

## **Cabinet – 19 November 2008**

### **Housing Strategy 2008-2011**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Barbara McCracken – Social Care, Health and Housing  
Councillor Adrian Andrew - Regeneration

**Service:** Strategic Housing

**Wards:** All

**Key decision:** Yes

**Forward plan:** Yes

#### **1. Summary of report**

The Housing Strategy 2008-2011 details our housing priorities for the next 3 years, and how we intend to achieve them. The three priorities are:

- Increase housing choice and opportunity
- Improve the standard and sustainability of existing and future homes
- Address diverse needs and promote independent living

The Strategy links closely with planning and regeneration activity, specifically the delivery of the housing element of Walsall's Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) and Walsall Regeneration Company's (WRC) Prospectus. The Strategy also links to the housing related outcomes of Walsall's Children and Young People's Plan, and Walsall's Whole Systems Strategy for Older People.

The Strategy is available in the Member's Room and on the Council's website.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommend to Council the adoption of the Housing Strategy 2008-2011.

#### **3. Background information**

- 3.1 In 2005, Council adopted Walsall's Housing Strategy 2005-2008, further to an assessment by Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) that the Strategy had met their Fit For Purpose (FFP) criteria. During this period, the council has had a number of housing achievements which include attracting approximately £40m Housing Corporation funding to deliver 1000 affordable homes, of which 250 have been built so far. This allocation includes £11m to develop 285 Older Person Extra Care homes.

3.2 The Strategy has been reviewed to give a clear approach to housing delivery over the next 3 years. This review has built on the achievements and partnerships formed through the existing strategy. It takes account of the ageing and diverse population of Walsall and provides an increased focus on creating housing choice for all through increasing the number of new and affordable homes, greater access to existing homes, and improvements in the condition and sustainability of homes. The change in the economic environment will impact on our ability to deliver the strategy however, service plans will be used to redirect resources and objectives on an annual basis.

3.3 The Strategy responds to the challenges set out in:

- Sustainable Communities: Homes For All (ODPM 2005) – this 5 year plan requires; everyone has a decent home, increase housing options and offer more choice and opportunities for homeownership and for people who want to rent, secure housing for homeless people, provide more homes where they are needed whilst improving the environment and regenerating deprived neighbourhoods.
- The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 sets out the Government's proposals to increase the supply of housing including providing more social rented and affordable homes. It aims to achieve this by; increasing investment and exploring new ways of identifying and using land for development, and introducing higher environmental standards to ensure homes are built in a sustainable way to help address climate change issues.

#### **4. Resource considerations**

4.1 **Financial:** The cost of producing this document (including draft documents for consultation) has been met from approved resources and will be contained within existing budgets. The adoption of this Strategy is likely to help maximise the amount of external housing related grant funding secured into Walsall.

4.2 **Legal:** There are no significant legal implications

4.3 **Staffing:** There are no significant implications in terms of IT or human resources as a result of this Strategy.

#### **5. Citizen impact**

The Strategy aims to achieve increased numbers of new affordable homes and greater access to better quality more energy efficient housing. This will benefit both current and future citizens of the Borough, by providing housing that will meet their needs and aspirations.

## **6. Community safety**

The creation of safe and attractive neighbourhoods is a key priority for the council. The incorporation of secure by design principles in property improvements and public realm work will be a key requirement for projects developed through this Strategy.

## **7. Environmental impact**

The Strategy aims are:

- new housing to be zero carbon by 2016
- affordable housing to be built to a lifetime homes standard, and encourage the Standard on private sector housing.
- 95% of all new housing should be built on brownfield sites.
- 70% of private sector homes occupied by vulnerable households will be made decent by 2010.

## **8. Performance and risk management issues**

**8.1 Risk:** The Housing Strategy gives a clear overview of Walsall's housing needs and aspirations to housing associations, private developers and funding agencies, such as the Homes and Communities Agency. Not adopting this Strategy could result in loss of funding/partner interest to deliver affordable housing and other housing related regeneration activity.

### **8.2 Performance management:**

Progress against the action plan attached to the Housing Strategy will be monitored to ensure we achieve both current and future strategic objectives. The multi agency Walsall Housing Partnership (housing associations, council and Housing Corporation) plays an important role in monitoring and achieving these outcomes.

The adoption of this Strategy will enable the provision of the right type of affordable housing and contribute to 'Number of affordable homes delivered' (NI155).

This Strategy also provides the overarching link to performance on the housing related Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets of:

- NI141 'vulnerable households achieving independent living',
- NI156 'number of households in temporary accommodation',
- NI187 'tackling fuel poverty'.

These performance measures are delivered through the housing supporting strategies of Housing Related Support Strategy 2008-2011, Homelessness Strategy 2007-2010 and Affordable Warmth Strategy 2007-2010 respectively. In addition, the Strategy contributes to NI5 'overall - general satisfaction with local area' and NI154 'net additional homes provided'.

## **9. Equality implications**

An increase in new housing and improved standards in new and existing homes will create wider housing choices in the affordable and private sector and will increase social and economic inclusiveness by making housing accessible to people with lower incomes.



## **10. Consultation**

- 10.1 We have consulted with partners, stakeholders, agencies and the community on the Housing Strategy 2008-2011 since September 2007. This has included a stakeholder event, consultation through the Community Empowerment Network (CEN), presentations at partnership boards and we made the document available for comment by the public through our website.
- 10.2 There were no comments that warranted fundamental change to the draft Strategy, though some improvements have been made.
- 10.3 The draft Strategy was considered by Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 9<sup>th</sup> October and minor amendments have been made to the Physical and/or Sensory Impairment section as a result of feedback received.

## **Background papers**

- Housing Related Support Strategy 2008-2011
- Homelessness Strategy 2007-2010
- Affordable Warmth Strategy 2007-2010
- Walsall's Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) 2006
- Walsall Regeneration Company's (WRC) Prospectus 2008
- Walsall's Whole Systems Strategy for Older People
- Walsall's Children and Young People's Plan
- Sustainable Communities: Homes for All – A Five Year Plan – ODPM – January 2005
- The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008

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Dave Martin  
Executive Director  
11 November 2008

B. McCracken

Councillor Barbara McCracken  
Portfolio holder  
11 November 2008

A black ink signature of Tim Johnson, consisting of a series of fluid, connected loops and a final horizontal stroke.

Tim Johnson  
Executive Director  
11 November 2008

A blue ink signature of Councillor Adrian Andrew, featuring a stylized, cursive script.

Councillor Adrian Andrew  
Portfolio Holder  
11 November 2008

# Housing Strategy 2008-2011

November 2008

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## Foreword

The council supports the Government's view that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford in a place they want to live and work. Our Housing Strategy sets out how through a variety of initiatives and successful partnership working with local agencies, housing providers and communities the council will achieve this.

The Strategy is structured around three housing priorities that focus on national, regional and local issues. It goes beyond building new homes and improving existing ones and considers the wider role housing has to play in increasing residents' quality of life. The Strategy demonstrates how housing contributes to the overall economic growth and regeneration of the borough and links to other aspects of day to day living such as education, health and transport.

The Strategy is a result of widespread consultation and its publication does not mark the end but the start of the process. A detailed action plan has been developed to ensure the successful implementation of our Strategy. It sets out a three year investment programme that will deliver lasting change to local neighbourhoods and achieve our housing vision to 'ensure access to a choice of sustainable, quality homes that meet the needs of our diverse community'.



**Dave Martin**  
Executive Director  
Social Care and Inclusion



**Councillor Barbara McCracken**  
Cabinet Portfolio  
Social Care, Health and Housing

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## Introduction

Our Housing Strategy details key achievements over the last three years and the challenges we face in meeting local housing need. It sets out our housing vision and priorities for the next three years and the implementation of the action plan will ensure they are delivered.

## Achievements

Our key achievements over the last three years include:

- secured £17.5 million Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme funding in 2006/08 to provide 400 affordable homes,
- published the Strategic Regeneration Framework jointly commissioned by the council and whg,
- contributed to the Black Country and Telford (Evolve) Housing Market Assessment and Interventions Prospectus launched in July 2007,
- published the Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy 2006.

## Vision and priorities

Based on our achievements and changing/evolving housing markets we have reviewed our housing vision and priorities from our previous Housing Strategy.

Our revised vision and priorities are a result of; consultation with residents and partner agencies, an analysis of our local situation and housing need, and national and regional policy.

### Our housing Vision is to:

‘ensure access to a choice of sustainable, quality homes that meet the needs of our diverse community’.

### Our strategic housing priorities are to:

- increase housing choice and opportunity,
- improve the standard and sustainability of existing and future homes,
- address diverse needs and promote independent living.

### We want to:

- create and maintain neighbourhoods where people want to live, work, shop and visit,
- improve the provision, condition, quality and choice of housing in Walsall and contribute to the wider social, economic and environmental well being of the borough to create and maintain sustainable communities.

### We will:

- provide greater housing choice to meet the needs of the growing number of smaller households, larger families, ageing population and both traditional and increasing numbers of new and emerging Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities,
- ensure there is a wide range of support options available to meet the needs of vulnerable people to help them manage their home and live independently.
- use housing to both support and drive regeneration and sustainable communities

## Strategic Links

### National context

The Government's 5 year plan<sup>1</sup> sets out the actions it will take to; ensure everyone has a decent home, increase housing options and offer more choice and opportunities for homeownership and for people who want to rent, secure housing for homeless people, provide more homes where they are needed whilst improving the environment and regenerating deprived neighbourhoods. To help achieve its housing agenda the Government has set a series of challenging targets that:

- all social rented homes meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010,
- all local authorities operate a choice based lettings system by 2010,
- the number of households living in temporary accommodation is reduced by 50% by 2010.

The Housing and Regeneration Bill 2007-2008 sets out the Government's proposals to increase the supply of housing including providing more social rented and affordable homes. It aims to achieve this by; increasing investment and exploring new ways of identifying and using land for development, improving the planning system to enable homes to be built quicker, and introducing higher environmental standards to ensure homes are built in a sustainable way to help address climate change issues. The Bill specifically sets targets to:

- deliver 2 million new homes by 2010 and 3 million by 2020,
- achieve zero carbon homes by 2016.

The 'Code for Sustainable Homes'<sup>2</sup> sets sustainability standards which can be applied to all homes and supports the Government's aim to cut carbon emissions. It consists of six levels and at each level there are minimum energy efficiency, carbon emissions and water efficiency standards.

The Fuel Poverty Strategy<sup>3</sup> sets out the framework for delivering the Government's overall goal to end fuel poverty for vulnerable households by 2010 and for all households by 2016. It focuses on measures to improve the energy efficiency of a home and reduce the costs of fuel for households.

### Regional context

We want an appreciation of people's housing aspirations in order to deliver the Government's agenda to promote housing choice. The inter-relationship between the various housing markets operating at regional, sub-regional and local level has been assessed to produce joined up strategies to address these issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Communities: Homes for All – A Five Year Plan from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published January 2005

<sup>2</sup> Code for Sustainable Homes: A step change in sustainable home building practice published by Communities and Local Government December 2006

<sup>3</sup> The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy published November 2001 by Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Regional Housing<sup>4</sup>, Spatial<sup>5</sup> and Economic<sup>6</sup> Strategies reinforce each other as they all have a common goal to create sustainable communities in towns and cities across the region where people will choose to live, work and invest. They aim to achieve this by; focusing investment in major urban areas, ensuring a balance of housing and employment development to increase choice and opportunity, creating safe and secure environments and improving transport networks.

The Sub-National Review (SNR)<sup>7</sup> and the Housing and Regeneration Bill 2007-2008 set out changes to sub-regional working in the future. These include the Regional Assembly ceasing to exist from 2010 and the roles and responsibilities of the Regional Development Agency and Local Authorities significantly changing to drive forward achieving local prosperity, economic growth and regeneration.

We are committed to working at a regional and sub-regional level with other local authorities to contribute to the delivery of wider housing, economic and regeneration priorities. For example the council is a member of:

- **Central Housing Market Area** which covers 13 local authorities including the Black Country and Birmingham. Its aim is to deliver the Regional Housing Strategy priorities within the Central area. To help achieve this the sub regions that exist within the Central Housing Market have produced Investment Plans and commissioned and/or completed Housing Market Assessments which will help set priorities for the next 3 years and inform the Regional Allocation Strategy<sup>8</sup>.
- **'evolve'** together with Telford and Wrekin, Sandwell, Dudley and Wolverhampton councils. The evolve prospectus<sup>9</sup> sets out the partnership's commitment to address issues arising from a set of inter-related but different housing markets across the Black Country and Telford area. It supports the aims of the Regional Spatial and Housing Strategy as well as the priorities within the Black Country Study and the emerging City Regions Development Plan.
- **Regional Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group** which has a multi agency/cross authority membership and the purpose of the group is to take forward the key priorities in the Regional Homelessness Strategy. To ensure the implementation and delivery of the Strategy each sub region has developed an action plan. The group is also piloting the national draft Framework for Reducing Homelessness.
- **Sustainable Housing Partnership (SHOPAR)** which consists of local authorities within the region and is supported by the Black Country Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (EEAC). It provides a forum for local authorities to share and develop best practice,

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<sup>4</sup> Delivering a housing vision for the West Midlands in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: pathways of choice – West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy published June 2005

<sup>5</sup> West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy published June 2004 by West Midlands Regional Assembly (phased revision in progress)

<sup>6</sup> West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES): Delivering Advantage 2004-2010

<sup>7</sup> Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration Review carried out by HM Treasury, Department Trade and Industry and Communities Local Government published 17<sup>th</sup> July 2007

<sup>8</sup> The West Midlands Regional Housing Allocations Strategy for 2008-2011 published July 2007

<sup>9</sup> evolve Black Country and Telford Housing Market Renewal Prospectus published July 2007

develops joint funding bids and provides opportunities for joint working with private sector partners in the region to help address energy efficiency and fuel poverty issues.

- **Supporting People Regional Information Group**, consisting of fourteen local authorities, housing association and voluntary and community sector representatives. It aims to; develop a common approach to the delivery of housing related support services across the West Midlands, improve the quality, choice and access to services, identify and jointly bid for resources to fund additional services to meet identified need, develop and share good practice and contribute and respond to local, regional and national issues.

## Local context

We want to create thriving communities and improve the quality of life for the people and the prospects of future generations. We will achieve this by making the most of our existing assets, attracting new resources and creating new opportunities.

Walsall Partnership has produced Walsall's first Sustainable Community Strategy. It sets out a Vision for Walsall in 2021 based on local people's view of the future that Walsall will be a good place to live, work and invest. The Strategy provides a long term overarching framework that influences and aligns plans and strategies of partner organisations to improve the social, environmental and economic well being of our communities and ensure their sustainability.

Walsall's Local Area Agreement (LAA)<sup>10</sup> is the delivery plan for the Strategy. The LAA sets out how partner agencies, business sector and local communities will work together to achieve agreed targets/priorities and deliver the 2021 Vision to create thriving communities. It is structured around four 'pillars': children and young people, safer and stronger communities, healthier communities and vulnerable people, enterprise and economic development.

Walsall has nine Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs) operating across the borough as illustrated in Figure 1 on page 10. They provide a forum for the local community to participate in local decision making and play a key role in delivering the Local Area Agreement. In addition, Walsall has established multi agency Project Reference Groups to oversee the delivery of the Strategic Regeneration Framework priority areas.

Housing cuts across, impacts on and contributes to all four 'pillars'. Improving the provision, condition, quality and choice of housing will; improve the health and wellbeing of our communities, create living conditions that encourage children to study and increases educational attainment, attract investment creating training and employment opportunities, incorporate design features that promote community safety, improve and protect the environment.

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<sup>10</sup> Walsall Partnership, Walsall Council, Government Office for the West Midlands: Local Area Agreement 2008-2011

## Chapter 1 – Understanding Walsall

Walsall covers around forty square miles. It combines urban, suburban and rural communities, reflecting the area's history of heavy industry such as iron, steel and coal mining and craft based industry including lock making and leather trades.

Walsall is one of the seven metropolitan authorities in the West Midlands. It has excellent communication links to the rest of the country as it is situated close to the heart of national road and rail networks.

An overview of the housing market shows:

- Walsall has a population of 253,499. The 2001 Census showed a reduction in the population by 3.1% since 1991.
- The population in Walsall is predicted to decline<sup>11</sup> from 253,200 in 2004 to 249,400 by 2026. This is a consequence of outward migration.
- Walsall has a diverse range of communities living within the borough. People from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in 2001 accounted for 13.6% of the total population which is an increase of 4% from 1991.
- The White British population is predicted to decline from 217,300 to 201,250 and will make up 81% of the total population in 2026 compared to 86% in 2004. The most significant predicted increases are for mixed ethnicity groups (+58%), Pakistani (+57%) and Bangladeshi / other Asian (+50%)<sup>12</sup>.
- Our communities are becoming more diverse with the new arrivals of refugees and asylum seekers from a variety of different countries. The number of new immigrant workers registered with the Department of Work and Pensions indicates there are major changes in immigration patterns which will impact on the future make up of our communities<sup>13</sup>.
- Over 60,000 children and young people live in Walsall and 46,000 attend school. The number of 0-14 year olds is projected<sup>14</sup> to reduce by 7% over the next 10 years.
- 21.2% of all children and young people are from BME communities and 23.8% of those are under 5 years old.
- Statistics<sup>15</sup> indicate approximately 5,500 children living in Walsall have a disability.
- Population figures suggest an ageing population profile. 24.4% of all households consist entirely of pensioners compared with 23.4% in 1991. This includes lone pensioner households that account for 14.8% of all households.

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<sup>11</sup> Population and Household Forecasts for Black Country Districts with an Ethnic Group Dimension  
Report to Wolverhampton City Council C3551 / September 2007

<sup>12</sup> Based on H-DAM (Ecotec Research Ltd) 2004 to 2026 Projections

<sup>13</sup> Source – Department for Works and Pension 2004/05 National Insurance records

<sup>14</sup> 2004 population projections

<sup>15</sup> National prevalence rates

- Population projections for older people show by 2021 the 65 plus age group will represent 25% of the population<sup>16</sup> and 85 plus is forecast to increase to 7,500 people compared to 4,776 in 2006.
- Walsall has 101,333 households in the borough. Whilst the population is forecast to decline, the number of households is predicted to increase to 106,850 by 2026 due to the formation of smaller households.
- 65% of households in Walsall are living in owner occupied accommodation, 27% rent from a housing association and the remaining 8% rent privately or live rent free<sup>17</sup>.
- 32.3% of households include dependent children<sup>18</sup>.
- Walsall has a relatively high dependent population<sup>19</sup> with a greater proportion of children under 14 years and people over 60 years than the averages for England and Wales. The proportion of young people aged 15-24 years is very similar to the national average. Consequently there are fewer people of working age.
- Of Walsall's population aged 16 – 74, 63.2% are economically active. Over 25% of the people in Walsall are employed in manufacturing industries; this is much higher than the national average of 15%. Unemployed people make up 6.9% of Walsall's economically active population.
- 36.8% of Walsall's population aged 16-74 are economically inactive. The largest proportion are retired and 6.6% are inactive due to illness or disability.
- The average income in Walsall is at £18,500<sup>20</sup>
- Between March 2007 to March 2008<sup>21</sup> the average property price increased from £124,890 to £131,040. Property prices have risen by 146% over the last 10 years. The global economic situation which emerged in 2007 has had several immediate impacts on the national and local housing market including a reduction in house sales, new build rates and average property prices. Nationally house prices have fallen by 10.5%, which is the largest annual fall in prices since 1990 (Nationwide 28<sup>th</sup> August 2008).
- The average house price ratio in Walsall is 7 times the average wage<sup>22</sup>.
- A housing needs study update<sup>23</sup> showed an increased need for social rented properties and larger homes. The focus across all tenures needs to be largely houses although apartments may still be appropriate in certain areas.

<sup>16</sup> Source ONS Mid Year Estimates and Projections 2006

<sup>17</sup> Source Census 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Source Census 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Walsall council People and Places Perspectives – a picture of our community January 2007

<sup>20</sup> source: calculations from Inland Revenue 2004/05, tax payers survey)

<sup>21</sup> Land Registry House Price Index

<sup>22</sup> Based on calculation of average house price and average income.

<sup>23</sup> Walsall Metropolitan Borough council Housing Needs and Demand Study Update 2007 published November 2007 by Fordham Research



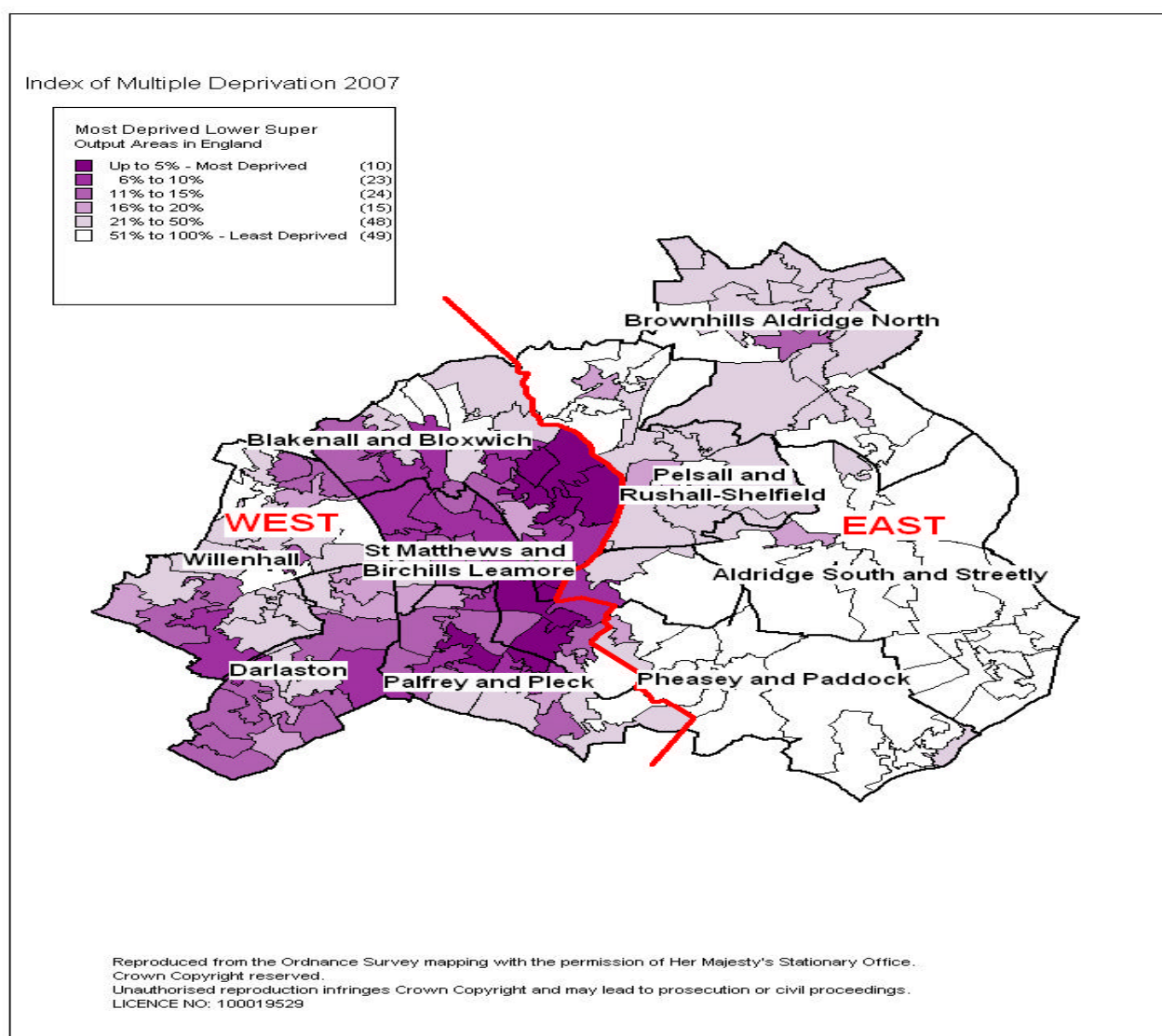
- 68.8% of private sector homes occupied by vulnerable households were decent<sup>24</sup>.

### Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007

Out of the 354 local authorities in England, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007<sup>25</sup> ranks Walsall in the top 50 of the most deprived local authority areas. The IMD measures deprivation across 7 key criteria. These include income, employment, crime, health, education, access and the living environment. These results are combined to form the IMD that provides a single score and rank of deprivation.

Figure 1 illustrates the IMD 2007 at Census Super Output Area levels which clearly demonstrates the higher levels of deprivation in the west of the borough compared with the east. The 3 Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNP) areas with the highest overall IMD are Blakenall/Bloxwich, Palfrey/Pleck and St. Matthews/Birchills/Leamore.

**Figure 1 - Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 and Local Neighbourhood Partnership Areas**



<sup>24</sup> Walsall Council Private Sector House Condition Survey 2007

<sup>25</sup> The English Indices of Deprivation 2007

## Housing Market Areas

### Local

There are clear differences between housing markets in the east and west of the borough. The west of the borough borders traditional Black Country manufacturing areas with the M6 motorway a prominent feature. Traditional heavy industry and older housing are more common. The east of the borough borders open countryside with affluent settled areas where there are extensive green spaces between neighbourhoods and much less industry. Figure 1 details the areas of prosperity and of significant deprivation, and the 9 Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNP) boundaries. The Census 2001 and Land Registry data specifically highlights the following differences in the borough's east and west housing markets:

- a quarter (26%) of properties in the east are detached compared to 12% in the west,
- three quarters (77%) of housing in the east is owner occupied compared with half (55%) in the west,
- there is twice the rate of overcrowding in the west (7%) than in the east (4%),
- there is twice the number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents in the west (17%) than in the east of the borough (9%),
- there is a greater proportion of younger people in the west and older people in the east,
- the average property prices in the east are 42% higher than the west.

Our Housing Needs Study identified that the tenure of new affordable housing should be 75% social rent and 25% shared ownership in the west of the borough and 100% social rent in the east. It concluded that the affordable housing should be focussed on larger family homes.

### Sub-Regional

The Sub-Regional Housing Market Assessment broadly confirms this east/west split, with 3 housing markets identified (1 covering the east and 2 in the west). It highlights how these markets spread into Sandwell and Wolverhampton local authority areas, and are also influenced by Birmingham. The housing markets are:

- **The eastern suburban** covering Pelsall/Rushall/Sheffield, Brownhills/Aldridge North, Aldridge South/Streetley and Pheasey/Paddock LNP areas extending across to Great Barr. There is a need for more smaller properties to balance the overall housing market. The affordable housing need is for 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed plus houses.
- **Northern Outer Core** including Blakenall/ Bloxwich, Willenhall and Darlaston LNP areas, extending to Wednesbury, West Bromwich and Bilston. There is a need for more properties of all types and sizes to balance the overall housing market. The affordable housing need is for 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed plus houses.
- **Central Walsall** Covering St. Matthews/Birchills/Leamore and Palfrey/Pleck LNP areas. There is a need for more larger houses to balance the overall housing market. The affordable housing need is for 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed plus houses.



## Chapter 2 – Increasing housing choice and opportunity

### Our aims are to:

- increase the supply of new homes,
- increase housing choice,
- improve access to housing.

We want to create and maintain neighbourhoods where people want to live. We want to ensure the physical improvement of housing and infrastructure is accompanied by action to; improve community facilities and service provision, promote and maintain community pride and ensure residents are involved in decisions affecting their communities.

We want residents to be able to live safely and comfortably in neighbourhoods that have a mix of high quality homes in a range of types, tenures and costs and access high quality local amenities and services. To achieve this we will:

- remodel and regenerate neighbourhoods to retain existing and attract new households, including re using previously developed land for housing,
- reduce the amount of housing that is obsolete, in low demand or of poor quality,
- bring empty homes back into use,
- provide a range of housing options that meet the requirements, needs and aspirations of existing and potential new households which offer a balance of housing provision between social and private housing for rent, low cost home ownership, market and aspirational housing.

### Increase the supply of new homes

Our target for 2007-2026 is to build an additional 11,363 net new homes across all tenures. This equates to 568 net new homes each year which is a 76% increase on the existing annual net build rate of 322. The national economic situation and Walsall Housing Group's (WHG) extensive planned demolition programme are likely to hold back net build rates in the short term, but as WHG redevelop demolished sites the net outturn is expected to rise. The overall target is subject to the completion of the Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2 Revision and the Black Country Core Strategy. These will set district level targets and show the broad locations where new homes are to be provided. Key aims of the Black Country Core Strategy include addressing areas of low demand and housing market failure and providing aspirational homes to attract higher earning households to the Black Country.

On the basis of the ambitious approach to the Core Strategy, the Black Country was awarded New Growth Point status in July 2008, which will release resources for improving the environmental quality and sustainability of new homes and residential areas. The Government has allocated £100 million to 20 second round New Growth Points to support 74,828 additional

homes of which 32,850 are in the Black Country. A Black Country wide “Programme of Development” will be drawn up to set out how funds will be used.

The Council intends to prepare a Land Allocation Development Plan Document, which will allocate specific sites for new house building and other residential accommodation. We require 95% of new homes to be built on previously-developed land.

We want to increase the supply of good quality, well designed homes to not only address housing need but to meet people’s aspirations, to attract new and retain existing people within the borough. The council’s new Urban Design Guide ‘Designing a Better Walsall’<sup>26</sup> will help achieve this as it sets out the principles the council expects developers to follow when designing new schemes. The council also works in partnership with Midlands Architecture and Designed Environment (MADE) to promote excellence in the designed environment including neighbourhoods and major new housing developments.

The council’s Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Affordable Housing provides advice and guidance to landowners, developers, housing associations and other affordable housing providers. It guides the delivery of affordable housing in the Borough to create choice and opportunity and ensure housing needs are met.

We will work with housing providers to develop the 305 additional affordable homes required per year as evidenced in our Housing Needs Study. Due to the likely decline in new residential build rates over the next 3 years, the number of new affordable homes built through Section 106 agreements only are expected to be minimal. The vast majority of affordable homes over the life of this Strategy will be built on developments attracting external funding from agencies like the Housing Corporation, and the newly forming Homes and Communities Agency (HACA). The affordable new build targets have been set to reflect this.

We will continue to work with the Housing Corporation’s Investment Partners to develop bids for Housing Corporation funding to enable us to provide more affordable homes on key strategic sites. Housing partners supported by the council have so far secured £24 million in the 2008-2011 bidding round to deliver 600 affordable homes. We will work closely with HACA (due to be in place December 2008) to deliver housing led regeneration in Walsall. Early indications are that our strategic approach with the SRF and WRC prospectus will fit closely with HACA’s emerging agenda and provide early opportunity to attract investment.

We want the majority of new affordable homes to be social rent with 50% consisting of four bedrooms and above. We want a property mix of predominately houses as we currently have an oversupply of flats. We will actively promote the inclusion of bungalows where needed and consider the provision of flats where appropriate. There will continue to be a need for supported housing schemes across the borough. New build homes should be built to the Lifetime Homes Standard and in some cases adapted for full disabled access.

We will encourage housing providers to make links with and use local skills centres to help employ and train local people and maximise use of local supply chains as part of the emerging ‘Think Walsall’ initiative. Walsall Housing Group (whg) has an established multi award winning construction skills centre that provides advanced apprenticeship programmes in bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing and electrics through it’s ‘Building Futures’ project ‘.

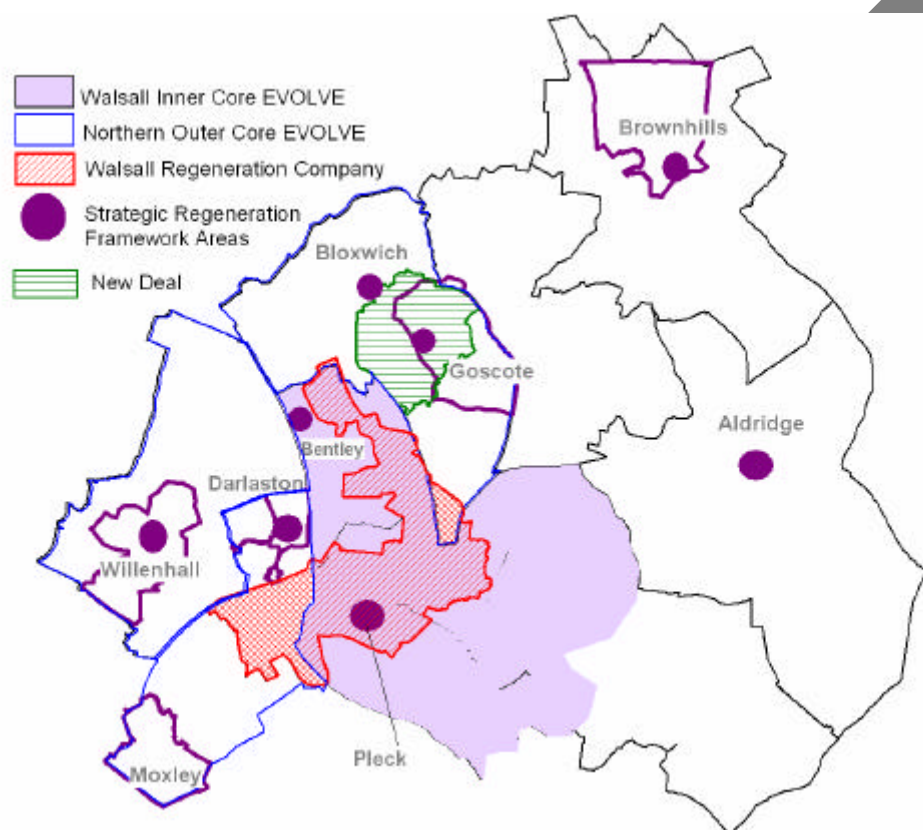
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<sup>26</sup> Designing a Better Walsall (Supplementary Planning Document) February 2008

## Increase housing choice

We have identified priority areas within the borough for housing market restructuring and regeneration as illustrated in Figure 2. Some of these areas (e.g. Goscote) have been accepted by the Housing Corporation as having 'strategic fit' and are also key elements of the Core Strategy.

**Figure 2 – Priority Regeneration Areas**



## Evolve

The 'Evolve' prospectus<sup>27</sup> will deliver the priorities detailed in the Black Country Study<sup>28</sup> and sets out a 9 year development programme that aims to attract £394 million through private, public and housing market renewal funding. It will ensure investment is targeted at regenerating specific housing markets within Walsall, Dudley, Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Telford and Wrekin through a range of area and theme based actions. It will help to restructure housing markets in the west and north of the borough as illustrated in Figure 3 to increase housing choice and opportunity.

<sup>27</sup> Evolve – The Black Country and Telford and Wrekin Housing Market renewal Prospectus prepared by the Evolve Housing Market Renewal Partnership

<sup>28</sup> The Black Country Study May 2006

We will continue to work with Evolve to deliver the prospectus and build on our success of attracting Evolve funding into Walsall to help deliver our Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) priorities.

## Strategic Regeneration Framework

The council in partnership with whg, jointly commissioned Walsall Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF)<sup>29</sup>. It provides a 10 – 15 year comprehensive development framework that builds on the findings of the Black Country Study and compliments the aims of the Evolve prospectus<sup>30</sup>. The SRF identifies 9 priority areas for regeneration focusing on Pleck, Goscote, Brownhills, Moxley, Bentley, Willenhall, Darlaston, Bloxwich and Aldridge as illustrated in Figure 3. All the projects are interlinked and connect with existing plans for regenerating Walsall Town Centre and parts of Darlaston by Walsall Regeneration Company (WRC), and the 'Corridors and Gateways' regeneration programme.

The redevelopment of the Old Pleck Road site within the Pleck area kick started the SRF. The Housing Corporation is funding the replacement of 6 unattractive and unpopular blocks of multi storey flats with mixed tenure new homes. This scheme was the first national project to deliver affordable homes through the Housing Corporation's New Partnership in Affordable Housing (NPiAH) programme. Planning consent for this major scheme led by whg and Bovis Homes was granted by the council in less than 9 weeks.

Strategic Regeneration Frameworks have been developed for:

- **Goscote Lane Corridor** - which covers parts of Harden, Blakenall and Goscote estates consisting mainly of 3 bedroom social rented houses owned by whg, including key parts of the New Deal area. The area suffers from high levels of deprivation and the plan proposes a range of solutions which includes selective demolition (including the Goscote Estate) to diversify property tenure, type and size by building approximately 950 new homes.
- **Brownhills** - which proposes canalside and High Street, mixed tenure schemes providing over 500 new homes consisting of apartments and houses. It also identifies regeneration projects for Brownhills centre focusing on shopping facilities, traffic improvements, public transport and pedestrian access.
- **Moxley** – which has identified a total of 34 Hectares of housing redevelopment land where approximately 800 new dwellings will be built (giving a net increase of 576) over the next 10-15 years to provide a wider range, of tenure, size and type of properties
- **Bentley** - which proposes, over the next 3 to 5 years, improvements to the local centre to provide new mixed tenure housing, iconic library and related community facilities and enhanced public spaces.

The plans identify a range of long term regeneration solutions from investing in bricks and mortar to investing in the capacity of the local community through training, education, employment and health interventions.

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<sup>29</sup> The Walsall Strategic Regeneration Framework: A framework for housing and district centre regeneration; prepared for Walsall council and Whg Building Design Partnership with King Sturge and EKOS Consulting January 2006

<sup>30</sup> Evolve – The Black Country and Telford and Wrekin Housing Market renewal Prospectus prepared by the Evolve Housing Market Renewal Partnership

The Strategic Regeneration Framework options have been developed following extensive community led consultation, supported by local Project Reference Groups (PRGs).

These 4 areas, along with the Town Centre Waterfront have been recognised as strategic sites by the Housing Corporation.

In July 2007 a framework study was commissioned to provide a long term plan for Willenhall centre, which is expected to deliver approximately 3,000 new homes over a period of 15 years. This work is now being developed through the council's first statutory Area Action Plan (AAP).

We will continue to work with the PRGs and housing providers to ensure the housing priorities in each framework are delivered and sustainable.

In April 2008, Cabinet supported the principle of establishing a Strategic Partnering Arrangement jointly with Walsall Housing Group (whg) to identify a development model and developer partner to deliver the SRF programmes for Brownhills, Moxley and Goscote Corridor. The council and whg are currently working with English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation and Advantage West Midlands to develop the Strategic Partnering Arrangement and take forward this major first phase of the SRF programme of housing and wider community and regeneration initiatives.

In June 2008, Cabinet agreed to Darlaston being taken forward as the next SRF priority area. It also agreed a joint review by the Council and partners (Whg and WRC) of the remaining SRF priority areas and areas covered by the Regeneration Company be undertaken to refresh the next phase of housing led regeneration priorities across the borough.

### **Walsall Regeneration Company**

Walsall Regeneration Company's (WRC) strategic framework<sup>31</sup> covers Walsall Town Centre extending north to Leamore and west to Darlaston Strategic Development Area (DSDA) as detailed in Figure 3. WRC's vision is to restore Walsall as a leading Black Country Town by regenerating the town centre facilities and building on existing transport links. It aims to attract more than £750 million of combined private and public sector investment over the next 10 years, creating more than 5,500 jobs, over 1,500 new homes and reclaiming in excess of 70 hectares of land.

The WRC and partner agencies are actively promoting and facilitating the delivery of mixed use developments. Their aim is to promote 'city living' by introducing residential schemes alongside shops, offices and leisure facilities that are designed to complement the existing street scene and buildings. Examples of this are the Urban Splash proposals for the Waterfront development also the creation of jobs in the Darlaston Strategic Development Area and Office Corridor.

We will work in partnership with the WRC and housing providers to help deliver its strategic framework.

### **Birchills**

The WRC boundary also covers part of the Birchills community, which is one of the most deprived areas of the borough. The community is situated on the northern edge of the town

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<sup>31</sup> Walsall A Town for Enterprise: A Prospectus for Growth 2008 published by Walsall Regeneration Company



centre. It is important that the economic benefit delivered through projects in the town centre are linked to regenerating the Birchills area. Birchills has been recognised as a priority for both WRC and the council, and a number of housing-led regeneration projects are being developed. A study was recently commissioned by WRC, funded by the council and English Partnerships, into how a strategic vision could be established for the Birchills area. This study concluded that a strategic framework should be commissioned by the Birchills PRG, and a task and finish group be set up of key stakeholders to take that process forward. These recommendations are set to be endorsed by the council.

### **New Deal for Communities**

Walsall has one of 39 national New Deal for Community (NDC) areas which covers parts of Blakenall, Bloxwich East and Leamore. The NDC programme aims to address multiple deprivation in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Walsall was awarded £52 million over a 10 year period 2001-2011.

One of the key objectives for Walsall NDC is the creation of sustainable communities through partnership and housing market restructuring. It wants to improve the quality and range of housing, create choice and opportunity, diversify tenure and increase confidence in the area to help retain existing and attract new residents.

### **High Value Areas**

We know there are areas outside the SRF, WRC and Evolve which have high house prices and limited supply of affordable homes. For example, research<sup>32</sup> into the housing needs and aspirations of young Black and Minority Ethnic people indicated that a significant number aspire to move away from settled community areas in the west of the borough to more affluent areas in the east. We want to ensure people have access to a range of housing options in these areas. We will continue working with housing providers to create housing pathways of choice by providing a mix of aspirational housing, affordable home ownership and some new social rented properties.

### **Improve access to housing**

All social housing in Walsall is managed and owned by our housing association partners. They have affordable homes for rent and/or sale and a range of different types of property to suit different people including; older people, young people, families and people with particular support needs. We work closely with them to ensure the effective management of homes to help meet housing need.

Existing housing association properties becoming vacant are the main source of rented accommodation in the borough. We have a nominations agreement with all our housing association partners to ensure people in housing need can access vacancies. We ensure housing associations offer us the opportunity to nominate people for a minimum of 50% of empty homes and 75% of new build homes. We widened the nominations criteria to not just

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<sup>32</sup> Housing Needs and Aspirations of young people currently seeking to access accommodation and young people in secondary school education who will be seeking accommodation in the future – research carried out by Housing Strategy and Partnerships September 2007

include people who are homeless but also vulnerable people such as refugees, people with a disability and people experiencing domestic abuse. This contributes to the delivery of our Homelessness Strategy<sup>33</sup> by helping to address and prevent homelessness and our Housing Related Support Strategy<sup>34</sup> by helping people to move from supported accommodation to settled independent living.

Whg operates a Choice Based Letting scheme. The scheme, called 'choose and move' advertises empty homes via property shops, whg housing offices, the internet and in local news papers. People bid for a property and are selected based on the gold, silver or bronze band they are awarded and the length of time from when they registered.

Our Empty Property Strategy 2005-2008 sets out our approach to bringing empty homes back into use. We use a combination of measures including; our empty property information pack providing property owners with a range of advice and information, empty property grants encouraging owners to refurbish their empty homes for re-use, rent deposit guarantee scheme offering private landlords a deposit for use against rent arrears and damage to property at the end of the tenancy, and enforcement powers.

Mercian Housing Association is the HomeBuy Agent for Walsall. They promote low cost home ownership options to help people who cannot afford to buy a home on the open market access the property ladder. We will work with housing providers to ensure affordable housing options are promoted.

As at April 2008 the Government launched two new products which replaced Open Market HomeBuy. These products are OwnHome HomeBuy and MyChoice HomeBuy and give further access to affordable home ownership for Walsall residents.

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<sup>33</sup> Homelessness Strategy 2007-2010 – published September 2007

<sup>34</sup> Housing Related Support Strategy 2008 -2011 – published August 2008

## Chapter 3 – Improving the standard and sustainability of existing and future homes

### Our aims are to:

- improve 70% of private sector homes occupied by vulnerable households to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010,
- improve energy efficiency and end fuel poverty across all tenures.

### Decent Homes Standard

One of our housing objectives is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home. The Decent Homes Standard focuses on ensuring homes within the social and private sectors are warm, weatherproof and have reasonable modern facilities. A decent home is important for the health and well-being of the people living in it.

Our housing association partners have business plans and are on target to deliver the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 for all their properties. We monitor their progress annually and at the end of March 2008, 97% of all housing association homes including all Whg homes in the borough were decent.

We will target investment towards making private sector homes occupied by vulnerable households decent, particularly those that include children. Our target is to improve 70% of private sector homes to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

### Private sector homes

Owners are responsible for maintaining their own home, however we know that not all owners can afford or are in a position to do so. Our Private Sector Strategy<sup>35</sup> sets out the role we play in helping owner-occupiers, private tenants (in particular the elderly, people with disabilities, vulnerable people, people on low income and with young children) and landlords improve living conditions.

Our Housing Renewal Assistance Policy<sup>36</sup> explains what support is available to owner occupiers and private sector landlords to maintain and improve their properties. Support is available as loans (funded through the Kick Start programme) that allow owner-occupiers to borrow against the equity in their home and where appropriate direct payments in the form of grants.

The private rented sector is essential to achieving a balanced housing market that offers people tenure choice. We are working with private sector landlords to improve management and property standards within the private rented sector. To achieve this we have established a landlord forum and worked with the Regional HOMESTAMP Consortium to develop the

<sup>35</sup> Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2005-2008 published November 2004

<sup>36</sup> Housing Renewal Assistance Policy published March 2006 by Walsall Council



Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme (MLAS). The successful Landlord Accreditation Scheme aims to; ensure the provision of quality accommodation and good tenancy management services, reduce illegal evictions and promote tenancy sustainment. We will continue to promote the scheme to increase the number of accredited landlords within the borough.

Landlords of larger homes over three storeys high with five or more tenants are required to apply to the council for a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) license. We have licensed all HMO in the borough that meet the criteria and will continue to identify other large properties that may be subject to licensing.

The council has completed a Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (NRA) of the Alumwell/Birchills area. It looked at the standard of repair of 1,400 private sector homes and environmental issues relating to parking, litter and crime. It also asked local people what they thought of the area. The assessment revealed the properties require varying degrees of repair. We have set up a street by street group repair programme to complete the work over the next 5 to 10 years depending on funding available. This assessment is contributing to the development of the Birchill's scoping report commissioned by WRC.

We want to increase the energy efficiency of all homes in the borough and achieve the governments target to end fuel poverty for vulnerable households by 2010 and for all households by 2016. Our Affordable Warmth Strategy<sup>37</sup> includes initiatives to; promote affordable warmth through a range of media, raise energy awareness through training and education and maximise take up of assistance available by residents.

## Future homes

Designing a Better Walsall<sup>38</sup> requires all new homes to meet level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.<sup>39</sup> The Code for Sustainable Homes<sup>40</sup> builds upon the EcoHomes standard. It introduces a standard for the design and construction of all new homes to ensure their sustainability. It uses a rating system consisting of six levels. At each level there is minimum energy efficiency, carbon emissions and water efficiency standards which aim to achieve zero carbon new homes by 2016.

We know well designed housing schemes can increase community safety and discourage crime. We will encourage developers to consult with the local Police Architectural Liaison Officer as part of the design process and seek Secure by Design<sup>41</sup> accreditation.

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<sup>37</sup> Affordable Warmth Strategy 2007-2010 published April 2007

<sup>38</sup> Walsall council 'Designing Walsall' Supplementary Planning Document for Urban Design February 2008

<sup>39</sup> Code for Sustainable Homes - A step change in sustainable home building practice published December 2006 by Communities and Local Government

<sup>40</sup> Code for Sustainable Homes – a step change in sustainable homes building practice produced by Communities and Local Government in December 2006

<sup>41</sup> Safer Places – The planning System and Crime Prevention

New build housing association and private developer schemes grant funded through the Housing Corporation must comply with the Corporation's published Design and Quality Standards<sup>42</sup>. This ensures affordable housing providers build well designed, good quality housing to meet identified needs in places where people want to live. Our Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Affordable Housing encourages all affordable homes to conform to the Standards.

All these requirements are made clear to developers at pre-application stage. Potential partners are assisted through regular Development Team meetings that aim to provide a 'one stop shop' approach to development consents. The Team provide a corporate framework for assessing the merits of new initiatives and progress scheme proposal.

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<sup>42</sup> Design and Quality Standards – Affordable Homes Strong Communities published April 2007 by The Housing Corporation

## Chapter 4 – Addressing diverse needs and promoting independent living

### Our Aims are to:

- develop and deliver options for young persons temporary accommodation,
- deliver the council's older persons re-provision programme,
- adapt 600 homes by March 2011.

We want to improve the quality of life of vulnerable people in the borough and reduce health inequalities. We want to ensure people receive help and support to enable them to maintain or increase their ability to live independently and participate in community life, preventing homelessness and avoiding admission to hospital or residential care.

Our Housing Related Support programme funds a range of flexible housing support services, tailored to meet the needs of a variety of vulnerable households including the following identified priorities; older people, women experiencing domestic abuse, people with a mental health issues, and young people. Our Housing Related Support Strategy<sup>43</sup> sets out our priorities and plans for the next three years in more detail. Our focus is moving more towards providing increased floating support services. For example Supporting People Grant has enabled us to establish floating support schemes for Gypsies and Travellers, refugees and resettlement support to help prevent homelessness and homelessness recurring.

### Homelessness

We have adopted a pro-active approach to addressing homelessness and implemented practical initiatives and best practice in homelessness prevention and providing housing options. We want to achieve the government target to reduce the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010. Our Homelessness Strategy<sup>44</sup> focuses on four strategic priorities; preventing homelessness arising where possible, providing support to vulnerable people and people at risk of homelessness, addressing the wider causes of homelessness and increasing access to settled homes to help reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation. The effects of the recent economic situation have seen an increase in the numbers of households accepted as homeless as a result of repossession, and an increase in the number of people seeking advice and assistance. The council will continue its prevention work to assist these households, including the new 'court desk' to help people faced with court action to repossess their homes, which is a joint venture with Citizens Advice Bureau and funded through Communities and Local Government (CLG).

We are carrying out an option appraisal of our homeless persons' projects. We are specifically focusing on the re-provision of our largest young persons project at Sandwell House in

<sup>43</sup> Housing Related Support Strategy 2008 – 2011 published August 2008

<sup>44</sup> Homelessness Strategy 2007-2010 published September 2007

Caldmore. We want to provide smaller fit for purpose schemes that offer modern self contained short stay accommodation in a variety of locations across the borough. We want to ensure homeless young people are able to maintain links with existing support networks and access local education, employment and health services.

## Older People

We know that Walsall has an ageing population with the number of older people projected to increase significantly over the next 10 -15 years. The greatest rate of increase will be people over 75 years particularly with the increase in dementia related illnesses in the over 85s. Whilst the majority of households are owner occupiers, over a quarter of social rented accommodation houses an older person. There is an above average number<sup>45</sup> of people aged 60 years and over living in the east of the borough.

Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership's Whole Systems Strategy for Older People identified a range of outcomes required for older people, particularly Outcome 4b 'older people have decent, appropriate and affordable accommodation and can choose where they live.' We want to enable older people to remain in their own home as long as possible and for those not able, or wishing to, we want to provide them with a range of modern housing options if home based and preventative services cannot meet their independence needs

Our Housing Needs Study identifies a need for bungalows across all tenures for older people, particularly social rented. It specifically states that there is a demand for 230 affordable bungalows per year, some of which can be met through the re-letting of current stock by our housing association partners. We will encourage the provision of new bungalows in the borough.

The council, in partnership with Housing 21, has developed a 3 year programme to re-provide our existing residential homes for older people and replace them with 5 new extra care schemes in Aldridge, Brownhills, Delves, Mossley and Short Heath. This will provide a total of 285 self contained affordable homes with access to care and support services. Whilst the majority of these homes will be social rented, an affordable home ownership option will be included. It will help people retain their independence, promote social inclusion and improve the health and quality of life of older people. It is anticipated that further extra care requirements from 2011 onwards will be between 80 to 120 homes, focused in the Darlaston and Pheasey and Paddock areas.

People are living longer and less likely to have family support. We will promote the use of telecare and assistive technology to help the most vulnerable people in Walsall to live independently for as long as possible.

Our Neighbourhood Community Officer (NCO) Service funded through Supporting People Grant provides practical advice and support to over 1,300 older and vulnerable households helping them to live independently in their own home.

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<sup>45</sup> Walsall council people and places perspectives – a picture of our community published January 2007

## Learning Disability

We know over the next three years we will need to provide homes for approximately 50 - 70 people with a learning disability. This is partly due to the need to re-provide for people currently living in accommodation that is no longer fit for purpose and people living outside the borough that the council supports who wish to return. There is also an element of new provision for young people leaving school who want to live independently and people who are living with older carers whose circumstances may change resulting in them no longer being able to provide care and support. We will work with commissioning managers and housing providers to meet this need.

## Mental Health

The council in partnership with the teaching Primary Care Trust (tPCT) has developed a protocol to ensure timely housing advice is provided to all people with enduring mental health issues on admission to hospital. Using Supporting People Grant we have also established a floating support service to help people on discharge from hospital to return to the community and independent living. We will work with commissioning managers and housing providers to consider increasing the capacity of floating support and accommodation based services and explore alternative options such as extra care housing.

## Physical and/or Sensory Impairment

Our Housing Needs Study identified that 14.2% (14,705) of all households include someone with a particular need. Approximately two thirds of those households contain a person with a physical disability.

In Walsall, households with particular needs generally contain fewer people than the average for the borough and are disproportionately made up of older people. They are more likely to be in unsuitable housing and require a wide range of adaptations and improvements to their home; most commonly required are shower units, extra handrails inside the home and a lift/stair lift.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are a means tested grant provided by the council to help people with a disability adapt their home to meet their needs and retain their independence. The number of adaptations completed each year is increasing. At the same time demand for grants is also increasing. This demand exceeds the resources available which has resulted in a priority register being developed. Our target is to adapt 600 homes by March 2011.

Walsall Adapted Housing Service (WAHS) was launched in September 2006. It was developed through partnership working between Walsall Disability Forum (WDF), the Health Service, Housing Associations and the council. The service aims to help people with a disability access appropriate accommodation to meet their needs. It provides a matching facility of people with a disability to vacant housing association adapted properties, and we are working with WAHS to widen this service to properties of all tenures. We will continue to work with WAHS to provide people with a disability, housing choice and reduce the demand for Disabled Facilities Grants. WAHS aim that up to 50 adapted homes will be recycled over the next 3 years.

Designing a Better Walsall<sup>46</sup> requires all new affordable homes to be built to Lifetime Homes Standard<sup>47</sup> and encourages housing providers to incorporate the standard for all new open market properties. This will provide quality, accessible, adaptable homes that offer people, increased housing choice and independence by making homes easier to adapt as peoples circumstances change which will reduce the cost of adaptations.

## Children and Young People

Walsall ranks 47<sup>th</sup> of 150 councils on the income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) score and it has a high rate of infant mortality which is linked to deprivation and poor housing. We know that children and young people face real challenges due to the increasing levels of poverty and deprivation they experience. A key component of deprivation is poor housing and research shows how this adversely impacts educational attainment.

We want to improve housing for children and young people and provide attractive, high quality affordable homes to attract and retain young families who are crucial to the future prosperity of Walsall and the success of our regeneration plans. To help address this we will focus our resources on;

- ensuring housing improvements are targeted at households with dependant children,
- reducing the use of temporary accommodation for homeless families,
- encouraging the development of low carbon emission homes to reduce fuel poverty,
- increasing the number of homes available for communities with large families,
- encouraging the re-use of under-occupied homes,
- adapting homes for children and young people with a disability,
- encouraging housing providers to design family homes with an area for children to complete homework, as recommended by the Housing Corporation<sup>48</sup>.

We want to support young people who are accessing housing for the first time. We will:

- promote the supply of affordable homes for young people,
- increase housing related support to meet the needs of vulnerable young people,
- ensure that allocations policies result in proportionally more lettings to vulnerable young people.

## Existing Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and Emerging Communities

The 2001 Census indicates that approximately 1 in 6 people living in the borough are from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group which is forecast to continue to rise. A large proportion of our BME community comprises of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi households.

We know our BME communities are unevenly distributed across the borough<sup>49</sup> with a large proportion living mainly in the Palfrey/Pleck, St Matthews/Birchills/Leamore, Darlaston and Willenhall LNP areas of the borough. There are links between areas with high deprivation and

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<sup>46</sup> Walsall council 'Designing Walsall' Supplementary Planning Document February 2008

<sup>47</sup> Lifetime Homes 21<sup>st</sup> Century Living Quality, Flexibility and Choice : [www.lifetimehomes.org.uk](http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)

<sup>48</sup> Design and Quality Standards – Affordable Homes Strong Communities published by the Housing Corporation April 2007

<sup>49</sup> Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy 2005-2008 published October 2005



ethnicity with the highest proportion of BME households living in the two most deprived LNP areas Palfrey/Pleck and St Matthews/Birchills/Leamore.

Our Housing Needs Study indicates Black and Asian households are more likely to be owner-occupiers, that a high proportion of Black and Mixed households live in socially rented accommodation and all three of these BME groups show higher levels of private renting than White households.

We know from recent research<sup>50</sup> that there is a need to; provide some 5 and 6 bedroom homes, develop a range of tenure across the borough to increase housing choice, access and opportunities and promote housing options. It specifically indicated that a number of young Black and Minority Ethnic people aspire to move away from settled community areas in the west of the borough to more affluent areas in the east.

We will work with housing providers and the voluntary sector to help address the housing needs and aspirations of our existing BME communities to enable people to move out of or remain in traditional areas of settlement. The delivery of the Strategic Regeneration Framework and the work of Walsall Regeneration Company will help address housing needs in parts of Darlaston, Willenhall, Pleck and Birchills.

We know very little about the housing needs and aspirations of the Gypsy and Traveller community and they were excluded from the 2001 Census. The council in partnership with Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton councils commissioned Fordham Research to carry out a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showmen Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).

The results of the Assessment will inform the review of our Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy<sup>51</sup>, Regional Housing Strategy to help establish overall need within the sub-region, and the Regional Spatial Strategy Review (RSS) which will set targets for pitch provision for each local authority area. Our Development Plan Document will identify appropriate sites to match the pitch numbers if they haven't already been identified. We will work with sub-regional local authorities and our housing association partners to develop accommodation options to help address the needs identified through the Assessment.

We know that immigration patterns are changing. The Department of Works and Pensions data<sup>52</sup> indicates that since 2003/04 the number of people from Eastern European countries regionally and locally has increased significantly. This will impact on the diversity of our communities and council services and we need to be able to respond to these changes. We will be carrying out research to help us understand the housing needs and aspirations of new and emerging communities.

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<sup>50</sup> Housing needs and aspirations of young people currently seeking to access accommodation and young people in secondary school education who will be seeking accommodation in the future : completed by Walsall council Housing Strategy and Partnerships September 2007

Investigation into the need for 5 and 6 bedroom accommodation for Black and Ethnic Minority families in Walsall: completed by Walsall council Housing Strategy and Partnerships February 2007

<sup>51</sup> Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy published May 2006

<sup>52</sup> Walsall Council People and Places Perspectives – A picture of our community January 2007

The economic impact of migrant workers in the West Midlands: commissioned by West Midlands Regional Observatory – published November 2007

## Chapter 5 – Resourcing our strategic priorities

We want to maximise investment opportunities to ensure our housing vision and priorities are delivered. We work closely with partner agencies including housing associations, Walsall Partnership and other councils within the region to secure external funding and increase the range of resources available.

### Capital resources

The Capital Strategy is the council's financial management framework. It determines the level of capital resources available and sets out the processes and policies which influence capital investment.

The Capital Programme sets out the council's investment priorities over the next 5 years and how it's financed through a mixture of borrowing, capital receipts and specific grants from the Government.

The housing element of the Capital Programme is based on priorities identified by the directorate management team through the service planning process, which are assessed and approved for funding by the Capital Strategy Group. Table 1 provides details of our indicative programme (external finding in particular may vary from these amounts).

**Table 1 – Indicative Housing Capital Programme**

	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010/11 £000's	2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's
<b>Funded Through Mainstream</b>					
<b>Aids and Adaptations</b>	4,387	3,687	3,687	3,687	3,687
<b>Disabled Facilities Grant – Council Contribution</b>	310	610	610	610	610
<b>Total Housing Capital funded through Mainstream</b>	4,697	4,297	4,297	4,297	4,297
<b>Funded Through Other Sources</b>					
<b>Disabled Facilities Grants – Grants from DCLG</b>	1,215	915	915	915	915
<b>Regional Housing Pot - Kickstart</b>	979	979	979	979	979
<b>Regional Housing Pot – Regeneration and Growth</b>	3,328	3,328	3,328	3,328	3,328
<b>Total Housing Capital funded through Other Resources</b>	5,522	5,222	5,222	5,222	5,222
<b>Total Housing Capital Programme</b>	10,219	9,519	9,519	9,519	9,519

The programme is kept under constant review throughout the year to ensure the delivery of capital priorities. It is monitored at a senior management level monthly and quarterly reports



are submitted to the scrutiny and performance panel detailing actual expenditure against the budget.

## Revenue Resources

The estimate of revenue expenditure for the housing role of the council is detailed in Table 2. These estimates were derived from the budget approach highlighted within the context of this Section. The council also revenue funds other services which have a substantial contribution to housing, specifically Regeneration Services.

**Table 2 - Revenue Resources**

Revenue estimates of housing expenditure	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010/11 £000's	2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's
Housing Standards and Improvements	717	737	762	787	812
Housing Strategy and Partnerships	734	749	763	780	795
Supported Housing	1,463	1,551	1,633	1,716	1,801
Supporting People	269	277	287	296	306
<b>Net budget</b>	<b>3,183</b>	<b>3,314</b>	<b>3,445</b>	<b>3,579</b>	<b>3,714</b>

## Other sources of funding

Strategic Housing receives grants from Communities and Local Government that are targeted at delivering specific services such as Supporting People and Homelessness.

The Housing Corporation allocates funding to our housing association partners through their Approved Development Programme for bids we have supported to provide more affordable homes within the borough. As part of the Housing Corporation's 2008-11 funding programme, housing associations in Walsall have so far been allocated £24m to deliver approximately 600 affordable homes. These monies are paid directly to the housing associations concerned, and are not reflected in Table 3. There is a further £256m Housing Corporation funding to be allocated across the West Midlands in 2008/2011.

**Table 3 – Other sources of funding**

	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010/11 £000's	2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's
Supporting People Grant	7,225	7,213	7,192	7,192	7,192
Homelessness Grant	79	79	79	79	79
<b>Total Other Sources of Funding</b>	<b>7,304</b>	<b>7,292</b>	<b>7,271</b>	<b>7,271</b>	<b>7,271</b>

## Chapter 6 – Implementation, Monitoring and Review

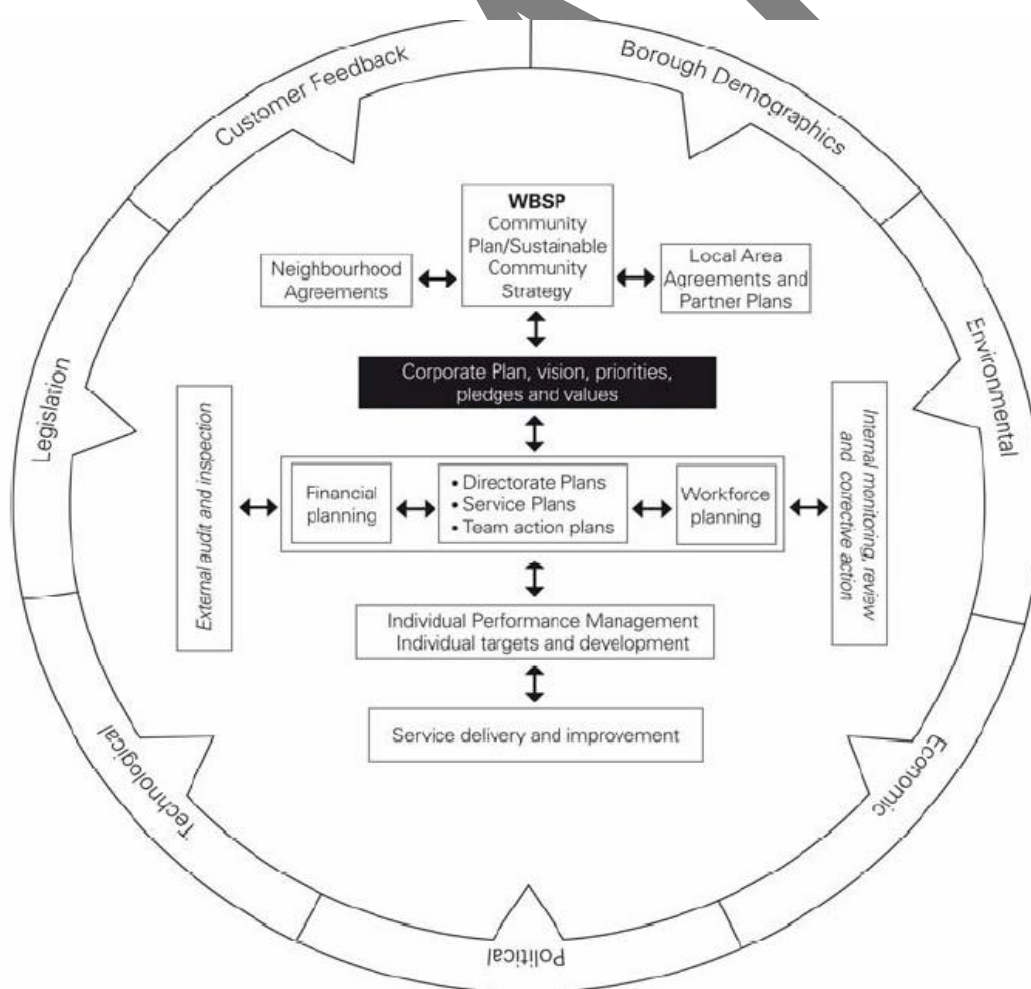
We want to deliver high quality cost effective services to our residents. We know robust comprehensive performance management is essential in delivering excellent services for everyone. Our Corporate Integrated Planning and Performance Framework (IPPF) ensures performance management is an important part of our daily work.

A key element of the framework is the Corporate Plan which sets out the council's vision for the borough, its aims and objectives, and key priorities for the year ahead. It contributes to and is influenced by Walsall Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.

The framework brings together a range of environmental, economic and demographic information together with customer feedback that influences the design and delivery of our services.

Figure 4 illustrates how our services are designed, delivered, performance managed and how service delivery and financial planning link to the Corporate Plan.

**Figure 4 – The council's corporate integrated planning and performance framework**



Monitoring and reviewing our performance is carried out at every level of financial, service and individual planning processes to ensure continuous improvement.

The council's performance is subject to formal assessment by the Audit Commission through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process to be replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). It looks at how well the council delivers its services and how well the council is run.

Annually Strategic Housing produces division, service and team plans which set out priorities and targets we want to achieve over the next three years that focuses on the current year. These are monitored and reviewed quarterly by our senior management team.

We also monitor our performance against a set of national and local housing performance indicators on a monthly basis and the results are reported to the strategic housing performance board and quarterly reports to the corporate management team. This continuous monitoring enables us to assess the effectiveness of our strategy, processes and procedures. It also enables us to identify and respond to changes in trends.

The implementation of the action plan included in this Strategy will ensure our housing priorities for the next three year are achieved. It will be implemented through existing partnership and working groups for example Evolve, HOMESTAMP and setting up additional groups to work on new projects and initiatives. The action plan will be monitored, reviewed and updated annually by Walsall Housing Partnership.

## Action Plan

Priorities	Milestones	Targets / dates	Partners
Increase housing choice and opportunity	Work with housing providers to provide additional affordable homes.	2008/2009 – 100 2009/2010 – 200 2010/2011 – 305	Homes and Communities Agency Walsall Housing Partnership, Private Developers
	Work with housing providers to ensure the property mix on new housing developments is predominately houses, includes some bungalows and a reduced number of apartments.	Ongoing	Walsall Housing Partnership, Private Developers
	Review and publish an updated Supplementary Planning Document for Affordable Housing.	2011	Walsall Housing Partnership, Private Developers
	Continue to work with evolve to deliver the prospectus.	Ongoing	Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Telford and Wrekin LAs
	Ensure appropriate housing needs and aspirations are incorporated within the regeneration framework plans (SRF and WRC).	Darlaston June 2009 Willenhall September 2010 Birchills March 2011	Homes and Communities Agency, Walsall Housing Partnership, Private Developers
Improving the standard and sustainability of existing and future homes	Monitor our housing association partners progress towards achieving the Decent Homes Standard.	Until 2010	Walsall Housing Partnership
	Improve 70% of private sector homes occupied by vulnerable households to Decent Homes Standard.	2010	
	Review and publish an updated Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy.	June 2009	Private Sector Landlords and Developers

Priorities	Milestones	Targets / dates	Partners
Address diverse needs and promote independent living	Review and publish an updated Homelessness Strategy.	2010	Walsall Housing Partnership
	Reduce the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation.	50% by 2010	
	Re-provide temporary accommodation for young homeless people at Sandwell House.	2011	Housing Associations, Private Developers
	Deliver the council's older person's accommodation re-provision programme to provide 5 new build extra care schemes.	2011	Housing 21 Housing Corporation
	Work with housing providers to provide homes for approximately 50 – 70 people with a learning disability.	2011	Housing Associations, Private Developers
	Adapt 600 homes over the next three years.	2011	Walsall Adapted Housing Service
	Ensure affordable homes are built to the Lifetime Home Standard on all appropriate developments.	100%	Walsall Housing Partnership, Private Developers
	Review and publish an updated Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy.	October 2009	Walsall Housing Partnership
	Undertake research to help us understand the housing needs and aspirations of new and emerging communities.	March 2009	Walsall Housing Partnership

## Additional Information

This document is one of a range of housing related strategies:

- Housing Strategy Summary 2008-2011,
- Housing Related Support Strategy 2008-2011,
- Homelessness Strategy 2007-2010,
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy 2005-2008,
- Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy 2006,
- Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2005-2008,
- Empty Property Strategy 2005-2008,
- Affordable Warmth Strategy 2007-2010,
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Strategy 2006,

If you would like a further copy of this Housing Strategy or any of the above documents please contact us:

Housing Strategy and Partnerships

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E-mail: [housingstrategyandpartnerships@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:housingstrategyandpartnerships@walsall.gov.uk)

These documents are also available on the Housing Service page of the council's website [www.walsall.gov.uk/housing](http://www.walsall.gov.uk/housing) as well as links to documents mentioned in these strategies.

## Feedback Form

We would like to hear your views and suggestions. If you have any comments, please complete the response section below, detach it and send it to:

## Housing Strategy and Partnerships

Walsall council

## 2nd floor, Civic Centre

## Darwall Street

Walsall

WS1 1TP

Alternatively, e-mail [housingstrategyandpartnerships@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:housingstrategyandpartnerships@walsall.gov.uk)

## Comments

DRAFT

Name .....

Address.....