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**Private Sector Housing Strategy
For County Durham**

2011- 2015

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY

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Section One: Executive Summary

The Private Sector Housing Strategy sets out how the Council and our partners will ensure that the key objectives of the Housing Strategy will be met in relation to private sector housing.

The **five key priorities** covered by the Private Sector Housing Strategy include:

1. Area based regeneration
2. Meeting needs of vulnerable people/ Improving and adapting properties
3. Improving management practices and stock condition in the private rented sector
4. Bringing empty homes back into use
5. Making properties more energy efficient

The Private Sector Housing Strategy is framed within the three overall objectives of the Housing Strategy:

Altogether better housing markets,
Altogether better housing standards, and
Altogether better at housing people.

Its purpose is to identify the activities to be undertaken which have the greatest impact on private sector housing, and in doing so make the greatest contribution to economic regeneration across the county.

The Private Sector Housing Strategy describes how the private sector housing service's resources will be targeted on the existing housing regeneration projects inherited from the previous District Councils and how each element of the service will play its part in a coordinated approach to deliver sustainable improvements. These are areas with the worst concentrations of housing problems including poor stock condition, high numbers of empty properties, high levels of deprivation and anti social behaviour. Maps of these priority areas are shown in Appendix 5.

The delivery of capital investment programmes, the selective acquisition and demolition of some housing, group repair schemes, environmental improvements, and new housing development, each play a part in this form of housing renewal, but they also need to be supplemented by effective work on energy efficiency, bringing back empty properties, working with private landlords and with wider economic regeneration interventions. It is recognised that in the future housing will be more integrated with wider economic activity. The action plan within this strategy includes the introduction of a more systematic approach to the prioritisation of regeneration to areas of opportunity involving housing, planning, transport and economic functions.

Every opportunity will be taken to lever in private sector funding streams and develop private sector partnerships aimed at increasing financial resources to enable the delivery of additional housing.

The Strategy will focus on areas with the worst concentrations of housing problems and describes how the needs of vulnerable people across the whole of County Durham will continue to be met through the provision of a repairs and adaptations service supported by the provision of loans for vulnerable and financially excluded households.

A safety net service will be provided to ensure that priority housing issues in the private sector occurring outside of priority regeneration areas can be effectively dealt with.

Over the term of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, subject to confirmation, around £23.4 million has been earmarked to deliver the strategy. This is made up of £4 million, exclusive of grants, for Disabled Facilities, £14.6 million for area based regeneration and safety net projects and a further £4.8 million for the Financial Assistance Policy.

Section Two: Introduction

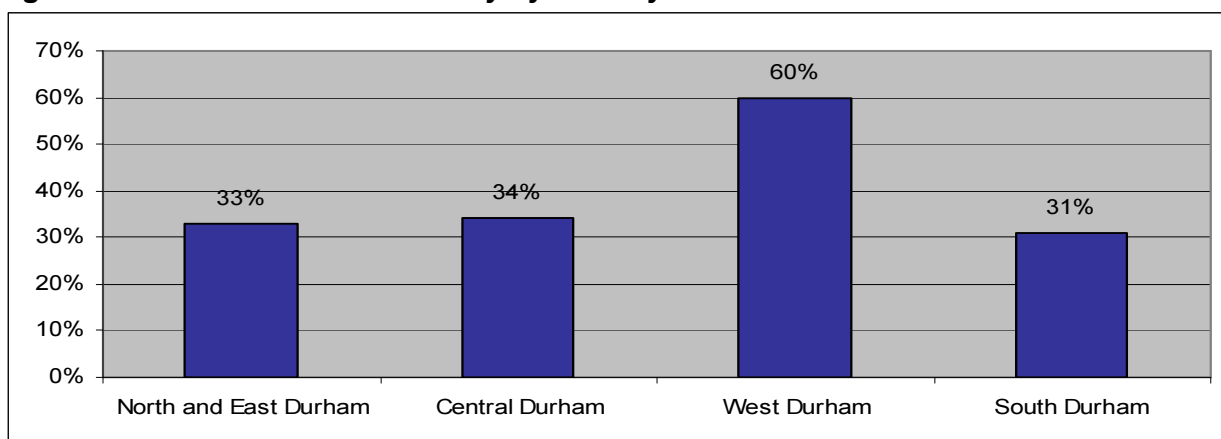
2.1 Private Sector Housing in Durham

Durham is a large and diverse authority and different parts of the County have distinct characteristics, functions and needs. We have identified **five** localities/delivery areas for County Durham: North Durham; East Durham; Durham City; South Durham; and West Durham (see section 3.1 for further detail)

As at April 2010 there were 185,159¹ private sector dwellings in County Durham representing 80% of the total housing stock; this includes both owner occupied and private rented housing. There is a need to ensure that all sectors of the housing market contribute to meeting local housing needs.

Around 34% of private housing is failing to meet the decent homes standard and there are 16,000 households living in these properties who are classed as vulnerable.²

Figure1: Private sector non decency by delivery area



There is a high proportion of terraced housing within the private sector and a number of these are privately rented. These are mainly in ex mining settlements where there are high levels of deprivation. There is a shortage of high quality market housing specifically executive housing.

The aim of this Private Sector Housing Strategy is to improve the quality of private sector housing, and in doing so, contribute to achieving other key priorities notably:

¹ HSSA 2009/10, RSR March 2010

² Private Sector Housing Stock Models update March 2009

Better health:

- By providing more homes that are warm
- By reducing financial exclusion by offering loans to less well off
- By supporting independent living

Better economy:

- By delivering housing renewal programmes
- By delivering housing improvement initiatives in areas of opportunity across the county

Better environment:

- By reducing carbon emissions

2.2 Context

The private sector housing strategy is set within the context of wider strategies in particular [“Building Altogether Better Lives: A Housing Strategy for County Durham 2010-2015”](#), describing the overall vision for housing in County Durham. Developed with its partners, it reviews housing issues in the county, identifies options for addressing them, and presents a strategic delivery plan for the whole housing service.

The strategy also explains how housing objectives are linked to the Council’s key corporate priority of improving the economy in County Durham, which is fully explained under the “Altogether Wealthier” theme of the [“Sustainable Community Strategy”](#) and in the Regeneration and Economic Development Service’s [“Regeneration Statement”](#).

The County Durham Regeneration Statement outlines how the underlying ambition of creating sustainable places where people want to live, work, invest and visit can be achieved. This partnership led Regeneration Statement underpins the Sustainable Community Strategy, the County Durham Partnership’s Altogether Wealthier theme, and the County Durham Economic Partnership’s priority to create a vibrant economy.

The Statement’s five objectives are to create:

- A Thriving Durham City
- Vibrant and Successful Towns
- Competitive and Successful People
- Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Rural Communities
- Top Location for Business

The Private Sector Housing Strategy contributes to the delivery of these objectives and will significantly contribute to the Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Rural Communities objective, by illustrating the Council’s and partners commitment to:

- Working with the Homes and Communities Agency to provide new homes, investment in existing housing, refurbishment of Council owned Gypsy and Traveller sites and bringing empty homes back into use.
- Delivering housing regeneration in the eight identified areas
- Improving housing standards through the use of the Council's Financial Assistance Policy

The link between housing and other high level priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-30 is described too, including "Altogether Better for Children and Young People"; "Altogether Healthier"; "Altogether Greener" and "Altogether Safer".

Under its general aim of *Building Altogether Better Lives*, the Council's Housing Strategy sets out three key objectives for dealing with the issues facing County Durham:

Altogether Better Housing Markets - housing's role in economic growth, including a more joined-up approach to regeneration, getting the most from investment and building new housing with a range of housing types, tenures and levels of affordability.

Altogether Better Housing Standards - improving standards in the existing housing stock, with more homes that are warm, safe and decent, fewer that are empty or in disrepair, and with professional management standards in the private rented sector and enforcement taken against problem landlords.

Altogether Better at Housing People - the 'people side' of housing including improved support for vulnerable people of all ages, housing advice to prevent homelessness, decent housing for Gypsies and Travellers, and the wider benefits from better housing such as improved health, educational attainment, social inclusion and less crime and anti social behaviour.

Financing the Delivery of the Strategy

Over the term of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, subject to confirmation, around £23.4 million has been earmarked to deliver the strategy. This is made up of £4 million, exclusive of grants, for Disabled Facilities, £14.6 million for area based regeneration and safety net projects and a further £4.8 million for the Financial Assistance Policy.

2.3 Key components of the Private Sector Housing Strategy

The key components of the work of the Council in private sector housing are:

Area based regeneration & renewal

Although a number of housing renewal programmes have been implemented which have involved selective clearance of the worst housing, environmental improvements and group repair schemes, the Council recognises that some settlements and neighbourhoods still reflect their historic role, have unimproved stock, a poor environment and contain large levels of deprivation. It is acknowledged that housing regeneration plays a significant role in the economic regeneration of an area and

therefore in the future a holistic approach to economic regeneration will be taken which will include housing regeneration and renewal activity.

Improving standards in the private rented sector

Private landlords make an essential contribution to meeting housing need in County Durham, through providing rented homes, where the tenure of choice is in the private sector. However, poor housing management by some private landlords continues to have a negative impact on neighbourhoods. The aim of Durham County Council's Private Landlords Initiatives Service is to work with private landlords to improve housing standards overall and at the same time helping private landlords secure a decent, reliable return on their investment.

Bringing empty homes in the private sector back into use

Across County Durham as at April 2010 there were approximately 4,000 properties empty for six months or more. Longer term empty homes can cause problems for local residents as they attract crime and anti-social behaviour. Empty homes also reduce the supply of affordable homes.

Delivering adaptations and repairs for vulnerable people living in the private sector

The local authority has a role in assisting *vulnerable* households in the private sector. Vulnerable households are those facing financial hardship, or needing help to adapt or repair their home because of the effects of disability.

Given the projected ageing of the population in County Durham, it is essential that housing allows people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. This service also supports children who may have lifetime needs, as well as adults of various ages. This can be supported by Disabled Facilities Grants and the work of the Home Improvement Agencies which involves the promotion of loan products the council's financial assistance policy.

Figure 2: Vulnerable Households, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

Delivery Area	Location	Private Sector Dwellings	Vulnerable Households	Vulnerable Households in Non-Decent Dwellings	% SAP* < 35	% Fuel Poverty
North & East Durham	Chester-le-Street	18216	23%	8%	7%	15%
North & East Durham	Derwentside	28843	29%	12%	12%	19%
North & East Durham	Easington	28348	39%	14%	7%	19%
South	Sedgefield	27440	31%	11%	9%	18%

Durham						
Central Durham	Durham City	27831	25%	10%	11%	16%
West Durham	Teesdale	9799	27%	16%	32%	34%
West & South Durham	Wear Valley	21294	31%	14%	16%	21%
	County Durham	161862	30%	12%	12%	19%
	England	18053000	18%	8%	13%	12%

* Standard Assessment Procedure – energy rating of dwellings

Figure 2 illustrates that across the county 30% of households in the private sector are classed as vulnerable by virtue of their age, income or infirmity and the highest percentage are living in the East Durham area.

Energy efficiency

Energy efficiency of the home contributes to a reduction in fuel poverty. Homes that are not energy efficient (currently assessed as fewer than 65) affect the most vulnerable in our society, a problem that affects more than 27% of households in County Durham each year. The priority for this strategy is to raise those SAP ratings currently assessed as lower than 65 particularly in those properties in the eight priority housing regeneration areas.

Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation

The Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation are part of the Governments Energy Bill due to be introduced in December 2012. Durham County Council are currently part of the national pilot Scheme along with The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) National Energy Action and Durham University commencing in July 2011. This will identify forth coming national targets and explore opportunities to maximise external funding ahead of the Bill being enacted.

National Green Deal Pilot Scheme

Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation will offer significant financial benefits to Local Authorities to assist them to raise housing standards, provision of decent homes and the well being of local residents. Local Authorities with Financial Assistance Policies will be well placed to access Green Deal external funding and this will have a direct effect of increasing the numbers of private and private rented households able to meet the decent homes energy efficiency standard.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) have invited Durham County Council, National Energy Action and Durham University to undertake a National Green Deal (ECO) Pilot Scheme commencing in July 2011. The key elements of the national pilot are listed below:

- Maximise external funding opportunities
- Establish delivery mechanisms within existing resources

- Target properties to receive grant funded energy conservation measures
- Promote uptake of measures in regeneration areas
- maximise community engagement and provide scheme credibility
- Establish targets and monitoring mechanisms
- Integrate externally funded measures into the Durham County Council Financial Assistance Policy

The council's Financial Assistance Policy (FAP) supports the delivery of the Private Sector Housing Strategy. The FAP has been reviewed and amended to ensure it is completely aligned with this strategy.

This strategy covers and works in the context of the Council's overall housing strategy and the five priorities therefore on which the private sector housing strategy is based are:

- 1. Area based regeneration**
- 2. Meeting needs of vulnerable people/ Improving and adapting properties**
- 3. Improving management practises and stock condition in the private rented sector**
- 4. Bringing empty homes back into use**
- 5. Making properties more energy efficient**

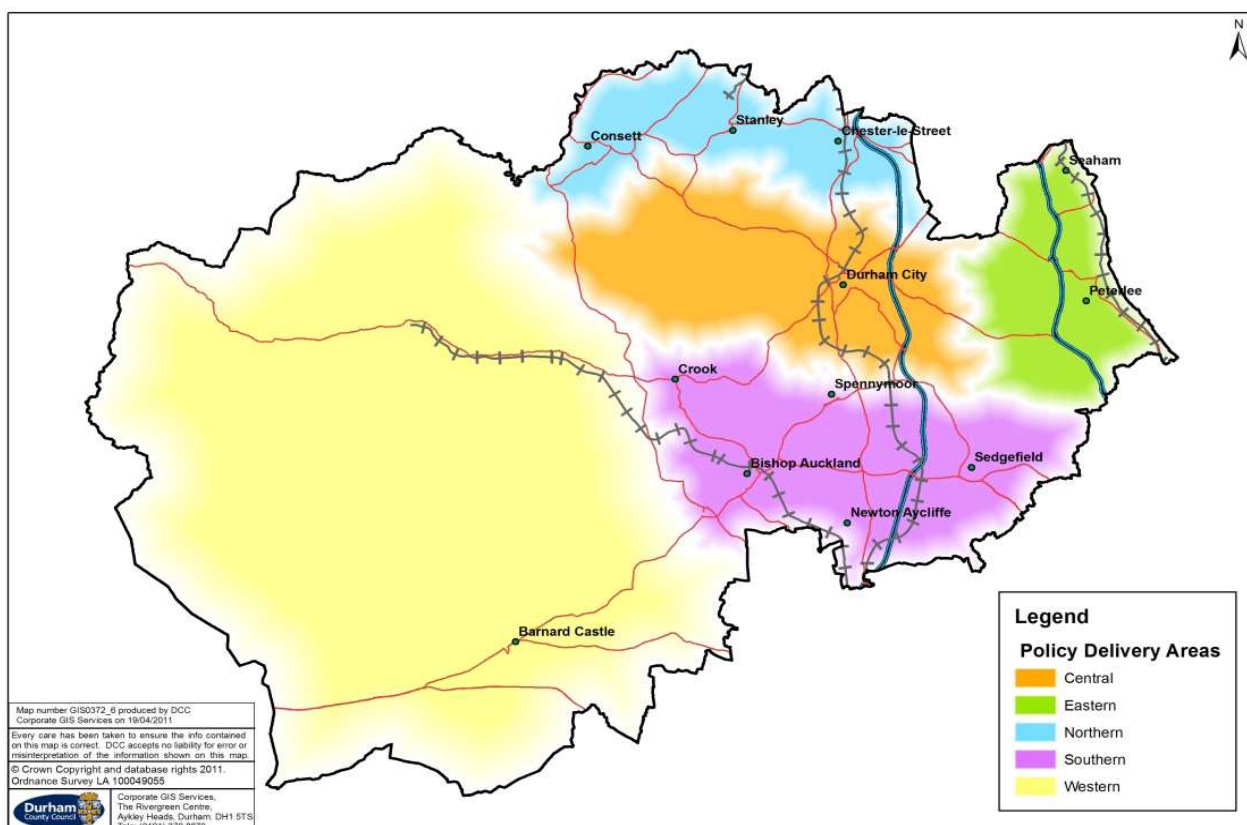
Section Three: The Current Picture

This section provides additional details on the priorities for the private sector housing strategy and sets them within the local context. Additional information in relation to the private sector housing market in County Durham is available at Appendix 4.

3.1 Locality profiles

We have identified five localities for County Durham: North Durham, East Durham; Durham City; South Durham; and West Durham. For each of these areas we set out the local housing & regeneration context. The delivery areas are shown on the map of the County below and further details of the settlements in the individual delivery areas are included at Appendix 3.

Figure 3: Map of the 5 Delivery Areas across County Durham



Operational Delivery Areas for the Private Sector Housing Service

The Private Sector Housing Team deliver all functions from three operational areas

- The Stanley area office covers both North and Central Durham
- The Seaham area office covers East Durham
- The Spennymoor area office covers West and South Durham

CENTRAL DURHAM

At the heart of the North East, **Durham City and the surrounding area** is an important population centre, employment location, visitor destination and transport hub. The locality stands out as the key economic driver to the County and of regional importance; it symbolises the economic potential and opportunities available. Generally, the Index of Deprivation scores for areas in and around Durham City compare well against the County's averages.

Average house prices in some parts of Durham City are three times the County average at over £300,000 but nevertheless it has significant private sector challenges and some surrounding villages have average prices nearer £100,000 or below.

Altogether Better Housing Markets

Housing sites near the centre are high value and properties within a mile of the city centre command some of the highest prices in the County. It is the only place in the County where apartments can be sold or rented in large numbers and where the privately rented sector is flourishing.

Durham City's future growth must be seen within the context of **regeneration of surrounding settlements**. In contrast to the wealth within the city, there are deprived communities on the other side of the City's green belt that require public sector intervention in order for them to remain as viable places to live. These include places where Area Development Frameworks have been produced (Bowburn and Sacriston) or where masterplans have been developed (Esh Winning).

Durham City has benefited from a pioneering '**joint venture**' **partnership** between the Council and Keepmoat plc (the Durham Villages Regeneration Company (DVRC) which has delivered nearly 1000 houses and bungalows for sale and social rent since 2004. This joint venture arrangement will be used to deliver further regeneration in Esh Winning and in Brandon.

Altogether Better Housing Standards

The **private rented sector** is greatly affected by the student population that place considerable demands on this housing despite the University's collegiate system. Older terraced housing in certain quarters (such as Gilesgate and Crossgate) is so dominated by rented housing for students to share (predominantly in term time) that it is likely that the supply of lower cost housing to other household groups has diminished; forcing first time buyers in particular to seek housing away from the city centre areas. Further work on how this element of the housing market can reconcile differing needs and demands is required and will be undertaken with our partners in higher and further education. There will be close liaison with the Durham AAP over completing this work.

Altogether Better at Housing People

The needs of **older people** (50+) who comprise 20.5% of the population of Durham City and its environs will be of paramount importance. As well as reviewing social housing sheltered schemes, there is an over-riding need to consider how older people can be encouraged to stay in their existing accommodation through either aids and adaptations or through financial assistance to enable improvement and repair.

Other **special needs** require assistance:

- The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community has a site at West Rainton that is in need of refurbishment.

Housing Regeneration Areas

The main centre for area based regeneration in Central Durham is:

- Esh Winning

Esh Winning Regeneration Programme

Esh Winning is a former mining community 6 miles to the west of Durham City. A master plan was prepared in conjunction with Durham Villages Regeneration Company the recommendations of which started to be delivered in April 2010.

The focus for housing regeneration was identified as the social housing areas of Durham City Homes stock which includes The Oaks, Rowan Court, Pine Tree and a redundant site at the rear of the Co-op supermarket know as West View. Funds have since been secured and agreed through the 2010-2013 Housing Revenue Account Regeneration Delivery Plan. An amount of £1million has been identified over the three year period; these funds will pay for acquisition and demolition of the social housing and private sector housing stock.

The funding programme has been set out initially in three phases covering 78 properties. This includes 7 private sector properties and 71 Durham City Homes properties. Phase 1 The Oaks within 2010/11, Phase 2 Rowan Court within 2011/12 and Phase 3 Pine Tree within 2012/2013.

New housing will be built as part of the regeneration plan and will include approximately nine two bedroom bungalows for social rent and 20 new housing units for market sale.

NORTH AND EAST DURHAM

North and East Durham is closely connected to the **Tyne and Wear City Region** and forms part of wider employment, housing and travel to learn markets, supported through a transport infrastructure which includes major arterial roads and rail links to the East Coast rail network. North Durham is served by the towns of Consett, Stanley and Chester-Le-Street whilst the East contains the towns of Peterlee and Seaham, where the A19 forms a good connection between the two City Regions. This part of the County contains some of the most **deprived communities** in the North East and although progress has been made in recent years, much more remains to be done. The population for N&E Durham is around 220,000.

Employment is a concern, with over 90% of the populations in two areas being ranked in the worst 30% nationally. Unsurprisingly, income also compares poorly against the County averages, along with health, education and children index of deprivation ratings.

Average house prices range from some of the lowest at £30,000 through to over £150,000. Main service centres (set out below) tend to be the places where greatest housing and employment growth is located but interspersed are a dispersed pattern of former coalfield communities that through lack of investment and poor social and physical infrastructure are relatively deprived and where private sector interventions are most required.

North Durham

Consett and Stanley are two important local centres of employment, shopping, leisure and public services in North West Durham. The strong growth in housing schemes for sale needs to be counter-balanced with housing renewal in order to sustain the towns' long term roles

Chester-le-Street is the main centre to the north of Durham City and the town has consolidated its role as a local retail centre in recent years. Although relatively prosperous, limited housing growth opportunities will curtail its development in future years.

East Durham

Seaham is the gateway to Durham's coast and its growth and revitalisation, based around the regeneration of the town centre and the redevelopment of former colliery sites, is an emerging success story.

Peterlee is a former new town and is a significant residential and employment base within the County halfway along the coast between Hartlepool and Sunderland.

Altogether Better Housing Markets

Despite North and East Durham having some of the lowest **affordability ratios** in the country and some of the largest supplies of social housing (averaging around

23%% of total stock with some neighbourhoods closer to 50%) the provision of good quality private sector accommodation (alongside social housing) remains critical to the well being of vulnerable persons and newly forming households.

The **low values inherent in housing land** in this area place additional emphasis on the public sector (either through investment by the HCA or through the local authority's land assets) to deliver the required range of good quality affordable housing to meet needs and to stimulate the private sector.

As part of the Coalfields Housing work, the settlements at Easington Colliery and Dawdon were identified as priorities for selective clearance. Further interventions may be required in places such as Horden, Blackhall, Shotton Colliery and Thornley in East Durham and South Stanley, New Kyo, Quaking Houses and Craghead in North Durham.

Altogether Better Housing Standards

Existing housing in North and East Durham requires considerable new investment. In particular, the smaller communities that are situated on the fringes of the main centres of population often have poorer quality housing and a weaker infrastructure to support the communities that live there.

In the **private sector**:

- Non decency is a particular problem especially for marginal owner-occupiers, older persons on limited incomes and other vulnerable groups.
- Renewal areas are benefiting from limited group repair and environmental improvement schemes such as those at Dawdon (near Seaham), Wembley (Easington Colliery) and Craghead (near Stanley). However more extensive work to regenerate these communities is needed and therefore the Council must secure finance and recommit to clearance for those areas of housing where neither private nor public investment will deliver the necessary improvements.

Also, of concern is the welfare and living standards of those in the **privately rented sector** where absentee landlords do not provide an adequate management and maintenance service. Landlords in Wembley; an area within Easington Colliery; are now subject to compulsory licensing as part of an intensive neighbourhood management scheme but further work is required to ensure the efficacy of the scheme.

Altogether Better at Housing People

The needs of **older people**, who comprise 22.5% of the population of North and East Durham, will be of paramount importance. Opportunities to alleviate under-occupancy to maximise the efficient use of stock should be taken while at the same time additional two bedroomed bungalows should be procured in the right locations.

The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community has sites at Birtley and Stanley in North Durham which require refurbishment but there are currently no permanent sites in East Durham.

Housing Regeneration Areas

The main centres for area based regeneration in North and East Durham are:

East Durham

Wheatley Hill
Easington Colliery
Dawdon (Seaham)

Wheatley Hill Regeneration Programme

Since the closure of the local collieries in the late 1960s/early 1970s Wheatley Hill village lost its traditional focus and main source of employment. In recent years, considerable efforts have been made to address some of these issues and the regeneration of the village. The colliery sites have been reclaimed and work on a range of housing, environmental and community schemes are currently taking place.

There are around 1450 dwellings in Wheatley Hill. The local authority stock is located on the older estates in the south of the village and a more recent development in the east. A large number of these council houses have been subject to partial improvement programmes.

The private housing is generally in good condition and in attractive surroundings and the village has a decent range of local services, including the Primary School, Front Street shops, the Community Centre and other community facilities.

The former Easington District Council commissioned a Masterplan for Wheatley Hill and development appraisals generated proposals for two specific sites in Wheatley Hill with accompanying implementation plans to provide for the long term regeneration of the village up to 2016. The housing regeneration plan for Wheatley Hill includes selective acquisition and demolition of surplus properties, environmental improvements, possible reprovision of new two bedroom bungalows for older people, bringing empty properties back into use and targeting energy efficiency initiatives.

Easington Colliery Regeneration Programme Wembley/Easington Colliery

Easington Colliery is a former coal mining settlement located on Durham's Heritage Coast mid way between Seaham to the north and Peterlee/Horden to the south. It has a population of around 5,000 with basic shopping facilities and some other community amenities.

Low income levels, poor health and low aspirations associated with a low skills base created a community with high levels of multiple deprivation. For instance 18% of the working age population claim incapacity benefits about double the average for the North East. About 37% of households do not have access to a car, a particular problem for such an isolated community. Nearly all the houses fall within Council Tax band A.

The housing stock is primarily privately owned with some smaller infill developments of local authority and housing association property. Absentee landlords with poor management records have compounded issues of anti-social behaviour amongst some residents.

Our current priorities include action to address the poor condition of privately owned stock in the neighbourhood of Wembley through selective licensing, group repair and other housing regeneration activity (energy efficiency initiatives, bringing empty homes back into use)

The area of the village nearest the rail line and coast has previously benefited from selective clearance. The majority landlord in some of the terraces (in the 'C' streets) is the housing association Accent Housing who took over the ownership of former Coal Board properties in the 1980's.

There is evidence though that those streets where private ownership predominates require further intervention and this could include further selective demolition.

The former colliery site (To the north of the village centre) is now an extensive area of reclaimed grassland and has been the subject of 'option studies' to establish its suitability for new development. This is dependant on whether the private sector is interested in participating in investing in this area.

Dawdon

Dawdon a former coal mining settlement was identified as a strategic focus for intervention having close proximity to Seaham and the potential to support the main town role. The neighbourhood had been identified as a low demand area and a ten year housing renewal programme was approved by the former Easington District Council.

A further Coalfield Settlement Study and Area Development Framework also highlighted the accessibility and connections between Dawdon and the rest of Seaham particularly to the town Centre, Group repair which has included renewal of doors, windows, facia's guttering etc, to private sector terraced housing with Dawdon has progressed into year 9 covering 94 properties and commenced in August 2010 with work nearing completion.

A succession strategy is currently in development and the impact of the investment will be evaluated at the end of the scheme and 12 and 24 months after project completion.

**North Durham
Craghead Regeneration Programme**

The Craghead Housing Intervention Project (CHIP) began in April 2007 with its overall aim being to improve housing conditions and to strengthen the housing market. The main intervention area includes just over 119 private sector terraced dwellings within 5 key streets in central Craghead.

Initially the first phase of the programme commenced in 2007/08 included, acquisition and demolition of a small number of failing private sector housing. The second phase of the programme commenced in September 2009 and encompasses a range of environmental improvements, The third phase commenced in August 2010 and is due for completion June 2011 and includes boundary wall treatment works which are being undertaken to the identified 119 terraced private sector housing within the area. The fourth phase which is due to commence in June 2011 includes group repair works comprising of renewal of roofs, doors, window, inclusion of an energy efficient render system and work is under way to facilitate the fitting of photovoltaic cells to properties. Work is progressing with Craghead Development Trust to develop a business plan linking with Homes and Communities Agency and Derwentside Homes to bring empty homes back into use.

SOUTH DURHAM

South Durham is closely connected to the **Tees Valley City Region**. The main commercial centres of Bishop Auckland, Newton Aycliffe, Spennymoor and Shildon form an important southern gateway to the County. The links with Darlington and Tees Valley, afford opportunities for complementary economic growth, to widen labour market catchments and extend the benefits of growth in Tees Valley to residents in the south of County.

The area incorporates a **network of strategic employment sites** including Green Lane industrial estate, Newton Aycliffe Industrial Estate and NETPark. The population of South Durham is around 155,000.

Health is a major issue across South Durham, with between 65% and 92% of the populations of different areas being ranked in the worst 30% nationally. Education, employment and older person index rankings also compare negatively to the County averages. Average house prices vary from £70,000 in former coalfield settlements and up to over £150,000 in the more rural areas. Its main service centres are described below.

Bishop Auckland in particular is a key retail and service centre with a population of 24,000 but a catchment area of over 150,000 people within 10 miles of the town. Bishop Auckland Further Education College is based in the town. There are strong public transport links to other settlements in the County; it has rail links to Darlington and will be connected to the Weardale railway in the future.

Newton Aycliffe is one of the larger towns in the County with a population of 26,725 and was the first new town in the North of England. It hosts the second largest industrial park in the region at Aycliffe Business Park, a major source of manufacturing-related employment for this and surrounding areas. A key issue for Newton Aycliffe is the vitality and potential redevelopment of the town centre and the strengthening of the Business Park.

Spennymoor, also a major town, was founded to service heavy and extractive industry but now requires significant investment in its town centre and the former Industrial Estate at Green Lane and Merrington Lane.

Sedgefield is host to the regionally important science and technology park of NETPark. It has ambitious expansion plans and is a key component of the County's strategy to make its economy more competitive. Recent private financing will boost the products being developed on the site. Sedgefield Community College is one of the first schools in County Durham to benefit from the **BSF programme** and work began on site on a 'state of the art' energy efficient building in July 2009.

Altogether Better Housing Markets

Mirroring the situation in North and East Durham, the need for **regeneration** is primarily focussed on places and settlements on the fringes of the main centres. Existing clearance and group repair funding has been concentrated on Dean Bank, Ferryhill Station and Chilton (to the south of Spennymoor) and to a lesser extent Coundon and the Dene Valley to the east of Bishop Auckland.

Altogether Better Housing Standards

The challenges of **poor stock in the private sector**:

- Has been confronted through a long term commitment to clearance in some of the settlements south of Spennymoor (Dean Bank, Chilton and Ferryhill Station); though future funding to continue the programme beyond its current phases is not yet identified. The majority of recent clearance and rehousing has taken place in these communities and the positive impact that this has had must be sustained.
- An integrated investment programme needs to be revived in Coundon and the Dene Valley where regeneration has halted. Market confidence can only be reinstated when a clear programme of work has been agreed – this will benefit private sector sites as well the public realm.
- A licensing scheme for private landlords has been established in Dean Bank and West Chilton where ongoing intensive neighbourhood management is helping to halt the decline of the community and its infrastructure.

Altogether Better at Housing People

South Durham has much in common with North Durham in terms of housing need:

- It has some of the lowest **affordability** ratios in the country and yet some of the largest supplies of social housing (averaging around 22% of total stock). The 2008 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) shows that additional private sector affordable housing is still required for the continued well being of vulnerable persons and newly forming households. However the need for additional affordable housing conflicts with the need to attract inward business investment and the role that a good housing offer plays in this; and further the need to create mixed communities in order to make such communities sustainable in the longer term.
- The needs of **older people**, who comprise 22.5% of the population of South Durham, are of paramount importance. Additional two bedroomed bungalows are required in locations close to services as well as schemes for the frail elderly (including flexible-tenure options).
- Other **special needs** require assistance:
- The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community has 3 sites at Auckland Park, Dene Valley, East Howle, near Ferryhill and Bishop Auckland in South Durham; two of which have benefited from funding from HCA for refurbishment.

Housing Regeneration Areas

The main centres for area based regeneration in South Durham are: Chilton, Ferryhill Station, Dean Bank, Ferryhill.

West Chilton

Chilton is based off the A167 bypass and in common with many former coalmining villages within County Durham has declined since the closure of the mines. Chilton has a population of 4,192, the area is relatively disadvantaged compared to the average for England and in particular is deprived in terms of employment, health and education with the area ranked in the worst 10% of all lower super output areas. Unemployment is at 2.5% broadly in line with local, regional averages however the rate of incapacity benefit and severe disability claimants at 13.4% is almost twice the average for England.

Dean Bank, Ferryhill

Dean Bank was built at the turn of the 20th century to house miners from the Dean and Chapter Colliery and is located west of the A167. The area consists of long terraced streets running east to west along the north and south sides of Dean Bank. Private rented stock accounts for a large proportion of homes with a mixture of Sedgefield Borough Homes and Three Rivers social housing stock. Low demand has led to issues of empty properties and high turnover.

Ferryhill Station, Ferryhill

Ferryhill Station a former mining community is based to the east of Ferryhill and runs alongside the main East Coast railway line. The designated housing market renewal (HMR) area was a small linear settlement of mainly pre 1919 terraced colliery housing. The overall area has suffered from years of under investment in its ageing housing stock which has contributed to significant levels of disrepair, empty properties, low values and in general a poor local environment.

A Master Plan for the three priority communities was commissioned in April 2005. The Master Plan involved a review of the existing evidence base, wide community involvement and consultation, option generation and financial modelling. This resulted in the production of Area Development Frameworks to support the regeneration of the priority communities. The former Sedgefield Borough Council adopted the ten year Master Plans on the 13th July 2006. The Housing Regeneration Plan for these three areas includes demolition and acquisition, group repair, environmental improvements, selective licensing work to bring empty homes back into use and targeting energy efficiency initiatives.

WEST DURHAM

County Durham is essentially a rural County with the West of the County displaying many 'deep rural' characteristics due to its topography and remoteness. The market towns of Barnard Castle, Stanhope, and Middleton-in-Teesdale are important rural centres serving their rural hinterland needs. However net population gains have resulted in housing affordability problems.

The population of West Durham is around 32,000. Despite apparent higher standards of living in West Durham, housing and wider deprivation is a significant issue with 59.5% and 37.4% of the populations of Weardale and Teesdale respectively being ranked within the 30% most deprived areas for housing nationally in terms of the index of deprivation.

Average house prices range from £106,000 in isolated former mining villages in the east to over £200,000 in the more desirable market towns. This area has the highest proportion of private sector dwellings and some of the highest non decency levels in the County – especially amongst those houses built before 1919.

Barnard Castle is the main town within this area and attracts residents, visitors and businesses. Its 20 year regeneration plan, developed by Barnard Castle Vision, sets out objectives around improving the local economy through business growth and diversification; through developing the town as a visitor destination and enhancing its role as a rural service centre.

Altogether Better Housing Markets

The affordability ratio in Teesdale is the second highest in the County and the 2008 local housing market assessments for Teesdale and Wear Valley have shown that there is a continuing need for affordable housing in both private and social sectors. The high level of second home owners accentuates the housing shortage in these rural areas. Particular requirements exist for 2 bedroomed starter homes and accommodation for older people (both bungalows and apartments).

It should be noted that outliers of the former coalfield area exist at Cockfield and Evenwood and the housing in these isolated communities would also benefit from some levels of regeneration and renewal.

Altogether Better Housing Standards

The housing exhibits relatively high levels of non decency in the private sector – mainly associated with poor thermal efficiency. The stock is older and less well heated and this is combined with many properties being off the mains gas network; the levels of fuel poverty in the area need to be brought down. Good practise examples such as the installation of ground source heat pumps in Teesdale HA's properties in Cockfield could be replicated.

Altogether Better at Housing People

Rural homelessness is regarded as an issue and increasing the supply of housing for single persons and couples in particular is seen as a priority.

The percentage of older people at 28% is the highest in the County and older people's needs, particularly when staying put is an additional challenge in isolated rural communities require particular attention either through the Home Improvement Agency or through telecare products and services. Where rehousing is a more appropriate solution then new housing schemes should be pursued in main centres of population where services exist and access to them is acceptable.

The Gypsy and Traveller community do not have a permanent site in West Durham but do benefit from 'stopover' sites along the route to Appleby in neighbouring Cumbria. The needs of this group in May/June each year needs to be continually assessed and provided.

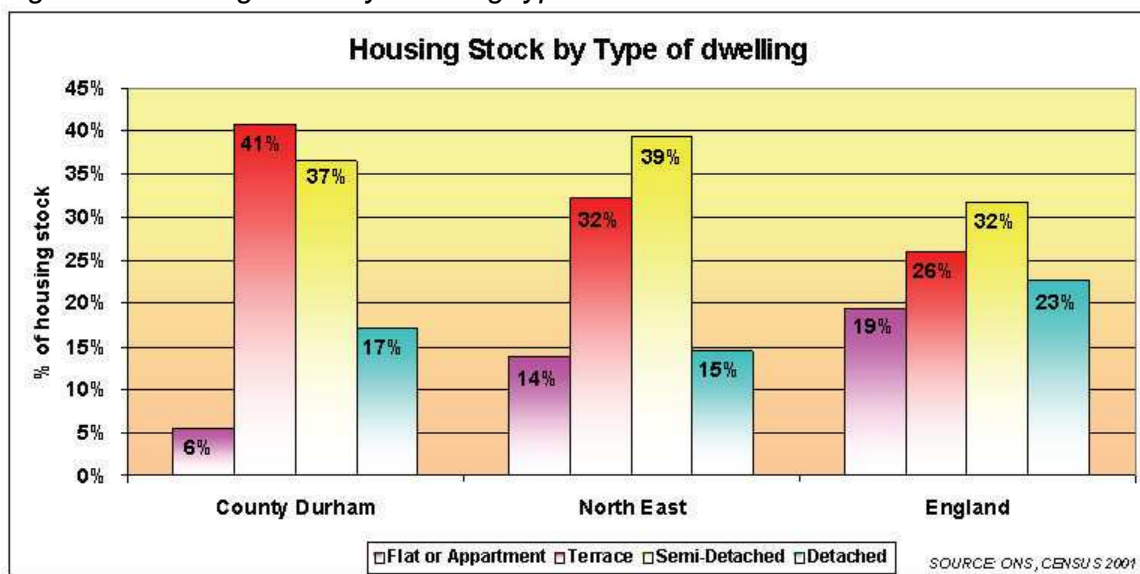
3.2 Issues and evidence

Some basic facts about private sector housing in County Durham

There are about 232,000 homes in County Durham. Of these around 80% or 185,000 are private sector housing, which means they are owned by an owner occupier, private landlord or private company. In short, private sector housing is all housing except that which is owned by the Council or another social landlord.

The various types of private sector housing in County Durham are set out in the table below, for comparison with the rest of England:

Figure 4: Housing stock by dwelling type



In terms of the age of housing across County Durham:

- around 15% of housing was built before 1900, ranging from 39% in Teesdale to 6% in Easington;
- around 24% was built between 1900 and 1939, ranging from 38% in Easington to 12% in Wear Valley;
- around 42% dates from between 1939 and 1982, ranging from 52% in Sedgefield to 30% in Teesdale;
- around 19% of stock has been built since 1983, ranging from 21% in Chester le Street to 17% in Teesdale.

We estimate that approximately 16% of private sector housing is owned by Private Landlords.

Stock Condition

The primary responsibility to maintain homes in the private sector rests with owner occupiers and private landlords. Work which Durham County Council carried out with the Building Research Establishment in 2009 using English House Condition Survey information showed a correlation between older housing and non-decency, often due to the poor thermal efficiency of older housing stock. Around 34% of

private housing appeared to be failing the decent homes standard and 16,000 households living in these properties classed as vulnerable. The total estimated cost of bringing all private sector homes up to standard is a staggering £492million, dropping to £147million to improve the homes of the most vulnerable.

Although government has dropped the decent homes standard in the private sector from national indicators, Durham County Council remains committed to addressing decency and will continue to monitor performance in this sector.

Figure 5: Modelled Private Sector Stock Condition

Delivery Area		Private Sector Dwellings	% Non-Decent	% Inadequate Thermal Comfort	% HHSRS* Cat. 1	% Disrepair	% Non-Modern
North & East Durham	Chester-le-Street	18216	29%	13%	17%	8%	1%
North & East Durham	Derwentside	28843	36%	15%	23%	11%	1%
North & East Durham	Easington	28348	29%	13%	18%	8%	1%
South Durham	Sedgefield	27440	30%	13%	18%	10%	1%
West Durham	Teesdale	9799	57%	22%	44%	21%	2%
West Durham	Wear Valley	21294	42%	17%	30%	15%	2%
Central Durham	Durham City	27831	32%	14%	22%	10%	1%
	County Durham	161862	34%	14%	23%	11%	1%
	England	18053000	36%	17%	24%	8%	2%

* Housing Health and Safety Rating System

Source: BRE Stock Condition Model March 2009

Durham County Council's Financial Assistance Policy sets out the approach to providing financial help to private sector vulnerable householders whose homes are in poor condition. The policy makes use of new flexibilities introduced by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, enabling local authorities to provide financial help in various new ways. The policy sees a shift from grants to loans and offers a suite of low cost loan products to people who cannot access finance through a commercial lender.

Regeneration and renewal

In County Durham many areas offer residents a wide range of housing choice, from good quality affordable social housing to smaller starter homes, two and three bedroom family houses, and larger executive homes. But in other areas the

housing mix still reflects the historic role of settlements and is less suited to the demands of modern householders, with more social rented and older terraced properties and fewer new properties on offer.

In Derwentside, East Durham, Sedgefield and Wear Valley almost 50% of the stock is terraced, and in some cases the quality is of a poor standard. A number of communities with older terraced housing also have poor environmental amenities with poor access to health services and leisure facilities.

Working within the framework of a Coalfield Settlement Study to address issues such as low demand and abandonment (leaving homes empty), the Private Sector Housing Service is taking forward housing renewal work inherited from the former District Councils in the following **eight** regeneration areas:

- Esh Winning Durham
- Wheatley Hill East Durham
- Dawdon Seaham East Durham
- Easington Colliery (Wembley) East Durham
- Dean Bank, Ferryhill South Durham
- West Chilton South Durham
- Ferryhill Station South Durham
- Craghead North Durham

Vulnerable households /Aids and Adaptations

The Council works in partnership with local Home Improvement Agencies to provide a range of support to householders to improve their homes and quality of life, either using their own funds or with the aid of grants and loans when appropriate.

Currently the Council's Occupational Therapists refer over 700 cases each year for adaptations, often supported by Disabled Facilities Grants to fund works carried out through the Home Improvement Agencies. The Home Improvement Agencies (HIA's) offer a project management service to vulnerable people who are able to pay or have the financial capacity yet require practical support from design stage to completion of works.

A review of the Home Improvement Agencies across the county has been completed resulting in the merger of 2 HIA's into one covering South and West Durham (in house service South Durham and Dales HIA). Service Level Agreements have been established with Three Rivers Care and Repair service to provide services in the North and East of county and a Central Improvement Team within the private sector housing service monitors the performance of all HIA provision across the county.

Better housing standards in the private rented sector

County Durham has a high level of private rented housing, with a significant proportion failing to meet the decent homes standard. Ineffective management by some private landlords, together with an unwillingness to invest and a lack of

engagement with local communities, has unsettled neighbourhoods by causing a high turnover of tenants and other residents.

Councils have discretion to use various measures to improve housing management in the private rented sector, including landlord accreditation projects or selective licensing schemes to cover all privately rented property in areas which suffer from low housing demand or significant anti social behaviour. There are now three selective licensing schemes in County Durham in Easington Colliery, Dean Bank and Chilton.

Durham County Council wants to support a thriving private rented sector, where housing conditions are improving, homes are well managed, fewer properties remain empty and it is easier for people to find a home that suits their needs

Initiatives with landlords represent a dual approach to the private rented sector, making a major contribution to the programme of area-based housing renewal, and also handling priority cases across County Durham involving the most vulnerable householders and the worst private landlords.

Ensuring that more private rented properties are advertised through the Choice Based Lettings system will also make a significant contribution to improving access to decent, affordable housing across the county.

In order to raise standards generally, the Private Sector Housing Service offers private landlords advice and information through a number of sources, including Durham County Council's website. It also runs networking and training events in a number of localities during the year. Where housing management problems arise, the service will work face-to-face with a landlord, offering support until a resolution is found.

The Private Sector Housing Service wants to show landlords that it makes business sense to maintain properties at a decent standard and follow sound, fair housing management practices. Therefore a joint approach with Neighbourhood Services has recently been developed in the form a joint working protocol. This approach involves the Private Sector Housing Service providing a high quality advice line to landlords and tenants across the county with more proactive intervention within the regeneration areas. Within these areas the Private Sector Housing Service will engage with landlords, in the first instance, to resolve any issues informally through education, information and negotiation. Only in cases where issues cannot be resolved by informal methods will Neighbourhood Services begin to consider enforcement proceedings.

Empty Homes

Analysis of data from council tax records suggests that over 4,000 private sector homes across county Durham have been empty for 6 months or more. There are many reasons why homes are empty and it will not be possible to bring all these homes back into use; indeed the Council recognises a proportion of empty homes are necessary and demonstrative of a healthy functioning open housing market. However, there is a need to reduce the level of empty homes in identified housing regeneration areas in order to increase the sustainability of those neighbourhoods.

In addition there is an under supply of housing across the county and the council needs to identify those properties that can be brought back into use relatively quickly. In this way the council is utilising its limited resources effectively to maximise the supply of housing. Finally, it is important to retain some resource to deal with empty homes outside identified housing regeneration areas where it can be evidenced that the empty home is directly causing neighbourhood blight.

The private sector housing team take a proactive, informal approach to influence and encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use including:

- Face to face meeting with owners to assess needs and develop a set of actions designed to bring the property back into use
- Advice on becoming a responsible private landlord where sale is not an option
- A free tenant referencing service for new and existing landlords in identified housing regeneration areas
- Access to loans to complete essential repairs through the council's financial assistance policy
- Free advice and support regarding disrepair and refurbishment needs including drafting schedules of work if required

The strategy delivery plan identifies future actions to increase the council's effectiveness at bringing empty homes back into use, notably the establishment of a range of private sector leasing schemes, and setting a policy and framework for the use of Empty Dwelling Management Order and Enforced sales.

Once informal approaches have been exhausted the team prioritise empty homes that will be brought back into use using an enforcement approach as detailed in the joint protocol with the council's Environment Protection Team".

Energy efficiency

Installing energy efficiency measures can result in a warmer home, lower fuel bills, reductions in fuel poverty and safeguarding health and well being. It also brings associated environmental benefits in terms of reductions in climate change emissions and assisting with the achievement of decent homes.

Up to 33% of the heat is lost through external walls and up to 20% can be lost through the roof. The faster heat escapes the higher your heating bills will be. There are numerous cost effective measures that can be installed in most traditional houses such as cavity wall and loft insulation, high efficiency gas boilers and highly controllable heating controls with central heating boilers accounting for around 60% of overall heating costs.

Durham County Council has developed some excellent projects and schemes over the years to help mitigate the effects of high fuel prices and energy inefficient homes and with vast changes to UK energy policy, a new strategy is very timely.

Accurate targeting of assistance to the people who most need support and assistance is crucial to tackling fuel poverty in the future. Local Authorities play a

pivotal role in delivering real change through the application of local knowledge and delivery of area based intervention schemes.

While inefficient heating systems can be expensive to run, other forms of heating can be even more costly for settlements in the off gas areas of West Durham where on peak electric heating, liquid petroleum gas (LPG) heaters and oil central heating is used.

Some households in County Durham do not have access to mains gas particularly in west durham therefore their choice of heating system is more limited. It is important, with the introduction of more stringent carbon reduction targets that Durham County Council considers the introduction of more renewable technologies for householders, but also ensuring that these systems do save money and are amenable to vulnerable people.

Section Four: Future Challenges

4.1 Future Delivery and Improvement of the Service

Delivering the Private Sector Housing Service - options for the future

A review of internal and external factors affecting the private sector housing service has taken place and the results were used to determine the best approach to intervening in private sector housing in County Durham. Details of this analysis are included at Appendix 1.

Seven different strategic delivery options were examined to see how they each fared against three essential tests.

- Is the option **suitable**? - Does it meet the needs of residents and landlords in a way that represents value for money? Does it fit with the Council's overall strategy?
- Is the option **acceptable**? - Does it meet the Council's housing and regeneration objectives in a way that is legal and ethical?
- Is the option **feasible**? Is it actually possible to put it into practice?

The chosen strategic option for the Private Sector Housing Service: a targeted service with a safety net. This offers an approach which combines suitability, feasibility and acceptability to optimum effect.

Details of the seven options considered are included at Appendix 2.

This chosen option offers a three-pronged approach:

- Concentrated work in identified housing regeneration areas with the worst housing conditions and highest levels of deprivation, or where regeneration schemes link to wider economic regeneration activity, this will be led by the area based housing regeneration team using a project management approach to draw in other elements of the Private Sector Housing Service and increasingly other social and economic regeneration agencies.
- A safety net service to deal with other priorities, for example, if an empty home outside a regeneration area is found to be significantly contributing to neighbourhood blight.
- Work with vulnerable households across all of County Durham, led by work around home improvements, disabled adaptations and energy efficiency.

An advice line will be available to report queries and complaints about any service area. These will be prioritised using a set of criteria to determine the level of

neighbourhood blight and identify quick wins in relation to empty homes in order to maximise supply of housing.

Under the chosen strategic option, the Private Sector Housing Service will seek to deliver the following range of activities in an effective and efficient manner, subject to available capital:

Priority 1: Area based regeneration in the eight identified housing regeneration areas

- Group repair and facelift schemes
- Selective acquisition and demolition
- Environmental improvements such as the provision of car parking facilities and green spaces
- Working in areas with concentrated pockets of poor quality private sector housing to improve the quality of accommodation and housing standards
- Bringing empty homes back into use and working with owners and private landlords
- Delivering an intensive approach to improving energy efficiency

Priority 2: Meeting the needs of vulnerable people/improving and adapting properties with a more intensive approach in the eight housing regeneration areas.

- Provision of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants
- Home improvements and repairs for vulnerable financially excluded home owners including accelerating the shift away from grants to loans
- Technical advice and assistance to households wanting to improve or adapt their properties who don't qualify for financial assistance through a project management approach
- Assistance for vulnerable owner occupiers across the whole of County Durham, liaising with Occupational Therapists and Home Improvement Agencies to ensure that a consistent service is delivered to vulnerable people wherever they live
- An equitable adaptations service for all social housing tenants across County Durham is in place
- Ten owner occupiers (in each of the housing identified regeneration areas) to take up a loan product via the Council's Financial Assistance Policy

Priority 3: Improving management practices and stock condition in the private rented sector with a more intensive approach in the eight housing regeneration areas.

- Working in partnership with private landlords to improve their properties and assist some landlords to improve their housing management practices
- To promote ,strengthen and effectively manage Selective Licensing in current licensed areas, and evaluate the schemes' effectiveness
- When formal action has failed, take robust enforcement action on the poorest private rented stock and worst housing management practices
- Advertise properties owned by private landlords into the County Durham's Choice Based Lettings Scheme

Priority 4: Bringing empty homes back into use with a more intensive approach in the eight housing regeneration areas.

- Reduce vacancy levels to 4% or below

- Quick wins to increase the supply of affordable homes outside of regeneration areas
- Make use of all available tools to bring empty properties back into use, for example Empty Dwelling Management Orders
- Introduction of leasing arrangements for bringing empty properties back into use through use of a managing agent

Priority 5: Making properties more energy efficient

- improving the energy efficiency of properties occupied by the most vulnerable households living across the County
- Improve the energy efficiency of those properties in the identified regeneration areas
- Increase average SAP ratings to above 65 to those properties in the eight housing regeneration areas

4.2 Applying a new approach to the private sector housing service

The new approach to the private sector housing service will involve the following activities:

4.2.1 Approach to housing regeneration

The approach to private sector renewal is to be focussed on area based regeneration. Area based housing regeneration will be based on a project management approach and is exemplified as follows.

Holistic renewal

By a project-based approach in the most deprived areas linking to any economic and development schemes with the worst housing conditions to draw in contributions from each strand of the Private Sector Housing Service and other stakeholders/partners.

Project management approach

There is a named project manager designated to each of the eight interventions drawn from the Housing Renewal and Improvement Housing regeneration team.

There is a project plan in place for each of the interventions.

There is a steering group for each area.

Programmed approach

A coordinated capital programme geographically targeted and linked to wider regeneration strategies.

Measuring impact

A set of outputs and outcome measure to ensure effective performance management will be identified

4.2.2 Approach to improving and adapting properties for vulnerable households

The approach to improving and adapting properties will distinguish between regeneration and non regeneration areas as follows:

Within housing regeneration areas

Heavily promote the advice and project management service

Produce an intensive marketing campaign to promote the Council's Financial Assistance Policy /loan products

Outside regeneration areas

Publicise the advice and project management service

Provide adaptations via Disabled Facilities Grants for those vulnerable people referred by Social Services for assistance

Publicise the financial assistance policy/ loan products

4.2.3 Approach to improving management practices and stock condition in the private rented sector

The approach to improving standards in the private rented sector will distinguish between regeneration and non regeneration areas as follows:

Within regeneration areas

Signpost to appropriate support mechanisms including 'Enhanced tenancy support schemes' for vulnerable tenants

Close links established with landlords with high levels of stock

Maintain a selective licensing framework in 3 areas (Wembley, Dean Bank and Chilton West) including selective licensing enforcement activity

Housing enforcement activity through housing enforcement protocol

The delivery of briefing & training sessions.

Outside regeneration areas

A high quality advice line, with excellent information offering a range of advice on housing and tenancy issues and assessing incoming calls to prioritise calls for intervention and tracking outcomes.

4.2.4 Approach to bringing empty homes back into use

The approach to bringing empty properties back into use will distinguish between regeneration and non regeneration areas as follows:

Within regeneration areas

Will play a key role in the project management structure to ensure all empty properties are appraised and appropriate action taken.

Outside of regeneration areas

Respond where there is significant blight or anti social behaviour or danger to the public.

Quick wins in order to increase the supply of affordable homes

4.2.5 Approach to making properties more energy efficient

The approach to making properties more energy efficient will distinguish between regeneration and non regeneration areas as follows:

Within regeneration areas

Ensure that all individual properties are recorded on an energy database

Produce an intensive marketing campaign to promote energy efficiency initiatives in regeneration areas

Engage stakeholders including social landlords in delivering comprehensive energy efficiency measures.

Progress innovative investment initiatives

Outside regeneration areas

Provide general publicity and advice on energy efficiency initiatives where demand and needs are identified.

Section Five: The Delivery Plan

Priority 1: Area Based Regeneration

Includes bringing empty homes back into use, working with private landlords to improve standards and practices, intensive approach to energy efficiency and helping vulnerable households.

ACTION	TIME SCALE	RESOURCES	LEAD	OUT- PUTS	OUTCOME
1. Carry out a review of regeneration vehicles with a view to establishing a vehicle that levers in private sector funding for housing renewal in areas of need including the utilisation of DVRC as a private sector housing regeneration vehicle where appropriate	February 2013	Existing staff resources	KH	Review complete and report produced including clear recommendations	Increased private sector investment for housing regeneration activity
2. Deliver housing regeneration project in the Craghead area of Stanley	August 2013	Existing staffing resource FAP budget Capital Capital= £3.68m	ACJ	Improvements carried out to 137 properties Complete group repair to 89 properties Complete environmental improvements	Reduction in fuel poverty Improved stock condition Better health outcomes Reduction in carbon

			<p>Provision of free solar P.V. panels through Scottish and Southern Electricity.</p> <p>Reduce vacancy levels to 4% or below</p> <p>Increase average SAP ratings to above 65 (to a defined number of properties)</p> <p>100% of stock free from Cat 1 hazards. Community development trust,</p> <p>10 owner occupiers to take up a FAP loan product (over the lifetime of the strategy and subject to funding)</p> <p>Succession Strategy</p>	<p>emissions Neighbourhood sustainability</p>
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				<p>& Evaluation</p> <p>Business Plan developed by Craghead Development Trust to bring empty homes back into use</p>	
<p>3. Deliver housing regeneration project in the Wembley area of Easington Colliery Integrate with economic development to consider retail, schools and wider regeneration of Easington Colliery.</p>	<p>August 2014</p>	<p>Existing staffing resource FAP budget Capital £823,500 (phase 1, now complete) £850,000 phase 2 due to commence September 2011</p> <p>Phase 3 2012/13 subject to funding</p>	<p>JW</p>	<p>Group repair of 195 properties split over 3 phases (subject to funding)</p> <p>license 100% of licensable properties</p> <p>Reduce vacancy levels to 4% or below</p> <p>Increase average SAP ratings to above 65 (to a defined number of properties)</p> <p>100% of stock free from Cat 1 hazards</p>	<p>Reduction fuel poverty Improved stock condition Better health outcomes Reduction in carbon emissions Neighbourhood sustainability</p>

				<p>(only for the properties in the designated licensed area)</p> <p>10 owner occupiers to take up a FAP loan product(over the lifetime of the strategy and subject to funding)</p> <p>Succession strategy & Evaluation</p>	
4. Deliver housing regeneration project in the Dawdon area of Seaham and to continue to endeavour to secure capital for acquisition and demolition.	August 2012	Existing staffing resource FAP budget Capital £1.228m	JW	Succession strategy and evaluation of the project	Reduction fuel poverty Improved stock condition Better health outcomes Reduction in carbon emissions Neighbourhood

					sustainability
5. Deliver Ferryhill Station housing regeneration project	March 2013	Existing staffing resource FAP budget Capital £340k	DL	<p>Deanbank, Ferryhill Environmental improvements completed in June 2011 and the remainder in August 2011</p> <p>Reduce vacancy levels to 4% or below</p> <p>Increase SAP ratings to above 65 (to a defined number of properties)</p> <p>100% of stock free from Cat 1 hazards</p> <p>license 100% of licensable properties</p> <p>10 owner occupiers to take up a FAP loan product (over the lifetime of the</p>	<p>Reduction fuel poverty</p> <p>Improved stock condition</p> <p>Better health outcomes</p> <p>Reduction in carbon emissions</p> <p>Neighbourhood sustainability</p>

				strategy and subject to funding) Succession strategy & Evaluation	
6. Deliver housing regeneration project in the Dean Bank area of Sedgfield	August 2013	Existing staffing resource FAP budget – as required Capital SHIP/GF = £330,000	DL	Reduce vacancy levels to 4% or below Increase SAP ratings to above 65 (to a defined number of properties) 100% of stock free from Cat 1 hazards(only for the properties in the designated licensed area) 10 owner occupiers	Reduction fuel poverty Improved stock condition Better health outcomes Reduction in carbon emissions Neighbourhood sustainability

				<p>to take up a FAP loan product(over the lifetime of the strategy and subject to funding)</p> <p>Succession strategy</p> <p>Evaluation</p>	
7. Deliver housing regeneration project to the West Chilton area of Sedgfield	August 2013	Existing staffing resource FAP budget Capital /GF = £748k	DL	<p>Acquisition and demolition of 57 residential properties and 10 garages.</p> <p>Reduce vacancy levels to 4% or below</p> <p>Increase SAP ratings to above 65 (to a defined number of properties)</p> <p>100% of stock free from Cat 1 hazards(only for the</p>	<p>Reduction fuel poverty</p> <p>Improved stock condition</p> <p>Better health outcomes</p> <p>Reduction in carbon emissions</p> <p>Neighbourhood sustainability</p>

				<p>properties in the designated licensed area)</p> <p>10 owner occupiers to take up a FAP loan product(over the lifetime of the strategy and subject to funding)</p>	
8. Deliver housing regeneration project in the Esh Winning area of Durham	August 2013	Existing staffing resource FAP budget Capital HRA = £570k	DH	<p>78 demolitions</p> <p>9 two bed bungalows for rent</p> <p>20 open market housing for sale</p> <p>Reduce vacancy levels to 4% or below</p>	<p>Reduction fuel poverty</p> <p>Improved stock condition</p> <p>Better health outcomes</p> <p>Reduction in carbon emissions</p> <p>Neighbourhood sustainability</p>

<p>9. Deliver housing regeneration project to the Wheatley Hill area in East Durham</p>	<p>August 2013</p>	<p>Existing staffing resource FAP budget Capital HRA = £700k</p>	<p>JW</p>	<p>Demolish 50 properties</p> <p>In Cain, Henderson and Ryan Terrace</p> <p>Land assembly for future housing development</p> <p>Reduce vacancy levels to 4% or below</p> <p>Increase average SAP ratings to above 65 (to a defined number of properties)</p> <p>100% of PRS properties free from cat 1 hazards</p> <p>10 owners occupiers to take up a FAP loan product (over the lifetime of the strategy and subject to funding)</p>	<p>Reduction fuel poverty Improved stock condition Better health outcomes Reduction in carbon emissions Neighbourhood sustainability</p>
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<p>10. Continue to engage effectively with HCA to lever in funding to improve private sector stock condition</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Existing staffing resource</p>	<p>KH</p>	<p>Maximising resources for housing regeneration</p>	<p>Accelerated activity in housing regeneration Reduction fuel poverty Improved stock condition Better health outcomes Reduction in carbon emissions Neighbourhood sustainability</p>
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11. Develop an approach for the identification of future areas of opportunity or at risk of market failure.	February 2012	Existing staffing resource	KH	Process in place	Effective approach to regeneration
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Priority 2: Improving and adapting properties for vulnerable people

ACTION	TIMESCALE	RESOURCES	LEAD	OUTPUTS	OUTCOME
1. Evaluate the HIA implementation plan.	October 2011	Existing staff resources	SJ	An equitable service across the county.	Better HIA service
2. Carry out a strategic review of the County's HIA service jointly with Adults Health and Wellbeing.	Starting in April 2012	Existing staff resources	SJ/DE	Service reviewed and recommendations made.	Value for money service
3. Maximise the take up of loan products across the County	On-going from June 2010	Existing staffing resources	NP	More people taking up loans to improve their properties 90 properties per year made decent	Improvement in County Durham stock condition More balanced housing markets Individuals lives improved
4. Engage with RSL's in County Durham to agree levels of funding for adaptations within their stock	November 2010 - April 2012	Existing staffing resources	SJ	RSL's contributing to the funding of adaptations	More efficient and effective service with more of County Durham housing stock appropriately adapted
5. Provide mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants	2011-2015	Existing staffing resources	SJ	700 properties adapted per year	Enable residents to live more independently

Priority 3: Improving management practices and stock condition in the private rented sector
(In addition to the intensive approach in housing regeneration areas as set out in Priority 1)

ACTION	TIME SCALE	RESOURCES	LEAD	OUTPUTS	OUTCOME
1. Complete option appraisal of the introduction of a charging system for tenant referencing	April 2012	Existing staff resources	Delivery Team	Option appraisal complete	Increased revenue to the Council
2. Complete a comprehensive evaluation of selective licensing & report outcomes with recommendation regarding future use of licensing	September 2012	Existing staffing resources	KH	Clear understanding of benefits (or otherwise) of licensing to inform future decision making	Effective use of resources
3. Complete a comprehensive evaluation of the joint protocol for housing enforcement	February 2013	Existing staffing resources		Clear understanding of effectiveness of protocol & how improvements can be implemented	Effective and efficient service delivery to maximise Council's impact on improving housing standards
4. Private landlords to advertise properties as part of County Durham's Choice based lettings scheme	December 2012	Existing staffing resources		Good quality private rented sector accommodation advertised in same way as social rented accommodation Private landlords incentivised to improve accommodation in order to be included in CBL	Maximising supply of affordable housing Improving housing standards

Priority 4: Bringing Empty Properties back into Use (In addition to the intensive approach in housing regeneration areas as set out in Priority 1)					
ACTION	TIME SCALE	RESOURCES	LEAD	OUT- PUTS	OUT COMES
1. Assess the need and make recommendations in relation to additional licensing of HMOs	April 2012	Existing staffing resource	Neil Laws	Report produced and a decision reached regarding additional licensing of HMOs	Better standards in HMOs
2. Introduce leasing arrangements for bringing empty properties back into use through the use of a managing agent.	August 2012	Existing staffing resources	Delivery Team	Private sector leasing schemes established	Better housing standards. Maximising supply of affordable housing

Priority 5: Energy efficiency					
ACTION	TIME SCALE	RESOURCES	LEAD	OUT- PUTS	OUTCOMES
1. Produce an energy audit for each property with energy saving options identified in a report	April 2012	Existing staffing resource	Cliff Duff	All properties in	Countywide energy

				regeneration areas are SAP rated Countywide energy database extended	database to allow strategic targeting and monitoring
2. Work with communities and identify Energy Champions training to include one resident from each regeneration area.	April 2012	Existing staffing resource	Cliff Duff	Numbers of local residents engaged in training programme	Increased community engagement to maximise uptake of energy conservation schemes
3. Explore opportunities for enhanced energy efficiency grant schemes within regeneration areas and research all external funding opportunities within CERT, CESP and Warm Front	September 2011	Existing staffing resource	Cliff Duff	Properties made energy efficient using external funding	Improved energy efficiency and stock condition Reduction fuel poverty Better health outcomes Reduction in carbon emissions
4. Establish a toolkit for energy efficiency officer working in	June 2011	Existing staff	Cliff Duff	Toolkit	Improved

regeneration areas and targeting vulnerable groups		resource		produced and being applied	energy efficiency of properties in regeneration areas
5. Work in regeneration/licensed areas to target vulnerable groups and achieve energy efficiency targets	April 2011 and following 2 years of delivery plan	Existing staffing resource Capital: FAP budget	Cliff Duff	Properties made energy efficient in regeneration areas or occupied by vulnerable households	Private sector properties made energy efficient with lower fuel bills for residents Reduction in carbon emissions
6. Undertake a National Green Deal (Energy Company Obligation) Pilot Scheme based in regeneration areas	Dec 2012	Existing staffing resource	Cliff Duff	Clear understanding of benefits and external funding opportunities offered by the Green Deal to improve energy efficiency in private sector properties	Better understanding of how to access Green Deal funding

Cross cutting issues across the 5 priorities					
ACTION	TIME SCALE	RESOURCES	LEAD	OUT- PUTS	OUTCOMES
1. Review and update the financial assistance policy	Annual	Existing staffing resources	KH	Revised policy in place	Improved and adapted stock.
2.Enhance the existing data base for information on condition of private sector housing stock	October 2011 and 6 monthly thereafter	Existing	KR	Detailed information on the private sector housing market	Ability to determine areas of housing need and opportunity