



Stratford-on-Avon District Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

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Foreword by Portfolio Holder

This Housing Strategy 2009-2014 has been endorsed by xxxxxxxxxxxx and was adopted by the Council on xx xxxxxxxx xxxx.

It is available on the Council's website: www.stratford.gov.uk
(See Housing Strategy under A-Z).

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Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014

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Introduction

Stratford-on-Avon District is an attractive place to live. Residents, many of whom have chosen to move into the District, generally enjoy a high quality of life. But there are also some significant housing problems.

Housing Strategy 2009-2014 sets out how the Council and its partners will work together to ensure that more people in the District get the housing and housing related support that they need and choose. This Strategy covers all tenures including owner occupation, private rented accommodation and affordable housing.

This Strategy sets out a clear agenda and actions to tackle the important housing issues facing the District. It therefore addresses disadvantage. A formal Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken before the Strategy was drafted. It shows that the impact of the Strategy on low income households and each equality 'strand' (that is race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability) will be either neutral or positive. Partners helped the Council to identify some potential impacts of the Strategy. Actions will be kept under review in order to identify and correct any likely negative effects on any sector of the community.

This Strategy will not set the overall targets for the number of new homes to be built in the District over the coming years, or where those homes should be located. This is one of the main purposes of the Local Development Framework (the Core Strategy and associated policies).

Housing Strategy 2009 - 2014 covers all the important aspects of private sector housing, and as a result, the Council no longer has a separate private sector housing strategy. It is the Council's intention that the Homelessness Strategy will also be incorporated into the next review of this Strategy. Until then, this Housing Strategy sets out the principal issues and areas of action for preventing and responding to homelessness.

Members and partners told us to make the Housing Strategy more user-friendly and so it only summarises the main issues. A separate *Evidence Log* and a separate *Consultation Log*, together with the Equality Impact Assessment, underpin and support this Strategy document and provide more detail.

This Strategy's action plan sets out 'high level' strategic actions. Implementation and operational actions are included in service plans or strategies and policies that sit below this Strategy such as the *Empty Homes Strategy*. Delivery of this Housing Strategy will be monitored by the Council's Housing Advisory Panel and by partnership groups.

The vision, four aims and nine themes of Housing Strategy 2009-2014 are detailed in the diagram on the next page.

Local Area Agreement outcome areas described in
Stratford District Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy

Children and Young People ♦ Stronger Communities ♦ Healthier Communities and Older People
 Safer Communities ♦ Economy and Employment ♦ Climate Change and Environment

Housing Strategy 2009 - 2014

Vision: A District of sustainable communities offering more people the opportunity to live in good quality housing of their choice, with the support they need.

Aim 1
 To increase the supply of good quality affordable housing for local people.

Enabling more and better affordable housing

Aim 2
 To improve existing housing and help people to live as independently as possible.

Better homes

Housing options for older people

Aim 3
 To prevent homelessness and reduce the harm caused by it.

Tackling homelessness

Young people

Aim 4
 To strengthen the support to local communities.

Local Development Framework

Gypsies and Travellers

Reducing disadvantage

Continuing to meet residents' needs

Vision: A District of sustainable communities offering more people the opportunity to live in good quality housing of their choice, with the support they need.

National context – policy

National context - resources

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Key housing challenges in the District

- Ensuring that everyone has equal access to services is important. The District is large (979 square km) with a dispersed settlement pattern: almost four-fifths of the population live in rural areas.
- The population of the District is projected to grow by 25% between 2007 and 2031 from 117,800 to 145,600. This increase is far higher than projected regional and national (England) population growth rates of 13.9% and 19% respectively.
- Currently 23.5% of residents are over pensionable age; this compares to 20.3% for Warwickshire and 18.9% across England. This is the age group that is projected to grow fastest by 2031, with particularly big increases in the number of people aged over 84.
- As most people want to live independently and stay in their own homes for as long as possible, it is essential that steps are taken to ensure existing housing is up to the job.
- Despite falls in average local house prices in the period to mid 2009, and a drop in the number of sales, the local housing market remains fairly buoyant.
- 'Market' housing in the District is the least affordable to buy in Warwickshire. This particularly affects households looking to buy their first home, and obliges more people to seek private rented or affordable housing.
- There is a shortage of affordable accommodation, and a mismatch of the housing available and housing needed. The latest assessment of District-wide housing needs points to an annual shortfall of 532 affordable homes.
- One of the main reasons for young people leaving the District is the lack of affordable accommodation.
- There is inadequate provision of housing and support for people who are vulnerable or at risk of homelessness because of their circumstances.
- There is a need to improve substantially the fuel efficiency of much of the existing housing in the District. Reducing waste will allow more people to afford to heat their homes properly, and will contribute to a reduction in CO₂ emissions.
- We recognise the importance of residents having greater choice about housing services and influence over policy and service delivery.

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The reasons for writing a new Housing Strategy

The Council's Housing Strategy 2006-2011 was adopted in June 2006, and has been updated annually. Housing Strategy 2009 - 2014 builds on and reviews the previous Strategy to ensure that our approach continues to meet the needs and expectations of as many local residents as possible. There are four main reasons why the Council and its partners decided to undertake a major review of the Housing Strategy at this time:

- 1) To check what housing issues are important to residents, partners and service users:

Extensive consultation with residents, partners and service users, together with customer satisfaction comments, has helped to identify local housing priorities and shape the vision, aims and actions in this Strategy. The results of the consultation programme, and the key points raised in the Place Survey 2008, are set out in the comprehensive x page long Consultation Log. In addition, the views of vulnerable people informed the recent needs analyses underpinning the Supporting People 5 Year Strategy, and are taken into account in the strategic reviews of Supporting People services.

- 2) Changes to the research and evidence base underpinning this Strategy:

The Evidence Log lists and describes all the evidence that has been taken into account when drafting this Strategy. Significant updates to relevant research became available after Housing Strategy 2006 – 2011 Review 2008 was written:

- Single People Experiencing Housing Difficulties Monitoring 2009
- Survey of Advertised Private Rents in Stratford-on-Avon District 2009
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Market Review 2009
- Private Sector House Condition Survey 2009
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2008 + update 2009
- Development Viability Assessment Model 2009

- 3) To achieve value for money:

Having an up to date housing strategy will enable the Council and its partners to continue to focus resources on what really matters to people, achieve better value for money and continue to attract external investment.

- 4) To take account of a number of other recent strategies that impact on housing:

The most significant of these strategies are discussed later in this section. Other relevant strategies and plans are detailed in the Evidence Log.

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Why we have written a District-wide strategy

The West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy 2005 created sub-regional housing market areas, that is areas that had housing markets with similar characteristics. In each area, local authorities would work together to address housing issues and attract Government investment.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is currently moving from the South Housing Market Area housing sub-region (Worcestershire, Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon local authorities) to the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire (CSW) housing sub-region. The move to the CSW housing sub-region will be beneficial as it will align with existing CSW arrangements for planning and economic development. It will also facilitate joint working across Warwickshire because all the Warwickshire local authorities will for the first time be in the same housing sub-region.

The move to a new housing sub-region is the main reason why, having decided that a new housing strategy was required, Stratford-on-Avon District Council chose to do a District-wide housing strategy rather than a cross authority housing strategy. This approach was endorsed by Government Office West Midlands – the priorities identified in this Housing Strategy can feed into a sub-regional housing strategy at a later date.

This Strategy places the housing issues facing the District - and the actions proposed to tackle the impact of these challenges – in the context of initiatives being progressed across Warwickshire and the Coventry, Solihull, Warwickshire sub-region. Thus, the alignment between relevant strategies will be strengthened so that each can make an effective contribution to achieving positive outcomes for our residents and communities.

How the Housing Strategy links with other strategies

Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy

People, Places & Prosperity - a Sustainable Community Strategy for Warwickshire 2009-2026 details the long term vision for the County. The Strategy has nine outcomes, one of which is “Our housing is appropriate and affordable”.

The Warwickshire Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 (LAA) is the key mechanism for partnership working to deliver the Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy. The LAA is an agreement between central government, all the Warwickshire local authorities and other local publicly funded organizations; it will be reviewed every 3 years. It has six key ‘blocks’:

- Children and young people
- Safer communities
- Stronger communities
- Healthier communities and older people
- Economic development and enterprise
- Climate change and the environment

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and three cross-cutting themes: Equalities and cohesion; Culture, sport and active recreation; and Rurality.

Delivery of the LAA is measured via agreed indicators: those of most relevance to this Housing Strategy include:

LAA theme: Stronger communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (NI 155)
LAA theme: Healthier communities and older people
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently (NI 139) (local indicator)• Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living (NI 141)
LAA theme: Climate change and the environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tackling fuel poverty - number of people receiving income-based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating (NI 187) (local indicator)

Warwickshire Health Inequality Strategy 2009 - 2026

The Strategy seeks to reduce health inequalities and improve life expectancy in Warwickshire. The Strategy suggests 'ways' in which the County and local organisations by working together on programmes can address health inequality across Warwickshire. One of the 'ways' focuses on reducing poverty by maximising income through benefits advice, debt management and financial management programmes; reducing homelessness and fuel poverty. Indicators include NI 155 – Number of affordable homes and NI 187 – Tackling fuel poverty.

Quality of Life for an Ageing Population Strategy 2008 - 2012

The Strategy sets out how Warwickshire County Council and its partners will respond to the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population. Residents identified six strategic priorities:

- Supporting people in their home
- Safety at home and in the community
- Valuing older people
- Equality, access and dignity
- Preventative support services in the community
- Improving access to information and advice.

The ten year strategy is supported by annual implementation plans, and includes housing and housing related issues.

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Warwickshire Supporting People 5 Year Strategy 2008-2013

The Warwickshire Supporting People programme co-ordinates the provision of housing related support services (both 'accommodation based' and 'floating support') to vulnerable people to allow them to achieve or maintain independence. The Strategy identifies three priority groupings of people where new resources will be invested in the future as savings are made across the programme:

- Homeless people, and people fleeing domestic abuse
- Offenders, people with mental health problems, and people with substance misuse problems
- Young people at risk, young people leaving care, and teenage parents.

These priority groups align closely with those identified by the District Council and Stratford District Housing Forum as the two groups of vulnerable people "with the most urgent unmet accommodation and support needs":

- Young people aged 16-25 years
- Single homeless people of all ages.

Stratford-on-Avon District Sustainable Community Strategy

Stratford District Partnership's *Improving the Quality of Life for everyone – a 2026 Vision for Stratford District* is the Sustainable Community Strategy for the District. It sets out a long-term vision for the area and provides the context for the Housing Strategy. *Improving the Quality of Life* identifies a number of key challenges relevant to the Housing Strategy and includes 10 'housing' goals (as well as many more that are more loosely related to housing):

Children and Young People

- Improving vulnerable young people's wellbeing and independence through enhancing their accommodation and support options.

Stronger Communities

- Giving everyone 'anytime anywhere' access to services and facilities through digital and other technologies.
- Helping communities identify sites for affordable housing.
- Extending the local choice scheme.
- Making more accommodation available by bringing more empty homes into use and encouraging older people to move to smaller properties.

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Healthier Communities and Older People

- Improving, expanding and extending at-home services, and adapting more properties to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities.
- Delivering more accessible homes.

Climate Change and Environment

- Supporting and setting standards for home energy efficiency and the supply and use of renewable energy.
- Promoting and supporting home working.
- Ensuring new development meets strict design quality standards.

The District Council's Corporate Strategy 2009-2012

The Strategy sets out how the District Council will lead Stratford-on-Avon District forward, and improve the quality of life locally so that by 2012 it is one of the top ten places to live in the country. The Strategy has four aims:

- A district where everyone shares an improved quality of life
- A clean and green district
- A district where business and enterprise can flourish
- An excellent council that is well managed and respected by the community.

One of the outcomes under the first aim is 'more housing is available at a price local people can afford'. The two priority actions under this outcome are:

- Bring empty properties back into use across the District and increase the number of affordable homes in rural areas.
- Increase the proportion of 2 and 3 bedroom properties on new developments.

The Development Plan

The statutory 'development plan' for the District currently comprises the *West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) 2004*, and the *Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan Review 1996-2011*, adopted on 14 July 2006. These documents set out policies and proposals to guide development in the District.

Both the above plans are currently under review. In particular, Phase Two of the RSS Revision will roll-forward the strategic housing provisions for the District to 2026. Phase Three will include critical rural services and provide a framework for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

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In addition, the District Council is producing its Local Development Framework (LDF). This portfolio of policy documents will replace the Local Plan Review. The key document within the LDF will be the Core Strategy. Collectively, the LDF documents will contain policies and proposals that:

- Set a vision for the District by 2026, and define core objectives relevant to housing.
- Give effect at a local level to the strategic housing provisions of the RSS.
- Determine the scale, location and nature of new housing provision.
- Provide a framework for managing change within the built environment, including existing housing stock.
- Identify more sites to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers.

Supplementary planning documents will provide detailed guidance on planning policies and implementation.

The Long Marston Estate has been identified by Government as a possible site for an eco-town known as **Middle Quinton**. If agreed, this might provide a new town of approximately 6,000 new homes (of which about 2,000 would be affordable homes). A clear strategic housing role for a new town in this location has not yet been defined. The owners of the site are also considering alternative development proposals for the site.

Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire (CSW) Sub Regional Housing Growth Strategy

The primary purpose of this Strategy, produced in July 2009, is to provide a steer for current and medium term investment decisions by the Homes and Communities Agency. It is based on the emerging strategic housing provision of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

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**Aim 1:
To increase the supply of good quality
affordable housing for local people.**

Local Area Agreement outcomes:

More affordable housing * Empowered communities

Stratford Sustainable Community Strategy objectives:

- Helping communities identify sites for affordable housing.
- Extending the local choice scheme.
- Ensuring new development meets strict design quality standards.

CONTRIBUTION TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Sufficient and appropriate affordable housing – intended for people who cannot afford to buy or rent a suitable home at ‘market’ prices – is a key ingredient for truly sustainable communities in both town and country. It allows for mixed income and all-age neighbourhoods and villages where young people, singles and families, and retired people can ensure local vitality. Good quality affordable housing promotes social cohesion; improves health; and contributes to an attractive environment.

Existing and new affordable housing should meet local needs. Active participation in the planning of new affordable housing and the updating of existing housing is an important and durable step towards empowering communities. This is of particular relevance in rural areas where each community has its own needs, opportunities and ideas. Empowered communities are stronger and more resilient to adverse change.

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Theme A: Enabling more and better affordable housing

Defining affordable housing

Affordable housing is subsidised social rented or intermediate housing for people who cannot afford and/or find suitable market housing. Intermediate affordable housing is housing at prices and rents above those of social rent but below market prices or rents. All affordable homes must be retained in perpetuity for future households or any subsidy recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. A fuller definition of affordable housing is included in the Council's *Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document*.

Our track record

The Council and its partner housing associations have a good track record in delivering new affordable homes. In the ten years up to 31 March 2009, a total of 1,096 additional affordable homes were provided in the District. 244 homes of these were provided between 2006 and 2009.

Some of these affordable homes were specifically designed for people who were vulnerable because of their circumstances e.g. a scheme for people with learning disabilities and a refuge for victims of domestic violence. The most recent special needs development is an extra-care scheme for older people - the first in Warwickshire.

The delivery of affordable homes in the District continues to be cited as good practice. For example in 2007, the Audit Commission's Strategic Housing Services' inspection report highlighted the development of affordable housing generally and the way the Council was meeting rural housing needs as 'positive practice'. In the same year the Council acted as an affordable housing mentor to two other local authorities. The Council hosted in 2008 a fact finding visit from Matthew Taylor MP, and the Council's rural affordable housing policies were included in his *Living Working Countryside* report. Rural affordable housing in this District was also recognised in the Improvement and Development Agency's 2008 publication *New Housing Provision and the Strategic Housing Role*.

Affordable housing as a strategic priority

The urgent need to provide additional affordable housing in this District is recognised as a priority in regional, sub-regional, County-wide and local strategies and plans. The Warwickshire Local Area Agreement and the Council's Corporate Strategy both include a target of 472 additional affordable homes in this District between 2008 and 2012. This target will have to be reviewed for the following reasons:

- The Council's moratorium on the development of open market housing has been in force for longer than originally anticipated. The moratorium was imposed in 2006 and is having a major adverse impact on the delivery of affordable homes because many

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affordable homes are delivered as part of large scale open market housing schemes.

- The Development Plan for the District is currently being reviewed. This means that there is uncertainty about the number, location and nature of new housing of all kinds.
- The effect of current market conditions on both the future delivery of new housing and the type and tenure of housing people can afford.

Assessing housing needs

The *Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Market Review 2009* updates the Council's 2006 Assessment and estimates that there is a need for an additional 532 affordable homes in the District each year. Parish housing needs surveys are undertaken to identify local housing needs. Other sources of information such as the District Housing Forum's monitoring of single people experiencing housing difficulties survey are used to identify the housing and support needs of vulnerable people.

The Council has resolved that the housing needs of key workers should continue to be addressed through the Council's existing affordable housing policies.

Identifying land

The draft Core Strategy sets out what land is available for residential development - see Theme F: Local Development Framework. Land in public ownership across Warwickshire has been mapped. The exercise confirmed that the scope for utilising publicly owned land within the District for affordable housing currently appears very limited.

Meeting Rural Housing Needs

Around 4 out of 5 residents live in the rural portion of the District (defined in planning terms as anywhere other than Stratford-upon-Avon town). Consequently, increasing the number of affordable homes in rural areas is a priority action in the Council's Corporate Strategy 2009-2012. There is a special planning policy framework to help rural communities identify and meet their housing needs:

- The development of 'Local Choice' housing schemes within the market towns and larger villages. Local Choice empowers communities to identify and address their local housing needs. In 2007, the Council adopted *the Local Choice – Meeting the Needs of Rural Communities Supplementary Planning Document*. The initiative has attracted a great deal of attention nationally as an example of innovative and effective practice.
- 100% affordable 'exception' schemes in smaller villages.

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To increase the amount of affordable housing in rural areas, the Council has since 2003 helped fund an independent full-time Rural Housing Enabler for the District; the Council is covering all the costs of the post from 2008-2013. The Rural Housing Enabler works with local communities to help them carry out housing needs surveys and identify suitable sites for development. This project is producing results and has great potential: as at August 2009, 44 homes have been provided and there are 13 developments in the pipeline which will provide another 165 new homes. Site canvassing could yield an additional 50 homes.

An annual parish council event is held to promote rural housing to meet local needs. Parishes that have successfully completed rural schemes sell the idea to other parish councils.

Parish plans articulate the needs and aspirations of communities. To encourage more rural communities to consider their local development needs, the Council has agreed a £25,000 parish plan pilot project. The project provides policy guidance and seed corn grant monies to parishes to assist them to produce realistic parish plans. It is a condition of the grant that parishes agree to undertake a local housing needs survey.

Improving the supply of housing and its sustainability

The Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document 2008 concerns both affordable and market housing. It describes how the Council will work in partnership to

- 1) Contribute to the creation of a balanced housing market.
- 2) Enhance the sustainability of all new housing.
- 3) Ensure local housing needs are more effectively addressed, especially by boosting the provision of affordable housing.
- 4) Assist in the effective implementation of the *Housing Strategy*
- 5) Increase the supply of new homes in rural areas.
- 6) Promote best practice in the development of all new housing.
- 7) Make effective use of funding.

The SPD details affordable housing 'quality benchmarks': standards for development, management, delivery and allocation, and monitoring and evaluation of completed housing schemes.

It also sets out optimum stock mixes for market housing (with an emphasis on providing more 2 and 3 bedroom houses) and for affordable housing; demands the integration for market and affordable housing; and specifies that 50% of all homes should meet the Lifetime Homes standard.

The SPD also covers space standards for affordable homes; working from home; extra care housing; making houses family friendly by providing reasonably sized gardens; responding to climate change and the importance of pre-planning application discussions.

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Affordable housing is 'secured' on sites via Section 106 legal agreements. In order to expedite the delivery of affordable housing, the Council commissioned an expert review to update its model Section 106 agreements in light of the SPD and other changes.

Funding affordable homes

Obtaining funding for affordable homes at the right time is critical. Although housing associations borrow, or use their own reserves, to help fund the development of new affordable housing, additional funding is usually required.

On developer led sites that include open market and affordable housing, the *Meeting Housing Needs SPD* expects developers to provide affordable housing without public subsidy through discounted land values and internal cross subsidy generated from profits on the sale of open market housing. This approach has been very successful. If there is a funding gap, the Council will consider a reduction in the overall proportion of affordable homes and / or the deployment of public funds. Despite the economic downturn, this is currently not an issue because of the moratorium on building open market homes.

However, to ensure that the provision of affordable housing and other 'planning obligations' is not so onerous that it prevents sites coming forward and stifling development of both open market and affordable housing, the Council has commissioned a Development Viability Assessment Model report July 2009 (draft).

Grant funding is particularly required for rural and special needs schemes. As affordable housing is a long standing corporate priority, the Council has since April 2004 invested over £4m of its own capital to fund more affordable homes. In addition, the District has also attracted over £9m of Government grant since April 2007.

Working in partnership

To facilitate and promote the development of affordable housing and ensure the efficient management of its housing development programme, the District Council has established the Stratford-on-Avon Housing Partnership. The Partnership currently includes five preferred partners for general needs housing development.

However, in line with the Government's *Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing*, the Council has adopted a 'level playing field' approach for all potential affordable housing providers. Any provider can join the Partnership, and in the case of 'developer led sites', there is no compulsion on developers to work with any specified housing association. There is instead an emphasis on meeting the defined 'quality benchmarks' and other requirements of the *Meeting Housing Needs SPD*. On all other sites it is up to local communities to determine which housing association they wish to work with. This approach has been endorsed by the Homes and Communities Agency.

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The Council has been pro-active in working at regional and sub-regional level to help secure affordable housing. The Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sub-regional Housing Growth Strategy identifies the District's priorities for affordable housing investment as:

- Single rural programme package
- District-wide strategic affordable housing sites (allocated in planning documents)
- Stratford Cattle Market.

Evaluating completed schemes

All affordable housing schemes are evaluated on completion to record development outcomes, including feedback from tenants and purchasers and the wider community. The evaluation assesses effectiveness in meeting housing need; 'Lifetime Homes' standards and accessibility; scheme / estate layout and design; architecture, specification and build quality; internal and external space; safety and security; environmental sustainability; management arrangements; and delivery performance.

Monitoring delivery

The Council monitors what affordable housing is expected to be delivered in the short, medium and long term; this information is widely shared with partners and within the Council. Delivery of LAA and Corporate Strategy targets such as increasing the number of affordable homes is reported monthly. Detailed progress reports on the delivery of affordable housing, which also highlight risks to the programme, are considered at every meeting of the Council's Housing Advisory Panel.

What we need to do

The Council and its partners have been very successful and innovative in delivering affordable homes. To a large extent all the basic foundation blocks are in place - we need to continue to focus resources on what we are already doing. However, it is important that the Council is flexible enough to make the most of new opportunities and respond to changing circumstances.

We need to continue to maximise the amount of affordable housing and ensure that it is the right type, size and tenure.

Knowing what funds are, or are not, available is essential in order to successfully plan and deliver affordable housing in the medium and long term. The Council needs to clarify with the Homes and Communities Agency if, and in what circumstances, it is prepared to provide Government grant funding for affordable housing. As at August 2009, there is approximately £1.3m in the Council's Affordable Housing Investment Programme. The Council will need to decide whether or not it can afford to invest any more capital to fund new affordable homes.

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There is a need to determine whether affordable housing on sites 'allocated' in the Core Strategy should in the first instance be reserved for local people in that town or village or, alternatively, for local people living anywhere in the District.

Similarly, we must ensure that new affordable housing is allocated in line with identified needs. A needs survey may identify households such as young people as being in need of affordable housing. A scheme is then developed to meet these specific needs. However, there is a possibility that no young people will get any of the new affordable homes because they will all go to households with greater priority for housing. Parish councils have asked for this to be changed so that towns and villages have more balanced communities and in order that young people, whether single or a childless couple, are not forced to leave villages and towns owing to a lack of affordable accommodation.

Sustainable homes and communities remain the ultimate aim. The Council will do all it can to ensure that all new affordable housing continues to meet high quality and design standards.

The Council is working with its partner housing associations, the Homes and Communities agency, and the Rural Housing Enabler to establish and deliver an ongoing rural development programme. This involves packaging several rural housing schemes together to ensure stability in the longer-term development programme and to achieve economies of scale.

**Aim 1:
To increase the supply of good quality
affordable housing for local people.**

Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014 Actions:

1. Seek to negotiate and deliver the optimum amount and type of affordable housing on every relevant development site.
2. Seek the maximum investment in the District from the Homes and Communities Agency and establish a medium to long term budget for District Council support to increase or enhance affordable housing provision.
3. Ensure new affordable housing is allocated so as to enhance the long-term sustainability of communities.
4. Continue to seek the highest practicable quality standards for affordable homes to help deliver sustainable communities.
5. Continue to enable and empower rural communities to meet their housing needs.
6. Establish and deliver an on-going rural development programme.

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**Aim 2:
To improve existing housing and
help people live as independently as possible.**

Local Area Agreement outcomes:

Reduce child poverty * Improve mortality rates * Supporting carers
Supporting independent living * Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
Cohesive communities * Supporting vulnerable people

Stratford Sustainable Community Strategy objectives:

- Improving, expanding and extending at-home services, and adapting more properties to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities.
- Delivering more accessible homes.
- Supporting and setting standards for home energy efficiency and the supply and use of renewable energy.
- Making more accommodation available by bringing more empty homes into use and encouraging older people to move to smaller properties.

CONTRIBUTION TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Adequate and continued investment by the owners of existing housing (in any tenure) means that homes will last for many more decades; the need for new building is reduced; and a major contribution is made to the attractiveness of the District. There is the potential to reduce significantly the amount of CO₂ emitted and thus mitigate climate change.

The main purpose of maintaining and improving the physical fabric of housing is to ensure its continued ability to provide good homes: homes that remain suitable as the needs of their occupants change; are safe and healthy; and affordable to run. These requirements are particularly important to people who are vulnerable: children, disabled people, those with chronic health conditions, and older people. Most people want to live as independently as possible: they want to be able to choose to stay in their current home or to move to a more suitable property. Better housing and support options improve quality of life and can mean longer lives.

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Theme B: Better homes

The housing stock

The District had 53,740 dwellings in April 2009: around 77% were owner-occupied, 10% were rented privately and 13% were housing association affordable rented properties (as the Council does not own any housing).

All affordable homes are expected to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010. A decent home is defined as one that is free of serious hazards, warm, in a reasonable state of repair, and having reasonably modern facilities. Orbit Heart of England Housing Association owns over four fifths of the affordable rented housing in the District: 98% of its homes met the Standard in summer 2009.

Councils are legally required to keep housing conditions within their areas under review. The *Private Sector House Condition Survey 2009* describes local housing conditions in the owner occupied and private rented sectors, based on physical surveys and household interviews relating to 1,200 homes. In addition, the survey looked at the condition of the approximately 750 mobile homes in the District occupied as a main home.

There are very few larger houses in multiple occupation in the District – eight such houses have been licensed by the Council.

Adaptations and repairs

Housing adaptations enable disabled people and people with mobility impairments to continue to live independently in their own homes rather than having to go into residential care or nursing homes. Adaptations restore privacy, confidence and dignity to individuals and their families, and significantly improve people's health and quality of life.

The objectives of *The Warwickshire Accessible Housing and Inclusive Design Strategy 2008 – 2012* include:

- To enable older and disabled people to remain and live independently in suitable accommodation.
- To maximise the provision of more inclusively designed housing and the utilisation of adapted housing.
- To streamline systems to deliver adaptations with minimal delay.
- To promote, encourage and ensure fair access for all.
- To provide a service, which is outcome focused, evidence based and value for money.

In 2008/09, mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants up to £30,000 or discretionary grants up to £25,000 helped 175 households with the cost of property adaptations; repairs; or energy efficiency, security or home safety works. Satisfaction with these grants services is very high: 94% of customers rated the services as "very good", although customers are concerned about the length of time the whole process takes.

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There is a limited handyman service to do small jobs in people's homes and to check home safety.

The Government views Home Improvement Agency (HIA) services as the "hub around which vulnerable people are provided with personal support to make informed choices about their housing options and home environment".

Warwickshire local authorities are working together to create a single County-wide HIA to deliver economies of scale and a more comprehensive and responsive service. The new HIA will speed up the provision of property adaptations and assist older, disabled and vulnerable people to repair, improve, or maintain their homes. This might involve the provision of advice, grants or loans. It will help achieve Local Area Agreement targets relating to health and social care such as NI139 (the extent to which older people receive the care they need to live independently).

Telecare

Telecare is the continuous, automatic and remote monitoring of real time emergencies and lifestyle changes to manage the risks associated with independent living. Telecare includes social alarms, lifestyle monitoring and telehealth (remote monitoring of vital signs) and covers a wide range of equipment (detectors, monitors, alarms, pendants etc) and services (monitoring, call centres and response).

The Council holds national Beacon status for 'Digital Inclusion' and has some funding to develop partnership services that use technology to help people overcome barriers to independent living.

As part of the digital inclusion programme, the Council has joined with NHS Direct (West Midlands), Warwickshire County Council, Age Concern Warwickshire, NHS Ambulance Trust, Wolverhampton University, Coventry University, Tunstall and the First Responders programme to deliver a substantial telecare pilot project. The project is part funded by Government. It aims to improve the quality of life of older people, people with learning and or physical disabilities, people suffering domestic violence, migrant workers and people being discharged from hospital. Partners will assess the cost effectiveness of the project and determine its potential for roll out nationally.

Raising standards

Councils use the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to assess whether homes provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor. The most serious hazards – Category 1 - are strongly associated with older dwellings, and dwellings occupied by older people, people with disabilities, people on low incomes and those in receipt of benefit.

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The *Private Sector House Condition Survey 2009* shows that main hazard failures in the District are excess cold, and falls on level surfaces and stairs. Proportionately, most Category 1 hazards are in the private rented sector. In 2008/09, the Council took action to ensure that 20 dwellings with Category 1 hazards no longer posed a serious threat to the health and safety of tenants.

The Council will continue to safeguard residents and to promote high standards in the private rented sector. It will insist on good standards for any accommodation let under the Rent Express Scheme that assists people who may be threatened with homelessness to access private rented accommodation.

The Council runs a well-supported Landlords Forum for private sector landlords and local letting agencies that focuses on improving standards, sharing good practice, and promoting the Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme. This scheme recognises landlords who provide their tenants with good quality, safe accommodation and awards them a quality mark. Prospective tenants can view a list of accredited landlords on a website.

Empty Homes

Although the proportion of homes in the District that are empty is lower than the national average, such homes are a waste of a valuable resource. There is ongoing work to identify why owners keep houses empty but it can be assumed that some are simply properties that have not sold in the current economic climate.

The Council's *Empty Homes Strategy 2008-2011 – From Empty Houses to New Homes* sets out how the Council will seek to reduce the number of long-term empty homes, as required by its Corporate Strategy. One of the tools being used is to give the owner a grant of up to £30,000 to bring empty dwellings back into use in return for the Council being able to nominate a tenant for a minimum period. In 2008/09, the Council enabled 16 empty homes to be brought back into use through one or more of the interventions set out in the Strategy.

Grant funding

Legislation allows Councils to adopt a flexible approach to giving financial assistance for housing adaptations, repairs and improvements to reflect local circumstances and resources.

Grants budget for 2009/2010	
Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)	£420,000 plus £80,000 reserved for OHoE properties.
Discretionary Grants	£150,000
Empty Homes	£390,000 as at 1 August 2009 (Funding can be rolled forward each year)
Reserved for issues identified in the Private Sector House Condition Survey	£71,000 as at 1 August 2009 (Funding can be rolled forward each year)

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Improving environmental sustainability

The *UK Low Carbon Transition Plan* White Paper (July 2009) sets out the Government's transition plan for building a low carbon UK: cutting CO₂ emissions, maintaining secure energy supplies, maximising economic opportunities and protecting the most vulnerable. The Plan includes measures to cut emissions from existing and new homes by 29% by 2020 by improving their energy efficiency and using more low carbon energy sources such as heat pumps and solar power. Key proposals include:

- Subsidising home energy saving works and insulation, and more generous energy efficiency grants.
- Installing 'smart meters' to help people understand their energy use.
- 'Pay as you save' long term financing to help people make their homes greener.
- Introducing payments for low carbon energy generation.
- Pilots to deliver green homes in low income areas.
- Tackling fuel poverty, and energy price caps to protect the most vulnerable households.
- Requiring by 2016 all newly built homes to be 'zero carbon'.

The Council's promotion of energy efficiency measures has contributed to a 30.7% reduction in residential energy consumption / CO₂ emissions across the District between 1996 and 2008.

Improving residential energy efficiency is particularly important in tackling fuel poverty. Households are considered to be in fuel poverty if they need to spend 10% or more of their net household income on all domestic fuel use to provide adequate warmth and hot water...

These households are more likely to be people living alone; households on low incomes; and to live in homes with poor energy efficiency. Households that include people at home due to, for example, unemployment, retirement, long-term sickness or disability, have a greater requirement for heat and hot water. Cold and damp homes threaten good health, reduce quality of life and result in an increased number of deaths during the winter months. The highest concentration of fuel poverty is in the private sector (both owner occupied and private rented housing).

Eliminating fuel poverty is the overall objective of *South Warwickshire's Affordable Warmth Strategy*. One of the key players is Act on Energy, an independent energy advice service, which the Council originally set up.

Local Area Agreement NI 187 relates to fuel poverty. It requires local authorities to measure the proportion of households on an income related benefit living in dwellings with SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) ratings below 35, and 65 and above. The objective is to decrease the former and increase the latter.

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There are ambitious targets to improve SAP ratings in the District by 1.5% of all households claiming Council Tax benefit each year. In April 2009, of the 7,800 households claiming Council Tax benefit:

- 16% of households live in a home with a SAP rating below 35
- 32% of households live in a home with a SAP rating 65 or above.

The Council and its partners will review the assistance available to households experiencing fuel poverty in the light of the *Private Sector House Condition Survey 2009*. This will involve updating the *South Warwickshire Affordable Warmth Strategy*.

Orbit Heart of England Housing Association has over 5,800 homes and is the largest landlord in the District. It is developing a Decent Homes Plus strategy to focus further investment on a programme of retro-fitting its homes to reduce running costs for tenants and the carbon footprint of the homes. At Lighthorne Heath, the occupiers of 80 existing homes and 22 new properties are now benefitting from significantly reduced energy costs as a result of installation of ground source heat pumps.

A further Orbit Heart of England Housing Association pilot is expected to radically improve the environmental sustainability of 50 of its existing homes. The project will apply the principles of the 'Passive House' standard: energy use is cut to a minimum because of good insulation and airtightness, with good air quality guaranteed by a mechanical ventilation system. This, coupled with some solar gain, should eliminate the need for heating. The pilot will be the subject of technical evaluation to determine the most cost-effective interventions: the pilot has the potential to act as a model for housing in any tenure.

Theme C: Housing options for older people

This section details three issues that are particularly relevant to older people. However, much of what is described elsewhere in this Housing Strategy also affects older people. For example, the Council's commitment to Lifetime Homes as described under Aim 1, and all the initiatives set out in Theme B: Better Homes are important to older people.

Local and national policies are committed to improving the quality of life and well-being of older people. The Government's vision for older people is set out in *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society 2008*:

"Older people will have housing that supports healthy, active and independent living in welcoming communities. Housing, neighbourhoods and communities will be more inclusive, attractive and sustainable for an ageing population. There will be more mainstream and specialist homes of the right type in the right location for older people. New housing will be planned and built to Lifetime Homes Standards and new communities will be built to be Lifetime Neighbourhoods. The implications of ageing for housing

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and communities will be well understood by professionals and the public alike.

Excellent information and advice will be available for all. Many more homes will be warm and comfortable. Major and minor adaptations will be more easily obtained. Home improvement and handy person services will be widely accessible in every part of the country. Where housing services are needed, they will be more personal, progressive, high quality and joined-up."

Sheltered housing

Sheltered housing schemes are designed to meet the needs and interests of older people who want to live independent lives. Good schemes consist of grouped, self-contained accommodation with an emergency alarm system in each home, communal facilities, and support and advice from staff.

Orbit Heart of England Housing Association owns and manages the 13 sheltered housing schemes in the District. The Association's *Older Persons Framework* encourages and enables independent living and choice for older people by contributing to and enabling:

- Economic well being
- Feeling safe and secure
- Health and wellness
- Choice and independence
- Able to make a positive contribution.

The Association is reviewing its sheltered schemes to determine how they can individually continue to provide attractive, comfortable and supportive accommodation, and collectively best address the needs of local older people.

Extra Care Housing

Extra Care Housing (ECH) is specially designed housing that allows the provision of all levels of personal care and support. The care and support provided for each individual resident is responsive and flexible: it will change with the resident's changing circumstances, thus avoiding the need for them to move to other accommodation. ECH therefore combines the positive features of sheltered housing and a care home.

Warwickshire County Council's *Care and Choice Accommodation Programme* seeks to introduce more ECH to Warwickshire, and replace traditional residential care with more specialist care including for people with dementia. The *Extra Care Housing Strategy for Older People in Warwickshire 2008* seeks to:

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- Increase choice and control for citizens with a wider range of innovative, high quality and flexible care options that are joined-up.
- Provide more community based services, enabling people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.
- Promote independence and well-being.
- Improve outcomes for service users and carers.

Briar Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon, is the first ECH scheme in Warwickshire. Managed by Orbit Heart of England Housing Association, the scheme consists of 64 one and two bed flats for rent and shared ownership. Capital funding for the scheme included Government grant, a commuted sum secured by the Council and the Association's own monies.

The Council is working with Warwickshire County Council and other partners to decide how best to provide additional Extra Care housing in the District. This includes investigating whether some traditional sheltered schemes should be adapted to provide further Extra Care housing.

Housing options service for older people

Providing older people with sufficient information and advice to make informed choices about their housing, care and support needs is critical. Currently, older people can get advice from a number of different agencies including Age Concern Warwickshire, the Council and Warwickshire County Council. Within the District, Senior Citizens Action Network (SCAN) meetings also play a significant part in keeping older people up to speed about the various services and options available.

FirstStop is part of the Government's *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods* Strategy. The service will help older people decide whether to stay put or to find a suitable home elsewhere. People will be referred to other services that will enable them to remain safely in their home or supported to move to accommodation that is more appropriate.

In the short term, Warwickshire Supporting People has successfully bid for £193,000 Government funding to establish a pilot FirstStop-type advice service. It will provide a free, independent County-wide service covering housing options, and related care and finance. In the longer term, it is likely that the proposed County-wide Home Improvement Agency will take on this role.

Warwickshire Supporting People has also received £310,000 Government funding for an extended County-wide handyperson service for older people. This service will link closely with the housing options advice service.

Warwickshire Supporting People – together with the Primary Care Trust, Warwickshire County Council, and the local housing authorities – need to develop, in consultation with service users, the service specifications for the older people housing options advice service and the extended handyperson service. Once the services are up and running, partners need to monitor outcomes for service users.

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**Aim 2:
To improve existing housing and
help people live as independently as possible.**

Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014 Actions:

7. Implement the recommendations of the county-wide home improvement agency review and provide enhanced programmes of assistance for people in their own homes.
8. Promote the use of 'telecare' services to support independence at home and provide an alternative to residential care.
9. Take enforcement action when necessary to protect tenants in private rented accommodation, and encourage local private landlords to join Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
10. Deliver a well resourced programme of interventions to bring empty homes back into use.
11. Review the assistance available to help people stay warm in their homes.
12. Undertake a pilot programme of improvements to existing homes to reduce their environmental impact and the running costs to the occupier.
13. Following a detailed review of each scheme, progress the modernisation / replacement of existing sheltered accommodation to provide more sustainable housing.
14. Promote the development of further 'Extra Care' schemes to widen the housing and care options open to older people.
15. Develop a housing options for older people service to promote awareness of housing and care options and to assist older people to choose the most appropriate option.

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**Aim 3:
To prevent homelessness
and the harm caused by it.**

Local Area Agreement outcomes:

*Improve the emotional health of children * Cohesive communities
Supporting vulnerable people * Reduce number of young people not in
education, training or employment * Increase skills
More affordable housing * Supporting vulnerable people
Increase average earnings*

Stratford Sustainable Community Strategy objectives:

- Improving vulnerable young people's wellbeing and independence through enhancing their accommodation and support options.
- Reduce health inequalities by targeting resources where they are needed most.

CONTRIBUTION TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Homelessness undermines communities. For the people directly affected, it is often stressful and unpleasant, and sometimes traumatic and dangerous. Its prevention thus contributes to better mental and physical health, and to keeping people safe. Preventing and responding to homelessness can assist independence and help people take a realistic approach to their housing arrangements. Prevention programmes are thus an efficient and effective use of public resources.

Young people who experience homelessness are particularly likely to suffer personal harm and economic disadvantage. Their ability to study, undertake training, and get or keep a job will be hampered. Participation in sport or positive activity might also be reduced, and their future housing prospects affected. Investment in preventing youth homelessness and providing good housing and support options is therefore a sensible priority for any District looking to a positive future.

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Theme D: Tackling homelessness

Homelessness Strategy

This Housing Strategy describes the main strategic issues relating to homelessness. Detailed analysis and policy on homelessness is described in the *Stratford-on-Avon District Homelessness Review and Strategy 2008-2011*, the overall objective of which is to prevent homelessness whenever possible. The *Homelessness Strategy* considers the needs of all vulnerable people, and has three aims:

- Aim 1: To increase the range of housing options and improve existing options
- Aim 2: To ensure that a high level of customer care and access is maintained
- Aim 3: To ensure that the Council and its statutory and voluntary partners work in a joined up and planned way to address housing difficulties throughout the District.

Choice Based Lettings

Demand for affordable housing in this District is high. There are over 3,000 households on the Council's housing waiting list. Approximately 400 affordable homes become available for letting each year.

'Home Choice Plus' is the sub-regional choice based lettings scheme for affordable homes. This operates across Stratford-on-Avon District and most of Worcestershire. The scheme helps people to make informed choices about their housing options by allowing them to check the number and types of properties that become available for letting, and compare their priority for housing with that of other people.

People 'bid' for affordable homes via the internet, and by telephone, text or in person at any of the Council's offices. The Council provides assistance to make it easier for vulnerable and older people to bid.

In the long term there are plans to use Home Choice Plus to advertise more private sector properties – currently only empty homes brought back into use as private rented accommodation are advertised.

Home Choice Plus went live in this District in December 2008, and customer satisfaction with the scheme in the first four months of its operation is high with 63% of people rating it as 'very good' and 28% as 'fairly good'.

To ensure that disadvantaged people can access Home Choice Plus easily and use it to find suitable properties, a Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to review the impact of choice based lettings on service users and partners.

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In addition, the local authorities and housing associations running Home Choice Plus are to jointly review the scheme's policy and operation. The review will take account of *Fair and flexible* - the Government's recent draft statutory guidance on housing allocations.

Preventing homelessness

Over recent years, the Council has increasingly focused resources on preventing homelessness rather than just responding to it when it occurs. Evidence of this shift in focus is set out in the table below.

<i>Homelessness preventions and acceptances</i>		
	Number of households prevented from becoming homeless	Number of households accepted for permanent housing under homelessness legislation
2006 - 2007	72	73
2006 - 2007	107	130
2008 - 2009	241	101

The greater emphasis on prevention means that there is no longer any need for the Council to use bed and breakfast except for the odd emergency outside office hours. It also means that the Council should meet the Government target of halving the number of households living in temporary accommodation from a December 2004 baseline of 55 households to 27 households by December 2010. (As at June 2009, there were 18 households in temporary accommodation.)

Effective homelessness prevention relies on the Council advising, at an early stage, people in housing difficulties or those who are at risk of losing their homes about their housing options. Prevention also depends on good partnership working, and on organisations sharing information about the local housing market and economy, and maintaining their knowledge of each other's respective services.

The Stratford District Housing Forum co-ordinates much of the cross-agency work, including for example supported housing needs assessments, the dissemination of CAB statistics on employment, benefit, debt and housing enquiries, and how best to deal with loan sharks.

The Council sees people who are at risk of homelessness at its offices in Stratford-upon-Avon, Alcester, Shipston and Southam, or in their homes. To engage with more hard to reach groups, there is outreach work to vulnerable people, including those who sleep rough, at The Salvation Army's project (approximately 50 to 60 people housed since 2004), at the local women's refuge, with young people in schools, youth clubs or colleges, and at community events. Customers can also access advice by e-mail, letter or telephone.

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There is a range of services to assist people in housing difficulty:

- Registering to bid on Home Choice Plus properties
- Making a formal homelessness application to the Council.
- A Rent Express Scheme that assists households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to access private rented accommodation by providing deposit guarantees and rent in advance. The scheme is very popular: 135 households used it in 2008 – 2009.
- Liaison between landlords and their tenants if difficulties arise. This includes the work of the District Landlords Forum.
- One-off payments from the Homelessness Prevention Fund. Payments are normally repayable, and monies are recycled to help other people.
- Housing support to enable people in all tenures to live independently.
- A mediation service for young people and their parents.

In addition to the above services, there are a number of welfare advice and financial inclusion measures:

- The Council signposts and makes formal referrals for general budgeting advice, debt advice and access to affordable credit. More detail is given under Aim 4 (Theme H: Reducing Disadvantage).
- A CAB County Court help desk assists people facing rent and mortgage repossession action.
- The Council encourages homeowners in mortgage difficulties to contact their lenders as soon as possible. Homeowners are also advised to check their eligibility for Government help with paying the interest on their mortgage, deferring a proportion of their mortgage interest payments or for the *Mortgage Rescue Scheme*. The latter assists households to stay in their own homes, and has been successful in this District.
- People struggling financially are encouraged to get their entitlement to benefits checked.
- The Council aims to pay housing benefit, and deal with changes in households' circumstances, promptly. Consequently, people are less likely to get into arrears with their rent and be evicted.
- Private rented accommodation in this District is expensive. The Council uses discretionary housing payments to help people whose housing benefit does not cover the cost of private rented accommodation. An analysis of private rents in this District (April 2009) highlighted the affordability issues faced in particular by single people under 25 and households who require three bedrooms.

Customer satisfaction with the Council's housing advice service is high with 73% of people rating it as 'very good' and 19% as 'fairly good' in 2008-2009.

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Protocols are in place to help people move on from supported accommodation to other housing when they are ready, ensure people being discharged from hospital move to suitable accommodation at the right time, and to deal with the housing of witnesses who need protection and dangerous offenders.

Support for single people in housing difficulty

The provision of additional accommodation and support for single homeless people of all ages is a strategic priority for the Council and its partners. The *Warwickshire Supporting People 5 Year Strategy* identifies single homeless people in this District as a priority for investment.

The most recent multi-agency monitoring exercise undertaken by the District Housing Forum in February 2009 found that during this one month 62 single people experienced housing difficulties. Of these 62 people, 42 considered themselves homeless. The exercise recorded that 10 people slept rough at different times in the month.

Currently there is no supported housing and no emergency access accommodation for single homeless people in the District. The nearest emergency access accommodation available to anyone who does not qualify for permanent accommodation under homelessness legislation is in Coventry. Warwickshire Supporting People has awarded a contract to provide an 8 to 10 bed hostel for single homeless people in the District. This is likely to include two emergency access beds. The proposed hostel will fill some, but not all, of the gaps in service provision for this client group. The Council and its partners will carry out a full assessment of housing options for single people in the District once the scheme has been up and running for a few months.

Theme E: Young people

Young people as a priority group

In terms of housing and the support provided to enable independent and stable living, the phrase 'young people' refers to a different age range to that traditionally covered by 'youth services'. In this Strategy and Action Plan, 'young people' means people aged between 16 and 25. This recognises the additional and particular problems faced by people of this age who find themselves in housing difficulty.

This vulnerability is the reason for housing and support services for young people being recognised – as noted in the Introduction above – as a priority in a range of local documents, including in the Warwickshire Local Area Agreement, Warwickshire Supporting People 5 Year Strategy, and the District's Sustainable Community Strategy.

In 2008, the Council undertook a detailed 'gap' analysis of housing and support provision for single young people in the District. This included discussions with referring agencies, and accommodation and support

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providers in order to understand the existing capacity issues and the options for strengthening local provision. We also looked at the examples of partnerships and projects detailed on the *National Youth Homelessness Scheme* website.

The situation revealed by this research and the preferred options for improvement were reported to a Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2008. It was agreed that a successful approach to establishing and sustaining good support for young people would be characterised by:

- Adequate capacity of provision across the District.
- Mutual understanding between service providers, and co-ordinated action.
- Regular discussion between providers, funders, other partners and the Council as strategic housing authority.
- Observance of best practice principles such as:
 - Offer consistent services tailored to meet individual needs
 - Recognise the particular needs of young people
 - Focus on positive outcomes for individual young people
 - Improve engagement with young people
 - Value homelessness prevention
 - Provide support for as long as it is needed.

Further feasibility work was carried out and reported to the Council's Housing Advisory Panel in March 2009. It was recognised that some of these key features of an excellent service could not be afforded while current financial conditions continue. An example is a dedicated centre to provide specialist housing information, advice and guidance to young people. The absence of such a specialist resource means that more focus should be placed on collaborative working and signposting between the existing agencies, education and outreach.

The overall objectives of the four proposed actions under this Theme are to prevent young people from becoming homeless; reduce the harm caused to them if they do; and provide a safe and supportive environment in which they can achieve and progress towards independence.

Mediation

'Crisis homelessness' can occur when a young person is forced, or chooses, to leave the family home in a hurry. The young person may have made no plans in respect of their accommodation, income or safety.

Discussions with a trained mediator can result in an agreement for the young person to continue to live in the family home (but only when that is both appropriate and what the young person wants to do), or to leave home in a planned way when they are ready to do so.

There is a need to strengthen and expand the housing mediation services available to young people in the District. The success of the scheme is

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likely to depend on the involvement of many agencies, particularly in offering a choice of referral route so that a young person can receive support without necessarily making a formal approach to the Council.

16 / 17 year olds

The severe vulnerability of 16 or 17 year olds in housing need is the reason for the special status given to them under both homelessness and children legislation. The relationship between the obligations placed on local housing authorities (such as Stratford-on-Avon District Council) and those placed on social services authorities (such as Warwickshire County Council) was the subject of a further House of Lords judgment in May 2009.

Locally, we recognise that there is considerable scope for better working between the District and County Councils on this matter, so that more is done to ensure that each young person in housing difficulty is provided with support – and possibly accommodation – appropriate to their circumstances. A protocol to guide Warwickshire authorities' individual and co-operative actions will be adopted, and its impact monitored.

Supported accommodation

There is currently in the District:

- No emergency accommodation specifically for young people
- Not enough supported lodging places where a young person stays with a private household or under a dedicated arrangement with a private landlord
- Too few rooms in a scheme that offers accommodation in a shared house with on-site support or in sole-occupancy flats with visiting support.
- An additional requirement for long-term supported accommodation for those who have more serious support needs.

Improving the local supply of both emergency and longer-term accommodation for young people (including care leavers) is likely to focus on the use of existing housing rather than a proposal to build a new scheme. Investment in the continuing support of the young residents is critical to enabling their future independence, as is the availability of appropriate 'move-on' housing.

Foyer

Foyers provide a stable and secure home environment for vulnerable young people who commit to engage with a tailored programme focused on training, education and employment. Residents typically stay between 12 and 24 months before moving on to more independent living arrangements. Foyer schemes can be appropriate for small towns within a rural area. They can also act as bases for developing other support services to non-residents.

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The Council regards the provision of at least one foyer in the District as a long term ambition. Capital and revenue funding will present significant challenges, and changes in the amount of other supported housing in the District might alter the need for a foyer. The feasibility of enabling one or more foyers will be kept under review and no commitment can be made at the moment.

**Aim 3:
To prevent homelessness
and the harm caused by it.**

Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014 Actions:

16. Keep the operation and impact of Home Choice Plus under review to identify any necessary improvements.
17. Continue to deliver and support a homelessness prevention programme.
18. Maintain good performance for dealing with housing benefit claims and applications for discretionary housing payments.
19. Consider the adequacy of current accommodation and support (including emergency access provision) in the District for single homeless people and people who sleep rough.
20. Keep under review the feasibility of enabling a residential foyer (with emergency access) for 16-24 yr olds.
21. Improve the emergency access and longer-term accommodation and support available for homeless young people (aged 16-24) within the District.
22. Enhance mediation services available to families that include young people at risk of homelessness.
23. Work with Warwickshire County Council to ensure that proper accommodation and support is available to all 16 or 17 year olds in need.

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**Aim 4:
To strengthen the support to local communities.**

Local Area Agreement outcomes:

Cohesive communities * More affordable housing
Reduce child poverty * Reduce anti-social behaviour
Supporting vulnerable people * Empowered communities
Improve access to services

Stratford Sustainable Community Strategy objectives:

- Helping communities identify sites for affordable housing.
- Extending the local choice scheme.
- Giving everyone 'anytime anywhere' access to services and facilities through digital and other technologies.
- Finding out the views of hard-to-reach groups.

CONTRIBUTION TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES

The housing and associated support that is promoted and delivered by the Council and key partners must serve the needs of all local residents. In order to support community cohesion and sustainability, our policies and investment decisions should address communities' needs and priorities, including in particular those of the relatively disadvantaged and people at risk of exclusion. Services can be extended and made more accessible. We want to make it easier for residents to influence our decisions and help shape our policies.

These policies are based on a thorough understanding of the housing and economic circumstances of the District. Keeping this understanding up to date through research and analysis will allow housing and support programmes to continue to strengthen communities. Ensuring that the impact of these programmes and policies is kept under review will help reduce inequality and maximise effectiveness.

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Theme F: Local Development Framework

The Introduction to this Strategy explains the purpose of the Local Development Framework (LDF). It is important that the LDF sets out local planning policies and proposals for residential development that will help achieve balanced housing markets. These policies and proposals should take account of all the relevant evidence such as that presented in the *Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Market Review 2009*.

A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2008 and 2009 provides information on the extent of potential development opportunities in the District to meet strategic housing needs up to 2026. The SHLAA forms part of the evidence base for the Council's draft Core Strategy, which was published in October 2008. The Core Strategy 'allocates' sites to meet the District's housing requirements as determined by the Regional Spatial Strategy. It also encourages rural local communities to identify land to meet their own housing needs.

However, creating sustainable communities is about much more than the number of new homes in a particular location, and the facilities and services that allow communities to function. It is also about making sure that new homes are of the right tenure, type, size and design to meet the needs of the local population including people who are disadvantaged or who require specialised forms of housing. New homes must also be environmentally sustainable and affordable to run.

Building the right homes depends on the Council having up to date information on local housing circumstances, demographic trends, and the current and future housing needs, demands and preferences of all sectors of the community.

The LDF is likely to take forward the proposals on improving the environmental performance of new housing that were set out in the Sustainable Low-Carbon Buildings Supplementary Planning Document 2007.

This Housing Strategy, and all the research and consultation that underpins it, will itself form part of the evidence base for the Examination in Public of the Core Strategy.

Theme G: Gypsies and Travellers

A *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment* (2008) for Stratford and Warwick District Council areas and Worcestershire demonstrated a need for a significant number of additional permanent pitches and the provision of some temporary stopping places in this District.

LDF documents will identify locations to meet this need. As it is likely to be some years before these locations are agreed, the Council is in the meantime examining the possibility of granting temporary planning permissions on some sites to make up the current shortfall in provision.

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Pathlow Caravan site is the one authorised permanent Gypsy and Traveller site in the District – there are 30 pitches. The Council is refurbishing and upgrading all the facilities on the site, which it owns and manages. Most residents have lived on the site for some time and have regular contact with Council officers. Consequently, they are generally happy with the site (once the refurbishment is complete) and its management. Residents both use local services and know what services are available.

However, Pathlow is cramped. When asked as part of the consultation on this Strategy, residents stated that the two things that would most improve their quality of life would be the provision of a children's play area and additional parking spaces. The Council is exploring whether it is possible to purchase some adjacent land to provide these additional facilities and a few extra pitches.

In July 2009, the Government published a good practice guide: *Gypsy and Travellers Site Management*. The guide states:

“Where sites are properly managed they can be successful, self-financing and sustainable, helping to ensure that the Gypsy and Traveller communities can co-exist peacefully with the settled population nearby. Gypsies and Travellers are a highly socially excluded group, with health and education outcomes significantly worse than that of the settled population. Clearly families able to settle on well managed and maintained authorised sites are better able to access health and education services, and access a better quality of life, than those unable to find an authorised pitch and forced to live on the margins of society.”

The Government is clear that new sites will only be sustainable if they are backed by good quality site management. As further authorised sites are developed in the District, it will be essential to ensure that minimum standards for management and facilities are in place.

Local authorities and housing associations can bid for Government capital grant funding to help them meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The quality of management arrangements is taken into account when bids are evaluated.

Theme H: Reducing Disadvantage

Financial inclusion

Financial inclusion means everyone has access to appropriate financial services and products. This enables people to participate fully in modern day society and the economy. Exclusion from the financial system imposes additional costs on people – often those who can least afford them – and leads to greater social exclusion and exposure to risk.

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The Government's *Financial Inclusion: An Action Plan for 2008-2011* sets out how it will help people to:

- Manage their money day-to-day
- Plan for the future and cope with financial pressure
- Deal effectively with financial distress.

In other words, people need bank accounts; access to affordable credit such as overdrafts or personal loans; savings and adequate insurance to help meet unexpected costs; and reliable and impartial advice.

Statistically, people at risk of homelessness and social housing tenants are more likely than other people to experience one or more aspects of financial exclusion. The Council will work with housing associations and other partners to help more people escape financial exclusion or prevent them becoming excluded.

In addition to the financial measures detailed under Aim 3 (Theme D: Tackling homelessness), the following services are available in this District:

- Debt advice via the Citizens Advice Bureaux and / or the National Debtline.
- The Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency working with the District Council, Orbit Heart of England Housing Association and Warwickshire County Council, provides free information and
 - Budgeting advice
 - Assistance with opening bank accounts
 - Bill paying services
 - Access to low-cost loans
 - Regular savings
 - Other financial services.
- All adult residents of the District can become members of South Warwickshire Credit Union. It offers members a savings scheme, bill paying service and access to low-cost loans.

Digital inclusion

Digital inclusion means making the best use of digital technology to improve the lives and life chances of all citizens. The Government's *Delivering Digital Inclusion: an Action Plan for Consultation* (October 2008) and its *Digital Britain* report (June 2009) emphasize the strong correlation between digital exclusion and social exclusion.

The Action Plan provides a framework for achieving greater digital inclusion and for using technology to tackle social inequalities via improved service planning and delivery for disadvantaged groups and individuals. It also recognises that, in the more rural locations in the UK, access to computers and the internet is a significant barrier to digital inclusion.

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As detailed under Aim 2 (Theme B: Better homes), the Council holds national beacon status for 'digital inclusion', and has been awarded some Government 'Digital Challenge' monies to develop a telecare pilot scheme. Other innovative projects can also make a big difference to people's lives.

There are several potential applications of digital technology that can make it easier for residents to access and use housing services and improve the functioning of the benefits system. The Council will consider how best to progress the matter so as to contribute to its corporate objectives around improving services and addressing the problems of people who live in rural communities.

Theme J: Continuing to meet residents' needs

Ensuring that the actions in the Housing Strategy continue to articulate the views of local residents, and as far as possible address their housing and related support needs, is of paramount importance. We will only achieve this if we regularly take stock of our performance and link it with what local people are telling us about housing and with the latest research evidence. Responding actively to the views of customers and residents and considering the evidence will also help us achieve good value for money.

In order to deliver on what we have said, we need to be accountable for our actions, and open and transparent about what we have or have not achieved.

The activities that will make up our continuing review of the impact of this Housing Strategy (and the Homelessness Strategy) are:

- The Council and its partners will monitor and report regularly on progress against each of the actions in each Strategy.
- We will review annually the Equality Impact Assessment for the Housing Strategy and, if necessary, take corrective action to ensure that delivery of the Strategy is not having an adverse impact on any sector of the community.
- We will continue to ask customers what they think about existing services, so we can be confident that the services we are providing are of the quality and standard that customers expect.
- We will act on this feedback and change things that are not working.
- We will check that we are providing the right services, and if there is anything else that we should be doing, we will involve potential customers in shaping new services.
- We will continue to undertake regular diversity audits of frontline housing services, to ensure that we meet the needs and expectations of all people.

Although residents can tell us a great deal about what is required in the District, we also have to rely on other sources of information to maintain

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an up to date understanding of local housing circumstances. This will include undertaking research to measure or assess the scale and impact of particular housing issues, interpreting and analysing new and existing data, and keeping up to date with new policy initiatives. The Council and other organisations use this research to better identify problems and solutions and to target resources more effectively. Some examples of the kinds of research required are set out in the text box on page X.

The impact assessments, customer feedback and research will inform the formal review of the Housing Strategy. To remain relevant, this review should be undertaken every 12 to 18 months. The next review of the Housing Strategy will incorporate the Homelessness Strategy.

**Aim 4:
To strengthen the support to local communities.**

Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014 Actions:

24. Ensure Local Development Documents (including the Core Strategy) plan for the appropriate level, type, distribution and specification of market and affordable housing across the District to help achieve balanced housing markets.
25. Promote good site management and the provision of appropriate facilities for all authorised Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites.
26. Expand financial advice and products available to District residents.
[REVISE]
27. Expand digital inclusion to more of the District's residents.
[REVISE]
28. Continue to ask service users and residents about housing issues in order to inform service improvements.
29. Maintain an up to date understanding of housing circumstances in the District.
30. Monitor the success and impact of the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy, and undertake formal reviews of the Housing Strategy.

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Notes on reading the Action Plan

- The themes are as described in the Strategy text.
- The actions are high level.
- The resources column has a list of main contributors (not necessarily headed by the 'lead' agency) but also includes key materials and some funding sources. The list relates to the action not the milestones / targets.
- Most of the monitoring dates for the milestones / targets are left blank. XX/XXXX in different actions does not necessarily mean the same calendar month. YY/YYYY and ZZ/ZZZZ are not necessarily later than XX/XXXX, except where they relate to stages of the same process. These dates are subject of consultation. Work programming might require the whole package of actions to be considered before individual milestone dates are set, to avoid bunching and to allow all of them to be met.
- 'Report' means a formal written report. It will generally be preferable to present separate reports on each action.
- 'Agree' means agreement at the appropriate level (e.g. portfolio holder, Housing Advisory Panel, Warwickshire Heads of Housing) with a written record of the decision (e.g. meeting minutes making a clear reference to the document agreed).
- 'Review' can mean anything from a focused discussion through to research and consultation leading to a formal report. The scale of the review should be appropriate to the action, but all reviews must have a recorded outcome (what considered, findings, recommendations or decisions, who involved, date) to allow for transparency, auditing and progress monitoring.

Consultation Draft Housing Strategy 2009 - 2014 Action Plan

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Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
Theme A: Enabling more and better affordable housing		
1	<p>Seek to negotiate and deliver the optimum amount and type of affordable housing on every relevant development site.</p> <p>Planning policies and needs analysis.</p> <p>SDC, HCA, partner HAs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report annually (end of year) on the tenure, number, %, type and size of the affordable homes negotiated / completed. 2. Agree (by XX/XXXX) a Statement of Intent setting out the principles of the partnership working between SDC, HCA, and partner HAs. 3. Respond to opportunities for enhanced affordable housing provision.
2	<p>Seek the maximum investment in the District from the Homes and Communities Agency and establish a medium to long term budget for District Council support to increase or enhance affordable housing provision.</p> <p>National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP) and SDC's Affordable Housing Investment Programme (AHIP).</p> <p>SDC, HCA, partner HAs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report annually (end of year) on the engagement undertaken with the HCA and the investment secured. 2. Review (by XX/XXXX) with partners the approach to public subsidy on private development sites. 3. Agree (by XX/XXXX) the principles of investment for the AHIP and set (by YY/YYYY) a medium to long term budget for the AHIP.
3	<p>Ensure new affordable housing is allocated so as to enhance the long-term sustainability of communities.</p> <p>Planning obligations and policies.</p> <p>SDC, partner HAs, (? Parish councils, local communities)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review (at least every two years) the model Section 106 agreements that govern who can be offered affordable housing provided as part of new developments (including the local connection criteria). 2. Agree (by XX/XXXX) a template for a local lettings scheme for all new developments to reflect identified housing need.

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Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
Theme A: Enabling more and better affordable housing (continued)		
4	Continue to seek the highest practicable quality standards for affordable homes to help deliver sustainable communities.	Planning policies and funding requirements. SDC, HCA, partner HAs.
1. Seek detailed feedback on success of each completed scheme. 2. Report annually (end of year) on the quality of affordable housing secured /completed (see Strategy text for details).	5	Continue to enable and empower rural communities to meet their housing needs.
Planning policies and housing needs surveys. Rural Housing Enabler, SDC, parish councils, local communities.	1. Facilitate or instigate at least 6 local housing needs surveys each year to identify unmet housing needs. 2. Facilitate or instigate 5 site canvassing exercises each year to secure land. 3. Report twice a year on progress on rural housing enabling to Housing Advisory Panel.	6
Establish and deliver an on-going rural development programme.	NAHP and AHIP. Warwickshire Rural Housing Association, SDC, HCA, Jephson Housing Association.	1. Finalise programme by XX/XXXX. 2. XX affordable homes completed on component schemes by XX/XXXX, with the remainder of affordable homes completed on component schemes by YY/YYYY.

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Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
Theme B: Better homes		
7	<p>Implement the recommendations of the County-wide home improvement agency review and provide enhanced programmes of assistance for people in their own homes.</p> <p>Disabled Facilities Grant funding, SDC funding, learning and potential funding from regional sources, Tradeline.</p> <p>Dedicated officers within SDC, Warwickshire CC, Age Concern Warwickshire.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete (by XX/XXXX) the county-wide HIA review. 2A. Commit (every year) at least 95% of the annual adaptations budget. 2B. Meet performance targets for time taken to process adaptation grant applications. 3A. Report (by XX/XXXX) to Housing Advisory Panel on prospects, options and possible sources of funding for providing loans so that vulnerable and low income homeowners can address poor housing conditions. 3B. Subject to agreement following consideration of the options report, establish (by YY/YYYY) a loans scheme. 4. Review (by ZZ/ZZZZ) how the advice and support service for individuals undertaking work to their homes can be improved, and implement any changes necessary.
8	<p>Promote the use of 'telecare' services to support independence at home and provide an alternative to residential care.</p> <p>BUDGET AND PARTNERS TO BE IDENTIFIED Warwickshire CC, SDC.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Devise a scheme by May 2010. 2. FURTHER MILESTONES / TARGETS TO BE IDENTIFIED.

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Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
Theme B: Better homes (continued)		
9	Take enforcement action when necessary to protect tenants in private rented accommodation, and encourage local private landlords to join Midlands Landlords Accreditation Scheme.	Enforcement powers, policy and training. Dedicated officer within SDC, Landlords Forum, National Landlords Association.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report annually (end of year) on the number of properties where intervention from SDC has resulted in the removal of Category 1 hazards to private tenants. 2. Track local membership of Midlands Landlords Accreditation Scheme and report progress annually to District Landlords Forum.
10	Deliver a well resourced programme of interventions to bring empty homes back into use.	Empty Homes Strategy interventions (including SDC grant assistance, policy, EDMOs). Dedicated officer within SDC.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver (between April 2008 and March 2011) at least 50 interventions that result in an empty property being brought back into residential use. 2. Report annually (end of year) to Housing Advisory Panel on the number and kind of interventions and their outcomes. 3. Review annually (end of year) the operation and impact of the Empty Homes Strategy and implement any amendments considered necessary.

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Vision: A District of sustainable communities offering more people the opportunity to live in good quality housing of their choice, with the support they need.

Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
Theme B: Better homes (continued)		
11	<p>Review the assistance available to help people stay warm in their homes.</p> <p>Various sources of subsidies and grants to individuals, home works grants.</p> <p>SDC, Act on Energy, Warwickshire HIA(s).</p>	<p>1. Review the South Warwickshire Affordable Warmth Strategy and report (by XX/XXXX) to Housing Advisory Panel on the opportunities, funding sources and potential budget requirements for an enhanced programme of assistance to householders.</p> <p>2. Subject to agreement following consideration of the opportunities report and the setting of a budget, establish (by YY/YYYY) a programme of assistance.</p>
12	<p>Undertake a pilot programme of improvements to existing homes to reduce their environmental impact and the running costs to the occupier.</p> <p>Orbit Heart of England HA.</p>	<p>1. Plan and undertake (by XX/XXXX) a large scale refurbishment project designed to reduce substantially the amount of fuel used in each home.</p> <p>2. Evaluate (by YY/YYYY) the costs and impact of the refurbishment project, and consider the options for widespread application of the design principles to both refurbishment and new build programmes.</p>
13	<p>Following a detailed review of each scheme, progress the modernisation / replacement of existing sheltered accommodation to provide more sustainable housing.</p> <p>Sheltered housing schemes. SP strategic reviews. Warwickshire CC and SP, Orbit Heart of England HA, SDC, development partners.</p>	<p>OHoE TO LEAD ON IDENTIFICATION OF MILESTONES / TARGETS.</p>

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Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
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Theme C: Housing options for older people

14	Promote the development of further 'Extra Care' schemes to widen the housing and care options open to older people.	Warwickshire CC, Orbit Heart of England HA, HCA, specialist development and management partners.	WCC and OHoE TO LEAD ON IDENTIFICATION OF MILESTONES / TARGETS.
15	Develop a housing options for older people service to promote awareness of housing and care options and to assist older people to choose the most appropriate option.	WCC, SDC, advice agencies, private and RSL providers of housing and care (potential sponsors),	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt (by XX/XXXX) a project plan for a County-wide housing options service. 2. Appoint a 'move facilitator' to provide advice and support to older people who choose to move home. 3. Facilitate an annual 'Housing for Older People' fair in the District.

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Action	Resources	Milestones or targets	
Theme D: Tackling homelessness			
16	Keep the operation and impact of Home Choice Plus under review to identify any necessary improvements.	Home Choice Plus system. SDC, Home Choice Plus Partnership, District Housing Forum.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete (by XX/XXXX) a review by SDC Overview and Scrutiny of the impact of Home Choice Plus on service users and partners, and implement any changes necessary. 2. Complete (by YY/YYYY) a review of the operation of Home Choice Plus across the sub-region, and implement any changes necessary.
17	Continue to deliver and support a homelessness prevention programme.	Homelessness Prevention Fund and other finance. SDC, District Housing Forum.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review annually the operation and budget of the Rent Express Scheme and other private tenancy support services, and implement any changes necessary. 2. Report annually to Housing Advisory Panel of success of Mortgage Rescue Scheme and other current or potential prevention activity.
18	Maintain good performance for dealing with housing benefit claims and applications for discretionary housing payments.	Dedicated team within SDC.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet performance targets for time taken to process new claims for housing benefit and changes to claims. 2. Spend at least 80% of Discretionary Housing Payment budget in 2009/10, and at least 90% in subsequent years.

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Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
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Theme D: Tackling homelessness (continued)

19	Consider the adequacy of current accommodation and support (including emergency access provision) in the District for single homeless people and people who sleep rough.	Warwickshire Supporting People, SDC, providers, District Housing Forum.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report (by March 2011) to Housing Advisory Panel on the adequacy of current provision and make recommendations in respect of any shortfall between supply and need that the review may find. 2. Progress agreed actions as per the timetable set by Housing Advisory Panel.
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Theme E: Young people

20	Enhance mediation services available to families that include young people at risk of homelessness.	SDC, potential providers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish (by XX/XXXX) a funded service available across the District that can be accessed when appropriate either via a SDC home options interview or via another local referring agency and maintain on-going evaluation of service.
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Consultation Draft Housing Strategy 2009 - 2014 Action Plan

Vision: A District of sustainable communities offering more people the opportunity to live in good quality housing of their choice, with the support they need.

Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
Theme E: Young people (continued)		
21	Work with Warwickshire County Council to ensure that proper accommodation and support is available to all 16 or 17 year olds in need.	Warwickshire CC, SDC, District Housing Forum.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt (by XX/XXXX) a County-District protocol that allows each authority to meet its obligations to 16 and 17 year olds in need. 2. Report annually to Housing Advisory Panel on the operation of the Protocol, and on individual outcomes for 16 and 17 year olds in need in the District (irrespective of whether the protocol has been applied in their case).
22	Improve the emergency access and longer-term accommodation and support available for homeless young people (aged 16-24) within the District.	Warwickshire Supporting People, Orbit Heart of England HA, potential providers, SDC, District Housing Forum.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish (by March 2010) a project steering group to evaluate options and to secure additional provision. 2. Increase (by March 2011) the number of bed spaces available in the District by that number considered feasible by the project steering group and agreed by the relevant funding agencies.
23	Keep under review the feasibility of enabling a residential foyer (with emergency access) for 16-24 yr olds.	Warwickshire SP, HCA, SDC, potential providers, District Housing Forum.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report (by XX/XXXX and then every 12-18 months) to Housing Advisory Panel and make recommendations to progress enabling of a foyer if the review suggests a scheme is feasible.

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Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
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Theme F: Local Development Framework

24	Ensure Local Development Documents (including the Core Strategy) plan for the appropriate level, type, distribution and specification of market and affordable housing across the District to help achieve balanced housing markets.	Housing market evidence, including on the need for additional affordable housing. SDC, Housing Partnership Meeting.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply (throughout drafting of each Local Development Document) the relevant learning from housing market assessments, house condition survey, and other research. 2. Present, as necessary, the relevant evidence at the Examination in Public on the Core Strategy.
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Theme G: Gypsies and Travellers

25	Promote good site management and the provision of appropriate facilities for all authorised Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites.	Warwickshire CC, SDC, Gypsies and Travellers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report (by XX/XXXX), including costed recommendations, on further proposals to improve Pathlow Caravan Site. 2A. Consult (by YY/YYYY) on a draft site management and facilities standards document to be applied to all authorised sites. 2B. Adopt (by ZZ/ZZZZ) a final standards document, and apply to all authorised sites.
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Consultation Draft Housing Strategy 2009 - 2014 Action Plan

Vision: A District of sustainable communities offering more people the opportunity to live in good quality housing of their choice, with the support they need.

Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
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Theme H: Reducing disadvantage

26	Expand financial advice and products available to District residents.	Citizens Advice Bureaux, South Warwickshire Credit Union, Voluntary Action Stratford-on-Avon, SDC, Warwickshire County Council.	1. Review the Council's approach to supporting and promoting initiatives to increase financial inclusion, by reporting to Overview and Scrutiny Committee by (XX/XXXX).
27	Develop residents' access to the Council's housing and related services through application of digital technology.	SDC with the assistance of a multi-agency partnership.	1. Agree (by XX/XXXX) the Council's approach to using DigiTV to improve the operation of the Home Choice Plus scheme, other housing services, and the benefits system.

Theme J: Continuing to meet residents' needs

28	Continue to ask service users and residents about housing issues in order to inform service improvements.	Customer satisfaction surveys. SDC, District Housing Forum.	<p>1. Ask service users (at least annually) and residents (as opportunities arise) their views on the service provided / general housing issues, and report findings and how services have been amended to Housing Advisory Panel.</p> <p>2. Undertake annual diversity audits for frontline housing services.</p>
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Consultation Draft Housing Strategy 2009 - 2014 Action Plan

Vision: A District of sustainable communities offering more people the opportunity to live in good quality housing of their choice, with the support they need.

Action	Resources	Milestones or targets
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Theme J: Continuing to meet residents' needs (continued)

29	Maintain an up to date understanding of housing circumstances in the District.	Housing market assessment, private sector house condition survey. Orbit Heart of England HA, SDC, District Housing Forum, Warwickshire Supporting People.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review (annually) all relevant research and other evidence sources, and either undertake further research or make recommendations to commission research as the review may indicate is necessary. 2. Supply (within given deadlines) evidence to inform Supporting People and county-wide needs analyses and service reviews.
30	Monitor the success and impact of the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy, and undertake formal reviews of the Housing Strategy.	SDC, Housing Partnership Meeting, District Housing Forum, Stratford District Partnership.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report (twice yearly) to Housing Advisory Panel on progress against each action. 2. SDP Housing Key Group, Housing Partnership Meeting and District Housing Forum to each review annually the impact of the Strategies. 3. Undertake annual equality impact review of Housing Strategy 2009-2014 actions. 4. Incorporate (at next review) Homelessness Strategy into Housing Strategy. 5. Agree (by XX/XXXX) Housing Strategy Review 2010.