

HOUSING STRATEGY

2013-2016



*We want everyone to be able to live in a
good quality home in an attractive neighbourhood*

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Our strategic aims are to:

- Raise the standard of the existing housing stock in the Borough across all tenures and neighbourhoods.
- Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs.
- Use the provision of new housing as a tool to increase local economic growth, jobs and improve skills.
- Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community.
- Reduce adverse environmental impacts and improve the health of local residents by improving energy efficiency, reducing fuel poverty and building new homes that are healthy to live in.



The key challenges for us are:

- The condition of all housing (all tenures) within the Borough is generally good and we want to encourage owners to maintain this standard.
- The existing housing in the Borough is our biggest asset and we need to help owners and landlords to make the best use of it as a lot of it is currently under-occupied.
- The dominant housing type in the Borough is three bedroomed houses. We need to provide a mix of smaller and larger housing types in any new housing that is built to try to address the imbalance of housing types.
- Many newly forming households cannot afford to buy or rent a home of their own.
- Demand exceeds supply for social or affordable housing.
- We know that thousands of welfare benefits claimants have already been affected by changes to the Local Housing Allowance and non-dependent charges alone. Many other households in the Borough have had changes to their non-housing related benefits. From April 2013 we anticipate that up to 4,000 working age households who are under-occupying social housing, who are in receipt of housing benefits, may experience a further reduction in income. This not only poses a significant challenge for households who need to live on the reduced income but it also has impacts on levels of rent arrears and the disposable income that is available to be re-invested in the local area. We have estimated that just two changes (reducing Local Housing Allowance rates and loss of LHA £15 top ups that are paid) has resulted in a reduction of £2.2 million per year being available to spend in the local economy.
- We have an ageing population so we need to help people to maintain their independence by helping them to adapt their existing homes whilst offering a range of suitable specialist housing for those who cannot or do not want to adapt their existing home.
- We need to build a range of specially designed housing to enable people who have been in residential care to live independently in local communities, for example people with learning disabilities.
- Tough economic conditions, uncertainties over the economy and a myriad of policy changes that are designed to reduce public sector borrowing and expenditure have combined to make investment in new housing provision risky for new investors.
- We need to capitalise on opportunities that will help us to improve energy efficiency, reduce fuel poverty and improve the health of residents, especially Green Deal and other opportunities.
- Our key challenge will be to work creatively with a range of agencies to fund new affordable housing supply at a time when funding is scarce and the impacts of welfare reform measures have yet to be fully understood.

Setting the scene - Dudley

With a growing population that stands at 306,000 Dudley is the third largest Metropolitan authority in the West Midlands and the 12th largest in England. The Borough covers approximately 38 square miles. It is predominantly urban in form but around 30% of the borough is made up of green spaces.

Dudley has a vibrant and diverse population. The 2007 mid-year ethnic group population estimates show that the percentage of White British people in the borough is now 89.7. According to estimates the Pakistani and Indian community remain the largest minority ethnic groups in Dudley today at 2.6% and 1.7% respectively.

Dudley consists of five distinct areas: Brierley Hill, Dudley, Sedgley, Halesowen and Stourbridge. Brierley Hill is the strategic centre of the Borough and contains the large Merry Hill Shopping Centre which is a major source of employment within the Borough.

The Borough plays an important role in the West Midlands economy with around 10,000 businesses and a workforce of over 117,000 people. Whilst the majority of residents live and work within the Borough, Dudley also attracts a significant commuter workforce; for example, a total of 37,559 people lived outside the Borough and commuted to work here in 2001 (Source: 2001 Census). Dudley was significantly affected by the 2008 recession, with above average increases in unemployment and high impact on manufacturing and engineering. The Annual Population Survey for the period October 2009 - September 2010 revealed that the most common occupation for people living in Dudley was manager and senior official (18%).

Historically Dudley has experienced lower than average earnings and qualifications. In 2010 the median gross annual pay of full time employees living in Dudley borough was £22,276. We have the lowest average full time wage in the West Midlands Metropolitan area.

Whilst the Borough appears relatively affluent compared to the rest of the West Midlands region it is recognised that there are some small but severe pockets of deprivation within the area. Two of these areas are within the 10% most deprived areas in England and are in close proximity to Dudley town centre.

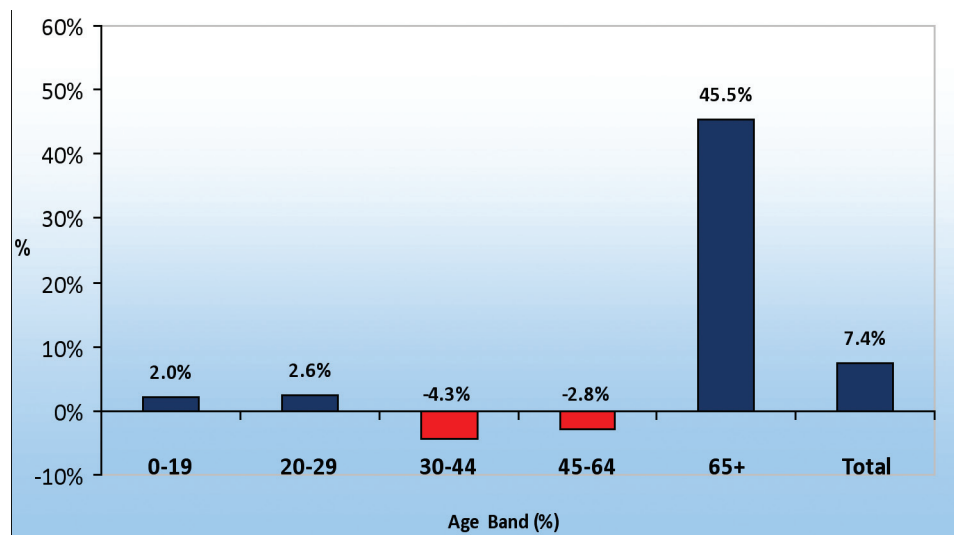
Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Population changes

Dudley's population is projected to increase by 7.4% in total (22,600 people) to 328,900 people between 2008 and 2033.

The most significant feature is the projected growth of the 65+ age group by 45.5% over the forecast period. This equates to 25,100 more people. The 85+ age group shows the largest increase overall of 9,900 people, around a 155% increase from 2008 to 2033

% Change in Age Band Structure, 2008 - 2033



4,935 households had in-migrated to Dudley over the last three years. There was net in-migration from all surrounding boroughs. 22.6% had moved from Sandwell and 21.8% from Birmingham; 12.7% had moved from elsewhere in the UK.

Dudley's housing stock

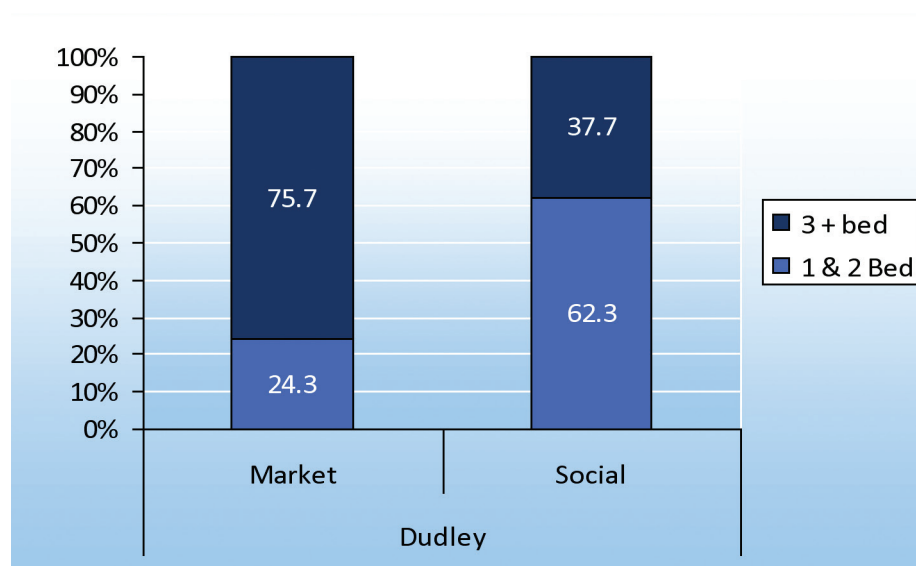
Around 72.1% (93,642) households are owner occupiers. 20.7% (26,845) of households are social housing tenants, lower than the national level of around 24%. The private rented sector constitutes 6.2% (7,976) of households and under 1% (1,053) of households live rent free or live in accommodation that is provided as part of their employment.

72.6% of properties in the Borough are either detached or semi-detached, 15.1% are terraced houses and 12.0% are flats. There are a small number of houseboat / caravan / mobile home properties (0.1%).

Over half (54.6%) of Dudley's existing housing stock contains three bedrooms.

The property size profile in the market and social housing sector indicates marked differences.

Market and Social Stock by Number of Bedrooms



Source: Dudley Housing Survey 2011

Housing conditions

Data from our recent Housing Market Intelligence Report indicates that 91% of the borough's residents are living in a home that is adequate for their needs. The residents were asked to judge for themselves if their home was adequate. Questions included making judgements about the state of repair, whether it was too large or small, too costly to run or if it had inadequate heating facilities. Residents living in the private rented sector reported the lowest levels of adequacy at 80.4%.

Most occupants reported that improvements/repairs were required to make their home more adequate. The reasons why homes were inadequate varied between the different areas within the borough. For example, in North Dudley and Stourbridge the most frequent reason for inadequacy was 'needs improvement/repairs' whereas in Brierley Hill, Dudley Central and Halesowen the most frequent reason was 'too small.'

Access to affordable housing

In Dudley the average property price is £146,280. Smaller terraced housing is often regarded as 'entry level' housing for people seeking to buy their own home. The lowest priced 2 bedroom terraced housing ranges from £89,500 in Central Dudley to £104,995 in Stourbridge.

Data from our recent Housing Market Intelligence Report indicates that access to the owner occupied market in the Borough requires an average income of £22,989 per annum. There are 4,492 concealed households in the Borough who are planning to move and form a household in their own right within the next five years. Concealed households are people who are currently living within other households because they do not own a home or have a tenancy of their own. Based on a weighted income average, 71.9% of these households cannot afford to buy a home of their own and 62% cannot even afford to rent in the private rented market.

In addition to this there is also demand for housing from 9,331 existing households that either want to move to another area or another property type/size. 5,706 are looking to buy whilst 3,625 require affordable (social) housing.

Based on current demand levels for affordable homes from people who cannot afford to buy or rent privately we calculate that we need to provide 421 additional new affordable homes per year for at least the next 15 years. This figure assumes that we will continue to deliver 186 new affordable homes per annum and that the current levels of vacancies and re-lets of existing stock remain roughly the same.

Our delivery of new affordable housing

A total of 927 new affordable homes have been built in the Borough between 2008/09 - 2011/12. This has been delivered through £110 million of investment of which £41 million has come from the Homes and Communities Agency.

Year	Number of new affordable homes
2008/09	200
2009/10	196
2010/11	162
2011/12	369

The majority of the new affordable housing has been delivered through our Registered Provider partners but 72 homes were built by the Local Authority through the Local Authority New Build programme. Overall, a varied range of housing has been provided ranging from Extra Care housing for older people to general needs housing. Different sizes of housing have been built, including 1 and 2 bedroom apartments through to 4 bedroom houses.

Future housing delivery

The majority of future affordable housing will be delivered either through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) affordable housing programme or through Section 106 planning obligations (Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

Homes and Communities Agency - Affordable Housing Programme

The Affordable Housing Programme was introduced in 2011 and runs until March 2015. A number of firm allocations were secured for the Borough along with indicative allocations for the Black Country sub-region. For Dudley this included:

- £2.4 million of funding to complete the Friars Gate (former North Priory) development (94 homes)
- £12.3 million to deliver 200 Extra Care homes
- £2.5 million from Midland Heart's Recycled Capital Grant Fund to deliver 58 units at a redeveloped Gibbs Road House (the Borough's only direct access homeless scheme);
- Approximately 50 general needs homes are to be delivered by Black Country Housing Group on five sites (predominantly former local authority garage sites).
- Up to 50 general needs homes to be delivered by Midland Heart.
- 65 (35 rented & 30 shared ownership) affordable homes to be provided on the Dudley Guest Hospital site by Accord Housing Group.

It should be noted that this funding regime offers less grant per housing unit than the previous funding regime. This, in effect means that Registered Providers have to source more of the funding for the new homes themselves. In addition to this there are strict rules about when the housing needs to be built by or the organisations risk not being able to claim the grant. This has led to a more cautious approach to providing affordable homes by some organisations. This is reflected in the predicted new affordable homes table opposite. The early years of the new funding regime will deliver lower numbers of homes, whilst the final year shows the most predicted delivery as the programme beds in. We believe that there is a 'lag' effect as organisations had to prepare and bid under the new funding regime and it has taken time to secure the finance, identify suitable land and obtain planning permissions.

Section 106 affordable housing obligations

In addition to the homes that are to be delivered through the Affordable Homes Programme it is anticipated that a number of developments with section 106 affordable housing obligations attached will be built over the coming years. We estimate that approximately 85 homes may be delivered. They will be a combination of rented and shared ownership units. These homes, however, will only be built if the private housing developer feels that the housing market is robust enough for the private market homes to be sold. The private developers are primarily motivated by profit and will not build unless market conditions are suitable and individual schemes are financially viable. In tough economic times developers often try to reduce their section 106 affordable housing contributions. This often causes a dilemma for planners and strategic housing enablers because judgements have to be made to assess if it is better to see the delivery of new housing and improvements to areas as a result of land being redeveloped but less affordable housing being built on the sites, compared to no building activity taking place and sites falling into disrepair or being neglected and impacting adversely on local communities.

Summary of predicted new affordable homes

Year	Number of new affordable homes
2012/13	111
2013/14	74
2014/15	530

We will look at all opportunities to maximise the provision of affordable housing in the Borough as we recognise that the estimated supply of new homes falls well short of estimated need.

Other affordable housing opportunities

Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund

The Department of Health are making £160 million capital funding available over the next five years (2013 onwards) to support the development of specialist housing for older people and adults with disabilities. We will be considering submitting a funding bid.

Investing in housing and regeneration

The provision of good quality homes plays a vital role in the transformation and regeneration of areas. Virtually every householder contributes to the local and national economy by buying products and items that will improve their homes. In addition to this employment opportunities arise from new construction and supply chain activities. Housing construction supports jobs and evidence suggests that every £1 million of new house building output supports 12 net jobs (seven direct and five indirect) for a year. Builders of new affordable homes also provide apprenticeships. For example, The North Priory (Friars Gate) development has supported six apprenticeships on the scheme to date and up to 48% of construction workers on the site (measured over 3 separate weeks across the first 6 months of the project) lived in a Dudley postcode area. This equated to between 9-12 people.

National policy drivers

Census 2011

At the point when we are writing this strategy there is very limited information available from the 2011 Census. We will be updating the strategy action plan annually and at that point we will revise plans based on new data that is available.

Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England 2011

The publication of the national housing strategy set out the Government's intentions to address long standing issues with the way the national housing market functions by unlocking the housing market and getting Britain building again to drive local economies and create jobs to boost employment. Improving access to owner occupation is a key driver. It acknowledges the need to build more new homes and the role that housing plays in social mobility and health and well-being. It also seeks to encourage the growth of the private rented sector. The reform of social housing and its role in supporting those in the most housing need, promoting social mobility and ensuring that it does not foster a culture of worklessness or benefit dependency figure strongly in the strategic drivers.

Localism Act 2011

The Government has devolved greater powers to councils and local residents so that they can have more control over the planning process and where new homes may be built and has enabled more local discretion to be used in the way social housing is allocated and who is eligible to apply for, and occupy social housing.

The Act has also given local authorities more flexibility to house homeless households within the private rented sector, introduced the opportunity to use fixed term tenancies and introduced a new form of social housing called Affordable Rent. This is social housing that is made available to tenants at up to 80% of private rented local market rent levels as a way of generating funds that can be reinvested into the delivery of new social housing. In reality however, Affordable Rent levels in most parts of the Borough only generate small amounts of funding, typically between £0-11 additional income per week.

Welfare Reform

The Government has introduced a range of actions that are designed to 'make work pay' and provide drivers for people to take responsibility for their own financial well-being whilst simultaneously reducing the amount of money that is spent on welfare benefits. There are a myriad of changes. The changes that have a marked impact upon housing are listed below:

- Changes to Local Housing Allowances - this is an attempt to drive down housing costs primarily by basing housing allowances on the lowest 30th percentile rent levels in an area, restricting allowances by room size - i.e. abolishing the allowance paid for a 5 bedroom property and limiting all payments up to a maximum of 4 bedrooms.
- Reducing the allowances paid to single people aged under 35 who now only qualify for the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) allowance based on occupying a room in a house where all other facilities are shared with other residents. In Dudley this has impacted on an estimated 236 people. This change, based on April 2012 rates in Dudley, means that those who were in receipt of Local Housing Allowance for a one bedroom flat could claim £86.54 per week and they are now only entitled to £60 per week at the SAR. It is anticipated that this may lead to increased demand for smaller bedsit/shared accommodation within the Borough that is currently in short supply as it is estimated that there are currently around 274 privately owned bedsit properties available.
- There are further suggestions that housing benefits entitlements may be removed from most under 25 year olds.
- Changes to Housing Benefit - Non-dependent charges have been increased and there are plans to reduce benefits for working-age households who claim housing benefit and under-occupy social housing from 2013. It is estimated that around 4,700 working age households are under-occupying their social rented home by more than one bedroom. Within these around 3,700 live in council properties. This may lead some people to seek smaller accommodation. This smaller accommodation may not be available in all areas of the Borough and, therefore, many households may face a significant drain on their household income to cover rent payments.
- Introduction of the Universal Credit - this means that in future a household will receive a single payment, from which they will have to pay their housing costs to their landlord (as opposed to now when most housing benefit is deducted at source and paid directly to landlords) and budget to pay for all other living costs such as food and utilities from this single monthly allowance. Within the Universal Credit there will be maximum benefit caps. This means that from April 2013 no single person claimant will be paid more than £350 per week and couples or lone parents £500 per week. This maximum amount includes both daily living expenses and housing costs. This may impact on households with high housing costs who may struggle to pay their rents and those who do not have good budgeting skills may fall into debt.
- Changes to the Social Fund - plans to devolve funds that would traditionally have been used for Crisis Loans or Community Care Grants for people experiencing financial hardship are to be devolved to local authorities who can set their own criteria and make their own decisions about how the funds are invested. The Government also plans to cap the funds at the 2006 levels of expenditure. Such funds were often used to buy essential household items such as beds or cookers for people in need.

Improving energy efficiency, reducing CO2 emissions and tackling fuel poverty

The UK's current housing stock contributes around 27% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. The Government's policy is to reduce the country's emissions by 50% by 2027 and by 80% by 2050 based upon 1990 levels. Research by DECC in 2010 identified that 20.9% of households (26, 615 households) in the Borough were fuel poor. This means that they spend more than 10% of their income on heating their home. A key national driver is to improve the thermal efficiency of existing homes to reduce CO2 emissions and to reduce household expenditure on fuel costs. The Government's Green Deal is based on a 'Pay As You Save' model and allows consumers to have energy-saving measures installed in their property at no up front cost. Costs are then recovered through instalments on their utility bills. The green deal will be supported by an energy company obligation (ECO) which obligates suppliers to contribute to meeting carbon reduction targets.

Local policy drivers

Dudley's Community Strategy 'My Borough - Our Borough'

outlines six themes for the borough. These are jobs and prosperity, health and well-being, heritage, culture and leisure, environment and housing, individual and community learning and community safety.

The Black Country Core Strategy

was adopted in 2011 and forms the basis of the Black Country Authorities' Local Development Frameworks. It aims to deliver 16,127 new homes in Dudley between 2006 - 2026. Based on current projections we are unlikely to achieve this ambitious target. It will be reviewed in 2015 but it remains our driver to increase the housing options and choices that are available.

We will be working with investors to deliver most of the new housing within the following 'Regeneration Corridors (RC)' that are identified as:

- RC10 Pensnett to Kingswinford
- RC11a Dudley Town Centre to Brierley Hill Strategic Centre
- RC11b Brierley Hill to Stourbridge
- RC13 Rowley Regis to Jewellery Line (includes Stourbridge and Lye)
- RC14 Coombswood to Halesowen
- RC16 Coseley to Tipton.

Dudley's Local Investment Plan

outlines the Borough's plans for delivering new housing which is primarily focused upon delivering a mixed housing offer and promoting opportunities for delivering new housing within the regeneration corridors that span the Borough. The plan also covers plans to deliver specialist housing such as Extra Care housing to meet the needs of older people.

Dudley Borough Economic Development Strategy 2011/12 - 2013/14

has three strategic aims based on:

- Place: to improve and champion the economic infrastructure and assets of the Dudley borough and secure additional resources to improve its competitiveness.
- Business and Enterprise: to encourage the development of a dynamic and diverse business base and job opportunities through support to new and existing businesses in the borough.
- People and Communities: to optimise the opportunities for local people, including the most vulnerable people and those from deprived areas, to develop and improve their skills and obtain jobs.

Cross cutting themes

We believe that there are a number of cross cutting themes that run throughout this strategy. Some significantly impact on both our ability to improve our stock condition and housing supply whilst others generate benefits for residents such as improved health or greater economic prosperity. Within the text of the strategy we will identify key partnerships and benefits.

Strategic aim	Cross cutting themes				
Raise the standard of the existing housing stock across all tenures	Partnership Working	Economic Development	Sustainability and effective neighbourhood management	Health and Well-being	Welfare Reform impacts
Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs					
Use the provision of new housing as a tool for economic growth, jobs and improve skills					
Provide a range of housing and support to vulnerable people					
Reduce adverse environmental impacts and improve the health of local residents by improving energy efficiency, reducing fuel poverty and building new homes that are healthy to live in					

Partnership Working

The contributions of private housing developers, in new housing provision and the regeneration of areas, as well as providing valuable employment opportunities is immense. Our main partners for the delivery of new affordable housing are Registered Providers (housing associations) and the Homes and Communities Agency. Both commit substantial resources into the delivery of new housing. The Dudley Housing Partnership that consists of housing providers and local authority directorates will continue to be a key partnership to help to deliver our strategic ambitions.

Economic Development

The Economic Strategy identifies a number of key projects/activities within the Borough. These include sites that may include the provision of new housing. These include:

- Dudley Area Development Framework – 8 redevelopment opportunity sites within Dudley Town Centre with potential for 680 residential units, 100 new businesses and improvements to public and civic spaces and transport infrastructure.
- Dudley Townscape Heritage Initiative – to create 109 jobs, support 21 businesses, improve 41 properties and enhance vacant retail or office floor space.
- Dudley College expansion - creation of a central learning quarter and potentially making available up to 7 acres of development land for new homes.
- Spatial priorities identified within the Local Investment Plan – North Priory, Dudley Town Centre, former Dudley Guest Hospital site and Brierley Hill. These areas could deliver over 4,000 new homes.

Alongside the focused economic regeneration activities, the role of private developers is key to new housing delivery. They are driven by market forces and will build the types of properties that they think will sell easily and generate maximum returns on their investment. We have invited developers to discuss the findings of our housing needs survey with us to try to work more collaboratively in the future in order to balance the local housing market.

Sustainability and effective neighbourhood management

We must also be mindful that housing must be affordable so that people can occupy it as a long term sustainable housing option. In order to achieve this, new home and existing homes must be as energy efficient as possible and have low running costs to reduce the risk of households falling into financial difficulties or fuel poverty. Housing assets must also be well managed to ensure that they are well maintained and that communities thrive and continue to want to occupy these homes in the longer term.

As part of the sustainability work, new homes must be of a high build quality, energy efficient, preferably low or zero carbon rated. The Black Country Core Strategy (Policy ENV3) specifies meeting Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 or above (or the national requirement at the time of submitting the proposal for planning permission).

Design standards also form a key element of sustainability and, where possible, we will encourage homes to be built to 'lifetime homes' standard so that the homes can be easily adapted at a later date if people develop mobility/other health problems. Homes built to this standard usually have level access, turning circles within rooms that can accommodate a wheelchair user and walls and ceilings that are strong enough to be fitted with hoists, stair lifts or platform lifts, as required.

Whilst we have considerable control over the sizes and quality standards of new affordable housing that is delivered via Homes and Communities Agency funding streams we have less control over the affordable housing that is built by private developers as part of their planning obligations (Section 106 – Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Many of the homes delivered through this planning obligation are small and lack storage/circulation space. As part of our strategic approach we will evaluate the merits of requesting a smaller number of higher quality homes (better quality finish and larger space standards) as opposed to larger numbers of homes with a poorer quality finish and smaller space standards that impact on their ability to be a sustainable longer term housing option for the households that occupy them.

The Borough is a place where levels of reported crime is decreasing and a range of community safety, community cohesion and tension monitoring activities take place through partners of the Safe and Sound partnership. Following a review of services, a new Anti-Social Behaviour Team will be created. Their task is to improve customer outcomes and satisfaction with the response that is currently provided to reports of Anti-Social Behaviour. In addition to this there will be a specific resource allocated to pro-actively identify and tackle housing fraud, for example unauthorised sub-letting.

For social landlords estate based management is a long established practice with many organisations carrying out regular estate walkabouts with tenants, residents, councillors and other agencies. Dudley also works collectively with other social landlords who have housing stock in the Borough to co-ordinate activities and share good practice through an operational housing managers group.

Dudley MBC has a rolling programme of Home Checks. These visits to tenants are an opportunity for residents to raise issues and for Housing Managers to assess the condition of the property and ascertain if any breach of tenancy has occurred or if the tenant needs to be sign posted to other services for support.

In addition to this a great deal of work is done by various teams to improve the liveability of estates from street cleansing and grounds maintenance to adult and community learning courses and activities that are delivered in local venues to improve the employability prospects and basic skills of local residents. Dudley has a great deal of community assets and activists, who may, in the future, take up the opportunities that have been provided through the Localism Act 2011, for example by becoming owners or managers of community based assets and land.

Health & Well-Being /Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

Dudley's JSNA highlights that whilst residents are living for longer there are differences in mortality rates across the Borough. In addition to this there is a need to continue to focus on the two main causes of premature mortality which are circulatory diseases and cancer. The reduction in smoking is seen as a key factor that will impact on this. Emerging health risk factors that need to be tackled are the rise in obesity and the increase in alcohol related diseases.

With the driver to reduce public expenditure it is becoming more vital to make the best use of resources. A key local driver is to align health, social care and support services to make sure that early intervention and prevention services work as well as they can to prevent further long term expenditure on residential care or hospital admissions that could be avoided. The Department of Health's Health Profile for Dudley 2011 highlights a number of health issues that are present in Dudley residents that are 'significantly worse than the England average.' These are:

- Obesity - Adults and Children
- Diabetes
- Hospital stays for alcohol related harm
- Winter deaths
- Male life expectancy

These factors will also play a role in the type of housing provision that local residents will need in the longer term, particularly obesity and diabetes as they can impact on mobility and longer term health.

The impact of overcrowding/poor housing conditions can manifest itself in a number of ways. National research indicates that living in overcrowded conditions can have particular impacts on children including increased risk of:

- Child mortality
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
- Respiratory conditions
- Meningitis or TB

Living in overcrowded conditions can also have particular impacts on adults including increased risk of:

- Mortality, particularly women
- Respiratory conditions
- TB

Whilst there is less definitive evidence in relation to overcrowding and mental health it is likely that living in cramped and/or unsuitable conditions may place stresses on the household unit and increase the likelihood of mental ill-health. It is imperative, therefore, that we seize opportunities to provide the correct balance of housing stock as opportunities arise.

Welfare Reform Impacts

As we have previously mentioned in the national policy drivers section, we cannot underestimate the impact that welfare reform will have on the size and type of housing that people can afford to occupy. Some tenants and residents will be affected by benefit caps and the implementation of Universal Credit.

For landlords this will also bring less certainty about their rental income and the fear of increased rent arrears. Such uncertainty is likely to impact on new housing provision as investors may be more cautious in their investments.

The impacts of welfare reform pose a number of challenges in terms of the strategic direction that we will take, particularly in relation to the provision of affordable housing, as people often want to live in properties that have more bedrooms than they actually need so that they have additional storage space or room for overnight visitors or carers to use. Financially they may no longer be able to afford to this option. A further dilemma for us is that our overall housing stock is dominated by three bedroom properties and we have less smaller sized properties to offer people who may need to downsize.

Responding to demographic changes

In summary

Our strategic challenges are:

- We have a growing population with slightly more people moving into the Borough than moving out of it. However, up to 20% of existing households and 10% of newly forming households are considering moving out in the next five years. This is mainly due to employment/access to work reasons.
- Our older population is growing as people live for longer. A quarter of our current households contain at least one member aged 60+. As people get older they become less mobile and often need to adapt their homes to continue living there or consider moving to more specialist housing such as sheltered or Extra Care housing.
- Many older people are living in homes that are now too large for them. Some may be tempted to move to a smaller more suitable home and free up a family sized home if the right type of housing was made available.
- A lot of our housing stock is under-occupied either by home owners or tenants. Working age households in receipt of housing benefit who live in social housing will be penalised for under-occupying their homes from April 2013.

What we have been doing about this:

- We have worked with housing association partners to provide three new Extra Care Housing schemes for older people that provide accommodation with on-site care and support along with a range of facilities that can be accessed by the local community.
- We have continued to provide a range of sheltered housing schemes for older people, some are Council owned and some are owned by housing associations.
- We have created the accredited Dudley Home Improvement Service to assist older and more vulnerable people to improve their living conditions.
- Since 2008/9 we have invested over £1.1 million on almost 8,000 installations of Preventative Assistive Technology to help people to live independently for longer and avoid unnecessary hospital or residential care admission.
- Over the last five years we have invested over £5 million per year to adapt properties to enable people to remain living independently in their homes.
- We have provided help to tenants wishing to downsize to smaller properties by changing our allocation policy and offering practical help.

What we are going to do about it:

- We will work to ensure that most of our new housing is built within regeneration corridors. This will enable us to revitalise areas by providing housing and link to employment opportunities.
- We will align our health, social care and support services to make the best use of scarce resources and focus on early intervention and prevention services. This also includes a focus on re-ablement services that help primarily older people to maintain their independence.
- We will build more new Extra Care Housing schemes that will house at least 200 older people that will provide high quality accommodation with on site care and support services.
- We will help as many older or disabled people to remain in their existing homes by making best use of our Disabled Facilities Grant and fund adaptations where this is the best housing option for them.
- We will work with property developers and housing associations to build new housing, especially some smaller one or two bedroom housing to encourage some existing households to downsize and free up some larger housing that can be occupied by families.
- We will be working to develop further incentives that will encourage some existing households who are under-occupying their home to move to smaller accommodation.

Balancing our housing market

In summary

Our strategic challenges are:

- Almost 75% of Dudley's entire housing stock is detached or semi-detached houses or bungalows. Most of these contain 3 bedrooms. In order to diversify the stock we need to encourage the building of smaller 1 or 2 bedroom properties. There is a small but acute need to build some larger properties for social rent (4 bedroom+).
- Many homes are currently under-occupied. This is especially true of older people who are living alone or as a couple in family sized homes. By building smaller housing that appeals to older people we could free up a range of existing homes for families to live in.
- The affordability of housing is a key issue in the Borough. It is important to provide a mixed range of housing types in order to make home ownership an attractive option for those who can meet their own housing needs and a good range of rental options for those who can't.
- In order to meet current unmet demand for social housing we need to build over 600 new units per year for the next 15 years. Our recent delivery level averages out at 186 new units per year.
- We have a small privately rented sector that needs to be encouraged to grow to meet some currently unmet housing needs.
- Through work on the Black Country Core Strategy we have set an ambitious target to deliver 16,127 new homes in Dudley between 2006 - 2026 but based on our current delivery levels and the economic climate we are likely to fall well short of this target.

What we have been doing about this:

- Between 2006 and 2011 there were a total of 2,656 net housing completions in the Borough of which 1098 were affordable housing completions.
- We have delivered an average of 186 new affordable homes per year in recent years.
- Between 2008 -11 over £110 million has been invested in Dudley through the provision of new affordable housing. This includes £41 million from the Homes and Communities Agency. This figure does not include the additional investment from private developers who have built homes for sale on the open market.
- We have tried to address the lack of 4 bedroom homes for social rent by building 10 new four bedroom council homes. We have also worked with Bromford Housing to provide 11 new 4 bedroom properties at Friars Gate.
- We have worked with partners to build three new Extra Care Housing schemes to increase housing options for older people.
- We have built 72 new council homes that are available to rent.
- The council has a Strategic Housing and Land Assembly Strategy and regular meetings take place between housing, regeneration and planning officers to facilitate joint working initiatives.
- We have made use of Council owned land to encourage the development of new housing such as our Extra Care housing schemes
- As at April 2011 planning permission has been granted for a further 2,778 dwellings that had not yet been built or completed.

What we are going to do about it:

- We will help to deliver 16,127 new homes in Dudley between 2006 - 2026.
- We will be working with Planning, private housing developers and regeneration partners to help meet the target of delivering 795 new dwellings for 2013/14.
- We are working with partners to deliver at least 111 new affordable homes in 2012/13, 74 in 2013/14 and 530 in 2014/15. This will be done by working in partnership with local housing associations and the Homes and Communities Agency.
- We will be specifically requesting that new housing developments include the range of property types needed to balance local housing markets. For affordable housing this will mean specifically focusing on providing more smaller dwellings and more 4 or 4+ bedroom dwellings.
- We will make use of council owned land for housing developments.
- We will work to raise the housing and management standards within the existing privately rented sector and encourage more landlords to enter the market

Affordability, access and making the best use of the existing housing stock

In summary

Our strategic challenges are:

Affordability and access

- Our housing needs data indicates strongly that there is an affordability problem arising from the relationship between local incomes and the realistic supply of the cheapest housing stock in Dudley.
- Around half of the existing working age households and 75% of concealed households (those living with other households because they cannot afford to access housing in their own right) have an income of below £25,900 per annum (national average income).
- The majority of the housing demand from concealed households is from grown up children still living with their parents as they cannot afford to access housing of their own.
- The average house price in the Borough in quarter 3 2011 was £146,280. Entry price levels (lowest quartile property prices) vary across the Borough. The cheapest entry level cost of a one bedroom flat was £59,950 in Central Dudley and Brierley Hill. This rose to £84,950 for a one bedroom flat in Stourbridge.
- To access the owner-occupied market in the Borough requires an average income of £22,989. This means that 72% of concealed households are unable to afford to buy in the local owner occupied market.
- To access the private rented sector (lowest quartile rents) rent levels range from £350 for a 1 bed flat to £675 for a 3 bed terraced house. This means that 70% of concealed households are unable to afford to rent privately.

Making best use of stock

- There are significant levels of under-occupation, particularly amongst older home owners who are mortgage free. This is a lifestyle choice for them and our challenge will be to provide a more attractive housing offer that will encourage them to downsize and free up some of the existing family sized homes.
- From April 2013 working age households in receipt of housing benefit who under-occupy their social rented homes will receive reduced payments towards meeting their housing costs. This may mean that they will need to move to a smaller home out of economic necessity or they will have to cope with increased housing costs and less disposable income. There are around 4,000 social housing tenants who are at risk of having a shortfall in meeting their housing costs if they are of working age and in receipt of welfare benefits.

What we have been doing about this:

Affordability and access

- We have introduced a Choice Based Lettings scheme as the method for allocating our social housing. We have changed from a points based allocations system to a bandings system that is more understandable for customers to use and people choose which properties that they would like to be considered for. This has increased the number of people who have moved into, and within, the existing social housing stock.

Making best use of stock

- We have developed the accredited Dudley Home Improvement Service to help home owners to maintain their home and make best use of it.
- We delivered a successful downsizing support scheme which released 125 three bed houses and 21 four bed houses.
- We have developed a Black Country Tenancy Strategy with other neighbouring local authorities. This provides strategic guidance to social housing providers regarding the use of tenancy types, their duration and how the impact of the newly introduced Affordable Rents will be monitored.
- We are working with other providers of social housing to see if we can collectively make better use of our housing stock (West Midlands Best Use of Stock WMBUS).

What we are going to do about it:

Affordability and access

- We will look at options for bridging the affordability gap for households - this may include using council owned land for housing schemes, encouraging self-build schemes, working with local lenders, encouraging more use of First Buy schemes or other forms of shared ownership. We will also consider if it is feasible to provide council backed mortgages, returning as many empty properties to use as we can, and exploring any other options.

Making best use of stock

- We will work collectively with other housing providers to maximise the resources that we have. This includes specific initiatives that will be overseen by the West Midlands Best Use of Stock -WMBUS group.
- We will review the allocations policy that dictates what types and size of properties an applicant on our housing register is eligible to bid for.
- We may also look at initiatives such as encouraging people to take on a lodger to reduce the potential welfare reform impacts of under-occupying their current homes.
- We will monitor the impact of the Black Country Tenancy Strategy

Improving the quality of the existing housing stock

Raising the quality and sustainability of our homes and neighbourhoods

In summary

Our key challenges are:

- We have over 3,000 empty homes in the Borough that could be occupied by households and contribute significantly to meeting local housing need.
- The majority of the housing within the Borough is privately owned and how the owners maintain and use their housing assets has a major bearing on the housing conditions within the Borough. Most owners occupy the property that they own themselves.
- Over 90% of respondents to our recent housing survey indicated that their accommodation was adequate for their needs. The highest rates of adequacy were cited by home owners whilst households who were renting privately cited the lowest rates of adequacy.
- The types of inadequacy that were cited varied on an area basis so targeted area based work is required to tackle these issues. We particularly need to concentrate on improving the housing conditions of those living in pre-1919 and 1945-64 stock in Central Dudley and Halesowen sub areas.
- Dudley delivered the Decent Homes Standard for its Council owned stock by the Government's December 2010 deadline, but there is an ongoing decent homes liability that will need to be maintained. At April 2012 the level of non-decency was 1%. Considerable stock investment is required to ensure that Dudley maintains the decent homes standard for its own housing stock and Registered Providers who own stock within the Borough face similar challenges.
- To increase the energy efficiency of the Borough's existing housing stock to help to reduce fuel poverty, excess winter mortality and the detrimental impact of thermally inefficient housing and low indoor temperatures on health.
- The existing system of direct support for domestic energy efficiency advice and measures is changing with the introduction of the Green Deal supported by an energy company obligation (ECO). A key challenge will be to determine our approach to ensure that we maximise ECO spend in the Borough and to encourage households to continue to increase the energy efficiency of their home.

What we have been doing about this

- We have worked with owners of empty homes to return an average of 80 of these empty properties to use each year.
- We have worked with partners to secure funding from the Homes and Communities Agency to return 18 empty homes to use through a lease and repair scheme.
- We have developed an accredited Dudley Home Improvement Service that offers individual advice and support to homeowners to assist them to improve and make the best use of their homes.
- The Council invests around £35 million per year to improve and maintain its housing stock. The Registered Providers (housing associations) also invest in their stock on an annual basis. This forms a significant investment within the Borough. Our investment strategy and procurement processes encourage the use of locally sourced materials and the use of local labour. These activities contribute significantly to the local economy.
- We were part of the successful Kickstart Loan Partnership that helped nearly 400 households living in their own homes - to invest £4,879,346 through equity loans - to undertake repairs and or improvements to bring them up to the Decent Homes Standard between 2005/06 & 2011/12.
- We have been running a property accreditation scheme and a landlord accreditation scheme since 2008 and have an inspection programme for inspecting licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- We met our target to make all council owned homes decent (Decent Homes programme) by 2010 by investing in repairs and improvements
- We have provided a free phone energy advice line for homeowners and private tenants offering information and advice on energy efficiency.
- We have signposted / referred residents to a number of Government run energy efficiency schemes including Warm Front, Health through Warmth.
- Last year we assisted 238 vulnerable and fuel poor households through the Warm Homes Healthy People programme.
- We have delivered over £10 million of energy efficiency improvements through the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) in some of the most deprived areas of the Borough.
- We have been working with the other Black Country authorities to assess the potential for joint implementation of the Green Deal across the Black Country.

What we are going to do about it:

- We will continue to focus activities to encourage home owners and landlords to make the best use of their housing stock including support to return empty properties to use. This work will be driven by a new Empty Homes Strategy.
- We will continue to offer advice and assistance to home owners to improve their living conditions through the Home Improvement Service.
- We will consider various ways of improving management standards and housing conditions in the private rented sector by looking to offer more advice and assistance to landlords and tenants.
- Dudley has a 5 year rolling capital programme of investment to its Council owned stock, worth around £35 million each year. This is supported by a £24 million repairs budget to deal with responsive repairs and cyclical maintenance.
- We will develop a strategy that will help us to tackle fuel poverty.
- We will look to maximise ECO funding in the Borough both across the private and council owned stock to improve energy efficiency.
- We will continue to work with the other Black Country authorities and Energy Savings Trust / Verco to complete the options appraisal and business case and to finalise our approach to Green Deal.
- We will seek opportunities that will improve the energy efficiency levels of the properties within the Borough whilst looking to capitalise on these activities to create new jobs, industries and improved economic prospects within the Borough.

Meeting specific housing needs

In summary

Our strategic challenges are:

- The number of people who self-report that they have a disability in our Borough is higher than the national average.
- Two thirds of the disabled residents are aged over 60.
- We have a small but growing number of mainly older people who are living with dementia.
- Young people are finding it particularly difficult to access housing in their own right, this is mainly due to affordability issues but the lack of supply of smaller housing types impacts too.
- We need to build more homes that are suitable for people with learning disabilities as we know that there are at least 240 people living with carers aged 60+ and 226 people living in residential care. There are also a small number of disabled people who need specially built homes, particularly young people, so that they can live independently in their communities when they are ready to.
- Black and Minority Ethnic households report higher levels of inadequate housing and/or overcrowding.
- Whilst we have a good record in preventing homelessness in the Borough we need to continue to provide as many resources as we can to help people through tough economic times.

What we have been doing about this

- Three Extra Care housing schemes are now operational in the Borough and we have funding to build more.
- We have built a new domestic abuse refuge to provide state of the art accommodation for up to 14 households and remodelled our existing refuge accommodation to enable us to take larger households and male service users.
- We have transferred and expanded our accommodation and support service for single homeless women. This has enabled us to use better accommodation and provide a more focused service for women.
- We have provided 18 new apartments specifically for people with learning disabilities to enable them to live independently in their community as opposed to being in residential care.
- We have worked with a local housing association to provide a further 7 bungalows for people with learning disabilities.
- We have set out a new strategic direction for our housing related support services so that most services provide floating support which is linked to the person, wherever they choose to live, rather than support being tied to specific accommodation/properties. This is a more person centred approach.
- We have developed a pre-tenancy training resource for young people aimed at reducing the likelihood of tenancy failure for young people who take on their first tenancy.

What we are going to do about it:

- We will build a range of specialist housing including Extra Care housing schemes to cater for the needs of some elderly people and look to see how the needs of those with dementia and people with learning disabilities can be met.
- Demand for the current supply of older person's social housing is strong but we will look to improve or remodel stock depending on the local needs. This may include change of use, for example, harder to let older person's bedsit accommodation may be more suitable for use for young people.
- We will continue to invest money in adapting existing homes for people with disabilities.
- We will be looking to expand housing options for young people.
- We will expand the range of specialist housing for people with disabilities and learning disabilities.
- We want to improve housing conditions and reduce overcrowding by working with our Black and Minority Ethnic communities.
- We will continue to support vulnerable people to live independently within their communities by providing housing related support services.
- We will work with Midland Heart to redevelop the Gibbs Road House single homeless hostel.
- We will look at the feasibility of creating a one stop shop advice and assessment hub for vulnerable young people aged 16+.
- We will continue to focus on preventing homelessness from occurring.

Partnerships and delivery

Dudley has a range of strong partnerships that will take forward this work. The partnerships include strategic enablers, funding bodies and housing providers (house builders and landlords). Partners include:

Dudley Housing Partnership - partnership of local authority officers, regeneration agencies and local housing associations who have stock in the Borough.

Homelessness Strategy Review Group - multi-agency partnership that works together to prevent homelessness in the Borough. The group includes the council, housing associations and voluntary sector organisations.

We will also seek future opportunities to align work streams and report progress to the emerging Health and Well-Being Board.

Monitoring the effectiveness of this strategy

The implementation and delivery of activities in relation to this strategy will be overseen by the Head of Housing Strategy and progress updates will be reported to the Dudley Housing Partnership. The action plan will be reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis.

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2013-16

These are the actions that we will be taking in order to achieve our strategic aims.

Our strategic aims are to:

- Raise the standard of the existing housing stock in the Borough across all tenures
- Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs
- Use the provision of new housing as a tool to increase local economic growth, jobs and improve skills
- Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community.
- Reduce adverse environmental impacts and improve the health of local residents by improving energy efficiency reducing fuel poverty and building new homes that are healthy to live in

Responding to demographic changes

What we are going to do?	Which strategic aim will this help us to achieve?	How we will know if we have achieved it?	When will it be done by?	Resource options	Who will make sure this is done?
Deliver most of our new housing within economic regeneration corridors to revitalise areas and link to employment opportunities	Use the provision of new housing as a tool to increase local economic growth, jobs and improve skills	We will report annually on the number of new homes delivered within the regeneration corridors	Report progress annually	Private investment, Homes and Communities Agency, Dudley MBC	Head of planning Policy - Dudley MBC
Build 200 new Extra Care housing units	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community	Number of units delivered	By 2015	Registered Providers, Homes and Communities Agency, Dudley MBC	Head of Housing Strategy and Development - Dudley MBC

Responding to demographic changes (continued)

What we are going to do?	Which strategic aim will this help us to achieve?	How we will know if we have achieved it?	When will it be done by?	Resource options	Who will make sure this is done?
We will help people to remain in their existing homes by investing in adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants, if this is the best option for them	Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community	We will report annually on expenditure and number of people that have been assisted	Report progress annually	Dudley MBC, Disabled Facilities Grant, Housing Revenue Account	Head of Investment and Head of Private Sector Housing - Dudley MBC
We will work with property developers and housing associations to build some smaller and larger housing types	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs	We will report on the types and size of properties that are built to assess if we are achieving our aim of balancing the housing stock	Report progress annually	Dudley MBC	Head of planning Policy - Dudley MBC
We will encourage some existing households who are under-occupying to move to smaller accommodation	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs	We already have a service in operation but we will look to develop further assistance and report annually on the number of households that have been assisted	Report progress annually	Dudley MBC, Registered Providers	Head of Housing Options - Dudley MBC

Balancing Our Housing Market

What we are going to do?	Which strategic aim will this help us to achieve?	How we will know if we have achieved it?	When will it be done by?	Resource options	Who will make sure this is done?
Help to deliver 16,127 new homes in Dudley	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs Use the provision of new housing as a tool to increase local economic growth, jobs and improve skills	We will report annually on the number of new homes	Between 2006-2026 Report progress annually	Private investment, Homes and Communities Agency, Dudley MBC	Head of planning Policy - Dudley MBC
To work in partnership with local housing associations and the HCA to deliver new affordable homes	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs Use the provision of new housing as a tool to increase local economic growth, jobs and improve skills	We will deliver at least 715 new affordable homes	By March 2015 Report progress annually	Registered Providers, Homes and Communities Agency, Dudley MBC	Head of Housing Strategy and Development - Dudley MBC
We will work to raise the housing and management standards within the privately rented sector and encourage more landlords to enter the market	Raise the standard of existing housing stock in the Borough across all tenures and neighbourhoods Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs	The number of accredited landlords operating in Dudley will increase LetsHelpYou Dudley website for accessing private rented properties will be developed We will explore the development of a social lettings type agency to work in conjunction with the LetsHelpYou Dudley website. We will offer advice and assistance to new potential landlords and link into specialised support for tenants with complex needs to help encourage and sustain new tenancies	Report progress annually Report progress annually Report progress annually	Private landlords, Registered Providers, West Midlands Homeless Prevention Fund, Dudley MBC	Head of Private Sector Housing - Dudley MBC

Affordability, access and making the best use of existing housing stock

What we are going to do?	Which strategic aim will this help us to achieve?	How we will know if we have achieved it?	When will it be done by?	Resource options	Who will make sure this is done?
We will look at options for bridging the housing affordability gap for households	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs	We will look at a range of ways to make housing more affordable and seek to increase the number of affordable homes that become available. We will measure the success by reporting on the number of additional affordable homes that have been provided that exceed our yearly target.	Report progress annually	No additional resources have been identified at this stage but we will look for funding opportunities	Head of Housing Strategy and Development - Dudley MBC
We will review the Council's housing allocations policy	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs	Review completed	2015	Dudley MBC	Head of Housing Options - Dudley MBC
We will monitor the impact of the Black Country Tenancy Strategy	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs	Review completed	June 2014	To be confirmed by Black Country Local Authorities	To be confirmed by Black Country Local Authorities
We will continue to monitor and respond to the impacts of welfare benefit reform and how it impacts on people's housing choices	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs	Review completed	2013 onwards	Dudley MBC, local CAB services, other sources	Welfare Benefits Reform Group - Dudley MBC

Improving the quality of the existing housing stock

What we are going to do?	Which strategic aim will this help us to achieve?	How we will know if we have achieved it?	When will it be done by?	Resource options	Who will make sure this is done?
We will encourage home owners and landlords to return their empty properties to use	Raise the standard of the existing housing stock in the Borough across all tenures and neighbourhoods	Empty Homes Strategy produced and implemented Number of empty homes across the Borough will be reduced	2013 Report progress annually	Private Landlords, Dudley MBC	Head of Private Sector Housing - Dudley MBC
We will continue to offer advice and assistance to homeowners to improve their living conditions	Raise the standard of the existing housing stock in the Borough across all tenures and neighbourhoods Reduce adverse environmental impacts and improve the health of local residents by improving energy efficiency, reducing fuel poverty and building new homes that are healthy to live in	This will be measured in a number of ways such as number of enquiries received and schemes completed with or without funding We will monitor our performance against the delivery of the Warm Homes Healthy People Initiative supported and developed through successful funding bids from DoH, DECC and Foundations. This will include the number of measures installed and provision of advice, assistance and education We will continue to monitor the activity and referrals received through the Snug as a Bug Energy Advice line	Report progress annually	Home owners, Warm Homes Healthy People Funding, DECC funding, Foundations funding, Dudley MBC	Head of Private Sector Housing - Dudley MBC

Improving the quality of the existing housing stock (continued)

What we are going to do?	Which strategic aim will this help us to achieve?	How we will know if we have achieved it?	When will it be done by?	Resource options	Who will make sure this is done?
We will invest money to maintain and improve the Council's housing stock	Raise the standard of the existing housing stock in the Borough across all tenures and neighbourhoods Reduce adverse environmental impacts and improve the health of local residents by improving energy efficiency, reducing fuel poverty and building new homes that are healthy to live in	£35 million per year invested in housing improvements £24 million per year invested in housing routine repairs	Report progress annually	Dudley MBC	Head of Investment - Dudley MBC
We will develop a fuel poverty strategy	Reduce adverse environmental impacts and improve the health of local residents by improving energy efficiency, reducing fuel poverty and building new homes that are healthy to live in	Fuel poverty strategy produced and implemented	2013/14	Dudley MBC	Head of Investment and Head of Housing Strategy, Head of Private Sector Housing, Head of Investment - Dudley MBC
We will look at ways of improving energy efficiency, use of the Green Deal and opportunities to create new jobs/industries related to these activities	Reduce adverse environmental impacts and improve the health of local residents by improving energy efficiency, reducing fuel poverty and building new homes that are healthy to live in	We will work with Energy Service Providers and secure/bid for Energy Company Obligations (ECO) funding	Timescale to be determined	Energy Company Obligations, Dudley MBC, other local authorities and Registered Providers	Head of Housing Strategy, Head of Private Sector Housing, Head of Investment - Dudley MBC

Meeting specific housing needs

What we are going to do?	Which strategic aim will this help us to achieve?	How we will know if we have achieved it?	When will it be done by?	Resource options	Who will make sure this is done?
We will build more specialist housing	housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community	200 units of Extra Care Housing delivered Additional specialist housing delivered	2015 Report progress annually	Registered Providers, Homes and Communities Agency, Dudley MBC Additional resources will be required that haven't yet been identified	Head of Housing Strategy and Development - Dudley MBC
We will work with Registered Providers to see if any existing housing schemes need to be remodelled	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community	Review completed and implemented	2016	Registered Providers, Homes and Communities Agency, Dudley MBC	Head of Housing Strategy and Development - Dudley MBC Head of Community Care Services - Dudley MBC
We will be looking to expand housing options for young people	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community	Look at the feasibility of creating a one stop shop advice and assessment hub of vulnerable young people Increase in accommodation that is available	2013 2016	Registered Providers, Homes and Communities Agency, Dudley MBC	Head of Housing Strategy and Development, Head of Housing Options - Dudley MBC
We will be looking to expand housing options for people with disabilities and learning disabilities	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community	We will increase the number of people with learning disabilities who are living in settled accommodation	2016	Registered Providers, Homes and Communities Agency, Dudley MBC	Head of Housing Strategy and Development, Head of Learning Disabilities - Dudley MBC

Meeting specific housing needs (continued)

What we are going to do?	Which strategic aim will this help us to achieve?	How we will know if we have achieved it?	When will it be done by?	Resource options	Who will make sure this is done?
We will help to improve the housing conditions of Black and Minority Ethnic communities	Raise the standard of the existing housing stock in the Borough across all tenures and neighbourhoods	Improved results for 'adequacy of properties' in the next Housing Needs Survey	2016	Home owners, private landlords, Dudley MBC	Head of Private Sector Housing - Dudley MBC
We will continue to support vulnerable people to live independently within their communities	Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community	Provide housing related support to over 3,000 vulnerable people per year	Annually	Dudley MBC	Assistant Director - Housing Strategy and Private Sector Housing - Dudley MBC
We will work with Midland Heart to redevelop Gibbs Road single homeless hostel	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community	New hostel in operation	2015	Midland Heart	Midland Heart, Head of Housing Strategy and Development – Dudley MBC
We will continue to prevent homelessness from occurring, where possible and maintain low levels of rough sleeping	Provide a mixed housing offer that will meet a range of housing needs Provide a range of housing and support that will enable vulnerable people to live independently within their community	The number of homelessness preventions increase annually The number of households accepted as homelessness remains the same or reduces The number of rough sleepers remains below 5	Report annually	Dudley MBC, Government funding Homelessness review Group (multi-agency)	Assistant Director - Housing Strategy and Private Sector Housing, Head of Housing Options - Dudley MBC