

HOUSING STRATEGY AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The preparation of the *Housing Strategy* and *Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan* is a requirement of the Government Office of the South East (GOSE).
- # 1.2 The purpose of the *Housing Strategy* is to describe and analyse local housing needs and to lay down proposals for action. A summary of the *Strategy* is attached as Appendix 1. The full version of the document can be made available on request.
- # 1.3 The *Business Plan* describes and details the housing landlord service both now and in the future and indicates how it is expected that the service will develop. It also indicates how the Council will achieve the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) following the recent Options Appraisal. A summary of the *Business Plan* is attached as Appendix 2. The full version of the document can be made available on request.
- 1.4 The Housing Strategy fulfils two roles. It provides the framework for the bid for Capital Allocation and also a framework for action so that a multi-agency approach can be taken to meeting local housing needs.
- 1.5 As a result of the recent Options Appraisal that was carried out to assess how this Council could meet the financial requirements of the Decent Homes Standard both documents have links to that process and outcome (i.e. the Council retaining the stock.)
- 1.6 GOSE have confirmed that both the Housing Strategy and the Business Plan have met the required standard (“Fit for Purpose”) and have signed off the Stock Options Appraisal. They will continue to work with the Council to review progress on meeting the Decent Homes Standard.

2. GOVERNMENT APPROACH AND GUIDANCE

- 2.1 Government Guidance is contained in a range of documents, most specifically Sustainable Communities: Homes for All and the *South East Regional Housing Strategy*.
- 2.2 Guidance focuses on promoting decent housing (both new housing and the quality of the existing stock), increasing affordable housing, minimising homelessness and developing sustainable communities.
- 2.3 Councils are urged to take a strategic leadership role and develop partnerships with key stakeholders.

3 THE SUBMISSIONS

- 3.1 The submissions are consistent with Government guidance, while reflecting local needs.
- 3.2 The *Housing Strategy* has its top strategic priorities, the provision of additional affordable housing and minimising homelessness..
- 3.3 The Business Plan focuses on service provision and the development of the service to meet government targets and importantly the needs and aspirations of tenants and leaseholders. The Plan includes a number of appendices to support the text including an Appendix that contains an action plan that is designed to meet the targets for improvements in the service.
- 3.4 A crucial area in this year's Business Plan is the action necessary to meet the Government's target of all Council owned homes meeting the Decent Homes Target by 2010. This has an increasing importance this year following the recent Stock Options Process since the Plan needs to identify how this Council intends to achieve the DHS and retain the stock in its ownership. The Business Plan therefore identifies the work necessary to achieve this target and the finance necessary.
- 3.5 Supplementary information, including statistics setting out Council performance, will be provided for GOSE in support of the submission.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A wide range of consultation exercises have been carried out. These have included:
 - The Housing Strategy Board
 - Tenants Consultative Group
 - Community consultation
 - Registered Social Landlords
 - Supported Housing Forum/Sub Groups

5. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS

- 5.1 Providing new affordable homes and ensuring that Council homes are of high quality are our top priorities and both the Housing Strategy and the HRA Business Plan set out how we intend to make the best use of our resources to achieve the best possible results in these areas.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Government is in the process of reviewing the allocation of support for the financing of housing capital schemes. In 2004/05 this support was based upon a notional capital expenditure need of £1.675m shared between the Non HRA housing element of £484,000, the HRA element of supported capital expenditure of £951,000 and Disabled Facilities Grant allocation of £240,000.
- 6.2 Identifying, as part of the Housing Strategy and Business Plan, the significant investment needs to meet Decent Homes and to address the housing shortage in the District, is an essential element of arguing for and ensuring that the Government continues to provide financial support to this Council in the future at a level which does not significantly fluctuate from the amounts quoted. Further negative changes to subsidy calculations could otherwise have a detrimental effect on achieving DHS and uncertainty could, in general, effect good management and forward planning.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The submissions focus on a number of environmental issues, including energy efficiency, the re-use of empty properties and brownfield sites and improving housing and open spaces. The *Strategy* advocates the provision of additional housing to meet local needs. When specific proposals are brought forward, consideration will be given to their environmental implications. The *Business Plan* indicates where in the repair and maintenance of the Council's stock opportunities are taken to improve energy efficiency.

8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Good quality housing can enhance social cohesion and help reduce crime and disorder. The submission addresses these issues and in particular the matters of anti-social behaviour and racial harassment.

9 OTHER OPTIONS

- 9.1 It is a Government requirement that a *Housing Strategy and Business Plan* is submitted. Failure to do so would adversely affect the Council's performance rating and Single Capital Pot allocation. The Council's ability to meet local housing needs and the Decent Homes Standard for Council stock would be prejudiced if no *Strategy* or *Business Plan* was in place.

10 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 The submissions are consistent with Government guidance, while reflecting local needs.
- 10.2 The attached documents are in draft format and Members are asked to consider them and any changes they may wish to see.

11. RECOMMENDATION

- 11.1 It is recommended that the Council's *Housing Strategy* and *HRA Business Plan* are adopted on the basis that any changes that may be necessary as a result of this meeting or subsequent comments that may be received from GOSE are delegated to officers to make in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

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Background Papers:

ODPM, HIP Guidance

New Forest District Council

**Housing Strategy and Action
Plan**

2004– 2007

2005/6 Summary

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This document can also be made available in large print.

Extracts are available on request in a variety of formats including Braille, audio tape and in languages other than English.

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Introduction

by Cllr Peter Greenfield

Portfolio Holder for Housing

At New Forest District Council we are committed to ensuring that our residents have decent housing and are happy with where they live. Despite the District's outward appearance of affluence there are serious housing issues that we need to tackle. Increasing affordability problems are making it harder and harder for households to afford to buy or rent their own home, and the need to maintain and improve the quality of our own stock of around 5200 homes is an ever present challenge.

Providing new affordable homes and ensuring Council homes are of a high quality are our top priorities.

We also recognise the important role the Council has to play in wider housing and other local issues. We will work with the community and partners to deliver improvements in areas such as home energy efficiency, community safety and the condition of private sector housing. I am confident that the New Forest Housing Strategy Board will drive forward an agenda to tackle the diverse challenges we face.

In the coming years it will be particularly important that we develop our role in the Local Strategic Partnership, and our relationships with neighbouring authorities and the New Forest National Park Authority. I am optimistic that we are well placed to take a lead in tackling the wide range of housing needs in the area. The Housing Strategy lays the foundations for that process.

Cllr Peter Greenfield
Portfolio Holder for Housing

Overview

Housing issues are at the top of the Council's agenda. The *Housing Strategy* is the overarching document that sets out key strategic aims in relation to housing. The Council also produces a range of other related strategic documents such as the *Targets and Action Plan*, *Homelessness Strategy* and *Rural Housing Development Strategy*. A full list of strategies can be found in Annex 2 . Their role is to provide direction and co-ordinate ways to meet local housing needs. The *Strategy* sits within a national and regional policy context, most particularly the *Regional Housing Strategy* that has amongst its key themes an increase in housing supply, including affordable housing, tackling homelessness and ensuring the sustainability of the housing stock

The *Strategy* has been developed in partnership with a wide range of statutory and non-statutory bodies and the community. Its central aim is:

To create sustainable communities, meet a diverse range of local housing needs, provide housing choice and increase affordable housing supply by promoting joint action by stakeholders.

Headline Issues

1. Households facing increased difficulties in affording their own home
2. Homelessness and increasing numbers of households in housing need in both urban and rural parts of the District.
3. Need to meet decent homes standards and tenant desires for improved properties
4. Increasing household numbers, particularly small households, coupled with a size imbalance in the dwelling stock..
5. The need to provide suitable homes and support for vulnerable households.
6. The need to fill empty properties.
7. The need to ensure that private sector properties are in good condition.
8. The need to ensure that in considering housing issues account is also taken of wider matters such as energy efficiency, community safety, and health.
9. Limited land supply for new house building.
10. Limited financial resources.

The top priorities are to increase the supply of affordable housing and to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standards for Council homes. The greatest need is for additional affordable general needs dwellings for rent at Registered Social Landlord target rent levels for those on Homesearch Register. The need for the affordable housing to meet intermediate affordable housing needs (including the needs of key workers and for low cost home ownership (LCHO)), and also to provide supported housing, will also be given a high priority.

Key Priorities

1. To maintain an up to date knowledge of the housing market and local housing needs and develop strategies to meet identified needs.
2. To promote sustainable communities and foster social inclusion.
3. To increase the supply of affordable housing.
4. To minimise homelessness.
5. To maximise and make the best use of resources to provide additional affordable homes.
6. To provide and help maintain decent and suitable homes.
7. To engage with New Forest Communities.

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A full list of contacts can be found in Annex 3.

A summary of the strategy will be available at www.nfdc.gov.uk.

New Forest District and its Housing Needs

Overview of the District

New Forest District covers an area of 290 square miles in south west Hampshire, and is dominated by the New Forest itself an area of great natural beauty and of ecological importance, both nationally and internationally. On 1 March 2005 the New Forest was designated as a National Park and a National Park Authority will shortly be established. Just under three-quarters of the District's area is within the National Park.

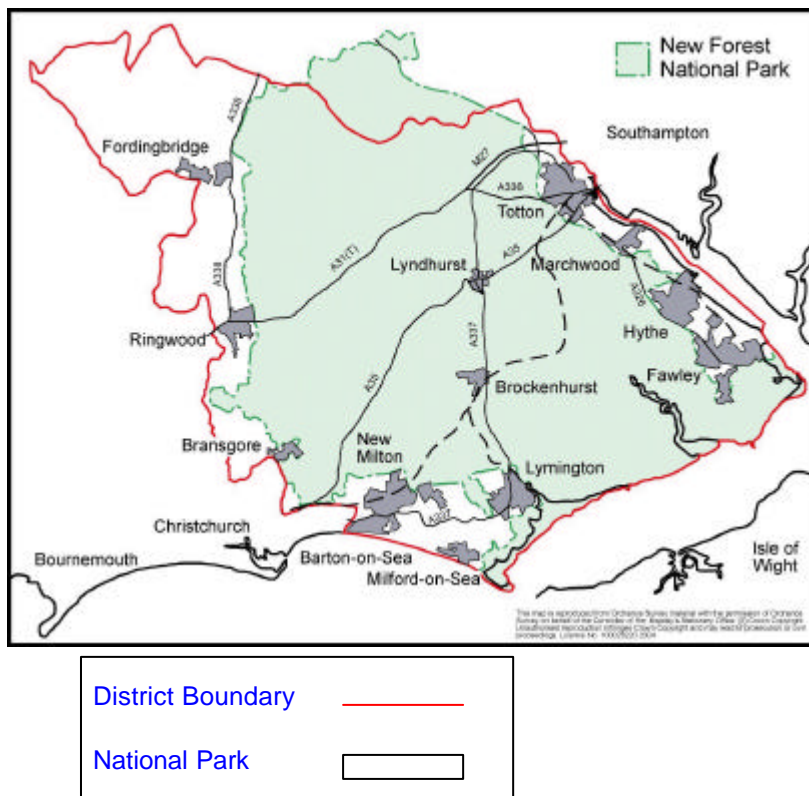
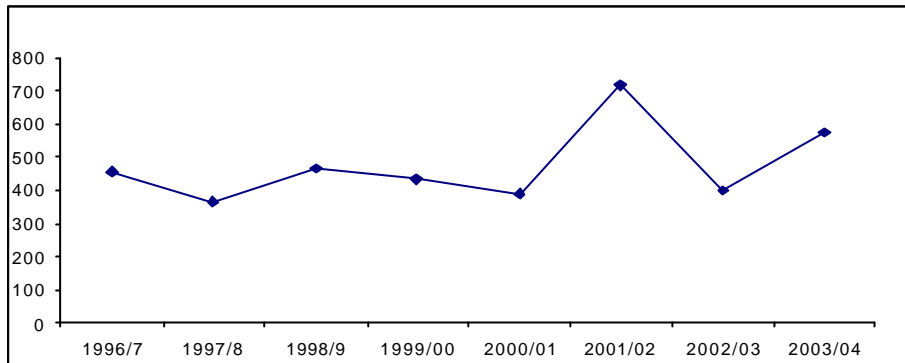


Figure 1. New Forest District and National Park Boundary

The District has a population of approximately 170,000 people (72,000 households) (2001 Census) and is predominantly rural. Household numbers are forecast to increase by 2,288 in the period 2001 – 2011. The majority of people live in the towns that surround the rural area.

There are seven principle towns in the District, all located around the periphery of the New Forest. Fawley, Hythe and Totton lie to the east of the District alongside Southampton Water; Lymington and New Milton are on the south coast; and Fordingbridge and Ringwood lie in the Avon Valley to the west. The principle towns act as service and employment centres for their rural hinterland. In addition there are many smaller settlements and villages both in and around the New Forest. The expanding conurbation of Southampton lies to the east and Christchurch, Bournemouth and Poole are to the west.

Figure 2. Annual House Building Rates (all tenures)



The building of large numbers of new houses for sale on the open market has attracted more people to live in the area and has done little to help address the housing needs of local people unable to compete effectively for housing on the open market. The majority of the dwellings built in the past twenty years were for owner occupation. The result is that privately owned homes have increased from 68% in 1991 to just over 80% in 2001, whilst the number of Council homes has fallen from 15% to 7%, substantially below the national average.

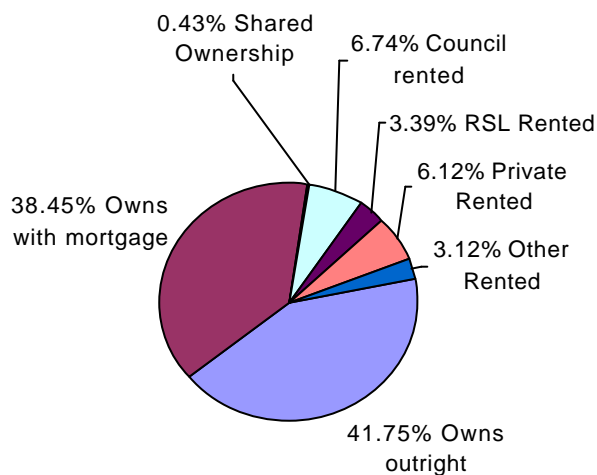


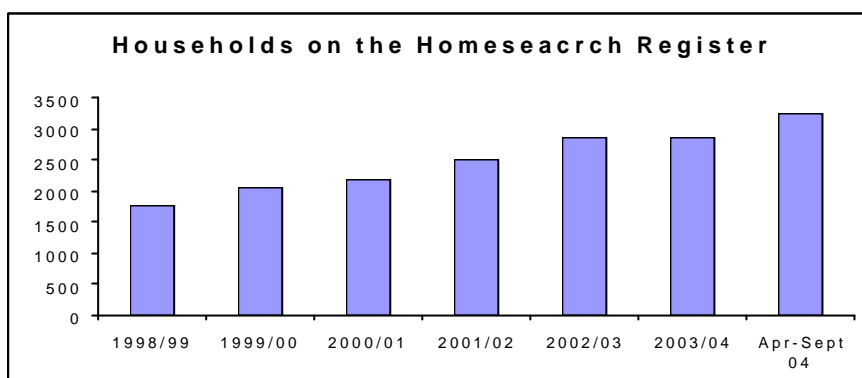
Figure 3. Dwellings by Tenure

In total over 4100 properties have been sold through *Right to Buy*. There are now about 61,000 owner occupied homes compared with just under 5200 Council homes and 2,800 RSL properties.. There has been a shift in the dwelling balance, with larger houses now making up a greater proportion of the dwelling stock than they did 10 years ago. This is of concern given that an increase in smaller households is forecast by 2011.

Housing Needs and Preferences

Housing need in the District continues to rise steadily, primarily due to the demographic trend towards smaller households and the increasing affordability gap between incomes and property prices.

Figure 4. Households on the Homesearch Register



The Council operates a joint housing register (the *Homesearch Register*) with its partner

RSLs. This provides a co-ordinated approach to the letting of affordable housing using a choice based lettings system.

Detailed studies of local housing needs and the local housing market are regularly undertaken. These assessments have revealed a major problem in terms of affordability particularly for new or concealed households. Owner occupation is well beyond the means of a significant proportion of the community and the modestly sized private rented sector makes little contribution to meeting the needs of these households.

Key Findings of the Housing Needs and Market Assessment 2001 (adjusted by 2003 update)

- ? There is a need for 986 new affordable dwellings a year between 2003-8.
- ? Average house prices are £210,000 (terraced house average £154,300).
- ? Average household incomes are £24,100, 77% of concealed households earn no more than £20,000
- ? In the most affordable parts of the District an income of £27,000 is needed to purchase a flat
- ? 94% of concealed households cannot afford to purchase.
- ? Around 50% of health, social service and education staff, and 70% of local authority staff are unable to purchase a home.
- ? In rural areas 100 new affordable dwellings a year are needed.
- ? There is a need for 240 new affordable dwellings for households with support needs.
- ? The private rented stock is expensive and limited in supply.
- ? A household income of £20,000 is needed to rent unassisted along the Waterside
- ? Although population is forecast to fall by 1150, an increase in household numbers of 7000 is forecast between 2001 and 2021.
- ? The over 80 year old population is forecast to increase by 15% between 2001 and 2021, representing 2000 people.

- ? Though most future housing demand will be for smaller dwellings there is an imbalance in the dwelling stock with only 21% of dwellings being terraces or flats (46% nationally).
- ? Comparing affordable housing need and supply, the shortfall is mainly for 1 and 2 bed homes, although there is also a significant shortfall of larger properties.
- ? Comparing demand and supply in the private sector, there are, in most parts of the District, surpluses of larger properties and shortfalls of smaller properties.

One of the most serious immediate housing problems facing the New Forest is the high level of homelessness acceptances over recent years. The Council's *Homelessness Strategy* has helped to reduce the number of homelessness acceptances and its private sector leasing scheme continues to provide alternatives to bed and breakfast

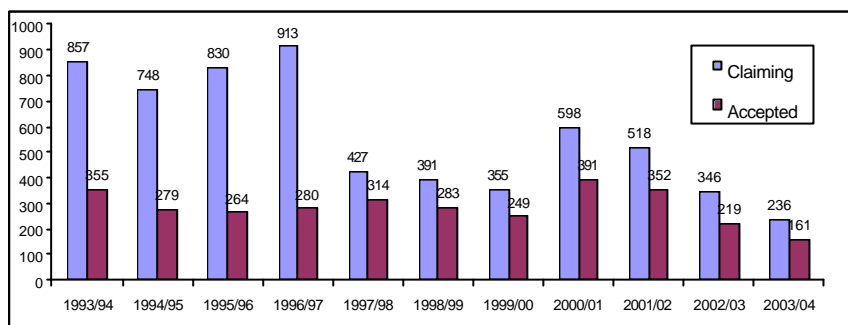


Figure 5. Homelessness Applications and Acceptances

Homelessness is particular problem for young people, the Housing Needs and Market Assessment reported that in a random sample of 202 households 14% had experienced homelessness and half of these had slept rough. A multi-agency Young Persons Panel has been established to provide assistance to this client group.

The District's black and minority ethnic (BME) population is 1.1% of its population, the largest community being the gypsy community. Access to services is closely monitored and action is taken to tackle incidents of racism, e.g. removal of racist graffiti within 24 hours, suspension of perpetrators of racism from the Homeseach Register.

Rural Housing Needs

Many of the District's rural villages, including those within the National Park, have insufficient affordable housing. The larger villages, in particular, provide important services for the surrounding rural area and it is important they remain viable. Parish council's are especially concerned about younger people leaving villages. An assessment of affordable housing needs and supply has been carried out to ensure activity to improve provision is well targeted.

Key Worker Housing Needs

A study carried out in 2004 revealed particular recruitment and retention problems linked to housing costs for certain employers, for instance the health sector.

Key worker definition:

An individual primarily employed in the New Forest District who is in housing need, who is unable to afford to meet their needs without some support and whose employment is of particular importance to the New Forest community.

Supported Housing Needs

The *Housing Needs and Market Assessment* identified over 12,500 households with special needs requirements and the need for around 240 supported dwellings to be provided by 2004. There are a high number of households with a mobility impaired member (around 6000 households) and around 500 households which included a member with a learning disability, and almost 1000 a member with a mental health problem. An increasing number of older people is a particular issue facing the area. There is an increasing need to provide non-accommodation based support as well as provide accommodation for the frail elderly. However, there is no significant need for additional sheltered accommodation in the area.

Conclusions

The local situation of high demand/low supply, homelessness, household growth and the increasing need for affordable housing reflects the general regional situation as set out in the *Regional Housing Strategy*. However, in the District, the need to limit land supply due to environmental constraints creates particular problems. Between 2001 and 2011 the average annual house building rate in the District is forecast to be 336 dwellings. This compares with a need for 986 affordable dwellings a year to meet the District's housing needs.

Analysis of the range of data sources indicate that the **greatest need is for new affordable housing for rent at RSL target rent levels**. Low cost home ownership (e.g. shared ownership and equity dwellings) can also make a valuable contribution towards meeting needs.

In the market sector there is a need to address the imbalance in the housing stock that has seen an increase in the numbers of larger dwellings at a time when the demographic trend is towards smaller households.

Stock Condition

Council Homes

The Council owns just under 5,200 homes and these are used to support the need for affordable accommodation in the District. As part of the on-going Options Appraisal a stock condition survey has recently been carried out to assess the maintenance needs for the next 30 years as well as to identify the work necessary to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. As part of the survey dwellings were assessed in accordance with the Government's Decent Homes guidance.

The Council's stock has been well maintained over the past 10 years with an effective planned maintenance programme that has ensured that all properties are wind and watertight. All have had external major elements replaced, when required, in accordance with the 10 year planned maintenance programme. There are no significant backlogs of work and this situation has been confirmed by the recently completed stock condition survey. Many components are, however, approaching the end of their economic life and will require replacement within the short to medium term.

The survey has identified that only 14% of dwellings fail to achieve the Decent Homes standard currently (well below the Government's estimate of the national average (40-50%) although there is the potential for that to rise to 73% by 2010/11 if no work is carried out in the intervening period.

Registered Social Landlord Homes

Most of the 2,800, mainly low rise, RSL homes in the District were built since 1990 and as such are in good condition, built as they are to Housing Corporation and Building Regulation standards. There are no reported difficulties envisaged for meeting the Decent Homes Standard.

Private Sector Housing

Private housing accounts for over 80% of all dwellings in the District. Maintaining the private sector housing stock in a satisfactory condition reduces the pressure on social housing resources and contributes to wider economic and social benefits. Regular stock condition surveys are undertaken to ensure there is up to date knowledge of conditions.

The poorest households in the District are as likely to suffer from bad housing conditions as any part of the country. The elderly are the group most likely to need help with looking after their homes.

The 1998 *Stock Condition Survey* estimated that in the District, approximately:

- 1417 (2%) private homes are unfit for human habitation, another 4% are in need of substantial repairs and the cost of remedying the unfitness is about £15m.
- 2203 private homes need improvements or repairs.
- 866 private homes occupied by disabled or elderly occupants are not suitable for their needs.

A new survey is due to be completed in early 2005.

With more people wishing to stay and being cared for in their own home it is necessary to address the need for adaptations and the provision of accessible housing. The *Housing Needs and Market Assessment* suggests that 17.5% (12,560) of households have a special need and 11% of household believe that their home is not adequate for the special need.

Around 1750 dwellings in the District are classed as second homes and 490 as empty homes.

Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency is measured in terms of the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP), the Government's recommended system for the home energy rating. A property built to current Building Regulations would be in the region of 90 – 110.

SAP Ratings

- Private Sector 50 (ave)
- Council 66 (ave)
- RSL 54-74

Tenant Participation & Key Linkages

We recognise that housing problems are often only one of the difficulties confronting individuals and communities. It is therefore important that links are created to other policy areas.


The council has a dedicated Tenant Participation Team that works closely with the Tenants' Consultative Group to meet tenants' needs.

Key housing related community safety issues facing the district include the care of properties by tenants, youth congregation and control of young people in their homes, noise nuisance, protection of vulnerable people and the allocation of properties to households associated with anti-social behaviour or criminal activity. Through the *Community Safety Strategy* and initiatives such as *Divided We Fall* problems of crime and anti-social behaviour are being tackled.

The first partnership New Forest Health Strategy *Improving Life in the New Forest* was adopted in 2003 and has identified several areas that will be tackled including health inequalities, mental health and older persons' requirements. An older persons strategy is being produced and there are detailed discussions underway aimed at improving extra care provision for older persons.

Many tenant and applicants to the Homeseach Register are on low incomes, and are disproportionately likely to be in receipt of benefits compared to other residents. There is a need to support the development of adult skills and ensure that children are provided with educational support. The Council is working in partnership with a range of organisations to provide improved training opportunities, for instance through estate based UK On-Line centres and Sure Start.

Meeting the District's Housing Needs

This section sets out the housing priorities and the principle ways they will be tackled. Targets marked with a  can also be found in the *Changing Lives: The Community Strategy*.

1. To maintain an up to date knowledge of the housing market and local housing needs and develop strategies to meet identified needs.

What will happen if we do not do this?

- We will not be able to fulfil our role as strategic housing authority
- We will have inadequate information on which to make decisions
- We will lack direction
- We will prejudice our chances of securing resources and be unable to work effectively with RSLs to provide new housing.
- We will not be able to effectively influence strategies and activities of the Regional Housing Board and other stakeholders
- We will be unable to defend planning policies and support negotiations with developers

Short Term Actions	Target Date
Undertake a Housing Needs and Market Assessment	October 2006
Undertake interim Housing Needs and Market Assessment	October 2008
Produce a Sub-Regional Housing Needs Assessment as part of the South Hampshire Strategy	March 2005
Undertake research into the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers	March 2007
Produce a new Housing Strategy	March 2007
Annually review and update the Housing Strategy Action Plan	March 2005 & 2006
Develop a Key – Worker Housing Strategy 	July 2005
Produce Housing Strategy Monitoring Report	April 2005 & 2006
Develop an Older Persons' Strategy 	March 2006
Develop a Rural Housing Development Strategy 	May 2005


We will also:

- Produce a supplementary planning document to guide affordable housing development.

2. To promote sustainable communities and foster social inclusion.

What will happen if we do not do this?

- Individuals and communities will not have access to mainstream services and opportunities and be unable to participate in decision making, potentially leading to continued cycles of decline and deprivation.
- We will fail to recognise diversity in the range of communities and meet their varied needs.
- We will compromise the future by making decisions without having regard to their longer term impact.
- Vulnerable people will not have suitable accommodation and support.
- Community safety, health and economic development will be prejudiced

Short Term Actions	Target Date
Access to affordable dwellings	
Investigate the need for a Mortgage Rescue Scheme & if need identified establish one	March 2006
Develop and implement improvements to the Homesearch choice based lettings policy to improve choice and customer service.	January 2005
Community Safety	
Publish housing policies on anti-social behaviour	December 2004
Supported Housing and Health	
Undertake a comprehensive assessment of local need of client groups identified in the Supporting People Strategic Steer 	March 2006
Undertake analysis of the barriers to the accessing of Supported Housing services and set in place mechanisms for overcoming them	March 2006
Develop a specialist service for people who are deaf signers with addition physical or learning disabilities.	March 2006
Increase the level of housing related support to frail elderly people through the creation of extra care services within existing sheltered housing stock.	March 2006
Increase the level of housing related support to people who misuse substances	December 2006
Increase support to people suffering from mental health problems through the development of an accommodation based service.	March 2007


We will also:

- Use the New Forest Sustainable Development Framework as a means of ensuring new development is of a high standard.
- Support vulnerable households to use the Homesearch Scheme.
- Work closely with health and social care agencies to identify and meet housing needs.
- Continue to support the development of the Care and Repair Agency
- Monitor access to services for black and minority ethnic communities

3. To increase the supply of affordable housing.

What will happen if we do not do this?

- More households on low and modest incomes will find themselves unable to afford suitable accommodation.
- The Homesearch Register will increase in size.
- Homelessness will increase.
- Staff recruitment and retention in key local services will suffer.
- The sustainability of New Forest communities will be threatened with, for instance, increased social exclusion, polarisation of communities and health problems.

Short Term Actions	Target Date
Investigate and develop a model for providing flexible tenure housing to meet identified needs with/without grant	June 2005
Start 100 new affordable dwellings per year	March 2005 and 2006
Start 10 new affordable rural dwellings per year	March 2005 and 2006
Provide 20 affordable shared ownership/equity dwellings per year	March 2005 and 2006
Publish Supplementary Planning Document on the provision of new affordable housing through the planning system.	October 2005
Monitor effectiveness of local plan policy implementation by analysing percentage of times affordable housing targets achieved each year	May 2005 and 2006
Increase the supply of land for affordable housing by creating an asset management partnership agreement between major local public sector landowners. 	June 2005
Develop and maintain a Registered Social Landlord portfolio of 275 properties for use as temporary accommodation	December 2004
Progress Local Plan Affordable Housing Policies to adoption	December 2005

Develop a model for the use of revenue raised from the levying of increased Council Tax on 2nd Homes to provide additional affordable homes	March 2005
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We will also:

- Provide a range of affordable housing types, giving priority to social rented housing
- Use planning powers to secure new affordable housing
- Promote mixed communities.
- Publish a rural housing development strategy

4. To minimise homelessness.

What will happen if we do not do this?

- Increased use of bed and breakfast for homeless households.
- Increased levels of rough sleeping.
- Increased health problems for people who are homeless.
- Greater inequalities in outcomes for people with housing problems.
- Higher levels of family evictions.
- Lack of support for people who are suffering housing problems, causing repeat homelessness.
- We will incur additional revenue expenditure on temporary accommodation, including bed and breakfast.

Short Term Actions	Target Date
Have no families with children in B&B unless they are there because of an emergency	Ongoing
Ensure that a decision is issued on at least 95% of all homelessness applications within 33 working days.	March 2005 and 2006
Develop a single data collection form to be used by all agencies that deal with homeless people to enable a better understanding of the level of homelessness and repeat homelessness. 	April 2005


We will also:

- Work with registered social landlords to provide temporary properties for homeless households.
- Operate a rent deposit and guarantee scheme to assist homeless households
- Operate a multi-agency panel to address young persons' needs

5. To maximise and make the best use of resources to provide additional affordable homes.

What will happen if we do not do this?

- The number of new homes provided each year will reduce and the level of unmet housing need and homelessness will increase.

Short Term Actions	Target Date
Develop and carry out an appraisal of resourcing options for new affordable housing. 	May 2005
Review Council land/building assets	April 2006

We will also:

- Use Council financial and land resources for new development.
- Work with Registered Social Landlords and the Housing Corporation to maximise new investment in the area.

6. To provide and help to maintain decent and suitable homes.

The need to ensure that Council homes meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 has been identified as the **number 1 housing priority for the Council as a landlord.**

What will happen if we do not do this?

- The Decent Homes standard will not be met.
- The condition of the housing stock will deteriorate.
- Housing will not meet householders needs and there will be additional pressure on the Homeseach Register and increases in homelessness.
- Vulnerable households will have inadequate housing.
- There will be an adverse impact on the health of households.
- Energy consumption will remain at current levels and possibly increase, having an adverse impact on households' costs and the environment.

Short Term Actions	Target Date
Produce a new 10 year programme of maintenance and repairs and improvements to meet the Decent Homes target and on-going maintenance needs	June 2005
To achieve the Decent Homes Standard for all Council stock	March 2010
Complete Stock Options Appraisal	July 2005

Fully analyse the financial position of the HRA and ensure that a balanced budget is produced for the next 10 years.	April 2005
Assess progress of Registered Social Landlords towards meeting the Decent Homes Standard	January 2005
Develop an Assistance Policy to increase the number of homes in the private sector occupied by vulnerable groups which meet the Decent Home Standard	July 2005
Private Housing: Complete 40 Renovation grants/loans (targeted at vulnerable households)	March 2005
Implement the Best Value Improvement programmes	July 2005
Bring 25 empty private sector properties into use each year	March 2005 and 2006
Review discounts on empty homes Council Tax	December 2004
Review policy for Maintenance Club to improve take-up	July 2005
Review of the Housing Assistance Policy	July 2005


We will also:

- Bring empty private sector homes back into use.
- Complete a private sector stock condition survey
- Assist low-income key workers carry out repairs and improvements to their homes.
- Utilise Disabled Facilities Grants to help people with disabilities.
- Use planning powers to ensure small market dwellings are built.
- Encourage the development of energy efficient affordable housing.

7. To Engage with New Forest Communities.

What will happen if we do not do this?

- Vulnerable communities will become less sustainable.
- Social exclusion will be increased.
- Planning for the future will become more difficult.
- Services will become unresponsive to community desires and satisfaction levels with services will decrease.

Short Term Actions	Target Date
Monitor minimum standards of tenant participation	March 2005 and 2006
Elections of Tenant Representatives	July 2005 & 2006
The TRUST Training Group to organise 2 events and annual conference for tenants and residents	March 2005
Involve the Tenant Participation Team in the Corporate Disability Forum	March 2005
Complete the Status Survey for the whole housing stock	March 2006
Produce a Tenant Handbook	March 2006
To develop a communications strategy to promote housing issues and provide an opportunity for resident involvement. 	November 2005
Ensure that tenants and residents have an opportunity to be involved in the review and production of the Housing Strategy	April 2005 and 2006

We will also:

- Develop ways of involving underrepresented groups e.g. young people.
- Use the Council web site to further involve tenants.

Annexes

Annex 1. Glossary

Affordability Gap	This represents the gap between the price that a household can afford to pay for a suitable home and the income that is required to pay for that home.
Affordable Housing	Subsidised housing for people who are unable to afford their own homes. This includes social rented and intermediate affordable housing.
Care and Repair Team	A voluntary sector agency that acts as independent advocates to low income vulnerable home owners and tenants and provides assistance and support when making a grant application.
Changing Lives Community Strategy	The strategy prepared by the Changing Lives Partnership that identifies the priority issues facing the District, and sets out new ideas and targets for addressing them.
Changing Lives Partnership	A public/private/voluntary sector partnership that develops the Community Strategy and develops shared solutions to tackle local issues with the aim of improving the quality of life in the District
Choice Base Lettings (CBL)	The method used to determine how affordable housing is allocated to households on the Homesearch Register
Concealed household	A household living within another household who wants to move to a home of their own e.g. a grown up child living in the parental home.
Corporate Plan	A Council document that sets out its priorities.
Decent Homes Standard (DHS)	A standard set by Government to ensure all Council and RSL properties are wind and water tight, warm in winter and have reasonably modern facilities. This standard must be achieved by 2010.
Disabled Facilities Grant	A means tested grant to help tenants and owners adapt their homes to meet their needs.
Divided We Fall	A multi-agency partnership aimed at identifying and tackling anti-social behaviour.
Government Office for the South East (GOSE)	The Government's regional office –responsibilities include housing
Homelessness Strategy	This aims to prevent homelessness and ensure sufficient accommodation is available and that support is provided for homeless/potentially homeless households .
Homesearch Register	A list of households who are unable to afford their own homes and who wish to live in Council or RSL properties.
Housing Association	See Registered Social Landlord
Housing Association Leasing Scheme	A scheme operated by the District Council and RSL partners to provide private sector accommodation to people in housing need. A critical element of the Homelessness Strategy.
Housing Corporation	An executive agency of the Government that regulates and provided funding for RSLs
Housing Needs and Market Assessment	A survey and analysis carried out on behalf of the District Council that assessed current and future housing needs.
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan	The Council's strategy for managing its own housing stock.
Housing Strategy Targets and Action Plan	A document that accompanies the Housing Strategy and sets out short term measurable targets.
Intermediate affordable housing	Affordable housing that lies someway between social rented and open market housing in cost terms. It may be shared ownership/equity or rented.

Key worker	A person who provides an essential service to the area and is unable to afford a home of their own.
Local Strategic Partnership	See Changing Lives Partnership
Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO)	See intermediate affordable housing
Mortgage Affordability	A household is in need of affordable housing if it does not have a deposit equivalent to 5% of the price of a suitable home and has a gross household income less than one third of its mortgage requirement.
New Forest Committee	A co-ordinating body made up of key New Forest organisations working to conserve the special character of the New Forest. They produce the New Forest Strategy.
New Forest District Local Plan	The New Forest District Local Plan is part of the statutory Development Plan for New Forest District. It sets out land use planning policies for the area. (Note: In changes to the planning system under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, local development frameworks will replace local plans.)
New Forest Housing Strategy Board	A multi-agency group that oversees the development and implementation of the Housing Strategy and the housing element of the Community Strategy
New Forest National Park	An area which covers about 75% of the District. A new National Park Authority that will be responsible for planning and landscape management will be established in 2005.
New Forest Strategy	A strategy for the management of the New Forest Heritage Area prepared by the New Forest Committee. It is the pre-cursor to the National Park Plan and identifies the lack of affordable housing as a key issue.
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister – has overall responsibility for housing and planning issues.
Portfolio Holder for Housing	The lead District Councillor for housing. Sits on Cabinet.
Regional Housing Board	A regional board that comprises governmental and non-governmental agencies and is responsible for producing the Regional Housing Strategy.
Regional Housing Strategy	A strategy produced by the Regional Housing Board that provided a strategic housing framework for the region and directs investment.
Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	Non-profit making bodies that are regulated by the Housing Corporation and provide/manage properties for households unable to afford their own home.
Rented Affordability	A household is in need of affordable housing if rental costs would take up more than 25% of its net income (private rented sector affordability is determined in relation to gross incomes).
Shared Ownership/Equity Housing	A form of affordable housing where a householder owns a proportion of the property. On some cases rent is paid to a RSL on the share not owned by the householder.
Social Exclusion/Inclusion	The phrase social exclusion embodies the concept that individuals and communities can suffer multiple deprivation and be cut off from the social, economic and political mainstream. Social exclusion is prejudicial to sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities.
Social rented housing	Affordable housing provided by the Council and RSLs at rents that conform to guidelines that dictate they are significantly below market levels.
Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP)	A measure of energy efficiency.
Stock options appraisal	A process, to be completed in 2004/5, that is looking at future ways to fund housing services, to improve/maintain the Council housing stock and future ownership of the stock.

Sub-Regional Housing Market	Typically this is an area in which 70% of all household moves are contained, excluding long distance moves e.g. due to a change in employment.
Supplementary Planning Document	A planning document which supplements policies in a development plan document (e.g. the local development framework).
Supporting People	A system for funding and regulating housing related support services for vulnerable people
Sustainable communities	Sustainable communities are places where people want to live, work and relax. They are inclusive, safe and support a range of social, economic and cultural uses. People should feel engaged and able to influence the future of their community. Communities may be spatial or based on common bonds and interests.
Sustainable development	Development that balances social, environmental and economic issues to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations.
Sure Start	An initiative to bring together education, childcare, health and family support.
Sustainable Development Framework	A set of objectives and a checklist aimed at ensuring new affordable housing development meets locally agreed criteria.
Tenant Compact	An agreement between landlord and tenants, which sets out standards for working in partnership to review and improve housing management services.
Tenants' Consultative Group	The main consultative group of elected and co-opted tenant representatives from around the district.
The Heart of the Forest	See Corporate Plan
UK On-Line Centres	Small scale facilities that offer skills and computer training.

This glossary provides a non-technical description of some of the terms used in this document. The descriptions should not be taken as precise legal or policy definitions.

Annex 2. List of Housing Strategy Documents

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy
- Domestic Violence Housing Strategy
- Empty Property Strategy
- Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Housing Strategy
- Homelessness Review and Strategy
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- Housing Strategy Targets and Action Plan
- Supporting People and Supported Housing Strategy
- Tenant Compact

In Production (due for publication 2005/6)

- Key Worker Housing Strategy
- Older Persons' Strategy
- Rural Housing Development Strategy
- Supplementary Planning Document – The Delivery of Affordable Housing

Annex 3. Contacts

General comments and queries can be directed to housing.strategy@nfdc.gov.uk

Housing strategy, new affordable housing, empty properties and leasing	Simon Maggs, Housing Development & Strategy Manager	simon.maggs@nfdc.gov.uk 023 8028 5122
Changing Lives Community Strategy, Comprehensive Performance Assessment & Best Value Council homes	Keith Smith, Head of Performance and Strategic Development Dave Brown, Assistant Director Housing Landlord Services	keith.smith@nfdc.gov.uk 023 8028 5551 dave.brown(housing) @nfdc.gov.uk 023 8028 5141
Homelessness, housing needs, advice and lettings	Gregory Spawton, Housing Needs Manager	greg.spawton@nfdc.gov.uk 023 8028 5190
Private sector – improvement and disabled facilities grants/loans	Sara Gardener, Housing Improvement Manager	sara.gardener@nfdc.gov.uk 023 8028 5154
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Energy efficiency	Mary Rainbow, Home Energy Officer	mary.rainbow@nfdc.gov.uk 023 8028 5607
Supporting People and supported housing strategy	Mark Allen Supporting People Co-ordinator	mark.allan@hants.gov.uk 07876 478891

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NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

HRA BUSINESS PLAN SUMMARY

2005 – 2035

FEBRUARY 2005

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.2 This is a summary of the fourth Business Plan for the management and maintenance of New Forest District Council's housing stock.
- 1.3 The Council's housing stock is a major source of much needed affordable housing. It is a large and vital resource of which the Council is custodian for the local community, particularly in view of the serious shortage of affordable homes throughout the District and the constraints on new affordable home development posed by the New Forest National Park and the general rural nature of the District.
- 1.4 This Plan has been produced by senior officers of the housing service who are responsible for the day to day delivery of the landlord service to tenants together with senior colleagues in the Council's Resources Directorate who have contributed to the financial aspects of the Plan. Assistance has also been given by specialised consultants in relation to the Options Appraisal and future funding of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Other officers including those responsible for the Council's strategic housing role have contributed as appropriate. Details of how tenants have been involved in the process are described in Section 6 of the main HRA Plan.
- 1.5 The purpose of the Business Plan is to set a clear strategy from 2005 until 2035 although it is primarily focused on the period until 2010 when the Decent Homes Standard must be achieved. The Plan focuses on the need to ensure that the housing service in partnership with others continues to make a substantial contribution to meeting the local need for affordable housing and supports the Council's wider role in preserving and developing sustainable communities. Specifically the Plan aims to:
- Provide long term objectives for managing the Council's stock and financing the necessary investments.
 - Ensure the long term effective management and maintenance of the Council's housing.
 - Show how the Council's stock will be managed in the context of stock condition, demand for social housing and the likely availability of resources.
 - Contribute to the Council's Housing Strategy and Community Plan and other strategic policies.
- 1.6 The Housing Department is part of a wider Directorate with responsibility for a range of community services including leisure and environmental health. The housing service was restructured in 1996 in preparation for Compulsory Competitive Tendering when a clear split was made between the landlord and

strategic housing functions. Following the success of the in house team in winning the contract the service has been provided in this way since that time.

- 1.7 A strong culture of performance management exists within the landlord team and significant performance improvements have been achieved over recent years with top quartile performance currently being achieved in void turnaround times and arrears recovery. In the area of reactive repairs there has been a significant increase in the numbers of appointments offered to tenants for their repairs. Further improvements to services are planned.

2 THE DEMAND FOR HOUSING

- 2.1 Demand for Council owned housing within the District, except for a very small number of properties is high, and exceeds supply. It is expected that this level of demand will be sustained for the life of the business plan. A detailed analysis of demand is included in Section 3 of the main Plan. Links between the Housing Strategy and the Business Plan are detailed in Section 2 of the main Plan.

3 TENANT SATISFACTION

- 3.1 Satisfaction with current services is high with the reactive maintenance service regularly achieving satisfaction levels of 98% or more.
- 3.2 A tenant satisfaction survey was carried out in 2004. The results of this survey indicated that 86% of those tenants who responded to the survey (26% of the total number of tenants who were sent the survey) were satisfied with the service provided by New Forest District Council landlord service. Less than 2% of tenants who responded said they were either fairly or very dissatisfied with the service. As part of the Options Appraisal process tenants have been actively consulted regarding their views and wishes with respect to the future management of the stock. Details of this consultation are contained with the main Plan in Sections 6 and 7. 94% of tenants who responded to the final survey expressed a wish for the +Council to remain their landlord.

4 TENANT PARTICIPATION

- 4.1 New Forest District Council are committed to involving tenants in the management of their homes and have developed varying ways of enabling tenants to be involved over the past few years. This will continue so that those tenants who wish to be involved will be encouraged and given every opportunity to be involved at the level and to the extent that they find comfortable.
- 4.2 Estate walkabouts, led by Housing Officers and including tenants representatives and tenant participation staff together with local councillors and often police representatives, have produced real improvements by promoting partnership with housing and technical staff, police and councillors. This has also helped to address some of the crime reduction issues including identifying and dealing with anti-social behaviour.
- 4.3 We consider there has been a great deal of progress with tenant participation over the last two years. Tenants have presented their first report to the Council's

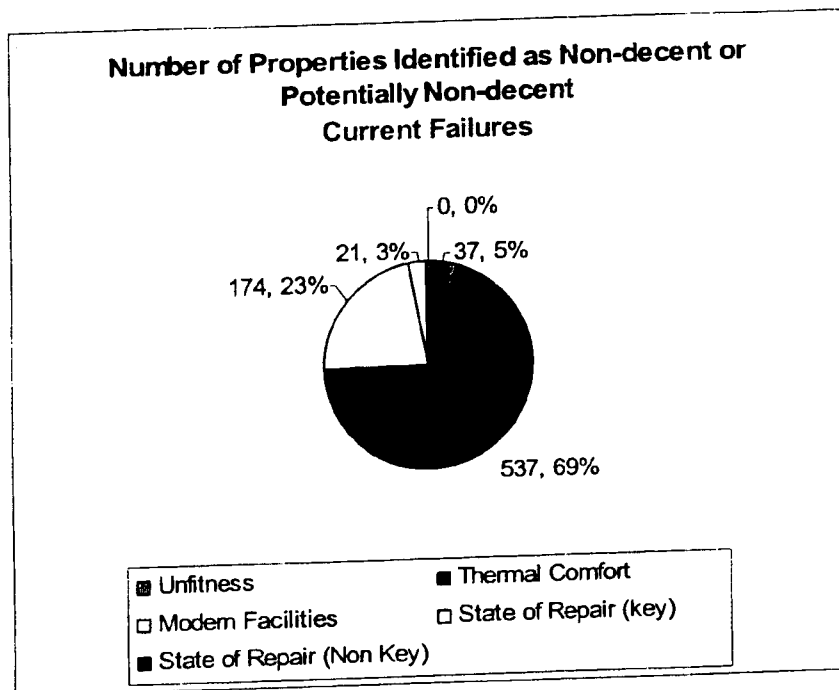
Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Panel and led their AGM, which included a presentation by a tenant on the achievements of the Tenants Consultative Group. We believe this demonstrates increasing levels of involvement in the decision-making processes of this council.

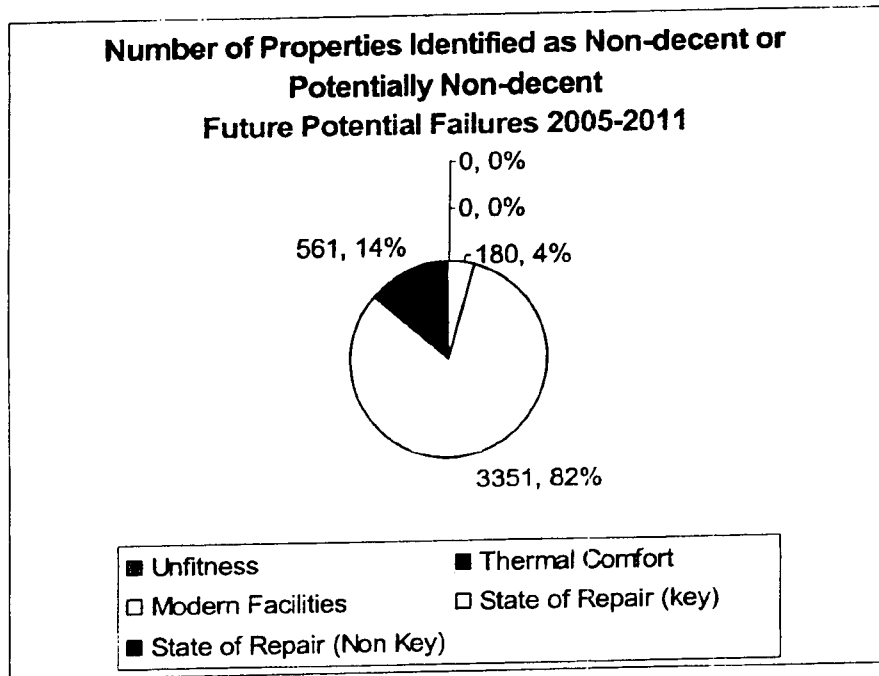
- 4.4 Section 6 of the main Plan provides full details of current involvement and how we intend to develop and encourage tenant participation over the coming years.

5 THE CONDITION OF THE HOUSING STOCK IN THE NEW FOREST

- 5.1 As part of the Options Appraisal process the Council commissioned a stock condition survey in early 2004. The survey comprised a 15% internal and external sample of the housing stock. The results of the survey indicated that the Council's stock was not in poor condition. However many components were approaching the end of their economic life and will require replacement in the short to medium term.

- 5.2 The survey identified that 14% of the Council's homes did not meet the Decent Homes standard but 59% had the potential for failure in the years to 2011. The reasons for failure are shown in the two charts below:-





5.3 Although the Council's stock is currently in good condition it is necessary to ensure that the position is maintained and that the Government's target of meeting the Decent Homes standard by 2010 is achieved. The Business Plan sets out how the Council will ensure this happens. Details of this can be found in Section 8 of the main plan.

6 THE FINANCIAL POSITION

6.1 Analysis of the investment requirements in the Council's housing indicate that there are insufficient funds for the Council to meet the Decent Homes standard and the on-going maintenance needs of the stock without further work being done to reduce expenditure (or increase income) elsewhere. Following the Options Appraisal, the Council have decided to retain the stock and take the necessary difficult decisions to ensure that the Housing Revenue account remains viable. An asset management strategy is being developed to ensure that this position can be maintained.

6.2 Further details and an analysis of the overall financial position can be found in Section 9 of the main Plan.

7 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

7.1 The Council have undertaken a robust Housing Stock Options as required by the Government. Although the difficult financial position mentioned above has been discussed and communicated to all tenants the very clear picture coming from the vast majority of tenants (94%) was that they wished the Council to retain ownership and to manage the existing stock.

- 7.2 The Council has considered the outcome of the Options Appraisal and associated consultation and in spite of the difficult financial position has decided to retain both management and ownership of the Council's housing stock.
- 7.3 More information concerning the Options Appraisal and the consultation exercise is included in Section 7 of the main Plan.

8 REVIEW OF PROGRESS

- 8.1 A number of priorities were set in the 2002 Business Plan. The table below shows the progress made against these priorities.

Action Proposed	Current position
Achieve all performance targets and wherever possible improve results	Performance throughout the service has remained good and high levels of tenant satisfaction have been consistently achieved. (E.g. satisfaction with the maintenance service at the end of December 2004 was 99%)
Undertake the Best Value Review for the whole of the Landlord Service.	Completed in early 2004
Review processes and efficiency of existing service to gain improvements in service delivery, cost and customer satisfaction.	A review of the reactive maintenance service was carried out in 2003/2004 and a number of significant improvements made including the establishment of a new appointments system which has led to a dramatic increase in the number of appointments made and kept.
Fundamentally review the requirements of service users in the Sheltered Housing Service.	This has taken more time than anticipated and there are continuing meetings with a small focus group of service users to establish the needs of residents in Sheltered Housing.
Introduce planned maintenance ICT package.	Not achieved, other priorities have taken precedence.
Achieve decent homes standard across all properties by 2010.	Good progress being made towards achieving the target in 2010. Target for 2003/2004 was 39%. The results of the recent stock survey have identified that only 14% of properties currently fail the DHS.
Adapt capture form to achieve further details required to enable decent home standard to be accurately assessed.	Completed
Achieve expenditure and work annually in accordance with the 10-year plan.	Completed
Investigate and evaluate options to increase expenditure on the stock so that the decent homes standard can be	In progress

achieved	
Investigate the opportunities for introducing hand held computers for maintenance work.	In view of other changes proposed and the work on the options appraisal this proposal has been deferred.

9 CURRENT PRIORITIES

- 9.1 In developing the targets for the Business Plan, the Council considered a wide range of national and local priorities and consulted with tenants and other stakeholders.
- 9.2 The Council's corporate priorities and the priorities detailed both in the Housing Strategy and main Plan take account of national and regional priorities for housing and meeting the decent homes standard and housing need as key elements.
- 9.3 There are clear national priorities for housing and with limited resources NFDC have concentrated on identifying what tenant priorities are for the Council owned stock in the New Forest. Tenants' representatives have the opportunity for active participation in the development and management of the housing service. Two tenants attend the Council's monthly Cabinet meetings and are actively encouraged to speak on items that are relevant to the housing service. In addition a further 6 tenants attend the Housing scrutiny panel and participate in debate on housing issues. All reports which affect any aspect of the housing service are presented initially to the Tenants' Consultative Group and their comments are included within the report that subsequently is presented to Members. All these measures ensure that members are given every assistance to determine and assess tenant priorities as part of the decision making process
- 9.4 The consultation process that the Council have undertaken both for the Business Plan, the Options Appraisal and the general consultation that is carried out on a regular basis has identified the following:
- High levels of satisfaction with the housing service generally.
 - A view that the Council maintain their homes well (93% agree with this comment)
 - A view that their homes are well managed (93% agree with this comment)
 - 91% feel it is important that the Council own their homes
 - 93% think it is important that their home is managed and maintained by the Council.
 - Nearly 72% say that it is important that their streets are kept clean.
 - 76% say that more should be done about anti-social behaviour.
 - 70% say that more affordable homes for rent should be provided in the area.
- 9.5 The Business Plan will ensure that many of these views expressed by tenants are incorporated into the future work of the housing service although both we and tenants are aware of the difficulties that our resultant financial position, as a consequence of the likely decision for the management of the stock to remain with the Council, will bring which will more than likely mean that we will be less able to deal effectively with some of their concerns.
- 9.6 The key objectives included in the Action Plan attached to this document take full account of the national priorities for housing, the Council's corporate priorities and targets and the aspirations of tenants. They also take account of the Best Value improvement plan and have been developed in consultation with tenants through the Tenants Consultative Group and with Members through the Housing Health and Social Inclusion Panel.

- 9.7 The key objectives concentrate mainly on the outcomes from the Options Appraisal project, the need to achieve the Decent Homes Standard and the priorities identified above. Operational targets are included within the Service Plans for the Housing Landlord Service and the Housing Strategic Service and the Best Value Improvement Plan which are attached as Appendices (7A & B) to the main Plan

ACTION PLAN – 2005/2010

1. To meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 (and to maintain the standard in perpetuity).

Action	Target date	Lead	Others involved	Resources	Links to Heart of the Forest and other Strategies/Priorities
Fully analyse the data produced from the Stock condition survey and in conjunction with tenants clearly identify priorities.	April 2005	Housing technical Manager	Planned Maintenance Team	Officer time	Asset Management Strategy. Heart of the Forest _ Housing (4.6)
Complete the asset management strategy	April 2005	Housing Technical Manager	Ridge and Partners.	Funding provided.	Heart of the Forest – Manage our physical assets (1.6)
Establish clear annual targets for achieving the DHS by 2010	April 2005	Housing Technical Manager	Planned maintenance team, Members and tenants	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Manage our physical assets (1.6)
Produce a new 10 year planned maintenance and improvement programme to meet the DHS and the on-going repair liabilities of the stock.	April 2005	Housing Technical Manager	Planned maintenance team	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Manage our physical assets (1.6)
Continue to carry out annual 20% re-surveys of the stock to ensure data base remains up-to-date.	April 2006	Housing Technical Manager	Planned maintenance team	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Manage our physical assets (1.6)
Ensure data base of stock attributes is maintained on an appropriate format.	April 2006	Housing Technical Manager	Housing Manager IT	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Manage our physical assets (1.6)

Action	Target date	Lead	Other Involved	Resources	Links to Heart of the Forest and other strategies/priorities.
Identify and produce a new repairs and voids policy.	April 2005	Housing Technical Manager	Reactive Maintenance Team, Tenants	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6)
Implement the new repairs and voids	July 2005	Housing Technical	Reactive Maintenance	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6)

policy		Manager	Team, tenants		
Monitor performance against the new policy taking action where necessary to ensure adherence.	July 2005 and thereafter.	Housing Technical Manager	Performance Monitoring Manager, Reactive Maintenance Team, tenants	Officer Time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6)
Implement actions arising from the new asset management strategy	June 2005	Assistant Director (Housing Services)	Housing Management Team, tenants, Members	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6) Manage our physical assets (1.6)

2 To identify funding for and carry out environmental improvements to estates.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other involved	Resources	Links to Heart of the Forest and other strategies/priorities.
Implement the decision arising from the Options Appraisal and meet the initial financial targets identified.	April 2006	Assistant Director	Housing Team, Members, tenants and Finance staff.	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6), Manage our Finances (1.2).
Monitor savings achieved through the new repairs and voids policy and asset management strategy.	On-going	Assistant Director	Housing Team, Members, tenants and Finance staff.	Officer time.	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6), Manage our Finances (1.2).
Work with tenants and leaseholders to identify the need for environmental improvements and prioritise resultant schemes.	July 2006	Housing Technical Manager	Estate Management Staff	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6).
Assess savings accruing that do not need to be spent on the property to meet the DHS and agree with tenants that this available money can be spent on environmental improvements.	On-going	Housing Technical Manager	Estate management staff, Finance Officers.	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6),

3 To improve housing services.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other involved	Resources	Links to Heart of the Forest and other strategies/priorities.
Implement all identified improvements in Maintenance	April 2006	Housing Technical Manager	Planned and reactive maintenance teams, tenants.	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6)
Implement all identified improvements to the disabled facility grant process.	April 2006	Housing Improvements Manager	Improvement Grant Team, tenants and private owners.	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6), Older People (4.4)
Implement all identified improvements to rent collection and former tenant arrears processes.	April 2006	Housing Rents Manager	Rents Team, tenants.	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6), Manage our finances (1.2)
Implement a "Help Desk" approach to first line telephone contacts for tenants.	April 2006	Assistant Director (Housing Services)	Housing management team, staff, tenants.	Officer time, as yet unidentified resources for CRM software.	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6), Improve our performance (1.3)
Implement a suitable rewards scheme to recognise good tenants and encourage other tenants to conform to their tenancy conditions.	April 2006	Assistant Director	All housing staff, members, tenants.	Officer time and revenue expenditure to fund the scheme.	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6), Improve our performance (1.3), Foster Innovation in service delivery (1.4)
Regularly review all services to ensure value for money is being achieved.	On-going	Assistant Director	Housing Management Team, tenants and Members	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6), Improve our performance (1.3), Foster Innovation in service delivery (1.4)

4 To improve the homes of tenants over and above the DHS to meet their aspirations.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other involved	Resources	Links to Heart of the Forest and other strategies/priorities.
Work closely with tenants to identify their aspirations and to formulate a "New Forest Standard" for their homes	September 2006	Tenant Participation Officer	Housing Technical Manager	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6),
Identify the costs required to meet the "New Forest Standard"	December 2005	Assistant Director	Housing Technical Manager	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6),
Establish what funding may be available to meet tenant aspirations.	April 2006	Assistant Director	Housing Finance Staff	Officer time	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6),
If and when funding identified work with tenants to prioritise the works to be carried out.	July 2006	Housing Technical Manager	Planned maintenance team	Officer time, resources for individual projects.	Heart of the Forest – Housing (4.6),