

Housing Strategy Summary 2007-2011

Information on priorities for housing

Homes for the future



Why do we have a Housing strategy?

A decent home is the foundation for a good quality of life. Only with the right supply of good quality housing, that will meet our future needs, can Southampton deliver its vision of economic success, and be a place where people will want to live.

Decent homes in decent neighbourhoods give people a springboard from which they can reach their full potential. A Decent home provides a starting point for family life, for good health, and for sustainable communities.

This Housing Strategy details the way in which the Council and its partners will provide decent homes which are fit for the needs of Southampton's exciting future.

What do we want Southampton to look like in 2020

As the major city in central southern England, Southampton will be recognised as the region's economic, social and cultural driver, building on its role as an international seaport, centre for cutting edge research and leading retail centre. It will be a centre of learning, have a varied and exciting cultural landscape and be known for its innovative and creative businesses, leisure opportunities and fine parks and open spaces. Adapting into a sustainable waterfront city Southampton will have a world-wide profile, attracting visitors, new citizens and businesses by being the UK's premier cruise liner home port, a major European container port and the local city for one of the UK's top airports. Southampton will be known as a city that is good to grow up in and good to grow old in where people are proud to live and economic success is harnessed to social justice.

Drivers for Change

What's Happening Nationally?

This Housing Strategy reflects the national housing agenda which is set out in **Sustainable Communities: Homes for All**, launched in 2005. It sets out a series of actions to offer everyone the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford, providing more homes where they are needed whilst enhancing the environment, and revitalising communities suffering from deprivation.

The ability to purchase a suitable home is denied to many across the country because of high house prices. As a result of this the Government announced the intention to increase the rate of housing delivery in England from 160,000 homes per year to 200,000 per year by 2016, and include an increase in the amount of affordable housing. This has led to changes in the planning system, including a new Planning Policy Statement 3 to improve the affordability and supply of housing for all communities and to deliver a more responsive approach to land supply at the local level.

The government have a national commitment to bring all social housing up to a decent standard by 2010. In addition the Housing Act 2004 has introduced reforms to the ways properties are bought and sold including Home Information Packs, and new interventions such as HMO licensing to improve the quality of housing in the private sector.

The government recognises the importance of decent housing to wider agendas. In particular housing policies must work alongside other agendas in health and social care, community safety, tackling disadvantage and deprivation and environmental sustainability to create cohesive, sustainable and balanced communities.



Our Nearest Neighbours

The South East Regional Housing Strategy 2006 sets out the region's housing needs and identifies what the priorities are. It is developed by the key housing and planning organisations which make up the Regional Housing and Planning Board. The strategy provides a framework for the Government's allocation of housing funding for 2006–2009, including decisions made by the Housing Corporation's National Affordable Housing Programme. The main housing priorities for the region are:

- To build more affordable homes
- To bring decent housing within the reach of people on lower incomes
- To improve the quality of new housing and of existing stock

The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) promotes economic growth in the Sub Region. Urban South Hampshire is an area that is recognised as having the potential for carefully managed growth. The authorities in the PUSH area have agreed a vision which embraces the concept of managed growth based on a sustainable approach. This vision implemented, will provide the necessary infrastructure for the regeneration of the economy, with more investment, jobs, people to enrich communities, and services to meet their demands, whilst maintaining and enhancing the quality environment that the area enjoys.

PUSH will be a key driver to shape housing policy over the next twenty years and the synchronising of housing development with economic growth. PUSH is developing a Sub Regional Housing Strategy which will be key to ensuring that housing allocations and major development are considered as a sub regional resource across local authority boundaries.

Southampton Issues

The population of Southampton has grown steadily since the late 1980's and the latest official population estimates from the Office for National Statistics suggest that in 2001, the population of Southampton was 221,000. However, it is likely that this figure substantially underestimates the City's current population. Projections which incorporate the latest figures on house building in the city, the scale of migration into the city from Eastern Europe suggest. It is likely that the current population of the city is approximately 236,000.

In addition the PUSH agenda for growth will lead to more economically active households coming to the city. Southampton's allocation of the PUSH/South East Plan housing supply over the next twenty years is 16,300 homes (815 a year). To support this economic led growth it is crucial that the city promotes a balanced housing market, and sustainable communities, specifically providing for a range of homes; in terms of size, type and tenure.

The provision of sufficient family housing is a major concern for the city. There is a particular need to take action to safeguard the supply of family housing for the future, to balance the high proportion of flats which have been built in recent years and the number of properties that have been converted as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

The need for family housing is reinforced by information collected concerning the housing needs of Southampton's ethnic minority communities. Additionally the housing needs and community impact of EU enlargement will need to be carefully monitored. The Council is also committed to develop a transit site for gypsies and travellers.



Southampton has been successful in providing new affordable housing, with approximately 400 new homes a year being delivered for rent or shared ownership. However demand continues to outstrip supply, particularly as the availability of social housing has been reduced through the Right to Buy. The Council accepts nearly 500 families a year as homeless, and there are now 11,000 local households on the Council's Housing register. The city's housing need and market survey concluded that there is an overall shortfall of 1,391 affordable homes a year.

The city needs to make best use of its existing homes, ensuring that they are of a good quality and that decent home standards are met. The Council is on track to ensure that all council housing meets the decent homes standard by 2010, and the planned investment programme is detailed in **Decent Homes, Decent Neighbourhoods**. There are however major investment needs in the private sector, to improve the standard of repair and quality of the housing, particularly in the private rented sector which is twice the size of the national average, and also in properties owned by low income households. Recent progress in establishing an HMO licensing system and in offering loans to private owners to meet repair and improvement costs, needs to be built upon in order to improve the quality of private sector housing in the city. We need to continue to take an effective enforcement role in relation to poor quality housing. There is also a need to reduce the number of empty properties in the city particularly in the private sector.

Southampton leads the way among local authorities in demonstrating its commitment to tackle climate change. In developing new homes and improving existing ones there is scope to improve their energy efficiency and future sustainability. Energy efficiency measures, such as increased insulation and the use of renewable energy sources, have the added advantage of helping to tackle poor health and reduce fuel poverty.

In looking at the demographic predictions for Southampton's residents, the 60+ population will increase by over 40% by 2026. Southampton's Housing Strategy for Older People provides a framework for developing housing solutions for older people. This includes making the best use of sheltered accommodation, and the development of extra care housing. The framework includes ensuring that appropriate adaptations, and care/support packages are put in place to enable people to live independently in their own homes.

The need for a range of housing with support options has been identified through the **Supporting People** Strategy. The supporting people programme provides support to a wide range of people including; young people, people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems and people fleeing domestic violence.

Closing the Gap, the Southampton Partnerships' strategy for neighbourhood renewal makes the link between housing and tackling deprivation in priority neighbourhoods. The actions identified include ensuring a programme of mixed tenure, so that social housing is not concentrated in particular neighbourhoods. Housing also has a key role in facilitating community involvement, helping to tackle crime, and the fear of crime, and in improving the local street scene, to help create decent neighbourhoods for all Southampton residents. As one of the largest business sectors in the city, housing, property and construction services all contribute greatly to the overall economic success of Southampton. By offering local training and employment opportunities the sector can ensure that local people benefit from this success.



Priorities 2007 – 11

1. Developing Balanced and Sustainable Communities

We will:

- increase the overall supply of homes in the city to meet the PUSH / South East Plan targets, ensuring a sustainable mix of size, type and tenure within each neighbourhood,
- provide 2,000 new affordable homes,
- increase the number of new family homes and protect existing family housing
- target bringing empty homes back into use,
- expand the use of Choice Based lettings.

2. Improving the Condition of the Housing Stock

We will:

- implement the investment plan Decent Homes in Decent Neighbourhoods to bring the Council's stock up to a decent standard by 2010,
- improve the quality of homes in the private sector through a range of actions including developing a citywide licensing scheme for HMO's, expanding the loan service for home improvements and taking enforcement action where necessary,
- work with Housing Association partners to ensure all social housing meets the decent home standard.

3. Improving Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

We will:

- encourage private developers to ensure all new housing meets the highest ratings in the Code for Sustainable Homes,

- support Housing Association developments to meet the highest ratings in the Code for Sustainable Homes,

- Improve energy efficiency in existing homes through better insulation, improved energy awareness, recycling and the use renewable sources, and

- Implement the actions in the Fuel Poverty Strategy.

4. Preventing Homelessness

We will:

- work with partners to revise the city's Homelessness Strategy and implement an Action Plan to further reduce homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation,
- ensure that Housing Benefit is paid accurately and promptly to prevent rent arrears for building up.

5. Meeting the Housing and Support Needs of Vulnerable People

We will:

- implement the actions in the Housing Strategy for Older People, including the provision of extra care housing, improvements to retirement housing, and ensuring that appropriate adaptations, care and support arrangements can be made to enable people to live independently in their own homes,
- implement the Supporting People Strategy,
- develop and deliver a transit site for gypsies and travellers,
- implement the recommendations from the BME Housing Study.



6. Promoting Neighbourhood Renewal

We will:

- link investment in housing to wider economic, social and environmental benefits,
- provide an excellent housing management service on our estates,
- work with partners to reduce crime, improve the neighbourhood street scene, and offer local training and employment opportunities,
- Implement Closing the Gap to tackle disadvantage in the city's Priority Neighbourhoods, especially by encouraging tenure diversification,
- encourage residents to get involved in improving the quality of life in local communities.

How are we going to pay for this?

Most investment in housing is from the private sector in Southampton with billions being spent annually on housing developments, the buying and selling of properties and home improvements.

Over the period of this strategy the council will invest in the order of £10.4m (GF capital) in the private sector, £12.6m on Housing Association developments, and in the order of £98.4m (HRA capital) on Council housing. Housing Corporation grant for investment in new affordable housing is estimated to be at least £40m, and this will be matched by direct investment from Housing Association partners.

Revenue support will be in the order of £2.5m a year for strategic housing services and £52m to run Council housing in the city. Available Supporting People funds are estimated at £10.6m a year, and Housing Benefit payments are estimated at approximately £62.6m a year. Further support is available through a range of funding streams such as New Deal for Communities grant funding and DCLG Homelessness Grant.

How do we keep track on what is being achieved?

The Housing Strategy has been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, and overseen by the Southampton Housing Partnership which is the representative body for the housing sector in the city.

The Housing Strategy will be monitored through the Southampton Housing Partnership and the council's own monitoring processes. Progress towards delivering objectives, actions and targets will be reported annually in a Progress Report.

How to contact us

Southampton City Council is committed to ensuring that all of its customers have equal access to key plans and services. This strategy is therefore available, on request, in **larger print**, Braille  , on audio tape and on disk . It is also available in other languages from Southampton City Information on Tel: 023 8083 3333.

If you would like the full version of the Housing Strategy please go to our website address:
http://www.southampton.gov.uk/housing/housing_policies/default.asp#0

For further information please contact

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This information is available, on request, in **larger** print, Braille  on audio tape  and on disk . It is also available in other languages or we can read a brief summary and explain it to you. Please contact telephone 023 8083 3333 for help.

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