

Front Cover:



Flats over shops - Worcester Street



Young persons integrated housing provision - Berkeley Street



Regeneration of Gloucester Docks



Extra-care Sheltered Housing Scheme - St Catherine's Court

Housing Strategy 2005/10

July 2005

Gloucester City Council
Housing Strategy and Enabling

GLoucester City Housing Strategy

The Council has been working hard in partnership with others to deliver a variety of housing to meet the numerous and different housing needs across the city.

The preparation of this document is a Government requirement and its content and presentation strives to be "fit for purpose" as defined by the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister.

As in previous strategies a large majority of the content is not new and readers may well recognise much of it. Its preparation provides a basis for identifying priorities, co-ordinating activity with partners and identifying and bidding for resources for the delivery of housing projects and programmes.

The document follows a logical structure which considers the corporate and community context of housing; partnership working including the Council's enabling role. The action plan to the Strategy identifies priority targets, setting priorities is necessary because resources are limited. It is intended and expected that all priorities set out in the strategy will be addressed during its life through 3 yearly Service Development Plans.

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Bengali	<p>ইংরেজী ভাষায় এটা বুঝতে আপনার সমস্যা হলে, দয়া করে নিচের ঠিকানায় যোগাযোগ করুন: ট্যাপেস্ট্রী ট্রান্সলেশন সার্ভিস করপোরেট পার্সোনেল সার্ভিসেস হারবার্ট ওয়ারহাউস, দা ডকস গ্লোস্টার ডিএলস ১ ইকিউ টেলিফোন নম্বর: (০১৪৫২) ৩৯৬৯০৯</p>
Chinese	<p>如果你對明白這些英文有困難的話：請聯絡 達意處翻譯服務 共同人事服務部 何畢貨倉 告羅士打 電話：(01452) 396926</p>
Gujurati	<p>વડોને જે આ શબ્દોમાં સમજવામાં કઠણીક પડતી હોય તો મદદરોની ઠહીને નીચેની જગ્યાએ સંપર્ક સાધવો : ટેલિફોન સુલભરોથના સર્વિસ, કોર્પોરેટ પર્સોનલ સર્વિસીસ, હરબર્ટ વેરહાઉસ, ધ ડોક્સ, ગ્લોસ્ટર, ગુજરાલેશ વર્કહાઉસ, ટેલિફોન નંબર : (૦૧૪૫૨) ૩૯૬૯૦૯</p>
Urdu	<p>اگر آپ کو یہ انگریزی میں سمجھنے میں مشکل پیش آتی ہے تو براہ مہربانی یہاں رابطہ قائم کریں: ڈاٹیسٹری ٹرانسلیشن سروسز، کورپوریٹ پرسنل سروسز، ہربرٹ ویکر ہاؤس، دی ڈاکس، گلوستر جی ای 1 2 ای کیو ٹیلیفون : (01452) 396928</p>

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Foreword

Decent housing is a basic human requirement and contributes to the social, health, environmental and economic well-being of the communities in which we live.

This Housing Strategy for Gloucester sets out a vision for all types of housing for the next five years.

The preparation of this document is a Government requirement and its content and presentation strives to be of a standard deemed to be “fit for purpose” as defined by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Although the Council has written this document its contents have been developed with the input of local people and community representatives, and reflects the main thrust of the Gloucester Community Strategy. As in previous strategies a large majority of the content is not new and readers may well recognise much of it. It draws on its content from many policies/strategies and developments subject to much earlier debate and consultation. It takes account of the Council’s recently (February 2005) adopted “Blueprint for Change” in setting out our main over-arching priorities.

This Strategy will be updated annually to reflect changing circumstances. If, on reading this document, you would like to make any comments or become involved in future years you are invited to contact Jan Kirby in the first instance, e-mail: JanK@gloucester.gov.uk, telephone: (01452) 396541.

The Strategy can also be viewed on the Council’s website www.gloucester.gov.uk



Councillor Andrew Gravells
Cabinet Member for Housing and Health



Phil Lane
Executive Manager (Healthy Living)

Blueprint for Change

Gloucester City Council Corporate Strategy 2005-2008

The council has been working hard in partnership with others to deliver real improvements, which can now be seen across the city. We have been focusing on the areas that matter to local people but achieving sustained improvement has not been easy with the increased pressures on the council's limited resources. Satisfaction with council services is below average and our performance is mixed. We have therefore decided that in order to improve our services and the quality of life for local residents we need to significantly change the way council services are delivered. We have put together an improvement plan, so that we can deliver the quality of service our customers expect.

As part of this 'Blueprint for Change' we aim to:

1. Review all our services to see if there are better ways to deliver them and make sure we are providing 'value for money'.
2. Get the council into a stable financial situation and provide money to invest in future improvements by making services more efficient.
3. Focus our attention and resources on the three priorities which local people have identified as important.
 - Streetcare
 - Regeneration
 - Efficiency and effectiveness

These three priorities for spending and improvement all help the authority to achieve its five key aims. These in turn contribute to the ten-year vision for Gloucester, which was developed by the Gloucester Partnership of public, private and voluntary sector organisations in 2003.

Most importantly, our strategy responds to the issues local people have said are important to them through residents' surveys and the many other ways the council consults with residents.



Cllr Mark Hawthorne
Leader of the Council



Paul Smith
Managing Director

The Blueprint for Change is available on www.gloucester.gov.uk

Housing Strategy 2005/10

Summary

This document establishes a vision and strategic framework for housing in Gloucester to the year 2010. Its preparation is a requirement of the Government and it provides a basis for identifying priorities, co-ordinating activity with partners and identifying and bidding for resources for the delivery of housing projects and programmes.

Whilst the Housing Strategy should be read as a stand-alone document, the management of the Council's own housing stock is dealt with in greater detail within the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the ALMO (Arms Length Management Organisation) Asset Management Plan. Other specific aspects of housing, such as the Local Plan; Homelessness, Private Sector Renewal and Affordable Warmth/Fuel Poverty are covered in more detail in separate documents. The views of key stakeholders and representatives of the local Community have been used to shape much of the content of this document.

The document follows a logical structure which considers the corporate and community context of housing; partnership working including the Council's enabling role; an analysis of local housing needs (including special needs and affordability); resources/mechanisms for delivering the strategy and priorities for action. The Action Plan to the Strategy identifies priority projects and outcomes against timescales and resources.

- The Blueprint For Change identified Regeneration as one of its 3 main priority areas of work. Within the Housing Strategy there are four issues that contribute towards the achievement of this priority
- a minimum of 60% of all new homes to be built on previously developed land
- Decent Homes Standard achieved in 55 % of existing Council owned homes by 2008 (and 100% by 2010)

- Better standard in the private sector by 2008 with at least 100 homes per annum receiving direct assistance
- 500 new social housing units achieved by April 2008

HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITIES

Setting priorities is necessary because resources are limited. It is intended and expected that all the priorities set out in the strategy will be addressed during its life through 3 yearly Service development Plans.

However, in order to focus our energies the Council have considered the main priorities to fulfil its aims and objectives set out in various priority documents such as the Blueprint for Change/Community Strategy and South West Regional Housing Strategy

1. Balancing Housing Markets

Adequate Land supply

- Ensuring there is an adequate land supply to meet the Council's obligation under the Structure Plan

Wide Range of Dwelling Types

- all developments to provide a wide range of mix , housing type and size to meet all needs especially within the City Centre

Brownfield Developments

- 60% of all new housing to be built on "brownfield"/previously used land

Local Development Framework

A local development framework including an Action Area Plan for the HURC area including revisions to Affordable Housing Policies and related Supplementary Planning Document.

2. Regeneration

Decent Homes

- Meet the Decent Homes standards by 2010 for the council housing stock

- ❑ Achieve 2 or more star rating for the ALMO and successfully bid for £41m grant from government
- ❑ To sustain the regeneration of the Central area of Gloucester
- ❑ The provision of a wide range of new housing within the Western Waterfront targeted at higher income households whilst making provision also for lower income residents
- ❑ Reduce levels of long term vacants
- ❑ Increase the amount of housing within the City Centre
- ❑ to reduce levels of unfit and disrepair and increase the amount of Decent Housing
- ❑ Improve the condition of Houses in Multiple Occupation
- ❑ Carry out targeted regeneration of Council housing estates
- ❑ Target our limited housing capital resources towards supporting low-income owner-occupiers in areas of poor housing.

3. Meeting Housing Need

- ❑ To maximise the amount of affordable housing from new private housing developments in accordance with Local Plan Policies without reliance on Social Housing Grant
- ❑ Deliver the affordable housing provision within the GHMP (Gloucester Housing Market Partnership)
- ❑ Agree an Asset Management Plan/Regeneration of the Council's housing stock and start delivering agreed plans

4. Homelessness and Rehousing Services

- ❑ Operate a Choice Based lettings scheme by 2010
- ❑ Provide a pro-active service based on prevention of homelessness rather than being reactive
- ❑ Reduce our reliance on Bed and Breakfast for emergency housing and work in partnership with the private sector to provide good quality self contained temporary housing for the homeless

5. Vulnerable/Special Needs/Supported Housing

- ❑ Deliver the Extra-Care Village at St. Oswalds Park including sheltered housing for Chinese Elders within it
- ❑ Manage the changes due to come into effect following the reduction in Supporting People funding
- ❑ Work with the district council's in the County on any housing needed for travellers and gypsies
- ❑ Reduce Fuel Poverty and increase energy efficiency across both private and public sector housing.

Section 1

Introduction and context

This section explains the purpose of the Housing Strategy and provides an overview of the influences that affect housing issues in Gloucester. These include physical, organisational, human, political and resource factors as well as placing housing within its regional and sub-regional context. The Housing Strategy is one of a family of documents prepared by the Council and other bodies. Other documents referred to are referenced at the end of this section.

1.1 Purpose of the Housing Strategy

This document provides a number of functions including:

- ❑ Communicating a shared vision and approach with customers, the local community, partners and other agencies.
- ❑ Providing an over-arching document for a number of topic-focused and implementation-based studies such as the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, the Homelessness Strategy, the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy and the Local Plan.
- ❑ Placing housing within a wider economic, social, political and spatial context and explaining how these factors influence housing issues in Gloucester.
- ❑ Providing a basis for consultation with the local community, stakeholders and partners.
- ❑ Strengthening the linkages between housing and related activities including urban regeneration, crime reduction, health improvement and sustainability.
- ❑ Setting out an explanation of delivery mechanisms.
- ❑ Establishing options for action, evaluating these options, and setting targets.
- ❑ Monitoring the delivery of targets.

The Housing Strategy covers a five-year period from April 2005. During the life of this document individual (3 year) Service Development Plans will be updated and rolled forward annually reviewing the previous year's performance and setting targets for forthcoming years.

This document provides a basis for housing activity in the City and will be used in seeking resources including applying for spending and borrowing permissions from Central Government and making bids to other bodies for resources.

Corporate Strategy

The Blueprint for Change and the plans for improvement within it form the basis of council activities over the next five years. Part of the strategy is to ensure that council services are delivered in the best way and that they are achieving value for money.

Within the overview of the Corporate Strategy this housing strategy contributes primarily to the council's 'regeneration' priority and the key aim of 'a city with good housing and health'. This in turn helps us to achieve the Gloucester Partnership's joint vision for Gloucester 'a fair and thriving community where no one is seriously disadvantaged'.

1.2 An Overview of Gloucester

Development Constraints

Gloucester is acknowledged by GOSW (Government of the South West) as one of the 12 Principal Urban Areas (PUA) in the South West. It is heavily constrained by its municipal boundaries for new developments as past building has taken up almost all "Greenfield" opportunities. The River Severn and its flood plain have stopped new development to the West beyond the River. Apart from the redevelopment of RAF Quedgeley to provide a significant urban extension there is now an increasing emphasis on development of the Central Area of the city (especially the Western Waterfront) to regenerate the older areas and this is commented on later in this document. Finally much of the new building scheduled to take place within the Conurbation/PUA is

within the remit of Stroud and Tewkesbury Councils.

Demographic Overview

The results of the 2001 census are now available on the Council's website www.gloucester.gov.uk/living/research-information/census. The census shows that the population of Gloucester is almost 110,000. The City has a relatively young population with 21.5 % of residents being under 16 years and 17.4% of retirement age compared to (nationally) 19.8% and 18.4 %.

The Housing Needs Assessment 2004 shows that the city has a proportionately younger population (38.6% under 30 years of age) compared to county-wide (35.2%) and a higher percentage of teenage parents.

The 2001 Census has revealed that 6.1% of all households classifying themselves as non-white (7.5% of all people) spread across three main groups being Asian/Asian British; Black/Black British; Mixed and Chinese. Of the non-white population Asian represent 37.2% Black/Black British 30.8% Mixed and Chinese being 25.5% and 6.45 % respectively. The BME (Black Minority Ethnic) community in Gloucester is by far the largest in the County; above the average for England and on a par with Bristol although below that of England's largest cities.

Social Factors

The centrally collected index of multiple deprivation show that Gloucester is the most deprived of all the Local Authority districts in Gloucestershire.

Five out of the top six and 11 out of the top 20 of the most deprived Super Output areas in the county are found within Gloucester. Westgate and Podsmead contain the most deprived areas and almost all have high deprivation "scores" in whichever elements you examine. At a national level, Gloucester has five Super Output Areas which are in the top 10% of deprivation and 15 within the top 25% of deprivation.

Many of these areas feature heavily at national and local level in issues such as

employment (6 in top 10% of unemployment nationally, and 14 in the 25% nationally).

Figures taken from the 2004 county wide Housing Needs Assessment showed that 18.9% of Gloucestershire households were in receipt of one or more state related financial supports with the highest percentage (22%) living in Gloucester. That same report estimates that 7.3% of all our residents suffer fuel poverty, which is approx in mid-way range for the other District Councils in Gloucestershire.

1.3 Community Context

In Gloucester there is a direct link between Strategic and Community priorities and the thrust and delivery of housing services. This is provided by the Gloucester Partnership which brings together more than 100 organisations with a stake in the city who are committed to improving the quality of services to the public in Gloucester.

The Community Strategy 2003/13 "Our Gloucester, our Future"- states "Over the 10 years we aim to create a fair, just and thriving community where no one is seriously disadvantaged".

It has six ambitions:

1. A strong, vibrant and sustainable city.
2. An inclusive city.
3. A healthy active city.
4. Opportunities to live learn and play.
5. Safe, clean and pleasant city.
6. Working together.

Community Cohesion

Housing has an enormous impact on communities of all sorts and sizes: how they form, how they differ, how they are treated, how they relate, how they belong.

In the light of the Community Strategy's ambitions, and following several years' action and research, the Gloucester Partnership has developed a Community Cohesion Proofing Tool for use by all partners. This defines community cohesion for the local context, raises awareness of key issues, and helps

partners maximise the positive impact of their policy and practice.

Gloucester City Council is now using this proofing tool in developing new strategies.

The Community Strategy sets out a wide range of Partnerships demonstrating the strong links between the work of the City Council and its partners and a full version can be viewed on the Council's website: www.gloucester.gov.uk

Examples of how this Housing Strategy meets those priorities are set out in Appendix H.

1.4 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

Gloucester City Council was assessed as 'Fair' in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment in July 2004. The Audit Commission felt that we were lacking the resources to deliver everything we were trying to. We recognise we have been over-ambitious in the past and are now focusing on delivering tangible improvements in key areas such as housing. The CPA identified some weaknesses in parts of our housing service and we have already put plans in place to remedy these. Further actions are included in our Corporate Strategy, ALMO Business Plan and within this Housing strategy as well as Service Development Plans of individual Service Portfolios.

Amongst the weaknesses were: -

- shortage of affordable housing
- staff and management capacity severely stretched
- direct labour organisation not tested against the market in recent years
- poor computer systems for data collection within its housing landlord repair service
- Decent Homes - 66% of council homes do not meet the Decent Homes standard

- performance in improving and making good, private sector housing was in the bottom quartile for 2002/03
- speed of decision making on homelessness decision (2002/03) and heavy reliance on use of B&B

Improvements underway identified by the CPA

- Long term agreements to provide 1,000 new affordable homes
- Local Plan/Supplementary Planning Policy (SPG) helps deliver priorities such as affordable housing
- Decent Homes delivery underway
 - robust up to date stock condition survey
 - extensive tenant involvement
- ALMO - key staff in post to manage and deliver
- Council in a position to drive forward key project area
- Substantial reduction on the use of "B&B"

Decent Homes - Council Housing

- Updated housing stock and condition survey (council housing) helping to identify work required
- New IT systems to improve data collection on housing repairs
- Stock options appraisal leading to formation of ALMO
- Bid to Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in February 2005 for ALMO status and funding of £40 million was successful in attracting an award of £19.3 million for two years. ALMO status depends on outcome of 2 star rating
- Market testing of Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) Building works

1.5 Corporate Context

Council Decision Making

As a result of Local Government modernisation, Gloucester selected a new decision making structure which replaced the Committee system. This comprises the Council, a Cabinet with six members, including a Leader and Portfolio Holders. The Cabinet considers reports with recommendations that are key or non-key depending on whether they constitute major changes in policy or have significant financial implications. In addition, more minor operational decisions are delegated to Portfolio holders.

Decisions within the portfolio areas are overseen by Scrutiny & Review Committees, whilst the Planning Committee determines those applications where the Development Control Manager does have delegated powers to grant permission.

The Cabinet Forward Plan is an annual statement of Council priorities setting out clear objectives and targets and identifying staff responsible for delivery. In addition, within each portfolio area is a policy framework, a series of strategy documents that contribute to policy, priority setting and delivery. The Cabinet Forward Plan and the policy framework can be viewed on the Council's website: www.gloucester.gov.uk

Consulting with and informing the local community is a key area of Council activity and is undertaken in many ways depending on individual circumstances. Strategic consultation and the gaining of feedback are undertaken in a variety of ways including questionnaire; focus groups; "planning for real" exhibitions, presentations at meetings and various forums. All formal meetings of the Council are open to the general public and Cabinet minutes are available to public scrutiny both in paper form and on the Council's website.

There are a variety of Fora serviced by Council staff with which the Council consult, including Tenants' Forum, Race Equality Forum, Disability Equality Forum,

Environment and Ecology forum and City Centre Management Forum. The role of Tenants' Forum once the ALMO is established has yet to be determined, but clearly there will need to be a mechanism for consultation between the Council as the freehold owner of the housing stock and its tenants.

1.6 Influences on Housing Strategy National and Regional

(a) National Context

Whilst a stream of new Government initiatives make this a dynamic situation to which local delivery must respond, the key national policies that currently inform housing strategy in Gloucester are set out below.

The importance for Local Housing Authorities such as Gloucester is to ensure that strategic priorities are driven through and implemented at the local level. Examples of these are:

- ❑ National Housing Policy Statement "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home For All" (December 2000)
- ❑ Homelessness Act 2002
- ❑ A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal (Report by the Social Exclusion Unit January 2001)
- ❑ Private Sector Renewal
- ❑ Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (Housing) revised 2000
- ❑ Planning Green Paper Planning: Delivering a Fundamental Change (DTLR 2001)
- ❑ Sustainable Communities, Building for the Future (The Communities Plan) 2003
- ❑ Housing Corporation Investment Strategy
- ❑ National Crime Reduction Strategy
- ❑ National Framework for Health
- ❑ The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995.
- ❑ Gypsies and Travellers

- National Immigration and Asylum Act 2002
- Supporting People framework

(b) Regional and Sub-Regional context

Central Government is placing increasing importance on regional strategies and resource allocation requiring cross-boundary working and co-operation. Examples of these are:

- South West Regional Housing Strategy 2002-2005 (South West Regional Housing Forum) and its successor for 2005/08)
- Sustainable Communities in the South West, Building for the Future 2003
- Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10, September 2001)
- Gloucestershire Structure Plan
- Regional Spatial Strategy

1.7 Local Issues and Priorities

Gloucester Second Deposit Local Plan (2002)

The Second Deposit Local Plan was published in August 2002 and has been formally approved for Development Control purposes. It covers the period to 2011.

The Plan is underpinned by the over-arching principle of ‘sustainable development’ and places great emphasis on achieving an, ‘urban renaissance’ for Gloucester. It also gives priority to the reuse of previously developed land and buildings as well as the need to reduce travel by car and promote other means of travel.

It identifies that 10,250 dwellings need to be provided in Gloucester between 1991 and 2011.

Monitoring undertaken on an annual basis by the Council shows that as of 31 March 2004, 6,677 of these dwellings have already been constructed. This leaves a requirement of 3,773 dwellings.

Taking into account existing commitments (4,075) allocations (1,186) and likely windfalls (400) there is a forecast over-provision of 1,888 dwellings in the period to 2011.

In terms of affordable housing, the Local Plan seeks the provision of up to 40% affordable housing on sites of 15 or more dwellings or on sites of 0.5 hectares or more irrespective of the number of dwellings.

The Gloucester Local Development Framework

The Second Deposit Local Plan (2002) covers the period to 2011 requires considerable redrafting in light of recent planning permissions and changing circumstances.

With the emergence of the Urban Regeneration Company it has been agreed that the Local Plan will be converted into a series of Development Plan Documents under an overarching Local Development Framework including an area Action Plan for the Urban Regeneration Company (URC) area.

This will cover the period to 2016 and will therefore tie in with the emerging Structure Plan Third Alteration. Housing policies and allocations will therefore be updated accordingly.

It is anticipated that documents will be formally submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2006 and October 2006. The Second Deposit Local Plan will remain in force until that time.

Customer Access/E-Government

In 2002 Gloucester City Council adopted a customer access strategy which emphasised its commitment to providing an excellent service to all those who contact the Council.

Citizens are customers who have expectations about the quality of services they receive, and against which Gloucester City Council is judged. It is increasingly important for us to understand the needs and aspirations of our customers, and to remain flexible and responsive in meeting those needs. To do this we recognise that we need

to build our services around the needs of the customers.

Our vision is to be an organisation that can achieve a customer oriented 'first time fix' for frequently asked questions and a fast response for more complex issues, delivered by a service team that is trained in customer care to ensure that the customer can experience a quality service. The service should be available over a choice of media (phone, face to face and via self service Information Communication Technology (ICT)). (Customer Access Strategy, 2002).

This programme of work will benefit the housing strategy in the following areas:

- ❑ Mobile and remote working supporting home visits at the convenience of the customer.
- ❑ Implementing document image processing and workflow to support officers in the field by streamlining the management of the housing function.
- ❑ Implementation of Customer Relations Management (CRM) and linking back office systems, providing access to information for front-line customer services officers.
- ❑ Supporting a countywide Gloucestershire local authority network for sharing data and services.
- ❑ Supporting national initiatives such as mutual exchanges, supporting people and regional initiatives.
- ❑ Improvements to 'Council Direct' on-line service providing a source of information and access to electronic services

Anti-Poverty Strategy

The Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy 2005/10, has direct relevance to the services contained within the Housing Strategy and particularly dovetails with the corporate strategies on Economic Development,

Community Development, Affordable Warmth and Fuel Poverty and Housing.

It aims to improve the quality of life for everyone in the city by taking action to improve the position of the most disadvantaged sections of our community. It links to the generic equality standards and other measures to counter discrimination, disadvantage and other barriers that affect the life chances of some sections of the community.

The broad aims of the Anti-Poverty Strategy are to:-

- ❑ counter the causes and effects of low income
- ❑ support equality of access to services
- ❑ encourage social integration and cohesion

These broad aims provided the starting point for developing a more detailed set of aims. The full strategy can be found on the Council's website: www.gloucester.gov.uk

Supporting People

This is a new government framework introduced to fund the costs of providing support for vulnerable people. The County Council are the Administering Authority and the City Council together with other statutory partners serve on the Commissioning Body.

An adverse Audit Commission report on the service, together with the need to make cuts to the overall budget, means that the Council does not have complete freedom to decide its strategic approach to provision for Supported Housing. The Supporting People (SP) budget has to be reduced from £28m (2003/04); to £25.6m (2005/06) and to £23.1m (2007/08) and so our ability to provide suitable housing will be influenced significantly by the Commissioning Body of Supporting People.

The Supporting People 2005/08 Strategy raises major challenges for the City namely:

- ❑ Changes to the distribution of resources (away from Gloucester to other parts of the County) may result in a substantial

reduction in funding for implementing Supporting People projects/services locally.

- The majority of projects are placed in the urban districts of the county and therefore the City is more likely to be adversely effected by any pro-rata reduction in the budget.
- Recommendations of any reviews for withdrawal of medium support projects will adversely affect our Homelessness Strategy.
- Success of the city in establishing special needs schemes especially around mental health means we are likely to be adversely affected by costs.
- New special needs schemes cannot be considered until 2008/9. For Gloucester this means loss of opportunities at a time of development of new social housing.

- Reductions in the funding of Lifelink Services will impact on our unique dispersed alarms service and changes to funding of Category II Sheltered Housing may well have a detrimental affect.

However, this will not preclude some re-investment in new provision, eg. Extra Care Village at St Oswalds Park (probably not scheduled to be ready for occupation before January 2008), nor the continuing provision of high-support special needs housing projects for single homeless people such as Claremont House/The Old Curiosity Shop and The Old School House.

The City Council remains committed to working in partnership to deliver the Supporting People Services to maximise benefits to our residents especially in the delivery of front line services.

Section 2

Partnership & Enabling

The Council is committed to working in a spirit of true partnership, both within and between its own internal Services/Portfolios and with external agencies, statutory, voluntary and private. This partnership approach is essential in developing the Council's housing enabling role-making things happen.

2.1 Working with Planning

Housing staff have worked closely with Planning staff to develop the Local Plan policy for affordable housing and in drawing-up Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Close working continues between Housing and Planning in the drafting of the Affordable Housing requirements within Planning Brief and specific Planning applications where an element of affordable housing will be required.

The Housing Service is closely involved in all negotiations on Affordable Housing provision and advice is sought at an early stage.

A Good Practice Guide

A 'Good Practice Guide/Workshop Manual' is due to be published during 2005 following a joint Seminar/Workshop between Council staff (Housing/Planning) and two Housing Associations to exchange views on securing Affordable Housing agreements and ensuring their implementation. A version of the Guide will be made available to developers to assist them when purchasing land and submitting planning applications.

Housing Benefits

Benefits staff and Housing staff work together to prevent homelessness and develop housing opportunities. Examples are:

- Private Leasing scheme through the Gloucestershire Housing Association and English Churches Housing Group whereby rental charges for these

properties are fully covered by Housing Benefit.

- An extension of this scheme is under discussion with Housing Benefit (HB) to take advantage of opportunities to secure high rental incomes through eligible higher management allowances.
- Regular liaison meetings between HB and Housing staff that ensures smooth running between the departments and awareness of regulations impacting on mutual client groups.
- Use of discretionary housing benefit to prevent homelessness.

2.2 Working with Social Landlords

Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)

The City Council's Housing stock, albeit depleted through redevelopment and Right to Buy, still provides substantially the largest portfolio of social housing (both rent and shared ownership). The decision of the Council to set up an Arms Length Management Organisation with a view to attracting £41 million towards meeting the Decent Homes Standard is reported on elsewhere.

The City Council are committed to working with the ALMO to provide the highest of housing management services and have wholeheartedly endorsed the Mission, Values and Visions adopted by the ALMO Board. (See Appendix E)

The ALMO are committed to supporting the City Council in meeting its strategic obligations. Some of these are enlarged upon within Section 4 and set out in more detail in Appendix E.

Working with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) also named Housing Associations (HAs)

There are some 20 RSL/HA who have housing in Gloucester. However of these, only six are active in development: -

- Gloucestershire) partners
- Housing Association(GHA)) within
- Oxbode HA) GHMP
- Guinness Housing Trust)
- Rooftop Housing Group
- Severnvaile Housing Society
- Bromford Housing Group

The stock ownership ranges from one supported Housing scheme of some 8 bed-spaces to over 600 dwellings

Successes

The Council's partnership approach and enabling work with its RSL partners has produced many important successes.

Some examples are:

Assessment Hostels for Single Homeless People

Claremont House/The Old Curiosity Shop

These projects provide (respectively) 20 and 10 short-stay self-contained flats for single homeless people over and under the age of 25 years. Capital costs of the projects were funded by a mixture of Housing Corporation and Council Social Housing Grant, and sale of a large council owned hostel at nil cost. Supporting People provided a major source of revenue funding for the high support provided to residents. Both projects provide an opportunity for residents, within a 24 hour staffed environment, to receive support/rehab/training and access to private housing as "move-on accommodation".

Both projects operate within their respective Integrated Networks for Single Homeless and provide alternatives to an uncertain stay in the night shelter. There are substantial links to other agencies such as the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service.



Old Curiosity Shop redeveloped to provide 10 short stay flats for under 25's

Short Term Leasing Scheme for Homeless Families

A portfolio of 100 privately owned dwellings leased for three or five years by GHA with revenue deficit support from the City Council.

Gloucester Housing Market Partnership (GHMP)

This major development partnership is a "flagship". Gloucester Housing Market Partnership involving Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury Councils and a consortium of three RSL's gives exclusive access to Social Housing Grant to carry out a 10 year development programme on three main strategic housing schemes within the conurbation of Greater Gloucester, centred around Quedgeley/Hardwicke and Brockworth, plus a number of selected and associated smaller sites in Gloucester. The project will deliver circa 120 dwellings per annum (rent/shared ownership). This implementation and funding partnership has been in place since late 2000 and has attracted significant value added investment in addition to the new housing that is being provided.

The Housing Corporation are providing £4 million for 2004/05 and 2005/06 to fund the first phase with the three Councils jointly providing £0.5 pa. in three equal shares.

Affordable Housing - Grant Funding

With the exception of the sites within GHMP there needs to be an expectation that Social Housing Grant will not be available to subsidise the cost of providing Affordable Housing arising from a planning obligation. This is supported by the emerging Housing Corporation policy framework on support for Section 106 sites.

Because social rented housing needs a capital subsidy landowners need therefore to expect a lower return. It is recognised that the subsidy is substantial and is likely to exceed that provided by provision of free land and infrastructure.

The current benchmark used for Affordable Housing is that the Council will seek to

negotiate an on-site provision based on 40 % split as follows:

Social rent	25%
Social shared equity	10 %
Low cost home ownership	05 %

Shared ownership to be affordable to a family with young children with a joint income of £20,000 means an equity share purchase of £50,000.

Low Cost Home Ownership will generally be provided as a form of intermediate housing at a rate discounted in perpetuity below open market value.

Our most notable success in achieving grant-free housing has been the agreement to provide an Extra Care Village for the Elderly at St Oswalds Park (formerly the Cattle Market). This will provide 150 flats (1 bed and 2 bed) for rent and sale on shared ownership. The land was provided by the landowner free of cost.

Because of the strategic importance of GHMP to both the City Council and the Housing Corporation it is likely that this scheme will absorb 100% of all grant funding from the Government. The reality therefore is that other Section 106 schemes will need to be funded without recourse to Social Housing Grants.



Affordable and New Spec. Housing

2.3 Working with Statutory Agencies

Work with other statutory bodies, such as Health Agencies/Social Services, has been important for the Council in developing strategies and delivering services. Examples of joint working are:

Social Services/West Glos Primary Care Trust (PCT)

The housing staff continues to develop joint working relationships with colleagues within Social Services/PCT. In particular this has been enhanced through regular meetings with senior managers to consider relevant and pertinent topics, especially around housing services to older persons.

Joint working has resulted in important successes which have benefited the local community. Some examples are:

- Joint partnership for rehousing solutions of those with special/complex/supported housing needs
- Joint assessment protocol for vulnerable young people
- Referral system for homeless families with children
- Provision of support services to an existing Sheltered Housing Scheme (St. Catherine Court) to enable Extra Care facilities to be provided on site
- Occupational Therapy Team located within the Housing service; funded by Social Services and dedicated to the housing needs of Homeless and waiting list clients
- Involved in developing a Support and Accommodation Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities.
- Joint funded contract between the six District Councils/Social Services and Shelter to provide an advice/advocacy and assistance for young homeless single people via a county-wide service
- Joint protocol for rehousing Care leavers as part of the Pathway Plan
- Planning a new Extra Care Village for the elderly (both renting and shared ownership) to provide Affordable Housing together with Supporting People revenue funding for support costs.
- The use of the ex-deputy warden bed-sit in one of the Council sheltered scheme as short-term accommodation

to prevent delayed discharges from hospital

- ❑ Established Keyring Project to provide network of low support accommodation for people with learning disabilities, with a view to extending the service Countywide.
- ❑ Development of a County-wide Older Persons Strategy.
- ❑ Agreement to carry out a feasibility study on all 20 social sheltered housing schemes to measure their accessibility for wheelchair users and the seriously disabled person.
- ❑ Development of a Strategy for Young Homeless people to include Care Leavers.
- ❑ Working together on national initiatives such as “Every Child Matters”



*St. Catherine Court
African-Caribbean Extra-Care Scheme
Plus accommodation for physically-disabled*

Supporting People

The Council are partners at a Director level through the Partnership Board which gives a strategic guidance leadership on the Supporting People Service. At an operational level, the Enabling Service is part of the Core Strategy Group (drawn from all the Statutory Partners). This meets bi-monthly to work with the Supporting People Manager to ensure the Service meets targets and delivers an effective service. With the need for the Service to make cuts over the next 2-3 years, the Core Strategy Group will be crucial in the smooth implementation of the cuts in order to minimise the effect on front line services delivered direct to clients.

Along with colleagues throughout the county, housing staff have been involved in multi-

agency groupings to review the services, which Supporting People should be funding.

Mental Health Services (Partnership Trust)

There is regular liaison between housing and colleagues in the mental health service to identify the housing needs of clients with a view to agreeing a five-year accommodation plan.

Crime and Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour

The Council as an active member of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership is working corporately towards reducing crime; disorder and anti-social behaviour, both in its role as a local authority and landlord. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership adopted its third Crime Reduction Strategy 2005/08, which came into effect from April 2005. It encompasses a number of targets which impact upon residents' lives, both at home, work and play, but particularly around criminal and anti-social behaviour in residential areas, whether on a neighbourhood/locality basis, or to an individual's home.

A number of issues have been identified by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership which impact upon housing and these are contained in action plans set out at the end of the document. One notable development is the formation of an Anti-Social Behaviour Unit that will share an office with the proposed ALMO to tackle problems on Council estates

2.4 Working with Voluntary Agencies

The Council values the work of the voluntary sector throughout all its services and none less so than the broader areas covered by the Housing Strategy. It recognises its inability to provide a comprehensive service to the homeless in isolation; values the work of its partners and will continue to engage them in meaningful partnership.

The Council is working with the voluntary sector in delivering services, and examples of this are:

Multi-Agency Forum on Homelessness

Whilst the Council has the statutory responsibility towards the homeless, it cannot provide the appropriate services in isolation. It therefore works in partnership with many others. Over-seeing these arrangements is a Multi-Agency Homelessness Forum comprising of about 20 different agencies/partners. The Forum, which meets quarterly and is chaired by the City Council, provides advice and guidance to the City. Over the course of a year it reviews all the targets within the Homelessness Strategy. The agenda for the Forum are to be reviewed to ensure a better balance between operational and strategic issues.

Service Delivery

Street Services

- The City Council purchased a property and attracted government funding towards refurbishing and developing it into a Day Centre for Street Homeless. This Centre provides access to facilities to assist with physical and Mental Health problems. They provide counselling, advice, training, outreach and resettlement work for rough sleepers. It is run by GEAR (Gloucester Emergency Accommodation Resource) a local charity, in partnership with English Churches Housing Group (ECHG). It is funded through the City Council via Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Grant/SP, and charitable fund raising. This work is pivotal in meeting Gloucester's target for getting rough sleeping as near to zero as possible.
- The Council has received money from the ODPM for entrenched rough sleepers, up to 31 March 2006. A number of voluntary agencies assist rough sleepers who have addictions and other problems.
- The centre provides specialist Mental Health Workers to assist rough sleepers and other homeless people with mental health problems

- Primary Health Care is also available at the Centre, providing services such as a GP surgery, a Community Nurse and a chiropody services. The two new Short Stay Assessment Centres for single under and over 25 year olds link into this service.
- Drug & Alcohol Project
- GEAR have established a 5 Bed unit to house Rough Sleepers who are seeking detox
- A local RSL provide 8 move-on flats for post-detox clients
- Gloucester Forum for Young Single Homeless (Glofysh). This service was developed through the Council, and is managed by a local charity. This innovative project is a key element of Gloucester's preventative approach to dealing with homelessness. A network of agencies, statutory, voluntary and private have developed around Glofysh, which acts as a 'triage' ensuring that people can access the right advice, information and help as quickly as possible.

Rent Deposit Schemes

- Funded by the ODPM Homelessness Grant, the Council's private sector housing worker has successfully secured over 40 private rented houses for homeless families during 2004/05. This work will be continued into 2005/06 (subject to adequate funding) and beyond.
- Glofysh also operate a rent deposit scheme for young, single people.

2.5 Working with the Private Sector

Private Sector Landlords

The Council have established good working relationships with many private sector landlords both directly through our Private Sector Tenancy Introduction Service and indirectly through our portfolio of 100 Short Term Leasing Dwellings operated by GHA. Both services have proved popular to homeless families and landlords.



Stratton Road
Private Sector Development
Leased as part of P.S.L. scheme

Empty Homes

The Council will:

- ❑ Continue to actively encourage property owners, on a voluntary basis, to bring back (long-term) vacant dwellings into use concentrating staff resources on those properties vacant for more two years.
- ❑ Use its enforcement power (for compulsory purchase/licensing) to ensure that dwellings are brought back into use.
- ❑ Continue to work with property owners to encourage them to use “Rooms over the Shop” for housing especially in the Four Gate streets.
- ❑ Work with owners to encourage them to use vacant non-residential properties and bring into use for housing.

2.6 Cross Boundary Working

The importance and benefit of joint working within the county has long been recognised by the six housing authorities and the County Council. Over some 10 years, the co-operation and exchange of views and joint projects has grown considerably both in the area of county-wide projects and cross-boundary co-operation. The prime driver has been the Gloucestershire Housing Strategy Group (GHSG) comprising all the housing authorities/county planning, the Housing Corporation and GOSW plus others on an ad hoc basis.

Examples of work undertaken have been:

Gloucestershire Housing Strategy Group (GHSG)

- ❑ Commissioning of a county-wide Housing Needs Assessment (2004/5)
- ❑ Setting up and overseeing of a Children Act project for care leavers and young single homeless
- ❑ Provision of specialist Special Needs Housing Projects available county-wide
- ❑ County-wide Floating Support for the Homeless
- ❑ County-wide Homebuy scheme operated by GHA
- ❑ County-wide submissions on consultation documents from GOSW/ODPM
- ❑ Agreement to pursue options about county-wide Choice Based Lettings

Gloucestershire Environmental Health Housing Technical Sub Committee

This group meets quarterly to address a number of key housing issues. The current work plan includes production of an HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) Standards Guide to promote clarity and consistency across the county and a homeowner’s maintenance pack to encourage preventative maintenance in the owner occupied sector. A County Landlords’ Forum is planned to foster links with individual landlords and groups, building on landlord training provided in partnership with the Residential Landlords’ Association. Best practice and consistency of approach is addressed through benchmarking and co-ordinated training of officers in procedures, technical issues and new legislation.

Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA)

For many years the six district Councils and the County Council have worked together through the HECA Strategy Officers group to promote joint working. Examples are output are:

- ❑ Production of Affordable Warmth and Fuel Poverty Strategy
- ❑ Operation of ‘Warm and Well’ scheme

- Support and development of the Severn Wye Energy Agency

Gloucester Housing Market Partnership

This “flag-ship” project is reported in Section 4.4

Gloucester/Cheltenham Joint Study Area

The Council has been working jointly with the County Council and other Districts over the planning of the Gloucester/Cheltenham area in the period to 2026. The joint steering group has recommended options to the South-West Regional Assembly for accommodating long-term housing and other needs as an input to the forthcoming Regional Spatial Strategy.

Section 3

Needs Analysis

It is important to understand what the housing needs of Gloucester/shire are. Need is assessed through surveys/assessments and a range of other information which is set out in this section.

3.1 Surveys and Information

Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) /Survey

A county-wide assessment of housing need was commissioned in Autumn 2003 by the six local Councils and Supporting People and consultants appointed in December 2003. A county-wide overview provided a separate report and was produced on each Council area, whilst some tailored work, (Supporting People/Key Workers/BME issues), was also commissioned. The final draft report was approved in February 2005. As expected, with substantial house price inflation far in excess of wage inflation, housing need has increased significantly since 2000. The County-Wide HNA indicated an across-the-board gross shortfall of 7685 per annum with an annual shortfall for the city of 1290. The report in particular highlights that, whilst need has risen substantially supply from relets has dropped significantly.

Having considered the headline figures of housing needs, Cabinet and Council have agreed that the existing percentage in the Local Plan of 40 % should continue to be used in negotiations on Affordable Housing. A brief outline of the main findings of the assessment, including the earnings ratio to house prices, is shown as an Appendix G

A separate survey was commissioned within the overall commissioning of the HNA for Supporting People to assess the housing needs of vulnerable groups for supported housing. This information will be used to inform future housing and support needs

Affordability

Most people would probably choose to own their own home, should they be able to do so.

However, for many, this is not possible because they cannot afford the costs of buying a property to meet their needs. As a result of the affordability problems many people must seek accommodation within other tenures. This results in high demand for social housing and accommodation within the City's private rented stock.

In addition to providing housing that meets the needs of those on low incomes, the same situation can be improved by helping local people to raise their incomes and economic well-being. The City Council will support the economic development of Gloucester to help meet this objective. There are also a number of new community-based housing mechanisms such as Community Land Trusts and mutual home ownership which the City Council will explore.

With Area Reference Rents often falling below market rents many of the households reliant upon Housing Benefit, have to pay a top-up where Benefit does not cover all of the rent. This in turn results in demand for social housing where Housing Benefit covers rents in full.

The new Housing Needs Assessment provides information on incomes and property prices. The affordability model will enable the Council to monitor the relationship between incomes and prices and people's ability to access the housing market.

3.2 The Housing Register

The City Council has for well over a decade operated a Common Housing Register on behalf of all social landlords in order to achieve equality of access and "one-stop shop" service for citizens.

The Regional Housing Statement emphasises the importance of creating and sustaining mixed communities, including more choice for people about where they live. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires Local Authorities to make a clear statement about their priorities on giving choice to people in meeting their housing needs. Following the Act the Council undertook an interim review of its allocation policy pending a more thorough assessment in the light of the

Government's requirement that by 2010 all Councils should operate a Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBLs).

The full Policy & Procedures on the Allocation of Social Housing can be viewed on the Council's website: www.gloucester.gov.uk

Discussions have already taken place within the GHSG with a view to joint partnership to procure a countywide scheme, especially to achieve both some degree of uniformity/consistency and economy of scale. The creation of the ALMO may lead to the City Council having to purchase a new computer system for its residual housing function and this would be an opportune moment to ensure the technology can operate a CBLs scheme.

Housing Stress

(Reference to Tables numbers are those contained in Appendix M)

Both the number on the Housing Register and the waiting period for a home has been substantially increasing in recent years. Tables 1 and 2 respectively show the increase in numbers on the Common Housing Register, together with a breakdown by household groups.

Profile of Housing Need/Supply of Social Housing

Table 3 gives a breakdown of the Register by household group and bedroom requirement, whilst Table 4 gives details of supply of Social Housing in the last five years. This, coupled with the numbers on the Register, explains the worsening situation. Of particular note is the severe reduction in vacancies of family houses which, coupled with the increasing demands from homeless families, makes their wait for rehousing very bleak indeed.

Table 5 shows the dramatic increase in both the numbers and the percentage of single person applicants together with a substantial increase in the actual numbers of families.

The housing of families remains a priority for the Council with 2150 family applications, (figure as at 31/3/05), registered especially in

the light of the required reduction in the use of bed & breakfast accommodation for families. The shortage of family accommodation is acute with the average wait for an offer of such accommodation being in excess of seven years.

Table 6 shows the number of dwellings let in 2004/05 by their bedroom size.

The HNA shows a consistent picture of increasing demand across the county, as shown in Table 7 where it will be seen that the two Principal Urban Areas (Cheltenham and Gloucester) have the highest numbers of households on their register albeit their populations are similar to two of the other four Councils.

3.3 Homelessness

The Homelessness review carried out as part of the Homelessness Strategy identified the following key issues that will be used to guide service delivery and form the basis of the Strategy's Action Plan:

- Reactive crisis intervention to more effective preventative work
- The need for all agencies to move away from the legislative duty approach to a more positive solution-based approach
- Delivery of housing advice needs to be co-ordinated and consistent
- All sources of providing and securing accommodation need to be pursued vigorously

It is important that the Homelessness Strategy is kept under review. Clear actions, targets and timescales are set out in the Action Plan and this will enable its effectiveness to be clearly monitored through the Multi-Agency Forum

To deliver the Homelessness Strategy effectively, account must be taken of available resources. The Review included such an assessment, and the following key issues have been identified:

- Gloucester City Council's social housing stock is not sufficient to meet the needs of homeless families, people

on the Housing Register and Transfer List

- It is expected that capital funding for the provision of new social housing will be grossly inadequate to meet needs
- Bed & Breakfast provision is a major revenue cost to the Council in supporting homeless people.
- Savings resulting from the reduction in the use of breakfast must be balanced by increased spending on projects that deal with homelessness and sustain the reduction in bed & breakfast use
- An overall reduction in future levels of Supporting People Funding which will be available for existing and future supported housing schemes
- The private rented sector is a significant resource, the use of which must be maximised.
- There needs to be a balance maintained between the amount of permanent social housing used to house homeless households with those on the general waiting list.

Bed & Breakfast (B&B)

The Council has made use of bed & breakfast accommodation to help homeless people. While the intention of using this form of accommodation has been for emergency short-term use only, the number of households placed therein by the Council had, until April 2004, increased considerably over the last few years. The Council has since then made substantial steps to reduce its use of B&B, enabling it to meet the statutory 6 week rule. Using a grant from the ODPM Homelessness Unit this has been achieved through: -

- appointment of a Prevention Officer and Private Sector Landlord Officer to access housing in the Private Sector
- use of furnished Council flats as emergency housing
- increasing the amount of social housing available for homeless families especially those already on the Register a long time

- continuing to use its Short-term leasing scheme and maintaining the portfolio of 100 dwellings

The Team was unable to achieve a full compliment of staff during 2004/5 and this has meant severe pressures in achieving our stated aim of changing the culture of the service from being re-active to being a pro-active Council seeking to prevent homelessness.

Table 8 - This table reveals an increase in approaches to the City since 1996/7 and in particular a significant and constant rise in since 2000/2001. The majority of households approaching are families with dependent children.

Figures for 2004/5 show a substantial increase in household applying to the City Council.

Rough Sleeping

Gloucester produced its first Rough Sleeping Strategy in 1994. In 1997, the then Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions funded services to help rough sleepers, and a target was set by the Government nationally to reduce rough sleeping by two-thirds by March 2003. The benchmark figure against which Gloucester was working was a count of 44 rough sleepers in August 1997. The two-thirds reduction was met ahead of the Government's target in November 2002, when 7 rough sleepers were counted. At the last count on 11 April 2003 the number of people sleeping rough was 4, and the Rough Sleeping Strategy aims to reduce rough sleeping to zero.

Those currently on the streets are the most chaotic and difficult to engage, primarily because of addiction problems, mental health problems or a combination of both.

Rough sleeping, though much reduced, remains a challenge, particularly in the light of the chaotic nature of the remaining entrenched rough sleepers.

3.4 Special/Supported Housing Needs

Extracts from the Supporting People Draft Strategy, (attached as appendix P), provides an overview of supported housing provision and support needs. The process of researching and planning for the provision of Special Needs/Supported accommodation for people with Special Housing Needs is carried out annually. The preparation of the report is done by the County Council with information provided by Housing Authorities, Statutory Agencies and Voluntary Services.

The report, together with other information, is considered by the Supporting People Core Strategy Group, a multi-agency group that decides on priorities for the commissioning of support schemes.

An example of the schemes, which have been successful in attracting Supporting People funds under this process, are set out in Appendix K and P together with an overview of identified needs.

In order to assist people with physical disabilities to remain in their homes the Council operate a Care and Repair Scheme and requires that at least 15% of all new build properties should meet Lifetime Homes standards.

3.5 Black and Minority Ethnic issues (BME)

Successive Census surveys have shown that Gloucester has a culturally and ethnically diverse community ever since the early 1950's when the first immigration from the West Indies commenced. The 2001 Census shows that: -

	England and Wales	Gloucester-shire	Gloucester
White	91.3%	96.2%	92.5%
Non-white	8.7%	3.8%	7.5%

Within the non-white population, there are four ethnic groups

Ethnic Group	%
Asian/Asian British	37.5%
African/African Caribbean	30.8%
Mixed	25.6%
Chinese	6.4%

A targeted Housing Needs Study amongst 150 BME households was carried out as part of the County-wide Housing Needs Assessment. The study revealed that, these communities live almost exclusively in terraced housing (Asian 92% and African 77%) which, is by far the predominant type of housing in the Barton and Tredworth area (pre 1914) in which many of these communities are concentrated. A brief summary of the findings is included as an Appendix (A) but the full report can be viewed on-line within the Council's own website as part of the County-wide Housing Needs assessment and looking under the City-Wide report.

A further invaluable piece of research was undertaken by the University of Gloucestershire looking at the benefit to the BME community of the GHMP programme which provides the largest source new-build programme of social Housing in the City. It is intended to hold a seminar in September 2005 to discuss the findings and a summary of conclusions of the report is due to be presented to a future meeting of the Council's Race Equality Forum. Appendix A contains a summary of the report and recommendations.

The Council's main priority for housing for BME communities is the targeted provision of sheltered housing for Elders from each of the main communities. The Council have so far made provision for African Caribbean Elders, (at St. Catherine Court) and Asian Elders, (at Apna Ghar and Charter Court).

The outstanding priority now lies with Chinese Elders. Agreement has been reached with Rooftop Housing Association for a group of 20 flats to be included in an Extra Care Village to be built at St. Oswald's Park. It is hoped that building of that project will commence before 2007.

The other need for most of the BME Community is to be able to access good quality housing within the Barton/Tredworth area where most of their communities reside - an issue borne out by both pieces of research mentioned above

Housing for Gypsies and Travellers

In order to take a county-wide approach to the issues of housing travellers and gypsies, a local authority county travellers group has been set up to look at issues relating to: -

- Provision of sites
- Dealing with unauthorised encampments

This group will be jointly working with the Gloucestershire Housing Strategy Group looking at the needs of Travellers to adopt a countywide approach to the ODPM directives on managing the spread of unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller developments. That group will also be liaising with the new Traveller and Gypsy Unit at the ODPM if a need emerges for additional sites across the county.

There are currently no gypsy sites in Gloucester and in recent official counts there has been no evidence of gypsies seeking to live in the city.

A study undertaken in 1995 concluded that there was not an acceptable site available in the city's administrative area. However, the working group is taking a fresh look at the problem and investigating sites across the county that could be used as small permanent or transit sites.

The Local Plan safeguards an established and well located Travelling Showmen's site within the city and close to the main transport network.

The statutory requirement to assess the needs of this group came too late to be included in the recently completed County-wide Housing Needs Assessment but future Assessments would be a suitable mechanism for carrying out this duty

Asylum Seekers

Gloucester is the sole cluster area within the county for the National Asylum Seekers Service (NASS) and has for some years received significant numbers of asylum seekers. The City Council has supported and encouraged joint working with partners to provide the appropriate type of infrastructure to support individuals and provide the right environment for them to live harmoniously

with the local community. Clearsprings (a private sector company contracted by NASS) and Social Services have been successful in obtaining private housing to accommodate asylum seekers pending their request for refugee status. The Council's Housing Services are core members of the Asylum Seekers' Multi-Agency Forum. There is no call on social housing to provide accommodation for this client group.

3.6 Stock Condition

Matters relating to the condition of Gloucester's housing stock across all tenures are addressed below. Other issues concerning the housing stock are addressed in the Resources Section of this Strategy.



Council Housing

The Council's Housing Stock

Information on the Council's housing stock has been gathered through two recent Stock Condition surveys covering 83% of the stock and has provided an accurate assessment of the repairs, maintenance and improvement costs over the next 30 years, as well as identifying the cost of meeting the housing to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. This has enabled the Council to carry out a robust Options Appraisal. The recent combined stock condition surveys found that 66% of the stock in Gloucester failed to meet this standard. The Council does not have the resources to improve the stock to the required standard. Consequently the decision was taken in July 2004 to pursue the ALMO option and Gloucester submitted a bid to the Round 5 programme which was accepted. If the bid, and subsequent inspection, is successful, Gloucester will meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. If the bid is not successful Gloucester will return to the Options Appraisal process to identify the next

most appropriate method of meeting the Decent Homes standard.

The Council has developed an asset management strategy, taking into account the additional resources it hopes to obtain from the ALMO bid. The additional funding will enable the ALMO to carry out a more comprehensive approach to capital investment, repair, improvement and renewal of the properties.

The ALMO will have a five year programme to bring all properties up to the required standard, with a projected delivery by year as shown in the table below:

Expected progress towards Decent Homes:

Year	Decent Homes achieved
2005/06	37%
2006/07	47%
2007/08	58%
2008/09	71%
2009/10	84%
2010/11	100%

Managing Changing Demand

However, research undertaken in 2003 and evidence from the Council's housing register, indicates that there will be a continuing demand for social housing both from new applicants and from existing tenants requesting a move to alternative accommodation which more closely meets their needs.

There is however a diminishing stock of dwellings due to the Right to Buy of which approximately 95 % are houses) and this seriously affects the ability of the Council to house people in appropriate areas, and has particular consequences for the affected communities.

Furthermore, there are some properties for which demand is much lower and/or which do not match current need. Work has been undertaken to identify property types that are not sustainable and that could be developed or used in some other manner to meet changing demand. This may involve

remodelling or altering the use of some properties or working with private developers/registered social landlords to enhance provision of the types of properties that are needed now and for the future. Clearly any plans of this nature, that will affect property numbers, will have an affect on the rental stream and this will be addressed through subsequent HRA Business Plans.



Modernised Upgraded Council Housing

The Private Sector House Condition Survey

In view of the importance of the private sector in meeting housing needs, a clear understanding of the quality and condition of accommodation in this sector is necessary.

To assist in this a city-wide private sector house condition survey was completed in April 2005 of 1,200 dwellings and published in June 2005. This describes the state of dwellings in the city regarding fitness, disrepair, housing risk assessment, energy efficiency; adaptations for disabled occupants and Decent Homes. It also relates these to tenure and the financial status of the occupiers and their ability to bring about improvements. Subsequent data analysis will inform present and future Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategies. The Survey data which also assist the development of other strategies including the Home Energy Conservation Strategy, Affordable Warmth and the Fuel Poverty Strategy.

Results of Private Sector Survey

From the private sector housing stock of 44227 dwellings (all tenures) 16.3% fail to meet the decent homes standard. Non-decent housing is concentrated in the older, pre-1919 terraced housing areas and the private rented sector.

This level for non-decent homes in the city is lower than the national average of 31.9%.

The survey compares conditions within the Barton and Tredworth Neighbourhood Management Area (NMA) with the rest of the city.

The reasons for non compliance with the Decent Homes standard are as follows:-

Unfitness

2.4% of dwellings were found to be unfit for human habitation, mainly due to problems with structural stability and disrepair. Whilst this level is lower than the national average of 4.2%, there is a concentration of unfit dwellings in the older housing areas particularly in the pre-1919 housing (as found in the NMA) and in the private rented sector.

This unfitness level was measured using the existing statutory regime, however as new method of measuring fitness is likely to become operative by the end of 2005 (the Housing Health and Safety Rating System HHSRS) and the level of unfitness under this measurement is likely to rise to 6.7%. Failure is mainly due to inadequate fire safety, inadequate measures to prevent intruder entry and poor internal arrangement.

Disrepair

7.5% of dwellings were found to be in disrepair, this is concentrated in the pre 1919 housing and in the private rented sector.

Amenities and Thermal Efficiency

6.5% of dwellings were found to be lacking in modern amenities and/or thermal comfort with defects on energy efficiency being the main reason for failure. The average SAP rating for the city was estimated at 61, above the national average of 51.

Defects in energy efficiency are concentrated in the pre 1919 stock and the private rented sector.

The survey also found a significant lack of awareness amongst householders about their housing conditions.

There was found to be a link between housing conditions and socio-economic disadvantage.

£29.645m is estimated as the minimum costs for improving the non-decent private sector housing in the city.

The survey estimated 2278 empty dwellings (5.2% of the private rented stock)

The level of unfitness has fallen from 9% (as estimated in the previous 1997/98 house condition survey), however future strategies will need to address:-

- The expected level of unfitness under HHSRS
- Empty homes
- Advice and implementation of energy efficiency measures.
- The lack of awareness amongst householders about their housing conditions.
- The link between poor housing conditions and socio-economic disadvantage.
- The level of disabled adaptations.

There is an executive summary of the full report in Appendix R.

3.7 Gloucester's Renaissance - Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company (GHURC)

Gloucester made a major leap forward when Government in February 2004 sanctioned the country's only 'Heritage' Urban Regeneration Company. Its purpose is to bring life back to the many historic areas of Gloucester that have become derelict and unattractive to investors, and help to create a new and prosperous city for the 21st century. The GHURC is a highly focused partnership organisation funded by: -

- English Partnership and the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)
- Gloucester City and Gloucestershire County Councils

A more detailed summary of the HURC Yearbook 2005 is set out at Appendix B within this Strategy.

Housing is an essential component of any Renaissance of Gloucester and especially in the context of the area covered by the HURC with its special focus on the central area. Current ownership of major strategic sites by the component partners of the HURC gives a powerful tool to drive forward regeneration.

In a housing context, the Local Plan and various other supplementary forms of guidance seek to change the central area: -

- to provide a wide range of housing types and household incomes with an emphasis on significantly increasing the amount of higher value housing
- to create an environment which will reverse the trend towards low value housing predominantly occupied by low income and often transient households
- to achieve a housing market where people aspire to live generating higher property values whilst protecting the opportunity for low income households to have good quality housing to rent within the area.

3.8 Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder

Community Counts is a Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder covering the Barton, Tredworth and White City areas of Gloucester. Recognising that poor private sector housing conditions and fuel poverty are major challenges in this area. Community Counts has funded an Environmental Health Officer (E.H.O) post to address these issues in a two and a half year project that has been running since September 2004. It is intended that a portion of the funding within Homes Repairs Assistance HRA's will be targeted and ring fenced to this area so that the E.H.O has some practical assistance to offer as well

3.9 Private Rented Sector Disrepair

The Environmental Health Service receives over 300 complaints about disrepair in the private sector each year. This core service

achieves significant improvements in housing standards but being predominantly complaint led is not necessarily targeted to the worst housing. The service is only delivered to those who are both aware of the assistance that is available and able/willing to access it.

Enforcement under the Housing Act 1985 does not necessarily bring properties up to the Decent Homes standard, particularly with regard to energy efficiency measures. The Council is investigating ways in which the experiences of working with the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder in delivering a more holistic service, and increasing the proportion of vulnerable households living in decent homes, can be applied to other areas of the City.

The City-Wide Private Sector House Condition Survey (reported elsewhere) has an enhanced profile in the Barton, Tredworth and White City area (paid for by Community Counts) that will give baseline information against which performance can be measured.



Private/Public Partnership for improvement of poor private housing

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

The profile of the HMO stock in Gloucester means that the HMO programme is targeted towards vulnerable households in the private sector. Once basic safety measures have been addressed the Council will seek to move HMO's towards the decent homes standard.

The Council recognises that HMO's provide low cost housing, particularly for single person and vulnerable households.

Following a best value review in 2003, the Council directed resources to provide an

additional post to address the issues that HMO's present. A team of two officers is now dedicated to proactive HMO work, focusing on properties presenting the highest risk to the health of the occupants.

All known HMO's are recorded on a database which currently holds details of 460 properties. These are found across the city, but are concentrated in the Westgate; Kingsholm; Barton and Tredworth Wards.

Mandatory HMO licensing is expected to be introduced towards the end of 2005, with approximately 350 properties requiring licensing.

Residential Mobile Homes

The city currently has 16 mobile home sites, including 6 major sites with over 20 units per site. All are licensed and are inspected when complaints from residents are received.

Work is currently underway with other local authorities across the county to develop a standardised approach to conditions and enforcement in residential mobile home sites.

Section 4

Resources and Mechanisms for Delivery

4.1 Introduction

Resources are required to address identified housing needs. These resources are not just financial but include accommodation, land and staff. The objective of the Housing Strategy is to narrow the gap between needs and the resources that are available.

The Local Authority, through its wide powers under the Local Government Act 2000, has a pivotal role in community development and the well being of its residents. This role will be reinforced through the implementation of Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future (the Community Strategy).

In practice, the Council:

- Provides some 72% of Gloucester's social housing stock through its landlord role and has set up an ALMO to manage the stock. Achievement of the required 2 star assessment from the Audit Commission will enable the Council to draw down an allocation of some £38m and meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.
- Provides direct financial support for housing expenditure in the private sector and to housing associations.
- Provides direct services to those requiring housing advice and to vulnerable people in the community, both to support independent living and to ensure that the appropriate residential alternatives are available when needed.
- Supports and co-ordinates voluntary and community groups who seek to address specific housing issues or the needs of specific client groups.
- Acts as a spokesperson for the residents of Gloucester and lobbies for the resources to help address housing

needs and maximise investment within the city.

All of these functions and roles require resources. In some cases this will be direct Capital support whilst for others this will form part of the Council's General Fund revenue budget.

4.2 Financial Resources

Capital Allocations—General Fund

Following a 'root and branch' review of the Council's General Fund, Cabinet took a decision in 2004 to become a 'debt free' authority. It then undertook a 'stocktake' of all its property and land assets resulting in a decision to sell a portfolio worth some £10 million. This money has been used to repay debt with a view to enabling it to restrict Council tax rises to 3% per annum over a three-year period. As a result, (with some exceptions set out below) the city has decided not to use its capital receipts or borrowing capacity under the prudential rules to fund capital projects.

However, it has taken four decisions on capital:-

- **firstly**, to 'ring fence' spendable capital receipts from Right to Buy to support its target to meet the Decent Homes standard
- **secondly**, any other capital receipts will be used to repay debt
- **thirdly**, to take advantage of supported borrowing allocations from the Regional Housing Board for private sector housing.
- **fourthly**, to "ring fence" Affordable Housing commuted sums for provision of Affordable Housing elsewhere.

Supported Borrowing Funding

This resource pot is likely to be used to fund:-

- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) (Mandatory).
- Home Repairs Assistance (discretionary) including grants towards

home energy conservation and security measures for vulnerable households.

- Gloucester Housing Market Partnership, an equal share funding with our two local authority partners (Stroud and Tewkesbury) towards the 'other public subsidy'.
- Westgate - Loans Scheme and Small Area Improvement Scheme (153 houses).

Together with the Specified Capital Grant on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) this has enabled a capital budget for 2004/05 and 2005/6 as follows: -

Housing Capital Budget (General Fund)

The provisional allocation of Supported Capital Expenditure (SCE) for 2006/7 and 2007/8 indicates a 20% reduction from 2005/6. Assuming (a) Specified Capital Grant (SCG) for DFGs remains at 2005/6 levels and (b) the Council are able to bid for, and are successful in receiving, a Supported Borrowing Approval for private sector renewal from the Regional Housing Board, General Fund Capital programme could look as follows:-

Item	Amount per annum
DFG	750,000
Home Repairs Assistance	132,000
Energy Efficiency	50,000
Gloucester Housing Market Partnership	168,000
Private Sector Renewal	375,000
TOTAL	1,475,000

(£1.310m SCE for 2005/6 + £165K SCG)

However, final decision on the Capital Budget will be decided by successive Councils at their budget round meetings.

Other than GHMP (and any commuted sums in lieu of Affordable Housing on-site) the Council will not therefore have capital resources to fund Housing Associations to provide social housing.

The ability to support private sector improvements to reach Decent Homes is limited by the availability of Supporting Borrowing Allocations from the Regional Housing Board.

The Council is already developing its role in lobbying on behalf of Associations through the regional allocation body and in partnership with other Authorities particularly on a conurbation-wide basis. The Council will also look to proactively support new affordable housing through the local planning process.

Overall Council expenditure Over the Last Three Financial Years

The table below shows the Capital and Revenue expenditure of the Council split into General Fund and Housing Revenue Account::

	Capital		Total
	HRA	HGF	
	£	£	
2002/2003	3,689,753	1,478,975	5,168,728
2003/2004	2,623,779	1,628,004	4,251,783
2004/2005	3,610,560	1,075,075	4,685,634
	Revenue		Total
	HRA	Other	
	£	£	
2002/2003	27,349,420	18,879,733	46,229,153
2003/2004	24,506,174	17,499,963	42,006,137
2004/2005	17,887,894	25,968,706	43,856,600

Housing Corporation Funding

The way Housing Corporation funding is distributed has changed and Local Authorities (LAs) are no longer allocated funding on a local area basis. It is now allocated on a regional and sub-regional basis in order to encourage LAs to work in cross boundary partnership. Priority is given to areas declared as Principal Urban Areas (PUA) and Gloucester is regarded as such and forms part of the sub-region named Gloucester and Cheltenham, this region has provisionally been allocated between £23 - £27 million over two years 2006-08.

How much Gloucester will benefit from this funding will depend on their continued ability to enable successful and innovative partnerships.

4.3 Accommodation Resources

Gloucester's Overall Housing Stock

There are over 48,000 dwellings in Gloucester and the spread across tenures is shown as follows:

Dwelling Stock as at 31 March 2005

Council	4,770	10%
Housing Association	1,981	4%
Other public sector	28	-
Private rented	4,188	86%
Owner occupied	35,674	
Total	46,641	100%

(Numbers and % of Private Rented and owner occupied housing taken from the Census 2001 and adjusted to reflect higher numbers of households per Council Tax Data Base at 31 March 2005)

The number and type of Council properties (including Wardens' flats) are set out below.

Social Housing Stock

The number and type of Council properties, including properties within sheltered schemes, are set out below:

	Bunga- low	Flat	Maison- ette	House	Total
Bedsit	6	179			185
1 Bed	384	1135		25	1544
2 Bed	147	793	55	446	1441
3 Bed	74	26	21	1288	1409
4 Bed				153	153
5 Bed				7	7
Total	611	2133	76	1919	4739

The Right to Buy (RTB) has had a serious effect upon the size and profile of the Council's housing stock with over 2830 homes sold since 1980. Since 1st April 2000 the sale of council houses has been running at an average of 84 per annum, although, sales have eased up slightly in the last 2-3 years, for example, in 2004/5 67 houses were sold. On average 71 of the 84 sales are of houses.

With a turnover of 297 Council properties in 2004/5 (excluding transfers and exchanges), it is clear that there is a serious shortfall between supply and demand. This is particularly serious for families, as only 152 properties that became available in 2004/05 were properties with two or more bedrooms suitable for family accommodation.

Elderly Persons' Designated Housing

The Council has 1,020 flats, houses and bungalows for the elderly, with housing associations having 388 such properties. This level of provision for older persons is considered adequate, with the exception of Extra Care accommodation for the frail elderly, which is referred to earlier in this Strategy.

Indeed there is a significant imbalance between the supply and demand for elderly persons and for households below 60 years of age. As part of the Managing Changing Demand debate serious consideration will be given to changing the designation of a number of the elderly persons' housing to make them available to a much younger client group.

The number of Housing Association properties is illustrated below:

Bedsits	89
1 Bedroom	581
2 Bedroom	578
3 Bedroom	441
4 Bedroom	68
5 Bedroom	4
7 Bedroom	1
Total	1762

ALMO (Arms Length Management Organisation)

Condition of Housing Stock

Two stock condition surveys (internal and external) have provided an accurate assessment of the cost of improving/modernising the housing stock, meeting both the Decent Homes Standards, Gloucester Standard and Managing Changing Demand.

To meet this cost, the Council has formed an ALMO and has been awarded some £38m under Round 5 of the bidding round. Subject to satisfactory star rating from the Audit Commission, this will enable the Council to make substantial inroads to meet the strategic objectives for its own housing stock. The stock condition stock surveys indicate that only 44% of our housing met the Decent Homes Standard. The ALMO have a five year programme to ensure 100% of all our housing stock meets Decent Homes by 2010. Together with the recent decision to 'ring-fence' 100% of RTB Capital Receipts will enable a substantial and worthwhile programme to be assembled.

ALMO's Contribution towards meeting Strategic Aims

Decent Homes

This has been mentioned above.

Adapting the Social Housing Stock to Match Changing Needs

The Council have for some 30 years carried out programmes of both major works of conversion/enlargement to flats/bungalows and demolition/redevelopment of Council estates. In recent years the latter involved provision of replacement housing through local Housing Associations.

Apart from some comprehensive regenerations of our estates, most of this has been carried out on a piecemeal basis e.g there have been successful examples in recent times with Victorian/Edwardian four storey flatted dwellings being converted back to family houses and modern bedsit pensioner bungalows upgraded to one bedroom bungalows.

However, the Council some years ago acknowledged the need for a strategic approach to ensuring its own housing stock adapted to both changing demands and need, in particular the continued erosion of the social housing asset base through Right to Buy. This has meant that the supply of houses has been considerably distorted with over 50% of social relets being one and two bedroom flats.

A substantial piece of research and feasibility study was undertaken during 2004 to establish

- the preferred property types and sizes needed to meet strategic housing need
- costed options for re-configuration /conversion of the existing Council housing stock
- costed options for demolitions and newbuild
- cross-subsidy models including how these options can be achieved without access to Social Housing Grants

The Council will work with the ALMO and tenant groups to evaluate these options and prepare a medium/long term plan over a 5-10 year term building the outcomes into the HRA(Housing Revenue Account) Business Plan

Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

The Council will seek to increase its SAP level from 53.4 to an average of 85 by 2008 and make tenants more aware of opportunities to reduce fuel costs and reduce fuel poverty.

Asset Management Plan (AMP)

A comprehensive AMP has been produced by ALMO and city staff setting out how the housing stock and estates will be regenerated both in a physical and community sense to produce and maintain sustainable communities. It sets out the strategic approach to Managing Changing Demands.

Focus for Service Improvements

The ALMO will focus its service improvements on meeting the following objectives:-

- Compliance with the Decent Homes Standard by 2010
- High quality, easily accessed customer-focused services leading to improved levels of satisfaction
- Improving the quality of life on the estates, working to reduce incidents of

anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime

- Developing modern, efficient and effective services with sound financial management
- Improving responsiveness and reliability through a well trained, motivated workforce

4.4 Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing Stock

Public Funding

Along with Stroud and Tewkesbury Council the City have been able to provide £500,000 towards GHMP for 2004/5/6. However the Housing Corporation have also invested a total of £3.8m making a public sector grant of £4.3m. (2004/5/6)

The South-West Region of the Housing Corporation has received a 43% increase from the Regional Housing Body (RHB) for Social Housing Grant (SHG) for 2006/7 + 2007/8. Assuming that GHMP gets a commensurate increase, this will make a substantial contribution to increasing the provision of housing for rent.

Gloucester Housing Market Partnership (GHMP)

It is envisaged that for the foreseeable future, 100% of the Housing Corporation SHG will need to be devoted to the GHMP. Although the GHMP developers are providing the housing at a significant discount from the Open Market Value (OMV) there is still a need for further subsidy to meet the Council's strategic housing need for 80% of the social housing to be for letting (at target rents) and 20% for onward sale on shared ownership. Together with a need for the latter to be available at a price not exceeding £50,000 (to meet affordability) this means a substantial call on Social Housing Grant and this area of work could well take up the whole of the allocated increase available from the Housing Corporation for the Gloucester Principal Urban Area (P.U.A)

Grant –free Housing

The result of this is that the Council is telling developers (outside of GHMP) that they must not rely on the availability of SHG for any new developments outside of GHMP. This will require developers to be realistic as to the price they can afford to pay landowners when negotiating/tendering to buy land. Appendix J sets out details of the anticipated projected supply of Affordable Housing over the life of this Strategy (outside of any “windfall sites”).

The Council are committed, through its Local Plan policies and the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF), to providing the maximum level of Affordable Housing from all new developments, within the current national threshold. The draft Local Plan has adopted a lower threshold of site sizes and will work within these when they are valid through either the LDF or revised national standards.



Old garage site now providing homes for shared ownership

4.5. Private Sector Housing Stock

According to the HIP (Housing Investment Programme) Return of April 2004 the Private sector (both rented and owner-occupied) makes up 86% of the total housing stock in Gloucester and encompasses the widest range of accommodation from bedsits with shared facilities in houses in multiple occupation to higher priced larger homes.

The Council recognises the importance of increasing the number of decent homes in the private sector, particularly those occupied by people from vulnerable groups. This will go towards supporting the national initiative contained within the Sustainable Communities agenda. An accurate baseline against which performance can be monitored will come from the Gloucester Private Sector

House Condition Survey, which has been published and reported to Cabinet and Full Council in July 2005.

With regard to reducing energy consumption the Council will continue to work in partnership with Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) to offer financial assistance and advice to homeowners and tenants. The draft 'anti-poverty strategy' incorporates 'affordable warmth' as one of the priorities under discussion.

In addition, from April 2005 the Council will grant aid the provision of security measures through the Home Repairs Assistance Grant programme (subject to ongoing funding).

4.6 Empty Homes

The Council adopted an 'Empty Homes Strategy' in June 1995 with a view to reducing both the number of long term void dwellings and bringing non-residential buildings into use. The Strategy recognises that all housing markets rely on a 'pool' of empty dwellings and the Council see no need to devote resources to tackling dwellings vacant for less than 12 months (unless causing a public nuisance).

During 2004/5 restrictions on the General Fund meant that there were no staff resources available to proactively implement the strategy. However, the Council, recognising the importance of reducing the number of vacant properties, have reinstated the staff budget so that there has been a dedicated staff resource to promote the Strategy from April 2005.

4.7. Other Housing Resources

Gloucester has a strong and close working relationship with voluntary agencies that make an invaluable contribution to the housing resources of Gloucester. The Council has contractual arrangements with them for the delivery of essential services which the Council funds directly from the local taxpayers or using other funds e.g. from ODPM grants. For 2004/5 the following arrangements are in place: -

ODPM Homelessness Grants

Name of Organisation

Nightstop

Project Co-ordinator

Glofysh (Gloucester Forum for Young Single Homeless)

Youth Network Co-ordinator

Project Co-ordinator (50%)

Support Liaison Officer (75%)

GEAR (Gloucestershire Emergency Access Resource)

Deputy Co-ordinator

ECHG (English Churches Housing Group)

Hap Team Manager (75%)

Street Outreach Worker

Institutional Outreach Worker

Private Sector Development Officer

GCC (Gloucester City Council Homelessness)

Co-ordinator

Prevention Officer

Community Grants

Name of Group

Afro-Caribbean Association

Glos Chinese Womens Guild

Glos Home Safety Check Scheme

Glos Racial Equality Council

Gloucester Branch/Victim Support

Gloucestershire DVSA

Linking Communities

The Family Haven

The Furniture Recycling Project

Service Level Agreements

Coney Hill Neighbourhood Project

Matson Neighbourhood Project

White City Neighbourhood Project

Podsmead Neighbourhood Project

Citizen's Advice Bureau & Money Advice

Glos City Dial-A-Ride

GCVS (Volunteers)

Gloucester Law Centre

Shelter
Glofysh
Age Concern - St Hilda's
Glos Chinese Community Group
Roshni Womens Centre
Share
Co-operative Futures
Glos Resource Centre
Relate
Matson Churches Y & C Project
Glos Pakistan Social & Cultural Soc
Glos Pensioners Forum
Westgate Tenants Consultative Committee
Kingsholm Tenants Consultative Committee

Section 5

Progress and Performance against targets

The Council believes that it is important to be able to monitor the quality of the services that it delivers so that the services can continue to improve. Consequently targets are set for its performance across a range of Housing activities. The performance against these targets is measured by use of 'performance indicators' (PIs). Some of these PIs are set nationally and all housing authorities are required to report on these national ones. Other PIs are not national ones but are set voluntarily by the Council. This enables the Council to measure its performance in delivering services where national PIs do not exist.

A second set of Appendices provides information on Targets/Best Value Performance Indicators, (National and Local), extracted from Service Development Plans (SDP's). This enables the reader to make comparisons of achievements against targets, also included are a range of Service Targets extracted from these same SDP's.

See Appendix O

Section 6

Consultation

This Housing Strategy/ALMO and the HRA Business Plan bring together in one document many individual and separate policies/plans and strategies. Each one of these component documents has been subject to their own formal/informal consultation over a period of years.

However, the Council recognises that such formal consultations on a "meaty" document can be rather bureaucratic and therefore relies very much on an ongoing process of consultation/working with stakeholders/partners/private sector developers/community groups and the like. Details of the stakeholders consultation partners are set out in Appendix C.

The Draft Housing Strategy was considered by Cabinet on 25 May 2005 and then sent out for formal consultation. The results of the consultation were considered, by Cabinet and full Council, at their meetings in July 2005.

Section 7

Family of Strategy Links to the Housing Strategy



