

Housing Strategy 2008-12

Contents

Housing Strategy Statements	2
Introduction	3
Chapter 1 - A Background to Darlington	4
Chapter 2 – Strategic Framework	5
Chapter 3 – Corporate Context	8
Chapter 4 – Partnerships in Practice	18
Chapter 5 – Meeting Needs in Darlington	20
Chapter 6 – Strategic Housing Market Assessment	23
Chapter 7 – Housing Resources	32
Chapter 8 – Priorities for Action	34
Chapter 9 - Performance Management	35
Chapter 10 - Conclusion	36

Appendices

Appendix 1 - The Darlington Housing Market	39
Appendix 2 - Meeting Needs within Darlington	48
Appendix 3 – Darlington Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	50
Appendix 4 – Annual Housing Investment Programme 2008-09	51
Appendix 5 – Community Services Department, Staffing Structure	53
Appendix 6 – Options Appraisal	55
Appendix 7 - Bibliography	72

Housing Strategy Statements 2008

Statement from Bill Dixon, Cabinet Member with Housing Portfolio

It gives me great pleasure to endorse this Housing Strategy at a time of considerable change in the housing market. I appreciate the pivotal role of the council as a social housing provider and recognise its key strategic position in delivering balanced sustainable communities.

I want to celebrate past successes as well as welcome new challenges in meeting rising resident expectations. The Council will continue to deliver high quality resident focused services tailored to meet local requirements and actively tackle any inequalities which hinder access to affordable Decent Homes.

I support the development and natural progression of existing and new partnerships, welcome the engagement of key stakeholder partners across all sectors, and support creative and imaginative working to add value to existing services for local residents.

Statement from Richard Westmorland, Chair of the Tenants Board

The launch of the new Darlington Housing Strategy is a measure of the close partnership working that the Tenants Board has with the Council. Tenants are empowered and play an active role in identifying future housing priorities. Tenants are engaged at a number of different levels from product specifications to service standards and their views are valued.

The Tenants Board is a vital link between the Council and its Tenants. We meet regularly to discuss issues and concerns and work together to find solutions. We drive forward continuous improvement and as part of the focus and task groups have developed partnerships that deliver our major works programme. We will continue to evaluate this new way of working to ensure that it benefits tenants.

On behalf of the Tenant Board I congratulate the Council on the launch of this new strategy and look forward with optimism and enthusiasm to our contribution to its successful delivery.

For further details contact:

Alan Glew
Housing Strategy and Renewals Manager
Tel: 01325 734101
Email: alan.glew@darlington.gov.uk

Introduction

The Darlington Housing Strategy embraces the strategic objectives of the Regional Housing Strategy, Quality Places for a Dynamic Region 2007 and the Sub-Regional Tees Valley Housing Strategy 2007. This strategy builds upon the "fit for purpose" Housing Strategy of 2003 providing the foundations for continuous improvement. Darlington's housing market exhibits many of the features of the regional and sub-regional housing markets. These common features include the need for housing market renewal within its central conurbations where the oldest housing stock is more prevalent, the requirement for an increased supply of affordable housing and local demographics showing an increasingly elderly population who need to be supported in living independently for longer.

Darlington's geographical location is one which encompasses both a rural and urban housing environment and this Housing Strategy addresses the needs and requirements of two separate but not independent housing markets. The Housing Strategy also examines the inter relationship that Darlington's housing market has with the Tees Valley sub-region and other adjacent sub-regional housing markets such as North Yorkshire and County Durham. An examination of migration patterns for Darlington (unlike many of its Tees Valley local authority partners) demonstrates a net inward migration with particular housing market pressure being exerted by North Yorkshire and County Durham. This can, in part, be explained by Darlington's geographical location in respect of major transport infrastructure, and, being a recognised gateway for the Tees Valley sub-region.

Darlington's Housing Strategy is a pivotal document at the centre of Corporate Policy and is strategically aligned to the local Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008, One Darlington, Perfectly Placed, developed and agreed through intensive consultation and key stakeholder engagement across all sectors of the community. The Housing Strategy outlines a clear holistic approach to sustaining a balanced housing market, providing choice and an accessible quality product, while contributing to broader socio- economic and environmental benefits. The pursuit of continued excellence and value for money are maintained through the robust procurement of materials and services that are monitored through quality assured performance management software. This Strategy clearly outlines achievements over the lifespan of the previous Housing Strategy 2003, while reinforcing the commitment to continue to deliver housing which meets wider community needs and is central to improving the quality of life of local people.

Key achievements over the period of the Housing Strategy 2003 have been;

- Achieving and maintaining a 4 star Housing Service.
- Achieving decent homes standards amongst all council owned housing stock and introducing a local Darlington "enhanced housing standard".
- Top quartile performance within the Housing Options Service and nil rough sleeping.
- The implementation of an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.
- The delivery of 4 Extra Care schemes through match funding initiatives.
- Invested £55M in council owned housing stock (2003-08) in accordance with the Authorities Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Introduced partnering contracts with external providers to improve quality and efficiency and learn from best practice.
- Achieved Beacon Status for Better Public Places (Environmental Services).
- Introduced and embedded Key Performance Management software.

A Background to Darlington

Chapter 1

The Borough of Darlington covers an area of some 19,750 hectares to the north of the River Tees and west of Teesside. Darlington has a population of 99,800 living in 45,100 households. Darlington has a population density of 5.0

The district is compact and no resident lives more than ten miles from the centre of Darlington. The 2001 census data is now unreliable with regards to black and minority ethnic (BME) populations but our own analysis of Darlington schools data indicates an ethnic population of about 3%.

The tenure and household composition of Darlington is illustrated in Appendix 1 as 'Table 1'

As part of the Tees Valley, Darlington shares an economic climate with neighbouring authorities. There are however, a number of characteristics that define issues specific to Darlington:

- Increasing population and household projections 2004-2026 (see Table 1, Appendix 2).
- Despite having the highest Gross Domestic Product per head in the Tees Valley, Darlington has the lowest average wages (see Table 2, Appendix 2).
- High average house prices across all property types (see Table 3, Appendix 2).
- The unemployment rates have increased in 2006 and 2007 but remain lower than the Tees Valley average.
- Higher than average levels of educational attainment are not being translated into higher education as university entry rates are below those of the rest of the Tees Valley.

Despite commonly held perceptions that Darlington is a prosperous town, there are a number of small areas where deprivation is comparable to that experienced in other Tees Valley areas. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 analysis highlighted that eight of Darlington's 63 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) are among the worst 10% of LSOAs nationally.

Strategic Framework

Chapter 2

Darlington's Housing Strategy reflects and embraces the key strategic priorities identified at a national, regional, sub-regional and local level encompassing recent legislative changes and financial freedoms afforded to excellent performing authorities. The Strategy identifies key delivery partners and aligns with and compliments broader strategic objectives maximising inward investment and community benefit. This chapter outlines Darlington's approach to a changing and exciting new housing market environment.

National Framework

The following national housing priorities have been taken into account in shaping the local Housing Strategy and contributing to top quartile performance against the new National performance Indicators;

- The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 - new approach to delivering financial assistance to private owners and private landlords detailed in Chapter 6.
- The Housing Act 2004 - introduction of licensing of privately owned properties detailed in Chapter 6.
- The Housing Green Paper - the delivery of sustainable homes detailed in Chapter 6.
- Decent Homes standard and Health and Housing Safety Rating System - assessing quality of accommodation in respect of vulnerable households in Chapter 6.
- Our Health, our care, our say - the Department of Health's White Paper 2005, outlining best practice approaches to supporting Independent living and providing customer choice in Chapter 6.

Regional Framework

The Regional Housing Strategy outlines four key strategic objectives. On assessing and appraising local housing market conditions in Darlington, clear strategic relevance and linkage was established with the four regional strategic objectives through common identified actions. Darlington's response to the regional strategic objectives are as follows;

- **Rejuvenating the Housing stock** - tackling non-decency across all housing tenures to create sustainable, mixed and balanced housing communities.
- **Providing Choice and Quality** - delivering and providing a quality housing product accessible to all, to ensure the provision of mixed tenure and balanced local communities.
- **Improvement and Maintenance of Existing Housing stock** - ensuring retained council housing stock and private sector housing meets minimum Decent Homes standards, through targeted annual housing Investment and the provision of packages of financial assistance for private owners.
- **Meeting specific community and social needs** - ensuring that specific community and social needs are met and provided through a range of supported housing, floating support, and disabled adaptations to prolong independent living.

Sub-Regional Framework

Tees Valley as a whole is now actively demonstrating confidence and a collective will to succeed. Our aspirations and plans are powerfully described within our area's City Region Development Plan and it presents a compelling case for a better future.

A new governance structure - "Tees Valley Unlimited" – has been developed to ensure that opportunities are realised and resources allocated within a Multi Area Agreement between Councils and stakeholders, under which the agency can bring the most benefit to the city region. Within Tees Valley there remain a number of communities facing terminal decline and the onset of spiralling decay. They are characterised by a serious deterioration in the quality of life, declining health and an inevitable lack of aspiration. Such severe problems confront not only the communities and the individuals themselves but also impact on the taxpayer through the continuing financial support needed to alleviate, rather than solve, these major issues.

Our Sub-Regional Housing Strategy (SRHS) addresses a comprehensive range of challenges facing the City Region until 2021. From the outset, Tees Valley has seen Housing Market Renewal (HMR) as a fundamental aspect in the wider economic regeneration of the emerging Tees Valley City Region. We have started a massive job, engaged the interest and, critically, the support of both our communities and the private sector and we are now well placed to deliver on behalf of the people and organisations that we serve.

Government has provided the resource that will enable us to make a considerable start in arresting this process of decay but this is only the start. The process will require long term and considerable support. We also aim to provide choice and quality by aligning Section 106 obligations across the five Boroughs to cater for identified needs. This will produce new housing areas predominantly owner occupied family housing, but also provide affordable units to rent and buy.

The local authorities across the Tees Valley are also committed towards the provision of decent homes in both the private and social sectors. Effective neighbourhood management systems will be introduced where they are most needed. We will continue successful initiatives such as Supporting People, Extra Care for the Elderly, the prevention of homelessness and the targeting of housing to cater for specific needs. Each of the Tees Valley authorities will take a lead role in delivering different strategic objectives of the Sub-Regional Housing which reflect their local expertise and mirror the local priorities they have identified within their local Housing Strategy. Darlington will lead on "affordable housing" as this has emerged in Darlington as a strong local priority.

Local Framework

The Council's Sustainable Community Strategy is:

"One Darlington : Perfectly Placed"

The delivery of the vision will be secured through a series of short-term (3 year) Local Area Agreements (LAA). The LAA is a contract with government, built around a prioritised set of performance indicators, establishing the priorities to be achieved in Darlington to make progress towards the vision.

The Darlington Local Development Framework (LDF) is currently being developed to replace the Borough of Darlington Local Plan. It is a statutory requirement that the LDF must provide the spatial dimension for the One Darlington : Perfectly Placed vision. This relationship of high level vision and statutory planning policy has to be articulated through the Core Strategy of the LDF. This plan and the Darlington LDF Core Strategy have been drawn up in tandem, with some shared public consultation. The result is a close correlation between the delivery themes of this plan and the strategic themes of the LDF, the former setting out a visionary framework to guide the actions of all the agencies working in Darlington, and the latter a planning policy framework designed to secure the physical aspects of the vision through development.

One Darlington : Perfectly Placed acts as a single strategy that embraces the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS). The One Darlington element of the vision statement is focused on tackling deprivation and narrowing the gaps in prosperity, health, attainment and life chances that are evident across the borough. This supersedes the visionary dimension of the NRS, with detailed actions to be developed through the LAA and other supporting plans.

Darlington Local Strategic Partnership

The Council is a key member of the Darlington Partnership, our Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The Partnerships main task is to oversee the process of preparing, implementing and reviewing the Darlington Sustainable Community Strategy launched in March 2008. The Structure Plan at Appendix 3 illustrates the proposed new framework for the Local Strategic Partnership and how the respective roles and responsibilities will deliver the objectives of the Sustainable Communities Strategy;

The Sustainable Community Strategy for Darlington provides the vision for Darlington to 2021. The Strategy focuses on five theme areas being;

1. Prosperous Darlington
2. Aspiring Darlington
3. Healthy Darlington
4. Greener Darlington
5. Safer Darlington

The Darlington Housing Strategy contributes to all five priority theme areas in the following ways;

1. **Prosperous Darlington** - The Housing Strategy provides the framework and strategic direction to ensure that there is customer choice in housing and that the housing product being sought can be readily accessed in Darlington without the need to commute.
2. **Aspiring Darlington** - The Housing Strategy provides access to the housing market for local first time buyers and those on marginal local incomes through the provision of intermediate housing options.
3. **Healthy Darlington** - The Housing Strategy addresses health inequalities in different housing sectors through targeted investment in local housing stock, the provision of financial assistance, introduction of selective licensing and enforcement action to meet minimum Decent Homes Standards.
4. **Greener Darlington** - The Housing Strategy embraces the green agenda, targets investment in properties with inefficient and obsolete heating systems and engages with the private sector to lever in private investment to compliment public investment to provide a range of energy saving improvements to homes thus reducing household fuel bills and tackling fuel poverty. The Housing Strategy has also contributed to the introduction of new Design and Quality standards and fully utilised procurement opportunities to reduce the "carbon footprint" of new build dwellings.
5. **Safer Darlington** - The Housing Strategy supports and informs the annual housing investment programme which delivers a range of improvements that contribute towards the safety and well being of local residents. Details are outlined in Appendix 4.

A new approach to Corporate Planning

The Council has signalled its intention to become a more inclusive and engaging authority by agreeing to its first Community Engagement Strategy 'A Bigger Say and a Better Deal for Communities' in April 2007. There were some key milestone objectives that emanated from this engagement, such as;

- A new **Sustainable Community Strategy** – setting out a long-term, sustainable vision for Darlington's future that meets the diverse needs of its existing and future residents, improving their quality of life and safeguarding the prospects of future generations.
- A new **Local Area Agreement** – a three-year 'contract' between the Darlington partners and government to deliver on particular priorities set out in the sustainable community strategy, and a key vehicle for the Council's new role in place-shaping. The Council and its partners will identify up to 35 improvement targets from a national indicator set of 200 for inclusion in the agreement, whilst also remaining focused on the delivery of the current Local Area Agreement due in end in March 2009.
- A **Multi-Area Agreement** for the Tees Valley – the Council will be working with the other Tees Valley authorities to develop and deliver on agreed strategic proposals for economic development, housing and transport.
- Refreshed **Service Planning Arrangements** – to ensure that internal planning arrangements are aligned with the new emerging strategic context and effective in delivering against new priorities.
- Refreshed **Corporate Plan** – evolved in 2007 to reflect the changing strategic context, a new administration and in the light of stakeholder feedback, the new plan has a greater emphasis on the top corporate priorities, giving a clear articulation of the key goals to be extrapolated in department and service plans.
- Reviewed **Medium Term Financial Plan** – a single Corporate Plan and MTFP will be produced for the first time in 2008.
- A Continuation of **Leading Edge, the Organisational Development Strategy** to develop the strands of the new Organisational Development Strategy that are:
 - Influencing Public Services
 - Champion for the interests of the citizen
 - Promoting Darlington and the Borough Council
 - Providing Public Services

The Housing Strategy is a corporate document that fits within and is influenced by a corporate hierarchy of Strategies and Service Plans as shown below:-



Capital Spending Priorities

The Capital Strategy covers all areas of the Council's capital programme, which in total for 2007/08 is around £64.5M, which includes Children's Services £22.7M, Transport £15M and Housing £14.5M. Other capital schemes relate to Community £1.1M and Regeneration £7.6M. Schemes approved within this programme have been assessed against the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan and included in the Medium Term Financial Plan for Capital.

The Housing element of this strategy includes:

- works to ensure properties meet the 'Decent Homes Standard' requires investment of £104.7M over 30 years and £27.3M over the next 5 years.
- maintaining the external fabric of Council houses requires investment of £16.3M over 30 years and £9.8M over the next 5 years.
- tackling unfitness in private sector housing and providing disabled facilities requires investment of £34.3M over 30 years and £7.5M over the next 5 years.
- improving the environment of estates and communities requires investment of £9.5M over 30 years and £2.2M over the next 5 years.
- to deliver disabled adaptations for council tenants, we will need to invest £8.3M over 30 years and £1.4M over the next 5 years.

Further details of capital investment in housing can be obtained from Housing Business Plan, which is available on request from housing@darlington.gov.uk.

The Capital programme is then supplemented with Capital Receipts generated from the sales of the Council's surplus assets and council house sales.

Revenue resources can also be used to underpin housing capital investment.

The introduction of the prudential capital regime in 1st April 2004 has allowed the Council to borrow without approval from central government. The Capital Medium Term Financial Plan approved in March 2007 includes £2.8m of prudential borrowing to supplement the Council's own Capital Programme. However, the principal repayments and interest are not supported by central government through the Revenue Support Grant and must be borne by the funds received by Council Tax payments.

Procurement

In September 2004 Darlington adopted a revised Procurement Strategy. Since the adoption of this strategy the Council has achieved a number of actions: -

- The creation of the Darlington : Stockton partnership where common services are provided across the two different local authorities more efficiently through the "shared" resource. The partnership includes Information Communication Technology, Financial Services, and elements of the human resources function.
- Tees Valley sub-regional procurement of empty property and energy efficiency specialists.
- Agree partnering contracts for major improvements to council housing and the delivery of environmental works. Sharing and learning from best practice to add value and improve customer satisfaction.

Role of the Asset Management Group

The Asset Management Group (AMG) co-ordinates the Capital Strategy as well as the Asset Management Plan (AMP), Accommodation Plan and Land and Property Strategy (deals with surplus assets). The group is chaired by a member of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and includes senior managers, some at Assistant Director level, from all departments. The group reports routinely to CMT and approves external funding bids. It also recommends capital spending proposals, reports progress and outputs from the Capital Programme and any significant issues on programme variations or slippage, through CMT to Cabinet.

Community Safety and the Crime Disorder and Reduction Partnership (CDRP)

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) is made up of a host of agencies that come together as one of a number of themed groups that report to the Darlington Partnership.

The CDRP Executive Board has responsibility for ensuring delivery of the Community Safety Plan. This group is supported by a Business Group and Domestic Abuse Steering Group. At an operational level partners come together at the Geographical Problem Solving Group, the Prolific and Other Priority Offender Group and the Domestic Abuse Network / Forum. The CDRP was recently awarded Beacon Council status.

Community Safety Plan 2008/11

In 2006 a review of the provisions within the Crime and Disorder Act was completed and resulted in further legislation to improve the way in which agencies work together to make communities safer. The new provisions require that Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships carry out an annual strategic assessment of crime, disorder and the harm caused by drugs and alcohol in the area and that a rolling three year Community Safety Plan (CSP) be produced.

The Housing Estates teams play a vital role alongside a dedicated team of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Officers in tackling anti social behaviour at its root causes, engaging and intervening early, and working collaboratively with other key agencies to develop common solutions. ASB Officers provide a valuable link with the local community providing reassurance, advice and support to vulnerable people who otherwise may feel unsafe. They also ensure perpetrators of anti-social behaviour are aware of the consequences of their activities, and, in turn, are provided with support (where required) to play a more positive role in their communities.

Specific links to housing are made in the CSP target to 'reduce re-offending of prolific and other high priority offenders by 2011' by identifying the need to review and improve critical pathways which include access to accommodation and employment. The Housing Strategy also supports the target to reduce incidents of domestic abuse by 2011 through responsive and appropriate relocation programmes and the effective delivery of the sanctuary scheme. The Housing Strategy's work with the private housing sector and targets for reducing the number of empty properties will support the Community Safety target to reduce perceptions of anti-social behaviour.

Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Framework

The North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy, to be issued in final form later in 2008, is expected to:

- Emphasise Darlington's potential to attract population and employment to the Tees Valley City Region.
- Set higher housing targets for Darlington than previous regional and sub-regional plans.
- Encourage major mixed use regeneration projects on brownfield land in central Darlington.

Current Local Plan policies for housing, prepared in consultation with Housing and other Council functions, have been saved until replaced by relevant parts of the Local Development Framework which the Council is currently preparing.

These include provision for:

- An adequate supply of land for housing, to meet a wide range of needs and demand.
- Well designed housing in accessible and sustainable locations.
- Housing to meet specific needs e.g. affordable housing, accessible housing, housing for older people, accommodation for Gypsies and travellers.
- Regeneration of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The Local Development Framework will build on these policies, linking closely to the new Sustainable Community Strategy, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and other Council strategies including this Housing Strategy. Options being considered for the new Core Strategy (Core Strategy Issues and Options January 2008) place even greater emphasis on the themes already referred to, and in addition making provision for:

- More sustainable homes
- Improving older housing
- Lifetime homes and live-work housing
- More supporting infrastructure and services
- A greener living environment
- More transport choices

The Council has already adopted a supplementary planning document setting out how much, where, when and in what way it expects affordable housing to be provided in new housing developments. Further supplementary planning documents covering design of new development and planning obligations, both of which will relate substantially to housing, are currently being prepared. Further housing related documents planned or being considered for inclusion in the Local Development Framework include housing allocations, development policies, and regeneration policies and area plans (current Local Development Scheme 2007-2010 and emerging update 2008-2011).

The Council's Housing and Planning functions have been working increasingly closely together, and with those of the other Tees Valley Authorities, the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, Tees Valley Living, Tees Valley Regeneration, and other neighbouring authorities and organisations, to deliver housing objectives, including:

- Joint commissioning of the Darlington Local Housing Assessment 2005 and Tees Valley update 2008, the Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008, and the Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2008.
- Preparation and implementation of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.
- Investigating administrative and financial mechanisms to secure improvement and/or renewal of poorer quality and low demand housing.
- Progressing the Darlington Urban Housing Capacity Study 2004 and replacement Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2008.
- Informing Darlington's contribution to the Tees Valley Housing Growth point bid.
- Advising on the housing elements of the new Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.
- Liaison on proposals for the expansion of Catterick Garrison.
- A Housing Corporation joint protocol for the sub-region.

Housing and Health

Darlington Borough Council is the largest Public Sector organisation in the area and recognises the potential it has to improve the health of the population of Darlington. Promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities is a shared priority. Darlington Borough Council, working with Darlington Primary Care Trust and other partners are developing their local plans to improve people's overall life expectancy and reduce health inequalities.

The Housing Strategy describes the context of national policy and how it is translated into local policy and actions. It identifies health improvement as a theme of the new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the development of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) as the delivery plan. The Strategy describes the health status of the residents of Darlington and starts to identify inequalities in health.

The overall health of the population of Darlington is poor compared with the national picture. There is a health gap between the population of Darlington and that of England, and gaps between the populations of the wards within Darlington. The reasons for the differences can be summarised as:

- Inequalities in opportunity – poverty, family, education, employment and environment (the wider determinants of health).

- Inequalities in lifestyle choices – smoking, physical activity, food, drugs, alcohol and sexual activity.
- Inequalities in access to services for those who are already ill or have accrued risk factors for disease.

The Housing Strategy contributes to addressing these inequalities by;

- Ensuring housing standards across all sectors of the community are maintained through positive dialogue, targeted financial assistance and enforcement action.
- Providing a dedicated floating support service tailored to individual requirements and contributing towards sustaining tenancies.
- Signposting to energy efficiency grants for home improvements and increased thermal comfort for fuel poor households.
- Access to free independent housing advice and homelessness prevention through the Housing Options service.
- Access to “Get Everyone Motivated (GEM)”, light exercise programme.
- Enhanced “Lifeline” service for the elderly and / or disabled and “falls prevention” initiative.

Social Inclusion Strategy

“*All Together Now*” is Darlington’s Social Inclusion Strategy launched in 2005. The strategy’s main purpose is to address inequalities and disadvantage wherever it exists within our communities. The strategy embraces all local communities in Darlington recognising the contribution they can all make in creating mixed, balanced and sustainable neighbourhoods. Whenever Housing engages with communities it does so within the agreed framework of the Social Inclusion Strategy.

Supporting People

The Supporting People Five Year Strategy was initially published in 2005, and is subject to annual reviews to reflect policy and legislative changes at national, sub-regional and local levels, and to ensure strategic priorities remain focused. The Supporting People programme funds 148 different services through 43 separate contracts and delivered by 41 different service providers.

At a regional level Darlington Supporting People team is a member of the Durham and Tees Valley Cross Authority Group (CAG). The CAG works together to address common issues relating to customers who migrate across local authority boundaries. The group also responds to issues arising in the North East Region and nationally.

CLG has “designated” certain support services as cross authority services as they are deemed to be “of national importance or extremely specialist”. Darlington’s Supporting People team are always keen to seize opportunities of cross local authority boundary working. In 2008, such a partnership arrangement was established with the Durham Supporting People team to jointly commission support services for ex-offenders and those at risk of re-offending. This was a natural partnership given Durham Probation service operate across both local authority areas. This joint commissioning has been highlighted by the North East Centre for Excellence as an example of best practice.

New Commissioning

New support services recently commissioned include:

- A supported lodgings scheme which was operational on the 1st June 2007 to address an unmet need identified in supported accommodation options for young people leaving care.
- Rosemary Court sheltered housing scheme was remodelled into an extra care scheme, with designated units of accommodation for Older People with mental health support needs. The increase in the provision of extra care and designated support for older people with Alzheimer's and other mental health support needs was a key cross cutting strategic priority for Supporting People, Housing, Health, and local third sector organisations.
- A floating support service for people affected by Domestic Abuse was commissioned and operational on the 16th July 2007, in response to areas of unmet need previously identified in the Five Year Strategy, particularly those for whom the Women's Refuge Is not appropriate such as women with low level needs, men who have been affected by Domestic Abuse, and people living in rural communities.

Older Person's Housing Strategy 2007

The Council aims to understand the main housing and support issues facing older people living in Darlington, and sets out in its Older Persons' Housing Strategy (2007) how, together with its partners, it will work collaboratively and in consultation with stakeholders and older people to ensure quality and choice. Further, to develop services that will enable older people to stay in their own homes, or move into the right specialised accommodation as their needs change. Above all, the Council will support older people to remain in control of where they live and how they are supported to maintain independent living.

There are a wide range of housing and support provision for older people in Darlington, including: Council Housing and Support Schemes; Sheltered Housing including Good Neighbour Schemes and Extra Care Schemes; Lifeline Service; and the Home Support Scheme. Other initiatives designed to improve the standard and quality of homes, tailor support provision to reflect need, and maintain independence for older people include: the Capital Investment Programme; Assistive Technology Pilot Scheme; gentle exercise classes known as, Get Everyone Motivated (GEM); and the Darlington Active Independent Staying Young (DAISY) projects.

"Extra Care" Schemes

The provision of Extra Care Scheme is a particular priority for the Council as there are a growing number of people who require greater assistance with personal care. Extra care comprises accommodation that offers 24-hour support from a care team within each site. The schemes are aimed at people aged over 50 who are identified through assessment as having a care need.

The Council also operates in partnership with Hanover Housing Association the provision of extra care accommodation. Rosemary Court was completed in September 2007 and provides 42 units of accommodation; 28 refurbished one bedroom flats (adapted to wheelchair standard), and 14 flats (owned by Hanover Housing), specifically aimed at older people with dementia. In addition to the Council's 3 Extra Care schemes, called Oban Court, Dalkeith House and Rosemary Court we also have nomination rights to Mayflower Court, an extra care scheme provided by Hanover Housing.

Priorities for action in housing and support for older people have been considered within the five key areas of new policy and service development in **Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing: A Strategic Framework**, and are set out in the Older People's Strategy. These key areas are:

- **'Diversity and Choice'**, enabling older people exercise choice over where they live;
- access to **'Information and advice'** to empower older people to make informed choices;
- **'Flexible Service Provision'** to reflect changing needs and supporting older people to live safely and securely in their own homes;
- **'Quality'**, which reflects both the standard of housing and the mechanisms by which quality standards can be enhanced; and a willingness, and,
- commitment to **'Joint Working'** by working collaboratively between all agencies in the housing, care and support of older people.

Housing Options Service and the Homelessness Strategy

The Housing Options Service continues to achieve top quartile performance against each of the key Best Value Performance Indicators. In 2006/2007 there was a caseload of 715 cases and homelessness was prevented in 245 cases (34% success). Projected figures for 2007/2008 show a caseload of 756 cases and homelessness prevented in 484 of those (64% success). 100% of homelessness investigations are completed within the Government target of 33 days.

The Service has embraced the Government agenda of "prevention" with dedicated Officers providing information and advice proactively to alleviate the damaging effects of homelessness. Existing partnership arrangements have been strengthened within the public, private and voluntary sectors working towards common objectives to access permanent and temporary accommodation. A new Bond scheme is due to be launched in 2008 in partnership with the 700 Club (a voluntary sector body) unlocking further accommodation opportunities for the most vulnerable working in tandem with the Accredited Private Landlords.

Darlington applied in February 2008 for funding through the "Places of Change" programme to support the renovation, improvement and expansion of the current hostel accommodation for local people with mental health support needs. This was a four way partnership bid between Darlington Borough Council, MIND, Darlington Housing Association and Home Group acting as development partner for Darlington Housing Association. The scheme, which represents an investment of over £400k, will provide greater employment and training opportunities for residents and contribute to broader homelessness prevention initiatives. The outcome of the bid for nearly £200k will be known in April 2008.

The Darlington YMCA hostel was successful in securing nearly £300k of investment from Communities and Local Government, to extend the existing training and employment advice facility within the residential scheme. This exciting new project will be complete in 2008 and will offer the training facility to residents as well as non-residents and engage in collaborative projects with other young person support providers such as MIND. Both the MIND and YMCA projects will be delivered without any additional Supporting People investment but add additional value to the existing contracts through improved sustainable outcomes for local people. Darlington's annual Homelessness Grant of £30k has been invested in the recruitment of an additional Housing Options Advisor focusing on the preventative agenda, and, to supplement Discretionary Housing Payments to help sustain existing tenancies where there is a shortfall in housing benefit entitlement.

The Homelessness Strategy 2006 is subject to interim annual reviews with a major review planned for 2009. A new structure to deliver against this commitment will be introduced in April 2008 creating a multi-agency Homelessness Strategy Review Group and annual Homelessness Forum events.

Race Equality Strategy

The Race Equality Strategy highlights that central government has historically set a number of performance indicators that link equality with the Housing Service. These include:

- BVPI 75b which focuses on the satisfaction of council housing tenants from BME groups with relation to opportunities for participation in management and decision making for the housing service.
- BVPI 164 which focuses on how well the authority has followed; the Commission for Race Equality's (CRE) code of practice in rented housing and the Good Practice Standards for social landlords on tackling harassment

While these performance indicators will be abolished in April 2008, the importance of race equality to the Housing Service is demonstrated by the fact that between 2005 and 2007 the Council have consistently met or exceeded these targets. Specific examples of actions the Housing Department have taken to improve race equality include:

- The ethnicity of customers on our Housing Benefits claim form is captured to help identify any perceived barriers to the service on the grounds of race. We have met with the Asian Women's group to promote the take-up of Housing Benefits/Council Tax Benefits and obtain their perceptions of the service as part of the Best Value review of Revenues and Benefits.
- Community Services take an active role in ensuring Partnerships we are involved with also take a positive approach to social inclusion. This includes developing diversity training for members of the Tenants Board and also for members of Community Partnerships. Northgate Community Partnership has already received diversity training that proved to be very popular amongst residents.

Affordable Warmth Strategy

In 2006-7 we procured £100k of investment through the Single Housing Investment Programme (SHIP2). This was match funded by the private sector utility companies providing a total investment of £300k for Darlington. The scheme provided energy efficiency measures such as loft Insulation and cavity wall Insulation for privately owned properties. The programme was available to those local people that were "able to pay", that is, able to contribute some finance towards overall costs, as well as the more vulnerable low income and fuel poor families. The programme delivered energy efficiency improvements to 552 private homes.

Darlington's commitment to Investing in their own housing stock and protecting vulnerable council tenants is unabated. Current annual capital programme works incorporate energy efficiency measures as part of standard internal planned maintenance work. In 2007-08, 441 Council homes have benefited from loft Insulation, installation of thermostatic radiator valves and the communal boilers of two sheltered schemes have received additional insulating realising estimated energy savings of £4,000 per annum. All capital improvements are monitored and assessed for energy performance rating through the asset management database, Codeman. The public sector stock condition survey (March 2008) has captured energy performance certificate information on all standard property archetypes.

Darlington continues to explore funding opportunities to tackle fuel poverty, reduce energy consumption and reduce the "carbon footprint" of its activities. In 2008-11 funding has been earmarked from the Single Housing Investment Programme (SHIP3) to continue activity in targeted priority areas of the Borough where the greatest concentration of fuel poor households exist. Over the three year term of the SHIP3 programme, it is anticipated this will lever in a total investment of approximately £1M.

In addition, discussions with other housing providers and private house builders are encouraging the incorporation of design and quality standards mirroring those published by the Housing Corporation in April 2007 to continue to meet the rising expectations of consumers. A special seminar event is scheduled for 2008 to convey the positive messages about "behavioural change" to council tenants and how lifestyle changes can impact on energy usage and associated household costs.

Partnership, joint working and effective consultation with individual residents, community representatives, and our other partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors, are at the heart of our Housing Strategy. Community Partnerships are present in each of Darlington's 11 Priority wards. These are; Central, Cockerton West, Bank Top, Eastbourne, Lascelles, Park East, Northgate, Haughton East, North Road, Lingfield and Cockerton East. Local Action Plans have been developed by each of the Partnerships to outline what projects they will develop and deliver over the next five years. Regular updates on Community Partnership activities can be viewed via Community Partnership newsletters.

Allocations Policy

Darlington are a partner in the process of developing a new housing allocation policy for the Tees Valley region as part of the Choice Based Letting (CBL) Partnership. This new allocations policy represents a completely new approach to selecting new tenants for Council and housing association properties. It also offers applicants other options for meeting their housing needs, if they do not have sufficient priority to be rehoused quickly.

The new policy, which will be shared by the partners, will transform the way housing is let making it more responsive to applicants needs by allowing them to choose between all appropriate and available properties. As well as offering improved choice the new policy will also:

- Provide a one-stop-shop for housing applicants in the Tees Valley
- Ensure consistency in the way in which applicants are treated by all the partners
- Give help to people needing to move from one local authority area to another and,
- Help to tackle homelessness and its causes in the Tees Valley region.

This policy has been developed by the Tees Valley CBL Partnership. The partnership is made up of the 5 local authorities and their partner landlords that either own or manage the housing stock on their behalf. Darlington's Tenants Board has been regularly informed of progress in the implementation of Choice Based Lettings (CBL) and a small task and finish group was established very early in the process. The draft policy was considered by the group and comments were invited to inform the policy. Tenant representatives were also engaged in the procurement and selection process of the successful software provider, Abrisas.

A tenant representative also acted in an "advisory role" in respect of the "logo and branding" with a publicity company. Each edition of Hotnews (council tenant newsletter) has contained articles about the CBL system and the "Editorial" group have had an opportunity to inform and comment on the publication. As soon as the final CBL policy is agreed by all stakeholder partners in late April / May 2008, the implementation phase will commence in earnest, with tenants assisting in the implementation process through "dry run" testing, assessing the user friendliness, and, agreeing the content of all information packs.

Promoting the Private Rented Sector

A new Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy was launched in 2008 which concurs with the requirements of the Housing Act 2004. The strategy focuses renewal activity in the four wards of the borough with the highest incidence of non-decent housing stock namely, Northgate, North Road, Central and Bank Top. Housing standards have been improved through the introduction of the highly successful Private Landlords Accreditation Scheme which boasts nearly 50 members and whose Forum events, held quarterly, average attendances of between 50-100 private landlords. Feedback from these events is used to inform housing strategy.

The Forum provides an invaluable opportunity to engage directly with private landlords on policy issues and members have a clear voice in determining the agenda of Forum events.

Community Consultation

"Talking Together" is an annual programme of 24 meetings which provides an opportunity for Darlington residents to "have their say" about issues that affect them. The events also provide an opportunity for the Council, the Police and PCT to find out what people think about changes to / improvements for service delivery.

These informal events are combined with family fun entertainment and are held in different venues throughout the Borough. Information and comments gathered from these community events inform future service planning and priority setting as well as providing invaluable feedback about "how we are performing" as a Council.

Partnering

Core Team meetings were established in 2007 with our internal and key external partners, Wates, Mitie and Seymours to monitor progress on housing capital improvement works, share experiences and best practice and review product specifications. A "transferable" model of project management has been developed in partnership, to inform and improve the efficiency of delivery, and, quality of future improvement works. Partners and the Council alike, have benefited from the knowledge, experience and expertise of both parties. Partners have been able to deliver improvement programmes elsewhere nationally in their business portfolio more efficiently and the Council have been able to learn from Partners' management of key performance indicators. The existing contractual arrangements with external partners will continue in 2008-09.

Tenants Board

The Tenants Board are at the centre of housing policy and strategy and are engaged with the Housing Department on a number of different levels. Tenants Board members were actively engaged in;

- the procurement of external partners for housing capital improvement works in 2007 and assisted in the evaluation of tender documentation.
- the assessment and evaluation of the housing stock condition survey tenders and presentations in 2008.
- a "Task and Finish" group which evaluates housing capital improvement works and identifies areas for improvement and informs product specification.
- consultation and marketing in respect of sub-regional Choice Based Lettings.
- consultation in respect of the "Rewards and Recognition" scheme.

Homelessness Forum

The Council have established a new structure to consult, monitor and deliver the Homelessness Strategy. The first of a new schedule of Homelessness Forum events involving all partner agencies is scheduled for 2008 with subsequent Forum events being held annually. A new strategic sub-group with a representative membership of the wider Forum will deliver the strategic objectives of the Homelessness Strategy. The sub-group will also inform future Homelessness Strategy objectives when a new strategy is launched in 2009.

Housing and Planning

Housing and Planning departments engage in regular dialogue about specific development opportunities and actively enter into joint negotiations in respect of affordable housing requirements with private developers and housing associations in accordance with the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning (SPD) document. Regardless of the first point of contact with the council by prospective developers, Housing and Planning departments agree a common approach to the delivery of affordable housing consistent with the Affordable Housing SPD and, in direct response to identified local housing need. Darlington have been selected sub-regionally as “lead authority” for the development of common s106 planning agreements for the sub-region. It is recognised that transparency and clarity at the earliest opportunity for prospective developers in terms of planning requirements, is essential if affordable housing numbers are to increase.

Meeting Needs in Darlington

Chapter 5

The Council are committed to meeting the accommodation and support needs and aspirations of the local community. This Chapter highlights a number of actions implemented to meet local needs and aspirations as a result of the previous Housing Strategy.

Successful implementation of Older Persons Housing Strategy;

- Demolition and re-building work undertaken at Linden Court with completion due 2008/09
- In partnership with Hanover Housing, increased affordable housing in Darlington with 8 bungalows for the elderly in Fenby Avenue
- Successfully re-opened and extension of Rosemary Court resulting in to the provision of 42 Extra Care flats and a wide range of communal facilities. 14 flats are for people with mental health issues.
- Completion of works to Branksome Hall including the refurbishment of communal areas, upgrading bathing facilities to individual flats and installation of a new lift.
- Successful completion of Assistive Technology Pilot
- Creation of employment opportunities for people with Learning Disabilities at Rosemary Court
- Significant review of the Lifeline Service

A review of Housing Services resulting in

- Re-structure of the housing management team which resulted in the creation of new posts for a
- Welfare Rights Officer, Tenancy Enforcement Officer, Housing Investment Manager and Debt Recovery officer
- Successful implementation a Reward and Recognition Scheme for Tenants
- Implementation of new procurement arrangements including appointment of three framework partners to deliver internal planned maintenance, decoration and environment improvements.
- Maintained Level B for the Supporting People contract for Tenancy Support
- Successful implementation of the new North East Contracting Consortium for Asylum Support
- Maintained low levels of homeless households in temporary accommodation

Successful partnership working;

- A range of Housing Officers played an active role in CDRP initiatives resulting in significantly reduced crime levels across the Borough
- Worked in partnership to develop the Family Intervention Programme
- Provided financial assistance and support to the Sanctuary Scheme for victims of Domestic Abuse
- In partnership with the third sector secured £250k for the YMCA Foyer from the Communities and Local Government for young homeless for access to training and development opportunities

Strategy and Housing Renewal

- Investment of £10M in improvements in council housing and £1.3M in the private sector. The Council improvement programme delivered heating replacements in 236 homes, 351 properties benefiting from internal planned maintenance, the commencement of remodelling

works at Linden Court, Hornby House and Kilburn House and a range of environmental, fencing, footpath, garage and roofing works were completed.

- The private sector investment programme delivered disabled facilities grants to in excess of 100 vulnerable customers, reintroduced 57 empty properties back into active use, and delivered energy efficiency improvements to 660 homes.
- Development and launch of the housing sub regional strategy in preparation for SHIP 3 funding submission for 2008-11.
- Successful in securing external resources for private stock investment via SHIP 2 for £100,000 and match funding of £200,000.
- Addressed issues identified in Housing Needs Survey to increase affordable housing across Darlington by implementation of Affordable Housing SPD.
- A review of Disabled Facilities Grants was undertaken resulting in the implementation of new working arrangements with the Home Improvements Agency with the development of a new SLA.
- Implemented a programme of hand held technology enabling appraisals of properties to feed into the Stock Condition survey.
- Increased properties for socially excluded young people to move into settled accommodation.
- Successfully implemented Mandatory Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) leading to improvements to properties and management standards.
- Expanded the Landlord Accreditation Scheme to include in excess of 400 properties with over 50 landlords.
- Successfully responded to serious domestic flooding incidents in July 2007

Tenants Board Achievements in 2007/08

- Successful completion of second year's training programme and agreed the next years training programme for Board members.
- Increased knowledge of the Board and its work among the wider body of tenants by undertaking meetings and outreach work to residents groups, promoting awareness and knowledge of the Tenants Board.
- Successfully delivered the first year's action plan of the Tenant Empowerment Strategy.
- Undertaken a programme of Mystery Shopping.
- Successfully developed task and finish groups including;

Sheltered Housing Task & Finish Group – this group included work relating to the Older Persons Strategy, DAISY, social activities in sheltered schemes, the Wardens handbook, Sheltered Housing Handbook and a review of the Lifeline Service,

Repair & Maintenance Task & Finish Group – this group included work relating to garage security and refurbishment, review of the Stock Condition/Void Inspection form, Opti-time, Internal Planned Maintenance works, bathroom and kitchen choices.

Choice Based Lettings Task & Finish Group – including discussing and agreeing the Common Allocations Policy, with one member being involved in the selection process for software partners.

- Development of the Leaseholder Focus Group.
- Reviewed the promotional material including re-designing posters and leaflets promoting the Board and tenant empowerment and contributed to tenants and leaseholders newsletter, Hot news through the Editorial Group.
- Monthly meetings were held with the Tenants Board receiving information and feeding into discussions around the Local Government White Paper, Housing Revenue Account, review of the rent arrears letters, Housing Capital Programme, Older Persons Housing Strategy, Street Champions, Housing Benefits Survey, Rewards and Recognition Scheme, Housing STATUS survey, Anti-Social Behaviour and Family Intervention project.
- Reviewed and fed into the Housing Service Plan for 2008/11 including development of the new National Indicators and target setting.
- Successfully undertook the first elections for the Tenants Board and recruitment of new members.
- Training and development received resulting in involvement of the selection process for R&M partners.

Introduction

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment was jointly procured and commissioned for the Tees Valley sub-region in November 2007. ARC4 were successfully appointed (previously David Cumberland Housing Regeneration Limited) and, as they previously undertook the housing needs analysis for Darlington in 2005, provide consistency of approach as well as a means of benchmarking and analysing housing market conditions within Darlington, and, across the Tees Valley sub-region.

The greatest influences on Darlington's local housing market are the North Yorkshire and County Durham sub-regions and, to a much lesser degree the Tees Valley sub-region. Darlington geographically is the gateway to the Tees Valley sub-region and boasts strong transport infrastructure linking North Yorkshire and County Durham by road, rail and air. Indeed the affordability issues exhibited in County Durham and North Yorkshire are fuelling issues of affordability for Darlington particularly the planned repatriation of army personnel from Germany to central areas of Darlington, and, an expanded Catterick Garrison in neighbouring Richmond.

In planning for future requirements this Housing Strategy is based on a robust and up-to-date housing needs assessment, derived from a range of sources:-

- 2001 Census Data
- 2005 Housing Needs Survey
- Indices Of Multiple Deprivation 2007
- 2007 Building Research Establishment (BRE) Study
- 2008 Council House Stock Condition and Energy Survey
- Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit Reports
- HM Land Registry Data
- Council Registration list data
- Turnover and capacity within existing social housing stock to meet housing need.

The Housing Strategy has a pivotal role as outlined in Chapter 2, in delivering and sustaining quality of life for local people in Darlington. Housing contributes to each of the five theme based priorities of the Sustainable Communities Strategy, provides consumer choice and challenges Issues of accessibility for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable.

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

Over recent years the issue of "affordability" has become a consideration of much greater prominence in Darlington. A buoyant housing market supported by average house prices second only to Stockton in the Tees Valley sub-region have fueled demand for more affordable housing. In response to the Housing Needs Study commissioned with David Cumberland Housing Regeneration limited in 2005 and refreshed and updated as part of the sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2008, affordable housing requirements are identified as 265 units per annum in each of the next five years to keep pace with demand.

In response to this demanding affordable housing target, a dedicated "roadshow consultation event" was held at Darlington Football Club in November 2006 with key stakeholder partners such as Registered Social Landlords, land owners, and private developers to determine how this new challenging affordable housing target could be delivered without causing local housing market imbalances. A graduated affordable housing threshold was applied to different geographic locations for the borough ranging from 15-40% affordable housing contribution through planning gain and the strict application of s106 planning agreements.

Affordable housing contributions were thus a prerequisite to planning permissions and the type, design, mix and quality was determined by reference to the housing needs data collected, and, local registration list information from households seeking accommodation from the councils own register. A universal mix of 70% rented and 30% intermediate housing as the affordable housing contribution is being sought on all new sites meeting the policy criteria. This will supplement relatively modest affordable housing build rates in recent years.

A summary of our affordable housing requirements is shown at Table A below:

Table A – Affordable Housing Need

	Annual Affordable Shortfall	Total Households	Affordable requirement per 1,000 households
Darlington	265	46819	5.7

The affordable housing requirements mirror the findings of the Housing Needs Assessment in 2005 and illustrate a challenging affordable housing target. Darlington are the only Tees Valley authority with an adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document and it is expected that this will deliver a significant number of the additional affordable housing units to help reduce the shortfall in provision against needs identified.

The graph in Appendix 1 highlights that the between 2002 and 2007 the total number of affordable housing developed by RSL and the local authority each year has been consistently and significantly less than 100 p.a. With an anticipated annual shortfall in affordable housing of 265 there is an urgent need to engage more effectively with private developers and local RSLs so a step change can be achieved in the number of affordable homes developed each year.

In terms of the Council stock, a major survey of the condition and energy performance of council properties was undertaken in 2008. The survey work was commissioned following a formal tendering process to Savills who undertook a 10% sample survey of the housing stock and garages. This Information informs future investment decisions, enables appropriate targeting of resources and ensures the council are appropriately prepared for the introduction of Energy Performance Certificates for all socially rented housing by October 2008.

Evidence

- David Cumberland Housing Regeneration (DCHR) Limited, Housing Needs assessment 2005.
- Arc4 sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008.
- Council housing registration list information.
- Demographic growth particularly amongst the elderly, Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit.

Key issues:-

- Provision of affordable and fully accessible housing for the elderly and less mobile.
- Growth and demand in the intermediate housing market.
- The large privately rented sector and “buy to let” housing market.
- Land values and acceptance from land owners that capital receipts will be lower than “market value” to facilitate affordable housing.

Tees Valley Sub-Regional Growth Bid

Housing choice is an important condition for economic growth, and it is important to align and coordinate housing development, economic growth, and population changes. Darlington has applied (as part of a Tees Valley sub-regional bid) to the government to become a Northern Housing Growth Point. If successful, this will provide funding to bring forward sites for housing development that require infrastructure investment to make them viable, as well as enabling intervention in the housing market securing housing provision required to meet current and planned local needs.

In Darlington, this means expanding the stock of affordable housing, making sure that future housing development meets the needs of an ageing population, making all new dwellings carbon neutral within the lifetime of this plan, as well as enhancing choice across the housing market to support our quality of life and inward investment aspirations.

Evidence

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments.
- Migration patterns.
- Arc4 Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008.

Key issues:-

- Investment and planning for new infrastructure to support housing growth.
- Delivery “vehicles” through partnerships with Registered Social Landlord or Private Developers.
- Housing Corporation “Design and Quality” standards 2007 and sustainable homes criteria.

Estate / Area Based Work

The majority of the council owned housing stock is of a high demand and sustainable in the longer term primarily through targeted investment through the annual housing investment programme. Such improvement work has addressed long term sustainability issues through intensive consultation with tenants, remodeling, clearance and redesign, and, linkage with the Crime Reduction Partnership to inform key investment decisions. All council owned dwellings currently meet the "enhanced Darlington" housing standard.

Evidence

- Public Sector housing stock condition survey 2008.
- Asset Management database, Arcview version 4, Codeman.
- Responsive repair trend analysis.

Key issues:-

- Move towards 20 year cyclical renewal for major internal works.
- Remodeling of obsolete sheltered housing schemes.
- Tenant Board engagement.
- Prudential borrowing and self financing pilot with Communities and Local Government.

The Private Sector Housing Market

Background

Darlington Borough Council has embraced the changes of the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform Order 2002 by introducing a Financial Assistance Policy to support the most vulnerable members of the community in the wards where private housing conditions are the poorest. A highly successful Private Landlords Forum frequently attended by in excess of 50 private landlords have engaged positively with the Council and played a major role in agreeing the agenda of the Forum meetings. The Private Landlord Forum is hailed regionally as a Forum of “best practice” and many local authorities both sub-regionally and regionally have attended Forum meetings and met with colleagues within the Renewal Team to learn from our success.

The Private Landlords Forum has been the catalyst for the creation of a Private Landlords Accreditation scheme with a membership approaching 50 private landlords in 2008.

Darlington continue to promote the advantages of being a member of the Accreditation scheme amongst local private landlords preferring to engage in dialogue and proactive joint work rather than following an enforcement path to improve housing standards. Early engagement with private landlords has delivered both relationship and efficiency benefits for the Renewal Team.

Private Sector Housing conditions

A comprehensive private sector housing stock condition survey will be procured across three sub-regional local authority partners (Darlington, Stockton and Hartlepool) in 2008. This will provide updated private sector stock condition information to inform future targeted areas and facilitate benchmarking.

The Financial Assistance Policy is a direct response to poor private sector housing in Darlington and its focus is on the priority wards of Northgate, North Road, Central and Bank Top. Inward investment through Single Housing Investment Programme funding (SHIP2) has provided the financial basis for positive intervention to redress the imbalance.

More information about Darlington’s approach to private sector housing renewal can be found in the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2008. A copy of the summary Financial Assistance Policy can be obtained from the Home Improvement Agency, Care and Repair.

Darlington continue to lobby sub-regionally and regionally for additional investment for the private sector housing market, but, although conditions are poor, in the context of wider “deprivation indices”, Darlington is not highlighted as a priority for private sector housing market renewal within the Tees Valley sub-region for the period 2008-11. Revised deprivation indices for Darlington are illustrated in map form at Appendix 1 (Maps 2 and 3) and will be the basis for identifying funding priorities post 2011. Darlington Borough Council recognises that significant inward investment is required to rejuvenate, remodel or improve poor private sector housing stock.

The council is considering a number of options to maximise inward investment while recognising that the Borough does not exhibit such extreme deprivation to qualify for many traditional funding opportunities. More innovative options such as the recycling of Section 106 planning gain commuted sums are being considered. The 'pooling' of Section 106 commuted sums or other 'off-site' affordable housing provision could assist in the improvement or regeneration of poor private sector housing stock.

Evidence

- David Cumberland Housing Regeneration (DCHR) Limited, Private Sector Stock Condition survey 2004.
- Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2008.
- Building Research Establishment (BRE) private property survey 2006.
- Housing Vitality and Community Vitality indices.

Key Issues:-

- Priority wards of Northgate, North Road, Central and Bank Top are targeted by the Financial Assistance Policy.
- Commissioning of new private sector housing condition survey with Hartlepool BC and Stockton BC.
- Increase of investment in private sector housing.

Licensing of Houses of Multiple Occupation

All houses of multiple occupation are now subject to strict licensing following the Housing Act 2004. Licenses are only issued following satisfactory inspections of properties and appropriate health and safety procedures put in place.

Evidence

- Houses of Multiple Occupation (HOM) property inspections.

Key issues:-

- Advice, support and assistance on required legislative standards for HMOs.
- Licensing.

Improvements to Council Housing stock

The Business Plan details the full range of improvements required to the Council housing stock costed over the next 30 years. These are required to maintain and improve the fabric and condition of the housing stock, meet the *Decent Homes Standard* requirements and to meet the aspirations of our tenants. Table B shows expenditure and resources in respect of 2006/07.

Evidence

- 2008 Council House Stock Condition and Energy Performance

Key Issues:-

The housing stock is in good condition and currently meets the "enhanced Darlington" standard

- The main areas of expenditure within the period 2008 to 2011 are expected to be kitchen replacements, electrical rewiring, environmental works including boundary fencing and paths, renewing heating systems, remodelling to re-providing new build sheltered accommodation, and, the installation of door entry systems and improvements to communal areas.
- Some investment areas such as replacement UPVC double glazed windows will be revisited following feedback from the tenants annual survey.
- Renewable energy sources will be investigated further to reduce household costs and make a positive contribution towards fuel poverty and reduce "carbon footprinting".
- Comprehensive desk-top studies, will be undertaken analysing asset management data (Arc asset version 4, Codeman) for audit purposes and to inform future investment decisions.
- Repairs and Maintenance works will be examined for "trends" of common remedial works and undertake remedial work in a planned programme.

Tenant priorities derived from the annual survey 2008 found that the greatest preferences were for kitchens / bathrooms and double glazed windows.

Meeting the needs of Older Persons

Darlington's older population is projected to rise and current Council services are modernising to adapt to the challenges that this places on local services. Linden Court sheltered scheme has been demolished and a modern purpose built sheltered scheme will be complete in July 2008, Dinsdale Court will be demolished and follow a similar path to Linden Court with an expected completion date early in 2009 and Windsor Court is subject to option appraisal work with residents and their families with a projected start on site date in April 2009. 4 Extra Care schemes are now provided in Darlington.

Evidence

- Older Persons Housing Strategy.
- Consultation with customers and key agencies.
- Local demographics.
- An increasing demand for disabled adaptations.

Key Issues:-

- Accessibility within Windsor Court needs to be addressed, and, a review of communal facilities will inform the capital works specification.
- Highly regarded activities such as exercise classes and social events enjoyed by residents of sheltered schemes need to be more accessible for non-residents.
- Need to better integrate housing, social and care needs of older people.
- Review the modernised Lifeline Service.
- Provide outreach services within Extra care and sheltered schemes.
- Ensure modern facilities and accommodation to allow flexibility of letting and alleviate pressure on disabled adaptations budget.

- Further explore the potential of assistive technology to deliver positive independent living outcomes.

Need for Supported Accommodation

There is an increased demand for accommodation with support from a variety of vulnerable groups across the community.

Evidence

- Supported People Commissioning Strategy.
- Housing Needs Study and Strategic Housing Market assessment.
- Supporting People 'gap analysis'.

Key Issues:-

- Success of existing supported housing schemes.
- Need to sustain vulnerable people in the community.
- Need for appropriate accommodation on hospital discharge.
- Need to reduce dependence on temporary accommodation.

Balancing Supply & Demand for Social Housing

There is a healthy demand for all but a few council properties. The more difficult to let council homes are those at Dinsdale Ct where the studio flats are very small and cannot be accessed by a lift. Windsor Court has accessibility difficulties between the different levels of the sheltered scheme and narrow linking corridors. Both Dinsdale Court and Windsor Court are planned for major capital works 2008-2010. First floor flats designated for older people (aged 60+ years) but with no access by a lift are also undesirable

Evidence

- Exit strategies.
- Analysis of supply and demand.
- Registration list experience.
- Experience of RSL partners.

Key Issues:-

- Inaccessible first floor flats designated for older people.
- Continued implementation of sheltered housing scheme capital improvements.
- "Design out" obsolete bedsit accommodation through remodeling.
- Increase the supply of large family homes.
- Increase the provision of intermediate housing particularly in rural locations.
- Provide more wheelchair accessible bungalows.
- Provide more single young person accommodation.

Modeling the Darlington Housing Market

In recent years the emerging feature of Darlington's housing market has been the buoyancy of the market, reflected in the increasing demand for affordable housing. This in part, is due to the inter relationship with the neighbouring sub-regions of Durham and North Yorkshire which both fall within easy commuting distance of central Darlington. Undoubtedly, the growth in the Ministry of Defence site at Catterick Garrison is contributing to a "heated" housing market.

Darlington has a rural and urban landscape with fairly compact settlements and a large privately rented sector. Central Darlington offers an attractive investment opportunity for "buy to let" purchasers due to the lower market prices in much of the early 19th century terraced housing stock. Owner occupation still remains the preferred housing option for the majority of the local population but increasingly the housing market is denying access to many who wish to climb the "housing ladder", resulting in increased interest in the intermediate housing sector.

Evidence

- Housing Needs Study 2005.
- Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2008.
- Public Sector Stock Condition Survey 2008.
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008.

Key Issues:-

The Housing Needs Study 2005 identified a requirement for 265 affordable housing units per annum and this has been confirmed by the conclusion of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2008. Clearly the target is a very challenging one and will require maximum usage of planning powers, investment from the National Affordable Housing Programme, and, identification, and, use of surplus or under utilised assets. An additional supply of intermediate housing is also targeted particularly in rural areas of the Town. To further our understanding of the local housing market and to deliver increased volumes of affordable housing, additional research / work is required in the following areas;

- The identified need and demand for the intermediate housing sector.
- Preparatory work, consultation and infrastructure planning in respect of the Growth Bid if successful.
- Increased alignment between the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document, the Strategic Land assessments and the Design Supplementary Planning document.
- Review of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document in respect of the "Design and Quality standards" guidance published by the Housing Corporation in April 2007.
- Introduction of common approaches to s106 planning agreements and commuted sums for the sub-region.
- Further investigation in respect of migratory patterns and employment with residency conditions (see Appendix 1 Table 6).
- Analysis of the growth patterns and changing demographics of the older population of the Town.

The Gypsy and Traveller Community

A Tees Valley Sub-Regional Gypsy and Traveller Area Assessment has been commissioned. The assessment when completed will provide the evidence needed to inform sub-regional and local housing strategies. However, as well as presenting evidence and information on accommodation needs at an immediate local level the evidence collected and analysis produced will have a wider regional role. It is assumed that the sub-regional assessment of accommodation need and pitch requirements will be included in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for each local planning authority (LPA) in light of the GTAAs produced, and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region is taken. The local planning authority's Local Development Framework (LDF), composed of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), then identifies specific sites to accommodate pitch numbers from the RSS.

Current Supply

- There are **2 socially rented sites** in the Study Area (Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees) together providing 43 pitches.
- There are **15 authorised private sites** in the Study Area together providing an estimated 75 residential pitches and 24 transit pitches. The spread of the provision of authorised pitches throughout the Study Area is uneven as only two local authorities (Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees) have private sites. Only Darlington expected the number of authorised private sites to increase in their area over the next 5 years.
- There are **5 unauthorised developments** (land owned by Gypsies and Travellers but developed without planning permission) within the Study Area accommodating approximately 12 separate households. Four of the five unauthorised developments are in Darlington – one is in Stockton-on-Tees.
- There is an average of **44 unauthorised encampments** each year across the Study Area, with each encampment containing roughly five caravans. Most of the encampments occurred in Darlington, Stockton-on-Tees and Redcar & Cleveland.

The distribution and potential future requirements across the sub-region are uneven and potentially unsustainable in respect of pitch provision and the Gypsy and Traveller population across the Study Area.

Decisions about where need should be met should be strategic, taken in partnership with local, sub-regional and regional bodies – involving consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and other interested parties – which will take into account wider social and economic planning considerations such as equity, choice and sustainability whilst being informed by the views of the Gypsies and Travellers who participated in this study.

The study's findings were also used to make a number of recommendations with regards to the: strategic systems and policy frameworks, communication and engagement and health and housing related support issues.

Evidence

- Tees Valley sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation assessment 2008.

Key issues:-

- Geographical distribution of additional site provision across the Tees Valley sub-region.

- Ethnicity of the Gypsy and Traveller population.
- Identification of suitable sites to be developed.
- Appraisal of existing site capacity.

Housing Resources

Chapter 7

The tables below show the main programmes of capital expenditure concerned with the medium to long-term maintenance and improvement of the condition of the housing stock. Four of the five main sources of funding for capital expenditure as identified in the tables are regulated by central government, with the exception of the Major Repairs Allowance. This represents the estimated long-term average of capital spending required to maintain a local authority's housing stock in its current condition. Table B shows expenditure and resources in respect of 2006/07

Table B – Housing Major Repairs & Improvements 2006/07

	Budget	Outturn	Over/(Under) Spend	Planned Carry Forward
Expenditure				
Responsive Repairs	2,028	2,255	227	-
Cyclical Maintenance	572	521	(51)	-
Planned Maintenance & Renewals	12,439	9,613	(2,826)*	1,240**
Estates & Community Improvements	1,240	1,021	(219)	219
External Fabric Maintenance	-	-	-	-
Private Sector	1,682	1,395	(287)	-
Total Expenditure	17,961	14,805	(3,156)	1,459
Financing				
Revenue Repairs	2,600	2,776	176	-
Prudential Borrowing	2,944	-	(2,944)	1,108
Capital Receipts	2,337	1,885	(452)	-
Major Repairs Allowance	3,450	3,450	-	-
RCCO	2,860	3,275	415	-
Disabled Facilities / SHIP funding	1,320	1,320	-	-
Dept. of Health Grant	2,450	2,099	(351)	351
Total Financing	17,961	14,805	(3,156)	1,459

* Sheltered housing scheme internal planned maintenance postponed and alternative option selected to demolish and rebuild scheme to increase long term sustainability.

** Carry forward finance reduced from underspend as alternative internal planned maintenance work brought forward from 2007-08 programme to fill the some of the programme shortfall.

Table C – Housing Major Repairs & Improvements 2007-11

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Expenditure</i>				
Responsive Repairs	2,513	2,670	2,750	2,819
Cyclical Maintenance	628	709	730	752
Planned Maintenance & Renewals	8,955	7,772	8,725	5,380
Estates & Community Improvements	1,178	1901	1224	1249
External Fabric Maintenance	-	-	-	-
Private Sector	1,270	907	907	907
<i>Total Expenditure</i>	14,544	13,959	14,336	11,107

<i>Financing</i>				
Revenue Repairs	3,141	3,379	3,480	3,571
Borrowing Approvals	-	-	-	-
Capital Receipts	700	1,200	700	700
Other Capital Resources	1,270	907	907	907
Major Repairs Allowance	3,508	3,859	3,900	3,900
RCCO	2,641	1,871	1,547	1,146
Prudential Borrowing	3,284	2,743	3,802	883
<i>Total Financing</i>	14,544	13,959	14,336	11,107

Appendix 4 gives a detailed description of how the funding illustrated in Table C, above (2008-09) will be spent.

Appendix 5 illustrates the Community Services Department staffing structure.

In this chapter a summary is given of the strategy developed to respond to each of the areas identified as a priority from the needs analysis in Chapter 6. Appendix 6 contains a full breakdown of the options considered to respond to each of these issues alongside a risk assessment and Action Plan that provides details of responsible managers, timescale and resource implications, three of these Priorities for Action are also in the Housing Business Plan. It is felt appropriate to also include them here, given their importance to readers of both documents.

A brief summary of each strategy identified in Appendix 6 is given below.

1. Private Sector Regeneration

- Review and develop the Council's Financial Assistance Policy.
- Complete a sub-regional private sector stock condition survey to identify gaps in the current local housing market.
- Increase the number of private landlords who are members of the private landlord accreditation scheme to continue to raise the standards of the private rented sector.

2. Improvements to the Council's stock

- Complete the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Public Stock Condition Survey to improve the information held on the Council's stock.
- Through consultation with groups such as the Tenants Board and Neighbourhood Partnership, develop the Business Plan.
- Develop and deliver the Housing Investment Programme to maintain the Council's Decent Homes Standards and to allow major refreshes to the Council stock every 20 years.

3. Meeting the needs of Older People

- Respond to specific Disability Discrimination Act requirements at Windsor Court.
- Identify and implement improvements to the communal areas in the Council's sheltered schemes.
- Promote the use of the facilities and involvement in social activities provided by sheltered schemes to the wider community.
- Used information collected by the SHMA to inform the procurement of new services.

4. Supported Accommodation

- Submit funding applications for new supported accommodations schemes to the Housing Corporations National Affordable Housing Programme.
- Work in close partnership with the Supporting People programme.

5. Balancing the Supply and Demand for Social Housing

- Make effective use of Section 106 agreements to enable the development of affordable housing.
- Implement and evaluate the impact of the sub-regional Choice Based Letting service.

6. Modelling the Darlington Housing Market

- Complete a full analysis of the findings from the SHMA to inform research into the need to deliver regeneration activity within the borough.

The performance indicators and action plans will be monitored during the year so that we can manage the changes that we need to make. The plan has also been designed to enable it to be monitored using the 'Performance Plus' software system. This will give us a huge advantage in knowing what progress we are making in working towards our objectives and improvement priorities.

Within the department structure the Assistant Director – Housing has overall responsibility for all aspects of the Housing Services performance whilst the Assistant Director - Finance, Performance and ICT leads the Performance Development team who are responsible for co-ordinating performance data within the department for National Performance Indicators, Improvement Action Plan, Service Plan and Housing Strategy Targets.

The key actions and priorities of this strategy will be taken forward by:

- Service Plan
- Inclusion in the staff Performance Development Review System. In addition Service Planning Posters identifying the departments key objectives and targets are displayed throughout Housing Services.
- All National and local performance indicators and targets have Accountable Officers dedicated to them. Each accountable officer is responsible for giving the status for indicators and targets to the Performance Development team together with an explanation if the target is being achieved and if not why not.
- Quarterly Service Review Meetings attended by the AD and Managers for the service, Director of Community Services, AD for Finance, Performance and ICT, Head of HR and the Strategy and Performance Manager. Progress against service plan actions is monitored along with performance against PI targets and actions are agreed to address any dips in performance.
- A monthly report covering all areas is produced demonstrating progress against targets for management purposes. This report goes to all senior managers and is discussed at the Senior Managers Team meeting. A copy of this report goes to the Cabinet holder for Housing.
- A quarterly report is presented to the Tenants Board outlining progress against actions and targets. Regular articles giving residents feedback are featured in Hot News a newsletter that is delivered to all tenants and leaseholders four times a year.
- In addition the Performance and Strategy Manager submits a quarterly progress report on all the Division's Targets, which is then considered by Senior Management Team and Cabinet Portfolio holders. Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and the relevant Scrutiny Committee consider a six monthly corporate report.
- Performance on Budgets, Operations and Management Issues (Staffing, Sickness Absence, Violence at Work etc), Health and Safety, PI and Target Achievement is monitored at quarterly meetings involving the Director of Community Services and the Assistant Directors for Housing, Finance, Performance and ICT, Environmental Services, Cultural Services, Highways and Technical Services.
- Financial Performance is managed at monthly meetings involving the Assistant Director – Finance and IT, Assistant Director - Housing, Divisional Managers and an Accounting Manager from Corporate Services Department.

Challenges for 2008-12

The challenges facing the Housing Services in 2008/2012 include:

- Re-alignment of Darlington policy to regional loans policy.
- Deliver SHIP 3 programme.
- Implementation of Finance Re-modeling Initiative.
- If successful, implement Housing Growth Area policy.
- Increase NHAP funding into Darlington.
- Achieve greater numbers of Affordable Housing through Planning Gains.
- Maximise development potential of existing land and LA sites.
- Develop an Action Plan to deliver Energy Performance certificates.
- Evaluate Public Sector stock condition survey.
- Meet increasing demand for private sector housing enforcement activity under the Housing Act 2004.
- Completion of Private Stock condition survey with evaluation 2008/09.
- Review and implement Housing and Homeless Strategies.
- Implement Choice Based Lettings.
- Further develop Reward and Recognition Scheme.
- Continue to develop joint working with Adult Services.
- Implement recommendations of Supporting People review.
- Complete the rebuilding of Dinsdale Court and Linden Court and commence remodeling works at Windsor Court.
- Successfully achieve targets for reducing long term empty homes in the private sector.
- Further develop the Mystery Shopper scheme.
- Develop and support the board members of the Tenants Board and further develop tenant participation.
- Continue to improve opportunities for user involvement in both the strategic and operational development of tenancy support.
- Align Housing Options to feed into new Government PI's.
- Develop monitoring mechanisms for new Government PI's.
- Implement web enabled version of ARC Plus.
- Develop specification of work with partners to feed into Key PI's.

Tenant Board Challenges for 2008/12

- Develop and implement a new training programme for new and existing members.
- Creation of a Tenant Board website, involving ICT training and design.
- Develop a programme of promotion and engagement to enable more tenants and leaseholders to become involved.
- Develop more robust Performance Management monitoring mechanisms for Housing and partners.
- Further develop the Mystery Shopper scheme.
- Feed into the Choice Based Lettings launch and review.
- Evaluate the Darlington Dividend Scheme (phase 1), develop and implement Phase 2.
- Undertake further training to improve the Tenants Board role of inspecting the work of partners.
- Undertake inspection of IPM works.
- Deliver the second year of the Tenant Empowerment Strategy.

- Review the Board's Constitution to make it more fit for purpose.
- Disseminate energy efficiency information to tenants and leaseholders.
- Evaluate models of consultation and engagement.
- Feed into the review of Older Persons Services.
- Develop a workplan for 2008/09, including action plan and timescales for delivery.

Conclusion

Chapter 10

This Housing Strategy makes a clear statement of progress made in the key areas of performance that we set ourselves for the last 12 months.

There is nevertheless, a commitment to continually improve, add value and increase the efficiency and quality of our service to meet modern customer expectations. The Strategy will continue to explore opportunities through procurement to deliver enhanced services and learn from best practice at a local, sub-regional and cross local authority boundary level.

The Strategy identifies four priority wards of private sector housing which exhibit higher levels of non-decent housing than the remainder of the Borough and, it is these priority wards which are the main focus of the Financial Assistance Policy. A number of wider regeneration opportunities are being examined through the "Growth Bid", Housing Market Renewal funding through the Regional Housing Board, and, private financing opportunities.

While the Council's housing stock has achieved Decent Standards and operates on the basis of an "enhanced" Darlington standard, a comprehensive maintenance and annual Housing Investment Programme has been developed with the Tenants Board to ensure the long term sustainability of the housing stock. The Investment programme provides a balanced and considered approach targeting vulnerable members of the local community and those who are less able to manage without support and / or adaptations to their homes. This is particularly relevant given Darlington's increasing older population.

The Strategy also considers and addresses the barriers faced by many first time buyers, young people and those families on low or moderate incomes not able to access accommodation locally. Delivering affordable housing accessible to all whilst providing customer choice is a key objective of the Strategy. Clearly maintaining robust data about local, sub-regional and regional housing market conditions and the inter-relationship with other adjacent sub-regions will be continually monitored to inform future local housing strategy policy.

Darlington have embraced the Housing Green Paper and are supportive of more sustainable development, growth and delivery of higher volumes of affordable housing to meet local housing needs. The Strategy gives a commitment to exploring renewable energy sources, reviewing new build specifications (in terms of reduced energy consumption and higher energy efficiency levels) and acting as a catalyst for behavioural change amongst local households for energy consumption.

The Strategy builds upon the strength of the Tees Valley sub-regional strategy and the partnership existing between the five local authority partners and Tees Valley Unlimited. Opportunities are collectively pursued to enhance the quality of life of residents through broader more holistic regeneration initiatives contributing to economic growth and prosperity.

The Darlington Housing Market

Appendix 1

Table 1 illustrates the household type / tenure breakdown of housing stock in Darlington. The most significant changes in household type are amongst couples and couples with dependent children illustrating a need for more family homes. Those aged over 60 years have also increased. In respect of housing tenure, the biggest change is the growth in the owner occupied sector matched almost by the decrease in the privately rented sector which could signal a reduced interest in the “buy to let” housing market.

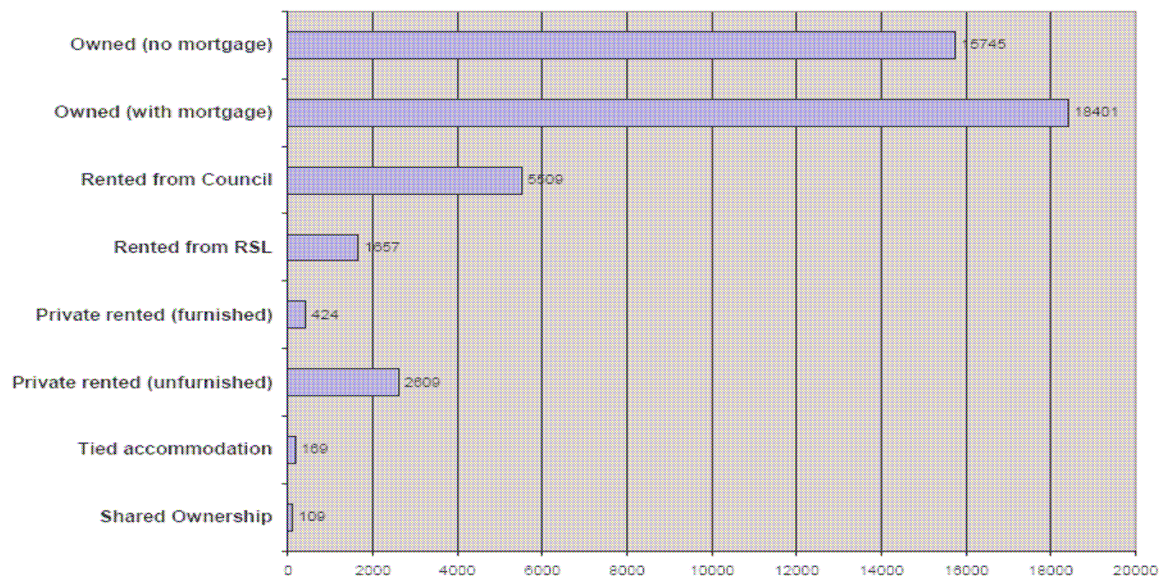
Table 1 – Household Type and Tenure Mix

Household Type	2005 Survey		2001 Census		
	Weighted Frequency	%	Frequency	%	%Variation
Single person <60	6225	13.9	6803	16.1	-2.1
Single person 60+	8253	18.5	6638	15.7	2.8
Couples (any age)	15046	33.7	11494	27.2	6.6
Couple with dependent children	7233	16.2	8605	20.3	-4.1
Lone Parent family	2625	5.9	3170	7.5	-1.6
Other type of household	5242	11.7	5602	13.2	-1.5
Total	44624	100.0	42312	100.0	
Tenure	2005 Survey		2001 Census		
	Frequency	%	Census	%	% Variation
Owner Occupied	34146	76.5	30350	71.7	4.8
Rented from Council	5509	12.3	6048	14.3	-1.9
Rented from RSL	1657	3.7	1611	3.8	-0.1
Private Rented	3202	7.2	4304	10.2	-3.0
Shared Ownership*	109	0.2			
Total	44624	100.0	42313		

* not specified on 2001 Census

Graph 1 shows a more detailed picture of housing tenure in Darlington, illustrating a high owner occupied sector and very small intermediate housing sector but one which requires growth if Darlington is to bridge the increasing affordability gap for first time purchasers.

Graph 1 – Tenure profile in 2005



Source: 2005 HNS

Map 1 shows the affordable housing needs in Darlington by sub-area. The highest affordable housing need recorded in the affluent South West and rural areas of the Borough. Significant variances in the type, quality, age, availability and price of housing exists across the Borough which is reflected in the designated sub-areas. The affordable housing takes account of affordable housing need as well as concentrations of single tenure housing in determining affordable housing contributions to ensure a mixed tenure and balanced supply of housing.

Map 1 – Affordable Housing Need

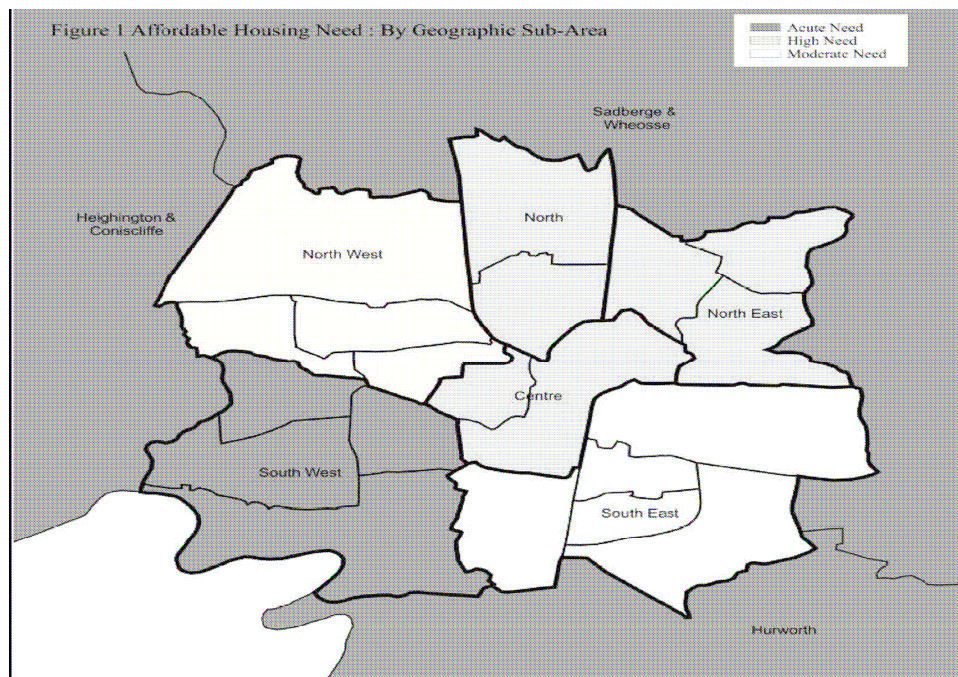


Table 2 illustrates the market pressures faced by Darlington's housing market. The red colours indicating areas, types of property and tenure and size of property in shortest supply compared to the identified level of housing need. Purple illustrates supply exceeding demand and therefore, represents housing supply at the opposite end of the scale to those illustrated as red. This stable should be compared to the map on the previous page as both inform each other in terms of policy development.

Table 2 – Household Type, Tenure Mix and Ward Level Housing Need

		Urban sub-areas					
Property Characteristic		Darlington North East	Darlington South East	Darlington Centre	Darlington South West	Darlington North	Darlington North West
Tenure	Owner Occupied	0.58	1.71	0.81	0.48	0.73	0.91
	Private Rented	0.00	3.19	2.36	0.70	1.59	1.80
	Shared Ownership	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total	0.42	1.83	1.05	0.48	0.85	1.05
No. Bedrooms	One (inc. Bedsit)	0.00	3.47	1.48	2.09	0.00	1.46
	Two	0.50	2.18	1.72	0.41	1.30	1.52
	Three	0.57	1.87	0.76	0.36	0.62	0.92
	Four	0.16	0.24	0.42	0.34	0.73	0.53
	Five or more	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.79	0.00	0.00
	Total	0.42	1.83	1.05	0.48	0.85	1.05
Type	House	0.54	2.17	1.22	0.38	1.04	1.36
	Flat	0.00	1.66	1.26	1.06	0.86	0.61
	Bungalow	0.32	0.42	0.00	0.20	0.13	0.00
	Total	0.42	1.83	1.05	0.48	0.85	1.05

		Rural Wards				
Property Characteristic		Heighington and Coniscliffe	Hurworth	Middleton St. George	Sadberge and Whessoe	Total
Tenure	Owner Occupied	0.25	0.14	0.60	0.11	0.62
	Private Rented	0.18	0.00	0.83	0.16	1.23
	Shared Ownership	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total	0.21	0.10	0.60	0.10	0.66
No. Bedrooms	One (inc. Bedsit)	0.37	0.48	6.94	1.20	1.13
	Two	0.24	0.06	0.75	0.07	0.88
	Three	0.30	0.15	0.13	0.06	0.60
	Four	0.05	0.00	0.62	0.00	0.39
	Five or more	0.23	0.00	1.83	0.00	0.33
	Total	0.21	0.10	0.60	0.10	0.66
Type	House	0.25	0.07	0.76	0.15	0.82
	Flat	0.11	0.00	0.47	0.00	0.69
	Bungalow	0.14	0.21	0.14	0.00	0.16
	Total	0.21	0.10	0.60	0.10	0.66

<0.5	Demand exceeds supply and particular pressure on stock
0.5 - <1	Demand exceeds supply and some pressure on stock
1 - <2	Demand equals supply; demand likely to be satisfied
>2	Supply exceeds demand; possible excess of properties

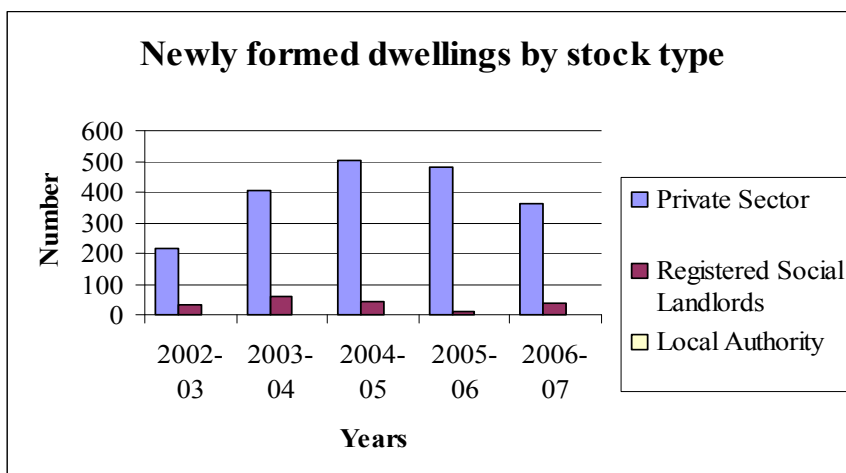
Table 3 provides ward level data for the Darlington Housing Market (Source: Tees Valley joint Strategy Unit). The oldest housing stock is present in the wards of Bank Top, Northgate, Central, Pierremont and North Road. It is perhaps not surprising then that the poorest housing conditions are to be found in four of these five wards (excludes Pierremont). In each of these wards the predominant property type is early twentieth century terraced housing.

Table 3 – Housing Market Data at Ward Level

	2005	2006	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	
			HOUSE TYPES (% of Dwellings)					AGE OF HOUSING (Construction Date)				
Ward Name	Number of Dwellings	Mean House Price (£)	Detach	Semi-Detach	Terrace	Bung.	Flat	% Pre-1919	% 1919-1939	% 1945-1972	% post 1973	
	Defn	Defn	Defn	Defn	Defn	Defn	Defn	Defn	Defn	Defn	Defn	
Bank Top	1,867	90,600	1.5	16.9	54.8	4.9	21.8	55.8	9.0	4.5	30.7	
Central	2,018	96,500	1.9	8.9	54.7	6.0	28.4	55.3	8.5	8.9	27.3	
Cockerton East	2,297	129,900	10.8	64.6	8.9	9.8	5.9	0.3	59.1	1.5	39.2	
Cockerton West	1,900	89,700	0.4	25.4	47.3	4.8	22.1	4.3	2.6	81.2	11.9	
College	1,775	208,900	8.8	37.4	22.4	4.3	27.1	30.5	34.7	11.1	23.7	
Eastbourne	2,626	107,200	4.0	59.2	22.4	5.6	8.9	0.0	41.0	40.4	18.5	
Faverdale	882	166,500	40.2	45.0	7.3	2.4	5.2	0.3	6.9	3.1	89.7	
Harrowgate Hill	2,566	121,600	13.3	55.0	25.7	4.5	1.4	18.0	38.6	18.9	24.6	
Haughton East	1,759	129,100	11.3	28.2	36.9	10.2	13.3	6.1	12.0	45.0	36.9	
Haughton North	1,516	133,600	28.0	34.1	12.5	14.5	11.0	0.0	11.7	5.9	82.4	
Haughton West	2,242	130,800	19.6	38.5	24.5	8.3	9.0	3.9	4.5	33.3	58.4	
Heighington and Coniscliffe	1,513	212,000	40.2	20.1	18.8	19.0	1.8	27.3	8.0	33.9	30.8	
Hummersknott	1,486	218,300	41.7	31.6	1.5	13.0	12.2	1.5	16.5	41.3	40.7	
Hurworth	1,503	187,200	25.1	24.1	20.5	22.9	7.5	25.0	6.7	53.6	14.7	
Lascelles	1,648	113,200	6.6	28.2	47.2	6.4	11.5	13.1	29.3	36.3	21.3	
Lingfield	1,717	111,400	1.8	54.9	22.0	11.1	10.2	1.3	45.3	33.1	20.3	
Middleton St George	1,819	175,100	37.8	21.7	23.4	12.0	5.3	18.3	7.2	24.3	50.2	
Mowden	1,683	167,500	20.6	50.4	1.3	17.0	10.6	2.0	12.5	69.9	15.5	
North Road	3,051	85,900	9.5	14.4	52.1	1.8	22.3	39.2	19.9	0.8	40.1	
Northgate	2,154	89,800	0.5	4.9	71.8	0.5	22.3	81.6	2.4	1.2	14.7	
Park East	2,787	106,500	2.2	29.7	47.6	2.7	17.8	36.7	18.7	31.9	12.8	
Park West	1,614	249,200	21.1	42.8	8.3	15.6	12.2	17.9	49.8	19.5	12.8	
Pierremont	2,669	99,800	1.5	22.8	72.3	0.5	3.0	73.1	24.4	0.4	2.1	
Sadberge and Whessoe	848	214,500	29.8	18.3	20.8	28.4	2.8	31.4	14.7	31.7	22.2	
DARLINGTON	45,940	132,500	13.3	32.5	33.3	8.1	12.7	24.7	21.3	25.1	28.9	

Graph 2 – Newly formed dwellings buy stock type

Graph 2 highlights that the between 2002 and 2007 the total number of affordable dwellings developed by RSL and the local authority each year has been consistently and significantly less the 100. With an anticipated annual shortfall in affordable housing of 265 there is an urgent need to engage more effectively with private developers and local RSLs so a step change can be achieved in the number of affordable homes developed each year. The framework for delivering improved newly formed dwellings is now in place, the Affordable Housing SPD.



Asylum Seekers

The Council's Social Inclusion Strategy was published in 2005 and so is largely focused on Refugees and Asylum Seekers when discussing newly formed communities. The Strategy highlights that in 2005 Darlington provided only twenty units of furnished accommodation for Asylum Seekers and estimated that this group made up less than 0.0005% of the population. Recent data from the Asylum Seeker Support Team shows that the Council now have 31 units of furnished accommodation and were supporting 71 asylum seekers in March 2008.

General Migration

Inward and outward migration to and from the UK has increased substantially and all parts of the UK have been affected. The UK inward migration figure almost doubled in the years between 1997 (320,000) and 2006 (574,000).¹ In the North East, a part of the UK which had a declining population and which does not have the same ethnic diversity of other parts of the UK, new arrivals are having a substantial impact on the economic and social life of the region.²

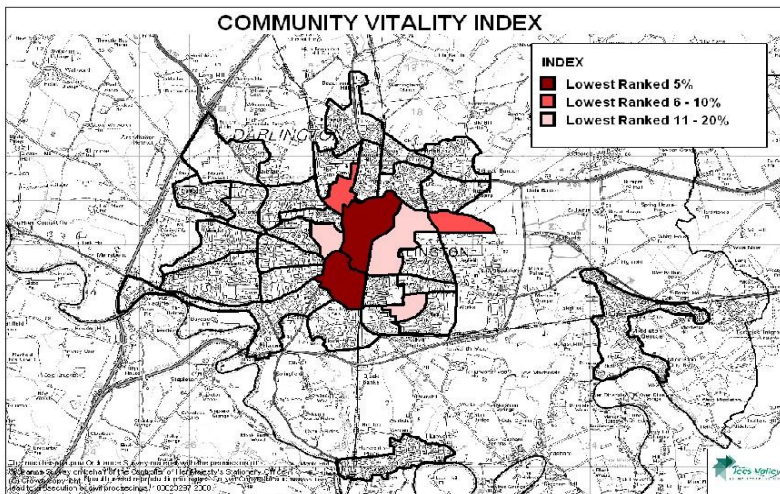
The new arrivals are not homogeneous and information on them is incomplete. It is impossible to know with any accuracy how many migrants have arrived in the region since a particular date, and even more difficult to know whether they have stayed. The North East Public Health Observatory (NEPHO) recently published migrant data using several sources, some characteristics and a view of the scale of migration to different parts of the region can be developed. Sources include the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Total International Migration Estimate (TIM), NHS GP Registration figures of non-UK born individuals ('Flag 4'), National Insurance number allocations (NINO) and the Workers 3 Registration Scheme (WRS). A report published by the Local Government Association gives a detailed commentary on these data sources some of which are summarised below.

Table 4 demonstrates that out of the 23 local authority areas in the North East, Darlington have roughly the seventh largest migrant population. The NEPHO study indicated a common problem facing migrants is that they are housed in unsatisfactory conditions of multiple occupation. The work of the private sector housing renewal team at Darlington have focused on raising the awareness of recent legislative changes for housing in multiple occupation (HMO) by publishing articles in the Private Landlords News Letter and by offering advice and guidance at the Landlords Forum.

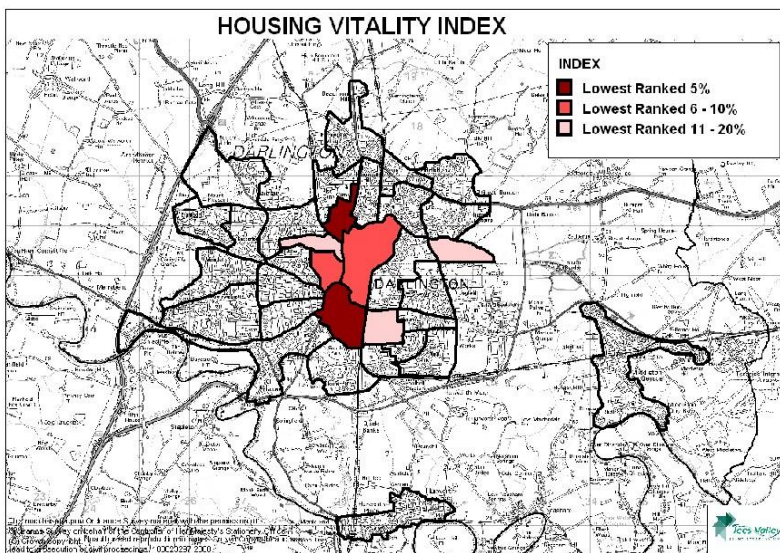
Table 4 – Data indicating migration patterns to local authorities in the North East

Local Authority	TIM 2005-06	Flag 4 2006	Flag 4 as % of TIM	NINO 2005-06	WRS May 2004 to March 2007
Hartlepool	240	215	90%	200	70
Middlesbrough	960	1220	127%	990	240
Redcar and Cleveland	490	160	33%	150	95
Stockton-on-Tees	770	596	77%	480	315
Darlington	390	441	113%	690	470
Chester-le-Street	90	75	83%	70	35
Derwentside	130	201	155%	430	570
Durham City	1860	1097	59%	570	255
Easington	90	124	138%	130	195
Sedgefield	110	113	103%	260	175
Teesdale	110	43	39%	60	65
Wear Valley	80	110	138%	150	150
Gateshead	700	768	110%	980	515
South Tyneside	980	903	92%	810	80
Sunderland	1480	1239	84%	1440	540
Newcastle upon Tyne	5240	5386	103%	4530	1515
North Tyneside	950	494	52%	590	260
Alnwick	90	64	71%	80	125
Berwick-upon-Tweed	60	95	158%	170	195
Blyth Valley	120	111	93%	150	185
Castle Morpeth	330	91	28%	80	395
Tynedale	180	102	57%	200	150
Wansbeck	90	60	67%	80	40

Map 2 – Community Vitality Index



Map 3 – Housing Vitality Index



Darlington engaged with their Tees Valley local authority partners to assess and appraise priority areas for regeneration across the sub-region. In Darlington, any funding secured for major regeneration initiatives will be targeted at one of the four priority wards. Priorities across the Tees Valley sub-region were considered on the basis of the Vitality Viability Indices (VVI), a suite of deprivation indicators mapped across the Tees Valley sub-region. Unfortunately for Darlington (from a funding priority point of view), the volume and concentration of poor private sector housing based on the VVI is greater within the other 4 Tees Valley authorities than Darlington.

Based on the current VVI Darlington is not prioritised within the Tees Valley sub-region for housing market renewal for the period 2008-11. Further discussions have ensued within the Tees Valley sub-region and two suites of deprivation indices will inform future priority investment areas. The Housing Vitality Index (HVI) with a strong focus on housing indices (subject to refinement following the conclusion of private sector stock condition survey results) and, the second suite of deprivation indices will focus on more economic and social deprivation indices called the Community Vitality indices (CVI). The maps above illustrate how Darlington compares in respect of the two suites of indices.

Meeting Needs within Darlington

Appendix 2

The Local Housing Assessment was completed in 2005 to consider housing need and wider market issues in Darlington. This involved the completion of a household survey sent to 35,000 local residents, interviews with key stakeholders and a review of secondary data such as house prices and the 2001 census. The assessment had a number of recommendations, most notably the need to deliver 265 units of affordable housing per annum from 2005 to 2010. 82% of this affordable accommodation should be delivered through socially rented dwellings with the remaining 18% from shared ownership and shared equity dwellings. Darlington have adopted a tenure split for affordable housing of 70 : 30, 100% rented : intermediate housing which reflects the “hidden” need for the intermediate housing option.

Population and Household projections for Darlington

Table 1 illustrates a projected growth in population and households over the period to 2026. This poses a significant challenge to the local authority in terms of delivering new housing to meet local housing need and securing sufficient development land to deliver the increased supply. However, Darlington remain confident they can deliver the increased supply which is why they applied as part of the Tees Valley growth bid to be designated a “growth area” in 2008.

Table 1 – Population and household projections

Year	Population	Households
2004	43,000	98,400
2006	44,000	98,900
2011	46,000	100,300
2016	49,000	102,000
2021	51,000	103,800
2026	53,000	105,300

Population projections = ONS Revised 2004 Based Population Projections

Household Projections = ONS 2004 Based Population Projections

Household Incomes (2006)

Table 2 illustrates the local challenge to deliver accessible affordable housing to meet identified housing need given the position that Darlington residents exhibit the lowest combined median earnings across the Tees Valley sub-region. The inter-relationship between earnings and the affordable housing model are intrinsic to the success of the affordable housing market in Darlington.

Table 2 – Median Weekly Earnings

Median Weekly Earnings £ (2006)	Darlington	Tees Valley	North East	Great Britain
Full-time Men	444.9	463.3	444.2	489.4
Full-time Women	345.0	331.2	341.0	387.1
All Full-time adults	383.3	408.4	399.0	448.6

Table 3 – Average House Prices and Volume of Sales

	Detached		Semi-Detached		Terraced		Flat / Maisonette		Total	
	Sales	Price	Sales	Price	Sales	Price	Sales	Price	Sales	Price
Darlington	440	226,300	991	138,815	1,129	98,903	307	121,298	2,867	134,649
Hartlepool	357	230,396	621	123,224	1,089	74,945	170	97,830	2,237	114,895
Middlesbrough	376	228,936	1,250	129,633	1,560	78,592	288	115,738	3,474	116,309
Redcar & Cleveland	626	206,019	1,237	128,353	1,100	86,732	200	104,067	3,163	127,714
Stockton-On-Tees	1,242	229,912	1,828	127,765	1,334	96,405	262	113,595	4,666	145,193
Tees Valley	3,041	224,407	5,927	129,654	6,212	86,911	1,227	112,288	16,407	129,734

(£ - 12 months to End March 2007)

Table 3 illustrates the buoyancy of Darlington's housing market with average house prices in Darlington only second in the Tees Valley to Stockton Borough Council. However, it is broadly recognised that the Greenfield development at Ingleby Barwick does skew the average figures for Stockton upwards.

Darlington Assembly
 Receives reports on progress of SCS and
 conducts strategic consultations
 Meets at least twice annually
 Comprises reps. from all sectors

**Darlington Partnership Board
 (the LSP)**
*Ensures the SCS is being delivered through
 the Themed Groups*
 Equal representation across sectors
 Chair and Vice Chair elected every two

All Themed Groups develop delivery plans to ensure that SCS priorities ‘One Darlington’ and ‘Perfectly Placed’ are being addressed

Aspiring Darlington	Greener Darlington	Healthy Darlington	Prosperous Darlington	Safer Darlington
Chair Lead Officer	Chair Lead Officer	Chair Lead Officer	Chair Lead Officer	Chair Lead Officer

Each Themed Group will develop its own structures, sub-groups and means of commissioning projects

<p>Executive Group (Replaces Themed Groups Chairs)</p> <p>Membership and Governance arrangements to be decided in consultation with partners</p>	<p>One Darlington Group (to be confirmed)</p> <p>Provides forum for discussion on ‘creating a sense of common purpose’ – builds on success and popularity of Enquiry Group Six Ensures that Darlington Partnership and Talking Together events are effective means of community engagement</p>	<p>Cultural Network</p> <p>Provides forum for discussion on ‘Culture and Heritage within Darlington. Draws together a different set of agencies to Themed Groups and informs their discussions.</p>
--	--	--

Annual Housing Investment Programme 2008-09 Appendix 4

Responsive Repairs - Day to day repairs non-urgent repairs, void inspections, etc. (on average 13,617 are completed per annum) and urgent repairs (on average 7,551 are completed per annum).

Cyclical Maintenance (£520,991) - Works include gas servicing (£260,114), legionella maintenance (£54,964), internal and external painting contracts (£178,418), maintenance of emergency lighting (£19,658), portable appliance testing (£2,813), etc.

Council House Adaptations

The adaptations budget (£340,000) is to deliver adaptations within the Council's housing stock to enable tenants with a disability to remain in their own home across the Borough.

Heating Replacement

New condensing boiler central heating systems will be fitted to around 210 dwellings throughout the Borough but predominately in Haughton, Park East and North Road. As utility companies have caused significant delays in programmes in earlier years due to missed schedules for installing new gas services to properties that are being converted from electric to gas central heating, a specific programme has been developed over the next five years to deliver such works, thereby speeding up future replacement.

Community facility

A new modern Community Centre will be built to replace an old, under utilised resource to promote neighbourhood sustainability.

Internal Planned Maintenance

A programme to upgrade kitchen, bathrooms, electrical rewiring, including security lighting and where appropriate TV aerials and communal works which will cover approximately 350 dwellings located predominantly at Harrogate Hill, Central, Rise Carr, Bank Top and Lascelles areas of the Town. The extra investment in this area will help towards delivering the commitment as part of the Darlington Standard to reduce the replacement cycle for these works from 30 years to 20 years.

Sheltered Scheme replacement

Dinsdale Court will be demolished and a new modern sheltered scheme built to replace the existing sheltered scheme to meet the expectations of current and future elderly people. The new building will be modelled on the Linden Court scheme which is currently being rebuilt, meet Disability Discrimination Standards, improve accessibility to first and second floors, increase thermal comfort, and improve internal space standards within the individual units to enable lettings to less mobile elderly people, promoting greater independence.

Structural repairs

A small budget has been set aside to address any structural issues that may be identified within the year.

Lifeline Services

£82,000 has been put aside to continue to provide upgrades to the Lifeline services (in addition to those picked up in the costs for remodeling works) within sheltered housing schemes and blocks of flats throughout the town, and to provide upgrades and modernisation to communal facilities in sheltered housing schemes such as common rooms and kitchens.

Environmental Improvements

£419,000 has been set aside to undertake environmental works at Firthmoor.

Improved footpaths

£343,000 is to be spent on improvements to footpaths at Firthmoor, Lascelles, and Bank Top.

Fencing improvements

£300,000 will be spent on fencing works in areas to be determined.

Garage improvements

Improvements to the Council's garage blocks will continue in areas to be determined.

Pre-paint joinery

Joinery works in anticipation of the cyclical external painting programme will take place on those dwellings that require it.

Roofing replacement

£309,000 has been set aside for roofing works throughout the Borough.

Private Sector - Financial Assistance

£143,000 set aside to support the Financial Assistance Policy targeted at areas of poor private sector housing.

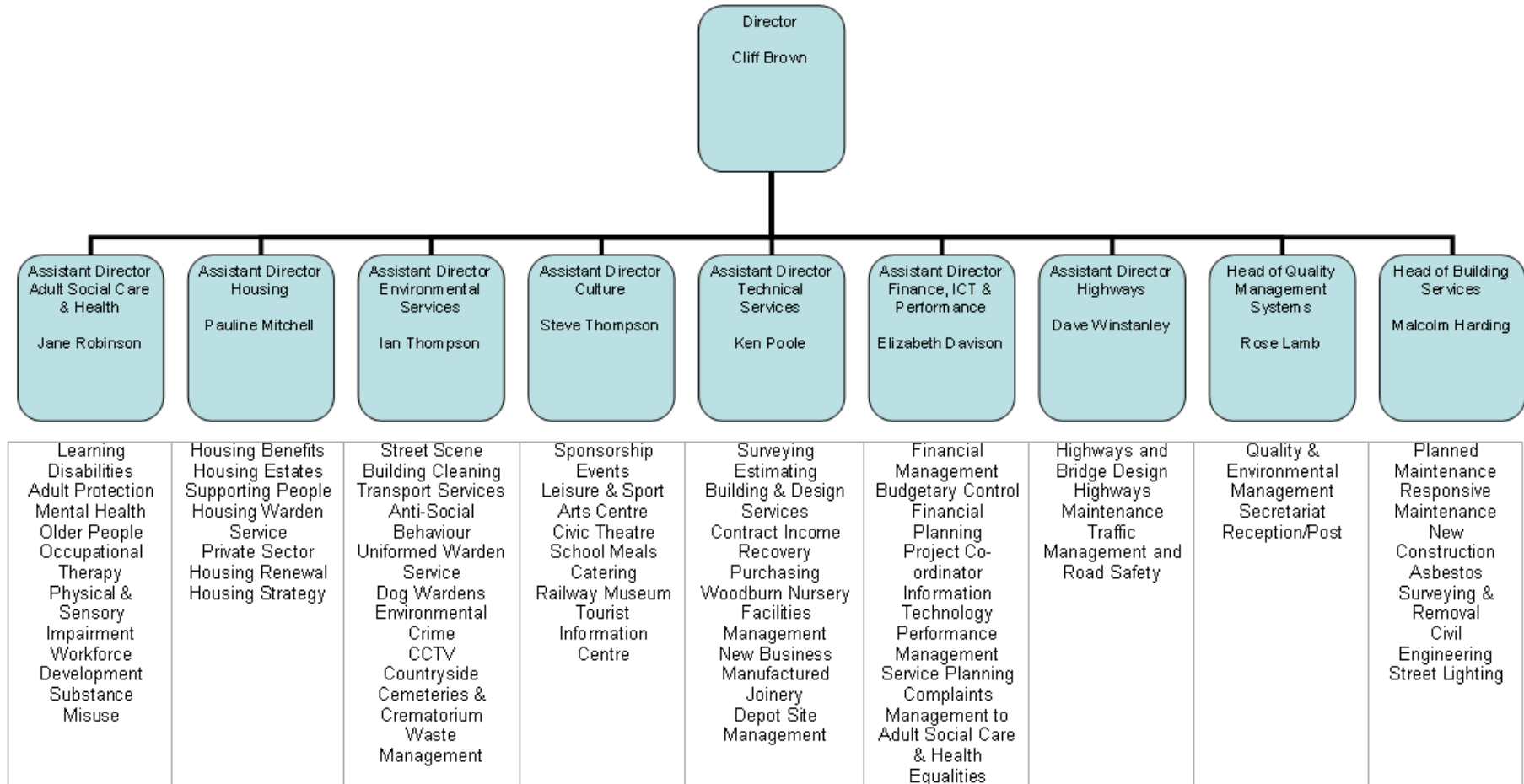
Disabled Facilities Grants

DFG grants will continue to be offered according to the mandatory limit of £25k, plus the additional optional "Top up" Financial Assistance Loan of up to £10K as agreed by Cabinet in 2005. The total budget for mandatory DFG grants is £665,000. This is based on SHIP3 funding (£383k) and a Government Office for the North East allocation of £282k.

Private Sector – Energy Efficiency

Private Sector funding of £100,000, will help deliver targeted energy efficiency works in the private sector in partnership with utility services and match funding Government grants

Community Services Department



Options Appraisal

Appendix 6

Priority 1 - Private Sector Regeneration

Corporate and Regional Framework

Corporate Plan:	Shaping a Better Darlington
Sustainable Community Strategy Theme:	Safer Darlington / Healthy Darlington
Regional Framework Theme:	Rejuvenating the Housing Stock

Strategic Options

OPTION 1 - TARGET FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AT PRIORITY WARDS

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of Decent Homes amongst private sector housing stock. • Sustainability of neighbourhoods and communities. • Proactive interventionist approach minimises financial implications. • Contributes to the health and well being of residents. • Increases thermal comfort of dwellings which could contribute to reducing fuel poverty.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of non-decency amongst priority wards is high leading to high cost remedial works. • Disproportionate amount of investment focused on four priority wards to the detriment of other wards. • No long term guarantee of sustainability. • Lack of equity or disposable income to service a loan.
Potential Resource Implications; Will be clarified when in receipt of private sector stock condition information in September 2008.	

OPTION 2 - SELECTIVE ACQUISITION OF OBSOLETE PROPERTIES, CLEARANCE AND SALE OF LAND. REDEVELOP WITH NEW HOUSING. PARTNERING CONTRACT WITH A PRIVATE DEVELOPER AND RSL.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an opportunity to create a mixed and balanced multi tenure development. • Provides a long term sustainable housing solution. • Potential to generate a capital receipt to help finance the project. • Could "free up" opportunities for match funding or additional private investment. • Could generate additional affordable housing through creative land use planning.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial viability of project and potential requirement for match funding. • The social and economic impact and the ability of existing infrastructure to support regeneration. • Disengagement of local community and public opposition. • Potential short-term negative effect on local economy. • Selective acquisitions could be time consuming and only achieved through enforcement action.
Potential Resource Implications; Detailed analysis / evaluation and financial appraisal required.	

OPTION 3 - PROMOTE PRIVATE LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME TO IMPROVE DIALOGUE WITH PRIVATE LANDLORDS AND RAISE HOUSING STANDARDS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise levels of decency amongst privately rented housing stock. • Encourage and promote excellent tenancy management to reduce incidence of anti-social behaviour and homelessness. • Increase accessibility to the privately rented housing market by engagement with the sub-regional Choice Based Letting scheme. • Provide a Forum by which best practice can be shared and legislative changes can be effectively communicated. • Reduce the requirement for enforcement action.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of interest will mean the Accreditation scheme is resource intensive. • Private landlords may find the eligibility for accreditation too burdensome.
Potential Resource Implications; Projected costs could be quantified based upon existing membership. Will need to evaluate potential new business which may follow and ascertain resource implications.	

Strategic Choice

- A Strategy based upon:-
- The outcome of the Public and Private Stock Condition Surveys (2008), Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2008) and consultation, which may involve a solution using all options.
- Consultation with communities and constituted Partnerships.
- Maintaining neighbourhoods.
- Creating diversification of housing choice / options.
- Continued partnership working with all sectors of the community to create cohesive neighbourhoods and achieve "best value" in terms of wider social and economic rewards.
- Evaluation of existing Financial Assistance Policy and assessment of the implications of the Regional Loans model.

Action Plan

Key Activity	Target	Resources	Timing	Lead
Evaluate the Financial Assistance Policy for Darlington.	Complete customer consultation and feedback through the Home Improvement Agency.	Within existing resources.	September 2008	A. Glew
Align the Council's financial assistance policy with the Regional Loans Policy.	Submit a revised financial assistance policy to CMT when the Regional Loans Policy is established.	From within existing resources	Review of alignments will begin in April 2009	Alan Glew/David Burrell
Analyse results of Public Sector Stock Condition Survey and present Action Plan to Members.	Receive survey results.	Within existing resources.	May 2008	A. Glew
Analyse results of Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and present Action Plan to Members.	Receive survey results.	Within existing resources.	November 2008	A. Glew
Undertake community consultation in accordance with "Talking Together" schedule of community meetings	Scheduled meetings every 3 months in each ward.	Within existing resources.	Summer 2008	A. Glew

Promote the Private landlord Accreditation scheme and improve private sector housing standards.	Increase membership of the accreditation scheme. Complete 4 Private Sector Landlord Forums per annum.	Within existing resources. Will need to be re-evaluated periodically depending upon membership numbers.	Ongoing	D. Burrell
---	--	---	---------	------------

Risks

- Community expectations raised.
- Opposition to proposals.
- Impact on local housing market.

Performance Management

- Outcome target – prepare detailed action report on recommendation for each area, by March 2009.
- Engage community in developing and progressing action recommendations by December 2008.

Priority 2 - Improvements to Council Stock

Corporate and Regional Framework

Corporate Plan:	Putting the Customer First
Sustainable Community Strategy Theme:	Healthy Darlington / Safer Darlington
Regional Framework Theme:	Improvement and Maintenance of Existing Housing

Strategic Options

OPTION 1 - DEVELOP INVESTMENT STRATEGY CONCENTRATING ON TENANT PRIORITIES.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for High Tenant Satisfaction.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May ignore less high profile, but essential maintenance and improvements. • Competition between residents groups –minority representations may be dis-proportionately advantaged. Areas without residents associations, or non-vocal residents, may be • Marginalised. • Potential High Cost. • May not address Decent Homes Standard. • Increase to responsive repairs costs, to tackle 'low priority' issues not programmed.
Potential Resource Implications; Within available budget.	

OPTION 2 - PROGRAMME ESTABLISHED IN CONSULTATION WITH TENANTS TO ADDRESS THEIR KEY ISSUES AND PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS OF STOCK CONDITION SURVEYS.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses both needs of stock and wishes of tenants. • Tenants satisfaction and ownership of programme. • Address Decent Homes Standard. • Provides core information to residents on competing priorities.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing wishes from different areas of the Borough
Potential Resource Implications; Within available budget.	

OPTION 3 - PROVIDE AREA SPECIFIC BUDGETS FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIPS TO ALLOCATE TO THEIR OWN PRIORITIES TO COMPLIMENT MAJOR CAPITAL WORKS IDENTIFIED ABOVE.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving residents. • Tackling local issues. • Potential to stimulate resident involvement.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability of group with budget holder responsibility. • Appropriateness of work proposed.
Potential Resource Implications; Could undertake a pilot programme with one Neighbourhood Partnership. Estimated resource implications, £30k for 2009-10.	

Strategic Choice

- A Strategy based upon:-
- Comprehensive public stock condition data.
- Full account taken of resident priorities.
- Core programmes to ensure Decent Homes criteria is met.

Action Plan

Key Activity	Target	Resources	Timing	Lead
Deliver the 2008/09 Housing Investment Programme (including brought forward underspend from 2007/08).	Deliver programme on Schedule and to budget Limits.	£10M	Complete April 2009	A. Glew
Analyse housing public stock information from all sources and prepare 2009/10 Housing Investment Programme.	Meet Decent Homes Criteria. Address tenants' issues within the stock. Address Health & Safety issues. Provide sustainable investment in stock.	Within existing resources.	December 2008	A. Glew

Identify tenants priorities.	Involve Tenants Board and other Neighbourhood Partnerships in Business Plan Development	£2k	Ongoing	P. Mitchell
Prepare the Business Plan and Budgetary Information.	Prepare investment strategy for Council Housing	Staff time and publication costs	January 2009	P. Mitchell

Risks

- Communities and Local Government Allocation / Subsidy Arrangements 2009/10.
- Expenditure on unexpected works - higher levels of responsive repairs, previously unidentified works.
- Change of Government Policy Priorities.
- Pilot self financing initiative.

Performance Management

- Outcome target – maintain the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 and achieve the Darlington "enhanced housing standard".
- Outputs – replace kitchens and bathrooms at least every 20 years.
- Outputs – replace electrical rewiring at least every 20 years.
- Increase resident involvement in budgetary process.
- Customer satisfaction – measured through Tenants Board, post contract questionnaires and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Priority 3 - Meeting the Needs of Older Persons

Corporate and Regional Framework

Corporate Plan:	Providing Excellent Services
Sustainable Community Strategy Theme:	Healthy Darlington / Safer Darlington
Regional Framework Theme:	Providing Choice and Quality

Strategic Options

OPTION 1 -	EVALUATE THE APPROPRIATENESS AND SUITABILITY IN THE LONG TERM OF SHELETERED ACCOMMODATION IN RESPECT OF THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT AND ACCESSIBILITY / LETTABILITY.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prudential borrowing allows full scheme appraisals to be undertaken and delivered. • Tenants have indicated they wish to remain as Council Tenants and improvements can be phased to minimise disruption. • Extends the life and usage of existing buildings. • Some unsuitable and unsustainable sheltered schemes could be cleared and new purpose built modern accommodation built.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion costs can be high. • Physical constraints may limit the improvements that can be achieved. • New build option expensive and operationally will be more difficult to deliver due to programmed decantment of existing residents.
Potential Resource Implications; Average of £3M per new build sheltered scheme with remodelling / internal planned maintenance costing approximately £300k - £1M – within Business Plan projection.	

OPTION 2 -	TRANSFER COUNCIL STOCK TO A REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD TO CARRY OUT THE NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be greater investment opportunities.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential opposition from tenants. • Physical constraints will be a problem for any landlord.
Potential Resource Implications; The costs of the transfer would need to be ascertained and guideline costs could be obtained from recent transfer authorities.	

OPTION 3 -	CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE USES FOR THE BUILDINGS AND WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS TO PROVIDE NEW PROVISION.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New build would provide all necessary amenities, facilities and accommodation to be planned into schemes tailored to individual residents' needs.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New build is very expensive so limited places would be available. Buildings not particularly suitable for alternative uses.
Potential Resource Implications; Average of over £3M per scheme.	

Strategic Choice

A Strategy based upon:-

- The Older Persons Housing Strategy 2006.
- The Supporting People Strategy 2004-09.
- Partnership working with Older People, Health, Social Services and the Voluntary Sector.
- Specialist advice from Consultant Architect.
- The Health Improvement Programme 2008-12.

Action Plan

Key Activity	Target	Resources	Timing	Lead
Identify work required to Windsor Court to ensure it complies with DDA requirements in consultation with the residents and Scheme Managers.	Complete all work.	£500k	Complete March 2009.	H. Neasham
Identify all improvements required to communal areas on a five year cycle including renewal and upgrades of furnishings and fittings and limited remodelling work.	Implement identified work on annual basis	£80k per annum.	March 2009 on a rolling basis	J. Walton
Promote activities in schemes to all older people in the local community by working in partnership with other key agencies.	Make communal room available to other groups interested in GEM programme	Nominal	March 2009	J. Walton

	Increase participation of non-residents in social activities in sheltered schemes throughout the awareness raising weeks in June/July.	Normal	July 2008	J. Walton
Explore new innovative services which can be provided within the 4 Extra Care schemes and open to the wider public.	Evaluate potential for the procurement of new services.	Within existing resources. Dependent upon the nature and conclusion of the evaluation.	March 2009	H. Neasham
Evaluate the effectiveness and customer satisfaction level of the new Lifeline Service.	Increase the number of Lifeline customers by 50 per annum.	Self-financing	March 2009	J. Walton

Risks:

- Insufficient capital resources within the Housing Investment Programme.
- Other priorities emerging locally or through Government policy changes.

Performance Management

- Increase the number of Lifeline users by 50 per annum.
- Complete the new build sheltered schemes at Linden Court by August 2008 and Dinsdale Court by April 2009.
- Complete the option appraisal of Windsor Court in consultation with residents by December 2008.

Priority 4 - Need for Supported Accommodation

Corporate and Regional Framework

Corporate Plan:	Ensuring Access for All
Sustainable Community Strategy Theme:	Healthy Darlington / Safer Darlington
Regional Framework Theme:	Providing Choice and Quality

Strategic Options

OPTION 1 -	NEWLY BUILT ACCOMMODATION WITH SUPPORT.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality. • Purpose built.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively high capital and revenue cost. • Lack of financial flexibility in terms of revenue costs i.e. Supporting People budget allocation already committed. • Scheme not supported by the Supporting People Commissioning Group.
Potential Resource Implications Capital - Approx. £500k for 6 unit scheme. Revenue dependent upon specific customer support requirements.	

OPTION 2 -	FLOATING SUPPORT PROVIDED BY EXTERNAL SUPPORT PROVIDERS, TO CUSTOMERS IN EXISTING ACCOMMODATION.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains residents in their existing home and reduces the likelihood of hospitalisation. • Opportunities to work with other experienced providers. • Customer choice.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some accommodation is unsuitable. • High revenue costs. • Lack of financial flexibility in terms of revenue costs i.e. Supporting People budget allocation already committed. • Additional monitoring costs for external support provider. • Scheme not supported by the Supporting People Commissioning Group.
Potential Resource Implications; Revenue dependent upon specific customer support requirements.	

OPTION 3 -	FLOATING SUPPORT PROVIDED BY COUNCIL'S TENANCY SUPPORT OFFICERS TO CUSTOMERS IN EXISTING COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION.
Strengths	Helps Council tenants sustain independent living. Provides alternative uses for the Council stock. Monitoring costs less onerous.
Weaknesses	Lack of knowledge and experience to support all vulnerable customers. Resource implications would need to be carefully assessed to ensure "best value". Lack of Customer choice.
Potential Resource Implications; Revenue dependent upon specific customer support requirements.	

Strategic Choice

A Strategy based upon:-

- New purpose built accommodation with support.
- Floating support where appropriate provided by Councils Tenancy Support Officers and other Support Providers.
- Involvement and participation of customers, carers, family, advocates and support providers.

Action Plan

Key Activity	Target	Resources	Timing	Lead
Submit bids for Housing Corporation (NAHP) funding in April and October 2008.	Provide a range of older person designated affordable housing offering choice.	Capital costs to be determined with Registered Social Landlord partner.	April 2008 October 2008	A. Glew
Appraise and review existing floating support service in accordance with contract review timetable.	To conclude the review and assess future requirements.	From existing resources.	To be determined	A. Sandys
Review the Supporting. People Strategy.	Review of supported housing priorities.	From existing resources.	April 2009	A. Sandys

Risks

- Demands on limited revenue funding.
- Supporting People budget allocation.
- Housing Corporation capital allocation 2008/11.

Performance Management

- Outcome target – increase the number of units of accommodation provided with support to vulnerable clients by 20% within existing resources by 2009.
- Outputs – 10 additional supported homes provided per annum.
- Customer Satisfaction – measured through on-going consultation with client groups and their advocates.
- Increase the number of support providers achieving top performance as part of the QAF.

Priority 5 - Balancing Supply and Demand for Social Housing / Delivering Affordable Housing

Corporate and Regional Framework

Corporate Plan:	Shaping a Better Darlington
Sustainable Community Strategy Theme:	Aspiring Darlington / Prosperous Darlington
Regional Framework Theme:	Understanding the Housing Market

Strategic Options

OPTION 1 -	IMPLEMENT THE SUB-REGIONAL CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (CBL) SCHEME TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND CHOICE FOR CUSTOMERS.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve customer choice and improve the sustainability of tenancies. • Reduce void turnaround times. • Reduce void repair costs. • Improve customer satisfaction levels.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires significant investment in information technology. • The private sector has yet to fully engage with the sub-regional CBL scheme. • Some Registered Social Landlords are opting out of providing 100% of their stock vacancies for the CBL scheme. • Retraining of administration staff.
Potential Resource Implications; Government implementation grant.	

OPTION 2 -	DEMOLISH ALL OBSOLETE OR LOW DEMAND HOUSING STOCK AND UTILISE LAND FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT TO MEET IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY HOUSING NEED.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land release – that may produce a capital receipt from private house builders / Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), and facilitate provision of new, high demand affordable units.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial capital outlay – whether by the Council or RSL. • May be some local opposition to proposals. • Reduction in available Council housing. • Relocation costs and capacity of retained housing stock to accommodate any displaced residents.
Potential Resource Implications; Demolition / clearance costs would need to be quantified in accordance with risk assessment.	

OPTION 3 -	MODERNISE AND REFURBISH 3 STOREY BLOCKS OF OBSOLETE OR LOW DEMAND ACCOMMODATION, WHILE RETAINING OWNERSHIP. NO CHANGES TO INTERNAL LAYOUT.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant improvement in quality of the housing / surrounding area. • Potential to stimulate demand. • Capital investment may encourage inward investment from other sources. • Improve the security and therefore, safety of residents.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High capital cost. • Unlikely to improve demand significantly. • May require decantment of existing residents during works incurring removal / relocation costs.
Potential Resource Implications; £500k + per block of 18 flats. (Cost based on previous works and inflated accordingly).	

OPTION 4 -	TRANSFER 3 STOREY BLOCKS TO REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD PROVIDER FOR CONVERSION AND REFURBISHMENT. THIS WOULD INCLUDE REDUCTION IN OVERALL NUMBER OF UNITS TO TACKLE SPATIAL AND DESIGN PROBLEMS.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to stock completed with negligible financial impact on Council. • Potential stimulus to demand. • Provision of tenant choice and counters single tenure estates. • Reduce repairs and maintenance liabilities.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High capital cost for refurbishment of 8 blocks of 18 unit accommodation. • May be some local opposition to proposals. • Reduced council housing stock could exacerbate housing demand issues. • Unknown impact on demand – potential to shift problem onto RSL. • Would be at the expense of other competing priorities within the National Affordable Housing programme. • Reduces council rental income.
Potential Resource Implications; costs would need to be determined In partnership with preferred RSL provider.	

OPTION 5 -	ENCOURAGE REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS'S AND PRIVATE DEVELOPERS ON A SITE-BY-SITE BASIS, TO PROVIDE, AN ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF UNITS SUITABLE FOR LARGER FAMILIES, FAMILIES WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY AND 2 BEDROOM BUNGALOWS.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets an identified need within the Borough. • Increases flexibility of lettings. • Provides accommodation for a carer. • Reduces Disabled Facilities expenditure and provides purpose built accommodation.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More 2 bedroom bungalows could exacerbate falling demand for obsolete or lower demand council housing stock. • Remoteness of development site from other support services.
Potential Resource Implications £80k per unit	

Strategic Choice

A Strategy based upon:-

- Improving customer access to suitable purpose built accommodation.
- Increased customer house type / tenure choice.
- Meeting community needs by utilising the housing market to best effect.
- New accommodation by RSL's that meets the sustainable demand for 2 bedroom bungalows, small numbers of large family housing and housing to meet the needs of families requiring disabled facilities, on a site-by-site basis.
- Contributing towards the Homelessness preventative agenda and reducing costs of the provision of temporary accommodation.

Action Plan

Key Activity	Target	Resources	Timing	Lead
Exercise planning powers through s106 planning agreement to deliver more affordable homes.	Increase the delivery of affordable homes through planning gain.	Within existing resources.	Annual monitoring.	A. Glew
Agree common sub-regional s106 planning agreement.	Increase the delivery of affordable homes through planning gain.	Within existing resources.	In accordance with Sub-Regional Housing Strategy.	A. Glew
Evaluate the effectiveness of Choice Based Lettings.	Evaluate Policy.		April 2009.	C. Burke

Risks

- Registered Social Landlords and private developers are unable to secure sufficient funding to finance the development.
- Local opposition to site development.
- Resistance from land owners in terms of land value.
- Some housing providers "opt out" of the Choice Based Lettings scheme.
- Resistance from developers about affordable housing thresholds.
- Contaminated land and remedial costs.

Performance Management

- Increased delivery of affordable housing units to meet identified housing need.
- Increased customer satisfaction levels.
- Efficient delivery of affordable homes for less pro rata public subsidy.
- Creation of mixed, balanced and sustainable communities.

Priority 6 - Modelling the Darlington Housing Market

Corporate and Regional Framework

Corporate Plan:	Ensuring Access for All
Sustainable Community Strategy Theme:	Aspiring Darlington / Prosperous Darlington / Greener Darlington
Regional Framework Theme:	Understanding the Housing Market

Strategic Options

OPTION 1 -	ANALYSE THE RESULTS OF THE STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise existing housing market capacity to best effect. • Ensure a balanced, sustainable, mixed tenure housing market. • Provide customer choice and ensure accessibility to housing choices. • Provide modern, desirable, safe and thermally efficient housing meeting customer expectations.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete data and "snapshot" view in time. • Down turn in house prices resulting in instability.
Potential Resource Implications	Internal resources

Strategic Choice

A Strategy based upon:-

- Robust information on the long-term viability of the housing market in Darlington, providing specific recommendations as to the future supply and demand projections for housing by tenure, location, property type, affordability and property size.
- Targeting of potential areas of regeneration through the self financing Communities and Local Government pilot (opting out of the Housing Revenue Account) or through a successful "Growth status" bid.

Action Plan

Key Activity	Target	Resources	Lead
Analyse and interpret SHMA research information.	To deliver sustainable, mixed tenure, balanced communities.	Arc4 commissioned research, £10k.	A. Glew V. Adams
Delivery of regeneration activity.	Reduce the number of obsolete, low demand and non-Decent privately rented housing stock.	To be confirmed.	J. Simpson A. Glew

Risks

- Data from SHMA is inconclusive or inaccurate.
- Darlington is unsuccessful in the Growth Bid application.
- The financial arrangements for "opting out" of the Housing Revenue Account are not feasible or attractive.

Performance Management

- Reduce the number of non-decent privately owned homes.
- Increase the level of inward investment for Darlington.
- Ensure the long term sustainability of local communities.
- Provide customer choices.
- Contribute to an increased supply of appropriate affordable housing to meet identified local housing need.

Bibliography

Appendix 7

Document Contact Details / Telephone No.

Accommodation Plan	Estates Section, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388735
Asset Management Plan	Estates Section, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388735
Corporate Plan 2007-2010	Plan Policy Unit, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388016
Capital Strategy	Financial Services Division, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388305
Community Action Plan 2006-2007	Policy Unit, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388016
Community Safety Strategy	Youth Offending and Community Safety Service, Darlington Borough Council	01325 346489
Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2012	Policy Unit, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388016
Council Housing Stock Condition & Survey – Update 2008	Housing Division, Darlington Borough Council	01325 734100
Housing Business Plan	Housing Division, Darlington Borough Council	01325 734100
Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008	Housing Division, Darlington Borough Council	01325 734100
Housing Policy Statement:	“The Way Forward for Housing” C.L.G.	020 7944 4400
Indices of Deprivation 2007	Economic Regeneration, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388946
Land and Property Strategy	Estates Section, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388735
Local Agenda 21	Environment and Sustainability Section, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388920
Local Development Framework	Development and Regeneration, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388644
Local Transport Plan	Transport Section, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388701
Older Persons Housing Strategy	Housing Division, Darlington Borough Council	01325 734100
Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2008	Housing Division, Darlington Borough Council	01325 734100
Regional Housing Statement	Government Office for the North East	0191 2013300
Social Issues Map	Economic Regeneration, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388946
Supported People 5 Year Strategy 2004-2009	Supporting People Team, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388108
Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit: Various reports	Tees Valley Unit	01642 264800
Tees Valley Structure Plan	Development and Regeneration, Darlington Borough Council	01325 388644

