

Housing Strategy 2008 - 2012



Working for West Dorset



Housing Strategy 2008 - 2012

Contents

Foreword	5
Executive Summary	6
Corporate Context	8
Wider Priorities	9
Working in Partnership	13
Housing Need in West Dorset	15
Performance on Priority Areas 2004 to 2008	22
Priorities for Action 2008 to 2012	26
Financing the Housing Strategy	30
Housing Strategy Action Plan	33

Appendices

A: Glossary	49
B: Policy and Strategic Documents & links for further reference	50
C: List of respondents to consultation	52
D: Best Value Performance Indicators	51
E: Consultation and Options Analysis	55
F: Affordable Housing Schedule	59





Foreword

We are very pleased to introduce this new Housing Strategy for West Dorset, which provides a plan of action over the next four years. It sets out how we will all work towards improving existing housing and building new additional homes to meet demands.

Housing is a key issue for most people in our communities and is the District Council's top priority for action. We recognise that having good housing is at the heart of keeping our communities vibrant and sustainable. Good housing not only means that people are happier and healthier, it also means that the economy is underpinned with a strong, diverse workforce. In 2006, West Dorset residents placed affordable decent housing as the third most important factor in making somewhere a decent place to live, after low crime and good health services, and top of the list of improvements required in the District.

Most of our residents are owner-occupiers and many have been fortunate enough to buy their houses before the massive increase in house prices over the last decade. However, those people entering the housing market for the first time now, or without equity, find themselves priced out of the private rented market, let alone home-ownership. The housing market is failing to provide these local people with the housing opportunities they need. Despite the current economic conditions, and reversal in the housing market house prices have been outstripping wages by more than 11 times. We will now have a situation where it is likely that there will be less appetite by developers to build affordable housing, counteracting the benefits of falling prices. Thus, finding somewhere affordable to live remains difficult, even for households with two average incomes. The demand for social rented housing and intermediate shared equity houses has increased significantly but the supply is limited and cannot be increased significantly or quickly. This represents our biggest strategic challenge.

A high proportion of older people live in our District and it is predicted that this will increase significantly over the next few years, with people living longer. We must ensure that a suitable range of affordable and appropriate housing is available in the private and social rented sectors, which meets the needs of an increasingly elderly population. This is our second biggest strategic challenge.

We are committed to doing as much as we can to maximize new affordable house building and we will ensure that the existing affordable housing stock is used as efficiently and effectively as possible. We have already improved the quality of our services to people threatened with homelessness and we want to build on those improvements and ensure that the service is easily accessible to those who need it. We are concerned about the impact of soaring energy prices for people on low and fixed incomes and are keen to support those people in fuel poverty, as well as to help older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as they wish.

This Housing Strategy can only be delivered in partnership with others and many different partners have a role to play in making this happen. We look forward to the next few years as the plans within this Strategy are put into place.



Robert A. Gould

Cllr Robert Gould
Leader of Council



David Webb
Chairman, West
Dorset Partnership



Executive Summary



The Challenge

West Dorset covers 418 square miles and has a population in excess of 96,000, making it one of the sparsest districts in England. Half of the residents live in the six towns, with the remainder in the 132 rural parishes. It has the highest percentage of retired residents in the United Kingdom and an increasingly ageing population. The proportion of our residents with a disability is slightly above the national average at 19.2% and 3.3% of our residents are not white-British. At £407.60, the median gross weekly pay for full time employees working in West Dorset is 91% of that for Great Britain. House prices are 25% above the national average, and outstrip average wages by a ratio of 11:1. West Dorset ranks 235 out of 354 on the Indices of Deprivation but has pockets of relative deprivation, especially in parts of Bridport and Dorchester.

The gap between local income levels and house prices continues to widen making home ownership impossible for an increasing number of our local residents. The level of housing need identified in the Housing Needs Survey 2007 far exceeds realistic expectations for provision increasing the demand upon the socially rented and privately rented stock.

In West Dorset, 37% of our properties house people of 65 and over, compared to 24% nationally. In addition, 8,345 (19.2%) of households in West Dorset contain someone identified as having a special need. This is higher than the national average of 13%. Of these, nearly 98% are defined as having a "medical condition" or are physically disabled. Meeting the housing needs of these people as they grow older is a significant challenge.

The main causes of homelessness in West Dorset are termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancies in the private rented sector (42%), exclusion by parents, friends or relatives (26%), and relationship breakdown, both violent and non-violent (13%). There were a total of 61 homeless households accepted during 2007/08. Work to prevent homelessness in an area with low household incomes but high house prices will continue to be a challenge for the council.

The Stock Condition Survey 2007 revealed that only 66.6% of our dwellings currently meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. The age of the stock and the nature of its construction make it difficult to achieve modern standards of thermal comfort - a situation exacerbated by the lack of a gas supply to some rural locations, where only 60.2% of the properties meet the Standard. While over 30% have a SAP rating above 70, nearly 10% of our houses have a SAP rating of less than 30. There is a distinct split between the older houses in rural locations and the modern properties more commonly found in the larger towns. The overall cost to repair all privately owned properties comprehensively in West Dorset is calculated at £194.6m, an average of £4,790 per property. More realistically, remedying disrepair to those properties classed as "non-decent" would cost £7.4m.

Our response

This strategy sets out how we will respond to the challenges we face in meeting housing need over the next four years. We are proud that the Audit Commission rated our housing service "Good with promising prospects for improvement" and this

strategy demonstrates how we can turn that promise into a reality.

We have steadily increased our support and resources for housing services over the past few years and this is translating into positive benefits for our communities. We have invested in and improved housing advice and homelessness services and implemented new policies for affordable housing. Our housing service is now relatively well resourced with a healthy capital fund of £3.8m in 2008-09 and good levels of ongoing funding of £280k per annum, which is supplemented by external grant funding and by moving resources from other lower priority service areas. The Council is financially well placed to respond to the challenges and our staff are competent and committed.

Resolving the challenges of the housing market is not easy and requires contributions from a wide range of people and organisations. Staff from the Council's housing, planning policy, development control, legal, economic development, revenues and technical services teams work together with Members to maximise our capacity to address the imbalances of the housing market. However, the Council cannot do it alone. We work closely with our public, private and voluntary sector partners to deliver services to our customers and we are keen to increase our capacity through combined service delivery. We enjoy very positive relationships with key partners such as Dorset County Council, neighbouring District Councils and Housing Associations, particularly Magna.

We have consulted extensively on this strategy. Over 70 people from community and partner organisations in West Dorset and beyond attended a workshop event in October 2007 and their views have been used to shape this strategy. Further consultation took place on the draft document and a summary of the outcome of that consultation is reported in Appendix E.

Our Priorities

We have considered the housing needs of the District, the consultation feedback and the statutory requirements placed on us and have identified 5 priorities:

1. Maximise affordable housing provision to meet identified need
2. Support older people to live independently in suitable housing
3. Prevent homelessness and provide a good quality service to people in housing need
4. Reduce fuel poverty and improve the quality and energy efficiency of the housing stock
5. Deliver high quality customer-focused Housing Services

Our strategic approach to meeting housing needs is driven by our strategic planning policies. This Housing Strategy will be a key influence in the development of new planning policies in the Council's Local Development Framework in 2009. Once this is in place we will have a robust long-term policy framework with which to tackle structural issues in the housing market.

Our Options

The Policy Development Committee considered the various options available to the Council in delivering our housing services, taking into account the above priorities. These are set out in "Priorities for Action 2008 to 2012". Our key activities will centre on:

- The pro-active development of rural exception sites
- Supporting innovative community housing projects
- Tackling under-occupied social housing
- Maximising the amount of social rented housing in new housing developments
- Creating a single housing register for West Dorset
- Introducing Choice Based Lettings
- Creating a Dorset-wide policy for the allocation of social rented housing
- Targeting resources and delivery at those in greatest financial need

The specific actions we propose to take and how we intend to measure delivery can be found in the Housing Strategy Action Plan.



Corporate context



The Corporate Plan 2007-11 sets out the following corporate aims:

- Safeguard West Dorset's unique environment
- Improve West Dorset's infrastructure and strengthen our economy
- Promote thriving and safe communities
- Ensure improved health, better care and independence
- Improve life chances for children and young people
- Build a well managed Council.

Priority actions within the Corporate Plan support these objectives and those relevant to housing include:

- **P1:** Use our planning policies, land and other assets to provide affordable homes for local people in need.
- **P6:** Improve the ways the public can access our services
- **P8:** Prepare and implement a local development framework and climate strategy

This Housing Strategy seeks to meet these aims and deliver the priority actions.

Increasing the delivery of affordable housing units has been consistently identified as the community's top concern since 2003 and figures prominently in both the Community Strategy for Dorset 2007-16 and the West Dorset Partnership Community Plan 2006-10.

The Council does not have its own housing stock but seeks to support and influence new house building to

ensure it meets the needs of local people. We provide a housing advice service to people in housing need, including homeless people, and allocate social rented housing that becomes available in the District. We help private homeowners to improve the condition of their properties and provide grants / loans and services to help people stay in their own homes when their physical needs are changing. We also have an enforcement role, protecting people from poor housing conditions and unscrupulous landlords.

Our housing services influence and support the delivery of our wider community objectives through other key Council strategies, particularly the Local Plan and emerging Local Development Framework, the Improving Prosperity Strategy and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy. The Housing Strategy also feeds into the development of and supports the delivery of, the Community Strategy for Dorset and the West Dorset Partnership Community Plan. It is itself supported by other key strategies, including the county-wide Supporting People and Older Persons Housing Strategies, the emerging Homelessness Strategy, the Rough Sleepers Strategy, and the Private Sector Housing policy as well as important research like the Housing Needs Survey, Housing Market Assessment and the Stock Condition Survey.

Wider priorities

While it is our role to respond to local priorities, we are also required to follow national, regional and sub-regional policies, unless there is evidence that these policy objectives are not significant local issues.

National priorities

The national priorities for housing until 2010 are set out in *Sustainable Communities: Homes for All 2005*. They aim to offer everyone the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford, providing more homes where they are needed, enhancing the environment and revitalising communities suffering from abandoned housing and deprivation. Other key national policy areas are, more opportunities for home ownership, better housing and services for those who rent and secure housing for homeless people. Since 2005, a number of other Government papers and reports have been published. The *Housing Green Paper: 'Homes for the Future; more affordable, more sustainable'*, published in July 2007, seeks to encourage new house building, with a target of 240,000 additional homes per annum by 2016, increased affordable housing provision and including targets for rural developments and greater emphasis on sustainable design criteria. The *Housing and Regeneration Bill* will, once enacted, help to deliver the commitments set out in the *Housing Green Paper* and establish the new *Homes and Communities Agency*, which will focus on delivering more new and affordable homes across all tenures and will drive and invest in regeneration. We will aim to form effective relationships with the new Agency to maximise investment in West Dorset.

The important role that strategic planning and development control has in delivering increased housebuilding has led to a number of national reviews, notably the Barker review in 2004, which emphasised the need for a responsive planning process. Statutory guidance was issued in 2006 in *Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3)*, which required local planning authorities to identify a residential land supply for at least five years, with a fifteen year supply advocated, and to deliver more high quality affordable housing within mixed sustainable communities. *Delivering Affordable Housing* was published by the Government in 2006 to support the PPS3 requirements. The 2006 *Local Government White Paper 'Stronger and*

Poundbury takes shape as an urban extension to Dorchester.



Prosperous Communities' sets out a 'place-shaper' role for local Councils, detailing the contribution that housing has to play in the social, environmental and economic well being of an area.

The suitability of the existing stock has also been the subject of national policy. *Quality and Choice - a Decent Home for All: The Way Forward for Housing (2000)*, sets out the Government's long-term vision that all households should be accommodated in homes that are considered 'decent', with facilities and standards applicable to the 21st century. It requires that people accessing social rented housing should have greater choice and that all social rented properties should meet the Decent Homes standard.

The recently published *'National housing strategy for an ageing society'* has particular significance to West Dorset with our greater than average proportion of households of retirement age and high percentage of residents with a disability. The strategic direction of that document has influenced this strategy.

Ongoing service provision has also been influenced by national policies relating to homelessness services, including *'Sustainable Communities; Settled Homes; Changing Lives'* and the Government's *'Code of Guidance for Local Authorities'*, and to housing-related health and welfare issues highlighted in the 2006 Government White Paper *'Our health, Our care, Our say: a new direction for community services'*.

These national priorities are reflected in the new basket of 198 national performance indicators for local authorities from 2008-2011. Those relating to housing services influencing this strategy are:



NI 12	Refused and deferred Houses in Multiple Occupation(HMO) license applications leading to immigration enforcement activity
NI 46	Young offenders access to suitable accommodation
NI 131	Delayed transfers of care from hospital
NI 136	People supported to live independently through social services
NI 138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both Home and Neighbourhood.
NI 139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home
NI 141	The number of vulnerable people achieving independent living
NI 142	The number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
NI 143	Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence.
NI 145	Adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation
NI 147	Care leavers in suitable accommodation
NI 149	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation
NI 154	Net additional homes provided
NI 155	Number of affordable homes delivered
NI 156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation
NI 157	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'major', 'minor', and 'other' application types.
NI 159	Supply of ready to develop housing sites
NI 181	Time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events.
NI 186	Per Capita CO2 emissions in the LA area.
NI 187	Tackling fuel poverty - people receiving income-based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating
NI 188	Adapting to climate change



The government reflects its key priorities in Public Service Agreements. The only 2004-08 Housing PSA target of 70% decent homes by 2010 has been deleted. The 2008-2011 PSA agreements relevant to housing are set out below and place a national focus on settled housing for vulnerable adults, older people's housing, decent neighbourhoods, affordable housing and energy efficiency:

PSA16	Increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training
PSA17	Tackle poverty and promote greater independence and wellbeing in later life
PSA20	Increase long term housing supply and affordability

In addition to the above policies and targets, the Government's £316 million Housing and Planning Delivery Grant encourages local authorities to be proactive in their delivery of new housing.

Most of the national priorities are mirrored in our local priorities and form part of the strategic approach to housing in West Dorset. Meeting the housing needs of the growing proportion of older people in West Dorset and increasing the supply of affordable housing are the important local priorities. However, we are fortunate to live in a superb environment and our communities do not tend to suffer from abandoned housing and extreme deprivation, so that national priority is not reflected in this strategy.



Regional priorities

The Regional Housing Strategy 2005 -2016 identifies the following strategic drivers for housing policy in the South West:

- **High and on-going housing demand:** Household growth has been 29% compared to 21% nationally.
- **An ageing demographic profile:** At 24%, the South West has the highest proportion of people over 60 and is set to increase to 27% by 2021.
- **Under-delivery of new homes:** Net completions between 1996 and 2004 have only exceeded targets in Cornwall, Dorset and Somerset.
- **Severe market access difficulties to owner occupation:** 18 Districts in the South West are among the 40 most unaffordable in the country with a price-to-earnings ratio of over 5:1.
- **High levels of homelessness and use of temporary accommodation** - The number of homeless households accepted by local authorities is 15% higher than in 1997. Households in temporary accommodation have increased by 36% since 1999.
- **Shortage of affordable housing** - current stocks of affordable housing, particularly in rural areas, are unable to compensate for severe market access difficulties to owner occupation, increased levels of homelessness and use of temporary accommodation.
- **High levels of Right To Buy (RTB) sales** - the proportion of social housing in the region is among the lowest in the country at around 15% with a 2% fall in this stock 1991-2003
- **Poor quality homes** - approximately 30% of the region's housing stock does not meet the Government's Decent Homes standard
- **Social exclusion and disadvantage**
- **Inadequate links between housing affordability, quality and health**
- **The challenge of creating sustainable communities** - housing growth being concentrated in Principal Urban Areas and other significant towns and cities

In view of these, the Regional Housing Strategy has established three priorities for the region:

1. **Balancing housing markets:** increasing housing delivery, reducing homelessness and making best use of existing stock
2. **Good quality homes:** promoting good design and meeting the Decent Homes target
3. **Sustainable Communities:** including mixed communities and addressing the support needs of vulnerable groups to promote social inclusion

West Dorset shares many of these strategic drivers, the most significant being high demand, an ageing population and the lack of affordable housing and these are reflected as priorities in this strategy. Until 2007, high levels of acceptances of homeless households and heavy use of temporary accommodation was a problem in the District but they have been tackled effectively and are now at acceptable levels, with temporary accommodation numbers still declining.

Historically, West Dorset has suffered from high levels of Right to Buy sales but these have recently dwindled



to single figures per annum. Although there are pockets of poverty and deprivation, West Dorset is fortunate in having relatively low levels of social exclusion and disadvantage and a very healthy population. At over 33%, West Dorset does have a high proportion of non-decent homes. However, this is largely a reflection of the age and construction of much of the housing stock in the District and the lack of gas services in rural areas. The focus for the District is more on tackling fuel poverty than on decent homes per se and it is interesting that the national priorities are now supporting this approach. Dorchester has been designated as a "significant town" and is leading the way in the creation of a sustainable community at Poundbury.

The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out how the South West region will be developed up until 2026, based on continued economic and population growth. It provides the strategic planning policy for the whole of the region, setting total housing requirements for each District and for strategically significant towns across the region. The submission draft RSS, published in 2006, identified a housing target for West Dorset of 410 dwellings per annum, of which 200 per annum were to be at Dorchester. This was a lower rate of development than that previously identified in the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan. A Public Examination into the draft RSS took place in 2007 and the Panel's report of recommendations was published in early 2008. This recommended an increase in West Dorset's housing numbers to 625 per annum, including 350 per annum at Dorchester. Large urban extensions are recommended at Dorchester, and from Weymouth into West Dorset. These proposed changes to the draft RSS were published for consultation in Summer 2008, and the RSS is expected to confirm the higher development rate of 625 units at the end of 2008.

We are actively involved in identifying and setting sub-regional priorities and jointly commissioned a sub-regional Housing Market Assessment in 2007 as a pilot exercise. The findings from that work will be used to develop emerging planning policy and have already influenced the county wide 'Local Area Agreement' (LAA), and the drafting of a Bournemouth Dorset and Poole 'Multi Area Agreement' (MAA). LAAs are mandatory agreements negotiated with

government office to determine targets in agreed service areas which the community has identified through the community planning process. Housing is a priority service in the Dorset LAA as well as the discretionary MAA covering the extended area of Bournemouth Dorset and Poole. Targets around affordable housing and the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households have been successfully achieved within Dorset, and new targets are being set for 2008-11. The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole MAA, will require a strong partnership commitment to increasing affordable housing provision throughout the sub region. The proposal is very much a pilot which if successful will be extended nationally in future years.

We also work closely with neighbouring authorities to identify and resolve common issues, with the production of a county wide Homelessness Strategy 2008 and the introduction of a common Choice Based Lettings scheme throughout Dorset by 2009.

Working in Partnership

The Council recognises that its strategic housing role and the delivery of its housing services relies heavily upon the contribution of local and regional partners. The consultation process for this strategy started with the Council's own staff, who are well placed to identify emerging drivers and areas for improvement. This was followed by a well-attended consultation event in October 2007 where around 70 stakeholders from local government, health, the private and voluntary sectors and local community representatives gave presentations, considered key strategic questions and had the opportunity to provide free-flow input. Members of the Council's Executive, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committees, including the Leader of the Council, were actively involved. A list of the organisations involved in the consultation is attached at Appendix C.

A number of clear messages from stakeholders have been incorporated into the strategy, including full use of the planning regime to maximise affordable housing delivery, proactive development of exception sites to increase delivery in rural settlements and a call for greater publicity of the Council's Housing Advice Centre and its role in assisting households with housing issues.

Based on this consultation, strategic priorities and key strategic options were considered by the Council's Policy Development Committee and Executive Committee and incorporated into the draft strategy. Consultation on the draft strategy took place between April and June 2008.

Details of revisions to the strategy resulting from the various consultation exercises can be found in Appendix E.

Resolving the challenges of the housing market is not easy and requires contributions from a wide range of people and organisations. Staff from the Council's housing, planning policy, development control, legal, economic development, community services, revenues and technical services teams work together with Members to maximise our capacity to address the imbalances of the housing market. However, the Council cannot do it alone. We work closely with the public, private and voluntary sector (for example through the West Dorset Partnership) to deliver services to our customers and we are keen to

increase our capacity through combined service delivery. We enjoy very positive relationships with key partners such as Dorset County Council, neighbouring District Councils and Housing Associations, particularly Magna. We have also developed good relationships with private landlords, with a highly successful Landlords Accreditation Scheme.

Effective partnerships with members of the Western Dorset Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, such as Dorset Police, Dorset Fire and Rescue Service, Dorset Primary Care Trust, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council and Dorset County Council to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour, rough sleepers and domestic violence and abuse. This includes co-ordinating the West Dorset Rough Sleepers action plan and meetings of the multi-agency steering group.

We work well with the Housing Corporation and have achieved a high level of National Affordable Housing Programme grant. Regular liaison meetings are undertaken between the Council and our developing partners, mainly housing associations, to tackle barriers to development quickly and effectively. We are members of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Affordable Housing Task Group, a working group of the Dorset Strategic Partnership, which enables the Councils and other key stakeholders to agree and manage joint projects to fill gaps in current requirements and share best practice on the delivery of affordable housing. We jointly commissioned the recent Dorset-wide Housing Needs Survey and Housing Market Assessment with the other Dorset Councils. We have also developed a loan scheme for private sector renewal with a voluntary sector partner, the Wessex Reinvestment Trust, which enabled previous grant funding to be recycled to help more residents. West Dorset has one of the best take-up levels of this new form of assistance within the consortium and we are keen to extend the loan option with new products in the future. We are also able to provide benefits advice at our Housing Advice Centre with a Money Advisor funded by the Westway Revenues and Benefits Service partnership with neighbouring Weymouth and Portland Borough Council.

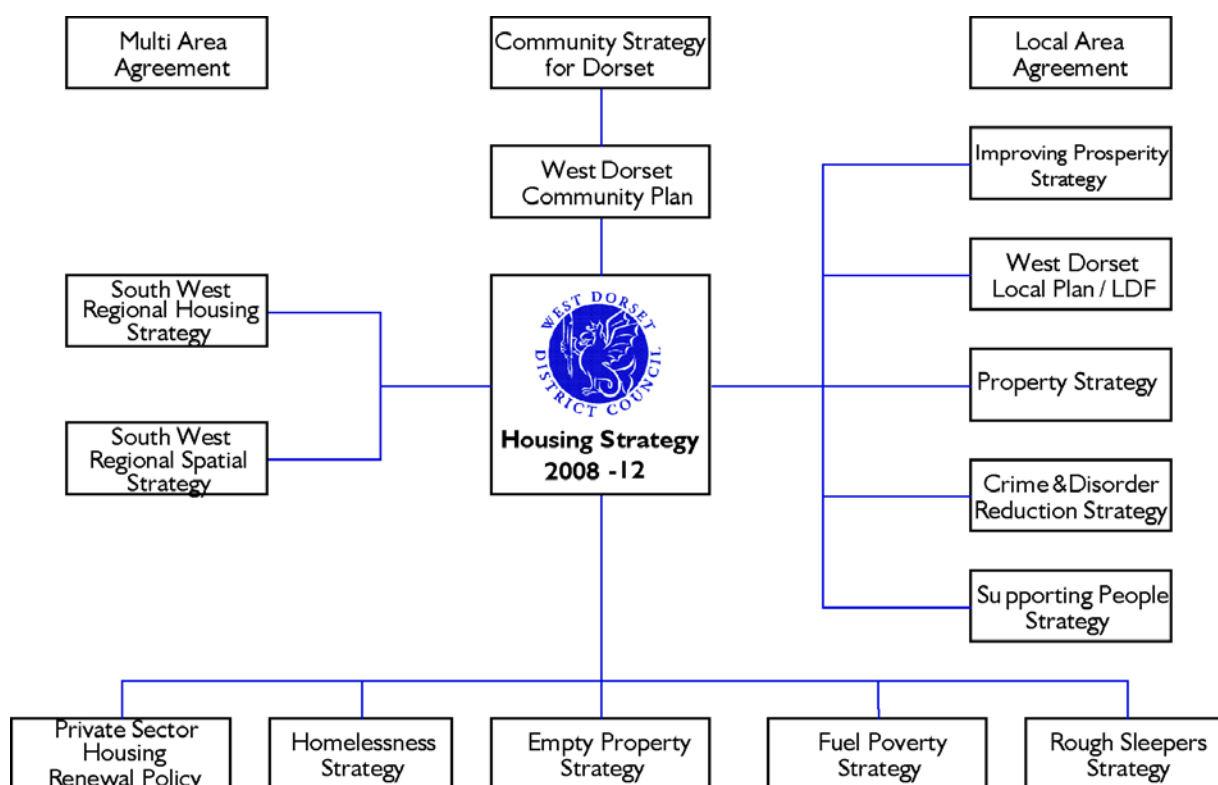


There are many examples of where collaborative working achieves better value for money. The housing service works closely with other partners to procure and deliver services jointly, which has resulted in economies of scale and an ability to share resources to deliver extra or improved services. Established partnership working includes the Utilities Grants scheme, Householders Loan scheme, Dorset West Dorset Women's refuge and the Private Sector Leasing scheme.

The needs of users are at the heart of the design and delivery of housing services in West Dorset. Users are routinely asked for their views and these, together with any complaints received, are considered with a view to making service improvements. We recognise the diverse needs of our users and have worked in partnership with the County Council and the other District Councils in Dorset to consult with disability groups and individuals as part of a long-term dialogue with the community on disability issues. We use census data and the County Council's data service as key resources in understanding the diversity of our community. This is supplemented with information

from representative organisations, local community and interest groups and surveys, such as the recent county-wide Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Survey. We help to develop, and work closely with, community groups like the South West Dorset Multi-Cultural Network, Youth Extra and various older people's groups.

The specific housing needs of the different groups of people who make up our customer base have been assessed using Equality Impact Assessment tools. Impact Assessments have been undertaken on the homelessness and housing advice and private sector housing services together with the Local Plan to make sure that both the Council's strategic objectives and operational approach adequately meets the needs of all service users. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on this strategy. We are active in cross-authority multi-agency groups like the countywide Supported Housing, Older Persons Housing and Domestic Violence Groups, which ensure that specific, diverse needs are understood and responded to, both by the Council and its partners.



Housing need in West Dorset



SOLD

(SUBJECT TO CONTRACT)

goadsby.com



Our strategic approach to delivering housing services is based on robust needs analysis and a good understanding of the local housing market. We undertook the latest housing need survey across West Dorset in 2007 as part of a county-wide initiative driven by the agreement to produce a Dorset Housing Market Assessment (HMA). Housing Market Assessments are the Government's recommended tool for local authorities to appraise housing markets and understand the relationships between the varying geographic, social and economic drivers that underpin needs and demands. A stock condition survey was also undertaken in 2007 to assess the suitability of the existing properties in meeting the housing needs of our residents. The two reports provide information essential to the development of a Housing Strategy.

West Dorset covers 418 square miles and has a population in excess of 96,000, making it one of the sparsest Districts in England. Half of the residents live in the six towns, with the remainder in the 132 rural parishes. It has the highest percentage of retired residents in the United Kingdom and an increasingly ageing population. The proportion of our residents with a disability is slightly above the national average at 19.2% and 3.3% of our residents are not white-British. At £407.60, the median gross weekly pay for full time employees working in West Dorset is 91% of that for Great Britain. House prices are 25% above the national average and outstrip average wages by a ratio of 11:1. West Dorset ranks 235 out of 354 on the Indices of Deprivation but has pockets of relative deprivation, especially in parts of Bridport and Dorchester.

West Dorset's entire 26 miles of coastline is designated as a World Heritage site and 71% of the

District is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are around 46,800 homes in the District, 6,200 of which are owned by Registered Social Landlords and 5,500 rented privately, with a high level of owner occupation. The private sector rental market represents just 12.5% of the stock in West Dorset, with achievable rents for virtually all properties well outside the range of affordability for most householders in housing need. There are 105 identified Houses in Multiple Occupation. 8% of private properties fail the old fitness standard and 66% of private homes meet the new Decent Homes standard. There are 2,381 second homes, predominately in wards along the coast. Housing needs information indicates that 730 affordable homes would need to be developed annually until 2011 to meet demand. 61 homeless households were accepted during 2007/08, while five people were officially recorded in the most recent rough sleepers count.

The gap between local income levels and house prices continues to widen. The problem in West Dorset is acute and not easily resolved locally. The market for private housing in West Dorset is national, with inward migration fuelling demand and limited supply driving prices up, while the labour market is local with little upward pressure on wages. Identified annual affordable housing need exceeds the total annual housing provision that has been permitted and achieved over recent years and the total annual housing provision in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026.

Through the newly published HMA, West Dorset's housing needs and priorities can now be considered in a sub-regional context. Using combined primary and



New housing for local people



secondary sources of data for both West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland, the study has been aligned with the Regional view of Housing Markets in the South West, providing the means for the future development of regional and sub-regional strategies and priorities. Amongst its key findings the report identifies a joint indicative annual demand for 1,580 homes, of which 49% should be affordable and provided within West Dorset. It also concludes that the proportion of affordable housing sought through Planning should theoretically be at least 80%, subject to economic viability considerations.

Stock profile

Properties in West Dorset vary considerably in terms of property types and construction materials and, unusually, 31% of the stock was built before 1919. Detached houses and bungalows make up nearly half of the stock at 44.6%, while relatively few households live in flats: 12.6% compared to 17% nationally.

The Stock Condition Survey 2007 revealed that 66.6% of our dwellings currently meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard, compared with 58% in 2004. However, the excellent progress made towards the Standard in the last few years needs to be continued if we are to reach the national average of 72.9%. The current gap is in part explained by the age of the stock and the nature of its construction which makes it difficult to achieve modern standards of thermal comfort - a situation exacerbated by the lack of a gas supply to some rural locations, where only 60.2% of the properties meet the Standard.

It is estimated that 2,500 non-Decent properties are

occupied by households considered by the Government to be vulnerable. This suggests that only 59% of all vulnerable households within the District are accommodated in decent properties, significantly below the previous national target of 65% of vulnerable households living in decent homes by 2006/07 and 70% by 2010/11.

The overall cost to repair all privately owned properties comprehensively in West Dorset is calculated at £194.6m, an average of £4,790 per property. More realistically, remedying disrepair to those properties classed as "non-decent" would cost £7.4m. The types of properties most likely to need repairs are those built before 1919, privately rented properties and those in certain geographical areas, notably rural settlements and in Bridport, Beaminster, and Lyme Regis. Local authorities are required to take enforcement action on properties exhibiting a Category 1 hazard, defined by the Housing Act 2004. It is estimated that 7,120 properties in West Dorset exhibit such a hazard.

Tenure profile

Nearly three-quarters of West Dorset's properties are owner-occupied, with 13% in the social rented sector, significantly lower than the national average of 18%, and 12.5% in the private rented sector. The Council undertook a voluntary transfer of its housing stock in 2004 and is no longer a landlord of social housing. Magna Housing Association is the largest social landlord in West Dorset, although another 16 housing associations have properties in the District.

West Dorset is an established location for tourism with many homes used for holiday lets and around

2,000 properties (4.6%) are thought to be used as second homes.

Householder profile

Households in West Dorset largely follow the national trend, although there is a higher proportion of households of two adults at 42.9%, and of single people over 60 years old.

Household type distribution

Household type	West Dorset 2007		England 2004
Adult group (3+ adults)	1,700	4.2%	7%
Lone Adult	2,800	6.9%	12%
Lone Older (60+ years)	7,300	18.0%	15%
Single Parent	1,400	3.4%	8%
Traditional Family	7,800	19.2%	24%
Two Adults	17,400	42.9%	34%
Vacant	2,190	5.4%	4%
Total Household Type	40,600	100%	100%

Source: 2007 House Condition Survey & 2004 EHCS

In the rural areas of the District there are more outright owners, more older person households and more people with a higher level of income and savings than in the towns. Households in rural areas are also more likely to have access to a vehicle and to express problems with the adequacy of public transport.

The quality of life in West Dorset attracts people planning their retirement and there are a significant number of in-migrating owner-occupiers aged over 55. This is a key factor in the gap between house prices and wages and one of the most difficult issues to resolve. In West Dorset, 37% of our properties house people of 65 and over, compared to 24% nationally. Meeting the housing needs of these people as they grow older is a significant challenge.

8,345 (19.2%) of households in West Dorset contain someone identified as having special needs. This is higher than the national average of 13%. Of these, nearly 98% are defined as having a "medical

condition" or are physically disabled. More information is needed on the housing needs of the remaining households, particularly people with a learning disability. The most common requirements of these households are support services (21%), shower units (15%) and hand rails (14%). Special needs households are three times more likely to be living in unsuitable accommodation as non-special needs households and have lower average incomes. Most people in these households prefer to remain living independently in their own homes. To meet this need, the Council has provided a Home Improvement Agency service since 1994, helping around 350 people every year. Recently, this service has been improved by a Handyperson Scheme, introduced in partnership with Help the Aged, and a housing options service, developed with Anchor Staying Put.

There is an adequate supply of sheltered accommodation within the District but no extra-care scheme has yet been developed. The provision of an extra-care scheme for frail elderly residents in West Dorset is identified as a priority for West Dorset in the Supporting People Strategy.

Southern Focus Trust (SFT) have a contract to provide housing support to 36 vulnerable young people in 3 re-modelled Magna properties, with 2 flats for young single parents provided in one of them. SFT Firstpoint also deliver floating support to 400 clients across Dorset. Work with other councils and the police has effectively addressed domestic violence and abuse incidents. A sanctuary scheme enables victims to stay in their own homes if appropriate.

West Dorset Woman's Refuge, in common with other refuges, accepts referrals from all over the country. The refuge, operated by Raglan Housing Association, can accommodate nine families. Dorset Woman's Outreach Project provides domestic abuse outreach services locally to women in the District.

House prices in West Dorset

At £260,000, (2007) average house prices in West Dorset are around 25% higher than the average for England and the price of an average house increased by 75% between 2001 and 2006. Astonishingly, the average age of our recent first time buyers is 43 and



nearly a third of people aged between 21-35 live with their parents. Buying a house in West Dorset requires incomes significantly above the District average. The average (mean) annual household income in West Dorset is £28,160, but there are wide variations by tenure. The average annual income of households in our social rented properties is just £10,952. The low wages associated with the mostly rural economy and the high cost of housing combine to seriously restrict the ability of local people to live and work in the District. Housing benefit of approx £25.5m is paid to almost 5000 people in the District to help them live in a house that they would otherwise not be able to afford.

Entry-level market costs in West Dorset		
Property size	Cost to buy	Cost to rent (per week)
1 bedroom	£95,000	£92
2 bedroom	£143,000	£121
3 bedroom	£211,000	£129
4 bedroom	£287,000	£202

Source: Fordham survey of estate and letting agents 2006

The entry-level cost equates to the cheapest cost of housing in good repair of which there is a reasonable supply. The table shows that the lowest priced one bed property would be £95,000 to buy or £92 per week to rent. Housing costs at that level could be expected to require an annual household income of £27,000 to buy or £19,200 to rent. Income required for a 3-bed property would be in the region of £60,000 to buy or £26,800 to rent. Given the annual average (median) earnings in the District is around £22,000 it is evident that home ownership is not a realistic aspiration for many local families.

Housing Need

The 2007 Housing Needs survey reports the total future need for affordable housing as 1,001 units per annum, in addition to an assessed backlog need of 421 units. This is calculated by identifying the existing shortfall in suitable housing and adding demand from new households. Some of this need will be met as existing affordable housing becomes available, around 348 households a year, but it leaves an annual shortfall in affordable housing supply against demand of over

737 units.

There is significant demand for new homes in West Dorset. This is influenced by many factors such as increased life expectancy, in-migration and smaller household sizes.

The Housing Needs Survey separately estimated that there is a current demand for 1,104 properties in the District across all tenures. The Balanced Housing Market analysis shows that in social rented housing 75% of the need is for 1&2 bedroom homes, while in owner-occupied housing 83% of the need is for 2&3 bedroom homes, with the intermediate market showing a shortfall of 2 bedroom homes. Although the Balanced Housing Market model indicates an annual shortfall of 1,104 houses, including a shortfall of 542 affordable homes, the total annual housing provision for West Dorset in the Regional Spatial Strategy will be between 410 and 620 homes, around half of what is required. In turn, this will require us to have strong policies in place to maximise affordable housing.

The Balanced Market Housing model suggests that if the annual shortfall of affordable housing were to be provided it should be located as shown in the table below.

Sub Area	Affordable Housing Shortfall per annum
Central and Rural West	83
Bridport and Bridport rural	158
Chickerell and Chesil	61
Lyme Regis and Charmouth	33
Dorchester & Dorchester rural	167
Sherborne and Sherborne rural	40
Total	542

Source: Fordham Housing Need Survey 2008

The buoyant housing market of recent years means that there are relatively few empty properties and a strategic approach to bringing them back into the housing stock is not required. This is one of the few areas where this strategy does not follow national policy. Of the 1,030 properties considered vacant in West Dorset, only 140 are considered to be long-



term vacant, defined as any dwelling vacant for six months or more, or subject to unlicensed occupation. Overcrowding is not a significant issue in West Dorset but there is significant under-occupation of larger houses in general, with over half of those people over 65 living in social rented properties under-occupying properties with three or more bedrooms.

2,265 (5%) of households in the District are currently living in unsuitable housing, which either does not meet their needs or is overcrowded, although 618 people stated that their accommodation was too expensive and 260 were facing the end of their tenancies. 905 of these households considered a move to affordable housing essential to resolve their housing needs. At 7.1%, Dorchester has the highest percentage of households in unsuitable housing. In April 2008, there were 2084 households (4.5%) on the West Dorset Joint Housing Register, which we administer on behalf of all 17 housing associations with properties in the District. All offer 100% nomination rights except Magna Housing Association, which holds 80% of the District's socially rented stock and retains 25% of their vacancies. This is a significant issue for our customers and one that we are keen to resolve. The register is open to anyone in housing need and is reviewed monthly to ensure that households whose needs have been met are removed from it. Our new allocations policy places applicants into one of three bands reflecting their relative level of need but also takes account of how long someone has been waiting for a suitable property. We aim to make 30% of all nominations to households in band A, 60% to band B and 10% to band C.

The following table shows the composition of our joint housing register (March 2008):

Band	Applicant category	Number of applicants
A 59 applicants	Sheltered	21
	Transfer	14
	General Needs	24
	Supported	0
B 732 applicants	Sheltered	133
	Transfer	141
	General Needs	448
	Supported	10
C 1113 applicants	Sheltered	186
	Transfer	215
	General Needs	698
	Supported	14
Total		1904

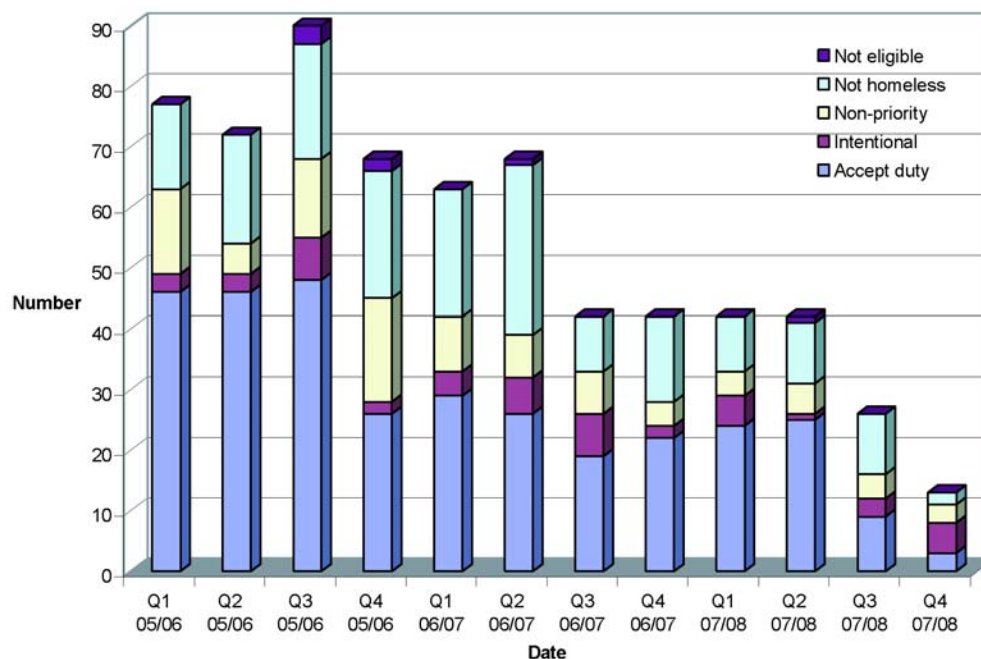
Homelessness in West Dorset

The main causes of homelessness in West Dorset are termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancies in the private rented sector (42%), exclusion by parents, friends or relatives (26%), and relationship breakdown, both violent and non-violent (13%).

In November 2006, we took back responsibility for the homelessness service from contractors and embraced the Government's preferred preventative approach, reducing the number of formal applications considered as a consequence. The number of homeless applications determined by the Council has decreased significantly from previous levels of around 42 every quarter. During the period January to March 2008 only 13 formal decisions had to be made, although many more people accessed the service,



Results of Homelessness Applications | April 2005 - 31 March 2008



with customer numbers 6% higher in 2007/8 than in previous years.

Levels of use of bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation are low, with an average of just one family per month entering B&B as a short-term measure pending provision of more suitable accommodation. The Council has access to nine self-contained flats specifically for homeless families at Exhibition Court, Dorchester. Between January 2005 and April 2008 a total of 111 families occupied the flats pending a move to secure accommodation. Similarly, the acquisition of self contained accommodation for single homeless people means that B&B is now only used as a short-term measure. The Council is required to halve the total amount of temporary accommodation in use for homeless families from the level in December 2004 of 74 units. The Government's target date to achieve this is March 2010 but the non-unitary authorities in Dorset are participating in a Local Area Agreement to meet the target a year early. West Dorset has already achieved its target, having only 13 homeless households in temporary accommodation at April 2008

The Council is keen to make use of the private sector to meet housing need and in 2007 appointed a

Tenancy Liaison Officer, who in 2007/08 assisted 47 families to find solutions to their housing problems in the private sector. A homelessness prevention fund was also created when the service returned in-house. In the same period 16 grants were made totalling £3572. The potential saving to the Council by not using temporary accommodation for these families was around £24,000.

In addition the Council works in partnership with agencies in the district to help fund the following initiatives to prevent homelessness:

- With Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, joint-funding EDP Dorset Drug & Alcohol Services to employ a Street Homeless Outreach Worker to research and reduce numbers of rough sleepers in the district.
- Funding of tenancy liaison post with Dorset Women's Outreach Project to reduce homelessness as a result of domestic abuse
- Weymouth & Portland Housing PSL scheme - providing ten private sector leased properties to use as temporary accommodation for homeless families

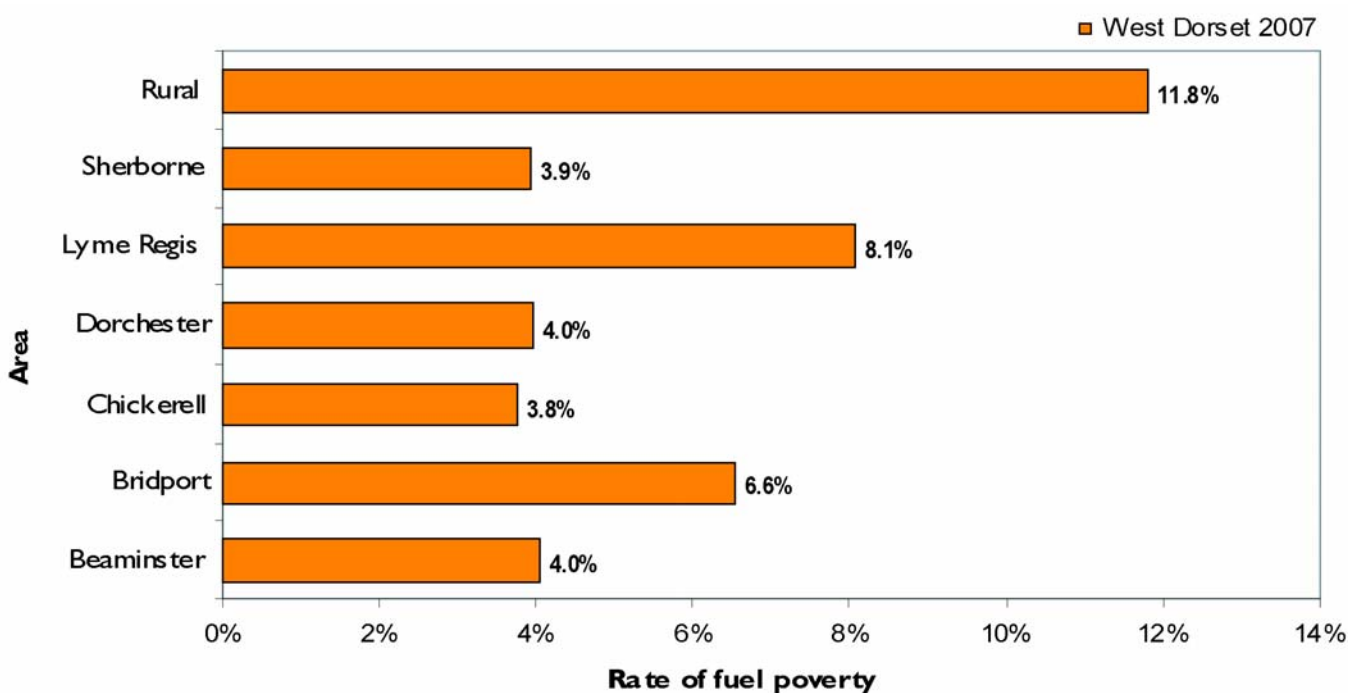
Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

The average SAP rating for the private housing stock in West Dorset is 58 and compares favourably with the national average of 52. However, there is a wide variation within this average figure: while nearly 10% of our houses have a SAP rating of less than 30, over 30% have a SAP rating above 70. There is also a distinct split between the older houses in rural locations and the modern properties more commonly found in the larger towns.

10% of households nationally and nearly 8% in West Dorset need to spend more than 10% of their net income on heating and hot water, and are therefore considered to be in fuel poverty. A key issue in reducing energy consumption is tackling fuel poverty

and the Government is seeking to eradicate it by 2016. Not only do houses where fuel poverty normally exists tend to have poor energy efficiency, they are, by definition, occupied by residents with low incomes who are least likely to be able to afford improvements.

The highest rate of fuel poverty is found in the private rented sector where just under 15% of households are in fuel poverty, compared with 6% in the owner occupied stock. No households with annual incomes over £15,000 were found to be in fuel poverty, but 2,700 (92%) households with annual household incomes of below £10,000 were found to be in fuel poverty. The following graph illustrates the estimated level of fuel poverty by area:



Source: 2007 House Condition Survey



Performance on Priority Areas 2004-08



Temporary accommodation at Exhibition Court, Dorchester



The Housing Strategy 2004-08 had five themes namely:

- Increasing the provision of affordable housing
- Maximising access to housing
- Ensuring healthy safe and energy efficient housing
- Meeting the needs of older people and vulnerable people
- Enabling more sustainable communities.

There were 30 objectives and some 131 actions detailed against the five themes. The Strategy was reviewed at its mid term by a process of stakeholder consultation events, leading to a report to the Executive Committee in October 2006. As a result of that process, appropriate revisions to targets were adopted while the emergence of a number of countywide strategies was noted.

The Council has been principally concerned with delivering against the number one priority of affordable housing and securing a reduction in the use of bed and breakfast for accommodating homeless households. Progress in those areas has been monitored by our Scrutiny and Executive Committees and through the Performance Management Framework originally introduced in July 2003. During the life of the strategy, Housing Services have been monitored under 11 National Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) plus an additional 7 local indicators (LDs).

Increasing the provision of affordable housing

We are proud of our record of delivering mixed

tenure sites, with affordable housing indistinguishable from open market housing. Since 2004, an average of 73 units have been built each year, against an initial target of 80, which was increased to 100 in the new Local Plan. Although the Council is unable to control the impact of international money markets on housing delivery and is concerned by the current downturn in development, this strategy retains aims to continue to increase delivery of affordable housing.

Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing was adopted in 2004, introducing a negotiated target of a 35% affordable housing provision on all housing sites above a threshold of 15 units in the towns and 3 units in rural locations. This policy was carried through into the Local Plan and 334 affordable homes have been granted planning permission as a result. The Local Plan also allocated 14 sites for new housing development with the potential to deliver 899 new affordable homes, including a Council-owned site in Bridport allocated for 100% affordable housing. Development briefs have been prepared in consultation with the community on larger sites in Sherborne and Dorchester. The Local Plan includes a new exception site policy allowing 100% affordable housing developments in locations where general market housing would not be allowed, provided there is evidence of need. We have supported a Rural Housing Enabler to bring these sites forward. In 2007, the Council adopted new policy principles for s106 negotiations, designed to maximise the affordable housing contribution from developers and protect it in the long term.

We have used our own resources to support affordable housing provision, allocating £1.9m to new-

build schemes in 2006-08 and drawing down £6m from the Housing Corporation. In 2004, we reviewed our own landholdings and identified nine sites for affordable housing developments, seven of which have been progressed. We have also provided a development loan of £850,000 to an innovative Community Land Trust scheme on an exception site in the hope that this will provide a replicable model for rural affordable housing with minimal public funding. We also worked with our other Dorset partners to meet the Local Public Service Agreement housing target, netting £46,000 for affordable housing in West Dorset.

Outstanding Actions from Housing Strategy 2004-08

- Seek to deliver a Community Land Trust affordable housing scheme and report on its potential as an alternative model for provision.

The CLT project at Buckland Newton continues to be supported with development anticipated in 2008-09.

- Work with RSLs and developers to deliver 195 funded units between 2006-08.

Delivery of a number of schemes funded within the NAHP 2006-08 slipped for a range of reasons beyond the Council's control although most do remain in the pipeline for delivery.

Maximising access to housing

A key target of the last Housing Strategy was to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation to meet temporary housing needs by making alternative provision. The cost of homelessness generally and B&B accommodation in particular was a cause for concern. In 2005/06, we spent over £259,000 on B&B accommodation and had 38 households placed in B&B at the end of November 2005. In 2005, the Council scrutinised the homelessness and allocations service and a range of improvements were put in place, in consultation with the Department for Communities and Local

Government. This included the contracted-out service being brought back to direct provision by the Council in November 2006. We have adopted a preventative, housing options approach to homelessness in our new Housing Advice Centre, with strong multi-agency working and a comprehensive range of homelessness prevention tools. This approach has been extremely successful with formal homelessness decisions reduced to less than a third of those in 2005, and rarely needing to place households into B&B. In addition there has been a vastly improved advice service and a more customer-focused approach.

In 2004 we developed a 9-unit complex in Dorchester providing good-quality self-contained short-term accommodation for homeless people. This has enabled us to support between 30-40 families a year who would otherwise have been placed in a B&B. In 2007, we acquired a further 21 units of temporary accommodation for single people in Dorchester and in September 2007 we had no-one placed in B&B accommodation for the first time in many years. We also acquired 10 units of family accommodation through a private sector leasing scheme, have part-funded a 9-unit refuge in Dorchester for women fleeing domestic violence and part-fund a rough sleeper outreach worker. We have developed a successful Landlords Accreditation Scheme enabling our customers to access the limited private sector housing market.

We adopted a new allocations policy in 2006, which abandoned the unpopular points system in favour of a transparent time-related banding system, preparing the Council for the introduction of Choice Based Lettings (CBL) by 2010. A comprehensive review of the housing register was also undertaken, with a rolling review programmed to ensure the register remains current.

Outstanding Actions from Housing Strategy 2004-08

- Commission mediation service to assist in preventing homelessness.

Action brought forward to 2008-12 strategy



Ensuring healthy, safe and energy efficient housing

With 86% of the District's housing stock owned privately, making the best use of existing housing is vital to meeting housing needs. We have provided a relatively high level of financial assistance for adaptations and improvements targeted at older and disabled people based on evidence of need. We launched one of the first loan schemes for adaptations and improvements in the South West in 2005 and completed 18 loans to a total of £112,000 (July 2008). Our in-house Home Improvement Agency, which supports vulnerable people through the adaptations process, was the first in the country to be re-accredited for quality assurance in 2006.

Reducing fuel poverty and increasing energy efficiency in existing housing stock is a key area for the Council, given the number of older residents on limited income living in their own home. We have already achieved the required HECA target of 30% savings on energy consumption by 2010 and we are one of the top three Councils in the South West region for our progress on energy efficiency, having improved the SAP level of our stock from 38 in 1996 to 58 in 2007. The high level of demand in the housing market means that there is a very low level of empty properties but we have been instrumental in bringing 31 back to use since 2004.

Outstanding Actions from Housing Strategy 2004-08

- All actions completed

Meeting the needs of older people and vulnerable people

The Council was one of the first housing authorities in the country to embrace the idea of a Home Improvement Agency assisting elderly and disabled people to repair improve or adapt their properties to enable them to continue to live independently. The West Dorset Care and Repair agency has been a great success regularly assisting around 400 householders each year. The agency continues to be the main focus

for Council resources to assist the elderly or disabled householder and is supported by the Supporting People Team at Dorset County Council and by Magna Housing Association Ltd.

The needs of older people and vulnerable people are routinely considered both at local level and at County level. The Council has assisted in the development of a number of countywide strategies aimed at increasing the potential for households to remain living independently. A new model of provision for vulnerable young people was introduced in 2005-06 introducing Southern Focus Trust to the district as a provider of housing support. The same organisation are also contracted to provide floating support to a range of vulnerable clients.

The Council supported a successful bid by the Pilsdon Community to secure £861,000 from the governments 'Places for Change Programme'. Pilsdon has been assisting homeless people for over 50 years. The funding will enable the provision of improved accommodation for male and female clients and also enable the community to further develop the skills of the service users as they become involved in the improvements and development of the community's facilities. The Council place a high value on services provided to vulnerable groups by the voluntary sector and is keen to support their development.

Outstanding Actions from Housing Strategy 2004-08

- Seek to develop with RSL partners a register of adapted properties

Action brought forward to 2008-12 strategy

- Support lifetime homes where appropriate

Action brought forward to 2008-12 strategy

Enabling more sustainable communities.

The Council's Local Plan was finally adopted in 2006, introducing affordable housing quotas on development sites and allocating sites for affordable housing. Work has also progressed to develop the Community

Planning process with clear communication links being formed with the Dorset Strategic Partnership, West Dorset Partnership and Local Area Partnerships.

The government published 'A National Strategy for Housing an Ageing Society' in 2008, which mirrored some of the aspirations of the Council's Housing Strategy to promote lifetime homes, provide handyman services for the elderly, and improve community cohesion.

Outstanding Actions from Housing Strategy 2004-08

- Crime and disorder reduction activities be fully integrated into the housing strategy including a section in the strategy

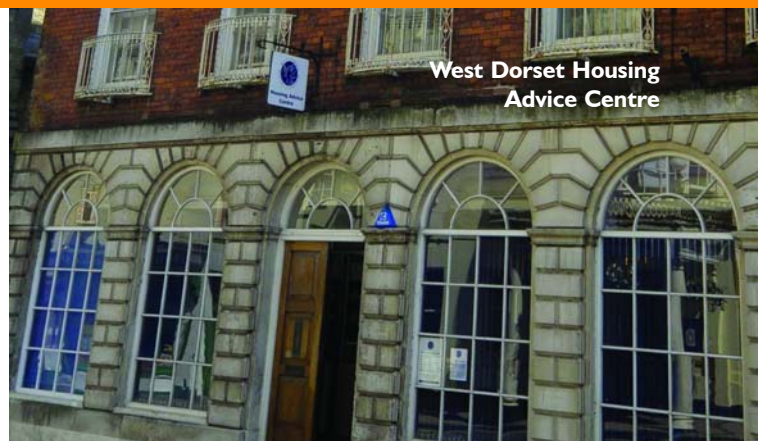
Crime and Disorder issues now considered as a matter of routine and not a strategic priority for new actions in 2008-12

Inspection of Strategic Housing Services

We were very pleased that our strategic housing services were found to be "good with promising prospects for improvement" by the Audit Commission in June 2007. They concluded that:

- It is easy for local people to make face-to-face contact with the service, customer satisfaction levels are high, there is a strong commitment to equality and diversity and a good supply of highly regarded services aimed at meeting the needs of vulnerable and hard to reach groups;
- Our overarching strategies including the local plan and housing strategy are of high quality and mostly based on a wide range of up-to-date research;
- There is a good supply of high quality new housing including a mix of tenures and sizes of affordable housing that reflects local need well.
- The Council makes good use of nomination rights to housing association properties
- There is a strong approach to improving private sector housing

However, they did find some areas for improvement



and made the following recommendations:

- Improve the monitoring and management of the housing advice and private sector housing services
- Improve the degree to which services are accessible and tailored to the local community
- Improve the cost comparison and value for money of each service
- Improve the quality of housing plans and policies

We have taken their suggestions for improvement seriously and many of the weak areas have been tackled in our Access Strategy and Housing Service Improvement Plan. Any remaining actions have been incorporated into the Housing Strategy Action Plan.



Priorities for Action 2008-12

Through exhaustive consultation with key stakeholders and the community the Council has developed five priorities for its Housing Strategy 2008-12. They are;

- **Maximising affordable housing provision to meet identified need**
- **Supporting older people to live independently in suitable housing**
- **Prevent homelessness & provide a good service to people in housing need**
- **Reduce fuel poverty & improve the quality & energy efficiency of the housing stock**
- **Deliver high quality customer focussed housing services.**

Priority 1: Maximising affordable housing provision to meet identified need

Ensuring that the District Council's influence, policies and powers are used to maximise affordable housing delivery remains the Council's top corporate priority. The latest housing need survey and the level of Housing Register applicants proves that, for the foreseeable future, need will far outstrip supply in both town and rural areas, thereby highlighting the importance of exploiting all land and resource opportunities and justifying the continued priority associated with social rented housing. Subject to affordable costs and rules over long-term provision, affordable home-ownership will continue to play an important role whilst scope exists to develop new forms of Intermediate housing. During the life of the Strategy these could provide an additional means to help bridge the gap between social rented and open market housing, in terms of both cost and accessibility.

Key strategic aims for maximising affordable housing provision

- To promote the early delivery of affordable housing on larger sites allocated in the Local Plan (Action Plan 1.1)
- To achieve mixed balanced communities whilst maintaining the priority associated with social rented housing. (Action Plan 1.1)
- To increase the delivery of affordable housing in villages and rural settlements (Action Plan 1.2)



- To increase opportunities for meeting housing need through innovative approaches and the more efficient use of land and the existing housing stock (e.g. tackling under-occupation in the district's stock) (Action Plan 1.4)
- To ensure that new and progressive affordable housing policies are thoroughly explored through the Local Development Framework process (Action Plan 1.5)
- To ensure the provision of quality and sustainable affordable housing built and managed to Housing Corporation standards (Action Plan 1.7)

Priority 2: Supporting older people to live independently in suitable housing

With a widely dispersed and ageing population, servicing the current and future needs of older people present major challenges for West Dorset, requiring carefully considered responses from a very wide range of partners. Joined-up strategies that cut across Housing, Social Care and Health are essential to ensure that statutory and voluntary agencies work efficiently and effectively to assist the most vulnerable within our communities. Particular concern surrounds the increasing percentage of elderly West Dorset households and the importance of enabling such people to live independently in decent housing for as long as this is appropriate, but to then offer alternative options as and when a greater level of support is needed. To that end a range of services are considered appropriate with continued support for the Home Improvement Agency essential.

In addition to its prioritised services for older people, new opportunities are being created to meet such



Celebrating plans for affordable homes at Flaxhayes, Bridport



Work to increase accommodation at the Pilsdon Community

needs through planning-led affordable housing developments and to 'future proof' accommodation for lifetime occupation. With this in mind, we are aware of the importance of bringing our knowledge base for people with supported/special need housing in line with that of general needs accommodation. We are also aware of the need to develop an Extra Care housing scheme for the Frail Elderly in the District.

Key strategic aims for supporting older people to live independently

- To support delivery of 'Lifetime Homes' standard housing on appropriate new developments (Action Plan 2.1)
- To develop existing Private Sector Housing Policy to support small scale grants and loans (Action Plan 2.2)
- To ensure good liaison with Health and Welfare agencies to deliver effective service provision for all supported housing groups (Action Plan 2.3)
- To develop Home Improvement Agency services in line with the National Strategy for Housing an Ageing Society (Action Plan 2.4)
- To secure the delivery of an Extra Care scheme in Dorchester and to assess the demand for further schemes elsewhere (Action Plan 2.5)

Priority 3: Prevent homelessness & provide a good service to people in housing need

Whilst we continue to widen our housing services to meet the national Homelessness agenda, we have already taken significant steps to embrace the themes of prevention and choice, and improving services for

people with specific needs. Over the past twelve months, we have started to see material, social and financial rewards of working early and proactively with those in greatest need and scoping housing options rather than the limited outcomes associated with traditional homelessness approaches. During the life of the strategy further developments will focus on increasing options, access to housing and the quality of services and accommodation provided by, and for, the Council. Other priorities include improvements to the existing network of supported housing for younger vulnerable people (including the increased scope for "move-on" accommodation).

Key strategic aims for preventing homelessness

- To improve access to housing through the allocations process by reference to a single register (Action Plan 3.1)
- To introduce choice to the allocation of affordable housing (Action Plan 3.1)
- To prevent homelessness wherever possible and minimise rough sleeping within the District (Action Plan 3.2)
- To develop the services provided by the Housing Advice Centre to address the range of needs of our clients (Action Plan 3.2)
- To promote available services to vulnerable and hard to reach clients (Action Plan 3.3)
- To improve existing knowledge and the evidence base for people with special/supported housing needs, including move-on accommodation requirements (Action Plan 3.3)
- To reduce the number of households living in unsuitable temporary accommodation (Action Plan 3.4)



- To increase the use of private sector tenancies to address housing need (Action Plan 3.5)
- To assist with the identification of Gypsy and Travellers sites (Action Plan 3.3)
- To reduce the number of disabled households in un-adapted properties (Action Plan 2.3)

Priority 4: Reduce fuel poverty & improve the quality & energy efficiency of the housing stock

West Dorset's housing stock is characterised by a range of construction types and a predominance of older properties. While a proportion of the stock is of good construction and relatively energy efficient there is also a high level of poorly insulated property and properties that generally fail the 'Decent Homes' standard. The Stock condition survey completed in 2007 reported a high level of Category One hazards within the stock, and occupation of non-decent homes by vulnerable households. Poorly insulated properties and an inherent inability to provide efficient heating systems to some properties in the more rural locations will provide a challenge to the Council if it wishes to further reduce CO2 emissions from residential accommodation. Eliminating fuel poverty is a key recommendation from the report with local levels below national levels.

With a relatively small supply of socially rented accommodation provided in the District there is a natural reliance on the private sector to meet the housing demands of the increasing number of local households that cannot afford home ownership. Ensuring that privately let accommodation is suitable and satisfactory to meet the needs of our residents is therefore important, with further development of the Landlords Accreditation scheme proposed to assist in that task.

New build will naturally comply with prevailing standards for energy efficiency. Those standards can be expected to become ever more stringent as the move towards carbon neutral homes gathers pace. The Council will be keen to see the use of new technologies and construction techniques that reduce energy consumption within the home as they become cost effective.



Key strategic aims for reducing fuel poverty & improving the housing stock

- To implement the recommendations of the stock condition survey 2007 (Action Plan 4.1)
- To address issues of poor energy efficiency within the housing stock, and reduce CO2 emissions from domestic properties (Action Plan 4.1 & 4.5)
- To reduce the number of non-decent homes occupied by vulnerable households (Action Plan 4.1)
- Increase the number of decent homes in the District's stock (Action Plan 4.1)
- To reduce the number of households living in fuel poverty (Action Plan 4.3)
- To ensure that the private rented sector provides suitable and decent accommodation (Action Plan 4.4)
- To further develop liaison with private sector landlords (Action Plan 4.6)

Priority 5: Deliver high quality customer focused housing services

The Council's Strategic Housing Service was inspected in 2007 and found to be good with promising prospects for improvement. An Improvement Plan has been developed based on recommendations from the Audit Commission that will address issues relating to access to services, customer satisfaction, and the development of equality and diversity awareness within service provision. A number of service specific recommendations have been made by the commission including improvements to the arrangements for allocating available housing association accommodation, and services to vulnerable



Former public house converted to flats



Accrediting our 100th landlord

households in non-decent housing. The benefits of benchmarking services and monitoring costs are appreciated as necessary to the continued delivery of effective and efficient services.

Key Strategic aims for delivering high quality housing services

- To improve arrangements for monitoring and responding to customer satisfaction feedback (Action Plan 5.1).
- To improve access to housing services and the range of means for accessing the services (Action Plan 5.1)
- To develop good equality and diversity awareness within the staff and elected members (Action Plan 5.1)
- To improve consultation arrangements with all key stakeholders and service users (Action Plan 5.1)
- To consider the benefits of joint service provision with neighbouring Councils (Action Plan 5.2)
- To develop benchmarking arrangements for key services including comparison of cost (Action Plan 5.4)
- To target services at the most vulnerable households to ensure that all residents live in housing suitable for their needs and with the appropriate support services provided (Action Plan 1.6, 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 3.3, 4.1)



Financing the Housing Strategy

Revenue Spending

The housing revenue budget for 2008/2009, funded by the Council taxpayer and Government Revenue Support Grant, is set out below: -

Service Area	Spend £000	Income £000	Net £000	Council Tax Band D £
Strategy, Advice & Development	140	0	140	3.29
Homelessness	592	81	511	12.03
Private Sector Housing Renewal	327	165	162	3.81
Housing Standards & HECA	162	0	162	3.82
ODPM Homelessness Grant	69	69	0	0
Total	1,290	315	975	22.95

The Council is bound to consider the option of reducing overall service levels in response to a poor Revenue Support Grant settlement from Central Government. This grant will progressively reduce by £578,000 over the life of the current Mid Term Financial Strategy, a real term cut of 7.5%. Despite these pressures, housing remains a priority service for the Council, with additional staff resources having been provided for the Housing Advice centre in 2007 and an additional post to assist in delivery of affordable housing proposed in 2008. It is likely that the revenue budget will increase by inflation only over the period of this strategy.

West Dorset Care and Repair Agency

The Council continues to be proud of the work undertaken by the in-house Care and Repair Agency and remains committed to funding the residual revenue cost of its operation.

The annual revenue cost of the agency is currently met by:

Supporting People Grant	£ 44,877
Fee income	£ 34,451
Magna Housing Association	£13,411
West Dorset District Council	£68,448
Total	£161,187

Homelessness Prevention

The Council assumed control of the Housing Advice Centre service in 2006 committing additional resources to the delivery of a prevention-based service. The service provides housing advice, tackles homelessness and administers the Housing Register on behalf of seventeen Housing Association partners. In addition to the Council's own revenue funding, CLG grant provides support to a range of Council and external agency services. In the seven years that CLG funding has been awarded, a total of £365,168 has been awarded to the Council, supporting thirteen different projects / initiatives. CLG are committed to funding at £69k pa until 2010-11. The range of initiatives during the funding period has varied to reflect the issues being faced at any particular time and the services available to commission, but for 2008-09 funds have been approved as set out below:

Initiative / Service	Provider	Amount (£)
Street Homeless Outreach	EDP	20,000
Homelessness Prevention Fund	Housing Advice Centre	12,000
Project Officer for Temporary Accommodation and Tenancy Liaison Officer: (Extra hours)	Housing Advice Centre	14,000
Private Sector Leasing Scheme	Weymouth and Portland Housing	11,000
Reducing homelessness resulting from domestic violence	Dorset Woman's Outreach Project	9,000
Mediation Training	Mediation Dorset	1,500
Housing Directory	WDDC	1,000
Consultation event on young peoples housing	All Councils in Dorset	150
Total		68,650

Capital spending

New capital spending will be driven by the availability of new resources from housing capital receipts, revenue budget contributions and Government

supported capital expenditure. The Council supported the National Affordable Housing Programme of 2006-08 with £1.9m of its own capital funding to create a total programme of around £7.8m.

The reduced Private Sector Housing Investment funding for 2008/09 will impact upon the Council's activities in the first year of this strategy but the Council is reassured by comments from the South

West Regional Housing Body funding levels may be restored in future years.

Given the Council's commitment to limiting Council tax increases and its very limited ability to generate receipts from non-housing capital assets, the Council's Capital Strategy does not envisage that, excluding those sources identified above, any additional funding will be made available for housing services during the life of this plan.

Housing Capital Programme Resources (£000's)

Housing Capital Resources	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Capital Grants	774	590	674	674	674
Capital Reserve	280	280	280	280	280
Cumulative unspent capital	244	2018	0	0	0
RTB receipts	0	440	0	0	0
Other finance	0	471	0	0	0
Total Resources Used	1018	3799	954	954	954

Housing Capital Programme Outputs (Units)

Housing Capital Resources	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Affordable housing completions	39	110	110	110	110
Disabled Facility Grants	121	140	140	140	140
Private Sector Grants /loans	163	170	170	170	170

Housing Capital Programme Expenditure (£000's)

Housing Capital Resources	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Affordable housing/Social Housing Grant	380	2997*	198	198	198
Disabled Facility Grants	415	502	456	456	456
Private Sector Renewal	223	300	300	300	300
Total Capital Programme	1018	3799	954	954	954

* Includes unspent allocation for 2006/08

In addition to the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants for which the Council receives CLG funding, the Council finances a range of discretionary grants and loans plus additional services to support independent living, funded by a combination of regionally allocated resources and Council revenue. The assistance provided is targeted at vulnerable households in non-decent property and in 2007-08 was distributed as set out in the adjacent table.

Private Sector Housing Assistance	£000	Output (number)
Disabled Facilities Grants	448	121
Loans	7.6 (interest payments)	5
Home Independence Assistance	89.3	141
Householders assistance	0	0
Landlords Assistance	43.6	17
Handyvan service	Nil (£10k in 2008)	180 (6 mths pilot)
Housing Options Officer	2,500	40 clients

Note: Capital allocation to sub regional loans pot of £65k in 2007-08



Capital spending in 2008-12 will, however, be supplemented by "in kind" contributions by the identification of surplus land and building assets that might be suitable for use to support housing initiatives, in line with the Council's Asset Management Plan. To this end, the Council has recently identified three pieces of land that it will make available for affordable housing, and which will provide a total "in kind" contribution of around £1,000,000.

Housing Benefit

In 2006/07 West Dorset District Council's annual Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit expenditure was £25.5 million, representing 53% of its gross revenue expenditure of £47.8 million. There were approximately 4946 residents in receipt of Housing Benefit and 6511 residents in receipt of Council Tax Benefit.

On 23 October 2006 the Westwey service (a revenues and benefits service jointly provided by West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council) went live. This partnership is one of the few revenues and benefits partnerships that has been implemented nationally and has attracted interest from government departments. The aim of the partnership was to continue to provide a high level of service to residents of both areas, whilst at the same time realising significant salary savings. The service is due to make a saving of over £100,000 in the 2007/08 financial year alone.

Although the partnership experienced a dip in performance relating to the speed of processing both new Housing Benefit applicants and changes to circumstances, a series of measures have been put in place and performance is returning to target levels of 30 days and 9 days respectively.

In 2007 West Dorset District Council, in conjunction with the other 5 District Councils in Dorset and Dorset County Council, was awarded Pathfinder status. This initiative aims to bring closer working across the Dorset authorities, in order to realise significant savings from joint working. The provision of a joint revenues and benefits service in wider collaboration is being examined as a Pathfinder priority.

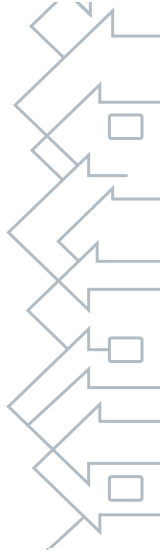
Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 1: Maximise affordable housing provision to meet identified need							
1.1 To maximize the supply of affordable housing	Meet National indicator (NI) targets 154: Net additional homes provided, and NI 155: Number of affordable homes delivered and increase the supply of affordable housing through S106 negotiations	440 units of affordable housing	2012	Housing Enabling	Planning Policy; Approved Providers; RSLs; Housing Corporation; Developers, AHTG	Staff time; Capital funding (where appropriate and available)	Regional Housing Strategy WDDC Corporate Plan West Dorset Community Plan Community Strategy for Dorset
	Build a close working partnership with the Housing Corporation to oversee successful delivery of a long-term West Dorset Affordable Housing Program.	Net annual increase in supply of affordable housing available in the district	2009	Housing Enabling	Housing Corporation; RSLs; Developers.	Staff time	Regional Housing Strategy WDDC Corporate Plan
	Liaise regularly with RSLs to optimize opportunities through the Housing Corporation's "Market Engagement" process and encourage the re-use and regeneration of surplus land and/or stock for remodeling	New models of provision to be discussed and case for additional freedoms and flexibilities for developments in market towns to be made 65% of all affordable housing to be for social rent	2009	Housing Enabling	RSLs; Housing Corporation	Staff time	Regional Housing Strategy WDDC Corporate Plan Property Asset Management Plan 2007-10. Property Disposal Policy
	New affordable housing developments to provide a proportion of rented units to meet the most acute housing need as a priority.			Housing Enabling Planning Policy	Developers; RSLs	Staff time	Regional Housing Strategy West Dorset District Adopted Local Plan



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 1: Maximise affordable housing provision to meet identified need							
1.2 To maximize the supply of affordable housing in villages and rural settlements	<p>Review and develop criteria for LA endorsement of approved affordable housing providers within the district</p> <p>To support local communities, landowners and developers to identify local need and bring forward sites for affordable housing</p>	<p>Criteria adopted and published following Housing Corporation consultation</p> <p>52 units in settlements of <3000</p> <p>Produce guidance for local communities, landowners and providers</p>	<p>Dec 2008</p> <p>2012</p> <p>Guidance in 2008-09. Revised planning policy within the LDF timescales</p>	Housing Enabling	<p>Housing Corporation; Planning Policy; Legal</p> <p>Planning Policy; Parish Councils; LAPs; landowners AHTG</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Staff time & new post</p>	<p>Regional Housing Strategy</p> <p>WDDC Corporate Plan</p> <p>West Dorset District Adopted Local Plan</p> <p>West Dorset Community Plan</p> <p>Community Strategy for Dorset</p>
1.3 To deliver affordable housing on land owned by the District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charles Street, Dorchester Flaxhayes, Bridport Car Park, Charmouth S West Quadrant, Bridport St Swithins, Bridport New Zealand, Bridport <p>To review the Council's asset plan for surplus land and assets potential for disposal for affordable housing</p>	<p>First completions</p> <p>Affordable housing potential to be explored on all surplus sites</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>2010</p> <p>2009</p> <p>2010</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2010</p> <p>On-going review</p>	Housing Enabling	<p>Housing Corporation; RSLs, Approved Providers, Technical Services</p> <p>Housing Corporation RSLs Approved Providers</p>	<p>Land value discounted</p> <p>Staff Time</p>	<p>WDDC Corporate Plan</p> <p>West Dorset District Adopted Local Plan</p> <p>Property Asset Management Plan 2007-10.</p> <p>Property Disposal Policy</p> <p>WDDC Corporate Plan</p> <p>Community Strategy for Dorset</p>



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 1: Maximise affordable housing provision to meet identified need							
1.4 To increase opportunities for meeting housing need through innovative approaches and the more efficient use of land and the existing housing stock	To deliver and appraise the Buckland Newton Community Property Trust scheme once built and occupied Encourage housing providers to develop intermediate housing models that meet need and improve affordability, and consider the potential benefits of Local Housing Companies.	Evaluation completed	2010	Housing Enabling	Housing Enabling; Buckland Newton Community Property Trust; Finance; Legal; Planning Policy	Staff time	Regional Housing Strategy WDDC Corporate Plan West Dorset District Adopted Local Plan
1.5 To explore new and progressive affordable housing policies through the Local Development Framework	Prepare the Core Strategy of Local Development Framework to ensure opportunities for the provision of affordable housing through the planning system are maximized: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce policy regarding Site size thresholds, quotas, tenure mix, property type and size Investigate scope to permit elements of market housing on exception sites to cross-subsidise affordable housing development Investigate scope to make retail development subject to affordable housing levies 	New models considered and appraised Robust policies in the Local Plan	By 2012 By 2010	Housing Enabling Planning Policy	Housing Corporation RSLs Approved Providers Housing Enabling RSLs Approved Providers GOSW	Staff time Staff time	Regional Housing Strategy West Dorset District Adopted Local Plan WDDC Corporate Plan Community Strategy for Dorset LAA and MAA targets Regional Spatial Strategy Regional Housing Strategy WDDC Corporate Plan West Dorset District Adopted Local Plan West Dorset Community Plan Community Strategy for Dorset LAA and MAA targets



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 1: Maximise affordable housing provision to meet identified need							
1.6 Seek integration of any supported housing required within new developments on suitable sites	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to be prepared and reviewed annually to identify a 15-year supply of housing land. As evidence of supported housing needs becomes established, provision to be sought as part of the planning obligations imposed on suitable sites or within other affordable housing sites	Prepare first Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and review annually. Identify need for supported housing suitable for the main client groups and seek to incorporate within new developments as appropriate	2008 2008-12	Planning Policy Housing Enabling	Landowners; RSLs; AHTG RSLs DCC Supporting People Team DSHG	Staff time NAHP Supporting People funding	Regional Spatial Strategy Local Development Framework Supporting People Strategy Regional Housing Strategy
1.7 To ensure that the affordable housing built in the District is good quality and sustainable	Ensure that all affordable Housing is built to prevailing Housing Corporation standards	100% of new-build Affordable Housing	2012	Housing Enabling	Approved Providers; RSLs; Developers;	Staff time	Regional Housing Strategy WDDC Corporate Plan West Dorset Community Plan Community Strategy for Dorset
1.8 Monitor changes and trends in the affordability of local housing markets and the need for affordable housing throughout the district	Affordable housing should be developed to meet housing need, be affordable to households on local wages and be available for as long as a need exists. Assess and predict the housing needs of older people, particularly in respect of extra care housing, and adapted / disabled access properties	Update of need and market trends Interrogation of data from Housing Needs survey and Supporting People data	Annually 2009	Housing Enabling	Planning Policy; Estate & Letting Agents; Land Registry Supporting People Team	Staff time	Regional Spatial Strategy Regional Housing Strategy WDDC Corporate Plan West Dorset District Adopted Local Plan West Dorset Community Plan Community Strategy for Dorset Older Persons Housing Strategy



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 2: Support older people to live independently in suitable housing							
2.1 Adopt recommendations from the National Strategy for Housing an Ageing Society	To encourage and promote Lifetime homes standard for new housing developments	Standard to apply to all new developments	2012	Housing Enabling	DCC RSLs Approved Providers Housing Corporation	NAHP 08.11 RSL Reserves	Regional Housing Strategy Supporting People Strategy Older Persons Housing Strategy HIA Strategy for Dorset West Dorset Community Plan
	Implement revisions to the Disabled Facilities Grant regime	70 people over 65 assisted to live independently pa	Annually	Private Sector Housing	Dorset County Council, RSLs, C & R, Age Concern, Benevolent Charities	DFG Budget = £456k DCC Budgets, £225k Private Sector Discretionary Budget, RSL Budgets,	Private Sector Housing Policy Supporting People Strategy Older Persons Housing Strategy HIA Strategy for Dorset West Dorset Community Plan
	Develop measures to address Fuel Poverty (NI 187)	9% of persons on an income related benefit living in a dwelling with a SAP<35 60% of persons on an income related benefit living in a dwelling with a SAP>65	2012	Private Sector Housing	RSLs, C & R, CERT Schemes, Warm Front, Installers, POPP, WRT, Benevolent Charities, PCT	£225k Private Sector Discretionary Budget, RSL Budgets, CERT Budgets, Warm Front Budget	Regional Housing Strategy Emerging Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Energy Efficiency Strategy. Fuel Poverty Strategy 2006, Private Sector Housing Policy West Dorset Community Plan



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 2: Support older people to live independently in suitable housing							
2.2 Develop a range of assistance to meet the needs of elderly householders	Provision of equity release loan scheme for the elderly householders.	Provide equity loans within range of assistance offered.	2009	Private Sector Housing	WRT, Dorset County Council, RSLs, C & R, Age Concern, Benevolent Charities	£225k Private Sector Discretionary Budget, WRT Fund, Benevolent Charities Funds	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy
	Adopt a Private Sector Housing Policy that supports small scale grants, and	50 grants / annum awarded to elderly households in non-decent property	On-going	Private Sector Housing Care and Repair	WRT, RSLs, C & R, Benevolent Charities	£225k Private Sector Discretionary Budget	Regional Housing Strategy Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy Older Persons Housing Strategy, HIA Strategy for Dorset
2.3 Develop the aids and adaptations service in partnership with statutory Welfare and Health bodies	Loans, and	10 loans / annum	By 2012	Private Sector Housing	WRT DCC Care and Repair	£225k Private Sector Discretionary Budget, WRT funds	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy Older Persons Housing Strategy, HIA Strategy for Dorset
	Advice, and	Respond to all enquiries within 3 working days	On-going	Private Sector Housing	CAB, POPP, DEAC, C&R	Staff time	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy Older Persons Housing Strategy, HIA Strategy for Dorset
	Enforcement	Contact all complainants within 3 days	On-going	Private Sector Housing	CAB, DCC, DF&R	Staff time	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy Enforcement Concordat
	Timely and effective assessment of an individual's ability to continue to live independently to lead to agreed responsibilities for the Health, Welfare or Housing Authority.	Develop standard assessment procedures with DCC / other Local Authorities	2010	Private Sector Housing	DCC PCT RSLs Care and Repair	Staff time	Older Persons Housing Strategy HIA Strategy for Dorset



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 2: Support older people to live independently in suitable housing							
2.4 Develop and promote 'Home Improvement Agency' services	Greater efficiency in the allocation of adapted property to prevent costly work being undertaken and minimize the number of properties adapted.	Develop a register of RSL owned adapted properties with procedures in place to consider allocation to disabled occupants	2010	Private sector housing	RSLs DCC	Staff time	Older Persons Housing Strategy HIA Strategy for Dorset Sheltered Housing Strategy for Dorset
	Continue to provide a Care and Repair Agency developing services in line with the governments National Strategy for Housing an Ageing Society including provision of a handyperson scheme and a Housing Options scheme	Provide support to 400 clients pa.	Annually	Care and Repair	DCC, Charities, POPP, Supporting People team Anchor Staying Put Help the Aged MHAL	£100 K discretionary grants via Care and Repair	Regional Housing Strategy Older Persons Housing Strategy HIA Strategy for Dorset
	Partnership funding for the revenue cost of providing a HIA required to offset cost to the Council.	Secure continued Supporting People funding, and support from Magna H Ass' On-going	2009	Care & Repair	Anchor Staying Put Help The Aged MHAL	£44 K Revenue funding (Supporting People)	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy Supporting People Strategy HIA Strategy for Dorset



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 2: Support older people to live independently in suitable housing							
2.5 Develop an Extra Care Scheme in Dorchester	Dorchester has been identified within the County-Wide Supporting People Strategy as being a priority location for an Extra Care Scheme	Identify a suitable development site and secure provision.	2010	Supporting People Team	RSLs PCT Land Owners	NAHP	Supporting People Strategy Older Persons Housing Strategy Extra Care Strategy
2.6 Liaison and consultation with voluntary organizations and other statutory bodies	Continued attendance at Dorset Supported Housing Group	Attendance by officer and member at commissioning group	On-going	Housing Enabling	DCC Probation PCT Supporting People	Staff time	Supporting People Strategy
	District Operational Group (DOG)	3 meetings to be convened / annum.	On-going	Housing Enabling	DCC Probation PCT Supporting People SFT Local Voluntary Organisations	Staff time	Supporting People Strategy
	PSH group, HECA Consortium, OT/Magna/C&R/WDDC Grp	Quarterly meetings to be convened	On-going	Private Sector Housing Care and Repair	NEA, DEAC,	Staff time	HECA Report Fuel Poverty Strategy



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans	
Strategic Objective 3: Prevent homelessness and provide a good service to people in housing need								
3.1 Improve access to social housing through the allocations process	Implement the use of a single housing register in the District.	Single register adopted and agreement to participate signed by all RSLs	April 2009	Housing Enabling	Magna Housing Association Ltd and all other RSLs	Staff Time Co-operation of Magna H. Ass.	Homelessness Strategy Allocations Policy	
	Introduce Choice Based Lettings	CBL operational in West Dorset	2009	Housing Enabling	Housing Corporation RSLs, Homechoice Partnership HAC	Staff Time, Funding for advertising and IT. Use of PSA reward grant (£44k)	Regional Housing Strategy Homelessness Strategy	
	Consider cross-boundary reciprocal nominations	Seek agreement with neighbouring Councils and develop protocol.	2011	Housing Enabling	RSLs, Dorset Housing Authorities HAC	Staff Time	Allocations Policy	
	Work with RSLs to reduce levels of under-occupation in the housing stock	Protocols agreed and incentives in place	2010	Housing Enabling	RSLs	Staff time, possible funding for incentives	Homelessness Strategy	
	Assess RSL's current contribution to homelessness prevention and ensure RSLs in Dorset deliver top quartile	Work with RSLs to develop consistent and strategic shared approach to tackling homelessness.	2010	Housing Enabling	RSLs Housing Corporation	Staff time,	Homelessness Strategy	
	Efficiently administer the allocation of adapted properties	Develop allocation arrangements to ensure allocation of adapted properties to disabled householders	2010	Housing Enabling	RSLs Housing Corporation	Staff time,	Homelessness Strategy	
	3.2 Promote the Housing Advice Centre to all potential client groups and seek to develop Housing Options and	Educate referral partners, e.g. GPs, Social Services	4 HPF meetings / annum, plus attendance at other organisations' formal groups	2012	Housing Enabling	Referral Partners HAC	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy
		Introduce HAC newsletter	3 newsletters / annum	2009	Housing Enabling	HAC Private Sector Housing	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy

Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans	
Strategic Objective 3: Prevent homelessness and provide a good service to people in housing need								
homelessness prevention services	Re-appraise customer access, including website and opening hours	Options appraisal at end of current lease	December 2008	Housing Enabling	HAC Communications Team	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy	
	Introduce mediation service	Service in place	2010	Housing Enabling	Dorset Housing Authorities HAC	Staff time and additional funding	Homelessness Strategy	
	Minimise rough sleeper levels in the District	<5 rough sleepers Street audit and assertive outreach project completed	2009	Housing Enabling	Weymouth and Portland BC, partner agencies	Staff time and additional funding	Homelessness Strategy	
	Develop reconnection policy for households with no connection to the county	County-Wide policy agreed	2010	Housing Enabling	Dorset Housing Authorities HAC	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy	
	Appraise Homelessness Prevention funding when CLG funding ends	Options appraisal when funding ends	2011	Housing Enabling	Finance CLG	Staff time £69k pa to 2011	Homelessness Strategy	
	3.3 Seek to improve access to services for vulnerable and hard to reach groups and develop more equitable access to supported housing facilities	Consider the needs of gypsies and travellers assessed by the countywide survey and feed into the RSS process.	Liaison with DCC to consider options for sites in West Dorset	2008	Housing Enabling	DCC Planning Policy RSLs Landowners DEFRA	Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Staff Time	Homelessness Strategy
		Consider creating further specialist housing panels	Approach agreed with Supporting People	2010	Housing Enabling	Supporting People Team Voluntary Orgs	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy
		Appraise the provision of specialist supported accommodation, including DV provision	Appraisals complete	Annually	Housing Enabling	Supporting People Team Dorset Housing Authorities	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 3: Prevent homelessness and provide a good service to people in housing need							
3.4 Make most efficient use of temporary accommodation	Ensure provision of emergency accommodation, eg Nightstop scheme.	Develop Nightstop scheme across Dorset	2009	Housing Enabling	Supporting People Team Dorset Housing Authorities	Staff time. Supporting People funding	Homelessness Strategy
	The various housing needs of the different client groups eligible for Supporting People funding are becoming established. As provision is made for these groups improve the management of the referral process and the 'move on' of clients to independent living.	Agreed referral route to all Supported housing facilities	2010	Housing Needs	Supporting People, DCC, PCTs	Staff time	Supporting People Strategy
		Develop Move-On Strategy for homeless households in temporary accommodation.	2009				
	Halve the amount of temporary accommodation from 2004 levels	12 units	2010	Housing Enabling	RSLs HAC Private Landlords CLG	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy
Eliminate the use of B&B for 16 & 17 year olds	No 16-17 yr olds in B&B other than overnight emergencies	2009	Housing Enabling	DCC SFT RSL's	Staff time 21 units of temporary accommodation	Homelessness Strategy	
Reduce the use of B&B as emergency accommodation to as near zero as possible	No families in B&B for >6 wks <10 families in B&B/annum	2009 2009	Housing Enabling	RSLs HAC	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy	



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 3: Prevent homelessness and provide a good service to people in housing need							
3.5 Seek to maximise use of the private sector properties to address housing need.	Re-assess mix of temporary accommodation	Complete supply and demand model and assess need	Annually	Housing Enabling	Signpost Housing Association Bournemouth Churches Housing Association Southern Focus Trust	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy
	Review incentives to landlords	60 households facing homelessness found accommodation in private sector / annum	2012	Housing Enabling	Private landlords	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy
	Review funding of Tenancy Liaison Officer post once CLG homelessness funding ends	Options Appraisal produced and reported.	2011	Housing Enabling	CLG	Staff time CLG funding £69k	Homelessness Strategy
	Improve links with Westwey	3 liaison meetings / annum, 2 year Money Adviser Post	On-going	Housing Enabling	Westwey, WPBC HAC	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy
	Use landlord accreditation scheme to increase use of private sector lets for those in housing need	2 meetings of accredited landlords / annum. Production of 3 newsletters / annum.	On-going	Private Sector Housing/Housing Enabling	Private landlords Landlord Accreditation Scheme committee.	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy
Investigate options for a mortgage rescue scheme	Consider financial models enabling RSLs to purchase properties and offer assured tenancies	2010	Housing Enabling	RSLs Dorset Housing Authorities CIH CML	Staff time	Homelessness Strategy	



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 4: Reduce fuel poverty and improve the quality and energy efficiency of the housing stock							
4.1 Implement the recommendations of the Stock Condition Survey Report 2007	Reduce the prevalence of Category one hazards within the housing stock which is reported to be 17% of properties	Reduce Category one hazards in stock to 15%	2012	Private Sector Housing	DCC, CERT providers, Warm Front, DEAC, C&R, RSLs Installers, POPP, WRT, Benevolent Charities, PCT	CERT, Warm Front, £225k Private Sector Discretionary Budget, WRT Loans Budget	Emerging Dorset Energy Efficiency Strategy, Fuel Poverty Strategy, Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy
	Target the disrepair issues in the private sector stock.	Reduce the number of non-decent homes to 30%	2012	Private Sector Housing	Care and Repair Agency, WRT.	£225K Private Sector Discretionary Grant / Loan Budget	Regional Housing Strategy, Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy
	Target non-decent homes occupied by vulnerable people in the district in order to meet the government target.	Increase proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes to 70%	2011	Private Sector Housing	Care and Repair Agency, WRT.	CERT, Warm Front, £100K Discretionary Budget via Care and Repair	Regional Housing Strategy, Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy
	Target insulation and heating upgrade work at those properties with the lowest SAP rating	Reduce percentage of dwellings with SAP < 35 to 10%	2012	Private Sector Housing	DCC, CERT providers, Warm Front, DEAC, C&R, RSLs Installers, POPP, WRT, Benevolent Charities	CERT, Warm Front, £100 K Discretionary budget via Care and Repair	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, HECA Report, Fuel Poverty Strategy
4.2 Encourage low carbon and carbon neutral homes in new developments	Examples of construction techniques leading to carbon neutral developments are emerging. Appraise opportunities to develop carbon neutral homes presented during the life of the strategy	Appraise exemplar carbon neutral scheme and evaluate replicability in the district	On-going	Housing Enabling	RSLs CABE BRE CLG	NAHP	Local Development Framework West Dorset Community Plan



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 4: Reduce fuel poverty and improve the quality and energy efficiency of the housing stock							
4.3 Target resources at people in fuel poverty	Promote and refer people to funding streams to undertake energy efficiency measures/heating upgrades Top-up government funded grants for vulnerable households in fuel poverty where required via Care and Repair	9% of persons on an income related benefit living in a dwelling with a SAP < 35 All clients of Care and Repair to be offered advice & assistance with heating and insulation works	2012 On-going	Private Sector Housing Private Sector Housing	DEAC POPP Care and Repair CERT providers, Warm Front DEAC Warm Front CERT Providers	EAGA (Warmfront grants) CERTS funding £100K Discretionary Grant via Care and Repair	HECA Report Fuel Poverty Strategy HECA Report Fuel Poverty Strategy
4.4 Improve standards within the private rented sector	Continue to operate Pro-active risk assessed inspection programme for all HMOs and residential caravan sites Empty Property represents a wasted resource. Empty properties to be targeted for action to bring back into use.	Inspect all HMOs and licensed residential caravan sites based on risk assessment 16- 52 properties that have been empty for more than 6 months to be brought back into use as a result of action.	On-going 2012	Private Sector Housing Private Sector Housing	Private Landlords Owners, RSLs, Landlords, Westwey	Staff time Staff time £225K Private Sector Discretionary Grant / Loan Budget	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy Regional Housing Strategy Empty Property Strategy 2007
4.5 Improve public awareness of energy efficiency options including heating and insulation schemes	Utility companies fund thermal insulation work to domestic properties. The Council is able to signpost all residents to the best options available	3 press releases / annum 2 events / annum	On-going	Private Sector Housing	Landlords Accreditation Scheme RSLs	Staff time	HECA Report Fuel Poverty Strategy
4.6 Develop and promote the Landlords Accreditation Scheme	Continue to develop the Landlords Accreditation Scheme to provide an opportunity to liaise with the private sector landlords, and to develop partnerships to address the housing needs of the district.	Increase membership to the Scheme year on year	On-going	Private Sector Housing	Landlords Accreditation Scheme RSLs HAC Estate Agents Letting Agents	Staff time	HIA Strategy for Dorset



Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action	Detail	Performance Target / Outcome	Target Date	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Resources & Delivery Potential	Links with other Strategies/Plans
Strategic Objective 5: Deliver high quality customer focused housing services							
5.1 Implement Housing Service Improvement Plan adopted 2007	The audit commission inspection in 2007 found the service to be good with promising prospects for improvement. Implement the recommendations to secure those improvements	Full implementation of the recommendations	2010	Community Protection Manager	Finance Personnel Communications Team Technical services	Staff time	Access Strategy; Communication Strategy; Strategic Housing Service; Improvement Plan
5.2 Improve liaison and working arrangements with neighbouring LAs and Voluntary Sector	Existing networking groups will inform the Pathfinder process	Consider provision of joint services where appropriate	2010	Community Protection Manager	Weymouth & Portland Borough Council Purbeck District Council; North Dorset District Council; East Dorset Council	Staff time	
5.3 Embrace and contribute to LAA targets	Support the delivery of the LAA for Dorset and negotiate targets for delivery	Achieve locally set targets to support the LA targets	2009	Community Protection Manager	District Council Christchurch Borough Council; Poole Borough Council Bournemouth Borough Council; Dorset County Council	Staff Time	West Dorset Community Plan Community Strategy for Dorset
5.4 Develop benchmarking arrangements with similar housing authorities.	Develop formalised benchmarking arrangements and VFM comparisons are not currently available although informal benchmarking has been undertaken	Adopt formalized arrangements	2012	Community Protection Manager	Unknown	Finance	Corporate Plan Financial Plan Strategic Housing Services Improvement Plan



Key

Delivery potential

- ✓ Many factors outside of the Council's control and delivery might prove elusive
- ✓✓ Critical factors outside of the Council's control placing delivery in doubt
- ✓✓✓ Significant challenges identified potentially affecting delivery
- ✓✓✓✓ Challenges to delivery exist but delivery is anticipated
- ✓✓✓✓✓ Few barriers to delivery, delivery should be straightforward.

LAPs	Local Area Partnerships
DCC	Dorset County Council
RSLs	Registered Social Landlords
AHTG	Affordable Housing Task Group
SFT	Southern Focus Trust
CERT	Carbon Emissions Reduction Target
POPP	Partnership for Older Peoples Projects
WRT	Wessex Reinvestment Trust
PCT	Primary Care Trust
DEAC	Dorset Energy Advice Centre
CABE	Commission for Architecture and Built Environment
BRE	Building Research Establishment
CLG	Communities and Local Government
HAC	Housing Advice Centre
WPBC	Weymouth and Portland BC

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary of terms

Affordable Housing Task Group

An Officer based sub-group forming part of the Dorset Strategic Partnership. Established to address Dorset-wide LAA and PSA aims and objectives.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy

A form of Assured Tenancy offering the landlord a guaranteed right to repossess his property at the end of the term. The Assured Shorthold is now the automatic or default form of tenancy for most residential tenancies.

Balanced Housing Market

A market status where the supply of housing (by both tenure and size) matches demand.

Choice based letting

An approach to offering and allocating social rented housing that enables households to exercise greater control in deciding where they wish to live.

Community Land Trust

A Charitable Trust mechanism for the democratic ownership of land by the local community. Land is typically taken out of the market and separated from its productive use so that the impact of land appreciation is removed, therefore enabling long-term affordable and sustainable local development

Decent Homes Standard

A Government defined standard that requires all social housing and an increased proportion of private housing occupied by vulnerable people to be in a reasonable state of repair; have reasonably modern facilities and services, and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort by 2010

Dorset Strategic Partnership

A single over-arching Strategic Partnership consisting of a wide range of organisations, agencies, businesses and other partnerships, which share a commitment to improving the quality of life for people in Dorset.

Equality Impact Assessment

An enquiry based method of appraising a policy or service to ensure compliance with equality legislation.

Extra-Care Housing Scheme

Housing which provides extra support whilst enabling people to live as independently as possible. It is usually for older people who are physically or mentally frail and need extra help to manage, and who might otherwise need residential or nursing care.

Handy Person Scheme

Part of the Care and Repair Agency: A mobile service undertaking minor aids and adaptations for older and vulnerable people

Housing and Planning Delivery Grant

A Government fund to incentivise improved housing delivery, including more effective planning, to better address local needs

Housing Market Assessment

A comprehensive sub-regional study into the nature and attributes of local Housing Markets. Undertaken in accordance with Government guidance to inform local and regional Housing and Planning Policies.

Intermediate Affordable Housing

Housing that provides a bridge between full owner occupation and full social renting. Examples can include Shared Ownership and Intermediate Rent (80% of Open Market Rent).

Landlords Accreditation Scheme

A free, voluntary scheme run by the District Council to encourage and promote responsible Landlords and best practise within the Private Rented Sector.

Lifetime Homes Standard

Homes built to this standard include design features making them fully accessible and flexible to accommodate the changing needs of households over time

Local Development Framework

A portfolio of updateable documents which will provide the local planning authority's policies for meeting the community's aims for the future of their area. They will replace the West Dorset Local Plan and guide future development in the District including residential development

National Affordable Housing Programme

Published by Housing Corporation, the National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP) describes the planned investment in England to increase the supply of affordable homes.

Principal Urban Areas

Identified in the South West Regional Planning Guidance as the 11 largest urban areas in the South West.

Public Service Agreements

PSAs set out the key priority outcomes the Government wants to achieve in the next spending period (2008-2011).

Rural Housing Enabler

A designated Officer tasked with promoting and leading rural affordable housing development activities amongst village communities and Parish Councils.

"SAP" rating

"Standard Assessment Procedure": an established and standardised method for rating the energy efficiency of housing

West Dorset Community Plan

The Community Strategy promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area as informed by the Local Area Partnerships (Dorchester, Bridport, Sherborne, Lyme Regis and Beaminster).



Appendix B

Policy and Strategic Documents & links for further reference

National

"Sustainable Communities; Homes for all" (2005)
"Homes for the future; more affordable, more sustainable" (July 2007)
Housing & Regeneration Bill
Barker Review (2005)
PPS3 (2005) & "Delivering Affordable Housing" (2006)
Local Government White Paper "Strong & prosperous communities"
"Quality & Choice - a decent home for all; the way forward for housing" (2000)
National Housing Strategy for an ageing society
"Sustainable Communities; settled homes; changing lives"
Code of guidance for Local Authorities
"Our Health, Our Care; Our Say; a new direction for community services"

Regional

Regional Housing Strategy (2005 - 2016)
Draft Regional Spatial Strategy
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan
Local Public Service Agreement
Draft Housing Market Assessment (Weymouth & West Dorset)

Local

"Affordable Housing"
West Dorset Audit Commission Inspection Report
West Dorset Corporate Plan
Community Strategy for Dorset (2007 - 2016)
West Dorset Local Plan 2006
West Dorset Improving Prosperity Strategy
West Dorset Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy
Dorset Supporting People Strategy
West Dorset Homelessness Strategy
West Dorset Rough Sleepers Strategy/Action Plan
West Dorset Private Sector Housing Policy
West Dorset Housing Needs Survey 2007 (Fordham)
West Dorset Stock Condition Survey 2007 (CPC)

West Dorset District Council Housing Contacts

Sarah Ward
Community Protection Manager
(01305 252313)
s.ward@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

Geoff Joy
Head of Housing
(01305 252286)
g.joy@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

Tim Davis
Lead Officer Housing Strategy and Development
(01305 252453)
t.davis@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

Mike Selley
Lead Officer Private Sector Housing
(01305 252243)
m.selley@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

Bob Ruthven
Lead Officer Care and Repair Agency
(01305 252405)
r.ruthven@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

Mandella Wisbey
Lead Officer Housing Needs
(01305 252484)
m.wisbey@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

Roger Grand
Housing Advice Centre Manager
(01305 251010)
r.grand@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

Website address

www.dorsetforyou.com

Appendix C

Housing Strategy Consultees

Betterment Properties (Weymouth) Ltd & Three Counties Housing Ltd
Bournemouth Churches Housing Association
Bridport Local Area Partnership
Bridport Town Council
CG Fry & Son Ltd
Chideock Parish Council
Churchill Retirement Living
Corscombe, Parish Council
DCH NHS Foundation Trust
Dolphin Stairlifts Ltd
Dorchester Area Community Partnership
Dorchester CAB
Dorset Age Partnership, POPP
Dorset Community Action
Dorset County Council; Dorset Youth Offending Team
Dorset County Council; Adult & Community Services
Dorset Energy Advice Centre
Dorset Primary Care Trust
Dorset Woman's Outreach Project
Drug Action Team, Dorset County Council
Duchy of Cornwall
EAGA - Agents for Warm Front
Halstock & District Parish Council
Hastoe Housing Association
Housing & Community Services, Borough of Poole
Independent advisor to Persimmon Homes & Barton Willmore
Knightstone Housing Association
Leaving Care Team, Dorset County Council
Lyme Regis Development Trust
Magna HA
Magna Housing Association
Maiden Newton Parish Council
Mill Street Housing
Morrish Builders
Mosterton Parish Council
NLA Dorset
Parrett & Axe PC
Pilsdon Community
Raglan Housing Association
RiverQuest
Saunders & Wheelwright Architects
Sherborne Area Housing Forum
Sherborne Area Partnership
Sherborne Town Council
South Somerset District Council
South Somerset Homes
Southern Focus Trust
Spectrum Housing Group
Supporting People, Dorset County Council
Symondsburry Parish Council
Synergy Housing Group
The Housing Corporation
The Hub
Wessex Home Improvement Loans
Westwey Partnership
Weymouth & Portland Housing



Appendix D

Monitoring Our Performance: 2004 to 2008

Best Value Performance Indicators

We have measured our performance in the following housing service areas since 2004:

CODE	SERVICE AREA	Top 25% all English districts	Top 25% all English districts	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual*
		2003/04	2006/07	2004/05	2004/05	2005/06	2005/06	2006/07	2006/07	2007/08	2007/08
Housing Services											
BV 62	The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of the council's action, since the last stock condition survey.	≥ 3.75%	del	3%	3.48	3.5%	3.61				
BV 64	The number of vacant private sector dwellings returned into occupation or demolished during the year as a direct result of action by us.			9	9	12	12	14	4	4	1
BV176	Number of domestic violence refuge places per 10,000 population which we provide or support	=0.64	del	0.02	0.02						
BV 183i	Average length of stay in B & B accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need.	≤1.18	≤1 wk	4 wks	3.42 wks	4 wks	5.84	6.00 wks	5.97 weeks	4 wks	6wks
BV 202	The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the local authority.	-		-	3	5	4	4	4		
BV 203	The % change in the average number of families, which include dependent children or a pregnant woman, placed in temporary accommodation under the homelessness legislation compared with the average from the previous year.			-	34.21	0%	+104.2 9%	-2.00%	- 67.83%		
BV 213	Number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local housing authority's housing advice service and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation per 1,000 households.							5.00	5.02	5.50	6.32
BV 214	% of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same authority within the last two years.							1.00%	3.13%	1.00%	0%
BV 225	The percentage of the 11 identified actions, in the checklist against domestic violence, that have been achieved by the authority.							72.00%	72.73%	81.00%	81.82%
LD 18	% of homelessness applications on which the authority makes a decision and issues written notification to the applicant within 33 working days.				84.92 %	95%	89.40%	95.00%	92.58%	95.00%	85.54%
LD 34	Number of affordable houses enabled by the council per annum.				76	80	83	57	60	77	Not submitted

		Top 25% all English districts	Top 25% all English districts	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual*
CODE	SERVICE AREA	2003/04	2006/07	2004/05	2004/05	2005/06	2005/06	2006/07	2006/07	2007/08	2007/08
LD 35	% of private sector housing in West Dorset which are meeting the "short form assessment" standard.				58%	59.5%	58.92%	62.50%	62.84% (est)	64.00%	64.08%
LD 36	SAP rating of the housing stock within West Dorset.				53	55	58	59	58	60	Not submitted
LD 37	Number of households living independently who are assisted by the Care and Repair agency.				250	256	309	263	358	270	176
LD 41	Number of priority need households in temporary accommodation (excluding homeless at home) as at 31 st March										
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit											
BV 78	Speed of processing:										
	a) Average time for processing new claims. (calendar days)	≤ 31 days	≤23.98 days	38 days		34 days		30 days			
	b) Average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstances. (calendar days)	≤ 7.2 days	≤7.08 days	15 days		10 days		7 days			
BV 79	Accuracy of processing:										
	a) % of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct on the basis of information available at determination.	≥ 99%	≥99.2%	98%		98.5%		99%			
	b) % of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year.	≥ 81.08%	≥81.71 %	70%		72%		74%			
Crime and Disorder reduction											
LD 32	% of anti-social behaviour cases satisfying Level 2 criteria and resulting in further action.					95%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Performance to 30.9.07. Final year figures will be published in the final strategy document

Housing Services have been monitored under 11 National Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) plus an additional 7 local indicators (LDs). Affordable housing delivery was retained as a local indicator, with a target in the Housing Strategy of 316 new units over the period. The number actually developed has been 258 (estimated), although the forward programme indicates that funding is in place for a further 111 units in 08-09 and 141 in 09-10. The Council allocated £1.9m of its own resources to support the Housing Corporations grant programme in 2006-08 and can justifiably expect that commitment to improve delivery. Slippage in the programme is viewed with considerable frustration given the high level of need

reported in the Housing Needs Survey 2007, and we are keen that providers and developers with funded sites progress delivery in the early years of this new strategy.

We are currently able to report no households in bed and breakfast and reducing numbers of homeless households in temporary accommodation. The gross cost of B&B in 2007-08 reduced to £85,000 (estimated). The fact that there have been so few families placed into B&B since mid 2007 has meant that BV 183(i), which monitors the average length of stay in such accommodation, has not been noticeably diluted. We do, however, take satisfaction from the



fact that we rarely need to resort to such accommodation to assist households facing homelessness.

Housing Strategy 2008-12

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy

Of the 11 BVPIs monitoring housing services, six related to homelessness and we retained a seventh as a local indicator to monitor time taken to make formal homelessness decisions. The new National Indicators introduced in 2008 do not focus so specifically on the subject, promoting independent living generally, and introducing NI 156 aimed at reducing the use of temporary accommodation. Reducing temporary accommodation has been a Local Area Agreement (LAA) target for all Dorset's Housing Authorities with a 50% reduction targeted by 2009.

The Audit Commission inspection team recommended greater awareness of client satisfaction with service provision when they visited the Council in 2007. In response customer satisfaction surveys have been introduced for private sector housing, the Home Improvement Agency and Housing Advice Centre services. Customer satisfaction with the Home Improvement Agency is high at 92%. Reports relating to the other service areas will be presented to the Council's Customer Focus Group in May 2008.

The 2008-12 Action Plan will be constantly monitored at officer level through routine operational team meetings. Actions relating to key corporate objectives are subject to quarterly monitoring through the Council's senior management team while performance against all targets is now well structured through the Council's Performance Management Framework.

An annual review of progress will be reported through the Executive committee. Within the plan are a number of milestones requiring progress reports or appraisals of individual initiatives, such as the evaluation of the Community Land Trust project at Buckland Newton. These reports will be submitted individually at the appropriate time and will naturally lead to updating of the Plan as a result of the conclusions drawn.

Routine monitoring of customer satisfaction and equalities monitoring on service provision will naturally inform on the public perception of the success of the strategy, and will be reported through the Council's Customer Service Group. There will be a formal mid term review of the Strategy including all key stakeholders undertaken in 2010.

Appendix E:

Details of Consultation, Feedback and Options Analysis

In developing the Housing Strategy, three distinct stages of consultation and feedback took place: Identifying Priorities (gathering information and views from stakeholders, Agencies and end-users concerning current priorities, needs and services); Options Appraisal (working with Members of the Policy Development Committee to evaluate options and agree new policy proposals); Draft Housing Strategy Consultation (inviting comment and views on the emerging Strategy and its identified priorities and Action Plan).

A full list of consultees is shown at Appendix C

Stage 1 Identifying Priorities	Stage 2 Options Appraisal	Stage 3 Draft Housing Strategy Consultation
Priority One: Maximise Affordable Housing Provision		
Not enough affordable housing is being achieved in villages and rural settlements	<p>Increase resources dedicated to enabling rural affordable housing small-scale community projects through the creation of a new post</p> <p>Monitor rural affordable housing completions within the Local Area Partnership sub-areas as a subset of overall affordable housing delivery</p> <p>Review the existing Exception Site Policy as part of the LDF process and promote the identification, allocation and advancement of rural Affordable Housing sites</p>	<p>WDDC should make special case for additional funding to replace Right To Buy losses</p> <p>WDDC should gain Regional and Central Government support for a long term plan to increase proportion of stock to 20%</p> <p>WDDC should make a special case for exempting urban areas from Right To Buy and Right To Acquire</p>
More affordable housing could be achieved if the Council's Housing Strategy looked at more innovative ideas and efficient ways of using the existing housing stock	<p>To prioritise resources and increase scope within the Housing team to research and develop new products, policies and mechanisms that improve affordability and increase the supply of new sites</p> <p>To establish budgets to provide incentives for Private sector Landlords to accept tenants from the West Dorset Housing Register</p> <p>To investigate incentives for releasing under-occupied Housing Association housing and encourage the re-use and remodelling of surplus land and/or stock</p>	
Greater emphasis should be placed upon 'intermediate' forms of affordable housing	<p>Maintain the priority of meeting 'acute' need and require 65% of all new affordable housing to be social rented housing</p> <p>Consider increasing the proportion of intermediate housing up to 50% where robust local housing need evidence indicates a lower need for social rented housing</p> <p>Encourage the development of more affordable forms of intermediate housing, closer to the costs of social rented housing</p>	



<p>The Council should be more pragmatic about perpetuity and focus on the importance of early delivery.</p> <p>What's more important to the Council, the quantity or quality of affordable housing resulting from its policies and influence?</p>	<p>Not to be pursued. Given the inability to replace much needed affordable housing, further losses to the stock should not be encouraged.</p> <p>All affordable housing supported by the Council should meet prevailing Housing Corporation requirements as a minimum</p> <p>Review affordable housing targets in the light of new policies and initiatives and prior to finalisation of the 2008 – 2012 Housing Strategy</p> <p>Continue with the budgeted level of capital contribution, providing assistance to community schemes and NAHP 'gap' funding where appropriate.</p>	
<p>Is there an opportunity to increase delivery if the Council invested more of its reserves in affordable housing?</p> <p>Could the Council's Planning Policies be strengthened to deliver more affordable housing?</p>	<p>Through the LDF process, consider the introduction of revised planning policies that would permit the provision of market housing on exception sites to cross subsidise affordable housing.</p> <p>Through the LDF process consider lowering residential development thresholds to ensure the maximum provision of affordable housing, subject to economic viability.</p> <p>Through the LDF process consider revisions to population thresholds for exception site policy, thereby making larger settlements eligible.</p> <p>Through the LDF process consider making retail development applications subject to an affordable housing levy</p>	<p>WDDC should make a case for a town exceptions policy to secure social rented housing in perpetuity</p> <p>Should have a target for more social rented homes by 2018</p> <p>Should be more than 65% social rented housing where local wages are low</p>
<p>Priority Two: Support older people to live independently in suitable housing</p>		
<p>Greater priority should be given to people with supported or special housing needs</p>	<p>Continue to target resources at general need housing and use floating support to meet special needs</p> <p>Improve access to services and existing facilities by vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Contribute to PSA 16 by improve our evidence base on housing needs of all special need groups</p> <p>Develop a frail elderly scheme in Dorchester and assess demand for further schemes with Supporting People Team (contribution to BV139-142)</p> <p>Consider the viability of adopting the Lifetime Homes standard on appropriate sites but resist any reduction in affordable housing as a consequence</p>	<p>To assess and predict the housing needs of older people over the long term and develop a better strategic approach to meeting future demand, particularly for supported housing and extra-case services</p> <p>To undertake research to identify the current and predicted need for specialist housing and develop a strategic approach to influence developer negotiations and grant funding</p> <p>Undertake research to collate evidence to map provision and identify the need for ground floor/accessible affordable housing.</p> <p>To maximise the effectiveness of the allocations systems for affordable housing suitable for disabled people and the use of the existing supply</p> <p>Provide evidence of need to increase the level of accessible affordable housing to the local planning authority and Dorset County Council</p>



<p>Should limited Private Sector Housing resources be targeted at the general improvement of sub-standard housing or older/disabled households</p> <p>Would it be better to retain the current 'in-house' Home Improvement Agency or merge with a county wide approach.</p>	<p>Maintain the Council's current policy approach where discretionary assistance is targeted at the elderly and disabled households with limited means tested assistance for other client groups.</p> <p>Continue to provide an in-house agency Home Improvement Agency, subject to continued grant funding</p>	
<p>Priority Three: Prevent homelessness and provide a good quality service to people in housing need</p>		
<p>Would it be better to have a single housing register for West Dorset?</p>	<p>To seek to introduce a single housing register for West Dorset</p> <p>To investigate appropriate joint working arrangements with Magna Housing Association</p>	
<p>If a single register was achieved, should it be managed by the Council or an external Agent?</p>	<p>No further consideration until a decision is made on the formation of a single housing register for West Dorset.</p>	
<p>Should a countywide allocations policy be introduced?</p> <p>The Council should increase promotion or its Housing Advice Centre services</p>	<p>Investigate implications of a countywide allocations arrangement as part of the work to implement CBL.</p> <p>Promotional activities should be increased during the life of the strategy using a carefully measured approach.</p> <p>Improved awareness and access to services should be raised at a community level but it should rolled out in stages and in a form that does not create unrealistic expectations that cannot be met through the Housing Advice Centre, thereby reducing the quality of current performance.</p> <p>Further investigation of the potential for the private sector to assist with meeting the District's housing need is required.</p>	
<p>More opportunities for re-housing could be achieved if an extended range of 'private rented sector' services were provided..</p>		
<p>Priority Four: Reduce fuel poverty and improve the quality and energy efficiency of the housing stock</p>		
<p>Should the Council continue to provide a wide range of services to generally improve the housing stock or limit its activities and resources to mandatory duties?</p>	<p>Continue to provide a range of assistance to address the issues raised in the Stock Condition Survey 2007</p>	



<p>Should services to reduce Home Energy consumption be limited to those in 'fuel poverty'?</p>	<p>Continue with the general promotion of all energy efficiency grants available to the residents of West Dorset Target fuel poor households through routine contact with vulnerable households and periodic promotion of government backed grants.</p>	<p>Where eligible grant/loan expenditure is already permitted on renewable energy sources, however, current policy and forms of assistance for those in fuel poverty will be reviewed Make it clear that the Council's grant and loans policies are available to finance alternative and renewable energy sources</p>
---	--	--



Appendix F

West Dorset Affordable Housing Schedule: July 2008

Town	Location Site	Planning Status			Outcomes				Drivers				Planning reference		
		Local Plan	Outline Planning Permission	Full Planning Permission	Homes	Affordable	Rent	Intermediate	S106 (Planning Policy HS3)	Percentage	Rural Exception (HS4)	WDDC land element		RSL land element	Allocated Public Subsidy (HC/WDDC/RCGF)
Dorchester	Charles Street	●			50	18	12	6	●	35		●			Local Plan
	Brewery (remainder)	●		●	290	99	29	70	●						
	Brewery (Signal/Bridge)	●		●	160	48	22	26	●	30					
	Brewery (Hancock House)	●		●	150	45	45	0	●					●	1/E/06/02390
	Trinity Street	●			15	5	3	2	●	33					Local Plan
	Poundbury (completion before 2011)	●			334	110	79	31	●						Local Plan
	Poundbury 2.93/2.99/3.04 (Guinness Trust)	●		●	50	18	13	5	●	35				●	1/E/06/000933 1/E/07/00698 1/E/07/001109
	Poundbury 2.84/2.85 (Weymouth & Portland Housing)	●		●	34	12	5	7	●					●	1/E/06/002337
	Poundbury Queen Mother Square (Guinness Trust)	●		●	72	28	14	14	●					●	1/D/07/001890
	Poundbury 4.00B	●		●	17	10	5	5	●					●	1/D/07/001929
	Little Keep			●	55	21	11	10	●	38				●	1/E/06/001844
	Edward Road			●	79	28	18	10	●	34				●	1/E/06/000821
Olds Garage			●	24	8	5	3	●	33				●	1/E/07/000896	
Bridport	South West Quadrant	●			200	70	46	24	●	35		●			Local Plan
	St Swithins	●			25	8	5	3	●	32		●			Local Plan
	New Zealand works	●			15	5	3	2	●	33		●			Local Plan
	Nth of Crt Orch (Flaxhayes)	●			52	52	33	19	●	100		●			Local Plan
	Priory Mills			●	24	8	5	3	●	33				●	1/W/04/001679
Sherborne	Barton Farm	●			230	81	53	28	●	35					Local Plan
	Sherborne House	●			40	14	9	5	●	35					Local Plan
	Hunts Meade (live application)			∅	3	3	3			100					1/D/08/001157
Chickerell	Floods Yard (live application)		∅	∅	61	21	14	7	∅	35					1/D/08/000737
	Putton Lane	●			200	70	45	25	●	35					Local Plan
Lyme Regis	Woodberry Down	●			30	11	7	4	●	36					Local Plan
	Queens Walk			●	10	10	10			100		●	●		1/D/07/002168
Rural Settlements (less than 3,000 population)															
Beaminster	Barnfleet Works			●	24	8	6	2	●	33				●	1/W/06/000570
	Clay Lane			●	10	3	2	1	●	30				●	1/W/06/001024
	Flaxfield Road			●	15	15	10	5		100	●	●		●	1/D/07/002257
	Hogshill			●	14	4		4	●	28					1/W/03/001539
Burton Bradstock	Mill Street			●	9	3	3		●	33				●	1/W/05/002448
Charmouth	Lower Sea Lane Car Park (live application)			∅	11	11	11		∅	100		∅			1/D/08/001225
Buckland Newton	Community Property Trust			●	10	10	8	2		100	●			●	1/E/06/002472
Cattistock	Land at South Drive			●	11	3		3	●	27					1/E/07/000093
Longburton	Whistle Water			●	9	3	2	1	●	33				●	1/E/06/000020
Maiden Newton	Dorchester Road			●	12	12	9	3		100	●			●	1/W/06/000151
Mosterton	West lane			●	4	4	4			100	●			●	1/D/08/000129
Overmoigne	Overmoigne School			●	5	2	2		●	40				●	1/E/03/002023
Thornford	Greenhill Farm			●	7	2		2	●	28					1/E/05/000242
Tolpuddle	Comm Sum for Homebuy unit			●	5	1		1	●	20					1/E/04/000587
Bishops Caundle	Limetree Farm			●	3	1	1		●	33					1/E/04/002370
Shipton Gorge	Peas Hill			●	9	9	5	4	●	100		●	●		1/W/05/000750





West Dorset District Council
Stratton House
58/60 High West Street
Dorchester
DT3 4NT

Tel: 01305 251010