

# Housing Strategy

2012 - 2017





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## Foreword

I am pleased to introduce our new Housing Strategy, which sets the priorities for all housing in the Borough until 2017. This document is for all current and future residents in the Borough and organisations that we work with. The strategy has been developed in consultation with our key partners and following consultation with the public via our website and interested organisations. The production of this new strategy starts the process of delivering the agreed priorities and objectives set out in the attached Action Plan.

Housing plays an important part in developing health, environmental and economic wellbeing of everyone who lives in the Borough. House prices are high in the Borough and this has led to an increasing number of households who cannot afford to buy a property and an increase in the number of applicants on the Council's Homechoice register.

Eastleigh Borough Council has no housing stock of its own but we work closely with our partner Registered Social Landlords to deliver affordable housing and to maintain existing properties in both the social and private sectors.

The strategy makes reference to both national and local priorities. We are currently working with the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) on a Housing Market Monitoring report for the sub region. During the course of this strategy we will continually assess housing needs and the local housing market to inform our policies.

### Our key priorities for the next five years will be to:

- Ensure delivery of housing of all tenures in line with the Council's "Local Plan", providing well designed, quality homes that are affordable and suitable for people's needs.
- Prevent homelessness and enable improved housing options.
- Work jointly with other agencies to ensure that those people in need of care and support have suitable housing available to meet their needs.
- Make better use of all existing housing.

The Action Plan, attached in Appendix 1, will be monitored and updated annually to ensure that this strategy remains an evolving and active document.

I would like to thank our partners for their assistance in producing this strategy.



**Councillor Anne Winstanley**  
Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services





## Introduction

The Housing Strategy guides local action and priorities for all housing tenures in the borough. It identifies the main local, sub-regional and national priorities that may affect Eastleigh in the future and sets out what we are doing to tackle these issues. The strategy is underpinned by the council's three strategic priorities which are:

- **A Clean and Green Borough:** Making a difference to our environment
- **A Prosperous Place:** Where everyone is able to share in prosperity
- **A Healthy Community:** Active and lively with a spirit of togetherness

Our current Housing Strategy 2006- 2011 is about to expire therefore we have sought to develop a new strategy. This strategy sets out how we will be approaching housing issues over the next five years. In practice there is continuation and evolution from the previous strategy.

It is widely held that housing strategies lose their momentum after the initial year as data analysis, action planning and aspirations fall behind an often fast moving social economic and political climate. This has never been more so than at the current time where the impact of the recession combined with the raft of new proposals from the Coalition Government mean the ability to respond quickly to new legislation and opportunities is paramount. It is, therefore, important that the new strategy continues as a working document that can be reviewed and respond to new priorities.

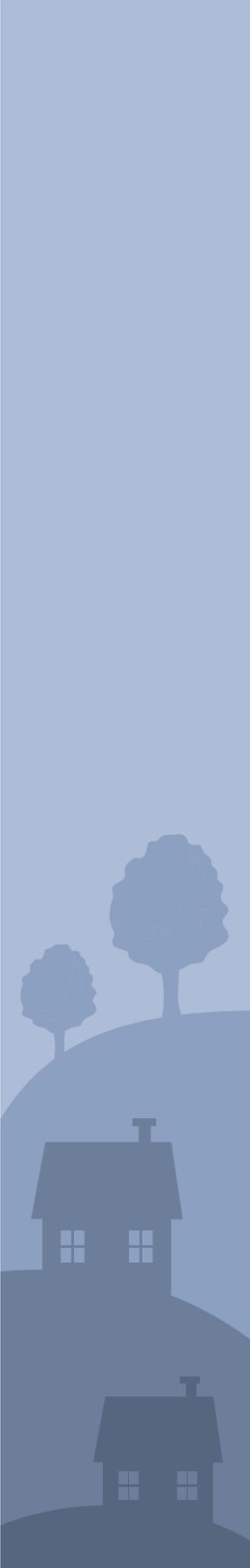
The council cannot achieve all of the priorities without working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations. The issues within this strategy have been discussed with the Housing Strategy Board that comprises a core group of representatives from housing providers, Adult Services, the Primary Care Trust and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

### Housing Strategy Priorities

The Housing Strategy is underwritten by a commitment to providing high quality local services. As part of the process of reviewing our priorities and analysing the resources available we have reconfirmed our commitment to continuous improvement and the need to challenge existing ways of working to ensure that we are making the most effective use of opportunities.

**The key priorities for this strategy are outlined below:**

- Ensure delivery of housing of all tenures in line with the Council's "Local Plan", providing well designed, quality homes that are affordable and suitable for people's needs.
- Prevent homelessness and enable improved housing options.
- Work jointly with other agencies to ensure that those people in need of care and support have suitable housing available to meet their needs.
- Making better use of all existing housing.



## Housing Strategy Action Plan

Our targets for delivering against our four key priorities are set out in the Housing Strategy Action Plan in Appendix 1. We have tried to make them specific and measurable so that progress can be easily reported. The action plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure that targets are being delivered and to respond to changing needs and new opportunities.

## Format of the Housing Strategy 2012 – 2017

This strategy sets out the four key priorities and each priority is discussed using the following broad headings:

- Why this is a priority
- Key objectives within this priority
- Expected Outcomes
- Local and National context

The strategy outlines how recent national policy changes might impact on the local situation. As these come to fruition we will need to respond accordingly. Overall, we anticipate that the main emphasis and priorities will remain consistent but the way in which the outcomes are achieved may change as we react and respond to the changing environment. We will also need to ensure that we are able to take advantage of any new opportunities that may develop that will support us in delivering our objectives.

## Overview of the Borough

The following information provides an overview of Eastleigh's population and housing stock to set the strategy in context.

### Population

- Eastleigh Borough has a population of 122,000 made up of 52,200 households.
- Eastleigh's ethnic minority population is 4.5% which is lower than the regional and national averages (Equality & Diversity Strategy 2006).
- Eastleigh's 65+ population is set to increase by 57% by 2031, from 19,212 to 30,163 people (Accommodation for Older People and Those in Need of Care Supplementary Planning Document May 2011).

### Housing Tenure

The table overleaf shows the percentage breakdown of households in Eastleigh by housing tenure compared to the country as a whole.

Type	Eastleigh *	Nationally
Owner- occupiers	75%	70%
Private rented	12%	12%
Social Housing	13%	18%

(\*Eastleigh Borough Council Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010 / English House Condition Survey 2007)

## Developing the Housing Strategy 2012 -2017

### Consultation

The Housing Strategy has been developed from the result of consultation carried out with:

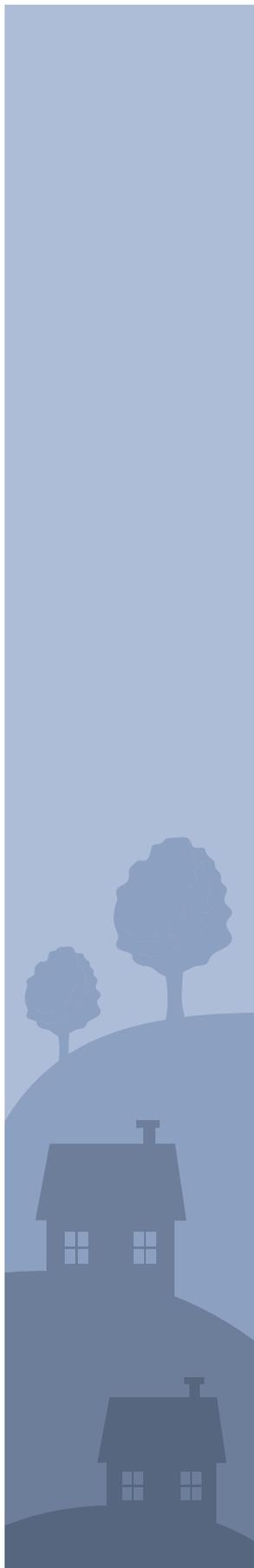
- Local residents
- Specific interest groups
- Organisations including Registered Providers (RP's), private developers, Hampshire County Council, Adult Services
- Borough Councillors and internal units within the Council

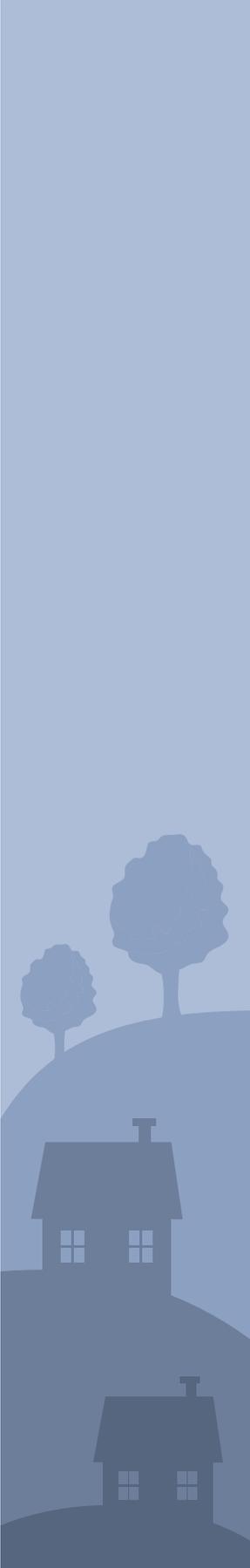
### Consultation Feedback

The consultation process sought to reach a range of people to enable them to feed into the document. This was achieved through direct mailing to relevant stakeholders and interested parties as well as through the publication of the draft strategy on the council's own website.

Disappointingly, there were only a limited number of responses made. These comments are summarised in Appendix 2 together with our responses.

The comments focused on issues around homelessness, including the forthcoming proposed changes around discharge of homelessness duty to the private rented sector, affordability of housing and our ageing population and support for older persons.





## Key Priority One

**Ensure delivery of housing of all tenures in line with the Council's "Local Plan", providing well designed, quality homes that are affordable and suitable for people's needs.**

### Why this is a priority

The economic recession continues to have a significant impact in a number of areas of the economy, not least of which is housing both in terms of the declining rate of construction of new housing across the country and in the difficulties that households have in securing sufficient funds to purchase new homes. There has also been a particularly significant reduction in the willingness of the development industry to build flats.

The housing tenure split in the borough demonstrates that compared to the national average Eastleigh has higher proportions of owner occupation and a lower proportion of households living in social housing. As part of our corporate commitment to increase delivery of housing of all tenures across the borough in line with the existing Local Plan and the newly emerging Local Plan, new development will also facilitate the opportunity to secure new affordable housing for those who are unable to access market housing.

### Key objectives within this priority

- In line with the Local Plan work to support the delivery of new housing of all tenures in the borough.
- Work with Partners to overcome obstacles to development to enable stalled sites to be brought forward.
- Work with partners to maximise the delivery of new affordable housing, providing a range of homes to meet all needs including those with specific needs e.g. mobility related disabilities / supported housing / larger family homes.
- Seek to maximise funding opportunities for new affordable housing.
- Ensure that new affordable housing is integrated within new development and supports new communities.

### Expected outcomes

1. Better match of housing supply to needs which should help stabilise prices in both the sales and rented markets.
2. A range of homes to meet different needs across the borough e.g. ensuring larger family households and those with physical disabilities are adequately housed.
3. A sustainable quantity and mix of dwellings to encourage economic growth within the borough and the PUSH sub region.

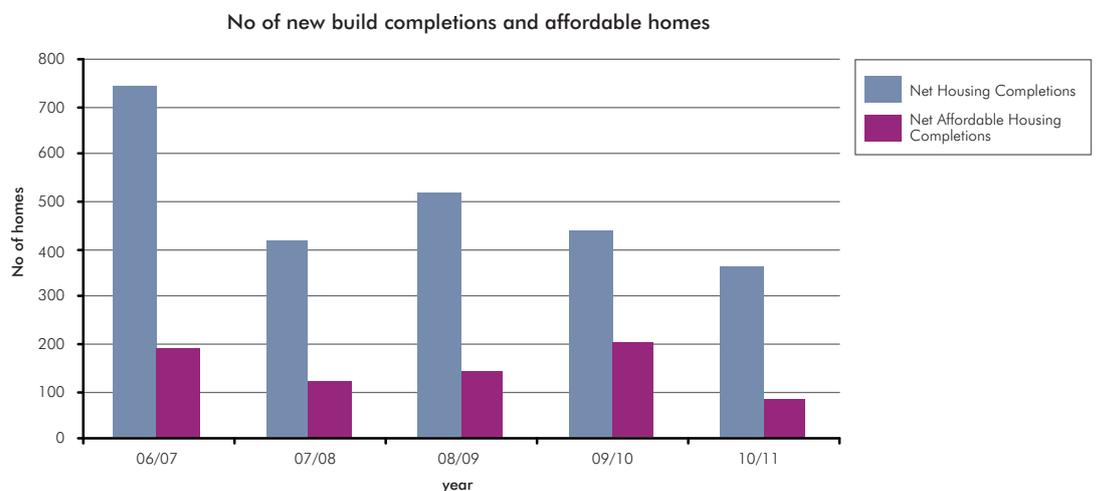
## Local Context

### Demand for Affordable Housing

- Demand for affordable housing in the borough is very high and the recent downturn in the economy has limited the opportunities and levels of affordable housing that can be achieved.
- The estimated overall annual shortfall of affordable housing is 672 units (Housing Needs Survey Update 2004 and Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) South Hampshire Housing Market Assessment (HMA)). There is a high level of demand for affordable rented housing in Eastleigh and this is reflected in the number of applicants registered on the Homechoice Housing Register, with 6,149 applicants as at 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011. The register clearly demonstrates that the highest demand is for 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation. Even removing those with no need and transfer applicants this still leaves in the region of 4,200 applicants registered for housing.
- The level of demand for Intermediate Housing, although lower than for affordable rented housing, is still significant in Eastleigh, with 630 applicants registered on Homes in Hants with a specific interest in the Eastleigh Borough area (September 2011).
- With limited financial resources to support affordable housing the Council seeks to work with partners to maximise funding opportunities where possible. Whilst we do have some limited funding to support new development this is prioritised to add value often aiming to attract additional funding and to enable schemes to be brought forward. We seek to secure on site provision as a preference thereby limiting the amount of developers contributions we have available to support new affordable housing development. The Council has made a commitment to ensure that the proportion of the New Homes Bonus derived from new social housing will be used for social housing.

### Development

Since 2006 and up to 2011, 2,470 new dwellings were built in the borough, an average of 494 per annum. Over the same period we have seen a steady supply of new affordable housing completions averaging 147 homes per annum. This is the net number of new homes provided and reflects the demolitions that have taken place during this time. There has been an overall decline in new build residential dwellings in the borough since 2004/05 as illustrated in the graph below. However, the number of affordable homes has



remained fairly constant primarily due to the redevelopment of poor housing association stock with new modern homes.

Officers within the council are currently working on our new Local Plan; our outline plan for the quantity and location of housing and other development from now until 2029. Information on housing need informs the Local Plan and the ambitions of the emerging Local Plan are reflected in this strategy.

### Housing Affordability

The high cost of housing means that affordability is a key issue for residents in the borough. In 2011, the Government's preferred measure of affordability (ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings) showed that house prices were 8.2 times salary. Locally we have seen an increase in private sector rents which has been further fuelled by limited properties being available especially for those who come to the council seeking assistance.

There are also changes being implemented for affordable housing which allows rents to be set at an intermediate rent level, 80% of market rent. This change is being implemented as the strategy is being drawn up and the actual impact is not currently known, although early indications in other areas where affordable rented properties have been advertised have not shown any decrease in demand. This together with proposed changes to the benefit systems will impact on families across the borough especially those in receipt of benefit and also those with lower incomes.

### Home Ownership

As at the time of writing average house prices in South Hampshire rose across all districts and ranged from between 5 – 15% between Q2 2009 and Q2 2010 according to Land Registry data. Prices have now recovered to 2006 levels. Generally house price increases in South Hampshire have been somewhat less than in the South East region as a whole.

2010 Qtr 4 house prices (provisional)	Eastleigh	South East	England
Median	205,000	225,000	182,000
Lower quartile	162,950	165,000	125,000

Source: Hampshire County Council

In 2010, the average (median) earnings in the borough were £21,903, making the average house price approximately 7.82 times the average earning (DCLG). This disparity between house prices and earnings makes affordability a problem in the borough, a trend that has continued.

### Private Rented

There is increasing pressure on the private rented market as an increasing number of prospective tenants seek to secure a limited supply of rental properties in the local area. This situation can be linked into the increase in the number of people who are unable to purchase their own homes therefore seeking alternative accommodation and then staying in this accommodation for a longer period thereby reducing the levels of mobility.

Across England there are 152 Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMA) set by the Rent Service to define areas in which similar sizes of properties attract similar rents. Eastleigh falls within the Southampton BRMA.

Average monthly private rent levels at November 2011 for Southampton BRMA

Shared Room Rate	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
£280.49	£499.98	£650	£775.01	£1050.01

Source: Local Housing Allowance Figures November 2011, Southampton BRMA

With such a buoyant private rented market we face increasing challenges in securing accommodation for those households seeking assistance from us. With increasing demand we have also seen an increase in the average rent levels being set by landlords which in some instances does impact on the affordability of these properties.

The findings reported in the PUSH Annual Market Monitoring Report (AMMR) 2010 reveal that nationally average rental asking prices increased by 1.4% in Q3 2010 from £840 in June to £850 in September and compares with the average rental prices for the South East of £1,120 in September 2010. The report further advises that with constraints on mortgage lending for first time buyers and investors the likely implications are that households will be unable to access homeownership and therefore by default, become private rented sector tenants. The supply of private renting will expand but more slowly than in the past so rents are likely to rise.

### The Demand for Housing on the Housing Register

At 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011, there were 6,149 households on the housing register. Of these 886 are aged over 60 representing 14% of the total number of households seeking housing. In 2010 / 2011 there were 389 lettings made available demonstrating that demand for housing vastly outweighs supply (Eastleigh Homechoice Housing Register 2011). Of the 389 lettings 98 (25%) were aged restricted to those aged over 60.

### 2010/11 Lettings by Bedroom Size

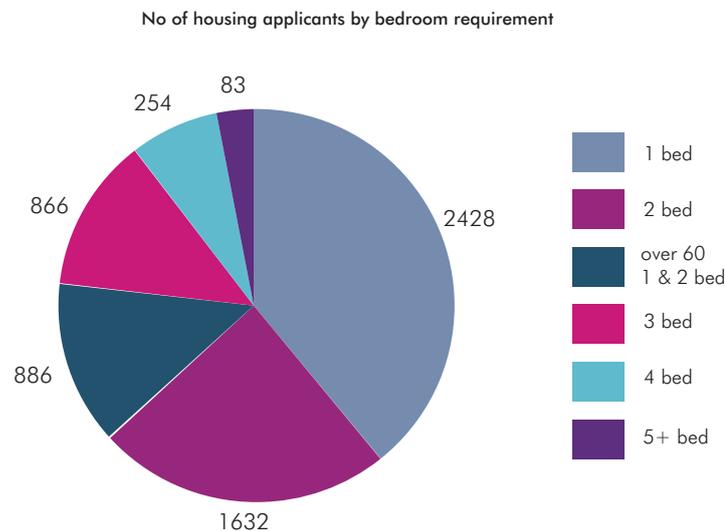
Number of Bedrooms	Number of Lettings
1	74
1 – age restricted	45
2	145
2 – age restricted	53
3	56
4	15
5	1
Total	389

The housing register has four priority bands and those assessed as having the highest level of need are generally placed in the urgent band. The lowest band is no priority band and this generally reflects those who have no housing need, but have expressed a wish to move.

### Housing applicant numbers by band

	Urgent	High Priority	Priority	No Priority	Total
General Needs	49	2933	1436	845	5263
Over 60's	9	331	364	182	886
Totals	58	3264	1800	1027	6149

There is a need for all types and sizes of affordable housing in the borough, the highest need being for 1 and 2 bed accommodation. The chart below shows the bedroom requirements of those on the housing register.



When developing new affordable homes we seek to work with providers to ensure that a proportion of new 2 bed flats are made available for those with a 1 bed need as we view this as being more sustainable in the longer term. In 2010/11 there were 119 one bedroom properties and 198 two bedroom properties let as detailed in the table above. Although fewer applicants need 3 bedroom or larger homes, there is a slower turnover of these properties and so waiting times are just as long. The shortest wait is for two bed properties.

As the housing market has changed with a move away from primarily flatted development we have seen more houses delivered / and being proposed for affordable housing. As part of this change when negotiating with developers we have, in some instances, been able to secure a number of 5 bedroom properties to assist in meeting the needs of larger families. This is an area that we will continue to monitor in the future.



## National Context

### Funding New Affordable Housing

The Coalition Government has reduced the level of grant available from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to build new affordable housing. In order to continue delivering affordable housing, the Government expects Registered Providers (RP's) to offer new tenants homes at an "Affordable Rent", whereby the rent level can be set at a maximum of 80% of market rent. The Government expects that this approach should enable the need for grant funding to be reduced as an increased rental income will be generated for RP's to fund new build developments.

Whilst it is acknowledged that an increased rental income will be generated there are also issues around ensuring that these new homes still remain affordable. We will therefore be working with RP's in the borough to ensure that new affordable housing remains affordable for local residents.

The HCA will seek to align its investment with the priorities identified in the PUSH Local Investment Plan (LIP). Eastleigh's priorities are included within the PUSH LIP document.

### Firstbuy

In March 2011, Firstbuy became the latest product to be launched in the Government's Homebuy range. Firstbuy is designed to give first time buyers a route into home ownership at the lowest possible cost and with the lowest possible deposit. Support is offered through equity loan funding of up to 20% of the property purchase price split equally between the HCA and the house builder with purchasers being required to raise funding of at least 80% of the purchase price.

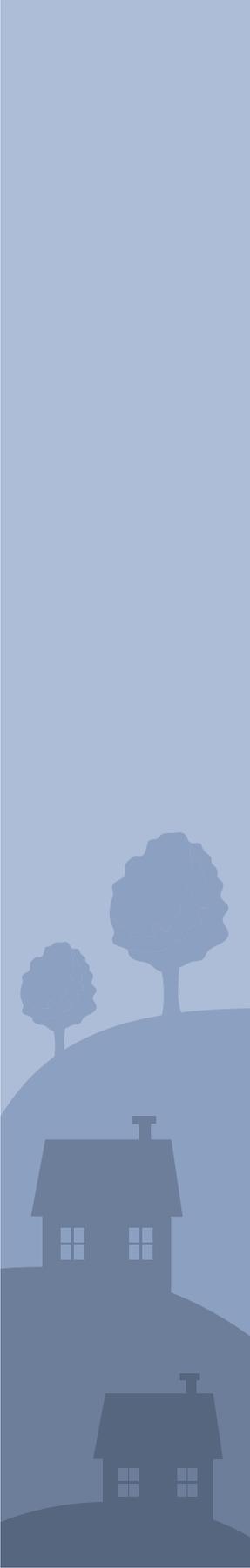
### Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Local Investment Plan (LIP)

The LIP is part of a 'Single Conversation' process introduced by the HCA aimed at better aligning their policies and resources with the aims and objectives of growth areas and local authorities. It supports the PUSH vision to build a strong and prosperous future for urban South Hampshire. A number of sites were supported in Eastleigh as a result of being identified in the LIP and these are now being progressed through to submission of a planning application as there are tight delivery timescales attached to the funding allocation. LIP site priorities are being updated in 2012.

For further information on the PUSH LIP please visit: [http://www.push.gov.uk/push\\_local\\_investment\\_plan\\_-\\_website\\_document\\_.pdf](http://www.push.gov.uk/push_local_investment_plan_-_website_document_.pdf)

### Local Plan 2011 – 2029

The council is currently undertaking work to prepare the new Local Plan which will replace the current adopted Local Plan. This is a statutory policy framework which will set out the spatial planning strategy for Eastleigh Borough. This work will set out the strategic direction of future development together with details around the number of new homes to be planned for over the plan period. The first round of consultation on the Draft Plan has been completed and further consultation will be carried out in the forthcoming months. It is anticipated that the Local Plan will not be adopted until late 2013 at the earliest. The plan identifies a need for 9,400 new homes over the 18 year period – half as Greenfield land development. This will contribute to meeting the demand for affordable housing.



In the meantime, an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in July 2009 which set out the policies and rationale for the delivery of affordable housing in the borough. This document will continue to inform decisions on new development in the borough which are required to provide affordable housing.

The Housing Strategy fully supports the Local Plan and we will continue to work closely with Planning Policy to deliver the set targets of affordable housing.

### **New Homes Bonus**

The Bonus commenced in April 2011, and will match fund the additional council tax raised for new homes and empty properties brought back into use and will be paid for the following 6 years. From 2012 / 2013 an additional flat rate of £350 per annum will be paid for each affordable home delivered over 6 years. Further information on the New Homes Bonus can be found at: [www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housing/housingsupply/newhomesbonus/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housing/housingsupply/newhomesbonus/)

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) determines national policies on different aspects of planning and the rules that govern the operation of the system. They have recently published the draft National Planning Policy Framework for consultation. It is seen as a key part of their proposed reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, and to promote sustainable growth. It seeks to streamline National Planning Policy into a consolidated set of priorities to consider when planning for and deciding on new development.

### **Resources**

The HCA's new approach to investment means that generally there will be a presumption against grant funding from central government. As detailed earlier we have identified a number of sites through the LIP where we would seek to discuss the position with the HCA as the schemes are worked up. Given this situation the council will therefore expect the provision of affordable housing to be funded from a range of resources.

- Recycled grant funds held by RP's, grants recycled through the sale of shared ownership properties.
- Local authority funding e.g. cash receipts collected on an exceptional basis in lieu of affordable housing provided on site, provision of free land.
- Limited grant funding from the HCA on the basis of priorities identified in the LIP.
- Funds raised by RP's under the new affordable rent programme.
- Sales of other assets by RP's.

## Key Priority Two

Prevent homelessness and enable improved housing options.

### Why this is a priority

The prevention of homelessness continues to be at the forefront of our work. The Housing Advice Service is designed to help households find solutions to their housing problems through advice, negotiation or by seeking to work with them to secure alternative accommodation. In the last year we have seen a significant rise in our use of bed and breakfast (B&B) and also temporary accommodation as it has become more difficult for our clients to access private rented housing.

### Homelessness Levels

The table below illustrates the number of homelessness applications that have been taken and of those the number of households owed a re-housing duty by the council because they are accepted as homeless.

	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Homeless Applications Taken	97	37	59
Homeless Acceptances	33	4	19
Successful Prevention Cases	123	114	88

During the second quarter of 2011 there were 8 households in B&B and 10 accepted homeless households in temporary accommodation.

The Homelessness and Housing Advice Strategy 2008-2013 is a plan that guides local action and priorities to reduce and prevent homelessness in the borough. It identifies the main local, sub regional and national priorities that may affect Eastleigh in the future and sets out how we are seeking to tackle these issues.

### Key priorities within the strategy are:

- Assess the housing needs of the homeless.
- Prevention of homelessness by effectively tackling the main causes and the provision of a comprehensive advice service and effective range of options for customers.
- Provide support for those facing homelessness, expand the provision of Housing with Support and move-on arrangements for those in supported housing.
- Provide good quality accommodation for those becoming homeless.
- Seek to minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.

### These are supported by a proactive approach to tackling homelessness by:

- The prevention of homelessness wherever possible.
- Reducing the levels of homelessness and ensuring that we keep levels of repeat homelessness at 0, or near to 0.
- Reducing the inappropriate use of temporary accommodation.
- Seeking to sustain tenancies wherever possible.

Many of the actions in the strategy have now been carried out but wider economic conditions and housing market problems are nevertheless exerting an upward pressure on homelessness.

### Expected outcomes

1. Preventing homelessness will result in better life chances for children by avoiding disruption to schooling and family life.
2. Homelessness can impact on both physical and mental health thus dealing with the issue will improve people's access to health care and settled accommodation with improved sense of wellbeing.
3. Tackling homelessness assists with individual prosperity and financial inclusion.

## Local Context

### Allocating Social Housing

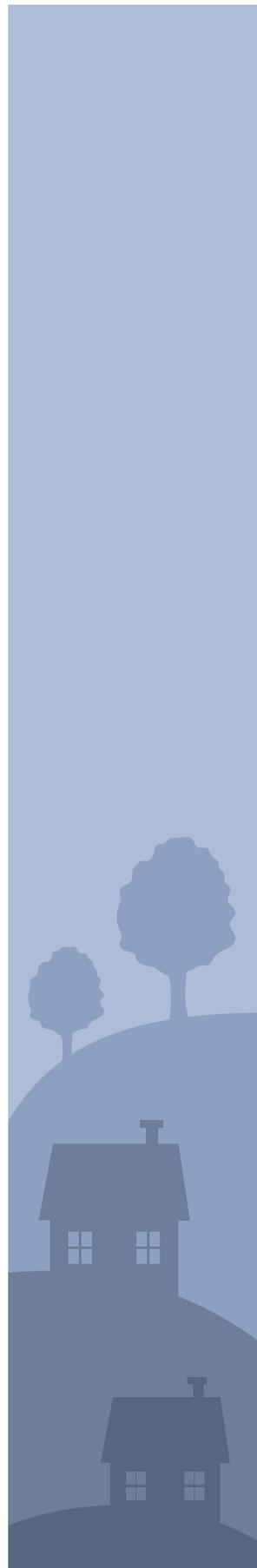
Currently local authorities are required to operate an "open" housing register which means that anyone, within certain limitations, can apply to be on the register, even if they have no realistic chance of ever being allocated social housing. The Localism Act proposes that local authorities will have a greater freedom to determine who goes on the waiting list. The council will review its waiting list criteria to ensure that applicants have realistic expectations as to the length of time they are likely to have to wait until they are housed into social housing stock.

The council does not own its own stock but works with local RP's to facilitate social housing in the borough which is allocated through Homechoice, our choice based lettings system. It is proposed that the council will make use of the freedoms granted by reviewing the priority given to groups such as under-occupiers and those in overcrowded accommodation to ensure best use is made of the existing social housing stock. Local lettings plans will be used for individual new developments to agree how properties will be let to achieve sustainable communities.

## National Context

### Changes to the Benefit System

The Welfare Reform Bill, introduced to Parliament in February 2011, sets out major reforms to the welfare system, including several changes to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA).



- LHA will now be calculated on the basis of the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of rents in each BRMA rather than the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, resulting in a decrease in LHA levels.
- The maximum LHA rate is capped at four bedroom property.
- A new nationwide, weekly upper limit will be introduced for each property size (one bed £250; two bed £290; three bed £340; four bed £400).

There are further changes proposed linked into housing specifically including a 10% deduction in housing benefit payments after claimants have spent a year on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and the restriction of single people under 35 years who will only be able to claim the rate of a single room in a shared property, rather than the level for a self contained one bedroom property. These rules currently apply to those aged under 25 years.

Another change proposed is linked into non dependent deductions whereby the deductions for people living with a claimant are rising steeply. This could have quite an impact for housing e.g. increases in parental evictions.

The move to a single room rate for those under 35 was introduced from January 2012 and is likely to lead to increased demand for shared houses and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). Further work with the Housing Benefit Team and also with local HMO landlords will be required to try and address these issues to ensure that we make effective use of our resources.

The Welfare Bill also proposes to bring together a number of existing benefits (including Housing Benefit) under a “Universal Credit” which will be capped at £500 per week. This is likely to affect larger families in private rented accommodation the hardest and as a consequence families may be forced to choose to live in overcrowded and unsuitable accommodation or move to cheaper areas away from schools and family.

### Homelessness and the Localism Act

Currently applicants owed a homelessness duty can refuse offers of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector without good reason and the duty will still be owed. The Localism Act proposes that local authorities will be able to fully discharge the duty with an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, without requiring the applicant’s agreement. The council supports this new flexibility as it fits in with the policy of ensuring fair access to affordable housing through the Homechoice housing register.

### Resources

Across the borough there are 7,354 units of social housing, 34 units of temporary accommodation and 34 private sector leased properties. The stock includes a variety of supported housing projects. Private units of accommodation are also secured through the council’s Rent Bond and Rent In Advance schemes to help our clients.

The council’s Housing Advice team deal with all enquiries relating to housing advice, homelessness and housing register as well as admin support for the Housing Register. Within the team there is a specialist adviser whose post is jointly funded by the council and Adult Services with responsibility for over 60’s and extra care housing.

Two further officers cover specialised areas. One is an Occupational Therapist who is jointly funded by the council and Adult Services. The other officer is part of the Hampshire

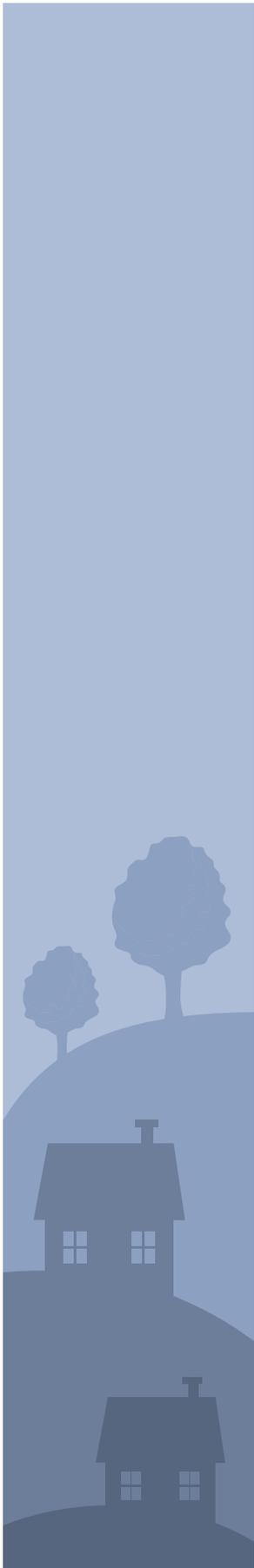


Supporting People Team who is involved in organising support for people in specialised accommodation and in their own homes where support is required.

Eastleigh Accommodation Support Team (EAST) (part of First Wessex Housing Group) provides floating and tenancy support services to customers in the borough.

The Housing Service works in partnership with a range of agencies both in the private and voluntary sectors to ensure that we provide the best possible service to our clients. This includes signposting to other services that can provide more specialist advice which, if provided at an early stage, could assist in preventing homelessness e.g. the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) who can offer assistance to clients in managing their debt problems or by helping them to resolve disrepair and other problems with their landlord.

The council makes revenue funding available to tackle and prevent homelessness. This includes funding the rent guarantee bond and rent in advance loans, providing top up and prevention funds to help people maintain their homes or access other lettings. The council also provides monies for the Eastleigh Churches Rent Deposit Scheme. Government grants to assist in provision for the homeless and for young people help to ensure funds remain available and a recent charity grant award is enabling a new project to be set up, helping prepare young people to make a success of their first tenancy.





## Key Priority Three

**Work jointly with other agencies to ensure that those people in need of care and support have suitable housing available to meet their needs.**

### Why this is a priority

With an increasing older population it is becoming more important for local authorities to work with other agencies such as Adult Services, Hampshire Supporting People team, Health and RP's to ensure that the limited resources are used effectively. We are seeking to work with our partners to ensure that those people in the borough in need of care and support have suitable housing available to them. This includes sheltered and extra care housing, shared housing schemes, wheelchair accessible homes and supported lodgings.

We also wish to promote independence and where feasible, support people to enable them to remain in their own homes. This can be through the provision of grant to adapt homes, through funding or enabling services such as the Handyperson and gardening schemes or through the provision of advice and low cost loans to keep the home warm, safe and secure.

This area of work links into the health agenda of Supporting People and Hampshire Adult Services as well as the council's priority for a healthy community.

### Key objectives within this priority

- Ensure accessible information is provided on the services and housing options available.
- Working with partners to increase housing options that improve choice for people with special needs, including disabilities, thereby enabling them to live independently and safely.
- Support a range of housing support services that benefit some of the most vulnerable and at risk client groups.
- Improve the amount of wheelchair accessible housing and lifetime homes.
- Redevelop Surrey Court and seek other opportunities to increase extra care provision.

### Expected outcomes

1. Action on key priorities will enable people to live a better quality of life for a longer period.
2. Work around adaptations and the provision of services can prevent accidents and illness thus leading to better health outcomes e.g. reduced hospital admissions.
3. Joint working across agencies can seek to make more effective use of public funding.

## Local Context

### Households with Support Needs

Eastleigh's recent Private Sector House Condition Survey (HCS) November 2010 identifies

that within Eastleigh the proportions of older households (head of household aged over 65 years) were greater than the national equivalents. This has implications for private sector housing policy due to the potentially greater need for support typically associated with older households. Approximately 16% of the borough's population is aged 65 years and over and this is expected to increase by 57% by 2031 to 30,163 people.

The Survey also estimated that 12.1% of occupied dwellings had at least one resident with a long term illness or disability. The table below shows the breakdown of these households:

Category	% of households with disabilities
Walks using frame or aid	21%
Walks unaided but unsteady	17.6%
Fully Mobile*	10.8%
Only wheelchair outdoors	9%
A total wheelchair user	5.9%
Visually impaired	2.6%
Hearing impaired	2.6%
Other**	30.6%

\*includes things such as profound learning difficulties and mental health problems.

\*\*represents residents who do not fall into the other categories but which were not specified.

### New Supported Housing Provision

The development of supported housing can be problematic in terms of both funding and site location. The council seeks to work with partner organisations to identify priorities and draw up plans that seek to address the identified need.

A number of older persons sheltered housing schemes in the borough are becoming outdated as aspirations have changed and the accommodation currently available does not meet those needs. The council is therefore working with partner organisations to prioritise those schemes that need to be updated and work through the options for enabling new more modern provision.

### Schemes that have already, or are currently, undergoing works are:

- Rotary Court Netley, where the existing scheme was demolished and new provision made.
- Raglan Court, Eastleigh, where one wing is currently being redeveloped to provide more modern accommodation to replace small bedsits.
- Proposals are currently being worked up to redevelop Surrey Court, Eastleigh to provide more modern extra care accommodation as again a number of the current flats are very small and do not meet residents needs.

Overall, we are trying to work with our partners to minimise the number of bedsits in the stock but this relies on partnership working as the properties are not in the council's ownership.

## National Context

### Ageing Population

With a recognised ageing population it is essential that the needs of older people are considered both in terms of the support services as well as meeting their housing needs effectively. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3 makes references to the importance of demographic change and makes specific reference to older people.

Nationally there is a trend for older sheltered schemes with small sized flats to be replaced as these homes do not meet the aspirations of older people today and are often hard to let. Also as part of this change there has been a move to increase the provision of extra care housing which provides higher levels of support and care. This supports the increasing drive nationally to support a person in their own homes (which is usually what they wish) for longer, thereby reducing the reliance on expensive residential care provision.

### Funding Support Services

Hampshire County Council's (HCC) Supporting People (SP) grant aims to deliver high quality and strategically planned housing related services across the County including Eastleigh. In terms of older people in particular, the focus is around maximising independence and balancing support between accommodation based (mainly sheltered housing) and floating support services.

The SP budget has been cut in Hampshire and as a result the council has been involved in the discussions and reviews undertaken to decide on the best way forward within these constraints.

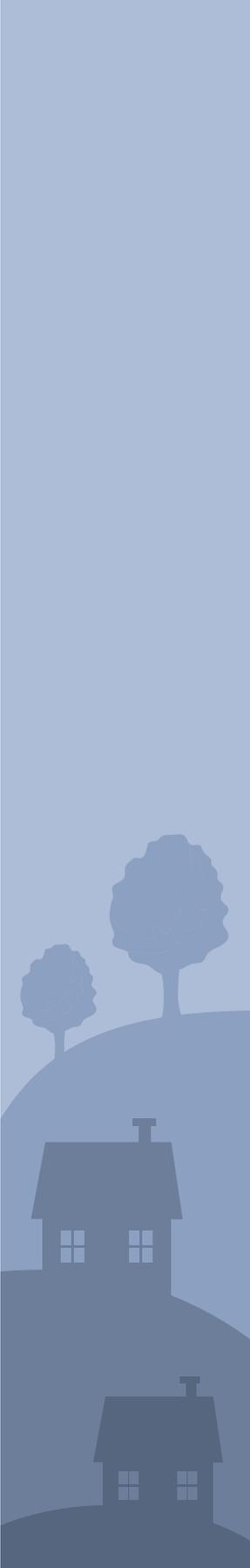
Eastleigh Borough Council remains committed to working with Hampshire County Council's SP team to help ensure that services to vulnerable people can be protected as far as possible.

### Home Improvement Agency

Home Improvement Agencies (HIA) assist vulnerable homeowners and private sector tenants who are older, disabled or on a low income to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their homes. The work of the HIA within Eastleigh in relation to disabled facilities grants (DFG's) has been transferred to the council since April 2011. They do still however provide the handyman service in the borough to which the council contributes funding. This enables the service to operate one person for 4 days a week. We would like to increase the service but would need new funding sources.

### Resources

From April 2011 the HIA service relating to DFG's has been brought in house and we are seeking to make efficiencies specifically through improved procurement and works specification. The DFG programme is jointly funded through grant made available from government and extra (capital) resources allocated from the council's own budget. The council has increased its allocation of resources to DFG's but demand continues to increase leading to a waiting list of applicants for works to be carried out to their property.



## Key Priority Four

**Making better use of all existing housing.**

### Why this is a priority

Housing is an expensive and limited resource, therefore it is essential that we seek to make best use of the housing stock that we already have. The council will try to influence and encourage owners / tenants to consider their current housing situations and where appropriate assist them in seeking more suitable alternative accommodation.

### Key objectives within this priority

- Improving property conditions and management standards in private rented sector and including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- Ensuring an effective and efficient adaptations service and support to households and their carers.
- Work with partner agencies on providing information, advice and support to residents on a wide range of options to resolve their housing problems, including assistance with relocation where the existing home may not be suitable for their needs.
- Improving energy efficiency and affordable warmth across all tenures.
- Making best use of existing housing by reducing the number of empty homes and addressing issues such as under-occupation and low demand. Also ensuring that adapted properties are appropriately allocated when they become available to re-letting.
- Dealing with overcrowding through allocations policies.

### Expected outcomes

1. The provision of disabled adaptations enhances quality of life for the resident and enables them to remain in their own home thereby reducing the call on supported housing. It can be seen to promote better health outcomes.
2. Seeking to make better use of existing stock can assist in making more homes available either to rent or purchase. This also enables more residents to be housed in homes suitable for their needs.
3. Seeking to improve the private sector stock and enhance its thermal efficiency improves health and well being as well as providing more sustainable and thermally efficient housing.

### Local Context

#### Energy Efficiency

In Eastleigh, reasons for failure to meet the decent home standard in the private sector replicates the national profile with the presence of Category 1 hazards followed by failures of thermal comfort criterion.



The majority of hazard failures were in respect of one criterion only, mostly relating to heating / insulation issues whether as a failure of the excess cold hazard or failure of the thermal comfort criterion. In Eastleigh 5,300 dwellings (11.9%) failed the thermal comfort criterion, which was well below the national average of 16.7%.

Inadequate thermal insulation and inefficient and uneconomic heating systems along with low household income and unaffordable energy costs results in fuel poverty. In Eastleigh fuel poverty was found in 1,100 households (26% of households in fuel poverty) where a benefit was received, compared with 3,100 households (74% of households in fuel poverty) where occupiers did not receive benefit.

### Empty Properties

Our empty homes policy sets out the initiatives which Eastleigh Borough Council plans to implement over the next 3 years (2011 – 2014) to maximise the re use of empty properties across the Borough of Eastleigh.

The policy aims to develop a coordinated approach by developing a package of initiatives and practical assistance to help homeowners bring their properties back into use. This will be underpinned by enforcement measures where empty homes are causing a nuisance to others impacting on the neighbourhood.

At 1 October 2011 there were 297 “long term empty” properties (empty for 6+ months), accounting for 0.57 % of the total dwelling stock. Of these 173 properties are in situations whereby we cannot take effective action e.g. awaiting probate, due to be demolished or refurbished etc. This leaves a balance of 124 dwellings empty for over 6 months for a variety of other reasons. These are the properties that are being targeted by officers with a view to seeking to bring them back into use.

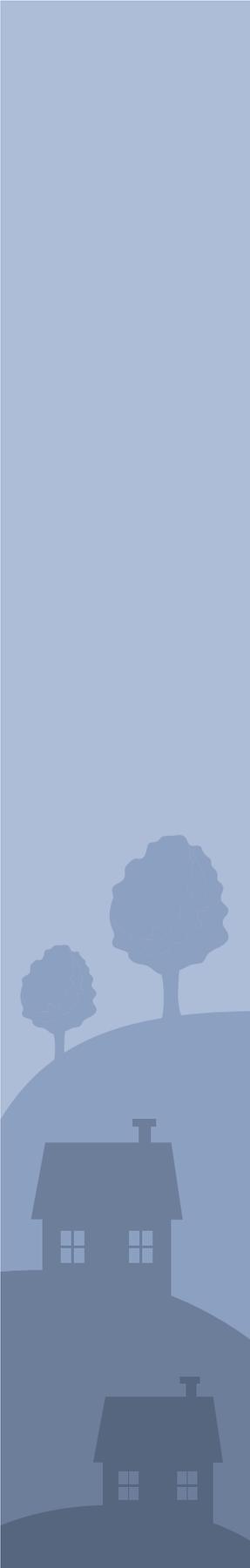
### Under Occupation

We are working with our RP partners to reduce the level of under occupancy in their stock using a range of incentives that can assist in encouraging those in social rented housing to consider downsizing thereby freeing up a larger property for another applicant on the waiting list. The council also aims to ensure practical help and support with a move can be given where appropriate through the HIA as the thought and stress of moving is often enough to deter people.

The programme to refurbish and redevelop the bungalow stock should also provide more desirable homes that people will wish to downsize to. It is hoped when reviewing the lettings system that a higher priority will be given to assisting under-occupiers to downsize.

### Overcrowding

There are concerns that the changes to benefit regulations will, by limiting payments, force some people to accept smaller and cheaper accommodation and that this will worsen overcrowding. Overcrowding is known to adversely affect life chances, especially of children where lack of their own room or space to do homework can be an issue. One way that the council and its partners may be able to reduce overcrowding is by amending the Homechoice system to give higher priority to the worst cases. This is to be looked at in a forthcoming review.



Driving up Standards in the Private Sector and Helping Those on Low Incomes to Maintain their Homes.

The council's Financial Assistance Policy 2011 sets out how resources will be targeted towards improving housing conditions in the private sector through a combination of advice, loans and grant assistance. The main features of the policy are:

- Maximising wherever possible use of the home improvement loans scheme
- Help with adaptations and essential repairs for vulnerable people
- Landlord incentives
- Assistance for owners of empty properties
- Enforcement of Housing Standards

## National Context

### Private Sector Stock

The key features of Eastleigh's housing stock compared with national averages are:

- There are significantly higher proportions of dwellings built post 1964 (66.8% compared with 40.4%).
- The tenure profile differs from the national profile with a higher proportion of owner occupation (75% compared with 70%). The proportion of social housing is significantly lower at 13% compared to 18% nationally which does have implications for access to affordable housing. Privately rented homes (12%) are similar to national levels.
- The building type profile was similar in many respects to the national profile, but there were higher proportions of bungalows and detached houses. There were also slightly higher proportions of converted flats and low rise purpose built flats, with lower proportions of all other dwelling types.

### Empty Homes

Long term empty homes are a wasted resource, particularly when there is increasing pressure for all types of housing. Houses that are left unoccupied can quickly fall into disrepair becoming a blight on the neighbourhood by exacerbating anti-social behaviour, accumulating refuse, encouraging vandalism and reducing market values in the local area. Bringing empty properties back into use can benefit the owner, potential occupiers, businesses and the wider community. The introduction of the New Homes Bonus provides another incentive to bring empty properties back into use.

### Under-Occupancy

Encouraging under-occupiers in social rented housing to downsize frees up properties for larger households. Downsizing can also benefit occupiers by providing them with a home that better meets their needs that would assist in alleviating issues around fuel costs and ongoing maintenance of a larger home.



The government is also looking to dissuade under-occupation by limiting housing benefit payments to the number of rooms a household needs. The outcome of these proposals is currently uncertain. The council and its partners will however consider giving a higher priority to those seeking to downsize within the Homechoice lettings system.

Advice is that for under-occupation policies to work there needs to be desirable accommodation available for the tenant to move into. This is often cited as the two bed bungalow and this is why the council is keen to see the provision of some of this type of housing continued.

### **Flexible Tenancies**

Currently social landlords must provide secure lifetime tenancies in most cases. This means that provided the tenancy conditions are adhered to the tenants can remain in that social home for life, even if their financial situation or housing needs change. The Localism Act proposes a new type of “flexible tenancy” to enable social landlords to make better use of their stock. The new flexible tenancy will enable landlords to offer tenancies for a fixed period, the minimum length being (two years if they wish) but 5 years in most cases. When renewing these types of tenancies landlords will be able to reassess a tenant’s need for social housing with the potential to free up accommodation if there is no longer a housing need.

The Localism Act will require local authorities to develop a Tenancy Strategy for their borough. This will set out how flexible tenancies will be used and granted, taking into account local housing context and needs. We will seek to develop this strategy in conjunction with PUSH ensuring that there is consultation with relevant stakeholders and partners.

### **Energy Efficiency and Sustainability**

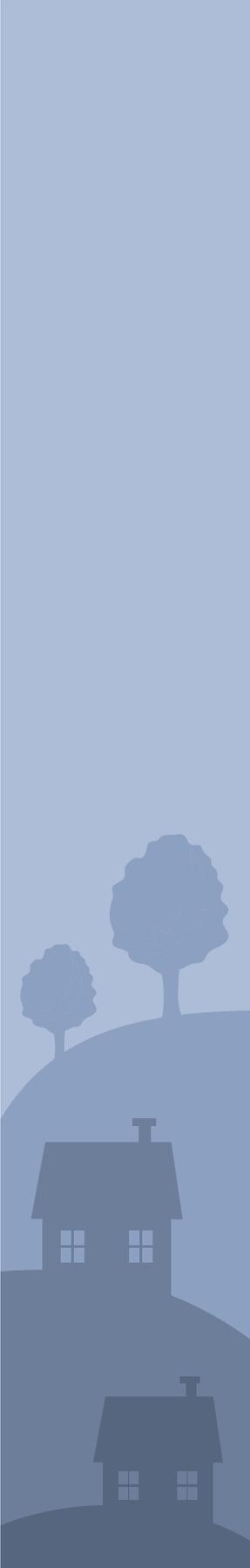
The Climate Change Strategy 2011-2020 was adopted in November 2011. It provides a Vision and direction for the council building on its previous work to tackle climate change. The Strategy identifies 2 strategic objectives, 8 key priorities and a number of key objectives for the council and borough as a whole. This will provide direction for the council and enable the council, its residents and local businesses to respond to the impacts of climate change and reduce the council and borough carbon emissions to mitigate against the effects of climate change.

The objectives will be delivered through a series of more detailed, time limited and costed actions contained in an Action Plan. This Action Plan will be produced in Spring 2012.

In support, the Housing Strategy recognises the impact housing and development can have on climate change, and seeks to minimise this by supporting energy saving initiatives and promoting sustainable development. Additionally, the Government’s Green Deal initiative will be launched during the period of the strategy and it is intended that the council will devote resources to support this initiative.

### **Private Sector Housing Assistance**

With 87% of households in Eastleigh living in the private sector (75% owner-occupiers and 12% privately renting), work in the private housing sector can make an important contribution to:

- 
- Preventing homelessness
  - Tackling fuel poverty
  - Carbon reduction
  - Increasing housing supply and choice
  - Older people's social care
  - Health protection and improvement

The council recognises that some home owners, particularly those who are elderly or vulnerable may have difficulty in maintaining their own homes. Whilst this primarily remains the owners' responsibility the Private Sector Housing Strategy details assistance available to owners to improve their properties. This includes advice from the council's surveyors on works required, help in selecting contractors and checking works carried out. Help can also be provided for the asset rich but cash poor in financing repairs through the low cost loans scheme.

### Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

There are only two registered HMO's in the borough (this applies to those 3 storey's or more high and with 5 or more households). There are however a couple of hundred smaller HMO's. These properties are known to have a higher fire risk than other dwellings and can often harbour the poorest living standards. For this reason council officers inspect HMO's and regularly take enforcement action to ensure standards are maintained.

### Resources

The Private Sector Housing Team deal with all enquiries relating to disabled adaptations, empty properties and HMO's. They provide support for homeowners to assist them in undertaking essential repairs and improvements to their homes as well as enforcing safety, welfare and health standards in privately rented accommodation. Within the team there are officers with specialist areas of responsibility such as surveyors who commission and oversee the disabled adaptations programme and one member of the team acts as lead officer for empty properties. They also oversee the low cost loan scheme which is available to homeowners and forms part of a package of assistance that we offer. More details of the types of assistance available to support our private sector housing work are set out in the council's Financial Assistance Policy 2011.

### Equality

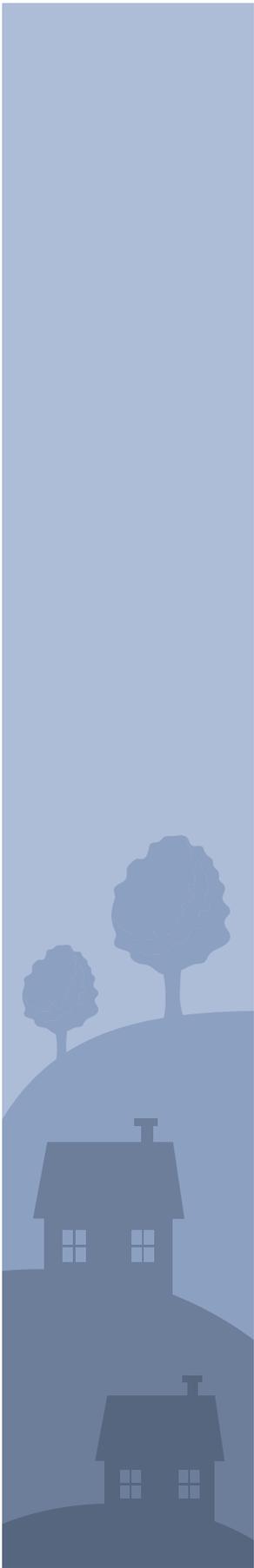
Eastleigh Borough Council is committed to positively promoting equality of opportunity and valuing diversity. Our Equality and Diversity Strategy is currently being updated in line with the Equality Act 2010. Within the Housing service we actively monitor use and satisfaction with the services that we provide. We take action to ensure that different groups are not under-represented.

This strategy has been tested through an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the adoption process and this is appended to the strategy (Appendix 3). We also acknowledge that it takes a broader approach and sets the overall focus of our work and therefore individual policy changes will themselves need to be tested for their impact on different sections of the community.

# Housing Strategy 2012 - 2017

## Action Plan

### Appendix One



## Priority 1

Ensure delivery of housing of all tenures in line with the Council's "Local Plan", providing well designed, quality homes that are affordable and suitable for people's needs.

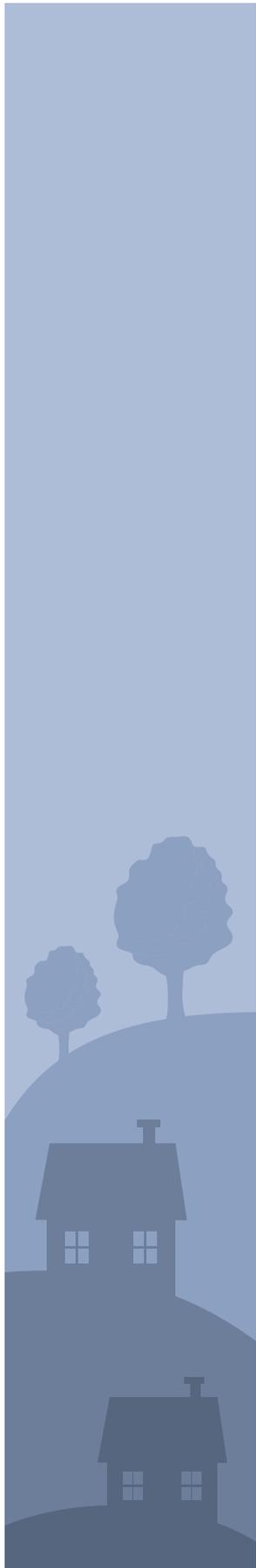
	Activity	Action	Targets	Resources Required	Links
1.	Maximise the delivery of affordable housing	Work with planning colleagues to secure affordable provision on qualifying sites.	Provide 150 affordable homes per year between 2012 and 2017.  Target of 35% affordable homes on qualifying sites of 15 or more units.	RP resources LA grant in some instances HCA resources	PUSH Strategy / corporate priority / EBC Local Plan
2.		Work with RP partners to achieve mixed tenure on new developments.	Seek to achieve a tenure mix of 65% rented and 35% LCHO within the affordable provision.	As above	As above
3.		Support the work of Planning Policy team on the emerging Local Plan to ensure ongoing delivery of affordable housing.	Adoption of Local Plan 2013/14 with the inclusion of affordable housing requirement.	Staff time Updated viability assessment	Local Plan
4.		Work within PUSH to produce and keep updated a robust sub regional Housing Market Assessment.	Within PUSH commission updated HMA and annual updates from 2012.	PUSH funding Staff time	Local Plan PUSH Strategy
5.		Work with RP's at new build stage to ensure that properties are fit for disabled tenants, with properties adapted prior to handover.	3% of homes to full wheelchair standard within qualifying new build schemes.  New affordable homes built to Lifetime Homes standard or agreed equivalent.	Staff time DFG budget	Housing register Affordable housing SPD

6.	Provide a range of homes to meet all needs	Seek to procure larger family homes where appropriate.	On new larger developments seek at least 1 No 5 bed property. Target of 10 houses by 2017.	Staff time. Some sites may need small amount capital funding.	Housing register
7.		Enable/ joint fund extensions and loft conversions in RP stock where this will alleviate over-crowding.	Target of 5 homes extended by the end of strategy period.	Joint funding programme with RP	Corporate health priority
8.	Maximise funding for new affordable provision	Support bids to the HCA for financial support.	Ensure our priority developments are included in the PUSH LIP and that this is regularly updated.	Staff time Some capital funding to encourage HCA support.	PUSH LIP Corporate priority Housing capital forward plan
9.		Review local priorities and seek to ensure best value for limited resources.	Update housing capital spending plans annually.	Staff time	Corporate priority Local Plan
10.		Work with partners to try to bring sites forward for development that otherwise might face delays/ barriers due to market conditions.	Hold joint site review meetings twice a year with planners and others.	Staff time May need some initial seed corn funding.	Corporate prosperity priority

## Priority 2

Prevent homelessness and enable improved housing options.

	Activity	Action	Targets	Resources Required	Links
1.	Review use of B&B accommodation	Look at alternatives to B&B's to reduce use, seeking better and cheaper alternatives.	Review by May 2012	Staff time	Government regulations Homelessness strategy



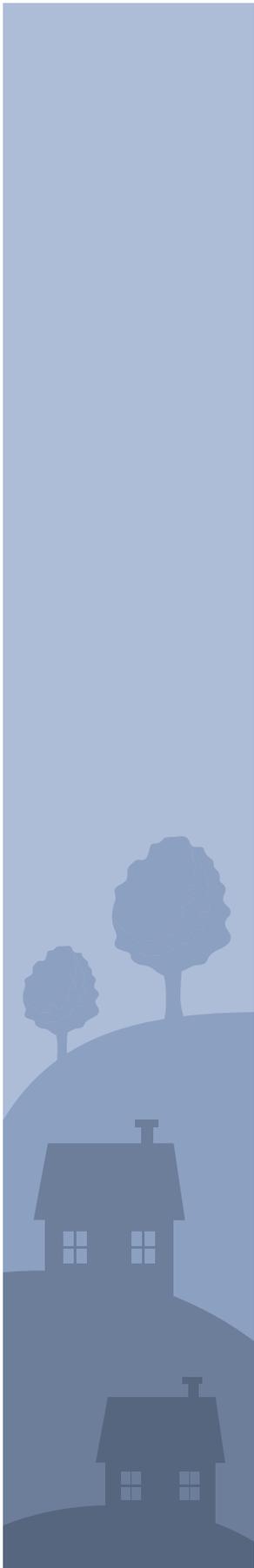
2.	Maintain access to private rented accommodation to prevent homelessness	<p>Work with private sector team to build landlord relations and provide incentives to ensure those on benefits are accepted for housing.</p> <p>Explore feasibility of using council's special purpose vehicle to purchase homes to rent at market levels.</p>	<p>Set up virtual landlord forum to provide info – December 2012</p> <p>Market incentives more coherently – review Oct 2012</p> <p>Promote new Private Sector Leasing schemes at least 4 times pa.</p> <p>Continue promoting Rent A Room scheme &amp; look at feasibility of new phone app. By March 2013.</p> <p>Explore feasibility by December 2012.</p>	Staff time. Homelessness prevention funds	Homelessness strategy
3.	Review of Homechoice housing register	Work with partners to review existing register and consider adoption of resulting recommendations.	October 2012	Staff time	Freedoms under new Localism Act
4.	Implement new allocations rules resulting from Localism Act	Linked with above. Full detail of new allocation regulations awaited.	Likely to be July before government guidance issued. Seek member approval by Dec 2012.	Staff time	Localism Act
5.	Publish new homelessness strategy for the period 2013 - 2017	Undertake review of homelessness and work with partners to produce new homelessness strategy.	Adoption of strategy July 2013	Staff time	Health and Prosperity priorities.

6.	Publish a Strategic Tenancy Policy as required by Localism Act	Work across PUSH to develop strategy covering issues such as Affordable rents and flexible tenancies.	Adoption of Strategy October 2012	Staff time	PUSH strategy
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## Priority 3

Work jointly with other agencies to ensure that those people in need of care and support have suitable housing available to meet their needs.

	Activity	Action	Targets	Resources Required	Links
1.	Work with partners to increase housing options that improve choice for those with special needs.	Work to increase supported lodgings and move-on housing for young people/care leavers.  Assist with provision of shared homes and/ or low cost home ownership as required.	Revenue funding is limited but aim for 6 extra places by 2017.  Demands likely to come from Health or Adult Services. Homes for 10 households - 2017.	Capital funding Some revenue funded support services.	Supporting People Health agenda
2.	Extra care housing for older people	Assist with delivery of Surrey Court extra care scheme redevelopment.  Identify and bring together resources for extra care provision within the southern parishes.	Building completion and re-let by March 2015.  Building project to start by 2017.	Capital funding already proposed for Surrey Court.  New scheme may also need some EBC capital funding.	Corporate health priority
3.	Foyer scheme for young people	Work up scheme and identify resources to provide a scheme that combines housing with education, employment and training opportunities for young people.	Aim to have scheme ready to start on site by 2017.	Scheme will require time input from a range of units and organisations. Capital and revenue funding will be required from a range of sources.	Links to corporate prosperity strategy. PUSH agendas on training and employment.



4.	Support a range of housing related services for vulnerable and at risk groups	Expand gardening service for vulnerable clients.  Expand handyperson service to meet demand.	Aim for 100 regular clients by 2017.  Try to raise funding to provide 5 day a week service by 2015.	Gardening service broadly self-financing. Handyperson service expansion will depend on ability to identify funding.	Health priority
5.	Ensure that adapted properties are appropriately re-let.	Work with RP's to ensure effective use of existing adapted properties through Homechoice labelling.	Review lettings results every two years starting 2012.	Staff time	Homechoice review Corporate health priority
6.	Maximisation of DFG budget	Work with RP's to ensure that they fund minor works, and up to £1500 of DFG funded works.	Complete joint procurement project for equipment and contractors - July 2013.  Recover grant funds where homes re-sold – Oct 2012	Staff time (& co-operation of RP's)	Private sector housing strategy
7.	Ensuring fair access to services	Continue to monitor access to services and customer satisfaction by different groups within the community to ensure fair access.	Produce quarterly monitoring information.  Take action to remove any barriers to access; e.g. by ensuring information available in a variety of formats, not just electronic.	Staff time. Some extra cost in producing written materials.	Corporate Diversity Strategy

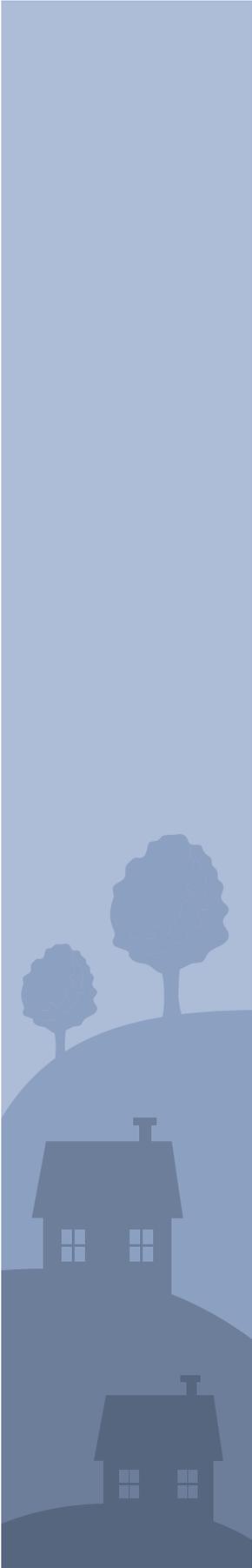
## Priority 4

Making better use of all existing housing.

	Activity	Action	Targets	Resources Required	Links
1.	Work to reduce the number of long terms empty properties	Further develop and promote incentives package for home owners.  Consider use of a loan scheme to assist owners where finance is an issue.	Bring 10 long term empty homes back into use pa.  Establish revolving loan scheme by Dec 2012	Staff time (This can be labour intensive).  Initial capital sum to be made available.	Links to corporate prosperity and environment priorities
2.	Seek to make effective use of under-occupied social housing stock	Increase priority for under-occupiers on Homechoice. Review practical and financial incentives to downsize.	Review Homechoice by December 2012 Review by October 2012	Staff time	Prosperity priority
3.	Promote help available to homeowners to keep their homes warm, secure and safe	Promote low cost loan scheme for repairs / improvements.  Provide other advice and assistance on defects/ repairs issues.	Publicise at least four times a year.  Target homes identified by stock condition survey for information and advice.	Staff time Capital funding	Prosperity priority
4.	Sustainability issues	Assist in promoting the Green Deal to maximise its effectiveness.	Target private rented dwellings, solid wall properties and certain older properties for assistance.	Staff time Corporate funding for promotion where available.	Environment priority Government policy
5.	Supporting social sector asset management schemes	Where stock suffers low demand or is no longer fit for purpose, assist RP's in producing renovation or redevelopment schemes including supporting funding applications.	This includes eliminating hard to let sheltered bedsits and small flats where possible. Targets hard to set as partly relies on persuasion. Decisions not within local authority control.	Staff time Possibly some capital finance	Environment priority

# Housing Strategy Consultation Results

## Appendix Two

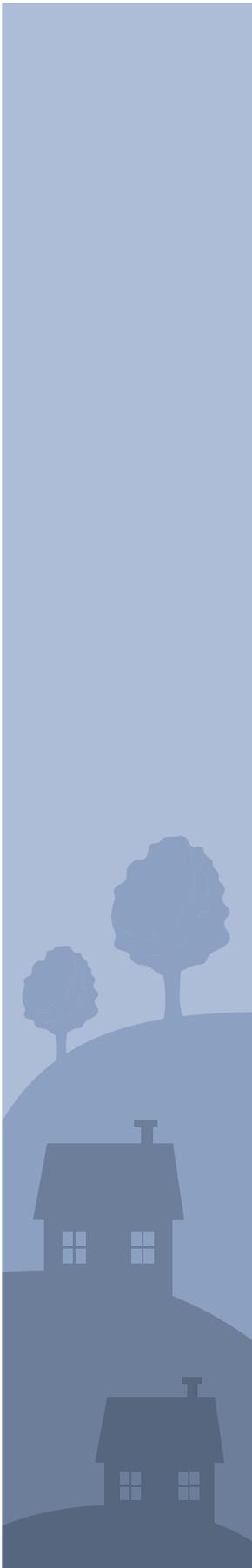


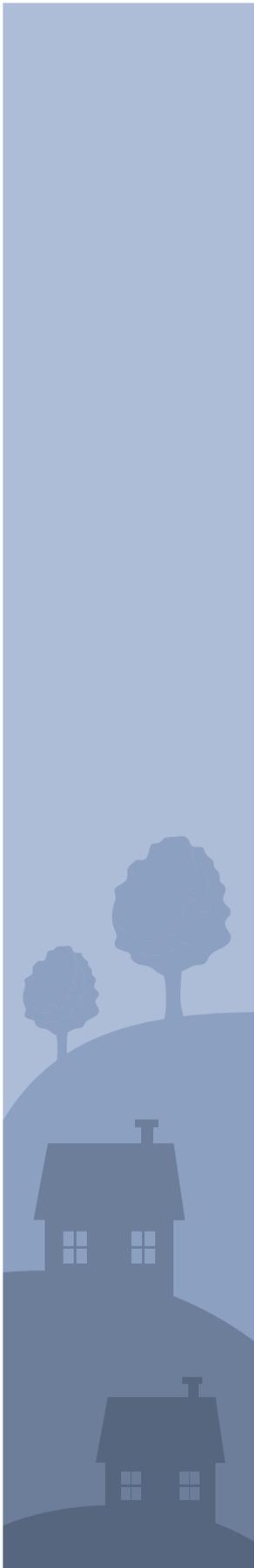
**We are very grateful to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People's Forum (ESPOPF) who have responded to our consultation. A summary of their comments and our proposed response are detailed below.**

There are a lot of changes happening within housing at the moment with some matters still being debated at a national level prior to their full implementation. We believe it is a result of high workloads that we have not had the level of responses we have received previously.

Also, as the strategy seeks to continue and build on the work that we are already undertaking it is less likely to be viewed as contentious.

Summary of Respondents Comments	Proposed Response
<p><b><u>Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)</u></b></p> <p>The document highlights that there is more demand than supply of affordable properties.</p> <p>The council should be encouraging the provision of more 1 bedroom properties rather than forcing people into two bed properties that they will not be able to afford.</p>	<p>Comments noted – strategically in longer term we view that 2 bed properties are more sustainable as applicants will prefer these. With a national drive to increase house building we anticipate that in the future there may develop a better balance between supply and demand of housing.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that more immediately there will be increased demand for 1 bed properties and for shared rooms in houses as a result of the benefits changes.</p> <p>EBC will consider with its housing partners whether we need to revisit our policy around preference for 2 bed minimum sized provision. This will have regard to existing stock / levels of voids / and whether allocation policies need to be reviewed in some instances to ensure more effective use of stock.</p>
<p>The Bureau is concerned that both public and private sector rents are rising but income levels are not keeping pace.</p>	<p>It is recognised that new affordable rent (AR) levels will impact on tenants by reducing disposable income. However, letting properties at AR enables more new homes to be built. Increasing the supply of housing to meet demand is seen as the key housing priority for the borough.</p>
<p>If the council is intending to rely increasingly on the private rented sector is there a strategy to encourage best practice amongst private landlords?</p>	<p>The council's work with private landlords will be dealt with in more detail in a Private Sector Housing Strategy which is currently being drafted.</p> <p>It is intended to provide more information to landlords on best practice and to maintain our efforts in enforcing decent standards.</p>
<p>The strategy makes no mention of the role that timely independent advice can have in helping to prevent homelessness e.g. by helping people to manage their debt problems or by helping people to resolve disrepair and other problems with their landlord.</p>	<p>It is accepted that independent advice is extremely important especially where people can be persuaded to seek advice at an early stage. Comments added to strategy document to this effect – page 13.</p> <p>The importance of early advice and prevention of homelessness will be covered in more detail in a new Homelessness Strategy covering the period 2013 -2017.</p>





<p>The strategy states that “the Council will review its waiting list criteria”. Will the public and the voluntary/community be consulted on these changes?</p>	<p>This is unlikely to happen until later in 2012 as we await detailed guidance from Government on relevant sections in the Localism Act. When the new criteria are drafted consultation will be undertaken prior to adoption.</p>
<p>The council will be able to discharge its homelessness duty by the offer of suitable accommodation into the private rented sector:</p>	<p>Subject to members approval at a later date it is intended to discharge homelessness duty by the offer of suitable accommodation in the Private Sector.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you intend to discharge the homelessness duty by an offer of a 12 month (or more) assured shorthold tenancy (AST) in the private rented sector? If so, how widely is it likely to be used?</li> </ul>	<p>It is intended to use 12 month AST wherever necessary to discharge a homelessness duty. We would not wish to place any restrictions on when this can be used. It is accepted however, that in some cases such accommodation may be unsuitable and in these instances alternatives will be sought.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will any 12 month tenancy agreement offered include a break clause for the tenant?</li> </ul>	<p>We do not believe we will be in a position to insist on a break clause for the tenant, although we will seek one where possible.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you envisage offering private rented accommodation outside of Eastleigh? If so, how far away?</li> </ul>	<p>Eastleigh has a limited amount of suitable private rented accommodation and has in the past assisted people into private rented housing in the surrounding boroughs. We would continue with this practice although we would not discharge a homeless duty by offering accommodation outside the borough unless the applicant is happy to accept it.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any circumstances when the option to discharge the homelessness duty by a private rented offer might be considered to be unsuitable? For example, because of vulnerability, affordability, the requirement for disability adaptations etc. Who will make decisions on these matters and what guidance will be laid down for them?</li> </ul>	<p>We would not seek to discharge homelessness duty into private rented property that we do not believe a tenant could afford or that could not be adapted to meet their needs or where the tenancy is likely to fail due to issues of vulnerability.</p> <p>Decisions on suitability will be made by the Housing Adviser dealing with the case in conjunction with the Senior Housing Adviser in the normal way.</p> <p>The Housing Advisers are used to working with clients on household budgets and in considering where a property is reasonably affordable. This already happens when decisions have to be taken on intentionality – as applied in homelessness cases.</p>
<p>How will the decision maker decide what is affordable, what criteria will be used?</p>	<p>More detail on how local authorities can discharge homelessness duties with an offer of private sector accommodation will be known once a new code of guidance or statutory order is produced from Government.</p>



We are unable to comment on the local lettings plan as the information provided is too vague. Will there be further consultation on this?

Agreements are made between EBC and housing providers on how new affordable housing properties for rent will be initially allocated on individual, larger developments to ensure sustainability. No further consultation is proposed.

**Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People's Forum (ESPOPF)**

Further research may well be necessary to uncover the varied needs of the older population particularly in view of the expected growth in the number of over 65's in the next twenty years

The council works in conjunction with the County Council and Health services in terms of researching the needs for different types of accommodation and related services.

It is expected that further research will be needed over time as housing aspirations may well change.

Members wish to point to the particular needs of the older single person (reference ESPOPF research Bleak Housing).

Bleak Housing (page 50) makes reference to women outnumbering men in single households (average age of respondents being 75) and on page 54, the discussion section advises that single women are dependent on local people for help and the prospect of having to move away from familiar communities must be devastating.

From this research it can be seen that there are policy issues around tackling social isolation and trying to achieve a range of older persons housing provision within each community to avoid the necessity of people needing to move away from existing support networks.

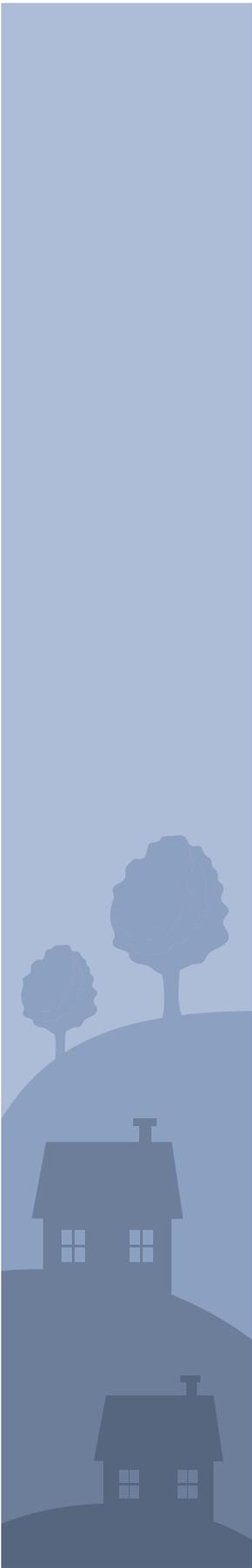
As well as looking at new housing provision this also implies ensuring services are in place to enable those who wish to, to remain in their own homes.

There are a number of items in the action plan that seek to support this area e.g. Priority 3 Action Plan points 2 & 4 – seeking to identify and bring together resources for extra care provision in the Southern Parishes.

Seeking to expand the gardening and handy person services.

# Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan Template

## Appendix Three



# Equality Impact Assessment

## 1. Title of document:

Housing Strategy 2012 - 2017

## 2. Description of strategy:

The Strategy guides local actions and priorities for all housing tenures in the borough. It is an overarching document that is supported by individual policies across a number of areas.

## Assessment

### 3. What evidence is there around the impact of the policy?

The strategy is an overarching plan that guides local action and priorities for all housing tenures in the Borough. It is underwritten by a commitment to providing high quality local services whilst working to ensure that we are making the most effective use of opportunities.

#### The priorities for the strategy have been identified as:

- Ensure delivery of housing of all tenures in line with the Council's "Local Plan", providing well designed, quality homes that are affordable and suitable for people's needs.
- Prevent homelessness and enable improved housing options.
- Work jointly with other agencies to ensure that those people in need of care and support have suitable housing available to meet their needs.
- Making better use of all existing housing.

The Strategy therefore has a positive impact in seeking to ensure that all people in the Borough have access to good quality homes that are affordable for them and meet their needs.

It seeks to promote the provision of a range of homes to meet different needs e.g. larger family homes and homes that are adapted to ensure that those households with physical disabilities are adequately housed.

With an increasing older population it supports cross agency working to ensure that those people in need of care and support have suitable housing available to them.

The strategy highlights that we are seeking to take a proactive approach in tackling homelessness with an emphasis on prevention but where this cannot be achieved we will work with households to find solutions to their housing problems.

### 4. What adverse impact could there be on the particular groups above?

No adverse impact identified.

As part of our ongoing work we monitor diversity of applicants applying to our Homechoice register.

## 5. What could reduce any adverse impact on these groups?

N/A

## 6. What consultation has been done which is relevant to this policy?

The Strategy was published on the council's website in draft form and made available for comments for a period of 1 month. It was also sent directly to a broad range of stakeholders for their comments.

## 7. How is the Strategy likely to eliminate unlawful discrimination?

The strategy guides local actions and priorities for housing and is underpinned by specific policies across the area of housing that seek to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to our work.

## 8. How is the strategy likely to advance equality of opportunity?

The strategy seeks to support the provision of a wide mix of housing across the borough thereby meeting a range of needs.

## 9. How is the policy likely to foster good relations?

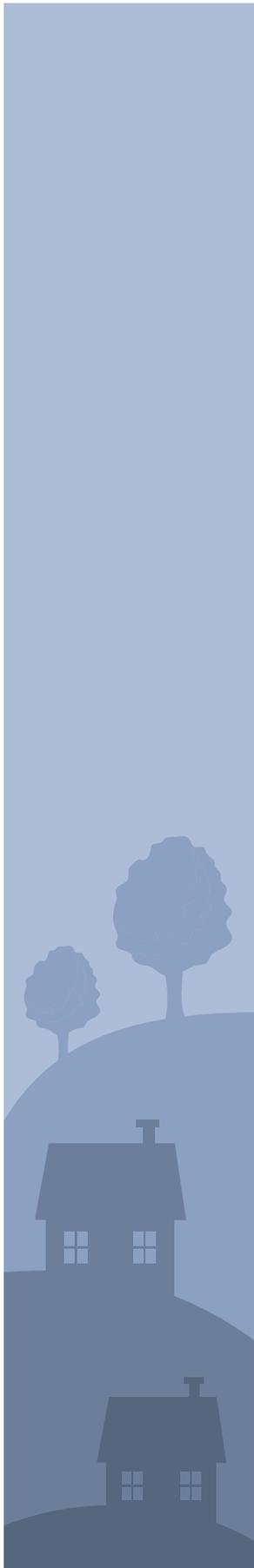
The strategy is drawn up in conjunction with a range of stakeholders and draws upon established working relationships. It also seeks to promote the continuation of joint working to achieve shared ambitions for the residents of the borough.

## Action Plan Template

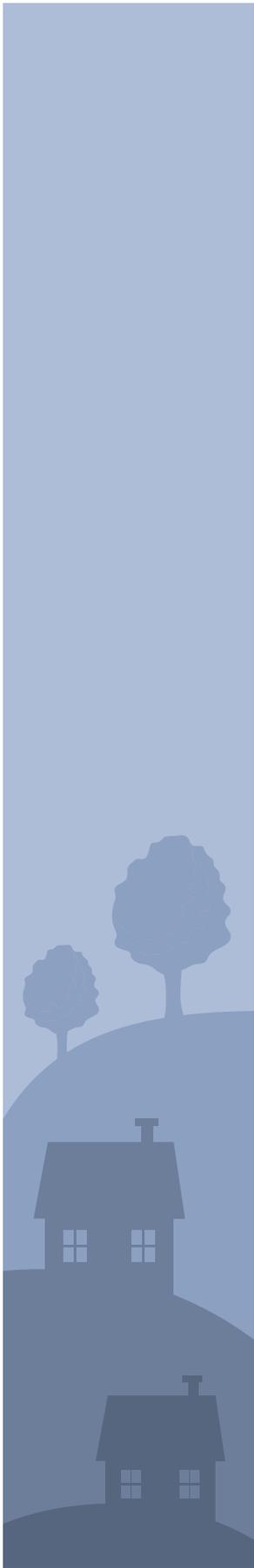
The Housing Strategy has an action plan and the specific items within this are incorporated within the Unit Business plans. The overall progress of work around the Housing Strategy is monitored through an Annual update usually published in the summer.

The table below reproduces the actions from the Housing Strategy that are particularly relevant to the council's aim of ensuring fair access to services for different groups in the community.

Activity	Key Tasks	Target	Person responsible
Ensuring delivery of housing	Work with housing providers at new build stage to ensure properties are fit for disabled tenants, with properties adapted prior to handover.	3% of homes built to full wheelchair standard  New affordable homes built to Lifetime Homes Standard or agreed equivalent.	Research & Development Manager



	<p>Seek to procure larger family homes where appropriate.</p> <p>Enable/ joint fund extensions and loft conversions in social housing to alleviate overcrowding.</p>	<p>On larger developments seek at least one, 5 bed property. Target of ten, 5B houses by 2017.</p> <p>Target of 5 homes extended by 2017.</p>	<p>Research &amp; Development Manager</p>
Preventing homelessness	<p>Publish a Tenancy Strategy as required by the Localism Act.</p>	<p>Adopt strategy by October 2012. (This strategy will contain its own impact assessment).</p>	<p>Head of Service</p>
Ensure suitable housing for those needing care and support	<p>Work to increase supported lodgings for young people aged 16+</p> <p>Assist with provision of shared homes and low cost home ownership for people with support needs as required.</p>	<p>Aim for 10 extra places by 2017.</p> <p>Depends on requests from other agencies. Aim for homes for 10 people, 2017.</p>	<p>Housing Needs Manager</p>
	<p>Assist with delivery of Surrey Court extra care scheme. Bring together resources for extra care provision in the Southern Parishes.</p>	<p>Scheme completion by March 2015.</p> <p>Aim to commence building project by 2017.</p>	<p>Head of Service</p>
	<p>Work up a foyer scheme for young people, combining housing, training and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Viability uncertain currently due to funding changes. If feasible, aim for project start 2017.</p>	<p>Head of Service</p>
	<p>To enable people to remain in their own homes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand gardening service</li> <li>• Expand handy person service (budget held by Health team)</li> </ul>	<p>Aim for 100 clients by 2017.</p> <p>Aim to fund 5 day per week service by April 2015.</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing manager</p>
	<p>Ensuring fair access to services (particularly monitoring Homechoice as choice based lettings systems require the applicant to be pro-active in bidding for vacancies).</p>	<p>Produce quarterly monitoring information.</p> <p>Take action to remove any barriers identified (e.g. by contacting applicants to ensure they understand system and offer help with bidding).</p>	<p>Housing Needs Manager</p>

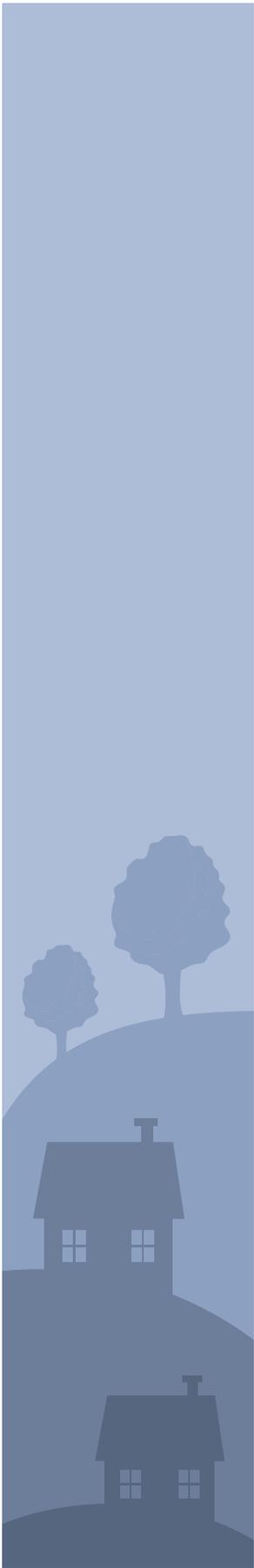


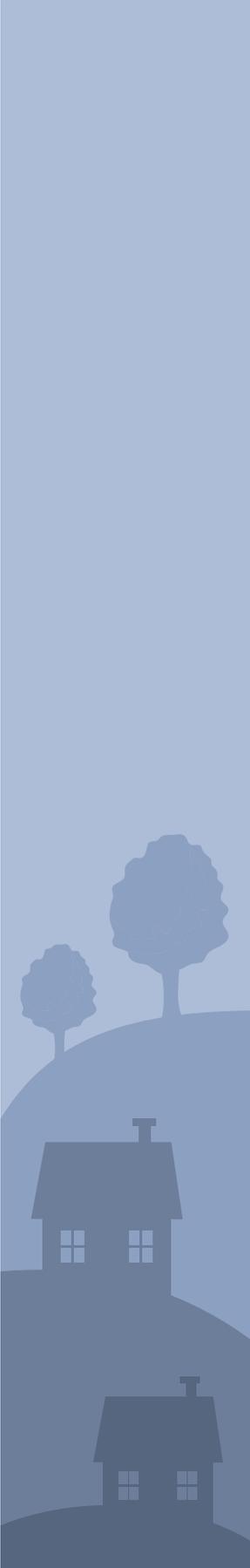
Making better use of existing housing	Promote low cost loans scheme to help owners keep homes in good repair. Provide other advice & assistance to ensure homes are warm, safe and secure.	Publicise scheme four times per year. Target homes identified by stock condition survey.	Private Sector Housing Manager
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**Lead officer** Mary Stribling  
**Unit Head** Tony Hall  
**Date completed** 2 March 2012  
**Review date** July 2013

# Glossary of Terms

## Appendix Four





## Adult Services

Part of the County Council Social Services departments that deal with services relating to adults.

## Affordable Housing

Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing (including Low Cost Home Ownership options), provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

## Affordable rented housing

Rented housing let by registered providers to eligible households at a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.

## Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA)

This is the geographical area used to determine the Local Housing Allowance rate.

## Category 1 Hazards

Through the Housing Health and Safety Ratings System, hazards are rated according to how serious they are. Category 1 Hazards are deemed to be the most serious hazards.

## Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

This is a grant to enable disabled people to have adaptations carried out to their homes.

## Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

The Government department in England responsible for setting policy on supporting local government, communities and neighbourhoods, regeneration, housing, planning, building and the environment, and fire.

## Eastleigh Accommodation Support Team (EAST)

A floating support service offering impartial, confidential advice to help people live independently in their own home.

## Extra Care Housing

Housing set up to provide care and housing support to elderly people who are finding it increasingly difficult to cope due to physical frailty.

## Floating Support

A service that provides housing related support to vulnerable adults (over 16) in the short term to enable them to maintain their independence in their own home.

## Fuel poverty

Considered to exist when more than 10% of income is spent on heating.

## Home Improvement Agency (HIA)

An organisation that provides advice services to vulnerable people who are private homeowners or tenants of private landlords in order to help them stay in their own homes.

## Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

The national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England, with the role to contribute to economic growth by enabling and helping communities to deliver high-quality housing that people can afford.

## Homebuy

The HomeBuy brand represents a set of products designed to help social tenants and others in priority need purchase a suitable home. Shared ownership and equity loan products are in place to assist first time buyers and others in need to get on to the property ladder.

## Homechoice

The name of the Housing Register for the allocation of affordable housing to rent for the borough of Eastleigh.

## Homes in Hants

The website used by the Homebuy agent to offer Homebuy properties and Intermediate Rent properties throughout Hampshire & the Isle of Wight.



### House Condition Survey (HCS)

An independent survey of the condition of the private sector housing in a specific area.

### House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

A dwelling that is occupied by more than one household.

### Intermediate Housing

Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent but below market price or rents.

### Local Investment Plan (LIP)

Part of a 'Single Conversation' process introduced by the Homes and Communities Agency aimed at better aligning their policies and resources with the aims and objectives of growth areas and local authorities.

### Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

This is the way of working out Housing Benefit (HB) for people who rent from a private landlord.

### Localism Act

A significant piece of legislation which looks to devolve decision-making powers from Whitehall to communities and their local democratically-elected representatives.

### Market housing

Housing available for purchase on the open market and at full price.

### Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)

In collaboration with local partners and government agencies, PUSH works to deliver sustainable, economic-led growth and regeneration to create a more prosperous, attractive and sustainable South Hampshire, which offers a better quality of life for all who live, work and spend their leisure time in the sub-region.

### Registered Provider (RP)

This term is used to cover all providers of social housing who are registered with the

Tenant Services Authority. A register provider can be either a non profit organisation or a profit-making organisation.

### Rent in Advance/Rent Bond Scheme

Schemes designed to assist those who are trying to secure private rented accommodation but are financially unable to provide the rent in advance or rent deposit required by the landlord.

### Shared Ownership

New or existing property sold on a part rent and part sale basis.

### Sheltered Housing

Sheltered housing is age restricted accommodation designed for people who wish to maintain and improve their independent lifestyle.

### Social rented housing

Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and Registered Providers for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime.

### Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Documents which provide additional detailed guidance for the policies in the Local Plan.

### Supported Housing

Supported housing is accommodation provided for people who could benefit from support to sustain and manage their housing.

### Supporting People (SP)

A Government funded programme that aims to make sure people get the housing related support they need to live more independently.

### Sustainable Development

Development balancing environmental, social and economic needs without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

### **Vulnerable People**

A person or group is vulnerable when support is required to enable or promote independent living and safe and active participation in the community.

