



Housing Strategy 2010-2013



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Policy and Partnerships
Wokingham Borough Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WR

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Housing Strategy 2010-2013

“All residents can access well-designed, affordable and sustainable homes and effective support services to enable them to experience a high quality of life in Wokingham”

	Addressing our Housing Needs To ensure that all households in the Borough can access well-designed, affordable and sustainable homes.	Supporting Vulnerable People To continue to enable vulnerable people to be self-reliant and live independently	Tackling Homelessness and Housing Need To prevent and provide for homelessness and be responsive to housing need.	Improving the Housing Service Providing high quality, value for money services to our tenants
In the next 3 years we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver more affordable homes through the implementation of our Core Strategy. • Work with the Rural Housing Enabler for Berkshire to identify and respond to the housing needs of our rural communities. • Proactively explore new delivery methods for affordable housing, including setting up a Council-owned Local Housing Company • Identify sites to meet the need for 21 additional gypsy and traveller pitches. • Improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of all tenures of housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable people, including Extra Care Housing, Dementia Housing, housing for people with a learning disability and supported housing for young people. • Provide a range of housing support services to help vulnerable people live independently, including a signposting service, equity release scheme and home refuge scheme. • Increase the supply of “Lifetime Homes”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer high quality advice to households on housing options, rights and responsibilities. • Increase access to settled forms of housing, including through the Rent in Advance and Deposit loan schemes. • Continue to work with the voluntary sector to provide a range of support services to respond to housing crises, including responding to the threat of homelessness created by the recession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a full condition survey of our Council-owned housing stock and develop a 30-year business plan. • Review all options for the future management of the Council’s housing stock in consultation with our tenants. • Develop and implement a Service Improvement Plan. • Put in place a Decent Homes programme. • Improve the overall management of our Gypsy and Traveller sites.
We will have succeeded if, by 2013:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 400 new affordable homes have been built in the Borough. • Rural exception housing has been developed in a rural community and further schemes are in the pipeline. • The Council is more actively involved in developing new housing through the establishment of a Local Housing Company or alternative method. • More gypsy and traveller pitches have been provided. • The standard of new and existing housing has improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 schemes of specialist accommodation have been completed in the Borough. • Vulnerable adults in receipt of housing-related support enabled to live independently has increased from 94% to 96%. • Enabled more adults with a learning disability to access long-term homes. • Vulnerable people are better informed about their housing and support options and choices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of households accepted as homeless is kept at 30 or less per annum. • Repeat homelessness stays at below 3% per annum. • The number of households in temporary accommodation is halved by 2010 to 28 or less. • B&B is used in an emergency only. • We have provided accommodation to those in most need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant satisfaction has increased from the current level of 70%. • The Council has a long-term, financially viable plan for the future management of the Council’s housing stock. • The Service Improvement Plan has been fully implemented. • The number of Council homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard has moved towards 100%.

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1. Introduction

“A great place to live and work, where residents feel valued and the Council promotes economic growth with good quality of life and opportunity for all.”

This is the Council’s ambitious vision for the Borough over the next 10-20 years. Affordable, decent homes are key to making this vision a reality for the people who live and work in Wokingham. The Strategy has been developed in consultation with our partners to set out our priorities for housing for the next three years. It seeks to celebrate and build upon the successes achieved since the publication of our previous Housing Strategy in 2005.

Wokingham Borough is changing. Over the coming years, we are going to see significant housing growth as we deliver over 13,000 new homes and expand four communities. We need to ensure that these homes are fit for the future and make a positive contribution to addressing our housing priorities.

Wokingham is a generally prosperous Borough that is often regarded as one of the best places to live in the Country. However, the success of the area does in itself bring with it challenges. House prices in the Borough are well above the national average leading to affordability issues for local people and key workers.

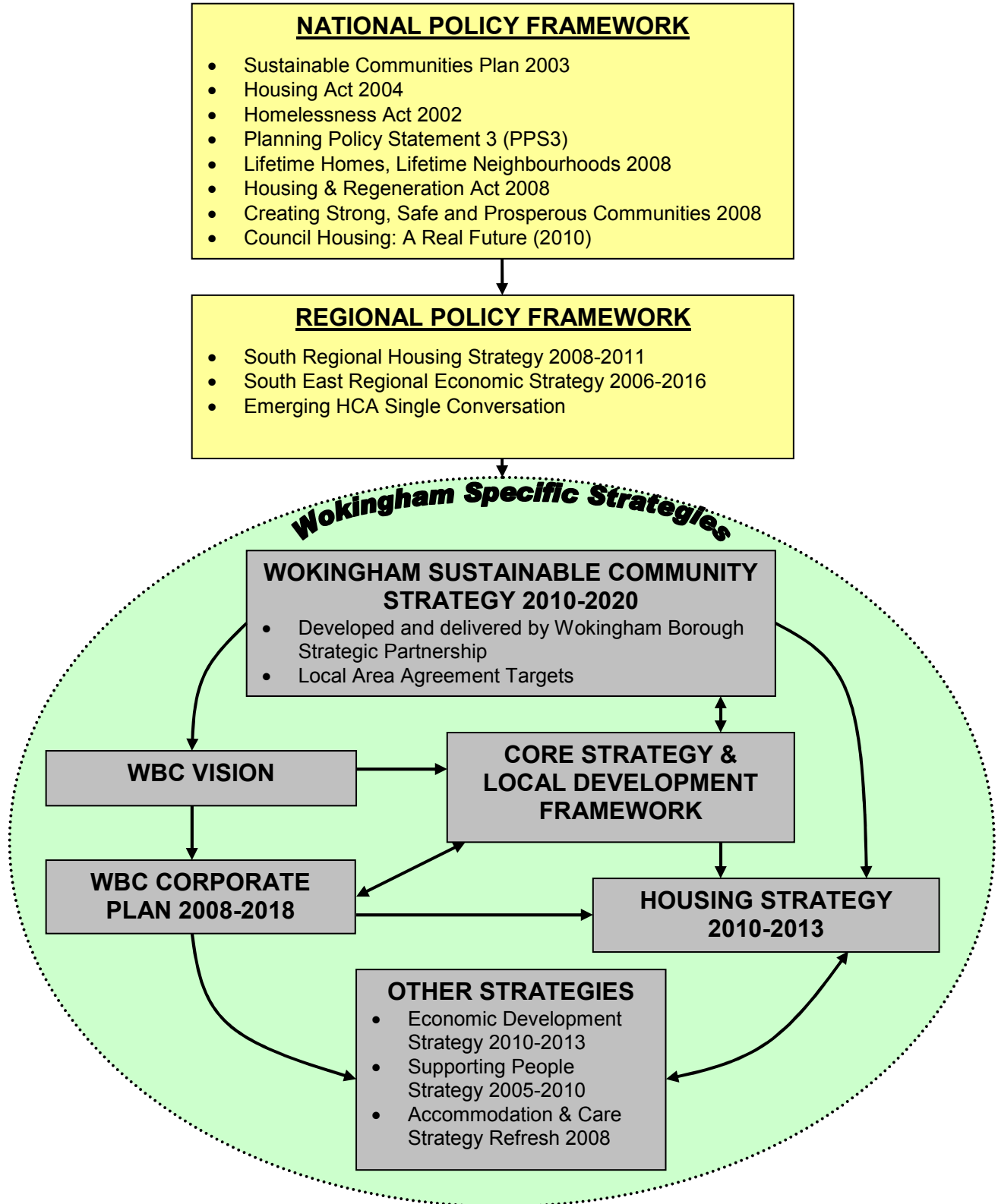
This Strategy has been developed at a time when the residents of Wokingham are faced with some particularly difficult challenges. Unstable house prices (and the higher risk of negative equity), rising unemployment, increased uncertainty and lack of credit availability are placing added pressure on households. Although house prices have dropped in Wokingham, they continue to be out of reach of many first-time buyers and credit is more difficult to come by. In these circumstances, we need to ensure that we provide high quality and responsive services to meet housing needs.

The Council is also committed to continuing to provide good quality homes and housing services to our tenants. However, we are currently required to repay £4.8 million of the £10.9 million rental income we collect from our tenants to central government for national redistribution making this ambition increasingly difficult to deliver on.

The previous Strategy has made some real differences to the people of Wokingham, which we must now build on. However, we recognise that there are challenging times ahead and that the Council cannot solve these issues on its own. We have built strong relationships with housing associations, developers and the voluntary sector to ensure that we deliver the high quality services needed by our local communities. It is through these established partnerships, and the forging of new ones, that we stand the best chance of meeting our objectives.

2. Policy Context

This Housing Strategy has been produced within a framework set by national, regional and local policies, which are summarised below and described in more detail in Appendix 3:



3. The Local Picture

A more detailed analysis of housing in Wokingham is available in Appendix 4.

3.1 *Demography and Local Context*

Wokingham Borough is characterised by the following:

- Significant population growth predicted in the future with a shift towards smaller household sizes
- A generally affluent population with high levels of car ownership.
- A highly skilled workforce with low levels of unemployment.
- A higher than average population of school age children and people aged 35-54.
- Population projections suggest a sharp rise in the number of people over 60 and a fall in children aged 0-14 years in coming years.
- An increasing Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population.
- Often comes out as a top place to live in national surveys.
- Low levels of deprivation. However, in some areas, there are particular deprivation issues around “barriers to housing and services” and “crime and disorder”.

3.2 *Housing Market and Affordability*

Wokingham’s housing market is characterised by the following:

- Higher levels of owner occupation and smaller private rented and social housing sectors than the national average.
- More detached properties and relatively few smaller properties.
- High house prices. Although house prices in Wokingham are lower than at their peak in March 2008 (in line with the national trend), house prices are still well-above the national and regional averages. In the last six months, there have been some signs of an increase in house prices.
- Assuming that a purchaser was obtaining a 75% mortgage (putting down a 25% deposit) and that a lender was lending at 3.5 times income, a single person purchasing a one bedroom property in Wokingham Borough would require an income of over £40,000 together with a deposit of almost £33,500. Although the average income for Wokingham is higher than the national average, housing affordability continues to be a significant pressure in the Borough.
- Renting a property in the private sector remains a more affordable option than buying in Wokingham Borough. The economic downturn has resulted in an increase in the availability of rental properties in the area.

3.3 Housing Need

Housing need in the Borough is summarised below:

- The Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment¹ undertaken by DTZ Research and Consulting in 2007 estimated that Wokingham requires between 400 and 550 new affordable housing units per annum.
- As at 1st March 2010 there were 2,778 people on Wokingham's Housing Register. The greatest need is currently 1-bedroom properties.
- There is a low level of homelessness acceptances, although there have been an increasing number of households seeking advice.
- There has also been a significant reduction in the use of temporary accommodation in Wokingham, in line with the Government's target.
- A study carried out by Atisreal in 2006 of key workers in the Thames Valley West² found that many public sector organisations reported recruitment problems due to housing-related issues. A quarter of key employers had lost potential recruits due to housing problems, and 92% of employers gave cost of appropriate accommodation as the main reason for this. The study revealed that a minimum of 641 units per annum were needed across the four local authority areas to meet key worker housing need.
- The Council's Strategy for Housing for Older People 2008 Refresh sets out the Council's future vision for the provision of specialist older people's housing which includes the need for 380 units of Extra Care Housing (including over 200 for sale units), 160 units of Enhanced Sheltered Housing and 76 units of Dementia Care Housing by 2018.
- In order to ascertain the housing need for vulnerable people, a survey of support services was undertaken during 2008. Data was analysed on a total of 217 clients. The greatest housing need is amongst people with a learning disability, which equated to 52% of the responses received. Mental health (18%), physical and sensory disabilities (11%) and care leavers (10%) are the next largest client groups identified to have a housing need.

3.4 Housing Supply

Wokingham's affordable housing supply is characterised as follows:

- Wokingham Borough Council retains its housing stock and as at 21st January 2010, it owned and managed 2,515 rented properties. The largest proportions are 2 and 3 bedroom properties with slightly fewer 1-bedroom homes.
- Registered Social Landlords also have a stock of approximately 1,300 properties in Wokingham Borough. The largest proportion (36%) is 2-bedroom properties.

¹ Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, DTZ October 2007

² Thames Valley West Key Worker Housing Study, September 2006

- Less than 25% of social housing stock is 1-bedroom, which is the greatest need shown on the Housing Register.
- Between 2005 and 2010, there have been 509 new affordable housing units developed in the Borough. A significant proportion of these have been shared ownership properties.
- New affordable housing in Wokingham has almost all been secured through Section 106 negotiations with developers. The economic downturn has impacted significantly on the number of these sites coming forward and has consequently resulted in a drop in affordable housing units being delivered.

4. Strategic Priorities

Through consultation with our stakeholders, we have identified four strategic priorities for housing over the next three years. These seek to build on the key aims of the 2005 Housing Strategy. The strategic priorities are as follows:

- 1 Addressing our Housing Needs** - To ensure that all households in the Borough can access well-designed, affordable and sustainable homes.
- 2 Supporting Vulnerable People** - To continue to enable vulnerable people to be self-reliant and live independently
- 3 Tackling Homelessness and Housing Need** - To prevent and provide for homelessness and be responsive to housing need.
- 4 Improving the Housing Service** - Providing high quality, value for money services to our tenants

The next few sections will elaborate more on these strategic priorities, including identifying key actions that will be undertaken over the next three years.

4.1 Strategic Priority 1 - Addressing our Housing Needs

Wokingham is often regarded as one of the best places to live in the Country due to its desirable location (including its proximity to London), its excellent schools and the quality of the local environment. However, because of its popularity, the cost of housing in the Borough is particularly high. This is a major barrier to economic growth, contributing to significant problems in recruitment and retention. Consequently, the provision of affordable housing is seen as crucial to the delivery of the Council's vision and its priorities, particularly sustainable, quality development. It is also one of the key objectives within the Local Area Agreement.

Since 2005, 509 new affordable housing units have been developed across the Borough. Whilst this is a significant achievement, the Housing Market Assessment has identified a need for between 400 and 550 new affordable units per annum and there are currently almost 2,800 households on the Council's housing register. Clearly, there is still more to be done to address the acute need in the borough. Furthermore, delivery has been adversely affected by slowdown in the housing market with private developers not bringing sites forward for development. With demand greatly outstripping

supply, there is a need for a wide range of organisations (the Council, housing associations, local employers, etc.) to work together to try and find additional opportunities to provide more affordable housing in the Borough.

Whilst there is a significant need for 1-bedroom affordable homes, this trend may not continue in the future, so flexibility needs to be considered. We constantly monitor the housing market and housing needs information to ensure that we secure the right housing in the Borough. Therefore, the type (including specialist housing), size and tenure of affordable housing is negotiated on a site-by-site basis depending on local needs with the aim of creating balanced, mixed communities into the future. A range of unit sizes on schemes of affordable housing can in itself contribute to meeting 1-bedroom need – for example, a new family-sized property can generate a chain reaction whereby a family on the transfer list who are currently living in overcrowded conditions will be able to move freeing up that property for smaller households. For some households, a 1-bedroom property will be a home for life and for others it will be a stepping stone. This will be addressed through our Allocations Policy. As a guide, based on current needs information, the Council will aim to achieve the following mix of sizes overall for affordable housing:

- 20% 1-bedroom flats and houses
- 15% 2-bedroom flats
- 30% 2-bedroom houses
- 20% 3-bedroom houses *(to include some 3-bedroom bungalows for families with physical disabilities)*
- 15% 4-bedroom + houses

The Council expects all new housing to have sufficient space to cater for a variety of different household needs with the aim of promoting high standards of liveability, accessibility and comfort. Subsequently, the Council plans to develop local space standards for new dwellings as part of its planning policies. As an interim measure, the Council will apply the minimum space standards contained with the Homes and Communities Agency's Draft Housing Design and Sustainability Standards (2010) for all new affordable housing.

Table of representative minimum space standards by unit type and occupancy: Unit type	1B 2P (Flat)	2B 3P (Flat or Bungalow)	2B 3P (House)	2B 4P (Flat or Bungalow)	2B 4P (House)	3B 5P (Flat or Bungalow)	3B 5P (House)	3B 5P (House)	4B 6P (Flat or Bungalow)	4B 6P (House)	4B 6P (House)
No. of people	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6
No. of bedrooms	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
No. of bathrooms	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
No. of additional WC's / shower rooms to bathroom	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
No. of storeys	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3
Mandatory minimum GIA (Floor Area) m²	48	61	71	70	80	86	96	101	99	109	114

Source: Housing Design and Sustainability Standards Consultation, Homes and Communities Agency (2010)

Success Story 1: Working with Home Group, the Council successfully took forward an innovative project to develop key worker homes on redundant school land. Twenty-two eco-friendly apartments were completed on a piece of land (previously consisting of derelict bike sheds) at St Crispin's School in Wokingham in June 2007. This scheme achieved an EcoHomes "Excellent" rating and won a national Green Apple Award for its environmental sustainability. It has proved highly popular with teachers and other key workers.



The Council also has an important role to play in ensuring that homes in the private sector are also safe and secure. During 2008, a survey of the borough was undertaken to identify Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and empty properties, including those above commercial premises (i.e. restaurants and take-aways). We are in the process of developing a Private Sector Housing Policy to cover these areas.

In the next 3 years, we plan to:

- Deliver more affordable homes through the implementation of our Core Strategy.
- Work with the Rural Housing Enabler for Berkshire to identify and respond to the housing needs of our rural communities.
- Proactively explore new delivery methods for affordable housing, including setting up a Council-owned Local Housing Company
- Identify sites to meet the need for 21 additional gypsy and traveller pitches.
- Improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of all tenures of housing.

We will have succeeded, if by 2013:

- At least 400 new affordable homes have been built in the Borough.
- Rural exception housing has been developed in a rural community and further schemes are in the pipeline.
- The Council is more actively involved in developing new housing through the establishment of a Local Housing Company or alternative method.
- More gypsy and traveller pitches have been provided.
- The standard of new and existing housing has improved.

4.2 Strategic Priority 2 – Supporting Vulnerable People

People become vulnerable and require the assistance of others for a range of reasons. This includes poor parenting; mental health problems; learning difficulties; physical and sensory needs; reliance on drugs and/or alcohol, vulnerability due to age (either young or elderly); and domestic abuse. The Council aims to support vulnerable people through working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary agencies. Appropriate housing and housing support services are increasingly seen as having an important role in preventative strategies in enabling vulnerable people to live successfully in the community. This approach is vital in delivering the Council's vision, and particularly in addressing the priority of better health for all and support for vulnerable people. The encouragement of self-reliance and independent living will positively contribute towards reducing the likelihood of vulnerable people living in institutional settings which in turn will reduce the need for expensive care services and unnecessary admissions to hospital or residential care.

The Supporting People programme plans, commissions and inspects what is referred to as 'housing-related support' services locally. Housing-related support services focus specifically on enabling people to develop the skills required to secure or maintain their home. The Supporting People Commissioning Body has refocused Supporting People funds on preventative activities, including commissioning a wide-ranging Floating Support Service. The service provided by Surrey Community Development Trust was launched in May 2007 to support vulnerable people in Wokingham.

Success Story 2: Working with Reading and West Berkshire Councils, we commissioned a sub-regional Home Improvement Agency, which launched in April 2008. The Berkshire West Home Improvement Agency, provided by Ridgeway Care and Repair, provides a range of services to vulnerable people in Wokingham, including small scale adaptations, handyperson facilities, falls prevention advice and provision of up to 70 Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) per year. The Agency scooped a top award from Foundations – the UK body for home improvement agencies.



In response to growing needs and aspirations of older people in Wokingham, the Council is keen to develop Extra Care Housing across the Borough. Extra Care Housing will provide spacious self-contained accommodation for older people with a range of communal and community facilities, whilst also offering care and support on site 24/7 as required for their changing needs. Extra

Care Housing will enable older people to retain their independence and remain in their own home, avoiding the upheaval of having to move into residential nursing or care homes as their needs increase. To progress this, we are providing land and funding to redevelop an outdated sheltered housing scheme in Woodley (Crescent House) into 54 apartments for extra-care housing as well as a specialist 10 unit dementia wing. We have identified two other Council-owned sites that we plan to develop for further schemes for people with dementia and people with learning disabilities.

In addition to Supported Housing, tenancies in general housing are also required for people with a learning disability, physical and sensory needs and for those with mental health problems who could receive housing related support through Supporting People Floating Support services. As a corporate parent, we will continue to improve the support on offer to our looked after children and care leavers. Young people (including care leavers) are already helped to start out living independently through a Supported Lodgings Scheme, three 'fasttrack' tenancies a year and supported housing at Seaford Court. Over the coming 3 years, we intend to identify further resources to provide more accommodation for vulnerable young people (including care leavers) in the Borough. We will also increase the supply of properties built to the Lifetime Homes standard through our planning policies, which will make homes more adaptable to people's changing circumstances and enable households to continue living in their own home (see Appendix 2, Action 2.12).

In the next 3 years, we plan to:

- Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable people, including Extra Care Housing, Dementia Housing, housing for people with a learning disability and supported housing for young people.
- Provide a range of housing support services to help vulnerable people live independently, including a signposting service, equity release scheme and home refuge scheme.
- Increase the supply of housing that meets the "Lifetime Homes Standard".

We will have succeeded, if by 2013:

- 4 schemes of specialist accommodation have been completed in the Borough.
- Vulnerable adults in receipt of housing-related support enabled to live independently has increased from 94% to 96%.
- Enabled more adults with a learning disability to access long-term homes.
- Vulnerable people are better informed about their housing and support options and choices.

4.3 Strategic Priority 3 - Tackling homelessness and housing need

Preventing and providing for homelessness is vital in enabling us to meet the Council's vision and priorities for Wokingham. Economic prosperity, better health, successful education and safe and strong communities are all dependent on permanent and decent housing. In September 2008, the Council published its Homelessness Strategy with the main themes of

prevention, support for vulnerable households, tackling the wider symptoms of homelessness and providing more settled homes. The Council places a strong focus on housing options advice. This ensures that those seeking housing assistance have access to as many choices as possible, in order to avoid reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation. Many people are directed to private rented accommodation and the discretionary, local Rent in Advance and Deposit loan schemes are critical in enabling this to happen.

Success Story 3: The Housing Needs Team has specific options in place that can help people affected by the economic downturn. These include one-off payments or loans to landlords/lenders of people experiencing a sudden drop in income (where such a payment will stop repossession action progressing), the Rent in Advance and Deposit Loan Scheme to help people access the private rented sector, the Government Mortgage Rescue Scheme, re-housing via the Housing Register and advice services. These options have already had some successful outcomes for Wokingham households. For example, a family were facing repossession by their mortgage company following redundancy. Although the family had responded by setting up a small business, there was a 3-month gap before income would start to come in. The mortgage company would only exercise minimal flexibility and wanted to progress the possession action. The Council was able to provide the family with a loan to cover mortgage repayments during this spell and consequently, the mortgage company reluctantly agreed not to take any further possession action. Overall, this flexible approach resulted in only 18 households being accepted as homeless during 2008/9 compared to 250 homelessness preventions.

The Council has set up a Homelessness Forum, which includes partner agencies and meets quarterly. This group monitors progress against the Homelessness Strategy and tracks emerging issues, including the impact of the recession on homelessness.

In the next 3 years, we plan to:

- Continue to offer high quality advice to households on housing options, rights and responsibilities.
- Increase access to settled forms of housing, including through the Rent in Advance and Deposit loan schemes.
- Continue to work with the voluntary sector to provide a range of support services to respond to housing crises, including responding to the threat of homelessness created by the recession.

We will have succeeded, if by 2013:

- The number of households accepted as homeless is kept at 30 or less per annum.
- Repeat homelessness stays at below 3% per annum.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation is halved by 2010 to 28 or less.
- B&B is used in an emergency only.
- We have provided accommodation to those in most need.

4.4 Strategic Priority 4 - Providing high quality, value for money services to our tenants.

The Council's Tenant Services supplies the housing management, repairs and maintenance service to over 2,500 tenants and 175 leaseholders. The provision of Decent Homes for our tenants is critical to achieving the Council's vision for the area.

In 2005, a stock options appraisal was undertaken and tenants told us that they wished to see their housing continue to be managed by the Council. In retaining our housing stock, the Council has not attracted any additional resources and has been disadvantaged further by changes to subsidy arrangements by Government (for example, the Council was required to pay an additional £1 million of tenants' rents to Government from 2008/9). Inevitably, this has led to tension between the service we would like to offer our tenants (and which they expect and deserve to receive) and what we are able to offer given our financial constraints. The Government has announced proposals for reforming council housing finance and we are awaiting the details of this, so that we can review what it means for the Council and our tenants.

The service was inspected by the Audit Commission in January 2008 and was judged as a fair (1*) service with uncertain prospects for improvement. The inspection (and subsequent follow-up in May 2009) identified a number of areas where we need to improve, particularly reducing void turnaround times, a more strategic approach to asset management, a more robust approach to equality and diversity and improved contract and performance management. Since the inspection, we have put in place a Decent Homes programme in Woodley, started a tenant audit (including customer profiling) and bought in external quality control of our gas servicing arrangements.

Success Story 4:

Tenant Services also manage the Council's two permanent gypsy and traveller sites within the Borough. During 2008, work was undertaken on the amenity blocks on both sites significantly improving the standard of living for those site dwellers. Furthermore, quarterly liaison meetings are now being held at the sites to gather the views of the tenants.



The service carried out a satisfaction survey in 2008 which showed that 70% of tenants (compared to 75% in 2005) were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the service. With the implementation of the service improvement plan, we expect to see customer satisfaction improve again in the future. The service aims to develop service standards and accompanying feedback mechanisms for all areas of the business.

In the next 3 years, we plan to:

- Carry out a full condition survey of our Council-owned housing stock and develop a 30-year business plan.
- Review all options for the future management of the Council's housing stock in consultation with our tenants.
- Develop and implement a Service Improvement Plan.
- Put in place a Decent Homes programme.
- Improve the overall management of our Gypsy and Traveller sites.

We will have succeeded, if by 2013:

- Tenant satisfaction has increased from the current level of 70%.
- The Council has a long-term, financially viable plan for the future management of the Council's housing stock.
- The Service Improvement Plan has been fully implemented.
- The number of Council homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard has moved towards 100%.

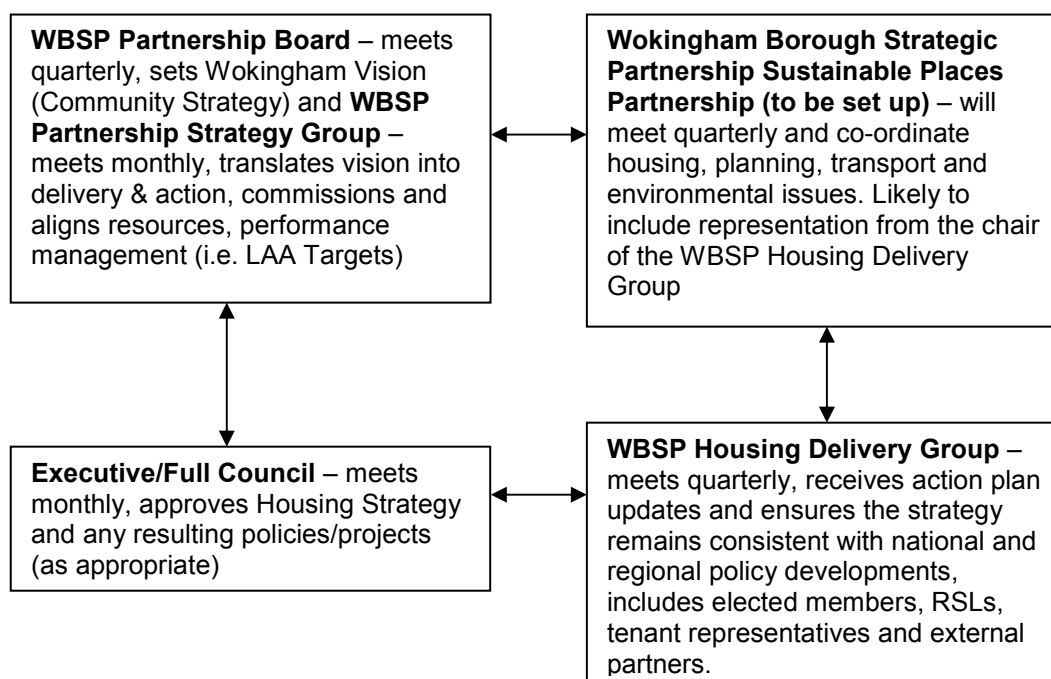
5. Monitoring and Evaluation

A high level sub-group of the Wokingham Borough Strategic Partnership (WBSP) – known as the WBSP Housing Delivery Group – was established in 2005 to take forward the Housing Strategy. The Group meets quarterly and is currently chaired by the Development Director of a partner RSL. The group includes elected members, tenant representatives and external partners, including RSLs, the Rural Housing Enabler, Government Office for the South East and Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The group receives updates on delivery against the action plan and oversees the development of the strategy.

With the recent restructure of the Local Strategic Partnership, the WBSP Housing Delivery Group is now likely to feed into the wider Sustainable Places Partnership to ensure better co-ordination of housing, planning, transport and environmental issues. These groups and the monitoring and reporting arrangements are illustrated in the diagram below:

These arrangements will monitor and evaluate progress with this new Housing Strategy. The action plan is intended as a working document which will be subject to continuous review to ensure that it remains responsive, appropriate and up-to-date. This will allow us to take into account any comments received from stakeholders and local residents that emerge during the three year period of the strategy. Any changes to the action plan will be presented to and approved by the WBSP Housing Delivery Group.

Housing Strategy Monitoring Arrangements



6. Contact Details

Regional and sub-regional agenda Affordable Housing RSL Partnership Housing Strategy Housing Needs Study Rural Housing Homelessness Strategy	Louise Strongitharm – Policy Manager (Community Infrastructure)	Tel: 0118 974 6779 Email: louise.strongitharm@wokingham.gov.uk
Planning Policy	Graham Ritchie – Senior Planning Officer	Tel: 0118 974 6457 Email: graham.ritchie@wokingham.gov.uk
Housing Needs Homelessness Housing Advice	Jude Whyte – Housing Needs Manager	Tel: 0118 974 6755 Email: jude.whyte@wokingham.gov.uk
Private Sector Housing, Empty Homes, Disabled Facilities Grants, Home Improvement Agency, Energy Efficiency	Steve Richardson – Health and Protection Manager	Tel: 0118 974 6378 Email: steve.richardson@wokingham.gov.uk
Tenant Services	Simon Price – Head of Tenant Services	Tel: 0118 974 3775 Email: simon.price@wokingham.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

In March 2008, we held a conference to consult our partners and stakeholders on the development of this Housing Strategy. The conference was attended by over 90 people providing us with a wide range of views upon which to develop the strategy.

As the strategy has developed, we have continued to engage with stakeholders, particularly partners on the WBSP Housing Delivery Group.

In October 2009, we launched a public consultation on the high level vision, objectives and targets via our website, which was promoted to our Citizens Panel and more widely through a press release. A total of 108 responses were received to the consultation. Of these, 92% of respondents agreed or broadly agreed with the vision “All residents can access well-designed, affordable and sustainable homes and effective support services to enable them to experience a high quality of life in Wokingham” while 4% did not specify and 4% disagreed. Furthermore, 89% of respondents agreed or broadly agreed with the 4 strategic priorities, while 7% did not specify and 4% disagreed.

One of the key messages coming out of the consultation was that the target for new affordable should be set at a higher level, although there were a few respondents who felt it should be lower or none. Furthermore, there were mixed opinions on the need for additional gypsy and traveller pitches. In response to the consultation, the Council has raised the target for new affordable housing from 300 proposed in the consultation paper to 400 between 2010 and 2013. Although evidence of need would support a higher number of affordable homes, this revised target is considered both stretching and realistic (particularly given the uncertain economic climate).

Other common points received through the consultation are summarised below:

- More housing options should be provided for older people, those with disabilities and people at risk of domestic abuse.
- There should be more assistance available to key workers, 1st time buyers and young workers.
- Schemes should be well-designed with open spaces and good infrastructure.
- Existing Council properties could be converted to provide more 1-bed units. Could also look at empty office buildings to meet affordable housing needs.
- There is too much public sector intervention.
- More 1 bedroom units should be provided.
- A stronger private rental sector should be encouraged.
- There should be more focus on environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, etc.
- More help to families struggling with mortgage payments.
- Less apartments should be built.

- The green belt should be protected.
- More/improved support services
- More provision for vulnerable young people.

Many of the above points above are addressed in the Housing Strategy, while others are covered by other emerging Council strategies, such as the Core Strategy.

General points on the Housing Strategy were that it was ambitious; needed specific and measurable targets and actions; should contain less jargon; should demonstrate links to other strategies and be monitored and reported regularly. These points have now been addressed through the inclusion of a detailed action plan (Appendix 2) and a glossary (Appendix 5). Progress against the strategy will be monitored by the WBSP Housing Delivery Group quarterly (as described in Section 5) and the links between strategies are described in Section 2 and Appendix 3.

APPENDIX 2: ACTION PLAN 2010-13

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
Strategic Priority 1 – Addressing our housing needs.					
1.1	Deliver more affordable homes	Enable the delivery of at least 400 affordable housing units between 2010 and 2013 through a partnership approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New affordable housing policy in Core Strategy fully implemented. • Achieve LAA Target NI155 to deliver 215 affordable units between 2008 and 2011. • Completions monitored and reported quarterly. 	Louise Strongitharm Policy Manager Community Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery from economic downturn slower than forecast. • Lack of development finance in the future.
1.2	Identify and respond to the housing needs of our rural communities	Work with the Rural Housing Enabler to facilitate the completion of the borough's first rural exception site in Wargrave by March 2011.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and full occupation by March 2011 	Louise Strongitharm Policy Manager Community Infrastructure & Arlene Kersley, Rural Housing Enabler, CCB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any unknown site constraints found. • Difficulties selling shared ownership units due to availability of mortgage finance.
1.3	Identify and respond to the housing needs of our rural communities	Promote the rural housing initiative to other rural parish councils to enable them to meet their housing needs locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular press releases on the Wargrave scheme. • Promote the Wargrave scheme as a pilot to other parish councils. • Hold an annual event for parish councils on rural housing. 	Louise Strongitharm Policy Manager Community Infrastructure & Arlene Kersley, Rural Housing Enabler, CCB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interest & take-up from parish councils.

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
1.4	Explore new delivery methods for affordable housing	Assess the feasibility of setting up a Local Housing Company and other delivery mechanisms and look for opportunities on our own land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility exercise on formation of Local Housing Company or alternative mechanism completed by December 2010. • If feasible, Local Housing Company to be established by January 2011. • Council-owned sites identified for development and Secretary of State approval for transfer to Local Housing Company to be in place by March 2011. 	Louise Strongitharm Policy Manager Community Infrastructure & Clive Dove-Dixon, Head of Commercial Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of capital finance. • Secretary of State approval not forthcoming.
1.5	Identify sites to meet the need for 21 additional gypsy and traveller pitches.	More gypsy and traveller pitches provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult gypsies and travellers on their housing needs by December 2010 (subject to Government guidance). • Sites identified in the Managing Development Delivery Development Plan Document to achieve 21 pitches (net). Document to be adopted by December 2011. 	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of engagement with gypsies and travellers • Lack of resources • Lack of suitable sites

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
1.6	Improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of all tenures of housing.	Work with the Zone Agent to promote low-cost home ownership products to local residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the zone agent to ensure that at least 2 Homebuy shows are held in Wokingham per annum • Issue at least 20 equity loans by August 2011. 	Jude Whyte Housing Needs Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of products available in future following withdrawal of Government funding for Open Market Homebuy. • Mortgage availability for low-cost homeownership products.
1.7	Improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of all tenures of housing.	Ensure that appropriate community infrastructure provision is planned into all new developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that each partner RSL contributes to at least one 'Housing Plus' initiative by March 2012 	Louise Strongitharm Policy Manager Community Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of funding for infrastructure provision. • Engagement of developers.
1.8	Improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of all tenures of housing.	Implement new sustainability standards for new housing in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 on all new affordable housing. • Implement the Sustainability and Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document 	Louise Strongitharm Policy Manager Community Infrastructure & Jim Dunning, Policy Manager (Land Use & Transport)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of development finance and high cost of green technology could constrain development viability.

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
1.9	Improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of all tenures of housing.	Improve the quality of the private rental sector, including revising and implementing the new Private Sector Housing Policy, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Support • Affordable Warmth • Empty property • Houses in Multiple Occupation • Disrepair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a Landlords Forum annually. • Increase the number of accredited private sector landlords by 20% by March 2011. • Policy to be revised by December 2010. • New policy to be implemented. 	Mary Glomé Principal Environmental Health Officer & Steve Richardson, Health & Protection Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service has limited capacity. • Lack of interest from private sector landlords
1.10	Improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of all tenures of housing.	Ensure that all new housing is built with sufficient space (including storage) to cater for a range of household needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new local space standards as part of the refresh of the Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by December 2010. 	Jenifer Jackson, Team Leader, Development Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge from developers
Strategic Priority 2 – Supporting vulnerable people					
2.1	Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable people	Completion of the Borough's first Extra Care Housing development in Woodley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra Care scheme completed and ready for occupation by Summer 2011 	Carol Lovell Senior Strategy Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unforeseen delays on site
2.2	Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable people	Completion of a specialist dementia housing scheme with additional units for people with a learning disability in Wokingham.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start-on-site by January 2011. • Completion by Summer 2012. 	Carol Lovell Senior Strategy Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and site constraints

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
2.3	Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable people	Enable the development of a housing scheme for people with a learning disability within the Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning application for Hillside Park submitted by December 2010. • Completion by December 2012. 	Carol Lovell Senior Strategy Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of funding. • Availability of a suitable site. • Planning and site constraints.
2.4	Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable people	Promote Extra Care Housing to other housing providers to encourage de-registering organisations to provide alternative supported housing for vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one scheme within the borough is modernised by March 2012 • To have successfully negotiated with at least one de-registering organisation to provide alternative supported housing for vulnerable groups by December 2012. 	Carol Lovell, Senior Strategy Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of a suitable scheme for modernisation • Willingness of organisations to engage and negotiate with the Council • Availability of funding.
2.5	Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable people	Increase the number of adults with a learning disability able to access long-term homes by March 2011 (LAA NI145)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of adults with a learning disability able to access long-term homes by 5.2% by March 2011. 	Mette Le Jakobsen Interim Head of Learning Disability Services Community Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of suitable accommodation
2.6	Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable people	Increase the supply of affordable homes for vulnerable young people (including care leavers) with a range of support needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather needs data on vulnerable young people by December 2010. • Investigate options for meeting identified need, including site availability and funding (capital and revenue) by April 2011. • Develop an implementation plan by September 2011. 	Louise Strongitharm, Policy Manager (Community Infrastructure) & Judith Ramsden, Head of Safeguarding & Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Land availability

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
2.7	Provide a range of support services to help vulnerable people live independently	Offer an effective signposting service to assist people access appropriate services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and enhance the new service and undertake a review of its effectiveness by December 2010. 	Supporting People Commissioning Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of continued funding
2.8	Provide a range of support services to help vulnerable people live independently	Set up a Home Refuge Service to enable people who have experienced, or are at risk of, domestic abuse to have security measures put in place at their home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme to be implemented – ongoing. 	Supporting People Commissioning Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of funding
2.9	Provide a range of support services to help vulnerable people live independently	Develop the new Accommodation Finder Service to assist vulnerable people access the private rented sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six month review undertaken and decision on service delivery made by November 2010 	Supporting People Commissioning Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of continued funding
2.10	Provide a range of support services to help vulnerable people live independently	Continue providing a Home from Hospital Service to provide short term support to vulnerable people being discharged from hospital to enable them to regain independence and prevent the occurrence of readmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementing the new service (with additional capacity) 	Supporting People Commissioning Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of continued funding

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
2.11	Develop a better understanding of the housing needs of vulnerable groups across the Borough	Develop a centralised system for recording the housing needs of vulnerable groups to enable more effective commissioning of accommodation and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Method and data set for collating information to be agreed and in place by December 2010 • System to be rolled out across all service areas by March 2011 • Full test of the South East Needs Estimation Model Toolkit and decision on suitability of ongoing use by March 2011 	Carol Lovell, Senior Strategy Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of staff resources • Lack of implementation of new system by service areas • Funding for continued use of Estimation Model Toolkit
2.12	Increase the supply of Lifetime Homes	Increase the supply of Lifetime Homes including encouraging private developers to achieve the standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of new affordable housing to achieve the Lifetime Homes Standard. • Adopt and implement the new Planning Obligations SPD requiring all new housing on the Strategic Development Locations to meet the Lifetime Homes Standard. • Ensure all new housing meets the Lifetime Homes Standard through the Design SPD by December 2010. 	Louise Strongitharm Policy Manager Community Infrastructure & Jim Dunning, Policy Manager (Land Use & transport)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of development finance and impact on viability

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
2.13	Enable vulnerable people to remain in their own homes	Vulnerable adults in receipt of housing-related support enabled to live independently has increased from 94% to 96%. (LAA NI142)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 96% of vulnerable people in receipt of housing-related support enabled to live independently by March 2011 	Lindy Jones, Commissioning Support Team Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of continued funding for support services
2.14	Enable vulnerable people to remain in their own homes	Establish a Flexible Home Improvement Loan Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme to be formally launched to the public by November 2010. Scheme to be reviewed 12 months after its launch. 	Mary Glomé Principal Environmental Health Officer & Steve Richardson, Public Protection Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low take up of scheme.
Strategic Priority 3 – Tackling homelessness and housing need					
3.1	Continue to offer high quality advice to households on housing options, rights and responsibilities.	Continue with housing options approach to preventing homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly monitoring of homelessness preventions and acceptances Number of homelessness acceptances maintained at 30 or less each year Level of repeat homelessness maintained at below 3% 	Jude Whyte Housing Needs Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of staff resources Continued impact of economic downturn.
3.2	Continue to offer high quality advice to households on housing options, rights and responsibilities.	Obtain ongoing feedback on the homelessness service and monitor long term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer feedback to be sought at least quarterly. 	Jude Whyte Housing Needs Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of staff resources.

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
3.3	Continue to offer high quality advice to households on housing options, rights and responsibilities.	Ensure a consistent and high standard of advice on homelessness across all advice providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directory of advice providers to be kept regularly updated. 	Jude Whyte Housing Needs Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of advice providers and competing priorities.
3.4	Continue to offer high quality advice to households on housing options, rights and responsibilities.	Promote greater public awareness of the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants through improved information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity campaign - ongoing • Improved website information available by December 2010. 	Jadranka Tasic Senior Homelessness Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of staff resources.
3.5	Increase access to settled forms of accommodation	Continue to refine the rent in advance and rent deposit loan schemes to enable households access the private rented sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of applicants to be in a sustainable housing situation 6 months after loan issued. 	Jude Whyte Housing Needs Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme oversubscribed. • Lack of suitable private rented properties.
3.6	Increase access to settled forms of accommodation	Cease use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and young people (except in an emergency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers in B&B reduced to zero by December 2010 	Jude Whyte Housing Needs Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of alternatives to bed and breakfast accommodation, particularly in an emergency.
3.7	Increase access to settled forms of accommodation	Reduce and maintain the number of households in temporary accommodation to 28 or less (in line with the Government's target) by March 2010. Develop an action plan for improving the quality of temporary accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued focus on housing options with outcomes monitored at least annually. • 28 or fewer households in temporary accommodation by December 2010 • Action plan developed for improving the quality of temporary accommodation by December 2010 (if required). 	Jude Whyte Housing Needs Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic downturn resulting in an increase in need for temporary accommodation. • Lack of alternatives to temporary accommodation.

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
3.8	Increase access to settled forms of accommodation	Continue to promote and expand the Supported Lodgings Scheme for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the number of supported lodgings at 10 or more. 	Gabrielle Watts, Children's Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of families wishing to act a host families
3.9	Continue to work with the voluntary sector to provide a range of support services to respond to housing crises	Maintain the low level of evictions due to rent arrears, debts and landlord/tenant disputes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain links with independent financial advice centre to enable referrals for debt counselling Investigate extending mediation service to landlord disputes (if required) 	Jude Whyte Housing Needs Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of resources
3.10	Continue to work with the voluntary sector to provide a range of support services to respond to housing crises	Prevent mortgage repossession proceedings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with the voluntary sector to offer early advice and assistance to those at risk of repossession Make use of the Government's mortgage rescue scheme where appropriate. 	Jude Whyte Housing Needs Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity of voluntary sector Eligibility of households for Government mortgage rescue scheme.
3.11	Provide accommodation to those most in need	Review the effectiveness of the Allocations Policy in providing accommodation to those most in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a review of allocations every 6 months. Refresh the Allocations Policy by March 2011. 	Jude Whyte Housing Needs Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of resources Resistance to change
Strategic Priority 4 – Improving the Housing Service					
4.1	Update information on stock condition and develop 30-year business plan	Obtain better information on the condition of our housing stock to inform new programmes and stock option appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stock condition survey undertaken by December 2010 	Simon Price, Head of Tenant Services	

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
4.2	Update information on stock condition and develop 30-year business plan	Develop a clear strategy on asset management for our housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim revised asset management strategy to be implemented 	Simon Price, Head of Tenant Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity within the service
4.3	Review all options for the future management of the Council's housing stock in consultation with our tenants	Undertake a full stock options appraisal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Government's proposals for council housing finance reforms when detail is published.. 	Simon Price, Head of Tenant Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to Government policy
4.4	Develop and implement a Service Improvement Plan	Maintain services at a 1 star standard in the period April 2009 – to April 2011 and improve to a 2 star standard by April 2011.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Tenant Services are well prepared for any potential Short Notice Inspection. Develop the service improvement plan in consultation with tenants. Put in place a clear performance management framework to ensure improvements are made. 	Simon Price, Head of Tenant Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity within the service
4.5	Develop and implement a Service Improvement Plan	Ensure that our services offer our tenants value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a Value for Money strategy with targets as part of a new performance management framework by April 2011. 	Simon Price, Head of Tenant Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity within the service
4.6	Develop and implement a Service Improvement Plan	Improve our approach to tenant involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significantly increase tenant involvement in decision-making. Increase tenant satisfaction on a year by year basis 	Simon Price, Head of Tenant Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity within the service

No.	Action	Target	Milestones	Lead Officer/ Resources	Risks
4.7	Develop and implement a Service Improvement Plan	Improve our approach to equality and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the service against CRE code and implement proposals to secure compliance by December 2010 Complete an exercise of community profiling, undertake a full range of equality impact assessments and implement an effective equality and diversity strategy -ongoing. 	Simon Price, Head of Tenant Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity within the service
4.8	Develop and implement a Service Improvement Plan	Improve our performance on voids, anti-social behaviour and estate services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce void turnaround to under 35 days by December 2010 Implement new service standards and performance management framework for anti-social behaviour. 	Simon Price, Head of Tenant Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity within the service
4.9	Maximise the number of Council properties meeting the Decent Homes standard	Put in place a Decent Homes Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rollout Decent Homes programme with kitchen and bathroom replacement programme. 	Simon Price, Head of Tenant Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of funding
4.10	Improve the overall management of our Gypsy and Traveller sites.	Make improvements to sites and improve participation of site dwellers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulting site dwellers on necessary improvements is ongoing. Develop a programme of improvement works by December 2010. 	Simon Price, Head of Tenant Services & Suzun Linton, Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of engagement with gypsies and travellers

APPENDIX 3: POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Policy

- **Sustainable Communities Plan: Building for the Future 2003** – Known as the Communities Plan, this sets out the Government's long-term priorities for delivering sustainable communities. It includes regeneration of deprived areas, the introduction of housing growth areas, building more affordable housing and the Decent Homes standard.
- **Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes, Changing Lives 2005** – This includes the aim of halving the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010 through a range of different approaches, including homelessness prevention and support for vulnerable people. It included a more strategic role for local authorities in terms of housing and planning.
- **Sustainable Communities: Homes for All 2005** – A 5-year sub-strategy of the Communities Plan. The key objectives are ensuring that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford and promoting choice, fairness and opportunity to own or rent a good quality home that meets needs.
- **Homelessness Act 2002** – This places a duty on all local authorities to review the services provided to homeless households, publish a Homelessness Strategy and cease to use bed and breakfast accommodation for families (except in emergencies).
- **Housing Act 2004** – This contained key legislation designed to assist vulnerable people while creating a fairer housing market across all tenures. It introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating system, mandatory licensing for houses in multiple occupation, Home Information Packs (HIPs), a national Tenancy Deposit Scheme (to protect private tenants' deposits) and new powers for local authorities to deal with Empty Homes. It also gave new rights to Gypsies and Travellers, including a requirement for local authorities to assess their accommodation needs.
- **Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities (Statutory Guidance) 2008** – The Government's vision to give local people more power and influence to improve their lives and communities. It states that where possible "housing and homelessness strategies should be incorporated within their Sustainable Community Strategy". However the Housing Strategy is produced, it requires it to reflect the wider vision of the Council and its partners, reflect a clear and evidenced approach and provide a strong focus on partnership working.
- **Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing) 2010** – This sets out the national planning policy framework for delivering the Government's housing objectives of supplying high quality, well designed housing in mixed communities and sustainable locations.

- **Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable: Housing Green Paper 2007** – The Green Paper sets out plans for more housing, including a new national target of 240,000 new homes per annum. The paper identifies that local authorities will have a critical role to play in achieving this increase.
- **Housing and Regeneration Act 2008** - The Act established the Homes and Communities Agency, to focus on delivering more new and affordable homes across all tenures and drive and invest in regeneration. It gave councils more freedoms and incentives to build new homes and makes rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes mandatory for new homes. The Act also introduced a new Tenant Services Authority, the new regulator for affordable housing, dedicated to raising the standard of services by putting tenants first.
- **Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods 2008** – This is the Government’s Strategy for making sure that there is enough appropriate housing available for older people in the future to relieve the forecasted unsustainable pressures on homes, health and social care services.
- **Council Housing: A Real Future 2010** – The consultation paper sets out proposals to abolish the current Council housing finance system, known as the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and replace it with a system of self-financing. This would depend on a one-off allocation of housing debt to stock-holding local authorities after which they would be able to keep all their rental income.

Regional/Sub-Regional Policy

- **South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11** – This strategy sets out the regional priorities for investment over the next 3 years. The priorities are to build more affordable homes, bring decent housing within reach of people on lower incomes and improve the quality of new housing and of existing stock. The Strategy also identifies 5 key challenges for the region as delivering affordable housing, sustainable development, an ageing population, health implications and supporting vulnerable people.
- **South East Regional Economic Strategy 2006-16** – This strategy recognises the important role of housing in supporting the region’s economy. The Strategy has 3 objectives – global competitiveness, smart growth and sustainable prosperity. Affordable housing is seen as an essential component to delivering smart growth.
- **Positive Planning for an Ageing Society – The Berkshire Authorities’ response to Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (2009)** - The study, commissioned by the six Berkshire local authorities, sets out recommendations on how to deliver the Government’s national objectives for an ageing population through effective planning policy and development control practice.

- **Emerging HCA Single Conversation** - The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has published national arrangements for the production of Local Investment Plans (LIP) and Agreements (LIA) on a sub-regional basis. These arrangements have been piloted in various parts of the country, and are now being rolled-out in Berkshire.

Local Policy

The **Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2020** sets out the long-term partnership vision and community ambitions for the Borough, along with a set of themed priority outcomes for action and partnership working over the next ten years to set the pace of change. The vision for the Borough is for Wokingham to be a modern community that values its heritage and embraces its future. By 2020 it will be a borough of innovation and entrepreneurship, with modern communities of people living sustainable lifestyles and who are empowered to be prosperous and fulfil their potential. It will be a bold and ambitious borough that does things differently, innovating the way people live, work and do business.

The **Local Area Agreement 2008-11** is effectively the delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy and includes 17 priority objectives for the Borough shaped around the Community Ambitions. Of these, there are 2 that are particularly pertinent to housing – delivering affordable housing and meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people. However, in its widest sense, the Housing Strategy will contribute to other objectives, such as, environmental sustainability, sustaining economic prosperity, providing neighbourhood services, community empowerment and supporting and engaging with an aging population. There are specific targets on the number of new affordable homes (NI155), number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living (NI142) and % adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation (NI145). This Housing Strategy plays an important role in the delivery of all of the community ambitions and the Local Area Agreement targets.

Delivery of this Housing Strategy will be overseen by the new Sustainable Places Partnership and Housing Delivery Sub-Group – both of which feed into the Wokingham Borough Strategic Partnership (WBSP).

The Council's own vision for Wokingham over the next 10-20 years is that it is "a great place to live and work, where residents feel valued and the Council promotes economic growth with good quality of life and opportunity for all."

Eight priorities have been identified to deliver this vision. These are:

- sound finances and value for money;
- excellent Children's Service and skills for all;
- better health for all and support for vulnerable people;
- a cleaner, greener local environment;
- keeping the Borough moving;
- sustainable, quality development;
- safer and stronger communities;

- keeping the customer satisfied.

The actions contained within this Housing Strategy contribute positively towards most of these priorities as will be demonstrated throughout the document.

The following Council policies are also strongly linked to this Housing Strategy:

- **Local Development Framework (Core Strategy) 2010** – The Council's Local Plan is being phased out and will be replaced by the Local Development Framework – which will include the Core Strategy at the centre. The Core Strategy is the blueprint for development to the year 2026. The Core Strategy is not simply about the development of housing – it focuses on ensuring the full range of community infrastructure needed by the community, including schools, roads and public open space, is provided. The Core Strategy seeks to increase the supply of new affordable housing by introducing higher targets and lower thresholds.
- **Corporate Plan 2008-18** – Within the context of our Vision, it sets out the Council's specific targets for the next ten years. It includes specific actions to build 75 extra care housing units on two sites (the first at Crescent House in Woodley), to help 30 more people with learning disabilities into supported housing placements by 2011 (as an alternative to registered care homes), to develop a Special Needs Housing Strategy and to review our approach to delivering affordable housing and work with our RSL partners to develop further ways of delivering new affordable housing. The Corporate Plan is likely to be refreshed in 2010.
- **Homelessness Strategy 2008-11** – This sets out how the Council intends to take a partnership approach to preventing and providing for homelessness in Wokingham over the next 3 years. The Strategy draws upon information gathered through our review of homelessness during 2006 and 2007. The Strategy contains four objectives - preventing homelessness; supporting vulnerable people; providing more settled homes and tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness.
- **Supporting People Strategy 2005-10** – This outlines how we will commission services to support people to maintain their accommodation.
- **Accommodation and Care Strategy 2008 Refresh** - This refresh of the 2005 Strategy sets out the Council's vision for achieving a future pattern of accommodation and related services for older people in Wokingham.
- **Economic Development Strategy (2010)** - This strategy focuses on four major priority areas with the aim of establishing a clear competitive

advantage for the Borough. These priorities are promoting innovation and enterprise; enhancing skills and creating economic activity; improving the vitality of the Boroughs towns and villages; and maximising inward investment through a partnership approach.

APPENDIX 4: THE LOCAL PICTURE

Demography and Local Context

Wokingham Borough had a population of 150,229 at the time of the 2001 Census. This represents a fifty per cent growth in population since 1971. The latest Office for National Statistics estimate of resident population for Wokingham Borough is the "Mid 2008 population estimate" (published August 2009) of 159,100. However, latest projections commissioned from the GLA³ estimate that the population of the Borough will not reach this level until 2016 when it is expected to reach 158,421.

Similarly there has been a rapid rate of household growth over the last three decades. The number of households in the Borough was 57,272 at the time of the 2001 Census, and the GLA has estimated that this will grow to 65,901 by 2016. Average household size has fallen and this trend is expected to continue. However, 2-person households continue to be the largest household group in Wokingham.

		Total Population	Households	Average Household Size
2008 Round GLA Projections: Wokingham	2001	150,334	57,395	2.542
	2006	149,921	59,569	2.439
	2011	153,957	62,470	2.388
	2016	158,421	65,901	2.329

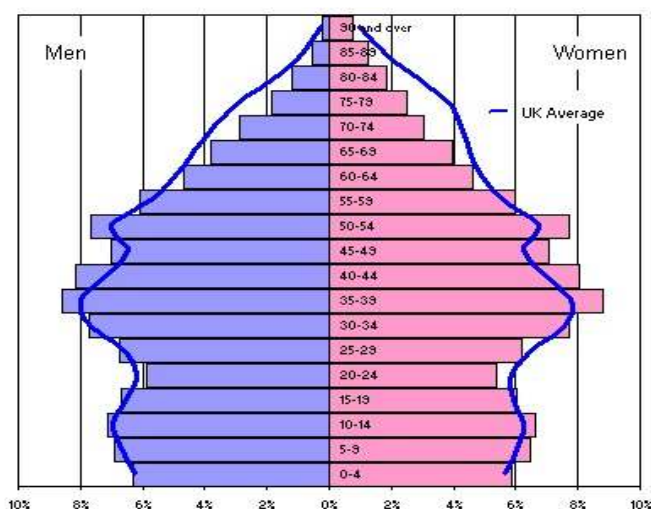
Source: 2008 based GLA Berks authorities' population summary table

The population of the Borough is largely affluent, with high levels of house owner occupation and car ownership. A high percentage of residents work in managerial and professional occupations and unemployment is consistently low (although the Borough has seen a marked increase in unemployment as a result of the economic downturn).

The 2001 census found that Wokingham had a higher than average proportion of people aged 35-54, and slightly more school age children. There were fewer than average people aged 65 to 79. 16.6% of the population were over 60.

³ 2008 based GLA Berks Authorities Population Summary

Wokingham Age Profile



The GLA projections for the Borough suggest that the number of children aged 0 -14 will drop over the next few years, and the number of people over 60 will increase.

The Black and Minority Ethnic population in Wokingham had risen to 6.1% by 2001 and economic migration has increased over the last few years. A report published in 2006⁴ found that Wokingham was one of the areas that experienced the fastest increase in applications for work permits from 2000 to 2006.

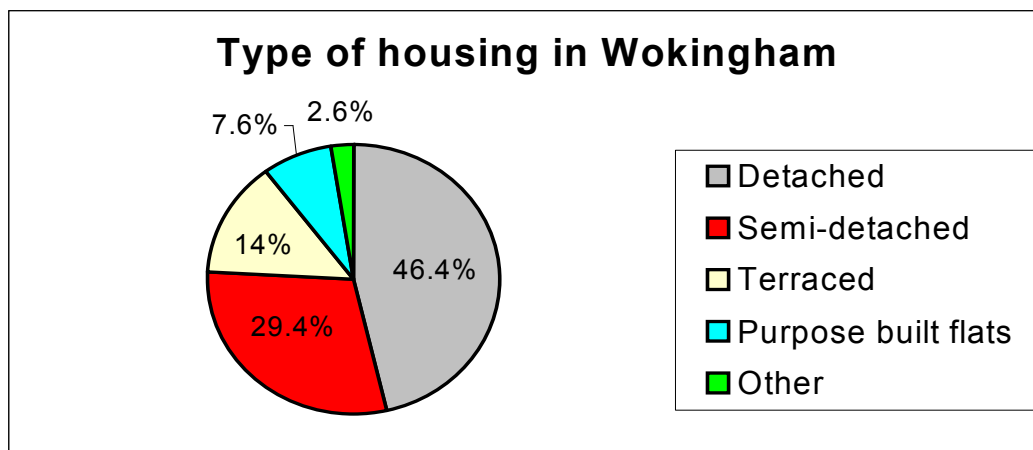
Wokingham is consistently scored in the Top Ten Places to live in the country in national surveys, due to factors, such as high earnings, excellent schools, good health and long life expectancy. However, the downside of Wokingham's popularity is the high cost of housing. According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007,⁵ Wokingham is ranked overall second least deprived local authority area in the country. However, this disguises the deprivation existing in some localities. There are particular problems uncovered in measures, such as "Barriers to Housing and Services" and "Crime and Disorder". A geographical analysis of the statistics also shows some problems for rural settlements and pockets of deprivation in otherwise affluent urban areas. The "Barriers to housing" measure includes indicators such as household overcrowding, difficulty of access to owner occupation and geographical barriers of distance to services such as a GP, school or post office.

Housing Market and Affordability

The 2001 Census recorded that 84% of Wokingham Borough's households were owner-occupiers - a higher percentage than the average for Berkshire or the South East. Wokingham was also found to have a high proportion of detached housing compared to other areas, and a lower proportion of terraced housing and flats.

⁴ Migrant Workers in the South East Regional Economy, SEEDA July 2006

⁵ Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007, DCLG



Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001

The profile of housing means that the Borough has fewer smaller properties (which are likely to be the most affordable) than elsewhere in the Country adding to affordability pressures.

Only 7.2% of Wokingham households rent from the Council or Registered Social Landlords, and there is also only a small private-rental sector.

	Wokingham	Berkshire	South East	England & Wales
All households	57,272	315,149	3,287,489	21,660,475
Percentage of households owner occupied:				
Owns outright	30.3%	26.8%	31.3%	29.5%
Owns with a mortgage or loan	52.9%	45.7%	41.9%	38.8%
Shared ownership *	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%	0.6%
Percentage of households rented from:				
Council (local authority)	5.3%	7.6%	7.3%	13.2%
Housing authority or Registered Social Landlord **	1.9%	6.7%	6.6%	5.9%
Private Landlord or letting agency	6.6%	9.1%	8.8%	8.7%
Other ***	2.4%	3.4%	3.3%	3.2%

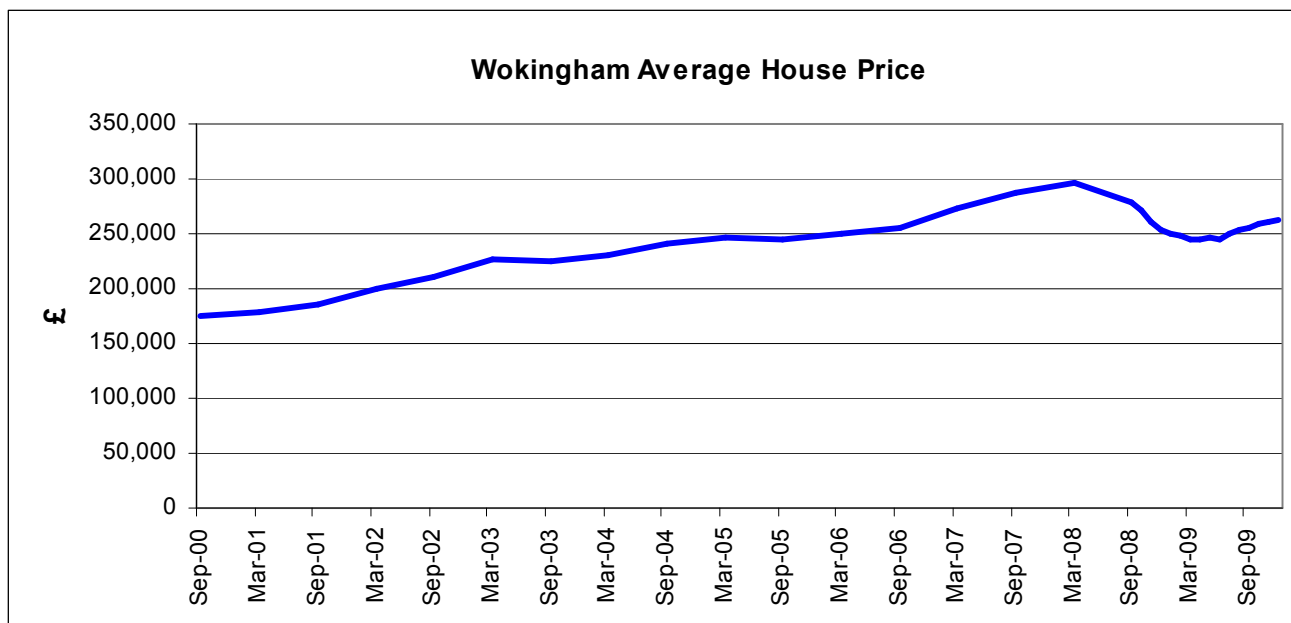
* Pays part rent and part mortgage

** Includes housing co-operative and charitable trust

*** Includes employee of a household member and relative or friend of a household member and living rent free

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2001 Census KS18

Until March 2008, average house prices had risen almost continually in Wokingham since 2000. However, since then, in line with the national trend, average house prices have fallen. Land Registry figures for December 2009 show that the average price of a home in Wokingham has increased slightly in recent months to £261,932, which is still down approximately 11.5% from its peak in March 2008.



Mortgages have become increasingly hard to obtain. Despite the continued Bank of England low base rate of 0.5%, credit conditions remain very tight with high levels of deposit (typically 25%) still required. In Wokingham a family would require a deposit of over £65,000 and an annual income of £56,000 to afford to buy an average priced property, assuming the purchaser was obtaining a 75% mortgage (putting down a 25% deposit) and that a lender was lending at 3.5 times income. A single person purchasing a one bedroom property in Wokingham would require an income of nearly £40,000 and a deposit of over £33,500. According to the Office for National Statistics the average annual income for Wokingham is currently £33,269 meaning that with the recent fall in property prices, house purchases have become more affordable. However this is countered by the high level of deposit currently required to secure a mortgage.

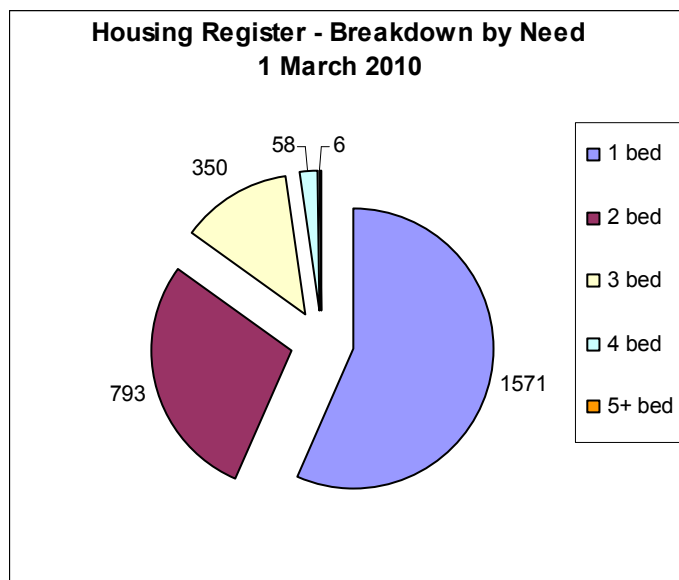
Renting a property in the private sector remains a more affordable option than buying in Wokingham Borough. The economic downturn has resulted in an increase in the availability of rental properties in the area.

Housing Need

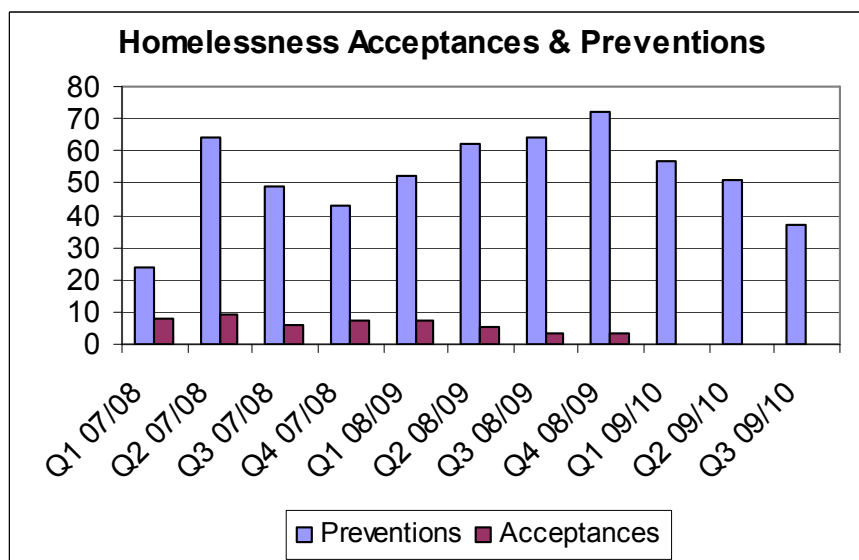
The Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment⁶ undertaken by DTZ Research and Consulting in 2007 estimated that Wokingham requires between 400 and 550 new affordable housing units per annum. The housing market assessment's analysis of data suggested that there were 7 applicant households for every available social rented property. 1-bedroom accommodation was most under pressure. This was because of the relatively low supply of 1 bedroom homes, which represent only 25% of the total stock.

As at 1 March 2010 there were 2,778 people on Wokingham's Housing Register. By far the greatest need is currently for 1-bedroom properties.

⁶ Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, DTZ October 2007



Whilst homeless acceptances are very low, the numbers seeking housing advice has steadily increased. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the Housing Needs Team’s focus on homelessness prevention (in line with the Council’s Homelessness Strategy) coupled with a robust approach to the investigation of individual homelessness applications. The graph below shows the number of homelessness acceptances and preventions since 2007/08. It shows there are significantly more homelessness preventions than acceptances during each quarter.



There has also been a significant reduction in the use of temporary accommodation in Wokingham, in line with the Government’s target.

High house prices coupled with a shortage of affordable housing can lead to difficulties with recruitment of key workers. A study carried out by Atisreal in 2006 of key workers in the Thames Valley West⁷ found that many public

⁷ Thames Valley West Key Worker Housing Study, September 2006

sector organisations reported recruitment problems due to housing-related issues. A quarter of key employers had lost potential recruits due to housing problems, and 92% of employers gave cost of appropriate accommodation as the main reason for this.

Housing factors leading to recruitment difficulties	Frequency	%
Cost of appropriate accommodation	110	92%
Range of appropriate accommodation	13	11%
Lack of appropriate accommodation	20	17%
Location of appropriate accommodation	22	18%
Poor quality of appropriate accommodation	13	11%

Source: Thames Valley West Key Worker Housing Study, 2006

Housing was also frequently quoted as a reason for difficulties with retaining staff. Three quarters of the organisations surveyed did not offer assistance to employees, although most thought this would be a good recruitment tool. Provision of accommodation by housing associations or subsidised rent was thought to be the most useful assistance that could be offered.

Although the average household income for the Thames Valley West was higher than the national average, many key workers at the lower end were not able to buy or rent in open market. 78% of key workers had at least one complaint about their housing circumstances with the most common issue being cost of rents or mortgages. 69% of key workers would leave their current local authority area permanently in order to afford the housing they desired, and of those, many would consider leaving Berkshire. 85% felt that the cost of suitably sized accommodation was out of reach of their income for buying or renting.

The study revealed that a minimum of 641 units per annum were needed across the four local authority areas to meet key worker housing need. If each local authority was to meet an equal share of this need, Wokingham would need to provide 160 key worker housing units per annum. Of those key workers in housing need, 48% were not registered on a housing waiting list (and therefore were unlikely to be captured through the Housing Market Assessment).

The Council's Strategy for Housing for Older People 2008 Refresh sets out the Council's future vision for the provision of specialist older people's housing which includes the need for 380 units of Extra Care Housing (including over 200 for sale units), 160 units of Enhanced Sheltered Housing and 76 units of Dementia Care Housing by 2018.

In order to ascertain the housing need for vulnerable people, between April and August 2008, a survey of support services was undertaken with details being provided of all vulnerable people known to services with a housing need. Detailed analysis was undertaken on a total of 217 clients. The main findings are summarised below:

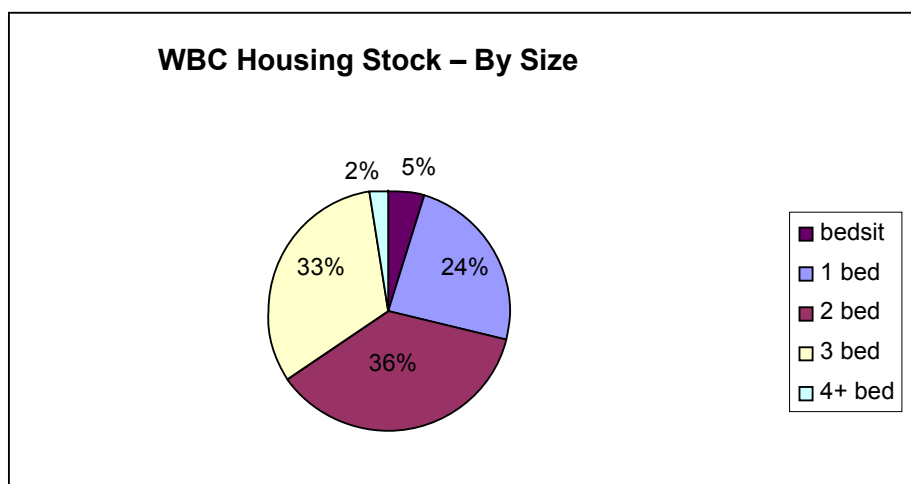
- The greatest housing need is amongst people with a learning disability, which equated to 52% of the responses received. Mental health (18%),

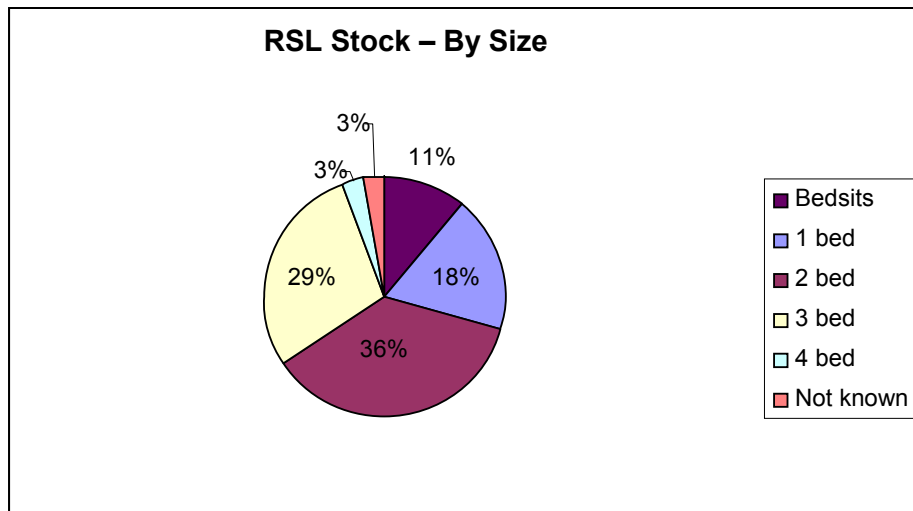
physical and sensory disabilities (11%) and care leavers (10%) are the next largest client groups identified to have a housing need.

- Almost 51% of clients identified as having a housing need are currently living with family, followed by 20% living in supported housing. 20% of clients are stated as being in their current housing due to no alternative accommodation being available.
- The main reason stated for requiring a move is the clients desire to be independent (29%), whilst 16% are in unsuitable property, 10% need to move due to having an older carer and 9% whose family cannot cope.
- Over 60% of the clients identified as having a housing need are stated as requiring a social rented tenancy and almost 9% require fully wheelchair accessible accommodation.
- Over 51% of clients will require floating support, whilst 33% will require a live in carer.
- Over 44% of clients identified as having a housing need require a move in less than 12 months.
- 33% have no preference where they live, whilst almost 28% prefer Wokingham.

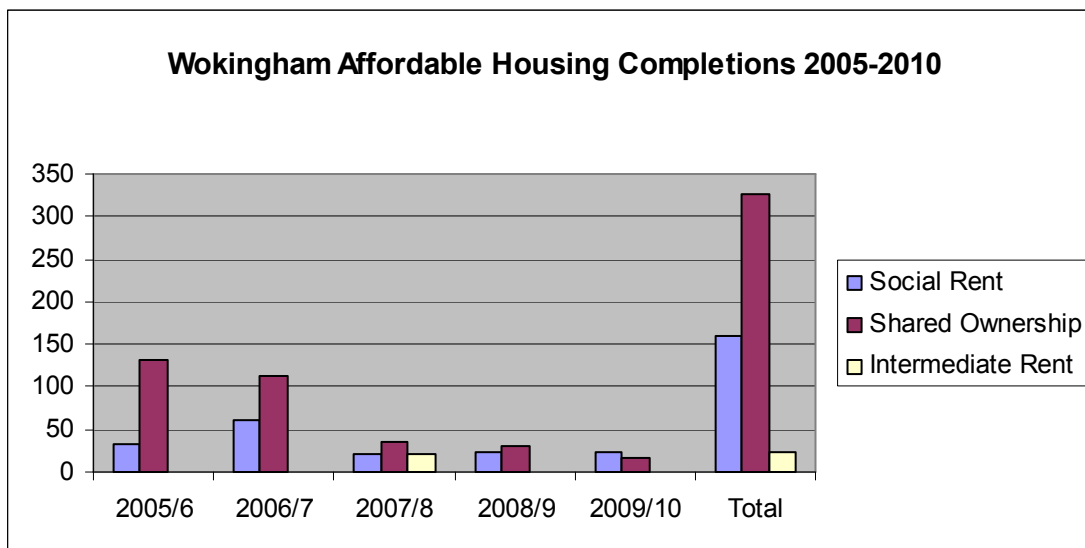
Housing Supply

Wokingham Borough Council continues to retain its housing stock and as at 21st January 2010, it owned and managed 2,515 properties. Registered Social Landlords also have a stock of approximately 1,300 properties in Wokingham Borough. The graphs below show the profile of housing stock owned by the Council and RSLs. The graphs show that for both the Council and RSL sector, 2-bedroom properties are the most common type. Less than 25% of social housing stock is 1-bedroom, which is the greatest need shown on the Housing Register, showing a significant imbalance between need and supply.





In the last 5 years, there have been 509 new affordable housing units built in the Borough. A significant proportion of these have been shared ownership properties as shown in the graph below. However, the economic downturn has tended to result in a move away from new shared ownership properties due to problems selling the units caused by the lack of readily available mortgage finance.



New affordable housing in Wokingham has almost all been secured through Section 106 negotiations with developers. The economic downturn has impacted significantly on the number of these sites coming forward and has consequently resulted in a drop in affordable housing units being delivered.

APPENDIX 5: GLOSSARY

Allocations Policy – the Council’s policy for allocating Council and RSL properties to people in housing need

Code for Sustainable Homes – a rating system to communicate the overall sustainability performance of a new home

Core Strategy – The Council’s Local Plan is being phased out and will be replaced by the Local Development Framework, which will include the Core Strategy at the centre. The Core Strategy is the blueprint for development to the year 2026.

Decent Homes Standard – a Government standard of condition that all local authority and RSL homes must meet by 2010

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) – A grant available to disabled tenants and owner occupiers to adapt their homes, so that they can manage more independently

Extra Care Housing – independent housing for older people with care and support available 24/7

Floating Support – housing related support services that allow people to live as independently as possible

Home Improvement Agency (HIA) – an agency set-up to assist vulnerable homeowners to maintain their homes

Homelessness Strategy – a strategy to address provision for and prevention of homelessness over the next three years

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) – properties of three or more storeys and five or more tenants who form two or more households and who share facilities e.g. kitchen, bathroom

Housing Association – usually a not-for-profit voluntary organisation providing affordable housing.

Housing Revenue Account – the ringfenced income and expenditure account relating to the Council’s housing stock

Key Workers – those workers who are deemed to be essential to the sustainability of the local economy.

Lifetime Homes – buildings with design features that create flexible, accessible and adaptable housing

Local Area Agreement – sets out the priorities for the local area agreed between central government and the local area (the local authority, local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at local level

Local Housing Company (LHC) – organisation established by the Council to deliver new affordable housing

Local Strategic Partnership – the multi-agency group that produces and oversees the Sustainable Community Strategy

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) – an alternative name for housing associations

Rural Housing Enabler – works with local rural communities to identify local affordable housing need and help bring forward schemes to meet that need

Section 106 Agreement – section of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 allowing the Council to enter into an agreement with developers to provide necessary infrastructure

Shared Ownership – housing provided by RSLs to enable people to part-buy and part-rent a home when they are unable to purchase outright on the open market

Social Rented Housing – housing let by RSLs and local authorities at ‘affordable’ rents, i.e. considerably below a market rent.

Supporting People – A way of funding support services for vulnerable people, introduced in 2003

Sustainable Community Strategy – a strategy for the borough produced by the Local Strategic Partnership setting out a vision for the community over the next 10 years

Zone Agent – housing association appointed by Government to administer low cost home ownership products for an area

APPENDIX 6: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. What is the main purpose of the strategy?

- **Addressing our Housing Needs** - To ensure that all households in the Borough can access well-designed, affordable and sustainable homes.
- **Supporting Vulnerable People** - To continue to enable vulnerable people to be self-reliant and live independently
- **Tackling Homelessness and Housing Need** - To prevent and provide for homelessness and be responsive to housing need.
- **Improving the Housing Service** - Providing high quality, value for money services to our tenants

2. List the main activities of the strategy:

- Deliver more affordable homes through the adoption and implementation of our Core Strategy.
- Work with the Rural Housing Enabler for Berkshire to identify and respond to the housing needs of our rural communities.
- Proactively explore new delivery methods for affordable housing, including setting up a Council-owned Local Housing Company
- Identify sites to meet the need for additional gypsy and traveller pitches.
- Improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of all tenures of housing.
- Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable people, including Extra Care Housing, Dementia Housing and housing for people with a learning disability.
- Provide a range of housing support services to help vulnerable people live independently, including a signposting service, equity release scheme and home refuge scheme.
- Increase the supply of housing that meets the “Lifetime Homes Standard”.
- Continue to offer high quality advice to households on housing options, rights and responsibilities.
- Increase access to settled forms of housing, including through the Rent in Advance and Deposit loan schemes.
- Continue to work with the voluntary sector to provide a range of support services to respond to housing crises, including responding to the threat of homelessness created by the recession.
- Carry out a full condition survey of our Council-owned housing stock and develop a 30-year business plan.
- Review all options for the future management of the Council’s housing stock in consultation with our tenants.
- Develop and implement a Service Improvement Plan.
- Put in place a contract for Decent Homes work.
- Improve the overall management of our Gypsy and Traveller sites.

3. Who will be the main beneficiaries of the strategy?

- Households in housing need
- Lower income households (including key workers)
- Homeless households
- Vulnerable households (including older people)
- Council tenants
- All residents in the Borough

	Detail	Positive impact It could benefit	Negative impact It could disadvantage	Nil impact	Reason
Gender	People of all genders (i.e. Male /Female /Transgender) can apply for/access our homelessness, allocations, housing needs and advice service.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Nil impact.	An applicant's gender is not an issue that affects his/her access to housing/advice or assistance
Ethnicity	Housing Register & Allocations - CORE data for all lets in the Borough showed that in 2008/09, 10.2% of general needs lets went to black and minority ethnic households. 100% of lets to Supported Housing were from the White British cohort.	Applies equally to all people who are in housing need in the Borough and who express a wish to be re-housed.	Those whose first language is not English.	Not Applicable	Those whose first language is not English may have difficulties with understanding the literature and the "rules" of the scheme. This is mitigated by strap-lines on all of the literature/application forms explaining that the documents can be provided in a different format/language. Also use of STAIS for translation/interpretation where necessary.
	Homelessness is monitored quarterly by ethnicity. In most quarters, people from BME backgrounds are under-represented in the homelessness statistics. Nationally, people from BME groups are often over-represented in homelessness.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Nil Impact	Due to the small numbers of customers involved, we discussed the issue of statistical significance with a monitoring expert who advised us to continue monitoring quarter by quarter & respond to any anomalies/ exceptions/patterns that this routine analysis suggests.
	Families from BME	Not Applicable	Larger	Not	This is mitigated by us

	groups can be larger/ extended and so often require larger properties. Wokingham does not have a huge resource of large accommodation and so these groups may be disadvantaged in terms of resources available.		extended families (due to the limits of the current stock). Larger shared ownership properties can be prohibitively expensive and so may not be accessible to larger families.	Applicable	monitoring the need for large houses on our register and ensuring that any need is catered for, where possible, in the design of new developments. (As at March 2010, only 58 households registered a need for 4-bed home and 6 for larger than 4-bed out of a total of 2778).
	Tenant Services' only have information on ethnicity for 40% of tenants, although work is ongoing to improve profiling. 97% described their ethnic origin as White British. There is no standard diversity monitoring form for collecting data about the take up and use of Tenant Services.	The Strategy includes a specific action to improve the service's approach to equality and diversity and complete profiling by September 2010. This will facilitate more effective monitoring and action in the future.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	The Audit Commission identified equality and diversity as a key area for improvement during its inspection.
	There is a significant need identified for more/improved gypsy and traveller pitches.	The strategy identifies various actions to improve the services we offer to gypsy and traveller families, including more pitches, more consultation with existing site dwellers and improvement to Council-owned sites.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	There is a significant unmet need identified for this group.
Disability	The Housing Register records individual need. If a person's housing situation is made worse by illness or disability, there are mechanisms for ensuring an urgent/specific response if needed.	An action is identified within the strategy to improve recording of information on housing need for clients known to Community Care services.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Assisting vulnerable people is a key priority within the Housing Strategy.
	Research in 2008	There are a	Not Applicable	Not	Assisting vulnerable

	<p>identified a total of 217 vulnerable clients (excluding older people) with a housing need. The greatest housing need was amongst people with a learning disability, which equated to 52% of the responses received. Mental health (18%), physical and sensory disabilities (11%) and care leavers (10%) are the next largest client groups identified to have a housing need.</p>	<p>number of actions identified within the strategy to increase the housing options available to vulnerable people (i.e. more Lifetime Homes, supported housing projects, more housing-related support, etc.).</p>		Applicable	<p>people is a key priority within the Housing Strategy.</p>
	<p>The 2009 SNAP survey showed that 53% of Council tenants said they had a long-standing illness, health problem or disability (including problems which are due to old age). 23% of sheltered tenants said that someone in their household uses a wheelchair.</p>	<p>The Strategy identifies actions to improve the range of support services available and enhance signposting of them. Tenant Services is also producing an aids and adaptations policy.</p>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	<p>Assisting vulnerable people is a key priority within the Housing Strategy.</p>
Faith	<p>There is little housing information available on different faith groups.</p>	<p>New housing schemes commissioned by the Council are planned to be culturally sensitive.</p> <p>Free geographical choice is given to all social housing applicants, so there is flexibility to live within proximity of faith centres.</p>	Not Applicable	Likely to be nil impact.	Not Applicable
Sexual Orientation	<p>There is little housing information available on sexual orientation.</p>	Not Applicable	Gay, lesbian and transgender applicants can be at risk of harassment from	Nil impact.	<p>Whatever an applicants' sexual orientation, they can apply for a service as a single person /couple/household and their needs and options are based on their</p>

			neighbours. Targeted harassment to these groups has resulted in requests for urgent moves to alternative settings.		housing situation and requirements.
Age	There is an aging population in Wokingham. The Council's Housing Strategy for Older People identifies a need for 190 units of Extra Care Housing, over 140 units of Enhanced Sheltered Housing and 46 units of Dementia Care Housing	A number of projects and supported services are identified within the strategy to improve housing options for older people, including Extra Care Housing, Dementia Housing, Lifetime Homes and an Equity Release Scheme.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Assisting vulnerable people is a key priority within the Housing Strategy.
	There are significant proportions of elderly people in both sheltered and general needs Council housing stock. 99% of Sheltered tenants were aged over 60 compared to 55% of General Needs residents. Many of these tenants live alone.	The Strategy identifies actions to improve the range of support services available and enhance signposting to them. It also seeks to improve the housing options available to older people.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	There is a potential need for extra outreach work and support for vulnerable residents in the absence of other household members who might be able to access services and offer support.
	As a corporate parent, we must continue to improve the support on offer to our looked after children and care leavers.	Young people (including care leavers) will continue to be helped to start out living independently through a Supported Lodgings Scheme, three 'fasttrack' tenancies a year and supported housing.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Assisting vulnerable people is a key priority within the Housing Strategy.

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Policy and Partnerships
Wokingham Borough Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WR

Tel: (0118) 974 6000