



**Draft**

**Peterborough Housing Strategy**

**2016 to 2021**

## **Add a foreword from the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet member for Housing – to follow**

### **Consultation preface**

The Peterborough Housing Strategy is a major policy item for the city council. It sets out our priorities, commitments and programme for the period 2016 to 2021 for a wide range of housing matters, including:

- How we will Support Substantial and Sustainable Growth in Peterborough
- How we will Increase the supply of homes which people can afford
- How we will Improve housing conditions in Peterborough to support health and wellbeing
- How we will ensure that a range of supported and specialist accommodation is available in Peterborough

This document is available for public consultation between **DATES TO BE ADDED**. This consultation period provides an opportunity for you to provide us with your views on the draft document.

### **How to respond**

We welcome your comments at this important stage. Any comments will help inform the final content of the strategy.

### **Consultation portal web link**

You can make your comments on the draft Housing Strategy at:  
[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 online (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:

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### **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 863815

## **The National Context**

It is widely reported that we face a national housing crisis, with not enough homes being built to meet ever growing demand. The housing sector is undergoing significant changes and faces a number of new challenges and opportunities. National planning, housing and welfare reforms are impacting on traditional operating practices for local authorities, developers and social housing providers. Peterborough's policy and strategy documents including this Housing Strategy, will need to reflect these changes and respond to the challenges and opportunities that they present.

Below is a summary of the key legislative changes relevant to the housing sector and how they will impact on our capacity to respond to housing needs and demand in Peterborough.

### **Starter Homes (Introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 2016)**

Starter Homes are newbuild homes which are available for sale to first time buyers aged 23-39 at up to 80% of the open market value. They are a new form of affordable tenure and Local Authorities, subject to confirmation by government, will have a duty to promote the supply of Starter Homes. Further government regulation may require the provision of a specific number of Starter Homes on each new housing development.

**Opportunity:** the sale of new homes at 80% of open market value will make homeownership a more realistic possibility for some first time buyers.

**Challenges:** Not everyone is eligible or will be able to afford a Starter Home. Setting a minimum requirement for Starter Homes provision on all new sites is likely to reduce the deliverability of other affordable housing products such as affordable rented housing and shared ownership housing.

### **National Funding Programmes**

The Homes and Communities Agency has a range of funding programmes aimed at enabling the development of new homes. These programmes include loan and grant initiatives and depending on the terms of the funding initiative, can be accessed by Registered Providers, Local Authorities, and large and small scale commercial developers. To reflect government's shift in focus towards home ownership, much of the funding is aimed at supporting building new homes for purchase.

**Opportunities:** Funding is being made available to a wider range of housing providers with the aim of encouraging more bids to support delivering more homes.

**Challenges:** The focus on funding for home ownership tenures will result in a significant reduction in new homes offering rented tenures. This will reduce the housing options available to households unable to afford to buy. The reduction in the provision of affordable housing for rent is likely to impact on our capacity to meet the demand for affordable housing on the Housing Register.

### **Vacant buildings credit (introduced by Ministerial statement November 2014 with legal effect from May 2016)**

This guidance indicates that where a vacant building is brought back into use, or is demolished to be replaced by a new building, the local authority should offer the developer a financial credit equivalent to the existing floorspace of the building when the local planning authority calculates the affordable housing contribution which will be sought.

**Opportunity:** this policy provides an incentive for brownfield development on sites containing vacant buildings and may lead to more housebuilding.

**Challenges:** this policy will lead to a reduction in the number of affordable homes which can be delivered on sites. The reduction in the provision of affordable housing is likely to impact on our capacity to meet the demand for affordable housing on the Housing Register.

#### **Office to Residential Accommodation Conversion**

Since 2013 there has been a permitted development right which allows developers to create residential units from offices without the need for a planning application, and without the requirement of affordable housing provision and other financial obligations. The temporary measures were due to expire on 30 May 2016 but have now been made permanent with effect from 6 April 2016. The permanent permitted development rights are subject to a new requirement for a noise assessment. This is intended to allow local planning authorities to consider noise mitigation from surrounding commercial uses.

**Opportunity:** Surplus to requirement office accommodation can be quickly converted into housing to help meet the current shortage of new homes.

**Challenges:** The newly converted homes may be in locations that lack the infrastructure and facilities associated with planned residential development.

The lack of planning obligations will impact on the number of affordable homes built and the funding available for infrastructure.

#### **Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding**

The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 introduced new duties on local authorities to keep, and have regard to, registers of people seeking land for self-build and custom housebuilding. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 goes one step further and requires local authorities to grant sufficient suitable development permissions on serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self build and custom housebuilding in their area as evidenced by the register.

**Opportunity:** Individuals and groups wishing to build their own homes will have greater access to serviced plots to facilitate their projects.

**Challenges:** The duty on local authorities to grant sufficient permissions to meet demand evidenced on their register may be difficult to achieve, particularly when applicants can register a speculative interest on numerous different local authorities' self-build and custom build registers.

#### **Neighbourhood Planning**

Neighbourhood planning allows local residents and businesses to influence the development of their area by creating localised plans and policies which accord with the Local Plan. Drafting a Neighbourhood Plan is the responsibility of the community. However, local authorities have a responsibility to support communities who wish to engage in the neighbourhood planning process and have a responsibility to use the policies and orders produced.

**Opportunity:** Neighbourhood planning enables communities to play a much stronger role in shaping their area and provides the opportunity to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop.

**Challenges:** Communities may have unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved through neighbourhood planning given that the neighbourhood plan cannot supercede the policies of the Local Plan.

### **Measures to tackle rogue landlords in the private rented sector (Introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 2016)**

Local authorities will be able to apply for a banning order to prevent a landlord/letting agent operating for a minimum period of 12 months where they have committed certain housing offences (once regulations have determined what constitutes a banning order offence). Tenants or local authorities can apply for a rent repayment order where a landlord has committed certain offences. If successful the tenant may be repaid up to 12 months' rent. The Act also introduces a statutory requirement for a national database of rogue landlords/letting agents to be maintained by local authorities. Again regulations are awaited to determine what information should be included on the database.

**Opportunity:** increases the tools available to tackle poor housing management in the private rented sector and provides a means for local authorities to share data on rogue landlords through the national database.

**Challenges:** Largely relies on local authorities to take a proactive role so implementation may vary between areas depending on available resources.

### **Rents for High Income tenants (Introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 2016)**

Local authorities must, and Registered Providers of Social Housing may on a voluntary basis, charge a higher level of rent to tenants who are deemed to have a high income. Traditionally, tenants of social landlords have been charged rents which are below market levels. However this change of policy requires tenants to declare their income to their landlord if they wish to benefit from a traditional lower rent charge.

**Opportunity:** Housing Associations in Peterborough who receive an increased income from the higher rent charges may have more income to invest in their current stock or in the provision of new affordable housing.

**Challenges:** The policy may create a disincentive for tenants to increase their income. Additionally people who are above the income threshold and who are charged a higher rent may struggle to manage financially.

### **Right to Buy for Registered Provider tenants (Introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 2016)**

The Right to Buy programme which has been available to local authority tenants since 1980 is now available to tenants of Registered Providers. This will enable tenants to buy their home at significantly below market value, once they have been a tenant for a qualifying period of time. Following the sale, the landlord will receive compensation by way of a grant from Government which they must invest in the provision of new housing.

**Opportunity:** This policy will make homeownership a realistic possibility for many households who would otherwise be unable to purchase their own home.

**Challenges:** The sale of affordable homes could lead to a reduction in the number of homes which are available to new households in housing need. Although compensation for the loss of the home will be paid to landlords there may be strict criteria for spending the grant which could prevent the delivery of new homes. Additionally, there is no certainty that the homes which are sold will be replaced in the same location by a property which is the same size, type and tenure.

### **Fixed term tenancies (Introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 2016)**

Since 2012 changes introduced by the Localism Act have meant that local authorities and Registered Providers have had the option to offer fixed term agreements for new tenancies. From April 2016 the Housing and Planning Act 2016 now requires that all new local authority tenancies must be granted for a fixed term of between two and ten years. Indefinite term secure tenancies cannot be granted to new local authority tenants. Although there is no local authority stock in Peterborough, some local Registered Providers already exercise their existing rights to offer fixed term tenancies to their tenants and this practice may become more widespread to reflect the new requirements for local authorities.

**Opportunities:** This policy is likely to reduce the incidence of households occupying accommodation when they could afford to secure market housing or when their existing home does not match their housing need. This is likely to free up and create greater turnover of social housing.

**Challenges:** Requiring tenants to move out of their homes could unsettle households and communities and result in households reapplying to the Housing Register for suitable alternative accommodation.

### **Reducing regulation of social housing (Introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 2016)**

Legislation has been amended to make it easier for Registered Providers to dispose of land and properties. It is no longer necessary to require the consent of the Social Housing Regulator prior to disposing of assets. Additionally the requirement for RPs to allocate the funds only as directed by the Social Housing Regulator, has been abolished.

**Opportunities:** Registered Providers will be free to dispose of properties which due to their condition or location are expensive to manage freeing up their resources.

**Challenges:** This policy allows Registered Providers to dispose of stock in locations where the local authority may consider there is a significant demand for housing. This could also lead to a loss of specific dwelling type which it would be difficult to replace leading to a reduced housing offer within the social sector stock. Additionally, if Registered Providers dispose of dwellings into the private sector due to their poor condition this does not support the Council in their efforts to improve the overall housing stock in the city. It may lead to a cost implication for the council if the condition of the property is not subsequently maintained and enforcement action becomes necessary at some future date.

### **Rent reduction (Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016)**

This policy requires Registered Providers to reduce social housing rents including social rents and affordable rents by 1% each year for four years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. There are some exclusions to this policy for certain types of supported accommodation including a one year deferral for applying this policy to supported housing rents until April 2017.

**Opportunities:** Reduced rent charges make social housing even more affordable for tenants.

**Challenges:** This policy has had a significant negative impact on Registered Providers' revenue meaning that there may be fewer resources available to invest in the management and maintenance of existing stock and the provision of new affordable homes.

### **Housing Benefit capped at Local Housing Allowance rate for social housing tenants (introduced in the Comprehensive Spending Review – November 2015)**

This policy will restrict Housing Benefit for social housing tenants to a maximum rate equivalent to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate from April 2018. The policy for general needs tenancies is applicable for all tenancies entered into from April 2016 onwards although the restriction in benefit will not apply until April 2018. The policy has been deferred for supported housing tenancies until April 2019 but will be applicable to all existing and new tenancies from this date. In response to concerns about the impact of this policy on supported housing provision, the government has said that an amount of funding will be devolved to local authorities to provide 'top up' funding to providers to reflect the higher than average cost of offering supported housing. The policy also limits the amount of Housing Benefit which can be paid to social housing tenants aged under 35 to a single room rate of benefit. This will mean that even if they are benefit dependent and in accommodation which has been deemed to be appropriate for their needs, they will not be able to have their full rent covered by Housing Benefit.

**Opportunities:** The policy may be an incentive for tenants to find work and reduce their reliance of Housing Benefit.

**Challenges:** As the LHA rate hasn't increased in line with market rates this policy is likely to mean that Registered Providers will have a significant reduction in rental income. Additionally, some more vulnerable people living in social housing who may experience difficulty finding employment, will have to make a contribution towards their rent from their own resources which may already be stretched. There is a high likelihood that the number of tenants with rent arrears will increase meaning a potential increase in evictions and homelessness. Supported housing is likely to be impacted by this policy with many providers expressing concern that the 'top up' funding to local authorities for supported housing will not be sufficient to support all schemes in the local authority area. In this event, a funding gap could lead to scheme closures with no suitable alternative accommodation available for tenants to move to and prevent new supported housing schemes from coming forward.

### **Universal Credit (Welfare Reform Act 2012)**

Universal Credit is a single monthly benefit payment to individuals, couples and families who are out of work or on a low income. It provides financial support for housing, children and childcare, people who have a disability or health condition and people who care for disabled people. It replaces a range of other benefits including Housing Benefit. In Peterborough it is currently only applicable to new, single claimants but in due course it will be fully rolled out across the city.

**Opportunities:** Universal Credit will give people the support to move into work or to earn more. It is expected to make it easier to transition into short-term or part-time work than the current welfare system.

**Challenges:** Whilst Housing Benefit can be paid directly to landlords, Universal Credit will be paid directly to tenants. This places a greater responsibility on tenants to ensure their rent is paid on time and could lead to additional incidence of rent arrears where tenants do not have the relevant skills to manage their income. Additionally, Universal Credit is not paid for the first seven days following each claim meaning that one weeks rent will always go unpaid at the commencement of any Universal Credit claim.

### **Benefit Cap (Welfare Reform Act 2012)**

The benefit cap limits the total amount of benefits which each household (exemptions apply) can receive if they are working age and are entitled to benefit to support them to pay for their housing. A household whose income from benefits is assessed to be above the benefit cap will receive a reduction in the level of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit that they receive. The level of the cap is subject to change by regulations.

**Opportunities:** The policy may be an incentive for tenants to find work and reduce their reliance on welfare.

**Challenges:** This policy could lead to an increase in poverty levels as incomes are restricted. Any restriction on benefits is likely to lead to an increase in rent arrears as people may struggle to meet all of their outgoings potentially leading to an increase in evictions by landlords and homelessness.

### **Under occupancy charge / Spare Room Subsidy (Welfare Reform Act 2012)**

This policy (also known as Bedroom Tax) restricts the level of Housing Benefit which can be paid to social housing tenants by imposing an under occupation penalty where the tenant is deemed to have larger accommodation than they need. The Council has adapted its Housing Allocations Policy to ensure allocations to social housing properties reflect the occupancy criteria of Housing Benefit.

**Opportunities:** This policy is likely to encourage some tenants who are living in larger accommodation than they need to downsize into accommodation which matches their need. This could result in a greater turnover of social housing stock allowing more offers of accommodation to applicants on the Housing Register.

**Challenges:** Tenants who cannot quickly be offered suitable alternative accommodation will have their Housing Benefit restricted and may not be able to meet the shortfall potentially leading to rent arrears, evictions and homelessness. The policy and the subsequent change to the Peterborough Allocations Policy has led to a significant increase in the demand for smaller properties and there is a mismatch between the size/type of housing which people need and the accommodation which is available. At present there is significant shortfall in the supply of 2 bedroom properties which has slowed down the turnover of households on the housing register and led to an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation.

### **The Care Act 2014**

The Care Act provides a statutory duty on local authorities to promote wellbeing and introduces a new universal eligibility criteria for accessing social care support services. A key focus of promoting welfare in the Act is prevention and re-ablement; investing in services that prevent the deterioration in individual's welfare and supporting people to regain their independence through intensive short-term support. In terms of housing, local authorities are required as part of its statutory assessment of wellbeing, to consider the suitability of a person's living accommodation and to generally support access to appropriate housing and related services. This could range from ensuring access to housing benefits to ensuring access to suitable housing options, depending on the individual's needs.

**Opportunity:** The Act requires partner agencies to work together to respond to the needs of each individual accessing social care support services resulting in a more holistic approach that includes their housing needs and enabling the most efficient use of Council resources.

**Challenges:** The extended statutory requirements of this Act add to the pressure already on existing Council resources.

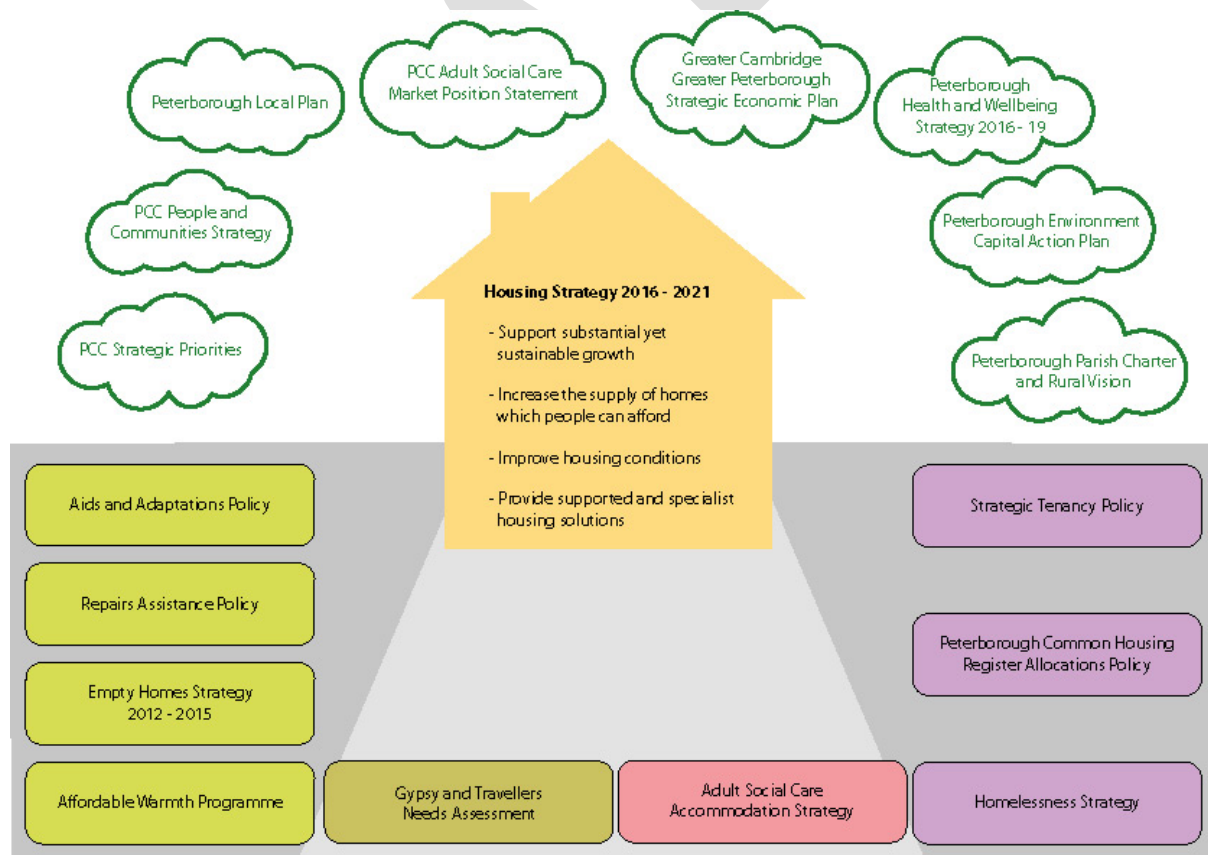


These significant and far reaching changes to national planning, housing and welfare policies have implications for a wide range of housing related issues and will impact on Peterborough’s residents. Some measures will create opportunities for Peterborough to further its housing growth ambitions in particular with new market homes available for purchase. Other measures are likely to impact negatively on the delivery of new affordable homes and in particular, homes to rent. Some measures (once implemented through awaited regulations) will provided additional means of tackling poor housing management in the private rented sector, while other welfare reforms will present more challenges for households reliant on benefits in both the private and social rented sectors.

**The Local Context**

There are several key themes in local policies, strategies and plans that contribute and feed into different aspects of the housing agenda in Peterborough. This Housing Strategy forms a central part of a strategic framework in Peterborough. It forms the link between government policy and the local strategic approach to addressing a range of housing related issues. The Housing Strategy is an overarching document that focuses and co-ordinates a number of other housing related strategies and plans enabling us to address the housing needs of the city.

The diagram below identifies the key local documents that inform and underpin this Housing Strategy:



## The priorities for Peterborough's housing agenda

This Housing Strategy identifies four key priorities for Peterborough's housing agenda. Each priority is underpinned by actions that the Council will take to deliver these priorities. They include actions that seek to maximise the potential benefits of the wide ranging housing reforms that the housing sector is currently undergoing, as well as actions that seek to minimise the possible adverse consequences.

The Council is committed to creating the UK's Environment Capital and the priorities of this strategy play a role in contributing towards the delivery of some of the themes within the Environment Capital Action Plan (ECAP). At the start of the related chapter for each of the four priorities of the Housing Strategy, we have identified the specific themes from the ECAP that the priority supports.

The ECAP is broken down into 10 themes which are set out below. They aim to provide a clear vision for how Environment Capital will be delivered. The themes each contain a vision to 2050 and interim targets to 2016 which detail how the city will change the way it does things to live within the resources of one planet by 2050. A new version of the ECAP is currently being prepared and is due to be published in early 2017. This will include interim monitoring targets to 2020.



## Priority One: Supporting Substantial and Sustainable Growth



### **Key Peterborough Snapshot Facts:**

- The population is expected to increase from 183,961 in 2011 to 227,890 in 2036.
- 1005 new dwellings are needed each year to meet current and projected population growth.
- 4637 new homes were built between 2011 and 2016 of which 28% were affordable housing dwellings.
- There are over 85,000 dwellings in Peterborough.
- 60% of all homes in Peterborough are owner occupied.

Peterborough continues to successfully grow as city. In January 2016 it was ranked as the third fastest growing city in the UK by population (1.5% annual growth) and as having the fourth highest housing stock growth (at 1.1% annually) with over 2,000 new homes built in the last 2 years. Housing demand is buoyant and it is likely this demand will continue.

We recognise that partnership working is key to supporting substantial and sustainable growth and we play an active role in the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The LEP's function is to help drive forward sustainable economic growth within its wider geographical area. It brings together local businesses, education providers, voluntary organisations and social enterprises, and the public sector to tackle key barriers to growth such as infrastructure, housing, skills and employment and funding. Peterborough's ongoing involvement in the LEP forms an important part of our ambitious plans to secure greater inward investment and influence major infrastructure decisions that affect the area's economic wellbeing.

Devolution offers another potential opportunity to support Peterborough's growth through joint working. It incentivises collaboration between local councils by devolving power, funding and decisions currently made by central government.

In response to the government's devolution initiatives, all Cambridgeshire local authorities together with Peterborough and the GCGP LEP, have worked together to put forward a proposal to create a Combined Authority.

A Combined Authority can work together to make decisions based on their agreed priorities, not national priorities. If following public consultation, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough devolution deal is supported by residents and approved by government, it will secure decision-making powers and significant funding for areas such as housing, adult education and skills, transport and major rail and road infrastructure schemes. Devolution will provide Peterborough with a further opportunity to work in partnership with other local councils on strategic growth issues that are more effective when delivered together. The devolution proposal includes £170m towards delivering affordable housing (with £70m ring-fenced for Cambridge) as well as £20m per year, for 30 years to support infrastructure.

To ensure that Peterborough is equipped to meet our growth needs, the Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan which will set out how the city and surrounding villages will grow and develop. This will replace the Council's existing Local Plan which makes provision for 25,500 new homes and 22,000 new jobs in Peterborough between 2009 and 2026. The emerging Plan is setting

new targets to provide 27,625 new homes and 22,024 new jobs between 2011 and 2036 and will allocate sufficient suitable land to meet our housing demand and our employment growth needs.

These targets in the emerging Plan are informed by evidence in the Peterborough Sub Regional Housing Market Assessment Update 2015 (SHMA) which takes into account factors such as population growth, household formation rates, migration and economic growth to calculate how many new homes and what types of new market and affordable housing is needed to meet the growth needs of our city.

We know that we need all types of housing in Peterborough from high value homes that will enable business leaders to live locally, to affordable housing that meets the housing needs of the most vulnerable groups. We also need to meet the demand for mainstream market housing in the form of homes for purchase and access to a quality private rented sector. Peterborough's rural community makes up 12% of our population and has its own housing challenges. In common with many rural areas, the housing offer is focussed more towards larger owner occupied homes with lower levels of smaller properties and affordable housing than in urban areas. A more balanced mix of property sizes and tenures is needed to meet local demand in many of Peterborough's village locations.

The Council has taken the decision to play a much greater role in the growth and regeneration of the city. In January 2015 the Council established its first development joint venture with a private sector partner. Through this joint venture we will realise more opportunities for growth in Peterborough by bringing forward surplus land in the Council's ownership to deliver new office, retail, housing and leisure facilities to the city. The Peterborough Investment Partnership has already demonstrated the benefits of the Council's direct engagement in development delivery. Planning permission has been obtained for a landmark regeneration scheme on a site at Fletton Quays which includes the delivery of 280 homes. Construction is expected to begin on site towards the end of 2016.

Separately, in July 2016 the creation of a specifically housing focussed Joint Venture between the Council and Cross Keys Homes was agreed with the objective of delivering new housing of all types and tenures. This will shift the Council's role from 'enabler' to a direct developer of housing. A £20m capital budget has been set aside as potential funding for the Council to invest in the joint venture project and £14.6m of corporate affordable housing capital funding has been allocated specifically to support affordable housing provision in projects that the joint venture, Medesham Homes, will bring forward in Peterborough.

We will continue to support other affordable housing providers to meet affordable housing demand by investing our funds accumulated from developer financial contributions paid to the Council in lieu of providing on-site affordable homes. These funds are ring-fenced for the provision of affordable housing in Peterborough. To ensure we gain maximum benefit for the city from this resource, the Council will explore a range of options with affordable housing providers including grant allocations, loans or equity investment, to determine the type of support that the Council can offer on a case by case basis.

**To achieve substantial and sustainable growth we will:**

- Keep the Local Plan up to date, with the emerging Local Plan seeking to deliver 27,625 new homes by 2036.
- Support good design which provides a mix of housing, including homes for purchase and affordable homes, to support a wide variety of households in both urban and rural areas and encourage community cohesion within neighbourhoods.

- Support employment growth by ensuring the right number of homes of the right tenure in the right places at the right price for workers.
- Influence the local housing market and contribute to the delivery of our priorities for new affordable housing through the Council's new housing joint venture partnership with Cross Keys Homes, Medesham Homes.
- Support housing providers in the delivery of our priorities for new affordable housing through funding allocations from the Council's affordable housing commuted sums.
- Support the Neighbourhood Planning system to ensure communities have a greater say on the future of the places where they live.
- Collaborate with the development industry to encourage housing sites to be brought forward quickly to improve supply and minimise the gap between the number of new households forming and new homes being built.
- Collaborate with the construction industry to deliver new homes using new techniques and technologies which deliver homes which better meet the objectives of the Environment Capital Action Plan.
- Continually review our understanding of the local housing market to ensure we respond to emerging trends and can meet future needs.
- Encourage the supply of prestige homes through the planning process to support the strategy for long-term economic growth and regeneration in Peterborough.

## Priority Two: Increase the supply of homes which people can afford



### **Key Peterborough Snapshot Facts:**

- 1211 new affordable homes have been built since 2011 of which 75% have been homes available for rent.
- 20% of all housing is in the social sector.
- Average property prices are lower than the regional and national average.
- Average earnings are below the regional and national average.
- A higher than average proportion of the population are in lower skilled occupations.
- In rural areas, housing need as a proportion of supply is ten times higher than it is in the urban area of the city.
- 40% of households are unable to afford to buy a home on the open market.
- 620 additional affordable dwellings are needed each year to meet current and future housing need.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation is increasing nationally and locally.
- The number of households accepted as being statutorily homeless is increasing nationally and locally.
- Since 2011 2273 new applicants applied to join the Housing Register. 1547 applicants were accepted as homeless. 2096 people were prevented from becoming homeless.

The population of Peterborough is expected to rise from around 184,457 in 2011 to 227,890 in 2036. With this increase in population comes a range of opportunities and challenges for housing provision. Everyone needs a home to live in at a price which they can afford and it is a priority of this Housing Strategy to ensure that as Peterborough grows the range of new housing which is built meets the range of needs of new households. The emerging Peterborough Local Plan will set a target for 27,625 new homes to be built by 2036 and 22,024 new jobs created. Average income in Peterborough is below the national average and house prices are also lower than the national average. However, the SHMA indicates that around 620 Peterborough households a year will be in housing need because they are unable to afford private rented housing or purchase a market dwelling. We recognise that measures must be taken to ensure the availability of housing which is affordable for these households.

Tackling empty homes is another means of increasing the supply of housing available to residents. We are committed to reducing the number of empty properties in the city, and dealing with the issues associated with long-term empty homes. Homes that lay empty for long periods are a waste of a scarce resource, and we recognise that more use has to be made of the existing housing stock. We aim to utilise the existing housing stock, whilst reducing the impact of empty homes on neighbouring residents, and highlighting the benefits of reuse to the vacant property owners.

As has already been identified, recent planning, housing and welfare reforms are likely to reduce the supply of new affordable homes for rent. New measures such as the 'Higher Rents for High Income Tenants' policy and the 'Housing Benefit cap to LHA rate' may also restrict the ability for existing tenants to afford their accommodation. There is already a higher proportion of residents in Peterborough living in deprivation than the average for England and around 22% of children and young people in Peterborough are currently living in poverty.

Although around 20% of stock in Peterborough is affordable housing, the number of households accepted as 'statutory homeless' resulting in a duty for the Council to offer them temporary accommodation and assistance with re-housing, is higher than the average for England, despite the national picture also showing increases. According to DCLG statistics compiled from local authority returns, on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 the number of households in temporary accommodation in England had increased by 9%, when compared to the figures from 12 months earlier. The number of households being accepted as statutorily homeless also showed a significant increase nationally: for the quarter between 1 April and 30 June 2016, acceptances were up 3% on the previous quarter and 10% on the same quarter of the previous year.

Although we work extensively with households to try and prevent homelessness by providing advice and assistance on their housing situation and alternative housing options, the number of households accepted as statutory homeless increased from 251 in 2013/14 to 440 in 2015/16 and there is currently a significant number of households in temporary accommodation. Research indicates that when people are forced to move in to temporary accommodation their health can suffer. The uncertainty of their situation, often combined with poor living conditions, impacts both physically and mentally on individuals and families.

The SHMA has identified that in rural areas, 76% of households are owner occupiers and there is a lower proportion of households living in rented accommodation both in the affordable and private sector. In the smallest villages and hamlets there is a significantly lower proportion of properties for affordable rent. Rural communities tend to have higher house prices and the tenure profile can create problems for younger households in accessing housing which they can afford. Additionally rural areas are dominated by properties with 3 bedrooms or more meaning that not only is there a more limited supply of affordable housing, it is also more difficult to access entry level market housing. A survey undertaken as part of the 2010 Peterborough Strategic Housing Market Assessment found that whilst incomes and savings of persons in rural areas are overall generally higher than in urban areas, given the low level of affordable housing and the limited entry level housing, there can be particular issues in accessing affordable housing locally.

**To increase the supply of homes which people can afford we will:**

- Through implementation of the Council's planning policy we will support the provision of new affordable homes on sites of 15 or more dwellings.
- Ensure a mix of housing tenures are provided on new housing development sites including Starter Homes, shared ownership properties and affordable homes for rent to meet the needs of households with a variety of income levels.
- Work in partnership with Registered Providers to support the provision of affordable housing on sites which they own/acquire by reducing the infrastructure requirements in line with the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.
- Work with developers and Registered Providers to ensure an ongoing supply of new build affordable housing for rent to meet the needs of households who cannot access home ownership affordable housing tenures
- Work with developers and Registered Providers to ensure that new build affordable rented homes provide the appropriate mix of house types to contribute to rebalancing the affordable housing stock to better meet the housing needs of applicants on the Peterborough Housing Register.
- Work with Registered Providers to encourage any capital raised from the sale of affordable homes as a result of Right to Buy or the reduced regulation of social housing providers to be reinvested to provide new affordable homes for rent in Peterborough.

- Work with Parish Councils and Registered Providers to support the delivery of rural exception sites which contribute to meeting the housing needs of households in rural areas and aids the ongoing sustainability of those communities.
- Reduce incidences of poverty by supporting tenants to reduce their energy costs through a mixture of providing new homes which are thermally efficient and promoting the installation of thermal improvements to existing properties.
- Work proactively with landlords and provide mediation services to prevent incidences of tenants becoming homeless including social housing tenants who may be losing their accommodation as a result of their fixed term tenancies ending in accordance with the end of lifetime tenancies for social housing tenants.
- Work with landlords and tenants to ensure that residents are supported as they transition from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit to prevent rent arrears from accumulating.
- Maintain good relationships with landlords to increase the opportunities for people on lower incomes to access private rented accommodation.
- Utilise Direct Housing Payments to support people to secure appropriate accommodation for rent by offering loan/grant payments for rent in advance and tenancy deposits.
- Support existing tenants of social housing properties, including those affected by the 'Bedroom Tax' to downsize into smaller affordable properties to ensure that they are not accruing unnecessarily large rent and energy costs, by offering them an increased priority on the Peterborough Housing Register in line with the Common Allocations Policy.
- Encourage landlords to support tenants who are adversely affected by the Benefit Cap to ensure that they make the necessary rent payments to avoid rent arrears and maintain their tenancies.
- Support tenants aged up to 35 years of age who are living in flats and houses to respond to the changes in the Housing Benefit legislation which may mean that from April 2018 their maximum Housing Benefit/Universal Credit (Housing) entitlement will be restricted to the Local Housing Allowance Rate for shared accommodation.
- Explore the opportunity of offering Empty Homes Assistance to owners of empty properties in order to carry out refurbishment work to enable the property to be brought back into use and offered to families in housing need.
- Increase the amount and type of temporary accommodation which is available to people to whom the Council owes a duty to rehouse as a result of homelessness legislation.



### **Priority Three: Improve housing conditions to support health and wellbeing**



#### **Key Peterborough Snapshot Facts:**

- 1,346 Disabled Facilities Grants have been provided since 2011.
- 699 enforcement interventions taken in the private rented sector since 2011.
- A Selective licensing scheme will be implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016.
- 20% of all homes are privately rented.
- 3% of homes are in disrepair.
- 13% of owner occupied households and 20% of private rented households are in fuel poverty.
- Life expectancy is lower in Peterborough than the national average.

Affordable, warm, dry, secure housing is associated with better health outcomes and helps communities to thrive. Poor housing can contribute towards the prevalence of many preventable diseases and is connected to injuries due to falls particularly in older people. Household overcrowding can result in an increased risk in the spread of infection. Poor housing conditions have also been identified as having an adverse effect on mental health. Fuel poverty and indoor cold is linked with excess winter deaths and cardiovascular problems. The highest concentration of fuel poverty and excess cold in the private sector in Peterborough are found in the urban wards of Central and Park and the rural wards of Barnack, Eye and Thorney and Northborough.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy estimates that poor housing conditions are responsible for over 651 harmful events requiring medical treatment every year in Peterborough. The estimated cost to the local NHS of treating these is £2.2M annually.

Selective Licensing will be introduced in designated areas of Peterborough on 1 December 2016. The Housing Act 2004 gives councils the power to require residential landlords to obtain a licence in order to let property to tenants within a designated area. Its aim is to improve the quality of life for all local residents by ensuring a consistent high standard of management of private rented homes in that area. Private rented homes account for just under 40% of the homes in Peterborough's selected licensing areas. Through Selective Licencing we aim to not only improve housing conditions where defects/hazards are identified, but also to improve the image and perception of the area to encourage more settled communities.

Registered Providers in Peterborough have significantly invested in their stock to ensure all dwellings meet the national Decent Homes standard. However some properties in the private sector are in poorer condition. The estimated number of dwellings in Peterborough's private sector stock with levels of disrepair classed as a serious hazard under the Housing Act 2004 is 7,952. The estimated average cost of mitigating hazards per dwelling is £3,548 resulting in a total cost of £28.2m.

Improving housing conditions in Peterborough will enable better living conditions, reduce illness and promote higher levels of achievements for residents, particularly in education and employment. The Council's proactive approach to improving health and tackling poor housing standards is demonstrated through:

- Working in partnership to utilise a £2.7m grant from the Green Deal Community Fund to provide external wall insulation, loft insulation, boiler and window replacements in 'hard to treat properties' in the city;
- Creating a partnership with Empower Community Management to offer free solar PV to all private sector residents in Peterborough;
- Launching the UK's second Council branded community tariff 'Peterborough Energy' allowing households to switch provider with overall average savings of around £248 per annum;
- enforcement action against private sector landlords to address unsafe living conditions;
- implementing a selective licensing scheme from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 which will affect around 6205 privately rented properties raising the standard of private rented accommodation and therefore improving the health and well-being of those tenants;
- supporting disabled, vulnerable, old and frail people by providing adaptations, handyperson jobs, repairs and maintenance work to enable people to live safely in their homes; and
- introducing assistive technology to enable people to be more independent, remain in their own homes and participate more in communities.

Adaptation and repair work can prevent falls and accidents, reduce the need for, or extent of, domiciliary care, prevent premature moves into residential care and assist hospital release by allowing care to be delivered at home.

Adapting and repairing homes and improving thermal efficiency is a key priority both in improving health outcomes and contributing to the Peterborough Environment Capital Action Plan.

**To improve housing conditions to support health and wellbeing we will:**

- Deliver a new Home Service Delivery Model which brings together Therapy Services, Reablement, Assisted technology and the Care and Repair Improvement Agency, to make grant delivery more effective and customer focussed.
- Provide mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants for adaptations so that people can live independently in their own home.
- Explore ways in which the extra Disabled Facilities Grants allocation within the Better Care Fund can be utilised to provide discretionary funding for works that will reduce hospital admissions, readmissions and enable people to be discharged from hospital more quickly.
- Provide minor Aids and Adaptations to assist people to maintain their independence.
- Provide a Handyperson service for vulnerable people to undertake small labour tasks that help to keep them safe at home and to prevent falls and accidents.
- Reduce the number of hazards in homes especially those associated with risk of injury or adverse health conditions through the Repairs Assistance Programme.
- Take housing enforcement action to tackle poor standards within the private rented sector by ensuring landlords provide safe, warm and decent accommodation for their tenants.
- Introduce a Selective Licencing scheme in designated areas of Peterborough on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 to ensure that all private rented properties within the designated area are managed to a satisfactory standard.
- Reduce the number of empty homes in Peterborough by engaging with homeowners, taking enforcement action and undertaking management orders.
- Respond to the measures in the Climate Change Act 2011 which prevent landlords from refusing a tenant's request to have energy efficiency measures installed and requires properties with the lowest energy efficiency ratings to be removed from private rented stock from 2018 onwards.

- Reduce fuel poverty by improving housing conditions and providing access to thermal efficiency measures.
- Target properties with excess cold by working with rural communities that have a large proportion of off-gas heated properties especially those households living in fuel poverty. Review the efficiency of homes and work with communities to improve standards.

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## **Priority Four: Supported and Specialist Housing**



### **Key Peterborough Snapshot Facts:**

- The number of adults with a learning disability is forecast to rise by 10% by 2030
- The number of people with physical disabilities is forecast to rise by 14% by 2030
- The number of people aged over 65 years is expected to grow by about 28% between 2013 and 2023
- Registered Providers own over 2000 supported housing dwellings.
- Assistive technology has been provided to 1360 people since 2011.
- 79 dwellings in affordable Extra Care schemes have been provided since 2011.
- 45 new homes have been built by Registered Providers for people who come into contact with Adult Social Care services, since 2011.
- Xxx new residential and nursing spaces have been provided since 2011.
- Registered Providers have built 517 new homes which meet the Lifetime Homes standard since 2011.
- Registered Providers have built 24 new wheelchair adapted homes since 2011.

The availability of appropriate good quality housing and housing services is key to supporting vulnerable people to live successful and independent lives.

The Council is committed to stimulating and shaping a diverse, active market where people with care and support needs, their families and carers are included and involved in community, economic and social life. Community based independent living can take a number of forms, from living in mainstream general needs housing with floating visiting support for people with low level needs, shared living in houses or bungalows with on-site support for those with higher needs and purpose built supported housing schemes.

As the population of Peterborough continues to grow, so too do the numbers vulnerable people and those with support and specialist housing needs. This increase poses a challenge to the Council both in terms of ensuring the availability of suitable accommodation and promoting the health and wellbeing of these households in response to the requirements of the Care Act 2014. The current Meeting Housing Needs policy in the adopted Local Plan seeks the provision of 30% of dwellings on sites of 15 or more to be provided as affordable housing. The policy indicates the tenure split between rented and shared ownership for the affordable housing provision subject to viability. Within the emerging Local Plan, this policy will be replaced with a new policy which will emphasise prioritising the provision of affordable housing which meets needs of the most vulnerable people living in Peterborough.

The Council's ring-fenced affordable housing capital funds paid to the Council by developers in lieu of providing on-site affordable homes under the requirements of the Meeting Housing Needs policy in the Local Plan, provides another opportunity for the Council to support housing for the most vulnerable members of the community. We will seek to prioritise investment of these funds in schemes providing supported and specialist homes in Peterborough.

## **Meeting the needs of Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing Services client groups**

The accommodation needs of people who come into contact with Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing Services provided by the City Council have been documented in a portfolio of accommodation strategies. In recognition that these documents now need to be updated, and to provide a consolidated overview of the accommodation needs of all of the various client groups that Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing services support, the Council is now looking to produce a single Commissioning Accommodation Strategy. This document will provide headline information about the accommodation requirements for the following client groups and the tenures and accommodation types identified to meet their needs:

### **Client Groups**

- Learning Disability and Autism
- Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment
- Mental Health
- Older People

### **Tenures**

- Social Rented
- Private Rented
- Shared Ownership

### **Accommodation Types**

- General Needs Rented Housing (with or without adaptations)
- Shared Accommodation (shared general needs accommodation)
- Supported Accommodation (bespoke and purpose built accommodation)
- Sheltered accommodation (older people)
- Extra Care Housing (older people)
- Residential and Nursing

An Adult Social Care Market Position Statement (MPS) has also been prepared by the Council. This tool will influence market activity in the development of additional supported accommodation and care services to meet the specific needs of those Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing services client groups. The MPS analyses the current provision of supported accommodation and the prevalence of each type of accommodation relative to the population. It provides a forecast of the future need for each type of accommodation and projected gaps in provision. In terms of the accommodation needs of people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health problems, there is also a focus on supporting people placed in out of area residential and hospital/secure settings to return to the city to live in community based independent settings.

The MPS clearly sets out that the Council's first priority is to support people to remain or regain their independence whenever possible. This means promoting preventative services including assistive technology to improve independence; holistic care interventions that avoid people being unnecessarily being admitted into hospital; and re-ablement services that promote earlier safe discharge from hospital. It is recognised, however, that while independent living is the desired outcome for many people, residential and/or nursing care remains important for those unable to live with or without support in independent settings.

The final adopted Commissioning Accommodation Strategy and the Market Position Statement will form part of the housing related strategic documents that sit behind this Housing Strategy.

### **Meeting the housing needs of other vulnerable groups**

#### **Rough Sleepers**

One of the strategic aims of the Council's current Homelessness Strategy is to reduce and prevent rough sleeping. It includes a range of measures aimed at tackling and preventing rough sleeping including;

- Working with partner agencies to identify people at risk of rough sleeping
- Working with partner agencies to deliver the 'No Second Night Out' (NSNO) initiative which aims to take rough sleepers off the streets by offering immediate shelter and to support them into a more stable environment
- Working with the faith sector to develop service to empower rough sleepers to leave the streets and not sustain street based lifestyles

The Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018 which was adopted in November 2014, forms part of the housing related strategic documents that sit behind the Housing Strategy.

#### **Young people and care leavers**

Some young people and especially 16 and 17 year olds who present to the Council as homeless, require additional support to prepare for independence in adult life. A joint protocol between the Housing team and Social Care ensures that the appropriate services are offered to each young person. The Council works with Registered Housing Providers in Peterborough to ensure that there are a range of accommodation schemes available to meet the needs of young people. These schemes address related issues such as enable access to benefits employment and living skills and are available to young people aged under 25 years.

The Council recognises that suitable, safe housing underpins success in other areas of life. For those leaving the care of the local authority it is particularly important that their housing needs are met promptly. The Housing team work closely with Social Care and other agencies to ensure an appropriate package of support. For care leavers ready to take responsibility for a tenancy, the highest priority for re-housing is awarded. Care leavers also have additional entitlement to Housing Benefit to mitigate the impact of changes to Housing Benefit entitlement for people aged under 35.

#### **Other specialist housing needs**

The housing needs of the following identified specialist housing needs groups is considered within the context of current and projected demand and need from these groups in Peterborough:

##### **Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople**

The Council has worked in partnership with eight other Local Authorities and consultants to prepare an up to date Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's Accommodation Assessment which was published on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The assessment takes into account the definition of Gypsies and Travellers as provided in the revised national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites which came into force in August 2015. This states that households who have ceased travelling permanently, will no longer meet the definition of a Traveller for the purposes of assessing accommodation needs in a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

To inform the assessment a survey was undertaken which attempted to interview all known Gypsy and Traveller households in the study area. Based on the findings from the survey, and applying the updated planning definition, the assessment identified no additional 'known need' for Gypsy and Traveller sites in Peterborough or Travelling Showpeople sites and no 'known need' for Transit sites.

However, the assessment also took into account the potential accommodation needs of the number of households that did not participate in the survey, but may still meet the new planning definition. This 'unknown need' results in a potential need for up to 16 pitches between 2016 and 2036 in Peterborough. Local authorities are not required to identify pitches to meet this 'unknown need' but can use the information to inform their policy development. Therefore while the emerging Local Plan does not identify specific land for the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites to meet this potential 'unknown need' the proposed policy sets out the criteria that the Council will apply when considering individual planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites from households that meet the new planning definition.

The accommodation needs of households that do not meet the new planning definition, i.e. households that have ceased travelling permanently, are now covered under provisions in the Housing and Planning Act 2016. The housing needs of these households will need to be assessed as part of the wider housing needs of the area through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment process and will form a subset of the wider need arising from households residing in park homes.

### **Armed Forces Personnel**

Military service is a unique form of employment and a way of life which for some may have a lasting impact even after they have returned to civilian life. Leaving the military may mean having to relocate, move home, find new employment and undergo a change in lifestyle.

Within Peterborough there is one army base at RAF Wittering which is home to around 1500 personnel. The Council recognises the difficulties which may be faced by armed forces personnel in seeking new accommodation. Accordingly, within the Peterborough Common Housing Register Allocations Policy serving and former members of the forces and bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the forces who are eligible for rehousing will be given additional priority to ensure that their housing needs are addressed at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **Student accommodation**

Appropriate and affordable student housing in the city is essential to meet the needs of this currently modest in number but important specialist group. Between 2013 and 2015, there has been growth in the provision of student accommodation in the city and this currently fulfills the needs of the student community. With Peterborough's ambitions for establishing a new independent campus style Peterborough University as part of the Devolution Deal, it will be important to respond to any changes or increases in the accommodation needs of students seeking to study in Peterborough. The vision for Peterborough's University is to have an undergraduate population of 12,500 students by 2035.

### **Key worker housing**

Key worker housing is usually provided to key public sector employees who provide an essential service and who may find it difficult to access housing in the area where they work. Key worker housing initiatives can provide discounted home ownership, shared ownership or discounted market rent products in areas where market housing is unaffordable.

Average salaries for nurses, social workers and newly qualified teachers in Peterborough are equivalent to the average median household income in Peterborough. The SHMA indicates that across the Peterborough Sub region, more than 40% of households have an income which is lower than the median household income in Peterborough and accordingly the provision of housing initiatives which are limited to key workers are not considered to be a higher priority than the general affordable housing policy. Households which include a key worker are eligible to apply for affordable housing in Peterborough in line with the criteria in the Peterborough Common Housing Register Allocations Policy.

**To ensure that a range of supported and specialist accommodation is available in Peterborough we will:**

- Work in partnership with service users and partners to commission coordinated, effective services and solutions that will prevent or delay escalating support and service needs.
- Continue to support the Personal Care and Support Framework to supply support in the home and in the community for people aged over 65, people with a learning disability and people with a mental health issue to ensure personalised support is provided that seeks to increase levels of independence and access to services enabling people to remain in their home.
- Support reablement services which provide intensive social care support aimed at maximising independence, health and wellbeing especially following a period in hospital to enable people to return to their homes.
- Identify housing solutions for adults with mental health needs, learning disabilities, autism and behaviours that challenge to return to Peterborough from out of area assessment and treatments.
- Maximise the opportunity of independent living with the installation and use of Assistive Technology in every setting.
- Broaden the range of independent living with the expansion of the Shared Lives Scheme that supports people to live in the community from every client group.
- Explore opportunities to provide specialist registered accommodation for people whose needs are so complex that they cannot be met within a community based environment, to reduce the use of registered care placements because of the lack of appropriate accommodation and support.
- Work with Registered Providers and private landlords to ensure a range of local accommodation options are available to promote best outcomes for people on the autism spectrum, with a learning disability, mental health illness or a physical or sensory disability.
- Work with providers to re-model under used residential home accommodation for people with a learning disability and encourage the conversion to supported living accommodation.
- Encourage the provision of and access to crisis accommodation and a complex care facility for people with complex mental health needs as an alternative to hospital admission.
- Support the policy in the emerging Local Plan seeking the provision of dwellings as accessible and adaptable designed to Category 2 of Part M of the Building Regulations 2015.
- Support the policy in the emerging Local Plan seeking the provision of a proportion of dwellings as wheelchair user homes designed to Category 3 of Part M of the Building Regulations 2015 on identified new housing sites.
- Work with private sector partners to encourage the provision of additional residential and nursing care accommodation to increase the current provision in Peterborough to meet growing demand for this accommodation.



- Monitor the demand for extra care accommodation and sheltered accommodation to ensure that any increased level of need is identified at an early stage to provide sufficient timing for additional facilities to be developed.
- Work with Registered Providers to ensure that sheltered accommodation is fit for purpose and fully utilised by those with the greatest need.
- Support the provision of accommodation for Gypsy & Travellers in line with the findings of the emerging Gypsy & Traveller Needs Assessment review.

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### **Monitoring delivery of the Housing Strategy**

To ensure the priorities of the Housing Strategy remain current and appropriate throughout its lifespan, regular reviews will be undertaken and an annual report will be published which sets out:

- Progress towards each of the priorities
- Changes in legislation or local priorities affecting the housing sector
- A profile of new risks and opportunities which impact on the council's ability to meet local housing needs
- An update on any new actions arising

Add a glossary of terms – to follow

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