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Herefordshire & Shropshire Housing Strategy

2012-2015



Welcome to the Joint Housing Strategy for Herefordshire and Shropshire.

Developing this Strategy has presented many significant challenges, not least because the world of local government and public funding is rapidly changing around us.

The Housing Strategy aims to embrace the new context for housing and communities by fully recognising that housing, ultimately, is about people and the communities in which they live. This Strategy focuses on achieving housing outcomes through ensuring we have the right type and supply of housing and housing support to meet local needs and local circumstances.

Housing has a fundamental impact on our lives. Access to good quality housing and housing support services plays a key role in improving the health; wellbeing and economic prosperity of our communities and can prevent or delay the need for more expensive services such as those provided by social care and health. It is critical, particularly in a time of increasing financial constraint, that we have a thorough understanding of what our most urgent housing related issues are and how we should work to address them in order to build sustainable, healthy and empowered communities.

This is a strategy for everyone in Herefordshire and Shropshire regardless of specific circumstances such as tenure, age or physical ability. Effective partnership working will be central to providing effective, value for money services which achieve positive outcomes and avoid duplication of effort.

The next few years will present significant challenges in how we deliver services with diminishing funding. We will therefore need to make difficult choices as to where we prioritise our resources in order to make the biggest impact and ensure that the housing and support needs of our most vulnerable residents are met. Our focus is on achieving priority outcomes, through flexible and innovative services.

We are committed to ensuring that local people have a much stronger voice in working with us to identify what the priorities are for their local area and how those priorities should be taken forward. This will include local communities being empowered to work with the voluntary and community sector in order to provide locally tailored services or by working with private sector organisations to deliver services on behalf of either Council. Whilst Telford and Wrekin have a strategy in place both Herefordshire and Shropshire will continue to work in partnership with Telford and Wrekin to deliver joint outcomes.

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Introduction

This Joint Herefordshire and Shropshire Housing Strategy replaces the Housing in Herefordshire Strategy 2011-12 and the Shropshire Housing Strategy 2009-11. The Strategy establishes the vision and sets the housing priorities for both areas to 2015, enabling resources to be focused on where they will have greatest impact in meeting housing need and achieving positive outcomes for our residents and the communities in which they live.

The Local Housing Partnership for the West Housing Market Area endorsed the production of a Joint Housing Strategy in recognition of the significant shared characteristics of our housing markets and the challenges we face. The Strategy builds upon a strong tradition of sub-regional partnership working and further strengthens our joint approach to tackling our housing challenges over forthcoming years.

It is recognised that whilst Telford and Wrekin have recently joined the partnership, their strategy will remain in place until 2015. Action plans will continue to identify joint working across all 3 authority areas.

The Authorities in the sub-region, social landlords and other key partners have a long and successful history of working together to develop and improve housing services and standards. This strategy further strengthens the sub-regional identity of the West Housing Market Area, to increase awareness of the many issues affecting the sub-region's population on a wider scale and drive forward improvements. In particular, bringing the housing and planning functions closer together is helping us to understand and influence the various housing markets across the sub-region in order to better meet the diverse needs of our communities.

The challenges ahead are significant and it is therefore essential that we are clear how we will shape our services and work with our partners and our local communities to continue to deliver effective services which provide positive outcomes in the future. The Strategy has been developed against a backdrop of significant reductions in funding for public services as well as a fundamental shift in the way that welfare benefits will be distributed.

The Localism agenda is having a fundamental impact on the way services will be delivered. It is about the decentralisation of power from Government to people and from the centre to localities. The Localism Act gives new flexibilities to Local Government and new powers for communities. The Act also provides a range of housing and planning reforms which will seek to give more power to local communities. Further details on the Localism Act are available at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/keymeasures/>

The measures detailed in the Localism Act are providing significant new opportunities for individuals and local communities to influence how services will be delivered and what outcomes they wish to see in their local areas. For both Authorities, locality working is key to the way services will be delivered in the future. The Local Authorities will seek to enable communities to find their own solutions to build more sustainable communities. This might include community led housing development coming forward.

The National Housing Strategy for England, which was published in November 2011, reinforces many of the changes in the Localism Act in relation to housing. Specifically, it focuses on:

- getting the housing market moving (i.e. enabling more housing to be built) and enabling people to access the housing market;
- reforming the way that social housing is funded, allocated and utilised so that it is used more effectively and is aimed at those most in need
- better utilising the private rented sector;
- ensuring that homes are well designed and maximise opportunities to reduce carbon emissions;
- tackling long term empty dwellings;
- meeting the needs of the most vulnerable;
- emphasising the focus of empowering local communities

The Joint Herefordshire and Shropshire Housing Strategy reflects these issues at a more local level and seeks to meet the challenges and maximise the opportunities outlined within the National Housing Strategy.

It is essential that the critical role of housing in working with partners to contribute to sustainable, healthy and empowered communities is both fully recognised and utilised throughout Herefordshire and Shropshire.

The key focus for the strategy is to detail the housing challenges for our areas and set the principles for how we will meet these challenges over forthcoming years to ensure effective and positive outcomes for our residents. It is also an important tool to illustrate the issues for which we will be prioritising the need to obtain external funding.

Priorities:

- 1. A range of housing, including affordable housing, is provided in partnership to meet the current and future needs of all our communities**
- 2. All existing stock is of a high quality and used effectively**
- 3. Residents are able to influence decisions through having access to suitable and timely advice on housing options and support available.**

These overarching priorities, detailed above, are based on the aims of our Community Strategies and Corporate Plans; the priorities outlined in our Local Investment Plans; the key issues raised as part of the development of a range of sub-strategies and extensive research as identified in appendix 2.

The draft joint housing strategy also underwent an extensive consultation process during Summer 2011 in order to ensure that there was consensus on key priorities for Herefordshire and Shropshire.

It is intended that through the focus on these priorities, we will be in a strong position to effectively contribute to building sustainable, healthy and empowered communities and to achieving the joint vision for housing which is:

Vision:

The diverse housing and support needs of local communities in Herefordshire and Shropshire are provided for through a balanced supply of sustainable homes and services.

Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils will develop joint approaches to dealing with the key priorities established within the Housing Strategy and will continue to develop closer working relationships with Telford and Wrekin Council. However, it is also recognised that there will be specific local issues that will require specific measures by the individual Authority. These actions will be monitored and an annual review published of progress on the implementation plan.

Purpose and scope of the Strategy

The development and implementation of the Joint Housing Strategy is overseen by the West Housing Market Area Partnership Executive. The Executive comprises Members and senior officers from Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils as well as Registered Provider representatives and the Homes and Communities Agency and is the steering group for the West Housing Market Area Partnership.

The West Housing Market Area Partnership initially comprised of Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils and more recently Telford and Wrekin Council, due to strong geographical and economic linkages, which have more recently been cemented through the establishment of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The LEP brings together public and private sector leaders in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin to create the conditions for enterprise and growth to flourish. An example of this is through collaboration between the three Authorities to create a joint housing and planning statement.

The three Local Authorities are committed to close collaborative working in delivering high quality, cost effective housing services and the Partnership brings together key stakeholders from a range of organisations that contribute to and influence delivery of housing and sustainable communities in the three areas. Details on the West Housing Market Area Partnership and the partnership arrangements are available at www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk and in appendix 1.

The Herefordshire and Shropshire Joint Housing Strategy does not extend to Telford and Wrekin as that Council has very recently published a long term local Housing Strategy. Therefore, within this housing strategy, where Shropshire is mentioned, this refers to the administrative (i.e. not including Telford & Wrekin) area of Shropshire Council unless otherwise stated.

The Joint Housing Strategy provides a framework for partnership working between all three Authorities. It is envisaged that this will lead to the development of a full sub-regional Housing Strategy in the future.

The Housing Strategy further establishes our approach to joint working across the sub-region in the future and our overall approach to meeting housing need. There has been a significant amount of work undertaken in both areas to prevent homelessness, provide support, implement choice based lettings and improve housing quality in the private sector which has enabled the two Authorities to make significant advances in meeting housing need and supporting our most vulnerable residents.

Through the production of a Joint Housing Strategy between Herefordshire and Shropshire, we are in a stronger position to identify where resources can be pooled to provide more effective and efficient housing services in the future. We are also able to have a stronger voice at a local, regional and national level regarding our housing and housing related support needs and our vision for the area in order to attract resources to meet our identified housing and support priorities.

The purpose of this Joint Housing Strategy is to identify the key housing challenges and to co-ordinate our efforts, where appropriate, so that together we can be effective in tackling those challenges. The Strategy forms the basis to build closer working arrangements between Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Councils.

The Strategy focuses on:

- Highlighting the issues affecting the Herefordshire and Shropshire areas and responding to the full range of housing related challenges
- Working together to assess and respond to the changing housing markets and housing needs
- Working to support economic growth, focusing particularly on affordable housing and sustainable growth

- Improving the services we offer, through involving and empowering local residents to play a more active role in shaping and influencing how housing services work
- Responding to reductions in overall Government expenditure on public services and identifying how services can be delivered in a more cost effective manner
- Developing and further strengthening shared approaches with key partners such as Registered Providers; the Voluntary and Community Sector and health colleagues to the issues we face.

The Strategy:

- Provides a framework for the future of housing in Herefordshire and Shropshire and identifies the key outcomes.
- Illustrates the key role of housing in contributing to sustainable, healthy and empowered communities
- Illustrates the key housing challenges faced within Herefordshire and Shropshire to assist in attracting funding and other resources.
- Considers the roles played by partnerships in delivering and improving housing and housing related support services
- Illustrates the links between this strategy and other key national, regional and local strategies and policies
- Provides realistic outcome based targets which focus on key identified priorities
- Forms a basis upon which to establish a full sub-regional Housing Strategy between Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Councils in the future.

We recognise the benefits of working together where cost savings or better services can be achieved. We also acknowledge that there are some very specific issues where a tailor made approach will be necessary to meet local specific circumstances.

Our approach:

Our approach is about a range of evidence of achieving positive outcomes for our residents and local communities based on expressed needs. We recognise the need to explore how other organisations including the voluntary sector or local communities themselves, work in partnership with the Councils. We also recognise that what may be the best approach to achieving a specific outcome in one area may not be the best way in another area. Therefore, it is essential that we work closely with our communities and other partners in order to ensure that we provide a flexible, outcome based approach which takes into account the specific circumstances of local communities.

An example of this would be that in some areas with large numbers of long term empty dwellings, it will be appropriate to give additional focus to working with owners to bring these dwellings back in to use which will provide additional housing, including the potential of affordable housing. Whereas, in other areas, it will be necessary to consider building additional housing to meet local need. New housing can be delivered through a range of mechanisms and led by a range of different organisations including:

- Council led development (which will be a focus in Shropshire, where the Council currently owns and manages its own social housing stock)
- Registered Social Landlord led development
- Development led by a private organisation such as house builders
- Led by the local community or individuals and a private developer in partnership
- Led by landowners

Whilst it is not in the scope of this Joint Housing Strategy to specify the specific solutions for each area, the strategy will guide decision making to identify specific work which should be undertaken on a locality based approach in order to provide the best outcome for the local area.

In shaping housing services for the future, it is important to make clear that the role of housing goes far beyond simply providing affordable accommodation and the influences of housing span across all aspects of what makes communities sustainable.

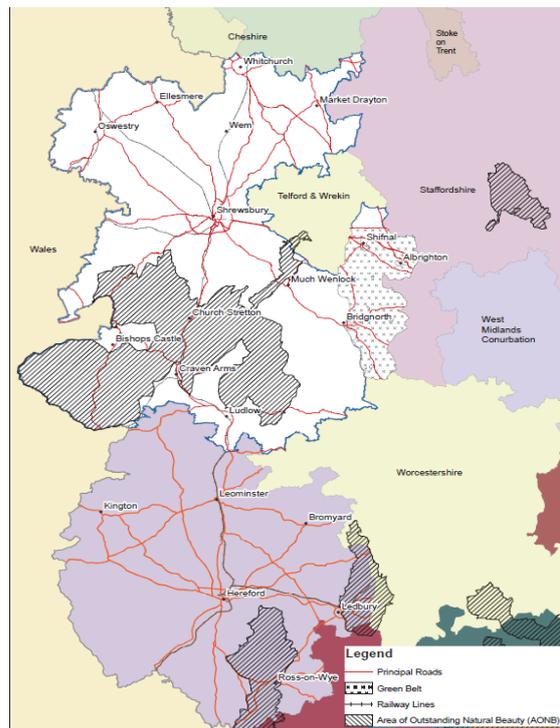
Good quality housing and effective housing support makes a significant and cost effective positive impact on our communities. It can dramatically help to drive economic development; reduce crime and anti-social behaviour; reduce carbon emissions; reduce fuel poverty; increase levels of educational attainment; reduce the number of hospital and care home admissions, and improve the overall health of our communities regardless of which tenure our residents currently occupy.

The Localism agenda is having a profound effect on how services will be delivered. This is creating an even greater role for housing and support services through a Place Based approach which takes into account specific local circumstances. It will ensure that services are capable of enabling communities and voluntary groups to deliver services themselves where services can be delivered more effectively and/ or this will enable cost savings to be made.

It is therefore essential that we work effectively with our partners, particularly our communities, to deliver positive, locally relevant outcomes and ensure that the positive impacts of good quality, affordable housing of the right type, which is in the right place, together with appropriate support, is available to our residents.

Overview of the sub-region

Herefordshire and Shropshire are diverse, predominantly rural, inland counties, bordering Wales. Covering a total area of 537,703 hectares (2076 square miles) of the West Midlands and with a population of 473,400 (0.9 people per hectare), Herefordshire and Shropshire are two of the largest and most sparsely populated areas of England. Hereford and Shrewsbury are the largest settlements with the other main market towns being Ledbury, Oswestry, Bromyard, Bridgnorth, Ross on Wye, Market Drayton, Leominster, Ludlow, Kington and Whitchurch.



For many people, the relatively low levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and deprivation, compared with the West Midlands as a whole, and an attractive environment (which includes three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) make Herefordshire and Shropshire ideal places to live.

However, pressures from high average house prices and low average incomes, an expanding population which includes significantly rising numbers of older people, the challenges of meeting housing and support needs in mainly rural, sparsely populated areas and the effects of reduced government funding, are providing significant challenges which we must address. Additionally, whilst deprivation overall is relatively low, there are some pockets of significant deprivation in both Herefordshire and Shropshire and in both rural and urban areas.

It is increasingly difficult for younger people to afford to access housing, particularly purchasing their first home. This is contributing to an outward migration of younger people, with the projected growth in the number of young people living in Herefordshire and Shropshire being at a much slower rate than regional and national averages. In fact, in many areas of Herefordshire and Shropshire, the population of younger people is expected to decline sharply over forthcoming years.

We will seek to meet the significant challenge of how we ensure that there is a suitable and affordable housing offer to attract and retain younger people to enable a sustainable and vibrant economy in the future and to ensure that

local facilities such as schools, shops and other community facilities in rural areas can remain viable.

Herefordshire and Shropshire are home to a number of military bases, such as at Credenhill, Cosford and Shawbury. We recognise the challenges currently faced by military and ex-military personnel in accessing the housing market and will seek to ensure that policies enable fairer access to the housing market.

Herefordshire and Shropshire have some of the fastest growing populations of older people in the region and this presents a particular challenge in terms of meeting the needs and expectations of a growing number of elderly and infirm residents. This is reinforced within Herefordshire following the commissioning of 'A Study of the housing and support needs of Older People in Herefordshire' which will be published during February 2012.

We are also faced with an ageing housing stock with inadequate levels of insulation and have additional pressures of social isolation, particularly of our older population which are exacerbated due to the rural nature of the area and a lack of public transport options.

It is recognised that current and future financial resources will not enable us to meet all of the identified housing and housing support needs. Therefore, it is essential that we establish priorities which are based on our understanding of housing need and focus on how we will work with our communities and partners, including at a sub-regional level through the West Housing Market Area Partnership, to address these priorities in an effective and cost efficient manner.

How the Strategy links with other policies and strategies

It is important to make clear that the Joint Housing Strategy does not sit in isolation. The Strategy draws together evidence from a range of sources at a local, sub-regional and national level. This includes the Sustainable Community Strategies, Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and Local Investment Plans (LIPs) for each area.

The Joint Housing Strategy also acts as an umbrella document for a range of sub strategies, which are listed in appendix 3, which provide more detail on how specific issues will be tackled in each area. This Housing Strategy forms an integral part of a range of complementary strategies and policies, including the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Herefordshire and Shropshire and transport and economic development strategies. It will support improvements to the health, welfare and quality of life of our residents.

The diagram on the following page shows how the priorities within the Joint Housing Strategy have been influenced, and how it contributes to a number of key documents.

THE ROLE AND SCOPE OF THE JOINT HOUSING STRATEGY

Context

National Policies and Drivers including:

Housing Act 2004
 Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
 Localism Act 2011
 National Housing Strategy 2011
 Welfare & Reform Bill
 Public Bodies (Reform) Act 2011

Evidence Base including:

Strategic Housing Market Assessment
 Local Housing Market Assessments
 Local Economic Assessment
 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
 Private Sector Stock Condition Surveys
 Viability Assessments

Strategies and Plans including:

Local Investment Plans (LIPs)
 Local Development Framework
 Community Strategy
 Sub-strategies including Homelessness Strategies;
 Empty Homes Strategies; Supporting People Strategies;
 Private Sector Housing Health and Well-Being Strategy
 Existing local Housing Strategies
 Policies relating to transport, health, economic
 development, social care, Community Safety, child
 poverty, employment, reducing re-offending etc.



Consultation



Strategy

Joint Housing Strategy

Priorities:

- Housing is provided in partnership to meet the current and future needs of local communities
- Existing stock is of a high quality and used effectively
- Appropriate and timely housing support and advice is available



Delivery

Local Action Plans

Annual Housing Strategy Review

Local Priorities – Place Plans

Local Investment Delivery Plans



Linked Plans and Strategies

Business Plans and sub-strategies including:

Partner business plans (including PCT; RSLs; Voluntary and Community Agencies; other Council Departments)

Planning Policy documents i.e. Local Development Framework

Sub-strategies including homelessness, empty homes, supporting people, private sector housing strategy

Shropshire Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

Tenancy Strategy

The contribution of housing to delivering sustainable communities

The Community Strategies for both Herefordshire and Shropshire provide a long term vision for addressing difficult and cross cutting issues which affect the economic, social and environmental well-being of our areas in a way that contributes towards sustainable development and sustainable communities (please refer to the glossary of this document for a definition of ‘sustainable community’).

Housing is the bedrock to achieving the aspirations for our communities contained within our Community Strategies. Without good quality, affordable housing, which is of the right type and in the right place, truly sustainable communities cannot be achieved.

The role of housing goes far beyond simply providing affordable accommodation and collecting rents. Good quality housing and effective housing support makes a significant and cost effective positive impact on our local communities.

The Government has made it clear that it wishes to see a “golden thread” of connectivity between the Community Strategies and their sub-strategies, such as Housing Strategies. This should show how the priorities contained within the sub-strategies contribute towards achieving the overall priorities for our areas.

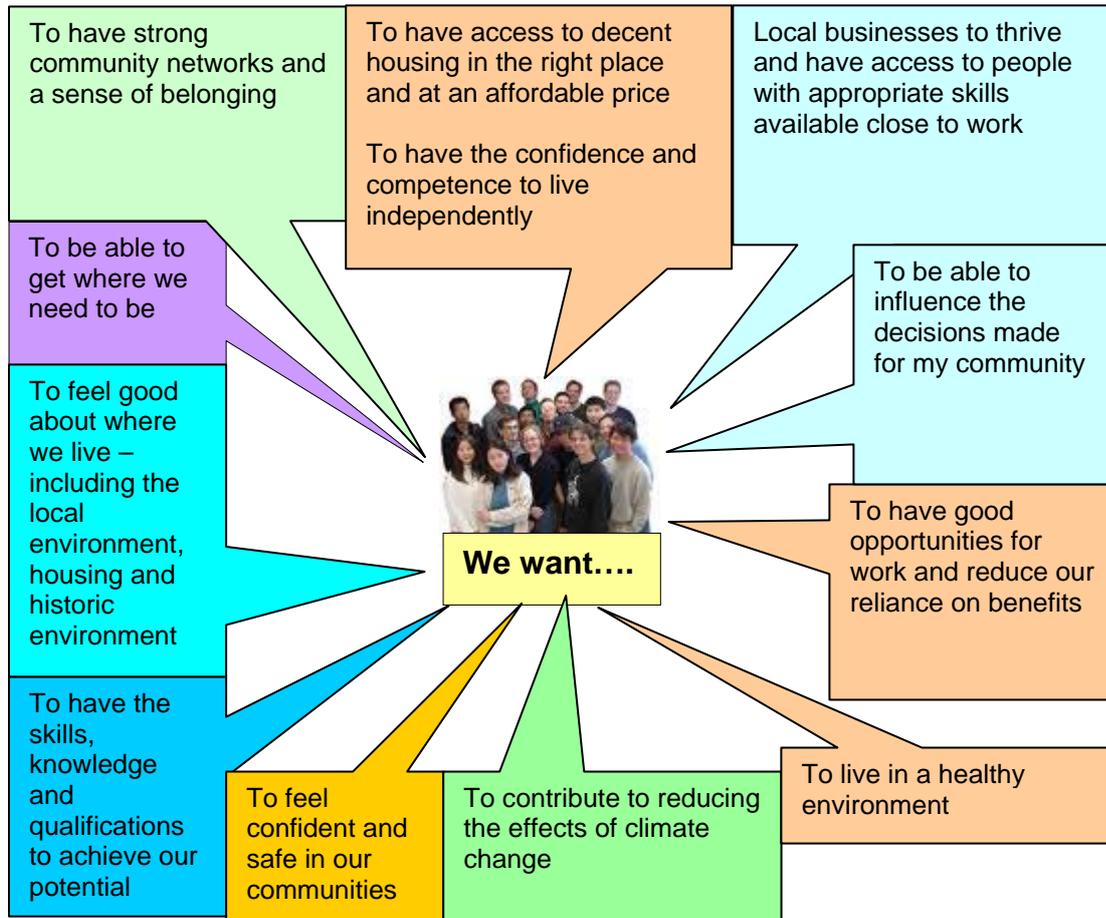
Sustainable communities contain a number of ‘building blocks’. This includes access to good quality education; good work opportunities; having a cohesive community; feeling safe and having a healthy environment. The role of housing runs across all of these building blocks.

The building blocks for sustainable communities

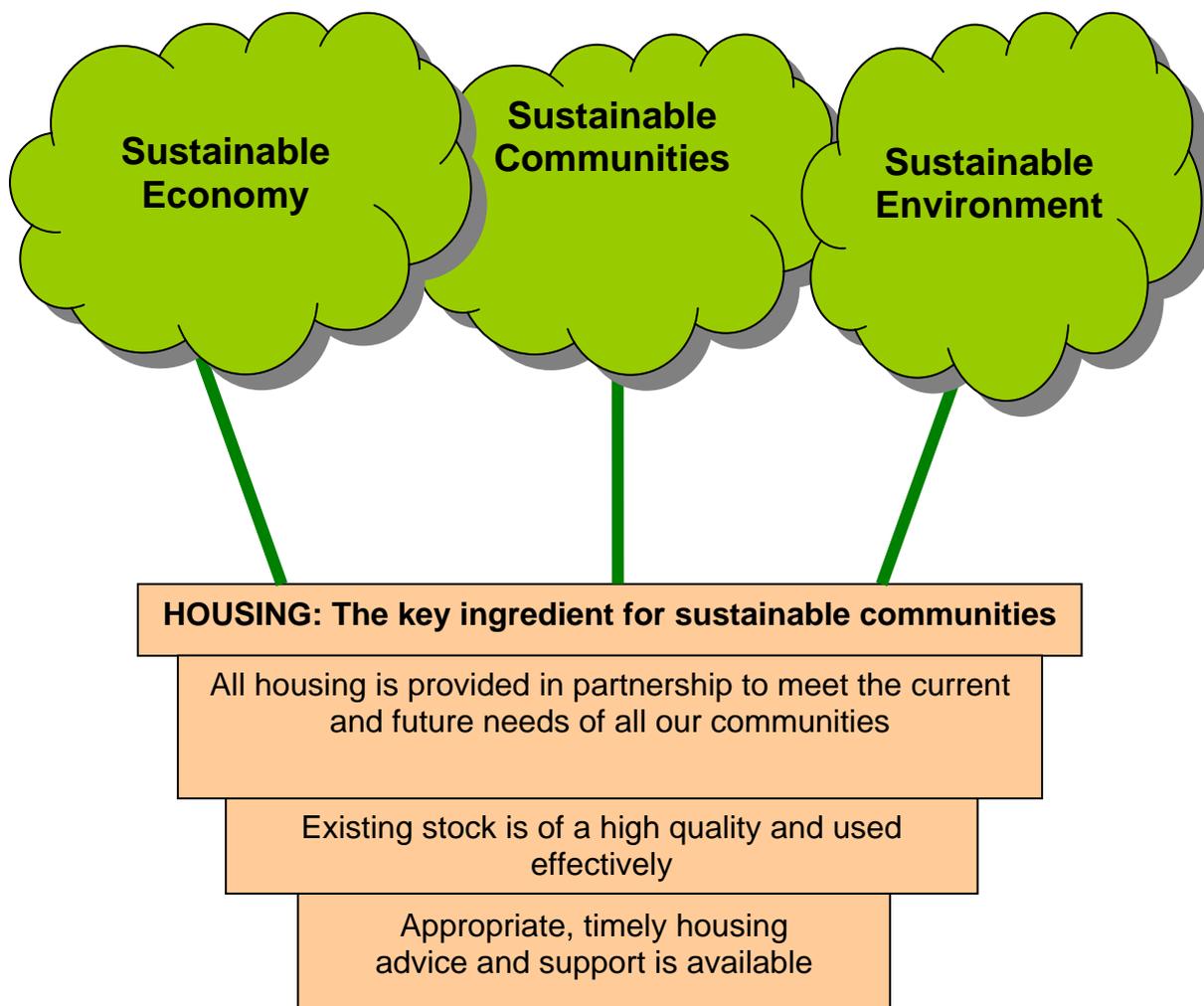
	Good quality housing and support	Economic development
High quality education	Environmental sustainability	Empowered communities
Community safety	Work opportunities	Good transport links
Quality of place	Community cohesion	Healthy environment

It is, however, important to reflect what these building blocks mean to our residents in terms of practical outcomes that they see in their daily lives on a practical level. The diagram below illustrates the practical interpretation of the building blocks above and gives examples of what this means to our local residents.

The practical needs of individuals



Affordable, good quality housing of the right type and in the right place forms the essential foundations on which successful lives and communities are built and underpins the wider aspirations of our residents and communities. Conversely, the effects of poor or inadequate housing and housing support can have a fundamentally detrimental effect for our residents and communities. The three priorities and associated priority outcomes which have been identified within this Strategy will further contribute to ensuring that our communities are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable as illustrated on the following page.



Sustainable Economy

To ensure that our economies are dynamic and modern, with an enterprising culture that attracts investors and skilled workers.

Having affordable, quality housing in the right places is central to attracting and retaining an effective and appropriate workforce with the right skills to help the sub-region flourish economically. Housing can also play a significant role in creating local employment and training opportunities directly and support signposting to a range of other key services. Additionally, poor housing is closely connected to increased levels of illness and is also linked to increased levels of time taken off work due to physical and psychological ill health.

Good quality housing is also an essential ingredient in ensuring that we have a well educated workforce and that our young people are able to have the skills; knowledge and qualifications required to achieve their potential.

An example of key evidence at a national level is shown in the document “Child poverty and housing” (Shelter, 2006) which states “There is a direct correlation between housing and educational attainment. Living in poor overcrowded housing means that children miss school more frequently, are twice as likely to leave school with no GCSEs and are more prone to exclusion. Homeless children living in temporary accommodation are up to three times more likely to be absent from school than other children, due to the disruption caused by moving”

Sustainable Environment

To work with communities to prepare for and adapt to the issues that climate change may bring and ensure the rich, varied environment is valued, protected and enhanced.

Sustainable principles for the design, construction and renovation of homes provide economic, health and environmental benefits. The potential contribution that housing could make to reduce carbon emissions is well recognised. It is estimated that housing contributes to over a quarter of all carbon emissions; therefore, tackling carbon emissions through housing is vital.

The benefits of sustainable design also contribute to increased health through improved air quality which in turn helps reduce cardiovascular and respiratory illness and ultimately supports the economy through reduced time off work and also reduces the pressure on health services.

Sustainable Communities

To ensure that our communities are strong, healthy, safe and inclusive, and encourage cultural diversity, voluntary effort and participation in community life.

Housing sits at the heart of ensuring that our communities are socially sustainable and can contribute significantly to ensuring that our communities are cohesive; that crime is reduced and that our residents are healthy.

Good quality housing and support makes a fundamental contribution to reducing physical and mental ill health and reduces the impact on more expensive acute services such as those provided through the NHS. As stated in the document “Housing and Health: Building for the Future” (BMA, 2003):

“Poor housing conditions are proven to lead to a wide range of health conditions and health inequalities. Living in cold and damp housing can cause a range of health problems, such as asthma, skin problems, coughing and wheezing. Overcrowding increases the risk of infectious or respiratory disease. Poor housing conditions also lead to long-term mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression”.

Furthermore, evidence shown in the document “Homelessness Prevention: a guide to good practice” (Pawson H et al, DCLG, June 2006), shows that “stable accommodation can reduce ex-offender reconviction rates by more than 20%”. Furthermore, evidence by Care and Repair England estimates that a fast-track service offering targeted low-level adaptations to older people recently discharged from hospital or at risk of readmission could be provided across England for £35m. If only 1 in 100 jobs prevented a hip fracture, this would save £70m annually. If 1 in 4 adaptations resulted in one night less in hospital for the affected older person, the saving would be over £21m (Care and Repair, 2007 cited at http://www.cpa.org.uk/cpa/Sustainable_planning_%20for_%20housing.pdf)

Delivering the Joint Housing Strategy

Vision

The diverse housing and support needs of local communities in Herefordshire and Shropshire are provided for through a balanced supply of sustainable homes and services.

Priority	Overall outcome
1. A range of housing, including affordable housing, is provided in partnership to meet the current and future needs of all our communities	<p>Herefordshire and Shropshire has a balanced and flexible housing market which can respond to changes in demand, changes in the economy and support regeneration.</p> <p>In particular, ensuring that housing is as affordable as possible to local people, is safe and healthy and that there is a choice of housing options available across all tenures.</p>
2. All existing stock is of a high quality and used effectively	<p>The condition of homes across all tenures are improved across Herefordshire and Shropshire and opportunities are taken to reduce the number of empty dwellings and to limit the impact of fuel poverty and climate change.</p>
3. Residents are able to influence decisions through having access to suitable and timely advice on housing options and support available.	<p>Appropriate and timely housing advice is available relating to all tenures.</p> <p>Those who wish to live more independently are supported to do so by appropriate advice and support which meets their needs. Homelessness is prevented where possible through appropriate advice and support.</p>

1. A range of housing, including affordable housing, is provided in partnership to meet the current and future needs of all our communities

KEY OUTCOMES

- **Communities have a range of housing options which meet their local needs in terms of type, size, locations and tenure of accommodation**
- **All those operating in partnership across the local authority areas to have a thorough understanding of current and future housing need and requirements for all types of housing within the sub-region**
- **New housing is developed to the latest standards of sustainability and design, where possible**
- **Opportunities are maximised to create employment and training opportunities for local people through new housing development**

Provision of the right type of sustainable housing in the right location and at a variety of prices to meet the needs of current and future residents is essential to the economic and social sustainability of our communities. It is important that we work to provide a greater choice for residents looking to buy or rent. New housing needs to include homes for outright sale, low cost home ownership, private, intermediate, affordable and social rent and also appropriate housing for our vulnerable residents.

Key considerations in the provision of housing includes:

- Meeting the housing needs of local people;
- Provision of specialist accommodation which meets local needs including for older people such as Extra Care housing; supported accommodation for vulnerable groups and Gypsy and Traveller pitches;
- Retaining and attracting key skills to support and promote growth within our diverse and dispersed economy;
- Promoting the development of environmentally sustainable dwellings;
- Sustaining existing communities and neighbourhoods and facilitating the development of mixed communities including in our rural areas;

Both Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils will continue to work with partners including land owners, developers, partner housing associations, the Homes and Communities Agency and local communities to bring forward affordable housing wherever possible and to sustain the local construction industry.

There is a significant need for additional affordable housing in both Herefordshire and Shropshire. Recent work to update Local Housing Market Assessments for Herefordshire and Shropshire has identified the estimated annual need for affordable housing to be between 1,268 and 1,776 units in Shropshire and 568 units in Herefordshire.

However, over the lifetime of this Strategy, Government spending on affordable housing will be significantly reduced, meaning additional pressures on the housing waiting list and the need to ensure that all possible means to increase the supply of affordable housing are explored. We aim to continue to work with partners to deliver housing which meets local needs for our residents across a range of prices to include the new affordable rent model.

Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils will work with partner housing associations and other appropriate organisations to maximise existing resources and will utilise our own capital funding programme for affordable housing, in collaboration with the Homes and Communities Agency. We will also utilise planning policy where feasible and changes in policy at a national level, such as through the New Homes Bonus, to maximise delivery of affordable housing.

Both Councils are progressing partnership working between housing teams and planners, the Homes and Communities Agency and our housing association partners to make sure that new housing meets the highest feasible standards of design and layout as identified in the Local Development Frameworks.

Specifically, both Herefordshire and Shropshire are predominantly rural areas and we recognise that there are particular affordability issues in many of our villages.

Within Herefordshire and Shropshire, we are faced with significant housing affordability issues. Currently, there are over 12,000 households on our housing registers. This presents a significant and growing demand on affordable housing. There are also marked disparities between earnings and house prices and issues related to accessing housing finance, which make it increasingly difficult for first time buyers to enter the property market.

At October 2011, the average price of a house in Herefordshire was £173,410 in Herefordshire and £157,328 in Shropshire, which is significantly higher than the West Midlands average of £129,500. Housing is also less affordable than the regional average.

One method of calculating affordability is to measure the difference between lower quartile earnings and lower quartile house prices. This is a widely accepted method for calculating the affordability of housing in an area, especially for first time buyers. The higher the ratio, the greater the gap between earnings and house prices and therefore, generally the more difficult it is to access the housing market. Herefordshire and Shropshire have some of the largest affordability ratios in the Midlands.

Lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings ratios.

	2000	2005	2011
Herefordshire	5.09	8.84	9.28
Shropshire	4.76	8.00	7.80
West Midlands	3.62	6.47	6.05
England	3.98	6.82	6.69

It is essential that we work closely with our key partners, including social landlords to maximise opportunities as they become available in order to ensure that we have the right type and amount of accommodation to meet the needs of our residents.

In order to ensure that the appropriate type of dwellings are provided, it is also essential that we have a thorough understanding of our housing markets in order to ensure that we develop the right type of housing and deliver appropriate services. Examples of work to inform our evidence base includes undertaking Local Housing Market Assessments and Local Investment Plans for each area. We will continue to update our Local Housing Market Assessments and identify where data can be standardised between Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Councils so that direct comparisons can be drawn.

2. All existing stock is of a high quality and used effectively

KEY OUTCOMES

- **Health impacts as a result of poor housing conditions are significantly reduced**
- **There are better incentives for home owners and landlords to maintain and improve the quality of their housing**
- **Fuel poverty is reduced and carbon emissions associated with housing are minimised**
- **Opportunities are available for households to move to larger homes or downsize as their needs change**
- **Best use is made of the existing housing stock to provide suitable accommodation options including bringing long term empty properties back into use**

Housing standards for social housing are improved

Around 80% of households in twenty years time will be living within the currently existing stock. Therefore, it is important to be clear that any changes to the way in which this stock is used can significantly impact on the extent to which it can accommodate housing need and contribute meeting wider sustainability issues in our communities. It is essential that effective use is made of existing housing stock in order to tackle housing shortages and meet housing need; improve the quality of private and social housing and reduce carbon emissions.

This includes:

- Reducing the number of long term empty dwellings;
- Maximising opportunities to reduce the numbers of under-occupied dwellings;
- Tackling poor quality private rented accommodation;
- Achieving Decent Homes in social housing;
- Enabling appropriate support such as aids and adaptations to enable individuals to remain independent;
- Reducing carbon emissions in existing housing;
- Reducing levels of fuel poverty.

Reducing the number of long term empty dwellings

As at 1 April 2011, there were a total of 895 long term (over 6 months) empty dwellings in Herefordshire and 2412 long term empty dwellings in Shropshire. The implications of this are significant. As stated in the Audit Commission report *Building Better Lives*, if only five per cent of empty homes could be brought back into use, councils could cut their annual homelessness costs by £½ billion.

Whilst there are often good reasons for properties being left empty, many are empty for longer than is justified by the workings of the housing market. Both Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils take this issue very seriously as many of these dwellings could be used to help to meet the identified housing needs within both areas. As such, both Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils have recently produced Empty Homes Strategies which provide detailed information on the extent of the issue and measures to bring long term empty dwellings back into use.

Maximising opportunities to reduce the number of under-occupied dwellings

Within both areas, there are significant issues of overcrowding within our housing stock. At the same time, many dwellings are significantly under-occupied. Many people, through a range of circumstances, find that they are living in properties that are too large for their needs. This is often particularly the case for older people where their children have moved out of the family home. We know that many of our residents wish to 'downsize' to smaller, more manageable homes but have not been able to do so as either suitable alternative housing is not available or they need support with the moving process.

By effectively providing support for residents to downsize, particularly through our social housing stock, we are able to cost effectively increase the supply of much needed family housing whilst at the same time enable residents to move to smaller, more manageable and cheaper to heat accommodation.

Both Councils will continue to prioritise supporting residents who are under-occupying their dwellings to move to smaller, more manageable accommodation through a range of support and financial incentives.

Improving the quality of private rented accommodation

The private sector rental market plays a significant role in both Herefordshire and Shropshire, accounting for around 9% of all housing. This sector is extremely diverse, ranging from individuals who rent out one or two dwellings to investors and companies who own hundreds of dwellings.

It is therefore acknowledged that a strong relationship with this sector is essential to maximising housing choice for our residents. It is also recognised that it is necessary to take enforcement action on the very worst landlords where other measures fail to improve standards.

It is estimated that around a third of dwellings do not meet the Decent Homes standard. The majority of these are non-decent due to poor thermal efficiency or disrepair. 'Non-decency' is most common in older properties, in privately-rented dwellings - especially converted flats in homes inhabited by low-income owner occupiers and in households whose head is under 24 or over 60 years of age of which, a significant proportion are vulnerable households. Both Councils will continue to work towards increasing the proportion of vulnerable households living in decent housing.

For home owners, whether owner-occupiers or landlords, their properties are likely to be the most valuable thing they own. Maintaining and improving the quality of their asset not only sustains and increases its value but it also improves quality of life and health for any resident and enhances the local neighbourhood.

Unfortunately, home owners, particularly the vulnerable can sometimes find themselves in a situation where they are unable to maintain and improve their home resulting in a deterioration of property conditions. Inability to maintain properties could be for a number of reasons such as ill health, a reduced income as a result of retiring and moving to a pension or unemployment.

Both Councils undertake significant work to support vulnerable people to remain independent in their homes and administer assistance to do so. The positive effect of this service means that many people are able to remain in their own homes and this reduces the burden on other services. Up until the end of 2010/11 both Councils were able to provide financial assistance to both owner occupiers and landlords to improve property conditions and return properties to use. Much of this work was carried out through the Home Improvement Agencies.

Following the Government's withdrawal of specific private sector housing renewal funding from April 2011 it is for Local Authorities to determine how they wish to financially support this work. The immediate future delivery of private sector housing assistance in Herefordshire and Shropshire is not being replaced.

Poor quality housing is known to have a significant detrimental effect on a household's health, educational and emotional wellbeing. Our Joint Housing Strategy will work to make sure that more residents are able to live in decent high quality homes that are able to meet their changing needs. To achieve this aim, we are also committed to working with owners and landlords to improve the private and public sector stock ensuring solutions incorporate affordable warmth. We also need to increase the number of private sector homes which meet the statutory minimum standards for decency and prioritise vulnerable households living in non-decent housing which will include occupants of unsatisfactory Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Both councils are working together on private sector stock condition surveys which will feed into broad private sector housing renewal strategies in order to give a detailed overview of our broader approach to improving standards in private sector housing.

Decent homes in the social sector

In 2000, the Government established the Decent Homes programme which aimed to improve the condition of homes for social housing tenants. The programme established a Decency Standard to which all social housing providers should aim to achieve by December 2010. Previously, Local Authorities who owned and managed their housing stock were financially constrained in their ability to bring dwellings up to the Decent Homes Standard. Consequently, Herefordshire and the former Shropshire Districts of South Shropshire, North Shropshire and Shrewsbury and Atcham transferred their stock to newly created Housing Associations, enabling additional resources to be made available. However, tenants in Bridgnorth and Oswestry expressed a preference to remain tenants of the Council. Shropshire Council retains ownership of around 4,300 homes in Bridgnorth and Oswestry. Due to financial constraints around 720 (17%) of these homes currently fall below the Government's Decent Homes Standards.

Within the social sector, this represents largest proportion of non-decent housing in Herefordshire and Shropshire.

Whilst the vast majority of housing association dwellings met the decent homes target date of 31st December 2010, there are still significant numbers of non-decent Council dwellings in Shropshire. Tackling the remaining non-decent Council stock is a high priority.

Reducing carbon emissions in existing housing

Over a quarter of carbon emissions are from housing with the vast majority of our homes still relying on fossil fuel powered heating systems and with much of our building stock still poorly insulated and thermally inefficient. There is a huge opportunity not only to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and emissions of harmful pollutants, but also for households to reduce costs and improve comfort standards. The most significant and cost effective opportunities are likely to come from better insulation and from replacing inefficient heating systems with more efficient ones. We need to ensure that the homes and buildings being built now and in the future are as energy efficient as possible, and the Government is committed to introducing ambitious energy efficiency standards for new homes and buildings.

In the short term, this means ensuring that all fossil fuel boilers are as efficient as possible and that the thermal insulation standards of existing dwellings are increased, but we also need to move towards lower carbon alternatives such as heat pumps and solar thermal technologies whilst considering options such as Combined Heat and Power and district heating.

The Energy Act 2011 has been designed to provide for a step change in the provision of energy efficiency measures to homes and businesses. The Bill has three principle objectives: tackling barriers to investment in energy efficiency; enhancing energy security; and enabling investment in low carbon energy supplies.

The Act makes a number of provisions, in summary, relating to:

- The introduction of Green Deal - to create a new financing framework to enable the provision of fixed improvements to the energy efficiency of households and non-domestic properties, funded by a charge on energy bills that avoids the need for consumers to pay upfront costs;
- The Private Rented Sector – making provisions to require, in certain circumstances, private landlords to undertake energy efficiency measures on their dwellings;
- The Energy Company Obligation to continue to require energy companies to take measures to reduce atmospheric emissions of carbon dioxide and to work alongside the Green Deal finance offer by targeting appropriate measures at those households which are likely to need additional support, in particular those containing vulnerable people on low incomes and those in hard to treat housing.

Energy Company Obligation;

- Amend existing powers in the Gas Act 1986, Electricity Act 1989 and the Utilities Act 2000 to enable the Secretary of State to create a new Energy Company Obligation to take over from the existing obligations to reduce atmospheric emissions of carbon dioxide (the Carbon Emission Reduction Target - CERT and Community Energy Saving Programme - CESP), which expire at the end of 2012,

Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils will continue to work with relevant local, regional, national and European partners, agencies and stakeholders to develop and promote measures to improve domestic energy efficiency across the local authority areas. Furthermore, it is recognised that the utilisation of green technologies can provide significant opportunities for the creation of jobs and training opportunities to which we are committed to maximising opportunities.

Tackling Fuel Poverty

A fuel poor household is one that cannot afford to keep adequately warm at reasonable cost. The most widely accepted definition of a fuel poor household is one which needs to spend more than 10% of its income on all domestic fuel use and to heat its home to an adequate standard of warmth.

Fuel Poverty damages people's quality of life and imposes wider costs on the community. The most direct effects are in relation to the health of people living in cold homes. Although these risks apply to all people, older people, children, and those who are disabled or have a long-term illness are especially vulnerable. The three main causes of fuel poverty are poor energy performance of the home; high domestic energy prices and low household income

Figures taken from House Condition Surveys of 2005 showed that approximately 11% of households were in fuel poverty throughout Herefordshire and Shropshire. In spite of a range of work to reduce this figure evidence suggests that in 2008 the percentage of households that were suffering from fuel poverty had risen to approximately 27% in Shropshire and 29% in Herefordshire. This figure is expected to rise further as fuel prices continue to increase.

(<http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/Statistics/fuelpoverty/1297-subregional-fuel-poverty-data-2008.xls>)

Both Herefordshire and Shropshire have very restricted access to the mains gas network and a high proportion of dwellings that are of solid wall construction with high thermal transmittance values. These factors require alternative and more expensive fuels for space and water heating, such as heating oil, LPG, Electricity, and more substantial improvements to the fabric of the dwelling in order to significantly reduce the overall heat loss.

Fuel poverty is particularly prevalent in the private-rented sector and is also one of the hardest tenures to tackle, due to the split between responsibility for investing in the property (landlord) and paying fuel bills (tenants).

The Energy Act 2011 contains significant provision for energy efficiency regulations within the private rented sector including strengthening the ability for tenants to require energy efficiency measures to be made to their homes.

Both Councils will continue to work with partners to develop and promote measures to improve energy efficiency and address fuel poverty.

3. Residents are able to influence decisions through having access to suitable and timely advice on housing options and support available.

KEY OUTCOMES

- **There is a reduction in the number of homeless people and suitable options for homeless people are increased**
- **There is better support for households to make informed choices about their housing options across all tenures**
- **A more comprehensive service is provided to those requiring more appropriate accommodation. This will minimise the number of homes requiring adaptation and promote sustainable independent living**
- **There is improved support for vulnerable people and better partnership working with others to respond to identified needs**
- **Services are delivered on a locality basis which fully reflect local needs**
- **Opportunities are taken to minimise dependence on benefits**
- **There is a reduced reliance on public funding for service viability**

Improving choice and access covers a wide range of activity. It involves ensuring that all people have an opportunity to obtain accommodation suitable for their needs, and providing them with the skills and opportunity to live as independently as possible in the community.

It is essential that we work to ensure that homelessness is minimised. It is also important that appropriate and timely housing support and appropriate advice is available which enables residents to have informed choice on their housing and support.

The focus of housing-related support is to maximise independence, minimise dependence on the state and ensure that the need for more expensive acute services, such as those provided by the NHS or through other intensive care services, is minimised by focussing on preventive services.

Where it is possible, being able to live independently is important in enabling households to have a high quality of life as part of the local community. For some households this can only be achieved with support.

Households have many different levels of need and there is no one solution that meets all housing need and so we seek to take advantage of every opportunity and provide a range of services to support households back to independence.

Households unable to access support and appropriate information and advice when required are more likely to disengage with services and suffer ill health. This will be detrimental to education and employment opportunities, resulting in further inequality and isolation.

We will continue to work in partnership to ensure that all our residents have access to good quality information and advice regarding housing options, thereby enabling appropriate informed choices to be made.

It is recognised that vulnerable people can struggle to access housing and housing support services. Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils and our partners will ensure that we focus on improving services for all vulnerable groups including:

- Homeless groups and people at risk of homelessness
- Vulnerable older residents
- People with mental health issues
- Ex-offenders
- People affected by substance misuse
- People with complex needs
- Individuals leaving care
- People with physical and learning disabilities
- People affected by domestic violence
- Teenage parents

The growth in the proportion of older people (as outlined previously) presents particular challenges. In particular, it is recognised that there are particular issues relating to feelings of social isolation, a lack of housing advice and housing options, and a desire to stay independent for as long as possible.

Housing advice services are delivered through a range of agencies. Both Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils have Housing Solutions/ Options teams, who are responsible for the prevention of homelessness for those people at risk of becoming homeless, and the assessment and provision of accommodation to those who are owed a duty under the homelessness legislation.

The Housing Solutions/ Options teams deliver a statutory service around the accommodation of homeless households, as well as delivery of the councils Homelessness Strategy.

In both Herefordshire and Shropshire there is a high proportion of vulnerable people living in private sector accommodation so there is a need to ensure that access to support and advice is available on a needs-basis irrespective of tenure.

Many households in Herefordshire and Shropshire are in need of some adaptation to their property and the demand for adaptations is projected to increase as the population rapidly ages and the care of both younger and older disabled people is increasingly provided at home.

In addition to meeting the needs of households and their carers within the built environment, the Councils and partners provide personal and housing related support to enable those in need to maintain a good level of independence.

Greater flexibility needs to be given to support services to respond to customer needs in ways that suit them individually and as communities in order to achieve positive outcomes. This may involve changing the customer offer to broaden choice as to the way that services are delivered.

Homelessness and prevention of homelessness

We recognise that homelessness is the most acute form of housing need and are committed to taking a proactive approach to prevention. It is also important that we seek to tackle the wider causes of homelessness including worklessness, anti-social behaviour and crime. Clearly a significant role for housing is to ensure that appropriate signposting to services is available and we are working increasingly closely with partners to ensure that opportunities are maximised to reduce worklessness; create training opportunities and maximise income. Supported by an ethos of 'spend to save', the focus is on proactive early intervention in order to reduce levels of homelessness.

Given pressures on other services, we anticipate increasing demands on our services and it is necessary to ensure that appropriate partnerships are in place to meet these increasing challenges.

We have a strong commitment to partnership working both between the two Authorities and with Telford and Wrekin Council and also with other Statutory and third sector agencies to tackle and prevent homelessness.

The focus of the Housing Solutions/ Options Teams is to:

- Focus on early intervention that prevents homelessness from occurring and allows for planned solutions to meet housing need;
- Provide appropriate support for vulnerable people to enable them to develop the skills needed to sustain their tenancies;
- Ensuring a joined-up approach to tackling homelessness;
- Promoting a wider range of tenure options and choices to help meet housing needs

We recognise that there are increasing pressures on home owners, and will therefore maximise opportunities to promote and implement the Mortgage Rescue Scheme as appropriate.

Both Councils have developed detailed homelessness strategies and action plans to which provide the framework for our approach to preventing homelessness and improving homelessness services in coming years.

Provision of appropriate support

It is important that we are able to offer good quality, impartial housing options services for residents. We will ensure that these services help residents to plan for their futures rather than being considered a place to turn to when they are most in need. For instance, when residents are in their 50's and 60's as they may be making plans for the short or longer term. Evidence suggests¹ that once we are in our 70's and beyond, it becomes increasingly difficult to make decisions about as emotive a subject as moving home. People who downsize do so mostly between their mid sixties and seventies.

The Councils recognise the need to work with other Council departments and agencies in order affect positive outcomes. Housing professionals have a strong track record in delivering effective front line services often to vulnerable people. They are well placed to work with a range of agencies to improve lives and make positive changes.

We see a diverse market of providers, voluntary groups, commercial organisations, training and educational organisations as well as the public sector as being the best way to meet the needs of vulnerable people across the board and that this will be most effectively achieved where partnerships with common and shared outcomes are robust and resilient.

1

http://www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/_library/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Viewpoints/Viewpoint17_Downsizing.pdf

Appendix 1: Partnership Working in the West Housing Market Area

Following the initial establishment of the West Housing Market Area Partnership to include Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils, Telford and Wrekin Council were subsequently invited to join the Partnership given the strong geographical and economic linkages which have more recently been cemented through the establishment of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The three Local Authorities are committed to working closely in delivering high quality, cost effective housing services and the Partnership brings together key stakeholders from a range of organisations that contribute to and influence delivery of housing and sustainable communities in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. More details on the West Housing Market Area Partnership are available at www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk

In summary, the aims of the Partnership are to:

1. Provide opportunities for partners to contribute their experience and expertise and to identify and share good practice;
2. Develop a common understanding of the sub-regional housing market;
3. Provide a strategic overview of the assembly, interpretation, review and updating of the evidence base for a range of policies and strategies;
4. Provide opportunities for partners to have an early input into housing policy and strategy formulation;
5. Raise awareness of housing issues affecting the sub-region at a regional and national level

The Partnership is committed to exploring appropriate opportunities to jointly develop improved services, commission research and work together to provide a strong voice for the sub region. The Partnership is also ultimately responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of this Joint housing strategy.

The Herefordshire and Shropshire Joint Housing Strategy does not extend to Telford and Wrekin as that Council has very recently published a long term local Housing Strategy. However, the Joint housing strategy will provide a framework for partnership working between all three Authorities. It is envisaged that this will lead to the development of a full sub-regional Housing Strategy in the future.

Within this housing strategy, where Shropshire is mentioned, this refers to the administrative (i.e. not including Telford & Wrekin) area of Shropshire Council unless otherwise stated.

The Marches LEP aims to create the conditions for enterprise to flourish and will improve the economic prosperity of the Marches area by co-ordinated action to stimulate the drivers of economic development, including housing, transport, infrastructure, broadband availability, inward investment and skills. A private/ public sector LEP board has been established to drive forward the LEP and to take into account key research relating to sub-regional priorities.

The LEP brings together public and private sector leaders in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin to create the conditions for enterprise and growth to flourish.

As illustrated, both Shropshire and Herefordshire Councils recognise the benefits of working together where possible, however, as identified, it is also recognised that some actions would need to be specific to the Local Authority area

As such, it is clear that the Joint Housing Strategy will have a major part to play in informing the LEP and ensuring that the priorities for housing are made clear at the highest level and that the sub-region achieves high levels of funding for housing through a variety of channels .

It is recognised that for our priorities to be achieved, it is essential to have close working relationships between a range of services in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Councils; the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and other health organisations; Registered Providers; the Voluntary and Community Sector and other agencies and also local communities to work in partnership in order to achieve effective outcomes for our residents on a broad range of issues. Therefore, the Joint Housing Strategy is closely aligned to the Sustainable Community Strategies for Herefordshire and Shropshire and clearly identifies the overarching priorities in our areas, in which housing contributes.

Appendix 2: Key evidence to support overarching priorities relating to Herefordshire and Shropshire

Below is a summary of the key facts and figures relating to housing in Herefordshire and Shropshire, which are part of the wider evidence base for this strategy. Further information on facts and figures include the following documents which are available on the West Housing Market Partnership website at www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk in the key documents section.

Herefordshire and Shropshire Local Investment Plans (LIPs)

Our Local investment Plans set out the investment requirements for our areas. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) asked Local Authorities to produce these plans in order to inform funding decisions in order to deliver our agreed economic, economic and environmental ambitions.

Available at:

http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/local_investment_plan_final_jan_11.pdf

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the West Housing Market Area

The SHMA, which covers Herefordshire and Shropshire, provides an overview of the key housing data for our areas including figures for housing need.

Available at: www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk

Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMA)

The LHMA's are updated on a regular basis and give a finer detail focus on housing need in Herefordshire and Shropshire.

Available at: www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)

The GTAA provides an overview of accommodation need for Gypsy and Travellers. The document covers the areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Powys and Telford & Wrekin.

Available at: www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk

Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA)

The JSNA brings together all the information on the health and well-being needs of our population.

(At the time of writing these documents were being updated and will be available on each Council's websites):

www.herefordshire.gov.uk

www.shropshire.gov.uk

Herefordshire Housing Strategy 2011-12 and Shropshire Housing Strategy 2009-11

Available at: www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk

Herefordshire Older Person's Housing/ Support study

See <http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/soh.aspx>

State of Herefordshire Report

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/soh.aspx>

Population (with forecast to 2020)

The overall populations of Herefordshire and Shropshire are forecast to increase by 22,200 to 2020. As shown below, however, the change in population varies markedly among age groups with a decrease in the population aged 18-24 and a significant increase in the population aged 65+

Local Authority	Population 2011 (2020)	of which 18-24	Of which 25-64	Of which 65+
Herefordshire	181,200 (188,600)	12,000 (10,400)	92,900 (91,800)	41,100 (52,200)
Shropshire	294,100 (307,000)	20,300 (17,600)	150,100 (148,800)	64,400 (82,300)
Total	475,300 (495,600)	32,300 (28,000)	243,000 (240,600)	105,500 (134,500)

The increase in proportion of older people in Herefordshire and Shropshire is most marked in the 'very elderly' age group. Projections taken from the Projecting Older People Population Information System (POPPI) illustrates the following projected increases in Herefordshire and Shropshire between 2011 and 2020. As shown below, the number of people aged 65 -74 in Herefordshire and Shropshire is projected to increase from 56,200 in 2011 to 68,100 in 2020 (an increase of just over 21%). However, the population aged 85+ is projected to rise from 14,500 in 2011 to 20,500 in 2020 (an increase of almost 40%).

Local Authority	Population aged 65-74 in 2011 (2020)	Population aged 75-84 in 2011 (2020)	Population aged 85+ in 2011 (2020)
Herefordshire	21,700 (26,700)	13,600 (17,600)	5,800 (7,900)
Shropshire	34,500 (41,400)	21,200 (28,300)	8,700 (12,600)
Total	56,200 (68,100)	34,800 (45,900)	14,500 (20,500)

Housing stock

The total number of dwellings as at March 2011 was 214,700, comprising as follows:

Local Authority	Local Authority	Housing association	Other public sector	Private sector	Total
Herefordshire	0	11,049	312	71,210	82,540
Shropshire	4,240	13,067	101	114,740	133,319

Source: HSSA 2011

Housing need

Local Authority	Number of households on housing register (April 2011) – HSSA 2011	Estimated annual need for affordable housing
Herefordshire	4,804 (at September 2011)	568
Shropshire	7,515 (at December 2011)	1,268 (low estimate) 1,776 (high estimate)

Source: Herefordshire and Shropshire Local Housing Market Assessments and Choice Based Lettings data

Bedroom requirements of households on housing register

Local Authority	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms +
Herefordshire	2,690	1,341	618	155
Shropshire	4,213	2,258	792	252

Source: Herefordshire and Shropshire Local Housing Market Assessments and Choice Based Lettings data

Housing standards (2011)

Local Authority	Private sector dwellings with Cat 1 hazards	Estimated cost of removing Cat1 hazards from private sector dwellings (£thousands):
Herefordshire	5,430	12,700
Shropshire	15,162	62,300

Long term empty dwellings (2011)

Local Authority	Private dwellings vacant over 6 months
Herefordshire	874
Shropshire	1,768

Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings (2011)

Local Authority	Average SAP rating of private sector dwellings (2005 SAP measure)	% of Private Sector stock SAP rating below 35 (%)
Herefordshire	52	18
Shropshire	50.2	18

House prices (Land Registry)

House price index comparisons (average prices)

Date	Herefordshire	Shropshire	W. Midlands	England & Wales
Jan. 2001	£92,740	£83,297	£73,515	£87,128
Jan. 2002	£103,680	£93,677	£81,950	£98,048
Jan. 2003	£128,854	£116,555	£103,463	£122,346
Jan. 2004	£148,556	£138,933	£120,242	£138,767
Jan. 2005	£172,415	£162,125	£136,432	£155,250
Jan. 2006	£174,589	£163,598	£140,311	£160,226
Jan. 2007	£190,209	£175,644	£147,873	£173,086
Jan. 2008	£198,892	£182,639	£152,254	£183,004
Jan. 2009	£179,844	£161,271	£131,646	£156,215
Jan. 2010	£176,420	£162,723	£135,129	£164,705
Jan. 2011	£175,184	£160,144	£133,295	£163,177
October 2011	£173,410	£157,328	£129,500	£159,999

Appendix 3: Sub strategies supported by the Joint Housing Strategy, for each Authority.

	Herefordshire	Shropshire
Housing Strategy	Refresh of the Local Housing Strategy in March 2011 Joint Housing Strategy with Shropshire to be produced in 2011.	Local Housing Strategy completed April 2009. Annual review completed April 2010 and signed off May 2010. Joint Housing Strategy with Herefordshire to be produced in 2011.
Local Investment Plans	Produced 2011	Produced 2010
Private Sector Housing Strategy	Private Sector Housing Strategy (draft)	Private Sector Housing Health and Wellbeing Strategy drafted in 2011
Empty Homes (Property) Strategy	Completed 2010 (2010-13)	Completed in 2010
Private Sector Stock Condition Survey	Current survey should be updated and published in Autumn 2011.	
Homelessness Strategy	Published 2008 (2008-13) Strategy refresh to be drafted in 2011	Action plan to be adopted Dec 2010. Homeless strategy to be adopted December 2011
	Youth homelessness strategy 2009-12	
Housing Market Assessments	SHMA completed June 2008 in conjunction with Shropshire Council LHMA completed July 2011 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2008 (joint with Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Powys)	SHMA completed June 2008 in conjunction with Herefordshire Council Phase 1 LHMA completed July 2010 and will update every 12-18 months
Affordable Warmth Strategy	Reviewed 2010	Not yet programmed
Housing and Support needs of Older Person's	Completed December 2011	Due to commission work in 2012
Prevent and Tackle Youth Homelessness (16-25 year old) 2009-2012	Published	

Glossary

Affordable Housing

Essentially, affordable housing is housing provided at below market cost, either through renting or through some form of Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) where the sale value is restricted.

The National Planning Policy definition of affordable housing has been amended during 2011 and now includes 3 types of affordable housing:

- a) social housing up until the introduction of affordable rents was the main model provided by housing associations and refers to housing that is subject to strict rent controls, which are around 50% of market level rents;
- b) The new affordable rent which is up to 80% of market rent;
- c) Intermediate housing, which includes shared ownership and other forms of low cost home ownership.

It also states that affordable housing should

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

Affordable Rent

A form of social housing, involving homes being made available at a rent level of up to 80% of market rent. This is the principal product available as new supply through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Affordable Homes Programme in 2011-15.

Allocations Policy

A document which sets out the rules the council has agreed for deciding the order in which people applying for affordable housing will be selected.

Assured Tenancies

Assured – the form of tenancy most commonly used by housing associations/ PRPs similar to secure tenancies traditionally provided by Shropshire Council.

Assured Shorthold– the form of tenancy most commonly used by private landlords allowing them to charge full market rent. There is less security of tenure and tenancies may be ended after 6 months.

Brownfield

This is a term generally used for land that has previously been developed and may be available for re-use.

Carbon emissions

Emissions to the atmosphere of carbon, usually in the form of carbon dioxide (CO₂), principally from the burning of fossil fuels. Increased atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases trap more of the earth's heat leading to the phenomenon known as global warming

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

System where applicants for social housing and existing tenants who want to move apply for available properties, rather than being allocated them by housing officers. Shropshire and Herefordshire operate systems known as Shropshire Home Point and Home Point Herefordshire

Census

A survey, carried out every 10 years, of all people and households in the country, providing information which allows central and local government, health authorities and many other organisations to target their resources more effectively and to plan housing, education, health and transport services for years to come.

Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)

This is the representative body for housing professionals.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

A disabled facilities grant is a mandatory grant, which is used to provide adaptations in dwellings such as level access showers, grab rails and stair-lifts, in order to enable/facilitate independent living, privacy and confidence for individuals and their families.

The process requires an assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT) from Social Services, to determine the adaptations needed. A referral is then made to the council, advising of the necessary works. The council will then carry out an initial test of resources (means test) to determine whether or not a contribution will be necessary towards the cost of the works.

Empty Homes Agency (EHA)

The Empty Homes Agency is an independent campaigning charity which exists to highlight the waste of empty property in England, and works with others to devise and promote solutions to bring empty property back into use.

Empowerment

Empowerment giving people the skills, resources, authority, opportunity and motivation to take action as well holding them responsible and accountable for outcomes of their actions.

Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)

An order that enables the council, in certain circumstances, to take management control of a dwelling in order to secure occupation of it.

Exception sites

An exception site is one that would not usually secure planning permission for housing, for example agricultural land next to but not within a local settlement area. A development plan or Development Plan Document may allow for the development of small sites within rural areas solely for affordable housing, which would not otherwise be released for general market housing; this is a rural exceptions policy.

Fixed Term tenancies

In certain circumstances, Registered Providers will be able to offer fixed term tenancies, normally with a minimum of 2 years (though normally expected to be for a minimum of 5 years) as well as life time tenancies at affordable rents on new properties. This is a move away from a previous approach of normally granting lifetime tenancies.

Fuel Poverty

Defined by the Government as a household that needs to spend more than 10% of disposable household income on fuel bills.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)

An assessment undertaken of the accommodation requirements relating to Gypsies and Travellers. The last GTAA was undertaken in 2008 for Herefordshire, Powys, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils. A copy of the GTAA is available at:

<http://www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk/2shropnet/AToZOfMini-sites/W/Whmap/KeyDocuments>

Gypsy and Traveller

A term used to describe persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism and/or caravan dwelling.

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

The HCA is the Government's funding agency for affordable housing.

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs)

Agencies that provide independent advice and assistance to older people and other vulnerable groups to help them through the process of repairs, improvements and adaptations to their homes.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Property with multiple occupants from multiple households, although the exact criteria vary according to the type of property. Landlords letting HMOs must meet licensing criteria set by the government.

Housing demand

The quantity and type / amenity of housing which households wish to buy or rent and are able to afford. It takes account of both preferences and ability to pay.

Housing need

Households lacking their own housing or living in housing which is inadequate or unsuitable, who are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance.

Land Registry

A government organisation that registers titles to land in England and Wales and records dealings (sales and mortgages) with registered land.

Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer (LSVT)

Transfer of ownership of local authority housing stock to an RSL. In Shropshire, Council dwellings in Shrewsbury were transferred to Severnside Housing; in South Shropshire to South Shropshire Housing Association and in North Shropshire to Meres and Mosses Housing Association. South Shropshire HA and Meres and Mosses HA formed an umbrella organisation called Shropshire Housing Group. The Council still maintains ownership and management of Council housing in Oswestry and Bridgnorth. In Herefordshire, all former council stock has been transferred to Herefordshire Housing.

Leaseholder

In terms of council housing, a person who has bought their home but on a leasehold basis because it is part of a block of flats or maisonettes. Leaseholders are subject to service charges for certain services and care of common parts and can be recharged for their share of works carried out to their properties under any improvement scheme.

Lettings Policy/ Allocations Policy

This sets down the rules of how the Council or Registered Provider decides who gets offered a home first. The Council or Registered Provider has a responsibility to give priority to those in greatest housing need.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

The LDF is a suite of documents which together guides development for Shropshire

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

The LHA is the way of working out Housing Benefit for private tenants. LHA is based on how much it costs to rent in the area a person lives and how many people live with them. It is paid by local authorities, usually direct to the tenant, who then pays their landlord. The rates are calculated by the Rent Service and are based on the market rates in each area. The rates are the maximum amount of LHA that will be paid. LHA rates are set at the 30th percentile of the average rents in each Broad Rental Market Area. In other words, Local Housing Allowance should cover approximately 30% of the lowest rental values in Shropshire.

Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA)

An analysis of the housing market that enables a local authority to develop an understanding of the nature and extent of housing requirements within their area.

Localism Act

The Localism Act introduces a range of new planning and housing reforms as well as new powers for communities and flexibilities for Local Government. Specifically relating to housing, this includes measures relating to allocations and flexible tenancies and it requires Local Authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy that sits alongside the Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Allocations Policy, providing guidance to RPs working in the Local Authority in relation to:

- What kind of tenancies to offer
- Circumstances in which the landlord will grant a tenancy of a particular kind
- Where a tenancy is set for a term, the length of term
- Circumstances where the landlord will grant a further tenancy on the ending of the existing tenancy

For more information in relation to the Localism Act see:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localismpla>
inenglishupdate

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The Local Enterprise Partnership covering Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin is called the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership.

Mixed community

A mixed community involves people of different ages, lifestyles and incomes sharing in the benefits of decent housing and an external environment capable of meeting their needs now and in the future.

A mixed community development promotes a well-integrated mix of land uses with well-designed homes of different types and tenures and is capable of supporting this range of household sizes, ages and incomes.

Mobility Scheme

Mobility schemes are designed to assist social housing tenants who wish to move within the social rented sector.

Mutual Exchange

A tenant's right, under certain conditions, to exchange his or her tenancy with a tenant of the same landlord or Registered Provider landlord.

National Housing Federation (NHF)

Umbrella body representing housing associations/ Registered Providers in England.

Place Based Interventions (PBIs)

Place Based Interventions aim to work with communities, local services, partner organisations and other stakeholders to identify particular issues and problems at a community level. The initiative then works to try to solve problems by collectively designing new ways of delivering services, using resources differently to maximise outcomes.

Planning Policy Guidance / Statements (PPG / PPS)

Range of government documents that provide guidance to local authorities on handling planning applications for different types of development.

Private Rented Sector

Rented housing controlled by private landlords rather than Councils, Social Landlords or the voluntary sector

Private Registered Providers (often referred to as Social Landlords) (PRPs)

PRPs provide homes and housing services to people in housing need. There are various types of organisations – such as housing associations or housing co-operatives. Some are charitable and others are known as local housing companies and are non-profit making. PRPs are registered with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Rent Deposit / Rent in Advance Scheme

Rent deposit schemes have been set up in some areas of the country in order to help those in housing need who cannot afford to pay a deposit to access the Private Rented Sector. Rent deposit schemes do not usually pay the deposit directly, but instead guarantee the landlord that any money owed to them at the end of the tenancy will be paid. The schemes also investigate any claims of financial loss made by the landlord. Some schemes are restricted to people on low incomes or in receipt of welfare benefits and most only offer bonds up to a certain amount.

Right to Buy (RTB)

The right of Council Tenants to buy their home (after a period of time) at a discount.

Section 106 Agreement

A contract entered into by a local planning authority and a property developer under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 under which the developer agrees to provide defined facilities, or contributions, as part of the proposed development.

Such planning obligations are often used as a legally binding agreement between a local authority and developer to deliver additional affordable social housing within a development.

Shared Ownership

Shared Ownership is a scheme that allows you to buy a share in a property, usually 25%, 50% or 75% of the open market value and pay rent to a Registered Provider on the remainder.

Sheltered Housing

Housing for elderly people that includes some form of support service.

Social Housing

Housing provided by government (public housing) and community organisations (community housing).

Staircasing

Process where people who have bought a partial stake in their home through a shared ownership scheme increase or decrease that stake.

Stakeholders

The individuals and groups of people with an interest in a given subject.

Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP)

SAP provides a simple means of reliably estimating the energy efficiency performance of dwellings. SAP ratings were expressed on a scale of 1 to 100, the higher the number the better the rating. However, improvements in energy efficiency have led to the scale being extended to 120.

Starter Tenancies

The Housing Act of 1996 allows Housing Associations to offer introductory tenancies to new rented residents. These last for a year and then would become assured tenancies. They are optional. Also known as probationary tenancies or introductory tenancies.

Stock Condition Survey

Local Authorities are required by law to inspect their areas from time to time to determine what action is necessary to meet their responsibilities in respect of private sector housing issues. Information collected is the main source of information on the condition and energy efficiency of housing in a local authority area. The survey builds a picture of all types of housing, whether owner-occupied, social housing or privately rented.

Supported Housing

Supported Housing is accommodation provided for a specific client group to enable them to adjust to independent living or to enable them to live independently. The term supported housing applies to purpose designed or designated supported housing.

Supporting People

General term used to cover the programme of reform of funding for support services for vulnerable people to improve their quality of life and independence. It is a preventative service providing people with housing-related support services in their own home.

Sustainable Communities/ Community Sustainability

The most commonly used definition of what makes a sustainable community can be found in the document: "Skills for Sustainable Communities", Sir John Egan (2004), which states:

"Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity"

Telecare

Telecare services are sometimes called social or community alarm, lifeline or careline services. Special equipment linked to people's telephone systems enables them to get help quickly, at the touch of a button, even if they are unable to speak.

Very Sheltered Housing/ Extra Care

Covers a range of types of supported housing which provides a 'caring environment' for older people. It is often specially designed self-contained housing and may have a range of communal facilities sometimes available to older people in the local community as well as the scheme. There are dedicated care teams and personal care is provided either by the housing provider or on a contract with another agency or social services. Also known as 'Extra Care', it offers care services for older people to provide a 'home for life'.

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

The sector can be defined as being self-governing organisations, some being registered charities, some incorporated non-profit organisations and some outside both these classifications. Work is delivered for the public benefit; being independent of both formal structures of government and the profit sector and that there is frequently an important reliance on volunteers to carry out its work.

West Housing Market Area Partnership (WHMAP)

The West Housing Market Area Partnership brings together representatives from a range of organisations that contribute to and influence delivery of housing and sustainable communities in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

The Partnership is led by an Executive comprising Elected Members with Housing and Planning portfolios and senior housing and planning officers from each of the three Authorities; Registered Provider representation and representation from the Homes and Communities Agency.

Worklessness

The definition of worklessness by the Social Exclusion Unit is “people who are unemployed or economically inactive and who are in receipt of working age benefits’ and that worklessness is the sum of working age people who are unemployed and persons of working age who are economically inactive”.