

# Peterborough Draft Housing Strategy 2011 - 2015



Cabinet  
November 2011



## Foreword

Welcome to the draft of our new Housing Strategy, which sets out the council's plans for housing in Peterborough from 2011 until 2015.

Peterborough is a city with huge ambitions. Our vision is simple; to create a bigger and better Peterborough, where sustainable growth brings with it opportunities that will improve the quality of life of its residents, help preserve our natural environment, and create vibrant and cohesive communities. Good quality housing is fundamental to this vision; the standard of our accommodation is pivotal to our health, our wealth, our aspirations and our life-chances.

The Housing Strategy is intended to benefit everyone who lives in Peterborough. It does not only focus upon addressing housing need, but it also focuses upon the role that housing will play in meeting the economic, social and environmental aspirations of the city. This Strategy is directly relevant to the future of housing in Peterborough, which affects all of its residents.

In producing this draft strategy we have identified four overarching objectives for the housing agenda in Peterborough for the period until 2015. These are;

- To support the delivery of substantial yet truly sustainable growth
- To secure the regeneration of and improvements to Peterborough's housing stock
- To meet existing and future housing need
- To create mixed and sustainable communities

These objectives are underpinned by a range of key priorities for action, including the need to increase the supply of prestige and affordable homes, support the accommodation requirements of our fledging university, reduce levels of rough sleeping, and meet the housing needs of those with disabilities and other vulnerabilities. This draft strategy contains a range of ideas and initiatives designed to help us address these priorities. However, we are seeking your help, your view and your ideas on alternative and/or additional ways on to address these issues for inclusion in the final document.

Details of how you can submit your comments are shown over the page. We really do value your input on this important document and look forward to receiving some great ideas. With your help we can help to shape Peterborough' housing agenda over the next four years.

We look forward to hearing your views.



**Cllr Marco Cereste**  
Lead of the Council and Cabinet Member for Growth,  
Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Business  
Engagement



**Cllr Peter Hiller**  
Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods  
and Planning

## Consultation Preface

The Peterborough Housing Strategy is a Major Policy item for the Council. As a statutory document, it sets out the Council's policies, commitments and programme for the period 2011-2015 for a wide range of Housing matters, including:

- How we will assist those in housing need, such as the homeless and those living in fuel poverty
- Our priorities for delivering new homes, including prestige and affordable homes
- How we will regenerate and improve existing housing stock
- How the housing agenda in Peterborough will contribute towards our key strategic aims as a Local Authority over the next four years

This consultation period provides an opportunity for you to provide us with your views on the draft document.

### Consultation history

The draft Housing Strategy has been prepared in consultation with a wide range of partner agencies. The objectives of the Draft Housing Strategy were drawn up in consultation with a steering group of key stakeholders, including representatives of housing-related council departments, local housing associations, private developers, NHS Peterborough and the private rented sector. This steering group was formed following the completion of a 'stakeholder identification' exercise designed to identify the key partners that would hold an interest in formulating the Strategy.

### How to respond

We welcome your comments at this important stage. Any comments will help inform the final selection process.

- **Consultation Portal Web Link**

[http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/housing/housing\\_strategy\\_team.aspx](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/housing/housing_strategy_team.aspx)

- **Making comments**

Whilst we prefer it if you submit comments on-line (see above) the email address for comments is: [housing.strategy@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:housing.strategy@peterborough.gov.uk)

The postal address for comments is:

Housing Strategy Team  
Peterborough City Council  
Stuart House East Wing  
St John's Street  
Peterborough  
PE1 5DD

- **How to make your comments effective**

If you require further clarification on any points raised in the draft Housing Strategy, then please do not hesitate to contact the team via the contact details above, or via phone on 01733 864055. For links to a range of organisations that may be able to assist you in preparing comments on the Draft Strategy, visit <http://www.cih.org/links/index.html>

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# Draft Peterborough Housing Strategy 2011-15: Executive Summary

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Peterborough is a city with huge ambitions. Peterborough City Council's vision is simple; for a bigger and better Peterborough, where sustainable growth brings with it opportunities that will improve the quality of life of its residents, helps to preserve the environment, and helps to create vibrant and cohesive communities. Good quality housing is fundamental to this vision; the standard of our accommodation is pivotal to the health, wealth, aspirations and life chances of Peterborough's residents.

## • Why does Peterborough need a Housing Strategy?

The Peterborough Housing Strategy is a Major Policy item for the Council. Under the Local Government Act 2003 the Council is required to produce a strategy that sets out the council's policies, commitments and programme for a wide range of housing matters, including:

- How it will assist those in housing need, such as the homeless and those living in fuel poverty
- Its priorities are for delivering new homes, including prestige and affordable homes
- How it will regenerate and improve existing housing stock
- How the housing agenda in Peterborough over the next four years will contribute towards the key strategic aims of the Local Authority

The Housing Strategy is intended to benefit everyone who lives in Peterborough. It does not only focus upon addressing housing need, but it also focuses upon the role that housing will play in meeting the economic, social and environmental aspirations of the city. This Strategy is directly relevant to the future of housing in Peterborough, which affects all of its residents.

This Strategy will cover the four-year period from 2011 to 2015. The policies emerging from the Strategy will be monitored and reviewed annually with our partners to ensure that they remain relevant to the housing agenda in Peterborough. This process will lead to the production of an annual report that will set out progress made against each policy objective.

## Housing policy in context

### • National Policy overview

There are several key reoccurring themes that run through national housing policy in the UK. One of the most dominant themes is that of 'sustainability'. Planning Policy Statement One (PPS1) sets out the Government's policy objectives for ensuring wider sustainable development and growth, and states that all types of development, including housing should ensure social progress, effective protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources, and maintain high levels of economic growth and employment.

Other key themes of national housing policy include:

- Aiming to improve housing affordability by increasing supply
- Ensuring a wide choice of homes to meet a range of needs including opportunities for home ownership
- Ensuring the creation of mixed and sustainable communities

These themes are predominantly set out in Planning Policy Statement Three (PPS3); a major policy document that sets out how the Government will implement its strategic housing objectives through the planning system.

In addition to these overarching policy objectives, successive governments have also legislated for a range of specific measures designed to address particular national housing issues. The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a requirement for all Local Authorities to adopt a strategic approach towards the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. This focus upon addressing homelessness has been bolstered by the introduction of the government's target to eliminate entrenched rough sleeping in England by 2012. Recent Government policy has also focused upon ways to address the housing challenges posed by an ageing population; the Government Strategy for an ageing population, entitled 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods', proposes amongst other measures that all new homes will be built to a nationally recognised standard for accessibility and adaptability by 2013 (known as the 'Lifetime Homes Standard').

Continuing on the theme of sustainability that is set out in PPS1, the Energy Act proposes to introduce a scheme known as the 'Green Deal'. This government-backed but privately funded scheme will potentially allow households to carry out energy efficiency improvements to their home at no upfront cost, helping to address Government priorities such as alleviating 'fuel poverty' and reducing domestic carbon emissions.

Finally, arguably the most significant recent changes to housing policy are presently passing through parliament as part of the Localism Bill. The Bill proposes a range of reforms based around a range of key themes, including;

- Meeting future housing needs within the context of wider spending cuts
- Enabling decisions around housing and planning to be made at a local level
- Incentivising housing growth

Amongst other initiatives, the Localism Bill introduces a new housing tenure called 'affordable rent' that will help Housing Associations increase the level of revenue available to fund new development, abolishes the requirement for new tenants living in social housing to be given a tenancy for life, introduces new 'Community Right to Build' powers, and introduces the right for communities to draw up 'neighbourhood plans' that will shape the future of where they live, including the nature of future housing provision. This Housing Strategy sets out how Peterborough City Council will help to deliver these national policy objectives within the context of our own local priorities.

#### • **Local Policy overview**

In terms of local priorities, the overarching strategic objectives for Peterborough City Council and its partners is set out in the Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2008-21. The four priorities of the SCS are as follows;

- Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities
- Creating strong and supportive communities
- Creating the UK's 'Environment Capital'
- Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth

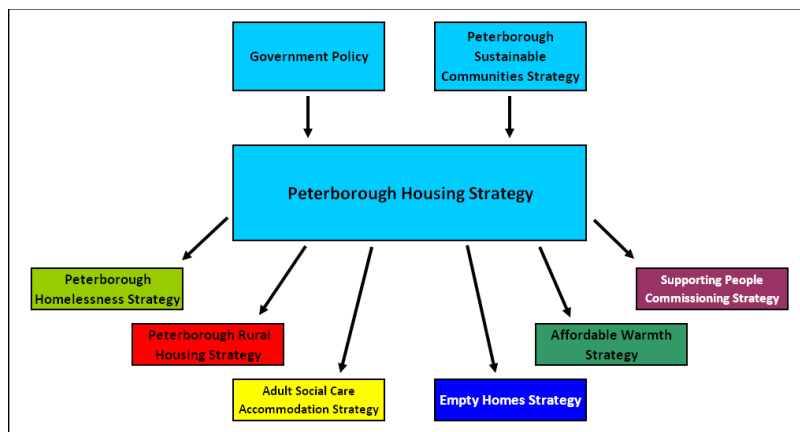
These four priorities underpin every strategic document and policy produced by the Council, including the Housing Strategy.

One such strategic document is the Peterborough Core Strategy, which sets out the principles by which the city will grow over the long term. The Core Strategy sets out plans to deliver 1,420 new homes per annum in Peterborough until 2026, with a focus upon ensuring an appropriate balance and mix of housing that meets the needs and aspirations of the city's residents. The Core Strategy also sets out objectives to improve the quality and longevity of Peterborough's housing stock, and to ensure that the housing growth agenda supports our Environment Capital aspirations. Another key strategic document that will play an important role in shaping housing growth across the authority area is the Peterborough Local Investment Plan (LIP). Developed in conjunction with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the LIP sets out the investment that is required in order to encourage housing-led regeneration and to meet future and existing and future housing needs.

In addition to our plans for growth, the Council has adopted a range of strategic documents and policies that set out the approach to addressing a wide range of housing priorities for Peterborough. The Peterborough Homelessness Strategy 2008-11 sets out how the Council and its partners will work prevent and alleviate homelessness across the Authority, whilst the Peterborough Affordable Warmth Strategy sets out the measures that the Council will take to reduce 'fuel poverty' and improve the level of thermal comfort experienced by vulnerable households. The Peterborough Rural Housing Strategy 2010-13 also highlights the need to address fuel poverty and domestic energy efficiency amongst vulnerable rural households, along with a need to improve the supply of affordable housing set aside to meet the needs of rural communities.

The Peterborough Older Persons Accommodation Strategy 2007 sets out a target to develop an additional 500 units of 'Extra Care' accommodation by 2016 in order to meet the needs of an ageing population, along with reaffirming the strategic aim to enable and support older persons to remain in their own home. This Strategy is soon to be superseded by a new Health and Social Care Accommodation Strategy that will set out how NHS Peterborough and the Council will seek to address the housing needs of vulnerable persons, including the elderly, those with mental health issues, and those with learning disabilities.

The Peterborough Housing Strategy is the Council's overarching strategic housing document. It sets the key objectives that will shape the housing agenda in Peterborough over a five year period. This relationship is depicted in the diagram below:



## Housing in Peterborough

- **Demographic overview**

According to the most recent projections the current population of Peterborough is estimated to stand at around 173,100 (ONS, 2010), with this figure anticipated to increase to 199,800 by 2026. The profile of the population in Peterborough is also projected to change over the next 15 years, with a significant increase in the percentage of local people aged 75 years or over. In addition to these population changes, the average household size in Peterborough is also expected to decrease for 2.31 to 2.20 persons by 2026. All of these changes have the potential to hold significant implications for the future of housing in Peterborough.

- **Housing Stock**

As with most British cities, owner-occupation by way of a mortgage is the most common tenure in Peterborough, accounting for 41% of all households. Peterborough is also categorised by a relatively low proportion of households who own without a mortgage (25%) and a higher proportion who rent in the social sector (20%) when compared with the sub-region. The private rented sector, which accounts for 12% of all tenures in Peterborough, is the second largest in the sub-region after Rutland.

**Fig. 3 Estimated Tenure Split**

Tenure	2007		2010	
	Households	% of households	Households	% of households
Owner-occupied (no mortgage)	17,194	25.1%	19,393	25.9%
Owner-occupied (mortgage)	30,825	43.1%	30,372	40.6%
Social Rented	14,055	19.7%	14,846	19.8%
Private Rented	8,686	12.2%	10,288	13.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,480</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>74,900</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Peterborough Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2010

Peterborough's housing stock is weighted towards smaller unit sizes when compared with the sub-region. The most common housing type across the Authority is the terraced house (27%), closely followed by the semi-detached house at 26%. The Authority has a relatively small proportion of detached housing (21%) when compared with neighbouring authorities in the sub-region (28%). In terms of the age, the housing stock in Peterborough is relatively young. Around 60% of Peterborough's existing housing stock has been developed since 1965, compared with 39% across the rest of England. The city also has a relatively small proportion of properties that were built in the period before 1919 (14% compared with 25% nationally).

- **Housing need and affordability**

Housing affordability is a key issue within the Peterborough housing market. In 2010 the Council and its partner neighbouring Local Authorities commissioned a study into local levels of housing need. This study identified the following;

- 27% of households in Peterborough cannot afford to rent or buy market housing without some form of subsidy. This is compared with 22.6% of households across the sub-region
- 81% of lone parents in Peterborough are unable to afford market prices or rents without subsidy. The same applies to 38% of single persons and 37% of single pensioners.



- At the current rate of household formation and housing supply, an average of 1,008 households will fall into housing need in Peterborough on an ongoing annual basis.
- In rural areas, housing need as a proportion of supply is ten times higher than it is in the urban area of the city.

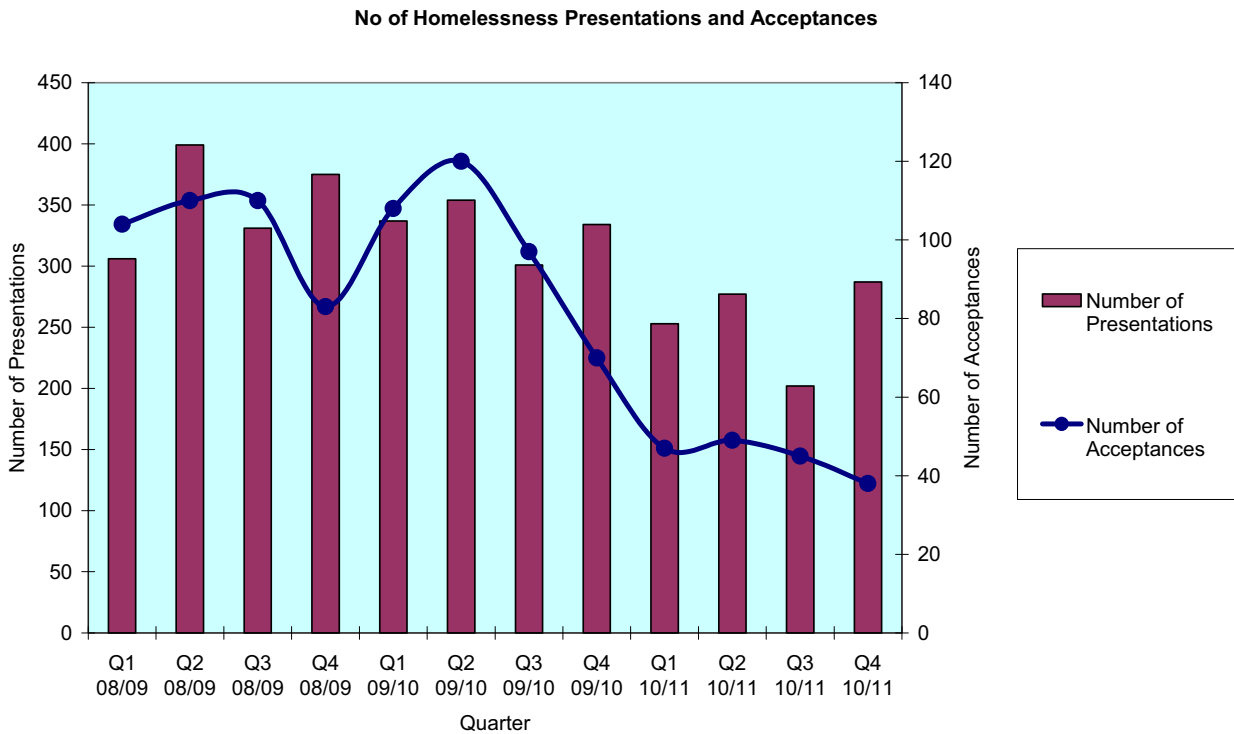
● **Housing Conditions**

In 2009 the Council commissioned a study into the condition of the private sector housing stock across the Authority. The key findings of the study were as follows;

- 23% of the private sector dwellings in Peterborough have a 'category one' hazard as defined under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. A category one hazard is defined as a hazard that may cause death or serious injury.
- 39% of private sector homes fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard
- The most common disrepair issues across the private sector housing stock in Peterborough relate to doors, windows and heating systems
- Around 15,000 private homes in Peterborough require improvements to their heating systems
- 7,749 Peterborough households are in 'fuel poverty', including 23% of all vulnerable households.

● **Homelessness and rough sleeping**

Historically, homelessness and rough sleeping have been significant issues in Peterborough. The last recession brought with it an increase in the number of households applying to the Council as homeless, along with an increase in the recorded instances of rough sleeping. However, recent efforts by the Council and its partners have led to a reduction in these numbers. The graph below shows the number of homelessness applications (known as 'presentations') received by Peterborough City Council over the past two years, compared with the number of homelessness applicants to whom the council owed a duty to secure accommodation (known as 'acceptances').



Peterborough City Council, 2011

# The Objectives

## **Objective One: To support the delivery of substantial yet truly sustainable growth**

The first objective of the Housing Strategy relates to the scale and nature of housing growth that is required to meet the needs of the existing and future population, as well as supporting Peterborough's economic performance and employment growth. In order to support this objective, the Housing Strategy sets out proposals to;

- Retain the Council's housing growth target of 1,420 homes per annum until 2026
- Prepare and publish a Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule by the end of 2012/13
- Encourage the development of, and protection against the loss of, prestige homes
- Encourage and support housing development proposals that make a clear contribution towards Peterborough's Environment Capital aspirations.
- Encourage and enable the growth of student accommodation that can support the growth of higher education facilities in Peterborough, including a commitment to undertake a mapping exercise of all existing student accommodation provision across the authority
- Utilise council land to support growth
- Introduce a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme to assist first-time buyers
- Enable the provision of accommodation that will support the growth of the Peterborough City Hospital
- Support self-build accommodation

## **Objective Two: To secure the regeneration of and improvements to Peterborough's housing stock**

The second objective of the Housing Strategy relates to the role that housing regeneration and improvements can play in wider neighbourhood renewal, meeting our Environment Capital ambitions, and improving the health of the local population. In order to meet these objectives, the Housing Strategy proposes to;

- Bring 80 long term empty properties back into use on an annual basis, and review the level of resources required to increase this target
- Remove all 'category one hazards' from 350 private sector households on an annual basis until 2014/15
- Improve the thermal efficiency of 100 private sector dwellings per year
- Produce a 'Green Deal' Implementation Strategy that will set out how the Council will support the implementation of the Government's flagship residential energy efficiency improvement scheme.
- Explore the feasibility of introducing mechanisms to encourage home owners to undertake consequential energy efficiency improvements
- Implement schemes that improve awareness of the benefits of domestic energy efficiency

## **Objective Three: To meet existing and future housing needs**

Objective three relates to how the Council and its partners will work to meet the growing needs of the residents of Peterborough, including disabled households, those unable to afford market housing, and those threatened with or experiencing homelessness. In order to support this agenda, the Housing Strategy includes plans to;

- Actively support the HCA's new 'affordable rent' delivery model as a means of increasing the supply of new affordable housing in Peterborough
- Adopt and publish a Strategic Tenancy Policy that will set out to ensure that the affordable rent tenure contributes towards meeting local needs and priorities
- Utilise Council land to support the provision of affordable housing
- Publish a new Homelessness Strategy by the end of 2011/12
- Continue to offer specialist advice and assistance to those experiencing mortgage difficulties, in anticipation of inevitable future increases in interest rates
- Develop services aimed at addressing homelessness amongst single person households
- Maintain funding for housing-related support services over the lifespan of the Strategy, and to produce a Supporting People Commissioning Strategy that will inform future service commissioning.
- Provide Disability Grant Funding assistance to at least 255 disabled and/or vulnerable households on an annual basis
- Support the delivery of homes built to the Lifetime Homes Standard

## **Objective Four: To create mixed and sustainable communities**

The final objective set out in the Strategy relates to how the Council will seek to utilise its housing agenda to ensure that future neighbourhoods created and the communities that live within them are mixed, thriving and sustainable. In order to meet this objective, the Strategy proposes to;

- Explore the feasibility of introducing a mechanism through the planning system that would help to manage the number of new Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in particular neighbourhoods.
- Continue to explore opportunities to increase the levels of affordable housing in rural areas that are available to meet the needs of local people.
- Encourage and support the establishment and growth of Community Land Trusts
- Ensure that community sustainability is a key consideration at the master planning stage of new neighbourhoods
- Conduct a refresh of the existing Peterborough Homes Allocations Policy, in order to ensure that the refreshed policy supports the aim of creating mixed and sustainable communities.



# Draft Peterborough Housing Strategy 2011-15

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## Introduction

Peterborough is a city with huge ambitions. Peterborough City Council's vision is simple; for a bigger and better Peterborough, where sustainable growth brings with it opportunities that will improve the quality of life of its residents, helps to preserve the environment, and helps to create vibrant and cohesive communities. Good quality housing is fundamental to this vision; the standard of our accommodation is pivotal to health, wealth, aspirations and life chances.

## Why does Peterborough need a Housing Strategy?

Under the Local Government Act 2003 the Council is required to produce a Strategy that sets out its vision for housing across the Authority. This Housing Strategy for 2011-15 sets out how the Council and its partners will address the housing challenges that Peterborough faces, and explains how the housing agenda will contribute towards the key aims of the city.

## Who is the Peterborough Housing Strategy for?

The Housing Strategy is for everyone who lives in Peterborough. It does not only focus on addressing housing need, it also focuses upon the role that housing will play in meeting the economic, social and environmental aspirations of the city. This Strategy is relevant to the future of housing in Peterborough for all its residents.

## What period of time does the Housing Strategy cover, and when will it be reviewed?

This Strategy will cover the four year period from 2011 until 2015. The policies emerging from the Strategy will be monitored and reviewed annually with our partners to ensure that they remain relevant to the housing agenda in Peterborough. This process will lead to the production of an annual report that will set out progress made against each policy.

## Structure of the Housing Strategy

The Peterborough Housing Strategy consists of four sections. It is structured along the following lines;

**Section One** provides an analysis of the national and local policy context relating to housing

**Section Two** provides a snapshot of the housing market in Peterborough, along with information regarding housing needs and specific housing issues.

**Section Three.** This section is broken down into four sub-sections. Each sub-section covers one of the four overarching objectives of this Housing Strategy. Under each of these four objectives we provide details of the key priorities that the Council will focus upon over the next four years in order to work towards achieving these objectives.

**Section Four** contains an action plan setting out the each of the 39 policies within the Housing Strategy. It includes details of the lead agency(s) responsible for delivery against each priority.

## Key achievements from the Peterborough Housing Strategy 2008-11

The key achievements of the Peterborough Housing Strategy 2008-11 are listed below.

### Providing for the future

- During the lifespan of the last Housing Strategy, over 3,172 new homes were developed across Peterborough. Of these homes, over 1,300 of these new homes (41%) were classed as affordable
- Over the last three years, a total of 143 Extra Care Scheme places designed to meet the needs of vulnerable elderly households were delivered across Peterborough.
- The Peterborough Foyer, which provides supported accommodation to young people in employment, training or education, was remodelled to offer a wider range of support packages and lodging types, including move-on accommodation that helps to encourage the transition from dependence to independence.

### Improving housing standards

- In 2008 an additional licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) located in the Central Ward of Peterborough was introduced. This scheme places a requirement for HMO landlords to register their property with the council and meet certain criteria in terms of property standards, helping to improve overall standards in the sector.

### **Regeneration and renewal of existing housing**

- Over the lifespan of the last Housing Strategy, nearly 200 previously empty homes have been bought back into use, with many of these properties let to homeless households who were previously awaiting for accommodation through the Housing Register
- Over 2,650 Private Sector Renewal Grants have been awarded by the Strategic Housing Services team; this equates to over £5 million investment to help improve the homes of vulnerable people living in Peterborough

### **Reducing homelessness**

- Due to an increased focus on homelessness prevention, there has been a year on year decrease in the number of homelessness 'acceptances' from 413 in 2008/9 to 179 in 2010/11. The number of homelessness presentations has fallen by 27% over the same period.
- Thanks to a strong partnership working approach between the Council, the UK Border Agency, the voluntary sector and faith groups, the levels of rough sleeping in Peterborough had reduced significantly by the end of 2010/11.

### **Delivering excellent housing advice and support services**

- Between 2008 and 2011 the Housing Needs team prevented the homelessness of 32 households through the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme
- Over 3,800 affordable homes have been allocated to households on the housing register by our Choice Based Lettings Scheme
- Over the last three years, the Council commissioned and funded over £14m worth of housing-related support services under the Government's Supporting People Programme.

A full breakdown of the progress made against the action plan for the previous Housing Strategy, covering the period from 2008 to 2011, can be found in Appendix 3 of this document.

## Section One - Local and National Policy Context

There are many strategies and plans that contribute and feed into different aspects of the housing agenda in Peterborough. This section highlights some key national and local housing-related priorities, and explains how these priorities relate to those of the Peterborough Housing Strategy 2011-15.

### The National Policy Context

Local housing priorities are heavily influenced by a series of strategies and plans introduced by the Government. The key national housing-related drivers of policy are explored below. It is worth noting that many of the national policies and plans set out in this section were introduced by the previous government. Details of the Coalition Government's housing agenda are yet to fully emerge. This section may be revised accordingly in the final version of this Strategy if further details are published.

### **'Local Decisions - A Fair Future for Social Housing' and the Localism Bill**

In December 2010, the Government unveiled a wide range of social housing reforms in a consultation paper named 'Local Decisions - A Fair Future for Social Housing'. Government has proposed the following reforms;

- The introduction of a new affordable housing tenure, entitled the 'affordable rent'. Rents for the new tenure will be set at 80% of local market rents.
- The introduction of new flexibilities that allow landlords to offer fixed-term tenancies to tenants in the affordable sector, and make it easier to transfer tenants between properties.
- A new duty for Local Authorities to produce a 'Strategic Tenure Policy', which sets out the principles by which landlords should apply their new flexibilities.
- Amendments to legislation that relate to homelessness and housing allocation. Under the proposals, Local Authorities will be granted more flexibility in how they discharge their homelessness duties, and will no longer be required to hold 'open' waiting lists and instead will be able to prevent certain groups from applying for housing (such as those with no local connection to the area).
- Plans to financially incentivise Local Authorities to bring long term empty homes back into use.

If adopted by Parliament, these reforms will be brought into statute by the Localism and Decentralisation Act, which is presently passing through Parliament as a 'bill'. Other measures being introduced with housing-related implications include;

- The introduction of the 'New Homes Bonus'. The bonus, which is designed to act as a financial incentive for communities and Local Authorities to encourage housing growth and bring empty homes back into use, will be the equivalent of six years council tax per new dwelling.
- New 'community right to build' powers which will give local people the opportunity to come together and devise plans to develop housing, shops, businesses or facilities, and then obtain outline planning consent where the rest of the community is largely in support of the proposals.
- New 'community to bid' powers, which will grant communities the chance to draw up a register of local assets which are of importance to local people (a register that local authorities will be required to maintain by law). When listed assets come up for sale, community groups will have the opportunity to formulate a bid to take ownership.
- The introduction of new rights for communities who wish to draw up 'Neighbourhood Development Plans' that will shape the future of where they live.

Detail regarding these reforms is still emerging, principally through the evolution of the Localism and Decentralisation Bill.

### **Energy efficiency, fuel poverty and the 'Green Deal'**

The 'Green Deal' is the Government's leading approach to addressing the issues of energy inefficiencies within the country's housing stock. Introduced through the Energy Bill in December 2010, the 'Green Deal' is designed to allow households to carry out energy efficiency improvements to their homes with no upfront cost.

Under the 'deal', energy consumers will pay back the cost of the improvements through a charge on their utility bill. However, the charge on the bill should be no more than the actual savings gained from having the improvements. Details of how the Council is preparing for this initiative are outlined in Objective 2 of Section 3 of this Strategy.

### **'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods'**

'Lifetime Homes Lifetime Neighbourhoods' was introduced by the previous government in 2008 as part of its Strategy for housing an ageing population. The document sets out policy objectives to:

- Build all new homes to Lifetime Homes Standard by 2013. This is a set of design principles for new build accommodation that make it easier for the occupant to remain in the property if their mobility decreases. The incumbent government has not expressed plans to abolish this target, but has confirmed that it is under review.
- To increase funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant, that funds the adaptations that are necessary to enable vulnerable and disabled people to remain in their own home. This increase in funding was supported by the recent Comprehensive Spending Review 2010.

As we will explain in the next section of this Strategy, Peterborough's elderly population is projected to rapidly increase over the next 15 years, with a 90 percent increase in the population of those over 85 years of age. The number of individuals suffering from dementia is also set to increase nationally, with a 38 percent increase over the next 15 years and an increase of 154 percent beyond 2050 (The Alzheimer's Society, 2007).

The combination of an ageing population, coupled with a likely increase in the need for care provision, reaffirms the necessity to ensure that our housing stock is ready for this demographic change. The Housing Strategy will set out some key overarching principles that will underpin the emerging Health and Social Care Accommodation Strategy that is being produced by NHS Peterborough. This document, which is anticipated to be published mid-2011, will include specific details of our strategic approach towards addressing the housing needs of an aging population.

### **Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) - Housing**

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) is a major policy document that sets out how the Government will implement its strategic housing objectives nationally through the planning system. The statement sets out the Government's four key policy aims for housing:

- To achieve a wide choice of high quality homes, both affordable and market housing, to address the requirements of the community
- To widen opportunities for home ownership and ensure high quality housing for those who cannot afford market housing, in particular those who are vulnerable or in need
- To improve affordability across the housing market, including by increasing the supply of housing
- To create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas, both urban and rural

In June 2011 as part of the social housing reforms process, the Government revised the existing definition of affordable housing as set out in PPS3 to include the new affordable rent tenure: 'Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.'

The criterion for affordable housing remains unchanged. PPS3 still states that 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.

### **Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) – Sustainable Development**

Although not solely focused upon housing, Planning Policy Statement 1 sets out the Government's policy objectives for ensuring wider sustainable development and growth. The policy objectives set out in PPS1 are:

- To ensure social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- To ensure effective protection of the environment
- To ensure prudent use of natural resources
- To maintain high and sustainable levels of economic growth and employment

These principles will underpin Peterborough City Council's approach to housing and growth, and will be incorporated into the approach taken by this Strategy.

Please note that the government is legislating to introduce a new single national planning policy document that will replace the existing Planning Policy Statement (PPS) documents, including PPS1 and PPS3.

### **Homelessness Act 2002 and the 2012 Rough Sleeper Target**

The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a duty for Local Authorities to adopt a strategic approach to tackling homelessness, including the requirement to produce a Strategy that sets out how it will seek to prevent



homelessness. Details of our ongoing work to prevent and reduce homelessness, including our plans to publish a refreshed Homelessness Strategy, are included within Section 3 of this Strategy.

The focus on the prevention of homelessness has also been bolstered by the Government's target to eliminate rough sleeping in England by 2012.

### **Summary of key national policies, priorities and plans**

As with the local strategies and plans, analysis of the key national policy objectives set down by the Government identifies several key themes. These include the objectives to:

- Ensure sustainability of development
- Address climate change through the way we build and heat our homes
- Create mixed and balanced communities
- Ensure a broad housing offer that supports economic growth
- Prepare for the housing challenges that an ageing population will bring
- Support those who are vulnerable and in the highest housing need.

### **The Local Policy Context**

#### **Peterborough Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008-21**

The Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2008-21 is an overarching Strategy that guides the work of Peterborough City Council and its partners. It underpins every strategic document produced by the Council, from the Core Strategy through to the Local Transport Plan. The four key priorities of this Strategy are as follows;

- Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities
- Creating strong and supportive communities
- Creating the UK's 'Environment Capital'
- Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth

A key role of the Peterborough Housing Strategy is to set out how the housing agenda in Peterborough will help to deliver the SCS. The work of Peterborough City Council is also guided by the Sustainable Community Strategy vision statement, which is;

*A bigger and better Peterborough that grows the right way, and through truly sustainable development and growth:*

- *Improves the quality of life of all its people and communities and ensures that all communities benefit from growth and the opportunities that it brings*
- *Creates a truly sustainable Peterborough, the urban centre of a thriving sub-regional community of villages and market towns. A healthy, safe and exciting place to live, work and visit, famous as the Environment Capital of the UK*

Safe, warm and good quality housing that meets the needs of a range of individuals and households will play a fundamental role in achieving this vision.

#### **The Peterborough Core Strategy**

The Peterborough Core Strategy, which sets out the principles by which the city will grow over the long term, has a similar vision for the future of housing across Peterborough. The Core Strategy (Paragraph 3.0.6) sets out the following vision for housing in Peterborough;

*Peterborough will be an area renowned for its quality and choice of housing, where marketability, progress, and social integration are promoted through the provision of a broad range of housing types in both rural and urban areas that match the needs and aspirations of existing and future residents in terms of affordability, sustainability, size, type and location, whilst also meeting the highest standards of design quality and environmental sustainability.*

The Core Strategy sets out various objectives that are designed to help achieve this vision. Five of these objectives are particularly relevant to this Housing Strategy, namely:

**Objective 1: Delivery** – To ensure the delivery of growth in Peterborough

**Objective 2: Environment Capital** – To develop a distinctive identity as the UK's Environmental Capital

**Objective 7: Balanced and Mixed Housing** – To meet the needs of Peterborough’s existing and future population by ensuring that there is a balanced mix of housing tenures and sizes throughout the area, including increased provision of executive, young professional and live/work homes in order to attract and retain more highly skilled workers to the area

**Objective 8: Affordable Housing** – To ensure that there is sufficient affordable housing to meet local needs and encourage social integration through the rural and urban area

**Objective 9: Housing quality and density** – To improve the overall quality and longevity of Peterborough’s housing stock by ensuring that all new and regenerated housing meets high environmental, sustainability and design standards

### **Peterborough Local Investment Plan 2011**

Peterborough’s Local Investment Plan (LIP) has been developed in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and was adopted by the Council in February 2011. The document sets out the investment required for Peterborough to inform funding discussions with the HCA. The investments set out in the plan are those required to deliver the agreed economic, housing and environmental ambitions of Peterborough. The plan identifies a series of key themes for investment (such as rural housing) and prioritises the key interventions and projects that the Authority believes will help to encourage housing-led regeneration. The plan also sets out the necessary infrastructure required to support these projects. This document will form part of the portfolio of housing-related strategic documents that sit behind the Housing Strategy.

### **Peterborough Homelessness Strategy 2008-11**

The Council is required by law to produce a Strategy that sets out how it will seek to prevent and reduce homelessness. The Peterborough Homelessness Strategy sets out various key areas for action, including:

- To ensure the availability of appropriate accommodation in line with current and future levels of demand
- To develop and review support and advice services
- To offer a range of housing options and advice for people seeking accommodation in the Peterborough area

Objective three of section three of the Housing Strategy sets out some key strategic principles that will underpin the approach towards tackling homelessness over the next four years. These principles will underpin the next Homelessness Strategy, which is due to be published and adopted by January 2012.

### **Peterborough Older Persons Accommodation Strategy 2007**

Produced jointly by Peterborough City Council and NHS Peterborough, the Older Persons Accommodation Strategy (OPAS) has played a key role in the provision of housing for an aging population over the past few years. The priorities of the Strategy include;

- To support older people to remain in their own home with the provision of aids and adaptations
- To promote development of accommodation to the Lifetime Homes Standard
- To promote the provision ‘Extra Care’ accommodation, including a target to provide an additional 500 units of extra care accommodation in Peterborough by 2016
- Ensuring the availability of high quality information and advice on housing and care options

NHS Peterborough is presently working on a comprehensive accommodation Strategy that will cover the approach towards addressing the housing needs of a range of vulnerable groups, including older persons. This new Health and Social Care Accommodation Strategy will supersede OPAS, and form part of the portfolio of housing-related strategic documents that sit behind the Housing Strategy.

### **Peterborough Affordable Warmth Strategy**

The Peterborough Affordable Warmth Strategy sets out the commitment to address the issue of fuel poverty in Peterborough. Fuel poverty occurs when households are unable to afford sufficient energy for health and comfort, due to the combination of low income, inadequate heating systems and a lack of insulation. The Strategy sets out several key priorities that will help to address fuel poverty, including;

- Improve the energy efficiency of all homes in Peterborough
- Promote and maximise the take up of benefits and grants to enable vulnerable households to maximise income
- Raise awareness of affordable warmth amongst the public and key agencies

Details of the Council's approach towards addressing fuel poverty are set out in Objective 2 of Section 3 of this Strategy.

### Rural Housing Strategy 2010-13

The Peterborough Rural Housing Strategy seeks to address some of the needs that rural areas face in terms of accommodation and housing. Produced in conjunction with rural communities, the Strategy sets out three priorities for action;

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing for those already living in rural communities
- Addressing fuel poverty and energy inefficiency
- Ensuring the in-keeping design of future development

The Peterborough Housing Strategy will further strengthen the Council's commitment to addressing these priorities by exploring the opportunities created by the Localism and Decentralisation Bill to tackle rural housing issues. Further details of the approach towards addressing rural housing issues is set out in Objective 4 of Section 3 of this Strategy.

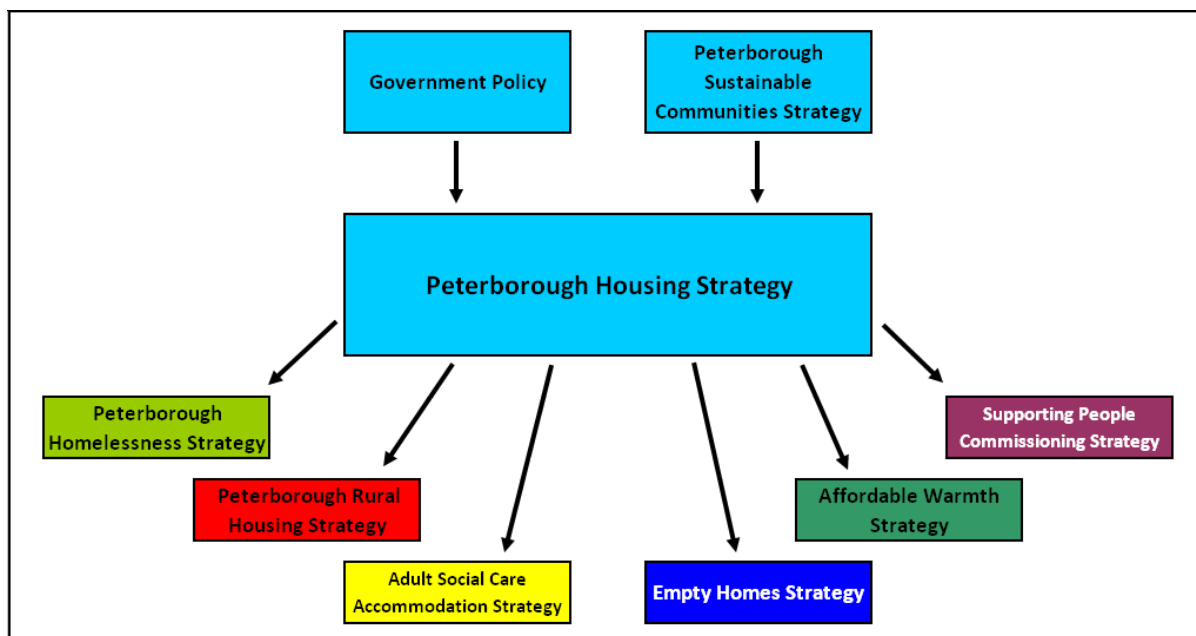
### Summary of key local policies, priorities and plans

There are several key themes that continue to re-emerge from the local strategies and plans explored here. These themes include the drive towards housing growth, the need to increase the supply of affordable housing, the need to improve the quality of existing and future housing stock (including improvements to energy efficiency), the need to create mixed communities, and the need to ensure the provision of high quality advice and support services.

### How it all fits together

The Housing Strategy forms a central part of a strategic framework in Peterborough. It forms the link between Government policy on housing and the local strategic approach towards addressing a range of housing-related issues. The Housing Strategy is the overarching housing-related strategic document for Peterborough. The relationship between the Housing Strategy and these local and national components are set out in the diagram below.

Fig 1. How it all fits together.



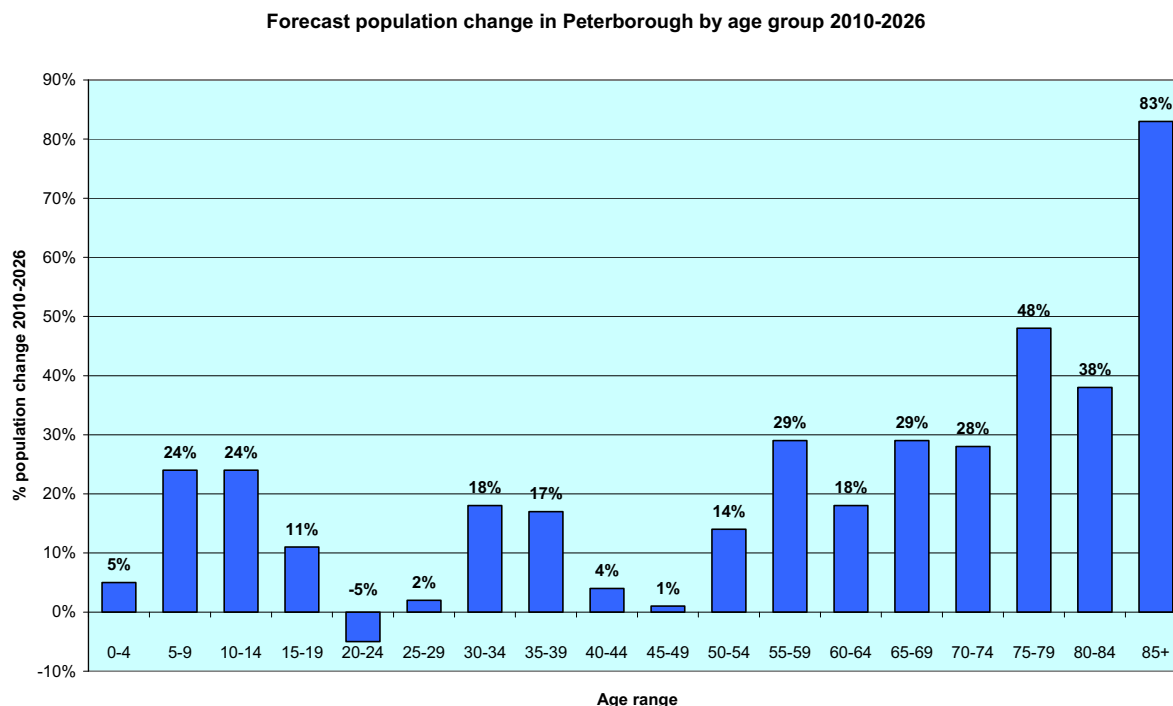
## Section Two - Housing in Peterborough

This Section explores some statistics behind the key housing issues in Peterborough. It highlights key trends relating to the housing market, housing need, housing conditions and homelessness. The Section also highlights some key statistics regarding the housing needs of vulnerable groups, including those with disabilities and older persons.

### Demographic Analysis

According to the most recent projections the current population of Peterborough is estimated at around 173,100 (ONS, 2010), with this figure is due to increase to 199,800 by 2026. In addition to a general increase in the overall population, a series of significant changes in the population profile of Peterborough are also projected, with a significant increase in the percentage of local people aged 75 or over. The graph below shows in greater detail the projected changes to the population profile of Peterborough over the next 15 years.

Fig.2



Source: Peterborough Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2010

In addition to changes to the age and size of the local population, the average household size in Peterborough is expected to decrease from 2.31 to 2.20 persons over the same period. The combination of a growing and ageing population, coupled with falling household sizes, will bring a series of significant challenges for future housing provision in Peterborough.

### Housing Tenure

Fig. 3 below shows the estimated current levels of tenure in Peterborough, with comparable data regarding the tenure levels when the last Housing Strategy was produced in 2007. As is the trend nationally, the most common tenure in Peterborough is owner occupation with mortgage, which makes up around 40.6% of all households. It is, however, the only tenure that has reduced in size in Peterborough since 2007, with an increase in the number of social and private renters, and owners without a mortgage.

**Fig. 3 Estimated Tenure Split**

Tenure	2007		2010	
	Households	% of households	Households	% of h/holds
Owner-occupied (no mortgage)	17,194	25.1%	19,393	25.9%
Owner-occupied (mortgage)	30,825	43.1%	30,372	40.6%
Social Rented	14,055	19.7%	14,846	19.8%
Private Rented	8,686	12.2%	10,288	13.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,480</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>74,900</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Peterborough Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2010

## Stock Profile

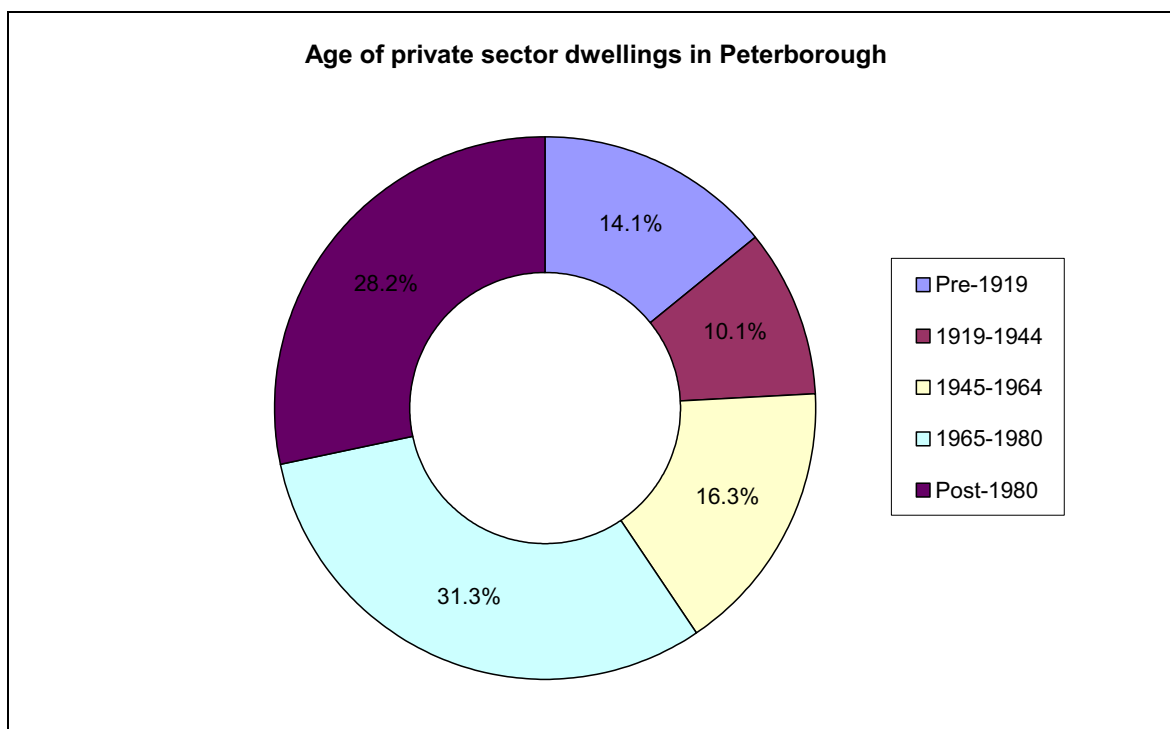
The most common housing type in Peterborough is the terraced house (27.2%), closely followed by the semi-detached house at 25.8%. As an Authority, Peterborough has comparably fewer detached houses than neighbouring authorities, with this dwelling type accounting for 20.6% of stock compared with 28.2% across the sub-region. The implications of this upon Peterborough's growth ambitions will be discussed later in this Strategy. A full overview of the stock type in Peterborough is displayed below.

Fig. 4 Stock Profile				
Dwelling Type	Peterborough		Sub-Region	
	Households	% of households	Households	% of households
Detached House	15,429	20.6%	52,139	28.2%
Semi-detached House	19,300	25.8%	46,946	25.4%
Terraced House	20,400	27.2%	35,200	19.0%
Bungalow	8,804	11.8%	32,055	17.3%
Flat/Maisonette	10,967	14.6%	18,760	10.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>74,900</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>185,100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Peterborough Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2010

In terms of the age, Peterborough has a relatively new housing stock when compared with the rest of England and the region as a whole. Around 60% of the private stock across the authority has been developed since 1965, compared with an English average of 39%. Consequently, Peterborough has a relatively smaller percentage of properties that were built pre-1919 (14.1% compared with 24.9% nationally). The full age profile of the private sector housing stock is set out in fig.5 below;

Fig.5

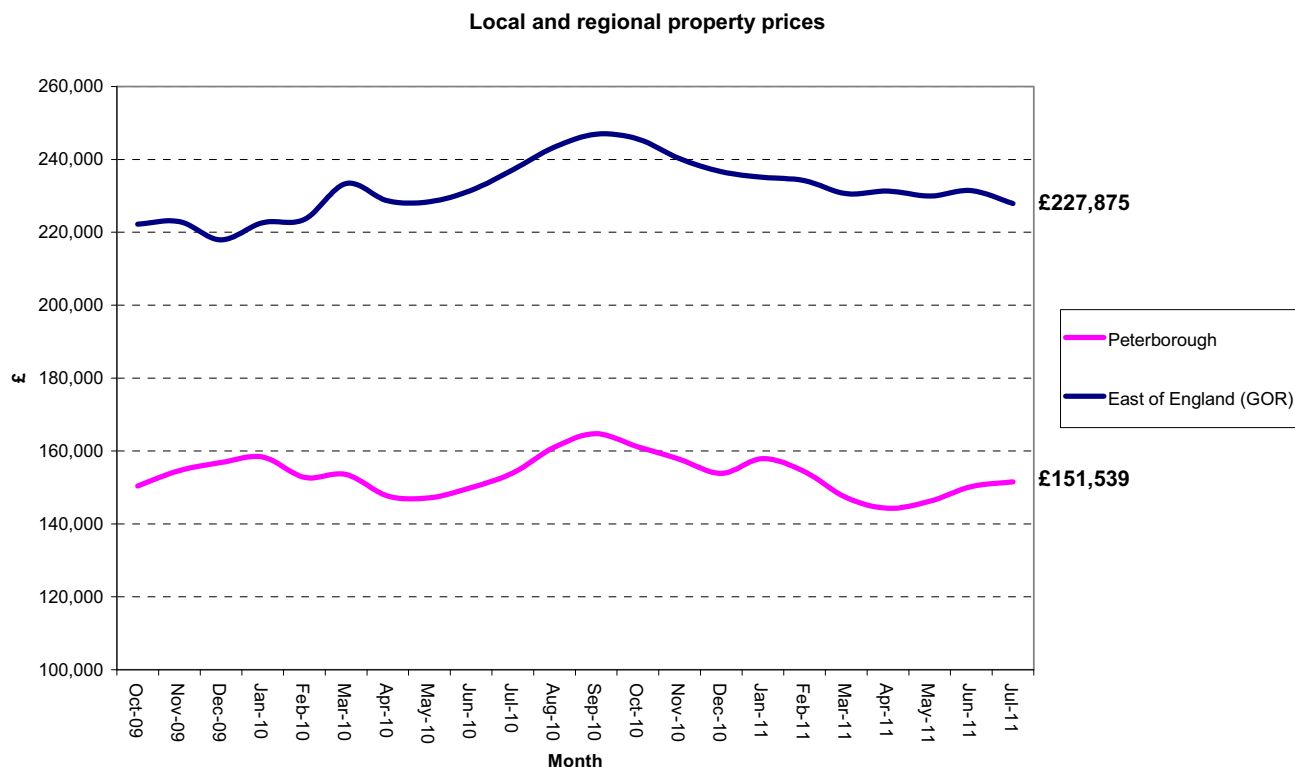


Peterborough Private Sector Stock Condition Survey, 2009

## House Prices

House prices in Peterborough tend to be below national and regional averages. In July 2011, the average house price in Peterborough was £151,539; some £76,336 below the national average. It is also apparent, through further analysis of house price trends over the past two years, that fluctuations in property values in Peterborough strongly mirror changes in prices on a national level. A chart displaying local and regional housing prices is set out on the next page.

Fig.6



Hometrack, 2011

### Housing Need and Affordability

In 2010, Peterborough City Council and three neighbouring Local Authorities commissioned an update to the 2007 Sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). One of the core outputs of this study is an analysis of the level of housing need in Peterborough, based on issues such as affordability and specialist housing requirements. The key affordability and housing need findings and recommendations of this Study were as follows:

- 27.4% of households in Peterborough cannot afford to rent or buy market housing without subsidy, compared with 22.6% of households across the sub-region
- 81.2% of lone parents in Peterborough are unable to afford market prices or rents without subsidy. 37.5% of single persons and 37% of single pensioners are unable to afford market prices and rents without some sort of financial intervention
- At the current rate of household formation and housing supply, an average of 1,008 households will fall into housing need each year in Peterborough
- If we were to solely address the highest levels of housing need, 38% of all new housing built in Peterborough would need to be affordable
- There is evidence to suggest that intermediate tenure products, such as shared ownership and intermediate rent, has a role in meeting some of the identified housing need in Peterborough
- Limited access to capital amongst households in Peterborough (due to a combination of low equity levels and high loan to value rates) suggests that intermediate rent would be the best suited intermediate tenure for Peterborough
- Across the sub-region, the main reason for unsuitable housing is health and/or mobility issues due to property conditions, followed by overcrowding and affordability
- Based on present housing needs, around two thirds of future new build affordable housing would need to be smaller units, including one and two beds.
- However, based on future demographic trends, long-term housing need is expected to shift towards a requirement for two and three bed properties
- In terms of rural housing demand, the percentage of households in need is lower than in urban Peterborough (1.06% compared with 1.35%). However, housing need as a proportion of supply in rural Peterborough is around ten times higher than it is in the urban area.

Data taken from the Peterborough Homes Housing Register echoes the findings of the SHMA Update. In May 2011 there were 7,575 applicants on the housing register, 82% of which required a one or two bed property and 11.3% of which were in need of a three bed property.

## Housing Demand

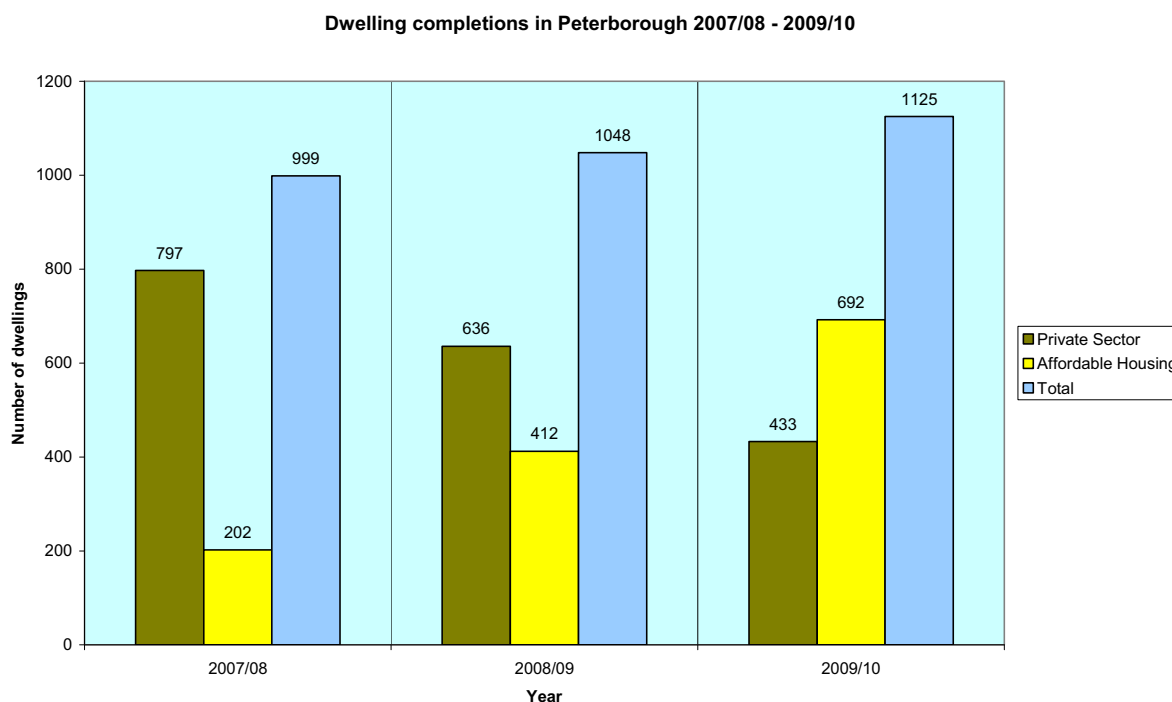
The SHMA update also featured an analysis of current and future demand for market housing, the key findings and recommendations are as follows:

- Around 44% of demand for market housing across the Peterborough sub-region will come from childless couples and multi-adult households, with 28% coming from single persons and a further 28% from households with children.
- In the long term, the majority of market demand will be for larger units, particularly three bed houses. Demand for flats and maisonettes will account for less than 5%
- Demand for properties of four bedrooms and larger will account for 22.4% of open market demand, whereas one bed accommodation will account for just 3.4% of future demand

## Housing Supply

In terms of the supply of new housing, the number of market homes being built in Peterborough has continued to fall since the housing market peaked in 2007. Despite this trend, the overall number of homes built across the Authority has continued to rise, mainly due to an increase in the number of affordable homes being built. These trends are shown in Fig.7 below.

Fig.7



Peterborough City Council Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10

Full housing completion figures for 2010/11 were not available at the time of writing. However, the Council can confirm that 331 affordable homes were developed during this period, representing a reduction in development levels experienced in previous years.

In terms of future housing growth, the Council's five year land supply projection prepared in March 2010 indicates that Peterborough has an available land supply to support the provision of 7454 new dwellings during the five year period from 2012 -2016. This capacity for growth is identified through availability of committed sites with planning status and sites detailed in emerging documents such as the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). However the current economic climate and its impact upon the housing market mean that the delivery of new homes in Peterborough is unlikely to reach these capacity levels in the short term.

## Empty Homes

Despite housing shortages across Peterborough, a certain proportion of the housing stock has been vacant for periods longer than six months, often for reasons that include repossession, legal disputes over ownership and inheritance, and a lack of funding for repairs. Peterborough City Council has legal powers to bring empty homes back into use, which under the current scheme are then let to applicants on the Peterborough Homes Housing Register. Over the past three years, Peterborough City Council and its partners have brought 198 long-term empty homes back into use.

Further details of our Empty Homes Agenda over the next four years are set out in Objective 2 of Section 3 of this Strategy.

### Housing Stock Conditions

In 2009 Peterborough City Council commissioned a study into the condition of the private sector housing stock across the Authority. The key findings of this study were as follows:

- 22.7% of private sector dwellings in Peterborough have a category one hazard as defined under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. A category one hazard is such that it may cause death or serious injury
- The most common hazards amongst the private housing stock in Peterborough are excess cold and risk of falling on stairs, with single pensioners and lone parents most likely to live in hazardous homes
- The main disrepair issues across the private sector housing stock relate to doors, windows and heating systems
- 39% of private sector homes fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard. 59% of these failures are due to category one hazards, and 49% fail due to issues of thermal comfort
- 15,000 homes in Peterborough require improvements to heating systems
- 7,749 households are in ‘fuel poverty’ across Peterborough, including 22.6% of all vulnerable households.
- Households in the private rented sector are most likely to be in fuel poverty.

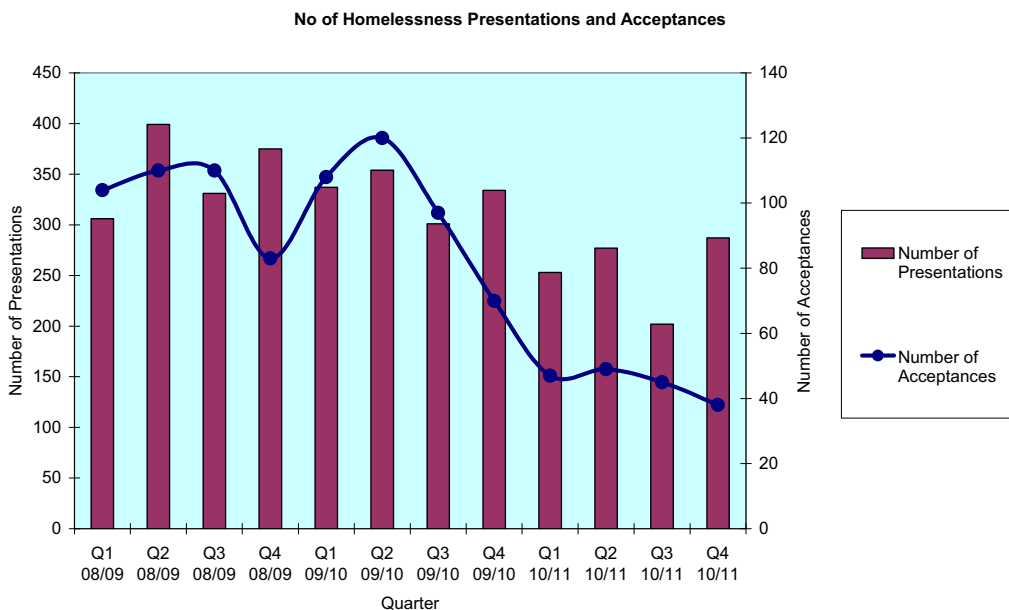
Furthermore, the 2009 Peterborough Energy Study estimates that around 21,721 of dwellings in Peterborough have less than 100mm of loft insulation, with around 3,754 of these dwellings having no loft insulation whatsoever. Only 5% of dwellings across the Authority have between 250-300mm of loft insulation, which is the minimum level recommended by the Energy Saving Trust.

Section 3 of the Housing Strategy sets out details of the Council’s approach towards addressing issues of disrepair and energy inefficiency across Peterborough’s housing stock, especially in accommodation for vulnerable households.

### Homelessness and rough sleeping

Homelessness and rough sleeping is a significant issue in Peterborough. The causes of homelessness are hugely varied; leaving the armed forces, fleeing domestic violence, being evicted or repossessed (many times through no fault of their own), and family and relationship breakdown. All of these situations can lead to people suddenly finding themselves in need of housing advice and assistance. The Council has a legal duty to secure accommodation for some individuals who find themselves in this situation and meet certain criteria. Fig.8 below shows the number of homelessness presentations received by Peterborough City Council over the past two years, compared with the number of homelessness applicants to whom the council owed a duty to secure accommodation (known as ‘acceptances’).

Fig.8



Peterborough City Council, 2011



There has been a recent downward trend in the number of households presenting as homeless to Peterborough City Council, along with a subsequent decrease in the number of homelessness 'acceptances'. This is partly the result of a concerted effort by the Council and its partners to focus upon the prevention of homelessness. Details of this effort, along with our strategic approach to prevent homelessness over the next three years, are included in Objective 3 of Section 3 of this Strategy.

## **Deprivation**

Some areas in Peterborough experience significant levels of deprivation. The Authority area covers several 'Lower Super Output Areas' (LSOAs) that fall within the 10% most deprived in England, including one area which falls within the 5% most deprived across the country. There are also areas of the city that experience contrasting levels of deprivation, despite being nearby geographically nearby. This is especially the case in Orton, where the least deprived LSOA in Peterborough falls within one mile of the second most deprived LSOA. Addressing this type of inequality is one of the four priorities of the Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy, and a key concern for the Peterborough Housing Strategy in regards to ongoing work related to fuel poverty, housing conditions and housing affordability.

## **Specialist Housing Needs**

The accommodation needs of all people who come into contact with the health and social care services provided by NHS Peterborough will be evidenced in the emerging Health and Social Care Accommodation Strategy. This Strategy will incorporate a number of existing strategies such as the Older People's Accommodation Strategy and NHS Peterborough's Extra Care Housing Strategy and will provide a holistic approach to meeting the needs of a wide range of people who are elderly, physically and sensorily impaired, have learning disabilities or mental health needs.

The Draft Vulnerable People's Accommodation Strategy produced by NHS Peterborough (to be replaced with the emerging Health and Social Care Accommodation Strategy) identifies the housing issues facing people with a learning disability and/or mental health issues in Peterborough.

Current housing provision in Peterborough for people with learning disabilities and/or mental health issues falls into four categories:

- Residential Care Homes
- Independent Living (in the community equated to a tenancy in self contained accommodation where the person lives alone or with an on-site care provider)
- Group Homes (renting a room in a shared house with others and receiving support, either floating or on site)
- Supported Housing (accommodation within a complex with support staff either on site 24/7 or during the day)

Under provision of supported and independent living options for these needs groups within Peterborough has resulted in a significant number of adults and also young people being accommodated outside of the area. This is not only an unsatisfactory arrangement for those people forced to live outside the area but is also a costly solution to individual housing needs. As part of its 2010 'Turnaround Plan', NHS Peterborough made it a priority to make provision for people with learning difficulties to be supported locally. Gap analysis has identified a need for more provision of all categories types of housing required for people with a learning disability and/or mental health issues.

A review of applicants on the Housing Register who have been identified as having a medical priority that affects their housing needs is currently underway. To date the review has confirmed that 31 households with a member who is a full time wheelchair user and 43 households with a member who is a part time wheelchair user have been identified as needing suitably adapted and accessible accommodation. Depending on individual circumstances accommodation needs range from houses with downstairs bedroom and bathroom facilities to ground floor flats and wheelchair adapted bungalows.

## **Section Three – The Objectives**

## **Objective One: To Support the delivery of substantial yet truly sustainable Growth**

'Achieving substantial yet truly sustainable growth' is one of the four priorities of Peterborough's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and is reflected in the Greater Peterborough Partnership's Single Delivery Plan (SDP) which identifies twenty eight key projects to deliver the Council's and its partners' long term agenda. Three of these projects contribute to achieving sustainable growth;

- Delivery of key infrastructure projects,
- Creating homes for a growing population and
- Encouraging the use of renewable energy.

These documents are underpinned by the Peterborough Core Strategy, which sets out a range of planning objectives and policies that will enable the Council to achieve its growth priorities including an increase of at least 25,500 additional dwellings between April 2009 and March 2026. This substantial housing growth target is fundamental to meeting the housing needs of the existing and future population, as well as supporting Peterborough's economic performance and employment growth. The SCS and the Core Strategy also make a commitment that this growth should be delivered in an environmentally conscious and sustainable manner, in accordance with the aspiration to establish Peterborough as the Home of Environment Capital.

The identification of sites to deliver this level of housing growth will take place through the preparation of the Peterborough Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Council is committed to progressing this to adoption as quickly as possible. In the city centre, sites will be identified through a separate City Centre Area Action Plan (CCAAP).

### **Policy HS1**

The Council is committed to its housing growth target of 25,500 additional dwellings for the period 2009 - 2026 in accordance with the Peterborough Core Strategy and the SCS priority to secure 'substantial yet truly sustainable growth'. The Council does not intend to review these housing growth targets over the lifespan of the Peterborough Housing Strategy.

### **Delivering the infrastructure to support growth**

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to fund infrastructure that is required to support the new development that the Council, local community and neighbourhoods want. It should not be used to address pre-existing shortfalls in infrastructure provision unless the new development makes the deficiency more severe. The Council plans to introduce CIL in Peterborough. It will prepare a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, which will set out the level of the charge (expressed as a sum of money square metre of new development) that will potentially apply to different types and/or locations of development. Funds raised from new developments in this way can be pooled in order to pay for strategic infrastructure to meet the needs of Peterborough as a whole but also local infrastructure to meet the more immediate requirements arising from the development (for example, play spaces, community halls or local transport improvements).

Large-scale developments may well be required to provide land for new community facilities, or the facilities themselves, within their development site. In those circumstances, it would be inappropriate for the Council to require payment of the full CIL charge as well. Therefore, the Council intends to accompany the preparation of the CIL Charging Schedule with some form of Community Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document, to explain how the CIL and planning obligations under S106 will operate in these circumstances.

### **Policy HS2**

The Council will prepare a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document setting out the relationship between the two, with a view to having both adopted during the 2012/13 financial year.

### **Increasing the supply of prestige homes**

Housing growth is an important part of Peterborough's strategy for long term economic growth and regeneration. A core element of Peterborough's economic development strategy includes restructuring its economy to encourage higher value employment opportunities and businesses in the city and in particular attracting new and expanding companies in the environmental and knowledge-based sectors to the area. If this is to succeed, Peterborough will need to offer a diversity of housing and a mix of tenure to meet the needs and aspirations of all its residents including large, top-of-the-range dwellings that will enable business leaders to live locally.

In March 2009 the Council produced a report that set out the case for the need to develop Prestige Homes in Peterborough. It highlighted that the average dwelling size in Peterborough is generally smaller than elsewhere in the local housing market area and that the income of employees working in Peterborough is significantly higher than the income of employees resident in Peterborough. This indicates that those in higher income employment tend to commute into the Authority Area as opposed to living within it. Therefore, the report identified that increasing the supply of Prestige Homes would not only contribute towards the economic growth of Peterborough, and contribute to more sustainable patterns of development but would also reduce commuting and support our Home of Environment Capital ambitions.

The supply of Prestige Homes is driven by market forces. However, in order to influence supply, Peterborough City Council has already taken steps to encourage Prestige Home development through the planning process and has been consulting on other potential measures. The Peterborough Core Strategy Policy CS8 advocates the provision of a wide range of properties that will support our economic development strategy and enable employees to live locally, in accordance with the requirements of national planning policy for housing. The emerging Peterborough Site Allocations DPD document submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2011 also identifies sites where future development of a proportion of prestige homes is both encouraged and expected, including within the Urban Extensions at Great Haddon and Norwood. The emerging Planning Policies DPD which went out for consultation in February includes a policy that seeks to protect against loss through demolition, conversion, redevelopment or change of use of existing Prestige Homes.

### **Policy HS3**

The Council will seek to encourage the market provision of new prestige homes on specific sites through the emerging Site Allocations DPD document, to ensure the provision of a wide range of housing across the local authority area. The Council will also seek to protect against the loss of prestige homes through demolition, redevelopment, conversion or change of use through the introduction of a Planning Policy DPD that limits the loss of such dwellings. The Council will seek to achieve adoption of the Peterborough Site Allocations DPD by February 2012. The Council will seek to achieve adoption of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD by December 2012

### **Implementing high environmental standards for new housing**

The Sustainable Community Strategy's (SCS) growth agenda prioritises not only truly substantial growth, but also sustainable growth that is aligned with our aspirations to establish Peterborough as the Home of Environment Capital. The Peterborough Core Strategy sets out a range of policy measures that are designed to support the environmental sustainability of new housing development delivered through the planning system.

Core Strategy Policy CS10 states that Peterborough City Council will only support residential development proposals where they make a clear contribution to the aspiration of the Peterborough SCS for Peterborough to establish itself as the Home of Environment Capital. Specifically, all residential development proposals should explicitly demonstrate what contribution the development will make to the Environment Capital agenda over and above that which would be required by the building regulations in force at the time of the application. The Core Strategy sets out a series of valid contributions that development proposals can make to the Home of Environment Capital agenda, including achieving a greater reduction in CO<sup>2</sup> emissions than required by building regulations.

Affordable housing that is funded by the HCA is required to meet the standards set by the Housing Quality Indicator System. These quality indicators measure a range of standards including the Code for Sustainable Homes and Lifetime Homes Standards and consequently in many cases affordable housing schemes will exceed national standards. The Council works proactively with developers and Housing Associations to maximise opportunities to deliver affordable housing units that meet or exceed the relevant level in the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The Council's Affordable Housing Capital Funding Policy (2011) includes measures to encourage development that meets or exceeds national environmental standards through a weighting process applied when assessing applications for funding. In accordance with a flexible approach to enabling housing delivery, the policy does not set a minimum requirement for environmental measures when assessing schemes for funding (other than what is required through national Building Regulations). However, the policy clearly states that an important consideration will be to what degree the scheme achieves or exceeds different environmental standards, including the standards required by the HCA for schemes funded under the National Affordable Housing Programme. Given the inevitable competition for the finite amount of capital funding available, this mechanism aims to encourage housing associations to put forward schemes that exhibit high environmental standards.

**Policy HS4**

Peterborough City Council will only support residential development proposals where they make a clear contribution to the aspiration of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Peterborough to establish itself as the Home of Environment Capital, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS10. Additionally, in its role as housing 'enabler', Peterborough City Council will continue to work with its affordable housing delivery partners to ensure that opportunities to develop homes of a high environmental standard are maximised.

**Supporting the growth of Peterborough's higher education offer**

Peterborough's strategy for economic growth and regeneration aims to achieve a significant expansion in further and higher education provision in Peterborough over coming years with a particular emphasis on supporting the development of the existing environmental, engineering and health sectors in the city. Rather than relying on a single university to achieve this goal, a 'multiversity' partner strategy has been adopted. Initially six universities have agreed to work in collaboration to deliver the Higher Education (HE) provision required under the umbrella name of 'Universities@Peterborough'.

'Universities@Peterborough' will build upon the considerable progress to date in developing HE in Peterborough:

- In October 2009 the University Centre Peterborough (UCP) opened. This joint venture between Anglia Ruskin University and Peterborough Regional College offers a range of full and part-time HE degree programmes and from September 2010 has provided places for a total of 615 students.
- In March 2011 Cranfield University announced plans to develop a renewable energy and bio-fuels research centre in the city.
- From March 2011 Anglia Ruskin University has delivered a range of health-related professional tuition courses that were previously provided at Peterborough District Hospital at an alternative facility in Peterborough. These programmes include midwifery, radiography, physiotherapy and veterinary science with plans for further courses to be provided from this site in future.

Peterborough's vision is to establish and develop HE provision that encompasses teaching, research and business support activities across a broad range of academic disciplines that fully meet the needs of both its residents and businesses, both within the city but also, over time, within the wider region, nationally and internationally.

This approach towards HE provision aims to increase the number of students living and studying in Peterborough by up to 4,000 students by 2015/16. The supply of good quality and affordable student accommodation will be a key factor to ensuring the successful foundation of HE facilities in Peterborough.

As with Prestige Homes, the provision of student accommodation is primarily driven by market forces and private sector investment. To secure the necessary investment from the private sector to deliver student accommodation, the Council and its HE provider partners will need to assess the scale of future growth in student numbers and also ensure that plans for growth in the city will enable the development of purpose built student accommodation in sustainable locations. Therefore, with a view to supporting inward private investment, the Council will undertake an assessment of existing student accommodation provision in Peterborough and through this mapping process, establish whether there is a need for a more detailed study into current and projected need for student accommodation in the city. The outcomes of research undertaken will support the development of related policy and planning where appropriate, as well as provide an evidence base for business plans for private investment in student accommodation provision in Peterborough.

**Policy HS5**

The Council will adopt a proactive approach towards enabling the delivery of student accommodation in the city. Wherever possible, the Growth and Regeneration Team will lend assistance to developers and Higher Education providers who are seeking to deliver student accommodation in the city. The Council will also consider the positive use of its own landholdings to encourage the delivery of student accommodation across Peterborough.

The Council will undertake a mapping process of existing student accommodation in Peterborough, to be completed by end of March 2012. If this assessment identifies a need for additional student accommodation then further research into the current and projected need for student accommodation in Peterborough will be undertaken along with an analysis of the likely impact of an increased student population upon the private sector housing market in the city. The findings of the study will support policy development, as well as providing an evidence base for business plans for private investment into student accommodation provision across Peterborough. If this additional more detailed research is required it will be completed by August 2012.

## Use of Council land to deliver housing growth

Peterborough City Council's Asset Management Plan (AMP) sets out how the Council intends to manage its portfolio of property and land to ensure that it can be used to support Peterborough's growth agenda within the context of delivering £50m capital receipts to support the Council's Capital Programme over the next five years. The current economic climate continues to have a significant impact on the level of capital receipts achieved by the Council from asset disposals to fund its Capital Programme. Fall in value of both land and property and a reduction in demand for larger sites means that maximising capital receipts from asset disposals is a priority for the Council, unless accepting a price at less than best consideration is supported by a robust business case.

The Council recognises the contribution our property assets can make to the growth of Peterborough. A number of sites have been identified for disposal within the Medium Term Financial Plan that has the potential to deliver growth including housing growth in Peterborough. While the market will influence the use of these sites, the Council's Neighbourhood Investment approach aims to ensure that the benefits of growth are shared across the city and respond to the needs of communities.

The Council's current initiative to formalise working partnerships with Housing Associations through entering into a collaboration agreement to bring forward sites for residential development will ensure that Council land will also contribute to the delivery of affordable housing provision in Peterborough. Whilst not legally binding, this collaboration agreement will establish a process by which the Council and Housing Associations can bring forward sites that will mutually benefit both parties.

### **Policy HS6**

The Council will make land assets available for development within a robust financial context to support growth in Peterborough. The Council will also support the delivery of affordable housing in Peterborough through entering into a collaboration agreement with Housing Associations to bring forward sites that will mutually benefit both parties.

## Stimulating the local housing market

The type and quantity of available mortgages, both in number and of the right type, is restricting the capacity of many households to become homeowners and impacting on the Peterborough housing market. Current constraints are a particular problem for first-time buyers, especially those unable to provide a substantial deposit. Many banks and building societies do not lend to buyers without a deposit of 20-25% of the property value. With other costs on top of this, including stamp duty and legal fees, this is effectively preventing many first time buyers from entering the property market.

In July 2011 the Council committed to participating in a national scheme that has been devised in response to the problems faced by those attempting to enter the home ownership market, to allow Councils to provide support for first-time buyers. This Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) enables Councils to 'top up' the deposits of first-time buyers who can afford mortgage payments but do not have the required level of deposit to get on to the property ladder. Under the scheme the Council can provide a cash backed indemnity of up to 20% of the property value as additional security. Homebuyers participating in the scheme will be able to provide a smaller deposit to get a mortgage and enjoy the benefits associated with taking out a 75% mortgage with only 5% deposit. The scheme is currently being launched through Lloyds Banking Group, however it is anticipated that more mortgage lenders will join the partnership as it progresses.

The Council has agreed to set aside £1 million to support the scheme initially with the ability to increase that involvement by up to £10 million. The Council has developed a local policy for scheme eligibility which forms Appendix 4 to this Strategy. The scheme will become available to Peterborough's residents in November 2011.

### **Policy HS7**

The Council will provide assistance to qualifying first-time buyer households through the Peterborough LAMS to enable eligible households to access homeownership. £1 million will initially be set aside to fund the scheme with the capacity to increase this fund by up to £10 million upon review.

In addition to this scheme the Council is also exploring other initiatives that could help to stimulate the local home ownership market. Alternatives to 'traditional' high-street products exist in the form of shared equity mortgages that can be funded differently, directly from capital markets. The Council is exploring the development of commercial shared equity products with suitable providers that could be offered to existing and potential residents of Peterborough, and would be available on both new build and existing stock. These commercial shared equity mortgages can offer an alternative to the Government funded equity loan and shared ownership schemes which include income threshold criteria and are limited to certain new build housing schemes. The Council is also exploring how suitable insurance for people taking out such mortgages could be included so that mortgage payments are protected in the event of financial difficulty, insurance that as a standalone product is often prohibitively expensive currently. It is hoped that work to determine the feasibility of

these products will be completed within the next six months, and careful consideration is being given to the potential social benefit that might be offered by them.

**Policy HS8**

The Council will determine the feasibility of working with commercial partners to develop a scheme that will provide financial products such as insurance policies and mortgages for existing and potential residents of Peterborough who are experiencing difficulty accessing the housing market.

**Supporting the accommodation requirements of the Peterborough City Hospital**

The Council is currently working with the Peterborough NHS Trust to facilitate an increase in provision of staff hospital accommodation in Peterborough. In November 2010 Peterborough's new 611 bed City Hospital was opened and became fully operational. This hospital was built to replace Peterborough's District and Edith Cavell hospitals. The staff accommodation associated with the former hospitals continues to be occupied by hospital staff, but is insufficient to meet the level of demand and the standards required to accommodate the increased staffing levels. The NHS Trust has calculated that approximately 250 new units of residential accommodation are required to meet its staffing needs. Most of the new provision requirement is for single person units with a need for approximately 25 units of 2 and 3 bedroom family accommodation although this number could be subject to change as the requirement is clarified. The Council is in discussions with the hospital regarding potential Local Authority land options that would enable the development of staff accommodation that would comply with the British Medical Association's criteria that staff accommodation should be a maximum of 3 miles away from place of work.

The Council will also seek to facilitate the provision of other forms of key worker housing, including temporary key worker housing for people relocating to Peterborough, where an identified need is evidenced.

**Policy HS9**

The Council will provide support to the NHS Trust to enable the provision of up to 250 units of new hospital staff accommodation in Peterborough by April 2013 and where appropriate make Council land available within a robust financial context to support this initiative.

**Supporting Self-build**

A recent statement by the Government has set out the intention to introduce measures that will encourage more individual and community self build schemes. This will include encouraging private investors to bring forward plots for development but also for Local Authorities and housing associations to help to facilitate self build schemes. The Government has announced plans to make available publicly-owned sites to house builders that will include plots exclusively for self-builders. The Government has set up a working group, led by the National Self-Build Association, to advise on what action is needed to reduce barriers, including the burden of regulation and the lack of access to land and development finance. The Council recognises the important role that self build can make to growth and regeneration in Peterborough. It compliments the Government's Community Right to Build measures that enable communities, particularly in rural areas, to build the homes that their area needs. Encouraging self build can also contribute to the development of more Prestige Homes in the city. The Council will seek to promote self build in Peterborough and act upon Government initiatives to enable self build as new measures are introduced.

**Policy HS10**

The Council will seek to promote self build in Peterborough and act upon Government initiatives to enable self build as new measures are introduced.

## **Objective Two: To secure the Regeneration and Improvements to Peterborough's Housing Stock**

Peterborough has ambitious plans for new housing growth, but also acknowledges the important contribution that the regeneration of our existing housing stock makes to meeting many of the Council's overarching strategic priorities. Peterborough City Council already has a range of statutory duties which enable enforcement action to be taken against owners and landlords requiring them to carry out improvements to their accommodation if assessed to be unsafe or in a particularly poor state of disrepair. However, in order to improve the quality of accommodation across Peterborough, a range of preventative and proactive measures are required. This section sets out how the Council will seek to improve living conditions across Peterborough's housing stock.

### **Bringing empty homes back into use**

Empty homes are often magnets for anti-social behaviour that can blight neighbourhoods. They can be a visual reminder of the need for social, economic and environmental regeneration within an area. Tackling empty homes contributes to addressing the priorities of the Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy and can provide a number of benefits including: improving the energy efficiency of stock, meeting housing needs, increasing investment in Peterborough and regenerating areas.

Bringing empty homes back into use has the potential to make a significant contribution towards the Council's Home of Environment Capital ambitions; recent studies have found that the restoration of an empty home can result in a saving of 35 tonnes of embodied CO<sup>2</sup> compared with the construction of a new-build property.

Empty homes are also a waste of precious housing stock. At the beginning of 2011/12 there were nearly 800 properties in Peterborough that have been vacant for longer than six months, around a quarter of which have been empty for in excess of two years. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment update 2010 identified that an average 1008 households will fall into housing need each year in Peterborough and the utilisation of empty homes could go some way towards meeting need by creating new homes without the necessity to build additional homes.

Bringing empty homes back into use can also create a considerable financial advantage to Peterborough City Council and the communities that it serves. The Government's New Homes Bonus scheme which is primarily designed to financially incentivise new housing development, also provides Local Authorities with the equivalent of six years of Council Tax for every long-term empty property bought back into use within their areas. Each empty home brought back into use could generate approximately £6,000 extra Government funding to the Council over 6 years. In addition to the New Homes Bonus, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is also making £100m capital funding available to bring empty properties back into use as affordable housing.

The renovation of empty homes also has a significant role to play in the regeneration of neighbourhoods across the city. Reducing the number of vacant properties can improve matters relating to disrepair, community safety and environmental health. Peterborough City Council is working with the HCA and partner Housing Associations to formulate a co-ordinated approach to bringing empty homes back into use to capitalise on the financial incentives available from HCA and from the New Homes Bonus. A partnership arrangement with a Housing Association is currently being explored to offer the owners of empty properties the option to either sell or long term lease their property to a housing association to enable properties to be brought back into use as affordable homes.

A partnership arrangement with a Housing Association will complement the Council's existing pro-active approach to tackling empty homes which includes measures to encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use. The Council has established a partnership arrangement with a private sector letting agent which facilitates shorter term leasing arrangements of empty homes (between 3-5 years) for rent in the private sector.

The council also utilises its powers under Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO). This enforcement power enables Local Authorities to take management control of a property for up to 7 years, carry out any necessary repairs and arrange for the property to be rented out during this period. The owner retains the right to sell the property and receives any surplus income made during this time. The Council has successfully utilised its EDMO powers to tackle empty homes thus creating additional private rented accommodation with management of the properties being discharged to a private sector agent. The Government has recently changed the criteria for deploying EDMO. The minimum threshold for obtaining an order is now 2 years whereas previously an order could be sought on properties vacant for more than 6 months. This power is also now only applicable for properties attracting anti-social behaviour meaning that enforcement measures are restricted to tackling a smaller number of empty homes in limited circumstances.



**Policy HS11**

Peterborough City Council will aim to bring 80 empty homes back into use on an annual basis over the lifetime of this Housing Strategy and will aim to reduce the number of empty homes within Peterborough to below 500 dwellings at any one time. This will be achieved by working closely with the owners of vacant dwellings to address the obstacles preventing the reuse of the property and by working with our Housing Association partners and the HCA to secure the necessary investment to bring a proportion of these dwellings back into use as affordable housing.

**Policy HS12**

Peterborough City Council will continue to dedicate resources to dealing with empty homes. The council will explore whether the income generated from the conversion of empty homes in to use through the New Homes Bonus scheme will enable additional resources to be dedicated to dealing with empty homes.

**Addressing hazardous levels of disrepair**

Local Authorities have a range of Statutory Powers that relate to addressing poor housing conditions and substantial disrepair within residential accommodation. The Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which is a risk assessment tool used to assess potential risks to health and safety of occupants in dwellings in England and Wales. The Act also introduced a duty for Local Authorities to deal with the most serious category of hazard, known as category one hazards, which are those that pose a significant risk to the health and safety of occupants. The most prevalent category one hazards found are excess cold, fixtures that pose a risk of and trip hazards and entry by intruders.

A large part of the Council's work around the HHSRS focuses upon issuing legally-binding improvement notices to property owners and landlords as a means to ensuring that identified hazards are either removed or reduced to an acceptable level from the housing stock. However, in many circumstances, those living in hazardous accommodation are doing so as a consequence of hardship or vulnerability.

The Council has a Repairs Assistance Fund which provides grants to low income households to cover the cost of urgent improvements that address these dangerous hazards. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2011-16 has provided funding of just over £1m per year for the Repairs Assistance Fund for the next five years. This reflects a 40% reduction in funding from previous years and therefore it is vital that the Council ensures best use of these funds to prioritise assistance to households in the greatest need. In order to respond to this challenge, the Council has published a revised 'Housing Renewal Policy' that sets out the new eligibility criteria for the Repairs Assistance Grant. The revised policy, which came into effect in April 2011 forms part of the portfolio of housing related strategic documents that sits behind this Strategy.

**Policy HS13**

The Council will aim to remove category one hazards from at least 350 private sector housing households per year until the end of 2014/15 by continuing to provide financial assistance through the Repairs Assistance Fund and through enforcement action.

**Maximising the energy efficiency of existing housing**

Improving the energy efficiency of existing housing stock is at the centre of local, national and international strategic agendas. The 26 million homes in the UK are responsible for 14% of the country's overall greenhouse gas emissions, whilst five million British households are living in 'fuel poverty'. Peterborough's ambitions set out in the SCS to improve the health of residents and establish itself as the Home of Environment Capital are both linked to the ability of residents to adequately and efficiently heat and power their homes in an affordable and sustainable way.

The link between fuel poverty and a wide range of other types of deprivation, such as child poverty and physical and mental health is well recognized. The direct link between our housing, our health and our wellbeing is most clearly demonstrated through work on fuel poverty. Therefore in order to address these broader issues, the Council needs a range of tools and mechanisms that will reduce our domestic energy use and improve the thermal comfort of our homes as two-thirds of the UK's present housing stock will still be in use in 2050.

The Repairs Assistance Fund plays a vital role in funding renovations that address excess cold which is one of the most common and serious hazards in the private housing stock across Peterborough. The Housing Renewals Policy allows the use of the Fund for the purposes of replacing heating systems and/or to improve levels of insulation. The Fund is also used to 'top-up' the financial assistance provided to vulnerable households from the Government's Warm Front Scheme which specifically provides funding for loft and cavity wall insulation, central heating and boilers. The Council provides additional financial assistance to Warm Front applicants where the grant provided does not cover the full cost of the works. Warm Front funding has been reduced by 68% from April 2011. This will significantly increase the pressure on Repairs Assistance Fund to address the issue of excess cold.

The Council's commitment to protecting the Repairs Assistance fund for the next five year period is evidence of its ongoing commitment to assist those threatened with fuel poverty. In addition to a commitment to removing category one hazards from 350 private sector homes each year the Council will also use the Repairs Assistance Fund to address fuel poverty.

Fuel Poverty can be defined as a household which needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel in order to heat the home to an adequate standard of warmth. This is generally defined as 21<sup>o</sup>C in the living room and 18<sup>o</sup>C in other occupied rooms as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1987). The national Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is used to rate the energy performance of a dwelling. SAP ratings calculates the annual energy costs for space and water heating in a dwelling and the annual CO2 emissions associated with heating the dwelling. A household living in a dwelling with SAP rating of 35 or lower is likely to be in fuel poverty. The Council has a target to improve the SAP ratings of dwellings in Peterborough to 65 or higher. This level of thermal efficiency dramatically reduces the risk of an occupying household experiencing fuel poverty.

**Policy HS14**

The Council aims to improve the thermal efficiency in at least 100 Peterborough private sector dwellings each year to a target SAP rating level of 65, therefore minimising the risk of fuel poverty for the occupants

**Supporting the 'Green Deal' and the 'Retrofit' agenda**

The Repairs Assistance Fund assists the most vulnerable households in greatest need of repairs to their accommodation and forms a vital part of a holistic approach towards regenerating Peterborough's housing stock. However to facilitate large-scale improvements to the housing stock, a range of other initiatives are required.

The Government has recently announced its 'Green Deal' initiative, which enables households to fund the cost of energy efficiency improvements to their home through the savings they will accumulate on their future energy bills as a consequence of undertaking the work. The upfront cost of the energy efficiency improvements are borne by the utility company and their investment partners, who then recuperate the cost from the household in instalments. However, a key criterion for the scheme is that the cost of repayments on the loan should not exceed the saving generated as a result of conducting the improvements in the first place. This enables households to improve the energy efficiency of their accommodation for a similar or lower cost than if they had not carried out the improvements.

The Green Deal Scheme features within the Energy Act, with an expectation for the first 'green deals' to appear in autumn 2012. The Government has already signalled a clear intention for Local Authorities to have a role in the delivery of the scheme. Suggested roles for local authorities include working with energy companies to identify those in greatest need of energy efficiency improvements and working with partners and communities to identify ways to implement the Scheme with maximised economies of scale.

By 2015, it is anticipated that Local Authorities will also be able to use the Green Deal as a tool to enforce improvements to the least energy efficient private-rented accommodation. Full details of the Green Deal are not yet available, however, it is apparent that it will form an important component of future policies relating to carbon reduction and housing regeneration.

The Government has also unveiled plans on how the Green Deal can assist affordable housing providers to improve the energy efficiency of their housing stock. Peterborough City Council will work with its Housing Association partners to develop ways of utilising the Green Deal as a means of funding improvements to existing stock.

**Policy HS15**

Peterborough City Council will produce a Green Deal Implementation Strategy that sets out how it will work with partners to support the operation of the Scheme. This document will be published within the lifespan of the Housing Strategy.

**Policy HS16**

Peterborough City Council will implement the Green Deal scheme as a means of improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock by working closely with relevant partners. The Council's Strategic Housing Services will be delivered in anticipation of the Green Deal Scheme being operational towards the end of the lifespan of the Housing Strategy.

## Encouraging consequential energy efficiency improvements

Peterborough City Council has seen a significant reduction in the financial resources available to directly fund improvements to the energy efficiency of the city's housing stock. Nationally, the funding for the Government's Warm Front Scheme has been reduced by 68%. In addition to the 40% reduction in the Council's Repairs Assistance Fund, funding for the Peterborough Home Insulation Scheme, from the East of England Development Agency has been withdrawn. In light of these reductions, Peterborough City Council will consider a range of innovative solutions to enable delivery of this agenda over the next four years.

There are examples in the UK of Local Authorities and their partners encouraging the increased energy efficiency of their existing housing stock. One approach is to encourage home owners to carry out simple and cost effective energy efficiency improvements to their existing property at the same time as building, for example, an extension to their home. These consequential energy efficiency improvements help to mitigate the additional energy requirements that result from the property being extended and lead to a potential net reduction in energy consumption and improved levels of thermal comfort for the homeowner.

The Government has set out an intention to incorporate consequential energy efficiency improvements into Building Regulations by 2013. However, should this not come to fruition, the Council will explore other ways to achieve improvements through its existing statutory powers. The Council's Climate Change Team will play a vital role in encouraging increased energy efficiency through the provision of advice and assistance to households. The team will also provide signposting and advice to other initiatives supported by this Strategy, including the Green Deal.

### **Policy HS17**

Peterborough City Council will explore the feasibility of introducing a range of mechanisms to encourage consequential energy efficiency improvements to extended dwellings as a means of improving the energy efficiency of our housing stock.

## Improving awareness of domestic energy efficiency

Peterborough City Council also acknowledges the role that a light-touch educational approach can play in reducing domestic energy use. The Council's Climate Change Team presently operates a 'Community Energy Challenge' in which residents compete to see who can make the biggest reduction in their energy usage. The scheme utilises up to 60 energy meters provided by the Council to households giving them the opportunity to track their energy usage over one week of normal household activity and a two week 'challenge period' to reduce energy usage. Energy meters are also available in all Peterborough libraries for residents to borrow enabling them to identify reductions in their energy usage without the need to take part in the challenge.

To date, the scheme has been very successful, with four challenges completed between March 2010 and April 2011 and over 150 participants taking part in the scheme. Peterborough City Council will continue to support the Community Energy Challenge over the lifespan of the Housing Strategy and will complete a minimum of three 'challenges' per annum until 2013 to continue this programme of improving awareness of the benefits of an energy efficient lifestyle.

### **Policy HS18**

Peterborough City Council will conduct a minimum of three 'Community Energy Challenges' per year across the lifespan of this Housing Strategy. This includes one challenge per year in rural areas in accordance with the objectives of the Peterborough Rural Housing Strategy 2010-13.

Peterborough City Council will also seek to utilise its Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme in order to raise awareness of the importance of domestic energy efficiency. CBL is the scheme through which vacant affordable housing is advertised and let to applicants on the Peterborough Homes Housing Register. As part of a holistic approach towards raising the awareness of the importance of domestic energy efficiency, the Housing Needs Team will work with partner Housing Associations to ensure CBL adverts for accommodation include a copy of the Energy Performance Certificate that sets out the energy efficiency of the dwelling. This will enable the 7000 households currently registered for affordable housing to make informed choices regarding the accommodation that they apply for using the Scheme. As part of this approach, the team will signpost service users to information and assistance on how to reduce energy use, improve thermal warmth and save money on energy bills.

### **Policy HS19**

Peterborough City Council in partnership with partner Housing Associations will provide Energy Performance Certificates as part of property advertisements through Choice Based Lettings. The Council will also introduce a range of signposting measures to increase awareness of the importance and benefits of domestic energy efficiency, and assist clients to make informed decisions regarding their choice of accommodation.

## **Ensuring Effective Housing Enforcement**

Housing enforcement has an important role to play in the raft of measures at the Council's disposal to improve accommodation standards in Peterborough. Housing enforcement enables the Council to exercise legal powers to take action in default when other measures to tackle poor housing conditions have failed by investigating housing condition complaints relating to the condition, occupancy and use of private sector rented properties including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The Council undertakes risk assessments of properties in line with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and conducts surveys to establish the energy efficiency rating of private sector rented dwellings. It then recommends, or if necessary, takes appropriate enforcement action, to either remove or reduce the risk of harm to the occupants. A 'triage' approach to dealing with enquiries and complaints has recently been introduced to ensure that priority is given to targeting the most serious cases identified, given the limited resources available to deliver this high demand service.

## **Objective Three: To meet existing and future housing needs**

Meeting the housing needs of the residents of Peterborough presents a growing challenge for the Council and its partners. Reductions in Government investment for affordable housing is likely to impact upon levels of new supply, and extensive welfare and housing benefit reforms are likely to add to the pressures on low income and benefit dependent households when attempting to secure good quality accommodation in the private rented sector. It is anticipated that these challenges, along with wider economic factors, will increase the threat of homelessness in Peterborough over the next four years. To add to the challenge, Peterborough City Council and its partners will need to address these issues despite reductions in the resources available to them, especially in terms of capital funding available to meet the housing requirements of vulnerable and disabled households.

### **Maximising the supply of affordable housing**

Housing affordability is a key issue in Peterborough. The 2010 Strategic Housing Market Assessment update (SHMA) identified that 27% of households in Peterborough are unable to afford market housing, either to rent or to buy, without some form of financial subsidy. The SHMA also identified that on average, around 1,008 households fall into housing need in Peterborough on an annual basis. For these reasons, maximising the supply of good quality affordable housing is a key strategic priority for Peterborough City Council.

Peterborough City Council's policies for meeting housing needs and ensuring the provision of affordable housing on new developments are set out in the Core Strategy which seeks to achieve 30% affordable dwellings on housing sites delivering 15 or more units. The tenure split for affordable housing provision recommended by the Core Strategy is 70% social rented and 30% intermediate housing. The evidence to support and justify our affordable housing target and tenure split, originates from the SHMA completed in March 2008. This tenure split was reaffirmed as appropriate by the Affordable Housing Viability Assessment 2009 and more recently by the SHMA update report completed in July 2010.

Over the three year life span of the last Housing Strategy (2008-11) the Council worked extensively with partner Housing Associations and the Government's housing investment agency, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), to deliver 1,485 affordable homes to rent or to buy across Peterborough. This record level of development was primarily driven by high levels of public sector capital investment in affordable housing delivery under the HCA's £8bn National Affordable Housing Programme 2008-11, and the Council's proactive enabling work with its partner housing providers. This growth was achieved despite the slump in broader house-building activity during the recent recession.

The Government has developed a new delivery model for affordable housing which includes a new funding regime that the Council and its partners will need to engage with to maximise the level of affordable housing development across Peterborough. The funding available for the new funding regime between April 2011-15 is £4.2bn. Approximately £2.2bn of this funding is currently available to deliver the Government's target to provide 150,000 new affordable homes through the HCA's Affordable Homes Programme Framework 2011-15. The new delivery model will provide housing associations with approximately 60% less public subsidy per unit of housing than the previous three year investment programme. In order to address this funding shortfall, the HCA expects housing associations to provide a greater proportion of finance for new housing themselves by borrowing higher levels of private finance against their assets and through increasing revenue by charging higher rents on a proportion of their stock.

To enable Housing Associations to increase the revenue available to fund new development, the Government has introduced a new housing tenure named 'affordable rent'. Under the tenure, new tenants will be charged up to 80% of the rental cost of a similar property in the private sector, representing an average increase in the current rent levels in the social rented sector. To complement the introduction of 'affordable rent', the Government has revised national planning guidance so that the new tenure is included within the Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) definition of affordable housing. As with social rented accommodation, affordable rent tenants will be able to claim housing benefit to assist with rental costs.

### **Supporting the affordable housing delivery model**

The introduction of the affordable rent tenure has a range of significant implications for future and existing housing provision in Peterborough. Firstly, the HCA has set out an intention that the affordable rent tenure will 'form the principal element of the new [housing] supply offer', and that 'social rented housing will only be supported in limited circumstances'. This means that the supply of new HCA-funded social rented accommodation is likely to all but cease as the affordable rent tenure establishes itself as a funding priority.

Secondly, in order to maximise revenue and decrease reliance upon public subsidy, the HCA is encouraging its housing association delivery partners to convert a proportion of their existing social rented housing stock to the

new 'affordable rent' tenure as units become vacant for re-let to new tenants. This change will result in a reduction in the level of social rented housing stock available in Peterborough.

To ensure that growth in Peterborough continues to focus on creating mixed and sustainable communities, affordable housing needs to maintain a strong role in the future housing market and securing funding for new schemes will be fundamental to this objective. Peterborough City Council acknowledges that failure to embrace the 'affordable rent' tenure and the new delivery model will expose Peterborough to the prospect that very little affordable housing will be developed during the four year lifespan of the Housing Strategy. Furthermore, a decision to reject the delivery of affordable rent tenure homes in Peterborough would not prevent existing housing stock from being converted to the affordable rent tenure. Housing Associations have the option to implement the new tenure in locations where they have no plans to develop as long as they have a development programme within the region or general economic area. Therefore, in accordance with our overarching strategic priority to achieve growth and in order to meet the identified need for additional affordable housing provision across Peterborough, the Council will actively support the HCA's new 'affordable rent' delivery model.

#### **Policy HS20**

The Council will actively support the HCA's new 'affordable rent' delivery model in order to meet the overarching strategic priority to achieve housing growth and ensure the continued supply of new affordable housing to meet demonstrated need.

#### **Enabling the delivery of affordable rented tenure in Peterborough**

The Government has clearly stated its intention that the affordable rent tenure will play a major role in the delivery of future HCA funded affordable housing provision, therefore the Council needs to modify its approach to achieving the targets of its affordable housing policy set out in the Core Strategy.

The Council remains committed to achieving its overall affordable housing policy of 30% affordable homes on sites delivering 15 or more dwellings. However in light of the Government's social housing reforms and the wider definition of affordable housing set out in the revised PPS3, the Council will take a more flexible approach by negotiating an affordable tenure mix on a site by site basis rather than maintaining the split recommended by the existing policy in the Core Strategy.

Future affordable housing provision will still address need but the affordable tenure split will be determined by assessing scheme viability using the HCA's Development Appraisal Tool. Furthermore, consideration will be given to the mix of affordable housing provision proposed on other planned schemes as well as taking into account the characteristics of existing affordable housing stock in the same locality, to ensure that developments contribute to improving the range of affordable housing provision in Peterborough. The Council will use the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) evidence and other Council policy (such as planning policy and housing policy) to assist with this assessment.

The Council will also re-visit existing S106 agreements to ensure that the requirements set out relating to the tenure of affordable housing provision does not prevent the development of the affordable rent tenure as part of the delivery of the planning requirements. The Council will require that the tenancy terms and rent setting parameters of affordable rent dwellings provided as a result of agreed S106 variations are in accordance with the recommendations set out in Peterborough's Strategic Tenancy Policy. This condition will also apply to affordable rent tenure dwellings provided as a result of variations to the terms of Peterborough City Council capital funding agreements for the provision of affordable homes.

#### **Policy HS21**

The Council will seek to achieve 30% affordable housing on sites delivering 15 or more dwellings. However in light of the Governments social housing reforms, the Council will take a more flexible approach to negotiating the tenure split on each site rather than maintaining the split recommended by the Core Strategy on all sites.

Peterborough City Council will explore the potential to provide the affordable rent tenure on sites which have an existing planning consent by reviewing the terms of existing S106 agreements in order to facilitate the ongoing delivery of new affordable homes.

#### **Developing a Strategic Tenancy Policy**

Under the new funding regime, Housing Associations were required to set out their proposals for a four year delivery programme to the HCA setting out how they will manage their existing assets in order to maximise revenue and generate new supply, including the proportion of existing stock that they intend to convert to the affordable rent tenure. Government has already set out its expectation that, in order to allow social landlords to effectively manage assets and maximise revenue, they will enjoy substantial freedoms on the types of tenancy that they provide and offer tenants. Housing Associations will be expected to produce their own policies on the grant and reissue of tenancies, including the type and length of tenancy that they will offer different households

in differing circumstances. The introduction of these new flexibilities has the potential to impact upon the existing relationship between Housing Associations and Local Authorities, with decisions regarding the conversion of stock in an area being taken in accordance with Housing Association development programmes, as opposed to being taken strictly in accordance with local housing needs and circumstances.

However, the Government has made it clear that it intends that Local Authorities retain a degree of strategic influence over the future of the affordable housing stock in their area. Legislation to be enacted through the Localism Bill will create a duty on Local Authorities to publish a Strategic Tenancy Policy. This document will set out the broad objectives that should be taken into consideration by social landlords when formulating their own policies on the grant and reissue of tenancies. Local authorities will be required to draw up their Strategic Tenancy Policy in consultation with social landlords and other key stakeholders in order to ensure that these policies strike a balance between meeting housing needs whilst ensuring future supply. The Government has made clear an expectation that social landlords give 'due regard' to the various strategic tenancy policies that cover their area of operation.

Following the enactment of the Localism and Decentralisation Bill the Council will seek to adopt its Strategic Tenancy Policy in order to provide guidance that will inform the policies of individual social landlords with housing stock in Peterborough. The Peterborough Strategic Tenure Policy will set out how the Council will seek to influence the implementation of the housing reforms to ensure they are applied in a consistent manner and continue to meet local housing need.

The Housing Strategy sets out the Council's intention to support the Government's affordable rent regime as a means of delivering both housing growth and as a means of meeting Peterborough's growing requirement for additional affordable housing. However, the Council is keen to ensure that future growth of the affordable rent tenure actively supports its strategic objectives to create mixed and sustainable communities, whilst also minimising homelessness and ensuring ongoing affordability. The Strategic Tenancy Policy will be formulated so that it takes into account the impact of increased rental costs and the issues associated with this, along with the reduction in the levels of Peterborough' social rented stock as it is converted to the new tenure.

One of the more significant outputs from the new affordable rent regime is the method through which affordable rent prices will be calculated. Under the current rent setting system for social rented housing, rents are set so that they are broadly consistent over a wide housing market area. However, under the new model the rent for an affordable rented home is calculated as a percentage of the rent for a similar property in the same locality in the private sector. Peterborough is an area where rental prices vary significantly between different areas and the new affordable rent regime will enable differences in the rents charged on affordable rent properties between areas. In order to mitigate this and ensure mixed and sustainable communities, the Peterborough Strategic Tenancy Policy will set out the preferred approach that the Council would like to see its housing association partners apply in order to ensure that rent levels remain affordable and broadly consistent across localities. The draft policy forms Appendix 5 to this Housing Strategy.

It is worth noting that the ability of our partner Housing Associations to build 'affordable rent' housing and convert their stock to the new tenure is dependent upon the success of their individual applications for funding through the Homes and Communities Agency's Affordable Homes Programme 2011-15. We will know the full outcome of this process, and the subsequent impact upon Peterborough's housing stock, in due course.

In addition to the introduction of the new tenure, the Government's housing reforms also include the introduction of new flexibilities that will allow Housing Associations to offer fixed term tenancies for both affordable rent and social rent tenants, or continue to offer traditional lifetime tenancies. Under the Government's plans, Housing Associations will be encouraged to draw up policies that set out the circumstances under which a fixed term or lifetime tenancy will be offered, and the criteria that will be taken into consideration when deciding whether to renew a tenancy at the end of a fixed term.

The Council welcomes the introduction of fixed term tenancies, as they will enable it to work with its partners to address issues such as under-occupation and low stock turnover. However, the Council also recognises that there are a number of potential outputs from this reform that will require careful management in order to ensure that commitments relating to mixed and sustainable communities are met. In order to mitigate these outputs, the Council will produce a Strategic Tenure Policy that will advocate the adoption of a range of measures designed to:

- Encourage tenants to invest in their homes and communities
- Prevent disruption to households with school-aged children
- Provide additional security of tenure to households with specific support needs
- Promote appropriate move-on at the end of a fixed term
- Prevent an increase in homelessness
- Encourage consistency of approach from our delivery partners about how the new flexibilities are applied

- Encourages the most effective use of Peterborough's housing stock

In Peterborough, strong partnership working between the Council and its Housing Association partners has ensured that a dialogue is already underway to achieve a shared approach to addressing the balance between preparing financially viable plans for future housing development, whilst addressing housing need and meeting the Council's wider strategic objectives and obligations. A first draft of Peterborough's proposed Strategic Tenancy Policy forms Appendix 5 of this Strategy. It is currently awaiting approval to commence a formal 4 week public consultation period before a final draft of the policy will be prepared for adoption by the Council.

#### **Policy HS22**

The Council will adopt a Strategic Tenancy Policy to inform and influence individual Housing Association policies on the allocation and renewal of tenancies to ensure the supply of affordable rent tenancies contributes to meeting local housing needs and priorities. The Strategic Tenancy Policy will be finalised and adopted following enactment of the Localism and Decentralisation Bill (due end of 2011/12).

#### **Utilising public land as a catalyst for affordable housing delivery**

The Government has also identified a clear role for Local Authorities in the ongoing delivery of affordable housing. The HCA affordable housing framework encourages Local Authorities to consider the contribution that they can make towards bringing forward housing supply through the use of their own land holdings, as well as through negotiations on S106 agreements to deliver affordable housing.

In response to this, Peterborough City Council is actively exploring with its Housing Association partners the potential for using publicly owned land as a catalyst for the delivery of new homes, within a robust financial context. A dialogue has already been initiated by the Council to set up a collaboration agreement with interested Housing Association partners with the aim of bringing forward new housing projects in the city that would provide a range of property types and tenures, including affordable homes.

#### **Policy HS23**

The Council will actively explore with its Housing Association partners the potential for using publicly owned land as a catalyst for the delivery of new homes within a robust financial context.

#### **Preventing and alleviating homelessness**

Peterborough City Council has worked hard to improve its response to the issue of homelessness. Significant inroads have been made to addressing the city's rough sleeper levels which until recently were the highest outside of central London. Efforts have also focussed on preventing homelessness to assist families before they reach crisis point. This change in focus has reduced the number of homeless households that the Council has had a duty to assist with finding accommodation, which until recently had recorded as above the national average.

The Council's concerted effort to addressing homelessness in Peterborough reflects the wider costs that it poses to both individuals and the community. Homelessness can arise as a result of a broad range of root causes including the sudden loss of employment, family or relationship breakdown, domestic violence or ill health. There is also a direct cost to the Council in terms of resources because Local Authorities have a legal duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 to provide assistance and, in some circumstances, find temporary and permanent accommodation for homeless individuals and households. The complexity of the issues surrounding homelessness means that any efforts to prevent homelessness cannot simply focus upon the provision of housing. Instead, it is an issue that requires a holistic and multi-agency approach in order to be addressed successfully.

The Peterborough Homelessness Strategy 2008-11 sets out the Council's approach towards addressing homelessness. However, the next four years are likely to present Peterborough City Council and its partners with some fresh challenges with regards to homelessness. Cuts to public spending, the likelihood of a rise in interest rates from their present historic low, and extensive reforms to welfare and housing benefit all have the potential to impact upon the levels of homelessness in Peterborough. In preparation for these challenges, the Council will have a new comprehensive Homelessness Strategy adopted and published by January 2012. The Strategy will be developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners including Housing Associations, voluntary groups and key housing-support related services. It will further strengthen Peterborough City Council's preventative approach to dealing with homelessness, and reaffirm the role that homelessness prevention plays in achieving our overarching priority of establishing 'strong and supportive communities'.

#### **Policy HS24**

Peterborough City Council will work with its partners to publish a new comprehensive Homelessness Strategy for the city by the end of the 2011/12 financial year. This document will form part of the portfolio of housing-related strategic documents that sit behind the Housing Strategy.



## **Homelessness prevention through housing advice**

Good quality housing advice is a vital component of any holistic approach aimed at preventing and alleviating homelessness. Local Authorities already have a legal duty to ensure the provision of housing advice to those who are at risk of losing their homes. In Peterborough this advice is provided by the Council's Housing Needs Team. The team provides specialist housing advice to households who are threatened with homelessness or experiencing any other type of accommodation-related issues. They also manage the Peterborough Homes Housing Register and control the allocation of social housing in Peterborough through the Choice Based Lettings Scheme. This role is key to the authority's ability to discharge its statutory duty to homeless households.

In April 2011 the Council's Housing Needs Team was remodelled to strengthen its focus on homelessness prevention. The remit of the new service is to work with clients to help them tackle their housing related issues and reduce the potential for the threat of homelessness. Within the team there are specialist officers to focus on three key areas:

- Assisting households with mortgage difficulties
- Assisting households that face significant issues with private landlords
- Assisting rough sleepers

With more officer time dedicated towards intensive casework with clients in the most urgent need, the Council will seek to strengthen the range of self-help tools available to users of the Housing Needs Service. This new approach will include the introduction of a telephone-based triage service for low priority and general housing advice, supported by a refreshed website that will host housing advice and information. Improvements to the online 'bidding' system for Choice Based Lettings which applicants on the housing register use to access more information about their priority for housing are also being introduced to reduce low-level enquiries to officers and to manage applicant's expectations.

## **Ensuring a wide range of mechanisms to prevent homelessness**

A central building block to a robust homelessness prevention agenda is the provision of a broad range of prevention mechanisms and tools. The Council presently receives funding from the DCLG that assists with financing homelessness prevention mechanisms. These include a deposit loan scheme for households threatened with homelessness, debt advice for those experiencing mortgage difficulties, and a 'sanctuary scheme' that provides home security upgrades for victims of harassment and domestic violence.

Over the next four years the funding available to the Council to fund these mechanisms will remain broadly comparable with the funding received in previous years. However, given the presence of an economic climate that threatens to increase levels of homelessness, it will become a priority of the Council to ensure that this funding is utilised in the most effective way.

## **Assisting households with Mortgage Difficulties**

The Council's work to provide dedicated assistance to households with mortgage difficulties is likely to play an increasingly important role in the homelessness prevention agenda over the next four years. With interest rates expected to rise from their present record low and the continued stagnation of the national housing market, it is vital that the Council continues to offer support and advice to those facing mortgage difficulties in order to prevent households from losing their accommodation.

To add to this challenge, the funding for the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme (a key homelessness prevention tool for those facing repossession) has been significantly reduced. Under the first phase of the scheme, the Mortgage Rescue funding prevented the homelessness of 32 households in Peterborough by providing funding to Housing Associations to enable the purchase of the home from the household and providing that household with a tenancy to allow them to continue to occupy the property. However, under the scaled-back second phase of the scheme, the Council will not be in a position to promote this as a prevention option.

The Council's own interventions to assist those who fall into mortgage difficulties will play a critical role in compensating for the significant reductions in this resource. The Housing Needs team provides an advocacy service for those who require assistance in negotiating with their mortgage provider to obtain better terms on their loan. The team also refers struggling homeowners to receive debt advice; a service that is presently funded through the homelessness prevention funding that the Council receives from the DCLG. Ensuring the continuation of these services, including the debt advice for those facing repossession, will be of vital importance to the homelessness prevention agenda over the next four years.

**Policy HS25**

Peterborough City Council will continue to offer dedicated and tailored support to those experiencing mortgage difficulties throughout the lifespan of the Housing Strategy. This will include ensuring the provision of debt advice.

**Preventing and alleviating Rough Sleeping**

Over the past three years tackling rough sleeping has been a key area of focus for Peterborough City Council. Many of those sleeping rough in the city have been Eastern Europeans, attracted to Peterborough because of the city's proximity to agricultural employment opportunities in surrounding areas. The recession in 2008 had a significant impact upon the economic prospects of this group, leading to many low skilled migrant workers losing their income, their accommodation and their entitlement to state assistance. In addition to rough sleepers from migrant communities, Peterborough also recorded significant levels of rough sleeping amongst the indigenous population.

In response to these challenges, the Council's rough sleeper outreach service has worked to develop strong relationships with a range of partners, including the voluntary sector, faith groups, the UK Border Agency and the DCLG to develop a reconnections service. During 2010 our work with these partners through the reconnections service led to 89 rough sleepers who are European Economic Area nationals being reconnected with their country of origin and a further 19 rough sleepers being administratively removed from the UK. The rough sleeper outreach service has also successfully assisted a number of rough sleepers in securing accommodation through helping them to find employment or obtain financial assistance from the state.

To continue reducing the level of rough sleeping in Peterborough over the next four years the Council needs to be mindful of a number of challenges faced by those groups who are likely to experience street homelessness, particularly single person households who are often not considered as a priority for assistance under homelessness legislation. In addition to wider economic pressures, changes to the Housing Benefit System are likely to add to the challenges for those with low incomes or in receipt of benefits when accessing private rented accommodation. A Housing Benefit reform which came into effect from April 2011 is the increase in amount of non-dependent deductions. All households in receipt of housing benefit receive a reduction in their entitlement if they have a non-dependent person living with them. The reformed regulation increases the amount of these deductions, increasing the potential for financial strain upon households who have non-dependent family members residing with them.

A significant impact of the reforms from April 2012 for single person households will be an increase to the age threshold from 25 years to 35 years for a restricted rate of housing allowance that is the equivalent to the cost of renting a room in a shared house. It is anticipated that this reform will result in a reduction in the demand for self-contained accommodation from certain groups affected by this change with a shift towards the market for shared accommodation. This is a type of accommodation which is already oversubscribed in Peterborough and will be subject to further demand as a university is established in the city.

To prepare for these future challenges, the Council will seek to develop services that are focused upon assisting single 'non-priority' homeless persons. The Housing Needs Team is soon to complete a 'move-on plans protocol' (MOPP) assessment. This assessment acts as an audit of the services available for single homeless households across a locality, helping to identify local factors that are preventing homeless individuals from moving on and securing accommodation. In addition to providing an evidence base for priorities and policies within the Homelessness Strategy, the findings of the MOPP will support a DCLG funded project to address single persons' homelessness in Peterborough. The Council will use the £40,000 funding allocated to employ a part-time officer to work with landlords to secure accommodation for single person homeless households, and also to work with landlords to address issues with tenants that emerge as a consequence of the reforms to the housing benefit system. Detailed information about the future use of this resource will feature in the refreshed Peterborough Homelessness Strategy.

**Policy HS26**

The Council will develop services that are focused upon assisting single 'non-priority' homeless persons. The prevention and alleviation of rough sleeping and street homelessness will remain as a key priority for Peterborough City Council over the lifespan of the Housing Strategy. The Council will continue to provide services to alleviate rough sleeping including the Reconnections Service, where funding allows.

**Ensuring the continued provision of targeted housing-related support services**

The provision of high quality housing-related support services are a vital component of any holistic homelessness prevention agenda. In Peterborough the majority of these services are funded by the Government's Supporting People Programme, which is managed locally by the Council's Housing Programmes Team.

The Supporting People programme funds the commissioning of housing support services for a wide range of client groups across Peterborough aimed at helping people to live independently. These support services form a key tool in preventing and alleviating homelessness, especially amongst client groups who are likely to struggle to retain their accommodation as a consequence of complex vulnerabilities, such as care leavers and those with mental health issues. The programme also funds a range of services that enable vulnerable households to live independently in their own homes, including the costs towards providing 37 wardens across 45 Peterborough-based sheltered housing schemes. Through preventing homelessness and enabling people to continue residing in their own accommodation, the support services provided under the Supporting People Programme can make a significant contribution towards the wider strategic objectives of the Council and its partners, such as reducing the reliance upon residential care and reducing street homelessness.

As a result of financial constraints, the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan has reduced the annual budget to fund Peterborough's Supporting People Programme over the next five years. To minimise the impact of the reduction the Council has worked with service providers to ensure that savings are absorbed through efficiency savings as opposed to reductions in front-line service provision where possible.

In order to plan for future service provision and ensure that funding is directed to where it is needed most, the Council will work with its partners to complete a review of all Supporting People contracts by June 2011. This process will allow the Council to identify gaps in current service provision and enable partners to identify further efficiencies and new ways of delivering support services under the programme. The review of existing contracts will underpin the production of a new Supporting People Commissioning Strategy, which will set out the priorities for housing support-related service provision over the three year period from 2011-14. Furthermore, this new Strategy will set out the Council's intention to ensure that all future service provided by the Supporting People Programme retain a clear focus upon homelessness prevention. The completed document will form part of the portfolio of housing related strategic documents that sit behind this Housing Strategy.

#### **Policy HS27**

Peterborough City Council will provide funding for the Supporting People Programme over the next three years in accordance with the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Council will conduct a review of all existing service contracts by June 2011. This will lead to the adoption and publication of a Supporting People Commissioning Strategy by the end of March 2012. This Strategy will seek to ensure that all services provided under the Supporting People Programme over the period 2011-15 retain the strongest possible focus upon homelessness prevention.

#### **Ensuring the suitability of accommodation for households with specific housing needs**

A key element of meeting Peterborough's housing needs is to ensure the suitability of accommodation for those households with specific needs. Through ensuring that households with specific needs are residing in safe and suitably adapted accommodation, the Council can help to address wider strategic issues, including reducing hospital admissions, reducing the need for expensive residential care, and preventing homelessness.

#### **Protecting Disabled Facilities Grant funding**

Local authorities have a legal duty to assist disabled households who qualify for assistance to adapt their homes. One of the main ways that we meet this legal duty is through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). These grants, which can be up to a maximum of £30,000, help to provide financial assistance to those who are in need of major adaptations that will allow them to better access their accommodation. DFGs cover the costs associated with various types of adaptations, including level access showers, stair lifts and through floor lifts, changes to room layouts, extensions to properties and the widening of doors and entrances.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan has retained the £1.4m budget level for DFGs for 2011/12 and 2012/13 with a proposed reduction of 25% for the following three years. To ensure the best use of valuable funds, the Council will work with its partners to strengthen its strategic approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable and disabled households. This approach will focus upon ensuring value for money when assisting those in existing stock, and also through ensuring that future specialist housing provision is designed in a way that meets the needs of vulnerable households.

The Council has taken some initial steps to ensure our funding for DFGs achieves value for money. A revised Housing Renewal Policy was published in April 2011 that included amendments aimed at ensuring maximum effectiveness from DFG funding. This includes provisions to encourage households that have received assistance to continue occupying their accommodation for a longer period of time if it remains suitable, helping to prevent the need to carry out successive adaptations for the same household across different properties. The revised Housing Renewal Policy forms part of the portfolio of housing related strategic documents that sit behind this Housing Strategy.

**Policy HS28**

The council aims to provide assistance to at least 255 disabled and/or vulnerable households per year through the allocation of DFGs until the end of 2014/15.

The revised Housing Renewal Policy also sets out criteria for the Disabled Persons Relocation Grant. This discretionary grant covers the costs associated with moving a disabled person and their household to more suitable accommodation, such as removal costs and legal fees. This grant may be awarded when the Council have been advised by Adult Social Care or Children's Services that a person has a need that makes him or her eligible for a disabled facility grant but where, in the Council's opinion, the disabled person's existing accommodation is not suitable to be adapted and the disabled person and their family is willing to move. In order to be eligible for the grant, the total cost to the Council (including relocation and any internal adaptation at the new property) must not exceed the cost of adapting the disabled persons existing accommodation. Therefore, as an alternative to carrying out extensive and costly adaptations to properties with a poor layout, the Council will strongly encourage relocation as a means of addressing the needs of a disabled person and their household where it is deemed appropriate.

**Policy HS29**

As an alternative to carrying out extensive and costly adaptations to properties with a poor layout, the Council will strongly encourage relocation as a means of addressing the needs of a disabled person and their household where it is deemed appropriate and will provide Disabled Persons Relocation Grant in appropriate cases.

**Securing the continuation of the Aids and adaptations service**

In addition to the wholesale interventions provided by DFGs and the relocation grant funding, Peterborough City Council also offers a minor Aids and Adaptations Service. This service is funded the Capital Programme that Peterborough City Council provides to Adult Social Care. Co-ordinated by the Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency, the scheme provides minor aids and adaptations such as wheelchair ramps and grab-rails that assist with enabling residents to remain in their home, earlier hospital discharges and the receipt of care from home, all of which provide the council and NHS Peterborough with significant financial savings.

**Policy HS30**

The Council's Capital Programme provided to NHS Peterborough will continue to fund and provide the Aids and Adaptations Service throughout the lifespan of the Peterborough Housing Strategy: We will aim to assist at least 1000 households with minor aids and adaptations on an annual basis until 2013/14.

**Securing the continuation of the Handy Persons Scheme**

The Peterborough Handy Persons scheme, which receives £100,000 funding from the Supporting People (SP) Programme, provides vulnerable households with assistance with minor repairs and improvements to their accommodation. The type of work covered under the scheme includes the removal of trip and fire hazards, and small electrical and plumbing jobs. Although the scheme only covers minor work, it is an important tool in the Council's approach towards enabling vulnerable households to maintain their independence, remain in their own homes and also in preventing accidents and falls.

**Future housing provision that caters for households with specific housing needs**

This Strategy has set out a series of reactive measures that will enable us to meet the accommodation needs of vulnerable and disabled households that reside within the existing housing stock across Peterborough. However, in order to prepare for the future housing challenges posed by an aging population, the Council also needs a strategic approach towards the standard of accommodation that is provided through new housing development in Peterborough.

The Council's policy for meeting specialist housing needs is set out in the Core Strategy which includes a policy requiring 20% of all dwellings to be built to Lifetime Homes Standard on development sites of 15 or more dwellings (an increase on the 10% sought under the previous Local Plan), and for 2% of dwellings to be built as wheelchair homes on development sites of 50 dwellings or more. The Lifetime Homes Standard is a set of sixteen design criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes. Housing built to the standard is designed in a way that makes it easier for households to cope with a range of eventualities, from raising small children through to dealing with reduced mobility in later life. Crucially, homes built to the Lifetime Homes Standard are also simpler and less expensive to adapt, providing the Council with a long-term financial saving on the cost of DFGs and other reactive measures to adapt the accommodation of vulnerable households. For these reasons, encouraging the development of Lifetime Homes will remain a key strategic priority for Peterborough City Council and strong partnership working with our Housing Association partners resulted in 107 units (of the total 331 affordable homes built) in 2010/11 being built to Lifetime Homes standards, equating to almost 33% of new affordable homes. The scope for achieving large numbers of wheelchair adapted homes is considerably more limited due to the additional costs associated with this type of housing provision. However,

2010/11 saw the provision of 12 new affordable homes built to accommodate the needs of wheelchair users, almost 4% of new affordable homes provision in Peterborough. Despite the financial pressures facing future affordable housing development, Peterborough City Council will work with its Housing Association partners to continue to achieve high levels of new affordable housing that is designed to cater for households with specific needs.

#### **Policy HS31**

Through its enabling role, Peterborough City Council will continue to support the delivery of units built to Lifetime Homes Standard, and where appropriate we will work positively with developers and housing providers to encourage levels of provision of both Lifetime Homes Standard and Wheelchair adapted homes that aim to exceed the existing policy requirements, taking into account viability constraints. To help achieve Policy HS9, the Council will work to strengthen its approach towards the implementation of planning policy that relates to Lifetime Homes. The Council will seek to introduce mechanisms that allow us to monitor annual levels of delivery of homes built to the Standard, and we will also seek to encourage and educate the building industry about the value of the Standard through the publication of a developer's guide to Lifetime Housing. The Council will also lobby parliament to make Lifetime Homes a compulsory requirement in the Building Regulations, with the aim of it being compulsory from 2013.

The accommodation needs of all people who come into contact with the health and social care services provided by NHS Peterborough will be evidenced in the emerging Health and Social Care Accommodation Strategy. A draft version of this Strategy is due to be available for consultation from the end of July 2011.

This Strategy will incorporate a number of existing strategies such as the Older People's Accommodation Strategy and NHS Peterborough's Extra Care Housing Strategy and will provide a holistic approach to meeting the needs of a wide range of people who need support including people who are elderly, physically and sensorily impaired have learning disabilities or have mental health needs. This Strategy will, once adopted, form part of the portfolio of housing related strategic documents that sit behind the Housing Strategy.

Currently in Peterborough there is a shortage of housing for people who need support. Historically investment in housing and support for people with more complex needs has been outside the City. Changing professional and clinical practice means that more people with significant support needs are now able to be supported in their own homes with comprehensive support packages. Demographic change also means a rising demand for housing with lower levels of support. As a result there is a need for an increased number of homes with support. This demand is likely to be met by a combination of a relatively small number of bespoke housing units being built for particular client groups and a larger number of normal houses and flats being available for sale or rent in a variety of locations across the City. Initial forecasts indicate that approximately 10 specialist units and 30 normal homes will be needed each year. More details will be in the forthcoming Health and Social Care Accommodation Strategy.

The existing Peterborough Older Persons Accommodation Strategy (OPAS) 2007 sets out a requirement to build 500 units of extra care' accommodation in Peterborough by 2016 in order to meet the needs of an ageing population and the projected growth in dementia. There are currently 231 units of extra care housing provision in Peterborough. The target for Extra Care provision set out in the OPAS is very challenging but remains a priority for Peterborough City Council and its partners. The target of 500 units was informed by Joint Strategic Needs Assessment carried out in 2007.

#### **Policy HS32**

NHS Peterborough will work with its partners to produce a draft Health and Social Care Accommodation Strategy for consultation. The final adopted document will form part of the portfolio of housing-related strategic documents that sit behind the Housing Strategy.

#### **Meeting Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs**

The Council's Core Strategy Gypsy and Traveller policy CS9 states that new permanent pitches can be achieved through the normal process of the submission and the granting of planning permission. The policy also states that, if necessary, the Council will allocate new permanent sites through the Site Allocations Document, though the Council currently sees no need to take up this option and is not in the process of allocating new permanent sites.

The Core Strategy Policy does, however, state the need to identify within the Site Allocations Document a transit site in Peterborough (i.e. a site which is used for a temporary period by a family travelling through or visiting Peterborough for a short period).

The need for a transit site was recognised because there was clear evidence of high levels of unauthorised encampments in Peterborough, yet at the same time there was no recognised location for Gypsy and Traveller families to stop for a short period.

Unauthorised encampments continue to arise on a regular basis in Peterborough. Therefore, the council and the Police have decided to take proactive action to address this issue. This proactive work started with the council safeguarding a piece of land off Norwood Lane for the provision of around 10 transit pitches. It safeguarded this land in the Site Allocations Document that was submitted in May 2011 to the Secretary of State for final examination and agreement by an Inspector.

The Council continues to monitor the situation, including learning from transit site provision best practice elsewhere in the country.

To assist in enabling best practice to be delivered in Peterborough, in October 2011 the Council asked the Inspector examining the Site Allocations Document to make a minor adjustment to the Document. These changes, if agreed by the Inspector, will add flexibility to the Document but will not remove the primary intention of safeguarding and delivering a site off Norwood Lane. If an alternative better solution to the safeguarded transit site at Norwood Lane is found, then this would be implemented rather than the safeguarded site.

On wider matters, the Council has committed to regularly maintaining a local assessment of Gypsy and Traveller pitch need (permanent and transit) and Travelling Show People plots, and is currently undertaking such an assessment with partner Cambridgeshire authorities the result of which should start to emerge around October 2011.

**Policy HS33**

(A) Temporary or transit sites: During the course of this Housing Strategy period (2011-2015), the Council is minded to deliver a transit site off Norwood Lane, on safeguarded land identified in the Site Allocations Document. However, if early in the Housing Strategy period an alternative provision can be identified and delivered elsewhere in the district, this would negate the need for the safeguarded site to be delivered.

(B) Permanent sites: The Council does not intend to allocate sites for permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches through its plan making process. However, it will support the provision of new pitches if the proposed development meets the criteria as set out in Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy.

(C) Maintaining an up-to-date evidence base: The Cambridgeshire Sub Region Travellers Need Assessment will be completed by around the end of 2011, which will assist in determining the need for new pitches and determining applicable planning applications.

## Objective Four: To create mixed and sustainable communities

Housing plays a vital role in ensuring that the neighbourhoods we create and the communities that live within them are mixed, thriving and sustainable. Developments that offer a range of housing tenures - owner occupied, private, intermediate and social rent - are essential to creating mixed and balanced communities. Large mono-tenure social housing estates have historically contributed to creating pockets of deprivation and poverty. Government policies relating to housing, planning and neighbourhood renewal have sought to create mixed, sustainable communities which promote a social and income mix and provide access to a range of services and amenities.

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) states that Local Authorities should seek to promote 'development that creates socially inclusive communities' through their local development plans. The document further states that to achieve this, Local Authorities should plan for policies 'that seek to reduce social inequalities' including access to good quality housing. This is reflected in the Peterborough Core Strategy, which sets out a vision for Peterborough to become an area 'renowned for its quality and choice of housing, where... social integration is promoted through the provision of a broad range of housing types... that match the needs and aspirations of future residents in terms of affordability, sustainability, size, type and location'. This stance is also reflected in the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy which includes 'creating strong and supportive communities' and 'creating opportunities, tackling inequalities'.

### Ensuring a varied housing offer that supports mixed communities

The Housing Strategy includes a range of measures aimed at ensuring new developments include a wide choice of well designed new homes to meet the needs and aspirations of all existing and future residents in Peterborough. These measures, many of which are embedded into local planning policy, will help to ensure that new neighbourhoods such as Great Haddon contain a range of housing types that contribute towards the creation of mixed communities. In considering the mix of new homes in new development the council will also take into account the characteristics of the existing housing stock in the area to ensure a wider neighbourhood balance.

Furthermore, to promote social integration the Council encourages a 'pepper potting' approach to affordable housing provision on new developments. This involves the Council working with developers and Housing Association partners to create a mix of affordable housing dwellings and private dwellings throughout the development in an attempt to minimise social exclusion and encourage mixed communities.

#### **Policy HS34**

In its role as housing enabler, the Council will work with developers and Housing Associations to ensure affordable housing provision is effectively integrated into new development through a 'pepper potting approach'.

### Managing the growth of the Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) sector

As set out under objective one of section three, it is anticipated that the city will experience an increase in demand for accommodation from single person households over the next four years. Peterborough's plans to develop its Higher Education (HE) offer will lead to an increase in demand for single person accommodation from the incoming student population. Furthermore, planned Housing Benefit reforms are likely to price many single person households out of self-contained accommodation and into shared accommodation, such as lodgings and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). These combined factors have the potential to significantly increase the demand for HMO accommodation in Peterborough which could impact upon the sustainability and cohesion of communities.

Peterborough already has a large HMO market which is partly driven by demand from the new migrant communities that have settled in the city since the accession of Eastern European countries into the EU in 2004, and also by a local population that is younger than the national average. This high level of HMO accommodation is widely acknowledged by the Council and its partners to have been a contributory factor to an increase in problems in particular neighbourhoods such as community cohesion issues, anti-social behaviour, environmental crimes such as fly-tipping, littering and graffiti, along with public health issues. The notable growth of HMO accommodation in Millfield and New England in particular has also reduced the number of large units of family accommodation, leading to some significant changes in the demographic and housing profiles of these wards.

The Council and its partners are committed to ensuring the sustainability of communities in Peterborough as they respond to meeting a range of housing needs that includes student accommodation and HMOs over the next four years. The Council will explore the potential benefits of introducing a Direction under Article 4 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) to manage the number of new HMOs in particular neighbourhoods. Currently, the conversion of a dwelling house to a HMO

benefits from 'permitted development rights', which means that no planning consent is required from the Council (though other permission, such as Building Regulation approval may still be required). A number of authorities have used this power to remove permitted development rights for this type of development where the rapid growth and high concentration of HMOs has caused problems, meaning that new HMOs must be considered through the planning application process.

#### **Policy HS35**

The Council will explore the benefits of a Direction under Article 4 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) to manage the number of new HMOs in particular neighbourhoods. If this approach to managing HMO growth is adopted, the Council will also produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that sets out our requirements for HMO development in planning terms.

### **Ensuring the sustainability of rural communities**

The provision of affordable rural housing has a key role to play in ensuring the future sustainability of rural areas. In a 2008 review of the rural economy and affordable housing, Matthew Taylor MP argued that villages run the risk of becoming 'gated communities of wealthy commuters unless affordable housing can be secured and retained within rural communities'. His report, along with a range of other studies produced by groups such as the Campaign for Rural England, also highlight the role that affordable housing can play in sustaining village facilities such as schools, post offices and public houses. As one of the recommendations of his report, Taylor encourages the creation of initiatives that allow rural communities to develop affordable housing for local people.

In 2010 the Council produced and adopted its first Strategy dedicated to addressing the housing priorities of those living in rural Peterborough. The Rural Housing Strategy 2010-13 was developed in conjunction with representatives of rural Parish Councils, and identified a range of key housing and development priorities for action. Addressing a lack of affordable housing specifically built and designed to meet the needs of local households (especially the needs of young families), was identified as a key priority of the Strategy.

In order to meet this priority of the Rural Housing Strategy and work towards securing the future sustainability of village communities in Peterborough, the Council has established a Rural Housing Delivery Partnership. The partnership consists of Cambridgeshire ACRE - an enabling organisation that works with rural communities to help address local issues, two Housing Associations and the Council itself. The partnership has two main objectives: to work with willing parish councils to identify the level and type of housing need, and to identify opportunities to develop affordable rural housing on 'exception sites'.

An 'exception site' is a site that is located adjacent to a village boundary where development would usually be prohibited. However, where there is evidence of unmet housing need, development of solely affordable housing may be granted on such a site. Any housing development permitted must be for the benefit of households local to the development, and must also remain as affordable housing to meet local need in perpetuity. The Council's Planning Policy on exception sites is set out in policy CS8 of the Core Strategy. Further details of the Council's plans for rural affordable housing can be found in the Rural Housing Strategy 2010-13, which forms part of the portfolio of housing-related strategic documents that sit behind the Housing Strategy.

#### **Policy HS36**

The Council will maintain membership of the Rural Housing Delivery Partnership until 2013 when a review will be conducted of the Peterborough Rural Housing Strategy. The Rural Housing Delivery Partnership will aim to visit every parish council across Peterborough by the end of 2011/12.

### **Supporting Community-led Housing Solutions**

The Rural Housing Strategy highlighted the role that community-led housing solutions could play in increasing the supply of affordable rural housing for local people and ensuring the sustainability of our rural areas. Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are an example of a community-led housing solution. They are established by local people for the purposes of securing land or assets, such as housing, for the benefit of the wider community. In many instances nationally, CLTs have formed for the purposes of developing affordable rural housing to meet the needs of local people. The Peterborough Rural Housing Strategy identified a need for the Council and community groups to develop links with organisations that can offer expertise and assistance in this field. Consequently the Council has established connections with the organisation Foundation East, who provide advice and start-up capital to community groups that wish to develop community facilities such as housing.

Community-led housing solutions have recently been given a heightened profile within the new Government's housing agenda. The Localism Bill includes details of a range of mechanisms designed to support the development of community-led housing solutions. These emerging mechanisms include the community 'Right to Build', which will enable organisations such as CLTs to develop local facilities such as housing without the need for outline planning consent, providing there is substantial local support in favour of the development. Over the



next four years the Council will explore ways of supporting the development of community-led housing solutions in accordance with the Government's wider housing agenda, in both rural and urban areas.

Ultimately, this type of housing development needs to be led by local people. However, the Council will assist and enable communities that would like to form an organisation such as a CLT or development trust. During 2011/12 the Council will be embarking upon the process of working with local communities to develop 'Community Action Plans' for each of the seven neighbourhood areas. These plans will identify the aspirations and priorities of each neighbourhood, including particular issues that the community would like to see addressed. These community plans will also allow local people to identify key assets of community value that they consider to be of importance or that they would like to see better utilised. This links into the new duties and community powers that the Government is seeking to introduce through the Localism Bill, including the new requirement for Local Authorities to hold a register of assets of value to the community.

The Council aims to produce its Community Action Plans by April 2012. This process will be used to identify potential community development opportunities, including those that relate to the provision of community-led housing solutions. If suitable CLT opportunities are identified, the Council will assist the relevant communities in developing links with organisations such as Foundation East.

#### **Policy HS37**

The Council will encourage and support the establishment and growth of community-led housing solutions in rural and urban areas. The Council will prepare and then utilise Community Action Plans as a catalyst for a range of community-led housing initiatives, such as Community Land Trusts. The Council will have a Community Action Plan in place for each of the seven neighbourhood areas of Peterborough by April 2012.

### **Planning, community infrastructure and neighbourhood management**

Creating successful and sustainable communities requires careful planning. Peterborough has embarked upon a considerable growth agenda that will continue until at least 2026. The Peterborough Core Strategy sets out plans for a series of urban extensions at Great Haddon, Norwood and Paston Reserve. These extensions will create new communities and provide around 8,000 new homes. Community sustainability is a key consideration in the Master Planning process for an urban extension. For example, the Council's Planning and Neighbourhoods teams are currently exploring initiatives to incorporate community sustainability in the Master Plan for Great Haddon. These include plans to utilise the first dwelling on Great Haddon as a temporary community centre that will provide a base from which a community development officer will work with the incoming community to address early issues. It is envisaged that this officer will work with the incoming residents to encourage them to take a role in planning the community open space within the development.

Through working to ensure a close relationship, especially at Master Planning stage, the Council will seek to ensure that community sustainability is a central consideration of future development proposals and will ensure joint working between the planning and neighbourhoods teams. The Council's planning policies through its Planning Obligations Implementation Scheme, future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule, and negotiation on individual planning applications, will ensure that community facilities are provided and funded as an integral part of new development.

#### **Policy HS38**

The Council will work with developers to explore and implement measures which aim to ensure that community sustainability is a key consideration in both the Master Planning of urban extensions and the subsequent building of new communities.

### **Affordable housing allocations policies that support mixed and sustainable communities**

The impact of the Government's housing reforms mean that the Council and its partners will be required to review the policy that underpins the process of allocating affordable housing in Peterborough. Several reforms, including the introduction of the affordable rent tenure and new restrictions to Housing Benefit, will have a significant impact on existing practices relating to the allocation of housing. Planned reforms to the Housing Benefit system from April 2013 will change the property size eligibility criteria for social tenants so that some households, for example, who are currently eligible for a three bed property under the Peterborough Housing Allocations policy, may only be entitled to the housing benefit to cover the rent on a two bed property, depending on the age and the gender of their children. As a consequence, the Council and its partners will seek to conduct a review of the Peterborough Homes housing allocations policy to ensure that it still contributes towards our key strategic objective to encourage mixed and sustainable communities, as well as reducing and preventing homelessness and meeting housing needs.

The Council will work with its partners to ensure that the revised policy meets a number of key aims. These include ensuring that housing is allocated in a manner that maximises choice for applicants, making effective use of the housing stock by ensuring appropriate allocation, and assisting the Council in meeting its statutory

duties in housing homeless persons. The Council will also work with partners to ensure that the policy includes a series of mechanisms that will support the creation of mixed and sustainable communities, such as measures designed to discourage anti-social behaviour and mechanisms to ensure that housing is allocated to a wide range of household types in order to ensure community mix. The review of the allocations policy also presents an opportunity to set into place mechanisms that address a range of other issues, such as under-occupation within the affordable housing stock. The Council will seek to ensure that the revised housing allocations policy reflects the broad objectives and strategic aims of the forthcoming Strategic Tenancy Policy, along with the aims of the Housing Strategy.

**Policy HS39**

In response to the recently announced housing and welfare reforms, the Council will work with its partners to conduct a review of the Peterborough Homes housing allocations policy by April 2012. The Council will ensure that the refreshed policy will reflect the broad objectives of the forthcoming Strategic Tenancy Policy, along with the strategic aims of this Housing Strategy. Once adopted, the refreshed policy will form an annex to the Housing Strategy.

## Appendix 1: Action Plan

Policy number and theme	Policy Wording	Lead post holder(s) responsible for implementation	Other key non-LA partners	Target milestone (if applicable)
Policy HS1 – Supporting Growth	<i>The Council is committed to its housing growth target of 25,500 additional dwellings for the period 2009 - 2026 in accordance with the Peterborough Core Strategy and the SCS priority to secure 'substantial yet truly sustainable growth'. The Council does not intend to review these housing growth targets over the lifespan of the Peterborough Housing Strategy.</i>	-	-	-
Policy HS2 – Delivering the Infrastructure to support growth	<i>The Council will prepare a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document setting out the relationship between the two, with a view to having both adopted during the 2012/13 financial year.</i>	Group Manager - Strategic Planning and Enabling	-	CIL Charging Schedule and Community Infrastructure Supplementary SPD adopted by the end of 2012/13
Policy HS3 – Increasing the supply of prestige homes	<i>The Council will seek to encourage the market provision of new Prestige Homes on specific sites through the emerging Site Allocations DPD document, to ensure the provision of a wide range of housing across the local authority area. The Council will also seek to protect against the loss of Prestige Homes through demolition, redevelopment, conversion or change of use through the introduction of a policy in the Planning Policies DPD that limits the loss of such dwellings. The Council will seek to achieve adoption of the Peterborough Site Allocations DPD by January 2012. The Council will seek to achieve adoption of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD by December 2012</i>	Group Manager - Strategic Planning and Enabling		Peterborough Site Allocations DPD adopted by January 2012  Peterborough Planning Policies DPD adopted by December 2012
Policy HS4 - Implementing high environmental standards for new housing	<i>Peterborough City Council will only support residential development proposals where they make a clear contribution to the aspiration of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Peterborough to establish itself as the Home of Environment Capital, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS10. Additionally, in its role as housing 'enabler', Peterborough City Council will continue to work with its affordable housing delivery partners to ensure that opportunities to develop homes of a high environmental standard are maximised.</i>	Group Manager - Development Management  Housing Strategy Manager	Partner Housing Associations	-

Policy number and theme	Policy Wording	Lead post holder(s) responsible for implementation	Other key non-LA partners	Target milestone (if applicable)
Policy HS5 - Supporting the growth of Peterborough's higher education offer	<p><i>The Council will adopt a proactive approach towards enabling the delivery of student accommodation in the city. Wherever possible, the Growth and Regeneration Team will lend assistance to developers and Higher Education providers who are seeking to deliver student accommodation in the city. The Council will also consider the positive use of its own landholdings to encourage the delivery of student accommodation across Peterborough.</i></p> <p><i>The Council will undertake a mapping process of existing student accommodation in Peterborough, to be completed by end of March 2012. If this assessment identifies a need for additional student accommodation then further research into the current and projected need for student accommodation in Peterborough will be undertaken along with an analysis of the likely impact of an increased student population upon the private sector housing market in the city. The findings of the study will support policy development, as well as providing an evidence base for business plans for private investment into student accommodation provision across Peterborough. If this additional more detailed research is required it will be completed by August 2012.</i></p>	<p>Head of Growth &amp; Regeneration</p> <p>Housing Strategy Manager</p>	Anglia Ruskin University/University Centre Peterborough	Student accommodation mapping process completed by August 2012
Policy HS6 - Use of Council land to deliver housing growth	<i>The Council will make land assets available for development within a robust financial context to support growth in Peterborough. The Council will also support the delivery of affordable housing in Peterborough through entering into a collaboration agreement with Housing Associations to bring forward sites that will mutually benefit both parties.</i>	Head of Growth & Regeneration	Partner Housing Associations	-
Policy HS7 – Stimulating the local housing market	<i>The Council will provide assistance to qualifying first-time buyer households through the Peterborough LAMS to enable eligible households to access homeownership. £1 million will initially be set aside to fund the scheme with the capacity to increase this fund by up to £10 million upon review.</i>	Head of Strategic Finance		-
Policy HS8 - Stimulating the local housing market	<i>The Council will determine the feasibility of working with commercial partners to develop a scheme that will provide financial products such as insurance policies and mortgages for existing and potential residents of Peterborough who are experiencing difficulty accessing the housing market.</i>	Head of Growth Delivery		

Policy number and theme	Policy Wording	Lead post holder(s) responsible for implementation	Other key non-LA partners	Target milestone (if applicable)
Policy HS9 - Supporting the accommodation requirements of the Peterborough City Hospital	<i>The Council will provide support to the NHS Trust to enable the provision of up to 250 units of new hospital staff accommodation in Peterborough by April 2013 and where appropriate make Council land available within a robust financial context to support this initiative.</i>	Head of Growth & Regeneration	Peterborough NHS Trust	250 units of hospital staff accommodation provided by April 2013
Policy HS10 – Supporting Self Build	<i>The Council will seek to promote self build in Peterborough and act upon government initiatives to enable self build as new measures are introduced.</i>	Group Manager – Strategic Planning and Enabling	-	-
Policy HS11 – Bringing empty homes back into use	<i>Peterborough City Council will aim to bring 80 empty homes back into use on an annual basis over the lifetime of this Housing Strategy and will aim to reduce the number of empty homes within Peterborough to below 500 dwellings at any one time. This will be achieved by working closely with the owners of vacant dwellings to address the obstacles preventing the reuse of the property and by working with our Housing Association partners and the HCA to secure the necessary investment to bring a proportion of these dwellings back into use as affordable housing.</i>	Strategic Housing Manager Empty Homes Officer	Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)  Partner Housing Associations	40 empty homes bought back into use on an annual basis.
Policy HS12 - Bringing empty homes back into use	<i>Peterborough City Council will continue to dedicate resources to dealing with empty homes. The council will explore whether the income generated from the conversion of empty homes in to use through the New Homes Bonus scheme will enable additional resources to be dedicated to dealing with empty homes.</i>	Strategic Housing Manager  Director of Operations	-	-

Policy number and theme	Policy Wording	Lead post holder(s) responsible for implementation	Other key non-LA partners	Target milestone (if applicable)
Policy HS13 - Addressing hazardous levels of disrepair	<i>The Council will aim to remove category one hazards from at least 350 private sector housing households per year until the end of 20114/15 by continuing to provide financial assistance through the Repairs Assistance Fund and through enforcement action.</i>	Strategic Housing Manager	-	350 category one hazards removed from private sector households on an annual basis
Policy HS14 - Maximising the energy efficiency of existing housing	<i>The Council aims to improve the thermal efficiency in at least 100 Peterborough private sector dwellings each year to a target SAP rating level of 65, therefore minimising the risk of fuel poverty for the occupants</i>	Strategic Housing Manager	-	The thermal efficiency of 100 private sector dwellings improved on an annual basis
Policy HS15 – Supporting the ‘Green Deal’ and the ‘retrofit’ agenda	<i>Peterborough City Council will produce a Green Deal Implementation Strategy that sets out how it will work with partners to support the operation of the Scheme. This document will be published within the lifespan of the Housing Strategy.</i>	Strategic Housing Manager	Partner Housing Associations	Green Deal Implementation Strategy completed and adopted
Policy HS16 - Supporting the ‘Green Deal’ and the ‘retrofit’ agenda	<i>Peterborough City Council will implement the Green Deal scheme as a means of improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock by working closely with relevant partners. The Council’s strategic housing services will be delivered in anticipation of the Green Deal Scheme being operational towards the end of the lifespan of the Housing Strategy.</i>	Strategic Housing Manager	-	-

Policy number and theme	Policy Wording	Lead post holder(s) responsible for implementation	Other key non-LA partners	Target milestone (if applicable)
Policy HS17 - Encouraging consequential energy efficiency improvements	<i>Peterborough City Council will explore the feasibility of introducing a range of mechanisms designed to encourage consequential energy efficiency improvements to extended dwellings as a means of improving the energy efficiency of our housing stock.</i>	Group Manager - Strategic Planning and Enabling  Group Manager Construction & Compliance  Group Manager - Development Management  Climate Change Team Manager	-	-
Policy HS18 - Improving awareness of domestic energy efficiency	<i>Peterborough City Council will conduct a minimum of three 'Community Energy Challenges' per year across the lifespan of this Housing Strategy. This includes one challenge per year in rural areas in accordance with the objectives of the Peterborough Rural Housing Strategy 2010-13.</i>	Climate Change Team Manager	-	Three energy challenges on an annual basis over the lifespan of the Housing Strategy.
Policy HS19 - Improving awareness of domestic energy efficiency	<i>Peterborough City Council in partnership with partner Housing Associations will provide Energy Performance Certificates as part of property advertisements through Choice Based Lettings. The Council will also introduce a range of signposting measures to increase awareness of the importance and benefits of domestic energy efficiency, and assist clients to make informed decisions regarding their choice of accommodation.</i>	Housing Needs Manager  Strategic Housing Services Manager	Partner Housing Associations  Choice Based Lettings Board	-
Policy HS20 - Supporting the affordable housing delivery model	<i>The Council will actively support the HCA's new 'affordable rent' delivery model in order to meet the overarching strategic priority to achieve housing growth and ensure the continued supply of new affordable housing to meet demonstrated need.</i>	Housing Strategy Manager	-	-

Policy number and theme	Policy Wording	Lead post holder(s) responsible for implementation	Other key non-LA partners	Target milestone (if applicable)
Policy HS21 - Enabling the delivery of affordable rented tenure in Peterborough	<p><i>The Council will seek to achieve 30% affordable housing on sites delivering 15 or more dwellings. However in light of the Governments social housing reforms, the Council will take a more flexible approach to negotiating the tenure split on each site rather than maintaining the split recommended by the Core Strategy on all sites.</i></p> <p><i>Peterborough City Council will explore the potential to provide the affordable rent tenure on sites which have an existing planning consent by reviewing the terms of existing S106 agreements in order to facilitate the ongoing delivery of new affordable homes.</i></p>	Housing Strategy Manager	-	-
Policy HS22 - Developing a Strategic Tenancy Policy	<i>The Council will adopt a Strategic Tenancy Policy to inform and influence individual housing association policies on the allocation and renewal of tenancies to ensure the supply of affordable rent tenancies contributes to meeting local housing needs and priorities. The Strategic Tenancy Policy will be finalised and adopted following enactment of the Localism and Decentralisation Bill (due end of 2011/12).</i>	Housing Strategy Manager	Partner Housing Associations	Strategic Tenure Strategy published upon enactment of the Localism and Decentralisation Bill
Policy HS23 - Utilising public land as a catalyst for affordable housing delivery	<i>The Council will actively explore with its Housing Association partners the potential for using publicly owned land as a catalyst for the delivery of new homes within a robust financial context.</i>	Head of Growth & Regeneration Housing Strategy Manager	Partner Housing Associations	-
Policy HS24 - Preventing and alleviating homelessness	<i>Peterborough City Council will work with its partners to publish a new comprehensive Homelessness Strategy for the city by the end of 2011/12. This document will form part of the portfolio of housing-related strategic documents that sit behind the Housing Strategy.</i>	Housing Needs Manager Strategic Housing Services Manager	-	Homelessness Strategy published and adopted by January 1 <sup>st</sup> 2012



Policy number and theme	Policy Wording	Lead post holder(s) responsible for implementation	Other key non-LA partners	Target milestone (if applicable)
Policy HS25 – Assisting households with mortgage difficulties	<i>Peterborough City Council will continue to offer dedicated and tailored support to those experiencing mortgage difficulties throughout the lifespan of the Housing Strategy. This will include ensuring the provision of debt advice.</i>	Housing Needs Manager  Strategic Housing Services Manager	-	-
Policy HS26 - Preventing and alleviating Rough Sleeping	<i>The Council will develop services that are focused upon assisting single 'non-priority' homeless persons. The prevention and alleviation of rough sleeping and street homelessness will remain as a key priority for Peterborough City Council over the lifespan of the Housing Strategy The Council will continue to provide services to alleviate rough sleeping including the Reconnections Service, where funding allows.</i>	Housing Needs Manager	United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA)	-
Policy HS27 - Ensuring the continued provision of targeted housing-related support services	<i>Peterborough City Council will provide funding for the Supporting People Programme over the next four years in accordance with the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Council will conduct a review of all existing service contracts by June 2011. This will lead to the adoption and publication of a Supporting People Commissioning Strategy by the end of March 2012. This Strategy will seek to ensure that all services provided under the Supporting People Programme over the three years 2011-15 retain the strongest possible focus upon homelessness prevention.</i>	Strategic Housing Services Manager  Housing Programmes Manager	NHS Peterborough  Partner Housing Associations	Supporting People Commissioning Strategy adopted by March 2012
Policy HS28 - Protecting Disabled Facilities Grant funding	<i>The council aims to provide assistance to at least 255 disabled and/or vulnerable households per year through the allocation of DFGs until the end of 2014/15.</i>	Strategic Housing Services Manager  Housing Programmes Manager	NHS Peterborough  Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency	255 disabled and/or vulnerable households assisted on an annual basis

Policy number and theme	Policy Wording	Lead post holder(s) responsible for implementation	Other key non-LA partners	Target milestone (if applicable)
Policy HS29 - Protecting Disabled Facilities Grant funding	<i>As an alternative to carrying out extensive and costly adaptations to properties with a poor layout, the Council will strongly encourage relocation as a means of addressing the needs of a disabled person and their household where it is deemed appropriate and will provide Disabled Persons Relocation Grant in appropriate cases.</i>	Strategic Housing Services Manager  Housing Programmes Manager	NHS Peterborough  Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency	-
Policy HS30 - Securing the continuation of the Aids and adaptations service	<i>The Council's Capital Programme provided to NHS Peterborough will continue to fund and provide the Aids and Adaptations Service throughout the lifespan of the Peterborough Housing Strategy. We will aim to assist at least 1000 households with minor aids and adaptations on an annual basis until 2014/15.</i>	Strategic Housing Services Manager  Housing Programmes Manager	NHS Peterborough  Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency	1000 households assisted on an annual basis over the lifespan of the Housing Strategy.
Policy HS31 - Future housing provision that caters for households with specific housing needs	<i>Through its enabling role, Peterborough City Council will continue to support the delivery of units built to Lifetime Homes Standard, and where appropriate we will work positively with developers and housing providers to encourage levels of provision of both Lifetime Homes Standard and Wheelchair adapted homes that aim to exceed the existing policy requirements, taking into account viability constraints.</i>  <i>The Council will work to strengthen its approach towards the implementation of planning policy that relates to Lifetime Homes. The Council will seek to introduce mechanisms that allow us to monitor annual levels of delivery of homes built to the Standard, and we will also seek to encourage and educate the building industry about the value of the Standard through the publication of a developer's guide to Lifetime Housing. The Council will also lobby Parliament to make Lifetime Homes a compulsory requirement in the Building Regulations, with the aim of it being compulsory from 2013.</i>	Housing Strategy Manager  Group Manager Construction & Compliance	Partner Housing Associations	New 'Lifetime Homes' monitoring mechanism established.  Developers guide to Lifetime Homes published

Policy number and theme	Policy Wording	Lead post holder(s) responsible for implementation	Other key non-LA partners	Target milestone (if applicable)
Policy HS32 - Future housing provision that caters for households with specific housing needs	<i>NHS Peterborough will work with its partners to produce and publish a comprehensive Health and Social Care Accommodation Strategy for the city. The completed document will form part of the portfolio of housing-related strategic documents that sit behind the Housing Strategy.</i>	Assistant Director Commissioning - Adult Social Care	NHS Peterborough	Health and Social Care Accommodation Strategy published by ____
Policy HS33 - Meeting Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs	<p><i>(A) Temporary or transit sites: During the course of this Housing Strategy period (2011-2015), the Council is minded to deliver a transit site off Norwood Land, on safeguarded land identified in the Site Allocations Document. However, if early in the Housing Strategy period an alternative provision can be identified and delivered elsewhere in the district, this would negate the need for the safeguarded site to be delivered.</i></p> <p><i>(B) Permanent sites: The Council does not intend to allocate sites for permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches through its plan making process. However, it will support the provision of new pitches if the proposed development meets the criteria as set out in Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy.</i></p> <p><i>(C) Maintaining an up-to-date evidence base: The Cambridgeshire Sub Region Travellers Need Assessment will be completed by around the end of 2011, which will assist in determining the need for new pitches and determining applicable planning applications.</i></p>	Group Manager - Strategic Planning and Enabling	-	Study completed by March 2012
Policy HS34 - Ensuring a varied housing offer that supports mixed communities	<i>In its role as housing enabler, the Council will work with developers and Housing Associations to ensure that not only is affordable housing provided but is also effectively integrated into new development through a 'pepper potting approach'.</i>	Housing Strategy Manager  Group Manager - Development Management	Partner Housing Associations	-
Policy HS35 - Managing the growth of the Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) sector	<i>The Council will explore the benefits of a Direction under Article 4 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) to manage the number of new HMOs in particular neighbourhoods. If this approach to managing HMO growth is adopted, the Council will also produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that sets out our requirements for HMO development in planning terms.</i>	Group Manager - Strategic Planning and Enabling Group Manager - Development Management Strategic Housing Services Manager Strategic Regulatory Services Manager	Anglia Ruskin University/University Centre Peterborough	-

Policy number and theme	Policy Wording	Lead post holder(s) responsible for implementation	Other key non-LA partners	Target milestone (if applicable)
Policy HS36 - Ensuring the sustainability of rural communities	<i>The Council will maintain membership of the Rural Housing Delivery Partnership until 2013 when a review will be conducted of the Peterborough Rural Housing Strategy. The Rural Housing Delivery Partnership will aim to visit every parish council across Peterborough by the end of 2011/12.</i>	Housing Strategy Manager	Cambridgeshire ACRE  Partner Housing Associations	For every parish council to have been visited by the Rural Housing Delivery Partnership by April 2012.
Policy HS37 - Supporting Community-led Housing Solutions	<i>The Council will encourage and support the establishment and growth of community-led housing solutions in rural and urban areas. The Council will prepare and then utilise Community Action Plans as a catalyst for a range of community-led housing initiatives, such as Community Land Trusts. The Council will have a Community Action Plan in place for each of the seven neighbourhood areas of Peterborough by April 2012.</i>	Head of Neighbourhoods  Neighbourhood Managers x3	-	Community Action Plans adopted for each of the seven neighbourhood areas by April 2012
Policy HS38 - Planning, community infrastructure and neighbourhood management	<i>The Council will work with developers to explore and implement measures which aim to ensure that community sustainability is a key consideration in both the master-planning of urban extensions and the subsequent building of new communities.</i>	Group Manager - Development Management  Head of Neighbourhoods  Neighbourhood Managers x3	-	-
Policy HS39 - Affordable housing allocations policies that support mixed and sustainable communities	<i>In response to the recently announced housing and welfare reforms, the Council will work with its partners to conduct a review of the Peterborough Homes Housing Allocations policy by April 2012. The Council will ensure that the refreshed policy will reflect the broad objectives of the forthcoming Strategic Tenancy Policy, along with the strategic aims of this Housing Strategy. Once adopted, the refreshed policy will form an annex to the Housing Strategy.</i>	Housing Needs Manager	Partner Housing Associations  Choice Based Lettings Board	Revised allocations policy published by April 2012

## Appendix 2: Glossary of terms

### Affordable Housing

Planning Policy Statement Three (PPS3) defines affordable housing as follows - 'Affordable housing includes social rented, *affordable rented* and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.' PPS3 still states that 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. It should also 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. It is this definition of affordable housing that the Council works towards in its role of housing enabler.

### Affordable Housing Programme

The Affordable Housing Programme 2011-15 is the major public funding source for affordable housing in the UK. Registered providers can apply to the scheme for funding to support housing developments that meet certain central government criteria, and the strategic aims of local government. The programme is administered by the Homes and Communities Agency. For further information, see <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/affordable-homes>

### Affordable Rent Tenure

The Affordable Rent Tenure is a new tenure that has been introduced by government to support the new affordable housing delivery model utilised by the HCA. Under the Affordable Rent tenure, tenants will be charged up to 80% of the rental cost of a similar property in the private sector, representing an average increase in the current rent levels in the social rented sector. To complement the introduction of the 'affordable rent', the Government has taken steps to revise national planning guidance so that the new tenure is included within the Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) definition of affordable housing. As with social rented accommodation, affordable rent tenants will be able to claim housing benefit to assist with rental costs. For further details on the Affordable Rent Tenure, visit <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/affordable-rent>

### Cambridgeshire ACRE

Cambridgeshire ACRE is an organisation which engages with the rural communities of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by supporting community participation, providing funding advice, facilitating community-led planning and setting up new projects. They also run a specialist service that assists rural communities to develop affordable housing. For further information, see <http://www.cambsacre.org.uk/>

### Code for Sustainable Homes

The Code for Sustainable Homes (the Code) is the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. The Code aims to reduce our carbon emissions and create homes that are more sustainable. It applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. For further details visit <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/sustainability/codesustainablehomes/>

### Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods want. It is the intention of the Government that CIL will replace s.106 agreements as a means of generating funds in order to provide infrastructure. For further information visit <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=122677>

### Community Land Trust (CLT)

A Community Land Trust is a body set up by members of a community for the purposes of procuring and developing land for the benefit of that community, such as the provision of affordable housing. For further information, see <http://www.communitylandtrust.org.uk/>

### Core Strategy

A Development Plan Document (DPD) which contains the spatial vision, main objectives and policies for managing the future development of the area. For details on the Peterborough Core Strategy, visit

[http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning\\_and\\_building/planning\\_policy/adopted\\_development\\_plan/core\\_strategy.asp](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning_and_building/planning_policy/adopted_development_plan/core_strategy.asp)  
[x](#)

### Decent Homes Standard

By 2010, central government is aiming for all social rented housing stock up to 'decent homes' standard. The criteria for the standard is quite detailed, but defined in simplest terms a 'decent home' is one which is 'warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities'. In addition to the social sector, the government has charged local authorities with the task of ensuring that 70 percent of all vulnerable households are living in homes that meet the standard by 2010. For further information, see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/decenthome>

## **Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)**

Amongst other issues, the Department for Communities and Local Government sets policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration and planning. For further information, see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/>

## **Development Planning Document**

This is a type of Local Development Document (LDD). They set out the spatial planning strategy, policies and/or allocations of land for types of development across the whole or specific parts of a local authority area.

## **Disabled Facilities Grant**

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are a grant towards the cost of providing adaptations and facilities to enable disabled persons to continue residing in their home. For further details visit <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/138592.pdf>

## **Empty Dwelling Management Order**

An Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) is a legal device that allows local authorities to bring unoccupied property back into use as housing. Properties must be vacant for a period of two years before local authorities can obtain an EDMO. For further details visit <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/emptydwellingmanagement>

## **Exception Site**

An 'exception site' is one which is not allocated by the local planning authority as a potential site for development, and may have certain features that ordinarily would reduce its chances of being developed i.e. 'green field' sites. However, it is possible for planning consent to be awarded to develop affordable housing upon an 'exception site' if a local need for this type of accommodation has been identified. Policy CS8 of the Peterborough Core Strategy permits exception site development where a need is identified and all other planning considerations are met. For further information, see <http://www.ruralhousing.org.uk/PDFs/Fact%20Sheets/What%20is%20an%20Exception%20Site%20July%202008.pdf>

## **Fuel Poverty**

A household is defined as being in 'fuel poverty' when it is required to spend ten percent of total income in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime.

## **Greater Peterborough Partnership**

The Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP) is Peterborough's Local Strategic Partnership, the body that unites representatives from the public, private, faith, community and voluntary sector together to work collectively together towards the vision and priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy. For further information, see <http://www.gpp-peterborough.org.uk/>

## **Green Deal**

The Green Deal is a government-backed initiative designed to allow households to carry out improvements to their property with no upfront cost. Under the Green Deal, the government is seeking to enable private firms to offer consumers energy efficiency improvements to their homes at no upfront cost, and then allow householders to pay for the works through the savings made on their energy bill as a consequence of carrying out the work. The government envisages local authorities having a role in supporting the implementation of the Green Deal. For further information on the government's plans, visit <http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/legislation/energybill/1010-green-deal-summary-proposals.pdf>

## **Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)**

The Homes and Communities Agency, or HCA as it is more commonly known, is the government's investment agency for housing. The HCA oversees the government's capital funding regime for new affordable housing, alongside a range of investment programmes focused upon existing housing stock, including empty and non-decent homes.

## **House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)**

In its simplest form, a property is an HMO if it is let as a main or only home to at least three tenants, who form more than one household and who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet. For a full definition of a HMO, visit [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/PrivateRenting/Repairsandstandards/DG\\_189200](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/PrivateRenting/Repairsandstandards/DG_189200)

## **Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System is the risk assessment procedure for residential properties. Under the system, a category one hazard is defined as one which carries serious risk of injury or death. For further information, see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/rentingandletting/housinghealth/>

## **Infrastructure**

A collective term which relates to all forms of essential services like electricity, water, and road and rail provision.

## **Intermediate Tenure**

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

### **Lifetime Homes**

The Lifetime Homes Standard is a set of sixteen design criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes. Housing built to the standard is designed in a way that makes it easier for households to cope with a range of eventualities, from raising small children through to dealing with reduced mobility in later life. For further details visit <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

### **Local Development Document (LDD)**

A Local Development Document is any document, prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements, which sets out a local authority's policies, including supplementary policies and guidance, relating to the development and use of land in their area. All LDDs are part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). There are different types of LDD.

### **Local Development Framework (LDF)**

The collective term for the whole package of planning documents which are produced by a local planning authority to provide the planning framework for its area.

### **Local Housing Allowance (LHA)**

Local Housing Allowance is a form of housing benefit that is paid to tenants who are renting in the private sector. The rate of LHA paid to claimants is based on the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of all rental prices within the area where their property is located.

### **Local Investment Plan**

Produced in conjunction with the HCA, the Peterborough Local Investment Plan (LIP) identifies the main themes and prioritises the key interventions and projects directly related to housing led regeneration. The document sets out the investment required for Peterborough to inform funding discussions with the HCA. The investments set out in the plan are those required to deliver the agreed economic, housing and environmental ambitions of Peterborough. The plan identifies a series of key themes for investment (such as rural housing) and prioritises the key interventions and projects that the authority believes will help to encourage housing-led regeneration. The plan also sets out the necessary infrastructure required to support these projects.

### **Localism and Decentralisation Bill**

The Localism and Decentralisation Bill was introduced by government in December 2010. The Bill includes plans to introduce new freedoms and flexibilities for local government, new rights and powers for communities and individuals, reforms to the planning system with a view to make it 'more democratic and more effective', and reforms to 'ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally'. The bill also sets out a range of housing related reforms that local authorities and their RP providers will need to prepare for and adapt to. For further details on the bill, which is anticipated to be ratified in December 2011, visit

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localismplainenglishguide>

### **Medium Term Financial Plan**

The Medium Term Financial Plan sets out the council's budgets for the five year period between 2011/12 and 2015/16. The document can be found at

<http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/pdf/Councilanddemocracy-ourfinances-statementofaccounts-mediumtermfinancialplan2010-2011-2014-2015.pdf>

### **New Homes Bonus**

The New Homes Bonus is a financial incentive scheme designed to incentivise communities and local authorities to encourage housing growth and bring empty homes back into use. For homes built in the first two years of the scheme the bonus will be the equivalent of six years of council tax per dwelling. Additional bonus is paid for every unit of affordable housing built under the scheme. For further details visit

<http://www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/briefings/snsp-05724.pdf>

### **Peterborough Site Allocations DPD**

The Peterborough Site Allocations Development Plan Document identifies land for different types of development to deliver the planned growth of Peterborough, including the areas of the authority designated for significant housing growth over the 15 years leading up to 2026. The document also sets out a number of policies that relate to safeguarding areas. At the time of writing, the Site Allocations Document was yet to be adopted by Council. For further details visit

[http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning\\_and\\_building/planning\\_policy/draft\\_development\\_plans/local\\_development\\_framework/site\\_allocations\\_dpd.aspx](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning_and_building/planning_policy/draft_development_plans/local_development_framework/site_allocations_dpd.aspx)

### **Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy**

The Sustainable Community Strategy is the principle overarching strategic document for Peterborough. The Strategy sets out four key priorities that are designed to guide the work of all public, private voluntary and community partners in Peterborough. It is a statutory requirement for each local authority area to produce and adopt a Sustainable Community Strategy. For further details on the Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy visit <http://www.gpp-peterborough.org.uk/>

### **Planning Policy Statement**

One of a series of statements issued by the government to set out national policies for different aspects of planning. Each statement (detailing particular aspects of planning) has its own PPS number. The most important PPS documents that relate to housing are PPS1 (Sustainability) and PPS3 (Housing).

### **Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)**

A Document published by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, providing statutory planning policies for a region. In the East of England region the RSS is known as the East of England Plan.

### **S.106 Agreement**

S.106 agreements are those struck between developers and the local authority in order to support planning applications. The agreements included in a s.106 agreement can be broad, but they are usually utilised to ensure that a local community affected by development actually benefits from it. This is usually through the provision of affordable housing on the development where the s.106 agreement is in place, or as a financial contribution from a developer towards schools and other local services.

### **Social Rent Tenure**

The DCLG defines social rented housing are rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered providers, for which 'guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime'. This means that the rents charged to tenants in socially rented housing is heavily regulated to ensure that it remains at a level deemed to be affordable. They are set at certain levels over a wide geographic area, which helps to ensure that the cost of social rented accommodation does not fluctuate greatly between areas. In Peterborough, average social rents are roughly 60% of the average rent on a comparable property in the private sector.

### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment**

Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs) are cross-boundary studies of the operation of Housing Market Areas. Planning Policy Statement 3 requires local authorities to undertake Strategic Housing Market Assessments as part of the evidence base required to inform Local Development Framework Core Strategies and the development of planning and housing policy. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment is not policy itself and is not intended to give definitive estimates of housing need and demand. Peterborough completed an update of its SHMA in August 2010. The study was completed in conjunction with South Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council and Rutland County Council. To view the document visit [http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/pdf/PSRSHMAud%20-%20Final%20Report%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/pdf/PSRSHMAud%20-%20Final%20Report%20(2).pdf)

### **Strategic Tenancy Strategy**

As part of its affordable housing reforms, government is presently legislating through the Localism Bill to introduce a new statutory requirement for local authorities to produce a Strategic Tenancy Policy. This document will set out the broad objectives that should be taken into consideration by social landlords when formulating their own policies on the grant and reissue of tenancies. Local authorities will be required to draw up their Strategic Tenure Policy in consultation with social landlords and other key stakeholders in order to ensure that these policies strike a balance between meeting housing needs whilst ensuring future supply.

### **Supplementary Planning Document**

One of the types of LDD; they expand upon policies or provide further detail to policies contained within a DPD.

### **Supporting People Programme**

Supporting People provides housing related support to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in the community. This could be in their own homes or in hostels, sheltered housing or other specialised supported housing. The Council receives Supporting People funding from government. The Council then works with its partners to commission services that meet local needs in terms of housing support. Further details of the Supporting People scheme can be found at [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/HomeAndHousingOptions/SupportedHousingSchemes/DG\\_4000297](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/HomeAndHousingOptions/SupportedHousingSchemes/DG_4000297)



### Appendix 3: Housing Strategy 2008-11 Implementation Report

Ref #	Action	Original Target	Outcome
AP1	Increase the % of new homes built to Lifetime Homes Standards	20% in 2010/11	2010/11 - 32.3% of affordable homes built to LTH standard. 15.6% of all dwellings built to LTH standard in 2009/10.
AP2	Develop a Fuel Poverty Strategy	Complete Strategy in 2008/09 and implement	
AP3	Increase the number of new homes built	1400 new homes per year by 2010	999 in 2007/08, 1048 in 2008/09, 1125 in 2009/10
AP4	Implement the Empty Homes Strategy		
AP5	Meet the Decent Homes standard for private sector housing	70% of private sector homes to meet the standard by 2010	Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2009 highlighted the proportion of household living in decent homes was 61% - so 2010 target has not been met
AP6	Monitor the number of documents adopted as part of the Local Development Framework	Six document to be incorporated by 2010	Four documents completed as of 2011.
AP7	Affordable Homes Built	200 per year by 2010	446 in 2008/9, 708 in 2009/10, 331 in 2010/11
AP8	Reduce the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation	57 by March 2010	There were 61 households accommodated in emergency accommodation at the end of March 2010. This number was achieved by negotiation with our temporary accommodation provider and reducing the number of units. A remodelling of the service has meant that Housing Options Officers now have more time at their desks to investigate applications resulting in quicker decisions and shorter stays in temporary accommodation
AP9	Implement a digital television service for Choice Based Lettings	Implement system by 2011	No longer a priority
AP10	Implement an automated telephone bidding system for Choice Based Lettings.	Implement system by 2009	Not implemented. As part of the Choice Based Lettings review concerns were raised around automated phone lines for applicants with disabilities
AP11	Promote the Healthy Homes Advisor Scheme	Implement across city by March 2010	Supporting People funding for this post was withdrawn in March 2009
AP12	Gain a quality mark for housing advice	-	Not pursued
AP13	Provide floating support for young people in independent accommodation	-	There was a submission for funding for the post. This was not awarded. This is currently under review following the recent Southwark judgement and the responsibility of children's services around 16/17 year olds
AP14	Implement the Homelessness Strategy	Implement by end of 2008. Continue to review and develop.	Peterborough Homelessness Strategy was adopted in July 2008
AP15	Develop and deliver the Homelessness Prevention Education Programme	-	Since November, 2007 the Project has been running workshops for young people in secondary schools, colleges and youth groups in the City. To date 1705 pupils have taken part. We have excellent links with Prince's Trust and young people who are not in mainstream school and we continue to try and gain access to all of the City's secondary schools.
AP16	Develop and implement a selective licensing scheme for HMOs	-	Established in 2008. The present selective licensing scheme covers the Millfield and New England areas of central Peterborough.
AP17	Provide a Tenancy Relations Service	-	Tenancy relations service established in September 2008. This service has since been remodelled and incorporated into the Housing Needs team, with one generic officer post with a

			specialism in landlord/tenant disputes.
AP18	Carry out a House Condition Survey	-	Completed in 2009. Study findings have been used to inform further work relating to fuel poverty and property conditions.
AP19	Reduce Carbon Emissions	-	The authority has not been required to report on HECA performance from 2008/2009 onwards. The Peterborough Home Insulation Scheme project measures carbon emission savings as a result of grant funded interventions.
AP20	Ensure that data on housing development is included in the Neighbourhood Investment approach	-	Not achieved. Forthcoming Community Area Action Plans will allow communities to identify a range of local priorities, including those related to housing
AP21	The provision of 35% affordable homes on all s.106 sites of 15 or more units	-	Affordable housing target has been revised from 35% to 30% based on the of a 2009 viability assessment. In 2008/09 affordable housing development accounted for 39.3% of all housing development. In 2009/10 it accounted for 61.5% of all development.
AP22	Carry out a survey into the needs of migrant households	Complete study in 2008/09	Migrant Workers Study completed in June 2009.
AP23	Undertake consultation and engagement with Gypsies and Travellers, including housing needs	Completed by July 2008	Needs assessment not pursued at that time on the basis that the Cambridge Sub-Regional Traveller Need Assessment completed in 2006 was considered to still be a valid source of robust data on gypsy and traveller housing needs in Peterborough.
AP24	Develop housing related support services to meet the RSS growth targets for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation	Completed by December 2011	Gypsy and Traveller floating support service now in place. Funded through Children's Services and Supporting People. Service is provided through the Ormiston Trust. To be reviewed in 2013.
AP25	Completion of a Rural Housing Strategy	Complete Strategy in 2008/09	Strategy adopted in June 2010
AP26	Measure the % of people who feel they influence decisions in their locality	50% by 2011	Recorded at 34.9% in the 2009 Peterborough Place Survey. The government abolished Place Surveys in August 2010.
AP27	Tackling fuel poverty – people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating	Decrease by 7% of baseline by 2011	Indicator gives a snapshot position year on year rather than a baseline. Information on each year to be added.

## Appendix 4: Local eligibility policy for the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme

### LOCAL ELIGIBILITY POLICY FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITY MORTGAGE SCHEME

Cabinet at its meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> June 2011 considered how the Council can support first time buyers and the local housing market, to help deliver the Council's priority of delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth.

Cabinet approved the plans as follows:

1. participation in the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS), initially in partnership with the Lloyds Banking Group, for £1m;
2. Plans to extend the scheme across other lenders as they enter the scheme, or with Lloyds, up to a total value of £10m;

In order to participate in the scheme on this basis, the Council has to adopt a local policy for scheme eligibility.

The policy is outlined below:

- The scheme will be available for purchase of properties in all locations within the local authority boundary
- There will be a ceiling on the value of properties that the scheme will support. This will initially be £130,000 (based on the £117,000 entry level price for a 3 bedroom house identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment update in August 2010, plus some headroom to allow for local variation). With a loan value of 95%, this would mean a maximum loan amount of £123,500
- The property should be occupied by the mortgage applicant as their main home. The Scheme will not support buy to let arrangements
- The scheme will support all property types, including new builds, where the lenders policy enables this
- The Council will receive monthly monitoring reports, and will keep the scheme under review, including incorporating any updates following updates to the Housing Strategy
- Applicants will liaise directly with the lenders on all matters relating to the mortgage application, and subsequent mortgage issues
- The Council will not levy additional fees on applicants
- Applicants will need to seek independent financial advice to assess whether the scheme is suitable, and meets their financial needs
- All aspects of the policy will be kept under review

This policy was approved by Full Council at its meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

# Appendix Five: Draft Peterborough Strategic Tenancy Policy

## Section One: Introduction

Legislation to be enacted through the Localism and Decentralisation Bill will place a duty on all local authorities to produce a Strategic Tenancy Policy. The purpose of this policy is to set out the broad objectives to be taken into consideration by affordable housing providers when formulating the policies that will govern how they will implement a range of new flexibilities that the government has granted to them through a series of reforms to social housing policy and legislation.

Government housing reforms have given affordable housing providers greater freedoms that will allow them to;

- Provide new tenants with a fixed-term tenancy if it is felt to be more appropriate than the offer of a lifetime tenancy. The minimum length of fixed term tenancy that affordable housing providers will be able to offer to new tenants is two years. Providers will still have the option to grant lifetime tenancies.
- Determine the length of the fixed term offered to each tenant on an individual basis
- Develop their own policy setting out the criteria to be used to determine whether or not to reissue a new tenancy at the end of a fixed term
- Build new homes and re-let existing homes under the new 'affordable rent' tenure, which enables housing providers to charge higher rent levels for accommodation than is presently charged for social rented accommodation

The Government has made it clear that it wants local authorities to have a degree of strategic influence over how affordable housing providers implement these reforms. Housing providers will be expected to give 'due regard' to the objectives and principles set out in local authority Strategic Tenancy Policies when formulating the policies that will govern how they will implement and utilise these new flexibilities.

The Peterborough Strategic Tenancy Policy has been developed within the context of the Council's overarching strategic objectives for housing, as set out in the Peterborough Housing Strategy 2011-15. The overarching objectives with specific relevance to the Strategic Tenancy Policy are;

- Objective One: Supporting the delivery of substantial yet sustainable growth
- Objective Three: Meeting existing and future housing needs
- Objective Four: Creating mixed and sustainable communities

## Section Two: Local Context

This section explores some statistics behind the key housing issues in Peterborough. It highlights key trends relating to the housing market, housing need, housing conditions and homelessness. The section also highlights some key statistics regarding the housing needs of vulnerable groups, including those with disabilities and older persons.

### Rental Prices

The table below sets out the average Peterborough rental prices for a range of property sizes, compared with figures for the region and England as a whole.

	One Bed			Two Bed			Three Bed		
	P'boro'	EofE	England	P'boro'	EofE	England	P'boro'	EofE	England
<b>Housing Association</b>	£69.30	£71.90	£69	£83.70	£82.90	£76.10	£85.30	£94.90	£86.50
<b>Private (30<sup>th</sup> percentile)</b>	£91	£109	£115	£114	£137	£132	£132	£155	£148
<b>Private 80% Median</b>	£78	£100	£120	£97	£120	£129	£110	£142	£146
<b>Private Median</b>	£98	£125	£150	£121	£150	£161	£137	£178	£183
<b>Private – Upper Quartile</b>	£108	£144	£225	£132	£183	£253	£150	£219	£279

Source: Hometrack, August 2011

Data from Hometrack indicates that median rental prices in Peterborough are lower than those in the wider region and the country as a whole. This data also suggests that the average housing association rent presently equates to around **67.3%** of the median private sector market rent (Hometrack, July 2011).

The private sector 80% median rents displayed in the above table provide an indication of the likely average rents that will be charged under the new affordable rent regime. These figures suggest that the introduction of the new affordable rent regime will lead to an average increase in rental prices of **£15.40 p/w**, with an average increase of **£24.70** on the cost of renting a three bed house through a social landlord.

### **Property Prices**

As with rental prices, property prices in Peterborough are notably lower than in the rest of the region and England as a whole. Information from Hometrack suggests that the average house price in Peterborough is **£151,539**, compared with a regional average of **£227,875**. Hometrack data also suggests that average lower quartile house price is **£102,000** compared with a regional average of **£140,000**. The average prices by property size and type, compared with regional and national averages, are set out in the table below;

	<b>England</b>	<b>East of England</b>	<b>Peterborough</b>
<b>One Bed Flat</b>	£165,283	£112,206	£73,988
<b>Two Bed Flat</b>	£216,724	£153,492	£96,000
<b>Two Bed House</b>	£152,903	£173,201	£112,208
<b>Three Bed House</b>	£199,375	£218,676	£136,452
<b>Four Bed House</b>	£340,439	£350,757	£214,818

Source: Hometrack, August 2011

### **Housing Affordability**

Despite lower house prices and rental costs, the 2010 Peterborough Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment found that **27.4%** of households in Peterborough cannot afford to rent or buy market housing without subsidy, compared with **22.6%** of households across the sub-region. In particular, the following groups face significant issues relating to housing market affordability;

- **81.2%** of lone parents
- **37.5%** of single persons
- **37%** of single pensioners

In particular, the SHMA attributed these affordability issues to lower average levels of savings and equity amongst Peterborough households. This is despite Peterborough's more favourable house price to income ratio of **5:1**, compared with a regional ratio of **6.2:1**. This difference in affordability ratio between Peterborough and the region is likely to be the consequence of the significantly higher regional house prices that are set out earlier in this section.

### **Housing Need and Demand**

The 2010 Peterborough Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identified that, at the current rate of household formation and housing supply, an average of 1,008 households will fall into housing need each year in Peterborough. Data from the Peterborough Homes Housing Register echoes the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment update. In May 2011 there were **7,775** applicants on the housing register. Of these applicants;

- **4,558 (58.6%)** require a one bed property
- **1,806 (23.2%)** require a two bed property
- **902 (11.6%)** require a three bed property
- **325 (4.1%)** require a four bed property
- **134 (1.7%)** require a five bed property

The SHMA also identified that, within the context of the planned rate of housing growth set out in the Peterborough Core Strategy (1,420 homes per annum until 2026), around **38%** of all properties built would need to be affordable homes in order to meet growing levels of housing need.

### **Housing Tenure**

The table overleaf shows the estimated current levels of tenure in Peterborough, with comparable data regarding the tenure levels when the last SHMA was completed in 2007. As is the trend nationally, the most common tenure in Peterborough is owner occupation with mortgage, which makes up around **40.6%** of all households. It is, however, the only tenure that has reduced in size in Peterborough since 2007, with an increase in the number of social and private renters, and owners without a mortgage.

Tenure	2007		2010	
	Households	% of households	Households	% of h/holds
Owner-occupied (no mortgage)	17,194	25.1%	19,393	25.9%
Owner-occupied (mortgage)	30,825	43.1%	30,372	40.6%
Social Rented	14,055	19.7%	14,846	19.8%
Private Rented	8,686	12.2%	10,288	13.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,480</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>74,900</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Peterborough Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2010

### **Economic Data/Income and household earnings**

Data from NOMIS (formally known as the National Online Manpower Information System) highlights a number of notable trends that relate to the economy of Peterborough.

In terms of employment, a slightly higher percentage of Peterborough's working age population are economically active (**76.3%**) compared with Great Britain as a whole (**76.2%**). However, Peterborough also has a considerably higher proportion of its working age population in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (**4.7%**) compared with the East of England (**2.9%**) and Great Britain as a whole (**3.7%**).

This trend is mirrored in other DWP statistics that relate to other welfare benefits; a higher percentage of working age people in Peterborough claim incapacity benefit, carers allowance, disability and lone parent-related welfare benefit compared with the rest of the region and Great Britain.

For those in employment, the average gross weekly pay for individuals that reside in Peterborough (**£434.80 p/w**) is significantly lower than the regional (**£523.30 p/w**) and national averages (**£501.80 p/w**).

Managers, senior officials, professional occupations and associate technical positions account for around **36%** of all paid positions in Peterborough, making this occupation sector the largest in Peterborough. However, this percentage is significantly lower than the rest of the Eastern region, where **45.7%** of all paid posts fall into these categories.

The occupational sector that includes process plant, machinery operatives and elementary occupations is considerably larger in Peterborough (**26.7%** of all paid posts) than in the rest of the region (**16.7%**) and Great Britain (**17.8%**).

As of April 2011 there were a total of **15,420** housing benefit claimants residing in Peterborough, **5,100 (33.1%)** of which were private sector tenants (DWP, 2011). This is a slightly higher percentage than the East of England total, where **32.2%** of claimants are renting in the private sector and in Great Britain as a whole where **31.7%** of claimants rent privately. Conversely the percentage of total housing benefit claimants renting in the social sector is lower in Peterborough compared to the region and the country as a whole.

This economic data suggests that, despite Peterborough's employment base being marginally weighted towards higher-end occupations, there is still a large element of the local economy that is grounded in low paid and unskilled employment. There is also considerable evidence to suggest a higher level of dependency upon welfare benefits in Peterborough than in the wider region and the country as a whole.

The data relating to earnings and dependency upon housing benefit amongst private sector tenants also supports the findings of the SHMA Update that identified a particular issue with affordability within the Peterborough housing market.

## **Section Three: The Policy**

### **Ensuring affordability**

The Council wants to ensure that affordable rents levels in Peterborough remain affordable.

The affordable rent model will enable affordable housing providers to set affordable rents at up to a maximum of 80% of the market rent for a comparable property within the same locality. Peterborough's market rent levels vary between localities. These variations will be reflected in the affordable rents calculated for each locality.

The Council aims to prevent excessive disparities between different localities in terms of affordable rent prices to ensure affordability for both low income working households, and also for households that are dependant on welfare benefits. For this reason, the Council would like affordable housing providers to ensure that **rents charged for affordable rented properties do not exceed the relevant Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate** that is applicable

for that property size at the time of rent setting. This is in order to avoid excessively high affordable rents in high value areas.

The Government plans to introduce a universal credit system and benefit cap in April 2013 will limit the amount of benefit available to families to £500 per week. When setting rents, affordable housing providers should also be mindful of the potential impact of the proposed benefit cap.

Research by the Council suggests that the introduction of the cap will create affordability issues for large families living in larger affordable rent homes. This research also suggests that the issue of affordability for those subject to the £500 p/w benefit cap is exacerbated in higher value areas, such as Hampton. Therefore, in order to ensure mixed and sustainable communities and preserve affordability, **the Council expects affordable housing providers to avoid setting rent levels that risk households being unable to afford their rent.**

### **Applying tenancy flexibilities**

Under the government's housing reforms, housing providers will have the flexibility to determine the length of tenancy that they offer to new tenants.

The Council welcomes the introduction of these flexibilities as they provide an opportunity to address issues such as under-occupation, improve stock turnover, and encourage the best use of Peterborough's limited affordable housing stock. However the Council is also keen to ensure that these **flexibilities are applied in a manner that does not undermine social investment into communities**, and ensures that **the most vulnerable tenants are provided with the level of stability that they require.**

In order to achieve these outcomes, the Council advocates that;

- **Fixed term tenancies should normally be offered for a minimum period of five years**, including any probationary period. The Council is of the opinion that the minimum fixed term of two years should only be used in exceptional circumstances, as this is unlikely to encourage a household to invest in their home and community. Two year tenancies should only be issued where there is a short term risk that the tenant may no longer require the property within a relatively short time frame of commencing occupancy.
- **In certain circumstances the grant of a tenancy that exceeds a five year period may be appropriate for some tenants in order to provide an additional degree of stability and security.** The circumstances of households who have dependent school-aged children attending a local school, those living in adapted properties, and those with a support need that is long-term but not necessarily lifelong should be considered when deciding on the length of the fixed term offered by an affordable housing provider.
- **Tenants with a lifelong need for support that would disadvantage them in securing alternative accommodation should be offered lifetime tenancies.** This applies to tenants in both general purpose accommodation and those in specialist and/or supported accommodation. The Council is also of the view that those residing in older persons accommodation, such as sheltered or 'extra care' housing should continue to be granted lifetime tenancies.

Government reforms require affordable housing providers to formulate policies that will govern the process under which tenancies will either be renewed or terminated at the end of a fixed term. The Council is of the view that, in the majority of circumstances, **housing providers should seek to renew a tenancy at the end of a fixed term.**

However, the Council welcomes the introduction of fixed-term tenancies as they provide the Council and its partners with an opportunity to maximise the best use of the housing stock. **Affordable housing providers should consider the following factors** when formulating the policies that will govern the review of tenancies at the end of a fixed term;

- **The current circumstances of the household and the need for a property of the type and size that they presently occupy.** The Council is keen to see that housing providers utilise the new flexibilities to address issues such as under-occupation, and to make better use of adapted accommodation which is no longer required by a household and for which there is a local need. This decision should be taken in the context of the local housing need for and supply of the property type in question. Furthermore, those whose tenancies are not renewed on this basis should be offered an alternative property suited to their needs, unless there are other qualifying factors to be taken into consideration (such as those set out in the following two bullet points).
- **The financial capacity of the tenant to secure alternative market accommodation or affordable tenures, both in terms of earned income and entitlement to benefits.** However, the Council is keen to ensure that any assessment of financial capacity is managed in a manner that ensures that it does not act as a disincentive to work.
- **The conduct of the tenant throughout the fixed term.** This includes any anti-social behaviour issues, rent arrears or property management issues

Where the housing provider intends not to renew a tenancy at the end of a fixed term, **affordable housing provider's policies should set out how the tenant can register a complaint or appeal against tenancy decisions**. This may be facilitated through existing complaints procedures. Tenants should also be informed of the necessary review procedures for appeals.

### **Facilitating appropriate move-on**

The Council is committed to ensuring that the decision to terminate a fixed term tenancy does not lead to increases in levels of homelessness in Peterborough.

Therefore, in situations where a decision has been taken by a housing provider not to renew a tenancy at the end of a fixed term, the provider should seek to **engage with the tenant at the earliest possible convenience to make them aware of the provider's intentions**.

Housing providers should **provide households affected by the termination of a tenancy with any relevant advice and assistance** that will assist them in successfully relocating to alternative accommodation. This advice and assistance could include;

- Advice on **low-cost home ownership options** and other alternative affordable housing tenures
- **specialist housing and or welfare-related advice and/or signposting to appropriate advice services**
- Advice on **renting in the private rented sector** and assistance in indentifying and securing a suitable property (this may involve assistance with a deposit where necessary)

### **Protecting tenant mobility**

The Council wants to ensure that the introduction of the new housing reforms does not restrict the mobility of existing tenants living in the social rented sector, particularly where an existing household is presently under or over-occupying their property.

In order to enable mobility and encourage stock turnover, **the Council expects that social rented tenants should be allowed to retain their existing security of tenure** if they choose to transfer to an alternative property.

In order to facilitate this, affordable housing providers should **take a responsible view when determining the size, type and location of their stock that they plan to convert to the affordable rent tenure**. This approach should also be applied when planning the conversion of both existing stock and the retrospective conversion of schemes funded under the National Affordable Housing Programme 2008-11 to be converted from social rent to affordable rent on completion.

The Council also wants to avoid scenarios where particular localities experience a disproportionately high level of conversions, thus limiting the opportunities available for existing social rented tenants to transfer to areas of their choice without losing the option of transferring to an alternative social rent tenancy with a traditional rent level (target rent). **Housing providers should also be mindful of the impact of conversions upon the tenure profile and overall sustainability of the communities within which they operate**.