



KINGSTON'S

Housing Strategy 2011 to 2015

**Providing a long-term strategic housing framework
to plan and deliver improved housing for the people
in Kingston**

Making a difference together

The Royal Borough of Kingston

Kingston Plan: Our Vision for 2020

'We want Kingston to be a place where people are happy, healthy and enjoy a good quality of life, in a clean, safe and tolerant environment, where business is prosperous, and where everyone in our community can contribute to our success and reach their own full potential'.

You can find out about the Kingston Strategic Partnership and the Kingston Plan by going to the web link below:

www.kingston.gov.uk/community_leadership



Housing Strategy 2011 to 2015

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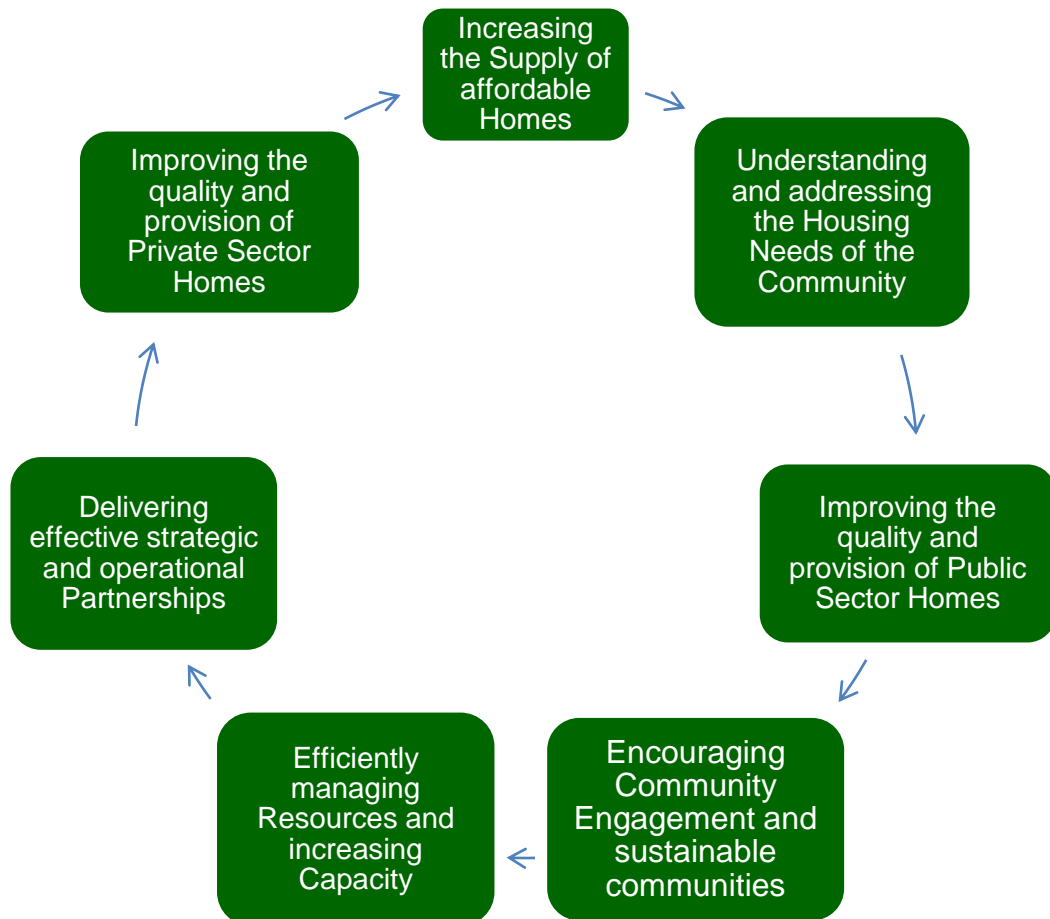
Appendix 1: Delivery Plan 2011-15 [Separate document]

Appendix 2: Overcrowding information

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms used within document

Kingston's Housing Strategy 2011 to 2015

Providing a long-term strategic housing framework to plan and deliver improved housing for people in Kingston



Consultation and Acknowledgements

This Strategy has been developed by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames with the support of the Strategic Housing Partnership Board and a range of internal and external stakeholders.

We are very grateful for all the comments and advice provided by the many people who have participated in its preparation and in the consultation process and we believe that the document has benefited greatly from these contributions.

Foreword



Cllr Frances Moseley
Executive Member for Better Homes
Royal Borough of Kingston

Kingston is a successful place; relatively prosperous and a great place to live, work and learn. Most people who live here are well-housed, in accommodation they can afford. However there are some challenges. Between 1981 and 2008 our population grew by 22% and this growth is set to continue. We need more homes for people to buy and rent but we need to achieve this while protecting and enhancing the unique character of the Borough.

House prices and rents are high and have resisted the sharp effects of the recession seen elsewhere. Many people on low or modest incomes cannot afford to house themselves in the market and for a minority of our residents, this leads to overcrowding, insecurity and even homelessness. So in planning for more homes we need to work especially hard to produce more affordable housing.

Amidst areas of relative prosperity, we have pockets of deprivation, often associated with concentrations of social housing. Many privately owned homes are not yet of a standard needed to cope with climate change.

Our new Housing Strategy gives us an opportunity to respond to these challenges and contribute to the future success of the Borough. The benefits go well beyond the housing field. If we can increase investment in Housing we will quicken the rate of economic recovery. If we deal with overcrowding, we can improve the educational prospects of the child who has nowhere to do his/her homework.

This Strategy has been prepared during a series of Government announcements which together represent the most significant changes in national housing policy for a generation or more. They cover housing and welfare benefits, homelessness, social housing tenancies, affordable housing and the financing of council housing. I am confident that in Kingston we can take these on board over the next few years and build a realistic plan for Housing in the Borough.

Together with our partners in the Kingston Strategic Partnership, we have set out how plans for improving conditions in private sector housing, preventing homelessness, providing more affordable housing, and tackling overcrowding.

I am also delighted that this document commits the Council to bringing all its homes up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2016 and to look to the long term future of some of its larger estates.

We also want to involve the community in Kingston in developing and implementing these plans. Working in partnership with residents and other stakeholders will be central to our success and we will strive to provide better homes and excellent, cost-effective services. We have had a very full and wide-ranging response to the consultation on the Strategy and I hope this will continue during its implementation over the next four years.

Why the Housing Strategy is important

This is Kingston's new Housing Strategy for the period 2011 to 2015. It is a consultation draft, leading to the adoption of the Strategy in September 2011.

Home is important for everyone in Kingston; but residents of the Borough will have a stake in this Strategy in a number of different ways. For example:

- They may recognise the need for more homes but also be concerned that the attractiveness of Kingston is protected and enhanced
- They may be concerned about where their children will live
- Home owners often face the challenge of improving the energy efficiency of their home
- Employers have an interest in where their employees can live
- Council tenants want the condition of their home improved
- Landlords and private tenants will want to see good quality homes that people can afford
- The many students in the borough need a supply of good quality, affordable accommodation.

Housing is important in its own right but it also impacts directly on many other aspects of the quality of life and our ambitions for the Borough. For example:

- There are direct links between poor housing and physical and mental health; plans to improve existing homes in the public and private sectors will serve to address inequalities in health in the Borough.
- Children who live in poverty are almost twice as likely to live in inadequate housing as children generally; providing more suitable homes will contribute directly to lifting children out of poverty and promote higher levels of attainment at school.

Over the last decade we have succeeded in accommodating a growing population. The challenge over the next few years is to balance further population growth with the supply of homes and the infrastructure needed to support it. In doing so, we need strongly to protect the existing character of the Borough and to concentrate development on brownfield sites and in existing growth points.

Our housing policies also need to support the economic wellbeing of Kingston. The nature of the local economy means that the income of employees in Kingston is lower than the London average. It is important to ensure that the availability of suitable homes does not act as a barrier to the economic success of the Borough.

It is because of these close links between housing and other elements of the life of the Borough, that the Housing Strategy is closely aligned to a number of other plans and in particular to planning policy as set out in the Local Development Framework.

Developing effective strategic and operational partnerships lies at the heart of our activities. We recognise the need to ensure that joined up, holistic solutions are developed to tackle the major issues highlighted by local residents: good and affordable housing a clean and safe environment, economic opportunities and health and well-being. The Council will continue to act as a broker, change advocate and lead agency, securing effective outcomes within a partnership framework which addresses individual and collective needs

The Kingston Plan

The context for the Housing Strategy is set by the Kingston Plan which provides a vision for the Borough in 2020. It holds our shared ambitions to achieve better outcomes for local people. Housing has a part to play in each of the themes of the Plan.

A sustainable borough where the environment is protected and enhanced for us and for future generations.

The Housing Strategy addresses how to make homes more energy efficient and how the supply of new homes will be delivered while enhancing the environment in the Borough.

A prosperous and inclusive borough where economic prosperity is shared and everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential and a good quality of life.

The Housing Strategy looks at accommodation for a range of income groups and in a variety of tenures.

A safe, healthy and strong borough where people feel safe, where individuals take responsibility, health inequalities are tackled and where people respect and support each other.

The Housing Strategy plans for the improvement in the quality of existing homes and for support for those residents who need it.

The Kingston Plan recognises that Kingston is already a very successful place. The vision for the Borough is that it will continue to be one of the very best places in which to live and work.

The function of the Housing Strategy is to reflect and contribute to achieving this vision. In doing so it sits alongside other key strategic documents such as the

Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework and the Borough Investment Plan.

The Role of the Housing Strategy

Kingston's success as a place is reflected in its housing situation. Most residents of the Borough live in accommodation which is appropriate for them and which they can afford. For many people, therefore, the significance of the Housing Strategy might simply be to ensure that advice or assistance is available if required, for example, on how to improve the energy efficiency of their home.

However, there are some specific issues which need to be addressed to work towards the vision set out in the Kingston Plan.

- Population growth in the borough over the next few years means that more homes are needed, both private homes for rent or purchase and homes which are affordable for those on low or modest incomes. This has to be achieved while protecting and enhancing the character of the Borough.
- In some cases the condition of homes both public and private is not to modern standards of repair, amenity and energy efficiency.
- Some residents live in a home which is not appropriate for them, for example because it is too small, or are faced with insecurity in their accommodation.
- Some residents have specific personal circumstances which mean they need a particular type of accommodation and/or support.

This strategy seeks to address these issues. Sometimes this will be by direct intervention by a public agency, for example, the local authority. More often, however, the role of the strategy is to provide a framework in which individuals, voluntary organisations or private sector agencies can meet their own requirements or contribute towards improving housing conditions in the Borough.

In many cases, addressing the housing issues in the borough is through a partnership between two or more contributory agencies.

In all cases, the strategy aims to be realistic in what can be achieved.

The Key Elements of the Strategy

The document itself goes into great detail about the range of housing issues in Kingston. However, the core proposals can be summarised as follows:

- To plan for more new housing, of all tenures, in suitable locations in the Borough and of the right size and quality; there will be a particular emphasis on new affordable housing using the new Affordable Rent model. New

development will be concentrated on brownfield land and in existing growth points and will protect and enhance the character of the Borough.

- To bring all council homes up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2016 and talk to residents about the long-term future of some of the larger housing estates.
- To provide private owners with the advice and assistance they need to make their homes energy efficient.
- To support a thriving private rental sector in Kingston, which provides accommodation for all income groups and which is well managed.
- To provide co-ordinated advice and services to people who are having difficulty with their housing and to prevent and minimise homelessness.
- To exploit opportunities to improve other aspects of quality of life in the borough, for example, health or educational attainment, through improving housing provision.

The first draft of the Strategy has been produced by the Kingston Strategic Housing Partnership for consultation with residents of the borough, community groups and partner organisations which have an interest or role in housing. The aim is to take on board comments made on it and to publish the final Housing Strategy in September 2011.

The document has already benefitted from contributions from a large number of organisations. The key themes, which form the basis of what the strategy seeks to achieve, were agreed and developed at conferences held in February and June 2010. The Kingston Strategic Housing Partnership itself has developed the approach to meeting the objectives of the strategy and specific issues have been discussed at length with, for example, residents' groups and registered social landlords.

Structure of this Document

The strategy is structured as follows:

Part One describes the **Context** in which it has been prepared, including the Kingston Plan, the Local Development Framework and housing policies at the regional and national level.

Part Two is a **Profile** of housing in Kingston setting out the key features of the housing market and the housing stock.

Part Three includes the housing priorities for the Partnership as presented in a number of themes.

Theme 1: Understanding and responding to the housing needs of the community.

Theme 2: Increasing the supply of homes

Theme 3: Improving the quality and provision of public sector homes

Theme 4: Improving the quality and provision of private sector homes

Theme 5: Encouraging community engagement and sustainable communities

Theme 6: Developing effective strategic and operational partnerships

Theme 7: Efficient managing resources and increasing capacity.

Each theme ends with a summary of 'what we will do' which feeds directly into the Delivery Plan which can be found at Appendix I.

PART ONE: Context and Vision

This section introduces the strategic Housing role of the Council and Kingston Strategic Partnership. It details the relationship with Local Regional and National Housing related policies and strategies. We also give a brief picture of recent successes in the Housing field. The section describes the link between the Housing Strategy and the Kingston Plan and begins with an overview of the Borough.

Overview of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Some key facts about Kingston

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is located in south west London and bordered by Surrey, Richmond, Sutton, Wandsworth and Merton. The North West boundary is formed by the River Thames. Kingston is made up of four neighbourhoods, comprising 16 wards.

Kingston has a rich heritage and includes well known tourist attractions such as Chessington World of Adventures. River views attract a host of visitors and our town centre continues to drive our economy and includes a well resourced retail shopping centre and bustling local markets.



Kingston upon Thames has a population of 157,000, the smallest population of any London borough, apart from the City of London. The population of the borough has been steadily rising in recent years; between 2001 and 2009 births in the borough increased by 30% to 2,321. Population projections for the next 10 years show the number of births will continue at around 2,300 and that the population will rise to 166,000 by 2021. These figures will be reviewed when the Census 2011 data is released during 2012. The age profile of the borough's residents reflects the popularity of Kingston as a base for young professionals working in London; 9.3% of the population is aged 25-29 whereas 5.8% is aged 50-54. Life expectancy in Kingston is higher than the average for England (80 compared to 78 for men, 83.3 compared to 82.1 for women). It is in the top quartile of local authorities with the highest life expectancy for men and women. For most ages the population is split evenly between men and women, however women outnumber men in the over 75 year old population, reflecting their longer life expectancy.

In the 2001 Census the ethnic composition of the borough's population was 84.5% white and 15.5% from black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. The Office of National Statistics estimates that between 2008 and 2018 Kingston will be one of the areas with the highest percentage growth in population.

The data on same sex couples was aggregated by The Office of National Statistics and these figures indicate that there are 312 people living as a part of a same sex couple identifying the other as a partner in Kingston in 2001. However the population in the group has become clearer with the introduction of civil partnership registrations. Since 2005 there have been 154 registrations in Kingston since services commenced from December 2005 whilst 402 individuals have given notice of intent to form a civil partnership.

Disability was not measured by the census but according to the Association of London Government, approximately 20% of the population in London are disabled. The census did measure long term limiting illness which is around 13% (19145) in Kingston.

Local economy and transport links

There is a lively evening economy with a thriving retail sector in the centre of Kingston. In research from 2010 on retail footprints, Kingston upon Thames came out as 25th in terms of retail expenditure in the UK at £810 million. Bentalls shopping centre continues to be a retail shopping magnet for local residents and other shoppers from outside of the Kingston area.

The town is served by three railway stations on a line into Waterloo Station via New Malden and Wimbledon or via Richmond upon Thames. The main local stations are Kingston and Norbiton. Norbiton is east of the town centre near Kingston Hospital. Two additional railway stations are located on the main line in Surbiton (which has a more frequent service) and Berrylands.

Employment

Unemployment in the borough is 2.6%, compared to that of Greater London at 5.7% (June 2010).

- Unemployment in Kingston is considerably lower than the national average
- Youth unemployment is considerably higher than unemployment for all age groups. Youth unemployment has been rising in recent years particularly in the wards of Norbiton (16.3%) and Chessington North & Hook (15.6%)
- Approximately half of the population is qualified to level 4 (degree level or equivalent). 83% of all young people leaving school are qualified to a level 2 (5 GCSEs Grade C and above or equivalent)

- Future Job Fund supported a large proportion of Kingston young people into employment, the retracting of this funding may further impact on youth unemployment.
- Key sectors for employment of Kingston residents are professional occupations, associate professional & technical and managers/senior officials and administrative/secretarial (70% of the Kingston workforce)
- Employment levels are high in the borough compared to national and regional levels.
- The number of unemployed in Kingston in June 2010 was below 2,000 for the first time since April 2009
- The largest proportion (25.4%) of Job Seekers Allowance claimants in the borough are within the professional, technical and executive roles (June 2010)
- Levels of unemployment vary according to residency; Norbiton ward has the highest number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in the borough and Tudor ward has the lowest
- Part time employment is increasing. A move from full time to part time contracts in the retail sector has had an associated impact on family incomes. Kingston has a large retail sector that remains very buoyant, with the number of empty shops remaining low (6.3%) at June 2010.

Levels of crime and the environment

Kingston has one of the lowest levels of recorded crime in London

There was an 8.0% reduction in overall crime in Kingston between 2007/08 and 2008/09, which was above the 1.6% average reduction across London. 85% of Kingston residents agree that the local police are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community¹

The Audit Commission awarded Kingston town centre a Purple Flag in 2010 for the work of Kingston Strategic Partnership to make the town centre safe, attractive and vibrant

Educational attainment

School pupil attainment levels in the borough are high with average results well above averages for England, Kingston schools are graded as good or outstanding by Ofsted ratings.

¹ Metropolitan Police Service Public Attitude Survey 2010

Quality of life

More than 8 in 10 Kingston residents are satisfied with their local areas as a place to live, with almost one in five saying they are very satisfied. (Place Survey, 2008).

Kingston is generally considered to be a relatively affluent suburb of London and is ranked 245th out of the 354 English local authorities (1 = most deprived, 354 = least deprived)². Kingston is also a place of contrasts. There are pockets of poverty, relative poverty and deprivation, largely clustered in small areas associated with concentrations of social housing. These are situated next to some of the most affluent areas in the country. The differences are more marked than in any of the neighbouring boroughs.

Understanding the Context for the Housing Strategy

Below is a summary of the relationship between our Community Plan [The Kingston Plan 2020] our Housing Strategy and National, Regional and sub-regional Housing plans. It is important that our Housing Strategy supports and reflects this bigger picture. This strategy has been prepared to ensure that it fits with National, Regional and sub-regional policies relating to Housing.

Strategic Housing policy context - snapshot



² Department of Communities and Local Government, English Indices of Deprivation 2007

Within Kingston the Housing Strategy is linked closely with a number of other key strategic documents, in particular the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework and Borough Investment Plan.

The Kingston Plan [The Community Plan]

The Kingston Plan sets out the vision of Kingston Strategic Partnership for a Kingston:

- Which has a national reputation as the best place to live and work.
- Where residents are confident about the future – a place where things happen.
- Where residents consider the services that matter most are of a high quality.
- Which has an outstanding reputation for innovation, engagement and designing services with users.

The Kingston Plan 2020 outlines the following housing related priorities:

Overall theme: **Increase supply of housing and its affordability**

Priority 1: LDF policies are in place to increase delivery of affordable housing and use planning decisions to reinforce our position

Priority 2: The Local Development Frameworks policies are in one place to identify suitable locations for new housing at appropriate density to meet identified need

Priority 3: Improve conditions of homes in council ownership and private sector

Priority 4: LDF policies are in place to ensure the delivery of Lifetime Homes Standards and that 10% of all new homes are accessible by or easily adaptable to wheelchair standards

Priority 5: Prevent Homelessness

Priority 6: Reduce the negative effects of overcrowding

Priority 7: Improve the environmental performance of both new and existing building stock within the borough.

Local Development Framework (LDF): Core Strategy

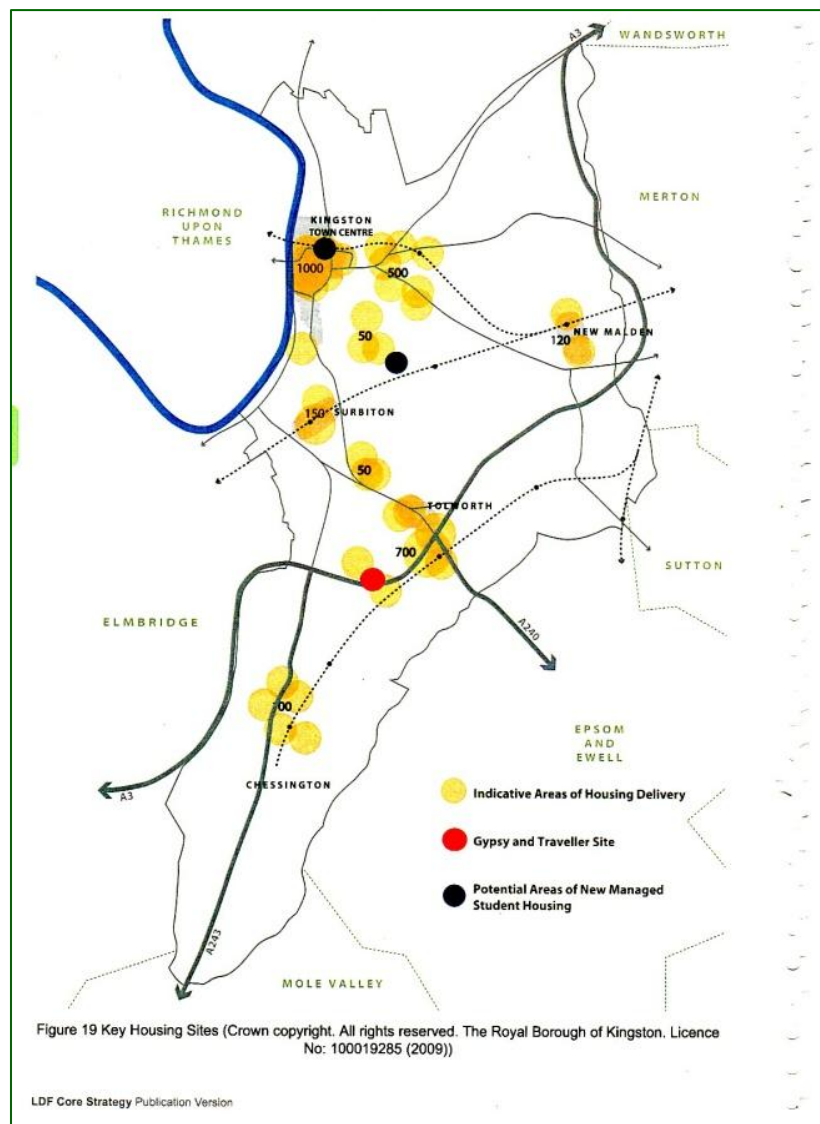
The Core Strategy is Kingston's planning strategy and policy document and will replace the Unitary Development Plan. Following its submission in May 2011, Examination in Public is planned for September 2011 and adoption in May 2012.

The Core Strategy provides that the Council, with partners, will take full advantage of opportunities to deliver new housing and, in particular, maximise the delivery of affordable housing. New housing should be delivered in the most sustainable locations, and with the associated infrastructure necessary to support it.

The preferred locations for new housing are Kingston Town Centre, the three District Centres (Surbiton, Tolworth, New Malden), areas with the greatest public transport accessibility (PTAL level) and areas in need of improvement or renewal. The map below shows the indicative location of the areas with the greatest capacity to delivery new housing.

Destination Kingston

Destination Kingston 2011-2015 is the Council's medium term service and financial plan. It sets out how we will deliver our consistent vision for a Kingston:



Destination Kingston details our journey to transform the way that Kingston Council works and prepares for the challenges ahead. It sets out what it is we want to make happen over the next four years and is focused on the delivery of outcomes.

To achieve our vision we work with our partners in the Kingston Strategic Partnership to deliver the objectives within the Kingston Plan. The Kingston Strategic Partnership is well established and symbolises the excellent relations that exist between local organisations to provide the very outcomes for people in Kingston. We are also exploring areas where we can work more closely with our neighbouring boroughs in the South London Partnership.

One Kingston

One Kingston is about working closely with our partners to create a more integrated approach to how we plan, shape and realise our vision for the Royal Borough.

One organisation alone cannot deliver all those things that matter most to residents. It is only by working together that we can make the best collective use of our shrinking resources and ensure the most efficient use of every public sector pound spent in Kingston.

To enable this, the Council will:

- Use Commissioning as the means to line up One Kingston plans and priorities with our partners to use public resources to best effect
- Place a strong emphasis on localism
- Build capacity through our Local First initiative in the local voluntary and business sectors to take on some of what has previously been seen as directly provided mainstream services.

National priorities relating to housing

The Department for Communities and Local Government has outlined the key housing priorities of the Coalition Government

Priority 1: Increase the number of houses available to buy and rent, including affordable housing.

Priority 2: Improve the flexibility of social housing (increasing mobility and choice) and promote homeownership.

Priority 3: Protect the vulnerable and disadvantaged by tackling homelessness and support people to stay in their homes.

Priority 4: Make sure that homes are of high quality and sustainable

Key National Policy Changes

During the drafting of this strategy a raft of new changes affecting housing have been introduced by the Coalition Government, the key ones are outlined in the table below:

Key changes/potential changes and Government led initiatives 2010	Potential impact/Ramifications
<p>Comprehensive spending review 2010</p> <p>Housing Benefit and LHA changes There will be caps put on the amount of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) payable, dependant on property size. Plan to reduce housing benefit for people claiming Jobseekers Allowance for over 12 months and reduction in HB entitlement for households who are under-occupying a property.</p>	<p>Increased homelessness and pressure on temporary accommodation</p> <p>Access to private rented sector limited and unaffordable</p> <p>More households needing to move, potentially to cheaper areas</p> <p>One positive may be in releasing more under occupied council homes</p>
<p>Localism Bill:</p> <p>Discharging homelessness duty via the private rented sector without applicants consent</p>	<p>Difficult for us to source in-borough private rented accommodation</p> <p>Places pressure on private rented sector in Kingston</p> <p>Greater number of refusals/discharge of duty interviews – increased workloads</p> <p>Greater choice for tenants</p> <p>Increase in the % of repeat homelessness applications</p> <p>Has an impact on community cohesion – lack</p>

Key changes/potential changes and Government led initiatives 2010	Potential impact/Ramifications
	<p>of long term stability in neighbourhoods</p> <p>Reduced waiting list</p>
<p>“A fairer future for social housing consultation”</p> <p>Proposal to remove lifetime security of tenure for new social housing tenants and replace with fixed term tenancy</p>	<p>Increase in Housing Register applications</p> <p>Create a more flexible housing stock in Kingston</p> <p>Breaks cycle of dependency on social housing</p> <p>Increase in re-lets [more void works]</p> <p>Has an impact on community cohesion – lack of long term stability in neighbourhoods</p> <p>Increase in the % of repeat homelessness applications</p> <p>May reduce incidences of sub-letting / tenancy fraud and anti-social behaviour</p>
<p>Affordable rent – New RSL homes and proportion of re-lets to be at rents at up to 80% of market rents</p>	<p>Working families [middle income households] in Kingston may benefit</p> <p>Increases housing choice</p> <p>Potential loss of social housing stock at target rents</p>
<p>HRA self financing</p>	<p>Potential for increased investment in Council homes</p>

It has not been possible fully to address these changes within this Strategy. Nevertheless:

1. A consolidated Action Plan to address change in Housing and Welfare Benefit, Homelessness and tenancies is discussed in Part 2 and priority Theme 1.
2. A response to the Government's Affordable Rent model is discussed under Priority Theme 2.
3. The implementation of HRA self financing is covered in Priority Theme 3.

The Mayor's Housing Strategy [London Housing Strategy]

London's first statutory housing strategy sets out the Mayor's vision for housing in the capital based on 3 central themes.

- Raising aspirations, promoting opportunities
- Improving homes , transforming neighbourhoods
- Maximising delivery, optimising value for money.

This vision, and the policies that underpin it, form the framework for determining the priorities for London's public housing investment and appear below:

- Priority 1:** Providing more homes
- Priority 2:** Helping homeowners and first time buyers
- Priority 3:** Improving the social rented sector
- Priority 4:** Improving the private rented sector
- Priority 5:** Designing better homes
- Priority 6:** Producing greener homes
- Priority 7:** Revitalising homes and communities
- Priority 8:** Delivering across London
- Priority 9:** Delivering locally

The South West London Housing Partnership (SWLHP)

The SWLHP partnership is made up of the following Local Authority Partners: Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Merton, Richmond upon Thames Sutton and Wandsworth. It has six strategic priorities:

- Priority 1:** Maximise the supply of affordable housing across the sub-region overall.
- Priority 2:** Make best use of existing stock, including: using the private sector to meet housing need, improving the condition of existing stock across the sub-region (in all sectors).
- Priority 3:** Champion environmental issues.
- Priority 4:** Increase housing options/choices for residents in the sub region (including mobility where residents want it) and work to prevent homelessness.
- Priority 5:** Maintain a customer focus ensuring fair access and equality.
- Priority 6:** Raise standards in practice and services across the sub-region, by identifying, sharing and emulating best practice across SW London.

The London Plan

This is the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London – a consultation draft replacement plan was issued in October 2009.

Strategic planning in London is the shared responsibility of the Mayor of London, 32 London boroughs and the Corporation of the City of London. Under the legislation establishing the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Mayor has to produce a spatial development strategy (SDS) – which has become known as ‘the London Plan’ – and to keep it under review. Boroughs’ local development documents have to be ‘in general conformity’ with the London Plan. The London Plan focuses on continuing growth for the Capital, with an expectation of an additional 636,000 jobs and 700,000 residents by 2016. The Plan makes clear the linkages between **new housing development** and economic development, and ensuring that London's communities have access to key public services and local amenities, as well as delivering better balanced communities which minimise social exclusion. The housing related priorities set out in the London Plan are detailed below:

Objective 1: Strong, diverse long term economic growth; in housing to produce more homes and particularly more affordable homes in successful neighbourhoods.

Objective 2: Fundamental improvements in London’s environment and use of resources; in housing to improve the quality of design and reduce the impact of housing on climate change.

Objective 3: Social inclusivity to give all Londoners the opportunity to share in London’s future success; in housing to tackle extreme housing need, improve choice and mobility, tackle worklessness, and involve residents in better management of homes and neighbourhoods.

In terms of the relationship between the London Plan, Mayor's Housing Strategy for London, and local strategies, there is an understanding that in preparing key plans such as the Housing Strategy, boroughs should take full account of the London Plan, supplementary planning guidance, and the Mayor’s strategies to ensure that it is in general conformity with them.

We have also taken into account the following Housing related legislation:

- Sustainable Communities Act
- The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Decent Homes guidance
- The Climate Change Bill
- The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995
- The Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000.

Local Strategic Context

Kingston Strategic partnership:

The Kingston Strategic Partnership sets the overall vision and strategic direction for the borough.

The role of the Kingston Strategic Partnership is to:

- Set the overall vision and direction for the Community Strategy
- Develop, in consultation with local people and organizations, a Community Strategy that will provide a long-term framework for partners to plan and deliver improved outcomes;
- Ensure effective community engagement with the community planning process and ensure that equality, inclusion and community cohesion are mainstreamed in partnership work
- Ensure effective communication with the public and stakeholders about the Community Strategy and improvement priorities for the local area and accountability for performance in achieving better outcomes
- Maintain an overview of partnership arrangements and ensure that partners work together to optimise achievement of priority outcomes.

The Strategic Housing Partnership Board [SHPB]

The Strategic Housing Partnership Board is responsible for the development and implementation of our Housing Improvement Plan [HIP] and for the development of the Housing Strategy. In the future it will be responsible for the annual review of this strategy. The Partnership Board also has a number of Delivery Boards and forums reporting to it, some of which will be responsible for the delivery of the different aspects of this strategy.

- Housing Consultative Committee
- Private Sector Housing Consultative Committee
- Homelessness Forum
- Housing Association Forum
- Temporary Accommodation Delivery Board
- Affordable Housing Delivery Board
- Decent Homes Delivery Board.

Our recent successes...

In looking forward in this strategy to the next 4 years we should celebrate some significant achievements of the recent past; The Partnership has:

- Enabled the provision of high quality affordable housing schemes at social rents e.g. Leatherhead Road, Ely Court, St Andrews.
- In partnership with the HCA and Network HA successfully concluded a street acquisitions programme of 11 properties in 2010/11.
- In partnership with the voluntary sector in Kingston successfully prevented homelessness in 195 cases in 2009/10.
- Halved the number of homelessness acceptances over the last six years.
- Reduced the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation by 40%.
- Grown our Tenant Finder Service, creating 950 lettings in total (415 of them active) to prevent homelessness, provide temporary accommodation and settle people long-term in a private sector home.
- Introduced a landlord accreditation system.
- Implemented a Mortgage Rescue scheme.
- Speeded up the turn-round of empty Council homes.
- Reduce bed-blocking by providing respite beds in sheltered housing schemes.
- Pioneered working with victims of domestic violence through the Resettlement and Support Service.
- Won £1m of SHESP funding for energy efficiency work in Council homes.
- Built and implemented an Overcrowding Strategy.
- Won £2m grant funding for the refurbishment of the Swallow Park Travellers' site.
- Successfully worked with the voluntary housing sector to address rough sleeping.
- Successfully ensured full housing input into the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children.

Against this background we can approach the challenges described in this new Housing Strategy.

PART TWO: The Housing profile of Kingston

This section provides a snapshot of some of the housing issues in the Royal Borough of Kingston. This allows us to get a strategic picture of key housing issues in our area and points to some of the key issues for the strategy over the next four years.

South West London Strategic Market Housing Assessment 2010

The South West London Housing Partnership commissioned research to carry out a Strategic Housing Market Assessment in August 2009. The assessment covered the seven individual local authority areas that together make up the South West sub-region of London. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is designed to provide a detailed Analysis of the housing market. There is no one single measure of housing need or requirements. Rather, the purpose of the Assessment is to provide a robust and credible evidence base which will complement and inform Local Development Frameworks (LDF) and borough and sub-regional Housing Strategies as well as establishing current and future requirements for both market and affordable housing across the sub-region within the London context.

The groundwork for the SW London SHMA has now been completed and we are able to **highlight** key contents pertaining to Kingston below:

- Owner-occupation in Kingston upon Thames is significantly higher than the London average. The stock of social rented dwellings is relatively small. Private rented dwellings are concentrated in the north of the Borough.
- The level of unemployment in the Borough is lower than the national and regional equivalents.
- The median earned income for employees in Kingston upon Thames in 2008 was £30,932, this is slightly lower than the average for London (at £31,932), although higher than England (at £25,520). Survey results for household income estimate the median gross household income level to be £37,076 per annum, including households without any members in employment.
- The housing stock in Kingston upon Thames has increased at a slower rate than in London or England as a whole in the last 10 years.
- The Lower Quartile house price in Kingston in the period June 2007 to June 2009 was £235,000, which is third highest amongst the south west London authorities. The Lower Quartile Affordability ratio (12.78 in 2008) for the

borough is the highest in south west London.

- The projected increase in households by 25,000 in the period between 2006 and 2031 is the highest amongst south west London authorities.
- The borough has the equal lowest number of new lets of social rented stock (392) of any south west London authority.
- There were 6,812 households on the Council's waiting list as at 31 March 2009, which was the third lowest in south west London. Of these 2,811 were in need (the second lowest figure in the sub-region). As at 31 March 2009, the Council was providing temporary accommodation for 676 households which it had accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need, which is the fourth highest figure in south west London.
- There are also 810 approved shared ownership applicants on the waiting list for a property in Kingston upon Thames.
- According to the BRE modelled data, there are 4,241 private properties in the borough which are in disrepair. This is the second lowest amongst the south west London authorities.

The South West London Strategic Housing Market Assessment suggests that on an annual basis there will be 887 newly forming households requiring affordable housing and a further 785 existing households. The total future need for affordable housing is therefore estimated to be **1,672** units per annum.

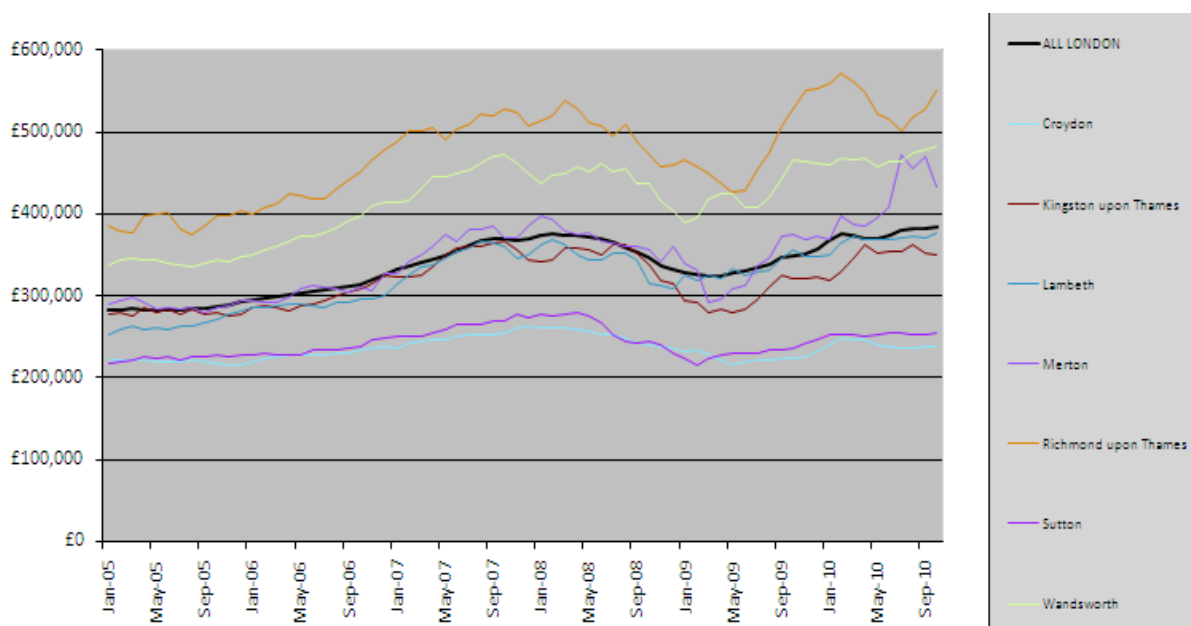
The local housing market – house prices

In Kingston, average house prices are amongst the highest in the country and high income levels are needed to gain access to the owner-occupied sector. The average price for a home at the lower end of the market is currently in the region of £160,000-200,000. There are considerable variations in house prices between neighbourhoods, with prices in the South of the Borough lower on average than those elsewhere in the Borough. The table below shows average prices for different types of property in the Borough and the average price of properties in the lower quartile.

<u>Average Value £</u>	South of Borough	Maldens & Coombe	Kingston Town	Surbiton
Terraced	239.720.3	318.759.4	341.307.5	338.416.9
Semi-Detached	277.209.5	436.832.3	463.167.7	437.219.4
Detached	340.550	825.561	617.403	471.636

<u>Average Value £</u>	South of Borough	Maldens & Coombe	Kingston Town	Surbiton
Flat/Maisonette	180.379.3	166.860.5	255.891.8	244.362.3
<u>Lowest Quartile</u>				
Terraced	226250	276250	299625	248500
Semi-Detached	247750	365000	378812.5	361175
Detached	374375	433625	450475	427500
Flat/Maisonette	161304	166666	208850	210500

The table below shows the trend in house prices in Kingston on Thames compared with other Boroughs in the South West London Sub-Region. This shows that this Borough broadly follows the trend of house prices in London but has not been subject to the same extremes of fluctuation in house prices as some other Boroughs in the sub-region. In general Kingston has not been affected to the same degree as the rest of the country by the fall in house prices since 2008.



Average accommodation costs in Kingston

The table below shows the disparity in weekly accommodation costs for a two bedroom property for the different tenures in Kingston.

Accommodation type	Cost per week
Council Housing	£90.16
Registered Social Landlords	£108.15
Private rented	Lowest £213 Highest £265 [GLA London Rents Map]
Home ownership	£490.66

The table shows that the rents for council homes are the lowest with private sector rents at least double those of social housing

Private rented sector housing in Kingston

14% of dwellings in Kingston are privately rented. The private rented sector has a major role to play, for example for students attending Kingston University or to enable labour mobility. The best estimate for Kingston University students living in Kingston is approximately 7,000. The student population is reliant on the private rented sector and continues to make a contribution to the local economy.

The private sector also provides a source of housing for homeless people either through direct lettings or through the Council's private sector leasing scheme. Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) also provide an important source of accommodation, in particular for single people under 25 who, because of housing benefit restrictions, can only afford to live in shared housing. Recent changes to HB regulations will see the age threshold rise from 25 to 35 years.

Key indicators – Private sector as at April 2010

% Privately rented dwellings	% homes vacant for more than 6 months	Total HMO licenses	Total Disabled Facilities Grants [DFG's] 2008-11	Total Empty Homes grants 2008-11
14%	*0.5%	164	131	13
			Value 1.5m	Value £306k

*Long term "empties" approximately 50.

The provision of social housing in Kingston – Council Housing

The table below provides an overview of the Council's rented stock. 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units make up the bulk of stock whilst 4 bedroom plus properties are in limited supply.

Total council stock as at April 2011	Total council rented stock 4847 [excl. Leasehold] breakdown by bed size
Total 1 bed units	1875
Total 2 bed units	1637
Total 3 bed units	1271
Total 4 bed units	59
Total 5 bed units	4
Total 6 bed units	1
Total 7 bed units	0

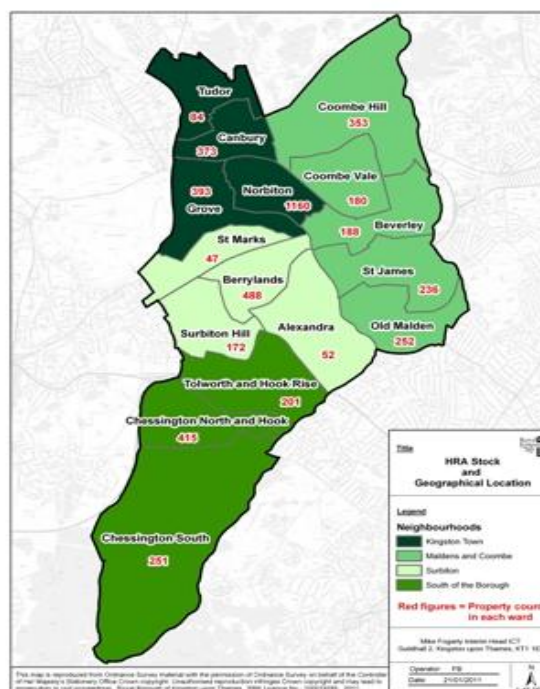
The map below shows the geographical distribution of Council houses as at January 2011. The greatest concentration of stock is in the Norbiton ward of Kingston and the least amount of rentable stock in the Alexandra and St Marks wards

Most of the Council property consists of small, low and medium rise flatted blocks. There are a small number of large flatted estates, including Cambridge Road and Cambridge Gardens in Norbiton, Alpha Road in Surbiton, Kingsnympton Park and Cumberland House in Malden and Coombe, School Lane in Tolworth and Sheephouse Way in Old Malden.

The only large non- traditional estate is at Cambridge Road which consists of 4 tower blocks, medium – rise slab blocks and some low rise houses.

Statutory Right to Buy: Impact on council stock

The Statutory Right to Buy [RTB] allows secure tenants the option to purchase their existing home providing certain conditions are adhered to. The table below provides a breakdown of RTB completion for the period 2007-2010 and the impact it has had on the housing stock. During 2009/10 – 22 tenants applied for the RTB. However we recorded only one completion.



Year	Outcome – Right to Buy
------	------------------------

During 2007/08	15 completions took place made up of 1 x 1b; 6 x 2b; 7 x 3b & 1 x 4b.
During 2008/09	6 completions took place made up of 2 x 2b & 4 x 3b all in the first quarter.
During 2009/10	Although 22 tenants applied for the Right to Buy, only 1 completion took place in the last quarter.

The Housing Register and Choice Based Lettings [CBL]

The Housing Register is a tool which allows residents' access to the Choice Based Lettings scheme. The Council introduced a new Choice Based Lettings Scheme in 2006. All applicants are placed in one of four priority bands, with Band A being the highest priority and Band D the lowest. Around 50% are judged to be in housing need and are registered in Bands A to C.

Within each band, priority is decided by the length of time waiting within the Band. All social rented properties available for permanent lettings are advertised through the CBL scheme and Housing Register applicants are invited to express an interest in properties by placing a "bid". The table below shows a steady rise in the number of Housing Register applications since 2007, a growth trend which is projected to continue.

Year [reporting period]	Total Housing Register applicants
2006- 2007	6163
2007- 2008	7010
2008- 2009	7700
2009- 2010	7791
2010- 2011	8236

The table below provides a breakdown of applications based on bedroom need requirements coupled with the total number of lettings for each bedroom need category:

Housing Register applications based on bed need requirement as at Jan 2011	Total households	Total council lettings for bedroom category 2009-10	Total RSL lettings 2009-10 for bedroom category 2009-10
Total 1 bed units	4345	176 [81 general needs]	50 [41 general needs]
Total 2 bed units	2224	90	49
Total 3 bed units	1193	52	13
Total 4 bed units	389	4	6
Total 5 bed units	74	0	1
Total 6 bed units	10	0	0
Total 7 bed units	1	0	0

The table shows that numerically the greatest demand from applicants on the Housing Register is for one and two bed homes. However these are also the categories of homes where there are most lettings. Proportionally the greatest gap between available homes and applicants in the higher CBL bands is for family sized accommodation. This is the source of the priority given in the Council's housing and planning policies to the provision of new family housing.

Changes to Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance [LHA]

The Coalition Government has introduced wide spread changes to Housing Benefits, Local Housing Allowances (LHA) and welfare benefits:

- Caps on LHA for higher-end and larger properties, mainly affecting central and inner London Boroughs.
- Basing LHA on the 30th percentile of rents rather than the median.
- Increasing non-dependent deductions.
- Extending the single room rate to people under 35.
- A move towards an overall benefit cap of £26,000 per household or £500 per week.
- The provision of direct payments to landlords when they lower the rent to the new levels.

It is difficult to predict how these changes will affect Kingston but most authorities are expecting a ripple effect as claimants are forced to move from the inner London boroughs to more affordable areas. It is anticipated that this will be felt most in 2012.
Corinne Singleton
Benefits Manager – Kingston

The table below shows the number of claims for Housing Benefit in Kingston over the past three years. It is possible that changes to Housing Benefit and LHA could result in more homelessness applications and Housing Register applications. However the extent of this will not be clear for some time.

HB claimant type	Total overall claims 2008	Total overall claims 2009	Total overall claims 2010
Private tenants	3732	4550	4947
Council [HRA] tenants	3783	3787	3729
RSL tenants	1596	1659	1678

The Council's response to these changes is discussed further in Theme 1.

The provision of Gypsy and Travellers sites

The Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Need Assessment [GTANA] of 2008 specifies the accommodation requirements of Gypsies and Travellers [including those who work with travelling fairs]. The GTANA completed by Fordham's identified the following:

Authorised pitches 2007	Minimum additional pitches required 2007-17	Maximum additional pitches required 2007-17
15 with an additional 3 underway as part of current site refurbishment	12	25

The London Plan 2011 requires the Council to work with sub-regional partners to identify provision to accommodate additional Gypsy and Traveller requirements.

PART THREE: Our priorities

This section sets out the strategic housing priorities based on a number of central themes and provides details of the objectives and the key actions that are needed in order for us to reach our goals. Details of our delivery framework and monitoring arrangements can be found in this section. The Delivery Plan can be found in Appendix I.

Theme 1: Understand and respond to the Housing Needs of the Community

Our objectives...

1	Understand and monitor the housing needs of different communities in the Borough and how they will change over time.
2	Support residents in meeting their own housing requirements in different types and tenures of housing.
3	Promote and support the voluntary sector in meeting the needs of sectors of the community, particularly those who are vulnerable or have special housing requirements, including enabling residents to stay in their existing homes.
4	Target public assistance at those parts of the community with the greatest housing need.

In the introduction to this strategy we recorded that most residents of the Borough are well housed in accommodation they can afford. For many people, the role of this strategy, and other key strategic policy documents such as the Local Development Framework (LDF) is to create conditions in which they can cater for their own housing requirements, providing advice and assistance where required.

However, a number of challenges were presented:

- The need to provide more homes to meet the demand of population growth; plans are in place to address this in the LDF Core Strategy and elsewhere and these are described fully under Theme 2.
- The condition and energy efficiency levels of some public and private sector homes; plans to address these can be found under Themes 3 and 4 respectively.

In this section, we consider plans for the minority of residents who do not have appropriate accommodation or whose occupation of their home is not secure. In particular we consider:

- Homelessness and the need for supported accommodation

- The response to proposed changes in benefits and tenancy legislation
- Overcrowding and under-occupancy
- The role of the community sector in the borough
- Provision for intermediate and student housing
- The equalities implications for our Housing Strategy.

Statistical information and datasets

The Partnership has a range of monitoring and client profiling processes which provide a good picture of performance in key areas. However, there is scope to consider new ways in which we can obtain more in-depth statistical information about our client groups and housing trends in the Borough. This will allow better configuration of services and targeting of resources accordingly. The Council aims to improve the data set which will aid the decision making process. The introduction of the Civica IT system for Housing Resources during 2011 will assist in the collection and provision of improved datasets.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The most recent SHMA provides us with an overview of the local housing market which in turn will help us to respond to key trends. Kingston remains an area with above average house prices and as such homeownership may not be the first option for many households. The private rented sector remains competitive and we recognise that we need to build a number of new relationships with local landlords and develop both the Tenant Finder Service as well as the accredited landlord service. However, the market can change very quickly and we therefore aim to commission a further SHMA during the life of this strategy.

Homelessness in Kingston

The Council provides a statutory homelessness assessment service and assesses homeless applications made under the provisions of homelessness legislation (Housing Act 1996/Homelessness Act 2002]. Since 2007 there have been some key trends and shifts in relation to homelessness applications and acceptances. In 2006-7 we received 1001 applications for assistance under the Homelessness Act 2002, of which 230 resulted in a full rehousing duty arising. This contrasts with 2009-10 which saw 499 applications and 140 acceptances.

There has been a steady reduction in the total number of applications for homelessness assistance, due in large part to the successful homelessness prevention and options activities

Homelessness preventions 2007/8 to 2009/10.

Year	Total households prevented from becoming homeless
2007/2008	81
2008/2009	102
2009/2010	195

The Council's Homelessness Assessments Team and Housing Advice & Options Service jointly participate in an advice triage rota at the Guildhall 2 reception. This service provides specialist advice and early intervention to identify households threatened with homelessness. Further to an initial assessment, immediate referrals are made to appropriate services. In 2009-10 the Duty Specialist Homelessness Service dealt with **1,071** enquiries from households either homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The main reasons for homelessness in Kingston are in line with the national pattern, namely parents/relatives/friends no longer being willing to accommodate; loss of assured short hold tenancy and homelessness caused by domestic violence.

Homeless Acceptances 2006/7 to 2009/10

Year	Homeless applications	Homeless acceptances	% decrease/increase
2006-2007	1001	230	-20
2007-2008	944	207	-10
2008-2009	625	218	5
2009-2010	499	140	-36

The Housing Options Framework

The Council's Housing Advice and Options Service (HAOS).

The Council provides comprehensive advice and assistance to private sector occupiers and private sector landlords and actively seeks to prevent homelessness. In 2009-10 the Service dealt with **1,180 enquiries** by phone, letter and e-mail from households with housing concerns. Within that year the Housing Advice & Options Service helped **prevent 195 of these households becoming homeless.**

The Service works in partnership with voluntary sector organisations such as the CAB and KCAH whose valuable work also contributes to the borough's homelessness prevention return to the CLG.

Intervention to prevent loss of home

Prevention of Homelessness by way of intervention by HAOS is the primary route explored. Wherever possible assistance to achieve sustainment of an existing home will be the first option explored. Including use of Mortgage Rescue Scheme where appropriate.

Homelessness Prevention Fund

The Housing Advice & Options Service manages a Homelessness Prevention Fund to provide monies for a variety of uses to facilitate intervention by front line officers to resolve disputes and prevent homelessness. These funds have been used, for example, to pay for a mortgage shortfall, to avoid possession action or to assist with an advance to secure a letting. However, other uses can be made of this money including; to pay for rubbish clearance to resolve a landlord/tenant or neighbour dispute and remove the threat of homelessness, or to pay for an elderly tenant's grass to be cut to comply with their tenancy obligations and resolve the threat of homelessness. The Homelessness Prevention Fund is a valuable tool which creates positive and cost effective outcomes for some clients who may otherwise have been made homeless.

Intervention to secure alternative private sector home

Prevention of Homelessness by way of intervention by HAOS is the primary route explored. Wherever possible assistance to achieve sustainment of an existing home will be the first option. Including use of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme where appropriate

'@home' enhanced Band B Scheme (under CBL)

In 2008 a Pilot Project, the Housing Options Visiting Team (HOVT) was set up to address RBK's main cause of homelessness presentation - exclusion by friends or relatives. An enhanced Band B category was created under CBL for such households, as an alternative to TFS prevention or a Homeless application. Qualifying households are offered the option to retain their present accommodation with family and friends to prevent the need for placement in any interim temporary accommodation. A CBL lettings quota was introduced for @ home enhanced Band B households in September 2010.

Homelessness Prevention Fund- example:

Ms A

This elderly client was diagnosed with Cancer and was in mortgage arrears. The lender had successfully secured a suspended Possession Order based on set terms which the client had been unable to meet. The lender successfully applied for a Warrant to enforce possession. The Council successfully intervened by applying to the courts for more time and advising the courts of our intention to cover arrears. We used the prevention fund to loan the client the monies to pay off the arrears. This was considered a good use of public funds given that homelessness was preventable in the longer-term through the client pursuing a claim for benefits that met housing costs and allowed the client time then to consider 'downsizing'.

This also helped prevent the client from needing to make a homelessness application and the alternative of emergency accommodation.

Preventing homelessness – partnership in action

The Partnership is proud of its cross sector work in preventing homelessness. A number of other stakeholders are involved including Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness, Kingston CAB, RBK Environment Health Officers, RBK Resettlement Service, RBK floating support service and RBK Learning and Children's Services.

Scope of Advice and Options Service

Although much of the work of the existing Housing Advice and Options network within the Borough is aimed at the prevention and management of homelessness, other groups within the community require and receive advice from a number of different agencies. The delivery of this Strategy will provide a good opportunity to review the scope of these services and how well they are co-ordinated.

To provide user-centred housing-related support services that are integrated, 'seamless' across agencies, and promote and lengthen peoples' independence across all eligible vulnerable groups.

Kingston Supporting People; Vision

Youth Homelessness in Kingston

Homelessness amongst young people remains a national issue. Kingston has a relatively young population due in part to the presence of the University. There has been a steady increase in the number of young people seeking homelessness assistance and recognise the need to focus on preventing homelessness amongst this client group.

This will include project work between the Housing and Learning and Children's Services within RBK aimed at recommissioning accommodation for young people and expanding mediation and family support targeted at older teenagers and their families to reduce the likelihood of youth homelessness.

Housing Support and Supporting People Programme in Kingston

The Royal Borough of Kingston is responsible for administering the Supporting People programme for the Kingston Area, which involves:

- Managing a Supporting People grant of over **£4.4m** per year.
- providing housing-related support services that enable people to live successfully in a supported housing environment or in their own accommodation
- Contracting, monitoring and reviewing **42** supported housing services in Kingston
- Working in Partnership with **15 separate providers** of housing support services, delivering **1,617** units.

Who is supported by the programme?

Housing related support is vital in helping vulnerable people to live independently, develop life skills, participate in their community and fulfil their potential. Housing related support emphasises Prevention and early intervention to meet needs before they escalate.

The Programme has a very wide scope, reaching out to many vulnerable members of society, including:

- People who have been homeless or a rough sleeper
- People with drug or alcohol needs
- Older people with support needs, mental health problems and dementia
- People with mental health needs and mentally disordered offenders
- Women fleeing domestic violence
- People with a physical or sensory disability
- People with a learning disability
- People with HIV and AIDS
- Offenders, and people at risk of offending.

Supporting People priorities

The Supporting People commissioning team is responsible for determining the percentage of the SP budget which will be allocated to each client groups. This is based on a needs analysis and local trends. The table below shows the percentage [%] spend for each of the client groups in Kingston:

Client group	% spend 2009-10	Actual £spend 09-10	% Spend 2010-11	Actual spend 10-11	% spend 2011-12
Domestic Violence	7.1	310,354	7.0	297,854	6.9
Drug and Alcohol	6.8	297,924	7.0	297,924	8.0
Ex-Offenders	0.9	41,910	1.0	40,907	1.0
Generic	7.1	330,806	7.3	310,501	8.4
Gypsies and Travellers	0.3	19,653	0.1	3,516	0.0
Homelessness	14.5	649,916	14.1	601,981	12.9
Mental Health	25.0	1,321,030	25.0	1,070,913	27.1
Older People	16.6	897,967	16.7	714,239	11.2
People with Learning Disabilities	14.7	636,787	15.1	644,801	17.3
Teenage	1.5	65,898	1.5	65,717	1.8

Client group	% spend 2009-10	Actual £spend 09-10	% Spend 2010-11	Actual spend 10-11	% spend 2011-12
Pregnancy					
Young People	5.7	254,199	5.4	232,622	5.8
	100	4,825,551	100	4,280,975	100

The table shows that the priority areas currently receiving most funding are; Mental Health, Homelessness; People with Learning Disabilities; and Older People.

The future of Supporting People in Kingston:

Both the Supporting People service and the providers are under considerable financial pressure and are in a period of budget reductions. The following principles have been adopted during this period:

- To recognise the importance of housing related support as a critical part of the future care and support system.
- To communicate to other local commissioners the importance of value for money; that includes community-wide outcomes and recognises the benefits of investment in prevention.
- To communicate to other local commissioners the
- importance of value for money; that includes community-wide outcomes and recognises the benefits of investment in prevention.
- To explore a variety of commissioning approaches to ensure a clear understanding of the need for specialist housing linked to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), to feed into local investment programmes.
- To work to share, promote and publicise practical advice and examples of jointly commissioned housing support, health and social care services.
- To maintain a healthy and diverse sector of providers, and ensure they can contribute to our strategies and future plans.
- Continue the current governance arrangements for the next two years to oversee the planned programme of expenditure for 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- Revise the existing eligibility criteria for services to take into account changes in funding arrangements and to take advantage of the flexibilities that these changes bring.

Supported Housing – Move-on Accommodation

The provision of move –on accommodation for those living in supported housing continues to be a challenge. The Supporting People Team has highlighted the following in relation to move –on accommodation:

- The lack of social housing for vulnerable people
- Cost of private sector housing
- Lack of high quality rent deposit schemes (TFS being the exception)
- Silting up of Supported Housing
- The potential for a more joined up approach between Boroughs to the provision of support schemes
- Pressure on funding for support which can lead to reduced services and a break down in tenancies
- An over-reliance on the YMCA, due to a lack of services for drug and alcohol accommodation services

As an important element of this strategy we intend to work with our partners in the voluntary sector to build a more co-ordinated approach to the provision of move-on accommodation for non-priority homeless households and homeless young people. In the statutory sector, a number of agencies will be involved including RBK Housing Services, Learning and Children's Services and Adult Services.

Rough Sleeping, “Sofa Surfing” and Single Homelessness

The recorded number of rough sleepers in Kingston is low in comparison to other London authorities'. The CHAIN data from 2009/10 suggest that at any one time 10 people were seen sleeping rough. However those who find themselves street homeless often have a number of needs that cut across statutory and voluntary services.

Often those who find themselves street homeless will not automatically be eligible for assistance under homelessness legislation and will be reliant upon agencies such as Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness [KCAH]. In recognition of this, the Council has given KCAH nomination rights to the Surbiton YMCA throughout the year: this supplements the winter night shelter that KCAH operate over the winter months.

In an effort to address rough sleeping in Kingston, the Council developed a ten-point plan in 2010 which forms part of the South-West London response to rough sleeping. The Kingston plan built upon existing practice and included:

- The promotion of existing services to rough sleepers in the borough.
- Improving referral processes, especially the work of London Street Rescue.
- Using the existing 'Professionals Meeting' system to develop pathways across relevant services for those coming off the streets.
- Adopting the provisions of the London Reconnections protocol.
- Committing to an ongoing review and monitoring of needs and gaps.
- Participating in the sub-regional and pan-London plans on working towards ending rough sleeping in London by 2012.

Since the plan was adopted, initiatives such as "No Second Night Out" have been launched in London and Kingston now makes available assessment bed spaces for use by London Street Rescue where immediate assistance is needed. A similar approach to the availability of emergency placements continues to be taken in relation to Severe Weather Emergency Protocol arrangements.

The Homelessness Forum needs to be given more weight for agencies to provide feedback and actions agreed. Communication with the Council leads to better understanding.
Respondent – Housing Strategy joint working online survey 2011

In the future, the Joel Project [a church led initiative] may be able to offer support and shelter to this client group and appropriate support to this will be provided via the Homelessness Forum and this Strategy.

It is acknowledged that the housing difficulties experienced by some single people in Kingston go wider than the relatively small numbers of people recorded as "Rough Sleepers". On one part of the spectrum, it is sometimes very difficult for single people of working age on low or modest incomes to access the housing market. On another are a population of people known as "Sofa Surfers". These are people who have no stable accommodation but are able to stay somewhere overnight off the streets. They may stay for a few days before moving on, often supported by people who are themselves on Housing Benefit.

In some cases, these residents can experience other problems with their lives including, for example, loneliness and difficulty in finding a sustainable community. The local churches and voluntary organisations provide particularly skilled and valuable support for this group. It will be important to include consideration of services to this group within the work of the Homelessness Forum.

Development of the Housing and Homelessness Forum

We are committed to developing effective strategic and operational partnerships to ensure that joined up, holistic solutions are developed to tackle the major issues highlighted by local residents.

The Homelessness Forum is a valuable tool which brings together the Council and the community sector to tackle a major social and economic issue in the borough. As part of this strategy we will review and strengthen the Forum to provide the basis it will need to undertake a number of important initiatives over the next few years. This will include seeking to widen the membership, particularly amongst BAME and marginalized groups within the Borough.

Over the life of this strategy the remit of the group will include consideration of:

- A rent deposit scheme for non-statutory households;
- A co-ordinated advice, prevention, signposting and referral service for a range of groups;
- A prevention and move-on framework for young people and non-statutory homeless households, alongside the emerging work around the services provided by the YMCA.
- The potential contribution of a Credit Union, such as that currently under consideration by KVA.

Provision of Temporary Accommodation

Duties under Homelessness legislation include the provision of temporary accommodation to households who are homeless in Kingston. There has been a steady decline in the number of households making applications for homelessness assistance however there are still a significant number of households in temporary accommodation.

Overall total households in temporary accommodation by type of accommodation 2006/7 to 2009/10.

	Hostel	Self Contained	PLS	B&B	B&B Annexe	Total
2006/07	81	192	518	7	14	812
2007/08	75	169	514	13	4	775
2008/09	54	126	487	6	3	676
2009/10	60	108	392	4	1	565

It is necessary to procure and use temporary accommodation as a result of the shortage of permanent affordable housing in the Borough. It is a major element of this strategy to provide more affordable housing; but in any event the use of temporary accommodation will persist.

The changes in benefit and homelessness legislation introduced by the Coalition Government may mean an increase in homelessness and hence the need for more temporary accommodation. The aim of the Partnership will be to minimise this and ensure that such accommodation is of an acceptable standard. In particular, the priority will be to minimise the use of bed and breakfast hotels and hotel annexes as these are very unsatisfactory for the household and very expensive for the council taxpayer.

Responding to the changes to Housing Benefits and Local Housing Allowance

The Council's Housing Benefits section is preparing for these changes in a number of ways including ensuring that staff are trained, liaison meetings are held with the Housing Service and local landlords are updated on changes through the Private Sector Housing Consultative Committee [PSHCC]. It is difficult to predict how these changes will affect Kingston but most authorities are expecting a ripple effect, as claimants are forced to move from the inner London boroughs to more affordable areas. It is anticipated that this will be felt most in 2012.

It is recognised that marginalised groups may be particularly at risk and plans are already in place to work with the council's Equalities and Community Engagement Team to ensure that as many of these groups as possible are aware of changes coming in from April 2011 and beyond.

The Housing and Housing Benefit Services will formalise their joint working protocols and ensure that they work collaboratively to communicate key messages and mitigate the impact of HB changes especially in relation to marginalised communities. They will also take this opportunity to ensure that they incorporate the Council Child Poverty objectives into their working objectives.

The Council is taking a co-ordinated and pro-active approach to these changes, with the aims of mitigating the impact on households, supporting landlords in making decisions about their business and sustaining confidence in the private rented sector in the borough as a viable and long-term housing option for households on low or modest incomes.

In advance of the April 2011 changes this has meant contacting tenants where the household contains non-dependents, contacting landlords to provide advice about the changes and offering a "Business Discussion" about how they might best respond. Intervention has included brokering a discussion between landlords and tenants in tenancies affected by the new caps or 30th percentile changes to see if a solution can be found, potentially including:

- a break in claim
- direct payments to the landlords
- a longer term tenancy

A second phase of the response will be included within a co-ordinated approach to the Government's housing policy changes.

The Government's Housing and Welfare Reforms – a Co-ordinated Approach

The changes and reforms to Housing and Welfare Benefits, homelessness powers and social tenancies introduced by the Coalition Government since its election in May 2010 pose a considerable challenge to the Partnership.

These changes and their potential effects are inter-linked. They also pose risks: personal risks for people in the Borough seeking or seeking to retain accommodation and financial risks for the Council.

A co-ordinated and comprehensive response to them is required by a number of agencies in the Partnership. It is an important commitment of this Strategy that we will produce co-ordinated plan which covers:

- The response to changes in Housing and Welfare Benefits
- The potential use of a new power to discharge the homelessness duty into the private sector
- The volume and mix of temporary accommodation
- The procurement and accessing of private sector accommodation for homelessness prevention and for use as temporary accommodation
- The impact of flexible tenancies in social housing
- Changes potentially required to the Allocations policy
- Changes confirming the budgetary impact of the reforms and changes introduced at national level
- Measures required to contain the budgetary impact locally of the reforms and changes introduced at national level.

The Tenancy Strategy

The Localism Bill proposes to place a new duty on local authorities to publish a statutory Tenancy Strategy for social housing lettings in its area. This is in parallel with the discretion to be given to social housing landlords to introduce fixed term tenancies, with a minimum term of two years. Registered Providers will be required to have due regard to the local Tenancy Strategy.

Although a date for the introduction of the new duty has not yet been fixed, this Strategy proposes the production of a Tenancy Strategy for Kingston by March 2012. Alongside this we will have to update our Allocation scheme to reflect both National and local changes.

Wheelchair Adapted Homes

The Council seeks to obtain **10% wheelchair provision** within residential schemes and particular in the new build/conversion affordable housing development programme.

The table below shows the outcome in the period 2007/8 to 2011/12. Wheelchair/mobility provision in Affordable Housing Schemes.

Year	Outcome
2007/08	Although there were 102 conventional completions, some developments were where properties were refurbished, ruling out provision of properties designed to wheelchair standards, nonetheless 5% wheelchair provision was achieved.
2008/09	There were no conventional completions
2009/10	Of the 30 conventional completions, 3 were designed to wheelchair standards, 10% provision.
2010/11	It is anticipated that there will be 65 conventional completions. Of those, 9 will accommodate persons with mobility use or designed to wheelchair standards, a total of 14% provision.
2011/12	7 further wheelchair adapted units are anticipated

The provision of adapted properties will continue to be a priority for the Partnership and we will continue to work with RSL partners to ensure that the housing development framework includes this key component. Respondents to consultation on this Strategy stressed that some wheelchair users need space standards that are suited to their own particular circumstances. Every effort will be made to identify occupants early in the development process to allow for tailoring of space standards to their individual requirements.

Tackling Overcrowding and Under Occupancy

The issue of people living in overcrowded housing circumstances along with the related issue of under occupation is one that has been recognised as key by the Government.

From the 2008/09 English Housing Survey and Labour Force Survey the Coalition Government estimates that there are:

- 654,000 overcrowded households across all tenures, including...
- 258,000 overcrowded households in the social sector, of which...
- 29,000 are severely overcrowded

There are around 430,000 households in the social rented sector who under-occupy by two or more bedrooms against the *bedroom standard [Source: Local decisions: a fairer future for social housing Consultation 2010]

The South West London Housing Partnership obtained grant funding from the CLG to operate a sub-regional overcrowding project. The aims of this project are to raise awareness of the issue of overcrowding, developing additional rehousing options for overcrowded households and raising local authority performance in the area of tackling under-occupation in their stock, thereby freeing up larger units that could be allocated to people living in overcrowded circumstances.

*Bedroom standard: This allocates one bedroom to each couple or lone parent, one to each pair of children under 10, one to each pair of children of the same sex over 10, with additional bedrooms for individual children over 10 of different sex and for additional adult household members.

The main focus of our Overcrowding Strategy has been to help overcrowded Council and Housing Association tenants.

We have successfully put in place an overcrowding initiative which aims to address the needs of overcrowded households in Kingston. We recognise that overcrowding has an adverse effect on the holistic needs of households and can impact: sleep patterns, fuel and energy consumption, mental and physical health, family relationships, disrepair elements [pressure on the built environment], privacy levels, economic sustainability, social inclusion, educational attainment and the risk of homelessness.

In order to tackle overcrowding we must also address under occupancy whilst being sensitive to the needs of households who currently under occupy their homes. We recognise that under occupancy not only affects the supply/through-flow of affordable housing but also places a degree of pressure on some households. Those older householders who under-occupy often are unable to

manage or negotiate stairs. For many only occupying a small proportion the dwelling there can be increased fuel bills and anxieties in relation to moving home or leaving long established community roots compound the issue further.

The Home Finder Scheme is open to overcrowded social housing tenants who wish to move to the private sector. 7 tenants have moved to date. Kingston hosts the sub-regional Overcrowding Co-coordinator, on behalf of the SW London sub-region. The Coordinator is working on sub-regional initiatives such as the Homes out of London scheme, to acquire RSL homes for under-occupiers under 60's to help them move out of London, releasing homes for overcrowded tenants.

Overcrowding project outcomes as at Jan 2011...

Since the launch of the project 70 households have been rehoused, 47 of which have been rehoused as a direct result of Project Officer's visits. 19 households have moved into the private sector.

A breakdown of overcrowded households rehoused by bedroom size required:

5 Households were in a 1 bedroom needing 2 bedrooms
5 Households were in a 1 bedroom needing 3 bedrooms
38 Households were in a 2 bedroom needing 3 bedrooms
17 Households were in a 2 bedroom needing 4 bedrooms
1 Household was in a 2 bedroom needing 5 bedrooms
3 Households were in a 3 bedroom needing 4 bedrooms
1 Household was in a 3 bedroom needing 5 bedrooms

We have had a number of successes relating to overcrowding and have provided further details in Appendix 4.

Under-occupation

The Council sets targets based on how many under-occupiers it can house each year which reflect the budget the Council has to spend on under-occupiers to assist their moves. We aim to achieve 45 under-occupation moves in 2011/12 and have extended the scheme. Sub-regionally, the Your Move scheme is still available to fund property improvements to help persuade under-occupiers to move and release family homes for overcrowded tenants. The Council has spent over £20K to date improving properties for under-occupying tenants.

The following table gives a breakdown of the number of moves achieved from 2006 to 2010.

Year	Releasing 1 beds	Releasing 2 beds	Releasing 3 beds	Releasing 4 beds	Releasing 5+	Total

06/07	12	14	8	0	0	34
07/08	12	12	6	1	0	31
08/09	10	11	4	2	0	27
09/10	8	17	13	3	0	41

Housing Mobility

The partnership is committed to providing social housing tenants with the opportunity to move home, for economic, social or other reasons and will encourage mobility within Kingston and other areas where this is practicable. For this reason, we will participate in the developing Pan-London Mobility Scheme, due to start before the end of 2011.

Addressing the Needs of an Ageing Population

As in other parts of the country, Kingston's population is ageing and older people will account for a significant proportion of the increase in the total number of households up to 2026.

In many ways, older people are affected by housing issues in the Borough in the same ways as other elements of the population; they are, for example, paying higher fuel costs and suffering the disbenefits of poor energy efficiency in the same way as other groups. Equally, not all older people are the same; both their circumstances and their housing requirements come in a variety of different forms.

Nevertheless, there are a number of specific issues which, taken together, need further specific consideration and this Strategy proposes a major review of housing provision for older people in the Borough. This will seek to produce a comprehensive borough-wide approach to the issue of housing for older people and will include:

- The latest demographic information.
- The question of what advice and assistance could be provide to older people in the private sector, mainly home-owners, and who may be under-occupying their property. This advice/ assistance could be aimed at the options available for people to stay in their existing home; alternatively it could deal with the options for moving to accommodation of a more suitable size and type. This issue emerged as an important priority during the consultation on this Strategy; those raising it also pointed out that increasing options for older people under-occupying their home could also free up family homes and produce a better use of housing resources overall.
- The role and quality of existing sheltered housing in the Borough owned either by the Council or RSLs and how much of this will be required in the future.

- The link between sheltered housing and facilities accessed or provided by Adult Services.
- The measures and services, including advice services available to enable residents to remain in their own homes and the respective roles of the voluntary, private and public sectors.

Existing Sheltered Housing in Kingston is designed for people over the age of 55, who are able to live independently. Its special features offer the potential for frail and disabled older people to maximise their independence, gain security and support, while they remain empowered to control their homes through tenancy rights.

There are a total of **876** Council owned sheltered units in Kingston. Some of the schemes have a communal facility that allows greater flexibility and choice within the service. They may also have guestrooms, which can be hired for a small fee through the Scheme Manager. Activities at the schemes vary but include coffee mornings, bingo, seasonal and/or monthly lunches and games.

Details of the sheltered housing stock and lettings are shown below.

Year	Total Units Dispersed	Total Purpose built	Total sheltered units available for letting
2007	243	676	114
2008	227	664	95
2009	223	661	110
2010	219	657	59

The sheltered housing stock comprises studio flats with shared facilities, self contained studio flats, 1 and 2 bedroom flats and 1 bedroom bungalows spread over 38 schemes.

There are treatment/hairdressing rooms in 6 of the schemes and library rooms or areas in most of the schemes with communal areas.

There are 2 respite flats which are occupied by clients from the PCT/NHS - These were set up to help with the cost of residential placement and bed blocking. These flats are used for short/medium term placements for clients who have been in hospital and are unable to return back to their home. Respite flats are used as an interim measure until residents are:

- re-housed into accommodation which is more suitable for their needs
- adaptations have been completed

- are independent enough to return back home. One Scheme is an Extra Care scheme (Fountain Court).

Age concern arranges a lunch club in two of the schemes which enable older residence in the surrounding community to enjoy the company of others and have a hot 3 course meal. Each individual client has a Support Plan and Next of Kin form which holds information with regards to ethnicity and disability etc.

Examples of support provided:

- Help with setting up gas/electricity accounts and arranging the installation of gas/electric meters where appropriate.
- Help in applying for Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and Council Tax Benefit and monitoring the progress of these claims.

Children, Young People and Families

Children, young people and families represent priority groups for the Kingston Plan as a whole and for the Strategy.

Housing issues and the provisions of the Strategy touch on their interests in a number of different areas, including:

- Joint work around the safeguarding of children.
- Preventing homelessness generally but also more specifically amongst young adults.
- The commissioning of accommodation for young people including those moving from Looked After to Leaving Care.
- Increasing the supply of homes, including affordable homes and making existing homes decent.
- The effective use of temporary accommodation where this is required.
- Providing joined-up advice and increasing the awareness of housing issues in the Borough.

These are picked up further at the appropriate points in the Strategy.

Resettlement Support for Vulnerable Households

The Resettlement and Support Service is part of Kingston Council's Housing Services. The Service works with accepted homeless applicants and people with a variety of vulnerabilities, who have been housed by the Council's Housing Options and Advice Team in private accommodation, to help them when they

move in to their new homes (temporary or permanent) and to help them maintain their tenancy.

The Service provides advice and practical support based on an individual assessment and support plan to enable people to successfully settle into and maintain their own home.

The service is offered to households living in private or temporary accommodation who are aged 16+ and have one of the following vulnerabilities:

- Mental health problems.
- Drug and alcohol problems
- Have been in , or are fleeing domestic abuse

Funded through Supported People, it s the aim of this strategy to continue with this valuable service.

Domestic Violence – The Sanctuary Scheme

The Borough has successfully operated a sanctuary scheme since 2006. This has secured 57 sanctuary places for clients who have been affected by domestic violence – details of which appear below:

Year	Total sanctuaries secured
2006-2007	14
2007- 2008	8
2008- 2009	7
2009- 2010	16
2010-2011	6

Housing and the Role of the Community Sector

The community sector in Kingston continues to provide valuable grass roots services to local residents, ranging from housing advice and assistance to referrals and signposting. Kingston Voluntary Action supports a range of local community/voluntary based services through community development, infrastructure support and training. The Kingston Advice Service Alliance aims to support the continued develop of advice services in Kingston. The Council has built a close partnership with Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness [KCAH] and the service is represented on the Strategic Housing Partnership Board. KCAH provides housing and welfare benefits advice to the local community, offers a hostel placement service and runs an accommodation project, The Access Project, providing two year supported accommodation for up to 43 single homeless people. KCAH also runs the Kingston Churches

Winter Night Shelter scheme offering shelter in church halls during the winter months, from the beginning of December to end of February each year.

The Partnership recognises the important role advice services provide in;

1. Helping to reduce and prevent levels of homelessness in Kingston through the provision of timely advice and assistance
2. Providing timely signposting and referrals and interventions such as casework
3. Providing advice and support to vulnerable households such as those who do not have English as a first language.
4. Ensuring that marginalized groups have access to advice services

Maintaining a positive relationship with the Council at a time of 'efficiencies' is important. The working relationship we have forged over the last few years will deteriorate if Council housing services are overwhelmed. If we are all overstretched, there is a danger of deterioration in communication which may have a direct impact on our clientele.

Matt Hatton – KCAH
Housing Strategy Joint working online survey 2011

Through the homelessness Forum the Partnership will therefore look at ways in which it can work in partnership with community sector organisations to ensure that joint working arrangements are in place and opportunities for collaboration are explored. We are keen to ensure that we find ways to improve communication, signposting and referrals and joint working arrangements with the community sector. This will include formalising joint working arrangements.

Intermediate Housing and Affordable Home Ownership

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies considerable demand within the Borough from households who may not be able to afford to buy or rent at market rates but whose incomes are above the level which are eligible for Housing Benefit/Income Support.

The Government's new Affordable Rent model for affordable housing may lead to more opportunity for these client groups in new developments. In addition, the Council's affordable housing policies still envisage the provision of shared ownership as an important component of new developments. The Council will continue to operate lists of potential applicants for these schemes and for other schemes such as TAPS, should resources become available.

Student Housing

Students represent an important component of the population in Kingston and make an important contribution to the local economy and the vibrancy of the

Borough as a place. The University estimates its student total in the Borough as 9,200 including those in halls of residence.

Many students are housed in the private rented sector but there is a requirement for additional purpose-built accommodation for students, which is important in providing a focus for engagement with the wider community and allows for the exercise of the duty of care to students. The University itself estimates the shortfall of managed student accommodation at least 2,500.

The LDF Core Strategy includes consideration of further purpose-built accommodation, for example within the Hogsmill Valley Project and the Council will continue to work in partnership with the University to identify additional sites. Measures elsewhere in this Strategy to improve conditions in the private rented sector will bring commensurate benefits to the student population.

Housing Equalities

Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2010

The Council's commitment to equality is that no one equality strand is more important than any other and all strands must be embraced equally. However, as the Council gathers information and acquires a better understanding of needs, it may have to focus energies and resources disproportionately in order to respond to the findings. Contained within the Housing Strategy are references to the various client groups that make up the Equalities strands, for example, wheelchair users, Black and Minority Ethnic, women and older people. We have also highlighted the issue of hate crimes which can affect a household based on their sexuality, race or religion. Other forms of disabilities such as learning disabilities are explored in the context of the Supporting People Programme.

We know from National Housing statistics that the vast majority of homeless applications are from female led single parent households and women affected by domestic violence. This group is therefore reliant upon the provision of social housing and other forms of settled accommodation provided by a local authority. Below we have highlighted 2 key housing equality issues:

[National] Acceptances by ethnicity [Extract from CLG Housing statistical release December 2010]

Between July and September 2010, 67 per cent of applicants accepted were White and 28 per cent were from an ethnic minority group – 14 per cent Black, 6 per cent Asian, 3 per cent mixed and 4 per cent another ethnic group. Compared to the population as a whole, there is a higher incidence of acceptances amongst ethnic minority groups than amongst the White population. The national picture shows that BaME households are disproportionately

represented in relation to homelessness. This disproportionality is also reflected in relation to overcrowding and housing register applications.

[National] Acceptances by household type [Extract from CLG Housing statistical release December 2010]

Of the 11,840 acceptances between July and September 2010, 50 per cent were lone parents (4 per cent male, 45 per cent female), and 19 per cent were couples with dependent children. One person households accounted for 26 per cent of acceptances, with a higher proportion male than female. Women continue to make up the highest percentage of those in housing need.

Equality Impact Assessments – Allocations and Lettings

The Allocations Service has been monitoring the ethnic origin of people applying for housing and lettings to new tenants for many years and providing annual reports. Monitoring the other equalities strands started more recently, in 2009, and when a sufficient set of data becomes available, reports will be provided and analysed.

There are a number of significant aspects to the current position:

- The ongoing collection of equalities data for all applying for housing. The latest analysis of the Housing Register on 1 January 2011 shows that 2,679, or 33% of applicants, were of *BaME origin.
- Housing Register and lettings data is analysed on an annual basis. An analysis of the 322 Council lettings during 2009/10 shows that 105, or 32.6% of lettings, were to BaME applicants.
- Support is provided to disadvantaged applicants in accessing social housing. There were 41 direct offers of permanent accommodation to vulnerable applicants during 2009/10, that is, to applicants vulnerable because of disability, old age, mental illness, child protection issues, DV, or children leaving care. Direct allocations of temporary supported accommodation are made through the Allocations Panel for people with mental health problems and other support needs.
- There is close liaison with occupational therapists to ensure that they are notified of disabled adapted homes becoming available so that they can support their clients in accessing the accommodation.
- Disabled adapted homes are advertised via choice based lettings with details of special features so that applicants can assess whether or not they might meet their needs.
- The Resettlement and Support Service provides support to vulnerable clients bidding for homes and moving into temporary and permanent

*Kingston CBL definition of BaME:
We group white Irish and any other group apart from white British or unknown as BaME

accommodation. During 2009/10 the team supported 292 vulnerable clients, the largest group being the 104 clients with mental health problems. There were also 44 clients with drug/alcohol problems, 45 victims of DV and other smaller vulnerable groups of clients.

Data for 2008/09 and 2009/10 shows that approximately a third of applicants for housing are of BaME origin and that a similar proportion of lettings are to BaME applicants. The overall proportion of applications from and lettings to BaME households has increased significantly since the current Allocations Policy and choice based lettings were introduced on 17 May 2006. In the year 2005/06, prior to the introduction of choice based lettings, approximately a quarter, 26% of applications and 23% of lettings, were to BaME applicants.

This demonstrates that the current Allocations Policy has had a positive impact on BaME applicants, many of whom suffer greater disadvantage in the housing market than white British households. BaME households are over-represented amongst homeless households applying to the Council for re-housing.

Consultations on amendments to the Allocations Policy were undertaken from November 2010 to January 2011. The consultation was sent to just over 8,000 applicants on the Common Housing Register, to tenants involved in the Residents Sounding Board, housing associations with homes in the Borough and 4 local voluntary organisations.

Responses were generally positive, but 11 Housing Register applicants expressed concerns about being offered homes outside the borough of Kingston and 6 applicants said they were concerned about having to use a computer to bid for homes on-line, particularly applicants without access to a computer. No concerns have been raised by the voluntary groups consulted.

Addressing inequalities – what we will do:

- Continue to monitor housing applications and lettings according to all equality strands on an annual basis.
- Where data is available, analyse it for the year 2010/11 by all equality strands
- Compare 2011/12 data with 2010/11 data to assess any impact of ceasing to advertise homes in the Kingston Guardian and whether or not there has been any impact on vulnerable households.
- Assess whether the safeguards put in place, such as Autobid, have provided adequate protection for vulnerable people in accessing social housing.
- Monitor direct offers to vulnerable applicants, to ensure that they receive the support required in accessing suitable accommodation.
- Ensure there is joint working between Housing Services and the Equalities and Community Engagement Team to effect positive outcomes for marginalized communities in Kingston.

Equality Implications for our Housing Strategy

We currently compile information relating to the equalities strands e.g. gender and race. However we recognise that there is scope to explore this area further to ensure that we are able to collate qualitative datasets which can be used to inform the strategic planning process as well as our service delivery and provision.

Key questions for us?

The development of our Housing Strategy has provided us with an opportunity to look closely at Housing Equality. This is particularly salient given the widespread and far – reaching changes affecting the National Housing landscape. We will explore the development of a new equalities action plan for Housing services with a view to mitigating the effects of Housing inequality in Kingston.

What we will do:

1	Create and regularly update a statistical database on key housing trends, including key monitoring information on Equalities issues.
2	Commission an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Kingston
3	Provide specialised services for people needing housing support through the framework of the Supporting People Strategy.
4	Devise and implement a comprehensive Plan for Older Peoples' Housing in Kingston, encompassing the role of the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.
5	Produce an updated Domestic Violence policy for housing services in the Borough and ensure that relevant frontline staff receives level 2 Domestic Violence awareness training.
6	Ensure that new homes are built to "Lifetime" standards and that at least 10% are wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for wheelchair users.
7	Minimise the use of Bed and Breakfast hotels and annexes for homeless households and families and provide temporary accommodation in or as close as possible to Kingston to minimise disruption to schooling and support.
8	Review and strengthen the role of the Homelessness Forum as a focus for partnership work between the voluntary and statutory sectors, including collaboration on staff training and induction.
9	Via the Homelessness Forum, develop a co-ordinated Housing advice, homelessness prevention, signposting and referral service for residents in Kingston, including young people, ex-offenders and those recovering from substance misuse.
10	Via the Homelessness Forum, produce a homelessness prevention and move – on framework for young people and non-statutory homeless

	households, including assistance to the YMCA in the reconfiguration of services.
11	Implement Kingston's 10 Point Plan and contribute to the South-West London Strategy on Rough Sleeping and to the Mayor for London's No Second Night Out project.
12	Via the Homelessness Forum, develop a co-ordinated Rent Deposit Scheme for households who are not statutorily homeless, including consideration of an insurance mechanism.
13	Produce a Consolidated Action Plan for the Partnership in response to changes in Housing and Welfare Benefits, and homelessness and social housing tenancy legislation.
14	Develop and publish a statutory Tenancy Strategy.
15	Consider the requirement to amend the Kingston Allocations Policy in the light of legislative changes.
16	Reduce under-occupancy and overcrowding in social housing in the Borough through the continuation of existing initiatives, subject to the availability of funding.
17	Develop a local equalities action plan for housing services.
18	Refurbish the Swallow Park Gipsy and Traveller site.
19	Address the housing requirements of the student population through consideration of new supply in the LDF Core Strategy and joint work between RBK and the University over standards in private sector housing.
20	If resources are available, assist council tenants into affordable home ownership through the TAPS scheme.
21	Review the scope and co-ordination of housing advice provided to different groups of the population in Kingston.
22	Review arrangements for commissioning accommodation for young people and providing mediation and family support to reduce the likelihood of youth homelessness.
23	Participate in the Pan-London Mobility Scheme.

Theme 2

Increasing the Supply of Homes

Part 2 of the Strategy has outlined the need for more homes in the Borough particularly affordable housing. This section sets out our planning policy background for the provision of new homes in the Borough, recent progress in providing new affordable homes and goes on to discuss the proposed approach to the Government's new Affordable Rent model.

Our objectives...

1	Increase the supply of homes of a variety of tenures and types for the different communities in the Borough
2	Provide affordable homes for those residents who cannot find housing on the open market
3	Make the best possible use of the national resources available for new affordable housing
4	Contribute to the development of Kingston as a Place by encouraging and providing homes and areas with high standards of design and sustainability

Local Development Framework: Core Strategy – Planning Policy

The Core Strategy is Kingston's planning strategy and policy document and will replace the Unitary Development Plan. Following its submission in May 2011, Examination in Public is planned for September 2011 and adoption for May 2012.

The Core Strategy confirms that the borough's annual target, as set out in the London Plan for the period 2012/13 to 2026/27 is to achieve 385 units per year of housing of all tenures. The preferred locations for new housing are Kingston Town Centre, the three District Centres (Surbiton, Tolworth, and New Malden), areas with the greatest public transport accessibility and areas in need of improvement or renewal.

The table below shows some of the significant sites potentially available in the Borough for new housing.

Indicative Area	Estimated Capacity	Significant Sites
Chessington South/Leatherhead Road area	100	Existing permissions on Leatherhead Road
Tolworth Area	700	Former UDP sites eg

Indicative Area	Estimated Capacity	Significant Sites
		former government offices and sites within the district centre
New Malden District Centre	120	former UDP sites at Cocks Crescent and opportunities on Coombe Road
Surbiton District Centre	150	Former UDP site at Surbiton Station car park
Ewell Road/King Charles Area	50	Opportunities along Ewell Road
Villiers Road Area	50	Small sites and former UDP site at Unigate Milk Depot
Norbiton Area	500	Opportunities along London Road and Cambridge Road
Kingston Town Central Area	1000	K+20 Area Action Plan proposed sites
Total	2670	

The Core Strategy expects that proposals for new residential development will incorporate a mix of sizes and types and should provide a minimum of 30% of dwellings as 3 or more bedroom units unless this can be demonstrated to be unsuitable or unviable. In line with the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the Strategy recognises the significant requirement for new family housing.

The Council's new planning framework confirms that given the level of need identified in the SHMA, the Council wants to maximise the delivery of new affordable homes and the Council will produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in support of this policy.

The specific provisions on affordable housing are:

- To seek to deliver 2,000 new affordable housing units over the period 2012/13 to 2026/27.
- To explore all opportunities to deliver new affordable units and encourage applications for 100% affordable schemes.
- To expect developments of 5 or more units to provide the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing, subject to viability considerations.

- On sites of 10 or more units, 50% of the units to be provided as affordable housing, with a sliding scale on sites of between 5 and 10 units.
- Within the affordable housing elements of new development that the tenure split should be 70:30 between social rented and intermediate provision. (Government guidance is expected on how policies stipulating social rent provision are to be interpreted under the new "Affordable Rent model").
- The affordable housing would be expected to be provided on-site, but within exceptional cases provision being made as an alternative site or as a contribution or commuted sum.

The strategy also emphasises that the Council will seek to maximise the affordable housing provision on publicly-owned land.

The LDF Delivery Plan is a document emerging to support the delivery of the LDF, including sites in the Core Strategy. In particular, it will show where and when development will happen in the borough, including housing developments. This includes the delivery of housing sites in the indicative areas of housing delivery in the Core Strategy. A list of Opportunity Sites has also been identified in the LDF Delivery Plan, most of which include the provision of housing, and it is the intention to work in partnership with landowners and developers to ensure they can be developed.

National Affordable Housing Programme [NAHP] Kingston – an overview

In England, public funding for new affordable housing is provided by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to Registered Social landlords (RSLs) through the National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP.) This is managed in funding periods, the latest of which has been the period 2008-2011.

Expenditure under the HCA's NAHP 2008-2011 in Kingston is shown below:

Funding	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
National Affordable Homes Programme	£3,519,650	£2,890,011	£11,001,974
Breakdown	My choice/Home buy	New build / My choice	New build / Acquisitions/Mortgage rescue

Funding has peaked in 2010/11 and this has included specific funding for a programme of property acquisitions from the private sector.

Affordable Housing Development

This has generated the following output in the programme period. The definition of National Indicator 155 includes schemes such as My Choice Home buy which do not involve the building of a new home.

Year	Conventional units	Affordable housing defined as per NI155
2007-2008	102	140
2008/09	0	40
2009/10	30	100
Anticipated 2010/11	65	88

The completions of new build affordable housing of 65 in 2010/2011 will have comprised the following developments:

St Andrews Church Hall Surbiton

16 social rented flats (100% Affordable housing)

Land at 71 Leatherhead Road Chessington

9 social rented houses (100% Affordable housing)

44-60 Leatherhead Road Chessington

21 social rented houses (100% Affordable housing)

215 Richmond Road Kingston

13 social rented and 6 Intermediate flats

A number of other schemes are currently under construction and are anticipated to complete in 2011/2012. These will yield 102 units. A particular challenge for the Council has been to secure delivery of family sized affordable units for which there is an acute need in the Borough.

The table below shows the number of completed family affordable units of 3 bedrooms or more since 2007-2008 (NB - through conventional supply only).

Year	Social Rented Units	Family units	Total AH Units	Family units as % of Social Rented units
07/08	73	23	102	32
08/09	0	0	0	-
09/10	30	15	30	50

Year	Social Rented Units	Family units	Total AH Units	Family units as % of Social Rented units
Anticipated 10/11*	59	46	65	78
Total	162	84	197	52

*10/11 as at November 2010

*SPD Affordable Housing Policy Family Unit (3b +) Requirement: 42 % Social Rented units and 9 % Intermediate Units – remains challenging with none achieved.

The Council has been proactive in drawing to the attention of Registered Providers development opportunities in the Borough. In some cases officers have worked to agree alterations to the approved scheme to make them suitable for use as affordable housing. In all cases officers have been able to secure Nomination Agreements to ensure that these units are provided for the benefit of those in priority housing need in the Borough.

Ely Court – A successful Affordable development

The Council continues to seek to progress Council-owned sites for new developments in partnership with RSLs. A recent example is the Ely Court site [see photo], completed by Affinity Sutton in February 2010. The scheme provided a total of 27 new dwellings with a mix of size of units to meet the Council's housing priorities and represents the first phase of regeneration of the Cambridge Estate. The development includes 9 x 3 bed, 4 x 4 bed and 1 x 5 bed houses all of which are provided with their own garden area. This scheme was built to current standards for sustainable homes. This is a good example of a development that has been built to relatively high density at relatively low scale whilst providing a good quality environment for the residents. There is the potential for this development to form a template for regeneration of other parts of the Estate.



Sustainable Homes at St Andrews

A recently completed development is at St Andrews in Surbiton with 100% social rented flats. This represented the first scheme in the Borough to be built to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and therefore sets a new standard for the quality of housing in the Borough.

Despite these successes, the total output of new affordable homes over the last few years has been modest. The Strategic Housing Partnership Board has been working to strengthen the relationship with RSL' partners and proactively encourage the development of sites.

Supporting Home Ownership

Grants to move [GTM]

The Grants to Move Scheme (GTM) originally called Tenants Assisted Purchase Scheme (TAPS) was introduced in 1991, as a Government initiative to release council properties for homeless families. It provides a grant to secure council tenants (of at least 5 years) who cannot afford to buy without the assistance of grant thereby giving up their council property to purchase a home in the private sector. Since Kingston's first scheme in 1991 it has provided a cost effective method of releasing much needed accommodation.

For the period 2007/10 a total of 33 units were released. The GTM scheme enables tenants to move into larger properties, thus improving overcrowding and enabling tenants to stay in the Borough. Also, there are no restrictions on the grant and they own the property outright. Unlike the Right to buy scheme where a tenant is subject to a maximum discount of £16,000, the GTM scheme provides a more generous grant allowance for the release of a two or more bedroom unit.

Due to other more pressing priorities, the Council was unable to make this scheme available in 2010/11 other than for 1 completion where a 2 bedroom home was released and the tenant purchased a 3 bedroom property on the open market. If the resources become available the Council will wish to continue the scheme in future years.

For the period 2007/10 a total of 33 units were released. The GTM scheme is generally considered to be more favourable to tenants because it enables them to move into larger properties, thus improving overcrowding issues and enables them to stay in the Borough. Also, there are no restrictions on the grant and they own the property outright. Unlike the Right to buy scheme where a tenant is subject to a maximum discount of £16,000, the GTM scheme provides a more generous grant allowance for the release of a two or more bedroom unit.

Home Buy

A number of "Home-Buy" schemes have been available in recent years, including New Build Home-Buy, Open market Home-Buy and My Choice Home-Buy. All have had in common that only a proportion of the property is purchased. In some cases, the home is occupied on a part buy/part rent basis; in others, the remaining share was funded by an equity loan. In recent years, gaining a mortgage has been difficult for applicants. However, these "shared ownership" schemes seem set to continue under the new HCA funding round.

Home-Buy completions in Kingston over the last few years are shown in the table below.

Year	Outcome
During 2007/08	12 completions
During 2008/09	32 completions
During 2009/10	33 completions and 13 Own Home similar initiatives launched by a particular RSL.

The Affordable Rent Model 2011-15

The election of the Coalition Government in May 2010 has meant a complete change in the way the provision of new affordable housing is organised and financed.

From April 2011 and for the life of this strategy, new affordable housing for rent will be under the "Affordable Rent" model rather than at social rents. Rents will be at up to 80% of market rents rather than at social rent levels seen hitherto. In an area such as Kingston, the new "Affordable Rents" may be twice or more than twice the level of social rents.

In addition, Registered Social Landlords will be free to offer fixed term tenancies, with a minimum term of two years.

In Kingston, the policy background against which affordable housing will be provided includes the core strategy within the Local Development Framework and the Borough Investment Plan.

Borough Investment Plan

Kingston's first Borough Investment Plan (BIP) was submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in February 2011. It was produced as part of the "Single Conversation" with the HCA, designed to bring together in one document the Strategy for Government investment in a locality, particularly in Housing, with the place-shaping priorities of the local authority. Latterly, it has become the place for the co-ordination of information about development opportunities over the period 2011-2015.

The BIP confirms a number of key areas for change in the Borough, where the Council's place-shaping activity will be concentrated:

- The Tolworth Strategy
- Kingston Town Centre
- The Hogsmill Valley Project
- Estate Regeneration

The core elements of the BIP however, are

- A Site Management Plan, bringing together for the first time the key opportunities for the development of new affordable housing in the Borough.
- The approach to the delivery of affordable housing in Kingston, including the relationship with partner RSLs.
- The Site Management Plan includes publicly-owned sites, including some held within the Council's Housing Revenue Account, privately-owned sites which already have planning permission and privately-owned sites where applications have not yet been received but where there is potential for development over the next few years.
- The BIP, including the Site Management Plan, has been distributed to the HCA and to partner RSLs to assist in the preparation and assessment of bids for grant funding for schemes for the period 2011 to 2015.

Position Statement on Affordable Housing

The Council has produced a Position Statement in response to the new Affordable Rent model and this was included in the Borough Investment Plan. This recognises that the Council has concerns that the new arrangements could make it more difficult for those on low or modest incomes to secure housing at a price they can afford. However, the statement commits the authority to;

- Operate positively and pro-actively with RSL partners within the new funding arrangements.
- Encourage and promote the development of priority sites, including providing in depth advice to developers and RSLs to ensure sites can be brought forward in an expedient manner.
- Promote the optimum arrangements for rent levels, nomination rights, tenancies and relets and to do so in a pragmatic way which does not act as a barrier or disincentive to development or investment.
- Reach an understanding with our RSL partners about how we can work together to maximise the benefits for Kingston and its residents from the new framework for investment in Affordable Housing.

Kingston's approach to the Government's new system for the provision of new affordable housing will therefore be to seek to maximise investment on the key sites identified in the Borough Investment Plan while at the same time maximising the affordability of new homes and protecting the interest of those on low or modest incomes in the Borough. The Council recognises that new

affordable housing in the Borough may in the future cater for a wider range of income groups than was the case under the previous system.

Delivery of New Affordable Housing

The policy background for the delivery of new affordable housing in Kingston is contained within the LDF Core Strategy, this Housing Strategy and the Borough Investment Plan. However, in addition to this, the Council will work pro-actively with its partners to encourage and facilitate the delivery of affordable housing in the Borough.

There are a number of strands to our approach to delivery.

The Affordable Housing Delivery Board, formally constituted within the Kingston Strategic Partnership structure, will hold responsibility within the Partnership for co-coordinating the delivery of new affordable homes.

The Council has a number of developing RSL partners who are committed to developing high-quality affordable housing in the Borough and which will form the major agents of delivery over the life of this Strategy. These partners are:

- Affinity Sutton
- London and Quadrant
- Paragon
- Thames Valley Housing Association
- Wandle

The Partnership has developed a good relationship with the Homes and Communities Agency, the funding agency for new affordable housing. The HCA will continue to be involved closely in the prioritisation and delivery of schemes. The first year of this Strategy, 2011/12 will be the period when the pattern of investment and development for the following three years will be set. It will during this first year that the arrangements for the new affordable rent model will be finalised and development contracts awarded to individual RSLs. For this Strategy, there are a number of important milestones during 2011/12:

- To ensure that as far as possible the key development opportunities in the Borough feature in the bids made to the HCA by our RSL partners
- To agree a framework with our RSL partners for how the new Affordable Rent model will operate in practice in the Borough, including the issues of rents and affordability, tenancy arrangements and the approach to nominations
- To establish an appropriate forum within the formal Kingston Strategic Partnership structure for the consideration between the Council, RSL

partners and developers of delivery arrangements for affordable housing and the removal of obstacles to development.


Innovation in Housing Provision – Temporary Use of Small Sites

The Council recognises that, for a variety of reasons, development sites may remain undeveloped for a period, often several years. These offer an opportunity to provide homes on a temporary basis, an opportunity which is not currently exploited.

The Council is keen to support innovative proposals to provide housing for Kingston residents. During the first year of this Strategy we will therefore support the YMCA in seeking to progress a pilot scheme to provide homes on a temporary basis on an appropriate site in the Borough. As a first step, we will assist in identifying potential sites.

What we will do:

1	Maximise the delivery of new homes of a range of types and tenures, with a particular emphasis on affordable housing and family-sized homes. Do so while protecting and enhancing the existing character of the Borough.
2	Assist residents on a range of incomes into affordable home-ownership through the HCA arrangements for delivery of affordable housing.
3	Maximise the public funding available for affordable housing in Kingston through development of the Borough Investment Plan and ensuring key sites are contained within RSL contracts with the Homes and Communities Agency.
4	Through the framework set by the LDF Core Strategy, pro-actively encourage the development of sites and identify and address barriers to development.
5	Produce a development framework, setting out partnership arrangements with developing RSLs, how the new Affordable Model will operate in Kingston and the role of the HCA and the GLA.
6	Develop a forum with RSLs and developers within the Kingston Strategic Partnership structure to harness their expertise and capacity to deliver new homes.
7	Develop the role of the Affordable Housing Delivery Board in ensuring the delivery of homes and incorporate detailed input from the HCA.
8	Support Place-shaping priorities in the Borough in the planning and design of new homes.
9	Identify and visit another Strategic Partnership to identify any further improvements to be made in delivery arrangements in Kingston.



10	In collaboration with the YMCA, develop a project to look at the creative temporary use of small sites for accommodation.
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Theme 3

Improve the Quality and Provision of Public Sector Homes

Our objectives...

1	High standard of accommodation and environment for council tenants and leaseholders or residents including bringing property up to the Decent Homes Standard as quickly as possible
2	The full involvement and participation of tenants and leaseholders in improving their quality of life and the services they receive, including empowering them to take on management responsibilities if they wish to do so.
3	A viable, long term Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account and the Council's housing stock, including provision for meeting the immediate investment backlog and ongoing repairs and improvements
4	A clear approach for those parts of the housing stock which may not have a long term future in their current form and where regeneration may be an option.
5	High levels of resident satisfaction with homes and services and the Environment on estates.
6	Efficient and effective management of homes with responsive customer contact
7	The co-ordination and targeting of services to address relative deprivation in areas of social housing.

The 4,800 homes owned and managed by the Council are structurally sound and the great majority have a long term future. However, over the last decade and more, restrictions imposed by the existing system of Council housing finance have meant that insufficient investment has been carried out in repairs and improvements.

As a result some of the homes do not meet modern standards. At April 2010, for example, 34% of Council homes did not meet the Government's minimum Decent Homes Standard. Information from a survey by Savills in 2009 shows in some detail the investment required in Council homes (see Table below)

Capital Investment Requirements in Kingston's Housing Stock

Years	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
Total Capital Requirement £m	61.7	42.1	23.6	20.4	23.7	19.9	191.4
Annual Requirement £m	13.0	8.8	5.0	4.3	5.0	4.2	

The survey shows an investment need of £191m over 30 years at current prices. The spending profile is heavily front-loaded with more investment required in the early years, reflecting the need to address a backlog of work.

Self Financing of the Housing Revenue Account

Kingston is one of many local housing authorities which have argued for many years for the reform of the existing housing finance system. Under this system, up to a third of the rent paid by Kingston council tenants has been taken by the Government to fund social housing in other parts of the country rather than used for investment in Kingston.

From April 2012, this system will change. The Council will be able to keep all the rents paid by Kingston tenants. In return, the Council will be required to accept a one-off allocation of additional debt. The current estimate of the additional debt is £105m.

Throughout 2011/12, the Council will undertake a major project to prepare for this important change in the arrangements for the financing of Council housing. It is anticipated that from April 2012, the new self-financing arrangements will allow for:

- An increase in investment in the fabric of Council homes
- More effective long-term planning of the management and maintenance of the Council's housing assets.

Decent Homes

The Decent Homes Standards is the minimum standard which homes should meet in order to be considered acceptable. Homes are assessed against four different elements - thermal comfort, unfitness (now superseded by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System), disrepair, and age of facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms. The Savills Survey of 2009 identified that we needed £60m over

the next 5 years to bring our stock up to a reasonable modern standard. In comparison we only had £20m available.

Total HRA stock <u>NOT</u> meeting Decent Homes Standard 09/10	34%
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Reaching the Decent Homes Target

The changes being introduced in April 2012 for the financing of Council housing will allow for the building of an asset management plan for the long term. This will mean that the HRA Business Plan can include a programme to ensure all Council homes in Kingston reach the Decent Homes Standard.

The target is that all Council homes will be brought up to the Decent Homes Standard within 5 years – that is, by April 2016.

Decent Homes Backlog Funding

In February 2011 the Council was awarded an allocation from the funding pot set aside by the Government at national level for those authorities with a backlog of works to bring their properties up to the Decent Homes Standard. The total allocation is £11.6m, spread over 3 financial years as follows;

2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
£2.00m	£4.4m	£5.2m

The additional funding will contribute towards an increase in investment in the Council's housing stock after the HRA self-financing system begins in April 2012. Preparation for investing these sums in Decent Homes works will take place during 2011/12.

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

Part of the preparation for the implementation of HRA Self-financing will be the building of a new HRA Business Plan. This will be adopted in January 2012 and reviewed annually during the life of this Housing Strategy.

The HRA Business Plan will include:

- 30 year financial projections of income and expenditure on the HRA, including the sums available for investment in Council homes.
- The approach to be adopted to the investment programme for Council homes, including the reaching of the Decent Homes Standard.
- The key priorities for the management of the housing stock

- The strategy for involving residents in the development of the investment programme and the priorities for the housing management service.

The Type of Investment Required

Although the period of this strategy will see an increase in investment compared to the previous 10 years, it will be necessary carefully to prioritise the categories of works which will be carried out. It is still unlikely that it will be possible to carry out all the works which are required, particularly in the early years, where commitments to carry out statutory works, such as fire assessments in the common parts of buildings will pre-empt significant resources.

The priorities for investment will be:

- Work urgently required to meet statutory or health and safety obligations. These include, for example, work arising from fire assessments and asbestos surveys and work needed to ensure high standards of water treatment.
- Works needed to bring priorities up to the Decent Homes Standard. This will vary from one property to the next, but could include replacing kitchens or bathrooms, renewing windows and doors, rewiring or renewing boilers and central heating.
- The renewal of core services such as lifts.
- Void properties, where work is required to bring a home to a lettable standard.
- Adaptations for tenants with disabilities.
- Work to improve the thermal efficiency of property.
- Other works which residents believe are important for the quality of life in particular blocks. This might, for example, include the upgrading of communal areas.

It will be a priority to increase the proportion of maintenance and capital investment which takes place as a planned as opposed to reactive basis. This will include the reinstatement of a planned programme of external repair and decoration.

These works programme will be planned and, implemented in full consultation with residents. This will include fulfilling our statutory obligations in consulting leaseholders

Energy Efficiency

As far back as 2005 the Council began a number of energy efficiency projects to its housing stock. These initiatives included:

Year	Energy efficiency initiative – description
2005-2007	Roof and Wall Insulation Programme Phase 1 – cavity wall and 270mm loft insulation. (£1 million spent)
2007-2009	Roof and Wall Insulation Programme Phase 2 – renew failed foam insulation and 270mm loft insulation. (£0.25 million spent)
2009-2010	Thermal Imaging Project capturing heat loss images for 95% of social housing stock.

The Council is aiming for an average stock SAP of 69 (Energy Band C). There are still approximately 400 properties where the average SAP is less than 50, of which 190 are located within the Norbiton Estate.

Norbiton Estate has a large number of properties built in the 1920's and 1930's; with solid walls, metal-frame windows and heating systems that still require upgrading. The estate has a high incidence of single-parent families occupying properties with poor thermal performance. We recognise that a major investment in internal or external wall cladding is required. The total estimated cost of achieving SAP 69 across the Borough is £2M-£2.5, of which £1.5M would be required for Norbiton Estate. If funding is made available, then the timescale will be 2011–2013.

The Council has pursued external funding to improve the thermal efficiency of its housing stock however this has been limited mainly to the Social Housing Energy Saving Programme (SHESP) because the scheme is completely grant funded. The Council will continue to insulate properties under the Social Housing Energy Saving Programme [SHESP] for as long as funding remains available.

The criteria for the SHESP scheme has recently changed and this is allowing the council to fund and install other types of insulation measures such as external cladding. RBK expects to spend £0.5M on insulation under the SHESP scheme between 2009 and end of March 2011.

It is anticipated that if additional capital sums become available under HRA self financing, it will be possible to take further advantage of CERT or CESP and to make further progress on energy efficiency work in Council homes.

The Approach to Estate Regeneration in Kingston

The majority of Kingston's directly-owned homes are on low to medium-rise flatted estates located in areas of otherwise privately-owned housing. As long as increased investment can be secured to bring them to and maintain them at a good standard, the majority of these buildings will continue to provide homes for Kingston residents in the long term.

However, one of the place-shaping priorities identified within the Borough Investment Plan is "Estate Regeneration". This is because there are four larger estates where, over the next few years, the Council will be looking to discuss with residents opportunities for further development and for changing the configuration of homes and the estate environment.

Cambridge Road Estate

Cambridge Road Estate in Norbiton contains some 700 units. It is the largest estate in the Borough and is the only non-traditional estate of any significant size. It consists of four tower blocks, a number of medium-rise walk-up slab blocks and a small number of two-storey houses. Together with the neighbouring Cambridge Gardens, Norbiton and Mount Pleasant estates, it forms the centre of that part of the Borough which has the highest levels of social and economic disadvantage.



Redevelopment and regeneration has already commenced on a small scale. The newly-opened Ely Court development by Affinity Sutton is in the centre of the estate on the site of a former sheltered housing block. The Council has already agreed in principle to 2 further phases of redevelopment of this part of the estate, including the demolition and redevelopment of the Tadlow residential block and the Piper Hall Community Centre. These two phases have the potential to generate up to 50 new homes.

The key question over the next few years for the residents of Cambridge Road, the Council and its RSL partners, is whether to go further to transform the topography and quality of housing on the estate through further redevelopment and regeneration. And further, what opportunities this would bring for residents and for Kingston Strategic Partnership to upgrade attainment, health and employment levels in the area through the concerted input of the community and the agencies concerned.

Sheephouse Way

Sheephouse Way in Old Malden is on the eastern boundary of the Borough. It consists of a number of four-storey walk-up blocks. They are structurally sound, but in need of substantial internal investment and upgrading to the communal parts. However, the main feature of the estate is



the large areas of open space between and behind the blocks which provides opportunities for infill development.

While infill is one possibility, the quality of life in the area might best be improved by some remodelling of existing homes in the longer term.

Cumberland House

Cumberland House is an estate of 130 units, built in two 7 storey blocks, on Kingston Hill in the north of the Borough. The estate was built in the 1950s and has some visual and architectural merit, including arches to the rear. It has high quality grounds and landscaping and is located in a prosperous part of the Borough. The blocks have heavy investment needs both internally and in the common parts but there is no questions as to their long term viability and once investment is secured, they will provide high-quality and popular affordable housing.



However, a unique feature of Cumberland House is the large area of vacant ground, currently used as a play space by residents, which is within the curtilage of the estate.

Within the new approach to local investment planning for estate, the Council wishes over the next year to discuss with residents the potential for development of these vacant areas and to what extent this could deliver both new affordable homes and additional investment for the existing homes at Cumberland House.

School Lane

School Lane is a medium-sized estate of 130 units in Tolworth. Along with Cambridge Road, it is the only other example of a non-traditional construction in the Borough. Although there is a strong sense of community, confidence in the long-term future of the estate is perhaps reflected by the low proportion of leaseholders. There are areas of under-used land and garages around the blocks and the Council will be looking to discuss with residents any opportunities for improving the quality of life on the estate.

On two of these estates, Cambridge Road and Cumberland House, the Council will be looking to make progress during the first year of this strategy mapping out



their long-term future. In collaboration with residents and our RSL partners we will;

- Look at the need and potential for investment on a local, estate-based level
- Include the consideration of the future of homes in the long-term
- Encompass the potential for redevelopment and infill development
- Include the local management standards required by residents and the potential for greater resident involvement.

Planning for Sheltered Housing

Nearly 900 of the rented homes currently owned and managed by the Council are sheltered housing for older people. These vary in quality and popularity. Some are modern, with a high standard of facilities and have a waiting list. Other schemes are in less demand and in poor condition, in some cases, facilities are shared by residents.

Like other Council homes, sheltered housing blocks will benefit from the enhanced investment programme in 2012 and beyond. However, over the last few years the Council has also adopted an approach in which it aims to have fewer sheltered homes overall to reflect the level of demand to reflect the level of demand for this form of accommodation. Over the life of this strategy, the aim will be to have fewer sheltered homes but to ensure that those which are retained are of a high standard.

In the short-term, it is planned to close the schemes at Waters Square, Roupell House and Greenleas and to convert or redevelop these for general housing needs. This follows the closure of Yew Tree House in 2009.

The planning for the volume and type of sheltered housing required in the long term will take place with the review of Older Peoples' Housing in the Borough referred to elsewhere in this strategy.

Asset Management

Sheltered homes are one example of where the Council will be looking to make the best use of its assets over the life of this strategy. This ongoing review will be led by the new Corporate Landlord function, established in April 2011.

There are other instances where a change of use will be considered where the optimum use is not currently being made of an asset;

- Where properties do not fit with the rest of the portfolio and where it would not be cost-effective to bring them up to standard.
- Where small infill development may be feasible on estates.
- Where "hidden homes" could be provided by developing unused parts of existing buildings.

The Repairs Service

One of the core services provided to council tenants and leaseholders is planned maintenance and responsive repairs. Performance on repairs has improved substantially over recent years, with high levels of resident satisfaction. The existing contracts with the Council's repairs partners are subject to retendering or, potentially, extension in 2013. The approach to these repair contracts will be reviewed during 2011/12.

The Residents Compact

A new Residents' Compact for Kingston was signed by resident representatives and the Council in 2010. This document commits both the Council and resident to work together to improve the quality of life for residents and the services provided to them. At the heart of the Compact is the active involvement and participation of residents in the taking of decision about services and in monitoring how well they are operating.

The operation of the Compact will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Local Standards

The Government has established a statutory framework for the standards of service to be provided for their tenants by social housing landlords, including local housing authorities. The regulator for these standards is the Tenant Services Authority. Following the abolition of the TSA in 2012, this responsibility will pass to the Homes and Communities Agency.

At the heart of this system is accountability to residents. An annual report to residents will set out how well the landlord is performing against a set of prescribed national standards.

In addition, the Council is required to agree with residents a "Local Offer," or set of local standards to be applied in the Borough, or parts of the Borough. The Local Offer for Kingston was agreed with residents at the Housing Consultative Committee in April 2011. There are a number of key features to the offer:

- Standards of customer service including, for example, answering 80% of telephone calls within 30 seconds
- Giving customers real choice about how they access council services
- Setting up Estate Management Agreements to give tenants and leaseholders real choice about the way services are delivered to them at an estate by estate level

- A menu of opportunities for how residents can become involved in the delivery of services
- Ensuring residents are involved in changes to the Council's most important policies and procedures
- Involving residents in how the repairs service is run and investment decisions made
- Giving residents choices about how the caretaking service is delivered.

The offer also includes the specific commitment to bring all homes up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2016. More detail on the operation of local standards and the Residents Compact will be provided in the HRA Business Plan.

The Decent Homes Delivery Board

The Decent Homes Delivery Board has been established formally within the structure of Kingston's Strategic Partnership. Its membership includes resident representatives, councillors and officers from a number of services across the Council.

This Board will be primarily responsible for the delivery of key elements of the strategy for public sector homes in the Borough, including the introduction of HRA self-financing and the planning of the capital investment programme in Council homes over the next few years.

What we will do:

1	Implement the changes necessary for the Self-Financing of the Housing Revenue Account in Kingston.
2	Develop and publish a 30-year Business Plan for Council homes in Kingston, including plans for the investment programme and priorities for ensuring a high-quality service to tenants and leaseholders.
3	Increase investment in Council homes and bring them up to the Decent Homes Standard.
4	Tackle carbon emissions and increase the energy efficiency of Council homes by the targeting "hotspot" areas in the housing stock.
5	In collaboration with residents, develop a new approach to investment planning and regeneration on estates, beginning with at least one pilot scheme, and implement as necessary.
6	Change the use of poorer quality sheltered housing schemes, within the framework of the Review of Older Peoples' Housing.
7	In collaboration with residents, set and monitor local management standards for Council homes within the TSA framework.
8	Implement the Residents Compact, with an annual review of progress, and with an emphasis on increasing resident participation amongst minority ethnic communities.

9	Review the effectiveness and operation of Repairs Contracts.
10	Undertake an exemplar project on a major housing estate focused on improving outcomes on employability, health and education.
11	In association with the Leaseholders' Forum, devise an advice programme for leaseholders where the Council is the freeholder.

Theme 4

Improve the Quality and Provision of Private Sector Homes

Our objectives...

1	Promote private renting as a long term housing option for communities in The Borough
2	Promote affordable home ownership
3	Understand the working of the private market in Kingston and the role of intervention by public agencies
4	Encourage the improvement of the physical condition of privately owned homes, particularly their energy efficiency and safety
5	Tackle fuel poverty
6	Prioritise the use of the public funding available to maximise the use of existing homes and target it on those residents who require it
7	Promote and encourage good and safe standards amongst landlords. Where necessary use enforcement powers to address poor standards amongst landlords.
8	Encourage good landlord/tenant relations.
9	Facilitate access for lower-income groups into the private rented sector on a permanent or temporary basis

Most residents in Kingston live in privately-owned homes and most of this is in good condition. The responsibility for the condition and energy efficiency of these homes lies with the owner. Nevertheless, the local authority has a role in:

- Taking regulatory action when this is required, for example in Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Subject to the availability of resources, providing funding to owners who cannot afford to improve their homes
- Encouraging good management standards
- Enabling access for those on low or modest incomes
- Encouraging the occupation of empty homes
- Providing leadership and information in encouraging improved energy efficiency in privately-owned homes.

The Condition of Private Sector Homes in Kingston

Privately-rented property is the tenure of housing most likely to be substandard and this tenure type typically includes a high proportion of HMOs, which in turn

usually contribute the majority of dwellings which are in an unsatisfactory condition.

The Decent Home Standard is the minimum standard which homes should meet in order to be considered acceptable. Homes are assessed against four different elements - thermal comfort, unfitness (now superseded by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System), disrepair, and age of facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms. A study by the Building Research Establishment commissioned by Kingston provided the following information about the quality of private sector housing:

Total Private Sector stock <u>NOT</u> meeting Decent Homes Standard 09/10	42%
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67% of private sector homes in Kingston were built before 1944 .42% of private sector homes failed at least one element of decent homes standard. This compares to the national average of 39% and is explained further by the relative age of properties in the Borough. The most common feature of a property to cause non decency was poor thermal insulation or energy efficiency.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System [HHSRS]

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is the risk assessment procedure for residential properties carried out by our Property Inspection Team.

The HHSRS is a measurement of the condition of a dwelling. It assesses 29 categories of housing related hazards, such as excess cold and heat, and provides a numerical value of the level of danger, based on the risk to the potential occupant who is most vulnerable to that hazard. This enables us to prioritise intervention where the hazards are most extreme.

A score of over 1000 is classed as a Category I hazard and triggers a duty on a Local Authority to take appropriate enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004. It also classifies the accommodation as non-decent as part of the Decent Homes Standard. We assess how the hazard may impact on the health of occupants/adjoining occupants. There are 29 hazards broadly grouped into the following strands:

- Dampness, excess cold or heat
- Pollutants, e.g. asbestos, carbon monoxide, lead
- Environment e.g. space, security, lighting or excessive noise
- Hygiene issues, sanitation or water supply

- Accidents, e.g. falls, electric shocks, fires, burns, scalds Collisions, explosions or structural collapse.

Total HHSRS Cat I hazards removed 2007-10	*130
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*This was achieved through grant work, including home renovation, empty property and Cold busters, and also included are statistics from enforcement work in the borough, predominantly HMOs through the licensing project.

The role of the Private Housing Inspection Team is to ensure that accommodation in the private sector is of a decent standard. Housing is a key determinant of health and poor housing conditions can cause preventable deaths and contribute to health inequalities.

Our Property Inspection Team is well placed, through their inspection framework, to help to mitigate the effects of health inequality in the Private Rented sector.

“We hope to highlight the positive effects that the work we do can have on health. We will work closely with our public health colleagues wherever possible in the future”.

Rebecca Murphy
Property Inspection Team Manager

Houses in Multiple Occupation – HMO's

The presence of Kingston University and its student population gives rise to a high percentage of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). HMOs typically provide a relatively low cost form of student accommodation in the Borough and therefore play an important role in the private rented sector. The standard of HMO accommodation varies significantly and in recognition of this, RBK was one of the first Council's in London to introduce a registration scheme in 1997 for houses in multiple occupation. This was superseded by the mandatory licensing of all three storey HMOs occupied by five or more people, as required by the Housing Act 2004 with effect from 6th April 2011.

The Council has been active in licensing HMO's over the last five years, with a total of 182 licensed as of April 2011. In each case, the HMO will have been inspected by a Private Sector Housing Officer who works with the landlord to ensure the property is suitable for multiple occupancy. However, the Council is aware that there are a large number of HMOs that fall outside the mandatory licensing scheme, typically because they are only two storey's in height. In these cases, there is no requirement for the landlord to inform the Council about the HMO, so often the smaller HMO's operate outside of the regulatory framework.

The Council wants to ensure all HMO landlords offer safe accommodation, and that it is fair and consistent in the application of standards across all types of

HMO in the borough. In 2011/2012 the Council plans to review its approach to HMOs, which will include an appraisal of the HMO licensing fees, conducting a study of the location and size of HMOs in the borough to establish whether an additional HMO Licensing scheme is necessary and an evaluation of our enforcement policy. This will be the subject of full consultation before any change in the licensing system is made.

With the planned changes to housing benefit, it is likely that more people will become reliant on HMO accommodation, and by reviewing the way it deals with HMOs, the Council will be in a good position to ensure that people who occupy HMOs live in a safe and healthy environment.

Empty Homes – private sector dwellings

Kingston along with other Authorities has a number of homes in the private sector which have been empty for a long period. There are a number of factors which create empty homes. One example is the period up to and including probate further to the death of an owner. We recognise that empty homes have a direct impact on the built environment and can encourage vandalism, result in dilapidations, misuse and misappropriation. They also represent a waste of resources. One of our objectives is to reduce the number of empty private sector homes in Kingston and increase occupancy levels of previously empty homes.

Total empty homes identified through audit process	165 of which 45 'long term empties remained vacant at the end of the 2010 audit
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The number of private sector empty homes in the Borough brought back into use as a result of action by the Council over the last 5 years, 2005/10, was 442 (based on definition used in former BVPI 64).

We believe more can be done by the Partnership to reduce the number of long-term voids in the private sector. This Strategy therefore provides for the production of a comprehensive Action Plan on empty homes. This will be developed in parallel with an empty homes strategy already in preparation within the South West London Housing Partnership.

Direct Funding for Private Owners

Over the last few years, the Council has successfully operated programmes of financial assistance to improve the condition of private homes in the borough and in particular to improve energy efficiency. More detail on expenditure can be found under Theme 7.

At the time of writing the position on Government funding in this area over the life of this Strategy remains unclear. In principle, however, subject to funding, the Council will wish to continue with programmes of assistance in order to:

- provide adaptations for residents with disabilities
- improve energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty
- help to bring empty homes back into use
- allow for enforcement including in Houses in Multiple Occupation.

The consultation on this Strategy raised the issue of whether the system of DFGs was sufficiently effective in allowing access to the private rented sector for people with disabilities. This issue will be referred to the Private Sector Housing Consultative Committee for consideration.

This strategy also provides for a review of the value for money gained from different forums of financial assistance.

Extending Housing Choice

Alongside our choice based lettings scheme we help to increase housing choice by providing local tenants and residents with the following affordable housing options.

Tenant Finder Service [TFS]

We are proud of TFS which was originally set up as a pilot in May 2000 .The service provides affordable private sector accommodation to households threatened with homelessness and to homeless households to whom the Council has accepted a duty under homelessness legislation. TFS provide a loan for advance rent and deposit to help households' access affordable private rented accommodation.

As at 31st December 2010 there were **323 private sector landlords** working with the Tenant Finder Service providing 400 properties for letting. Over **963 tenancies have been created**; of these over 484 tenancies have been created to prevent households becoming homeless. It is likely that these household would otherwise have had to make an application for assistance under homelessness legislation and would have required placement into emergency temporary accommodation.

The Council is eager to maximise the use of private rented sector accommodation and the development of our Housing Strategy will place a greater emphasis on private sector housing provision.

Home finder Scheme – for Social Housing Tenants

This option is currently available to overcrowded social housing tenants who choose to move to a private sector letting secured via TFS as an alternative to waiting for a transfer to larger social housing. The scheme is administered jointly by the Allocations Team and TFS.

Home Finder Scheme - Qualifying Offers

This is a permanent rehousing option for accepted homeless households. As an alternative to an offer of either a Council or a Housing Association tenancy, accepted homeless households will be given the option to have an offer of a private sector property as a settled home. The Tenant Finder Service was expanded to provide 'Qualifying Offers' into private sector tenancies.

Accredited Landlords and Partnership with Kingston University

In the absence of a national landlord accreditation scheme, along with most other London boroughs Kingston is a member of the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAS) which is operated via Camden Council.

The Council has supported landlord accreditation as good practice for many years. However more recently a more proactive approach has been taken to promoting LLAS accreditation and include accreditation as a requirement for landlords wishing to let property via our Tenant Finder Service. In November 2009 LLAS were invited to give a presentation at the Private Sector HCC

In March 2010 a further report regarding Landlord Accreditation was taken to the Private Sector HCC and the Committee agreed a Pilot scheme which if successful will lead to accreditation as a requirement of letting via TFS.

A rolling programme of LLAS training days has been arranged in Kingston since 2010. As part of the forthcoming Project to review HMOs, we also intend to consider offering a discount to HMO License fees for accredited landlords and to make accreditation a recommendation or condition of Licensing.

Alongside the Council, Kingston University is a significant player in the private rented market in Kingston and there is a positive and developing dialogue over initiatives to promote high standards in the sector. The University has a long standing Headed Tenancy Service where it rents houses and flats and sub-lets to students ensuring a safe and well-managed service for the community. Properties are regularly inspected and required to meet a specified standard. In 2010/11 there were 154 properties in the scheme.

The University has agreed to promote landlord accreditation through its daily vacancy list and this should improve management awareness for a significant

number of landlords. The University is also working on ways to make accreditation more attractive to landlords.

Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty in the Private Rented Sector

As part of the **Kingston Plan** (March 2009) and **Kingston's Energy Strategy** (May 2009) the council has made a commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in line with national and regional targets. The Council is committed to reduce by 24% carbon emissions from its services and operations by 2015 thereby contributing to reducing the effects of climate change.

The Royal Borough of Kingston should ensure that policies addressing poor quality housing in the private rented sector and associated questions of energy efficiency are highlighted in the Housing Strategy **Sustainability and Health – Joint Annual Public Health Report 2009/10**

NHS Kingston and Kingston Council launched the Joint Annual Public Health Report in 2010 [Sustainability and Health], which focused on the links between health and climate change. This unique report shows the link between the wellbeing of the local population and environmental changes. The report includes practical recommendations to improve public health while at the same time taking steps to slow climate change: from providing decent homes that are energy efficient to promoting walking, cycling and sustainable diets.

The energy efficiency of a property is determined by a measure called the Standard Assessment Procedure or SAP. The lower the SAP rating, the more the building costs to heat. The average SAP rating for Private rented accommodation in Kingston is **55** out of 120.

We recognise that improved energy efficiency has a number of health benefits and studies show that for some client groups, such as the elderly and people with disabilities, any drop in temperature can adversely affect wellbeing.

Fuel poverty

A household is said to be in 'fuel poverty' if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel (including heating, hot water, lighting and cooking) to maintain a 'satisfactory' heat in the home. Between 2001 and 2010 there has been a steady rise in the number of household in fuel poverty in England as illustrated below:

Number of fuel poor household in England 2001	Number of fuel poor household in England 2010

1,650,00	4,020,00
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There are three main factors that can impact fuel poverty levels:

- The energy efficiency status of the property
- The cost of energy
- Household income

In Kingston the highest level of fuel poverty is thought to be concentrated in the Private Rented Sector. Fuel poverty levels vary in Kingston with the highest found in Alexandra Ward [11%] and the lowest levels in Grove Ward [5%] [Joint Annual Public Health Report 2008].

There are three housing related projects that build on good practice and outcomes delivered in recent years. These include

- Developing plans and policies to tackle fuel poverty within the borough.
- Pursuing internal and external opportunities to undertake home visiting programmes in targeted areas of the borough.
- Developing plans and policies to identify areas of private sector housing to target for energy efficiency.

There are a number of positive energy efficiency and fuel poverty initiatives planned from 2011 onwards:

- GLA funded RE-NEW Project – Cross tenure home visits to Kingston residents living in the Hook and Old Malden areas focusing on e.g.: grant take-up, advice and guidance etc
- Awareness raising and signposting
- Improving statistical information available

Our Housing Strategy delivery plan includes actions aimed at mitigating the effects of fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency levels

For further detail of the Joint Annual Health Report – visit Kingston PCT by following the web link below: <http://www.kingstonpct.nhs.uk>


For further details of the Councils Energy Strategy visit our website by following the web link below: <http://www.kingston.gov.uk/energy>

Raising Awareness of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

The responsibility for raising standards of energy efficiency in the private domestic sector rests primarily with owners. The Partnership, however, has a key role to play in promoting awareness of the issue and making it as easy as possible for owners to take the necessary steps within their own home. As part of this Strategy, we will implement an information programme aimed at meeting this objective. In doing so, the Partnership will seek to increase the efficiency of the use of water.

What we will do:

1	Devise a communications and advice programme aimed at private owners, to encourage energy efficiency in private sector homes.
2	Tackle fuel poverty through support for the Re-New project, targeted visiting in specific areas of the Borough such as Chessington North, Hook and Old Malden and direct financial assistance to owners where resources are available
3	In collaboration with sub-regional partners, devise and promote a local and sub-regional Empty Homes Plan to bring private homes back into use.
4	License and promote the good management of Houses in Multiple Occupation.
5	Prioritise the use of capital resources to; Provide Disabled Facilities Grants; Support enforcement work in the private sector; Bring empty homes back into use; Tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency, and Review the cost effectiveness and value for money of renewal grants and loans.
6	Use the Private Sector Housing Consultative Committee to increase landlord and tenant involvement in the development of services.
7	Provide advice to both landlords and tenants as part of a co-ordinated Housing Advice service.
8	Promote and encourage good standards of management by encouraging landlord accreditation, backed by specialist advice, training and support for landlords.
9	Further develop the partnership between RBK and the University to use their combined influence in the private rented sector to improve accommodation standards.
10	Promote the Tenant Finder service and pilot the advertising of private homes on the Choice-Based Lettings system to increase access to the private rented sector for low-income households.



11	In collaboration with partners in the South-West London Housing Partnership, improve our knowledge of the condition of private sector homes in the Borough.
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Theme 5

Encourage community engagement and sustainable communities

Our objectives...

1	Ensure that residents and different groups within the community affected by Housing plans and proposals are engaged with them and have the opportunity take part in their development.
2	Involve and capture the views of residents through a variety of means, including new technology.
3	Increase the awareness of Housing issues and the need for better and more affordable homes in the Borough
4	Contribute to the building of more sustainable communities through housing activities and programmes and by recognizing the links between Housing and other service areas

Introduction

The future success of this strategy depends upon the ability of the Partnership to engage both the community and a range of stakeholders. By doing so we will be better able to configure our services to meet a range of needs. We are committed to increasing the levels of stakeholder involvement/consultation with particular focus on marginalized or non mainstream communities. This will include the full involvement of stakeholders in the development and monitoring of this strategy.

Housing programmes and initiatives can improve the quality of lives both through the improvement of the fabric of homes through repair, improvement or regeneration schemes and through the direct provision of services to individuals and families. In this section, we try to show how Housing can contribute to the building of more successful and stable communities in the borough both through its own programmes and in concert with other priority services

Resident involvement

We already involve Council Tenants and leaseholders in the development of services through well-established formal consultation groups:

- **Housing Consultative Committee (HCC):** discusses strategic and performance related issues relating to Council tenants and leaseholders.

- **Resident Participation Review Group (RPRG)**. This is a subgroup of HCC made up of the most senior members of the tenant movement and looks at changes in detail and agrees an overall response before any papers go to HCC.
- **Private Sector Housing Consultative Committee (PSHCC)** which brings together private landlords and tenants, the University and RBK to discuss developments and issues in the private rented sector in the borough

We have sound protocols which ensure that there is at least one resident on every housing policy and procedural working group as equal participants with staff thereby giving us an edge in terms of ensuring that resident opinions are built into the decision making process. Our Resident participation team has links to a number of faith groups and other community organisations. A new Residents' Compact was signed between residents and the Council in 2010. Through this we will seek to identify and put in place the best possible framework for Resident Involvement to ensure that residents are both well informed and engaged in decision making processes.

Increasing Public Awareness of Housing Issues in Kingston

Service users are regarded as primary stakeholders and their views and contributions are seen as both valuable and integral to successful service provision and delivery. In view of this we will take steps to ensure that our stakeholders are well informed about to changes in the housing agenda nationally and in turn have a sound grasp of local housing issues including our constraints and opportunities. We believe that if our stakeholders are well informed they will make a valuable and active contribution to the decision making processes relating to housing in Kingston,

In terms of Community Engagement, the Housing Strategy 2011-15 should try to ensure that more people have an understanding of, and a stake in, what partners are trying to achieve in the Borough. The general public needs a better understanding of social and affordable housing which will also help with planning applications
Kingston Strategic Housing Partnership Board event 2010

To increase general public awareness of Housing issues in the Borough we will upgrade the RBK website to include data and links on national policy issues and on current policy debates and developments in the Borough. As an innovation within this strategy and as a collaboration between RBK's Housing and Learning and Children's Services, we will also pilot a project to increase the knowledge about Housing issues, constraints and opportunities amongst young people to better resource them for planning their future.

Building Sustainable Communities

In Kingston we are continuing to work towards improving the standard of both public and private sector homes. Our strategic housing role also includes assessing housing needs, tackling homelessness and supporting local residents to access a range of housing options which meet their specific needs. We recognise that Kingston is a diverse area and understand the importance of support services and the supporting people programme.

The Kingston plan provides the central vision for sustainable communities and the Housing Strategy 2011-15 aims to support and underpin this vision to ensure that Kingston continues to be a vibrant area to live and work.

We aim to support the building of sustainable communities by:

- Tackling fuel poverty
- Encouraging social housing choice through our choice based lettings scheme
- Encouraging customer engagement and involvement in relation to the management of services
- Encouraging and developing housing choice by helping customers to access the private rented sector
- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
- promoting measures through our housing programmes which reduce health inequality;
- Contribute to addressing child poverty in Kingston

The Kingston Plan also sets the framework for the ambitions of the Partnership to mould Kingston as a place. This Housing Strategy contributes to this emerging 'Place-Shaping' programme by:

- promoting investment in the built environment;
- promoting improvements in the quality of existing public and private sector homes and the surrounding environment;
- planning for the delivery of high-quality new affordable homes in appropriate locations in the Borough;
- Opening a dialogue with residents about the long-term future of some of the larger council housing estates in the Borough.

For many residents, the quality of neighbourhoods is as important as the quality of the housing stock itself. "Place-shaping" is therefore a priority for our housing strategy to ensure that we continue to make Kingston a great place to live and work. This will mean having full and meaningful consultation with local communities over the planning and implementation of development schemes.

Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Bill before Parliament in early 2011 sets the stage for important changes for community action and planning at a local level. With its established system of Neighbourhood Committees, Kingston is already well-positioned to take a national lead in the promotion and implementation of Neighbourhood Plans.

Housing has an important impact at the very local level, for example where capital schemes or environmental improvements take place on Council blocks, a new affordable housing scheme is developed or private homes are made more energy- efficient. The Partnership will ensure that Housing issues play a full part in the development of Neighbourhood plans in Kingston.

Localism in action – the Norbiton Pilot

Kingston has agreed to be one of four areas nationally participating in a programme to develop Place Based Budgeting and Local Integration of Services through a project negotiated with central Government and piloted in the Norbiton Ward of Kingston. We are one of 9 Government backed pilots in the UK and the only localism pilot in the region.

Fundamental to the success of the project will be engaging with communities. During the engagement process, wider key themes will be explored such as 'Employment and Skills', 'Family and Life Chances' and 'Financial Support'. Through these themes, equality issues will be taken into account to avoid any individual or group within the Norbiton community being excluded from the LIS project. The first public engagement forum is expected to take place in early 2011.

The Housing Service work closely with Neighbourhood managers and other partners to ensure that there is a full housing input into the localism pilot.

“By working with ECET, housing may work more with marginalised communities. All the needs assessments we've carried out with marginalised groups identify housing as a major issue. Joint work has started but we could be much better at this if it were made a priority”
Martha Earley - Team Leader for Community Development and Public Health Manager for Inequalities

Community Engagement: Partnership in action

Equalities and Community Engagement Team [ECET]

The Equalities and Community Engagement Team (ECET) brings together NHS Kingston and Royal Borough of Kingston's community development and engagement work into one team. The team boast as number of successes including securing 500k of external funding.

The team's main aim is to reduce health inequalities by looking at how a wide range of factors such as income, education, employment status, mental health, housing, environment, access to services, experiences of discrimination, and participation in the community affect long term health.

The Team work with a number of communities; people from black and minority ethnic communities; refugees and asylum seekers; the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community; disabled people, including those with mental health problems and sensory impairments

The work has been focused on areas of deprivation in the Borough. From 2011, ECET will focus much of their attention on the Local Integrated Service work in Norbiton, working with residents and communities living in social housing. This will mean representing their interests and supporting them to become community advocates and become involved in service delivery in their areas.

Health inequalities and the links with housing

The association between housing conditions and physical and mental ill-health has long been recognised. This relationship and recommendations of ways in which we can work to improve the health of the population through improving housing condition have been addressed in the Public Health Annual Reports for Kingston in 2008 and 2009-2010. With our Kingston health partners of NHS South West London we are continuing to work together to mitigate the effects of housing condition and housing related ill-health.

“We know that a wide range of factors affect people's health throughout their life and drive inequalities such as early year care, Housing and social inclusion”
[Healthy lives, healthy people – Public Health strategy Government White paper 2010]

The Council has worked successfully in partnership with NHS Kingston to conduct Participatory Needs Assessments, details of which appear below:

Black and Minority Ethnic Needs Assessment

This assessment was commissioned by Public Health at NHS Kingston, to investigate the known health inequalities affecting BAME people in the UK and to ensure a set of recommendations are available to commissioners in order to combat these health inequalities locally. The aim of this assessment was to ensure that qualitative evidence existed about the needs of the BAME population in the borough of Kingston which could be used to improve the lives of BAME residents and thus also effect change within our community.

Within the assessment, by far the greatest concerns people had which had a direct impact on their health were:

- Being on a low income
- Housing issues
- Having difficulty speaking English
- Unemployment
- Experiences of racism
- Being a victim of crime or fearing crime

Poverty, housing issues and difficulty with spoken English emerge clearly as the predominant factors which shape the health and health experiences of minority ethnic communities living in Kingston.

African communities in particular mentioned social and environmental health concerns such as poor housing, domestic violence and gambling:

Asylum seekers and refugees

Due to the stark inequalities in health that are known to impact on refugees and asylum seekers nationally, a Participatory Needs Assessment was commissioned and carried out over 2008 with refugees and asylum seekers living locally in the Royal Borough of Kingston. This consisted of a literature review into the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and research conducted face-to-face with local residents from the refugees and asylum seeker population.

The Refugee Needs Assessment 2007/8 highlighted four main areas of concern for refugees and asylum seekers in the Borough:

- Access to housing both in the private and public sectors
- Access to good quality advice and information
- Getting repairs carried out to their homes
- Overcrowding

The above are highlighted in the Joint Annual Health Report published in 2009, 'Health Begins at Home.'

Responding to the Public Health Annual Reports (PHARs)

Housing related issues are a common thread in each PNA. Housing has an important role to play in underpinning and supporting the various actions points

“Inequalities in health exist across a range of social and demographic indicators including housing condition. Inequalities are evident in many health outcomes including mortality, morbidity, mental health and self reported health. Adverse housing conditions in Kingston include homelessness, fuel poverty, overcrowding, insecurity and housing in a poor physical condition that constitute a risk to health”

Russell Styles

Associate Director of Public Health
Kingston Borough – NHS South West
London

arising from local Participatory Needs Assessments. This includes exploring ways in which we can contribute to mitigating the effects of health inequalities in Kingston especially amongst homeless households in temporary accommodation and overcrowded households.

“No families in Kingston will be living in poverty and no children will be affected by the impact of poverty”

Kingston Children and Young Peoples plan 2009-2013

We will therefore include the PNA recommendations where appropriate in our Housing Strategy delivery plan to ensure that we are fully responding to the needs of our communities.

Health is a major issue amongst homeless households and the Director of Public Health has made recommendations on this in his Annual Report. Mental health issues can be significant amongst single homeless people, often hand-in-hand with drug and alcohol misuse. A number of agencies are involved in providing services to this group, including KCAH, other voluntary organizations, mental health teams, community drug and alcohol teams as well as the Homelessness Assessments Team within Housing Services. The Homelessness Forum will be asked to look further at the co-ordination of health services to this group.

Some of the specific initiatives set out elsewhere in this strategy will contribute directly to the improvement of health. This applies in particular to:

- increased investment in council homes to improve their fabric, energy efficiency and security;
- the provision of new affordable housing;
- measures to reduce overcrowding;
- tackling fuel poverty in the private sector;
- Measures to enable residents to sustain tenancies.
- In addition, however, we will;
- produce a consultation framework for homeless households living in temporary accommodation;
- in the project to increase public awareness of Housing issues and opportunities in the Borough place a particular emphasis on those groups which are shown in the PNAs to suffer health inequality partly on account of their housing circumstances;
- Produce specific proposals to tackle health inequality insofar as it relates to homeless households in temporary accommodation, single homeless people and social housing tenants.

One Kingston – Mitigating the effects of Child Poverty

The Child Poverty Act 2010 placed a legal obligation on all Local Authorities and their 'delivery partners' to:

- Cooperate to reduce child poverty and mitigate the effects of child poverty
- Conduct a local child poverty needs assessment
- Produce a child poverty Strategy
- Take child poverty into account in the production and revision of the Kingston Plan and associated strategies and plans.

A child is to be taken to be living in poverty if the child experiences socio-economic disadvantage" (Child Poverty Act, 2010).

Socio-economic disadvantage can be summarised as households with less than 60% of equivalised³ median household income. In England this is below £16,000 per annum (2009). Using the national definition of child poverty nearly 5000 children live in poverty in Kingston .Norbiton has the highest number of children living in poverty, nearly double any other ward in the borough

Kingston recognised the importance of tackling child poverty prior to legislation being enacted, and has embedded this priority within its strategic planning at all levels. The responsibility for the Child Poverty Strategy lies with Kingston Strategic Partnership and the One Kingston Child Poverty Strategy will be published in 2011. In Kingston the Children and Young People's Trust Board is taking the lead on child poverty on behalf of the Kingston Strategic Partnership.

About the Kingston Child Poverty Needs Assessment:

The Child Poverty Needs assessment provides the foundation for the Child Poverty Strategy by:

- Coordinating information from existing needs assessments and other data sources related to Child Poverty
- Identifying trends in data, opportunities and risks
- Collating and analyzing qualitative data, including local intelligence and case studies
- Presenting a partnership view of what child poverty looks like in the borough of Kingston, to inform identification of the major themes that contribute to child poverty locally.

The *One* Kingston Child Poverty Needs Assessment is aligned to the 4 building block areas specified in the Child Poverty Act 2010:

³ Equivalised income takes into account the number of people living in the household. Larger households need more money to achieve the same standard of living as smaller ones.

Child Poverty Building block	Description
Employment and parental skills	Provision of information, advice and assistance to parents; promotion of parenting skills; the promotion and facilitation of the employment of parents and of the development of the skills of parents
Family and Life Chances	Physical and mental health, education, childcare and social services.
Financial Support:	The provision of financial support for children and parents. The building block covers financial inclusion, debt and capability;
Place and delivery:	Housing, the built or natural environment and the promotion of social inclusion.

Child Poverty and Housing: Key facts...

- Children who live in poverty are almost twice as likely to be in bad housing. [Natsen research for Shelter (2006)].
- A Shelter survey found that homeless children had missed an average of 55 school days as a result of disruption caused by moves into and between temporary accommodation [Shelter, Temporary Accommodation Survey (2004)].
- Children living in bad housing are almost twice as likely to suffer from poor health as other children. Children in overcrowded or unfit accommodation are a third more likely to suffer respiratory problems such as chest problems, breathing difficulties, asthma and bronchitis than other children. [Shelter, Against the Odds (2006)].
- Children living in bad housing are nearly twice as likely as other children to leave school without any GCSEs [Shelter, Against the Odds (2006)]
- 50% of young offenders had experienced homelessness. [Shelter 2009].

“We all need to work in partnership to reduce Housing related poverty to ensure families have sustainable accommodation arrangements and the child’s environment supports them to thrive”

Mary Francis: Strategic Lead for Child Poverty

Poor housing during childhood has huge financial and social costs across many areas, including health, education and the economy. The Kingston plan sets out a vision for the borough in 2020 and mitigating the effects of child poverty is central to the social and economical wellbeing of all residents in Kingston.

The Partnership’s operational and strategic housing functions have a strong relationship to the Child Poverty Strategy for Kingston. There is scope for close joint working between housing services and the Child Poverty Project team to identify ways to support the aims of the Child Poverty Strategy 2011.

We know, for example, that as at 31 March 2010 there were 565 households in temporary accommodation, containing 735 children. It is important to ensure that our Housing strategy is aligned to the Child Poverty Strategy for Kingston. To this end we will work closely with the Children and Young people's Partnership to ensure that we identify ways in which we can appropriately address the needs of children living in temporary accommodation in the borough.

Joint working will concentrate on a number of specific areas, including:

- Increasing the supply of affordable homes.
- The numbers of children in temporary accommodation.
- Increasing the number of families living in Decent Homes.
- Ensuring homes are warm and easier to heat.
- Providing joined-up advice on housing.

Crime Reduction and Community Safety

The Safer Kingston Partnership

The Safer Kingston Partnership is made up of a number of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. These organisations work together with the local community to reduce crime, disorder, substance misuse and re-offending in Kingston Borough

The Partnership has a Strategy group of partners, who have a legal responsibility to reduce crime, disorder, substance misuse and re-offending and to produce a strategy to achieve that reduction. The statutory partners are:-

- Kingston Council
- NHS Kingston
- London Fire Brigade
- Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Service - Kingston borough
- London Probation Trust

The Strategic Partnership for Alcohol and Drugs is also represented on this group.

Key Successes

- Crime reduced in Kingston by 10.3% between 2007/08 and 2009/10, equivalent to over 1200 fewer crimes and ensuring Kingston remains one of the safest London boroughs.

- Conducted Problem-Solving Training amongst partners to promote multi-agency involvement and solutions to Anti Social Behaviour, Hate Crime and other offences.
- Kingston Town Centre was awarded a Purple Flag for the successful management of the night-time economy; this was in addition to a Green Flag awarded by the Audit Commission for partnership working to improve the Town Centre.
- Supported the One Stop Shop, which allows victims of Domestic Abuse to report and get advice from 10 different agencies in one setting. Over 500 victims a year are attending the One Stop Shop. This service, with appropriate safeguards, is to be expanded in the near future to provide an initial service to victims of sexual violence also.
- Enabled multi-agency Domestic Abuse training to raise awareness amongst staff of all partner agencies.
- Reducing violent crime and anti-social behaviour in the town centre.

Reducing re-offending

Reducing re-offending is an important community safety aim; it improves the chances for those individuals who re-offend and makes Kingston safer for all. Accommodation is one of the factors which can influence the likelihood of re-offending; RBK Housing Services recognise this and will work with the other Responsible Authorities* and partners to respond to this challenge.

Tackling anti-social behaviour and hate crimes

Hate crime can be defined as a criminal offence which is committed against person or property and is motivated by hatred of another due to their: Race, colour, ethnicity or nationality, Religion or beliefs, Gender or gender identity, Sexual orientation Disability, Age.

The Metropolitan Police in Kingston compile statistical information about recorded crimes in Kingston, for example, the Met recorded 7 Homophobic crimes in the 12 month period leading to Jan 2011. The Safer Kingston Partnership works in conjunction with a number of partners to support victims of racial harassment and discrimination and in promoting racial equality in the Royal Borough of Kingston. These partners include: Kingston Police Community Safety Unit, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, the Victim Support, a multi-lingual helpline, the Kingston Race and Equalities Council (KREC) and the Royal Borough of Kingston.

Whilst Kingston is one of the safest boroughs of London, it must be remembered that race crimes still take place. Recent crime figures from the Metropolitan Police website are detailed below:

Kingston Borough wide - Hate Crimes and anti social behaviour *statistical snapshot:

Year	Domestic Violence Offences	Hate Crime Offences Race, Sexuality, Religion	Anti-social behaviour
2008/9	615	122	6608
2009/10	665	128	6383
Financial year to Jan 11	526	82	Not Available

*Figures accessed via the MET Police Website and Performance Information Bureau. Due to the 'live' nature of the Crime Reporting System there might be small variations in the numbers if the same information were to be accessed at a later date.

Housing and race crimes

Support for and identification of victims of Race Crime also takes place through the Council's Registered Social Landlord system. This involves working with tenants to promote understanding of tenancy obligations and modifying tenancy agreements to include specific clauses relating to harassment and anti-social behaviour. The Housing Service also has an in-house graffiti response team which has a target to photograph report and remove racist graffiti within 24 hours of it being reported. The Council's Housing Racial Harassment Panel ensures that information is shared about victims (with their consent) to allow the appropriate support and investigation. The Panel tracks cases reported through to closure. Anonymous statistics from this Panel are reported to the Racist Incident Forum allowing hotspots to be identified and analysis of ethnicity trends regarding victims and perpetrators.

Housing and Anti-social behaviour

The Council takes vigorous action to tackle anti-social behaviour amongst its own tenants. The table below shows the rate of eviction over recent years, together with the number of ASBOs, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and recorded reports of hate crimes within the RBK housing stock.

Year	Total council tenants evicted for anti-social behaviour	Total council tenants subject to ABC, ASBO	Total recorded reports of hate crime? [council tenants]
2008	0	1	6
2009	2	4	2

2010	0	3	3
2011 [year to date]	0	3	1

It is the aim of this strategy to help build on the successes of the partnership in recent years in improving community safety in Kingston and to ensure that there is a full housing contribution to crime reduction initiatives.

What we will do:

1	Fully involve stakeholders in the development and monitoring of the Housing Strategy.
2	Through the Residents Compact and the Housing Consultative Committee consult and involve RBK tenants and leaseholders in the consideration of policy and the development of services.
3	Establish a consultation framework for residents in temporary accommodation.
4	Ensure full consideration of Housing issues within Neighbourhood Plans.
5	Ensure the full inclusion of Housing issues within the work of the Norbiton LIP to build on the work of the Participatory Needs Assessments.
6	Develop the Housing elements of the RBK website to increase awareness of Housing issues in the Borough and widen the means for residents to give feedback on services.
7	Develop a project to raise awareness of Housing issues amongst young people.
8	Produce proposals to increase the awareness of Housing issues, services and opportunities amongst the different communities in the Borough.
9	In particular in relation to temporary accommodation, produce specific proposals to reduce health inequality insofar as it relates to homeless households including single homeless people or social housing tenants.
10	Ensure appropriate links are made between the Housing Strategy and the emerging Child Poverty Strategy and in particular ensure appropriate briefing and awareness training is available to the relevant staff groups.
11	Ensure that a full Housing input is made into crime reduction initiatives to improve community safety.

Theme 6

Develop Effective Strategic and Operational Partnerships

Our objectives...

1	Harness the contribution of all agencies within the Partnership to meet a common set of housing goals
2	<p>Promote effective joint working and remove obstacles and barriers in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the provision of affordable housing within the borough • Maximise use of resources to reduce the effects of fuel poverty • Improve the condition of homes in public and private sector • Improve access to housing for vulnerable groups including offenders and those accessing treatment programmes • Encourage the involvement of tenants and leaseholders in the management and improvement of their homes • Promote and participate in the protection of vulnerable children and adults • Encourage regeneration of areas of deprivation and assess options for an exemplar estate/area project on a housing estate/area • Tackle the effects of poverty, overcrowding and unemployment in relation to the attainment of children • Provide good advice and innovative solutions to housing problems • Promote public health initiatives to improve the health of residents

Housing is a key element of the lives of all residents in Kingston. Lack of or inadequate housing can act as a barrier to improving the quality of life and to the effectiveness of many other services. For this reason joint working between Housing and other services is a vital element of the work of the partnership.

Some of our key partnerships, for example, between the Council and its main RSL partners, are described in other parts of this strategy. In this section we outline a number of other areas where partnership arrangements operate on housing issues – between different agencies within Kingston Strategic Partnership.

The Kingston Strategic Housing Partnership

The Strategic Housing Partnership Board is the driving force behind our Housing Strategy. The board is strategically placed to shape and influence the Housing landscape in Kingston and is directly aligned to the Kingston Strategic

Partnership. We have created an ambitious 5 year Housing Strategy and we are keen to ensure that we meet our delivery plan objectives.

The SHPB boasts a diverse membership ranging from representative from the Primary Care Trust [NHS] to Age Concern.

Key Strategic Partnerships

This strategy deals in detail elsewhere with a number of key strategic partnerships within the Housing sector.

- With Registered Social Landlords and Developers, which secure funding for and delivery new affordable homes
- With Residents, both in the public and private sectors, who are the recipients of services and who have a key role in participating in the monitoring and development of those services
- With contractors, who will repair and improve Council homes
- With the University, over planning for supporting high standards in the private rented sector
- With the voluntary sector, whose role is central to providing services to address homelessness in the Borough.
- Between the Planning Section and stakeholders such as landowners and housing developers. The pre-planning application process assists in promoting the need for affordable housing. The emerging LDF Delivery Plan will further reinforce this joint work to deliver the development of sites.
- With health organisations which contribute to services to particular client groups and in tackling issues such as fuel poverty.

Our Regional and National Partners

Kingston Strategic Housing Partnership has a number of key partners at the regional and national level. These are already closely involved in the work of the Partnership and will play a full role in the monitoring and delivery of this strategy over the next 4 years.

- The Mayor for London with the Greater London Authority set the strategic context for Housing in London. It is a requirement that this strategy is in general conformity with the Mayor's London Housing Strategy and the Mayor will play an enhanced role in the allocation of housing funding from 2012.
- The Homes and Communities Agency is the funding agency for new affordable housing and empty homes. Via the Borough Investment Plan, there is close liaison between the Council and the HCA over the opportunities available in Kingston for development under the new

Affordable Rent model. From April 2012, the London investment arm of the HCA will become the responsibility of the Mayor for London. Also from 2012, the HCA assume the regulatory responsibilities of the Tenant Services Authority.

- Tenant Services Authority is the regular for social housing in England and has set national standards and a framework for local standards to be adopted by social housing providers. Its functions will pass to the HCA in 2012.
- Communities and Local Government is the government department which leads on Housing and housing policy developments. Key current issues include provisions for housing reform within the Localism Bill.

One Council; One Kingston

At the inception of this strategy, the work of the One Council programme to transform the work of the local authority is moving into the One Kingston initiative to further strengthen the partnership arrangements between the key stakeholders and agencies in the Borough.

They will also serve to strengthen existing partnership and joint working arrangements in the Housing field. An important illustration is the combining of Housing and Planning services in RBK within the new grouping of Place and Regeneration. This change took place in January 2011 and is already leading to more effective working over the delivery of new affordable housing.

Joint Working Stakeholder Surveys 2011

In order to support the development of our Housing Strategy 2011-15 we created an online survey geared towards a sample of internal stakeholders [teams/departments within the Council] and external stakeholders [Organisations and community based service providers] outside the Council We wanted to, amongst other things, identify the way in which we could improve joint working as well as ensure that stakeholders developed a good understanding of the housing agenda both nationally and locally. We received a positive response to this exercise and have provided a summary of some things that respondents would like to have in place in relation to joint working:

- More formalised processes
- Better understanding of role of housing services - newsletter
- Better communication
- Housing options training /briefings
- Joint training exercises
- Better signposting and referral arrangements

Joint Working – our best practice

Much of the joint working between agencies takes place at an operational level. In Kingston, these joint arrangements are very well developed and make a real difference to the lives of individual clients and the surrounding community for example:

- in placing a client with mental health problems into the right type of supported accommodation in an appropriate location
- in ensuring the housing prospects of a household are fully considered where there are children at risk
- in balancing the different interests involved in dealing with a case of anti-social behaviour.

Some of the key operational partnerships are listed below

Table on Joint Working Arrangements

Arrangement	Description
South-west London Housing Partnership	Joint meeting of members and officers from Kingston, Merton, Sutton, Richmond, Wandsworth, Lambeth and Croydon. Covers Housing Strategy, development, homelessness, allocations and private sector housing.
Prevent and Deter Group	Brings together children's social services, Youth Offending Team, Housing and the Police to share information about clients aged under 18 to prevent and deter them from re-offending and their escalation to become a PPO (prolific priority offender)
Prolific and Priority Offenders	Joint meeting to provide an overview of intelligence on PPO's which is relevant to the local authority and RSLs
Anti-Social Behaviour Multi-Agency Meeting	Joint meeting to find solutions to address anti-social behaviour in the Borough
Safer Neighbourhood Panel Meetings	Meetings between residents, the Police, Housing, Education and Environmental Health to discuss 'hot spot' areas for anti-social behaviour
Strategic Partnership on Drugs and Alcohol (SPAD)	Joint working on inter-agency arrangements for clients with drug and alcohol problems
Safeguarding Adults Board	Joint Group to oversee arrangements for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults

Arrangement	Description
Allocations Panels	<p>Joint agency panels to discuss the allocation of general needs and supported housing to challenging cases and in particular to cover;</p> <p>Clients with mental health problems Young people Placements into the YMCA</p>
Joint Agency Group	A monthly meeting bringing together RBK, the Police and Kingston Town Centre Partnership to look at crime and other issues in the Borough
MARAC	Joint meeting dealing with high-risk domestic violence cases
MAPPA	Joint meeting looking at the individual cases of high-risk offenders

Brokerage

The Council will continue to act as a broker, change advocate and lead agency, securing effective outcomes according to individual needs. Our housing strategy aims to provide a long term framework for partners to plan and deliver improved outcomes for residents. We have successfully worked in partnership with a range of local agencies to:

- Improve health and address health inequalities
- Address community safety issues
- Respond to racial and other forms of harassment
- Deliver the Supporting people agenda
- Deliver housing and generalist advice to local residents through our funding and service level agreement with the Citizens Advice Bureau

We do however recognise that there is further scope to create new partnership arrangements with the community sector to ensure that the Council and Community sector work in a cooperative and collaborative way. This is of particular importance given the current financial climate affecting all sectors

Reviewing the effectiveness of existing partnerships

We are proud of the partnerships we have forged over recent years and continue to benefit from sound partnership frameworks. We do however recognise that the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010 will have had an

impact on partners and will invariably shift priorities and agendas. In view of this we need to ensure the long term sustainability of our partnership arrangements by ensuring that we have a good understanding of the constraints affecting partners. To this aim we will review the effectiveness of existing arrangements as identified by our Joint working survey 2011 and identify mutually beneficial improvements.

Domestic Violence One Stop Shop – an example of partnership in action...

A multi-agency one-stop shop providing advice support and representation for all victims/survivors of domestic abuse/violence.

The DV One Stop shop is a multi-agency partnership providing advice and assistance to victims and survivors of domestic violence in Kingston. This special partnership approach delivers a multi-faceted drop in service which is equipped to deal with the complexities of domestic abuse ranging from Housing and family law implications through to helping victims and survivors to access the services of health visitors.

“If housing staff complete Level 2 DV training they will have a better understanding of the psychology of DV / abuse and they will be better informed – this will have a positive impact on Victims and survivors of domestic abuse/violence“
Jo Keogh – Crisis Intervention worker [Kingston Community Safety Unit]

Established in 2003 the service is coordinated by a post holder joint funded by the Met Police and Safer Kingston Partnership. The service boast a wide ranging list of collaborators ranging from the Community Safety Unit , Victim Support , Health Visiting team , CAB and specialist legal practitioners.

The Crisis Intervention worker [CSU] and the Safer Kingston Partnership's Violence against Women and Girls strategic lead have also been instrumental in ensuring the delivery of level 1 and 2 domestic violence training to a range of local stakeholders and we are keen to ensure that our frontline housing staff attend Level 2 training. This is a positive relationship between the Council and CSU, particularly around risk assessment and risk management of DV cases. However this important relationship can be developed further.

We will therefore explore ways in which we can best contribute to the delivery of the One Stop Shop. We will work closely with the DV coordinator to develop a DV and Housing policy which takes into account the Violence against Women and Girls agenda as well as looking at monitoring processes and data collation of DV cases.

What we will do:

1	Map and consolidate the range of joint working arrangements, partnership arrangements and protocols between housing and other service areas,
2	Promote the role of the voluntary sector in providing services, advice and assistance and use the influence of the Partnership to develop the capacity of community groups and the faith sector.
3	Devise a specific proposal to further support the work of the Community Safety Unit/Multi-Agency Domestic Violence one-stop service.

Theme 7

Efficiently Manage Resources and Increase Capacity

Our objectives...

1	Understand the extent of resources the Partnership has available to it to address the objectives of the Housing Strategy
2	Optimise the use of those resources in meeting the Partnership's housing objectives
3	Maximise the external funding coming into the Borough
4	Be clear and realistic about the limits of our resources and capacity
5	Establish clear priorities for the use of the housing resources we have available.

Utilising the Capacity of Partners

In addition to the financial and other resources available to it, the **Council** will provide leadership, strategic direction and commitment in developing and implementing the Housing Strategy. We will be looking to our local partners to bring their expertise, resources and capacity to meeting the Partnership's housing objectives, including:

- Registered Social Landlords and Developers in providing new affordable homes;
- Residents in contributing to the development of plans and services;
- Contractors in repairing and improving homes;
- The Voluntary Sector in tackling homelessness and providing support for particular groups within the community;
- Private Landlords in providing good quality homes for residents on low or modest incomes.

Successful implementation of the Strategy also depends on;

- Strategic support and funding from the **Mayor for London** and the **GLA**, particularly in those areas of resource allocation where they have, or will have responsibility.
- Detailed and successful input from the **Homes and Communities Agency** in the, assessment, funding and development of sites in the Borough for new Affordable Housing and the funding of work to empty private sector homes;
- Support from the **Tenants Services Authority** in the delivery of national and local management standards;

- Policy guidance and support, including funding, from **Communities and Local Government**, particularly in the field of Homelessness.

In developing and monitoring this Strategy, we will look further to consolidate the role, contribution and expectations of the agencies involved in the Partnership.

Revenue Expenditure

Many of the Council's day to day revenue cost of meeting the strategic housing function fall into the General Fund. This covers homelessness, private sector housing, temporary accommodation and affordable housing development. A summary of the relevant budgets is set out in the Table below.

General fund: Budget area	Expenditure	Income	Net
Homelessness Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention	823,800	-343,700	480,100
Temporary Accommodation	7,981,100	-7,296,400	684,700
Tenant Finder Service	490,600	-103,600	387,000
Programme of grant support and enforcement in the private sector	553,400	-94,600	458,800
Other	149,100	-82,300	66,800
TOTAL	9,998,000	-7,920,600	2,077,400

In revenue terms the key financial challenge for RBK over the life of this strategy is containing the costs of homelessness while still meeting statutory obligations and maintaining a high quality of service to clients. This is against a background of the changes to Housing and Welfare Benefits which threatens to lead to an increase in homelessness across London. The key priority, both for the well-being of residents and for the financial health of the Authority is to avoid an increase on the use of Bed and Breakfast hotels and hotel annexes.

Non-HRA Capital Resources

The main categories of non-Housing Revenue Account capital expenditure are shown in the table below. Primarily they relate to assistance to private sector owners, the redevelopment of the Swallow Park Gypsy and Traveller site and assistance to RSLs in providing new affordable homes. At the time of writing, the

funding position in these areas for 2011/12 and beyond is still unclear as funding decisions are awaited at the sub-regional, regional and national levels.

General fund capital [GFC]:	Description	Expenditure 2009/10	Expenditure 2010/11
Disabled Facilities Grant DFG's	Adaptations	370,116	284,279
House Proud Equity release	Grants to allow elderly to stay at home	281,878	50,773
Cold buster Grants	Thermal insulation	406,781	195,921
Home Repair Grant	Home improvement grants	35,174	10,414
Empty Property Scheme	To bring back into use empty private sector homes	182,601	138,932
Swallow Park Redevelopment	Gypsy and Travellers site	217,424	250,839
Social Housing Programme	Grants to Housing Associations	57,000	
TOTAL		1,550,974	931,157

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Gross expenditure and income on the Council's HRA is £27m. The prospects for the HRA in the light of HRA Reform in April 2012 and the prospects for investment and business planning are discussed in detail under Theme 3. The award from Government on Backlog Funding for Decent Homes work is shown below.

Inward Investment and Funding

The key current areas of additional Government investment into the Borough are Homelessness Directorate grant and Decent Homes backlog funding.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Homelessness Directorate Grant	252,000	274,000	163,000

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Decent Homes backlog funding	£2m	£4,389,380	£5,199,310

National Affordable Housing Programme

A clearer picture of investment resources coming into Kingston over the next 4 years will emerge in July 2011 when contracts will be awarded to RSL development partners by the HCA. This process is discussed in more detail in Theme 2. RBK will work with RSL partners, developers and the HCA to encourage the funding and development of sites identified within the Borough Investment Plan and to bring empty private sector homes back into use.

Making Best Use of Our Assets

Given the constraints on public funding, it will be important over the life of this Strategy to secure the maximum benefit and value from existing assets. The Council has now established a Corporate Landlord function to take an overarching approach to the consideration of assets. The prospects for the Council's mainstream housing stock are discussed in detail in Theme 3. The Corporate Landlord will be looking at opportunities to change the use of assets, including some HRA assets, to increase the value available to the Partnership. This may include the disposal of properties which do not fit with the rest of the housing portfolio and opportunities for small-scale or infill development.

The Value for Money of our Services

The Housing landscape is undergoing a number of radical changes and in response to this we recognise the need to evaluate and review the cost effectiveness of our services. Our Housing strategy delivery plan includes this core element to ensure that we are appropriately positioned to respond to the national housing climate as well as local needs.

The Audit Commission has estimated that as many as 50,000 social homes across the country may be occupied fraudulently – this equates to more than 1 in 100 housing association and council homes.

Tackling unlawful subletting and occupancy: Good practice guidance for social landlords CLG 2009

Tenancy Fraud: Prevention and Detection

Our housing stock is a key asset and as such we recognise the need to protect it to ensure that housing is directed to those most in need. The Council continues to prioritise anti-fraud measures relating to, for example, Housing Benefits and tenancy fraud. We will aim to ensure that we have robust management procedures in place to tackle and prevent homelessness fraud and tenancy

related fraud. By doing so we will safeguard our assets, build our capacity and ensure that our housing stock is directed to those in most need. 2010 saw a series of benefits related fraud cases successfully prosecuted. This demonstrates our ongoing commitment to fraud prevention and detection. We continue to maintain close ties and information sharing protocols between the Housing and Housing Benefits services to ensure that swift and decisive action is taken against those attempting or committing fraud.

What we will do:

1	Provide Leadership, strategic direction and commitment in developing and implementing the Housing Strategy.
2	Use the development, monitoring and implementation of the Housing Strategy to establish the role and expectations of partnership members and to harness their expertise and capacity.
3	Via the partnership, harness the capacity and expertise of regional and national agencies, including the HCA, GLA, Communities and Local Government and the Tenant Services Authority.
4	Carry out a value-for-money assessment of strategic housing services in Kingston.
5	Via the HCA and RSL partners and through the updating of the Borough Investment Plan, attract investment resources into Kingston for the provision of new homes and the improvement of private sector dwellings.
6	Through the RBK Asset Management Plan and the Corporate Landlord, seek to use the value of Council and other publicly-owned assets to increase investment in new and existing homes.
7	Maximise the use of the Council's housing stock by detecting and preventing tenancy fraud.

Delivery Framework and Monitoring Arrangements

We recognise the importance of having a sound delivery framework for our housing strategy which is specific measurable achievable realistic and time bound. We equally understand the importance of ensuring that progress against targets requires high level monitoring and scrutiny.

Our Housing Strategy Delivery framework will be monitored in the following ways:

1. Actions linked to the Housing Strategy will be overseen by the Strategic Housing Partnership Board who will in turn feed back to the Kingston Strategic Partnership Board. The Strategic Housing Partnership Board will undertake a formal annual review of progress against the delivery plan.
2. The Lead officer for the Housing Strategy is the Head of Housing and details of our progress against targets will be reported on a quarterly basis
3. National and local performance indicators linked to housing are monitored monthly and presented to the Council's executive on a regular basis
4. A Housing Strategy Annual Monitoring Report will approved by the Strategic Housing Partnership Board and published on the Council's website

Our Delivery Plan 2011 to 2015

Following formal adoption of this Strategy a detailed Delivery Plan will be produced to cover the 4 year life of the document. This will take as its starting point the "What We Will Do" sections at the end of each of the 7 themes and translate these into specific actions. This will show a clear path from the overall objectives of the Strategy, through the proposals at the end of each theme into the Delivery Plan itself.

The Delivery Plan will include:

- The assignment of responsibility for the implementation of a particular aspect of the Strategy to a specific delivery vehicle;
- The timing and priority attached to a particular proposal;
- Resourcing implications and dependencies;
- Milestones and, where appropriate, targets for the delivery of actions

The intention is to submit the Delivery Plan for approval by the Council's Place and Sustainability Committee early in 2012.

Alongside the Housing Strategy itself, the Delivery Plan will be subject to annual review and monitoring by Kingston Strategic Housing Partnership.

Information on overcrowding in Kingston

In April 2009 we captured data which allowed us to get a complete picture of how many overcrowded households were on our Housing Register. In 2009 there were 1,221 overcrowded families on the waiting lists, broken down as follows:

Overcrowded households on waiting lists / all tenures					
I. Overcrowded households from all tenures on both LA and RSL waiting lists wanting to be re-housed as on 01/04/09			On LA waiting list	On RSL waiting lists	Total on 01/04/09
No. of households recorded as overcrowded by the Bedroom Standard		Total	1,216	5	1,221
Of these households how many are currently living in each size of accommodation?	1 bed	total overcrowded	681	1	682
		of whom severely o/crowded	63	0	63
	2 bed	total overcrowded	360	4	364
		of whom severely o/crowded	126	0	126
	3 bed	total overcrowded	152	0	152
		of whom severely o/crowded	100		100
	4+ bed	total overcrowded	23	0	23
		of whom severely o/crowded	19		19
Of these households, how many are existing social tenants seeking a transfer?			383		383
..... of whom, the number that are severely overcrowded			41		41
.....and how many are new applicants seeking social housing?		from Private Rented Sector	832		832
		from Owner Occupation	1		1
Check total (1b+1c)			1,216	5	1,221

Current households registered as overcrowding based on *ethnicity:

As at Feb 2011 we had a total of 463 households who have requested a transfer based on overcrowding [made up of both Council and RSL tenants]

Asian (including Asian other) = 45

Black (including black other) = 25
 Mixed (including mixed other) = 21
 Other ethnicity = 35
 Korean = 1
 Chinese = 1
 Middle Eastern = 2
 North African = 2
 Other SE Asian = 1
 Refused = 38
 White = (including white other) = 277
 Unknown = 15

Overcrowding: our successes to date as at 2011:

Initiative	Outcome/Deliverables
Home Visits	183 families have been visited. At the visits Project Officers discuss a range of housing options. This includes showing people how to bid and how to view their bid position. We also discuss the likelihood of being rehoused and the importance of being realistic when bidding for properties. We also show tenants how to maximum the space they have.
Furniture project	The Furniture Project is aimed at Council and Housing Association tenants. It was set up to provide in-situ solutions to help families alleviate their overcrowding whilst they continue to bid for suitable properties. The budget for the project was £7,500 which has been spent. To date we have provided 11 households with furniture, and a further 7 pending. In addition to offering furniture items we also recognised that it may be possible to partition existing properties creating an extra bedroom and solving the overcrowding. 1 household was identified, creating a 3 bed property from a 2 bed property. The total cost for the partition was £2,539.29. Subsequently the household has been taken off the Housing Register
Cluster flats	We have been working with Thames Valley Housing Association which has a small waiting list for cluster flat accommodation in Chiswick, Hounslow and Isle worth. This option is promoted during the housing options visits and is open to adult children of households where they are lacking one bedroom or more. We have made 3 referrals and 1 young adult has been housed resulting in a solution to 1 family's over-crowding.
Home swapper/ Mutual Exchange	We currently have 94 Council tenants registered on Home swapper. In the last 12 months 5 households have completed a mutual exchange.
Perfect Fit	Launched in August 2009, Perfect Fit SW London is an under-occupation scheme designed specifically for RSL tenants who wish move to smaller accommodation within the sub region. Participating RSLs contribute a

Initiative	Outcome/Deliverables
	number of desirable 1/2 bedroom properties to a centralised pot each year So far there have been 31 Moves, however although there has been moves in Kingston, the Council have not benefitted from any of the vacancies.
Home finder for Social Housing Tenants	The Home finder scheme was launched in March 2010. The scheme offers tenants the option of renting in the private sector, with the help of a loan for the deposit and the first month's rent in advance and removal costs. . 6 overcrowded families to date have moved through this scheme into the private sector and we have a further 12 households who have been referred to the Tenant Finder Service and are waiting to be housed.
Quotas for Overcrowded Households	We are now including overcrowded households in our re-housing quota. This year (2010/11) we aim to allocate 40 vacancies to overcrowded households.

Glossary of Terms used within the document

Acronym	Meaning
ASB	Anti social behaviour
BAMG	Black and Minority Ethnic Group
BIP	Borough Investment Plan
BRE	Building Research Establishment
CAB	Citizens' Advice Bureau
CBL	Choice Based Lettings
CERT	Colban Emissions Reduction Target
CESP	Colban Emissions Savings Programme
DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant
DHS	Decent Homes Standard
DV	Domestic Violence
ECET	Equalities and Community Engagement Team
GLA	Greater London Authority
GTANA	Gipsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment
GTM	Grants to Move
HAOS	Housing Advice and Options Service
HAT	Homelessness Assessments Team
HB	Housing Benefit
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HCC	Housing Consultative Committee
HHSRS	Housing Health and Safety Ranking System
HMO	Houses in Multiple Occupation
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
JAPHR	Joint Annual Public Health Report
KCAH	Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness
KREC	Kingston Race Equality Commission
KSP	Kingston Strategic Partnership
KVA	Kingston Voluntary Action
LDF	Local Development Framework
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
LIS	Local Integration of Services
LLAS	London Landlord Accreditation Scheme
NAHP	National Affordable Housing Programme
PNA	Participatory Needs Assessment
PSHCC	Private Sector Housing Consultative Committee
RBK	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

RP	Registered Provider
RPRG	Resident Participation Review Group
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
RTB	Right to Buy
SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure
SHESP	Social Housing Energy Savings Programme
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SHPB	Strategic Housing Partnership Board
SP	Supporting People
SPAD	Strategic Partnership on Drugs and Alcohol
SWLHP	South West London Housing Partnership
TAPS	Tenants' Assisted Purchase Scheme
TFS	Tenant Finder Service
TSA	Tenant Services Authority
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association