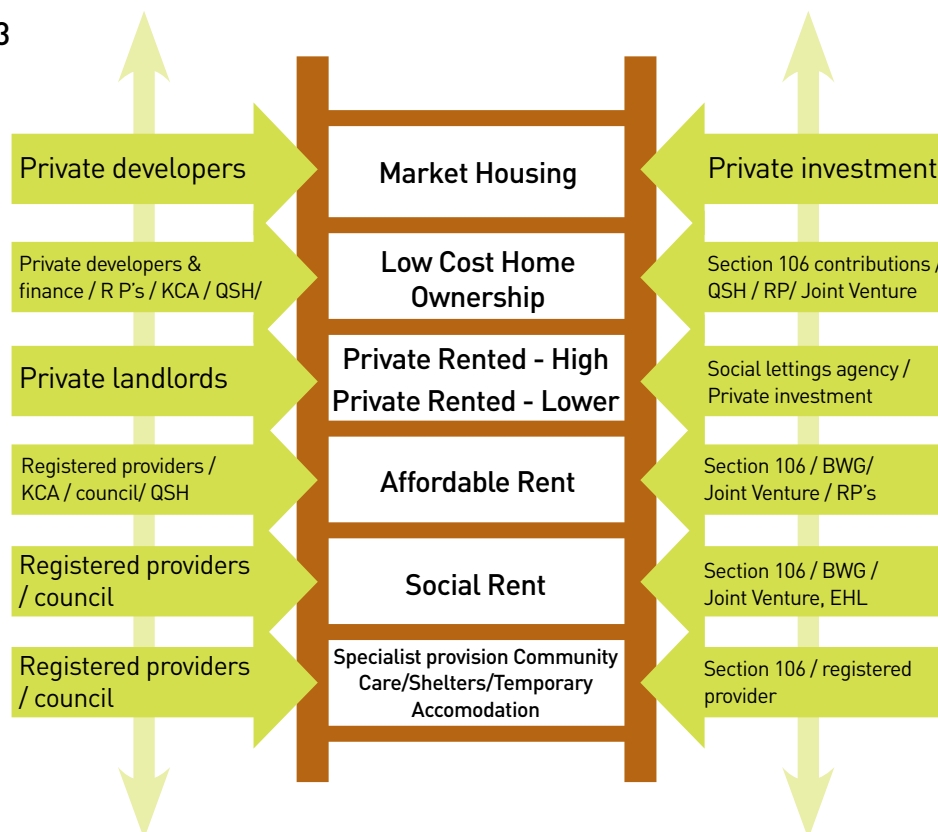
We need to focus on using housing investment and development activity to stimulate economic growth and job creation, recognising the substantial contribution that housing can make to the local economy.

Implementation of the proposed core strategy will provide more land for developers to build on and therefore more sites delivering new homes, jobs and training opportunities for residents in Kirklees. In addition the core strategy will secure up to 40% affordable accommodation on all sites larger than 1 property. We will continue to support registered housing providers and developers in the negotiation of the amount and price of affordable housing (S.106).

The council continues to explore the ways in which the issues around development can be overcome including using future City Region, Government or EU funding to support regeneration objectives, and opportunities to support delivery through a Joint Venture or Development Partnership agreement by generating value from council owned land or assets to overcome the barriers to viability.

Figure 3 again shows the housing ladder with the addition of potential partners and funding streams that will allow us to provide as many different types of housing as possible in order to ensure that the 62% of households who require some form of affordable housing can access it. Partners include Quality Social Housing (QSH) who use private investment to provide affordable housing to rent and buy. The diagram also illustrates some solutions to providing each type of housing, such as the Private Finance Initiative within the council, "Excellent Homes for life" that will provide 460 affordable homes by the summer of 2014, 140 of which will be Extra Care. Many of the solutions require some development and appraisal to ensure we maximise the amount of housing options available within Kirklees and that they meet the needs of the neighbourhoods.

Figure 3



The Ministerial Statement from September 2012 marks out a series of changes to the planning system. These are intended to free developers from the burdens of additional development costs and bureaucracy that, it is claimed, litter the planning process.

The statement points out two messages around affordable housing. On one hand it recognises the need to increase supply. On the other it also sees affordable housing contributions from developers as a development burden at this point in time. However, from a planning, or more specifically a development management perspective, the underlying message is for local planning authorities to be flexible.

We need to engage and work with our developer and delivery partners to understand the position within Kirklees and monitor delivery against policies and review these as the market starts to improve. Developers are keen to work with the council and registered providers to provide affordable housing on currently unsold developments and we need to work together to capitalise on these opportunities whilst they exist.

We are working with all social landlords and other partners to identify the range and levels of the above issues and formulate approaches to meeting the needs of overcrowded and under-occupying households. These approaches form part of the work we're currently undertaking to review how we allocate homes, and which groups of people should be given the highest priority. It is being carried out in conjunction with the work that's ongoing to address and mitigate the impact of the welfare reforms on Kirklees residents.

The Homefit Scheme has been very successful at assisting over 130 households that were living in overcrowded or under-occupied conditions to move to more suitable accommodation. We are better at identifying and recording overcrowding as part of our approach to early intervention and prevention of homelessness and we proactively visit and assess people who are living in a home that is too small for their needs. The scheme is now managed by KNH and is part of their mainstream activity.

Age restrictions, or age designation policies put in place by a number of housing providers, may be limiting access and contributing to overcrowding for some groups of applicants and we are looking at these policies as part of the overall housing allocations policy review.

We recognise the opportunity that new developments have to create apprenticeships, training and employment opportunities through housing related investment programmes, including new economic, housing development and regeneration initiatives. For example, the Excellent Homes for Life PFI scheme in Kirklees has agreed with the developer, Wates Living Space that they will employ local labour and provide apprenticeships for local people during the development.

We are working to understand what type of employment is likely to be provided in Kirklees and plan for providing housing which is suitable for employees in these new jobs and supporting employers in establishing their businesses. Providing the right type of affordable housing for workers will attract businesses into the area and so help improve the local economy in Kirklees.

Key Tasks:

We will;

- Continue to work in partnership with developers to enable them to deliver new housing through the planning system which will provide jobs and training opportunities
- Continue to work with registered providers on the new Affordable Rent product to deliver affordable housing
- Explore opportunities for new development and regeneration models, such as Quality Social Housing, the Joint Venture and the Clusters of Empties fund
- Continue to manage the construction and letting of new council homes built through the PFI scheme – Excellent Homes for Life.

Key Issue: More older people who are living longer

Kirklees has a generally ageing population, and there is expected to be a 45% increase in the over-65s (one in five) in the next 20 years. This increase will be particularly seen within the older end of the ageing population. The over 85 year old population is projected to almost double from the present 8,100 to 15,900 in 2030. In contrast, we also find that in some areas households are much younger and household sizes are increasing; so the right housing in the right place is essential.

Kirklees Council has committed itself to the wellbeing of older people, as one of its four priority areas of council business in the coming years. As a consequence, the strategy's action plan focuses on assembling the business processes required to implement and sustain the Older People's Vision.

The Kirklees Older People's Partnership Board has driven the development of the **Accommodation Strategy for Older People in Kirklees (2010 – 2015)** to take the accommodation needs of older people forward. The strategy sets out the needs of this group for the short, medium and long term. The rate that this group will grow in the future means that it needs to be considered very carefully and planned for.

The Accommodation Strategy for Older People in Kirklees identifies that:

- Without changes to current accommodation and social care arrangements, it will become increasingly difficult, and ultimately, unfeasible to support local older people to live independently
- The supply of future mainstream housing stock will need to expand substantially, with the equivalent of half of all new provision needing to reflect the widely varying needs of an aging population, based on high quality data and evidence
- The supply and range of specialist accommodation, such as extra care and sheltered housing will need to increase
- A recognition that residential care will remain appropriate for a core group of people with very high needs, but that the quality of this accommodation needs to be brought up to a higher standard to meet the needs and expectations of today's client
- Alternatives to residential care need to be developed within the context of an increased range of specialised accommodation offer
- Diverse needs and the predicted growth in ageing Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community of Kirklees should be reflected in the development of accommodation choices
- The need for comprehensive information and advice services which support older people to make and plan appropriate future accommodation choices.

Our response:

We know we need to increase the number and type of homes that are suitable for our growing elderly population; for example the housing mix policy in the core strategy has been amended to ensure that all developments over 0.5 hectares include housing designed to meet older people's needs. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012 tells us that the supply of future mainstream housing stock will need to expand substantially as will the supply of extra care accommodation to meet the growth of the ageing (over 85) population.

In addition, the Excellent Homes for Life scheme will build 466 one and two bedroom flats, of which 140 are homes for older people who need additional levels of care and support, with 10 homes being specifically for people with dementia.

The Extra Care housing schemes are being built on three sites:

- The former Fairfield School site, Dale Lane, Heckmondwike
- The former Westmoor House site, School Lane, Dewsbury
- Sandy Mount, Blackmoorfoot Road, Crosland Moor.

All sites are located within existing communities and with access to local facilities. The homes are being built over a period of around two and a half years, and started earlier in 2012. As the Extra Care housing schemes are large and complicated to build, the construction of the three schemes will be phased.

We need to build on our use of housing needs data and work with our partners to ensure that new homes built meet specific identified needs, for example adapted homes, extra care and specialist supported housing. Schemes developed for older people should also aim to minimise the impact of anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime.

Key Tasks:

We will;

- Provide sufficient and suitable accommodation to meet the needs of an aging population.

Key Issue: Empty homes

Empty properties represent a wasted resource and a wasted opportunity for a household in need. There are 179,239 properties in Kirklees, of which 3,273 had been empty for more than 6 months (known as long term empties) as of June 2012, 99 of these were properties are being managed by KNH. The 3,273 empty properties represent 1.8% of the total housing stock available in Kirklees. The long term vacancy rate in Kirklees is similar to the national average, and significantly better than the regional average. If brought back in to use, these properties could make a significant contribution to meeting housing need and creating vibrant neighbourhoods which are safe to live and work.

Some privately rented homes are more difficult to let – perhaps because of poor condition, design or unpopular location. These can lie empty for weeks or months. Many of the empty homes in the private rented sector are older properties which need significant work to bring them up to modern standards (in terms of energy efficiency and general condition / amenities). There are very few options for private landlords to secure low cost loans or grants to enable them to renovate their properties.

Retirement Living Housing (previously known as sheltered accommodation) managed by KNH can be particularly problematic to let and remain empty because of the design of schemes (not enough bedrooms for example), distance from shops and facilities or their location, such as being on a steep road. All of these can be difficult to manage for older people.

Our Response:

An Empty Homes Strategy has been developed with a view to bring as many properties back into use as possible through a combination of support and advice to homeowners and working with partners such as registered housing providers (RP's) and Fresh Horizons, a local social enterprise organisation based in Deighton, Huddersfield.

Recent work between the housing options and support service, the Private Sector Housing Unit and Private Landlords has been very successful in encouraging landlords to let properties to those who are in housing need. This provides an opportunity to make use of empty properties for some families and individuals who are homeless or in acute housing need. We are also working with partners who wish to acquire, renovate and let a number of long term empty private sector properties as affordable housing. Kirklees has been successful in securing HCA empty homes funding within the scope of the 2011-15 Affordable Homes Programme working in partnership with Connect Housing, Fresh Horizons and Up & Working (Sadeh Lok), this will bring approximately 10 properties back into use.

We are working with KNH to review how we can make better use of some harder to let retirement living units of accommodation, especially studio accommodation, for example by considering redevelopment to provide one bedroom properties

Our bid to the HCA's Empty Clusters fund was successful, and means inward investment of £2.8 million into Kirklees to convert empty commercial properties in Dewsbury and Huddersfield town centres into residential accommodation.

Key Tasks:

We will;

- Bring empty homes back in to use.

Summary of Key Tasks for Outcome 1

To ensure an appropriate supply of homes and jobs to meet the needs of a growing and aging population, action plans have been developed to; (Action Plan is attached as Appendix 3)

- Continue to work in partnership with developers to deliver new housing through the planning system
 - Continue to work with registered providers on the new Affordable Rent product to deliver affordable housing
 - Explore opportunities for new development and regeneration models, such as Quality Social Housing, the Joint Venture and the Clusters of Empties fund
 - Continue to manage the construction and letting of new council homes built through the PFI scheme – Excellent Homes for Life
- Provide sufficient and suitable accommodation to meet the needs of an aging population
- Bring empty homes back in to use.

Outcome 2 Improved places to live by reducing inequalities and worklessness

This section of the strategy sets out the key issues that relate to reducing inequalities. It also contains our current response and action plans for the future to achieve the Priority Outcome. The key issues in this section are:

- Communities that don't get along or feel unsafe and insecure
- Private sector stock in poor condition
- Homelessness and unemployment
- Fuel poverty.

Key Issue: Communities that don't get along or feel insecure

Some of our neighbourhoods suffer from poor quality environment which is, in some cases, linked to the quality and type of homes that exist there. We have some deprived neighbourhoods with high levels of poor quality private sector housing and associated poor quality environments including public space, combined with a lack of choice of housing. All of these factors are interlinked, and have led to decline which requires significant intervention and investment to address over the medium to long term.

In the recent "Your Place Your Say Survey" (November 2011) 50% of people in Kirklees identified "a safe local environment" as their top priority, and is in the overall top four priorities of all respondents. We know that some of our neighbourhoods have higher levels of anti-social behaviour, poor facilities and environments than others, and that these issues can only be improved by working together to tackle the attitudes and behaviours of some of our residents, alongside improving the wider area.

42% of respondents to the "Your Place, Your Say" Survey in 2011, stated that they did not feel safe when outside in their local area after dark, and this rose to an average of over 60 % within the three wards in Dewsbury. The results of the survey show consistent results from different age groups and ethnicities. Particular issues highlighted include street drinking in Huddersfield's town centre.

Connecting communities – supporting the development of strong communities that are connected and get along - is a complex subject attracting varied views of what it means and how it can be improved. Essentially it is about improving the ways in which people of different backgrounds 'get on' together. Communities that aren't well connected are an issue in some parts of Kirklees but there are different issues in different areas. The Kirklees "Your Place, Your Say" survey asked respondents; "To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people help and support each other." The response indicated that those living in Holmes Valley South (70%) and Kirkburton, Holme Valley North, Denby Dale and the Colne Valley (64%) are most likely to feel supported within their communities, whilst people living in Dewsbury West (33%), Dewsbury South and Ashbrow (27%), Heckmondwike, Dewsbury East and Dalton (26%) were least likely to feel this way.

The areas which have lower levels of community connectivity are perceived to have a more transient community, with people moving in and out of the area frequently.

There is a need to develop a sense of commonality and shared belonging and understanding and to manage communities perception of fairness.

Our response:

We must use intelligence and data to communicate the 'true picture' of the allocation of housing and the award of welfare benefits which may help to tackle misconceptions. Opportunities have been taken as a result of the consultation carried out as part of the council's review of its Housing Allocations policy to inform and educate the community on these issues.

There will be a universal service offer but a continued need to focus on priority areas of Dewsbury East, Dewsbury South, Dewsbury West and Heckmondwike. We are working on and involved in 3 projects in these areas;

- Community Mobilisation (Pilgrim and Becketts estates in Dewsbury West)
- Breaking barriers at a young age (Dewsbury South schools)
- Integrated working pilot during 2013 to get front line staff working better together concentrating on increasing co-ordination of operational officers, promoting joint action to problems, providing a visible team effort to improve neighbourhoods and to avoid duplication.

We need to continue to work jointly across key agencies including police, education, KNH, and childrens services to make sure that we co-ordinate our action to achieve change to make sure communities are connected.

The cleaner, greener approach is being taken forward through Streetscene and Housing Services and their new approach to Area Based Working, bringing together, cleansing, enforcement, parks and open spaces, horticulture and landscapes working together in a more responsive and joined up way.

New housing provision needs to promote community integration rather than exclusion. It needs to be considered in the context of sustainable community policies – so the type, tenure and size of housing should be designed to help create long-term, balanced and viable communities. Community infrastructure should be provided, improved or protected to help reduce social exclusion. There is a need to explore whether contributions can be sought through the planning system (Community Infrastructure Levy) as the housing market starts to recover from the recession.

It is important when supporting the development of stronger communities we encourage people to get involved in their local communities. It is essential that new communities and new residents and tenants are aware of activities and groups that will help them to integrate into the local communities.

The council and its partners have committed to delivering the Government's "Troubled Families" Programme locally. This programme in Kirklees is called "Stronger Families" and aims to turn around the lives of families with multiple problems, who although small in number, are calculated to be responsible for a large proportion of educational underachievement, social care casework, anti-social behaviour and small scale crime. It is also estimated by government that these families are responsible for considerable public expenditure through benefit payments and the range of intensive and expensive interventions and support they require.

Key Tasks:

We will;

- Have a Housing Allocations Policy in place which supports and encourages successful communities
- Deliver responsive Streetscene services resulting in attractive, vibrant neighbourhoods
- Support the development of stronger communities focusing on priority areas in North Kirklees.

Key Issue: Private sector stock in poor condition

Poor housing affects peoples' lives. Almost 26% of private sector stock in Kirklees is classified as "non decent"¹³. Kirklees Private Sector House Condition Survey (2010) estimates that a minimum of £141 million is required to bring all properties suffering from poor energy efficiency up to standard and a total of £246m is need to improve the overall standard of poor quality private sector stock. This investment can provide significant job opportunities, in terms of the low carbon domestic agenda, as evidenced by the Kirklees Warm Zone project; jobs created worth £39 million, with an overall net benefit over 40 years of £249 million.

¹³ *Kirklees Private Sector House Condition Survey, 2010*

Residents' surveys identify that affordable, decent housing is a particular concern amongst Asian residents, who are more likely to live in poor quality housing and overcrowded conditions and there is a need to target intervention in these areas.

The recent Stock Condition Survey found that 16% of homes in private ownership fall below a decent standard and many are in very poor condition, including privately rented housing and those owned and occupied by older or disabled people with very limited resources. The private sector stock that is in the worst condition in Kirklees can be found within the following wards:

- Greenhead
- Crosland Moor & Netherton
- Newsome
- Ashbrow
- Golcar
- Lindley
- Dewsbury East
- Dewsbury West
- Dewsbury South

The Your Place, Your Say survey (2011) found that 28 % of respondents felt they had to move as their property was badly in need of repairs or improvements. Helping people to bring their homes up to a decent standard¹⁴ is particularly important in helping to prevent ill health and improve well-being, especially where occupiers are on low incomes, elderly or are vulnerable. The council achieved its target to make sure that its housing stock met an agreed standard by 2010. The council's Asset Management Strategy provides for council-owned homes to be maintained in the future.

The condition of some properties in the privately rented sector is very poor, and the council has a range of powers available to improve conditions in this sector. This is particularly important as some of the most vulnerable members of the community live in the most poorly maintained rented accommodation. And these areas are also prone to suffer from poor perceptions and higher levels of crime. There are clear and well documented links between poor health, and inadequate housing conditions; we need to influence key stakeholders such as Health, to access funding streams which will help address and improve poor housing and so relieve pressure on health services. Houses in Multiple Occupations (HMOs) have particular risks due to their construction and the way in which they are let and occupied. We have a duty to license those that represent the highest risk.

The council no longer has the financial resources to improve the condition of all non-decent private sector homes and needs to identify other ways to help fund work, in particular through the use of loans to enable home owners to unlock some of the equity in their property to carry out improvements.

Our response:

We have introduced statutory licensing for HMOs. The statutory duty placed on us means we must identify Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) in Kirklees and license them appropriately, making sure that they meet the required standards. We will inspect those that do not require a license and take action wherever necessary to make sure they are maintained to a good standard and are well managed.

We will target our resources and interventions at those areas and groups that are in the greatest need and where our resources can make the most difference to residents' lives: we need the help of our partners to achieve this. We are continuing to work to improve the access to and the quality of, private rented sector

¹⁴ *A dwelling is defined as 'decent' if it meets the statutory minimum standard, provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort, is in a reasonable state of repair and has reasonably modern facilities.*

accommodation through the use of the bond scheme and Accreditation Scheme which encourages more private landlords to improve the condition of their properties and rent them out to those in receipt of Local Housing Allowance. We balance this with the need for more formal action where necessary. We continue to follow up all complaints about disrepair or poor management from tenants and take any necessary enforcement action to make sure that there is no risk to the health and safety of the occupants.

We are developing a series of maps which show connectivity between poor quality housing, fuel poverty, the effects of welfare reform and poor health. The areas where all of the issues meet will receive some targeted support using schemes or support systems that are already in place.

Key Tasks:

- Improve access to good quality private rented accommodation.

Key Issue: Worklessness and unemployment

The Government's welfare reforms make it very clear that people who work will always be better off than people who are in receipt of benefits. Unsurprisingly, because of the difficulty maintaining employment with nowhere to live, homeless people have the highest rates of worklessness and the rate has increased significantly in recent years. This is exacerbated by a lack of skills and qualifications amongst this group together with other vulnerabilities that impede access to and retention of both housing and work. The Government expects that housing services works in partnership to support working age people in housing need to access training and employment, particularly in relation to enabling increased housing choice through increased household income and increasing the range of housing options that an individual has.

A more integrated housing options approach can help tackle some of these problems by linking to training and employment advice, in-work benefits, financial management and other life skills. This approach specifically targets the housing and employment needs of socially excluded groups – offenders, young people leaving care, people with mental health issues and people with learning disabilities – but it is hoped that the work entailed in reaching the targeted groups will help others too.

The following three tables illustrate unemployment levels for 3 age groups, they are 16-24, 25-59 and 50 and over. The tables show that there is not a specific area within Kirklees where unemployment rates are highest but rather they are spread out across the district, depending on the age group in question. Each community with high levels of unemployment will require a different response. For example, areas with high levels of 16-24 unemployment may require the development of basic skills and knowledge whereas an area with aged 50 plus unemployed may require re-training after finding themselves unemployed after working most of their lives.

Table 2

Jobseekers Allowance Claimants aged 16-24 (%age of that age group) Dec 2011	
Percentage	Lower Super Output Area
23.9	Rawthorpe
22.3	Thornhill, Overthorpe
21.4	Deighton
20.3	Crosland Moor, Yews Hill
19.8	Birstall, Fieldhead Estate
19.8	Armitage Bridge
19.4	Dalton, Ridgeway

Table 3

Jobseekers Allowance Claimants aged 25-49 (%'age of that age group) Dec 2011	
Percentage	Lower Super Output Area
14.6	Rawthorpe
14.4	Deighton, Riddings
14	Bradley Mills, Town Centre
13.9	Lockwood, Yews Hill Road
12.4	Leeds Road, Sheepridge

Table 4

Jobseekers Allowance Claimants aged 50 and over (%'age of that age group) Dec 2011	
Percentage	Lower Super Output Area
13.3	Bradley Mills, Town Centre
12.7	Newsome, Primrose Hill
11.2	Huddersfield Town Centre
11.1	Bradley, Colne Bridge
11.1	Brackenhall, Ferndale
10.9	Walpole Estate
10.8	Cleckheaton, Moor End

Unemployment rates across the whole of Kirklees for 2012 are 9.6%, an increase of 2.1% from April 2009 – April 2012¹⁵.

The coloured shading on the charts illustrates the two occasions where high levels of unemployment coincide between two age groups. These areas are Rawthorpe and Bradley Mills in Huddersfield town centre.

Response:

The council as a whole and other statutory and third sector partners provide a wide range of interventions to help people to access employment, education and training. A key action for social housing and housing support providers is to tackle worklessness, both within communities and on an individual one to one basis. However we must recognise that some very vulnerable groups are a long way from being “work ready” and will need a more tailored and alternative approach to their support.

We plan to capitalise on successful schemes such as “NEET to EET”, run by the young peoples’ service within housing options and support services. This refers young people who are not in education, training or employments (NEET) to the Connexions service, who work to get the young person into employment, education or training. KNH and Jobcentre Plus work with tenants who are unemployed to provide a pathway into training or employment by providing tailored support to get people work ready, and into a job. We have also seen success with the outreach worker from Jobcentre Plus who now works within the housing options and support service one day a week, offering support to customers who need to access training or get back into work. We will continue to work with and support a range of agencies in Kirklees to overcome the significant challenge which exists for residents in supported housing who do move into work and therefore become liable for paying much more towards their housing costs.

The council has been working to inform and engage with those claimants who will be the most affected by the Housing Benefit changes of the impact on their incomes and help them to plan for the change.

Key Tasks:

- Work in partnership to support our customers in becoming work ready and finding and keeping a job.

Key Issue: Fuel poverty

Tackling fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency is a key element of government policy. Current high fuel costs coupled with the economic recession mean that fuel poverty is a bigger problem for poorer and vulnerable households. The recent Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010 reached the following conclusions:

¹⁵ Shelter, December 2012

- Fuel poverty at 17 % was higher than the rate found in England at 13%. The cost of remedial works to the 17,100 owner occupied dwellings in Kirklees that are in fuel poverty (i.e. spending more than 10% of income on heating) is just under £19.5 million and is considered to be a very conservative estimate
- The mean Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) (SAP 2005 energy rating on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (good)) is 54 in Kirklees, which is higher than that found nationally in private sector properties (48)
- The least energy efficient dwellings are older dwellings (pre 1919); and converted flats (although these only represent 2.3% of the total private sector housing stock). Privately rented properties had the lowest mean SAP rating at 52 compared with 55 in owner occupied properties
- Improving energy efficiency will contribute towards a range of Kirklees' corporate priorities and indeed contribute to a wide range of issues e.g. reduced carbon emissions, tackling fuel poverty, elimination of Cat 1 hazards, improved health and well being – warmer, better homes
- The level of excess cold hazards is an issue given the numbers of older residents in Kirklees and the potential link with cold related illnesses.

Response:

Improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty is a major strand of the council's Affordable Warmth Strategy with action plans to tackle housing energy efficiency, financial inclusion – household incomes and the health of the most vulnerable in the community.

The council and KNH have delivered a number of large housing programmes over the years (Warm Zone, Sun Cities, Decent Homes, Recharge) which have helped reduce carbon emissions in the district (15% by 2009 from 2005 baseline) and improved the SAP¹⁶ rating of the properties. Over the last 10 years approximately £38m of funding has been secured into the district for energy efficiency and renewable energy schemes for private sector housing in Kirklees; this has had positive impacts for the economy, health and wellbeing and carbon reduction, over 51,000 homes were insulated through Kirklees Warm Zone.

For council owned homes a 30% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 from a 2005 baseline is forecast. Additionally the council has used SAP rating system to calculate the number of properties potentially in fuel poverty within council stock. Through investments since 2005, the council in partnership with KNH has reduced the percentage of council properties with a SAP rating below 65 to 10%; this is a fantastic achievement. Compared to the national Private Sector SAP of 53.1 and local authority rating of 59.6 the council's stock compares very favourably. Despite all this good work, due to rapidly increasing energy costs, reduce household incomes and the forthcoming welfare reforms it is predicted that fuel poverty will worsen in Kirklees over the next few years in line with national projections.

Not enough members of the public or agencies know that there are still some resources that can be used to address energy efficiency problems in private rented homes whether or not the landlord is involved and more could therefore be done to maximise take up. The council needs to continue to build upon its existing partnerships with energy suppliers and agencies who are working to tackle fuel poverty in order to maximise resources and make sure that these are being used in the most effective way. The use of technology to make improvements in this area should also be promoted to households.

The council's Investment and Regeneration service and other support agencies are well placed to provide practical advice and information on measures to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency, including assisting householders to set heating controls and timers correctly, and by making sure that landlords are not reselling gas and electricity to private sector tenants at high rates.

Kirklees Council has signed up to Climate Local. Climate Local is a new initiative led by the Local Government Association (LGA) to drive, inspire and support council action on climate change. It succeeds the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change (which Kirklees Council signed up to) by offering a framework that enables councils to reflect local priorities and opportunities for action. Climate Local focuses on councils' efforts both to reduce carbon emissions and to improve their resilience to the anticipated changes in the climate.

¹⁶ *The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the UK Government's recommended method of measuring the energy rating of residential dwellings.*

Climate Local will consist of:

- A Climate Local Commitment - a suite of commitments and actions for councils to voluntarily choose and sign up to, to demonstrate their commitment to addressing climate change and to challenge themselves and build on their existing achievements. Councils are encouraged to adapt these suggestions to suit their own priorities
- A Climate Local Framework on Climate Change – a framework through which councils can organise and plan their journey in addressing climate change
- Additional resources and support – new web-based resources, a new online community with opportunities for peer learning.

The Kirklees Climate Local commitment on homes is summarised below:

Continue to aim to provide affordable warmth and tackle fuel poverty. This will help improve the health and wellbeing of Kirklees residents.

Currently the Kirklees Affordable Warmth Strategy is focussed on the core fuel poverty issues (as defined by the national Hills Review in March 2012). A group of officers from the council and partner organisations is working through the strategy to:

- Support the most health vulnerable residents – working with health professionals and social services to ensure those most at risk of physical and mental health, because of cold and damp housing have a home they can afford to heat
- Addressing financial inclusion – particularly supporting residents to get the best energy tariff and save money through reduced energy consumption and paying the best price
- Improving the energy efficiency of all homes – particularly “hard to treat” homes and the poorest households.

These initiatives are delivering other key council objectives of tackling poverty, integrated investment and delivering health and wellbeing.

Key Tasks:

- To mitigate the financial, environmental and health impacts of poor quality housing and energy inefficient homes. (Links to the council’s Tackling Poverty and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies).

Summary of Key Tasks for Outcome 2:

To ensure that the people of Kirklees have improved places to live by reducing inequalities and worklessness, action plans have been developed to; (Action Plan is attached as Appendix 3)

- Have a Housing Allocations Policy in place which supports and encourages successful communities
- Deliver responsive Streetscene services resulting in attractive, vibrant neighbourhoods
- Support the development of stronger communities focusing on priority areas in North Kirklees
- Improve access to good quality private rented accommodation
- Work in partnership to support our customers in becoming work ready and finding and keeping a job
- To mitigate the financial, environmental and health impacts of poor quality housing and energy inefficient homes. (Links to the council’s Tackling Poverty and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies).

Outcome 3 Improved life chances for people by supporting them to find and keep an affordable, good quality home

This section of the strategy sets out the key issues that relate to improving people's life chances and support them to find somewhere decent to live and maintaining a successful tenancy. It also contains our current response and action plans for the future to achieve the Priority Outcome. The key issues in this section are:

- People who need housing or support to secure and maintain housing
- Preventing homelessness
- Rising demand for adaptations.

Key Issue: People who need housing or support to secure housing

Having a settled home of the right type and in the right place is fundamental to helping people, with a range of support needs, to live independently. We need to increase access to settled housing for people who have in the past been most at risk of exclusion; for instance people with mental health problems, ex offenders, young people leaving care and people with medium to high learning disabilities. Demand from people with learning disabilities and those with complex physical needs will continue to grow. There is a need for a range of housing with different levels of support, in different tenures; for example the council's Learning Disability Strategy focuses on the need to develop a greater range of accommodation options and in particular extra care facilities. Learning disability only accounts for around 1,000 of the 8,000 people in Kirklees supported by Adult Social Care, but the council spends 25% of its total adult care budget in supporting people with a learning disability. Younger people with learning disabilities and younger physically disabled adults are expressing an increasing desire to move out of the parental home and live in their own home, living with friends, in a "cluster" style arrangement, or in self contained housing, with support.

The council has a clear commitment to enabling vulnerable people to live in their community as independently as possible by increasing the range of supported housing options that avoid or decrease the need for people to live in residential settings or out of area placements. Together with partners, the council commissions a range of housing related support services (previously known as Supporting People) to help vulnerable and socially excluded people live independently in their own homes. Annually, housing related support services in Kirklees support around 7,500 vulnerable people at any one time to remain living independently in the community or move on to independent living as quickly as possible. Housing related support lies in a spectrum between housing management and social care. Housing management includes repairs to properties, rent collection and tenancy disputes. Social care includes help with personal care such as washing and dressing and administering medication. Support is not care but support can come in the form of advising on personal care.

Supporting vulnerable people with housing increases the likelihood of individuals adhering to appropriate treatment/therapy. Housing related support is flexible and responsive at an early stage of intervention. Early intervention is important to prevent crisis as it prevents escalation /progression to higher needs. This reduces the need for more complex and expensive types of intervention such as residential care and helps establish/maintain independence. The aim is to promote independent living without a continuing dependence on professionals.

Services can be short term, aimed at assisting someone to get back on their feet and are preventative (for example ensuring that someone is not evicted) and personalised (based on a detailed support plan which is tailored closely to meet individual needs).

Housing related support provides a cost effective way of delivering services to a wide range of vulnerable people. It achieves positive outcomes in line with people's personal circumstances promoting independence, choice and control and preventing demand for more expensive services. Prevention and personalisation are at the heart of housing related support.

A successful example of this is the Sanctuary scheme, for people affected by violence in the home. The scheme provides both “target hardening” measures to make the property more secure, and personal support to the individual. This enables the individual, and their children, to remain living safely within their existing home, avoids the disruption of a move to temporary accommodation, and is a more cost effective solution.

In response to the council’s reducing budgets, the need to deliver greater efficiencies and to make the best use of available provision, there is a proposal to develop and commission a generic “no restrictions” housing support service to provide a co-ordinated floating support scheme to socially excluded, vulnerable people. This will be a focussed, preventative model of delivering housing related support which will operate on a “tenure blind” approach. It will sit beneath the specialist services to increase and improve throughput and to prevent escalation of needs, in line with the principles of prevention and early intervention. The service will be developed by remodelling existing floating support and is in line with the council’s aim to move away from long term services towards prevention and early intervention – and achieving outcomes that empower people by supporting them flexibly, for an appropriate length of time according to individual needs.

People who are older, frailer, and less mobile or are vulnerable for other reasons need access to a wide range of housing solutions. These might include different financial arrangements to support them to remain in their own home or in a new home that sustains their independence; different care or support arrangements including sharing with others; accommodation for growing families alongside family members with disabilities or the use of new technology to avoid crises. There is currently only one supported living scheme aimed specifically at people with disabilities. This scheme provides a floating support service to younger people with disabilities, often with additional needs such as substance misuse or mental ill health. This service is currently provided to 32 people in Kirklees. The council’s mental health accommodation strategy also identifies this need for more flexible floating support that people can “dip” in and out of, according to their changing needs, and which enables people with mental health issues and people who are misusing drugs and alcohol, or in recovery, to live safely within the community rather than in residential care.

We recognise that there are gaps in provision of supported housing services for some groups with complex and challenging needs such as single non-priority homeless people who need direct access emergency hostel accommodation, to prevent and alleviate rough sleeping; and supported accommodation for young people who are vulnerable, including care leavers.

The Kirklees Older Peoples Accommodation Strategy has identified several key issues that must be considered in the provision of appropriate housing for older people:

- Forecast increase of 24,000 older people in general needs housing requires partners to commission housing, including sustainable Lifetime Homes design – Lifetime neighbourhoods on the basis of firm local evidence
- The absence of Lifetime Homes will add pressure on older people and services
- Kirklees needs an additional 530 extra care units over the next 5 years for the high needs older population, 140 of these will be provided by Excellent Homes for Life
- Without extra care, there will be an unsustainable expansion of residential care, which neither fits with what older people say they want, or with long term policy
- Residential care will reduce as people choose extra care if sufficiently supplied
- There are no real tenure options for older people and we need to determine what options are required
- Links between mainstream, sheltered and extra care housing must be improved through stimulating leisure activities, which promote healthy living and inclusion.

The Welfare Reform Act has major implications for households in receipt of some kind of state benefit. In Kirklees over 70% of social housing tenants are in receipt of full or partial benefit; over 8,500 people live in private rented sector accommodation, more than 800 single people will be affected by the reduction in benefit paid to under 35 year old single childless people and approximately 190 households will be affected by the benefit cap of £500 per week. Approximately 2,500 tenants in council owned stock (the properties managed by KNH) will see a reduction in their benefits due to the under occupation rules. The introduction of direct

payments under the Universal Credit arrangements, from October 2013, may cause difficulties for people on very low incomes who then have to manage their money and the associated risks of running up debts including rent arrears. We also need to be aware of the potential mismatch between people needing to move to smaller properties, and the supply of such homes that are available.

The current economic climate means that we are receiving a higher number of approaches from households who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. These approaches include people who may not have previously come to the council, or an advice service, such as those made redundant or having to claim benefits for the first time. Nationally, 12,860 applicants were accepted as statutory homeless between 1st April and 30th June 2012, 9% higher than during the same quarter of 2011. On a seasonally adjusted basis, there were 12,960 acceptances, a decrease of 2% from 13,230 in the previous quarter.

In Kirklees, data for the first 3 quarters of 2012/2013 show we accepted 300 households as homeless with a priority need. Although Kirklees has not yet seen a large increase in homeless acceptances we are starting to see an increase in the number of people accessing the housing options service and an increasing number of people in temporary accommodation, in line with national trends. We anticipate that the demand for social housing, and the number of people applying for the register, will increase further as the welfare reforms start to impact coupled with rising interest payments and job losses.

Table 5 shows the number of customer contacts with Kirklees Housing Options and Support Service between January 2012 and December 2012 and the number of housing applications received in this period.

Table 5: Customers accessing Housing Options and Support

	Jan 12	Feb 12	Mar 12	Apr 12	May 12	Jun 12	Jul 12	Aug 12	Sept 12	Oct 12	Nov 12	Dec 12	TOTAL
Number of customer contacts	626	753	663	610	578	585	645	632	688	665	578	585	7608
Number of new housing applications received	693	743	617	509	629	543	552	504	513	803	739	516	7361

Analysis of the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) data as at March 2013 has shown that:

- The recession has put more people at risk of losing their home and has made it less likely that people are in a position to make alternative, permanent, satisfactory housing arrangements. Homelessness applications and acceptances are increasing and the numbers in temporary accommodation has increased by 25% on the same quarter last year, and 20% increase in acceptances.
- The number of people actively bidding on the housing register is 11,510.
- 2323 households on the register have some level of priority need, including 374 households classified as homeless or in temporary accommodation
- Applicants aged 35 and under account for 50% of the total number of housing register applicants. Applicants aged 25 and under make up 22% of the total register numbers, and 25 to 35 year olds, 28%.

In some areas it is difficult for people to access early advice and information services about their housing situation. Rural South Kirklees (mostly Holmfirth) has the worst areas for barriers to housing and access to services. Local Ward Councillors have received an increase in requests for advice from residents who have been made redundant and who have not had previous contact with the benefits system. In response, we have developed specialist briefing sessions to raise Councillors' awareness of the advice and support channels available to support their constituents.

In addition, housing advice is provided by the council's benefits advice service, voluntary sector advice services, the private sector housing team, housing officers in KNH and in some housing associations. Kirklees Information Points also offer basic advice and can signpost customers to more specialist agencies. The voluntary sector advice service is operated by five key agencies, under one contract. They provide legal, benefit and housing advice as well as advice on pay and employment rights. Data from the Citizens Advice service (England and Wales), covering 2009/10 Quarter 3 reports an overall increase in number of people advised of 14%, to 0.62 million people. Housing issues account for the 3rd largest category of problems, with a 17% increase in activity. The report says;

"The largest area of this (housing) advice related to helping people with housing debt, accounting for around one third of all housing related problems". The biggest area where people asked for help and advice is the private rented sector, where arrears rose far more sharply (by 27%) than in social housing (8%). CAB's view is this is partly due to the way in which benefit is paid; in the private rented sector, it's paid as Local Housing Allowance (LHA) directly to the tenant. The Bureau note that some tenants have fallen into arrears as a result, where LHA is paid into a bank account that is already overdrawn. 21% of the private tenants advised about rent arrears, also had problems with an overdraft. Multiple debt is a key issue.

The joint Housing Options/CAB debt advice project continues to offer timely, targeted advice resulting in positive outcomes for 149 customers so far. We are on track to meet our target of supporting 236 households by the end of March 2013.

Homelessness is a key factor associated with re-offending as many homeless people feel they have no option but to commit crime to pay for food and shelter.

Our response:

We will work in partnership with other front line services to provide financial advice to those people threatened with losing their home and use early intervention and targeted support for the most vulnerable people. A review of the joint Housing Options and CAB debt advisory work is ongoing, with a view to further extending funding for 2013 /14. We will also take into consideration how our policies react with the welfare reforms; for example, how under occupation by households in receipt of housing benefit could lead to people struggling to make up the difference between rent payable, and the amount of benefit received. We need to think more innovatively about how best to use the housing we already have, and tackle situations which lead to for example, people living in overcrowded situations. We cannot rely on building new specialist homes as this cannot meet the range of needs in our communities. There are already good partnerships in place with organisations which help to meet complex needs but this need to be built on and other partnerships forged.

Following successful bids to the HCA's Affordable Homes Programme we are working closely with registered providers and colleagues from across the council to secure provision of hostel accommodation for single homeless people who need support to avoid rough sleeping, or to get off the streets as quickly as possible and move on from living in a hostel, to permanent accommodation. As referred to earlier, this is a recognised gap in current provision.

There is also insufficient appropriate accommodation for younger people and care leavers. We are working to develop provision along the foyer principles as a pathway from residential care to fully independent living, or for young people who are unable to return to the family home. This provision will give young people the support advice and confidence they need to move onto successfully maintaining their own tenancy.

We know that we must improve access to ordinary housing (with extra support where needed) for a range of groups including older people, people who are financially vulnerable, people with disabilities, substance

misuse problems, mental health issues or learning disabilities. We also recognise that we need to provide different solutions such as access to care and support or home adaptations. Options should include help for people to acquire private sector housing, through shared ownership, shared housing where two or three younger people wish to have a shared tenancy, facilitated by the council (if that is the preference) or other routes. One suggestion we may wish to explore would see the council facilitate shared living arrangements, for example where a homeowner offers accommodation to a “home sharer” in exchange for an agreed level of support in the form of financial exchange, assistance with household tasks, or both. A home sharer might be an older person, a person with disabilities, a working professional, a single person struggling to pay their housing costs or simply a person wishing to share his or her life and home with others. For these people, shared housing could offer companionship, affordable housing, security and mutual support.

These options must also include making best use of existing retirement living schemes to provide a community environment for older people (and others) who need extra care and support.

Key Tasks:

- Those people most affected by the welfare reforms are supported through the change
- Maximise opportunities for access to appropriate accommodation for all sectors of the community
- Develop new and innovative models of meeting the housing needs of people who require support to live independently
- Housing related support services are in place to help the most vulnerable people live independently in their own homes.

Key Issue: Preventing homelessness

Figures issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) show the seriousness of the current housing situation. In 2010 more than 44,000 households were accepted as homeless in England, representing a 10% rise from the previous year and the first rise in almost a decade. Inside Housing published research in June 2011, following a survey with 51 local councils about trends in homelessness; of the councils surveyed, 37 report rises in the number of homelessness decisions and applications in 2009 / 10. The current national rise in people experiencing homelessness is seen partly as a result of a delayed reaction to the recession, where people who have been made redundant or had their hours’ reduced have been relying on savings or insurance which has now run out. As referred to earlier, repossessions are on the increase.

Homelessness prevention is a key role for local housing authorities, their partners in other statutory services like Health and Probation but also in the voluntary sector. The Government has set out directions to local authorities on what it expects to see within its approach to tackling homelessness. In its document “Making Every Contact Count” (DCLG, August 2012), the government sets out 10 local challenges to every local authority, to ensure a joined up approach to early intervention to prevent homelessness. In line with the focus on preventing homelessness through early intervention we work to prevent homelessness wherever possible. The number of people who were accepted by the council as statutorily homeless over the last year was 532, of whom 306 are deemed as having a priority need. The number of people being accepted as homeless is down by 6% over the last year reflecting our early intervention work to prevent people going onto make a homeless application to the council. This is achieved through a range of focused work with young people and their parents, targeting private and social housing tenants to prevent home loss through debt and helping households suffering from violence to stay safely in their homes wherever possible. We aim to avoid the use of Bed and Breakfasts for under 18s and families with children and work hard to reduce the numbers of people sleeping rough or becoming entrenched rough sleepers, in line with the Government’s “No Second Night Out” principles.

Table 6: Homelessness

Performance Indicator / Evidence	Mar	Jun	Sept	Dec	Total
	2012	2012	2012	2012	
Number homeless decisions (quarterly)	143	138	159	189	629
Number of homeless acceptances	75	87	105	108	375

Data from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) shows that the biggest category of people accepted as homeless is those in the 25 to 44 year old group; of the 44,160 households accepted as homeless as at the end of Quarter 2 in 2011, 21,870 (50 %) were over 25 and under 45 and this picture is replicated locally. There is a clear correlation between the age profile of drug and alcohol dependency, and numbers of people in this same age group who are also homeless, which suggests a strong link between the two issues.

Single homeless people with no priority represent the biggest pressure on the housing options service. In 2010 / 11 the council made 576 decisions about homelessness eligibility; 340 of which were accepted as homeless with a priority need and the remainder were found to be non-priority. A large proportion of these (72%, n=170) were single people. Research carried out in 2008 identified significant problems resolving housing problems for single (non-priority) homeless people in Kirklees. With only one local direct access hostel, it was very difficult to find spaces in temporary accommodation, particularly for people aged over 25 years. Provision in Bradford and Leeds was generally unpopular with homeless people from Kirklees. Some hostels are now closing which further reduces the options for emergency accommodation. The research indicated that the Housing Options and Homeless service did not always meet the needs of single people and there was not enough prevention work targeted at this group. As a result, there was a significant level of rough sleeping and sofa surfing in each of the main towns in Kirklees. Nationally, latest figures show the numbers of rough sleepers is up by 23% to an estimated 1,768. Locally, the numbers of people sleeping rough in Kirklees is now estimated to be 9 people at any one time, some of whom are migrants from East European countries.

The combined changes to the benefits system and social housing reforms are anticipated to have a major effect on the levels of homelessness. We are also concerned that financial pressures will lead to an increase in the number of young people who are asked to leave home, family breakdown and domestic violence. The planned benefit cuts will affect those who are poorest and most vulnerable.

Our response:

We are currently reviewing our approach to meeting housing need and the delivery of our housing options service to provide a wider range of co-ordinated solutions to support vulnerable people. We need to respond to the changes required through the new homelessness legislation enacted through the Localism Act. We also need to respond to the pressures of reducing budgets, fewer staff, higher numbers of households requiring housing advice and the need to deliver an accessible, high quality, customer focussed service. Most housing and advice services operate in Huddersfield and Dewsbury town centres. There is a need for a more streamlined point of access for housing related issues, but with a multiplicity of access mechanisms; via the 'phone, online, and face to face.

We are working with the Crime Reduction Initiative (CRI) to reconnect people from Eastern European Countries to their families and return them to their country of origin.

We need to help people before they reach a crisis situation so that we reduce the impact on individuals (stress, distress, ill health, deterioration in well-being) and also the financial impact on local public services. To do this effectively we need to identify and address the root causes of peoples' housing problem. For some people, a "light touch" in terms of advice and support may be sufficient; we must be able to gear our approach appropriately and target resources according to the differing levels of need. Providing advice on housing options is estimated to cost nine times less than providing alternative settled accommodation¹⁹. There is a clear business case for early advice and intervention and preventative action to reduce demand and spending on acute services. In 2009 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) commissioned Cap Gemini²⁰ to update a study assessing the financial benefits of housing related support services (formerly the Supporting People Programme). Overall they found that investment in packages of support, including housing related support services, avoids costs elsewhere producing a net financial benefit. The modelling shows that every £1 spent on preventative services saves almost £4 to the public purse.

Reports commissioned by the DCLG highlight evidence to show that preventing homelessness is cost effective; ("Demonstrating the cost effectiveness of preventing homelessness", CIH, July 2010) the following table summarises the savings of homeless prevention measures such as successful mediation, rent deposit schemes, sanctuary schemes and provision of advice and support.

Table 7

Value for Money	Prevention Measure	Savings compared to cost of meeting main homelessness duty
1.	Rent bond scheme	37 x
2.	Advice on housing options	9 x
3.	Mediation	9 x
4.	Rent deposit scheme	8.5 x
5.	Sanctuary scheme	5.5 x
6.	Finders Fee	4.5 x
7.	Home visits	3.5 x

We will be publishing the council's Strategic Tenancy Policy which has been developed with our partners. The policy;

- Sets out the high level objectives that social landlords (known as registered providers) should "have regard to" in their tenancy policies
- Signposts people to where the registered provider tenancy policies can be found, or summarise them.

The policy has been developed:

- With consideration to the council's local allocations policy and homelessness strategy
- Within the context of our overarching strategic priorities, as set out in this strategy.

Key Tasks:

- Strengthen our approach to preventing and tackling homelessness
- Make best use of existing accommodation across all tenures
- Publish the council's Strategic Tenancy Policy.

¹⁹ based on the assumption of operating costs at £71,000 per annum based on 355 cases in one year

²⁰ CLG, *Research into the financial benefits of the Supporting People Programme, 2009, Published July 2009*

Key Issue: Rising demand for adaptations

The number of people requiring adaptations to their homes in the future is likely to increase significantly in line with an ageing population and an increase in the number of people with long term health conditions such as obesity and physical disabilities. Between 2007 and 2011 there was a 7.8 % increase in those claiming disability living allowance in Kirklees. Using this as an indicator it suggests a higher proportion of homes in the future will need to meet the needs of those with disabilities, including adaptations to enable them to live independently. In 2010 / 11 the council carried out 631 major adaptations in Kirklees. The current demand for major adaptations shows a steady increasing trend, the most recent data shows a 15% increase. This trend is anticipated to continue in line with demographic changes.

A survey of disabled adults receiving some form of social care in Kirklees (Accommodation Strategy for people with a physical disability 2010) shows that 1 in 7 live in a council owned property. However, home owners were less likely to think their current home was suitable than council tenants, 68% (15 out of 22) compared to 81% (25 out of 31). We know that other changes help people to maintain their independence, including improved security and measures to detect and prevent falls; research has shown that where an elderly person is the victim of a burglary, is bereaved or falls at home, they are more likely to need nursing or residential care.

Our response:

We are working to speed up access to adaptations so people get what they need much more quickly through the multi-agency assessment team, which is now operational. This team is also able to tackle health and housing issues in a much more cohesive way by bringing together measures that improve independent living.

We have developed a more unified service with the co-located Accessible Homes Team and have moved towards more parallel working and improved governance arrangements. There is still more to do and we are working hard towards further improving the service for our customers. We have started to explore further options for “re-cycling” adaptations including adapted properties in the private rented and owner occupied sector, and opportunities for people to self assess, and make better, more informed choices about self financing their adaptations. There is also scope to include customer views and feedback more to develop and improve the service we offer disabled people and their families, and to focus more on the customer experience during the adaptations process. Capital investment in housing stock and repairs must include features to make homes more suitable for people with disabilities, to support the independence of the increasing proportion of the community who have mobility and sensory disabilities – this could include the introduction of features such as lever taps and raised sockets, ramps to communal doors and lower level door entry systems as standard features.

Key Tasks:

- Continue to improve the adaptations and re-housing service for customers.

Summary of Key Tasks for Outcome 3:

To ensure that the people’s life chances improve by supporting them to find and keep an affordable, good quality home, action plans have been developed to; (Action Plan is attached as Appendix 3)

- Ensure those people most affected by the welfare reforms are supported through the change
- Maximise opportunities for access to appropriate accommodation for all sectors of the community
- Develop new and innovative models of meeting the housing needs of people who require support to live independently
- Have a clear focus on preventing homelessness

- Have housing related support services in place to help the most vulnerable people live independently in their own homes
- Make best use of existing accommodation across all tenures
- Publish the council's Strategic Tenancy Policy
- Continue to improve the adaptations and re-housing service for customers.

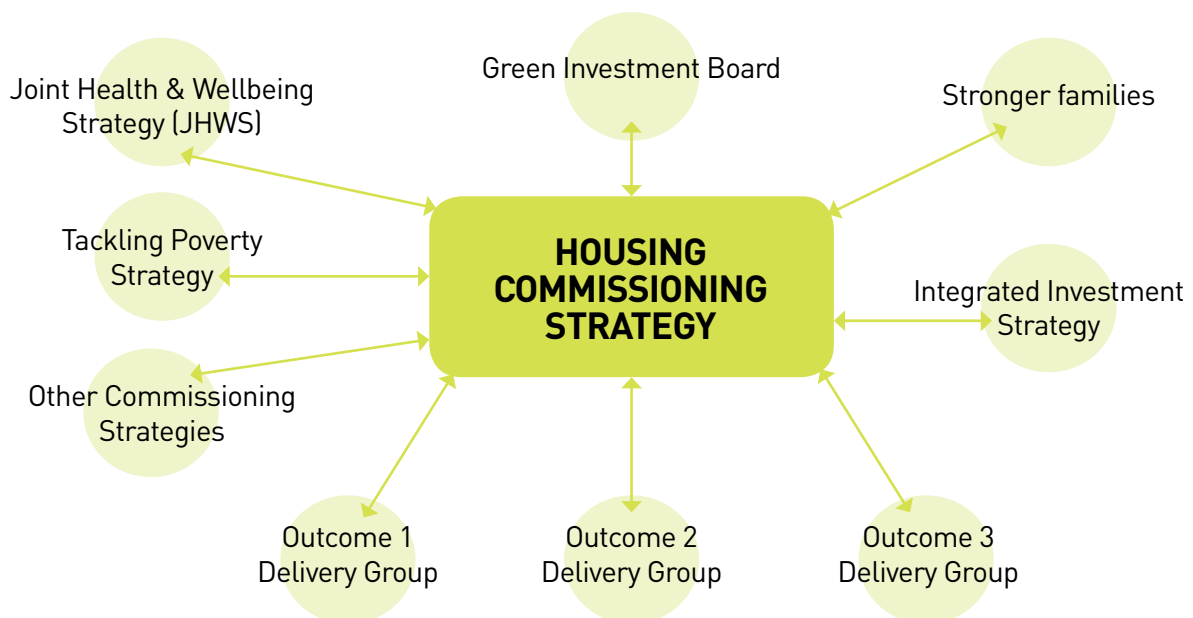
Delivery, Monitoring and Review

We will be taking a multi agency, partnership approach to the delivery of the strategy. We recognise that to achieve our priorities we cannot do this in isolation. We will work together with our partners to deliver the outcomes within the timescales shown in the action plans.

Following agreement and sign off to the strategy, action plans will be developed further which will set out, for each of the key outcomes, how the key tasks within the priority are to be achieved, and who will be responsible for progressing individual activities. The strategy will be monitored and reviewed by the Housing Executive Commissioning Group (HECG), which is a partnership body made up of senior managers and chaired by the director and assistant director within the council's Place Directorate. The group meets on a quarterly basis, and progress of the strategy's objectives will be reported to, monitored and reviewed at each HECG meeting.

The Figure 2 (below) illustrates how the Housing Commissioning Strategy relates to the other strategies within the council.

Figure 2



APPENDIX 1

Impact of Welfare reform and Localism Act. April 2011 to October 2013

Date	Change	Driver *	Impact	Details
Apr-11	LHA restricted to 30th percentile	WR	Amber	8,500 households affected, reassessments of existing claims to commence in Jan 2012 reduction between £6 & £58 per week
Apr-11	LHA 5 bed rate removed	WR	Amber	83 households in Kirklees affected
Apr-11	Removal of £15 LHA top up	WR	Amber	
Apr-11	Increase in non dependant deductions	WR	Amber	Approx 2,500 households affected - could lead to higher demands on support and advice services
Apr-11	Child benefit frozen for 3 years	WR	Green	
Apr-11	Child Tax credit reductions	WR	Green	
Apr-11	Working Tax credit reductions	WR	Green	
Jan-12	LHA shared accommodation threshold rise to 35	WR	Red	Approx 800 individuals affected in Kirklees - could lead to higher demands on support and advice services
Jan-12	Lone parents child under 5 will claim JSA not IS	WR	Amber	
Apr-12	ESA for people in work related activity group limited to 1 year	WR	Amber	
Apr-12	Working & Child Tax credit changes	WR	Amber	
Dec-12	Cabinet approval of new Allocations Policy	LA	Amber	The council's framework for deciding which groups of people can access social housing , and the priority given , is key to our ability to manage demand and make best use of social housing
Jan-13	Child benefit withdrawn from families with one higher rate tax payer	WR	Amber	
Jan-13	Strategic Tenancy Policy in Place	LA	Green	The policy will set our position on key housing issues in relation to our partners such as registered providers who operate locally.
Apr-13	Size criteria for working age claimants	WR	Red	Working age social housing tenants will receive benefit in line with the size of accommodation they require, not the size of their home. Approximately 3800 households affected.
Apr-13	Strategic Tenancy Policy to be in place	LA	Green	
Apr-13	working age DLA replaced by Personal Independence payment	WR	Green	
Oct-13	National roll out of Universal credit	WR	Amber	Universal credit is a new benefit that combines many existing benefits, including housing benefit, tax credits, income support and employment and support allowance.

APPENDIX 2

Consultation

A range of responses from a number of consultation opportunities have been used to inform the development of the strategy and agree priorities and outcomes. Consultation has taken place between December 2011 and February 2012, with the following groups;

- Council staff, managers, commissioners and other internal stakeholders including Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing
- Housing Executive Commissioning Group
- Registered Providers within Kirklees
- Supported housing providers
- Voluntary sector including services representing and supporting, people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Older People's Partnership Board
- Elected members
- Developers

The comments and feedback received has been used to inform and further develop the strategy, and to shape the outcomes that people have told us are important to meeting the housing need of Kirklees residents. We will be going back to our consultation groups as we start to draw up and develop the partnership action plans needed to deliver on the key priorities as set out in the strategy.

APPENDIX 3 – ACTION PLAN

OUTCOME 1 - An appropriate supply of homes and jobs to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population	Timescale & Target	Activity	Lead organisation/ service	Resources required from others
KEY TASK				
1 Continue to work in partnership with developers to enable them to deliver new housing through the planning system which will provide jobs and training opportunities	Medium Term Up to 40% affordable accommodation on sites larger than 1 property	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement revised housing mix and affordable housing policies within the proposed Core Strategy. 2. Work with developers to encourage development. 3. Utilise initiatives from DCLG and/or HCA to bring forward development 	Developers	Planning, Investment and Regeneration
2 Continue to work with registered providers on the new Affordable Rent product to deliver affordable housing	Medium Term 200 affordable homes delivered 2013-2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with RP's to encourage development. 	Registered Providers	Planning, Investment and Regeneration
3 Explore opportunities for new development and regeneration models, such as Quality Social Housing, the Joint Venture and the Clusters of Empties fund.	Medium Term Potential of 55 properties from the Care & Specialist Support fund. 125 properties from Clusters funding by 31.3.14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress any successful bids of the 5 made to the Care & Specialist Support fund Jan 2013. 2. Further development of Joint Venture model and use of sites that have fallen out of EHL and the development of private sector renting. 3. Use the empty clusters funding to convert empty commercial space in Huddersfield and Dewsbury town centres in to residential accommodation. 	Streetscene & Housing / Investment & Regeneration (£2.8m funding from HCA) £2.8m Match funding from Kirklees Care & Support Specialised Housing Fund	Private investment through QSH, KCA, HCA, RP's, LCR, RE&F Team
4 Continue to manage the construction and letting of new council homes built through the PFI scheme – Excellent Homes for Life.	Medium Term 466 properties built and let by Summer 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All properties built to appropriate standards on schedule 2. All properties let with minimum delays 	Regenter /EHL	Investment and Regeneration Service/ Streetscene & Housing

OUTCOME 1 - An appropriate supply of homes and jobs to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population	Timescale & Target	Activity	Lead organisation/ service	Resources required from others
KEY TASK				
5 Provide sufficient and suitable accommodation to meet the needs of an aging population (Linked to Older Persons Accommodation Strategy)	Long Term	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open house event to launch market briefs and standards for accommodation for older people on 5th June 2013 2. 140 Extra Care properties delivered through EHL by summer 2014 3. Revised Housing Allocations Policy in place by Summer 2013 	Wellbeing & Integration	OPAS Project Team / Investment and Regeneration / RP's / Planning / Commissioning Managers / Developers
6 Bring empty homes back in to use. (Linked to Empty Homes Strategy) Medium Term	Medium Term 450 empty homes brought back into use by 2016	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold further Empty Homes events for property owners providing support 2. Proactively promote the Empty Homes Loan Fund – pilot scheme within the area 3. Write to owners of all empty properties offering support 4. Continue to support the “Canopy” scheme with partners 5. Consider and develop a Social Lettings Agency 	Streetscene & Housing	Housing Solutions / Investment & Regeneration / RP's/ Fresh Horizons / Developers / C&E services / KNH
OUTCOME 2 – Improved places to live by reducing inequalities and worklessness	Timescale: Short, Medium or Long term	Activity	Resources / Lead Service	Resources required from others
KEY TASK				
7 A Housing Allocations Policy is in place which supports and encourages successful communities.	Short Term Policy in place by Summer 2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allocations Policy review complete 2. Draft, consult on and secure approval for the Successful Communities Policy 3. Implement revised Allocations Policy and Successful Communities Policy 	Streetscene & Housing	Steering Group / Elected Members
8 Deliver responsive Streetscene services resulting in attractive and vibrant neighbourhoods.	Medium Term	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To build on and develop the Streetscene approach to Area Based Working by developing stronger working relationships between the Streetscene Area Based Working teams and the KNH estate teams. 	Streetscene & Housing	KNH/KFTRA

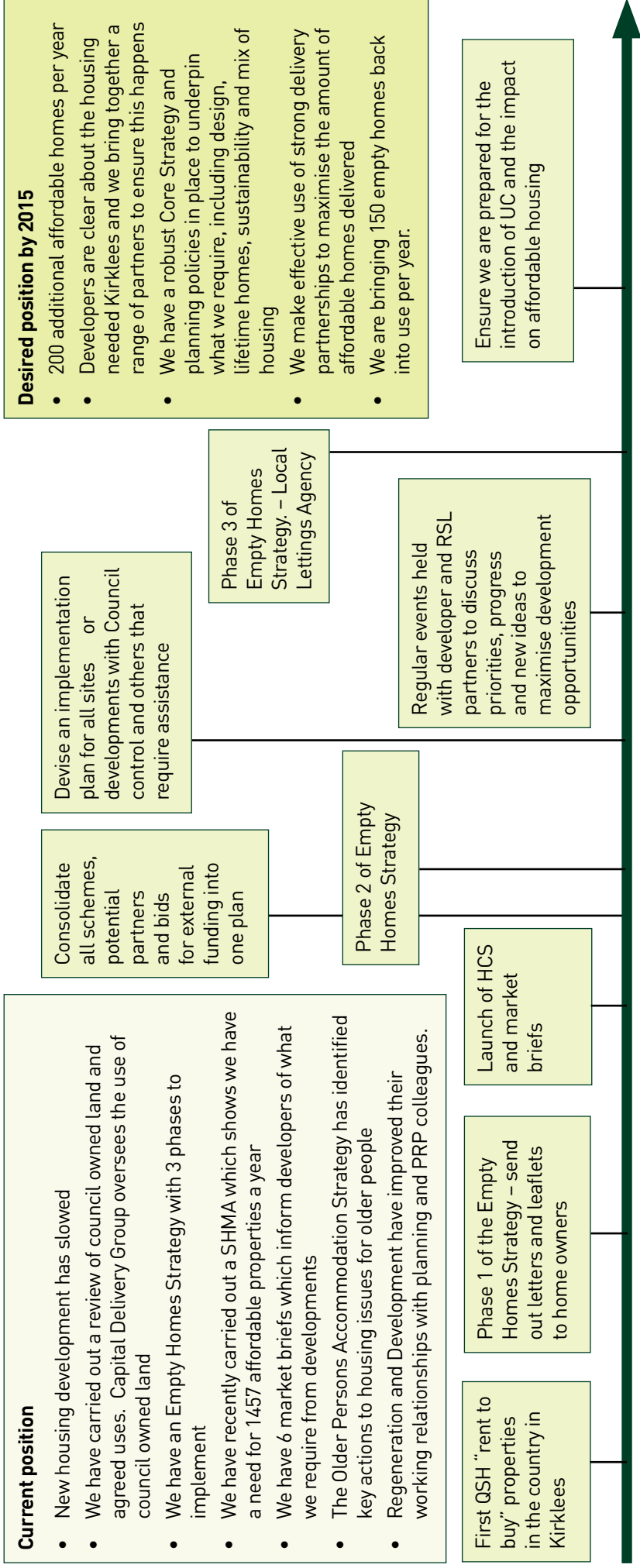
OUTCOME 2 – Improved places to live by reducing inequalities and worklessness	Timescale: Short, Medium or Long term	Activity	Resources / Lead Service	Resources required from others
KEY TASK				
9 Support the development of stronger communities focusing on priority areas in North Kirklees	Medium Term Decrease in the number of residents reporting they do not feel safe. (Your Place, Your Say survey).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contribute to developing a new strategic approach to integration and cohesion Activity in Kirklees 2. Engage in pilot projects in priority wards in north Kirklees aimed at responding to community tensions, developing a sense of commonality and shared belonging and understanding and managing perceptions of fairness. 	Council Cohesion Leadership Team	KNH / ANAT/ Safe and Cohesive Communities / Local People
10 Improve access to good quality private rented accommodation	Medium Term 100 Lettings facilitated in the next 12 months 300 privately rented properties accredited in the next 12 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proactively promote the council's Accreditation Scheme to private landlords and tenants 2. Continue the work of the Private Sector Lettings Team to increase the number of households accessing private rented accommodation 	Streetscene & Housing	Housing Solutions / private sector landlords
11 Work in partnership to support our customers in becoming work ready and finding and keeping a job.	Short – Medium Term Target of over 100 people supported in to work or training by March 2014.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work in partnership to develop employment opportunities 2. Fund the Connexions service to work with young people approaching the service for housing advice not in education, employment or training (current funding to Nov 2013) 3. Build on the successful pilot of in house JCP and Connexions advisors 	Job Centre Plus / Connexions	HOSS / KNH/ Stronger families/ I&R/ Private Sector/ Wellbeing & Integration
12 To mitigate the financial, environmental and health impacts of poor quality housing and energy inefficient homes. (Links to the council's Tackling Poverty and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.)	Long Term	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing targeted advice and assistance to support vulnerable resident across Kirklees 2. Capital investment through insulation measures, boiler replacement schemes and energy help loans 3. Continue to support the Affordable Warmth Steering Group to work in partnership to support the most health vulnerable residents, ensure residents are on the most cost effective tariff and improve energy efficiency of homes. 	Environment Unit	Streetscene & Housing / Phil Longworth / Exchequer Services / CAB

OUTCOME 3 - Improve life chances for people by supporting them to find and keep an affordable, good quality home	KEY TASK	Timescale: Short, Medium or Long term	Activity	Resources / Lead Service	Resources required from others
13 Those people most affected by the welfare reforms are supported through the change.	Short – Medium term 300 households visited and advised of solutions	1. Continue with in-house debt advisory service for housing options customers and council tenants 2. Our Customer & Exchequer and Housing Options and Support Services are working with a range of key colleagues from across the council and with our partners to ensure affected families are aware of the changes and of the local support available.	Streetscene & Housing	KNH/ANAT/ CAB/ Exchequer Services	
14 Maximise opportunities for access to appropriate accommodation for all sectors of the community.	Short – Long Term	1. Investigate the feasibility of different solutions to meet housing need, for example the development of a Local Lettings agency 2. Extend register of adapted properties to privately rented and owner occupied properties using Lets Help You website.	Streetscene & Housing	Developers partners / RP's / Regional authorities Homeless Link / Customer and Exchequer Services/ AHT / KNH	
15 Develop new and innovative models of meeting the housing needs of people who require support to live independently	Short - Medium Term Supported accommodation and hostel provision in place by 2014	1. Explore the feasibility of shared living models 2. Establish supported accommodation for vulnerable people including care leavers.	Streetscene & Housing	Wellbeing & Integration / Health / developers / Investment and Regeneration / Planning / Housing Related Support Providers / CHYPS	
16 Housing related support services are in place to help the most vulnerable people live independently in their own homes	Short Term 7,500 people being supported at any one time.	1. Current housing related support services are realigned and remodelled 2. Services are commissioned and operational.	Streetscene & Housing / Wellbeing & Integration	Housing Related Support Providers / Wellbeing & Integration / CHYPS	

OUTCOME 3 - Improve life chances for people by supporting them to find and keep an affordable, good quality home	Timescale: Short, Medium or Long term	Activity	Resources / Lead Service	Resources required from others
KEY TASK				
17 Strengthen our approach to preventing and tackling homelessness.	Medium Term 1000 households prevented from becoming homeless.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the range of options available to prevent and tackle the main causes of homelessness Develop a homelessness prevention tool kit for rough sleepers using "no second night out principles" Develop and implement the council's Homelessness Strategy Develop and implement supported accommodation for homeless single people and people at risk of sleeping rough being developed Review the delivery of temporary accommodation to meet the needs of customers. 	Streetscene & Housing	Voluntary sector / KHF / housing support providers/HCA/ RP's/ Investment & Regeneration/ PRS
18 Make best use of existing accommodation across all tenures	Short Term Revised Housing Allocations and Successful Communities Policies in place by Summer 2013 100 additional properties certified through accreditation scheme by April 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the revised Allocations Policy and associated Successful Communities Policy Develop opportunities such as maximising the use of council owned studio accommodation Improving private rented properties and management practices through the increase in the number of accredited private rented properties. 	Streetscene & Housing	Older Peoples Forum / OPAS project team/ R&DT/KNH / Private sector landlords / Fusion Housing / Wellbeing & Integration/ Voluntary Sector
19 Publish the Kirklees Strategic Tenancy Policy.	Short Term In place and published by April 2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The council's intentions for its own tenancies are set out. Guidance issued to show we expected RP's to manage stock in the borough. 	Streetscene & Housing	RP's / KNH / Elected Members / Consultation
20 Continue to improve the adaptations and re-housing service for customers	Medium Term Assessment of need carried out within 8 weeks.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a key contact approach to deliver adaptations Explore the feasibility of further integration of the multi agency Accessible Homes Team. 	Adaptations Management Group	Adaptations Board

APPENDIX 4 Timelines

Outcome 1: An appropriate supply of homes and jobs to meet the needs of an aging and growing population

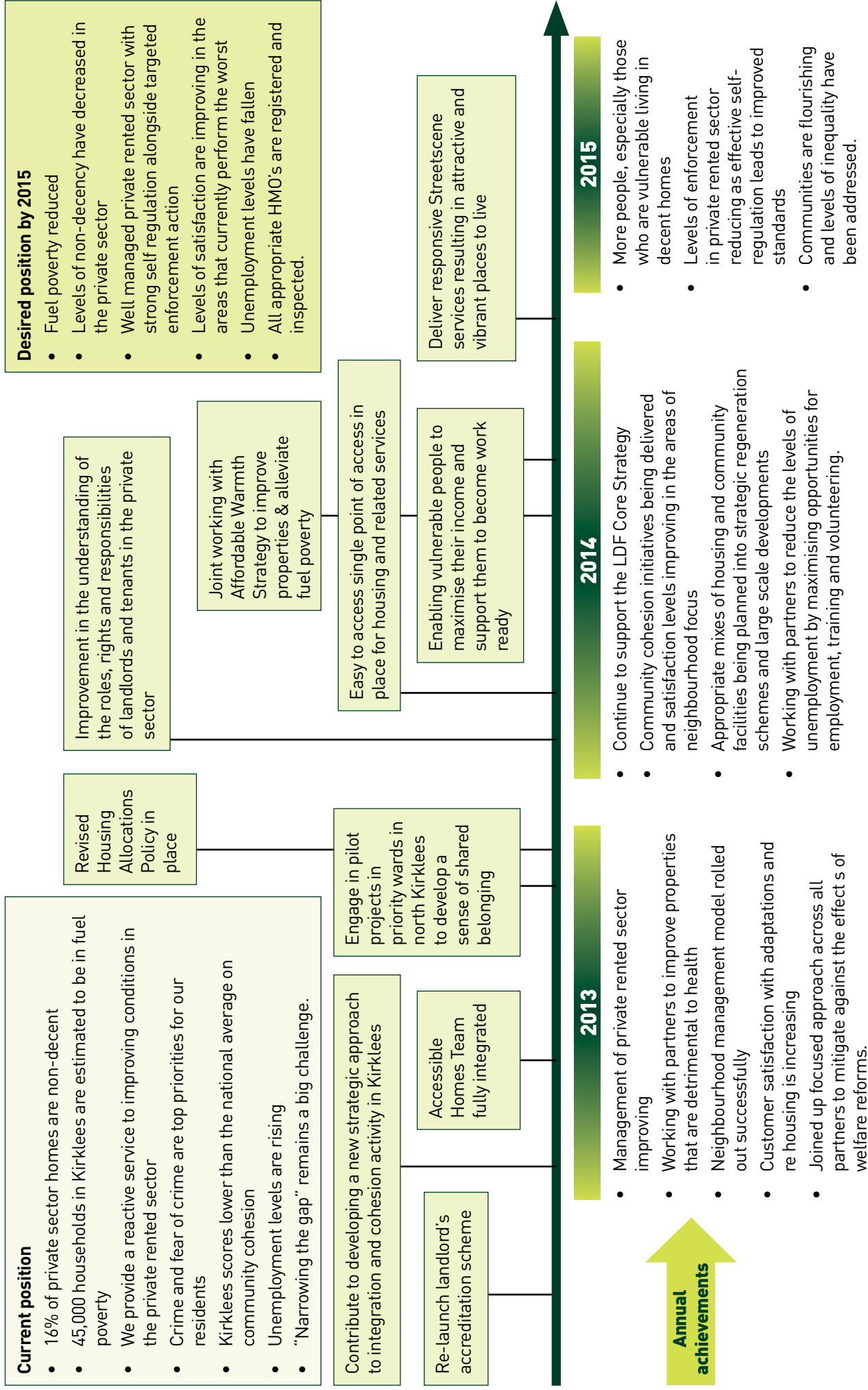


- Data base of empty homes created from data received from owners and a plan developed on how to tackle properties
- Sources of strategic funding to deliver affordable housing identified
- Identify and engage with potential partners for delivery of key Action.
- Formation of Action Group to deliver the plan
- Continue to work with partners and developers to maximise the amount of investment in Kirklees.

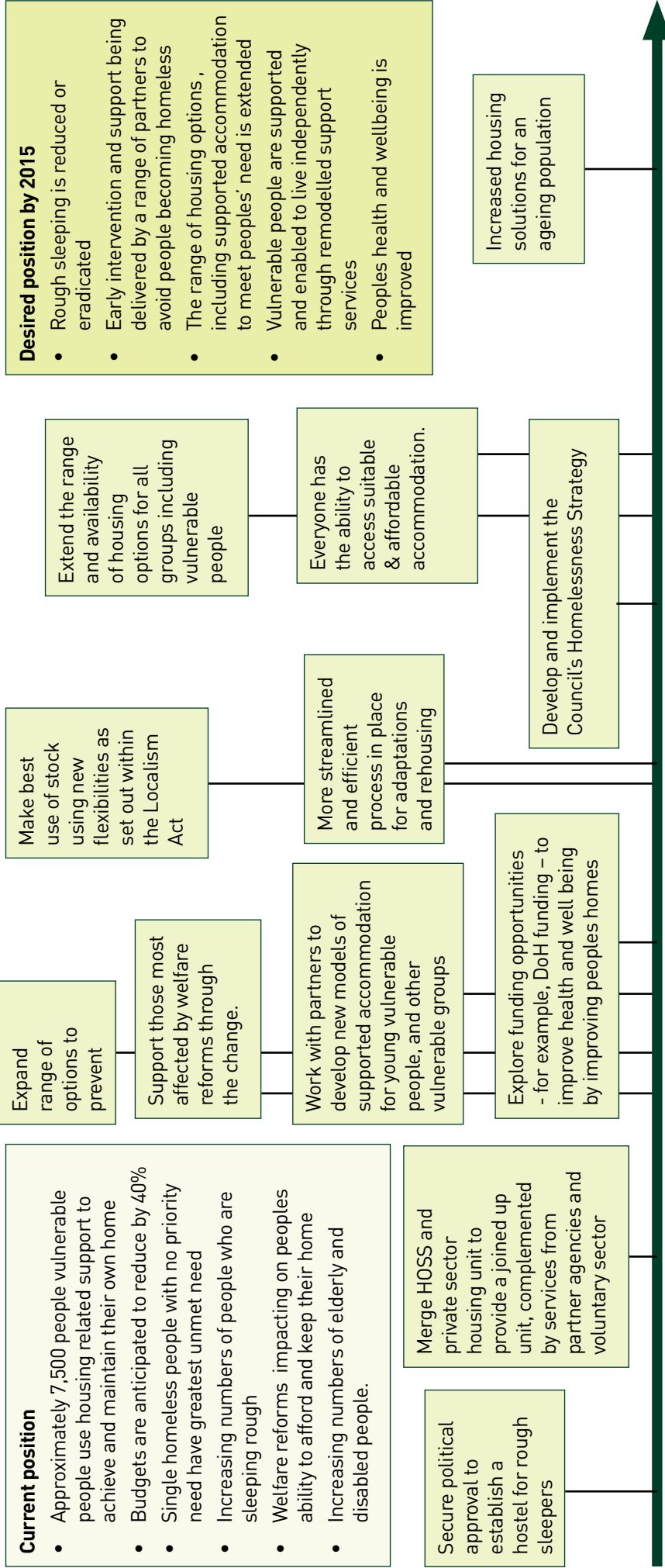
- Long term empty properties being brought back into use to help meet housing needs
- Community engagement taking place to ensure new homes and facilities meet their needs and aspirations
- Increased opportunities for work/training through development
- Accessing/bidding for all available streams of funding.
- Review development options for sites, identify stalled sites and re-evaluate possibilities
- All Excellent Homes for Life properties are completed and let.

- New, policy led, affordable homes being delivered to meet clearly agreed local priorities
- Council and public assets being used to maximise the number of affordable and specialist homes delivered through best use of resources
- Council is managing the impact of welfare reform and minimising the amount of homeless households.

Outcome 2: Improved places to live by reducing inequalities and worklessness



Outcome 3: Improve people's life chances by supporting them to find and keep a good quality affordable home





Download a copy of this 2013-16 strategy at
www.kirklees.gov.uk/housing



