

# Housing Strategy

Draft Strategy: October 12/10/2010



***“Globally connected, delivering sustainable growth to ensure a green, prosperous and ambitious place for the benefit of all”***

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## Foreword

### **Councillor Tom Nicols - Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development**

and

### **Councillor Rita Drinkwater - Portfolio Holder for Housing**



We are pleased to welcome you to the first Central Bedfordshire Council Housing Strategy. This strategy recognises Central Bedfordshire Council is a council that intends to make a difference. This new housing strategy sits at the core of Central Bedfordshire's growth agenda.

Central Bedfordshire has one of the fastest growing populations in the UK, facing an unprecedented demand for additional housing, whether it is for housing association renting, shared ownership or the open market. We will lay the spatial foundations where additional homes will be built, and set our policies and strategies to ensure new homes are built to reflect the very real needs of our local communities. Following the recession and the unprecedented levels of public borrowing, all public funding will be limited. Central Bedfordshire Council will strive to obtain external funding in order to ensure housing delivery and priorities are met and high standards for new homes are not compromised. We have to think innovatively, work collaboratively and efficiently to ensure that the financial resources that we provide now are recycled for further work in the future.

Central Bedfordshire Council is new unitary authority and our priorities are being refreshed to reflect our new role and ambitions. One key aim is to develop the Council as an Economic Powerhouse and this strategy has a key role in achieving that aim. As the Council takes shape we will adapt and continue to change to meet the housing needs and priorities of the community.

## Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council was created as a unitary council on 1 April 2009. Central Bedfordshire took over the services previously provided for the area by Bedfordshire County Council, Mid Beds District Council and South Beds District Council. This strategy aims to set out the strategic direction for housing in Central Bedfordshire. It will be the first housing strategy for Central Bedfordshire Council.

The Strategy plays an integral part in the delivery of the Councils high level corporate priorities.

Central Bedfordshire corporate priorities	How Housing contributes to meeting the priority
Supporting and caring for an ageing population and those who are vulnerable	Meeting housing needs is key in ensuring an ageing population is cared for and supported.
Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people	Meeting the housing needs of families ensures children are protected from harm and have a stable environment to take up educational and other opportunities.
Maximising employment opportunities and delivering housing growth to meet the needs of our communities	This strategy will ensure that the new housing provided is of a high quality in the right locations.
Keeping our communities safe	Housing contributes to effective community development and community cohesion by creating pride and social networks within neighbourhoods.
Promoting health and reducing inequalities	The provision of decent homes is a key government target because it has been recognised that decent homes form an important part of healthy lifestyles
Ensuring our local people have the skills to prosper	Developing good quality and desirable housing brings trade and commerce to by raising the social capital within the area.
Nurturing a sense of pride and belonging	Developing good quality housing in a thoughtful and sustainable way can ensure development instills ownership and pride within communities and areas.
Getting around and caring for a green and clean environment	The impact of climate change is a major issue, by ensuring that that the growth in the area responds to these impacts we can ensure sustainable development.

## Why housing matters

### Good housing contributes to a healthy community

Children and young adults living in poor housing conditions are up to 25% more likely to suffer from severe ill-health or disability than those in good quality housing.

Children living in poor quality housing have an increased risk of meningitis, asthma, and slow growth, which is linked to coronary heart disease.

Homeless children are up to four times more likely than other children to have mental health problems<sup>1</sup>.

### Good housing contributes to better education

Children who live in poor quality housing and overcrowded homes miss school more frequently due to illnesses and infections.

Homeless children are more likely to have behavioural problems, which compromise academic achievement and relationships with peers and teachers.

Many homeless children have lower levels of academic achievement that cannot be explained by differences in their levels of ability<sup>2</sup>.

The long-term health problems and low educational attainment that are associated with poor quality housing increase the likelihood of a person being unemployed or working in a low-paid job<sup>3</sup>.

### Good housing is part of the delivery of a strong local economy

Employment will be limited without a stream of available, attractive and affordable housing. The housing market will not thrive unless people have the money to buy houses locally. Achieving the right housing, including affordable housing as well as market housing, is vital in attracting and retaining a skills base that will encourage inward investment<sup>4</sup>.

Buying a house is likely to be the biggest single investment many of us we make in our lifetimes and an aspiration for many young people to work towards.

The construction of the many thousands of homes also opens up the opportunity for local people to be trained and work in the construction sector and take advantage of developing new skills based on the modern methods of

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<sup>1</sup> Shelter (2006) [Chances of a lifetime: the impact of bad housing on children's lives](#).

<sup>2</sup> Shelter (2006) [Chances of a lifetime: the impact of bad housing on children's lives](#).

<sup>3</sup> Shelter (2006) [Chances of a lifetime: the impact of bad housing on children's lives](#).

<sup>4</sup> Housing Corporation (2008) [Housing and economic development: moving forward together](#).

construction and renewable energy technologies to meet the standards for our new homes and refit existing homes.

The Central Bedfordshire Design Guide was adopted as a supplementary planning document for development control purposes by the Council in January 2010. The Council is committed to ensuring that new development is of high quality, is sustainable and maintains or enhances the character and local distinctiveness of the locality in which it is proposed. The Design Guide has been produced to set out the twin interacting principles contributing to good place making and to sustainable development, within the context of creating a safe, accessible, attractive and healthy built environment.

The ability of a community to attract and retain people and provide support for those who need it relies on good housing and attractive, inclusive neighbourhoods. Having a home is both a privilege and a responsibility. It raises aspirations and can instil the values of constructive social behaviour.

## National context

The national policy drivers for housing are set out in a number of documents, including the Government green paper *Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable*, and the national strategy for an ageing society *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods*. Housing priorities are also conveyed through the annual Budget, as well as through frequent government announcements.

Currently, the main drivers for housing policy include:

- Increasing the delivery of new homes to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population.
- Promoting more environmentally-friendly development, through the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- Building sustainable communities, through delivery of homes of a suitable size and tenure mix, supported by appropriate infrastructure.
- Increasing the provision of affordable housing in both the social rented and intermediate tenures.
- Enabling people to live independently in their own homes and communities and preventing the need for people to enter residential care.
- Using prevention methods to tackle homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation.

The Audit Commission report *Building better lives: getting the best from strategic housing*<sup>5</sup>, reinforces the importance of the strategic housing role. In particular it highlights the increased pressure housing services will come under as a direct result of the fact that none of the national targets for building new homes set in 2007 will be met.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/nationalstudies/buildingbetterlives/pages/buildingbetterlives\\_cop\\_y.aspx](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/nationalstudies/buildingbetterlives/pages/buildingbetterlives_cop_y.aspx)

The regulatory and investment frameworks for housing are changing and place significant emphasis on the effective performance of the strategic housing role.

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has been established as the government's national housing delivery partner and the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) is now the regulator of the landlord functions of social housing.

To qualify for financial support, the HCA expects councils to have developed and secured local agreement to soundly based strategies and business plans from local, sub-regional and regional partners. This means it is vital for us to effectively manage our relationships with partners to deliver a coherent message to the HCA through the Single Conversation process.

## The Strategic Housing Role

### The Relationship to the Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Communities strategy

The Central Bedfordshire Housing Strategy is incorporated into the Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Communities Strategy. The Housing Strategy document sets out in more detail the priorities identified in the Sustainable Communities Strategy

### What is the Strategic Housing Role

The Housing Strategy aims to ensure the Council provides a comprehensive housing service, which improves the quality of life by seeking solutions to all aspects of housing need, through the creation and maintenance of stable communities across Central Bedfordshire. A large policy framework at National, Regional and Sub-regional directs the Council's strategic function, and local government levels in both housing and planning.

Government has defined a council's strategic housing role as:-

- Assessing and planning for housing need across all tenures
- Making best use of existing stock to meet need, through greater local discretion in access and lettings of social housing stock to make it more mixed in terms of type, size, affordability and tenure
- Planning and facilitating new housing supply
- Planning and Commissioning housing Support Services which link homes and housing support services
- Improving current stock
- Ensuring effective housing and neighbourhood management through partnership working

The priorities of this strategy set out to meet this role by ensuring that a fit for purpose strategy is in place to deal with the local issues affecting Central Bedfordshire.

### Key Strategic Priorities

In order to fulfill the Strategic Housing Role and meet housing issues within Central Bedfordshire, 4 Key Strategic Priorities have been identified for the Central Bedfordshire Council Housing Strategy 2010 and these are:

Key Strategic Priorities	
1	Economic development and sustainable communities
2	Using council assets to aid the delivery of growth and housing
3	Meeting the accommodation and support needs of Older Persons and Vulnerable People
4	Providing housing options for the whole community



## Meeting Housing need

In line with national guidelines, Central Bedfordshire Council feels that it is essential to have a good understanding of its housing markets and a clear indication of the need within the area. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was commissioned by all Local Authorities in Bedfordshire in order to achieve this objective and provide an insight into the housing market in Bedfordshire.

The Council has several means to ensure affordable housing is built. These include: - new mixed housing developments where a 106 legal agreement is used to insure a percentage of affordable housing is built. 100% Housing Association Developments where Housing Association partners have secured land and bring forward a development of affordable housing; and Rural Housing Schemes, these schemes provide “local affordable housing for local people”. These schemes are “exceptional” to any other housing development as they are built outside the defined settlement boundary of the settlements. We plan to use Capital resources for development especially for rural development, supported housing and also brownfield development.

The Choice Based Lettings scheme (CBL) ensures that applicants for housing have some choice over the property they are offered. For Bedfordshire the scheme includes advertising all the vacant properties that become available. To increase mobility across the region, each of the main housing providers will also accept bids for a small proportion of their vacancies from applicants who live in other parts of the region.

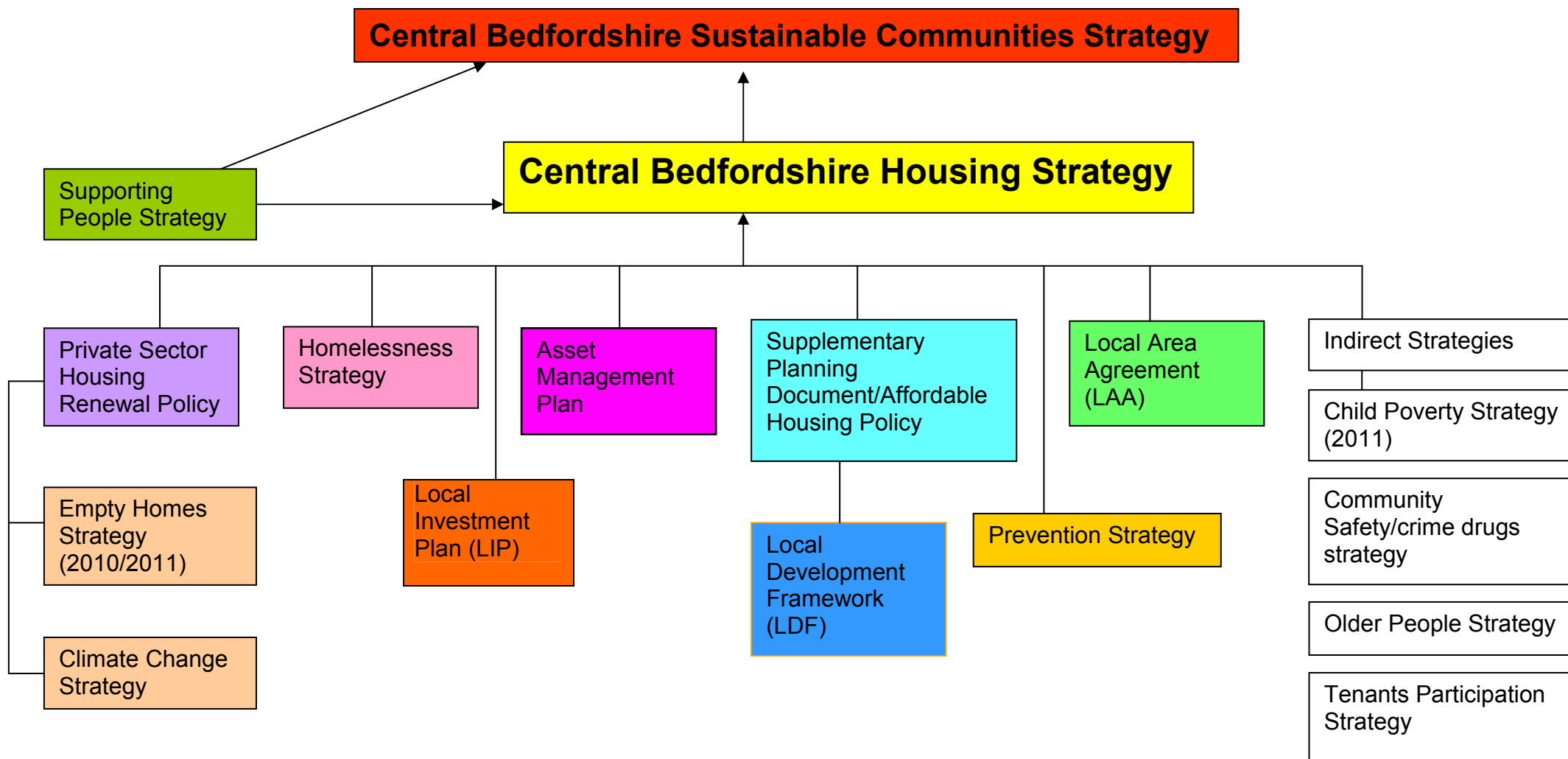
For more information on resources to meet homelessness please see the Central Bedfordshire Homelessness Strategy 2010-2015.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Central Bedfordshire Homelessness Strategy  
[http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/images/10%2004%2013%20Homelessness\\_Strategy\\_V8a\\_tcm5-27357.pdf](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/images/10%2004%2013%20Homelessness_Strategy_V8a_tcm5-27357.pdf)

## The Relationship of the Housing Strategy to the other Council Strategies

The Housing Strategy is informed by various other strategies which are shown in this diagram



## Key Strategic Priorities

### Key Strategic Priority 1: Economic development and sustainable communities

#### Issues

Central Bedfordshire is a widespread area with large and diverse communities. To ensure that these communities continue to thrive there must be opportunities for employment, good infrastructure and good housing, both social and market housing to ensure high levels of social capital and economic stability so that local communities remain sustainable.

Provision of affordable housing is fundamental to the economic and social sustainability of our communities - in the market towns, villages and the more sparsely populated areas of Central Bedfordshire. The Council is working with partners to ensure that the maximum amount of land is made available for affordable housing, including sources that may not previously have been considered such as Council owned land assets, but to do this we must ensure that the council gets value for money and meets the needs within the area.

Key considerations for the provision of affordable housing in Central Bedfordshire include:

- Retaining and attracting key skills to support and promote growth within our diverse and dispersed economy.
- Sustaining existing communities and neighbourhoods and facilitating the development of mixed communities including in the rural areas.
- Meeting the housing needs of local people across a broad range of household groups.

Housing supply is market driven and susceptible to change within the economy. The impact of the current economic downturn is being felt within the housing industry. The SHMA has identified that there is a shortage of both social rented and intermediate affordable housing. A need for affordable housing in North Central Bedfordshire (formerly Mid Beds area) of 2,200 social rented and 1,600 intermediate housing out of a total of 10,100 dwellings has been identified. In Luton Borough and South Central Bedfordshire (formerly South Beds area) combined a need of 7,700 social rented and 3,200 intermediate housing out of a total of 21,600 dwellings has been identified. The council will continue to maximise the supply of affordable housing through the planning system. By ensuring the right development which meets the needs of the population and growth in Central Bedfordshire we can continue to grow and provide the opportunities for people to remain in the area.

However it is not just about developing new homes, the effective use of the existing housing stock is a key element in meeting housing need. Bringing empty homes back into use will rejuvenate neighbourhoods and aid regeneration in Central Bedfordshire. This in turn can help reduce the

attraction and occurrence of anti-social behaviour, reduce pressure to build on greenfield sites, and give local people a home in an area where they have a local connection.

## **Objectives**

We must facilitate economic growth through the provision of new homes in sustainable locations with access to local employment and the provision of affordable housing and this is a key strategic aim of the council. We have researched our housing market and have planned targets for the future through a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment<sup>7</sup> (JSNA). We have completed Local Housing Needs Surveys and Studies and intend to update the SHMA data regularly to ensure we can provide an up to date analysis of the housing market within Central Bedfordshire and adapt to meet its needs. We will work to balance employment and housing growth and ensure a supply that includes housing for key workers. We will seek to secure significant infrastructure funding essential for future economic growth of the area through the Local Investment Plan agreed with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

We need to ensure the renewal of the existing housing stock in the social and private rented sectors in order to support affordable living. Local people must have access to local employment and it is important for established communities to continue to thrive and maintain a skilled workforce. It is just as important to regenerate existing communities as well as building new ones and to ensure that we increase the opportunities for all our residents through an integrated regeneration approach to maximise the economic benefits for all. This means that we must have a good knowledge of both sectors of housing stock and ensure that we can maintain and update information to ensure we can focus on and regenerate the areas which are most in need. Please see the Central Bedfordshire Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy<sup>8</sup> for more Information.

Empty homes are an issue within the county and they are a key resource. We must reduce the number of Empty Homes in Central Bedfordshire and ensure that they are brought back into use through Council interventions, including appropriate enforcement action, incentives, and partnership with owners to ensure they can provide for the housing needs of residents.

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to sustainability and aims to deliver affordable housing where and when it is needed. We will seek to ensure planning policy remains flexible and responsive to needs across the whole community. Sustainability encompasses three main components: environmental, social and economic. In rural areas environmental sustainability refers to the reduction in the use of natural resources,

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<sup>7</sup> JSNA: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/statistics/joint-strategic-needs-assessment.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> Central Bedfordshire Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy: [http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/housing/private-sector-housing/housing\\_grants/renewalpolicy.aspx](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/housing/private-sector-housing/housing_grants/renewalpolicy.aspx)

protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural environment. For housing this will include work towards reducing the carbon footprint of new developments and existing homes and aspire to carbon neutrality or as close as feasibly possible, and reducing water and energy use. We must ensure that we make homes as energy efficient as possible and maximise the opportunities of green technologies within Central Bedfordshire. Please see the Climate Change Strategy for further information.

## Resources

We have funding allocated within the Capital budget until 2013 for new affordable housing developments. Where no other funding streams are possible and where there is an evidence base for intervention we will make a financial contribution if possible to enable key developments. We have the ability to assess housing need in local communities through housing needs surveys in villages and desktop affordability studies and focus our efforts on areas where there is a need identified.

Through Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings to enable affordable housing delivery and we can ensure Planning Contributions are received for all new development to provide and improve services in the local area where developments will affect services. We have the capacity to seek off-site financial contributions which can be used for service provision in other areas of Central Bedfordshire.

There are various grants available for affordable housing:-

- HCA grant funding
- HCA loans, expertise and training
- Other external funding e.g. Growth Area Funding (GAF)

The Local Development Framework<sup>9</sup> (LDF) Core Strategy for the North has been adopted. It aims to deliver improved social, economic and environmental wellbeing for the community. It also seeks to ensure new development is provided in a sustainable manner, as well as trying to improve the sustainability of existing communities. The Joint Core Strategy will provide the overall development framework for Luton and the South Area, setting out where development should go and what standards it should aim to achieve. The LDF will co-ordinate the growth in Central Bedfordshire, considering the roles and relationships between settlements, as well as the strategy for infrastructure provision

The Council is drafting a Local Investment Plan (LIP) and it will be in place by 2011. The LIP establishes the economic, social and environmental context in Central Bedfordshire, on which a series of investment opportunities are based. These opportunities are identified and prioritised according to a rigorous evidence base and clear local vision.

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<sup>9</sup> Local Development Framework:  
<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/ldf/default.aspx>

## Actions

Lead Officer	Area of work	Action	Delivery and Outcomes	Time Frame	Key Partners
Head of Development Planning and Team Leader Housing Strategy	Strategic Housing and Planning, affordable housing delivery	Deliver an average of 300 affordable new homes each year  Increase the supply of affordable housing to meet identified needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target on new affordable homes met</li> <li>Promote a variety of tenures and mix of properties in urban and rural locations for both market and affordable housing that meets identified needs.</li> <li>NI 155</li> </ul>	300 affordable housing delivery target for 2010/2011  Ongoing	Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners, Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Developers
Head of Development Planning	Strategic Housing and Planning, housing delivery	Obtain the maximum possible affordable homes through the planning system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased numbers of homes delivered via the planning system</li> <li>NI 154</li> <li>NI 155</li> </ul>	Ongoing	RSL partners, HCA, Developers
Head of Development Planning	Strategic Housing and Planning, housing delivery	Continue to lobby for and progress proposals to develop on development land in Central Bedfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New developments progressed and appropriate funding secured</li> </ul>	Ongoing	RSL partners, HCA, Developers
Head of Development Planning and Team Leader Housing Strategy	Strategic Housing and Planning, monitoring the housing market	Monitor housing affordability using local housing market indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing understanding of affordability across tenures and market constituents.</li> <li>Actions developed to tackle key affordability issues.</li> <li>Updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)</li> </ul>	Annually  Ongoing to 2013	RSL partners, Sub-Regional Partners
Head of Development Planning and Team Leader Housing Strategy	Strategic Housing and Planning, housing delivery	In conjunction with the LDF ensure that local infrastructure and space for local infrastructure exists to support new units of housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of new units delivered supported by the appropriate infrastructure.</li> <li>National Performance Indicators.</li> <li>NI 154</li> <li>NI 155</li> </ul>	Annually Ongoing	RSL partners, Sub-Regional Partners, Developers
Head of	Strategic	Meet identified need for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting the identified need for pitches</li> </ul>	2010-2016	Strategic Housing,

Development Planning	Housing and Planning	G&T pitches in North Central Beds. Identify potential G&T sites in the South.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of G&amp;T pitches in the area.</li> <li>• Number of G&amp;T site improvements.</li> </ul>		Planning
Team Leader Housing Strategy	Strategic Housing and Planning	Increase availability of affordable supported and Extra Care accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed schemes and an increase in suitable accommodation for all housing needs.</li> <li>• Increase in the number of Extra care schemes developed</li> </ul>	Ongoing	RSL partners, HCA, Developers, Supporting People
Head of Growth; Team Leader Housing Strategy	Strategic Housing and Planning; economic growth	Compile and deliver Local Investment Plan (LIP). Agree Local Investment Agreement (LIA) with HCA based on LIP. Monitor and review LIP and LIA as live documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic funding agreed including capital grants, equity loans and Growth Area Funding.</li> <li>• Present true 'sustainable development' by capturing CBC corporate projects in one plan</li> </ul>	LIP complete Autumn 2010 LIA signed March 2011	HCA LSP (NHS, Police Fire etc) RSLs Private developers and landowners
Head of Private Sector Housing	Private Sector Houses in Multiple Occupation	Deliver proactive approach towards identifying and improving HMO's, including through mandatory licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements in HMO stock, increase in HMO landlords licensed</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Private Sector Team, Strategic Housing, Environmental Health Team
Head of Private Sector Housing	Private Sector harmonisation of services	Maximise the degree to which Private Sector Housing Services across Central Bedfordshire are harmonised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New corporate software to harmonise computer systems</li> <li>• Harmonise all grant forms and Legal Notices</li> </ul>	End of 2010	Private Sector Team
Head of Private Sector Housing	Private Sector, Empty Homes Strategy development	Develop an Empty Homes Strategy with actions and resources to tackle those homes which blight local Neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Central Bedfordshire Empty Homes Strategy adopted by Executive</li> </ul>	September 2010	Private Sector Team
Head of Private Sector Housing	Private Sector, Empty Homes	Bringing empty properties back into use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A grant funding programme to bring empty properties back into use</li> <li>• Number of empty homes brought back into use</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing	Private Sector Team, Pathmeads HA Private Sector

Head of Asset Management	Asset Management	Meet the decent homes target for Council owned homes and continue to maintain the housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decent homes target met (annual and final target)</li> <li>• Number of improvements completed</li> </ul>	Annually Ongoing	Asset Management Team, Contractors
Head of Private Sector Housing	Private Sector, Empty Homes	Bringing empty properties back into use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant funding programme to bring empty properties back into use</li> <li>• Empty Homes brought back into use</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing	Private Sector Team, Pathmeads HA Private Sector
Head of Private Sector Housing	Private Sector, Climate Change	Ensure that the work of the Housing Service positively contributes to the Council's Corporate Climate Change agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full participation in Carbon Action Network initiatives where appropriate and beneficial to Central Bedfordshire.</li> <li>• Contribution to Corporate Climate Change Strategy</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Private Sector Team, Strategic Housing Team, Carbon Action, Partner Contractors
Head of Asset Management	Estate Improvements Projects	The overall aim of this programme is to deal with a wide range of Estate Improvements projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of schemes</li> <li>• Needs of the Estates are prioritised and included in programmes of works</li> <li>• Regular inspections of housing estates</li> <li>• Liaison with tenants groups</li> <li>• Feedback from customer experience surveys</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Asset Management



## Key Strategic Priority 2: Using council assets to aid the delivery of growth and housing

### Issues

In 2008 there was decline in the housing market which reached a crisis point and has huge ramifications across the housing and development sector. This has inevitably had an impact on the supply of affordable housing where delivery is a percentage of an open market scheme. This situation is compounded by the restrictions in mortgage availability which is affecting first time buyers in particular. Local housing associations are experiencing difficulty raising finance to bring forward affordable housing on rural exception sites and other 100% affordable housing sites. Problems faced by the rural community other than high prices and a shortage of affordable housing include limited access to transport and other services.

Planning and delivering housing growth and infrastructure is more of a challenge than ever, given the current global economic recession and the impact on the housing market and reduced developer contributions being available.

Rural housing provision will continue to form part of the mainstream planning system in this area. Village property prices are higher than the national average leading to decreased affordability especially for first time buyers who may wish to remain near families in their local area.

The SHMA highlighted rural housing as one of four key themes for the sub-region. Northern Central Bedfordshire is DEFRA classified as 'Rural 80' meaning over 80% of the population live in rural settlements and market towns. Issues affecting rural communities include affordability pressures, lack of housing supply, fuel poverty, and non decent housing. This combination of factors produces a particularly important housing need which will equally need a combination of measures to address that need.

Currently local rural housing needs are provided through an 'exception sites' policy in the Local Development Framework (LDF) which permits residential development to occur on sites that are not allocated within the plan and would not otherwise be acceptable for such purposes. Housing developed on the rural exception sites must be 100% affordable.

To continue to develop new affordable homes in rural Bedfordshire, it will be important to use all of the planning and strategic housing mechanisms and land assets available.

### Objective

We plan to deliver successful and sustainable development whilst maintaining the character of Central Bedfordshire and develop on both urban and rural sites to meet the housing needs of Central Bedfordshire. To meet these housing needs we must ensure that we are proactive and must use our

resources and assets in a careful and sustained way to ensure delivery. Central Bedfordshire has land assets which could be used for development in the future to meet the growth targets and aid the delivery of housing.

## **Resources**

The Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy for the North has been adopted and it aims to deliver improved social, economic and environmental wellbeing for the community. It also seeks to ensure new development is provided in a sustainable manner, as well as trying to improve the sustainability of existing communities.

We will seek to use Council owned assets and our land bank for development to deliver much needed housing and infrastructure in Central Bedfordshire and we must use our assets in a sustained manner and ensure value for money and best value at all times.

## Actions

Lead Officer	Area of work	Action	Delivery and Outcomes	Time Frame	Key Partners
Head of Development Planning, Head of Asset Management and Team Leader Housing Strategy	Strategic housing, planning, housing delivery and assets review	Identifying land for sites and identifying land for rural exception sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider use of surplus public land for housing development subject to meeting criteria</li> <li>Number of sites indentified</li> <li>Number of rural exception sites delivered on council owned land</li> </ul>	Ongoing	RSL partners, HCA, Developers
Head of Development Planning and Team Leader Housing Strategy	Strategic Housing and Planning, affordable housing delivery	<p>Deliver an average of 300 affordable new homes each year</p> <p>Increase the supply of affordable housing to meet identified local needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target on new affordable homes met</li> <li>Promote a variety of tenures and mix of properties in urban and rural locations for both market and affordable housing that meets identified needs.</li> <li>NI 155</li> </ul>	<p>300 affordable housing delivery target for 2010/2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners, Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Developers
Head of Development Planning	Strategic Housing and Planning, housing delivery	Obtain the maximum possible affordable homes through the planning system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased numbers of homes delivered via the planning system</li> </ul>	Ongoing	RSL partners, HCA, Developers
Development Planning and Head of the Joint Technical Unit	LDF South	Joint Core Strategy will provide the overall development framework for Luton and the South Area, setting out where development should go and what standards it should aim to achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LDF for the South completed</li> </ul>	Mid 2011	Development Planning Team
Head of Development Planning	Strategic Housing and Planning, affordable	Continue to lobby for and progress proposals to develop on development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New developments progressed and appropriate funding secured</li> </ul>	Ongoing	RSL partners, HCA, Developers

	housing delivery	land in Central Bedfordshire			
Head of Growth; Team Leader Housing Strategy	Strategic Housing and Planning; Economic Growth	<p>Compile and deliver the Local Investment Plan (LIP)</p> <p>Agree Local Investment Agreement (LIA) with HCA based on LIP</p> <p>Monitor and review LIP and LIA as live documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic funding agreement including capital grants, equity loans and gap funding.</li> <li>• Present true 'sustainable development' having captured CBC corporate projects in one plan</li> </ul>	<p>LIP complete Autumn 2010</p> <p>LIA signed March 2011</p>	<p>HCA LSP (NHS, Police Fire etc) RSLs</p> <p>Private developers and landowners</p>
Head of Development Planning and Team Leader Housing Strategy	Strategic Housing and Planning, affordable housing delivery	Compile and maintain local housing needs information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the number of Housing Needs Surveys completed</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Strategic Housing, BRCC

## Key Strategic Priority 3: Meeting the accommodation and support needs of Older Persons and Vulnerable People

### Issues

The population of Central Bedfordshire is ageing, therefore a full range of housing options and support services will be required to meet the differing needs and aspirations of older households along with lifetime homes. The challenge is to reduce the number of older people living in inappropriate accommodation and to support them to maintain independence. The current data from the SHMA shows the greatest increase in population will be in older people living in Central Bedfordshire. There will be a corresponding increase in the need for extra care accommodation and support needs as the population ages. There remains a need for continued investment to deliver decent homes and improve thermal comfort in the private sector, focusing particularly on the needs of vulnerable and older person occupiers.

The 2007 Supporting People needs assessment for young people suggested 30-50 units for vulnerable young people, people suffering from Dementia, young offenders, care leavers, including specialist accommodation. Supported accommodation is currently concentrated in Bedford and there is a need to spread both services and accommodation more equitably across the south and middle of the County.

Bedfordshire has a limited supply of supported housing or floating support services, designated specifically for offenders and ex-offenders. It is recognised that many of the generic homelessness and young people's services do in fact work with many people who have offending histories. However the only provision which is identified as specifically for offenders is in Bedford. The development of this type service in Central Bedfordshire is much needed.

There is a need to improve services for 16-18 year olds leaving care and who are not ready to support their own tenancies. Foyer or hostel settings are often inappropriate for this group. These young people need support to develop life skills over an intensive period in semi-independent provision. Provision of this sort should be provided in both the north and south of the county however there are none currently within Central Bedfordshire and services are provided in neighbouring authorities.

Evidence from EERA has shown that there has been an under-provision of authorised pitches for Gypsies & Travellers. Aside from the statutory duties, there are practical reasons for making provision for the Gypsy & Traveller community. If authorised sites are not provided, unauthorised camping is likely to continue. The associated problems, such as the costs of taking enforcement action, the tension that exists between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community and the social exclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers will also continue.

*Putting People First Transforming Social Care (2007)*<sup>10</sup> introduced a vision for adult social care that is personalised for individuals, with prevention, early intervention and enablement at its core. Prevention and early intervention is key to meeting vulnerable peoples support needs. Evidence from the Partnership for Older Peoples Projects (POPPS) indicates that earlier intervention, before people reach high levels of need, may be more cost effective for the health and social care system. It is essential that Central Bedfordshire have services which can assess and meet people's needs before they escalate. Enablement services appear to be able to make significant reductions in the number of older people requiring ongoing social care support. Recent research has demonstrated the significant financial and quality of life gains which, can be achieved from a more rehabilitative and therapeutic intervention at the point of referral to social care. Connections with intermediate care services and housing are very important.

There is an increasing disparity between the housing provision for elderly persons and the population projections for this group. The needs of the growing elderly population are diverse and often urgent. The *Dr Foster Study Extra Care Residential Housing Provision in Central Bedfordshire* has outlined the growing need for Extra Care provision. Studies locally and at a national level have indicated that over 500 new extra care places are currently needed in Central Bedfordshire. However, models differ in the extent of how much development is required. The elderly population is predicted to grow considerably over the coming years, with those of 90 plus showing the biggest growth, increasing by almost 150% between 2009 and 2031. This will present challenges for the provision of residential care, and Extra Care housing specifically.

People become vulnerable and require the assistance of others for a wide range of reasons. The Council aims to support vulnerable people through working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary agencies and ensure that they receive the adequate support and accommodation needs.

## **Objectives**

Any household that requires specialist or additional support services to enable them to thrive as part of the community could be considered as 'vulnerable'. We must ensure older persons and vulnerable groups have equal opportunity to be independent, have a good quality of life, be as healthy as possible and be safe and secure in their own home. It is important for the council to address the housing needs of older persons and vulnerable groups and ensure that they are not socially excluded and are part of the community. It is essential that different services and partners work together and ensure that

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<sup>10</sup> Putting People First - Across Government, the shared ambition is to put people first through a radical reform of public services, enabling people to live their own lives as they wish, confident that services are of high quality, are safe and promote their own individual needs for independence, well-being and dignity.

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_081118](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_081118)

vulnerable people are passed on to the correct services to ensure that needs can be met quickly and efficiently.

Half the households containing the frail and older persons are home owners outright. They may have a limited income and will not necessarily receive the same support services as current social tenants. A large proportion may also consider downsizing. We must ensure that we can balance support needs despite tenure and where people want to downsize ensure we have the correct mechanisms in place to aid them.

We must increase the number of Lifetime Homes developed within Central Bedfordshire to ensure people can stay in their homes and communities. Provision of mobility standard housing within new housing growth is essential to meeting the long term and increasing need for accessible housing for older persons. We will endeavor to deliver 40-50 accessible, affordable homes per annum; built to wheelchair standards to meet the growing need.

We must ensure that there are a wide range of options of extra care services and support and ensure that more bespoke services which focus on and match clients needs are readily available. We will establish specialist floating support service and options for vulnerable people and offer preventative interventions for existing tenants and resettlement support for people moving on from temporary/supported housing schemes.

Early interventions will be targeted towards people who are beginning to be at risk of needing some health or social care services. The outcome here is to keep people at home and give them choice and control to maintain their independence. They could include practical support services such as minor aids and adaptations, Disabled Facility Grants, lifetime housing, supported housing, telecare and various other options. Taking a holistic approach to care is important to ensure that people can remain within their homes and part of their community. Services will be designed to promote independent living and clear, accessible systems to enable people to find out about them when they are needed.

Care and support for adults in Central Bedfordshire is being transformed. Transforming People's Lives is Central Bedfordshire Council's commitment to providing social care for adults in a different way, working with NHS Bedfordshire and local community voluntary sector partners. We are determined to improve the quality of people's lives in Central Bedfordshire. We will change the way services are delivered to give more choice and control over the care and support received, making better use of resources, allocating them in a fairer and more transparent way and helping to improve the range and quality of local services. We will work together with the people who need our services and the people who are willing to volunteer to help shape and develop future care and support in Central Bedfordshire. We want to increase the level of involvement by service users and carers in the way services are run and in the shaping of services.

We must also reduce the occurrence of unauthorised sites by making sufficient new provision for Gypsies and Travellers across the authority. Local authorities are required by Government, through the Housing Act 2004, to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers alongside the settled population and develop a strategy that addresses any unmet need that is identified. That strategy is the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD).

## **Resources**

There are various budgets available to ensure we can meet the objectives such as:

- Discretionary Renewal Assistance Budget
- Safety, Security and Emergency Repair Grant
- Home Improvement Loan/Assistance
- Affordable Warmth Assistance
- Empty Homes Loan Assistance
- Home Loan Support Grant
- Relocation Grant
- Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)
- Energy Conservation Grant (ECG)
- Externally provided Energy Conservation resources, such as Warm Front, Carbon Emissions Reduction Target
- HRA budget and capital budgets

Strengthening the voluntary sector and in particular improving signposting and strengthening referral networks is important in getting the best out of existing resources. Existing resources include Partner Support agencies, Voluntary agencies and services, Supported Housing providers and Supporting People (SP) services e.g. Floating Support.

'Lifetime Homes' are houses designed with flexible features that allow all age groups to use and inhabit them even with their changing circumstances. The specification of such homes is different to that required by current Building Regulations. Homes built to meet this standard will provide for the needs of the changing age profile in the district and the Council wishes to see as many market homes as possible meeting this specification. This is in line with Government advice 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods', which sets out a target for all new homes to be built to this standard by 2013.



## Actions

Lead Officer	Area of work	Action	Delivery and Outcomes	Time Frame	Key Partners
Head of Housing Needs	Meet the Housing Needs of young people 16-24	Implement protocol for 16/17 year olds. Identify use of own stock or other pathways (in partnership) to meet housing need for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify move-on accommodation</li> <li>Joint assessments with Children's Services</li> <li>Improve Business intelligence to drive strategic and operational delivery to young people</li> </ul>	2010/2011  Ongoing	Children's Services, Third Sector, Probation Services, Youth Offending Services, Bromford Support, Supporting People, Corporate Parenting Group
Head of Housing Need and Housing Heads of Service	Embed Think Family approach in homelessness prevention and broader interventions to sustain families in permanent settled accommodation	Provide early intervention and support to families  Set up dedicated mediation  Strategic approach with Children's Services on holistic family support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve quality of advice to families</li> <li>In partnership target families in housing need with early intervention and prevention</li> <li>Family Intervention Officers working closely with other Family Intervention Projects</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing  Ongoing	Children's Services, Probation Services, Youth Offending Services, Child Poverty Groups, Social Care, Third Sector, Estates Team
Head of Housing Needs	Strengthening Safeguarding Practices	Strengthen Safeguarding Practices for vulnerable adults and children across all aspects of housing options and homelessness prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated staff training for safeguarding of vulnerable people</li> <li>Provide comprehensive support for families in temporary accommodation</li> <li>Develop strategic and operational partnerships to embed safeguarding practice and outcomes in assessment processes</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing	NHS/PCT , Children's Services, Social Care, Third Sector, Probation, Youth Offending, Education, Sub-Regional Partners, May Day Trust
All Heads of Housing	Strengthening Equalities practices	Improve business intelligence around equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated and focused equalities training for all staff</li> <li>Improve access to housing advice and</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Ongoing	Third Sector, Estates Team, Children's Services, NHS/PCT,

	across all aspects of housing needs	Embed holistic equalities culture	to all marginalised groups		Equalities Forum, Aragon HA, Dedicated Equalities Groups, Forums Service Users
Head of Housing Needs	Investigating the particular problems that are experienced by people with complex needs and chaotic lifestyles	Improve business intelligence to identify key areas of need, including JSNA  Work in partnership to improve commissioning for drug and alcohol services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely and develop the Mental Health Protocol and Forum</li> <li>• Develop protocols with key strategic partners to share intelligence and target service users</li> <li>• Develop work on identifying rough sleepers</li> </ul>	2010/2011  2010/2011  2010/2011	PCT/NHS, Mental Health Services, Third Sector, Police, Probation, Drug and Alcohol Services, May Day Trust
Head of Housing Needs	Sharing awareness and strengthening partnerships with community and other agencies	Engage with community and partners at all levels  Promote outcomes to all strategic partners of homelessness prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify specific forums with key partners and service users to prevent homelessness</li> <li>• Development of key protocols and joint working on mutual outcomes</li> </ul>	2010/2011 Ongoing  Ongoing	PCT/NHS Children's Services Social Care, Police CLG, Aragon HA Estates Team, Carers Service Users, Sustainable Communities
All Heads of Housing	Tenancy Sustainment	Prevent homelessness by effective tenancy sustainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop early intervention strategies to identify key at risk service users</li> <li>• Ensure floating support targeting those that need help maintaining tenancies</li> </ul>	2010/2011 Ongoing	NHS/PCT, Bromford Support, Third Sector, Estates Team, CAB, Social Care, PRS
All Heads of Housing	Housing Options	Incentivise households under-occupying larger social housing properties to move to smaller dwellings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a consistent approach to under occupation across all social housing</li> </ul>	2010/2011	Housing Strategy Private Sector Team
Head Of Housing Needs	Meeting the housing needs of older persons and	Review of Sheltered Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing the effectiveness of sheltered housing</li> <li>• Identifying the housing needs of older persons and the vulnerable</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Housing Needs Bromford Support Asset Management

	vulnerable people				
Head of Development Planning and Team Leader Housing Strategy	Strategic Housing and Planning	Deliver the Gypsy and Traveller DPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document</li> </ul>	Mid 2011	Planning, Strategic Housing, Housing Needs
AD Housing	Strategic Housing, Housing Needs	All housing and partner services support the development and implementation of Preventative Strategy, achieving services which are preventative in nature, supporting independence and achieving greater Value For Money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NI 141 – Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living</li> <li>NI 142 – Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living</li> </ul>	Annually Ongoing	Strategic Housing, RSL partners, Housing Needs, Sub-Regional Partners
AD Housing	Strategic Housing, Housing Needs	Establish a strong and effective mental health and housing forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of service plan actions/protocols and PI's which reflect better joint working between mental health and housing services.</li> <li>NI 149 - Proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation</li> </ul>	Mid 2011  Annually	Strategic Housing, RSL partners, Housing Needs,
Commissioning Team	Produce Core Commissioning Strategy	Commissioning Strategy to modernise services in line with national policies and council priorities and integrate information into Transforming Peoples Lives (TPL Program).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NI125 - Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation / intermediate care</li> <li>NI130 - Social care clients receiving self directed support</li> <li>NI138 - Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood</li> <li>NI146 - Adults with learning disabilities in employment</li> </ul>	December 2010	Commissioning Team Adult Social Care Third Sector
Commissioning	Commissioning	Implement procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Services are able to meet the needs of</li> </ul>	June 2013	Commissioning Team

Team	for Learning Disabilities and Adult Social Care	plan for Learning Disability	people with Learning disabilities and their carers around providing a range of housing options		Adult Social Care Third Sector
Commissioning Team	Commissioning, JSNA and Adult Social Care	Ensure the JSNA and needs assessments are developed to support delivery of transforming peoples lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs analysis is sufficiently robust to deliver transforming peoples lives</li> <li>Commissioning strategies take account of the priorities identified through the JSNA</li> </ul>	October 2010	Commissioning Team Adult Social Care Third Sector
Commissioning Team	Commissioning and Adult Social Care	Developing the market, make providers aware and ensure they are able to develop services in line with transforming peoples lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providers are aware of the transforming peoples lives agenda and supportive of change</li> <li>An increase in the range of service choice with more bespoke services to meet needs</li> </ul>	June 2013	Commissioning Team Adult Social Care Third Sector
Head of Development Planning and Team Leader Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy and Planning	Development of wheelchair accessible homes and mobility standard homes to meet the growing indentified need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of 40-50 mobility standard and wheelchair accessible homes per annum</li> </ul>	Annually	Housing Strategy Planning, Housing Needs, RSL Partners, Developers

## Key Strategic Priority 4: Providing housing options for the whole community

### Issues

We recognise that within Central Bedfordshire there are limited affordable housing options in relation to the scale and diversity of need. It is essential that people in need of affordable housing have access to a comprehensive advice and assistance service which helps them to understand the pathways into housing that are available.

The widening gap between housing costs, particularly for owner occupation, and household incomes has resulted in fewer households being able to afford housing in Central Bedfordshire. In general, this means that a wide range of households need special help to live in a home that meets their needs. The groups particularly affected are households in housing need because of their personal circumstances. These can include a range of issues such as families increasing in size who need to transfer to a larger property or households that wish to downsize; those who are at risk of offending; those who need to move because of racial harassment or domestic violence; and people with special housing needs because of their health or personal circumstances. We must ensure there are range of housing options to meet the needs of people's changing circumstances.

Preventing homelessness is a key priority for Central Bedfordshire Council and its partners. We recognise the need to provide an efficient and focused housing needs service that delivers positive outcomes for homeless people.

Key areas we need to address are homeless young people, including non-priority need homelessness; and homeless people with complex needs, for example ex-offenders, people with mental health problems, people with drug or alcohol dependency, and people affected by a combination of different challenges. Present homelessness legislation requires that any 16 or 17 year old made homeless has an automatic priority need for housing assistance.

The issue of homelessness is extremely expensive and provides a strain on services however through early intervention and prevention the council can ensure cost effectiveness by preventing homelessness.

For full details on the evidence base for the homelessness issues and actions please see the Central Bedfordshire Homelessness Strategy 2010 - 2015.

### Objective

Through early intervention and prevention, promoting choice and control and good quality housing advice we will contribute to supporting and caring for vulnerable people, BME groups, an ageing population and the whole community and ensure a variety of housing options are available for all.

The main objectives of the Housing Needs Service are;

- To increase the supply of affordable accommodation
- Early intervention to prevent homelessness
- Shift the focus on how we are best able to meet housing need, to promote choice
- Avoid the use of temporary accommodation where possible
- Provide support for vulnerable people
- Tackle the wider causes such as debt and unemployment
- Address the health needs of homeless people
- Focus on youth homelessness
- Strengthen partnerships with others and make best use of resources

A significant number of older people are living in under-occupied properties (i.e. those with two or more unoccupied bedrooms above the 'bedroom standard'). While many enjoy the additional space, for others under-occupation can be a problem. Some would find a smaller home easier to keep warm and cheaper and more manageable to run. We must ensure that we make the best use of stock by providing options for people to downsize which will free up properties for those in need.

## Resources

The Choice Based Lettings<sup>11</sup> (CBL) Scheme aims to provide applicants with as much choice as possible in where they live by openly advertising vacancies and inviting applicants to express interest in vacancies that they would like to be offered and for which they are eligible to apply for. CBL also aims to simplify existing allocations procedures and provide an open and transparent service to all applicants.

The Lets Rent initiative launched in Central Bedfordshire in 2010 is intended to create further opportunities to meet housing need in the sector. Tenants going into the private rented sector under the Lets Rent Initiative will receive a deposit guarantee from the council, and floating tenancy support to prevent tenancy failure.

We have in place resources to give advice on how to prevent homelessness. A Homelessness Prevention and Mortgage Rescue Officer is working across Central Bedfordshire with partner agencies to provide advice and help with preventing homelessness. There are Service Level Agreements in place with the Citizens Advice Bureau in Central Bedfordshire to provide dedicated and comprehensive debt and money advice services.

Bedfordshire has both an in-house housing service (in former South Beds area) and a contracted out housing service (in former Mid Beds area) and the services will continue to work to harmonise service delivery. A Service Level Agreement has been agreed between Central Bedfordshire Council and

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<sup>11</sup> Choice Based Lettings:

[http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/housing/council\\_housing/allocations\\_info/default.aspx](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/housing/council_housing/allocations_info/default.aspx)

Aragon Housing Association to ensure performance management outcomes which can be used to measure effectiveness and value for money.

The council has in place a Mortgage Rescue Scheme and Recession Impact Funding for those qualify for help which will help ensure people can remain in their homes.

The Tenancy Deposit Protection scheme which is a national initiative is being used within Bedfordshire to ensure good practice in rent deposit handling.

Full details of the resources to meet this strategic priority are contained in the Central Bedfordshire Homelessness Strategy 2010 – 2015.

## Actions

Lead Officer	Area of work	Action	Delivery and Outcomes	Time Frame	Key Partners
AD Housing	Harmonise housing options service across Central Bedfordshire, following Local Government Review	To ensure a consistent, high quality service delivery to all across Central Bedfordshire.  Improve Business Intelligence to interpret Housing Needs and equalities data across Central Bedfordshire.  Review Allocations Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the Strategic Housing Review</li> <li>Align Business processes to provide a seamless model of service across Central Bedfordshire</li> <li>Embed equalities practice across the service</li> <li>Increase customer choice and control for housing</li> </ul>	2010/2011  2010/2011 Ongoing  2010/2011  Ongoing	Aragon Housing Association, Business Transformation, Third Sector, Social Care, Health, Children's Services
Head Of Housing Needs	Respond effectively to the Recession, focusing on Financial Inclusion	To work in partnership to alleviate the impact of recession on homelessness.  Strategic focus in increased provision of money advice and homelessness prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated Homelessness Prevention and Mortgage Rescue Officer</li> <li>Strengthen existing Service Level Agreement with Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) - SLA targets</li> <li>Enhance the quality of housing advice, better early intervention</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Aragon HA, CAB, Salvation Army, Communities and Local Government (CLG), Bromford Support, Housing Benefit Team, Housing Estates DWP/Job Centre Plus Third Sector
Head of Housing Needs and Head of Private Sector Housing	Increase housing supply in partnership with the Private Rented Sector	Expand Lets Rent to increase housing supply  Engage Private Sector Landlords to develop a partnership strategy, to encourage feedback and further consultation via a Landlord Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide sustainable homes for those in housing need</li> <li>Monitoring and Evaluation of Lets Rent</li> <li>Set up first forum by May 2010</li> <li>Implement DWP Safeguarding guidance</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Ongoing  2010/2011	Private Rented Sector (PRS), Service Users, Housing Benefit, Bromford Support
Head of Housing	Meet the Housing Needs of young	Implement protocol for 16/17 year olds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify move on accommodation in partnership</li> </ul>	2010/2011	Children's Services Third Sector



Needs	people 16-24	Identify use of own stock or other pathways (in partnership) to meet housing need for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint assessments with Children's Services</li> <li>Improve Business intelligence to drive strategic and operational delivery to young people</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Probation Youth Offending Services Bromford Support Supporting People
Head of Housing Need and Housing Heads of Service	Embed Think Family approach in homelessness prevention and broader interventions to sustain families in permanent settled accommodation	<p>Provide early intervention and support to families</p> <p>Set up a dedicated mediation service</p> <p>Strategic approach with Children's Services on holistic family support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve quality of advice to families</li> <li>In partnership target families in housing need with early intervention</li> <li>Family Intervention Officers work closely with other Family Intervention Project's</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing	Children's Services Probation Youth Offending Child Poverty Groups Social Care Third Sector Estates Team
Head of Housing Needs	Strengthen Safeguarding Practice for vulnerable adults and children across all aspects of housing options and homelessness prevention	Strengthen Safeguarding Practice for vulnerable adults and children across all aspects of housing options and homelessness prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated staff training of safeguarding</li> <li>Provide comprehensive support for families in temporary accommodation</li> <li>Develop strategic and operational partnerships to embed safeguarding practice and outcomes in assessment processes</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing	NHS/PCT , Children's Services, Social Care, Third Sector, Probation, Youth Offending, Education, Sub-Regional Partners, May Day Trust
All Heads of Housing	Strengthen Equalities practice across all aspects of Housing Needs	<p>Improve business intelligence around equalities</p> <p>Embed holistic equalities culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated and focused equalities training for all staff</li> <li>Improve access to housing advice and to all marginalised groups</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Ongoing	Third Sector, Estates Team, Children's Services, NHS/PCT, Equalities Forum, Aragon HA, Dedicated Equalities Groups, Forums Service Users
Head of Housing Needs	Investigate the particular problems and	Improve business intelligence to identify key areas of need, including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work closely and develop further the Mental Health Protocol and Forum</li> <li>Develop protocols with key strategic</li> </ul>	2010/2011	PCT/NHS, Mental Health Services, Third Sector,

	pathway journeys that are experienced by people with complex needs and chaotic lifestyles	JSNA Work in partnership to improve commissioning for drug and alcohol services	partners to share intelligence and target service users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop work on identifying rough sleepers</li> </ul>	2010/2011 2010/2011	Police, Probation, Drug and Alcohol Services, May Day Trust
Head of Housing Needs	Sharing awareness and strengthening partnerships with community and other agencies	Engage with community and partners at all levels Promote outcomes to all strategic partners of homelessness prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify specific forums with key partners and service users to prevent homelessness</li> <li>Development of key protocols and joint working on mutual outcomes</li> </ul>	2010/2011 Ongoing Ongoing	PCT/NHS Children's Services Social Care, Police, CLG, Aragon HA, Estates Team, Carers, Service Users, Sustainable Communities

## Reviewing the Strategy

Each strategic priority in this Housing Strategy has a specific action plan. The actions in the plan are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Accountable, Resourced, Time-bound) and so have:

- Clear explanations;
- Milestones;
- Challenging but realistic targets;
- Section and Officer responsibilities;
- Additional resources required;
- Timescales, and;
- Measures of success.

This strategy has been developed in the context of a recession, and an unpredictable socio-economic future, and ahead of a detailed Value for Money review of strategic housing services which will inform the resources available for its implementation. Central Bedfordshire Council is only one year old and is still in its infancy. We understand that we must continue to improve and that as a new authority, we need to grow and adapt if we are going to meet the needs of our community. We propose to review the Housing Strategy on an annual basis so we can monitor our performance and targets and continuously improve on any weaknesses.

The Council is currently undergoing a review of the housing services; it is key that we take on board recommendation so that we can improve all areas of housing and ensure:

- Enhanced value for money
- Improved benchmarked performance
- Improved customer satisfaction

Further, the Council is currently undertaking an organisational review project known as DECATS (Delivering Efficient Corporate and Transactional Services), which aims to promote standardization and remove fragmented or duplicated processes, in order to achieve efficiencies. This project may also have implications for Housing Strategy service delivery and the resources available for it.

## Glossary

Term	Meaning
Affordable Housing	Social rented and intermediate housing (e.g. shared ownership; below market rent) provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market
ALMO	Arms Length Management Organisation
Anti-Social Behaviour	Activity that impacts on other people/communities in a negative way.
Audit Commission	An independent body responsible for making sure that public money is spent wisely and efficiently.
Bed and Breakfast (B&B)	Temporary housing, usually not self contained, often used for (but not ideally suitable for) homeless people.
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
Brownfield Land	Land previously built on
Choice Based Lettings (CBL)	New approach to letting empty properties whereby applicants on the Housing Register can choose which properties to be considered for. Applicants having expressed an interest will then be prioritised.
Code for Sustainable Homes	The aim of the Code is to improve the overall sustainability of new homes by setting a single national standard within which the home building industry can design and construct homes to higher environmental standards. Also providing new homebuyers with better information about the environmental impact of their new home and its potential running costs.
Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)	Is a legal function which allows local authorities to obtain land or property without the consent of the owner.
Decent Homes Standard	A standard, which all social housing must meet by 2010. The standard requires all properties to have reasonably modern facilities, be in a reasonable state of repair and have effective heating and insulation
Disable Facilities Grant (DFG)	Council grant to help towards the cost of adapting homes for people with disabilities to continue to live there. The adaptations should meet identified needs, be reasonable and practical.
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
Energy Efficiency	The provision of energy products such as boilers, light bulbs and insulation that save energy and produce less pollutants.
Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)	A review of the effect of an action or policy on equalities communities.
Extra Care Housing	New forms of sheltered housing and retirement housing have been pioneered in recent years, to cater for older people who are becoming more frail and less able to do everything for themselves. These are known as extra care, very sheltered or assisted living developments (or schemes). Most properties in these schemes will suit less mobile people and wheelchair users, and bathrooms particularly will be designed to make it easier for assistance to be offered. Schemes usually have their own care staff and provide one or more meals each day, if required. Extra care housing has developed from sheltered housing, and shares many of the same other features.

Floating Support	Support dependent on not having to live in a particular property.
Green Belt	An area of land protected from development. Councils have certain planning powers to designate land as Green Belt where (for example) it will preserve the character of an area and safeguard the countryside.
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	The Homes and Communities Agency joins up the delivery of housing and regeneration under one roof, bringing together the functions of English Partnerships, the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities.
Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	Properties let to three or more tenants who form two or more households with shared facilities (e.g. kitchen). Legislation requires some of these to be licensed by the Council.
Housing Associations (HA)	Not for profit organisations providing affordable housing and which are registered by the HCA. Also known as Registered Social Landlords.
Housing Need	Households who lack their own housing or who live in unsuitable housing and who cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market.
Housing Needs Survey	A survey that identifies housing need in a particular area through new research or by analysing existing data.
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	The money which is spent on the day-to-day management and repair of council properties; which comes mainly from council rents.
Intermediate Tenures	Renting and ownership options at below market prices
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	The JSNA is the means by which Primary Care Trusts and local authorities will describe the future health, care and well-being needs of local populations.
Let's Rent Scheme	"Let's Rent" is a private sector housing scheme developed by the Housing Needs Service in partnership with private sector landlords, (PRS) Bromford Support, the Revenue and Benefits service, Private Sector Housing, other statutory and voluntary stakeholders. It will increase the number of good quality affordable homes in the private sector and will be available to households across Central Bedfordshire. The scheme has been created to assist in preventing homelessness, to offer customers threatened with homelessness a viable and sustainable alternative to Social housing or temporary accommodation when homeless and to promote customer choice and control.
Lifetime Homes	Houses/flats which have 16 design features with an accent on accessibility and design features that make the home flexible to accommodate the changing needs of households.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	A portfolio of updateable documents which will provide the local planning authority's policies for meeting the community's aims for the future of their area.
Low Cost Home Ownership	Subsidised home ownership e.g. an interest free loan for a percentage of the property value or shared ownership (part buy, part rent).
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
Move on	Movements both within and out of supported housing into independent living. It includes people who are moving into

	lower level accommodation-based support and those moving into independent accommodation, with or without floating support. It may also include people who need to move back into more supported environments.
Private Sector Assistance	Power of LA to help those in private housing e.g. owner occupiers, private landlords and their tenants gain access grants, loans, advice etc.
Regeneration	Improving areas that are run down, neglected, or deprived. Usually involves ways to improve the local economy as well as investment in the physical environment.
Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	See Housing Association
Rural Exception Sites	Housing developed on these sites must be 100% affordable.
Section 106 agreements	These agreements are a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, such as highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing.
Shared Ownership	Where a person buys part of the value of a house from a housing association and pays rent on the other part.
Sheltered Housing	Housing usually for older people with a warden (or scheme manager) to give support.
Single Assessment Procedure/Process	A new system being developed to improve information sharing across Health, Social Services and Housing. The aim is to help vulnerable people access services, by cutting down on paperwork they must fill in.
Social Housing	Type of affordable housing, which includes rented dwellings, which are usually owned and managed by either the Council or a Registered Social Landlord.
Stakeholders	Any individual or group with an interest ('stake') in the success of an activity (in this case housing) and in delivering results, maintaining and improving services.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	A detailed study of a district and/or region that gives detailed information on the present and future housing need, types of housing, jobs and migration that are likely to occur and how this is likely to shape housing provision.
Supporting People (SP)	A national programme that aims to help people live independently, by planning and funding supported housing in line with local needs.
Sustainable Communities	Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.
Total Place	Total Place is a pilot scheme set up to transform public services through improved working between central and local government agencies and a better fit between community needs and the total resources available.
Third Sector	Is made up of voluntary organisations and community groups.
Tenant Services Authority (TSA)	The TSA was launched in December 2008, having taken over the regulatory powers of the Housing Corporation.

	Their goal is to work with landlords and tenants to improve services for existing and prospective tenants.
Vulnerable People	Government term for people who may have less access to, but more need for services, because of low income, disability or other personal circumstances.