

# Weymouth & Portland Borough Council **Housing Strategy 2009-2012**



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## Foreword

We are very pleased to present this new Housing Strategy for Weymouth and Portland, which identifies the housing issues that are important to our community, the manner in which we will work towards improving existing housing and services, and how we will provide new homes to meet needs.

Our last Housing Strategy, 2005-2008, was developed for the first time with significant input from the Council's partners, particularly the Weymouth and Portland Partnership, and it stimulated and shaped significant progress in a number of key areas - for instance, increasing the number of affordable homes, reducing significantly the number of homeless households and occupants of 'bed and breakfast' accommodation, improving service delivery and developing much closer working with and support from private sector landlords. This new Housing Strategy continues with a shared vision and approach.

Responding positively to local housing issues lies at the heart of the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan and the Borough's Community Plan. Accordingly, both the Council and the Partnership wholeheartedly support this new Housing Strategy which not only sets out the inherent challenges and issues, including the impact of the economic downturn, but includes a demanding action plan through which progress will be delivered. Whilst the strategy is unapologetically candid in confronting the reader with the reality gap between aspiration and the likely achievable, it should not be considered as being in any respect negative – conversely, it provides a valuable blueprint for change and upon which cooperative effort can be based and improvement brought to the lives of many.

We recognise that many different partners have a role to play in making this happen and we collectively look forward to putting this strategy into action for the wider benefit of the community.



**Cllr Jean Woodward**

*Housing and Social Inclusion Brief holder*  
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Woodward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.



**Duncan Fergusson**

*Chair*  
Weymouth and Portland Partnership

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Fergusson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

# Executive summary

This Housing Strategy has a long term vision for the next ten years:

## **Our vision:**

Everyone living in Weymouth and Portland will have access to decent, energy efficient, affordable housing appropriate to their needs. They will be provided with the support they need to maintain their independence in the community and will have easy access to information about their housing options. We will target our financial resources effectively and develop partnership working to help achieve this.

Four strategic aims have been adopted for the lifetime of this Housing Strategy, following wide consultation with a range of stakeholders. We also considered how our local circumstances fitted into priorities for housing identified at a national, South West regional and Dorset County level. The four strategic aims are:

- **Provide more affordable housing**
- **Improve the quality and energy efficiency of all housing**
- **Provide sustainable solutions to homelessness**
- **Meet the housing needs of particular groups**

A strong emphasis from our stakeholders is on working together to make best use of existing resources. Stakeholders recognise that the Council has only limited resources and must therefore focus on joint working to create 'more from less'. This approach is reflected in the key actions set out below by which we will employ to achieve our priorities.

## **Key Issues**

The following eight key housing issues have been identified for the Borough which address the strategic aims:

### **1 Shortage of affordable housing**

- Need for affordable housing outstrips availability
- Need to consider the issue of move on from supported housing
- Need to make best use of existing affordable stock e.g. under occupation
- Ensure our Allocation Policy assists making best use of stock

### **2 Delivering more affordable homes**

- Need to access Housing Corporation/Homes and Communities Agency grant for affordable housing
- Many factors influence ability to build new affordable housing such as grant rates and cost of land
- Predominant need (70%) for additional rented affordable housing
- Revised Strategy target to provide at least 65 additional affordable housing units per annum
- Need to revise Affordable Housing Planning Policy
- Councils have an opportunity to build again
- Council and other land in public ownership could be used for new affordable housing developments
- Assess the contribution intermediate housing makes to additional delivery

### **3 Tackling homelessness and maintaining reduced usage of temporary accommodation**

- Need to implement the Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011
- Need to continue the homeless prevention approach
- Maintain lower usage of temporary accommodation for homeless households
- Need to address the issues of entrenched rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs which will require multi-agency commitment

#### **4 Meeting the housing needs of a range of groups and promoting independence and inclusion**

- The 2007 Housing Need Survey suggests over 20% of households contain someone with an identified special need
- Supporting People funding is reducing
- Existing Supporting People funding is reducing
- Existing Supporting People funding distribution may not reflect greatest needs
- Older person households in Dorset are increasing , and inward migration contributes significantly to this
- Many young people cannot access affordable housing
- Younger persons (age 20-29) numbers in Dorset are declining
- Suitable adaptations to homes can enable people to remain in their homes without the need to move
- Identified gypsy and traveller needs in the Borough are not currently met
- The Council could do more to identify and address the needs of minority groups

#### **5 Severe affordability problems for would-be home owners**

- Significant house price to income differential
- Key worker accommodation not a priority for the strategy
- Scope to explore and develop the role that intermediate housing can play, including shared ownership/equity and low cost housing for sale

#### **6 Poor quality private sector housing stock**

- A new Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy , aimed at improving the quality, security and energy efficiency of the housing stock, is in place from 2008
- The Landlord Accreditation Scheme requires review
- A House Condition Survey to inform strategic decisions is to be commissioned in 2008

- The Fuel Poverty Strategy is to be updated and reviewed
- An Empty Homes Strategy needs to be developed

#### **7 Maximising use of resources, and developing partnership working –**

- Despite financial pressures, the Council continues to invest in affordable housing schemes, reflecting the high priority it gives to this area
- In the private sector, the Council provides grants, and more recently loans, to meet identified needs and priorities
- Revenue support is provided to: pay housing benefits/Local Housing Allowance to support low income households, and to provide preventative homeless initiatives

#### **8 Improving access to information about housing services and options -**

- Housing Advisory services are accessible and convenient, and delivered at a range of locations in the Borough.
- Good range of advice literature available
- There is scope for improving the way services are delivered
- There is scope to review the information and literature and how it is made available
- Better use of web based solutions and interactive technology in delivering information and services should be explored and delivered
- Diversity issues need to be better understood and responded to

#### **Action Plan**

The Action Plan sets out the many activities required between 2009 and 2012 to deliver the strategic aims.

# Chapter 1. The Council's Vision, Strategic Aims and Key Issues

Set out below is the overall vision which this Housing Strategy aspires towards. It also sets out the Strategic Aims and Key Issues

The **vision** for the Housing Strategy for the next ten years is:

*'Everyone living in Weymouth and Portland will have access to decent, energy efficient, affordable housing appropriate to their needs. They will be provided with the support they need to maintain their independence in the community and will have easy access to information about their housing options. We will target our financial resources effectively and develop partnership working to help achieve this.'*

Four **strategic aims** have been adopted for the lifetime of this Housing Strategy, following wide consultation with a range of stakeholders. We also considered how our local circumstances fitted into priorities for housing identified at a national, South West regional and Dorset County level. The four strategic aims are:

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The following eight **key housing issues** have been identified for the Borough which address the strategic aims:

- **Shortage of affordable housing**
- **Delivering more affordable homes**

- **Tackling homelessness and maintaining reduced usage of temporary accommodation**
- **Meeting the housing needs of a range of groups, and promoting independence and inclusion**
- **Severe affordability problems for would-be home owners**
- **Poor quality private sector housing stock**
- **Maximising use of resources, and developing partnership working**
- **Improving access to information about housing services and options**



The following table shows the strategic aims and the key issues facing the borough interlink

Strategic aims	Key issues							
	1 Shortage of affordable housing	2 Delivering more new affordable housing	3 Tackling homelessness and maintaining reduced usage of temporary accommodation	4 Meeting the housing needs of a range of groups, and promote independence and inclusion	5 Severe affordability problems for would be home owners	6 Poor quality private sector housing stock	7 Maximising use of resources, and developing partnership working	8 Improving access to information about housing services and options
Strategic Aim- Provide more affordable housing	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Strategic Aim- Improve the quality and energy efficiency of all housing	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Strategic Aim- Provide sustainable solutions to homelessness	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Strategic Aim- Meet the housing needs of particular groups	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓

## Chapter 2. Context and Background

### 2.1 What is a housing strategy?

The Council must have a Local Housing Strategy (section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003) because the Council retains its Strategic Housing role. Our Housing Strategy is an overarching document covering all aspects of housing. It contains a long term vision and is also our plan for how we will meet the Housing needs of the Borough over the period from 2009 to 2012. It aims to put in place a clear, evidence based and robust plan of work, contained in the Action Plan. It supports the Weymouth and Portland Community Strategy 2008-2016, developed by the Weymouth and Portland Partnership, and the Council's Corporate Plan 2007-2012, which identifies dealing with issues of affordable housing and homelessness as the Council's second highest priority.

The Council's last Housing Strategy document covered the period 2005 to 2008 and was published against a background of rapid change in the environment in which the Council has to deliver its housing objectives. More recently the Government has placed considerable emphasis on the delivery of additional housing, and additional affordable housing in particular.

This Strategy identifies the issues the Council has confirmed as its main priorities, the processes by which it done so, and details how the Council proposes tackling the housing issues facing it in the light of this new and emerging agenda. However the Strategy is intended to be dynamic. Regular Monitoring and Review of the document and the Action Plan will take place and where necessary we will re-focus our work to meet the changing circumstances that we will encounter as our work progresses.

We will continue to work with our communities and stakeholders, and welcome the involvement and contribution of you all as we implement and monitor the Strategy.

This document will be distributed widely to all consultees that we have worked with, as well as being available in local Libraries and on the Council's website ( [www.weymouth.gov.uk](http://www.weymouth.gov.uk) ).

### 2.2 Developing the strategy

A local housing strategy cannot be developed in isolation. Stakeholder and public consultation during 2007 (e.g. Weymouth and Portland Partnership one day event, Housing Forum workshop, Planning public consultation road show on Core Strategy priorities, including housing) helped us to identify the housing aims and key housing issues to be incorporated into the Housing Strategy as it was drafted. In addition to this initial consultation, the rest of this chapter sets out the local context and explains how national, regional and sub-regional policies have also influenced our plans for Weymouth and Portland. The Consultation Draft has then been developed by a Member Working Group during the period April to September 2008. A consultation period, during August/September 2008 has allowed for feedback on the draft Housing Strategy to be considered and incorporated into the document, culminating in the adoption of the Housing Strategy 2009-2012 by the Full Council in February 2009.

### 2.3 About Weymouth and Portland

The Weymouth & Portland Local Housing Authority area shares many of the characteristics of its Dorset and South West Regional neighbours. At the same time its position as a small urban area serving a rural hinterland sets it apart and presents a number of unique factors relevant to housing need and supply.

The borough is only 42 square kilometres in size (the smallest district council area in the South West). Weymouth is however the third largest town in the sub-region after Poole and Bournemouth. In the summer an influx of tourists increases the population from 63,665 (2001 Census) to about 200,000.

The borough is a mixture of built-up and, to a lesser extent, rural areas including open countryside, villages, the historic town of Weymouth and the 'Isle' and Royal Manor of Portland. Our natural advantages (including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the historic built environment) attract visitors and new residents to the borough but also serve to limit land supply for housing development in what is already a very small geographical area.

In the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy Weymouth is identified as a Strategically Significant City or Town (SSCT) and Portland as a rural area. It should be noted that the Weymouth SSCT

includes Chickerell. As a small urban centre for Dorset, Weymouth has a concentration of services more usually associated with larger towns or cities including drug and alcohol rehabilitation, bail hostel, prisons and a range of supported housing providers all of which impact on local housing need particularly for single people.

The borough boundary does not contain the entire built up 'Weymouth area'. The immediate surrounding area, including the village of Chickerell (in West Dorset District Council) has a population of 70,000. The Dorchester and Weymouth 'Travel To Work Area' has a population of 103,000. Weymouth has been identified with Dorchester as a single Housing Market Area (South West Housing Body – Analysis of sub-regional housing markets 2004). It follows that local housing demand cannot be contained within artificial administrative boundaries.

Following the success of the London bid to host the Olympics in 2012, Portland Harbour will be the venue for Olympic sailing events. This is acting as

a catalyst for development of the local economy, and is stimulating development activity -this may benefit the delivery of additional housing, but may also affect land values and interest in commercial housing development.

There are over 28,500 households in the borough living in a mixture of privately owned and rented properties and properties owned and/or managed by housing associations.

In March 2000 the Council transferred its housing stock to a newly formed housing association, Weymouth and Portland Housing Company. The Council continues to manage the Housing Register and provides a housing advice and homeless service based at the Council offices, and from outreach advice 'surgeries' around the borough.

## 2.4 National priorities

The following summarises key government policies related to housing:

Document / source	Key policies / issues
"Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods. A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society" 2008	Responding to the demographic challenge of an ageing population. Linking housing to health and care. More accommodation for older households and all new social housing built to "Lifetime Homes" standards by 2011, followed by all new housing by 2013. Better information and advice for older people, more money to further develop Home Improvement Agencies and more funding for Disabled Facilities Grants.
National Indicators-central government	Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) have been replaced by a series of National Indicators (NIs) in April 2008.
Housing and Regeneration Bill- November 2007	The Bill aims to help deliver the government's increased house building targets. It proposes a new 'Oftenant' agency to replace the Housing Corporation's regulatory role, and a new 'Homes and Communities Agency' to replace the Housing Corporation's investment role.
Comprehensive Spending Review 2007	Increased national budget to provide affordable housing through Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) / Housing Associations
Housing Green Paper -'Homes for the Future; more affordable, more sustainable' - July 2007	To build more homes and build them more quickly with a target of 240,000 additional homes per year by 2016, increase affordable housing and provide greener and better designed homes. Options for Councils to have a direct role in building homes again (see Appendix Seven for a summary). The subsequent Calcutt review concludes that the house building targets are possible although changes are required such as more regeneration developments.
Planning Policy Statement 3 : Housing (PPS3) (2006)	Councils should have a residential land supply for at least five years, have a policy for developer contributions to affordable housing and seek higher quality, environmental standards. Councils can set density standards and parking allowances. More family homes are needed to accommodate the needs of children. Mixed communities should be developed and at least 60% of all new housing to be developed on 'brownfield' land.

Sustainable Communities : Homes for All (2005)	Five year strategy published by the office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Includes reference to enabling households to buy a stake in their home, increasing housing supply, higher housing densities, commitment to use brownfield sites, reduction in the use of temporary accommodation, and choice based lettings.
Housing Act 2004	Introduced a range of measures in relation to housing including new licensing requirements for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), Empty Homes Management Orders, the need to assess the housing needs of Gypsies and travellers, change in Right to Buy rules and requirement for tenancy deposit schemes.
'Homelessness Act 2002' and 'Sustainable Communities; Settled Homes; Changing Lives' and 'Code of Guidance for Local Authorities'	Councils should prevent and reduce homelessness rather than crisis intervention. They should avoid the use of temporary accommodation including bed and breakfast
Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance Act) ( England and Wales) Order 2002	Councils required to have a policy for giving financial assistance for home improvements.
Quality and Choice – a Decent Home for All : The Way Forward for Housing (2000)	Social rented housing sector requires greater choice. All social housing should meet the Decent Homes Standard. Properties should all meet the Decent Homes Standard and all social housing rents should be set according to the national rent restructuring formula.
Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) (ongoing)	These contain in-depth information about how the Audit Commission views excellent housing related services. The KLOEs indicate good practice and form the basis of inspections

## 2.5 Regional priorities

**Regional Housing Strategy 2005 –2016** This document identifies the following strategic drivers for housing policy in the South West:

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

- **Inadequate links between housing affordability, quality and health**
- **The challenge of creating sustainable communities -**  
housing growth being concentrated in Principal Urban Areas and other significant towns and cities

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

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

Priorities for Regional Funding within the Regional Housing Strategy are (ranked in order):

1. The provision of additional affordable housing
2. Improving the quality of private sector homes occupied by vulnerable households
3. Meeting the Governments Decent Homes Target in the social sector by 2010

## Regional Spatial Strategy

The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out how the South West region will be developed up until 2026, based on continued economic and population growth. It provides the strategic planning policy for the whole of the region, setting total housing requirements for each District and for strategically significant towns across the region. The submission draft RSS, published in 2006 identified a housing target for Weymouth and Portland of 280 dwellings per annum. This was a higher rate of development than that previously identified in the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan. A Public Examination into the draft RSS took place in 2007 and the Panel's report of recommendations was published in early 2008. This recommended the same target as in the draft RSS. An urban extension is also recommended from Weymouth into West Dorset. Proposed changes to the draft RSS will be published for consultation in summer 2008, and following consideration of the

responses, the RSS is expected to be adopted at the end of 2008.

## 2.6 Sub-regional priorities

To be effective this Housing Strategy must reflect and make appropriate connections with a number of linked policies and plans in Dorset.

### Community Strategy for Dorset 2007-2016 "Shaping our future"

The Dorset Strategic Partnership (DSP) published its second Community Strategy for Dorset in June 2007 and is available at [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

The Partnership identified "affordable, sustainable and appropriate housing" as a high priority and key cross cutting issue following a survey of Dorset residents.

The Strategy sets out its housing objectives as

- More affordable and appropriate housing
- Better and more co-ordinated use of land
- Increased investment
- New ways of meeting housing need, and
- Sustainable housing development

In order to deliver these and other objectives of the Strategy, a Countywide Local Area Agreement (LAA) for 2008-2011, has been agreed with Government to help make these improvements. A joint Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole Affordable Housing Task Group is established, bringing together planning and housing officers from the local authorities alongside representatives of health, the voluntary sector, CPRE, housing associations, the Housing Corporation and Government Office to work together to deliver the LAA targets.

### Supporting People Strategy

Supporting People (SP) – the grant funding system to provide housing related support services for vulnerable people was launched in 2003. The aim of SP is to allow people with housing support needs to live more independently and prevent problems which can lead to hospitalisation, institutional care, custody or homelessness.

The Council is represented on the Dorset SP Core Strategy and Commissioning Groups.

Through these SP bodies the Council helped shape the SP Strategy for 2005-2010 which identified the following priorities of particular relevance to Weymouth & Portland:

- **Ensure efficient and effective use of continuing Supported Housing services**, by ensuring that move-on accommodation is available to people who are ready to live more independently
- **Enhance quality of life for older people**, by developing extra care sheltered provision, rationalising support arrangements in sheltered housing and ensuring access to Floating Support
- **Minimise the harm caused by substance misuse**, by providing Supported Housing for those who have not yet broken with their drug or alcohol habit
- **Support vulnerable young people**, by ensuring a smooth transition to the new housing and providers we will be commissioning
- **Promote community safety**, by funding further refuge provision for women escaping domestic violence and ensuring that ex-offenders get access to support services
- **Ensure that members of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and other excluded communities benefit fully from SP.**

- Improving access to services for vulnerable people
- Inclusion and Diversity
- outline an approach to the future commissioning and procuring of Supporting People services

### Other sub-regional influences

As a small district council with limited resources we recognise the value of sub-regional and cross-boundary working with other local housing authorities and agencies. The council is prepared to invest its time and expertise in such joint projects, and through this approach we can generate economies of scale and consistency in the collection of data eg joint commissioning of housing needs surveys across Dorset, and the sharing of resources and good practice e.g. introducing choice based lettings schemes based on models developed by other authorities.

We are active participants in a number of other strategic bodies with an interest in housing including; the Dorset Chief Housing Officers Group, the Dorset Planning Officers Panel, the Dorset Heads of Environmental Services Private Sector Housing Group and the Dorset Domestic Violence Forum.

The government's funding nationally of SP has seen year on year reductions (From 2003/4 to 2007/8, a reduction from £10.5m to £9.66m) and in Dorset the Partnership has had to work hard to ensure that both existing services and new work to meet Strategy priorities.

In order to maximise existing resources the SP Partnership has worked to identify services that can be decommissioned because they do not meet priority needs and has used the service review process to identify value for money savings in continuing services.

A 2008-2010 "refresh" of the 5 year Strategy has taken place to

- reflect changes that have taken place since the Strategy was published.
- describe progress made and plans which are in place for four key areas where it has been identified that improvements need to be made, namely:
  - Governance and decision-making
  - Service User involvement

## 2.7 Local priorities - the community and corporate Context

As well as consulting with a range of local stakeholders (see Appendix 3) for their views about local priorities and issues, there are also formal Community and Council plans which link closely to this Strategy.

### The Weymouth and Portland Partnership, Community Plan 2008-2016

The Weymouth and Portland Community Plan, "Your Place, Our Future- 125 steps to a better place..." was published in 2008. (For a copy of the Plan see [www.weymouthandportlandpartnership.com](http://www.weymouthandportlandpartnership.com)).

Included in the Plan are a number of housing aims which link directly to our Housing Strategy priorities. These include measures to reduce homelessness, tackling housing shortage, improve the quality of all housing, and meet the housing needs of particular groups within the community.

Reflecting the importance of housing as a local issue, a housing representative sits on the Partnership Board.

In March 2005 the Weymouth and Portland Housing Forum agreed to take on a new role as theme group for housing within the Community Partnership. The Forum has agreed an action plan linked to helping achieve the 15 (out of the 125) steps that specifically relate to Housing.

### Weymouth and Portland Borough Council Corporate Plan 2008-2013

In September 2008 the Borough Council adopted a new Corporate Plan (For a copy of the Plan see [www.weymouth.gov.uk](http://www.weymouth.gov.uk)).

This document sets out the Council's priorities for improving quality of life in the borough.

Corporate Priority 2 is "Meet the Housing Needs and Aspirations of the Borough" Within this Corporate priority there are 3 objectives:

- Tackling homelessness
- Delivering more affordable homes
- Improve the quality and energy efficiency of housing and meet the needs of particular groups, promoting independence and inclusion.

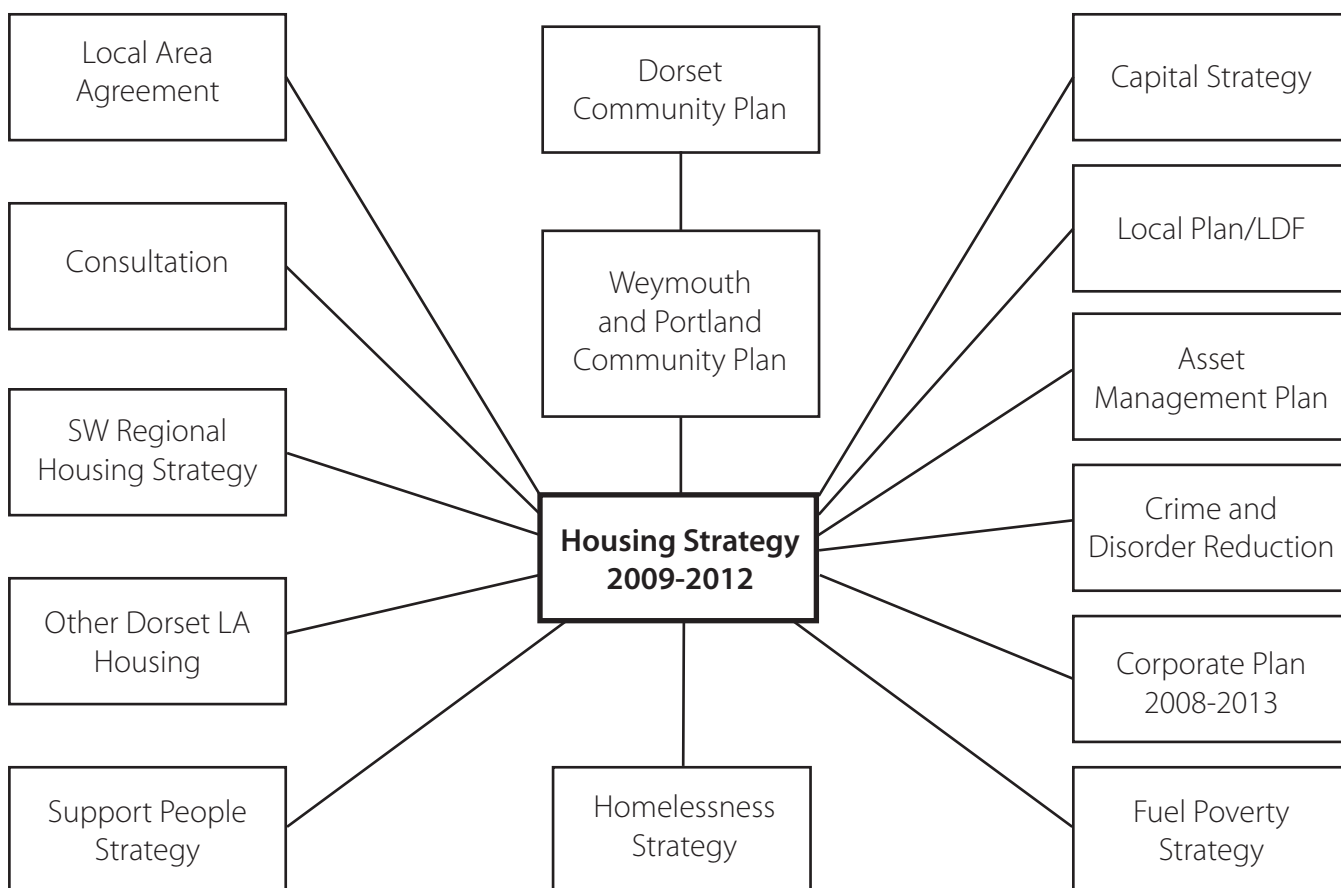
The emphasis placed on housing in the Corporate Plan not only underlines the importance which Council members attach to dealing with housing issues but also reflects the views of the local community articulated during the Plan consultation process.

### Links to other local Strategies, Policies and Plans

Ensuring an adequate and decent supply of housing is inextricably linked to resolving health inequalities, social well being and a sustainable economy. The diagram below illustrates how national policy, regional housing issues and other community plans have shaped our plans for housing.

### 2.8 Past performance for the Housing Strategy 2005-2008

The table in the appendices (Appendix 2) considers the outcomes and performance in delivering the 2005 to 2008 Housing Strategy Action Plan.



## Chapter 3. Understanding the housing market

### 3.1 Housing Market Assessment and the Housing Need and Demand Survey

The Councils in Dorset have jointly worked with Dorset County Council to produce an up to date Housing Market Assessment. This presents an analysis of the two local housing markets across Dorset (Dorset County Council 2008), and because of associated housing patterns and influences, the Borough forms part of the Weymouth and Dorchester Housing Market Area (HMA), covering both Weymouth and Portland and West Dorset Districts.

A Housing Need and Demand Survey for Weymouth and Portland, undertaken in 2007 by Fordham Research, helps us to further understand the local housing market. This involved a household survey focussing on the need for affordable housing as well as the broader analysis of housing demand and supply across all tenures. The survey was carried out across the county allowing comparisons between areas.

Both documents can be found on [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

### 3.2 Tenure profile

Levels of owner-occupation in Weymouth and Portland (73%) are similar to national levels.

The private rented sector in the Borough, at 13.7% is larger than nationally (12%).

The amount of private rented accommodation is even higher in areas such as Melcombe Regis (48%) and Radipole (21%).

85 of these units provide supported housing to meet the needs of particular groups including; women and children escaping domestic violence, vulnerable young people, teenage mothers, former rough sleepers and those recovering from drug and alcohol addiction.

The proportion of social housing in Dorset is as low as 10% and 11% in Bournemouth and Poole, and is 13.5% in the South West. The number of units has stabilised as the level of Right to Buy sales has slowed, with only 4 in the last 2 years.

### 3.3 Housing affordability

The average house price in Weymouth and Portland is about twelve times the average annual income (NHF 2007). Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2006) calculated that the average home in Weymouth and Portland was five times the average joint income for younger working households. The South West was confirmed to be the least affordable region in the country.

The average property price in Weymouth and Portland is £205,422 which is in line with the national average (£207,573) but below the Dorset average of approximately £250,000. Affordability of housing within the Borough however remains an issue.

The price for a one bedroom property in the Borough starts at around £103,000 with a rental value of £399 per calendar month. The price of a three bedroom property starts at £173,000 with a minimum rent of £598 per calendar month (Fordham Research 2007).

The average full time earnings in Dorset are below the national average. The average gross household income is £23,753 per annum in Weymouth and Portland (Fordham Research 2007).

Total Dwellings	Number of dwellings	% of dwellings
Private sector	25854	87
Local Authority/other public sector	14	0
Registered Social Landlords	3928	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29796</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA 2007)

The total proportion of social housing in Weymouth and Portland, at 13.4%, is lower than the national average of 18% (CLG 2007). This comprises around 3,928 properties owned by 14 Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations).



### 3.4 Housing need

As at 1 April 2008, there were just under 5,000 households on the Housing Register. The number has risen over previous years and in part reflects recent changes to legislation which has widened access to the register.

Number of bedrooms required	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
One	1290	2746	1682	2125	2897
Two		1557	823	1034	1102
Three	116	683	501	619	716
Four or more	38	119	160	201	241
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1444</b>	<b>2746</b>	<b>3166</b>	<b>3979</b>	<b>4956</b>

Source: CLG 2007, HSSA returns

These households will have varying levels of housing need. They include people in social housing wishing to transfer, and those living in the private sector. Of these 222 have a priority status on the register (Their priority is due to homelessness 22%, medical 29%, social 14%, overcrowded 4%, under-occupation 31%)

The level of housing need far outstrips supply. There were a total of 225 properties that became available to people on the register during the financial year 2007/8.

The Housing Needs Survey provides another measure of housing need. Households in housing need are defined as those in unsuitable housing, would need to move to find a solution and would find market housing unaffordable where market rents are more than 25% of their gross income.

The 2007 survey suggested that there were a total of 1,118 households currently in housing need in the Borough. The survey suggests that there is a need for an additional 800 new affordable housing units in Weymouth and Portland to address current housing need. This is a significant increase from 514 in the last 2001 survey. The survey notes that the main shortfall for social rented housing is for two bedroom properties, followed by one bedroom and then three bedroom properties.

### 3.5 Special Needs and Supported Housing

The needs of client groups who may have specific housing requirements were considered in the 2007 Housing Needs Survey. The survey looked

at households with special needs, older person households, key workers, young people, and families with children. In particular the survey found;

- An estimated 22% of all households in the borough with one or more members in an identified special need group
- Just over 28% of households in the borough contain only older people, almost all are one or two person households, and over half live in properties with three or more bedrooms. In the social rented sector there are some opportunities to reduce under occupation
- Key worker households are more likely than average to be in owner occupation, and also record higher incomes than other households in employment
- An estimated 8,500 people in the borough aged between 21 and 35. Nearly 80% of these are employed, and over 30% live with parents
- The average age of recent first time buyers is 35, and they require incomes significantly above the borough average. Over 40% of these households spend more than a quarter of their gross income on their mortgage
- Lone parent households represent 5% of all households, but 23% of all households with children. Lone parents are more likely to live in social or private rented housing.

The issues relating to these client groups are considered later in section 4 of this Strategy, particularly, but not exclusively, in section 4.4.

### 3.6 Intermediate housing

The 2007 Housing Needs Survey identified a limited supply of intermediate housing in Weymouth and Portland. Intermediate housing includes properties rented at prices above social housing rent levels yet below market prices. It also includes shared equity and low cost homes for sale. Almost one third (30%) of the current shortfall of dwellings in the Borough is estimated to involve intermediate housing. Whilst there is a shortfall for all sizes of intermediate housing, the main shortfall is for one and two bedroom homes.

Knightstone Housing Association provides the MyPlace service which coordinates the sales of intermediate shared ownership housing across Dorset, Salisbury and South Somerset. There are over 400 households currently registered with MyPlace who have expressed an interest in shared ownership properties in the Borough.

### 3.7 Housing demand

There is significant demand for new homes in Weymouth and Portland. This is influenced by many factors such as increased life expectancy and household sizes getting smaller.

The Housing Needs Survey estimated that there is a current shortfall of 480 properties in Weymouth and Portland across all tenures. There was a slight over-supply of three and four bedroom privately rented properties, whilst the largest shortfall related to two bedroom private housing. Three quarters of those wanting to move in the next two years wanted either two or three bed accommodation.

### 3.8 Housing Delivery Targets

The emerging South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out the broad development strategy for the region. PPS 3 requires strategies to set out the overall housing figures for the region, broken down by housing market and local planning authority areas. The Panel Report dwelling requirement for Weymouth and Portland to 2026 is:

5000 in Weymouth urban area

600 in the remainder of the Borough

700 at Weymouth Urban Extension (located in West Dorset District)

This equates to 280 dwellings per annum requirement within the Borough itself.

At 31st March 2008, there were 1,460 dwellings with planning permission and 593 of these were under construction. In addition there are Local Plan housing allocations that could accommodate a further 190 dwellings. This high level of commitments has ensured a comfortable 5 year land supply for housing in the Borough, with a number of additional significant pipeline schemes in preparation or at planning application stage. A high level of development in the Borough is on previously developed land (98% at 31st March 2008). A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has been undertaken (July 2008) that identifies sites that are technically suitable, achievable and available to contribute to the medium and long term housing supply. Future housing allocations will continue to be made through the statutory planning process as part of the Local Development Framework. The extent and quality of environmental assets in the Borough does constrain the capacity for housing development generally.

The new National Indicator Set contains a number of performance indicators relating to housing supply (for example: NI 154 Net additional homes provided; NI 155 Affordable homes delivered; NI 159 Supply of ready to develop housing sites; and NI 157 Processing of planning applications). This allows housing delivery to be monitored against housing figures, alongside other local priorities through the new local performance framework. Some of these housing indicators are used as part of Dorset's Local Area Agreement (LAA) and proposed Multi Area Agreement (MAA)

### 3.9 Development Plan

The Development Plan comprises the Regional Spatial Strategy – Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) 1999 and the Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2005) which sets out the basis for land use and guides development in the Borough. The emerging Weymouth & Portland Local Development Framework (LDF) will eventually replace the Local Plan and will comprise the following documents that are programmed to be adopted in 2011:

Core Strategy

Weymouth Town Centre Area Action Plan

Pavilion/Ferry Terminal Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

A housing allocations document is not currently required or programmed, but this will be reviewed on an annual basis through the Annual Monitoring Report.

### **3.10 Homelessness**

A preventative approach has been established by the Council. Rather than processing homeless applications, accepting people as homeless, and placing people in temporary accommodation, early intervention takes place to find a solution prior to actual homelessness.

Weymouth and Portland has consequently seen a significant reduction in the number of formal homelessness applications received. There has also been reduced rough sleeping and reduced use of temporary accommodation. 39 households were accepted as homeless by the Local Authority in 2006/7 (compared to 92 in 2005/6), 57 households were in temporary accommodation at 31st December 2007 (compared to a high of 186 in March 2005). 4 households were in bed and breakfast accommodation at the end of December 2007, compared to 54 in June 2005.

### **3.11 Property types and sizes**

Around one fifth of properties in Weymouth and Portland are flats, (22%) which is slightly above the national (19%) and regional (17%) figure. However looking across the wider Housing Market Area both the urban areas of Dorchester and Weymouth have a higher proportion of smaller properties, either flats or terraced houses. The peripheral areas, however, are dominated by detached houses, which make up almost 39% of the dwelling stock.

A high proportion of recent developments and commitments are for flats in Weymouth & Portland which continue to meet the identified need for smaller 1 and 2 bed properties. On high value, constrained, previously developed sites there are often less opportunities for houses, rather than flats, and the opportunities for additional family housing are more likely to present themselves in suburban, peripheral parts of the Housing Market Area as a whole.

### **3.12 Dwellings for tourism use**

Weymouth and Portland has a strong tourism economy. Many homes are used for tourism and a fluctuating number of additional self-contained

properties are used for holiday lets. This affects the number of properties for residential use but is difficult to quantify because it is constantly changing.

### **3.13 People moving into the area**

There is a significant amount of inward migration to Weymouth and Portland especially from London and the South East (DCC 2007). Many of these are older person households moving to owner-occupied dwellings (Fordham Research 2007). There is also a significant inward migration from EU countries, particularly Poland.

### **3.14 Household size, overcrowding and under-occupation**

Nationally and locally, the average household size has decreased. The average for Weymouth and Portland is just over two people (DCC 2007).

An estimated 1.6% of households in Weymouth and Portland are overcrowded according to the national bedroom standard. This proportion is less than found nationally (2.5%). Overcrowding is more common in the rented sector (Fordham Research 2007).

In contrast, over a third of all households in Weymouth and Portland are under-occupied (38%) with more bedrooms than their minimum bedroom requirement. (Fordham Research 2007).

### **3.15 Empty homes**

There were 580 empty homes as at April 2007, 390 of which had been empty for more than six months (CLG 2007). This excludes second homes, holiday lets and properties which are empty but usually occupied by students. This compares with 426 empty for more than 6 months in neighbouring West Dorset. Properties may be empty for a variety of reasons such as in need of improvements/renovations, awaiting redevelopment or awaiting sale if the resident deceased. An Empty homes Strategy is to be developed during 2009/10.

### **3.16 Second homes**

The highest proportion of second homes is found in the South West region (NHF 2007).

2.6% of properties in Weymouth and Portland were second homes in 2007 which equates to approximately one in forty properties. This is just

above the South West average (2.25%) but below the Dorset average (3.37%).

Council Tax revenue (£50,000) collected on second homes has been used by this authority to invest in community issues. It is acknowledged that in itself this funding would not offer any significant opportunity to provide more affordable homes.

### 3.17 Private sector stock condition and Decent Homes

The Councils last Stock Condition Survey was carried out in 2004, and we are currently in the process of jointly commissioning a new one with Purbeck District Council. The results will inform our policies and strategies to tackle issues in the private sector.

The Government defines a Decent Home as one which has reasonably modern facilities, is in a reasonable state of repair and has effective heating and insulation (CLG 2006). The councils 2002 stock condition survey did not establish what proportion of the stock meets this standard but a new survey is currently being commissioned in 2008, and will aim to assess the level of Decent Homes.

The Government states that all social housing should meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. Around 95% of the Registered Social Landlord housing stock as at 2007 is Decent Homes compliant. In the private sector our policies are targeted at improving standards to Decent Homes Standards in line with Government policy. Our grants/loans policies are targeted at assisting vulnerable people.

### 3.18 Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

The Council actively promotes initiatives to improve energy efficiency and works with a number of partners to deliver improvements. The Councils existing Fuel Poverty Strategy, developed in 2004, is to be actively reviewed this year, in particular to consider the impact of recent fuel cost increases on delivering the objectives of the strategy.

#### Summary of main points:

- Opportunities to work closely with West Dorset District Council who with us form a Housing market Area
- Large private rented sector

- Small social rented sector
- Scope to develop more liaison with Registered Social Landlords across a wide range of issues e.g. intermediate housing, nominations, under occupation.
- Falling numbers of Right to Buy sales, and consequently reducing capital receipts
- Affordability is a concern
- Considerable unmet housing need for both general needs and supported housing
- Increasing need for Lifetime Homes
- Demand for affordable intermediate housing such as shared ownership
- Need for additional properties to meet demand
- Recommendation for Weymouth and Portland to build 280 new dwellings per year
- Limited capacity to provide new land for residential development, and the need for developer contributions impacts on property prices
- Most development is on brown field and windfall sites
- Effective homeless prevention approach already in place
- High proportion of new urban developments are flats
- High levels of under occupation
- Low levels of overcrowding
- Some empty homes
- Some second homes
- High number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
- Pockets of disrepair
- Difference in energy efficiency standards required for social and private sectors
- Continued need to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty

## Chapter 4. Where are we now in tackling the key housing issues for the borough?

For each of these key issues we consider what options are available to meet our priorities and which key actions we will focus on for this Strategy.

### 4.1 Shortage of affordable housing

#### Some definitions:

**Affordable housing** includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs cannot be met by the market. Affordable housing should:

- meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
- include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

**Social rented housing** is rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also include rented housing owned or managed by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Housing Corporation as a condition of grant.

**Intermediate affordable housing** is housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents, and which meet the other criteria set out above. These can include shared equity/ownership products, other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.

#### 4.1.1 The Housing Register, Allocations Policy and Choice Based Lettings

A review of the allocation policy has just taken place which aims to give greater emphasis to households with particular needs to be rehoused. At the same time we have written to all Housing Register Applications asking them to complete

a revised form which gathers more detailed information about their housing needs to allow better allocations of properties and monitoring of our allocation scheme.

The Council operates the Housing Register for the Borough, and in 2006 the Council introduced a Choice Based Lettings Scheme, Homechoice. All social housing vacancies are advertised each week enabling clients to bid or express an interest in vacant properties. Bids are sorted by a combination of Priority status and date order. The Homelessness Act 2002 and Sustainable Communities – Homes For All, require local authorities to adopt a choice based approach to letting social housing vacancies by 2010. In the first twenty months since starting, 485 properties have been advertised through Homechoice, and have attracted 12,401 bids. Of the 485, 117 were sheltered housing properties. Of the remainder the majority (161) were 2 bed roomed properties, 127 one bed roomed and 63 three bed roomed.

#### 4.1.2 Housing “local” people

Feedback from the consultation on the draft of this strategy noted concern from some respondents about the need to help “local” people. The housing legislation (Housing Act 1996) allows preference to be given to applicants with a “local connection”. Applicants without a “local connection” will only be considered for an offer of accommodation if there are no applicants within the Borough who have bid for the property in question. The only exception to this is where an applicant from outside the Borough has been awarded a priority card due to an exceptional need to move into Weymouth and Portland.

To establish a local connection, applicants or a member of their household must:

- Have lived in the Borough through choice for 6 months during the last year  
or
- Have lived in the Borough through choice for 3 years out of the last 5 years  
or
- Be working permanently in the Borough  
or
- Have close family who have lived in the Borough for the last 5 years  
or
- Have a special reason for needing to live here, for example the need to give or receive support.

In addition some housing for people with special needs, which receives government Supporting People (SP) funding cannot be restricted to people with a local connection only. This is a condition of the Government SP funding.

### 4.1.3 Updating our housing needs assessment

The 2001 Housing Need Survey identified an annual shortfall of 514 affordable housing units per annum. In the 2005 Housing Strategy we used the 2001 Housing Needs Survey as the basis for assessing an annual shortfall of 551 affordable housing units per annum. The latest (2007) Housing Needs Survey has reassessed the annual affordable housing need at 800 units per annum.

### 4.1.4 Availability of affordable housing

On average, over the last seven years, the Council has nominated households from the housing register to 268 RSL properties that have become vacant. In addition, an average of 60 new additional affordable homes each year have been also been added to the stock over that same period.

### 4.1.5 Loss of stock through ‘Right to Buy’

As shown in the table below, right to buy sales since 2000 have had a serious impact on the supply of affordable housing for rent. But numbers have now tailed off and the position has now stabilised.

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
Right to buy purchases	71	54	54	35	8	6	0	4

### 4.1.6 Shortage of ‘move on’ accommodation

The ‘silting up’ of supported housing due to a shortage of move on accommodation has been identified as an issue of concern during consultation with RSLs and in the Supporting People Strategy. The problem is a symptom of the general shortage of affordable housing in the borough.

The issue was taken into account when the Council reviewed its allocations scheme. When reviewing the impact of the new allocations scheme we will consider whether the approach of giving greater priority to people living in supported accommodation and recommended for move on to independent living has been effective. It is also a current target for local authorities in Dorset to

formulate an overarching countywide approach to “move on” and this will be developed for implementation in 2009.

The problem also highlights the need to provide more single person’s accommodation.

Given the general shortage of affordable housing we continue to work with other support agencies, enabling access to the private rented sector for this client group through use of rent deposits. And we also work with providers of Floating Support to promote flexible models of support to make best use of all housing stock.

### 4.1.7 Releasing under occupied social housing

To respond to the shortage of affordable housing in the short-term best use needs to be made of the existing stock. The Council’s Allocation Policy awards priority to households releasing under occupied social housing properties, and in the last 20 months 34 larger RSL properties have been released by a household moving to smaller accommodation. The Fordham 2007 Housing Need and Demand Survey estimated that in the social rented sector 217 older households were living in properties with at least 3 bedrooms, indicating an opportunity to reduce under occupation. We will work with RSLs to assess the amount of under occupation in their stock and consider how we can further encourage households to move

to smaller properties. A key message through feedback from tenants is that attractive alternative accommodation is a significant main stimulus to moving in such circumstances.

**Summary of main points:**

- Need for affordable housing outstrips availability
- Need to consider the issue of move on from supported housing
- Need to make best use of existing affordable stock e.g. under occupation
- Ensure our Allocation Policy assists making best use of stock

## 4.2 Delivering more affordable housing

### 4.2.1 New build affordable housing programme

The Council has a Housing Enabling role, to increase the amount of affordable housing in the Borough.

The Council actively supports and works with preferred partner Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to bring forward new housing developments. New developments in partnership with RSLs, particularly using the planning process, remain the most significant route to increasing the supply of affordable housing.

The table below shows additional (including acquired) units of affordable housing provided since 2000

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/7	2007/8
Rented	61	25	30	63	0*	113	22	65
Shared ownership	18	8	0	0	7	19		29
Homebuy				5	5			
Total	79	33	30	67	12	132	22	94

Note: For the years 2000/1 to 2003/4, Right to Buy sales exceeded the number of additional affordable homes provided.

The previous Housing Strategy set a target to produce at least 60 units of additional affordable housing each year, and this strategy proposes a revised target of at least 65.

### 4.2.2 Setting a Strategy target for annual delivery of affordable housing

Since 2000, an average of 59 additional affordable homes a year have been provided. This figure falls well short of the 800 affordable dwellings needed each year to meet local need, and realistically provision will never approach reaching the need identified.

Uncertainty over funding, and delivery by the market, makes the setting of annual targets for additional affordable housing very difficult. Taking into account the likely level of future resources, making an assessment of housing development proposals coming forward and known S106 planning agreements we have set ourselves a target for the life of this strategy to deliver at least 65 units per annum of affordable housing.

Having regard to the number of households on the Council's Housing Register, the numbers of homeless households in temporary accommodation and the limited resources available for new build affordable housing we consider that the Council's priority must be to provide affordable housing for rent. Shared ownership affordable housing does not meet the needs of the substantial number of homeless households currently living in temporary accommodation nor the majority of households in housing need on the Housing Register. The 2007 Housing Needs and Demand Survey (Fordham 2007) demonstrates, using the Government (CLG) model, the case for a requirement of an overall tenure split for new affordable housing provision of 70% rented and 30% intermediate.

Between 60-70% of the Housing Corporation's South West regional funding is to be targeted at "strategically significant cities and towns" (SSCTs) and for the period 2008 to 2011 around £20m of grant is targeted to be utilised in the Weymouth/Dorchester Housing Market Area. It is important to note that the provision of new affordable housing is subject to many external factors including the ability to access Housing Corporation grant, access to Supporting People revenue grant, land prices and grant levels. The average Housing Corporation grant rates per unit are now lower than previously. In the context of some developers paying over inflated amounts for land which has affordable housing constraints and obligations on it, this then impacts on the delivery of new affordable housing.

### 4.2.3 Planning and affordable housing delivery

The Weymouth & Portland Local Plan includes Affordable Housing Policy H7 which sets out the affordable housing requirements for all public and private sector housing developments, and is supported by the Local Needs Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) February 2006.

Policy H7 states that all sites of 9 or more dwellings or 0.3 hectares or more should contribute a minimum of 30% of units for affordable housing, and the SPG has additional requirements for Lifetime Homes. Provision should normally be on site and is negotiated through a Section 106 Agreement. Exceptionally off site provision or a financial contribution will be accepted. Affordable housing provided through the planning system is expected to be delivered without public subsidy. The SPG is programmed to be updated in 2008 to support and strengthen the delivery of more affordable housing through the planning system.

Affordable housing delivery through the planning process has averaged 64 dwellings per annum over the past 4 years, though some of these are 100% RSL developments. There are also a number of additional significant pipeline schemes in preparation or at planning application stage that include affordable housing.

#### **4.2.4 Councils having a greater financial role in directly supporting people to access housing**

The Government's Green paper, "Homes for the Future, more affordable, more sustainable", suggests that Councils could have 'a direct role in the building of new homes where it provides value for money'. This is an option that could be explored, but only by Councils retaining a housing stock, to supplement other means of providing affordable housing. In addition the Government is also being asked to look at a number of initiatives in the current economic environment ("credit crunch") including whether Councils can borrow more, and whether Councils could offer mortgages. No Government response to these suggestions has yet emerged, but such considerations would require significant amounts of Government financial support. Due to the challenging nature of the Councils financial position, it is currently not in a position to consider additional borrowing.

#### **4.2.5 Use of Council land and other land in public ownership**

The Housing Corporation recommends that Councils provide suitable land at nil or reduced costs to enable more affordable housing. Last year the Council agreed to release land at Moorfield Road for housing, and a number of sites have been identified for possible development during 2008-2011. An objective of the Dorset wide Local

Area Agreement in 2005-2008 was to make better use of sites within the ownership of public sector agencies for affordable housing.

#### **4.2.6 Intermediate housing**

The 2007 Housing Need and Demand Survey (Fordham 2007) supports, using the Government (CLG) model, a target of 70% affordable rented and 30% affordable intermediate homes. An increased emphasis on intermediate housing for sale is in line with Housing Corporation priorities, and will help the Council address the unmet demand for this tenure locally. The Fordham survey also provides a model for assessing the affordability of intermediate housing. Without this model, some shared ownership proposed in the Borough is still not able to be affordable to local households in need. Affordability of intermediate housing is an important consideration as more of it becomes available in the Borough. Private rented housing at intermediate rent levels is a tenure option that further work could be targeted at to consider how it could be expanded to meet local needs.

##### **Summary of main points:**

- Need to access Housing Corporation/Homes and Communities Agency grant for affordable housing
- Many factors influence ability to build new affordable housing such as grant rates and cost of land
- Predominant need (70%) for additional rented affordable housing
- Revised Strategy target to provide at least 65 additional affordable housing units per annum
- Need to revise Affordable Housing Planning Policy
- Council and other land in public ownership could be used for new affordable housing developments
- Assess the contribution intermediate housing makes to additional delivery



## **4.3 Tackling homelessness and maintaining reduced usage of temporary accommodation**

### **4.3.1 The Homelessness Strategy**

During 2007-2008 the Council has jointly reviewed its Homelessness Strategy as part of a countywide review. The priorities of the Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011 are-

- More effective use of temporary accommodation
- Improved access to appropriate homelessness services, particularly prevention services
- Tackling affordability
- Reducing homelessness through a variety of initiatives

The Homelessness Strategy (including a detailed Action Plan) can be viewed at: [www.weymouth.gov.uk](http://www.weymouth.gov.uk)

### **4.3.2 Housing and support**

There is a range of housing related support provided in the Borough for homeless people including accommodation based and floating support. Floating support is available for approximately 43 households in the Weymouth and Portland.

### **4.3.3 Homelessness prevention activities**

Several homelessness prevention activities are established in the Borough. These include a housing advice service, rent deposit scheme, homeless prevention fund, use of the private rented sector, early intervention preventing evictions, and joint funding a specialist debt counselling service.

The government is providing an annual grant of £60,000 for 2008-1011 to help fund preventative services, and a further £20,000 per annum over the same period to target Rough Sleeping (see below).

Three temporary tenancy support/private sector development posts in the Housing Advice team demonstrated that they could be funded through the savings that they make in reducing temporary accommodation costs and were made permanent in 2005.

### **4.3.4 Use of temporary accommodation**

Our use of bed and breakfast has reduced significantly from a high point of 85 households in November 2004 to an average of 6 households per week in 2007/8. Our gross expenditure on Bed and Breakfast accommodation has reduced in line with this improvement from over £600,000 a year in 2005/6 to under £100,000 in 2007/8.

A target of reducing the use of temporary accommodation by a half by 2010 was announced by the government in January 2005. This requires us to reduce the total number of homeless households in temporary accommodation for which the Council has accepted a 'homeless duty' from 157 to 78 by 2010.

We have currently met the government's target early (57 as at 31st December 2007) by being effective in our preventative work, increasing the supply of permanent social housing and by securing accommodation in the private rented sector as a settled solution to homelessness.

The Council and Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) lease and manage around 50 privately owned properties used as temporary accommodation for homeless families.

### **4.3.5 Rough sleepers**

A street count of rough sleepers is carried out in line with government methodology. In March 2008 this recorded four rough sleepers in the borough. This is a reduction from ten at the previous count in November 2006. A multi agency group meets to deliver and review a Rough Sleeper Action Plan for the Borough and is developing its work around actions to reduce the incidence of street homelessness, by working with those people who are either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.

Whilst some rough sleepers pass through the Borough in transit between the larger towns and cities, a number of the local street homeless population move between Weymouth and Dorchester in particular. In order to better understand and tackle this particular group, an assertive street homelessness outreach team (SHOT) worker is being jointly commissioned by the Borough Council and West Dorset District Council as part of a one year pilot project with the overarching aim of reducing rough sleeping levels to as near to zero as possible.

### **4.3.6 Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance and Discretionary Housing Payments.**

In April 2008 the government introduced Local Housing Allowance to replace Housing Benefit for all new claims in private sector housing. This involves direct payments to private sector tenants, and average rent levels set for property sizes rather than reference to an assessment of each property by the Rent Officer service. Partnership working with the Westway partnership Housing benefit team and others ensures full spending of the Boroughs Discretionary Housing payments budget, and arrangements are also in place to fast track claims for homeless households

#### **Summary of main points:**

- Need to implement the Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011
- Need to continue the homeless prevention approach
- Maintain lower usage of temporary accommodation for homeless households
- Need to address the issues of entrenched rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs which will require multi-agency commitment

greater independence. Dorset received a grant allocation of £9,665,842 in 2008/9. This total is expected to decrease further both locally and nationally over the next few years. The table below sets out anticipated expenditure and client group information for the Borough in 2008/9. Over 40% of the countywide budget supports services and clients in the Borough.

Whilst it is important to recognise the overlap between client groups, the greatest proportion of Supporting People spend is on services for people with learning disabilities (30%) followed by people with mental health problems (22%) and older people with support needs (15%). In terms of total units, the client group with the highest number of supported housing units is older people with support needs with over two thirds of the total.

## **4.4 Meeting the housing needs of a range of groups, and promoting independence and inclusion**

### **4.4.1 Housing Need and Demand Survey data.**

The Fordham 2007 Housing Need and Demand Survey asked households about special housing needs that they had. Key findings from this element of the survey estimated that over 6,000 households had one or more family members with an identified special need (22.3% of all households). These households were most likely to state a requirement for more support services in their homes.

### **4.4.2 Supported Housing**

Supporting People is a central government fund, administered at a County Council level, which provides housing related support for vulnerable people to improve their quality of life and enable

<b>Anticipated Supporting People expenditure in Weymouth and Portland 2008/9</b>				
<b>Client group</b>	<b>Annual contract value</b>	<b>% of total spend</b>	<b>Total units</b>	<b>% of total units</b>
Older people with support needs	£603,060	15	1,001	69
Frail elderly	£53,302	1	91	6
People with learning disabilities	£1,175,127	30	99	7
People with mental health problems	£858,598	22	80	5
Single homeless with support needs	£209,199	5	26	2
People with drug problems	£48,046	1	12	1
Offenders or people at risk of offending	£222,643	6	43	3
Young people at risk	£553,047	14	50	3
Women at risk of domestic violence	£81,961	2	6	0.5
Young people leaving care	£60,022	1	4	0.5
Floating support (for all 21 DCLG client groups)	Around 17% (£110,500) of Countywide contract (£650,000) referrals in W&PBC	3	43 (out of 253 Countywide referrals)	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£3,975,496</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,455</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Dorset County Council, Supporting People

The programme provides both floating support not tied to specific properties and onsite accommodation based support.

Detailed sector reviews continue for each client group to examine how services meet demands in order to inform future funding decisions.

Very little new provision specifically for supported housing needs is taking place. Because of the reductions in Supporting People grant, capital funding for new supported housing cannot be guaranteed revenue (Supporting People) funding. However, the countywide Supporting People commissioning decision making process, (within which the Council is represented), aims to align existing (and in the future, decreasing) expenditure on services with greatest needs, and some shifting of funding between client groups may occur.

#### 4.4.3 Older persons

A significant proportion of the borough's residents (over 25%) are over sixty years old and yet the

projected population growth rate is significantly higher than the regional and national averages due to net inward migration (Dorset County Council – The 2001 Census Data Book). The 2001 Census also records that between 1991 and 2001 Dorset's population aged 20-29 decreased by 23% while the proportion of those aged 50-59 increased by 44%. These population trends need to be recognised when planning to meet housing need for the future, as there is likely to be increasing demand for accommodation and services.

Over 40% of households in Dorset own their home outright, more than 10% higher than the national average. The proportion for Weymouth & Portland is 34.5%. With an aging population and a substantial proportion of households on low incomes (13% of the population in the Borough are in receipt of benefits- the highest figure in Dorset) high levels of home ownership presents its own challenges if private sector housing stock is to be maintained in a decent condition. In addition the models of traditional sheltered housing will need to be reviewed, if this type of accommodation

is to remain the home of choice for many older people. Small bedsit accommodation in particular is becoming less popular, and the expectations of our ageing society are changing.

A countywide suite of Housing Strategies relating to older people inform our operational work. The three developed so far in consultation with all Dorset local authorities, RSLs, PCTs, and a range of voluntary agencies, are the Sheltered Housing Strategy for Dorset (2006-2009), The Extra Care Sheltered Housing Strategy for Dorset (2007-2010), and the Home Improvement Agency Strategy for Dorset (2006).

Main objectives for each of these are:

### **Sheltered Housing**

- Sheltered housing is a home of choice.
- Buildings will be fit for purpose
- That there will be different models of support services available and not all will be linked to tenure.
- Staffing for sheltered housing will meet a quality standard set out under the Supporting People Programme but the pattern of staffing arrangements will vary according to the model of support service offered.
- Access to 24-hour emergency alarm service will be integral part of all sheltered housing in Dorset.
- That sheltered housing is an integral part of the community in which it is located and works to enhance well being and reduce social isolation.
- Sheltered housing will be an inclusive place in which to live.

### **Extra Care Sheltered Housing**

- Consult widely
- Raise the profile of extra care housing
- Identify and commit resources
- Undertake further needs analysis
- Develop a model for extra care housing for rural Dorset
- Ensuring principles of sound housing design are embedded in plans for extra care housing
- Utilising multi agency working to ensure balanced communities exist within extra care housing schemes

- Ensure care and support are delivered flexibly
- The future of extra care is informed and improved by the evaluation of past developments and models of service delivery

Within Weymouth and Portland two brand new extra care housing schemes have been opened recently, and the thrust for additional provision in the County is not currently focussed on the Borough.

### **Home Improvement Agencies**

- to ensure people have decent and safe homes
- to ensure people can heat their homes properly and efficiently
- to ensure income is maximised and fuel poverty is overcome.
- to ensure older people have a real choice of good quality housing suitable for their needs
- to ensure people can obtain adaptations to their homes if they need them
- to ensure older people can enjoy healthy and active lives
- to ensure the risks of older people falling are minimised
- to ensure a reduction in the need for residential and hospital care

The Weymouth and Portland Home Improvement Agency, Anchor Staying Put, is playing a major role in the delivery of this strategy locally.

## **4.4.4 Young persons**

### **Young Persons Housing Strategy**

A countywide Young Persons Housing Strategy 2008-2012 has been developed jointly by all the local authorities. It has been developed at the request of the Dorset Children and Young People's Partnership Board, and the key messages in the strategy are:

- Many young people cannot access affordable accommodation to rent or buy
- Additional tenancy and floating support is needed to assist in maintaining tenancies and preventing homelessness
- Development of more affordable housing options for young people is needed

- There is not enough supported accommodation to meet the needs of vulnerable young people, especially those with chaotic life styles
- Ensuring young people have sufficient education and information on housing options
- More information is needed on what young people actually want

Several supported housing schemes are funded in Weymouth and Portland for young people. This includes supported hostel accommodation, and floating support. The Council seeks to avoid the use of bed and breakfast for all young people, and Housing Advice staff also mediates with families to encourage young people to return home where it is safe to do so. For care leavers a supported lodgings scheme is in place and whilst teenage conceptions in Dorset are lower than the national average, there is nevertheless a tendency for teenage conception rates to be relatively high in Weymouth and Portland. There is one small scheme for teenage parents in Weymouth where residents can remain for up to 18 months. Young parents can also benefit from the floating support services available.

Whilst not great in number, there are particular issues for under-18 yr old teenage parents are that they cannot enter into a tenancy. This means that housing options are limited, unless a guarantor can be found. We continue to work with private sector landlords to maintain a supply of suitable accommodation. There is scope to review our joint protocols between the key agencies working with vulnerable young people with housing issues to help ensure appropriate and prompt access to information, options and housing services.

#### **4.4.5 Families with children**

It is recognised that mixed communities require an appropriate balance of households, including families with children. It is therefore important to consider their needs when developing new accommodation.

The 2007 Fordham Housing Need and Demand Survey considered the needs of three types of families with children; Lone parent households, households with young children and those with older children. Lone parents were found to be more likely to be living in social or private rented housing, were more likely to need to move in

the next two years, and slightly more likely to be overcrowded and also prefer to move to social housing. Families with younger or older children were significantly less likely to be living in unsuitable housing, were less likely to be overcrowded, less likely to want to move soon, and more likely to prefer owner occupation.

#### **4.4.6 Disabilities, Home Improvements and Adaptations**

It is a requirement that all new affordable housing developments meet internal and external access criteria, and Planning policy requires a quota of new dwellings to be produced to "Lifetime Homes" standards.

In addition the Council makes available Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) to people in properties in the private sector, to allow those with disabilities to have help towards the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue to live there.

During 2007/8 29 were improved using grants and 49 homes received Disabled Facilities Grant funded adaptations. The total expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants in 2007/8 enabling adaptations in the home was £386,000. Occupational Therapists assess the need for adaptations on all applications.

The Council's Draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy 2008-2011 also proposes schemes to address the following issues:-

- ensuring disabled people can adapt their homes so that they can live more independently
- making the best use of homes by bringing empty homes back into use
- increasing the number of decent homes occupied by vulnerable people
- reducing fuel poverty
- improving security and reducing accidents in the home
- improving energy efficiency

New ways of delivering these services, using loans as well as grants, are proposed in order to improve and stretch the use of limited resources. Some of the grants and loans are administered jointly with the local Home Improvement Agency.

Whilst many people with a learning disability in the Borough are living with family, Supporting People funds over £1m of housing support in Weymouth and Portland for approximately 100 such people

living in supported housing.

#### 4.4.7 Gypsies and travellers provision

Local Authorities are required to consult with and consider the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in their area. The Housing Strategy must identify how these needs will be met.

A Dorset-wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has been undertaken. Considering these findings, the Secretary of State has proposed that Weymouth and Portland needs to provide no permanent pitches (the only authority in Dorset without a proposed permanent pitch requirement) and 25 transit pitches by 2011. The figures are expected to be finally determined by the Secretary of State in December 2008. Identification and decisions about how this will be provided will then be progressed through the local planning process

#### 4.4.8 Domestic abuse

The last three years has seen an increased proportion of Domestic Violence cases against which action is taken. A proactive approach has been developed jointly with neighbouring authorities and agencies including the implementation of multi-agency coordination of individual cases. A refuge is located in the borough, floating support is available and funds can be provided under our Sanctuary Scheme initiative to create a "safe room" within the home if appropriate.

#### 4.4.9 Equality Standard

The Council has achieved Level 2 of the Equality Standard. The Council is embarking on a programme of work to review services and policies in order to establish whether the way in which services are delivered or designed has an unintended adverse impact on individuals or groups of people which results from their race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion. Where adverse impacts are identified, or where the Council sees there are ways in which it can deliver better services to these groups, actions for improvement will be set out in an improvement plan to accompany the assessment. We use the term Equality Impact Assessments to describe the record of this process. Impact Assessments are being undertaken within Housing Services to inform delivery of our services and identify the impact of our plans and Strategies. This Housing Strategy has been assessed prior to adoption by the Council.

#### Summary of main points:

- The 2007 Housing Need Survey suggests over 20% of households contain someone with an identified special need
- Supporting People funding is reducing
- Existing Supporting People funding is reducing
- Existing Supporting People funding distribution may not reflect greatest needs
- Older person households in Dorset are increasing, and immigration contributes significantly to this
- Many young people cannot access affordable housing
- Younger persons (age 20-29) numbers in Dorset are declining
- Suitable adaptations to homes can enable people to remain in their homes without the need to move
- Identified gypsy and traveller needs in the Borough are not currently met
- The Council could do more to identify and address the needs of minority groups

#### 4.5 Severe affordability problems for would be home owners

##### 4.5.1 House prices, earnings and key workers

Between 2001 and 2006 average house prices in Weymouth and Portland have risen by 91%, compared to 71.6% for Dorset, and 74.7% nationally. Whilst average property prices are relatively low for the County of Dorset, they are rising at a faster rate.

The 2007 Housing Need and Demand Survey has estimated that the average mean gross household income in the Borough to be £23,753 per annum. The median income is noticeable lower at £19,068 per annum. In all tenure groups (outright owners, owners with a mortgage, social renters and private tenants) incomes of households in the Borough are significantly lower than the national estimates.

Recent studies by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) (May 2003, "Can work - can't buy: Local measures of the ability of working households to become home owners" and "Affordability

differences by area for working households buying their homes - 2003 Update" October 2004) both placed Weymouth and Portland highly nationally, as an unaffordable area for first time buyers to buy, demonstrating high house price to income ratios. The earlier study showed that over 78% of households in the Borough had insufficient income to access owner occupation.

The Fordham survey also looked at the housing needs of key workers (defined as nurses and other NHS staff, Prison/probation staff, teachers, junior and retained fire fighters, Police officers, and social worker/educational psychologist/therapists.) This indicated that over 80% are currently owner occupiers and have significantly higher incomes than non key workers. Therefore 'Key worker' initiatives designed to assist home ownership for public sector employees in London and the South East are less likely to be an appropriate use of public subsidy in Weymouth & Portland.

#### **4.5.2 Housing to meet the needs of non-priority groups.**

In this Housing Strategy the Council recognises that its resources must be directed primarily into providing homes for vulnerable people and Strategy priorities are directed to this aim. However there is concern in the Borough that an increasing number of people in low paid employment, and not in priority housing need are finding it difficult to access housing that they can afford in Weymouth and Portland.

As owner occupation becomes increasingly out of reach for many households, more are remaining in the private rented sector. Growing pressure on private rented housing from those who would previously have bought their own homes means those households on low incomes and in receipt of benefits are finding it increasingly difficult to access private rented housing.

If families in this position are unable to find accommodation they can afford in the Borough they may choose to leave the area altogether. Demographic statistics indicate that in the two years 2001 to 2003 the number of people in Dorset aged 20-29 has reduced by nearly 25% (nearly 10,000).

The rapid loss of people of this age group across Dorset has significant implications for the future prosperity and sustainability of the sub-region. Other Council strategies and priorities, such

as development of the local economy, and intermediate housing provision (for instance intermediate rented housing, shared ownership/equity, and low cost housing for sale), can play an increasingly important role in addressing these emerging trends. We will continue to explore these options and delivery of affordable housing is currently providing shared ownership homes.

#### **Summary of main points**

- Significant house price to income differential
- Key worker accommodation not a priority for the strategy
- Scope to explore and develop the role that intermediate housing can play, including shared ownership/equity and low cost housing for sale

### **4.6 Poor quality private sector housing stock**

#### **4.6.1 Private sector Housing Renewal Assistance**

A new Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy covering the period 2008/2010 will take effect from the summer of 2008 and form an integral part of the Council's Housing Strategy. The aims of this revised Policy are:-

- Ensure disabled people can adapt their homes and live independently.
- Make the best use of homes by bringing empty properties back into use.
- Increase the number of decent homes occupied by vulnerable people.
- Reduce fuel poverty.
- Improve security and reduce accidents in the home.
- Improve energy efficiency.

#### **4.6.2 Quality and condition of housing stock**

The Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy will help address the local stock condition, financial aid to home owners and qualifying tenants and the enforcement of legal standards to secure safe and improved home environments for all occupiers.

The Council will be working to increase the number of decent homes occupied by vulnerable people through the new grants and loans policy.

The Council is reviewing and updating its Landlord Accreditation Scheme which will recognise landlords who are committed to providing a quality service as well as quality accommodation. The scheme aims to encourage good practice and give tenants confidence in their landlords. The Council intends to increase annually the number of landlords and properties within the scheme.

The Council will be commissioning a new House Condition Survey during 2008/9.

### 4.6.3 Energy efficiency

Improvements to energy efficiency of local homes is being promoted through partnership working and the new Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy which introduces new and additional financial support in a drive to help improve the average SAP rating of properties within the Borough.

### 4.6.4 Fuel Poverty

The Council is to update and review its Fuel Poverty Strategy this year. The new strategy will endeavour to increase awareness, improve housing conditions and help ensure that vulnerable occupiers have access to all benefits to which they are entitled. The Government's Warmfront Grants will be supported by the Council's new Affordable Warmth grant. The review of the Strategy will in particular consider the impact of recent rises in fuel costs.

### 4.6.5 Empty Homes

The Council recognises that bringing empty properties back into residential use can provide much needed homes for the Borough. Whilst levels of empty homes are not high the Council recognises there is more it could do. A target to return 6 empty properties to use this year has been set, but at current resource levels is challenging. The Empty Homes Strategy, to be developed next year, will set out what Council wants to achieve, and will identify resource implications to deliver on that ambition.

### 4.6.6 Housing design

The Council has a design guide which helps encourage good practice in the design of all new

developments. Design standards for affordable housing through Housing Corporation funding are higher than the regulations which apply to the private housing sector.

#### Summary of main points

- A new Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy, aimed at improving the quality, security and energy efficiency of the housing stock, is in place from 2008-07-29
- The Landlord Accreditation Scheme requires review
- A House Condition Survey to inform strategic decisions is to be commissioned in 2008
- The Fuel Poverty Strategy is to be updated and reviewed
- An Empty Homes Strategy needs to be developed

## 4.7 Maximising use of resources

### 4.7.1 Capital and Revenue Resources

The Housing Strategy so far has analysed and researched housing issues in the Borough in the context of the wider housing agenda. In this section of the strategy we identify the resources, both capital and revenue, and others such as human resources, that it is anticipated will be available to the Council over the life of the strategy.

Resources can then be matched to the needs and strategic aims the Council has identified. Importantly too, those same needs and aims, along with the Council's ambitions for housing, can also act as drivers for securing additional future resources for housing.

### 4.7.2 Budget setting, and decision making,

In recent years the Council has faced increasing pressure on its resources. Having taken corrective action to deal with severe budget problems identified in 2002/3, the Council now faces the prospect of having a budget shortfall of several hundred thousand pounds per annum between 2009 and 2012 at current service levels. This requires the Council to consider, as part of its financial strategy, a range of options including efficiency savings, alternative service delivery methods, reviewing service levels, income



generation and asset disposals. It is against this background that the budget for this Housing Strategy is compiled.

The Council prioritises capital bids to ensure that resources are targeted at projects that achieve its Corporate Priorities. 'Meet the housing needs and aspirations of the Borough' is the second Corporate Priority. Revenue resources are determined by the Council's decisions about relative pressures and priorities on services.

### 4.7.3 The Capital Budget

The anticipated housing capital programme for the financial years 2007/8 to 2009/10 is set out below:

<b>Capital Budgets</b>	2007//8 £000s	2008/9 £000s	2009/10 £000s
Affordable Housing	294	500	500
Private sector renewal	552	757	757
<b>Total Capital Programme</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>1257</b>	<b>1257</b>

The programme has been built up on the basis that of known and projected capital resources. Each funding source carries a set of legal constraints and level of confidence that it will be available. The capital funding assumed to be available to fund the capital programme is as follows:

<b>Resources 2007/8 to 2009/10</b>	2007//8 £000s	2008/9 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<b>Affordable Housing</b>			
Private Sector Housing Renewal Grant	294	0	0
Capital receipts/ borrowing	0	500	500
<b>Private Sector renewal</b>			
Private Sector Housing Renewal Grant	142	282	282
Disabled Facilities grant	253	286	286
Capital receipts/ borrowing	157	189	189
<b>Total resources used</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>757</b>	<b>757</b>

N.B. The Private Sector Housing Renewal Grant funding regime for this element of the Council's capital programme is currently being reviewed by the Regional Housing Board. It was previously indicated that 70% of the 2008/9 grant would be allocated, whilst the remainder would be subject to a new annual bidding process.

The introduction of the new bidding process has been delayed until 2009/10 which makes predictions for future years uncertain. The capital programme has been built up on the basis of prudent levels of funding.

### 4.7.4 Capital support for new affordable housing

Affordable housing is an investment priority for the Council. The Councils direct financial support for new affordable housing is projected as £500k per annum for 2008/9 and 2009/10, but this commitment is kept under regular review as capital receipts from Right to Buy sales are declining.

Other ways the Council can promote new affordable housing are:

- development of effective partnerships with partner Registered Social Landlords and the co-ordination of funding bids to the Housing Corporation
- ensuring the maximum level of affordable housing is realised from planning applications, either through the direct provision of dwellings or through Section 106 cash contribution
- developing a new Affordable Housing Planning Policy as part of the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) to increase the provision of affordable housing
- ensuring that the opportunity to promote affordable housing is considered whenever the Council develops or disposes of surplus land holdings
- acting as an advocate for Weymouth and Portland in bidding for regional housing funds
- ensuring the inclusion of affordable housing needs in regional and local land use planning

The national investment in new affordable housing has been significantly increased for the period 2008-2011 through the Housing Corporation grant available. The Council has set ambitious targets

for the development of new affordable housing within the borough. The Council's capital support provided in 2007/8 for affordable units completed totalled £156,000 in relation to 22 units.

In line with government guidance (Communities and Local Government 2006), the Council has committed land at a cost that enables affordable housing development. In 2007 one site was transferred for affordable housing providing three and four bedroom houses on Portland.

#### 4.7.5 Promoting independence in the private sector

The capital support offered by the Council is through the provision of grants. These grants provide support for a range of issues including home improvement, energy efficiency, home security and adaptations.

The Council is now developing alternatives to providing cash grants and has been investigating the use of equity loans, to enable funds to be recycled again in future years. This innovation is in response to the growing number of 'cash poor, asset rich' property owners, and to address the limited amount of funds available as grants.

The breakdown of the allocation of grants in 2007/8 is set out below:

Private Sector finance support 2007/8	£000s
DFG	411
HMO licensing	67
Private sector renewal	74
Total	552

#### 4.7.6 Revenue Funding:

The Council provides the following revenue support alongside capital:

- Paying Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance to assist people on low incomes to meet their housing costs.
- Providing preventative homelessness initiatives

#### 4.7.7 Providing preventative homelessness services

The revenue funded Housing Advice team provides housing advice, tackles homelessness, accesses

emergency accommodation, administers the Housing Register and allocates empty social and affordable housing where the Council has nomination rights.

The Council also funds rent deposits to some households accessing private sector accommodation, to prevent homelessness. And in addition grant funding is provided to external agencies to deliver homelessness and preventative services- currently this contributes to funding a Debt Counselling Service at the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Women's Refuge, and will shortly be funding a rough sleeper assertive outreach project.

#### Summary of main points

- Despite financial pressures, the Council continues to invest in affordable housing schemes, reflecting the high priority it gives to this area
- In the private sector, the Council provides grants, and more recently loans, to meet identified needs and priorities
- Revenue support is provided to: pay housing benefits/Local Housing Allowance to support low income households, and to provide preventative homeless initiatives

### 4.8 Improving access to information about housing services and options

#### 4.8.1 Access to services

It is vital that people have easy access to services. The Access to Services Audit Commission inspection (2008) rated Weymouth and Portland Borough Council as a whole as 'Fair' with 'Promising Prospects of Improvement'.

#### 4.8.2 Access to housing advice

The Housing Advice Service has been relocated, in 2007, back into the main Council Offices, from its previous location at the Ferry Terminal. This has enabled more "joined up" linkages to other departments (e.g. Private Sector Housing, Housing Benefits) in the building, making our services more convenient for personal callers. The Housing Advice Centre also sends staff to hold regular "surgeries" at a number of locations across the Borough, where some residents will find it difficult or inconvenient to visit the main office. Surgeries are held at the

women's refuge, Surestart, Waves (The Childrens Society), and The Portland Centre. A suitable location in Littlemoor is still being sought. A system of booked appointments operates at the office as well as "drop in" for clients who need to be seen at short notice. A wide range of advice leaflets are also available.

### **4.8.3 Access to information and diversity**

The service is continually looking at ways to improve access to and delivery of its services. Minimising waiting times, improving our range of leaflets, large print and different language options, talking books, easier web access for choice based lettings, and web interactivity options and opportunities are all examples of areas for development. More information about which groups access our services, and feedback about the services we deliver is constantly sought, and will help identify potential hard to reach groups where engagement with our services could be improved. Our monitoring of these issues is limited, but there

is scope to significantly develop this, and take appropriate identified actions over the life of the Strategy.

#### **Summary of main points**

- Housing Advisory services are accessible and convenient, and delivered at a range of locations in the Borough.
- Good range of advice literature available
- There is scope for improving the way services are delivered
- There is scope to review the information and literature and how it is made available
- Better use of web based solutions and interactive technology in delivering information and services should be explored and delivered
- Diversity issues need to be better understood and responded to

## Chapter 5. Action plan

This section sets out the actions we plan to take to meet our strategic aims:

### Strategic Aim- Provide more affordable housing

Action	Detail	Performance target / outcome	Target date	Lead Responsibility (and partners)  SR = possible sub-regional opportunity	Resources (some estimated)	Links with other strategies / plans
1.1 Increase supply of affordable housing through Housing Corporation grant	Work with preferred development RSL partners to bid for capital within the Housing Corporation bidding period 2008-2011 on an ongoing basis	To bid when needs are identified.  Complete at least 65 additional units of affordable housing per year, including supported housing units, and general needs including move-on.	Ongoing	Housing Policy Enabling and Projects Manager.  (Housing Corporation/ Homes and Communities Agency, RSLs and Affordable Housing Providers)	Staff time	Weymouth and Portland Community Plan  SW Regional Housing Strategy (strategic aim 1)
1.2 Increase supply of affordable housing through section 106 agreements	Section 106 agreements with developers are negotiated for provision of affordable housing on relevant sites.	To achieve minimum 30% affordable housing requirement from relevant sites, meeting local planning policy	Ongoing	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager, Planning Manager.  (Developers, RSLs and Affordable Housing Providers)	Staff time	Affordable Housing Planning Policy  Weymouth and Portland Community Plan  Regional Spatial Strategy  SW Regional Housing Strategy (strategic aim 1)  Local Area Agreement

1.3 Identify Council owned sites for affordable housing development	Additional affordable housing could be developed on Council land, either as infill or redevelopment	30 additional units	2012	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager, Property Manager Finance Manager Planning Manager	Staff time	Asset Management Plan Capital Strategy
1.4 Secure a level of capital funding for affordable housing	Land and other asset disposals may be appropriate to provide funding specifically for additional affordable housing	Establish programme to 2012	Ongoing and annual	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager, Property Manager Finance Manager	Staff time	Asset Management Plan Capital Strategy
1.5 Develop 70% social rented affordable and 30% intermediate affordable housing (e.g. shared ownership)	Intermediate housing helps address housing needs including first time buyers and also means that some mixed tenure (e.g. social rented) may be more financially viable	Secure the tenure split in relevant planning permissions and s106 agreements	Ongoing	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager, Planning Manager (RSLs and Affordable Housing Providers)	Staff time Housing	Regional Spatial Strategy Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Regional Housing Strategy
1.6 Seek to develop additional models of affordable shared ownership which are more affordable	Additional models could include low initial equity shares, open market shared ownership options, mortgage to rent and options to staircase down	Agree alternative model(s)	2009	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager, (RSLs and Affordable Housing Providers)	Staff time	

1.7 Update the Local Needs Housing	An updated SPG needs to be in place until the new Core Strategy is adopted, to support and strengthen the delivery of more affordable housing through the planning system.	Updated SPG or similar planning guidance in place	2009	Planning Manager Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager	Staff time	Regional Spatial Strategy Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Local Plan
1.8 Investigate opportunities for the Council to more directly intervene to provide affordable housing	The findings from the investigation will help inform the way forward and any changes as a result of the Housing Green Paper and Housing and Regeneration Bill	To agree approach	2009	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager Finance Manger	Staff time	
1.9 Proactively respond to the threats and opportunities of the credit crunch	The credit crunch is offering some threats (e.g. developers stopping building) and some opportunities (e.g. RSLs acquiring market housing opportunities for affordable housing).	Threats identified and minimised, opportunities identified and maximised	2009	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager (RSLs)	Staff time Financial, dependent on outcome	

1.10 Improve the monitoring of housing nomination rights in the private sector.	There is a need to improve monitoring/ auditing of private sector grants tied to nominations.	Monitoring demonstrates nominations are maximised.	2009	Housing Advice Manager Environmental Health Manager	Staff time	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy
1.11 Ensure allocation policy makes best use of social housing stock	Monitoring of our policy should demonstrate it is effective ( e.g. assisting move on, reducing under occupation)	Monitoring demonstrates policy assists in making best use of stock.	2009	Housing Advice Manager	Staff time	Housing Allocation Policy
1.12 Engage with Dorset Authorities, Poole and	A new Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Dorset has been agreed in 2008. The housing targets within the new Multi Area Agreement (MAA) for the greater Dorset area are under negotiation. These will agree targets to be pursued in partnership, some of which will have reward grant implications	Ensure housing input as part of the LAA and MAA	June 2008 and ongoing	Joint responsibilities for Council and partners SR	Staff time	Local Area Agreement Multi Area Agreement

**Strategic Aim- Improve the quality and energy efficiency of all housing**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Performance target / outcome</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility (and partners)</b>  <b>SR = possible sub-regional opportunity</b>	<b>Resources (some estimated)</b>	<b>Links with other strategies / plans</b>
2.1 Implement the agreed actions in the Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy	A detailed action plan is in place to address the repair, maintenance, safety and energy efficiency of private sector housing stock, together with the funding of adaptations	Meet 95% of the agreed targets on time each year	Ongoing up until 2012	Environmental Health Manager (Anchor Staying Put)  SR	Staff time	Grants/loans budget Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy  Dorset Pathfinder
2.2 Increase proportion of private sector housing reaching Decent Homes Standard (DHS)	The government target is that 70% of all private sector vulnerable households should be living in properties that meet the DHS	Increase the proportion of vulnerable people in the private sector living in Decent Homes	Ongoing	Environmental Health Manager (Anchor Staying Put)	Staff time	Grants/loans budget  Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy  Decent Homes Standard
2.3 Bid for Private Housing Renewal grant money to maximise addressing property improvement requirements	The allocation of this grant for 2009/10 will be significantly reduced and likely to be subject to a bidding process. Joint bid planned with other Dorset authorities.	Submit bid as required, with other Dorset partner authorities	Annual	Environmental Health Manager  SR	Staff time	Grants/loans budget Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy  Fuel Poverty and Empty Homes Strategies
2.4 Agree and implement an Empty Homes Strategy	A strategy is needed to agree the activities and resources used to bring empty homes back into use. This will include reference to Private Sector Renewal Money, and enforcement	Approved Empty Homes Strategy including references to statutory powers and resources used	2009	Environmental Health Manager	Staff time	Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy



2.5 Bring empty homes back into use	Performance with regard to the number of homes which are empty in Weymouth and Portland could be improved, but may have resource implications.	To increase the number of empty homes brought back into use year on year (target of 6 for 2008/9)	Ongoing	Environmental Health Manager	Staff time	Grants/loans budget Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy
2.6 Housing Association stock in the Borough to achieve 100% Decent Homes Standard (DHS)	Monitor RSL progress in ensuring social housing stock meets the DHS	All stock to meet DHS	2010	RSLs	Staff time	RSL capital programmes
2.7 Undertake a new stock condition survey for the private sector	Work is needed to update the 2004 survey. A survey is being commissioned jointly with other Dorset authorities to produce data enabling a sub-regional overview	Survey to be commissioned	2009	Environmental Health Manager	Staff time Funding agreed £45,000 budget	Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy Fuel Poverty and Empty Homes Strategies
2.8 Update and review the Fuel Poverty Strategy, and deliver action plan	The current strategy (developed in 2004?) should be reviewed in the light of e.g. progress made in improving thermal insulation of properties, and the recent increases in fuel prices	Revised Strategy in place, and delivery of Action Plan targets	2008	Environmental Health Manager (Anchor Staying Put Dorset Energy Advice Centre Other Dorset LAs) SR	Staff time Grants/loans budget	Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy Dorset Energy Strategy
2.9 The Landlord Accreditation Scheme requires review and promotion	The existing scheme has been running since 2004  The operation of the scheme, promotion and regulation need review.  An Action Plan will be developed from the review	Additional landlords and properties in the scheme on an annual basis.  Deliver the targets in the Action Plan	2008	Environmental Health Manager (Private sector landlords) SR	Staff time Grants/loans budget	Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy Dorset Accreditation Scheme

### Strategic Aim - Provide sustainable solutions to homelessness

Action	Detail	Performance target / outcome	Target date	Lead Responsibility (and partners)  SR = possible sub-regional opportunity	Resources (some estimated)	Links with other strategies / plans
3.1 Implement the agreed actions in the Homelessness Strategy	A detailed action plan is in place to address to prevent and tackle homelessness	Meet 95% of the agreed targets on time each year	Ongoing up until 2012	Housing Advice Manager.  Joint responsibilities for Council and partners	Staff time SR?	Homelessness Strategy  Central government grant  LA homelessness budget  Supporting People  Weymouth and Portland Community Plan

### Strategic Aim - Meet the housing needs of particular groups

Action	Detail	Performance target / outcome	Target date	Lead Responsibility (and partners)  SR = possible sub-regional opportunity	Resources (some estimated)	Links with other strategies / plans
4.1 Develop centralised referral arrangements across the Supporting People programme	Multi agency referral panels to ensure appropriate referrals and prioritisation of people in need of housing related support services	Strategically focussed use of supported accommodation and services	Referral process in place during 2009	Housing Advice Manager.  (Supporting People Agency Partners)	Staff time SR	Dorset Affordable Housing Task Group target
4.2 Implement a move-on strategy for Supporting People services	Some residents are not able to move on from supported accommodation when they need/are ready to	People needing to move on are supported to do so in a timely manner	Move on Strategy in place during 2009	Housing Advice Manager.  (Supporting People Agency Partners)	Staff time SR	Dorset Affordable Housing Task Group target

4.3 Ensure Supporting People funded services are prioritised to meet identified needs (to include all areas of disability including mental health)	Distribution of current Supporting People budget may not be targeted towards greatest needs.	Reconfiguration of budget expenditure, when re-commissioning services, to reflect greatest and identified needs across all client groups.	2010	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager (Supporting People Agency Partners)	Staff time SR	Supporting People Strategy Equalities Impact Assessment
4.4 Ensure that at new affordable housing schemes are developed with some units that meet the Wheelchair/Mobility standard	There are a number of wheelchair users in housing need, and insufficient new affordable housing is being developed for this need	Through negotiation provide an additional 6 wheelchair/mobility units	2012	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager (Planning Manager)	Staff time	
4.5 Consider options for the early introduction of Lifetime homes requirements for all for new homes, including affordable housing development	Lifetime homes can adapt to changing needs of occupiers without need to move. Government intention that by 2013 all homes will be constructed to these standards (all social housing by 2011)	Achieve early implementation of Governments Lifetime Homes targets.	By negotiation, in advance of Government implementation dates	Planning Manager Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager	Staff time	"Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods. A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society" 2008 Government strategy Code for Sustainable Homes (Level 6 requirement)
4.6 Identify and deliver transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers as required	Current needs are not met, and are now identified and required in the Regional Spatial Strategy	Requirements met through Local Development Framework, or via a Dorsetwide Development Plan Document on Gypsies and Travellers	2011	Planning Manager Supporting People SR	Staff time SP	Regional Spatial Strategy

4.7 Ensure accessible information provision for BME communities and EU migrants	Where need is evidenced, information targeted at these groups should be provided	Information provided, following evidence of need	2011	Housing Advice Manager	Staff time Translation costs	Diversity/ Equality Policies Service Plan
4.8 Ensure adaptations and services are provided to assist households with special needs to remain in their own homes	The 2007 Housing Need Survey suggests over 20% of households contain someone with an identified special need  Suitable adaptations to homes can enable people to remain in their homes without the need to move	Funding and staff time maximised for delivery of this action,	Ongoing	Environmental Health Manager Home Improvement Agency Other partner agencies	Staff time SP funding DFG budget	Private Sector Housing Policies  Countywide Home Improvement Agency Housing Strategy
4.9 Implement and support the agreed actions in the Countywide Older Persons Housing Strategies	Older person households in Dorset are increasing. A range of housing strategies are in place to respond to this.  i.e Sheltered Housing, Extra Care Housing, Home Improvement Agencies.  Action plans are associated with each strategy	Meet 95% of the agreed targets on time each year	Ongoing to 2012	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager  (Supporting People Partner Agencies)	Staff time	Countywide Older Persons Housing Strategies
4.10 Implement and support the agreed actions in the Countywide Young Persons Housing Strategy 2008-2012	Many young people cannot access affordable housing and services  An action plan is associated with this strategy	Meet 95% of the agreed targets on time each year	Ongoing to 2012	Housing Advice Manager  (Supporting People Partner Agencies)	Staff time	Countywide Young Persons Housing Strategy 2008-2012

## General Actions

Action	Detail	Performance target / outcome	Target date	Lead Responsibility (and partners) SR = possible sub-regional opportunity	Resources (some estimated)	Links with other strategies / plans
5.1 Agree and apply Value For Money methodology for services	Benchmarking exercise to establish VFM of services has begun	Benchmarking exercise completed, VFM issues fully understood and plan in place to deliver best VFM	2009	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager Housing Advice Manager Finance Manager	Staff time	Council Financial Strategies/ Plans Service budget Service Plan
5.2 Diversity issues need to be better understood and responded to	The Council and the Service could do more to identify and address the needs of "hard to reach" and minority groups	Diversity issues investigated, understood and consideration given to how delivery of services can address issues.	2010	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager Housing Advice Manager Environmental Health Manager (Equalities Group)	Staff time	Diversity/ Equality Policies Corporate Plan Service Plan Equalities Impact Assessment Improvement Plan
5.3. Investigate how service delivery could be enhanced by using the internet, both for the distribution and availability of information, and for interactive delivery of services.	More information about more of our services could be provided. More of our business could be transacted online, and joint advertising/ literature could be developed with other authorities	Service delivery review completed and service enhancements introduced where possible.	2009	Housing Policy, Enabling and Projects Manager Housing Advice Manager Environmental Health Manager SR	Staff time	Service Plan

## Monitoring and Review

Progress on delivery of the Actions contained in the Action Plan will be monitored by the Briefholder on a six monthly basis. There will be an Information Report provided for all Members on a six monthly basis giving this detail, including areas of progress, slippage and areas for development. Should

aspects of the Strategy be identified as needing a significant change of focus, a reassessment will take place.

### Summary of main points

- Need to monitor the Action Plan closely and report progress regularly to Councillors

## **Appendix 1: Housing Related National Indicators.**

### **The National Indicator Set**

The new National Indicator Set, introduced April 2008, includes the following indicators (denoted with prefix NI) to enable local authorities (includes District, County and Unitary authorities as appropriate) to measure performance on the delivery of housing and support services:

#### **NI 138 Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood (PSA 17)**

Satisfaction levels reflect the areas that people live in and the suitability of their housing. It is a particularly important contributor to overall independence and well-being: as they get older, people become increasingly more likely to spend more time in their homes and in their immediate neighbourhoods.

#### **NI 141 - Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living**

aims to measure the extent to which housing related support helps people move on in a planned way to more independent living. The indicator will measure the number of people receiving a Supporting People service, who have moved on from supported accommodation, as a percentage of total service users who have left the service.

#### **NI 142 - Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living**

the number of service users who have established or are maintaining independent living (ie living in their home or in long stay accommodation), as a percentage of the total number of service users who have been in receipt of Supporting People services during the period.

#### **NI 156 - Number of households living in temporary accommodation**

will monitor progress towards halving the number of households in temporary accommodation provided under the homelessness legislation from 101,000 households in quarter 4 2004, to 50,500 households by 2010. This indicator will measure the numbers of households living in temporary accommodation provided under the homelessness legislation.

#### **NI 158 - Percentage of decent council homes**

will measure the number of non decent council homes and the proportion this represents of the total council housing stock. This is being calculated in order to demonstrate the progress towards making all council housing decent.

#### **NI 160 - Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services**

will measure local authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services. Local authorities that have retained all or part management of their housing stock (including those with ALMOs) are required to report on this national indicator.

#### **Other (wider housing) related indicators**

There are also (below) a wider number of indicators to which housing interventions will contribute and authorities are expected to report on them

#### **NI 143 - Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence**

is intended to help improve accommodation outcomes for ex-offenders and will also contribute to the wider reducing re-offending objective. The indicator will measure the percentage of offenders under probation supervision (ie serving a community order, or on licence), living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence.

#### **NI 145 - Adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation**

is intended to improve settled accommodation outcomes for adults with learning disabilities. The indicator will measure the percentage of adults (aged 18-64 ) with learning disabilities known to Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities (CASSRs) in settled accommodation at the time of their assessment or latest review.

#### **NI 147 - Care leavers in suitable accommodation**

measures accommodation outcomes for young adults aged 19, formerly in care, who were in suitable accommodation. This will help minimise the risk of care leavers being in unsuitable housing or becoming homeless.

### **NI 149 - Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation**

is intended to improve settled accommodation outcomes for adults with mental health problems. The indicator will measure the percentage of adults (aged 18-69) receiving secondary mental health services and on the Care Programme Approach in settled accommodation at the time of their most recent assessment, formal review or other multi-disciplinary care planning meeting.

### **NI 154 - Net additional homes provided**

aims to encourage a greater supply of new homes in England to address the long term housing affordability issue. The indicator will measure the net increase in dwelling stock (self-contained unit of accommodation) over one year.

### **NI 155 - Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)**

aims to promote an increase in the supply of affordable housing. The indicator will measure the total supply of social rent housing and intermediate housing (ie housing at prices or rents above those of social-rent but below market prices or rents.) This can include shared equity products and pitches on Gypsy and Traveller sites owned and managed by local authorities or registered social landlords.

### **NI 157 - Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'major', 'minor' and 'other' application types**

will ensure local planning authorities determine planning applications in a timely manner. The indicator will measure the percentage of planning applications dealt with in a timely manner in the four categories: major applications - within 13 weeks, minor applications - within 8 weeks, other applications - within 8 weeks, County Matter applications - within 13 weeks

### **NI 159 - Supply of ready to develop housing sites**

will assess the degree to which authorities are maintaining a five year supply of deliverable sites for housing through their Local Development Framework (LDF) as required by Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3).

### **NI 170 - Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than five years**

will measure the success of local authorities in facilitating the re-use of brown field land as a contribution to regeneration and economic growth. This indicator will measure the proportion of the area of developed land that is vacant or derelict for more than five years.

## Appendix 2 - Progress made on Housing Strategy 2005-2008

### Progress/outcomes against Action Plan.

#### Priority 1. Provide sustainable solutions to homelessness

Action	Progress /outcome
1.1 Review allocation scheme to understand barriers and blockages and produce recommendations for changes.	Completed. The allocation policy has been reviewed as part of the choice based letting scheme introduced in August 2006. It has been further reviewed and revised in 2008.
1.2 Investigate how other local services are impacting on local housing demand (e.g. drug and alcohol rehabilitation services, local prisons).	Some work has been done with i) Women's Refuge, to work in closer partnership to resolve clients housing issues, and ii) DCC adult services to undertake survey in 2008 of needs of Learning Disability clients in supported lodgings. iii) Protocols developed with offender management agencies.  Other research not completed with e.g. care leavers, mental health agencies, and drug and alcohol agencies
1.3 Introduce a choice based lettings scheme.	Completed. Introduced, August 2006
1.4 Assess effectiveness of prevention fund and produce recommendations for any changes in its use.	Completed. Analysis of the expenditure carried out. Continues to be a key and very effective homeless prevention tool. No changes recommended.
1.5 Carry out rough sleeper counts.	Completed. Annual counts carried out.
1.6 Understand the causes of rough sleeping locally and investigate best practice elsewhere.	Completed. Conference held in March 2006 and action plan developed
1.7 Develop and implement an action plan to reduce rough sleeping.	Completed. Action Plan finalised October 2006, implemented and reduction (from 10) to 4 rough sleepers achieved by 2008.
1.8 Assess effectiveness of current advice and prevention services and develop and implement an improvement plan.	Completed. Improved Information and Advice leaflets available.  Satisfaction with service being monitored.  Increased numbers of successful prevention cases year on year. Funded debt counselling service run by CAB.
1.9 Assess the housing needs of young people and develop and implement an improvement plan.	Completed. Worked with other LAs to develop a Countywide Young Persons Housing Strategy, published in 2008.
1.10 Assess the housing needs of single homeless people and develop and implement an improvement plan.	Work on this was not completed due to other commitments /priorities in the unit  However work has been done to assess and deal with issues affecting rough sleeping. NB links to 1.7
1.11 Assess the effectiveness of current mediation services and develop and implement an improvement plan.	Completed. Housing Advice Mediation Officer appointed September 2006.
1.12 Implement the homelessness strategy action plan.	Completed, the few outstanding issues were incorporated into this Housing Strategy Action Plan



1.13 Establish a not for profit letting and property management agency for low income and homeless households.	This action has not been progresses beyond initial assessment, which showed a significant cost to establish. However a Management Scheme for landlords was made available and promoted.
1.14 Continue to develop links with health professionals.	Completed. Staff maintained developing links with health professionals. Some joint training events held and attended.  Small homeless prevention budget utilised by Health Visitors.
1.15 Continue to work with groups supporting ex-offenders.	Partnership working developed with agencies, including Lantern, Gateway Project (we have accessed some Gateway rent deposit funding)  Involvement of WPBC tenancy support.  See also 1.2 (Protocols developed with offender management agencies)
1.16 Continue to work with crime and disorder reduction partnership on reducing anti-social behaviour.	Community Safety liaison with HAC over problem properties and rough sleepers.  See also 1.7 re Drug Action Team funding for outreach worker.  HAC engage with CDRP regularly on any cases where anti social behaviour (or potential anti social behaviour) is an issue

## Priority 2. Improve access to and conditions for vulnerable people living in the private sector

Action	Progress /outcome
2.1 Carry out survey to determine number of private sector homes that do not meet the decent homes standard.	Procurement issues have delayed survey to 2009.
2.2 Increase the number of private homes that meet the decent homes standard, are energy efficient and contribute to improving standards in the private sector.	No progress on establishing baseline (see 2.1 above), however HRA grants and Affordable Warmth Grants have been granted totalling £109,000 relating to 60 properties (averaging £1,817 per property.)
2.3 Clarify nature and extent of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)	Completed. Footfall survey of Borough identified c928 HMOs
2.4 Licence all houses in multiple occupation. (NB Those which are eligible under the Housing Act 2004)	Mandatory HMO licensing scheme came into force in April 2006. 55 properties have been licensed and £53,500 received in fees. A further 23 properties are being processed. A programme of inspections is ongoing.

<p>2.5 Bring at least 5 empty properties back into use annually.</p>	<p>Completed. BV64- "Number of private sector dwellings returned into occupation or demolished during the year as a direct result of action by the council."</p> <p>The figures reported by the Council for this Audit Commission Best Value Indicator were:  2005/6- 12  2006/7- 7  2007/8- 7</p>
<p>2.6 Develop better links between housing benefits / housing services / private landlords to support access into the private rented sector for vulnerable people.</p>	<p>Rent in advance, deposit and Bond schemes have assisted '00s of households.</p> <p>Landlord accreditation scheme promoted and expanded.</p> <p>Admin support provided to Landlords Association.</p> <p>Seminars and newsletter for private landlords.</p> <p>We maintain a private sector leasing scheme.</p> <p>Private sector is our best homeless prevention tool, so we constantly work to develop and maintain good links.</p> <p>HAC has access to HB Academy system to assist advice/service given to clients and landlords.</p>
<p>2.7 Continue to work with other agencies to develop supporting people services.</p>	<p>We continue to work with DCC and other agencies on reviewing/ commissioning services.</p> <p>Countywide Housing Strategies developed for some specific groups.</p>
<p>2.8 Consider needs of gypsies and travellers following receipt of government guidance.</p>	<p>Completed. Following research commissioned by Dorset LAs, and incorporated into the Regional Spatial Strategy proposals, targets are now being finalised. Will be included in Local Development Framework.</p>
<p>2.9 Better understand if there are individuals or groups that do not currently have equal access to our housing services.</p>	<p>Annual rolling programme (introduced in 2005) has collected ethnic background baseline data for all applicants. Housing service plan target to commence ethnic monitoring of service access and outcomes from September 2006.</p> <p>Service has considered barriers to access to services from excluded groups, and is implementing solutions.</p> <p>Also being addressed as part of the Council wide "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group"</p> <p>Two seminars attended on issues around migrant workers.</p>
<p>2.10 Develop and implement an improvement plan to make sure housing services are equally accessible to all.</p>	<p>Offices are designed and accessible for disabled people, and have a hearing loop.</p> <p>Outreach surgeries are held at WAVES, Portland, Surestart and Womens Refuge. Still to secure a location in Littlemoor.</p> <p>We also offer large print, Braille and LanguageLine.  -also see actions in 2.9</p> <p>RSLs are required under DDA to have policies to ensure equality of access to their services and properties.</p> <p>Equalities Impact Assessments completed for parts of the Housing Service and for some policies/Strategies.</p>

<p>2.11 Assess the effectiveness of current housing services for women affected by domestic violence and develop and implement an improvement plan.</p>	<p>Completed. Sanctuary project established in the Borough 2007 following consultation with relevant agencies (e.g. DWOP and emergency services). With financial contribution to project from our Homeless Prevention Fund.</p> <p>We continue to develop our work with DWOP and the Womens Refuge.</p> <p>We continue to develop our work with the Countywide DV Strategic Group.</p> <p>Borough wide DV Forum established.</p>
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### Priority 3. Deliver more affordable housing

<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress/outcome</b>
<p>3.1 Better understand who local key workers are.</p>	<p>Completed. Research Seminar on "Key Workers and affordable housing in Dorset" sponsored by the Dorset Affordable Housing Task Group held in May 2006.</p> <p>Housing Need and Demand Survey 2007 has established and analysed key worker housing needs. Little evidence of recruitment and retention problems for key worker employers, and key workers in the local economy are relatively better paid.</p>
<p>3.2 Better understand sub-market housing solutions.</p>	<p>Completed. Housing Need and Demand Survey 2007 has established and analysed sub market housing solutions. Consideration of sub-market (intermediate) housing solutions continue to be explored as part of ongoing negotiations with landlords/developers/RSLs</p>
<p>3.3 Encourage more people in houses bigger than they need to move into smaller accommodation.</p>	<p>Priority given to under-occupying tenants when allocating extra care housing units at Foyle Bank and Westhaven in Sept 2005, resulting in a number of additional vacancies.</p> <p>Choice Based Lettings scheme gives priority to households under occupying, and outcomes are monitored at regular CBL allocations review meetings.</p> <p>Housing Need and Demand Survey 2007 has established that the vast majority of under occupied properties are in the owner occupied sector, mainly occupied by older people.</p>
<p>3.4 Provide at least 60 units of new social housing per year.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Delivery outcomes:</p> <p>2005/6- 132</p> <p>2006/7- 22</p> <p>2007/8- 94</p>
<p>3.5 Promote shared ownership options more actively.</p>	<p>Completed. Government appointed agency MyPlace now responsible for promotion. They have a comprehensive marketing strategy including Radio/media/literature. Promotional events held in the Borough. 19 new shared ownership units 2005/6 and 29 in 2007/8. Also some resales of existing shared ownership each year too. Demand has been strong.</p>

3.6 Improve communication between and within the Council.	<p>Cross service officer groups meet on Action Plan delivery.</p> <p>Cross service officer group has developed Direct Leasing Scheme.</p> <p>Affordable Housing Working Group (Housing, Planning, and Legal) meets regularly.</p> <p>Housing/Environmental Health officers work actively with landlords.</p> <p>Cross service officers' group work on developing s106 agreements.</p> <p>Finance and housing have agreed arrangements for urgent issue of cheques to be used for responsive homelessness prevention work.</p> <p>HAC office relocation to North Quay from Ferry Terminal site has offered additional opportunities to improve communication with other units.</p>
3.7 Ensure delivery of CPA balancing housing markets improvement plan.	Housing Strategy Action Plan incorporated this.

### All priorities

<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress/outcome</b>
4.1 Carry out housing needs survey.	Completed, 2007
4.2 Annual review with stakeholders to monitor progress.	No annual review event will held but regular quarterly engagement with stakeholders at the Weymouth and Portland Housing Forum.
4.3 Review of housing strategy following housing needs survey.	Timing of Housing Need Survey (in 2007) resulted in interim review not taking place, but has fully informed development of 2009-2012 Housing Strategy.
4.4 Maximise any opportunities resulting from Olympic bid.	<p>We worked proactively to maximise opportunities, which involved discussion with property investors prepared to invest in the Borough to lease properties to the council to provide properties for people in housing need.</p> <p>Some developments are progressing with a clear Olympic context-affordable housing opportunities have come forward as part of this. Otherwise, limited opportunities have been identified.</p>
4.5 Improve working with other councils.	<p>Joint working examples:</p> <p>Joint managerial work with Poole (to 2006)</p> <p>Countywide Housing Needs Survey/Housing market Assessment work with Districts/Unitaries</p> <p>Negotiations with West Dorset DC on reciprocal nominations agreement on certain properties</p> <p>Work with other Districts and DCC co-ordinator on domestic violence initiatives.</p> <p>WPBC represented on all countywide housing and housing related forums (including LAA.)</p> <p>Joint development of several countywide specialist housing and related strategies</p>

## Appendix 3 - Details of consultation and feedback gained

Over a 4 week period in August/September 2008 a public consultation on the Draft Housing Strategy took place: A large number of stakeholders were consulted, (over 55 local statutory, commercial, representative and voluntary organisations and groups, Government Office, Housing Corporation) who have an interest in housing and housing issues in the Borough. In addition a group of applicants on the Housing Register, and over 1,100 residents on the Council's Community Consultation Panel, were also contacted.

As a result over 350 responses were received, summarised as follows:

<b>Overall feedback summary:</b> (cumulative number of responses to all questions)
<b>Agree:894 (85%), Disagree:88 (8%), No response: 75 (7%)</b>
<b>Feedback to individual Questions:</b>
Question 1) Do you agree with the Long Term Vision for housing in the draft Housing Strategy 2008-2012?
Agree: 87%, Disagree: 8%, No response: 5%
Question 2) Do you agree with the four Strategic Aims for housing in the draft Housing Strategy 2008-2012?
Agree: 84%, Disagree: 10%, No response: 6%
Question 3) Do you agree with the eight Key Issues to address the Strategic Aims for housing in the draft Housing Strategy 2008-2012?
Agree: 83%, Disagree: 7%, No reply: 10%
Question 4) Do you agree with the actions in the Action Plan in the draft Housing Strategy 2008-2012?
Agree: 86%, Disagree: 14%, No reply: 0%

Consultees were also invited to make additional comments about their concerns, or other things the Council should be doing. Over 550 comments were made, and the theme of the top 10 most repeated comments are listed below, along with the Council's response and how the feedback will be incorporated into our Housing Strategy and Actions.

<b>Overall feedback summary</b>	
<b>Theme of most additional comments:</b>	<b>Response to comments:</b>
Encourage and help people who are prepared to accept their responsibilities and help themselves (64 comments)	Legislation sets out who Local Authorities are required to assist - it is not within the Council's discretion to choose to help those who "deserve" to be helped.

Focus of assistance should be on local people, not outsiders (59 comments)	General need and sheltered affordable housing is made available to people with a local connection. Supported Housing, funded by Government resources, cannot impose a local connection requirement. New section 4.1.2 "Housing local people" inserted into Strategy setting out the legislation and "local connection".
Deal with the issue of second home ownership and empty homes- which should both be available for use to assist the Boroughs housing problems (34 comments)	Action 2.4 of the Strategy Action Plan is to "Agree and implement an Empty Homes Strategy"- these issues will be considered as part of this.
More help needed with energy efficiency initiatives and advice. (23 comments)	Action 2.8 of the Strategy Action Plan is to "Update and review the Fuel Poverty Strategy". This will look at these issues - and include information delivery via the Councils Website.
Too many flats being built, and not enough houses (19 comments)	The higher proportion of 1 and 2 bedroom flat developments is currently meeting the demand for this type of housing in Weymouth and Portland. Many brownfield sites particularly in the Town Centre lend themselves to flat development by nature of the housing densities and financial viability.
More affordable housing needed (14 comments)	Section 4.2 of the Strategy addresses this issue, and the twelve Actions in section 1 of the Strategy Action Plan aim to deliver more affordable housing.
Make use of "brownfield sites" and retain more green and open spaces (14 comments)	The national target for development on previously developed (brownfield) land is 60%. Weymouth and Portland consistently achieve brownfield development in the region of over 90%+. The 2008 WPBC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment supports this by being able to identify 15 years housing potential using predominantly brownfield sites. – Link to housing targets paragraph of Housing Strategy.
Where will all the resources come from? (N.B. These comments were particularly in response to the Vision Statement, which by its nature is aspirational) (12 comments)	Section 4.7 of the Strategy sets out the resource issues/implications.
More help for young people needed, particularly to retain them in the area (11 comments)	The Dorset Young Peoples Housing Strategy 2008-2012 addresses these issues, and Action 4.10 of the Housing Strategy Action Plan is to implement the agreed actions in the Young Persons Housing Strategy.
Ensure infrastructure is in place (roads, schools, surgeries etc) if there is more development (9 comments)	Despite extensive current planning consents for housing on Portland, future development as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy prioritises 5,000 new houses for Weymouth and 600 for Portland to 2026. Current evidence suggests that there will not be an initial demand for new infrastructure provision across the Borough but any that may be required could be easily accommodated over the next 20 years.

## Appendix 4 – Glossary of housing terms

Affordable Housing	Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs cannot be met by the market. Affordable housing should:  meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.  include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
Approved Development Programme (ADP)	One element of the Regional Housing Pot, administered by the Housing Corporation and used to fund social housing.
Black & Minority Ethnic (BME)	Black and minority ethnic persons/ households
Brownfield land	Land which has been previously developed
Capital expenditure	The cost of providing homes- the term covers permanent assets such as land, buildings, roads and sewers.
Capital Programme	The Council's plan on how it will spend money on capital projects during the current and future years.
Capital receipts	Money from land or property sold by local authorities
Capital resources	The amounts of money available to finance the Capital Programme. They include such things as credit approval, revenue contributions, and a percentage of capital receipts
Choice Based Lettings	Choice based lettings are lettings policies that enable households to exercise greater control in deciding where they wish to live.
Decent Homes Standard	A Government defined standard aimed at improving the condition of housing stock. To be defined as 'decent' a home must: meet the current statutory minimum for housing (the 'Fitness Standard'); be in a reasonable state of repair; have reasonably modern facilities and services; provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (effective insulation and efficient heating). All social housing is expected to meet this standard by 2010.
Development Partner	The Borough Council has selected a number of Preferred Development Partners to support to access Housing Corporation grant for building new affordable housing. The Partners are Bournemouth Churches Housing Association, Knightstone Housing Association, Magna Housing Association, Signpost Care Partnerships, Signpost Housing Association and Weymouth and Portland Housing.
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	A means tested grant paid to the owner of a property to enable it to be adapted for a disabled person.
Enabling role	Councils have an enabling role to increase affordable housing in their area by working with Registered Social Landlords and others. All Councils retain this role irrespective of whether they retain ownership and management of their housing stock.
Extra care Sheltered Housing	Housing which provides extra support whilst enabling people to live as independently as possible. Usually with a scheme manager on site to call to offer help and support, compared to ordinary sheltered housing, there are higher levels of care and support provided, as well as (usually) meals. If this accommodation were not available, some residents might otherwise need residential or nursing care.
Floating Support	Support provided to tenants and owners of general needs housing to enable them to live independently in the community

Fuel Poverty	A household which needs to spend more than 10% of its income on all fuel use in order to comfortably heat their home would be defined as being in fuel poverty.
Government Office for the South West (GOSW)	Government Office South West represents the interests and drives the activities of a number of 10 central Government departments in the South West.
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	A public body, sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), whose role is to fund Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in England. Created in 2009 it replaces the funding role previously undertaken by the Housing Corporation which it replaces. See also Tenant Services Authority and Housing Corporation.
Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs)	Not-for-profit organisations who help homeowners and private sector tenants who are older, disabled or on low income to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their homes, enabling clients to remain in their own home, safe, secure, warm and independent.
Homebuy	Government introduced scheme to help people get a foot on the property ladder through low cost home ownership. Aimed at tenants of RSLs councils and other households in housing need, it includes New Build Homebuy and Open Market Homebuy.
Housing Act 2004	The Act introduces changes to Right to Buy policy; the HMO licensing scheme; Home Information Packs; the Housing Health and Safety Rating system, and; a new requirement on local authorities to assess the particular housing needs of gypsies and travellers.
Housing Association (HA)	See registered social landlord (RSL)
Housing benefit	Financial help to enable tenants on low incomes in all tenures to pay their rent.
Housing Corporation (HC)	A public body, sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), whose role is to register, regulate and fund Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in England. In 2009 it will cease to exist, with its funding role taken over by the Homes and Communities Agency, and its regulatory role taken over by the Tenant Services Authority.
Housing Health and Safety Rating System	The HHSRS will replace the current Fitness standard and will establish minimum legally enforceable condition standards for all housing
Housing Market Assessment	A study into the long-term housing demand, supply and needs of a market area. A market area can be defined, in simple terms, as the geographic area within which the majority of households move.
Housing need	Households who lack their own housing or who live in unsuitable housing, and who cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market.
Housing Register	A list of people who have applied to the Council for housing.
Intermediate affordable housing	Intermediate affordable housing is housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents. Affordable housing should:  meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.  include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.  These can include shared equity/ownership products, other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.
Key Workers	Those workers who are essential to the provision of public services and who are employed by a public body. Defined by Government, key workers include nurses, teachers, police officers.



Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)	An RSL, which has received a wholesale transfer of housing stock from a local authority. Also used to describe the process of transferring large-scale housing stock to an RSL.
Lifetime Homes	Lifetime Homes have a number of design features that ensure a new house or flat will meet the needs of most households with an emphasis on accessibility and design features to make homes flexible enough to meet changing requirements.
Local Area Agreement (LAA)	Document required for each Local Strategic Partnership defining priority targets to be achieved over a period. Targets are to be achieved through partnership working to meet local needs. LAA will include housing targets.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	A portfolio of updateable documents which will provide the local planning authorities policies for meeting the community's aims for the future of their area. They will replace the Local Plan, and guide all future development in the Borough, including residential development.
Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	The new system of Housing Benefit for private tenants introduced nationally in April 2008. It defines rent levels for the area in which a person lives, and according to how many people live with them./ Payments to private tenants will be made direct to the tenant unless the benefits team agrees that the tenant is likely to have difficulty paying their rent.
Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO)	A general term covering shared ownership schemes, Voluntary Purchase Grant (VPG), Right to Acquire (RTA) and the Homebuy scheme.
Move on	Movements of residents both within and out of supported housing into independent living. It can also include people who need to move back into more supported environments.
New Build Homebuy	Scheme allowing households to share the ownership of a property with a Registered Social Landlord, through part renting and part buying.
Nomination rights	Where the Council has agreed the right to nominate tenants from its Housing Register, to Registered Social Landlord properties which become empty.
Open Market Homebuy	Scheme allowing households to part buy a property on the open market, and get a loan from the government for the rest.
Planning gain	Planning permission may require a developer to provide additional community benefits. For some larger housing sites this may be in the form of affordable housing units, or an off site financial contribution to provide such housing elsewhere (see also Section 106 Agreement)
Planning Policy Guidance Notes (in particular PPG3)	Issued by central Government setting out its national land use policies for England on different areas of planning. These are being replaced by Planning Policy Statements. PPG 3 covers housing policies.
Priority Need	Under the Homelessness legislation, the Council has a greater duty to people accepted as being in priority need. This includes people with dependent children and people who are vulnerable.
Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	When companies enter into a PFI agreement, they agree to build large-scale capital projects and lease them back to the public sector over a period of 30 years or more. Housing PFI is intended to be an alternative to direct procurement, stock transfer or Social Housing Grant for providing investment in social housing.
Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000	The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 came into force on Monday 2 April 2001. It strengthens and extends the scope of the 1976 Race Relations Act; it does not replace it. The legislation seeks to prevent discrimination directly or indirectly in any functions carried out by public authorities.
Regional Housing Pot	Total capital funds that the Government has to invest in the region.

Regional Planning Guidance (RPG)	A strategy and framework to manage the future distribution of land-use activities with a region over the medium to longer term. Regional Planning Guidance for the South West was issued in September 2001. From September 2004 this is now the Regional Spatial Strategy.
Regional Spatial Strategies	Statutory frameworks for regions covering a 15-20 year period, within which local development frameworks and transport plans can be prepared.
Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	Term introduced by the 1996 Housing Act applying to all housing associations or not for profit companies registered with the Housing Corporation to provide social housing. Only such organisations were eligible to receive social housing grant.
Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002	Order giving new powers to local authorities regarding the provision of private sector renewal assistance.
Right to Buy (RTB)	Policy that enables local authority tenants to buy their homes at a discounted price.
Scheme Design Standards (SDS)	A set of standards published by the Housing Corporation setting out the essential and desirable standards for social housing grant (SHG) funded property acquired or developed by registered social landlords (RSLs).
Section 106 Agreement (S106)	A legally binding agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, rather than a condition of planning permission, that secures facilities or aspects of a development.
Shared ownership	Properties where households can part rent and part buy, usually from a Registered Social Landlord.
Sheltered Housing	Homes for older people, usually with a scheme manager on site or on call to offer help and support.
Social rented housing	Social rented housing is rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also include rented housing owned or managed by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Housing Corporation as a condition of grant.
South West Housing Body (SWHB)	A Regional Housing Body has two main functions: i) to plan, implement and monitor the Regional Housing Strategy ii) to advise Ministers on the allocation of the Regional Housing Pot. The South West Housing Body is part of the Regional Assembly.
South West Regional Housing Forum.	The Regional Housing Forum is a stakeholder group which represents organisations involved in housing in the South West. It is used as a sounding board to debate topical issues, giving an insight into the challenges faced and providing a voice for housing interests in the region. This feedback is used by the Regional Assembly to better inform its decision-making.
Sub regional	Working with partners beyond the Council's geographical boundaries, across the region and County.
Supported Housing	Schemes for particular client groups requiring additional management support or care, e.g. people with learning difficulties, young at risk, frail elderly etc. Previously referred to as special needs housing.
Supporting People	General term used to cover the programme of reform of funding support services for vulnerable people to improve their quality of life and independence, providing people with housing related support services to remain independent or gain independence in their own home. Funding is met by a specific grant paid by central Government, administered by local authorities in partnership with NHS bodies and probation services.

Sustainable Communities	Sustainable communities are places where people want to live work and relax. They are inclusive, safe and are of the right size, scale and density to support a vibrant range of social, economic and cultural uses. They have well designed inter- connected streets, parks and other public space. Local people should feel engaged and able to influence the planning, design and long-term stewardship of their community. Guidance on how to create such places is contained in the 'Urban Design Compendium' published by the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships 2000.
Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future	Comprehensive programme of action announced in February 2003 to take forward Government policies to tackle deprivation and shortage of affordable housing and deliver sustainable communities for all. The £22 billion package represents a critical step change in delivering the supply of high quality, affordable housing; reforming the supply of high quality, affordable housing; reforming the planning system; reversing the causes of decades of low demand and abandonment; and ensuring all social housing reaches a decent standard by 2010. Also known as the Communities Plan.
Temporary Accommodation	Housing provided on short term licence or tenancy for homeless people waiting to find a permanent home.
Tenant Services Authority (TSA)	A public body, sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), whose role is to regulate Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in England. Created in 2009 it replaces the regulatory role previously undertaken by the Housing Corporation which it replaces. See also Homes and Communities Agency, and Housing Corporation.
Under occupation	Household circumstances, when the bedroom space standard capacity is not being fully utilised by those who are resident.