



District of **easington.**



## Three Year Housing Strategy 2008 – 2011

Decent homes for all



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# Foreword

## **This is District of Easington Council's Housing Strategy for the period 2008 to 2011.**

Through the delivery of this strategy we aim to improve the quality and choice of housing, the environmental conditions of our neighbourhoods, and the quality of life of local people. We also want to ensure strong, safe and healthy communities where people can access good quality affordable housing in an attractive environment.

This strategy includes an action plan that sets out how the Council and its partners will deliver our vision for housing in the district and how housing will contribute to the economic, social and physical regeneration of our district. Our priorities include maintaining an attractive supply of housing land in sustainable locations and the delivery of new affordable housing for rent and sale; restructuring the supply of housing in a number of communities to assist in creating a more dynamic housing market; the provision of housing and support for some of our more vulnerable residents; and the improvement in the management and maintenance of public and private sector housing throughout the district.

Working in partnership with the Council's housing company, East Durham Homes, we provide more than 8,700 social rented homes and have an important role in delivering excellent services to the tenants of these properties.

As a strategic housing and planning authority, District of Easington Council has a responsibility for shaping the future of housing provision in the district. We do this by working with other public, voluntary and private sector organisations and local residents as well as analysing housing market trends, determine future housing needs, and delivering actions that help deliver the council's vision 'to make the district great'.



**Cllr Robin Todd, MBE**  
Executive Member  
for Housing



**Ian Morris,**  
Head of Housing

## Chapter One: Introduction

### **What is a housing strategy?**

The housing strategy brings the key issues surrounding housing and housing services in the district together in a single document. The strategy is designed to demonstrate how housing can support future economic growth and how it contributes to the overall regeneration of the

district. The document also identifies how our approach to housing issues links to the national, regional and sub regional policy framework. It sets out plans and priorities for housing within the District of Easington over the next three years and demonstrates how these plans and priorities will

be delivered at the local level. The housing strategy sits alongside the Easington District Development Framework Core Strategy and the District of Easington Regeneration Statement in delivering the housing related objectives of the council's Corporate Plan and Community Strategy.



### **What is included within the housing strategy?**

The strategy sets out a vision, four strategic aims, and a number of objectives to achieve these aims. Chapter two of the document includes background information as to why each aim has been identified as a priority, while chapter 3 sets out a three-year action plan which includes the intended outcomes for the residents of the district.



## How has consultation shaped the housing strategy?

The consultation framework to help develop the housing strategy covered a variety of methods including:

- Presentations to a number of groups
- Sample questionnaires sent out to over 4,000 residents to record their views on the proposed vision and key aims of the strategy
- Questionnaires sent to a number of partner agencies
- Workshops with key partners through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Housing and Communities Group and Registered Social Landlord Forums.

A number of common key issues were highlighted during the consultation and have been included within the strategy and the action plan. Headline information includes:

- Affordable housing is a priority across the whole of the district
- Strong demand for sites for new housing developments to widen the choice of housing to assist the economic regeneration of the district.
- The standard of existing housing needs to be improved
- The number of two bedroom bungalows for older people and accommodation for single people needs to be increased
- Future housing development should take place on brownfield land
- Housing for vulnerable people needs to be increased.

More detailed information from the consultation exercise is included within Appendix 1.



## Chapter One: Background

### **Achievements over the last five years.**

The last Housing Strategy document was produced for the period 2002 - 2007 and delivered the following:

- Enabled the provision of 1,925 new homes
- Increased the number of new social rented homes by 159
- Demolished surplus poor quality low demand obsolete housing to create sites for housing development
- Increased support services for vulnerable people
- Increased the number of homes for older people

### **District of Easington Corporate Plan 2007-10**

The Plan sets out the general background information about the district including :

#### **District profile**

Our district forms the eastern boundary of County Durham and includes the towns of Peterlee and Seaham as well as a number of villages and colliery settlements. This mix of urban and rural living is of critical importance in understanding the dynamics of the district's housing markets.

Since the decline of the coal industry in the 1990s, the district has responded positively to the challenges it has faced but regeneration continues to be the focus of the Council's work. While significant progress has been made, the Council and its partners recognise that there are still many more challenges facing the district in

terms of the economy, housing, worklessness, education and health, as reflected in our current ranking of 7th most deprived area in the Country in the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Population**

District of Easington's population has now stabilised at around 94,000 (mid year estimate 2006) following a small decline between 1982 and 2002. We have a slightly older population than the national average, with 20.3 per cent of our residents being of retirement age (the national average is 18.5 per cent). Our population profile not only presents us with the challenge of providing housing for older people but also offers the potential for an overall increase in demand for housing, particularly from young people.

#### **Employment**

The unemployment rate for District of Easington is now comparable to the national average at 2.5 per cent. However, while the employment rate is improving, at 67 per cent it remains significantly lower than the North East average (70.5 per cent) and the national figure (74.3 per cent). The rate of economic inactivity, meanwhile, is 23.5 per cent compared to 21.7 per cent nationally. The number of incapacity benefit claimants is falling, with 9,910 claimants in August 2006 compared

to 11,280 in August 2002 but this is still high compared to the North East and national rates. Employment figures show the district continues to rely on the manufacturing sector to provide employment, with 22 per cent of jobs being in this area, compared to 12.3 per cent regionally and 11.1 per cent nationally. However, the economy is diversifying and has seen a significant increase in the service/business service sector mainly through public sector and call centre growth (the highest numbers of jobs are in the public admin, education and health sectors at 26 per cent). The number of VAT registered business is 14.1 per 10,000 population (2006), which is below both the regional (20.8 per cent) and national (39.3 per cent) figure, suggesting limited prospects for economic growth. The self-employment rate at 5.6 per cent is also below the regional rate of 7.9 per cent.

#### **Income and earnings**

The average weekly earnings for full-time workers in the district are £358.30 before tax, compared to £393.60 in the North East and £449.60 nationally (2006). Low income coupled with relatively high rates of worklessness place additional demands on a limited supply of 'affordable' housing stock in both the social rented and market housing sectors.



### **Average house prices**

The Government have recognised that affordable housing has become a national issue with average national house prices around £238,000. The average house price in the district increased from £42,802 in 2001 to £118,000 in 2007. This reflects the area's increasing attractiveness to both buyers and developers (about 600 new homes were built in each of the three years from 2003 to 2006) but has given rise to some affordability issues for first time buyers. Rising house prices across the District are a positive reflection of the ongoing regeneration of the area and have resulted in increasing personal wealth of many homeowners. But as the relative incomes of households traditionally catered for at the lower end of the home ownership ladder have failed to keep track with house price rises this has restricted choice and mobility for some and has, in turn, compounded the pressures on the affordable social rented and market sectors.

### **Housing stock**

There are presently around 41,900 homes in the district, about 26 per cent of which are in the social sector and 74 per cent in the private sector. The social housing stock is predominantly managed by East Durham Homes, a company established in 2004 to manage around 8,700 properties owned by the council. Almost 2,000 homes are managed by Registered Social Landlords. There is also a small private rented sector although this is predominantly restricted to older and poorer quality housing.

### **Health**

Health disadvantage is significant. The indices of deprivation ranks all wards within the district in the worst 20 per cent nationally (health domain), while 77 per cent of the area's population reside in areas ranked among the worst 5 per cent in the country for health. The quality and availability of housing is a key determinant of health and many

of our most vulnerable residents are currently living in unsuitable or non-decent accommodation. The district has higher levels of people with a limiting long term illness which is 30 per cent of the population compared to the national average of 17 per cent.

### **Community Safety**

Crime levels in the district are relatively low. Housing can play a key role in reducing crime not only through design but also because stable housing can be a key factor in reducing offending.

<sup>1</sup> District of Easington Corporate Plan 2007- 2010

<sup>2</sup> Source: IMD 2007: CLG



## Chapter One: Where we want to be

### **The vision and objectives of the housing strategy**

The vision we aspire to achieve through this housing strategy is:

Every resident in the district is living in a decent home and quality environment.

In order to achieve this vision we have created four key 'strategic' aims that are directly linked to key outcomes for the residents of our district. This will enable us to directly measure our success against the aims and objectives set out in the housing strategy.



## Aims of the housing strategy

## Outcomes for local residents

## Contribution to strategic outcomes within the council's corporate plan

**Aim 1:** To improve the quality and standard of housing provision and the local environment in order to ensure sustainable mixed communities.

- An increased choice of housing
- Improved environmental appearance of neighbourhoods
- Improved housing services to local residents
- Warmer, more secure, better quality homes
- Reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour
- Improved employment opportunities

Regeneration of the district, with a direct contribution to:

- Delivery of Decent Homes for all
- Clean and tidy communities
- Making the district safe

**Aim 2:** To direct housing investment to locations that will produce the greatest benefit for the district and support the economic, social and environmental well being of the people of District of Easington.

- Increased number and quality of housing units
- Improved employment opportunities
- Better amenities and services to local residents

Regeneration of the district, with a direct contribution to:

- Delivery of decent homes for all
- Clean and tidy communities
- Learning opportunities for all
- Sustainable job for everyone

**Aim 3:** To ensure the type and mix of new and existing housing provides choice and meets housing needs and demands.

- Increased access to properties built at specific 'affordable' levels (for sale or affordable rent)
- Increased range of property types available in settlements through new build and improvements
- Improved housing services to local residents

● Improved availability of market housing in the district

**Aim 4:** To address the supported housing needs of vulnerable groups.

- Increased availability of housing-related support for vulnerable people
- Increased number and type of housing units available for people with support needs
- Warmer, more secure, better quality homes

● People supported and assisted to live in the community

- Building a healthy community
- Decent Homes for all

## Chapter One: Policy Background

The housing strategy enables the council to co-ordinate local policies, programmes and investment so it can deliver a wide range of housing activity linked to priorities for district of Easington and County Durham and through this help to contribute towards national regional and sub-regional housing objectives.

### **Regional and sub-regional priorities**

This strategy has been developed in line with the regional priorities for housing set out in the Regional Housing Strategy 2007 and the Sub-Regional Housing Strategy for County Durham.

These priorities include:

- Restructuring housing markets to secure the long-term future of settlement areas and neighbourhoods, particularly in former coalfield communities
- Increasing the number, choice and quality of affordable homes to sustain communities, support economic growth, and attract and retain a skilled workforce
- Improving existing housing through the delivery of the Decent Homes programme
- Ensuring the specific housing and support needs of different groups are met

In seeking to address these priorities we will look at innovative ways of working in order to make the best use of our partners and resources. We are also committed to protecting the environment and

will look to promote sustainable housing solutions that minimise the impact on the local environment, reduce housing related costs to local residents and also reduces our carbon footprint.

### **Local priorities**

Our fundamental challenge is to transform the district's housing across both the public and market sectors. In order to do this we need to invest in existing housing, remove low demand and/or obsolete housing and enable the provision of new high quality contemporary housing. Our priorities will, therefore, include:

- Addressing the overall housing needs of the district. This includes increasing the range of choice in market housing as well as the number of affordable family homes and properties for first-time buyers
- providing appropriate housing for an ageing population.
- Engaging communities in decisions that affect their neighbourhoods.



- Promoting independent living by enabling the provision of supported accommodation for vulnerable people.
- Ensuring housing activity is coordinated with other key services such as regeneration, asset and property management and planning.
- Maximising opportunities for securing housing investment from public and private sector partners in order to deliver different housing types and tenures.
- Helping regenerate neighbourhoods, stimulate economic growth and provide employment opportunities for local people.
- Raising property standards and environmental standards in order to meet Decent Homes targets and the Government's Respect agenda.



## National Priorities

There are also a number of national priorities that this strategy aims to support at the local level including:

- Helping to promote diverse, mixed sustainable communities using different housing types and tenure.
- Promoting owner occupation by helping as many people as possible realise ambitions to own their own home.
- Driving up property standards in line with Decent Homes Standards and the 'Code for Sustainable Homes'.
- Increasing the supply of new housing, particularly affordable housing to support the restructure of housing markets.
- Improving responses to anti-social behaviour and improving community cohesion through the promotion and delivery of the Respect Standard for housing.
- Supporting housing options that promote and support independent living.
- Making new and existing homes greener through higher energy efficiency/carbon emission standards for new build homes, investment in the fabric of the existing housing stock and promotion of renewable energy sources. This is in line with the Government's 'Code for Sustainable Homes'.





## Chapter Two: Aims and objectives

This chapter outlines why each of our four strategic aims has been identified as a priority for District of Easington and includes supporting evidence. In order to achieve these aims the council has established objectives and key actions to be achieved by 2011. These are also

included in this chapter.

The objectives are supported by an action plan, set out in Chapter 3, and are clearly linked to performance indicators that measure the delivery of our intended outcomes for residents of the district.

The Decent Homes Standard was set by the Government, and requires social housing to be warm, safe, water tight and have reasonably modern amenities.

**Aim One:** To improve the quality and standard of housing and the environment to ensure sustainable mixed communities



This is a priority in District of Easington because of the following factors.

### **Decent Homes**

There is a high failure rate for decency standards in both the public and private sector housing stock. This means that some of our most vulnerable residents are living in homes that do not meet acceptable standards for warmth, security and amenities.

### **Social Housing**

90 per cent of council housing is currently failing to meet the Decent Homes standard. This is in comparison to only 12.29 per cent of Registered Social Landlord stock failing.

### **Private Sector**

The British Research Establishment (BRE) Housing Centre has been commissioned to produce a series of housing stock models to describe the housing conditions in the seven Durham districts. However, the main issue in District of Easington is that twice the national average number of financially vulnerable households live in the private sector and currently only 59 per cent of these vulnerable people live in Decent Homes.

(Appendix 2 illustrates the Decent Homes data in District Easington across all tenures)



### **Market Renewal**

There is currently an oversupply of poor quality terraced housing in the district. The housing offer, therefore, needs to be improved in order to support housing market renewal and regeneration. Appendix 3 illustrates the stock profile locally, nationally and regionally. The council have enabled over 600 new homes to be built each year since 2003 and has a strong housing land supply. However, the housing offer is limited with around 19,000 terraced properties in the district, making up almost 45 per cent of the total housing stock compared to a national average of around 25 per cent. In basic terms this means that a 'national average' stock profile for Easington would have around 8,000 fewer terraced houses and 4,000 more detached houses, with a small reduction in the number of semi-detached and small increase in maisonettes or apartments. While there is little real value in national averages in terms of planning for future local housing provision, these figures do illustrate the relative imbalance of housing in the District.

The council has established two private sector neighbourhood renewal areas in Easington Colliery and Dawdon Colliery, and during the last seven years 400 properties in these areas have been improved through group repair. A further 300 empty properties that were mainly poor quality low demand terraced housing have been demolished.

Our approach to housing market renewal will focus on improving existing housing as well as replacing older and low demand housing with new attractive houses and neighbourhoods.

### **Decent Homes and Environmental Improvements**

East Durham Local Strategic Partnership's housing group has identified Decent Homes and environmental improvements as a priority. The delivery of Decent Homes is also one of the council's corporate objectives and delivering improved housing and environmental standard for residents is identified as a priority.

One of the key issues raised by local residents and stakeholders during the consultation for this strategy was the need for improved environmental conditions particularly in relation to litter, unsightly empty properties and flytipping on open spaces.

### **Employment Opportunities**

Through East Durham Strategic Partnership we have set targets to bring in 5,000 net additional jobs by 2021, to reduce unemployment by 41 per cent (from 3.4 per cent in 2001 to 2 per cent by 2007), and reduce economic inactivity by 18 per cent from 12,100. In order to achieve these targets it is essential the district provides good quality housing to attract and retain economically active residents and ensure disadvantages and barriers to work presented by poor quality or unaffordable housing are minimised.

To address these issues and achieve our aim, we have set the following key objectives.

**By 2011 we will have:**

- Worked closely with East Durham Homes to achieve a successful inspection from the Audit Commission. A successful inspection will result in £117 million Government Funding becoming available to improve the council's housing stock. We will also monitor the Decent Homes programmes for Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners to ensure their housing stock is of a decent standard.
- Published a new Private Sector Financial Assistance Policy in 2008. This will enable us not only to offer advice and assistance to the owners of private sector housing to make improvements to their homes, but also to improve residents' ability to access financial advice and assistance for home improvements.
- Completed the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment with the other Durham districts to ensure the on going supply of quality housing sites for future housing developments.
- Made best use of our land and planning policies to ensure the design and construction of as many new homes as possible utilises modern construction methods in order to deliver environmentally friendly homes. As part of this we will encourage partners to work towards achieving the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 Standard by using environmentally sustainable materials and renewable energy in housing development schemes.
- Delivered an Empty Homes Strategy Statement, which will bring empty properties back into use. Improve housing management standards through the delivery of initiatives such as Empty Dwelling Management Orders and a Selective Licensing Scheme for private landlords, which will initially be piloted in Easington Colliery. This will also improve the condition of the housing stock in the private sector and reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Improved the environmental appearance of our communities. As part of this we will work with partners to align future environmental programmes with housing improvement programmes.
- Made best use of Government funding and partnership working to create employment opportunities for local people that stimulate the economy and sustain local communities. An example of this will be ensuring work contracts include specific employment training opportunities for local people.

## Case Study

### **Easington Youth Build Project**

A key weakness in the housing market across the District is suitable, affordable housing for rent for young people, in particular those who are single and under the age of 25. The Youth Build project has been developed in partnership with voluntary, statutory and private sector partners as a response not only to this issue but also as a way of meeting the education, training and employment needs of socially excluded young people in Horden and Easington.

The project will see derelict empty properties brought back into use by local young people who may have previously been excluded from employment and training opportunities. As well as developing skills and qualifications to take part in further training or employment opportunities, the young people who carry out the work will have the opportunity to rent these properties once the repairs are complete.

**Aim Two:** To direct housing investment to locations that will produce the greatest benefit for the district and support the economic, social and environmental well being of the people of District of Easington

This is a priority in District of Easington because of the following factors:

**Demographics**

Inward migration has now offset a previous trend of net outward migration, resulting in the district's population stabilising at around 94,000. However, an increased range of market housing is needed to meet the current and future needs of the population.

**Growth Areas**

The towns of Peterlee and Seaham are seen as the economic drivers for the district and play a key role in employment and retail. Both are easily accessible from the A19 trunk road, which is acknowledged as a driver for economic growth. Greater Peterlee includes the settlements of Horden, Easington and Shotton, while Seaham is supported by the village of Murton. Priority for future housing within these areas will, therefore, be given to activities that support these two towns.

**Market Renewal**

The 2002 report by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) at Birmingham University

suggested that 20 per cent of the region's housing stock was at significant risk of market failure through low demand. The subsequent house market boom, fuelled largely by low interest rates and population increases, has mitigated the effect of low demand and the market collapse that the study predicted has not happened. However, the underlying factors highlighted by CURS – older terraced housing, poor stock condition, an over supply of the wrong type of social housing and a poor environment – remain very real factors in a number of our communities. The subsequent 2003 DCHR/ABRA study into housing regeneration in Durham, therefore, highlighted the need for significant demolitions and high quality replacement housing.

The Durham Coalfields Housing Partnership has prioritised 13 settlements across the county for investment and market renewal to tackle the issues raised in the CURS and DCHR/ABRA studies. As part of this work we have commissioned Area Development Frameworks (ADFs) for Dawdon, Easington Colliery, Horden and Peterlee, which have provided us with an action plan for achieving substantial change through housing market renewal in these areas.

Our ambitions are to restructure these housing markets on a large scale through major investment and deliver new housing through area development plans. This will include approximately 3,000 new units of housing, 500 demolitions and 500 refurbishments over the course of the next 15 years.

**Housing Demand**

Information from housing registers confirms demand for social housing has increased across the district during the last two years.

The need for different types of housing is relatively equal in all areas although highest demand is concentrated around Seaham and Peterlee. The building of new houses in these areas, as well as others including South Hetton and Thornley, has increased, providing additional choice to help meet this increased demand.



To address these issues and achieve our aim, we have set the following key objectives:

**By 2011 we will have:**

- Enabled the construction of new homes to support economic growth in the two main centres of Peterlee and Seaham.
- Directed housing renewal investment into Easington Colliery, Dawdon and Peterlee. Individual area action plans, including selective demolition, provision of appropriate housing and environmental improvements, have been produced for each of these areas. Appendix 4 (produced December 2007) outlines the housing development plans for the next eight years. This includes those sites that are currently under construction and those where planning permission has been granted as well as projections for the provision of housing across settlements up until 2016.
- Better understanding of housing issues so as to increase capacity for future housing development and allow further housing choice for residents.
- Completed whole settlement reviews of the larger villages of the district with a view to targeted housing renewal and replacement.
- Established a suitable delivery vehicle for the Durham Coalfields Programme.



## **Aim Three:** To ensure the type and mix of new and existing housing provides choice and meets housing needs and demands

This is a priority in District of Easington because of the following factors:

### **Access to the housing market**

In the District of Easington between 2002 and 2006 house price inflation outstripped income inflation by a factor of 10 to one. Subsequent changes in the housing market and patterns of housing tenure mean access to all housing types is now an issue in the district. There has been a continuing increase in home ownership and a reduction in social housing, and as more households find their choices restricted this has manifested itself in an increase in the number of people on social housing waiting lists.

### **Affordability**

The Affordable Housing Strategy 2006 revealed a general shortage of affordable homes for all groups but identified an especially high need among young people and first and last-buyers. Choices and access to housing are limited and market interventions are necessary in order to secure the provision of affordable housing and address this need. Appendix 5 includes average house price and average earnings in the district from 2002 to 2006 illustrating how house prices

have risen significantly and local income levels have remained relatively stable.

### **Housing demand for different housing types**

The Housing Needs Survey 2004 identified the need for additional family housing and accommodation for older people. A high proportion of existing rented stock for older people is unsuitable and unsustainable in the long term and needs replacing. This has been exacerbated by the upturn in the housing market, and while families and older people remain the primary need groups the affordability issue has caused a general increase in demand for all property types.

To address these issues and achieve our aim, we have set the following key objectives.

### **By 2011 we will have:**

- Continued to provide affordable housing in line with planning policies. This will require all developments of 15 units or more to be comprised of at least 20 per cent affordable housing such as low cost housing or socially rented housing.
- Enabled the provision of new social housing by

Registered Social Landlords and Private Sector Housebuilders through the National Affordable Housbuilding Programme (NAHP). Our current priorities for NAHP funding are provided in Appendix 7.

- Enabled the building of new homes that protect the environment and make best use of brownfield land. This will include properties being built to the Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 Standard.
- Encouraged the building of 'lifetime homes' as part of new housing developments. These are properties that can be adapted to suit the resident's changing housing needs, for example, when they become older or if they develop a disability.
- Introduced a Choice Based Lettings Scheme in District of Easington by 2008, to be rolled out across County Durham by 2010.

## **Aim Four:** To address the supported housing needs of vulnerable groups

This is a priority in Easington because of the following factors.

We need to ensure sufficient supported housing is available for vulnerable residents in East Durham. This will involve ensuring an adequate supply of housing as well as providing the appropriate care and support to enable people to remain in their homes or move to more suitable accommodation. This will in turn involve working with a number of partner agencies including housing providers, Social Services, Primary Care Trust, carers and support providers. We have prioritised vulnerable groups in East Durham in line with the client groups identified in the County Durham five-year Supporting People Strategy 2005 to 2010.

### **Homelessness**

Although the number of homeless presentations to the Council has reduced by 64 per cent during the last two years there are still more than 200 cases per year. The main causes of homelessness in the district are domestic violence and other forms of family breakdown, e.g. when young people feel they can no longer

live at home. The figures for homelessness have reduced due to the early intervention work of Housing Options Officers who provide housing advice and assistance to people threatened with homelessness, often when there is no legal requirement to provide accommodation. This means there is a continued need for improved joint working in providing relevant support and accommodation for homeless people.

### **Older People**

Wider health and social care agendas are increasingly focussing on the importance of enabling older people to remain independent and live in their own homes for as long as possible. In District of Easington, population mid estimates from 2004 show the number of older people over retirement age is predicted to increase. Appendix 6 shows projected trends for the next 10 years as well as the supply of rented accommodation for older people against the population for each ward. These figures suggest that additional demands will be placed on housing and support services for older people in the future. In terms of socially rented housing provision for older people, 78 per cent is currently made up of bedsits and one



bedroomed bungalows but this type of accommodation needs to be remodelled, modernised or replaced with more suitable accommodation.

### **Other vulnerable groups**

The Housing Needs Survey 2004 revealed a number of groups within the district who need supported housing, including people with learning or physical disabilities, alcohol or substance misuse problems and mental health issues. This means there is demand for the development of appropriate housing and support services to meet their needs.





To address these issues and achieve our aim, we have set the following key objectives.

**By 2011 we will have:**

- Reviewed and began remodelling provision across the district of designated housing for older people on a settlement-by-settlement basis.
- Enabled the provision of new specialist housing for specific vulnerable groups.
- Increased housing opportunities and housing support for vulnerable people to help them live independently, for example, delivering a high quality aids and adaptations service.
- Continued to provide a high quality service for people who find themselves homeless.

## Case Study

### Homelessness Prevention

Miss Y is a single mother with three children. She and her family have lived in their private rented property for eight months. However, the landlord has told Miss Y that he wants her to vacate the property and has given her a letter advising she leave within two weeks.

Miss Y contacts the homelessness and housing advice team for assistance. She is informed that her landlord has to give two months written notice before he can proceed to court for a possession order and then a warrant for a eviction. The officer she speaks to contacts the landlord to discuss the reason for the notice and advises that the notice is invalid. She also informs the landlord that if the tenant is evicted without due process it would be an illegal eviction with sanction in the criminal and civil court. The landlord confirms possession was due to rent arrears but he is happy for Miss Y to continue to reside if the arrears are paid.

The officer completes an income and expenditure form to assess the affordability of the property and to ensure Miss Y is receiving her maximum entitlement to housing benefit. The officer plans an affordable re-payment of arrears and makes the offer to the landlord who is happy for Miss Y to remain in her home.



## Chapter Three: Three year action plan

The following pages set out the council's action plan for delivering its priorities for housing over the next three years. To do this we will be utilising the following funding sources:

### Funding Source

North East Regional Housing Board  
 - Single Housing Investment Pot  
 National Affordable Housing Programme  
 One North East  
 Government Funding from the ALMO programme  
 English Partnership  
 Private Sector Funding  
 Working Neighbourhood Fund  
 Registered Social Landlords

### Abbreviation

SHIP 3  
 NAHP  
 ONE  
 ALMO  
 EP  
 PS  
 WNF  
 RSL

### Funding Source

Supporting People Grant  
 Energy Efficiency Commitment Grant  
 Council's Capital Programme  
 Housing Revenue Account  
 General Fund  
 Disabled Facilities Grant  
 Warm Front  
 Places for Change  
 Homelessness Grant  
 Revenue Funding

### Abbreviation

SP  
 EEC  
 CP  
 HRA  
 GF  
 DFG  
 WF  
 PFC  
 HG  
 RF

**Aim One:** To improve the quality and standard of housing and the environment to ensure sustainable mixed communities are created

Objectives	Key Actions	Timescales	Resources	Responsible Officer	Outputs	Outcomes for Residents
<b>Ensure that 100 per cent of all properties in the public sector are decent.</b>	Finance and support East Durham Homes' Decent Homes programme.	2008 -11	CP	Head of Housing	All properties are Decent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warmer, more secure better quality homes</li> </ul>
	Monitor the delivery of Decent Homes programmes by East Durham Homes and Registered Social Landlord Partners.	2008 -11	HRA/GF	Service Support Manager/ Policy and Strategy Manager	All properties are Decent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warmer, more secure better quality homes</li> </ul>
	Continue to clear obsolete and low demand non-decent housing	2008 -11	CP/SHIP	Head of Housing/ Policy and Strategy Manager	Reduction in low demand obsolete housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved environmental appearance of neighbourhoods</li> <li>Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>

Objectives	Key Actions	Timescales	Resources	Responsible Officer	Outputs	Outcomes for Residents
<b>Enable improvements to private sector housing</b>	Commission an up-to-date private sector stock condition survey to establish a stock baseline position	April 08	CP	Head of Housing/ Housing Renewals Manager	Up-to-date information available for Decent levels in the private sector	N/A
	Introduce a Financial Assistance policy to support investment in homes by homeowners and private landlords	April 08	SHIP/CP	Head of Housing/ Housing Renewals Manager	Financial assistance policy implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warmer, more secure better quality homes</li> </ul>
	Carry out selective demolition in Easington Colliery to support the ADF	2008-11	CP/SHIP/EP	Head of Regeneration/ Housing Renewals Manager	Reduction in obsolete housing and improvement in Decency standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved environmental appearance of neighbourhoods</li> </ul>
<b>Promote the use of modern construction methods for new homes</b>	Encourage the use of renewable energy technologies in housing developments	2008-11	PS/ NAHP/EEC	Head of Planning/ Policy and Strategy Manager/RSL partners	Homes built to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased choice of housing</li> <li>● Warmer, more secure better quality homes</li> <li>● Reduced greenhouse emissions</li> </ul>

Objectives	Key Actions	Timescales	Resources	Responsible Officer	Outputs	Outcomes for Residents
<b>Improve existing standards of housing management</b>	Increase the number of private landlords registered as part of the private landlords accreditation scheme.	2008-11	GF	Housing Renewals Manager	The number of registered landlords on the accreditation scheme increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warmer, more secure better quality homes</li> <li>● Improved housing services to local residents</li> <li>● Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour</li> <li>● Increased choice of housing</li> </ul>
	Introduce a selective licensing scheme for all private landlords in the Wembley area of Easington Colliery	April 2008	GF	Housing Renewals Manager	Licensing scheme implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warmer, more secure better quality homes</li> <li>● Improved housing services to local residents</li> <li>● Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>
	Continue to work with East Durham Homes on improving the delivery of housing services.	2008-11	HRA/GF	Head of Housing/ Service Support Manager	Successful inspection by the Audit Commission and improvement in service performance indicators and tenant satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved housing services to local residents</li> </ul>
	Work in partnership with landlords to deliver the respect standard for housing management	2008-11	HRA/GF/RSL (RF)	Policy and Strategy Manager	Co-ordinated approach to deliver the respect standard for housing management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved housing services to local residents</li> <li>● Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>



Objectives	Key Actions	Timescales	Resources	Responsible Officer	Outputs	Outcomes for Residents
<b>Improve the environmental appearance of our communities</b>	Develop Neighbourhood Works Programmes with partners	2008-11	HRA/RSL/CP	Housing Policy and Strategy Manager/Principal Planning Policy Officer/LSP Housing Group	Joint neighbourhood works programme produced for 2008/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved environmental appearance of neighbourhoods</li> </ul>
	Reduce the number of long-term empty properties in both the public and private sector	April 2009	HRA/CP (Council stock) GF/SHIP (private housing) RSL funding (RSL stock)	Chief Executive, East Durham Homes Housing Renewals Manager Housing Policy & Strategy Manager	Void properties brought back into use Fewer empty properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warmer, more secure better quality homes</li> <li>● Improved housing services to local residents</li> <li>● Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour</li> <li>● Increased choice of housing</li> </ul>
	Work with partners to make best use of infill sites	2008-11	HRA/GF/NAHP/PS	Housing Policy and Strategy Manager/Principal Planning Officer	New properties built on infill sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased choice of housing</li> <li>● Warmer, more secure better quality homes</li> </ul>

Objectives	Key Actions	Timescales	Resources	Responsible Officer	Outputs	Outcomes for Residents
<b>Create local employment through construction work that improves the skill and economic prosperity of local people</b>	Encourage East Durham Homes and all other partners to include specific employment training schemes as part of Maintenance and Investment Contracts	2008-11	HRA/GF/ NAHP/PS	Head of Housing/ Corporate Procurement Manager	Joint neighbourhood works programme produced for 2008/9	● Improved employment opportunities
	Facilitate the expansion of the Easington Youthbuild programme	2008-11	GF/RSL (RF)	Policy and Strategy Manager/ Housing Renewals Manager	Increased number of placements for young people on Youthbuild scheme	● Increased employment opportunities
<b>Reduce the levels of fuel poverty</b>	Continue to reduce fuel poverty levels through the Warm Homes campaign	2008-11	CP/WF	Energy Manager	Fuel poverty reduced	● Warmer Homes

**Aim Two:** To direct housing investment to locations that will produce the greatest benefit for the district and support the economic, social and environmental well being of the people of District of Easington.

Objectives	Key Actions	Timescales	Resources	Responsible Officer	Outputs	Outcomes for Residents
<b>Support the growth of Peterlee and Seaham</b>	Prioritise new housing developments to support Peterlee and Seaham	2008-11	HRA/GF	Head of Housing/ Head of Planning	Areas for developments prioritised to support Peterlee and Seaham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased number and quality of housing units</li> <li>● Improved employment opportunities</li> <li>● Better amenities and services to local residents</li> </ul>
<b>Direct housing investment into Easington Colliery, Dawdon and Peterlee</b>	Implement the action plans included within the Area Development Frameworks of Easington Colliery, Dawdon, and Peterlee	Commence April 2008	HRA/GF/ NAHP/PS/ SHIP 3/EP	Head of Housing/ Head of Regeneration/ Head of Planning	Low demand/obsolete dwellings demolished Existing housing improved New housing developed Wider environmental improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased number and quality of housing units</li> <li>● Improved employment opportunities</li> <li>● Better amenities and services to local residents</li> </ul>



Objectives	Key Actions	Timescales	Resources	Responsible Officer	Outputs	Outcomes for Residents
<b>Complete whole settlement reviews of the larger villages of the district with a view to targeted housing renewal and replacement</b>	Complete the settlement reviews of Thornley and Wheatley Hill	March 2008	GF	Head of Regeneration/ Policy and Strategy Manager	Review document and action plan produced	N/A
	Complete review of the remaining settlements in the district	2011	HRA/GF	Head of Housing	Joint works programmes with RSL and private sector partners produced Prioritisation of the Decent Homes programme to priority settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased number and quality of housing units</li> <li>● Improved employment opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Establish a suitable delivery vehicle for the implementation of the Durham Coalfields Housing and Area Regeneration Programme</b>	Continued involvement in Coalfields Partnership activities	Sept 2008	GF/EP/NAHP/ SHIP3	Director of Regeneration and Development/ Head of Housing	County-wide housing and regeneration delivery vehicle established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased number and quality of housing units</li> <li>● Improved employment opportunities</li> <li>● Increased choice of housing</li> </ul>







**Aim Three:** To ensure the type and mix of new and existing housing provides choice and meets housing needs and demands.

Objectives	Key Actions	Timescales	Resources	Responsible Officer	Outputs	Outcomes for Residents
<b>Enable the provision of new social housing in our priority areas of Peterlee, Seaham, Murton and Easington</b>	Use planning gain and the national affordable housing programme funding to enable new social housing provision on these priority sites	2008 -11	GF	Head of Planning	New units of affordable housing provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased access to properties built at specific 'affordable' levels</li> </ul>
<b>Provide choice and accessibility in the social housing market</b>	Introduce a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme	April 2008	GF/HRA	Housing Policy and Strategy Manager	CBL scheme approved and implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved housing services to local residents.</li> <li>● Increased access to properties built at specific 'affordable' levels</li> </ul>
<b>Enable the building of new homes that make best use of brownfield sites.</b>	Increase the number of properties built on brownfield land	2008-11	GF	Head of Planning/ Head of Housing	Number of new housing starts on brownfield land increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased access to properties built at specific 'affordable' levels</li> <li>● Increased range of property types</li> </ul>

**Aim Four:** To address the supported housing needs of vulnerable groups

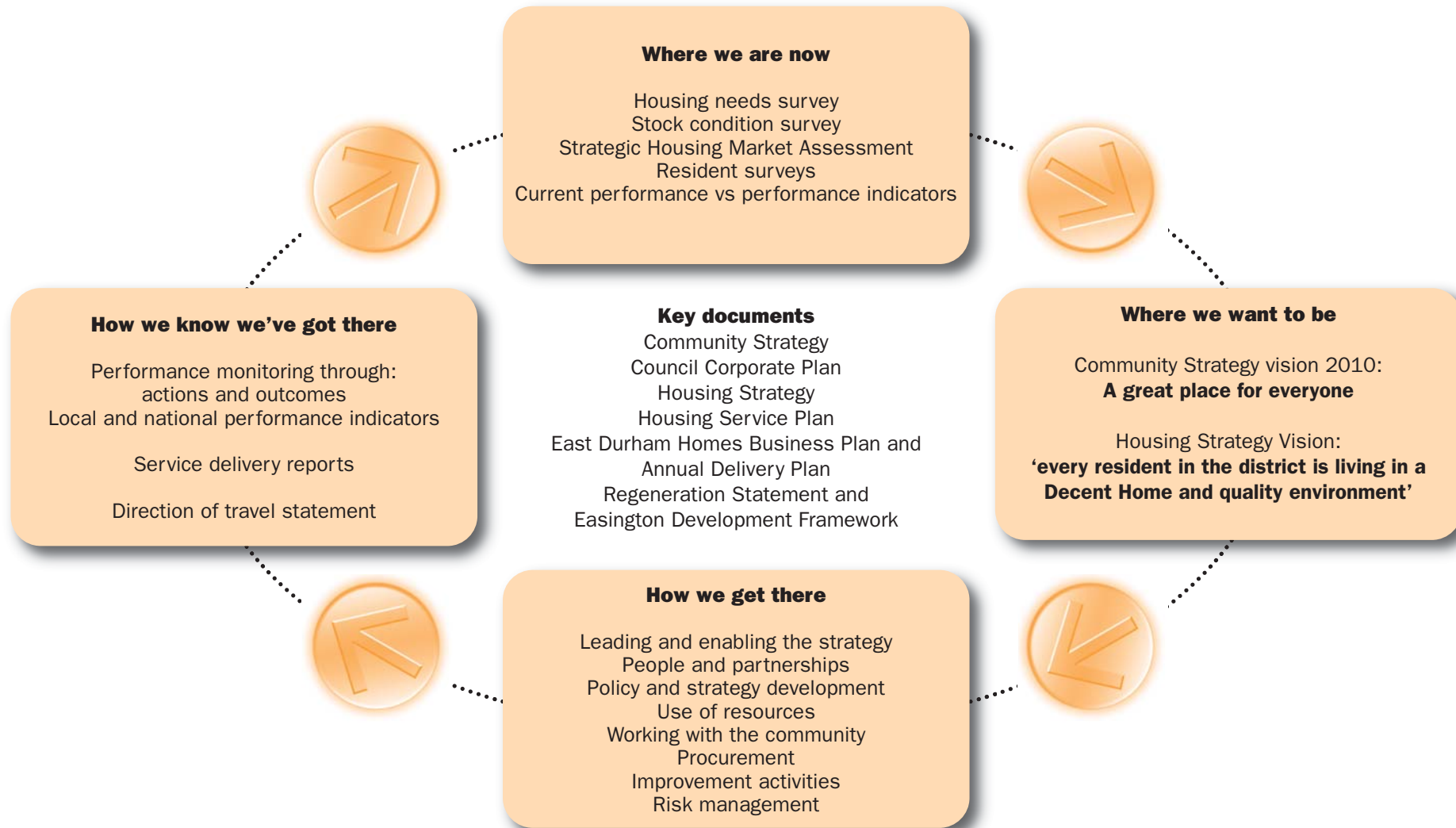
Objectives	Key Actions	Timescales	Resources	Responsible Officer	Outputs	Outcomes for Residents
<b>Review and remodel the provision of designated rented housing for older people across the district</b>	Prioritise older persons housing stock for demolition/disposal remodelling and new build	December 2008	GF	Housing Policy and Strategy Manager/ Supported Housing Manager	Older persons housing stock prioritised	N/a
	Work in partnership with housing providers to improve existing older persons housing stock and provide new build units	2008-2011	NAHP/PS /SP	Housing Policy and Strategy Manager	Obsolete housing stock for older people demolished or remodelled New housing stock for older people built	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warmer, more secure, better quality homes</li> <li>● Increase in the number and type of housing units available for people with support needs</li> <li>● Increased availability of housing related support for vulnerable people</li> </ul>
<b>Enable vulnerable people to live independently through the provision of support services</b>	Review the process for the provision of aids and adaptations	April 2008	GF/DFG /SP/ CP	Housing Renewals Manager	Process reviewed and changes implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved services to residents</li> </ul>
	Review existing arrangements for support services.	April 2008	GF	Supported Housing Manager	Review complete	N/a





Objectives	Key Actions	Timescales	Resources	Responsible Officer	Outputs	Outcomes for Residents
<b>Enable the provision of new specialist housing for specific groups of people.</b>	Determine the type of specialist housing units required.	December 2007	GF	Housing Policy and Strategy Manager	Information on type of housing units required is produced	● Increase in the number of units available for people with support needs
	Work with partners to provide specialist types of accommodation	2008-11	NAHP/PS/SP	Housing Policy and Strategy Manger/ Supported Housing Manager	New housing units built	● Increase in the number of units available for people with support needs
<b>Reduce homelessness in the district</b>	Continue to prevent homelessness for vulnerable groups  Continue to provide housing advice and the development of innovative prevention led services	2008 -11	GF/HG	Homelessness Manager	Homelessness reduced.	● Increased availability of housing related support for vulnerable people

## Chapter Four: Monitoring the Housing Strategy



## How will we know we have got there?: Actions and outcomes

In order to monitor progress against achieving the vision within this housing strategy, it is crucial that we monitor not only the delivery of the specific actions set out in the action plan in chapter 3 but also the outcomes for residents identified in chapter 1.

In order to do this we have identified performance indicators to measure our progress in delivering these outcomes. For example:

### Outcome for local residents

### Performance Indicator(s) to measure progress against the aim and outcomes

- **All East Durham Homes managed housing meets the Decent Homes Standard and is part of a sustainable community.**
- **Residents in social sector housing benefit from high quality housing services and standards of accommodation.**
- **Improved availability of market housing in the district to support the establishment of more sustainable communities.**

- Average energy efficiency (SAP rating) of council-owned dwellings
- Average energy efficiency (SAP rating) of privately-owned dwellings
- Proportion of public-sector (council or housing association owned) homes that meet the Government's Decent Homes standard
- Proportion of vulnerable households living in the private sector whose homes meet the Government's Decent Homes standard
- Domestic burglary (per 1,000 households)
- Proportion of new houses in the district built to the requirements of the sustainable code for housing

- **All East Durham Homes managed housing meets the Decent Homes Standard and is part of a sustainable community.**
- **Residents in social sector housing benefit from high quality housing services and standards of accommodation.**
- **Improved availability of market housing in the district to support the establishment of more sustainable communities.**

- Audit Commission 'star rating' of East Durham Homes
- Housing Corporation ratings of Registered Social Landlords
- Number of Accredited Private Landlords/ units managed by Accredited Private Landlords
- Customer satisfaction with East Durham Homes, RSLs, council's housing service
- Impact of the Selective Licensing Scheme Pilot

- **Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour**

- Proportion of residents affected by anti-social behaviour
- Domestic Burglary (per 1,000 households)

- **Residents in social sector housing benefit from high quality housing services and standards of accommodation.**
- **Improved availability of market housing in the district to support the establishment of more sustainable communities.**
- **People are supported and assisted to live in the community.**

- Number of units of new social housing
- Number of units for vulnerable people
- Proportion of new social/affordable housing compared with total new-build
- Number and type of new properties built per year

The vast majority of performance indicators featured in this strategy are collected and reported on by the council's housing service on a quarterly basis. Following the publication of the National Performance Framework and the implementation of Local Government Review, we have developed a suite of local performance indicators that reflect the actions and outcomes of this housing strategy, the council's housing service plan and the national performance indicators.

Performance against individual actions in the three-year action plan, as well as outcome performance indicators, will be reported to the Local Strategic Partnership's Housing & Communities Thematic Group on a regular basis. The group has recently adopted seven priority themes taken from this housing strategy, which it will be focusing on during the first year of this housing strategy (2008/09). This will be regularly reviewed and updated by the group.



## Appendix One: Statistical appendices



### **Consultation**

A consultation exercise was carried out with residents and key stakeholders on the development of the housing strategy. Questionnaires asked for comments on the proposed overall vision and key aims of the strategy document. The responses provided have been considered when producing the Housing Strategy for 2008-2011.

Two separate questionnaires were produced to seek the views of residents and key stakeholders and gain feedback on the vision and the four proposed aims. The first questionnaire was sent to more than 4,000 residents, including; tenants' and residents' groups, parish and town councils and hard-to-reach groups, all within the district. The second questionnaire was developed to seek the views and comments of key partners. More than 100 surveys were sent out to the Action for Housing and Communities Implementation Group, private sector landlords, local developers, Registered Social Landlords and the Home Builders' Federation.

Posters and questionnaires were also displayed in community centres, libraries and council reception areas. Information was also available on the council's website, giving the public the

opportunity to download the questionnaire online and return it by e-mail.

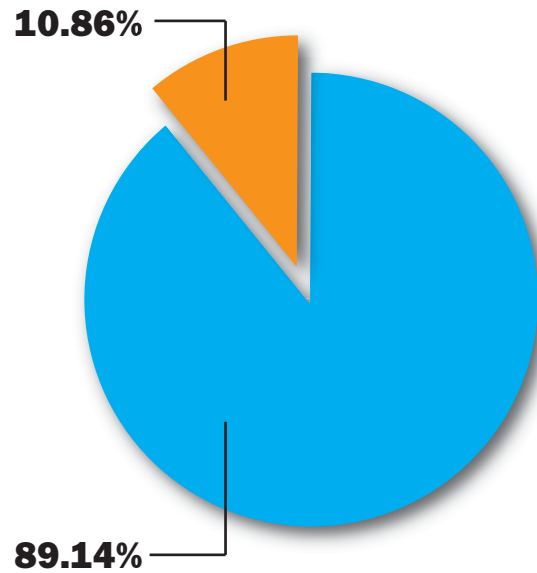
The comments made by respondents were mirrored throughout each returned questionnaire, making it clear that there is an affordability problem across the district and that residents would like to see any new housing built on brownfield land. Residents would also like to see existing private and public sector properties brought up to a 'decent' standard and for anti-social behaviour problems to be addressed. All major requests have been written into the strategy's action plan as key actions.

Both the overall vision and the aims have also been amended, taking into account the views and comments made by the people who responded to the questionnaires. This report confirms that the strategy has not just been written by staff, but that people who reside in the district or who are heavily involved in housing provision in the district have had their say in what they would like written into the new housing strategy for the district.



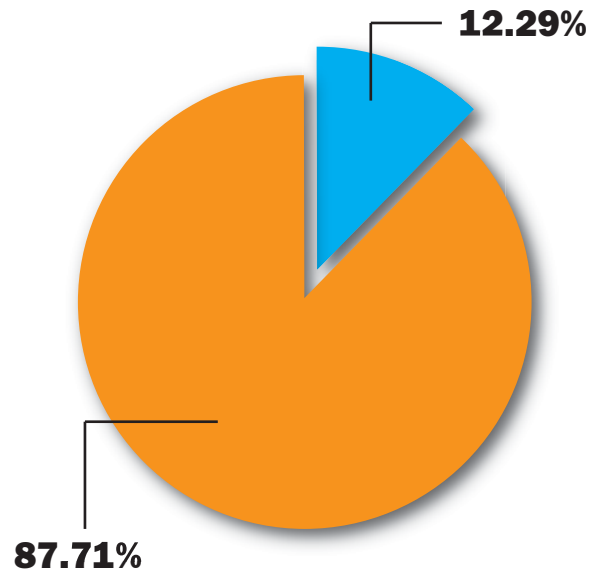
Appendix Two: **Decent Homes data for District of Easington** Across all tenures

**Council Stock**



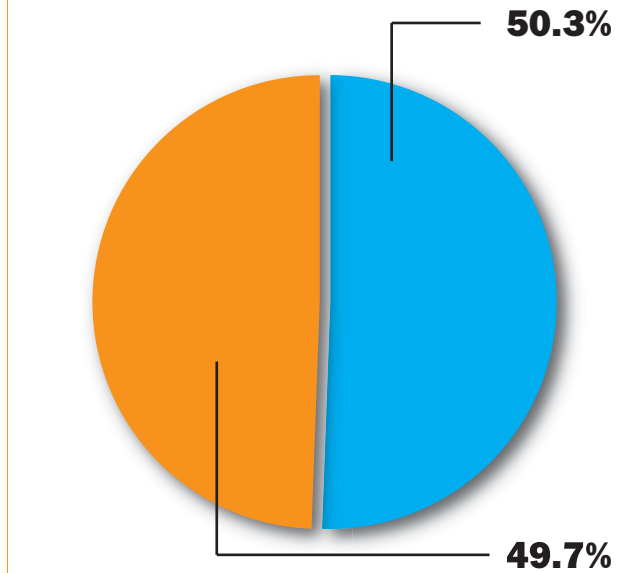
Source - EDH Stock Condition 2007  
(1st April 2007)

**RSL Stock**



Source - Registered Social Landlords  
(June 2007)

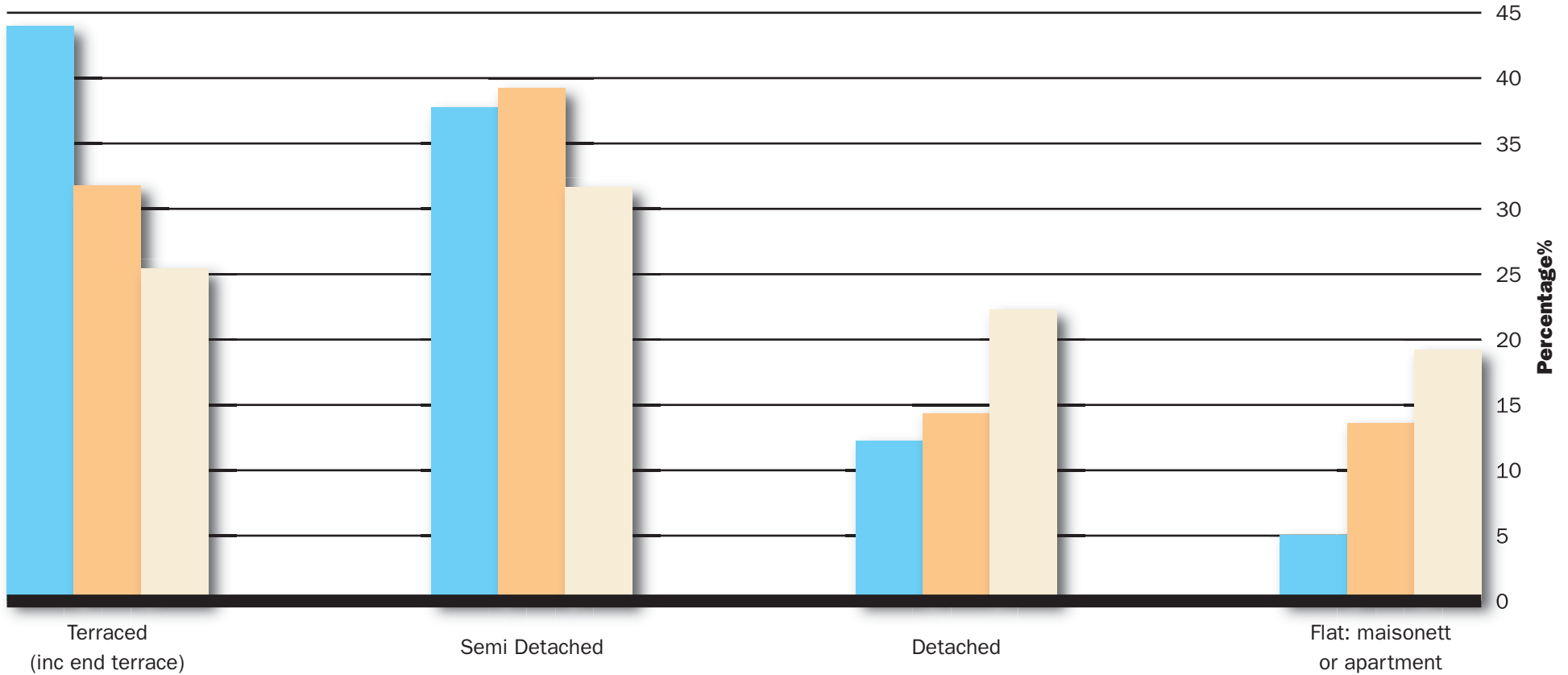
**Vulnerable Households in Private Sector**



ODPM Ready Reckoner  
(October 2006)

**Key**       Non Decent       Decent

## Appendix Three: Stock profile locally, regionally and nationally



 **Easington**

 **North East**

 **England**

## Appendix Four: Projected Housing Developments

This information was produced in December 2007 and shows developments across the district currently under construction as well as those where planning permission has been granted. Projected figures for the provision of new build properties for the next eight years is also included. This information will be updated and re-published on an annual basis.

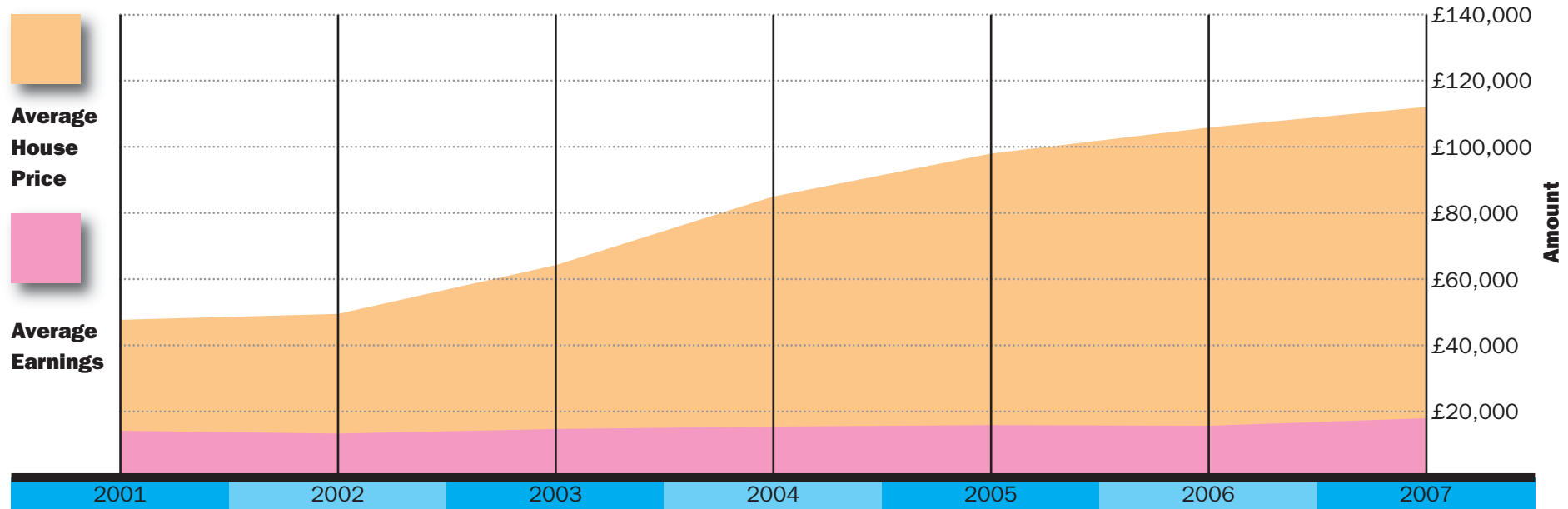
<b>Current Position - Planning</b>	<b>2004-2016</b>
<b>Strategic sites under construction</b>	
<b>Supporting Seaham:</b>	
East Shore Village, Dawdon Farm and Thomas Brothers at Murton	332
<b>Supporting Peterlee:</b>	
Sites at Easington and Shotton	52
<b>Villages</b>	202
<b>Total under construction</b>	<b>586</b>
<b>Permissions</b>	
<b>Supporting Seaham (including town centre)</b>	259
<b>Supporting Peterlee (including ITEC site)</b>	99
<b>Villages</b>	337
<b>Total planning permissions</b>	<b>695</b>

<b>Projected Provision</b>	
<b>Supporting Seaham:</b>	
Seaham Colliery	400
New Drive	70
Murton Colliery	180
Dock Site	130
Dawdon Area Development Framework	125
The Lawns site	100
<b>Supporting Peterlee:</b>	
College site	210
NE Industrial Estate	600
Denehouse	100
Master Plan Phase 2 (Intensification green space)	400
Horden Area Development Framework	300
Easington Area Development Framework	380
Eden Hill	30
Windsor Place Shotton	60
<b>Villages:</b>	
Pattison Gardens, Blackhall; Windermere Road and Argyle Place, South Hetton	103
Coopers Close and Hartlepool Street, Thornley	130
<b>Total projected new build</b>	<b>3318</b>

### Delivery of Affordable Housing

20 per cent of all housing on future development sites consisting of more than 15 units will be need to be affordable in order to meet the council's Affordable Housing Policy.

## Appendix Five: Average house prices v Average earnings



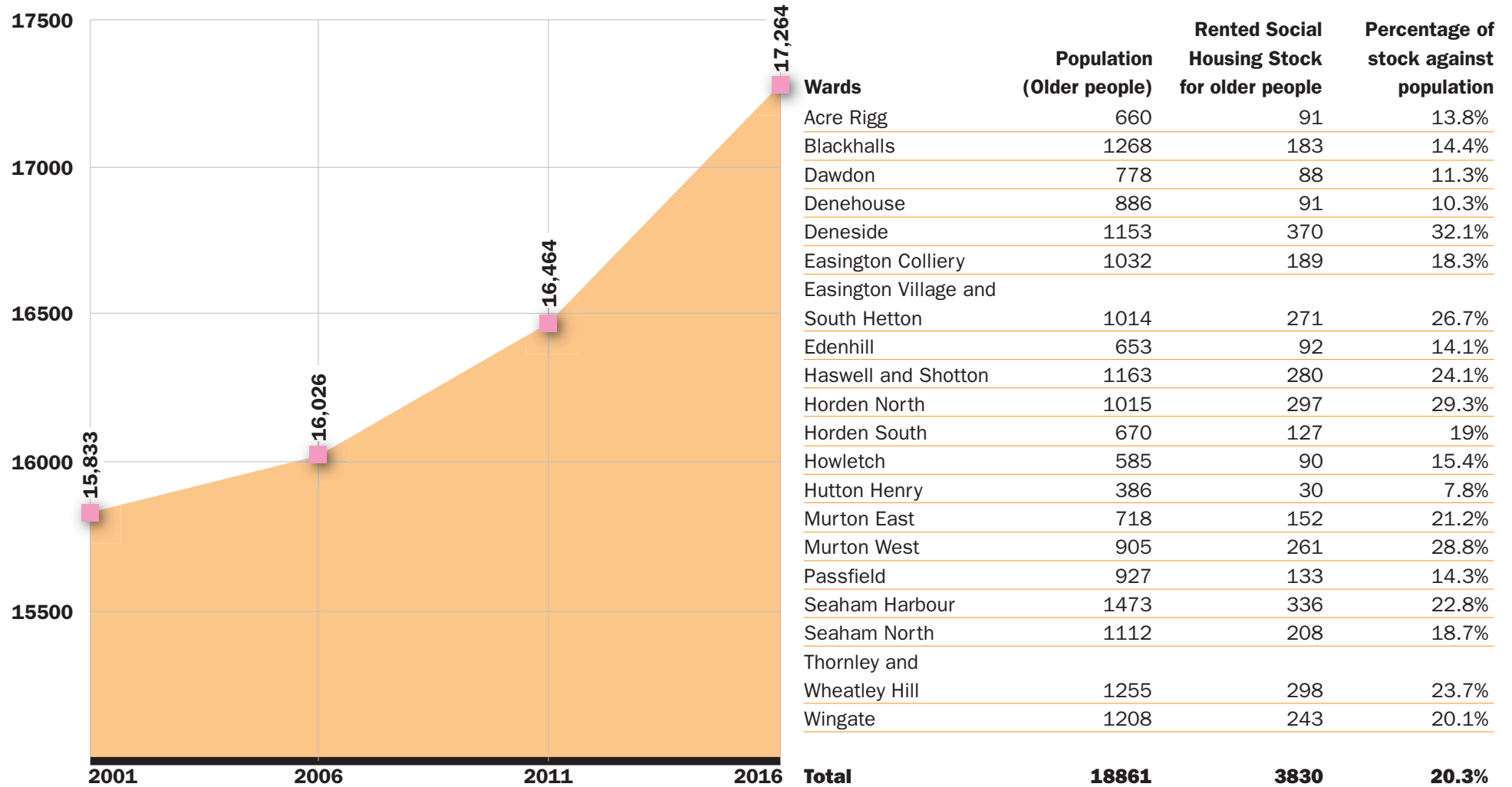
(The average house price has been obtained from the Land Registry)

(The average earnings for Easington District have been taken from the Annual Survey for Hours and Earnings (ASHE), the figures shown are based on the 'earnings by place of residence by Local Authority', based on a 1% sample. The figures show the mean (average) earnings in pounds of the residents of Easington District, based on adult rates of pay, who have been in the same job for more than 1 year and whose pay was not affected by absence. The survey does not cover self-employed and the earnings information collected relates to gross pay before tax, national insurance or any other deductions).

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Average House Price (£)</b>	47,827	49,215	64,110	85,488	97,708	106,488	112,142
<b>Average Income Levels (£)</b>	14,059	13,491	14,281	14,573	15,786	15,880	18,117



## Appendix Six: Population forecast for older people



## Appendix Seven: Priorities for District of Easington for the National Affordable Housing Programme 2008 - 2011

Year	Name of scheme	Development partner	Location	Needs group	No of units for rent	No of units for intermediate sale
2008/09	Welfare Close, Easington (ADF Area)	To be determined	Easington Colliery	General needs	24	To be determined
2008/09	Leech Ct, Easington(ADF Area)	DAMHA	Easington Colliery	Older people	14	
2008/09	Argyle Place, South Hetton	Accent North East	South Hetton	General needs and older people	17	12
2008/09	Bevan Sq, Watkin Cr and Turnbull Cr, Murton	To be determined	Murton Central	General needs	To be determined	To be determined
2008/09	Shotton	Three Rivers	Kings Street/ Moore Terrace Shotton	Mix of 2 and 3 bedroomed family housing and bungalows	To be determined	To be determined
2008/09	Easington Colliery	Gen too	Easington School Site	1 and 2 bedroomed appartments	To be determined	To be determined
2009/10	North East Industrial Estate Peterlee	To be determined	North East Industrial Estate Peterlee (Edenhill)	Mixed needs group	To be determined	To be determined
2009/10	Wheatley Hill – mixed tenure affordable housing	To be determined	Wheatley Hill (No site specific)	Mixed needs group	To be determined	To be determined
2009/10	Extra care scheme	To be determined	(No site specific)	Older People	To be determined	To be determined
2009/10	Supported housing scheme for homeless people	To be determined	(No site specific)	Homeless people and other socially excluded groups	To be determined	To be determined











District of **easington.**

Decent homes for all