

Housing Strategy

Scrutiny 5th December 2011



Walsall Council

Housing Strategy

Walsall Council has a statutory duty to identify housing need and publish a strategy to meet those needs.

Its purpose is to identify local housing issues, priorities for action and the resources needed to deliver those priorities.

We develop a new Housing Strategy every 3 to 5 years, and review on an annual basis.

Our housing strategy priorities are based on:

- local housing needs
- responding to local and national policy including the recent release of the **National Housing Strategy**
- employment opportunities



Housing Strategy

Comments made about the draft strategy

- Links to delivery need to be more closely made throughout the document
- Impact of welfare reform needs to be more robustly made and responded to
- Issues around energy efficiency and new build housing need to be addressed



Suggested alterations to the strategy

- At the end of each chapter there is an action plan that highlights how strategic priorities will be delivered
- Change chapter 3 to “Increasing choice, employment and **addressing welfare reforms**” and include a focus on the impact of welfare reforms.
- That the strategy reflects all methods to bring about energy efficiency in the housing stock



Chapter Headings – description and key actions

1. Priority regeneration initiatives

- Identifies the priority areas and regeneration activity
 - Action – Identify funding streams for development in priority areas
 - Action – Facilitate development of key housing sites
 - Action – Identify methods to promote energy efficient build

2. “Increasing choice, employment and addressing welfare reforms”

- How to increase housing choice and the supply of new homes
- Housings contribution to employment
- Understanding the impact of welfare reform
 - Action – Develop tenure strategy and respond to flexible tenancies
 - Action – Highlight activities to mitigate the effects of welfare benefit changes.
 - Action – Evaluate methods to pump prime housing development
 - Action – Maximise employment opportunities linked to housing construction and Green Deal



Chapter Headings – description and key actions

- 3 Tackling fuel poverty and improving the quality and energy efficiency of existing and future homes
 - Helping people to stay safe and well at home
 - Bringing empty properties back into use
 - Improving the condition of private sector homes
 - Promoting energy efficiency and fuel poverty initiatives
 - Action – proactive work with utility companies to secure investment in the borough
 - Action – investigate loan products to enable owner occupiers to maintain their homes
 - Action – Develop Affordable warmth strategy and Green Deal strategy

- 4 Addressing different needs and prompting independent living, health and well being
 - Highlighting housing as a tool to promote independence, health inequalities and prevention
 - Action – Build to lifetime homes standards
 - Action – Support the evaluation and provision of extra care solutions
 - Action – Work with Social Care to develop the correct housing solutions for each client group
 - Action – continue to deliver DFG's and other support initiatives to help people stay safe and well in their homes



Chapter Headings – description and key actions

5 Preventing and tackling homelessness

- Looks at the causes of homelessness and the range of interventions to intervene early to prevent homelessness and support customers to financial security through employment
 - Action – Work with key partners to provide support to people at risk
 - Action – Work with Revenue & Benefits to pro actively support households affected by benefit changes
 - Action – Develop employment and training links for vulnerable people

