

'Creating opportunities for people to live independently, in quality, affordable housing'



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Introduction: 'Leeds – A Housing City'

The city of Leeds has been transformed over the last 20 years from a mainly industrial city into a broad-based commercial centre. Leeds is the largest city in the Yorkshire and Humber region with a population of over 750,000. Leeds has experienced the largest absolute increase in population, 4.8% since 2001, of any authority in the country. This perhaps reflects the status of Leeds as a thriving place to live, work and bring up a family.

Access to affordable, quality housing, which can be treated as a home, is an important yardstick of a thriving place. Quality housing can be a foundation for every aspect of a person's life: it can help children to excel and flourish in everything they do; be a source of self-expression, foster community pride; provide security as people get older; and be an asset that can be passed on to future generations. Access to affordable, quality housing is also a prerequisite for economic development and job creation.

The Council is committed to making Leeds a 'Housing City'. Housing related priorities are embedded within the themes, outcomes and improvement priorities included within the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 to 2011. The Leeds Strategic Plan sets out the ambitions of the Council and partners for the city and the Housing Strategy is closely aligned to the plan. Housing and housing related services make a key contribution to 'place shaping' and therefore the Housing Strategy will help deliver the outcomes and priorities set out within the 'Thriving Places' strategic theme. Including increasing the supply of affordable housing, increasing the number of 'decent' homes, reducing homelessness and reducing the number of households who are unable to adequately heat their home. Housing and housing services also play a critical role in promoting the 'Health and Wellbeing' of the people of Leeds. Quality housing and housing services promote the capacity of vulnerable people to live independently and to exercise choice and control over their lives. The Council and partners are becoming increasingly aware of the negative impact that poor quality housing, overcrowding and fuel poverty have on people's health, wellbeing and life expectancy.



The Leeds Housing Strategy is being developed in an unprecedented economic climate. Some of the long-standing plans developed by the Council and partners to meet the housing challenges of the city were formulated during a period of sustained economic growth. The rising unemployment, deflationary pressure in property values, more restrictive mortgage lending practice, mothballed or discontinued housing development schemes, rising mortgage default and repossessions are some of the trends affecting housing that have become increasingly evident in recent months. The Leeds Housing Strategy will set out how the Council and partners are responding to long-standing housing challenges and those that have emerged in recent months.

Despite the economic downturn, the Leeds Housing Strategy is clear that the key housing priorities remain relatively constant. The city needs to increase the supply of housing, with a particular emphasis on increasing the range of affordable housing options, to improve housing quality and sustainability across all tenures and to promote the capacity for people to live independently. The Council and partners will need to be flexible and innovative to respond to changing challenges and opportunities. There will be greater emphasis on increasing the supply of social and intermediate rental housing rather than affordable home-ownership options.

The key priority relating to the owner-occupied sector will be helping existing home-owners to retain their homes. There is no doubt that the term of the Housing Strategy will witness a tightening in public spending. The Council and partners will therefore need to be innovative in identifying investment opportunities to improve the quality, sustainability and use of existing housing stock. The Housing Strategy will also promote services, such as housing-related support and adaptations as 'invest to save' opportunities.

The Leeds Housing Strategy recognises that at some point the economic position will stabilise and recover. Leeds as a city, including housing providers, needs to be ready for recovery. Long-term forecasts are for significant job growth within the Leeds district and city region. The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy sets out a target to increase net additions to the housing stock from around 2,260 to 4,300 per annum. This increase is needed to support job creation given that Leeds already has more jobs than homes. The city will need to develop more housing if it is going to benefit from job creation opportunities and to reduce long distance commuting into the city. Job growth will be in both the higher paid financial/legal/knowledge based sector and the often lower paid service sector. The city needs to develop a broad range of affordable housing options to complement all anticipated job growth.

In relation to new housing, the Housing Strategy is primarily focused on increasing the supply of affordable housing. The Council, through the Planning Authority, is accountable to government for net housing additions. The Housing Authority is primarily concerned with increasing the supply of housing for people who cannot or do not wish to secure a property on the open market. Affordable housing is that which provides for the needs of people who cannot afford to buy or rent in the open market. The term 'housing ladder' has been coined to describe the range of housing options that need to be available to people in the city, from low-cost rent to properties for sale or rent at market prices. A fully functioning 'housing ladder' would consist of sufficient options to cover the needs and preferences of all people in the city.

Significant evidence has been collected in recent years that demonstrates that the 'Leeds housing ladder' is not functioning to a level where most people's housing needs and preferences are met. House price values, following the steep reductions of up to 20% in 2008 and a moderate recovery in 2009 so far of 2% remain such that property purchase is unaffordable for people without a significantly above average income or considerable capital. Council owned housing stock has continued to contract in recent years; therefore limiting access to this housing option and pushing people into unsustainable house purchase.



Recent research has also highlighted that housing association rents are increasingly unaffordable for people in low or average income employment. The Leeds Housing Strategy will set out plans to increase the supply of a range of affordable housing options and to improve the functioning of the 'Leeds housing ladder'. Affordable housing delivery is closely linked to wider housing development and the Housing Strategy will set out actions and targets relating to increasing the overall supply of housing in the city. Maximising use of existing stock will be a key element of action relating to increasing the supply of affordable housing.

Improving the quality and sustainability of housing in the city is the second key housing challenge for the city. It has been estimated that two-thirds of existing stock in the city will still be in use in 2050. The Housing Strategy will set out the actions that the Council, Leeds ALMOs and local housing associations are making to bring all social housing stock up to the decency standard by 2010/11. The strategy will also consider options and opportunities for continuing to improve social housing stock post 2011. Perhaps the bigger challenge relates to improving stock condition within the private sector as rates of non-decency significantly exceed those within the social housing sector and the Council has more limited powers and resources to tackle private sector housing quality. Particular emphasis is placed on specific housing types such as back-to-backs that are more likely to contain Category 1 hazards, such as excess cold, limited fire escape routes and increased risk of falls, which are difficult to address due to building design. The private rented sector will be an increasingly important housing option over the term of the Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy will set out plans relating to promoting good landlord practice/high quality housing and addressing poor standards of accommodation and housing management. Rising energy costs over the last two years has plunged more people into fuel poverty and opportunities to address this, primarily through improving the energy efficiency of housing, will be set out in the Housing Strategy.

Promoting the capacity of vulnerable people to achieve and/or maintain an independent living outcome is the third key housing challenge for the city. The strategy will set out how the Council and partners intend to maximise opportunities to prevent homelessness. The strategy is being developed at the same time that traditional homeless and housing advice services, provided by the Council, are being reconfigured around a housing options model. This new approach aims to deliver personalised housing options services, through a range of providers, to vulnerably housed people so that they are better able to remain in their current homes or are able to make planned, timely moves to alternative housing. The Housing Strategy is clear that the delivery of enhanced housing options services should complement rather than conflict with the Council's duties to homeless households. The Housing Strategy will set out plans/actions to eradicate rough sleeping by 2012, in line with the governmental target.

Housing-related support, adaptations and assistive technology will play an important role in helping people to live independently and prevent admissions to hospital or residential care. The Housing Strategy will set out plans to quantify the wider health and wellbeing benefits that are generated from such services. The Council and partners are committed to modernising housing provision, for older people and people with learning disabilities, to promote independent living and to enable people to exercise greater choice and control over their lives. The strategy will consider the housing needs of groups such as refugees and Gypsy Travellers. For the latter group, the Housing Strategy will have regard for the findings of the Gypsy Traveller Housing Needs Assessment for West Yorkshire and the need to identify sufficient accommodation sites for the period up to 2015.



Strategic Vision and Themes

The vision of the Leeds Housing Strategy 2009-2012 is to 'create opportunities for people to live independently in quality, affordable housing'.

The strategic vision encompasses three strategic themes:

- 1. Increase affordable housing supply**
- 2. Improve housing quality**
- 3. Promote independent living**

The three strategic themes contain more specific strategic priorities:

Increasing the supply of affordable housing:

- a** Helping people to become and remain home-owners
- b** Increasing the supply of social and intermediate housing
- c** Maximise use of existing housing stock
- d** Deliver the right housing mix of new housing
- e** Increase the supply of new accessible housing

Improve Housing Quality:

- f** Bring all social housing up to the decency standard
- g** Identify future investment options for council housing
- h** Increase the supply of private housing that meets the decency standard
- i** Improve the long-term sustainability of private housing
- j** Continue to improve standards in the private rented sector
- k** Improve the standard of temporary accommodation leased through the private sector

Promote Independent Living:

- l** Deliver high quality and enhanced housing options services so that people are able to find a solution to their housing need or requirement
- m** Maximise opportunities to prevent homelessness
- n** Reduce the incidence of temporary accommodation
- o** Enable people to live independently through housing-related support, adaptations, lettings and assistive technology
- p** Modernise housing provision for vulnerable people
- q** Contribute to promoting community cohesion, reducing worklessness and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
- r** Encouraging and enhancing mechanisms for tenant and resident engagement and empowerment

Strategy in Context

National Context

The Housing Green Paper **Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable** sets out the government's commitment to deliver 2 million new homes by 2016, and 3 million by 2020. This will entail building 240,000 new homes per year by 2016, 70,000 of which should be affordable. The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review has increased the funding allocated for housing from £8.8 billion in 2007/08 to £10 billion in 2010/11. However, specific programmes, such as Supporting People, have had a cut in funding.

The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 builds upon the **Housing Green Paper** and the **Cave Report** into social housing regulation.

The key provisions are:

- Obliging housing authorities to involve tenants in any options appraisal carried out to consider the future management of council housing
- Making it mandatory for housing authorities to carry out a tenant ballot prior to a stock transfer
- Establishing the Homes and Communities Agency as a delivery partner for affordable housing and regeneration
- Setting up a social housing regulator – the Tenant Services Authority

The local government white paper '**Strong and Prosperous Communities**' includes a requirement for local authorities to develop a Local Area Agreement and partly redefines the strategic housing role of local authorities as centring around '**place shaping**' as a catalyst for delivering economic growth and prosperity.

Regional Context

The Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026 identifies that the Leeds district already accommodates more jobs than dwellings. It estimates potential job growth at 6,000 per annum and household growth at around 4,000 per annum. The Plan therefore recommends that 4,300 new homes be developed in the Leeds district per year for the next 15-20 years. **The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Strategy 2005-2021** is framed around three key themes: **'Creating better places', 'Delivering better homes, choice and opportunity' and 'Ensuring fair access to quality housing'**. The priorities set out within the strategy inform the use of available regional housing funding. An emphasis is placed upon investment that integrates housing, economic and social activity. The strategy will be reviewed in 2009.

Climate Change Plan for Yorkshire and the Humber sets out specific actions and targets for reducing carbon emissions generated from building stock. Approximately 46% of carbon emissions relate to property. The government has set targets that all new housing will be carbon neutral from 2016, public buildings from 2016 and commercial buildings from 2019. The plan considers how building design, maintenance and refurbishment can lead to better homes that use far less energy – providing more affordable warmth for inhabitants and helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Sub Regional Context

The Leeds City Region, comprising 11 West/North and South Yorkshire authorities, has secured **'Forerunner'** city region status, which could result in the Leeds City Region Partnership being granted specific economic and planning powers. **The Leeds City Region Development Plan** and the forthcoming **Leeds City Region Housing and Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan** will aim to ensure that economic development, housing provision and transport link to drive up economic and social well being. **The Leeds City Region Housing and Regeneration Strategy** and Investment Plan will replace the West Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2008-2015. The provisional overarching aim of the Leeds City Region Housing and Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan will be **'to develop better places and provide a housing offer that meets the city's region's needs and supports economic growth and competitiveness'**. The provisional objectives are:

- To promote housing growth, including improving the quality of new homes and places
- To improve the supply of affordable housing
- To ensure a good supply of middle and up-market homes to retain high earners and attract new ones
- To promote a wider spread of housing markets to secure broader gains from the more overheated parts of the city region
- To tackle struggling areas through targeted area regeneration

Local Context

The Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-2011 is one of the key strategic documents for the city. The plan has been ratified by the Council and the wider local strategic partnership, Leeds Initiative, and sets out a shared set of outcomes and improvement priorities. The plan is framed around seven vision themes, which have been adopted from the longer-term Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020. The vision themes are **Culture, Enterprise and Economy, Learning, Transport, Environment, Health and Wellbeing, Thriving Places and Harmonious Communities**.

The Thriving Places theme includes the strategic outcome: **'Improved quality of life through mixed neighbourhoods offering good housing options and better access to services and activities'**. The Thriving Places and Health and Wellbeing themes contain improvement priorities relating to improving housing decency, increasing the supply of affordable housing, reducing homelessness and fuel poverty, and increasing the number of vulnerable people helped to live at home.

Housing will also contribute to the achievement of improvement priorities included within the other vision themes:

- An adequate supply of affordable housing will be needed to complement job growth
- Stable housing gives children the foundation to learn and develop
- New housing development must contribute to wider environmental objectives such as cutting CO2 emissions
- Housing policy, such as temporary accommodation placements for the homeless and asylum seekers, impacts upon community cohesion.

The Leeds Local Area Agreement is closely aligned to the Leeds Strategic Plan. The Local Area Agreement sets out the 35 improvement priorities for the city and has been ratified by the Council, Central Government and the Leeds Initiative. The improvement priorities are linked to performance indicators included within the National Indicator Set. The agreement's housing-related indicators are:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| NI141: | Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living |
| NI154: | Net number of additional homes provided |
| NI56: | Number of affordable homes delivered |
| NI158: | Percentage non-decent council homes |
| NI187: | Tackling fuel poverty |
| | Reduce number of homeless people (<i>Local Performance Indicator</i>) |
| NI139: | Older people helped to live at home |
| NI30: | Re-offending rate of priority and prolific offenders |

The National Indicator Set of 198 performance indicators also includes a number of performance indicators that are housing related:

- NI142:** Number of vulnerable people maintaining independent living
- NI156:** Number of households living in temporary accommodation
- NI160:** Local Authority tenant's satisfaction with landlord services
- NI1:** Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- NI2:** Percentage of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood
- NI5:** Overall satisfaction with local area
- NI7:** Environment for a thriving third sector
- NI32:** Repeat incidents of domestic violence
- NI119:** Self reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing
- NI131:** Delayed transfers of care from hospitals
- NI143:** Proportion of offenders under probation supervision in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence
- NI145:** Proportion of adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation
- NI147:** Proportion of former care leavers aged 19 who are in settled accommodation
- NI149:** Proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation



Equality and Diversity

A fundamental theme of the Leeds Housing Strategy is to promote equality and opportunity for people in Leeds. The Council recognises the role housing can play in helping to promote equality through creating harmonious and cohesive communities; providing good quality, affordable housing, improving the health and wellbeing of the residents of Leeds and reducing levels of deprivation in the poorest areas of the city.

The objectives within the Leeds Housing Strategy aim to ensure that there is a range of accessible housing options available to people in the city, that empower them to find a housing solution that is most appropriate for their needs. This includes providing options such as housing related support for vulnerable people, to ensure that they are able to access the services they need, and are able to live as independently as possible.

To ensure that the Leeds Housing Strategy promotes equality, inclusion and diversity, we have carried out an Equality Diversity Community Cohesion impact assessment to identify the impacts, both positive and negative, that our strategic objectives could potentially have on residents, staff and communities. The findings of the assessment have helped us to consider how we can best encourage diversity and equality, and to mitigate potential negative impact.

The Leeds Housing Strategy promotes partnership working with related services and organisations to help tackle issues that impact negatively on equality and inclusion, such as anti social behaviour and racial harassment, and identifies options to address these issues. Tackling such problems will help neighbourhoods to become thriving places, and will contribute towards improving the health and wellbeing of the residents of Leeds.

The Leeds Housing Strategy also recognises that partnership working is essential to ensure that people have access to the key services in the city that are fundamental to their lives. Housing options and services should be provided in conjunction with health, education, employment and other community services so that people's needs are met in a holistic way and so that people do not experience social exclusion.

The Leeds Housing Strategy includes priorities to address the housing issues related to vulnerable groups who may experience inequality and social exclusion. Specific objectives aim to improve the housing and the health and wellbeing of children and families, older people, BME groups, asylum seekers and refugees, people with learning disabilities and mental health issues, and people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

A priority over the lifetime of the Leeds Housing Strategy and beyond, is to promote diverse and thriving communities, develop initiatives to reduce inequality and social exclusion, provide suitable housing options so people can find appropriate solutions to their housing needs, and give people the opportunity to access the services that enable them to live prosperous lives.

The Leeds Economic Plan has identified improved housing provision as making a major contribution to economic and employment growth for the city.

Leeds Strategic Housing Market Assessment (HMA) (2007) was carried out by consultants, Outside UK. It involved the assessment of cross-tenure housing need and demand within the Leeds district. The HMA identified that there was a need to develop 1889 affordable housing per units per annum up to 2020 in order to meet housing need, along with a need for a better mix of housing in terms of size, type and tenure. In particular, the HMA refers to the need for an increased supply of family size housing.

A range of housing market research has also been undertaken over the last three years including research into the demand for social rented housing, three studies into city centre housing in Leeds, research on private rented housing, affordability of social housing rents and a range of housing market tracking and analysis.





Leeds Local Development Framework (LDF) provides the planning policies for Leeds and is a key delivery tool of the Housing Strategy. The Core Strategy currently being developed will set out strategic housing, including policies for affordable housing and housing mix. The existing Supplementary Planning Guidance and Informal Policy on Affordable Housing provide guidance to developers submitting planning applications for residential development, as to what affordable housing will be sought. This will be replaced by an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2009 (*currently at draft stages*).

The Leeds Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) produced in 2008 jointly by NHS Leeds and Leeds City Council. It reflects on data and analysis in relation to the local population in order to identify current and predicted health and well-being needs and gives an account of what people in the local community want from their services. It is able to inform future service planning by identifying health outcomes that are not being met, health inequalities that need to be addressed, client groups with unmet needs, and services that require change.

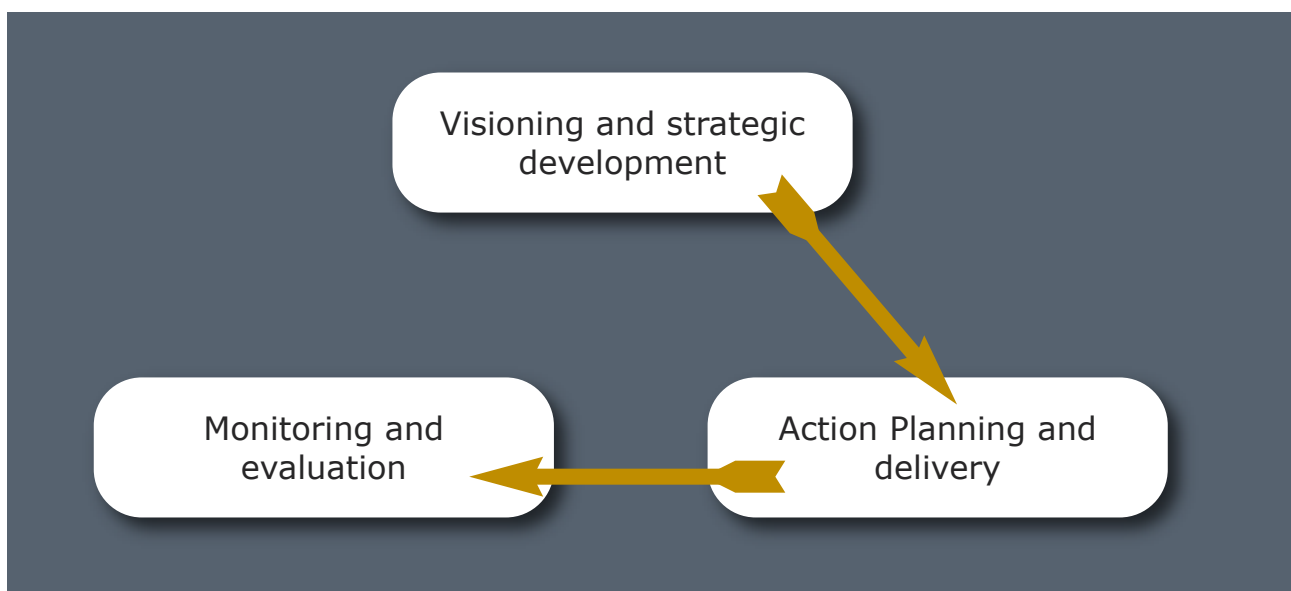
Although Leeds is recognised as one of Britain's most successful cities outside London, the JSNA highlights the diversity of the city's health and wellbeing needs and highlights the gaps between those areas that are wealthy and thriving and those that suffer high levels of multiple deprivation, as well as the key issues of the impact of the changing population, vulnerable groups and broader community well being.

The JSNA addresses the link between health and housing issues; in particular, the importance of enabling people to access quality housing by illustrating the impact this has on people's health and wellbeing. It highlights the importance of improving housing quality as a means of addressing contributors to multiple deprivation such as fuel poverty and infant mortality and identifies the key Super Output Areas (SOA) from the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 relating to Leeds that impact on people's health and wellbeing.

There are also a range of **local housing related strategies** and plans that contribute to the evidence base for this strategy and will continue to inform the development and delivery of the Leeds Housing Strategy: These include:

- Leeds BME Housing Strategy
- Leeds Disabled People's Housing Strategy
- Leeds Older People's Housing Strategy: 'Home not Alone'
- Leeds Supporting People Strategy
- Leeds Homelessness Strategy
- Leeds Private Rented Housing Strategy (in development)
- Leeds Empty Property Strategy
- Safer Leeds Partnership Plan
- Leeds Alcohol Strategy
- Leeds Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Affordable Housing Plan: 'Making the housing ladder work'
- Back-to-Back Housing Strategy
- Strategy for Housing Students in Leeds
- Supplementary Planning Guidance (in development)

Strategic Housing Process and Governance



The strategic housing process has three concurrent strands, with the Leeds Housing Strategy document representing the initial delivery of the first stage. The Housing Strategy document will also detail agreed actions, with accompanying success measures, against each of the strategic goals included within one of the three strategic priorities: **'Increase the supply of affordable housing'**, **'Improve housing quality'** and **'Promote independent living'**.



The most critical element of the strategic housing process will perhaps be monitoring delivery against the agreed actions. Council officers will be responsible for collecting this information so that it can be evaluated through the Leeds Housing Partnership governance framework. It is envisaged that the reporting cycle to the Leeds Housing Partnership will be modified to reflect the three strategic priorities of the Leeds Housing Strategy.

The Leeds Housing Partnership will oversee the updating of the strategic vision, priorities, goals and actions as required to ensure that they continue to reflect the housing challenge.

The Leeds Housing Partnership will also identify appropriate local mechanisms to deliver the goals set in the strategy including Strategic Working Groups and local housing and regeneration partnerships.

| | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|--|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| HCA funding | £18.9m (secured to date) | £15m (requested) | £15m (requested) |
| RHB Private Sector | £10.85m | £10.7m | Not yet known |
| Supporting People | £32.987m | £31.982m | Not yet known |
| Disabled Facilities Grant | £2.57m | Not yet known | Not yet known |
| Commuted Sums | £1.6m | Not yet known | Not yet known |
| HRA/Decency | £60.9m | £55.19m | Not yet known |
| Other – Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership Demolition and Decant | £2.295m | £1.489m | £770k |

Strategic Theme 1: Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing

The Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026 stipulates that the Leeds district needs to increase the supply of new housing from 2,260 to 4,300 per annum in order to support anticipated job growth. Leeds already has more jobs than homes. Essentially, the Regional Spatial Strategy states that this additional stock is required in order to attract new employment investment and to ensure that workers are not unnecessarily commuting long distances into the city. The Council has agreed, through the Local Area Agreement (LAA), to a target to deliver 10,200 additional dwellings over the three year period from 2008/09 to 2010/11. This equates to 3,400 new homes being developed in the city each year.

The term of the Leeds Housing Strategy is three years and the existing outlook, in relation to house building, is challenging. Annual housing completions in England totalled 126,500 in the 12 months to June 2009, down by 22 per cent compared with the 12 months to June 2008 however there are signs of recovery from June to September with a small increase in the number of new homes registered with NHBC nationally. In February 2009, recorded house building starts were averaging 100 per month, which implies completions of approximately 1200 per annum at some point in the future, if market confidence does not pick up. Many house building schemes in the city are being mothballed or cancelled due to the downturn in the economic climate. However, there are still approximately 4400 units under construction in the city, many of which are too far advanced to make deferral of completion worthwhile. A significant proportion of these units will be completed after April 2009. In addition, the Council has granted detailed planning permission for approximately 10,000 units, construction of which has not yet started. In theory, work could commence on these units in a relatively short period of time if there is a recovery in the economic position. The Council is therefore confident that the house building targets set out within the LAA will be delivered.



In relation to new housing, the Leeds Housing Strategy is primarily concerned with increasing the supply of affordable housing. Affordable housing can be broadly defined as housing which is provided for people who cannot or do not wish to purchase or rent through the open market. In relation to new housing, the Leeds Housing Strategy is principally focused on addressing the housing needs of people who are unable or do not wish to secure housing through the open market. Nevertheless, the three year target relating to net additional dwellings is still critical to the Leeds Housing Strategy.

The delivery of affordable housing is often linked to wider housing development. Under Section 106 agreements a developer will agree to develop a specific number of affordable housing units as a condition of being awarded planning permission to develop new housing. Any contraction in overall house building will therefore impact upon the target to increase the supply of affordable housing and place greater pressure on existing housing options.

The term affordable housing includes the following housing options:

- **Social Rented Housing** is that let through a Council, ALMO or Housing Association.
- **Intermediate Housing** is that which is sold or let at a price above social renting but below a market value or rent.

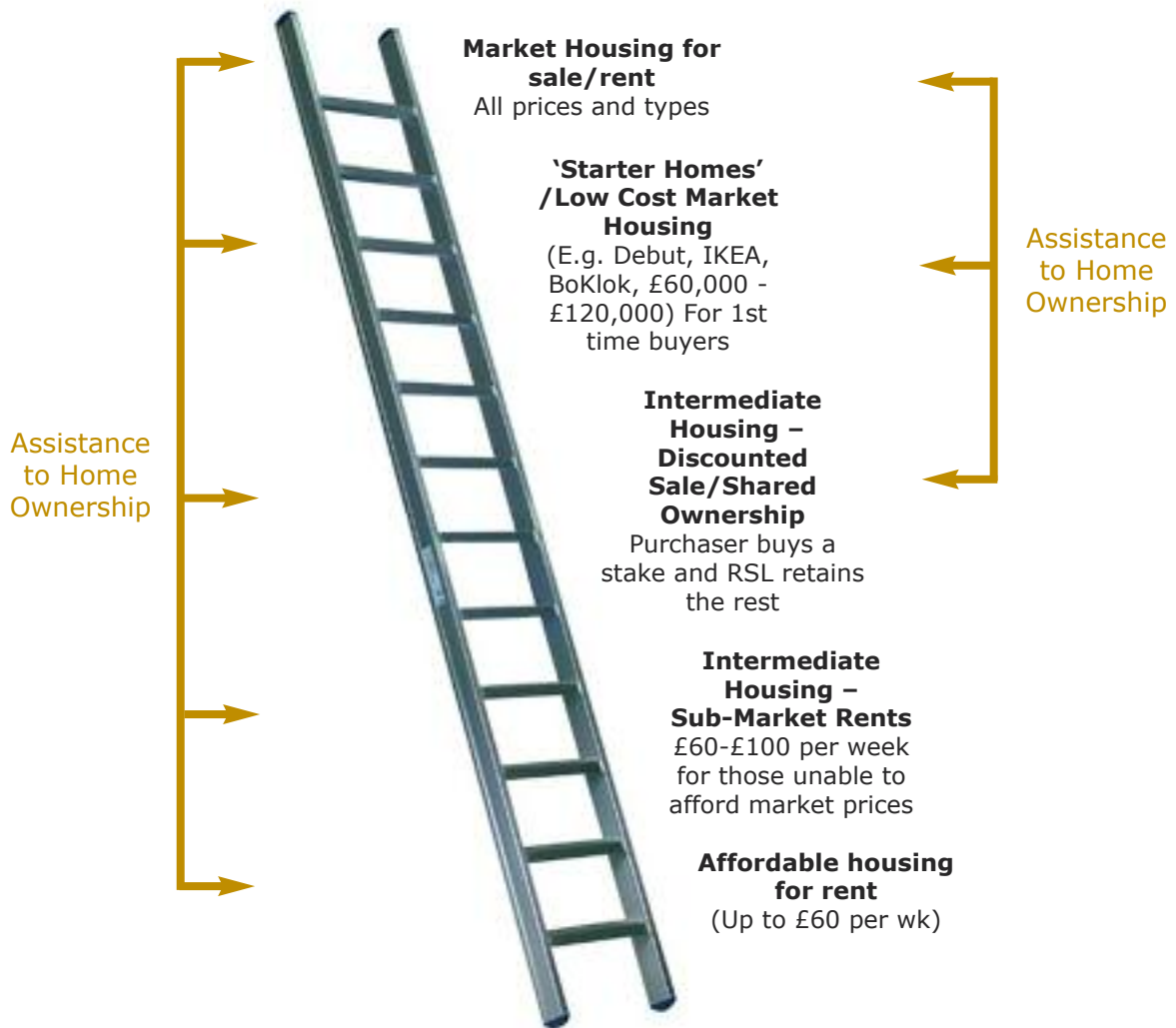
Intermediate housing encompasses three main housing options:

- 1. Shared equity/ownership** where the occupant owns a share of the property, generally by securing a mortgage, and pays rent for the remaining part of the property.
- 2. Discounted sale** where a housing association sells the property at a discounted price with a condition that an equivalent discount is repaid if the property is sold on.
- 3. Intermediate/submarket rent** where the property is let at a rent that is higher than social housing but lower than a market rent.

Increasing the supply of affordable housing has been an increasingly important priority for the Council in recent years.

In 2007, the Council ratified the Leeds Affordable Housing Plan 2007 to 2015. The Plan coined the term 'housing ladder' to describe the range of housing options that needed to be available to ensure that Leeds has a fully functioning housing market meeting the needs of all people in the city.

The 'rungs' of the 'housing ladder' are as follows:



There is compelling evidence to conclude that the 'Leeds housing ladder' is not functioning effectively for all the people of Leeds. The Leeds Strategic Housing Market Assessment (HMA) 2007 identified that a single person would need an annual gross income of £37k to purchase the average starter home in the city. The 20% reduction in average house prices in 2008 will have affected this calculation but nevertheless home-ownership remains difficult to secure for households unless they enjoy significantly above average income and/or considerable capital. Many households in the city have purchased properties at a cost that they are finding difficult to meet in the deteriorating economic climate. The continued contraction in the city's social housing stock, specifically that which is Council owned, means that more people are finding it difficult to access social housing.

It is not uncommon for 500 applicants to register a bid for a property advertised through the Leeds Homes choice based lettings system. Research carried out by Re'new highlighted that housing association rental charges are increasingly unaffordable for people on average or below average incomes. The Leeds Housing Strategy will therefore focus on how the Council and partners can work towards promoting the more effective functioning of the 'Leeds housing ladder' and helping people who are in some form of housing need to access affordable housing. Increasing the overall supply of housing is vital to this, not only as a source of affordable housing but also to create housing options for people who are able to, and choose to, secure housing through the open market.

The Leeds Strategic Housing Market Assessment (HMA) 2007 calculated that over a 15 year period 1889 affordable housing units need to be developed annually to meet unmet housing need in Leeds. The Council has agreed, through the Local Area Agreement, to deliver a total of 1800 affordable housing units between 2008/09 and 2010/11. This target is demanding, especially if the contraction in house building starts continues in the longer-term. The Leeds Housing Strategy recognises the need to initiate a flexible approach to delivering affordable housing. Fewer affordable housing units will be generated through Section 106 agreements and there will be fewer affordable home ownership units than was previously forecasted. However, there will be an increased focus on social and intermediate rental options, including the first new-build council housing since the late 1980s.



An increased emphasis will be placed on maximising the use of existing housing stock, including as a source of affordable housing. The Leeds Housing Strategy will set out actions and targets relating to the purchase or lease of empty properties from developers by housing associations, which could be let as a social or intermediate rental option, especially for key workers. The Leeds Housing Strategy will also set out action and targets relating to helping home owners, who are having difficulty meeting mortgage commitments and are at risk of repossession, to stay in their homes. Increasing the supply of affordable housing must be allied to a commitment to deliver the right housing mix for the city. The majority of housing developed in the city has been one or two-bedroom flatted accommodation; whilst the Leeds Strategic Housing Market Assessment (HMA) 2007 highlights a strong demand for larger family housing. There is also a significant need to deliver an increase in the number of larger properties to meet the needs of BME groups. The longer-term accessibility and energy efficiency of new housing will also be considered by the Leeds Housing Strategy.

Increasing the supply of affordable housing is one of the improvement priorities included within the Leeds Strategic Plan. A survey of Leeds residents carried out in 2007 identified that access to affordable housing was one of the three most important things that made somewhere a good place to live. Increasing the supply of affordable housing is therefore a key contributory factor in making all areas in Leeds 'Thriving Places'. Accessible affordable housing makes a significant contribution to promoting health and wellbeing, with people's quality of life being heavily influenced by contentment with their home. Affordable housing has a role in helping children to thrive, achieve in education and to maximise their potential. The availability of accessible, affordable housing makes a significant contribution to promoting the health and wellbeing of older people, enabling them to retain their independence, to exercise choice and control over their lives, and to prevent or defer them from needing to move to residential care, and is a platform from which community based services can be provided.

The affordability of housing makes a significant contribution to economic development with job creation targets being predicated on an adequate supply of housing being available to accommodate workers.

Housing affordability is a key cost indicator that will influence the decision making of organisations whether to invest, or continue to invest, in Leeds. Workers, including high-skill workers, may factor in housing cost considerations when deciding whether to relocate or remain living in the Leeds area.

The '**Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing**' Theme includes the following priorities:

- a. Helping people to become and remain home-owners
- b. Increasing the supply of social and intermediate rented housing
- c. Maximise use of existing housing stock
- d. Deliver the right housing mix of new housing
- e. Increase the supply of new accessible housing



The **'Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing' Theme** will contribute to a range of strategic outcomes and improvement priorities, set out within the **Leeds Strategic Plan**. These include:

| Theme | Strategic Outcome | Improvement Priority |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Enterprise and the Economy | Increased entrepreneurship and innovation through effective support to achieve the full potential of people, businesses and the economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase innovation and entrepreneurial activity across the city |
| | An enhanced workforce that will meet future challenges through fulfilling individual and economic potential and investing in learning facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enhance the skill level of the workforce to fulfil individual and economic potential ■ Improve learning outcomes for all 16 year olds with a focus on narrowing the achievement gap ■ Increase the proportion of vulnerable groups engaged in education, training or employment |
| Environment | Cleaner, greener and more attractive city through effective environmental management and changed behaviours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve the quality and sustainability of the built and natural environment |
| | Improved quality of life through maximising the potential of vulnerable people by promoting independence, dignity and respect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase the number of vulnerable people helped to live at home ■ Increase the proportion of people in receipt of community services enjoying choice and control over their lives |
| | Improved quality of life through mixed neighbourhoods offering good housing options and better access to services and activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase the number of affordable homes ■ Reduction in the number of homeless people ■ Reduce the number of people who are not able to adequately heat their home |
| Harmonious Communities | More community cohesion and integration through meaningful involvement and valuing equality and diversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase the sense of belonging and pride in local neighbourhoods that help to build cohesive communities |

The **'Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing' theme** also contributes to the following performance indicators, which are included within the National Indicator Set (**highlighted in bold if also included in the Leeds Local Area Agreement**):

- NI154: Net number of additional homes provided**
- NI155: Number of affordable homes delivered**
- NI139: Older people helped to live at home**
- NI141: Number of vulnerable people helped to achieve independent living**
- Tackling fuel poverty**
- Reduce number of homeless households (Local Performance Measure)**

- NI156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation
- NI1: Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- NI2: Percentage of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood
- Overall satisfaction with local area
- NI119: Self reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing
- NI131: Delayed transfers of care from hospitals
- NI142: Number of vulnerable people maintaining independent living
- NI145: Proportion of adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation
- NI147: Proportion of former care leavers aged 19 who are in settled accommodation
- NI149: Proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation

Strategic Priority A: Helping people to become and remain home owners

Strategic Priority B: Increasing the supply of social and intermediate rented housing

Over 70% of the Leeds population own their own home and home ownership continues to be the preferred form of housing tenure for the majority of the population. The Leeds Housing Strategy maintains the commitment to help people

secure sustainable home ownership, if that is their preference; but the downturn in the economic climate, with the resulting increase in mortgage defaults and home repossession, means that the focus has shifted towards helping people to remain home owners.

Case Study: Golden Triangle Partnership

The Golden Triangle Partnership, which covers North Leeds, York and Harrogate, was established to help prospective home-owners purchase a home through the release of an equity loan (of up to 45% of the purchase price) with the remaining cost being met through a conventional mortgage. The scheme is funded through the Regional Housing Board. It is projected that by the end of 2008/09, 28 people in North Leeds will have been assisted to buy their own home.

The Partnership has been re-modelled to provide a mortgage rescue service. Households who would be statutorily homeless, were they to lose their homes, and with a minimum 15% equity in their homes are being offered one of three options:

1. Equity loan to clear mortgage arrears/secured loans and to meet future mortgage payments/secured loan payments for the next 12 months
2. Equity loan to clear mortgage arrears/secured loans and to reduce outstanding mortgage/secured loan balance reducing future payments to an affordable level
3. Equity loan to clear mortgage arrears/secured loans and to meet future mortgage/secured loan payments until a planned sale can be made

The scheme will be sourced through the reconfigured Leeds Housing Options Service.

At October 2009 three applicants have received assistance through the scheme, although a large amount of interest has been shown in the scheme few are eligible due to lack of equity in their homes.

The Golden Triangle Mortgage Rescue Scheme only covers a specific part of the city. The development of a city wide **Mortgage Rescue scheme**, comprising of a partnership between the Council (primarily the Leeds Housing Options Service), Leeds Citizens Advice Bureau and Yorkshire Housing Limited.

The cornerstone of the city's affordable housing delivery plans is the Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership.

Case Study: Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership

The Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership is an innovative and trailblazing vehicle for delivering affordable housing in the city, and is a prototype for the Local Housing Companies that the Government is encouraging local authorities to establish. The Partnership is chaired by the leader of the Council and comprises senior representatives from both the housing and planning authorities, the Homes and Communities Agency and the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber. The Partnership recognises that the Council is primarily a strategic enabler of affordable housing delivery, through planning consent and the release of land for development.

The Council has released 87 acres of land for development through the Partnership, with the expectation that this would attract Homes and Communities Agency subsidy and additional developer investment. Some of this land has become available through work to purchase and clear areas of obsolete housing in the city, the funding for which was secured through the Regional Housing Board. The Affordable Housing Delivery Section had been successful in securing £45 million of Homes and Communities Agency funding and private sector investment to deliver new affordable housing on the land allocated to the Partnership. It is forecasted that 500 affordable housing units will be produced by the end of 2009/10 with 179 delivered by the end of quarter 2 .





The Council’s Planning Services are amending and developing new policies that will underpin the development of new housing, including affordable housing. The Leeds Local Development Framework sets out the planning policies for the city. The Council is currently in the process of replacing the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance with an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

An interim informal policy is in place until the SPD is agreed. The interim policy sets out targets, for development of at least 15 units, relating to affordable housing, and the type of affordable housing, in each of the five housing market zones.

| Housing Market Zone | % Affordable Housing | Of which Social Renting | Of which sub-market/intermediate |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| City Centre | 15% | 40% | 60% |
| Inner Areas | 15% | 0% | 100% |
| Inner Suburbs | 30% | 40% | 60% |
| Outer Suburbs | 30% | 50% | 50% |
| Outer Area/Rural North | 30% | 50% | 50% |

The Planning Authority is also developing a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which will identify public and private land that can be used for house building, including land which could be used for affordable housing development, up to 2024.



Key Actions

1. Help home owners to remain living in their home through the **Golden Triangle Partnership** and the establishment of a city wide mortgage rescue scheme.
2. Deliver affordable housing through the Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership.
3. Implement agreed **Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** targets on affordable housing and tenure mix.
4. Use **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)** to identify public and private land for housing development, including affordable housing.
5. Deliver new council housing and explore opportunities to expand this programme.
6. Maximise current and explore further opportunities to use empty housing stock as affordable housing.
7. Monitor the viability of existing Homes and Community agency subsidy rates and maintain dialogue with the HCA on opportunities for generating affordable housing on an ongoing basis.
8. Maximise affordable housing that can be delivered through Home buy initiatives.
9. Explore opportunities for increasing the supply of affordable housing targeted at BME households.

Key Targets

| Measure | 2008/09 baseline | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Net number of homes delivered (Minimum) NI154 | 3,835 (3,400 target) | 3,400 | 3,400 | tbc |
| Number of affordable homes delivered (Minimum) NI155 | 390 (300 target) | 500 | 1,000 | tbc |
| Affordable housing delivered through Strategic Affordable Housing Partnership (Minimum) | tbc | 230 | 230 | tbc |
| Affordable Housing delivered through S106 (Minimum) | tbc | 100 | 150 | tbc |
| Affordable Housing delivered through other initiatives (Minimum) | tbc | | | |
| | Total (all 2008/9 410 – target 300) | 170 | 620 | tbc |

*Targets for 2010/11 will be set by the Council, and monitored through the **Leeds Housing Partnership**, at a later point.*



Strategic Priority C: Maximise use of existing housing stock

Increasing the supply of affordable housing relates to making better use of existing stock as well as new house building. There are over 322,000 properties in the city, of which in September 2009, approximately 6,470 having been empty for six months or longer within the private sector. No matter how many new houses are built the Leeds Housing Strategy recognises that long-term empty homes are a wasted resource and an indicator that the 'Leeds housing ladder' is not functioning effectively. Empty properties often blight the area in which they are located. Although empty properties are located across the city, they are most notably in older stock, such as back-to-backs and through terraces characterised by high levels of non-decency, in the inner urban areas, and new build housing located in the city centre.

Leeds has been successful in tackling the incidence of empty properties in the city. The city has a long-standing Empty Property Strategy and employs a dedicated officer to monitor the incidence and trends relating to empty homes in the city. The Council also has a dedicated team that is responsible for bringing empty homes back into use. In 2008/09, 3,186 private sector dwellings were brought back into use through some form of intervention on the part of the Council – the best performance of any local authority. The target for 2009/10 is 3,200 with a year end prediction of exceeding this target, by the end of September 2009 1,032 properties were brought back into use. However, it is clear that much is still to be done.

Existing action, such as levying 100% council tax on empty homes and encouraging landlords to join the Council's Landlord Accreditation scheme, will continue to be employed. The Leeds Housing Strategy has already set out plans to establish partnerships with private companies, and to attract Homes and Communities Agency funding and private sector investment, to bring empty properties back into use as intermediate rented housing.

The 2004 Housing Act introduced the option of councils securing Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs) to bring empty properties back into use. The Council, in common with most other authorities, has to date not used the EDMO option by and lack of financial assistance to property owners to rectify issues is one detraction of the scheme. However the Council will take advantage of the additional guidance that the government has committed to supply to clarify use of EDMOs. One of the key challenges relating to EDMOs is finding organisations that are willing to take on the housing management responsibility of properties subject to an EDMO. The Council is carrying out a procurement exercise to establish contractual arrangements with housing providers who are willing to take on this role.

The threat of an EDMO can create a stimulus to property owners to bring a house into occupation. The city is facing the challenge of a high number of empty properties, high levels of private sector non-decency, and elements of poor landlord practice, and having a high number of people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or unsuitably housed. The Leeds Housing Strategy sets out plans to find joint solutions to these challenges. The reconfigured Leeds Housing Options Service provides a new Private Sector Lettings Scheme that gives Landlords who offer properties through the scheme a guarantee of the equivalent of up to four weeks rent to cover damage to the property – the scheme will potentially be extended to cover rent arrears. There is a target to facilitate 700 lettings annually to people on the Leeds Housing Register via this scheme during 2009/10. Tenants are offered housing support through Foundation Housing who can help ensure that they comply with tenancy obligations.

In return, landlords are obliged to join the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme and to bring the property up to a decent standard of repair. The Council is contacting property owners with empty properties to determine whether they would be interested in letting properties through the scheme and advising that it is an alternative to applying for an EDMO. The Council is using this route as a further means of having a dialogue with property owners and encouraging them to bring stock into use.

There is evidence of a substantial number of unlet or empty homes in Inner North West Leeds arising from changes in the student housing market. There is scope for partnership between the Council, housing associations and the Headingley Development Trust to develop means of bringing them back into use.

The Council is preparing to act as a banker for the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership's 'Recycling the Empties' initiative and has 20 Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) in the pipeline on long-term empty, dilapidated properties, which are blighting the locality in which they are situated. The Council is currently in discussions with local housing associations regarding the feasibility of such organisations purchasing, or long-term leasing these properties, carrying out the requisite improvement work and letting the properties as affordable housing. It was assumed that this scheme could become self-financing as further empty properties could be purchased with receipts generated from sales. Falling house prices makes this model more challenging but CPOs will continue to be an important tool to tackle the incidence of the worst forms of empty properties.



Under-occupation of housing is perhaps another indicator of stock not being used to its optimum capacity. The Council and the Leeds ALMOs took steps to address the incidence of under-occupation in council owned properties by launching the 'Under Occupiers Cash Incentive' scheme in July 2008. The scheme aims to release family-sized housing and to reduce the number of large households who are waiting for re-housing in the city. The scheme involves giving tenants who are under-occupying larger Council properties a cash incentive of £1,000 per bedroom to downsize to a smaller property.

Tenants would also be awarded Priority Extra/Direct Let status to be re-housed through the Leeds Homes Register. By January 2009, 27 families had been rehoused through the scheme at a cost of £56,000, and at September 2009 this had increased to 115 families. The comparative cost of developing 27 family size houses is around £3.5 million (£150k per unit), this demonstrates the cost effectiveness of the scheme. The potential saving of not having to place families in temporary accommodation also needs to be considered. The Council believes this is a scheme that can be expanded to help more families and will be developing an Under Occupiers Strategy in 2009.

Key Actions

1. Update the existing Leeds Empty Property Strategy to reflect emerging challenges and opportunities for action.
2. Continue to levy 100% council tax charge on empty homes.
3. Continue to encourage property owners to join the Leeds Landlords Accreditation scheme and highlight the benefits of letting out stock.
4. Maximise current and explore further opportunities to use empty housing stock as affordable housing.
5. Identify organisations willing to manage housing subject to **Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs)**.
6. Maximise dialogue with property owners to encourage them to bring empty properties into use.
7. Use Leeds Housing Options Service Private Sector Lettings Scheme as an option for bringing empty properties into use.
8. Explore opportunities to reduce the incidence of empty properties in the Inner North West area of the city by encouraging local agencies and housing associations to take up purchase or leasing opportunities
9. **Secure Compulsory Purchase Orders** through the 'Recycling the Empties' scheme on worst instances of empty properties.
10. Council and Leeds ALMOs to develop an **Under-Occupiers strategy** and encourage other housing providers to develop comparable plans.

Key Targets

| Measure | 2008/09 baseline | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Proportion of total housing stock empty for any time period (Maximum) | 5.38 | 4% | 3.5% | 3% |
| Total number of empty homes brought back into use (Minimum) | 3176 | 2,900 | 2,900 | 2,900 |
| Empty properties brought back into use through purchase/lease by housing associations | N/A | 100 | 200 | tbc |
| Number of Council tenants moving to alternative housing and releasing under-occupied properties | N/A | No target (report number to LHP) | No target (report number to LHP) | No target (report number to LHP) |

Strategic Priority D: Deliver the right housing mix of new housing

Strategic Priority E: Increase the supply of new accessible housing

The Leeds Housing Strategy is concerned not only with increasing the supply of new housing, including affordable housing, but also ensuring that the housing delivered meets the needs of the people of Leeds.

A key issue relates to the development of family sized housing. The Leeds Strategic Housing Market Assessment (HMA) 2007 identified that between 1998/99 and 2006/07 the proportion of new housing development in the city that was flatted accommodation rose from 11.6% to 73.6%. Only 7% of existing households and 27% of newly formed households expressed a preference to live in flats. The development of additional units of larger housing is needed to meet the needs of BME households. 22% of Asian households with housing applications on the Leeds Homes Register require a 3 bedroom property compared to 10% of White households.

The BME Housing Strategy and the 2008 Leeds Private Sector Stock Condition Survey both highlight that BME households are disproportionately likely to occupy non-decent housing, experience overcrowding, fuel poverty, homelessness and premature mortality. An increase in the development of larger housing therefore seems to be a critical element of the drive to better address BME housing need. The Council's interim planning policy considers housing mix for all development proposals. The interim policy, which was developed jointly by the Housing and Planning Authority, recommends that a minimum of 65% of all new residential housing developments should consist of houses with gardens, including communal gardens, and at least 40% of new housing should comprise units of 3 bedrooms or more. The application of the interim policy should help to deliver a better mix of family sized and smaller housing units. The Leeds Housing Strategy recommends that the Leeds Housing Partnership explores examples of new high density family sized housing which has been delivered through innovative design.

The Climate Change Plan Built Environment identifies that 46% of total carbon emissions emanate from building stock. The government has set a target that all new housing will be zero carbon from 2016. This is a target that needs to be made after the end of the three year term of the Housing Strategy. Nevertheless, the city needs to make a clear reduction in greenhouse emissions from its housing stock and make demonstrable progress towards achieving the aspirations detailed in the Code for Sustainable Homes. The Leeds Development Framework Core Strategy seeks new housing to be developed up to Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Housing up to 2010, Level 4 in the period 2010 to 2013 and Level 6 from 2013 to 2016.

Leeds has an ageing population, with the proportion of residents aged 60 or over likely to rise by approximately 18% in the period up to 2021. Older people are more likely to experience some form of life affecting illness, including loss of mobility. The Leeds Housing Strategy seeks to promote the opportunity for people to live independently in their existing homes. The development of accessible housing, including new housing, will be a key element of the drive to promote independent living. The government has set a target that all new social housing and general housing development will need to conform to the 'Lifetime Homes' standard from 2011 and 2013 respectively. The 'Lifetime Homes' standard is a set of 16 design criteria that aim to promote mobility within the home. Adhering to these design standards increases the cost of housing production by around £500 per unit. However, this is a small fraction of the cost of adapting a property or placing a person into residential care. All housing developed through the Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership will conform to the 'Lifetime Homes' standard. The proposed sheltered housing modernisation programme (see Priority P) will also develop housing that meets this standard.

Key Actions

1. Use the interim planning policy to achieve a better mix of family sized housing, with garden provision, and flatted accommodation.
2. Leeds Housing Partnership to identify examples of innovative high density family sized housing and strive to influence developers making planning applications.
3. Reduce greenhouse emissions emanating from the city's housing stock and make demonstrable progress to improving the environmental sustainability of new housing.
4. Deliver new housing that meets the specific needs of BME households.
5. All new housing delivered through the Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership to conform to the Lifetime Homes standard.
6. All new social housing developments to conform to the Lifetime Homes standard from 2011.
7. Consider reasonable targets relating to proportion of general housing development that should conform to the Lifetime Homes standard during the term of the Leeds Housing Strategy.

Key Targets

| Measure | 2008/09 baseline | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|--|---------------------|---|---|---|
| % of total new build development that consists of houses with some form of garden provision (Minimum) | 29% | 65% | 65% | 65% |
| % of total new build development that is 3 bedroom plus units (Minimum) | 30% | 40% | 40% | 40% |
| New housing meets specific environmental sustainability in Code for Sustainable Homes | N/A | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 4 |
| Proportion of new housing delivered through the Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership meeting the Lifetime Homes standard | N/A | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Proportion of new social housing meeting the Lifetime Homes standard | N/A | No target – to be monitored through LHP | No target – to be monitored through LHP | 100% |
| Proportion of new general housing development meeting the Lifetime Homes standard | N/A | No target – to be monitored through LHP | No target – to be monitored through LHP | No target – to be monitored through LHP |



Strategic Theme 2: Improving Housing Quality

Improving the quality of the city's housing stock is a key challenge for the Leeds Housing Strategy. There are in excess of 322,000 housing units within the city, with approximately 248,000 of these units being privately owned. The 'Improving Housing Quality' strategic theme will focus on the challenges and actions required to improve the quality and sustainability of the Leeds housing stock. Maximising the proportion of stock that conforms to a prescribed standard of decency will be one element of this. All social landlords in the city have brought, or are working towards bringing, their housing stock up to the decency standard by 2010/11. The Leeds Housing Strategy will set out how this target will be achieved, and, perhaps more importantly, will consider options for longer-term investment in social housing stock. Specific reference will be made to the future management and investment options for council owned stock, which is currently managed by the three Leeds ALMOs and Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation.

The challenge relating to improving housing quality in the private sector is perhaps the most significant that is contained within the Leeds Housing Strategy, as 77% of housing stock is privately owned. There are limitations on the amount of new housing that can be developed, especially in the current economic climate, and the Leeds Housing Strategy recognises that housing need will primarily be addressed through the existing housing stock, with the main part of this being privately owned. Therefore, increasing the level of housing decency in the private sector is a key priority within the Leeds Housing Strategy.



The Leeds Private Sector Stock Condition Survey identified that 33% (81,800 properties) of private housing in the city fails to meet the decency standard, with this figure rising to over 70% for back-to-back housing. The 2004 Housing Act introduced a new system of risk assessing the condition/habitation of residential housing, Housing Health and Safety Ratings System (HHSRS), with Category 1 hazards defined as the most serious risk to an occupants' health and wellbeing. Properties that have Category 1 hazards cannot be defined as meeting the decency standard. The stock condition survey also identified that 13.8% (34,300 properties) have one or more Category 1 hazard, with this figure rising to 45% for back-to-back housing. The most common hazards in Leeds are excess cold, limited fire escape routes and increased risk of falls. The stock condition survey estimated that approximately 21,000 properties in the city suffer from excess cold. The challenges relating to back-to-back housing are largely unique to the West Yorkshire sub-region and are most acute in Leeds, given the number of such units (19,500) that are part of the Leeds housing stock.

Recent research has estimated that around two thirds of existing housing stock will still be in use in 2050. This point needs to be aligned to the calculation included in the Climate Change Plan for Yorkshire and Humber that 46% of the UK's total carbon emissions emanate from property. The government has set targets that all public buildings be carbon neutral from 2018 and commercial buildings from 2019. These targets relate to a time period after the end of the Leeds Housing Strategy term.

Nevertheless, the city needs to make a commitment to reduce greenhouse emissions and to achieve improved standards against the Code for Sustainable Homes in relation to existing housing stock. Improving energy efficiency is a key action in the drive to promote the environmental sustainability of housing stock. Promoting energy efficiency will contribute to tackling the incidence of fuel poverty: where a household spends more than 10% of their household income on meeting energy costs.

A 40% rise in energy costs over the last two years has led to an increase in the number of Leeds residents who are 'fuel poor', albeit that more vulnerable households such as older or disabled people, BME households and families with children, are more likely to be in this position. The Council and other housing-related services have limited power to control energy prices, so the focus of the Leeds Housing Strategy will be on promoting energy efficiency measures as a means of reducing energy costs and eliminating excess cold.

The private rented sector will be an increasingly important housing option and a vibrant sector is needed to stimulate labour mobility and to attract job growth/investment into the city. This tenure option will be increasingly important for people in housing need, who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Leeds has a large and diverse private rented sector, which accommodates around 41,600 households, and the majority of property owners are committed to high standards of landlord practice and housing management. However, non-decency is higher (44%) than for the private sector as a whole. One of the reasons for this is that around 56% of such stock was built before 1919 and therefore is more likely to suffer from one or more hazard such as excess cold, limited fire escape routes and high risk of falls.

Vulnerable households are more likely to live in such housing or with landlords who do not apply, or aspire to apply, high standards of housing management practice. It is not feasible to comprehensively regulate property and landlord standards across a private rented sector comprising over 41,000 properties and some tenants may be reluctant to highlight issues relating to disrepair, given the limited security of tenure inherent in Assured Shorthold tenancies. The Leeds Housing Strategy will therefore set out how key services, such as the housing options service and the supported housing sector, can play a more proactive role in highlighting, and taking action against, poor standards of landlordism. At the same time, landlords need to be confident that tenants are being given realistic advice and not remaining in properties when it is in neither the tenants nor the landlords interest for them to do so.

A key principle in the drive to improve standards within the private rented sector will be to view landlords, as well as tenants, as the customers of housing services. Encouraging more landlords to become members of the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme will be another key action.

The Council has estimated the cost of bringing all private housing up to a decent standard of repair at £250 million. Clearly, it is not realistic to assume that this level of funding could be secured through governmental grants. The Leeds Housing Strategy will set out plans to target intervention at the worst housing, which is occupied by the most vulnerable members of society, to use funding to lever in additional investment, especially from property owners and financial institutions, and to consider other innovative options to attract investment. The Leeds Housing Strategy has noted the example of Liverpool, where the local NHS Trust is investing £9 million into improving private housing conditions, in recognition of the link between improved standards of housing and enhanced health and wellbeing outcomes. A key action within the Leeds Housing Strategy will be to commission research to better calculate the wider benefits, especially from a health and wellbeing perspective, that can be generated from improving housing conditions.

The links between housing conditions and health and wellbeing outcomes are evident, even in the absence of further research. Excess cold is a major cause of increased winter mortality, especially amongst older people. Older and disabled people are less likely to be able to function in back-to-back housing, with steep and narrow staircases a particular problem. This makes it more likely that people will need to move into residential care or will have a fall that results in a hospital admission. Living in poor housing conditions also has a negative impact upon a person's mental health and wellbeing. Children growing up in poor housing are less likely to thrive, to achieve in their education and other development, or to maximise their potential. NHS Leeds believes there is a strong correlation between the relatively high level of infant mortality that occurs in Leeds and family residence in poor housing conditions. The Leeds Housing Strategy has noted the work of Care and Repair Leeds (see case study Care and Repair Leeds) and the cost of carrying out minor adaptation work to prevent falls (£175), in comparison to the cost incurred by NHS Leeds to hospitalise a person who requires a hip replacement – approximately £50,000.

A survey of Leeds residents carried out as part of the formulation of the Leeds Strategic Plan identified that the quality of housing was one of the three main factors that influenced whether a neighbourhood was a good place to live. The 'Improving Housing Quality' theme will therefore significantly contribute to the Thriving Places theme within the Leeds Strategic Plan. Improving the quality of housing will also contribute to strategic outcomes and improvement priorities included within the Environment strategic theme of the Strategic Plan, especially improving the quality and sustainability of housing and reducing carbon emissions. Good quality housing also contributes to promoting harmonious communities and community cohesion, and investment in housing creates employment and stimulates the economy of Leeds.

The '**Improving Housing Quality**' strategic theme includes the following key priorities:

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- Bring all social housing up to the decency standard
- Identify future investment options for council housing
- Increase the number of private homes that meet the decency standard
- Improve the long-term sustainability of private housing
- Continue to improve standards in the private rented sector
- Improve the standard of temporary accommodation leased through the private sector

The **'Improving Housing Quality' theme** will therefore contribute to a range of strategic outcomes and improvement priorities, set out within the **Leeds Strategic Plan**. These include:

| Theme | Strategic Outcome | Improvement Priority |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Enterprise and the Economy | Increased entrepreneurship and innovation through effective support to achieve the full potential of people, businesses and the economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase innovation and entrepreneurial activity across the city |
| | An enhanced workforce that will meet future challenges through fulfilling individual and economic potential and investing in learning facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enhance the skill level of the workforce to fulfil individual and economic potential ■ Improve learning outcomes for all 16 year olds with a focus on narrowing the achievement gap ■ Increase the proportion of vulnerable groups engaged in education, training or employment |
| | Cleaner, greener and more attractive city through effective environmental management and changed behaviours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve the quality and sustainability of the built and natural environment ■ Address neighbourhood problem sites, improve cleanliness, and access to, and the quality of, green spaces |
| Health and Wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduced health inequalities through the promotion of healthy life choices and improved access to services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase the number of decent homes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improved quality of life through maximising the potential of vulnerable people by promoting independence, dignity and respect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce premature mortality in the most deprived areas |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enhanced safety and support for vulnerable people through preventative and protective action to minimise risks and maximise wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase the number of vulnerable people helped to live at home |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improved quality of life through mixed neighbourhoods offering good housing options and better access to services and activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase the number of decent homes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increased economic activity through targeted support to reduce worklessness and poverty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce the number of people who are not able to adequately heat their homes ■ Increased financial inclusion in deprived areas |
| Harmonious Communities | Improved community cohesion and integration through meaningful involvement and valuing equality and diversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase the sense of belonging and pride in local neighbourhoods that help to build cohesive communities |

The '**Improving Housing Quality**' theme also contributes to the following performance indicators, which are included within the **National Indicator Set** (highlighted in bold if also included in the Leeds Local Area Agreement):

NI120: Reduce premature mortality in the most deprived areas

NI139: Older people helped to live at home

NI141: Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living

NI158: Percentage of non-decent Council homes

NI187: Tackling fuel poverty

NI188: Planning to adapt to climate change

NI2: Percentage of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood

NI119: Self reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing

NI156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation.



Strategic Priority F: Bringing all social housing up to the decency standard

Strategic Priority G: Identifying longer-term investment options for council housing

The government has set a target to bring all social housing (stock managed by local authorities, ALMOs and housing associations) up to the decency standard by 2010/11. The Leeds ALMOs were able to secure £480 million in additional credits from government, following two star Audit Commission inspection results in 2004 and 2005. This funding has been used to part finance the decency programme and it is estimated that around £858 million will have been invested in improving the condition of council housing by the end of 2010/11. Local housing associations have financed decency programmes through a combination of private sector investment and organisational reserves.

Data held by the Homes and Communities Agency calculated Leeds housing association decency, in March 2009, was 95.3%. The Council is forecasting that ALMO decency will be around 90% by April 2010. The Council and the Leeds ALMOs are confident that the decency standard will be met by 2010/11.

Many social landlords have faced similar issues in striving to meet the decency standard, especially with regard to back-to-back units and the accompanying challenges relating to Category 1 hazards. Decency funding can only be used to finance improvement to the interior and immediate exterior of a property and cannot be used to demolish and replace obsolete stock. Private Finance Initiatives in areas of the city such as Swarcliffe have helped lever in additional investment to carry out decency work and to deliver new housing to replace obsolete stock.

The Leeds ALMOs have also looked at wider improvement work exceeding the decency standard, including improving energy efficiency by installing cavity wall and loft insulation. To date, the ALMOs have been unable to fund environmental improvement to estates, which could help achieve holistic estate improvement for the benefit of residents.

Many social landlords, including the Leeds ALMOs, will achieve the decency target during the term of the Leeds Housing Strategy. However, the Leeds Housing Strategy very much views this forecasted achievement as an important milestone, rather than an end in itself. Stock will need to be maintained post 2010/11 and properties will fall out of decency if investment is not maintained or enhanced. The expectations of tenants are rightfully evolving and increasing and it is essential that social landlords accept the challenge of meeting rising tenant expectations. All social landlords will be exploring opportunities to secure appropriate investment post 2010/11. This will entail quantifying the likely cost of ongoing investment, the balance between capital and planned investment, and identifying organisational and external resources that can be secured to finance investment.

Many housing associations will have to consider longer-term investment options within the context of financial institutions adopting less favourable and more restrictive lending practices.

With regard to council housing, following approval from the Council's Executive Board, an options appraisal has commenced which will consider investment options for stock post 2011. A number of drivers have been identified for carrying out this work. The Council acknowledges that stock condition will begin to deteriorate if ongoing investment is not secured. The Council is also looking beyond the decency standard to bring stock up to a higher level of repair. Improvement priorities, such as lift replacement and ongoing adaptations, which sit outside the parameters of decency work, will also need to be financed and will become more pressing challenges in future years.

The Council has been successful in securing additional investment of £183 million to modernise sheltered housing and increase affordable housing provision. The funding has been secured through the Expression of Interest to Central Government for Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits. An outline business case is due to be submitted to the Homes & Communities Agency by the end of 2009 with the aim of securing further PFI credits. However, it is forecasted that the ALMOs will have around £50 million less for capital works in 2010/11 (£100 million per annum less than at the peak of the decency programme) and this will be insufficient to meet the priorities listed above.

The options appraisal for future investment in council housing can be divided into two parts: short term investment options up to 2012 and longer term investment options post 2012. This ties in with the current arrangements whereby the Council has a management agreement with the Leeds ALMOs up to 2012.

Other events may also affect the outcome of the investment options appraisal. The Government is carrying out a review of HRA (Housing Revenue Account) funding arrangements. Currently, Leeds is obliged to transfer surplus income from the HRA to Central Government to subsidise other authorities. The HRA review may mean that surplus making authorities are able to retain all income, which could partly cover the costs of longer-term priorities. The 2008 Housing and Regeneration Act allows local authorities to pre-qualify with the Homes and Communities Agency as an approved recipient of grant. The Council is actively pursuing this option.

In addition, ALMOs that secure an excellent Audit Commission inspection rating can bid unilaterally for Homes and Communities Agency subsidy; with two star rated landlords able to bid as part of a consortium. The Leeds ALMOs were inspected in 2008, with Aire Valley Homes Leeds receiving a two star rating and West North West Homes Leeds and East North East Homes Leeds receiving a one star rating. The latter two ALMOs have opted to be re-inspected from September 2009 onwards and are hopeful that a two star rating can be attained.

Key Actions

1. All social landlords to continue to deliver capital investment programmes to bring all managed housing stock up to the decency standard by the end of 2010/11.
2. Social landlords to draw up investment strategies to cover investment requirements and opportunities once decency is met.
3. Council to carry out an appraisal into the options for investing in council housing looking at shorter term investment options up to 2012 and longer term investment options post 2012.
4. Council to establish arrangements for involving council tenants and other stakeholders in the options appraisal process.
5. East North East Homes Leeds and West North West Homes Leeds to be subject to further Audit Commission inspection of housing management services.
6. Council to consider the implications of the HRA review for the future management and investment in council housing.
7. Council to pursue pre-qualification status with Homes and Communities Agency as an approved recipient of grant.
8. All social landlords to develop Affordable Warmth Action Plans.
9. Council and Leeds ALMOs to work with partner agencies to identify funding opportunities for environmental improvement and uplift.

Key Targets

| Measure | 2008/09 baseline | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| % of non-decent council housing (Maximum) NI158 | 18.5% | 10% | 0 | 0 |
| % of non-decent housing association managed stock (Maximum) | To be confirmed | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Proportion of social housing units achieving a SAP rating of 65 or higher (Minimum) | 66.7% | To be confirmed | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| Number of Council tenants moving to alternative housing and releasing under-occupied properties | 75% (2008/09) | 75% (2008/09) | 80% | 80% (2010/11) |
| % satisfaction of BME council tenants with landlord (Minimum) | 65% | To be confirmed | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |



Strategic Priority H: Increase the number of private homes that meet the decency standard

Strategic Priority I: Improve the long- term sustainability of private sector housing

The 2007 Leeds Private Sector Stock Condition Survey identified that 33% of privately owned housing in the city was non-decent. It has also been estimated that around two-thirds of current housing stock will still be in use in 2050. It is unlikely, especially in the current economic climate, that there will be significant programmes of new house building during the term of this and subsequent housing strategies. Addressing the deficiencies of current housing stock is crucial if much of the current stock is to remain a sustainable housing option.

The main challenges, and likely cost, are in summary:

| Reason | Number of properties | % of total stock |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Category 1 Hazard | 34,300 | 13.8% |
| Repair | 27,100 | 10.9% |
| Amenities | 7,300 | 2.9% |
| Thermal Comfort | 51,400 | 20.7% |

| Reason | Total Cost | Cost per dwelling |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Category 1 Hazard | £91 million | £2,800 |
| Repair | £44 million | £1,600 |
| Amenities | £40 million | £5,400 |
| Thermal Comfort | £74 million | £1,400 |
| Total | £250 million | £3,100 |

The Leeds Housing Strategy recognises that the Council in isolation does not have the financial resources to address the private sector decency challenge. The actions set out in the Strategy will be framed around developing strategic partnerships to identify priority challenges and joint investment opportunities. Intervention and investment will need to be targeted at the most vulnerable members of society, especially where that maximises outcomes for all strategic partners. Council and other partner funding needs to be the catalyst for promoting property owner investment in housing stock.

The Council's Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board is carrying out an examination of the private sector housing challenge and the cost implications for the authority. The Council is committed to establishing a Private Sector Housing Strategic Partnership Board, which will be chaired by the Executive Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods. The partnership board will also comprise senior officers from the housing authority, Homes and Communities Agency, Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber and NHS Leeds. The composition and purpose of the Private Sector Housing Strategic Partnership Board will mirror that of the Leeds Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership. The private sector housing partnership board will strive to identify joint strategic priorities and additional investment that can be used to deliver the outcomes required.

The inclusion of NHS Leeds on the private sector housing partnership board is critical to its effectiveness. The introduction to the 'Improving Housing Quality' strategic theme has highlighted the strong links between housing conditions and health and wellbeing outcomes. The Leeds Housing Strategy has noted the example of Liverpool where the local NHS Trust is investing £9 million in improving private sector housing conditions, on the basis that this will generate improvements in health and wellbeing for the people of Liverpool and therefore reduce need and costs across aspects of the health service in the city. Nevertheless, it will be essential for the Council to establish the joint benefits that will be generated through such investment. The Council has recently commissioned Sheffield Hallam University to carry out research, using an established and cross-disciplinary model, to establish the health and wellbeing benefits of improving housing conditions. It will also be important to study the Liverpool example and to identify whether the NHS Trust can demonstrate that there have been improvements in health and wellbeing that can be directly traced back to the housing investment programme.

A strategic priority for NHS Leeds is to reduce the incidence of infant mortality in the city. There are 5.9 infant mortalities per 1000 births in comparison to the average for England and Wales of 4.9 deaths. There is a strong correlation between residence in the poorer areas of the city (Super Output Areas) and infant mortality, with the rate rising to 8 per 1000 live births for babies who are born to mothers resident in one of these areas. There is also a profound association between ethnicity and infant mortality with the rate being 9.6 for people of Pakistani origin and 9.8 for people of Afro-Caribbean origin. Such communities are more likely to live in deprived areas, with 92% of children born to Bangladeshi mothers living in one of the Super Output Areas. NHS Leeds believes that living in overcrowded and poor housing conditions is a major contributor to infant mortality. The Council has secured funding from the CLG to examine the causes and effects of overcrowding in the city and the link with infant mortality will be a key element of this work. The Council will also engage with NHS Leeds to identify how this joint challenge can be addressed.



In 2002, the government set a target for all housing authorities that a minimum of 70% of private housing occupied by vulnerable households (older people, people with a disability or other long-term life affecting illness, and families with children) would be brought up to the decency standard by the end of March 2010. This performance indicator/target was discontinued when the National Indicator Set was introduced at the beginning of 2008/09. Nevertheless, given the scale of the private sector housing challenge, an approach of targeted intervention and investment to assist the most vulnerable members of the Leeds population appears to be appropriate, especially if that generates wider health and wellbeing benefits. It is currently estimated that 63% of private sector housing occupied by vulnerable households is decent.

The Council has more limited powers and resources to address private sector housing non-decency than in respect of council owned stock. The 2004 Housing Act permits local authorities to take enforcement action if Category 1 hazards are identified in a property. The most common Category 1 hazard is excess cold. Vulnerable households are more likely to live in housing suffering from excess cold and are less likely to be able to contend with the effects of these conditions. Excess cold disproportionately affects people with limited income to meet energy costs and exacerbates conditions, such as rheumatism, arthritis, bronchitis and cardiovascular illness, which older people are more likely to experience. Excess cold also exacerbates mobility problems and increases the risk of falls and other household accidents.

Tackling excess cold and fuel poverty in private housing is therefore one of the key actions within the Leeds Housing Strategy. Fuel poverty is defined as where a household needs to spend more than 10% of its income on heating a home to an acceptable standard. An acceptable standard is a temperature of 21 degrees centigrade in the main living areas. Leeds City Council published an Affordable Warmth Strategy in 2007 to cover the period up to 2016, with the strategy delivered through the Council's Fuelsavers Team.



A key action within the Affordable Warmth Strategy is to monitor trends relating to the incidence of fuel poverty in the city. There has been an increase from 19 to 24% in the period from 2007 to 2008 in the proportion of the Leeds population that are experiencing fuel poverty, an increase which can be largely attributed to the 40% increase in energy costs over the last two years. Fuel poverty disproportionately affects BME households: with 39% of Black and 30% of households of Asian origin spending more than 10% of income on energy costs . The Fuelsavers Team also monitors fuel poverty levels by council ward. In 2006, the five council wards with the highest proportion of private sector residents who declared that they were having difficulty heating their homes were as follows:

The five wards with the lowest incidence of fuel poverty were Adel and Wharfedale, Wetherby, Harewood, Roundhay and Horsforth.

| Ward | Difficulty heating home (total) | Difficulty heating home (vulnerable) | Difficulty heating home (non-vulnerable) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Gipton and Harehills | 51% | 14% | 65% |
| Hyde Park and Woodhouse | 21% | 37% | 59% |
| Killingbeck | 45% | 8% | 53% |
| Middleton Park | 38% | 14% | 52% |
| Burmantofts and Richmond Hill | 38% | 12% | 50% |

* BME data needs to be treated with some caution given the limited number of survey returns made by households from BME communities.

The Council has limited powers to influence energy prices and therefore the focus of the Leeds Housing Strategy will be on action to promote energy efficiency as a means of reducing energy costs and eliminating excess cold.

The Fuelsavers Team has run a number of initiatives, designed to tackle fuel poverty amongst the most vulnerable households, such as 'Health through Warmth' and 'Warm Front'. The Leeds Housing Strategy recommends that the Council look beyond these initiatives to turn Leeds into a 'Warm Zone' area. There are currently 13 'Warm Zone' areas in the UK, including one covering the Kirklees authority area.



Case Study: Warm Zones

Warm Zones give every household in the catchment area the opportunity to better insulate their homes and to make their homes warmer, reduce energy consumption and cost, reduce carbon emissions and to make a positive contribution to the environment. The scheme works on a ward-by-ward basis, by carrying out initial doorstep assessments and then more detailed surveys to establish the improvements required. All households are entitled to loft and cavity wall insulation, with households in fuel poverty, on income related benefits or occupying hard to treat homes offered improvements to heating systems. All households also receive benefit entitlement and energy efficiency advice.

Warm Fronts are part funded through governmental and EU funding, but it is anticipated that additional funding will be secured through the local authority, ALMOs and NHS Trust.

The Kirklees 'Warm Zone' covers the period 2007 to 2010. In February 2009, the scheme had achieved the following:

- 4760 homes fitted with loft insulation and 2485 with cavity wall insulation
- 11,500 homes given energy saving light bulbs
- Carbon monoxide monitors given to 17,277 households
- Created 76 full time equivalent jobs in carrying out insulation work

The existing neighbourhood analysis of fuel poverty rates will enable the Council to prioritise the delivery of the 'Warm Zone' in the council wards with the highest levels of fuel poverty. The establishment of a Leeds 'Warm Zone' would be dependent upon Council officers receiving approval from members and it will be important to demonstrate the wider health and wellbeing and employment benefits that could be generated through the initiative. The Council could also benefit by using the best practice developed through 'Warm Zone' initiatives in other areas, especially Kirklees. Reference could be made to the Kirklees scheme, specifically to how they are tackling issues associated with older housing stock. The Council has also commissioned the Building Research Establishment to carry out a study on how energy efficiency can be maximised in hard to treat properties. Back-to-back housing is particularly difficult to treat as the hard external walls make it problematic to carry out cavity wall insulation and the roof void, where insulation is placed, is often used as an attic room. The development of a 'Warm Zone' in Leeds will make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse emissions emanating from housing stock and improving the rating of housing against the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The challenge of improving housing quality in relation to older housing stock, especially back-to-back housing is a key action within the Leeds Housing Strategy. There are approximately 19,500 back-to-back units in the city, with this housing form being almost unique to the West Yorkshire region and most prevalent in Leeds.

The Council commissioned Re'new to develop a Back-to-Back Housing Strategy in 2008 and the Leeds Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey made significant reference to this housing form. Approximately 73% of back-to-back housing fails the decency standard, most commonly because of Category 1 hazards such as excess cold (difficulties associated with insulating properties), limited escape routes in event of fire (one door exit) and increased risk of falls (steep and narrow staircases). There are limitations on the action that can be taken to address these hazards, albeit that the findings of the Building Research Establishment work could inform future action.

Back-to-back housing is not a homogenous housing form and represents an attractive housing option for many people, especially as a starter home for younger, economically active people with no life affecting illnesses, who are able to contend with the property defects. However, around 62% of the housing form is concentrated in areas of the city, such as Harehills, Cross Green and Beeston, and this concentration exacerbates the deprivation, through high density living, high stock turnover and poor environmental conditions, in these areas. It is estimated that around 13,000 back-to-back units will still be in use in 2050 and it is important that the sustainability of these units is considered. Indeed, the Back-to-Back Housing Strategy makes the point that the housing form could remain an attractive housing option for many households, especially first time buyers, if a viable investment strategy was developed.

The Back-to-Back Housing Strategy estimated that around £377.9 million of funding would be required to replace, convert or refurbish the worst forms of back-to-back housing in the city over the next 25 years. This equates to around £15.1 million per annum and assumes government funding of around £1.9 million per year, which would lever in around £13.4 million of private sector investment. The uniqueness of the back-to-back housing form to the West Yorkshire region could represent a strong argument to secure additional investment through the Homes and Communities Agency. It is debatable whether a model based upon generating private sector investment of approximately 90% of total cost is viable in the current economic climate. An action plan, including investment submissions to the Homes and Communities Agency, will need to be drawn up.

Many back-to-backs, and other pre-1919 private housing, are located in poor environmental conditions. Work to 'green' areas (improving green space, environmental amenity and appearance) where back-to-backs are concentrated, allied to property improvements, could enhance the attractiveness of this housing option.

Clearance of obsolete housing stock and group repair schemes are key elements of existing programmes to address poor quality housing. The Council receives funding through the Regional Housing Board to acquire and clear obsolete stock. The land released through this work is being placed in the Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership portfolio for development. The Regional Housing Board funding is also used to finance group repair work, in the Beeston Hill and Burley Lodge areas, improving the external fabric of properties. The Council is considering the feasibility of seeking an additional £20 million through the Homes and Communities Agency to extend the group repair programmes.

The Council will continue to provide options such as Home Improvement Equity Loans to encourage property owners to bring housing stock up to the decency standard.

Case Study: Home Improvement Equity Loans

Homeowners in Leeds are entitled to apply for an equity loan of up to 30% to make improvements to their properties. The loan option is part of the regional scheme that is administered by Sheffield City Council for the Yorkshire and Humber region. A key criteria of a loan being agreed is that the property must be of a decent standard upon completion of improvement work. The Council helps to steer the improvement work to ensure that the loan is used for the right purpose and the decency standard is met. Once properties are sold in the future, the percentage of the sale price relating to the original loan is paid back to the Council with proceeds being recycled back into the service, enabling it to become self-sustaining.

Securing additional investment to improve private sector housing is one of the key housing challenges for the city. The Homes and Communities Agency are considering the feasibility of using grant to attract institutional investment including pension funds. Investment could be used to purchase/improve housing that could be let within the private rented sector. It is believed that an annual return of 8% could be attractive to institutional investors.

Key Actions

1. Establish a Private Sector Housing Strategy Partnership Board
2. Commission Sheffield Hallam University to establish health and wellbeing benefits of housing improvement programmes
3. Study Liverpool model and identify health and wellbeing benefits generated through housing investment
4. The Council and NHS Leeds to develop a joint strategic approach to reducing the rate of infant mortality in the city
5. Draw up a business plan in 2009/10 setting out the rationale for establishing a 'Warm Zone' in Leeds
6. Secure member and other investment partner support for establishment of 'Warm Zone' in Leeds
7. Identify delivery partners to provide 'Warm Zone' through a procurement process
8. Identify best practice from other 'Warm Zones' including identifying direct benefits to health and wellbeing levels generated through these initiatives
9. Implement 'Warm Zone' in Leeds from beginning of 2010/11 with initial focus on five wards with highest levels of fuel poverty
10. Reduce the number of Older People living in fuel poverty. Providing services and customer care to enable Older People to take-up and benefit from the energy advice service.
11. Reduce the number of BME people living in fuel poverty. Providing services and customer care to enable BME people to take- up and benefit from the energy advice service.
10. Develop back-to-back housing action plan, targeting intervention on identified units and determining type of intervention required.
11. Develop investment proposals to Homes and Communities Agency to tackle the back-to-back challenge, including realistic assumption of private sector investment that can be levered in.
12. Identify feasibility of securing Homes and Community Agency funding to expand existing group repair programmes
13. Increase take-up of Home Improvement Equity Loan option
14. Target BME people and older people for Home Improvement Loan option through raising awareness and take up.
15. Council to work with partner agencies to identify funding opportunities for environmental improvement and uplift
16. Identify opportunities to secure Homes and Communities Agency funding to attract additional institutional investment that could be used to improve and stimulate the private rented sector.

Key Targets

| Measure | 2008/09 baseline | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Number of private sector properties made decent (Minimum) | 787 | 600 | 600 | 600 |
| % of Leeds residents receiving income based benefits living in housing with low energy efficiency rating – below SAP rating of 35 (Maximum) NI187 | 6.64% | 5.86% | 4.89% | 4.31% |
| % of private properties with SAP rating of 65 or above | 35.05% | 37.44% | 38.22% | 41.87% |
| Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the Leeds area | 0.3% reduction | 1.8% reduction | 1.8% reduction | 1.8% reduction |
| Number of Leeds households receiving energy efficiency grants or loans | 10,500 | 10,650 | 10,800 | 10,950 |
| Number of Leeds households taking up offer of Home Improvement Loan | 512 | 500 | 500 | 500 |

Strategic Priority 10: Continue to improve standards in the private-rented sector

Leeds has a diverse private rented sector, comprising 41,660 dwellings (13% of total stock) and a number of different markets: new build in the city centre, traditional student provision in the north-west of the city and older self-contained or multiply occupied housing in the inner urban areas.

The private rented sector plays a vital role in the Leeds 'housing ladder', it is the tenure of choice for many people and will be an increasingly important housing option over the term of the Leeds Housing Strategy. One of the key attributes of the private rented is its flexibility, adaptability and ease of access in comparison to other tenures. The private rented sector has been identified over a long period of time as a tenure that can facilitate labour mobility and therefore will play a critical

role in the forecasted employment growth in the Leeds district. The private rented sector also contains many landlords who pride themselves on offering high quality housing and excellent standards of housing management.

Despite the many vibrant aspects of the private rented sector, it also contains the highest proportion of poor housing, with approximately 44% of stock (18,330 properties) failing the decency standard. This compares unfavourably to ALMO managed housing (forecast that 10% will be non-decent by the end of 2009/10) and the owner-occupied sector, which has a non-decent rate of 31%.

Approximately, 56% of privately rented housing was built before 1919 (compared to 20% of owner-occupied stock) and therefore is more likely to suffer from difficult to treat Category 1 hazards of excess cold, limited fire escape routes and high risk of falls. The worst forms of private rented housing are concentrated in Beeston, Cross Green and Harehills.

A significant proportion of the back-to-back housing form is incorporated within the private rented housing market. The private rented sector also contains a number of landlords who offer poor quality housing and management and charge rents that do not equate to the standard of service provided.

The proposals for action set out in the strategic priorities to improve private sector housing decency and sustainability, especially those relating to developing viable investment strategies, also apply to the challenge of continuing to improve standards in the private rented sector. The Leeds Housing Strategy, and its contributory strategy for private rented housing in Leeds, will set out plans to use enforcement action and to promote self-regulation as a means of improving standards. The contraction in the availability of social housing and more limited access to home-ownership means that the private rented sector will be an increasingly important housing option, especially for people who are in some form of acute housing need. The Leeds Housing Strategy needs to embrace the opportunities that the private rented sector provides, and this includes housing services viewing private landlords as customers. Housing services, especially within the Council, need to examine current service practice, to identify whether it creates an unnecessary deterrent to property owners letting and investing in their stock.

The Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme is a key component of the drive to promote self-regulation and improve standards of landlordism within the private rented market. The scheme is administered through the Council.

Accredited landlords are obliged to ensure that their properties conform to a high standard of repair and maintenance and

do not contain hazards that would be prejudicial to the health and wellbeing of tenants or their visitors. Landlords are also required to comply with legal obligations in relation to property and tenancy management. Property inspections are carried out as part of the scheme acceptance process to ensure that it conforms to the necessary standards of repair and maintenance. Property improvement plans are drawn up if stock fails to comply with the required standard. Landlords benefit from membership of the scheme through the dissemination of good practice from other landlords and the provision of advice from Council officers. Membership of the scheme may make them more attractive to prospective tenants as a reputable landlord. Accredited landlords also benefit from a range of concessions relating to the removal of household waste.

The Leeds Landlord Accreditation scheme had 470 landlord members on 1 November 2009, covering 19,662 bedspaces. Member landlords tend to have housing stock located in the north west of the city. This means that accreditation is not necessarily covering private-rented housing located in the inner urban areas of the city, which is more likely to be non-decent and contain Category 1 hazards. The Council has set a target to increase the number of accredited bedspaces to 20,000 by the end of 2009/10. The Council is investigating the feasibility of establishing a Managing Agents scheme in the city. It is envisaged that such developments could increase the number of accredited bedspaces to around 80%. The Council has also noted the call from many accredited landlords to establish a tenant referencing scheme in the city. Middlesbrough has a good example of a tenant-referencing scheme that could be a blueprint for a Leeds scheme.

The Leeds Supporting People programme has also recently commissioned Stonham HA to provide a Pre-Tenancy Training scheme on a pilot basis.

Stonham HA Pre-Tenancy Training Scheme

The aim of the service was to deliver a minimum of 2 training programmes to a total of 20 clients to enable people who may not have previously been responsible for their own tenancy, or have struggled to maintain tenancies, to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to live independently and responsibly. Stonham HA has experience of delivering similar services in other areas of the country and are involved in a Pre-Tenancy Training scheme in Calderdale.

Pre-Tenancy Training is usually provided in conjunction with housing related support and topics covered may include applying for housing locally, rights and responsibilities, money management, living skills and home making, and environmental issues. Stonham delivered the modules in partnership with other agencies where appropriate, such as the CAB and the Fire service. The future aim of the service is to work towards clients delivering elements of the sessions and providing peer input to enhance the effectiveness of the service.

Pre-Tenancy Training is developed in partnership with housing providers to ensure that the training gives partners confidence in potential tenants, and in return it is expected that completion of Pre-Tenancy Training will enable vulnerable tenants, and those with a poor tenant history, to receive favourable consideration from housing providers. The training may also be made available to tenants living in housing providers' properties, but who may be struggling to maintain their own tenancy.

The Supporting People programme will need to consider the success of this project and take a view on whether the service can be funded on a longer-term basis.

Landlord feedback has also suggested that increasing the range of waste disposal concessions to include items such as mattresses, beds, sofas, carpets and construction waste could encourage landlords to join the accreditation scheme.

Property licensing is a key element of the enforcement programme to drive up standards in the private rented sector. The 2004 Housing Act requires that Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) be subject to licensing through the Council. HMOs tend to represent a poorer form of housing provision than self-contained units, especially in relation to fire safety standards, overcrowding, inadequate facilities and poor housing management. The licensing process will enable the Council to ensure that property standards conform to a reasonable standard for occupation, including landlords being obliged to address Category 1 hazards. Properties will need to comply with minimum standards in relation to the number of washing, cooking and toilet facilities and the property owner/manager will need to demonstrate that they are a fit and proper person to let out housing. Licensed landlords can potentially benefit from the initiative, as they can demonstrate that they are providing a better service than unlicensed landlords. The Leeds Private Sector Stock Condition Survey estimated that there were 6,600 HMO bedspaces in the city.

Approximately 2,500 HMO bed spaces had been licensed by the end of February 2009, and the Council is committed to licensing all units by the end of the new Leeds Housing Strategy term. The 2004 Housing Act also enables local authorities to carry out selective licensing on private sector housing situated in areas characterised by poor quality housing, low demand, poor management standards and persistent anti-social behaviour. In October 2009, the Council introduced selective licensing in the Cross Green/East End Park area, which covers around 400 properties.

The Council's reconfigured housing options services will have a key role in improving standards in the private rented sector. The private sector lettings service, which sits within the housing options service, is currently working with 124 accredited landlords to offer assured shorthold tenancies as a homeless prevention option. The housing stock used is predominantly within the inner urban areas and therefore the scheme is contributing towards increasing the number of accredited landlords operating outside the north west area of the city. Property inspections are carried out as standard and this differs from the existing Landlord Accreditation Scheme, which does not inspect every property in a landlord's portfolio. The service carries out a range of checks on prospective tenants prior to putting them forward to landlords and this represents a prototype for a city-wide tenant referencing scheme.

Housing options workers also negotiate rental charges below the Local Housing Allowance cap to a level that reflects the quality and location of the housing provided.

The housing options service will need to provide proactive housing advice to both tenants and landlords on tenancy law relating to repair obligations and possession proceedings. Officers from the housing options service should, wherever possible, negotiate with both parties to identify whether a resolution can be achieved that enables the tenant to remain living in the accommodation, provided it is in a reasonable condition. Tenants are entitled to remain in a private rented property for the duration of the fixed period of a tenancy and for a further notice period of two months. It is not appropriate to advise tenants to remain in a property, after the expiry of a notice period, until a bailiff warrant for possession has been executed. The Council does not have policies requiring this advice to be given, but have noted concerns raised by landlords and can make a commitment that no such advice will occur in the future. The Leeds Housing Strategy also recognises that providers of floating housing support often work with vulnerable people who are accommodated in poor standards of private rented housing. Such service providers have a vital role in alerting Council enforcement and advice services to poor standards of accommodation and landlord practice in the private rented sector.

Key Actions

1. Update the existing Private Rented Housing Strategy
2. Develop viable investment strategies to address the worst forms of private rented housing in the city
3. Encourage landlords to become members of the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme, especially those with stock located in the inner urban areas of the city
4. Identify further benefits that can be offered to accredited landlords to encourage membership
5. Investigate the feasibility of establishing an Accredited Managing Agents scheme
6. Consider the feasibility of establishing a Tenant Reference scheme across the city or regionally
7. Consider the feasibility of commissioning a Pre-Tenancy Training Scheme on a longer-term basis.
8. Continue to operate mandatory HMO licensing across the city
9. Introduce selective licensing in the Cross Green and East End Park areas of the city
10. Continue to develop the private sector lettings scheme through the reconfigured housing options service
11. Improve standards of housing advice given to landlords and tenants through the reconfigured housing options service including encouraging membership of the Leeds Landlord Accreditation scheme

Key Targets

| Measure | 2008/09 baseline | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of private sector properties made decent. | 787 | 600 | 600 | 600 |
| Number of bed spaces accredited under the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme (Minimum) | 18,000 | 20,000 | 22,000 | 24,000 |
| Number of licensed HMO bedspaces (cumulative) | 2,600 | 2,750 | 2,900 | 3,050 |
| Number of houses subject to selective licensing (cumulative) | NA | 250 | 400 | 410 |
| Number of private sector lettings made through the housing options service | 426 | 720 | 760 | 800 |
| Number of homeless preventions relating to tenants enabled to remain indefinitely in private rented tenancy (Minimum) | 40 | 100 | 125 | 150 |

Strategic Priority 11: Improve the standard of temporary accommodation leased through the private sector

Demand for temporary accommodation is such that provision commissioned through the Supporting People programme (hostels, refuges and other supported self-contained accommodation) is insufficient to meet demand. The Council currently has a contract with three private sector providers who supply additional units of temporary accommodation. In June 2009, there were approximately 160 households accommodated with the private providers, with around 131 of these being families with dependent children. The Council is committed to reducing temporary accommodation placements to no more than 210 households per night by the end of March 2010, which would include no more than 100 households placed with private providers.

The contract with the private providers expires at the end of 2009 and the Council is currently developing a specification to re-tender the service. The Council is aware that there are significant concerns regarding the quality of housing provided by the current contractors. The tender specification will place a significant emphasis on the quality of housing provided, with at least 60% of the tender score relating to quality submissions. The following conditions will be set out within the tender specification.

- The successful contractor(s) will be members of the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- All properties that will be used a temporary accommodation must be owned by the contractor and therefore subject to assessment under the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- All properties will be subject to inspection by the Council prior to them being made available for use
- All properties used for temporary accommodation will be inspected on an annual basis (minimum)
- The contractor(s) will be required to carry out a Housing Health and Safety Rating System assessment for each property used in the contract
- It will not be permissible to use properties with Category 1 hazards or in serious disrepair until these are addressed
- HMO units are not suitable for couples
- Gas safety checks must be carried out annually and electrical safety checks at least every five years
- Back-to-Back housing should only be used in exceptional circumstances and then only when it conforms to the Council's guidance on fire safety principles in residential accommodation
- Ventilation in kitchens and bathrooms should conform with Building Regulations

Customers are able to request a statutory review if they believe that the temporary accommodation they have been allocated is unsuitable. The Council will need to strengthen the use of the statutory review process to identify and address poor standards of temporary accommodation. It will also be important for supported housing providers to use the statutory review process to highlight poor standards of temporary accommodation given to households who are being provided with support.

Temporary accommodation leased through the private sector is currently concentrated in two council wards: Gipton and Harehills and Richmond Hill and Burmantofts. The tendering process will require the successful contractor(s) to supply housing in a wider range of locations.

Key Actions

1. Re-tender the current private sector temporary accommodation contract by the end of December 2009
2. New service contract to include a range of housing standard conditions
3. Carry out inspections of all temporary accommodation leased through the private sector
4. Use the statutory review process to identify and address poor standards of accommodation
5. Service contracts to include penalty conditions relating to poor standards of accommodation
6. Develop contingency plan to ensure contractual capacity is maintained in the event of Council terminating arrangements with particular provider
7. Temporary accommodation leased through the private sector located in a wider range of areas.

Strategic Theme 3: Promoting Independent Living

Promoting independent living and enabling people to exercise choice and control over their lives are consistent themes within strategy development for vulnerable people. The Housing Strategy sets out the contribution housing and housing services can play in improving the health and wellbeing of the people of Leeds. The 'Health and Wellbeing' theme of the Leeds Strategic Plan includes a strategic outcome 'Improved quality of life through maximising the potential of vulnerable people by promoting independence, dignity and respect'. The strategic priorities and actions set out within the Housing Strategy will also reflect the drive towards developing personalised services, which better reflect the requirements and choices of individual service users.

People are assisted to achieve and/or maintain an independent living outcome through a range of housing services: such as housing options and advice, housing-related support, adaptations and assistive technology. Prevention is a key component of the independent living strategic theme, especially in relation to preventing accommodation loss that requires an individual or family to move to some form of institutional living such as hostel or residential care. The 'Promoting Independent Living' strategic theme will set out how the Council and its partners intend to tackle some of the most chronic manifestations of the housing challenge in Leeds, such as reducing the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation and rough sleeping. The Housing Strategy will have regard for the impact that living in temporary accommodation and rough sleeping has on family life, individual health and wellbeing, and the capacity of children to thrive and to realise their potential. The Housing Strategy will consider how housing options and housing-related support services will contribute to the safeguarding agenda for vulnerable adults and children. Plans and actions relating to modernising housing provision for groups such as older people and people with learning disabilities also reflect the aim of promoting independent living. The Housing Strategy will consider how this modernisation agenda can contribute to wider priorities such as reducing the need for vulnerable people to live in residential care settings.

The strategic priorities for the 'Promoting Independent Living' strategic theme are as follows:

- l** Deliver high quality and enhanced housing options services so that people are able to find a solution to their housing need or requirement
 - m** Maximise opportunities to prevent homelessness
 - n** Reduce the incidence of temporary accommodation and rough sleeping
 - o** Enable people to live independently through housing-related support, adaptations, lettings and assistive technology
 - p** Modernise housing provision for vulnerable people
 - q** Contribute to promoting community cohesion, reducing worklessness and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
- R. Encourage and enhance mechanisms for tenant/resident engagement and empowerment

The 'Promoting Independent Living' Theme will contribute to a range of strategic outcomes and improvement priorities, set out within the Leeds Strategic Plan. These include:

| Theme | Strategic Outcome | Improvement Priority |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced health inequalities through the promotion of healthy life choices and improved access to services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable children and adults through better information, recognition and response to risk |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved quality of life through maximising the potential of vulnerable people by promoting independence, dignity and respect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the proportion of people in receipt of community services enjoying choice and control over their daily lives |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced safety and support for vulnerable people through preventative and protective action to minimise risks and maximise wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve psychological, mental health and learning disabilities services for all those who need it |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the number of vulnerable people helped to live at home |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve assessment and care management for children, families and vulnerable adults |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce premature mortality in the most deprived areas |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved quality of life through mixed neighbourhoods offering housing options and better access to services and activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction in the number of homeless people |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create safer environments by tackling crime |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced crime through prevention, detection, offender management, victim support and changing behaviours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve life by reducing the harm caused by substance misuse |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce offending by managing offending behaviour better. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced worklessness across the city with a focus on deprived areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce worklessness across the city with a focus on deprived areas |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the sense of belonging and pride in local neighbourhoods that help to build cohesive communities |
| Harmonious Communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved community cohesion and integration through meaningful involvement and valuing equality and diversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the sense of belonging and pride in local neighbourhoods that help to build cohesive communities |

The 'Promoting Independent Living' theme also contributes to the following performance indicators, which are included within the National Indicator Set (highlighted in bold if also included in the Leeds Local Area Agreement):

- NI141:** **Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living**
- NI187:** **Tackling fuel poverty**
- Reduce number of homeless people (Local Performance Indicator)**
- NI139:** **Older people helped to live at home**
- NI30:** **Re-offending rate of priority and prolific offenders**
- NI142:** Number of vulnerable people maintaining independent living
- NI156:** Number of households living in temporary accommodation
- NI1:** Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- NI2:** Percentage of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood
- NI4:** % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
- NI32:** Repeat incidents of domestic violence
- NI119:** Self reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing
- NI131:** Delayed transfers of care from hospitals
- NI143:** Proportion of offenders under probation supervision in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence
- NI145:** Proportion of adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation
- NI147:** Proportion of former care leavers aged 19 who are in settled accommodation
- NI149:** Proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation



Strategic Priority L: Deliver high quality and enhanced housing options services so that people are able to find a solution to their housing need

Strategic Priority M: Maximise opportunities to prevent homelessness

Strategic Priority N: Minimise temporary accommodation placements and rough sleeping

Addressing the housing needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness is one of the key strategic housing priorities for the city. The traditional route out of homelessness, via a temporary accommodation placement and social housing letting, is becoming increasingly less feasible, given the contraction in the social housing stock. At the same time, the government has directed local authorities to reorganise homeless and advice services around a housing options model, so that homeless prevention opportunities are maximised. The government has set all local authorities a target to halve the number of households placed in temporary accommodation by the end of March 2010.

The Council has therefore embarked upon a transformation programme, centred around services provided at the Leeds Housing Options Service (formerly Homelessness Advice and Prevention Service), to deliver a high quality and enhanced housing options service. The transformed service will focus on opportunities to prevent and end homelessness and this, in turn, will contribute to reducing temporary accommodation placements and the incidence of rough sleeping in the city.

The service change programme is framed around a number of key principles:

Personalisation: housing options services need to respond to an individual's specific housing needs. Standardised advice services, offering a homeless assessment as a passport to temporary accommodation and a social housing let, may miss the opportunity to prevent homelessness.

Organisation: Housing Options services must be organised with an emphasis on customer facing staff whose role is to prevent homelessness, in the first instance.

Legal Focus: People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness enjoy a range of legal rights. It is important that these rights be observed.

Well-Trained Staff: an effective housing options service requires well-trained staff across a range of housing-related disciplines.

Customer Choice: customers often prefer to remain living in their existing homes and housing options services should do everything possible to facilitate such outcomes. The option of a temporary accommodation placement and rehousing through a social landlord will remain the preferred one for many people.

Realistic Advice: it is essential that customers be given realistic advice on the housing options available to them.

Empowerment: The Council and partners can only offer customer's different housing options; it is for the customer to decide on the housing solution that best meets their needs.

Safeguarding: Housing options services should play a critical role in protecting vulnerable adults and children from abuse. All staff working in the housing options service will receive training on safeguarding issues.

Changing Markets: The contraction in social housing stock and reduced access to home-ownership may mean that some customers have to consider other housing options, such as the private-rented sector. Housing options services need to be alive to emerging opportunities, such as preventing homelessness through mortgage rescue initiatives.

Partnership: Effective housing options services work in close collaboration with a range of partners and are an access point for a range of services such as affordable housing and mortgage rescue initiatives, housing-related support and private rented accommodation.

Customer Focus: Staff offering housing options services should put customer service at the centre of everything they do. Other housing practitioners, such as private landlords, social landlords and supported housing providers, are also customers of a housing options service.

Branding: The Homelessness Advice and Prevention Service has been renamed Leeds Housing Options Service.

Case Study: Sanctuary Scheme

Historically, the main cause of homelessness in Leeds is domestic violence and hate crime. Leeds has developed a Sanctuary Scheme to help people who have experienced domestic violence or hate crime to remain in their own home, if that is their choice. The scheme involves the installation of a range of security measures, which can include an emergency alarm, to create a 'safer' living environment. The scheme is a partnership between the Council, West Yorkshire Police and a local contractor, CASAC. Domestic Violence Co-ordinators, employed by the police, carry out an assessment of a customer's suitability for the scheme and decide on the range of security measures required. CASAC deliver the installation service, with the emergency alarm service provided by the Council's Care Ring Service.

Since the scheme started in July 2006, 1020 households have been enabled to remain in their existing homes through the provision of a Sanctuary installation. Monitoring has also indicated that around 5% of applicants subsequently made a homeless application because they continued to feel unsafe. This suggests a prevention success rate of approximately 95%. The scheme has cost the Council approximately £550,000 since July 2006, but has generated significant savings in relation to reduced temporary accommodation placements, and for social landlords in terms of not having to void and re-let properties. The scheme enables people who have experienced domestic violence to remain living independently in their own home, to exercise choice and control over their housing arrangements and has contributed to improved health and wellbeing, with families being able to maintain existing social networks, access to healthcare and school placements.

The Sanctuary installation service has been re-tendered with CASAC being awarded a further two-year contract from April 2009.



The Leeds Housing Options Service will focus on maximising homeless prevention opportunities. Homeless prevention activity is targeted at tackling the main causes of homelessness in the city, which are detailed in the quarterly P1E return to Central Government. The Sanctuary Scheme (see Sanctuary Scheme case study) will continue to be a key component in the homeless prevention strategy. The second most common reason for homelessness in Leeds is young people having a relationship breakdown with parents. The Council commissions a local youth agency, Archway, to provide a mediation service for young people.

The mediation service aims to help young people reconcile relations with their parents so they can return home indefinitely, on a temporary basis so that they can make a planned move to their own accommodation or simply to improve relations to a point where the parent can provide assistance to the young person in their own independent accommodation. In 2008/09 182 young people were prevented from becoming homeless through mediation. The Council is currently in the process of tendering the contract to provide the mediation service. The organisation who are successful in securing the contract for the mediation service will be commissioned to provide the service from 1 December 2009.

Termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancy is the third most common reason for homelessness in Leeds. The reconfigured housing options service will focus on opportunities to prevent homelessness relating to loss of private rented accommodation. This will require housing options workers to be proactively engaging with private landlords and tenants to resolve disputes that could lead to accommodation loss.

It will also require effective partnership working between housing options services and the Council's Environmental Services, which leads on taking enforcement action against landlords who are failing to fulfil tenancy obligations, such as repairs, or are trying to unlawfully evict a tenant. The Council will also continue to work with Mediation Leeds, which offers a mediation service for landlords and tenants.

The Council will also need to be alive to emerging opportunities to prevent homelessness. The downturn in the economy/housing markets will mean that an increasing number of people will require a housing options service relating to mortgage default and home repossession. Staff at the Leeds Housing Options Service will need to use a range of options to help people who are threatened with repossession due to mortgage default including mortgage rescue, Home Owners Mortgage Support scheme (deferral of mortgage interest payments), Support for Mortgage Interest (payment of mortgage interest for people in receipt of income based benefits) and ensuring that lenders are adhering to the Pre-Action Possession protocol. The government has also given the Council funding to develop a Possession Prevention Fund, which could be used to offer interest free loans to people who are threatened with eviction due to non-payment of mortgage or rent (see case study Homeless Prevention Fund).

Case Study: Homeless Prevention Fund

Leeds City Council has established a Homeless Prevention Fund using grant funding from Central Government. The aim of the fund is to facilitate homeless preventions through making 'spend to save' investments that result in a household being able to stay in their existing home or make a planned move to appropriate accommodation. The parameters within which the fund can operate are relatively flexible; the most important criteria is to be able to demonstrate that by spending to secure a homeless prevention outcome, a greater saving will be generated in the long-term. Although the fund has only recently been established, a number of homeless prevention outcomes have been achieved.

The fund has been used to help households who are threatened with homelessness to secure a private rented tenancy. For example, one household wished to be re-housed in the Otley area and had found their own private rented tenancy. Although they were able to pay the rent in advance of £575, they were unable to afford the deposit of £600 required to secure the tenancy. There is no temporary accommodation in Otley and likely waiting times for an ALMO let in the area were estimated at 120 weeks. The cost of keeping the household in temporary accommodation in the city was estimated at £19,200. Therefore making an investment of £600 to pay the deposit on behalf of the household, enabled the Leeds Housing Options Service to make a saving of around £18,600.

The fund has also been used to help households who face eviction because of rent arrears to remain in their property. The relatively modest cost of paying part of a household's rent arrears through the fund has helped to achieve a number of homeless prevention outcomes. Significant savings have also been generated by enabling households to remain in their properties: the cost that would ordinarily have been incurred from making temporary accommodation placements, from having void Council properties and from having to re-let Council properties.

Enabling a household to stay in their existing home or move to alternative settled accommodation has significant benefits for the household: a stable living arrangement will promote the health and wellbeing of a household, promotes the capacity of a child to excel in education and other development and encourages adults to seek employment, education and training opportunities.

The fund has also be used to help repatriate rough sleepers who have no recourse to public funds by paying for travel expenses to enable their return to their home country. The relatively small cost (approximately £100 - £200 per person) incurred through paying for the repatriation of a rough sleeper generates significant savings for the NHS in relation to the cost of treating rough sleepers, the Criminal Justice System in terms of anti-social behaviour caused by rough sleeping, and the UK Border Agency in terms of deportation.

The fund has become a key element of the Housing Options Service focus on achieving homeless prevention outcomes. It is estimated that the first £4,500 spent through the fund has generated savings of around £100,000. It will be a priority to look to maximise homeless prevention outcomes through the fund and to explore long term funding opportunities. Securing additional units of longer-term accommodation is another key element of the enhanced housing options service/drive to prevent homelessness. The Council has established a Private Lettings Service, which offers people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, the opportunity to accept an Assured Shorthold Tenancy from an accredited private landlord, as an alternative to making a homeless application. The scheme has a target of achieving a minimum of 60 lettings per month. Available properties must meet requisite condition standards and housing options staff negotiate with landlords to agree appropriate rental charges. There had been an indication from landlords that the provision of ongoing support for tenants would increase the number of lettings made. The Council has subsequently made arrangements for housing-related support to be provided to vulnerable tenants who accept an Assured Shorthold Tenancy through the Private Lettings Service.

The government has set all local authorities a target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation, from a base position at December 2004, by the end of March 2010. There were 521 homeless households placed in temporary accommodation at the end of December 2004, and therefore the Leeds target is to reduce temporary accommodation levels to no more than 261 households by the end of March 2010. At the end of September 2009, 179 households were placed in temporary accommodation, 79 of these were accommodated in stock leased from private landlords, with the remainder placed in units provided by Supporting People commissioned services. The target has therefore been achieved but the Council and partners will need to continue to drive down temporary accommodation numbers, especially those leased through the private sector.

There are no plans to reduce the number of Supporting People commissioned units for homeless households. Nevertheless, Supporting People commissioned services will play an important role in improving service throughput and releasing accommodation for new placements. Supporting People commissioned services will be encouraged to use the Private Sector Lettings Scheme at the Housing Options Services as a rehousing option. The Leeds Supporting People Partnership transferred two Supporting People commissioned services, TEAS and Resettlement Service, from the Council to Foundation Housing in January 2009. TEAS is an important service as it offers housing support to households placed with private providers. The Leeds Supporting People Partnership will be seeking improvements in service utilisation levels, which should improve rehousing levels/throughput from the private sector leased temporary accommodation.

The Resettlement Service has historically worked with formerly homeless households rehoused in ALMO managed stock; however, the Leeds Supporting People Partnership will be looking for the transferred service to work with customers who have signed up for tenancies secured through the Private Sector Lettings Scheme.

Leeds has made significant progress in recent years in reducing the number of rough sleepers in the city: in October 2002, a headcount identified 43 rough sleepers; a comparable headcount in June 2008 identified six individuals. Rough sleeping levels, identified through formal headcounts, have been stable at no more than 10 individuals for the last couple of years. The Council has a dedicated Rough Sleepers Co-ordinator, funded through CLG Homelessness Grant, and commissions an independent organisation, CRI, to provide a Street Outreach Service. The team is responsible for identifying rough sleepers in the city and putting in place appropriate support packages to help them secure and maintain appropriate housing options. The Council is also looking to work closely with CREATE, a Social Enterprise, that provides innovative support to rough sleepers in the city.

Case Study: CREATE

Create Leeds is a Social Enterprise developing training and employment opportunities for vulnerable homeless people including long term rough sleepers. It is a government Regional Champion in combating rough sleeping through social enterprise, and is the Lord Mayor of Leeds Charity of the Year.

Create identified that training and qualifications do not necessarily lead to employment, particularly where a service user has experienced homelessness and other issues such as offending or mental health problems. Create found however that corporate supporters were happy to employ staff who had worked at Create for a period and had received positive references.

Create assisted 20 people into full time work in its first year in addition to its voluntary placements and now has a number of corporate catering contracts through its outside catering business. Create runs 2 cafes in which staff have to deal with customers and complaints, as well as handling cash. The recently opened 'Found by Create' occupies a premium space in the St John's Centre, selling used donated boutique clothes. Create also has a 'tenancy end' cleaning operation, and operates a 'Fair Share' franchise, redistributing excess food products from producers and retailers out of its warehouse. Here, staff learn warehousing skills including fork-lift driving. Create also provides consultancy services for other developing Social Enterprises in its Regional Champion role.

The work of Create helps to break the link between homelessness and worklessness. The skills learned as well as the pattern of regular work enables staff to gain employment experience whilst helping break many of the routines of a street homeless lifestyle. A 'stepping stone' approach is adopted, where a staff member may begin volunteering with Create whilst living in hostel accommodation, but on moving into independent living, Create will attempt to identify a full time post. Create has also made corporate links, including with Morrison's, to provide employment opportunities to members of staff who have successfully completed Create volunteering placements. This approach can successfully provide a route out of long term rough sleeping.

In November 2008, the government launched a new rough sleeper's strategy 'No One Left Out – Communities Ending Rough Sleeping'. The Rough Sleeper's Strategy sets out the target to eradicate rough sleeping by 2012 and is framed around 15 key actions. These key actions include ensuring that rough sleepers have access to housing options services, have their legal rights as homeless applicants observed and that private rented lettings schemes are used as a rehousing option. The Council will ensure that rough sleepers have improved access to services at the remodelled housing options service.

The rough sleeper's strategy also identifies rough sleeping amongst migrant communities as a key priority and this is a significant issue in Leeds as well. Feedback from the Street User Team has identified an increase in rough sleeping amongst asylum seekers with no recourse to public funds and refugees, especially from Eritrea, who have been dispersed to other areas and therefore have no local connection to the Leeds area. Whilst Leeds City Council may not have a duty to secure accommodation for such households it is important that they are offered comprehensive and effective housing options services so they can secure suitable accommodation, whether that be in Leeds or elsewhere.



Key Actions

1. Establish a multi-agency homelessness forum and update the existing Leeds Homelessness Strategy
2. Transform re-branded Leeds Housing Options Service to maximise homeless prevention outcomes and deliver a wider range of housing options
3. Provide a range of housing options services to prevent homelessness relating to mortgage and rent arrears
4. Develop Leeds Homes website to give customers unique bidding accounts through ArcHouse Plus development
5. Deliver an ongoing programme of training on housing law and housing options for staff at the Leeds Housing Options Service, Council Customer Contact Centre, One Stop Centres and Leeds ALMOs
6. Provide training to all staff at Leeds Housing Options Service on safeguarding for vulnerable adults and children
7. Use statutory review process and Council complaints procedure to monitor standard of housing options and homeless assessment services
8. Improve case management and decision making procedures at Leeds Housing Options service
9. Complete tendering of youth mediation service by the end of June 2009
10. Complete tendering of private sector leased temporary accommodation by end of October 2009
11. Deliver city wide mortgage rescue service through Leeds Housing Options Service
12. Refurbish St. George's Overnight Centre by April 2010
13. Develop a commissioning strategy for housing-related support services
14. Use Supporting People contract management process to improve throughput and independent living outcomes through commissioned temporary accommodation
15. Identify capacity within current Supporting People commissioned services to provide floating support to private rented tenants
16. Review service delivery from housing options service for rough sleepers to ensure services are accessible and effective.
17. Establish the reasons for the disproportionate level of homelessness amongst BME groups and identify options to address this position.

Key Targets

| Measure | 2008/09 baseline | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Homeless Preventions (Minimum) | 1296 | 1500 | 1600 | 1700 |
| Private Sector Lettings (Minimum) | 426 | 720 | 760 | 800 |
| Sanctuary Installations (Minimum) | 361 | 360 | 380 | 400 |
| Mediation Preventions (Minimum) | 182 | 220 | 240 | 260 |
| Homeless Acceptances (Maximum) | 1099 | 1100 | 1050 | 1000 |
| Statutory reviews completed within 8 weeks | 90% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Reduce temporary accommodation placements (Maximum) NI156 | 281 | 261 | 240 | 220 |
| Reduce temporary accommodation placements with private providers (Maximum) | 197 | 100 | 90 | 80 |
| Proportion of people achieving independent living (Minimum) NI141 | 76.4% | 71% | 76% | 80% |
| Rough sleeping levels (Maximum) | Less than 10 | 10 | 5 | 0 |
| Repeat incidents of domestic violence NI132 | 44.8% | To be confirmed | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |

Strategic Priority O: Enable people to live independently through housing-related support, adaptations, lettings and assistive technology

Housing-related support services, commissioned through the Supporting People programme, are designed to help vulnerable people achieve or maintain an independent living outcome. The services commissioned through the programme range from sheltered warden services for older people, homeless hostels and supported housing for people with learning disabilities. The Supporting People programme is managed by a Commissioning Body, comprising representatives from the Council, NHS Leeds and West Yorkshire Probation Service, and is administered by the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate of the Council. The Leeds Supporting People programme commissions 366 services, through 68 organisations, for approximately 14,000 people.

The Council has used a combination of contract management and procurement to deliver continuous improvement in the quality and value for money of commissioned services. Supporting People commissioned services were assessed against the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) that gives an A-D rating against six criteria. There has been a 50% improvement in QAF performance in the last two years with all organisations receiving a minimum C rating. A new QAF has been introduced which removes the D level and includes only five criteria with the merger of needs assessment and support planning.

The threshold for achieving a Level C rating has been increased and the Council will work with providers over the next three years to move towards an A or B rating. Performance against NI141 (Proportion of people achieving an independent living outcome) has improved from 54% in June 2007 to 82% in June 2009. Maintaining performance of at least 76% will be a key target.

The Leeds Supporting People programme received a grant settlement of £32.9 million in 2008/09, a reduction of £3 million from the position in 2003/04. Efficiency savings of approximately £7.5 million have been generated since 2003 through competitive tendering and contract management, which have been needed to balance the budget, given the real increases in costs, and to commission new strategically relevant services.

Supported housing services in Leeds have probably never been as efficient as they are currently in terms of quality of service provided and the value for money offered. However, the three-year term of the Housing Strategy will present a new set of challenges for the Council, as strategic commissioners, and for supported housing providers. The Supporting People grant settlement has been maintained at £32.9 million in 2009/10 and will be reduced by £1 million in 2010/11. This represents a pressure of approximately £3 million in real terms over the two-year period. The pressure in 2009/10 will be offset by the release of funding through the implementation of the second year of the Retraction Plan (removal of ineligible funding from services for non-housing related support activity); however savings of approximately £1 million will still need to be made in 2010/11.

From 2010/11, Supporting People funding will be absorbed into the Area Based Grant and can be used for any purpose the Council believes is appropriate. It will therefore be important for supported housing providers to continue to demonstrate strategic relevance and continuous improvement in service quality and value for money. The Supporting People Commissioning Body has recently commissioned research to quantify the wider cost benefits, in relation to health and wellbeing, community safety, education and economic prosperity that are generated through supported housing services. In 2009/10, approximately £1.8 million will be released through the conclusion of the retraction arrangements and this funding will potentially be available for new commissioning and to pay an inflationary uplift to providers. The Family Intervention Project (see case study), a long-term commissioning priority for the Supporting People programme, has recently been commissioned. A focus in 2009/10 will be to identify the efficiency savings (of around £1 million) that will be needed to balance the budget from 2010/11. The grant settlement for 2011/12 has not yet been determined.

There will be significant changes to the Supporting People programme in Leeds during the term of the Leeds Housing Strategy, with the absorption of programme funding into Area Based Grant, the reduction in funding and the removal of Supporting People grant conditions. It will be important that the improvements in service delivery achieved by providers are not lost. A key priority will be to develop a housing related support commissioning plan, which will set out how the Leeds Supporting People Partnership can continue to deliver continuous improvement in service delivery, generate requisite efficiency savings and commission new services to cover identified gaps in provision.

The Personalisation agenda commits to giving social care service users the opportunity to better design, choose and control the services they use. This includes giving service users an Individual Budget: given an indicative service budget, which can be used to purchase a service from a provider of their choice. A pilot study is underway to introduce individual budgets within Adult Social Care and by April 2011, 50% of social care service users will be in receipt of Individualised Budgets. Housing-related support, commissioned through the Supporting People programme, will be included within Individual Budgets, if the client is also in receipt of a social care service.

The Supporting People Commissioning Body will need to consider how a genuine 'open market' can be fostered so that service users can make a choice in relation to the housing-related support they purchase. A challenge may result where a customer decides not to purchase a service from the organisation that is also their landlord; such as sheltered housing services with on-site warden, and this may involve informing service users of comparative organisational performance. A customer may decide to purchase a service from an organisation that is not accredited through the Supporting People programme and there may well be conflict between promoting choice and safeguarding vulnerable people. The Supporting People Commissioning Body will also need to ensure that new providers sign up to meeting key housing-related outcomes such as helping service users to maintain an independent living arrangement.

Case Study: The Hollies and Pennington Place

The Hollies and Pennington Place are emergency direct-access hostel provision for single women and men respectively, providing 52 units of accommodation. Historically, the services were managed by Leeds City Council. Performance was poor with only 37.6% of service users achieving a positive move to more independent accommodation (NI141) in Q3 2006. In 2007, the Supporting People Commissioning Body decided to subject the service to competitive tender and this process ended with the services being outsourced to Leeds Housing Concern in October 2007. The procurement process will generate a saving of approximately £1.4 million over the term of the five-year contract with Leeds Housing Concern. In addition, performance against NI141 has improved to 72% in Q2 2009.

The Housing Strategy will set out actions designed to identify the contribution Telecare services, and more specifically the mobile response service, is making to promoting independent living. The Supporting People programme will need to consider whether the mobile response service should be commissioned on a longer-term basis and whether the service could be commissioned using a different model/subject to competitive tender.

Key Actions

1. Develop a housing-related support commissioning plan for Leeds
2. Use the contract management process to continue to deliver improvements in quality scores for Supporting People commissioned services against the revised Quality Assessment Framework
3. Conclude retraction arrangements in 2009/10 and use released funding (approximately £1.7 million) for new commissioning and inflationary uplifts to providers.
4. Develop and implement a plan to generate savings of at least £1 million that can be realised in 2010/11
5. Carry out a programme of value for money assessments on retraction services and use released funding to offset budget pressures in 2010/11 onwards for new commissioning.
6. Commission research to quantify the wider cost benefits generated through the provision of housing-related support services
7. Commission research to quantify the wider cost benefits generated through the provision of adaptations services as part of wider research into the benefits of improving housing stock.
8. Develop and implement an action plan for delivering Individualised Budgets including housing-related support.
9. Agree, through the Leeds Housing Partnership, a Leeds protocol for the joint funding of adaptations on RSL properties between the Council and landlord.
10. Develop a joint strategic plan between NHS Leeds, housing authority and social services authority for adaptations service investment in the city.
11. Identify funding options for delivering adaptations on council-owned stock as part of the options appraisal into the future management of council housing.
12. Work with partners from the social services authority and NHS Leeds to establish the contribution Telecare Services make to the independent living agenda and consider investment options.
13. Use the Supporting People contract management process to monitor the effectiveness and long-term requirement of the mobile response service. Carry out an options appraisal to determine whether the service should be remodelled and/or subject to competitive tender.
14. Develop an Accessible Housing Register as part of the wider Leeds Homes Register.

Key Targets

| Measure | 2008/09 baseline | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|---------------------|---|---|---|
| Proportion of people achieving independent living (Minimum) NI141 | 76.4% | 71% | 76% | 80% |
| Proportion of people maintaining independent living (Minimum) NI142 | 99% | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| Proportion of SP commissioned services achieving a Level C or Level B QAF rating | 100% | Level C: 100% minimum Level B: 50% | Level C: 100% minimum Level B: 70% | Level C: 100% minimum Level B: 95% |
| Proportion of joint supported housing/social care service users in receipt of an Individualised Budget. | tbc | 40% | 50% | 60% |
| Carry out non-Council stock adaptations work (Maximum) | | | | |
| High Priority | 100 | 114 | 114 | 114 |
| Medium Priority | 90 | 186 | 186 | 186 |
| Low Priority | 150 | 305 | 305 | 305 |
| Carry out Council stock adaptations work (Maximum) | | | | |
| High Priority | 212 | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| Medium Priority | 98 | 160 | 160 | 160 |
| Low Priority | 132 | 269 | 269 | 269 |
| Number of Telecare installations (Minimum) | tbc | 960 | 960 | 960 |
| Number of Telecare Mobile Response Service Users by year end (Minimum) | 300 | 500 | 600 | 600 |
| Proportion of Telecare Mobile Response Service Users Assisted to maintain independent living | n/a | 99% | 99% | 99% |

Strategic Priority P: Modernising housing provision for vulnerable people

The Council is committed to modernising housing provision for groups such as older people and people with learning disabilities in order to:

- Promote independent living and choice and control
- To use affordable and extra-care housing as an alternative to residential care placements
- To promote health and wellbeing
- To increase community based services
- To give people a wider range of housing options
- To replace outmoded forms of housing.

The 2007 Leeds Housing Market Assessment highlighted that the housing expectations of older people were changing and that some of the traditional housing options available to this group were no longer fulfilling rising expectations. A prominent example of this challenge is the sheltered housing stock managed by the Leeds ALMOs. The majority of the Council's sheltered housing stock was built prior to 1979 and predominantly comprises one bedroomed bungalow or low-rise flatted accommodation. The Housing Market Assessment identified a strong preference amongst older people for two bedroomed accommodation, so that family or live-in carers could stay over. There are also approximately 330 units of sheltered bed-sit accommodation, many with communal washing facilities, which the ALMOs are often having difficulty letting due to low level of demand.

The Council has recently been successful in its Expression of Interest to Central Government for Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits to deliver 820 new homes on up to 12 sites in priority regeneration areas across the city (split 65:35 between Extra Care and affordable housing). The proposal is framed around the concept of 'Lifetime Neighbourhoods': the extra-care schemes will encompass a range of community services and be accessible to care and health services, with complementary affordable housing built alongside. The new build housing will be in close proximity to transport links, shops, green spaces and leisure facilities. Housing will be built to a high standard of environmental sustainability (Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5) and will therefore contribute to reducing carbon emissions and tackling fuel poverty.

The funding bid does not include revenue funding such as housing-related support commissioned through the Supporting People programme. In addition to the new provision, extra care housing tends to be more expensive than traditional warden services, so this additional cost will need to be identified as part of Supporting People budget management.

The modernisation of housing provision for older people also includes an Extra Care development on the former Hemmingway House site in Hunslet.

Case Study: Hemmingway House Extra-Care Scheme

The Council, in partnership with NHS Leeds and Methodist Housing Association, has recently been successful in securing £1.845 million from the Department of Health, to redevelop the former Hemmingway House residential home into extra care housing, primarily for older BME households. The scheme will be comprised of 45 units of social housing. It was originally intended that there would be an equal split between units for social renting, shared ownership and market sale, but the downturn in the housing market has meant that this model is no longer viable. The scheme will comprise 39 two-bedroom units and 6 one-bedroom units. Communal facilities, some of which will be available for use by the wider local community, will include communal lounge, café/restaurant, hair and beauty salon, activity rooms, visitor's suite, health and fitness suite, laundry, catering kitchen and assisted bathrooms. All of these facilities will reflect the proposed multi ethnic/multi faith aims and objectives of the development.

The PFI bid is the Council's principal option for improving Council owned sheltered housing provision. Nevertheless, the PFI bid will not cover all sheltered housing provision. Investment requirements for sheltered housing will need to be factored into the options appraisal around future investment in council housing.

The Council has received a number of speculative proposals from developers relating to the development of extra-care housing. The Council believes there is an identified need for more extra-care housing than can be secured through the PFI bid, especially in relation to other tenure forms. However, the Housing Strategy will set out the action to develop an extra-care housing plan that will quantify demand and required supply across tenures and locations. The plan will also consider best practice in relation to the development of extra-care schemes. The Brunswick Gardens Village development has been cited as an example of good practice, particularly in relation to the development of communal facilities. It is also important that such proposals be routed through the Council's Affordable Housing Delivery Section, which can co-ordinate the assessment of strategic relevance.

The government's strategy for people with learning disabilities, 'Valuing People Now' seeks to increase the number of people who own their home or live in rented accommodation on an assured tenancy arrangement. The strategy also set out a commitment to enable people with learning disabilities to exercise greater choice and control over the housing they occupy and the housing services they utilise. There are approximately 2300 adults with learning disabilities living in Leeds, 700 of whom live in a registered care home or hostel.

The Council has recognised that the large number of people with learning disabilities who live in hostels or other institutional environments conflicts with the drive to promote independent living and to enable people to exercise greater choice and control over their lives.

Case Study: Independent Living Project (ILP)

The Council has secured £60 million PFI credits to modernise supported housing provision for people with learning disabilities and mental health problems. The funding will be used to close down 13 out-moded hostel services and replace them with 73 newly built houses, which can accommodate up to 343 people.

250 of these bedspaces are for people with learning disabilities and the remainder for people with mental health problems. The properties will be managed by local housing associations, Progress Care Housing, and service users will be let tenancies on an assured tenancy arrangement.

The development work has commenced and is due to be completed by 2011.

The ILP represents a fundamental shift in service provision for people with learning disabilities. The new services will continue to be part funded (for the housing-related support activity) through the Supporting People programme. Service funding will need to be reassessed to take into account the higher level of housing-related support activity that will be carried out as part of the more independent living arrangements, whilst at the same time moving from accommodation based to floating support.

Some people currently accommodated in traditional hostel provision will be seeking to move to mainstream independent accommodation through a Leeds ALMO or other social landlord. Such customers will need to be assisted to make housing applications, be made appropriate priority awards to facilitate rehousing and be provided with floating housing support (as required) when they are rehoused. Arrangements need to be formalised to respond to the housing needs of people with learning disabilities who are no longer able to remain living in specific projects due to behaviour or safeguarding issues.

A joint working protocol between the housing and social services authority will need to be drawn up to ensure that effective and appropriate responses are put in place for people with learning disabilities who require mainstream rehousing. Leeds developed a Leeds Learning Disability Strategy in 2008, which recommended that a specific Leeds Learning Disability Housing Strategy should be developed.

Key Actions

1. Review and update the existing Older People's Housing Strategy for Leeds.
2. Develop an Extra-Care Housing plan for Leeds
3. Consider sheltered housing modernisation investment options as part of the Options Appraisal into Council Housing
4. Deliver ILP modernisation programme by 2011 moving service users from hostels to more independent housing options
5. Implement modified funding arrangements through Supporting People programme to reflect new ILP provision
6. Develop joint working protocol between housing and social services authority to provide housing services for people with learning disabilities requiring mainstream housing
7. Develop a Leeds Learning Disability Housing Strategy

Key Targets

| Measure | 2008/09 baseline | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|--|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| People assisted to maintain independent living | 99% | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| Self reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing NI119 | 73.4% | No target set | No target set | No target set |
| Delayed transfers of care from hospitals (per 100,000 of population) NI131 | 4.48 | 4.3 | 3.6 | No target set |
| Proportion of adults with learning disabilities who are in settled accommodation NI145 | 36.4% | No target set | No target set | No target set |

Strategic Priority Q: Promoting Community Cohesion, Reducing Worklessness and Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

The 2004 Housing Act places a duty on local authorities to carry out an assessment of the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers, travelling show people and new age travellers and to make reasonable provision for these groups through the planning process. This duty is commensurate with the obligation placed on local authorities to consider and make reasonable provision of housing for the settled population. An accommodation needs assessment has been carried for the five West Yorkshire authorities.

The link between housing quality and health and wellbeing outcomes is an important theme across the whole of the Leeds Housing Strategy. NHS Leeds carried out a 'Health Impact Assessment' of Gypsies and Travellers in 2008. This identified that people accommodated at the Cottingley Springs site had the worst health and wellbeing outcomes in the city, in relation to life affecting illness, reported good health and being in full-time employment. The communities experience high rates of mental ill health and substance misuse, but often do not access treatment services.

There is also a low take up of cancer screening services. Service access is often inhibited by low levels of literacy. The Council will need to work in partnership with NHS Leeds to address the health and wellbeing inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. Consideration will be given to how existing housing related support services can work with residents at Cottingley Springs to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Leeds Housing Strategy is also concerned with ensuring that the housing needs of refugees are met. Asylum seekers are accommodated in Leeds as part of the UK Borders Agency dispersal programme, with specific groups, such as people from Eritrea, concentrated in the Leeds area. Refugees, who have been dispersed to a specific authority catchment area, establish a local connection to that area, in the event that they need to make a homeless application. Monitoring by the Street Outreach Team has highlighted that a significant number of refugees, dispersed to other local authority areas, are arriving in Leeds and because they do not have a local connection to the area, are not being offered temporary accommodation. This has led to an increase in the incidence of refugees sleeping rough and using the St. George's Crypt Overnight Centre.

The Council has a duty to offer such customers a homeless assessment and a housing options service; including helping them access housing-related support. It will be important that all refugees, dispersed to the Leeds area, be routed through the Council's housing options service. The Case Resolution programme, which involves the swift positive processing of long-term outstanding asylum applications, has increased the number of refugees in the city who are entitled to access housing services.

This process will be continued during the term of the Leeds Housing Strategy and consideration will need to be given to the impact on housing options, support and social landlord services. Promoting the health and wellbeing of refugees will be another important action within the Leeds Housing Strategy.

Data monitoring by NHS Leeds has highlighted that 5% of all births in the city relate to asylum seekers or refugees and that infant mortality disproportionately affects these groups. The Council will need to work with NHS Leeds to develop a joint strategic approach to tackle this issue, especially where it relates to poor housing conditions.

Case Study: Canopy

Canopy Housing Project is acquiring and renovating properties for refugee families in Beeston, a neighbourhood in Leeds with many vacant properties and a growing refugee population. Young volunteers from disadvantaged backgrounds are working alongside refugees to refurbish derelict properties. Refugee volunteers who take-up the tenancies are linked with a trading arm that Canopy is developing, so the skills they have gained can be used to secure permanent employment in the housing construction industry.

The partnership also promotes refugee community development activities through supporting Refugee Community Organisations in the area. The partners are developing a toolkit and making a film to share their experiences and promote positive images on how new and long term resident communities can work together in reviving deprived neighbourhoods.

The Council's Jobs and Skills Service is working with housing providers to address levels of worklessness amongst vulnerably housed and social housing tenants. Unemployment rates are higher and invariably longer-term for vulnerably housed and social housing tenants than for people occupying other housing tenures.

A scheme has been developed between the Council and Unity Housing Association: 'Tenants into Work' that signposts Unity Housing Association tenants to the Council's Job Clubs. A joint working protocol is being established between the Jobs and Skills Service and the housing options service. Customers of the housing options service will be signposted to the Job Club service.

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The housing options service has recognised that historical practice has potentially created disincentives for vulnerably housed people securing employment: private rented tenancy rents set at the Leeds Housing Allowance cap and where housing benefit is paid directly to the landlord. Work to negotiate rental charges to market levels and to pay housing benefit directly to tenants creates incentives for them to seek work. The Jobs and Skills Service has also started to work in partnership with Great Places Housing Association, who manage the hostel provision at St. Ann's Lodge in Burley, so that hostel residents are assisted to use Job Club services. There are further opportunities to expand this work to other supported housing services in the city.

Housing Services play an important role in tackling offending behaviour and anti-social behaviour. The National Offender Management Programme aims to reduce the offending behaviour of priority and prolific offenders.

Interventions are centred on the themes of preventing and deterring offending behaviour, catching and convicting offenders and helping offenders to be resettled and rehabilitated. The latter theme has relevance to housing services, given the significant number of offenders who are homeless or vulnerably housed. In 2008, the Supporting People Commissioning Body agreed to commission 200 units of floating housing support to help offenders, subject to the Offender Management Programme, to achieve or maintain an independent living outcome. The Jobs and Skills Service are also working with the Leeds Offender Management Service, given the link between offending behaviour and worklessness. The Supporting People Commissioning Body also agreed to commission 55 units of housing related support for offenders with drug dependencies who are receiving support and treatment through the Housing Drug Intervention Project (DIP). The Offender Management and Housing DIP services will be subject to competitive tender during the term of the Leeds Housing Strategy.

The Leeds Housing Strategy is also concerned with tackling the anti-social behaviour perpetrated by a minority of families that blights the neighbourhoods in which they live and causes misery for other people who live in the community. Taking possession action against such families, if they are council or housing association tenants, is an important option and may certainly enhance the lives of the people who live in close proximity to them. However, possession action does not necessarily work to modify the behaviour of the family, and evicted families may find alternative accommodation in close proximity to their former home, often in the private rented sector.

Case Study: Family Intervention Project

The Family Intervention Project (FIP), funded through the Supporting People programme, works to address the anti-social behaviour and support needs of families whose behaviour is blighting the communities in which they live. FIP works with families who have been served Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, who have been served notice-seeking possession of their home or have been evicted from their home due to anti-social behaviour. Supported families are permitted to remain in their current home or are moved to an alternative council tenancy on the condition that they engage with FIP. Accommodation is provided on an Introductory Tenancy arrangement, meaning that a family can be swiftly evicted if they fail to engage or the anti-social behaviour continues.

Intensive support, of up to 25 hours per week is provided, to cover all issues that may contribute to family behaviour: poor parenting skills, non-attendance at school, worklessness, drug or other substance dependency, low self-esteem, debt problems etc. It has been calculated that family intervention services can generate savings of up to £213,000 for one family from reduced need for interventions by education, health, police and wider housing services. The Leeds FIP is expanding from working with 56 to 100 families in 2009/10.



Households who have perpetrated anti-social behaviour and have been evicted from their home are often found unsuitable to be tenant of the local authority. This means that they are unable to access council accommodation until a tangible improvement in their behaviour has been made. The Council often retains a duty to secure such households temporary accommodation, an arrangement that would have to be made on an indefinite basis if the suitability decision is maintained. Such households may also access private rented accommodation in close proximity to their former home. Suitability exclusions, in isolation, do not address the reasons for the anti-social behaviour. It is important that affected households be offered housing-related support, which can work to address the causes of anti-social behaviour. Excluded households also need to be aware of their right to challenge the suitability decision, through the Statutory Review Process.

Key Actions

1. Consider the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travelling groups as part of the Local Development Framework alongside the needs of other groups in housing need.
2. The Council to work with NHS Leeds to develop a joint strategy to address the health and wellbeing inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers including the use of existing housing related support services.
3. Establish joint working protocol between Jobs and Skills Services and reconfigured housing options service.
4. Continue to drive down private rented sector rent levels to create incentives for vulnerably housed people to seek employment.
5. Ensure that all refugees, including those with no local connection to the Leeds area, are routed through the reconfigured housing options service.
6. The Council and NHS Leeds to develop a joint strategic approach to reducing the incidence of infant mortality experienced by refugees, with specific regard to the impact of poor housing.
7. Develop joint working arrangements between Jobs and Skills Service and supported housing sector.
8. Subject the Offender Management and Housing DIP services, commissioned through the Supporting People programme, to competitive tender.
9. Monitor the effectiveness of the Family Intervention Project in tackling anti-social behaviour.
10. Leeds Housing Partnership to monitor trends and issues relating to suitability/tenant exclusions.
11. Ensure that all households who are excluded from the Leeds Homes Register on suitability grounds are offered housing-related support.

Strategic Priority R: Encourage and enhance mechanisms for tenant/resident engagement and empowerment.

The Council, the three Leeds ALMOs and local housing associations have worked in partnership with a number of community and residents' associations to build a structure of tenant/resident engagement in housing provision, management and planning. Tenant and resident engagement makes an important contribution to improving the delivery of housing services and in fostering community pride and sustainability. Whilst there are many positive examples of tenant/resident engagement with housing providers, this involvement is not evenly spread across the city and specific groups, such as private tenants and BME households, are under-represented in existing arrangements. The Housing Strategy seeks to strengthen existing tenant and resident engagement and to promote the participation of under-represented groups. There is one tenant management organisation, Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation, operating in the city. The Council will need to consider the benefits of developing comparable services in other areas of the city.

Key Actions

1. The Council to work with ALMOs and housing associations to strengthen and enhance tenant engagement and involvement.
2. The Council to work with community and residents associations to encourage involvement of BME communities and 'hard to reach groups'.
3. The Council to consider the benefits of developing further Tenant Management Organisations in the city.
4. The Council to work with representatives of private landlords to develop means of achieving the engagement of private tenants in the management of their housing and the communities in which that is located.

Key Targets

| Measure | 2008/09 baseline | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Council tenant satisfaction with landlord service NI160 | 72% | Not reported | tbc | tbc |
| BME council tenant satisfaction with landlord service | 66% | Not reported | tbc | tbc |
| Other landlord tenant satisfaction with landlord service | 80% | tbc | tbc | tbc |
| % of people who feel they belong their neighbourhood NI2 | Not yet available | tbc | tbc | tbc |
| % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality NI4 | Not yet available | tbc | tbc | tbc |
| % of total members of Leeds Tenants Federation who are from a BME group | 8% | Target to be set | Target to be set | Target to be set |

'Creating opportunities for people to live independently, in quality, affordable housing'

Leeds Housing Strategy

2009 – 2012

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