

Consultation Draft

Housing Strategy 2008-2013

healthy homes, healthy lives, healthy city



Appendix 1 - Housing Strategy 2008 - Cabinet

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Brighton & Hove City Council, Housing Strategy Team,
4th Floor Bartholomew House, Bartholomew Square,
Brighton BN1 1JE

t: 01273 293055

e: housing.strategy@brighton-hove.gov.uk

w: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk

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TRANSLATION PANEL

About this Draft Strategy

The Housing Strategy is being developed to address important citywide issues that affect the population of Brighton & Hove – both now and in the future. This is the consultation draft of the strategy not the final product. We would like your comments on this draft strategy to help us shape the final draft to make sure that it really does meet the needs of local people.

This is a strategy for everyone living in Brighton & Hove. Housing has a fundamental effect on our lives and it is important that we identify those key housing needs that matter the most and take action that will make a real difference to local people and the city.

The Housing Strategy identifies the overarching headline housing issues that the council and its partners are working to address. To consider specific priority areas, additional strategies have been produced on Homelessness, Supporting People and Temporary Accommodation which were approved earlier in the year.

Alongside this consultation we are also consulting on our draft Older People's Housing Strategy and draft LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans) People's Housing Strategy to address the needs of particular communities in the city. A draft BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) People's Housing Strategy will be published for consultation in the new year.

We would very much like your comments and feedback on this draft strategy. Please post your comments by 30 November 2008 to:

FREEPOST RRRT-ETLH-KYSK
Housing Strategy Team (HS)
Brighton & Hove City Council
4th Floor Bartholomew House
Bartholomew Square
Brighton BN1 1JE

Or email them to housing.strategy@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Foreword

For many people our city is a wonderful place to live – we have a unique shopping district, restaurants that cater for all tastes, a few miles of seafront, the Downs on our doorstep and a vibrant night life.

However, for some their housing circumstances can make life a daily challenge – whether it's the high cost of housing, maintenance and repair issues, the need for support to remain independent or not having a home.

Unsuitable housing is recognised to affect other aspects of people's lives, harming education, health, employment and social networks. Through our strategy we want to help as many people as possible overcome their housing challenges to improve their wellbeing and overall quality of life.

Low cost home ownership will help many local families aspiring to get their feet on the property ladder and the development of new homes for rent will help those who find home ownership out of reach.

We want to help vulnerable home owners and people renting privately maintain and improve their homes, particularly ensuring they have efficient heating systems for the winter.

We also want to help support those people with health and mobility difficulties to enable them to remain in their home as part of the community rather than see them have to move to more institutional types of care.

The new Housing & Regeneration Bill gives us the possibility of setting up a Local Delivery Vehicle that will allow us to raise funds against a small proportion of the social housing stock.

*awaiting
new
image*

Councillor Mary Mears
Leader of the Council & Chairman of the Strategic Housing Partnership



Councillor Maria Caulfield
Cabinet Member for Housing

This money can be used for a variety of purposes such as developing new affordable housing, providing more adaptations and most importantly, it can be used to bring tenants homes up to the Decent Homes Standard.

This work could also be a springboard for wider neighbourhood regeneration to help improve the quality of life in some of our most deprived neighbourhoods and help deliver excellence in our housing management services.

Over the life of this strategy we will help improve the lives of many people. However, we have to be realistic and accept that we can not help everyone. Through this strategy we will provide advice and assistance to those who may need a steer in the right direction and target our support at those who need it most.

We urge you to read this draft strategy and send in your comments. It is only by listening to the experiences of local people that we will be able to tackle the issues that matter most.

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Councillor Mary Mears
Leader of the Council
& Chairman of the
Strategic Housing Partnership

Councillor Maria Caulfield
Cabinet Member for Housing

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Our Strategic Housing Vision for Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove is a city with a quarter of a million residents living in 120,000 homes. For many people, Brighton & Hove is an attractive place to live providing a high quality of life.

Successful action in the city over the last few years to enable the development of new affordable housing, prevent homelessness, provide support, implement choice based lettings and improve housing quality in the private sector have helped to secure Brighton & Hove City Council as a lead authority, widely respected in working to address the needs of local people and the sub-region.

However, pressures from an expanding population, high property prices, and pockets of poor quality housing are having a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of many residents, particularly amongst the most vulnerable members of our communities.

We recognise that the strategy will not be a success if carried out in isolation. It sits at the heart of the city's 2020 Community Strategy and shows how the Council and its partners are working together to address the regions housing pressures and also the needs and aspirations of the city. Ultimately, our Housing Strategy is aimed at:

Enabling healthy homes, healthy lives and a healthy city that reduces inequality and offers independence, choice and a high quality of life

The Housing Strategy is an overarching document that focuses and co-ordinates a number of other housing related strategies enabling us to maintain our momentum as we address the housing needs of the city into the next decade and providing a consistent drive towards our goals.

Our strategic priorities

The citywide housing strategy has 3 overall priorities that reflect the basic housing needs of the:

Strategic Priority 1: Improving housing supply

Strategic Priority 2: Improving housing quality

Strategic Priority 3: Improving housing support

Action to address these priorities will ensure we have enough of the right type of high quality housing in the city to meet the needs of local people and that those in need are provided with appropriate support to enable them to maintain their independence.

Making a Difference

Over the lifetime of this strategy we would like to achieve:

- An increase in the amount of housing available for low cost home ownership and affordable rent
- An increase the amount of affordable family housing
- Essential repairs, improvements and energy efficiency measures to around 1,000 homes in the private sector every year
- An Accessible Housing Register of adapted and wheelchair homes
- A Local Delivery Vehicle that will raise funding to help improve the quality of council housing up to the Decent Homes Standard and regenerate deprived areas
- Excellence in our housing management services
- Support being provided to around 6,000 people every year to help them maintain their independence
- The first Extra Care housing scheme for people with disabilities

Our Strategic Principles

The Housing Strategy identifies and subscribes to 6 fundamental principles that underpin all of the work we do. These principles will make sure that our strategy goes beyond the traditional bricks and mortar focus of housing strategies to deliver real change:

- A healthy city
- Reducing inequality
- Improving neighbourhoods
- Accountability to local people
- Value for money
- Partnership working

Health Impact Assessment

We recognise that housing plays an important part of all aspects of people's lives, particularly health and well-being. As part of the development of this strategy, the Primary Care Trust has carried out a Health Impact Assessment on the city's housing stock and housing needs. The results of this assessment are helping us to ensure that our strategy and action plans contribute to improving the health and well-being of local people.

1.2 Engaging Local People

Effective engagement with local people and their representatives is at the heart of this strategy. The strategy has been developed in stages with extensive consultation with stakeholders to ensure that it meets the needs and aspirations of the city's residents.

As well as developing the new housing strategy, we are also developing sub strategies to address important citywide issues that affect many residents. This will see the production of a Black & Minority Ethnic People's Housing Strategy, a Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Trans People's Housing Strategy and an Older People's Housing Strategy.

Feedback from local people has illustrated how the city's high housing costs combined with lower wages can make daily life a struggle for many, particularly with the recent rises in the prices of food, utilities and fuel. High housing costs are making it difficult for households to take that first step on the property ladder and existing home owners are being affected by rising mortgage costs making it more difficult for owners to maintain and improve their homes.

Whilst the private rented sector provides a welcome and flexible housing choice for many people, shortages of affordable family sized homes are pushing some households into lower quality overcrowded accommodation. There is also a high demand and relatively low supply of affordable housing for rent through the council and housing associations with the lower costs and security of tenure only able to benefit small numbers of people.

Some of those with mobility or health issues are finding it difficult to remain independent at home, being in need of adaptations, suitable housing or some sort of support to remove the need for more institutional types of housing.

Strategy Consultation

The first round of consultation was undertaken over a period of 3 months in summer 2007 giving local residents and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on a Consultation Briefing Pack covering different aspects of housing and support. It was sent out to many stakeholders, voluntary organisations and residents and was available on the council website, libraries and other public places.

To make sure that we spoke to as many people as possible we held a Consultation Fair, officers went out into the community, attended social functions, service user groups, meetings and other events. Where possible we linked in with other research and consultation, such as the *Count Me In Too!* research looking at the needs and aspirations of the city's LGBT population.

The second round of consultation concentrated on the Strategy Framework – our proposed priorities and actions developed from the findings of first round of consultation. More consultation was carried out on this framework which has resulted in changes to our priorities and been used to help develop this draft strategy and action plan.

Case Study: Housing & Support Working Groups

To support the development of the specialist strategies, an **Older People’s Cross Sector Housing & Support Working Group** and a **LGBT People’s Housing & Support Working Group** have been set up. These groups are made up of representatives from a wide range of support and advocacy groups, the community and voluntary sector, the Primary Care Trust and the local authority. The working groups have reviewed each stage of the strategy development process and made many valuable contributions to our strategic priorities, action plan and equality impact assessment. We are working with stakeholders to explore the potential for a similar group to be a critical champion of the BME People’s Housing Strategy.

Sub groups of the Strategic Housing Partnership have been looking at the role of housing co-ops and issues around student housing. The findings of these groups are helping to inform the draft strategies.

We do not want consultation to end with the publication of this strategy, but would like it to be a part of an ongoing process, involving local people and other stakeholders throughout the life of this strategy, helping us to monitor its implementation and review our services.

Case Study: Council Housing Chairman’s Focus Groups

In tandem with the strategy development process, a number of Chairman’s Focus Groups have been set up to consider key issues affecting the council’s social housing stock and impacting on the lives of tenants. These groups are looking at a number of issues such as sheltered housing, adaptations and allocations which are also helping to inform the draft housing strategies.

1.3 The Goals of this Strategy

Each priority has a range of strategic goals that will be developed and implemented throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

Strategic Priority 1: Improving housing supply

To make sure that the city has the right type of housing to meet the needs of residents our strategic goals under this priority are to:

- Goal 1 Help households become homeowners
- Goal 2 Provide opportunities for households to move to larger homes or downsize as their needs change
- Goal 3 Identify opportunities to improve and develop deprived neighbourhoods
- Goal 4 Make best use of the housing stock
- Goal 5 Increase the supply of affordable rented housing

Strategic Priority 2: Improving housing quality

To make sure that residents are able to live in decent homes suitable for their needs, our strategic goals under this priority are to:

- Goal 6 Work with home owners and landlords to maintain and improve the quality of their housing
- Goal 7 Reduce fuel poverty and minimise CO₂ emissions
- Goal 8 Develop the Brighton & Hove Standard for high quality and well maintained social housing and improve tenants' homes to ensure that they meet the standard
- Goal 9 Work with owners to bring more of the city's long term empty homes back into use
- Goal 10 Ensure new housing is developed to the latest standards

Priority 3: Improving housing support

To make sure residents are supported to maintain and increase their independence, our strategic goals under this priority are to:

- Goal 11 Support households to make informed choices about their housing options
- Goal 12 Provide adaptations and support to households and their carers
- Goal 13 Work to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- Goal 14 Contribute to the wider city agendas of reducing worklessness, improving community cohesion, reducing anti-social behaviour and reducing inequality
- Goal 15 Work to ensure student housing provides a positive contribution to students' lives and the city

1.4 Local Area Agreement

The Brighton & Hove Local Area Agreement set out the priorities for the city and has been agreed between the Government, the local authority, the Local Strategic Partnership and other key partners.

The agreement contains 35 key performance indicators that the Government will use to assess how the city is performing and includes additional local indicators to reflect key issues. The city's key LAA housing indicators are:

- NI 141: Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living
- NI 154: Net additional homes provided
- NI 156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation
- NI 158: Percentage of decent council homes
- NI 187: Tackling fuel poverty
- Bring empty properties back into use
- Reduce the number of rough sleepers

As housing has such far reaching effects on people's lives, our strategy also contributes to a much wider range of national performance indicators than are in the LAA:

The priorities and goals of the Housing Strategy contribute to the following National Indicators for Local Authority Partnerships:

- **NI 1: Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area**
- NI 2: Percent of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
- **NI 4: Percent of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality**
- NI 5: Overall/general satisfaction with local area
- **NI 7: Environment for a thriving third sector**
- **NI 17: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour**
- NI 21: Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
- NI 23: Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and dignity
- NI 25: Satisfaction of different groups with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour
- NI 27: Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
- **NI 32: Repeat incidents of domestic violence**
- **NI 119: Self reported measure of people's overall health & well being**
- NI 125: Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation / intermediate care
- NI 131: Delayed transfers of care from hospitals
- NI 140: Fair treatment by local services
- **NI 141: Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living**
- NI 142: Vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
- NI 143: Proportion of offenders under probation supervision in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence
- NI 145: Proportion of adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation
- NI 147: Proportion of former care leavers aged 19 who are in suitable accommodation
- NI 149: Proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation
- **NI 154: Net additional homes provided**
- NI 155: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
- **NI 156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation**
- **NI 158: Percentage of decent council homes**
- NI 160: Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services
- **NI 187: Tackling fuel poverty**

(Indicators in bold are also included in Brighton & Hove's Local Area Agreement)

2 Introduction

2.1 Our City's Challenge

Brighton & Hove is a city with a quarter of a million residents living in around 115,000 homes. The importance of the city in the South East Region has strengthened over the last few years. We have seen role of the city as a commercial, tourist and conference, sporting and cultural destination go from strength to strength the universities and colleges expand.

Bounded by the Downs and the sea, Brighton & Hove has limited opportunity for new housing development and population growth. Growth will need to be accommodated in a way that addresses increasing demands on the city's existing transport, social and physical infrastructure.

Housing in Brighton & Hove has been characterised by increasing housing costs and high levels of homelessness. These pressures have placed an increased burden on many other public services, such as the community care and health economies. Since 1998 we have seen property prices triple, with smaller properties traditionally associated with first time buyers seeing the greatest increases. One-bed flats now cost almost 6 times average income and 3-bed houses now cost 10 times average household incomes. High rents are make it harder for households to save deposits and problems in the mortgage markets are resulting in mortgage providers increasing interest rates and the deposits that households require.

Over the last few years the city has been one of the largest provider of new housing in the region. Unfortunately the current instability in the world's financial markets risk putting the city's major developments on hold. As a result, there may be a short term shortage of new homes including new affordable housing. This is likely to put an increased pressure on local people and our housing options services.

The private sector stock condition survey recently completed highlighted how more than 8,000 homes in the city are considered unfit. Many are occupied by vulnerable people either as owners or as tenants. We are working with owners and landlords to improve more than 1,000 of these homes every year to help bring these homes up to standard and improve the quality of resident's lives.

More than half of the Council's stock of social housing does not meet the Decent Homes Standard. We are looking at new partnering arrangements and ways of raising investment capital that can ensure we are able to bring these homes up to standard in addition to providing wider social benefits to help tackle the pockets of deprivation and worklessness concentrated in some parts of the city.

The city's housing problems have necessitated new thinking and joined up solutions to creatively make the best use of existing resources and work towards addressing the root causes of many problems rather than crisis managing the symptoms.

Through our Homelessness Strategy we have changed the way we dealt with homelessness, moving from crisis intervention to a homelessness prevention service, helping households to find solutions to their housing needs without having to go down the homelessness route. This approach has led to a sustained reduction in homelessness and avoided significant upheaval and distress for those affected.

Historically, loss of private sector rented accommodation was the main cause of homelessness, responsible for almost half of all cases. However, the last few years have seen much better working between the council and landlords that has resulted in a reduction of homelessness from this sector. In many ways, the flexibility, mobility and size of the private rented sector in the city makes this tenure a key tool to help resolving the city's housing needs.

Almost 40% of homelessness is as a result of eviction by parents, family or friends. Since the introduction of the Youth Homelessness Strategy we have seen a considerable reduction in homelessness amongst this group. New services targeting young people in crisis providing support and crash pads are now seeing a reduction in homelessness amongst young people.

Whilst a smaller proportion of our homelessness relates to people with children or are pregnant than the national average, we have a much higher proportion of our homelessness comprised of those with mental health problems and physical disabilities.

Our Supporting People Strategy has provided a clear link between Housing, Health, and Social Care enabling the strategic housing function of the authority become accommodation commissioner for all services. The strategic housing role of local authorities is no longer focussing purely on homelessness and private sector renewal, but is also taking into account the wider needs of local communities and residents.

The Supporting People programme cost around £12m each year and provides support to more than 4,000 people in the city. Our strategies are increasingly taking into account the need of those with a learning disability, the elderly, those with a physical disability, teenage parents, and many other groups often falling under the remit of social care, health, or children's services.

Supporting People has been instrumental in enabling people to leave institutional type care, increased the level of accommodation and support to teenage parents, and has contributed to the expansion of women's refuge services, and the first extra care housing scheme in the city.

2.2 Population Projections

The Census 2001 highlighted how the city had the highest proportion of one person households and smallest average household size in the South East. The city is the 5th most densely populated area in the region and contains pockets of overcrowding, particularly in the private rented sector.

Over the next twenty years the population of Brighton & Hove will grow by around 27,000 people. The city will experience an increase in working age residents; but also be an older and more diverse population than ever before.

The continuing trend of polarisation; with some neighbourhoods experiencing inequality compared to the rest of the city in terms of access to employment, health and life expectancy and safety will also need to be addressed. By 2026 the city will need to provide an additional 12,400 homes and according to trend based projections, 8,000 additional residents will need work over the next 10 years to maintain current employment rates.

2.3 Health Impact Assessment

To help ensure that the new housing strategy contributes to reducing health inequalities, the Public Health Directorate of Brighton and Hove City Teaching Primary Care Trust (PCT) has been carrying out a Health Impact Assessment of the city's housing needs.

Research carried out by the PCT¹ has identified a range of health and housing impacts that have helped us to develop the strategy:

- Mental health issues, including depression due to a range of housing factors, were amongst the most significant health issues reported, highlighting the importance of access to appropriate housing and support services.

- The specific needs of people with substance misuse / addiction problems in temporary accommodation require a partnership approach between housing, social care, substance misuse services and primary care.
- Isolation and a lack of social support was also highlighted, particularly amongst those with poor mobility illustrating the need for services to engage with wider communities alongside traditional groups.
- The need was highlighted for adaptations or more adaptable housing in accessible locations to help meet the needs of the population with a disability, mobility problem or a specific care need. This should enable care services to be more easily delivered in the home rather than in hospital or institutional settings.
- There is a need for noise reductions through infrastructural insulation or environmental measures to alleviate much of the stress and anxiety reported.
- We need to maximise opportunities to improve the heating and insulation of homes to tackle fuel poverty and excess winter deaths.

The findings from the PCT have helped shape the development of the new housing strategies and are ensuring that our strategic priorities will help to reduce inequality and enhance their health and well-being.

This work will also contribute to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments that are being carried out in partnership between the Council and Primary Care Trust.

¹ Brighton & Hove Housing Strategy Health Impact Assessment, Brighton & Hove Teaching Primary Care Trust, in progress - final draft expected end 2008

2.4 Local Development Framework

Local Development Frameworks have been introduced by the Government to replace Local Plans. Brighton & Hove City Council has been working on its LDF for the last couple of years, primarily undertaking research and consultation. The LDF is expected to be formally adopted in July 2011. Key elements of this work have included the Housing Needs Survey carried out in 2005 and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment completed in 2008. The findings of the LDF project to date have helped inform the development of this strategy.

2.5 Reducing Inequality Review

The Reducing Inequality Review carried out on behalf of the Council at the end of 2007 highlighted concentrations of disadvantage in the worst 10% and 20% of neighbourhoods, on a range of indicators (notably low income families with young children) and also significant numbers of disadvantaged people living *outside* these areas.

Other facets of inequality relate to people with multiple needs, those out of work and dependent on a range of benefits such as Incapacity Benefit, lone parents, people with low or no skills, disabled people and those with mental health conditions, BME and LGBT communities, vulnerable children and young people, and older people on low incomes.

The evidence review also highlighted related issues such as substance misuse and the incidence of violent and hate crime, with the shortage of affordable housing and labour market factors affecting the ability of residents to overcome the disadvantages they experience.

We recognise the role that housing plays in helping to reduce inequality. Through the Housing Strategy we hope to address these issues, reducing deprivation and worklessness and improving health and quality of life.

3 Our Strategic Principles

We want to make sure that our strategy goes beyond the traditional bricks and mortar approach of housing strategies to deliver a real change. To ensure this happens, we have identified 6 fundamental principles that will underpin all of the work we do:

Principle 1: A Healthy City

We want to make sure that our services improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of local people. Lack of suitable housing, poor quality housing, or lack of appropriate support all have a negative impact on the health and emotional wellbeing of residents and local communities. In turn, this places an increased burden on other services in the city such as health and social care.

Principle 2: Reducing Inequality

We need to make sure that our services are welcoming and responsive to the needs of our communities, tackling discrimination and disadvantage to help improve the lives of local people. Inequality can arise as a result of discrimination, or can be a cause of discrimination resulting in a wide variety of disadvantage, such as economic, educational, or health. In turn the inequality experienced by local people has a negative effect on the community and the city as a whole.

Principle 3: Improving neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods play an important part in providing a sense of community, integration and support. Through our housing strategy we want to help ensure that our neighbourhoods are safe, attractive and accessible places to live. Access to safe green spaces is important to encourage active living, recreation areas for all ages and a place for people to meet. Local communities need the mix of high quality housing and support to ensure that they are able to cater for the changing needs of local people.

Principle 4: Accountable to local people

The Housing Strategy has to take into account the needs and aspirations of everyone living in the city – a quarter of a million people. To ensure that our work improves the lives of local people, we need to make sure that local people are involved in decisions about the services that affect them.

This strategy and related sub-strategies have been developed with extensive consultation with the public, service users and other stakeholders at each stage. Additionally, once the strategy is launched, we need to regularly review progress of the strategy and delivery of our services with local people and other stakeholders to make sure that they are achieving their aims and adapting to the changing needs of the city.

Principle 5: Value for Money

Services delivered by the Council and its partners are affected by constant funding pressures and competing demands. We need to make sure that the services we deliver are the right services, that they are delivered efficiently and targeted in such a way that will provide maximum impact and benefit for the resources available.

Principle 6: Partnership Working

The Housing Strategy recognises that we cannot address the city's housing needs in isolation. We need to make sure that we work with all those who can help improve the quality of life in the city. Success depends on joint working with local people and a range of public, private, community and voluntary services across the city, and also by working in wider partnerships at a regional and national level.

Strategy Statement: Home Ownership

As a nation we aspire to owning our own home. Historically, private renting was the dominant tenure, however by the end of the 1950s home ownership became the largest tenure. The largest boom in owner occupation happened in the 1980s with the Right to Buy scheme giving council tenants the opportunity to buy their home. However, research compiled by the Halifax shows that the last few years have seen a national decline in owner occupation, particularly amongst those aged 25-34, although smaller declines were seen amongst those aged 16-24 and 35-44 (however increases in owner occupation is being seen in the 75 and over age groups). Many factors have contributed to this change including rising property prices, the effects of Stamp Duty, reduced mortgage availability and increased mortgage costs.

Low Cost Home Ownership

A number of low cost home ownership products have been developed to help people get into home ownership, such as by allowing people to part rent / part buy or by offering a grant or loan to contribute to the price of a home. This assistance is available under the HomeBuy banner and is managed by Moat Housing Group, with more than 400 homes available over the next few years. Council tenants still have the Right to Buy. However, sales have declined sharply, again attributed to the high cost of homes. There may be potential for new shared ownership schemes to help tenants.

Support to Home Owners

Some home owners or landlords are equity rich but cash poor – their homes may be worth money but they may be on a low income. Rising costs are making repairs, improvements, heating bills and mortgage costs a struggle. We want to help vulnerable home owners through grants for new energy efficient heating systems, by helping them to unlock the equity in their home, or if financial difficulties are so great, by perhaps helping them remain in their home and avoid homelessness by having a social landlord buy a share of their home to reduce mortgage costs or raise funds. This share could be bought back when circumstances improve.

Family Support

Recent steep rises in property prices have left many households with sizeable equity in their homes yet other family members cannot enter home ownership due to the same price increases. There may be scope for an equity release scheme that would allow home owners to trade a share in their home for a cash lump sum which a child or other family member could use as a deposit on their own first home.

Case Study: Brighton & Hove Housing Partnership

Affordable housing meets two primary aims in the city – it enables some households to take their first step on the property ladder through low cost home ownership and it also provides homes for affordable rent for those who home ownership is not a viable option. Over the next few years Brighton & Hove has one of the largest affordable housing programmes in the South East outside London, and a target to deliver 230 new affordable homes per annum, almost triple the national average.

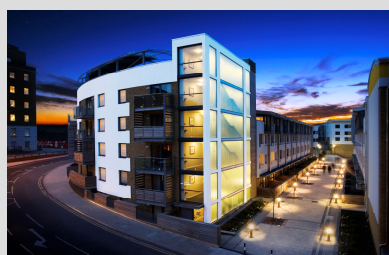
The Brighton & Hove Housing Partnership is a partnership of 7 developing Registered Social Landlords, the Housing Corporation and Brighton & Hove City Council. The partnership has a proven track record in delivering a range of affordable housing in the City including low cost home ownership, rented and intermediate rent to meeting housing needs and improving people's quality of life

Working in partnership we delivered 329 new affordable homes in 2006/07 and a total of 760 affordable homes over the last three years. We are committed to the future delivery of a significant number of affordable homes in the City, meeting high quality and design standards, and maximising those opportunities on Brownfield sites ranging from large, mixed use developments to smaller, more suburban sites.

The partnership has representation on the Local Strategic Partnership, Economic Partnership, Neighbourhood Renewal and Strategic Housing Partnership

Partnership members:

- Hyde Martlett
- The Guinness Partnership
- Southern Housing Group
- Places for People
- Brighton & Hove City Council
- Downland Housing Association
- Moat Housing Group
- Amicus Horizon
- Housing Corporation



City Point, Moat



Monarch's View, Downland



Gordon Road, Hyde Martlett

4 The Strategy in Context

4.1 Linking to International, National and Regional Policy

There has been a wide range of international, national and regional research and policies produced in response to the changing aspirations and demographics of the population.

International Policy

Article 25 of the United Nations **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (Resolution 217 A (III), 10 December 1948) has clear parallels with the strategic housing function:



Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was approved in 1951 with the United Kingdom being a founder member. These rights were strengthened in UK legislation through the Human Rights Act 1998 with Article 8 of the ECHR having particular relevance for strategy housing:



Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life

- 1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.***
- 2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.***



The **World Health Organization Healthy Cities Programme** (Phase IV programme) is currently focussing on healthy ageing, healthy urban planning and health impact assessment. Brighton & Hove is a member of the Healthy Cities network, led by the Primary Care Trust with the Council being a member of the Healthy City Partnership.

National Policy

The 2006 Local Government White Paper **Strong and Prosperous Communities** recognised the importance of the strategic housing role of authorities as being:

at the heart of achieving the social, economic and environmental objectives that shape a community and create a sense of place

This was followed by the **Local Government Public Involvement in Health Bill 2007** which enable local authorities to engage their citizens, lead their communities, and find new and more effective ways to deliver high quality services with their partners.

A new White Paper was published in July 2008.

Communities in control: real people, real power sets out how the government plans to give citizens and communities more rights and more power through becoming more involved in decision making, service delivery and holding politicians and councils to account.

The Housing Green Paper **Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable** published in July 2007 highlighted the importance of the strategic housing role, which saw the government committing to deliver 2 million new homes by 2016, and 3 million by 2020. This increases the 200,000 target to 240,000 new homes being built every year by 2016 and increasing the supply of affordable housing to 70,000 homes per year by 2011.

To support the Green Paper, the 2007 **Comprehensive Spending Review** prioritised funding towards the delivery of new housing, yet despite the overall increase in funds from £8.8bn in 2007/08 to £10bn in 2010/11, funding allocations to other housing activities such as Supporting People have been limited.

The new **Housing & Regeneration Bill 2008** based on the Green Paper takes forward the recommendations made by Professor Martin Cave in his report **Every tenant matters: A review of social housing regulation** published in 2007. The Bill has 3 main elements:

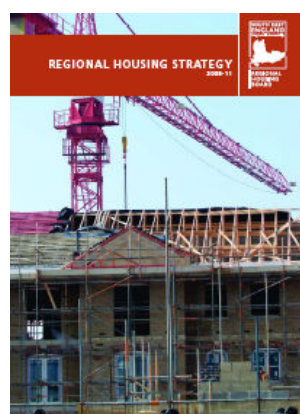
- to make it easier for local authorities to build new council homes to meet local needs
- to create the Homes & Communities Agency that will focus on the delivery of new affordable housing and work to regenerate run down areas.
- to set up a social housing regulator (the Tenant Services Authority) that will ensure providers improve standards and give tenants have a greater say in the management of their homes.

Alongside the Bill, the government is carrying out a review of council housing finances and a **Housing Reform Green Paper** is also anticipated at the end of the year which may link housing services to economic dependence and social mobility including the potential introduction of different forms of tenure.

A new **Welfare Reform Bill** is also expected towards the end of the year which will focus on helping people get back into work. These will build upon the work of the Hills Review **Ends and Means: The future roles of social housing in England** that was published in 2007. Hills recognised the problem of high levels of worklessness in social housing and the need to retain tenants with mixed incomes.



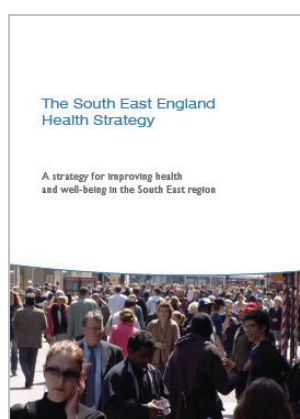
The government recently published its housing strategy for older people, ***Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society***. This national strategy brings together priorities from across government departments, in particular the 2007 Green Paper ***Homes for the Future*** and the Department of Health's 2006 White Paper ***Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*** and 2007 concordat on adult social care ***Putting People First***. These documents are also feeding into the forthcoming social care Green Paper and new ***Independent Living Strategy***.



All of these strategic documents want to support people to live independently in the community though the provision of personalised self directed support.

Regional Policy

The ***Regional Housing Strategy 2008-2011*** was published in April 2008 by the South East England Regional Assembly. Funding priorities concentrate on the delivery of new affordable housing, improving the quality of housing and improving provision for gypsy and traveller groups.



In particular, the strategy is encouraging the construction of larger family sized homes and expects that new and refurbished homes should meet level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The strategy also recognises the importance of the private sector and targets funding at improving the quality of the homes of vulnerable households, particularly in respect of heating systems.

The first ***South East England Regional Health Strategy*** was published in February 2008. Key themes in the strategy that link to housing include a focus on reducing Health Inequalities, developing a Sustainable Region and developing Safer Communities.

4.2 Organizing to Meet the Challenges

Brighton & Hove City Council has recently moved to the cabinet model of political leadership, with politicians being more directly responsible for the services under their remit. New scrutiny committees are able to hold councillors to account for their decisions.

A new Council Constitution includes a commitment to openness and involvement and the council's new priorities centred on delivering core services efficiently and making a real and lasting difference to local people's quality of life:

- protect the environment whilst growing the economy
- better use of public money
- reduce inequality by increasing opportunities
- fair enforcement of the law
- open and effective city leadership

Delivering effective housing services for the city requires a co-ordination of services across planning, health, social care, housing, the community and voluntary sector.

Social care and housing services are located in the same department within the council, enabling us to develop shared goals and understanding amongst staff delivering the services. The overall vision for these services is:

Improving independence and quality of life for our diverse communities

Working with the Primary Care Trust

In recent years there has been a much bigger focus on working with the Primary Care Trust to ensure health considerations and included in our social care and housing work, with strategic public health officers from the PCT now physically working alongside social care and housing colleagues.

This partnership has led to the Health Impact Assessment carried out alongside the development of the new housing strategy and new Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessments

The JSNA process is an integrated needs assessment across social care, education and health that describe future health, care and well-being needs of the local population and the strategic direction of service delivery to meet these needs.

PCT's and Local Authorities are working together to produce Joint Strategic Needs Assessments as the basis for developing and commissioning services. We are approaching these assessments as an opportunity to build on the extensive joint working across the city. A portfolio of specific JSNAs will be carried out to address the needs of different care groups and which are a result of true strategic collaboration across the city.

Examples include the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2008, a JSNA to focus specifically on children and young people in the city. Future assessments are likely to look at the needs of older people, those with mental health issues and those with physical and sensory disabilities.

4.3 A City Partnership

This strategy will only be a success if it is delivered in partnership between the local council, service providers and our communities. In many cases the providers of specialist advice and services will understand the needs of parts of the community much more than the Council.

We must work with all those that have a knowledge and stake in our local communities to achieve the aims of this strategy and make real improvements to the lives of the city's residents.

Some of the partnerships and key groups that operate across the city include:

- 2020 Community Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership or LSP)
- Public Service Board
- City Inclusion Partnership

2020 Community Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership)

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is a multi-agency partnership that brings together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. Its role is to improve the economic social and environmental well being of local people in the City of Brighton and Hove.

The LSP has developed the 2020 Community Strategy which sets out the vision and plans of the agencies, organisations and communities who work together to improve the quality of life in this city.

The role of the Local Strategic Partnership has been strengthened in ***Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007*** and accompanying statutory guidance that was published in July 2008. The guidance, ***Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities***, outlines the function of Local Area Agreements and how the Housing Strategy plays a central role in the wider Community Strategy.

Public Service Board

The Public Service Board sits alongside the LSP and is the main forum for the Council and its partners to work together on joint and national priorities. It has members from the Primary Care Trust, Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals, the Police and business leaders. It oversees progress against the targets in the Local Area Agreement.

Local Area Agreement (LAA)

These are new agreements introduced in the **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007** that set out the priorities for a local area agreed between Government, the local authority, the Local Strategic Partnership and other key partners.

Key housing action relating to the LAA includes increasing the number of new homes, improving the quality of social housing, supporting vulnerable people to maintain their independence and tackling fuel poverty. Additional local indicators focus on reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation, bringing empty properties back into use and reducing the number of rough sleepers. The targets in the Local Area Agreement are monitored regularly and reported to government and local partners.

City Inclusion Partnership

The Council is working with partners in the city to develop new arrangements that will oversee and lead the strategic direction of equalities and diversity work. This will take the form of a new City Inclusion Partnership that will sit within the Local Strategic Partnership and provide the basis for partnership work between the city council and our statutory and community / voluntary sector partners.

This Partnership will work actively with communities of interest and community / voluntary groups across the city and will provide a mechanism to hold the statutory sector to account in relation to equalities work.

4.4 Working in Partnership Across the Region

Multi Area Agreements take the notion of Local Area Agreements a step further – with different local authorities working together in partnership to address common issues. Whilst Brighton & Hove is not involved in a Multi Area Agreement at present, Brighton & Hove is already leading a number of regional initiatives and partnerships:

Sussex Empty Homes Forum

Brighton & Hove works with other local authorities in Sussex through the Sussex Empty Homes Forum (SEHF) with East Sussex and West Sussex County Councils and the Housing Corporation to reduce empty properties across the region through partnership working. The Forum has developed the Tackling Empty Homes in Sussex Empty Homes Forum Strategic Framework 2008–2011.

Sussex Homemove

Sussex Homemove is an expansion of Brighton & Hove's successful choice based lettings system to eight Sussex Authorities and 12 major housing associations. It is one of the largest and most successful schemes of its type in the South East. The partnership provides opportunities for sharing good practice to improve customers' access to social and other housing across the region. Initially this project was funded by the Government however partners now jointly fund the work, led by the Regional Housing Partnerships Team at Brighton & Hove City Council.

Brighton & East Sussex Together

The Brighton & Hove, East Sussex Together Partnership (BEST) has been allocated £18.6 million over three years by the South East England Regional Housing Board (RHB) to tackle some of the region's worst housing conditions.

The Partnership, led by Brighton & Hove City Council, received the largest allocation of funds in the region and brings together the local authorities of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne, Hastings, Wealden, Lewes and Rother.

The partnership is focused on improving the living conditions of vulnerable households in the private sector and will aim to improve the condition of housing to the decent homes standard, address more widespread regeneration needs; and foster improvement in domestic energy efficiency to combat fuel poverty and reduce the region's carbon emissions.

Southern Home Loans Partnership

The Southern Home Loans Partnership (SHLP) was launched in 2005 to offer low cost loans to assist homeowners finance essential works to their properties. SHLP joined together South Coast Moneyline and five local authorities: Brighton & Hove, Chichester, Eastleigh, Gosport and Portsmouth.

4.5 Strategy Co-ordination

Our Housing Strategy does not operate in isolation, but as its aims and objectives are interrelated to a wide range of other plans and strategies within the Council, its partner agencies, and stakeholders.

Key plans and strategies include:

- 2020 Community Strategy
- Local Area Agreement
- Draft Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- Draft Local Development Framework (Local Plan)
- Supporting People Commissioning Strategy 2008-2011
- Homelessness Strategy 2008
- Single Homeless Strategy 2002
- Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2008
- Empty Property Strategy 2007
- Brighton & Hove Affordable Warmth Strategy 2002
- Multi Agency Carers' Strategy 2006-2009

Copies of these strategies and plans are available from the Council's website.

Strategy Statement: Excellence in Council Housing

The draft Business Plan for Council Housing Management will set out the long term vision and strategic framework for services provided to council tenants and leaseholders in Brighton & Hove. The overall objective is to achieve excellence in Housing Management services recognising that social housing cannot be divorced from the wider economic, social and environmental objectives it helps to achieve.

Everyone deserves to live in a decent home, yet currently around half of all council homes in Brighton & Hove fall below the Decent Homes Standard. We recognise that the Decent Homes Standard is a minimum and we are working with tenants to develop a Brighton & Hove Standard to reflect resident aspirations. As a result, the Council is re-examining the stock condition and is working with tenants consider a range of options. Two key elements of this will delivered through a new Procurement Strategy and a new Asset Management Strategy:

- **Procurement Strategy**

This strategy would see the council enter into a long term partnership arrangement from 2010/11 for the maintenance and improvement of the housing stock. This will bring substantial savings which will help reduce the gap between our available resources and the investment needed to achieve the decency standards and carry out other works to meet our tenants' aspirations. This will also aim to achieve social benefits through training and employment initiatives, energy efficiency measures and measures to combat fuel poverty.

- **Asset Management Strategy**

This strategy could see the creation of a Local Delivery Vehicle. Up to 499 homes could be leased to this organisation which could then use them as an asset to release funding which could then be given back to the Council for a range of purposes and primarily to bring the housing stock up to the Brighton & Hove Standard.

In tandem with these key measures a number of other initiatives are being developed such as generating new income streams, programming works differently and reducing management unit costs which will achieve a sustainable business plan and bring all of our homes up to the Decent Homes Standard.

5 Strategic Priority 1: Improving Housing Supply

5.1 Improving Choice

Through our Housing Strategy we need to make sure that the city has the right type of housing to meet the needs of current and future residents, whether it be owner occupation, private renting, or social rented housing.

To achieve this aim, we need to develop new housing and make best use of the city's existing housing stock. To provide a greater choice for residents looking to buy or rent, new housing needs to include homes for outright sale, low cost home ownership, intermediate rent and social rent. We also need to bring empty homes back into use and help provide opportunities for those wishing to move to larger or smaller homes as the needs of their households change.

Our strategic goals under this objective are to:

- Goal 1 Help households become homeowners
- Goal 2 Provides opportunities for households to move to larger homes or downsize as their needs change
- Goal 3 Identify opportunities to improve and develop deprived neighbourhoods
- Goal 4 Make best use of the housing stock
- Goal 5 Increase the supply of affordable rented housing

Actions to meet Objective 1: Improving Housing Supply will contribute to the following National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships

- NI 5: Overall/general satisfaction with local area
- NI 119: Self reported measure of people's overall health & well being
- NI 124: People with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition
- NI 141: Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living
- NI 154: Net additional homes provided
- NI 155: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
- NI 156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation

5.2 Strategic Goal 1: Help households become homeowners

As a nation we aspire to home ownership above any other tenure however high property prices and changing mortgage markets have put traditional home ownership out of reach of many households.

Research² shown that more than half of working households in Brighton & Hove are in the intermediate housing market – they can afford to pay more than social housing rent but cannot afford to buy the cheapest 10% of family sized 2 or 3 bed homes. Only 29% of working households were able to buy at lower quartile levels.

Our own research³ shows that a 95% mortgage on the average 1 bed flat in the city would require an income of £52,000 with a 3 bed house requiring a £92,000 income. The CACI Wealth of the Nation Report 2007 shows that median household income in the city is just under £29,950.

These challenges have led to a range of low cost home ownership products where households can either buy at a reduced rate or buy on a part rent / part buy basis.

Case Study: HomeBuy

HomeBuy offers an increasing range of schemes to help people who wish to buy a home but are unable to raise a mortgage large enough to do so. Under Homebuy, households buy a share of the property, typically between 40% and 50%, and either pay rent or have an equity loan on the remaining share. The schemes are aimed at households earning £18,000 - £60,000. Moat manages the HomeBuy scheme for Kent, Sussex and Essex. There are more than 450 homes in development across Brighton & Hove available for HomeBuy between 2008 and 2010 with more to follow. For more information, please contact MOAT on 07002 662846 or at www.homebuy.co.uk



² The Geography of Affordable and Unaffordable Housing, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005

³ Property Price Report 2008 Q2 (Apr-Jun), Brighton & Hove City Council, 2008

Historically the Right to Buy and Cash Incentive Scheme has been the low cost home ownership solution of many thousands of social housing tenants. However, the current market climate has made these schemes unaffordable for many so we would like to look at other ways of helping tenants buy a share in their home.

Many households have built up a sizeable equity in their homes as a result of the property market boom, yet their children or other relatives are unable to access home ownership due to the same boom. We would like to look at the possibility of an equity release scheme to help households pay deposits for other family members.

Goal 1 Help households become homeowners

| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new homes for low cost home ownership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New homes developed for low cost home ownership |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate and deliver a range of low cost home ownership products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective uptake of low cost home ownership options by local people |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore potential for a new type of equity release product that enables family members to provide deposits to other family members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New scheme piloted and launched if viable |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore potential for a new type of product that enables social housing tenants to buy a stake in their home | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New scheme piloted and launched if viable |

5.3 Strategic Goal 2: Provide opportunities for households to move to larger homes or downsize as needs change

Pockets of overcrowding and the Housing Register illustrate how many households in the city require larger accommodation than they currently can afford or access. Conversely, we also know there is a group of residents who wish to ‘downsize’ and move to smaller homes but have not been able to do so as either suitable alternative housing is not available or they need support with the moving process.

Whilst low cost home ownership schemes have helped many younger households by flats and take their first step into home ownership, we can see a problem arising in the future if there are not sufficient larger low cost home ownership homes available as they want to have children and expand their family.

Almost half of the city's housing is comprised of 1 and 2 bedroom flats with development space being very limited new developments have also tended to concentrate on smaller homes. The Regional Housing Strategy recognises the need for family sized homes and is making it more financially viable for these to be developed.

Case Study: Social Housing Under-Occupation and Downsizing

Brighton & Hove City Council has appointed a dedicated Under-Occupation Officer to support to tenants wanting to downsize. The Transfer Incentive Scheme offers a financial reward of up to £3,500 to those who want to downsize from a family home or wheelchair adapted property that they no longer need. Practical help is given to identify a suitable new home and support is given through the moving process. In 2007/08 the Under-Occupation Officer work has supported households to release 81 family sized homes and has a caseload of 100 more households wanting to downsize. The homes that have been freed up are being let through Choice Based Lettings and have helped overcrowded tenants move to larger homes, provided new homes for homeless families and helped house families with disabled members.



To increase opportunities for people to move to larger or smaller homes as their needs change we need to ensure new developments include family sized housing and desirable options for those wanting to downsize and we also need to support those wishing to move to smaller homes freeing up existing family sized housing.

| Goal 2 | | Provide opportunities for households to move to larger homes or downsize as their needs change | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Strategic Action: | | Success Criteria: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all developments contain a mix of property sizes • Develop new family sized homes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment in Local Development Framework • Commitment of increased proportion of 3 bed homes developed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure home ownership pathways contain a range of property sizes and types • Target a proportion of new developments at those wishing to downsize | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost home ownership pathways do not trap households in unsuitable homes • Local lettings plans reflecting need to attract downsizers • Free up family sized homes for resale or reletting |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support households wishing to downsize | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free up family sized homes for resale or reletting | | |

5.4 Strategic Goal 3: Identify opportunities to improve and develop deprived neighbourhoods

The Reducing Inequality Review 2007 carried out on behalf of the Council identified that whilst deprivation was spread across the city, there were pockets of more pronounced inequality, particularly in East Brighton, Queens Park, Moulsecoomb and Bevendean. These areas are predominantly social housing and similarly, the report highlighted that more than 2/3 of social housing tenants experienced inequality arising from at least 2 of the dimensions of equality (income, benefits dependency, health, crime and environment).

Historically, homelessness pressures in the city have resulted in a higher proportion of social housing lettings going to the most vulnerable, contributing to the overall deprivation in these areas and housing quality is also a concern in these areas with many homes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard.

Over the last few years we have focussed on homelessness prevention which homelessness halve. This combined with the introduction of Choice Based Lettings and Private Sector Leasing have reduced the proportion of vulnerable people entering social housing. However, despite this, there are still pockets of deprivation across the city’s social housing that are in need of imaginative solutions and an intensive and co-ordinated approach from services to address.

Selective redevelopment of areas of deprivation and poor quality housing can be a catalyst for change, providing opportunities to develop a range of housing types and tenures, improving housing quality and diversity within the local population. New initiatives to improve residents health and help people get back into work can be linked to regeneration opportunities to ensure that everyone in the community benefits.

| Goal 3 Identify opportunities to improve and develop deprived neighbourhoods | |
|--|---|
| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring new developments contribute to improving the tenure mix of an area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenure diversification Reduced deprivation Reduced worklessness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify regeneration possibilities through a Local Delivery Vehicle to link Decent Homes, worklessness and tenure diversification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenure diversification Reduced deprivation Reduced worklessness Improved housing quality |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link the Council housing procurement strategy to reducing worklessness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced deprivation Reduced worklessness Improved housing quality |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure redevelopments are accompanied with local lettings plans that take into account the needs of local people and the area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved resident satisfaction with their neighbourhood |

5.5 Strategic Goal 4: Make best use of the housing stock

The pace of new housing development is not able to keep pace with demand arising from an increasing population, homelessness and those unsuitably housed. To meet this excess demand we need to make sure that we are maximising the potential of the existing housing stock.

Brighton & Hove has the 6th largest private rented sector in the country at more than 20% of all housing. We have utilised this resource to assist in housing households in housing crisis with many homeless households benefiting from properties leased on a long term basis from private sector landlords offering homes with a higher quality and greater level of stability than households were receiving from traditional temporary accommodation.

Case Study: Homemove

Our Homemove magazine advertises council and housing association homes for rent and shared ownership. A future Homemove improvement will see the inclusion of homes for rent in the private rented sector that will enable accredited landlords to advertise their properties and so increase housing choice to households seeking to move. Homemove has now also incorporated a mobility rating that indicates whether an available property is suitable for a wheelchair user or someone with limited mobility and all new affordable housing that meets the wheelchair standard is advertised before it is built in order to ensure that the features installed are designed around the specific needs of the future occupants.



The Housing & Regeneration Bill provides an opportunity to set up a Local Delivery Vehicle. Up to 499 homes can be leased to the LDV which can then be used as an asset to borrow money. This can be used for a range of purposes including improving the housing stock. In addition, the properties could be used for homes for those who may find it difficult to access housing through traditional routes, including those with a Learning Disability, those with mental health problems and those with physical difficulties.

To ensure the best use of our housing stock, we are also developing an Accessible Housing Register listing all wheelchair homes and those which have been adapted. This will help to ensure that they are aimed at households who needs adapted homes when they are available for reletting. Each year we spend almost £2m on adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants to improve the accessibility of people's homes across the public and private sectors, helping around 500 households.

Goal 4 Make best use of the housing stock

| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlock the capital in the social housing stock | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Delivery Vehicle able to access market funding |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure accommodation for non-homeless households that have difficulty accessing the market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Delivery Vehicle providing long term temporary accommodation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved use of the private rented sector as a viable option for homeless households | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discharge of homelessness • Temporary to permanent lettings |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make better use of adapted and wheelchair accessible homes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible housing register • Off-plan letting of new accessible homes |

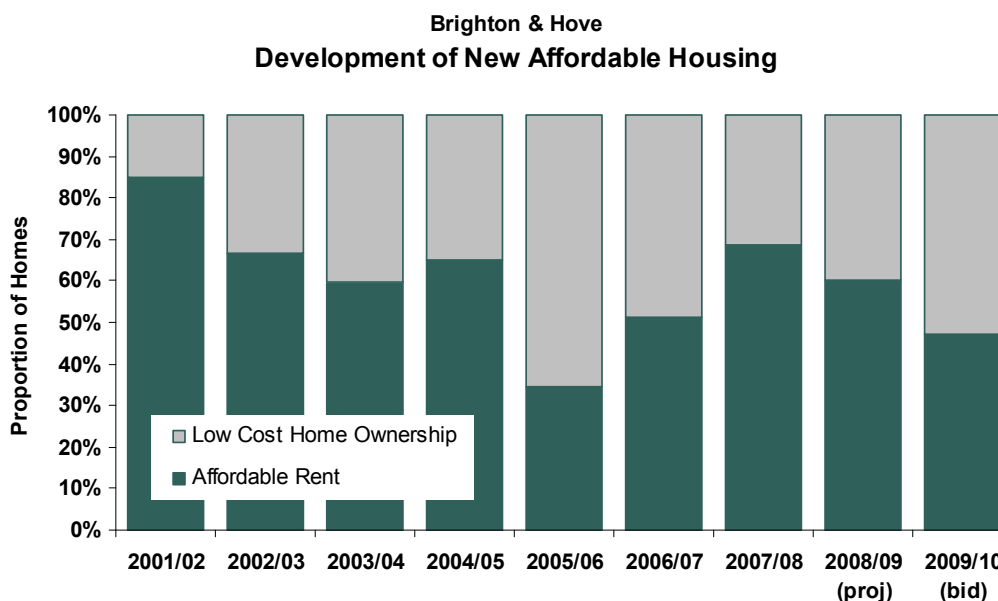
5.6 Strategic Goal 5: Increase the supply of affordable rented housing

Affordability indicators suggest that households should not spend more than 25% of their income on property rental costs. When comparing rents to incomes in Brighton & Hove, 65% are unable to afford to rent a 2 bed home and 54% are unable to afford to rent a 1 bed home.

Our own research⁴ shows that the average rent payment on a 1 bedroom flat is equivalent to the monthly repayment of a £100,000 mortgage, requiring an income of around £32,000 to finance. The average rent of a 3 bed house is

⁴ Property Price Report 2008 Q2 (Apr-Jun), Brighton & Hove City Council, 2008

equivalent to a mortgage of around £190,000 requiring an income of around £58,000. Whilst this is less than the cost of buying, they have to be considered alongside the median household income of just under £30,000 per annum.



Brighton & Hove has one of the largest affordable housing programmes in the South East and supports the development of a mix of new homes for affordable rent and low cost home ownership. We aim to deliver an average of 60% as new affordable rented housing and 40% as new low cost home ownership housing.

Goal 5 Increase the supply of affordable rented housing

Strategic Action:

Success Criteria:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all new developments contain a mix of housing for sale and for rent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed tenure developments that increase the supply of affordable rented housing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new affordable rented homes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New affordable rented homes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new affordable rented family sized homes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New family sized affordable rented homes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new affordable rented housing for wheelchair users | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% of all new affordable housing to meet wheelchair standard |

Strategy Statement: Private Rented Sector

Brighton & Hove has the 6th largest private rented sector in the country. It is estimated that around 22% of dwellings in the city are privately rented, double the proportion found across the South East region and nationally. The sector has the advantages of being able to cater for a highly mobile population but renting privately in the city can be expensive with an average 1 bedroom flat costing around £650 per month and though most landlords are responsible, there is limited security of tenure.

The profile of households living in the private rented sector shows that they are more likely to be younger and smaller households, many with one-person, who are economically active. Despite this, there are high instances of overcrowding with an estimated 28% of households having at least 1 room fewer than needed. A high percentage of households from BME groups rent in the private rented sector and a high percentage of private rented accommodation in the city is rented by students.

Much of the stock was built before 1919, with solid walls and sliding sash windows hindering energy efficiency. The historic nature of the city, with its many conservation areas and listed buildings, can also make it harder to install energy efficiency measures. Brighton & Hove have a significant number of houses in multiple occupation (HMO), some are small bed-sits others large shared houses. Many of the small bed-sits are concentrated in the centre of the city and often provide accommodation for the more vulnerable households

Over recent years, the booming property market has seen a surge in buy to let investors which has impacted the property market. The affects of a slowdown in the housing market may deter investment but it is expected that demand for the private rented sector will remain strong because more households may delay becoming owner-occupiers and rent in the private sector.

We are committed to improving housing in the private rented sector and we are working with landlords to make properties fit for habitation and improve energy efficiency. Through our housing renewal funding we have administered a wide range of loans and grants to improve private sector properties including properties in the private rented sector. The response to the HMO licensing scheme has need very good and over many years we have maintained a very successful HMO improvement programme. Our future activities include assistance to HMOs and private landlords which includes landlords' accreditation and training. These initiatives will either achieve decent housing standards or will move towards decency.

Strategy Statement: Families

The 2001 Census reported there were around 29,000 families with children living in Brighton & Hove and around 20% of those families were living in socially rented accommodation, 65% in owner-occupation and 14% living in the private rented sector. The census also identified 32% of families lived in overcrowded homes. Within the council's housing stock 18% of council properties are occupied by one or two parent families with at least one child under 16 and 22% of tenants said that they had too few rooms in their property.

Although Brighton & Hove has experienced a large percentage growth in households aged 25-44 years there has been a decline in families with children, suggesting that the city may be less of a destination for younger families with children. In fact the city has seen a net out-migration of family households. This may be due to high cost of housing in the city and families who need to move to larger homes can not afford to trade up and remain living in the city. For BME households who often have larger, extended households, trading up within the city is likely to be a particular problem due to the nature and prices of the housing stock.

Our needs survey highlighted a shortage of family sized homes are we are working through our planning policies to maximise the amount of family homes that are built on new developments, however, as space is at a premium our options are limited so we need to make best use of the existing housing stock. During 2007/08 our Under-Occupation officer was successful in helping 81 households downsize. As a result, this freed up 81 family homes for reletting, helping both homeless households and existing households in the social housing stock that may have been overcrowded.

In addition we have negotiated long-term leasing in the private rented sector. This provides the opportunity for homeless households to move into higher quality temporary accommodation than traditional B&Bs and has given more opportunity for existing council tenants to transfer alleviating some overcrowding.

We work closely with other agencies to help of families and young people find housing solutions that avoids the need for making homeless application and a placement in temporary accommodation, these include working with private rented sector landlords, mediation services and other agencies. Our benefit take-up team not only helps households to maximise their housing benefit but supports households to maximise all their entitlements.

6 Strategic Priority 2: Improving Housing Quality

6.1 Decent Homes

The Government has set a target for all Council Housing and Housing Association homes to reach the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. Additionally, the government wants to halve the proportion of vulnerable households living in non-decent private sector housing.

Poor quality housing is known to have a detrimental effect on a households' health, educational, emotional wellbeing. Our Housing Strategy will work to make sure that more residents are able to live in decent high quality homes that are able to meet their changing needs.

To achieve this aim, we need to work with owners and landlords to improve the existing housing stock across the private and public sectors and make sure new homes are developed to the very latest sustainability and accessibility standards.

Our strategic goals under this objective are to:

- Goal 6 Work with home owners and landlords to maintain and improve the quality of their housing
- Goal 7 Reduce fuel poverty and minimise CO₂ emissions
- Goal 8 Develop the Brighton & Hove Standard for high quality and well maintained social housing and improve tenants home to ensure that the meet the standard
- Goal 9 Work with owners to bring more of the city's long term empty homes back into use
- Goal 10 Ensure new housing is developed to the latest standards for quality, accessibility and sustainability

Actions to meet Objective 2: Improving Housing Quality will contribute to the following National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships:

- NI 5: Overall/general satisfaction with local area
- NI 119: Self reported measure of people's overall health & well being
- NI 131: Delayed transfers of care from hospitals
- NI 158: Percentage of decent council homes
- NI 160: Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services
- NI 187: Tackling fuel poverty

6.2 Strategic Goal 6: Work with home owners and landlords to maintain and improve the quality of their housing

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

Unfortunately home owners and particularly the vulnerable can sometimes find themselves in a situation where they do not have enough money to maintain and improve their home. This could be for a number of reasons such as ill health, a reduced income as a result of retiring and moving to a pension or unemployment.

To help owner-occupiers, landlords and tenants on low incomes, the council provides means tested loans and grants. In 2007/08, £2m was spent on private sector renewal, including adaptations, making properties fit for habitation, and improving energy efficiency to more than 1,000 homes, many occupied by vulnerable residents.

A Community Finance Initiative has been developed with a private sector partner and other authorities to focus on equity release and low cost loans to unlock the capital in people's homes, reducing reliance on limited grants.

Case Study: Southern Home Loans Partnership

The Southern Home Loans Partnership (SHLP) was launched in 2005 to offer low cost loans to assist homeowners finance essential works to their properties. SHLP joined together South Coast Moneyline and five local authorities: Brighton & Hove, Chichester, Eastleigh, Gosport and Portsmouth. The loans are subsidised by the council’s and are available to home owners for works to homes that have been assessed as having failed the Decent Homes Standard. If a loan option is not affordable, a referral will be made back to the relevant Local Authority to see if there are any other forms of assistance available.



A Home Safety & Security Scheme is being established to deliver home safety and security measures for the benefit of older householders and families with children.

The Brighton & Hove, East Sussex Together Partnership (BEST), led by Brighton & Hove City Council has been allocated £18.6 million over three years to improve the living conditions of vulnerable households in the private sector and will aim to improve the condition of housing to the decent homes standard, address more widespread regeneration needs; and foster improvement in domestic energy efficiency to combat fuel poverty and reduce the region’s carbon emissions.

Goal 6

Work with home owners and landlords to maintain and improve the quality of their housing

| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved promotion of Housing Renewal Assistance, Loans and Grants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved take up of schemes Improved housing quality reduction of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend eligibility on Decent Homes Assistance and Loans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved housing quality reduction of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend eligibility on Common Parts Assistance and Loans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved quality of common areas of buildings comprised of flats |

6.3 Strategic Goal 7: Reduce fuel poverty and minimise CO₂ emissions

Keeping warm at home can be a major problem for households living on low incomes and many households face the harsh decision of whether to heat their homes adequately or eat healthily. This can lead to poor health and in some cases, even death.

With the ever increasing awareness regarding climate change, investing in energy efficiency measures not only reduces fuel costs but also reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

We are committed to reducing fuel poverty and improving the energy efficiency of homes in the city. Our Home Energy Efficiency Strategy sets out how we, working in partnership with local organisations plan to improve the energy efficiency of properties across the city through eight major aims:

- improving housing energy efficiency
- eliminating fuel poverty and providing affordable warmth for all
- reducing the incidence of illness and early deaths caused by fuel poverty
- promoting energy saving in households and raising awareness of its benefits
- using the least environmentally damaging forms of energy and reducing carbon dioxide emissions
- avoiding unnecessary use of energy
- increasing the efficiency of energy conversion
- conserving natural resources

There are a number of grants or discounts schemes available to people of all ages and incomes which can help improve energy efficiency in the home.

Goal 7 Reduce fuel poverty and minimise CO₂ emissions

| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve awareness of assistance available to owners and tenants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced fuel poverty • Reduced excess winter deaths |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable HMO tenants to access Energy Efficiency Innovation Grants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved energy efficiency, lower fuel costs, reduced CO₂ emissions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Temporary Accommodation Energy Innovation Grant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved energy efficiency, lower fuel costs, reduced CO₂ emissions |

6.4 Strategic Goal 8: Develop the Brighton & Hove Standard for high quality and well maintained social housing and improve tenants' homes to ensure that they meet the standard

Everybody deserves to live in a decent home, however, around half of all council homes in Brighton & Hove fall below the Decent Homes Standard and the financial situation is such that the authority could not, under its own resources, achieve the Standard.

In a ballot of tenants early in 2007, the majority made it very clear that they would like their homes to remain with the Council despite the funding not being available to maintain their homes. As a result, the Council is looking at additional options for meeting the standard with two key approaches:

- An Asset Management Plan which could see the creation of a Local Delivery Vehicle that would sit outside the Council. Up to 499 homes could be leased to this organisation which could then use them as an asset to borrow up to an estimated £45m which could then be given back to the Council for a range of purposes including Decent Homes work.
- A Procurement Strategy that would see the council enter into a long term partnership arrangement for the maintenance and improvement of the housing stock, reducing overheads and direct costs.

| Goal 8 | | Develop the Brighton & Hove Standard for high quality and well maintained social housing and improve tenants' homes to ensure that they meet the standard | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Strategic Action: | | Success Criteria: | |
| • Develop a quality standard for the city's council housing in partnership with tenants | • Brighton & Hove Standard agreed | • Reduce maintenance and improvement costs | • Funding to contribute to carrying out Decent Homes work |
| • Enter into a long term partnership contract for maintenance and improvement of the housing stock | | | |
| • Use a Local Development vehicle to raise investment capital | | | |

6.5 Strategic Goal 9: Work with owners to bring more of the city's long term empty homes back into use

Despite Brighton & Hove being a popular city with high levels of demand for housing, there are a significant number of homes in the city that remain empty over long periods of time. These properties are a wasted opportunity and can blight neighbourhoods with the homes often acting as a magnet for anti-social behaviour.

The majority of empty property in the city is privately owned with owners living out of the area and not being aware of the effect it may be having on the community. We are committed to reducing the number of long-term empty properties in the city and our key objectives are to:

- Identify residential and non-residential empty property and vacant land that provides potential residential use
- Encourage owners to act, by offering advice and assistance on Empty Property Assistance funding and letting or leasing, and to those looking to purchase and/or develop, or those experiencing a problem living near an empty property
- Take enforcement action where it is considered that the property is unlikely to be brought back into use unless action is taken

The council re-launched its Empty Property Strategy in 2006, and adopted a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Policy allowing the council to acquire property in approved cases and as a last resort when owners have repeatedly refused to engage with us.

Case Study: Co-operative Housing

Local Housing Co-operatives are groups of people that have united voluntarily to meet their housing needs and aspirations. They can bring empty homes back into use by renovating homes in return for a lease at a reduced rent. In addition, co-operatives provide opportunities self development with members believing in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

Our work is resulting in improved neighbourhoods, a property prevented from becoming rundown or brought back from disrepair and another home for someone. Since 2001 the council has worked with owners to bring almost 1,000 empty homes back into use.

Goal 9

Work with owners to bring more of the city’s long term empty homes back into use

| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring long term empty homes back into use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise long term empty homes Improve supply of available homes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify non-residential vacant land and buildings with a potential residential use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New development opportunities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use enforcement powers when other avenues have failed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise long term empty homes Improve supply of available homes |

6.6 Strategic Goal 10: Ensure new housing is developed to the latest standards

We work with Planners, the Housing Corporation and our RSL partners in Brighton & Hove Housing Partnership to make sure that new affordable housing meets high standards of design and layout. We will only support bids for grant funding where a scheme meets or exceeds the Housing Corporation Design and Quality standards.

All affordable homes must be built to Lifetime Homes standards in the Code for Sustainable Homes and comply with recommendations on avoiding additional CO₂ emissions using both low and zero carbon technologies.

New homes should reflect the character and local distinctiveness of an area and we require that private outdoor amenity space to be provided in the form of balconies and terraces, plus ideally access to ground floor space including play areas.

We also want to make sure that new affordable housing is 'tenure blind' so that it is not visually distinguishable from the market housing on the site in terms of build quality, materials, details, levels of amenity space and privacy. New developments should actively discourage crime and anti-social behaviour by meeting Secure by Design principles as agreed by Police Architectural Liaison Officer.

At least 10% of new affordable homes must be built to the council's wheelchair accessible standard for providing full wheelchair access throughout, both indoors and outdoors.

| Goal 10 Ensure new housing is developed to the latest standards | |
|--|---|
| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: |
| • Lifetime Home Standard | • 100% of all new housing meets the standard |
| • Accessible Housing & Lifetime Homes | • 10% of all new affordable housing meets the standard |
| • Housing Corporation Design and Quality standards | • 100% of all new affordable housing meets the standard |
| • Code for Sustainable Homes | • New housing meets or exceeds the standard |
| • Secured by Design | • 100% of all new affordable housing meets the standard |

Strategy Statement: Disabilities

Brighton & Hove is recognised for having higher levels of physical disability in its general population than the national average. Housing problems are compounded by much of the city being hilly preventing full wheelchair accessibility. Many homes were built in the 19th century and subsequently converted into flats, often with small rooms and narrow stairways making accessibility and adaptation difficult.

Brighton & Hove City Council and our partners are forerunners in adopting policies and working practices that support the needs of people who have a physical disability and their carers. In 2001 the city council adopted the **Lifetime Homes Standard** to ensure that all new housing built in Brighton & Hove is accessible and adaptable to changing household needs. The government has stated that it would like the standard adopted nationally by 2013 - more than 10 years after Brighton & Hove adopted it. We are also ensuring that 10% of all new affordable homes are built to the authority's new wheelchair standard **Accessible Housing & Lifetime Homes**, adopted in March 2008 which sets standards higher than national requirements.

In partnership with Hanover Housing Association, we have successfully bid for funding from the Department of Health to help support the development of an Extra Care housing scheme specifically for younger people with disabilities. Extra Care Housing offers residents their own self-contained flat with a range of facilities such as shops, café's and in some cases a cinema and has the benefit of a 24 hour on-site care team. This enables those who need care and support to live independently rather than having to move to residential care.

Choice Based Lettings has evolved since its conception and now incorporates a **mobility rating** that indicates whether an available property is suitable for a wheelchair user or someone with limited mobility. All new affordable housing that meets the wheelchair standard is advertised before it is built in order to ensure that the features installed are designed around the specific needs of the future occupants. To ensure the best use of our housing stock, we are developing an **Accessible Housing Register** and we have an officer who is working with people wanting to downsize or release an adapted home they no longer need.

Each year we spend almost £2m on **adaptations** and **Disabled Facilities Grants** to improve the accessibility of people's homes across the public and private sectors, helping around 500 households.

Strategy Statement: Equalities & Inclusion

Life should be a positive experience, however inequalities can arise from a range of factors such as heritage, life experiences or health can have a profound impact on the quality of people's lives. We must ensure that all the city's residents are offered support appropriate to their needs so that they are enabled to be full and active members of the community.

In its basic form, equality is about ensuring that as a local authority, service provider and employer we comply with the various strands of equalities legislation and our duties around race, disability, gender and age. However, we have a professional and moral obligation to go much further to include the other key equalities strands of religion/belief and sexual orientation.

Equalities and inclusion issues are often linked to deprivation. We need to remove the barriers to equality and tackle discrimination but we must also address deprivation to help bring about equity and a city of opportunity for all.

Three strategies are being developed to complement the ***Housing Strategy 2008-2013: healthy homes, healthy lives, healthy city*** to focus on the particular needs and concerns of those communities:

- Older People's Housing Strategy
- Black & Minority Ethnic People's Housing Strategy
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans People's Housing Strategy

As well as recognising the particular needs of these communities we must also recognise and plan for the needs of all the other communities living in the City. Policy statements within this strategy and the other linked strategies highlight the particular needs of carers and those with physical disabilities.

Travellers

Travelling communities can often be overlooked in strategy and service development. Those living in the Travelling communities are more likely to suffer ill health at a younger age and have higher mortality rate than the rest of the population. We must ensure that our services are accessible and welcoming to all those in need. The Council has recently completed consultation on its new ***Traveller Strategy***.

7 Strategic Priority 3: Improving Housing Support

7.1 Independence

Being able to live as independently as possible is essential in enabling households to have a high quality of life as part of the local community. For some households this can only be achieved with the help of support.

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

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

The Housing Strategy will help make sure residents are supported to maintain their independence minimising the need for more intensive institutional or residential type care.

Our strategic goals under this objective are to:

- Goal 11 Support households to make informed choices about their housing options
- Goal 12 Provide adaptations and support to households and their carers
- Goal 13 Work to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- Goal 14 Contribute to the wider city agendas of reducing worklessness, improving community cohesion, reducing anti-social behaviour and reducing inequality
- Goal 15 Work to ensure student housing provides a positive contribution to students' lives and the city

Actions to meet Objective 3: Improving Housing Support will contribute to the following National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships

- NI 1: Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- NI 17: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour
- NI 125: Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation / intermediate care
- NI 141: Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living
- NI 142: Vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
- PSA16: The Socially Excluded Adults Public Service Agreement

7.2 Strategic Goal 11: Support households to make informed choices about their housing options

Over the last few years our Choice Based Lettings scheme, Homemove, has allowed households on the Housing Register to state an interest and 'bid' for the social housing available for rent. Priority is then given to the household bidding that has the highest level of need who has been on the list longest. This process ensures homes go to those who want them, in areas they desire.

In addition to advertising social rented properties in the Homemove magazine, we now include homes available for low cost home ownership and new mobility indicators highlight those homes which are adapted or particularly suitable for wheelchair users.

In the future we are also looking to include the private rented homes of accredited landlords through Homemove to provide a greater range of housing to households seeking alternative accommodation.

Independent living may not be appropriate for some people and so they need to be provided with housing with support. For some people this may be their housing for an indefinite length of time but for others it may be for a transitional period until they are able to live independently.

We work closely with our colleagues across the other council departments, health, RSLs and other service providers to ensure there is a choice of appropriate housing and support available and to ensure that as the person's needs change they are able to move to accommodation that will better meet those changing needs.

New initiatives such as the Under-Occupation Officer are actively helping many households move to more suitable homes, not only improving their quality of life but also freeing up much needed housing for others in need.

Goal 11

Support households to make informed choices about their housing options

| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure the future of the under-occupation service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainstreamed service provision |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve range of homes offered through the Homemove magazine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private landlords offering homes for rent through the magazine |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a register of adapted properties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted homes let to those most able to benefit |

7.3 Strategic Goal 12: Provide adaptations and support to households and their carers

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

The Census 2001 reported that 18% of the total population of Brighton & Hove reported having a limiting long-term illness and DWP reported in November 2007 that 5% of the population were in receipt of Disability Living Allowance. Over the last few years the proportion of homelessness acceptances that are related to a physical disability are around 3 to 4 times the national average.

The nature of the city’s housing is in part to blame for the difficulties faced by those with disabilities. Much of the city is hilly and many properties were built before 1919 that have a design that makes adaptations difficult.

The Council spends more than £1m every year on adaptations to homes through loans, Disabled Facilities Grants and Minor Adaptations Grants and other works to help owners and tenants across all housing tenures. Additionally, Anchor Staying Put provides guidance and assistance to carry out whatever repairs, improvements or adaptations are necessary to help older and disabled homeowners to continue to live in their own home.

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

| Goal 12 Provide adaptations and support to households and their carers | |
|--|--|
| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve workflow within the adaptations services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced time from adaptation request to completion of work |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce grants to improve accessibility of temporary accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased supply of accessible temporary accommodation for those in need |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Disabled Facilities Assistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support households to move to more suitable housing when it is not feasible to adapt the existing home |

7.4 Strategic Goal 13: Work to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping

Our Housing Options team offers a range of services to help people of all ages and circumstances and aims to prevent homelessness whenever possible. During 2007/08 our Housing Options teams saw 3,800 households requesting help in preventing them becoming homeless.

We were successful in preventing homelessness in around 3,000 of these cases. Of the remaining cases, around half were accepted as homeless. However, we are very aware that despite this success, the reality is that a household still becomes homeless every day.

The keys to their success has been in setting up specialist teams of dedicated staff able to focus on the specialist needs of particular client groups, links with Housing Benefit services, support providers and being able to work with households as soon as their housing situation is at risk to give enough time to explore all possible solutions and prevent a crisis.

Since the development of our Single Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy in 2002, rough sleeping has been reduced from more than 40 people on any one night to around 10, although services see up to 500 people every year. Despite this success, there is a core of people with a deep rooted history of street life that previous initiatives have not been as successful with.

We are developing services with our colleagues from other service providers to provide a range of housing and support in an Integrated Support Pathway to help household back to living independently. The Pathway provides a route from crisis into intensive support, with support reducing as people's health, skills and confidence improves.

Alongside the housing related support we are developing specialist services to improve people's quality of life through healthy eating, accessing life skills training, education, psychological intervention, employment opportunities and other support services. Key to this is ensuring that move-on accommodation is available for people in the pathway when they have completed a package of support and are able to move on to more independence.

Goal 13 Work to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping

| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent homelessness wherever possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing levels of homelessness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve housing options for those at risk of homelessness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced homelessness amongst young people • Increasing use of the private sector as an alternative to social housing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on success of lifeskills and meaningful occupation programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased move on from residential support services • Reduced rough sleeping to as close to zero as possible |

7.5 Strategic Goal 14: Contribute to the wider city agendas of reducing worklessness, improving community cohesion, reducing anti-social behaviour and reducing inequality

The Reducing Inequality Review 2007 carried out on behalf of the Council highlighted the concentrations of worklessness and deprivation in a number of predominantly social housing areas – particularly in East Brighton, Queens Park and Moulsecoomb & Bevendean wards.

These areas are some of the most deprived parts of the country and the research also highlighted that over the last few years these areas have not been closing the gap on the rest of the city. Children in low income families and with special educational needs are even more concentrated in these areas.

Case Study: Social Landlords Forum

This Forum brings together the main social landlords in the city to help meet housing needs, to secure thriving neighbourhoods and to promote greater efficiency and effectiveness. The forum has a strong history of joint working which includes anti-social behaviour initiatives on multi-landlord estates, jointly funding the mediation service, working to reduce under occupancy, work to reduce homelessness in the city, and benchmarking performance to drive up standards.

For those subject to prolonged or repeat homelessness the need to learn or regain lost skills is most acute. Work, learning and skills increase confidence, improve life skills, increase prospects for tenancy sustainment, widen social networks, increase employability, and help to address factors linked to homelessness such as mental ill-health, substance misuse and offending.

Housing and employment go hand in hand. We aim to support those residents who have difficulty getting into work, through poor health or lack of skills. With our partners across the city, we will aim to support the most disadvantaged into stable employment.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Goal 14 | Contribute to the wider city agendas of reducing worklessness, improving community cohesion, reducing anti-social behaviour and reducing inequality | |
| Strategic Action: | Success Criteria: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use major procurement contracts to secure additional vocational opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Management procurement contracts includes training and employment opportunities for local people | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand lifeskills programmes to other vulnerable groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More excluded young people and adults assisted in improving their skills and gaining employment | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure new housing strategies address community safety issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBT People’s Housing Strategy • BME People’s Housing Strategy • Single Homelessness Strategy | |

7.6 Strategic Goal 15: Work to ensure student housing provides a positive contribution to students’ lives and the city

Brighton & Hove is home to 2 major universities and several Further Education colleges resulting in large numbers of students living in the city. The universities only have capacity to offer campus-based accommodation to some of their students which means that finding an affordable place to live is an issue for many students.

Although there is a large private rented sector, many of the students are unable to afford to rent their own home and so shared housing is often the only choice for them. This can sometimes result in poor quality housing or conflict with other parts of the community.

In some areas large numbers of family homes are being converted to student housing affecting the character and nature of the area. This is putting pressure on the supply of larger family sized housing in a city, with families and landlords competing for the same homes.

Case Study: Students & Housing – Research by the University of Brighton

The University of Brighton is carrying out extensive research into the impact student housing has on the city, local communities and students lives. The research has primarily focussed on the Bevendean, Moulsecoomb and Hanover areas, parts of the city favoured by students. Student housing can have positive effects on the community, such as by supporting local shops and adding diversity, however, it is more commonly known for refuse and noise problems. Students themselves acknowledge these issues and are keen to help identify practical solutions, particularly with so many remain after their studies to become long term residents.

The universities and colleges add to the dynamics of the city and we are helping Brighton University with research into the extent of the problems and possible solutions to ease the tensions between the housing needs of students' and housing needs of the rest of the city's population.

Goal 15

Work to ensure student housing provides a positive contribution to students' lives and the city

Strategic Action:

- Work with universities, private landlords, students and local communities to address issues raised in the studentification research

Success Criteria:

- Student housing contributing to sustainable communities

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment Summary

The strategy has been developed through a staged process that has enabled us to engage with service users, services providers and the wider community and take into account their views, concerns and aspirations. To ensure that the Housing Strategy is truly inclusive we carried out an Equalities Impact Assessment to identify the positive and negative impacts our strategic objectives and goals will have on service users, staff and the community. These findings have helped shape our objectives and goals to help mitigate potential negative impacts.

Below is a summary of our approach to the 6 equality strands:

- **Race:** BME Housing Strategy in development.
- **Disability:** Strategy Statement on Physical Disabilities incorporated in Housing Strategy and Older People's Housing Strategy. Disability of all kinds, including physical disability, learning disability and mental health issues, are also a key feature of the Supporting People and Learning Disability Housing Strategies.
- **Gender and gender identity:** Actions from the Gender Equality Scheme have been fed into the strategic development process. Gender Identity is also a key feature of the LGBT Housing Strategy.
- **Age:** Older People's Housing Strategy in development. Youth Homelessness Strategy developed in 2007. Supporting People Strategy links to older people's services, youth homelessness services and services for young people at risk.
- **Religion / Belief:** The BME Housing Strategy includes community safety objectives linked to religion and belief.
- **Sexual Orientation:** LGBT Housing Strategy in development.

There were no fundamental negative impacts identified that directly result from the strategy, a reflection of how the strategy has been developed in response to the overwhelming disadvantage faced by many of the city's residents.

Appendix 2: Strategic Housing Partnership

The Strategic Housing Partnership (SHP) aims to improve housing, access to housing, and support to maintain the independence of vulnerable residents within the City and reports to the 2020 Community Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership).

The SHP is also linked to the Brighton & Hove Home Energy Group which aims to develop and support the implementation of action plans to reduce fuel poverty and to promote energy efficiency and sustainability use.

The Strategic Housing Partnership has overseen the development of the Housing Strategy to ensure that it meets the needs of the whole city.

Membership of the Strategic Housing Partnership

Councillor Mary Mears

Chairman & Leader of the Council

City Stakeholders:

- Tony Mernagh Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership
- Lydie Lawrence Brighton & Hove Primary Care Trust
- Arthur Wing Probation
- Stephen Woodbridge Supporting People Provider Forum
- David Standing Hove YMCA
- Catherine Bancroft-Rimmer University of Sussex
- Paul Bonett Brighton & Hove Estate Agents Association
- Rhys Daniel Brighton & Hove Housing Partnership
- Kaiser Mirza National Federation of Residential Landlords

Brighton & Hove City Council:

- Simon Newell 2020 Community Partnership Officer
- Joy Hollister Director of Adult Social Care & Housing
- Jugal Sharma Assistant Director of Housing
- Martin Reid Head of Strategy, Development & Private Sector Housing

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

- **Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)**

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) has been used to refer to all those who do not classify themselves as White British. BME includes people who classify themselves as being Irish, Other White (for example European), Caribbean, African, Asian, Chinese and other groups.
- **Brighton & Hove, East Sussex Together Partnership**

The Partnership, led by Brighton & Hove City Council brings together the local authorities of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne, Hastings, Wealden, Lewes and Rother. The partnership received the largest allocation of funds in the region from the South East England Regional Housing Board to tackle some of the region's worst housing conditions.
- **Floating Support**

This is support that is provided to people by visiting them in their own homes irrespective of the type of housing they are in.
- **Housing Corporation**

Regulates registered social landlords (the majority of housing associations), and provides grant funding for the delivery of new affordable housing.
- **Local Area Agreement (LAA)**

This is an agreement that sets out the priorities and targets for a local area agreed between government, the local authority and other partners through the **Local Strategic Partnership**.
- **Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)**

This is a single body that brings together at a local level the public, private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that services work together to deliver on local priorities.

- **Local Development Framework / Local Plan**

This is the city's local planning policies. This plan determines the sites for major development, whether sites are for housing, business, mixed or for other uses, what percentage of new housing is affordable, and accompanying infrastructure requirements.
- **Personalisation**

Personalisation is about putting people first and providing person centred services through a holistic approach. It means that people are able to live their own lives as they wish; confident that services are of high quality, are safe and promote their own individual needs for independence, well-being, and dignity. Personalisation includes early intervention and prevention and is the cornerstone of public services. It means that every person who receives support, whether provided by statutory services or funded by themselves will have choice and control over the shape of that support in all care settings.
- **Regional Housing Board**

Regional Housing Boards (RHBs) were established in February 2003 to ensure that housing policies would be better integrated with the regional spatial, transport, economic and sustainable development strategies and to ensure delivery of the policies set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan. The functions of the RHBs have now been devolved to Regional Assemblies.
- **Supporting People**

Supporting People funding is provided by central government to local authorities and is given to organisations that support vulnerable people to enable them to move into independent housing or to assist them to maintain their independence.
- **Third Sector**

These organisations play a key role in helping shape and deliver local services. Third Sector organisations include many charities, community and voluntary sector organisations.

Notes

**We would very much like your comments and feedback on this draft strategy.
Please post your comments by 30 November 2008 to:**

**FREEPOST RRRT-ETLH-KYSK
Housing Strategy Team (HS)
Brighton & Hove City Council
4th Floor Bartholomew House
Bartholomew Square
Brighton BN1 1JE**

Or email them to housing.strategy@brighton-hove.gov.uk

