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SOUTHWARK HOUSING STRATEGY

2005 TO 2010

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PAGE 1 – TRANSLATION TAG TO BE TRANSLATED INTO COMMUNITY LANGUAGES AS ADVISED BY TRANSLATION UNIT. TAG TO APPEAR FIRST IN ENGLISH AND TO READ

This document sets out the council's plans for housing and housing services in Southwark over the next five years. A summary of the main points is available. If you need a translation of the summary in your language, or if you need the summary in a large print, tape or Braille version, please contact us by either emailing housingstrategy2@southwark.gov.uk or by telephoning 020 7525 1217.

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Foreword

As Southwark Council's Executive Member for Housing I am delighted to present the new Southwark Council Housing Strategy 2005 to 2010. This strategy sets out the vision and direction for housing services and investment for the council and our partner housing providers for the next five years. It covers both private and public sector housing. It is not just about buildings but also covers plans for housing services provided to residents.

From talking to residents and from first hand experience of Southwark as a landlord, I understand the massive impact that housing can play on peoples' quality of life. If you have a suitable home in good condition it is easy to take this for granted, however this can quickly change due to changes in personal circumstances or in the property. Through no fault of their own some people can find their home is no longer useable or affordable without repair, modification, or support. People may not be able to afford to make these changes. There are a large number of homeless households who require social housing, but due to the high levels of demand many have to live in temporary accommodation for long periods of time. As a result there are a very large number of people who need external support from the Council or other agencies. It is vitally important that excellent services are provided in a strategic way to make the best use of the available resources to meet these needs.

While the strategy takes account of national and regional priorities, this is a local strategy based upon the housing needs of our residents. We have determined these needs through a robust analysis and through consultation with people living and working in Southwark. We have consulted a wide range of people such as tenants, leaseholders, residents, landlords, voluntary organisations, partner organisations, health, police, and education. We are very grateful for all the comments received and this has made a big impact on the strategy.

We would specifically like to thank all the members of the Housing Strategy Review Board (which was a partnership group of tenant and leaseholder representatives, councillors, key partner organisations and council officers). They helped identify the key housing issues and the structure for the strategy and helped coordinate the consultation. This required a lot of hard work and time but it achieved very real positive results.

This strategy aims to build upon our recent housing achievements so far. While determining this strategy we have always been focussed on a vision of what we want to be different by 2010. While the targets we have set are ambitious, they are important to improve the quality of life of our residents and to give them the excellent services they deserve. We will be openly monitoring our progress of delivering the strategy through our website. To achieve our objectives, we will need to work in partnerships on a regional and sub-regional level with other agencies, housing providers, and residents. Through hard work and working efficiently to make best use of our resources, we will achieve these outcomes to make the strategy a reality.

Councillor Stephen Flannery
Executive Member for Housing

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is Southwark Council's new five-year housing strategy. It sets out our strategic approach to tackling housing problems and delivering housing services. A summary of this strategy is available from the Strategy & Policy Team on 020 7525 1217 and on the council's web site www.southwark.gov.uk. Translations of the summary or other formats such as large print can be requested from the team.

What is the housing strategy?

The council is required by law to have a housing strategy. The strategy is the result of analysis of housing needs, local, regional and national housing trends and policies and consultation with partners and residents. It is an overarching document which sets out our housing objectives and priorities for action. It covers private and public sector housing, and is about homes, neighbourhoods and services. Our housing strategy has important links to many other Southwark strategies and plans, in particular contributing to delivering Southwark's [community strategy](#) which aims to make Southwark a better place to live, learn, work and have fun by

- tackling poverty
- making Southwark cleaner and greener
- cutting crime and fear of crime
- raising standards in our schools
- improving the health of the borough.

The council's corporate plan includes housing targets to deliver these priorities. The local strategic partnership, Southwark Alliance, is currently developing a new community strategy, so when we next review our housing strategy we will ensure it links to the priorities of the new community strategy.

How did the council develop this housing strategy?

Our previous housing strategy covered the period 1998-2005. It was reviewed and updated annually until 2002/03. In March 2003 the Government Office for London accredited Southwark's housing strategy as Fit For Purpose (FFP). At the time, only 10 per cent of housing authorities in England had achieved this standard. Building on this, we consulted widely with partners and residents on this new housing strategy in four key stages:

- With the Housing Strategy Review Board¹ (HSRB) we identified key housing issues for the strategy and discussed them at our housing conference in October 2003. Then, with the HSRB, we developed our draft vision, values and objectives and an outline of the strategy.
- We consulted with councillors (through Housing Scrutiny committee), Southwark Alliance Management Group, Southwark Homelessness Forum, Southwark Housing Association Group and key officers across the council on the vision and priorities of the strategy and on our plans for consulting with partners, stakeholders and residents.
- Building on feedback from this consultation we developed *Southwark housing strategy consultation document* which summarised what we think are the key housing issues for Southwark, and what we intend to do about them over the next five years. This was widely advertised, put on the council's website and sent out to over 700 statutory and voluntary sector partners and residents groups. We also took this to community and partnership meetings.

¹ The Housing Strategy Review Board - a partnership group of tenant and leaseholder representatives, councillors, key partner organisations and council officers, which met regularly to discuss housing strategy and advise on consultation on the strategy and the annual housing conference.

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- We discussed the strategic priorities in small groups at our housing conference in February 2005, which was attended by over 130 delegates.

A full report of the consultation, feedback received and the council's response can be found in *Housing strategy consultation report* on the council's website.

Summary recommendations from consultation

- Ensure regeneration is sustainable in the long term, improving understanding of planning, building and managing mixed developments
- Link the need for larger homes to tackling under-occupation
- Be explicit about whether Southwark can meet housing needs within its boundaries
- More emphasis on tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
- More emphasis on community cohesion and sustainability
- Provide greater choice
- Focus on improving the quality of temporary accommodation and preventing homelessness
- Focus more on delivering housing and services for young people to deliver the priorities of the Every Child Matters² agenda
- Focus more on leaseholder and tenant management issues
- Focus more on black and minority ethnic issues
- Give higher profile to resident participation
- Give more emphasis to and improve joint working to deliver objectives and highlight partners' contributions

Our strategy has also been informed by

- Consultation with black and minority ethnic (BME) communities about housing priorities which resulted in our BME report *Celebrating diversity* (on our website)
- Consultation with young people on their housing issues. A report of this project and resulting action plan – *Engaging young people in housing* – is on our website
- One-to-ones with homeless people
- Consultation with service users, providers and stakeholders on Southwark's new five-year supporting people strategy (on our website)

We would like to thank everybody who contributed to this strategy.

Southwark housing strategy 2005 to 2010

Our **vision** is to improve residents' lives by providing high quality homes and housing services that promote successful and inclusive communities.

The underlying **values** of the strategy are:

- **Equality, diversity and social cohesion** – ensuring the strategy meets a range of housing needs and does not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any group of people because of their race, gender, faith, sexuality, age or physical/mental disability and that it promotes social cohesion. (We have carried out an equalities impact assessment of this housing strategy – see Appendix XXX for the report).

² see chapters 2 and 8

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- **Fairness** – ensuring that the strategy addresses and balances a wide range of needs in a fair and consistent way
- **Quality and value for money** – using resources efficiently to provide quality homes and services
- **Community and partner involvement** – ensuring the strategy is informed by meaningful consultation with residents, partners and stakeholders and that effective partnerships are in place to deliver the strategy, making links to other local strategies and plans
- **Evidence based** – ensuring the strategy is informed by good quality information, for example, on housing needs and stock condition.

To deliver our vision we have five **strategic objectives** and associated priorities

Strategic objectives	Priorities
Improve the quality of all homes and neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring all council homes up to the decent homes standard • Bring private housing occupied by vulnerable people up to the decent homes standard • Improve the energy efficiency of all homes • Improve run down private housing • Improve neighbourhood environments • Set quality standards for new housing
Increase the supply of housing, in particular affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase opportunities for housing developments • Ensure a supply of new affordable homes to meet a range of needs • Make better use of existing housing to meet housing needs
Reduce homelessness and improve the standard of temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of information on homelessness • Improve access to information • Prevent homelessness, in particular against main causes • Provide good quality temporary accommodation and related support services
Improve the quality of life for vulnerable people through housing support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support independent living • Provide housing to meet specific needs • Provide support for young people to live independently
Deliver community-focused services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve customers' access to our services • Involve residents in strategic and service planning • Achieve excellence in our services • Provide services that increase choice • Provide services that tackle deprivation and support sustainable communities

Chapters two, three and four describe the policy framework of our housing strategy, a summary of our assessment of housing needs and the resources to deliver the strategy. Chapters five to nine cover our five key objectives and our priorities to deliver them. For each objective we highlight recent achievements, what we are aiming to achieve over the life of the strategy and key risks which may have a negative impact on our ability to deliver our priorities.

Partnership working

The council cannot deliver Southwark's housing strategy on its own. As well as working effectively across council departments, we need to work in partnership with government, other local authorities and with the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to effect the kind of step change we want to make over

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the life of the strategy. Partnerships exist at every level from strategic planning to service delivery – there are examples in the table below and throughout the strategy. In particular, housing associations are major partners in delivering our housing objectives. We work closely with housing associations on strategic issues as well as day to day operational issues through Southwark Housing Association Group (SOUHAG)³, which is represented on the local strategic partnership (Southwark Alliance). Housing associations are also key partners in the South East London Housing Partnership⁴ which has set out a joint framework, *Guide to RSLs⁵ and developers working in South East London*.

Monitoring delivery and updating the housing strategy

Targets in the housing strategy action plan are included in the housing business plan. To ensure delivery, departmental business plan targets are devolved to the relevant divisional and business unit plans and then into responsible officers' workplans. Delivery of the strategy is therefore monitored both through the council's rigorous performance management scheme and through regular reporting on progress against departmental business plan targets. Business plans and service improvement plans also include additional operational and performance targets.

We will continue to ensure that our housing strategy is informed by good quality information, including an understanding of local housing markets and housing needs. We will review the strategy regularly in consultation with residents and partners to ensure that it is up to date and reflects changing needs and priorities. We will publish an annual progress report on the council's website.

2 nd quarter 2006	Review housing strategy and action plan	3 rd quarter 2006	Publish review
2 nd quarter 2007	Review housing strategy and action plan	3 rd quarter 2007	Publish review
2 nd quarter 2008	Review housing strategy and action plan	3 rd quarter 2008	Publish review
2 nd quarter 2009	Review housing strategy and action plan	3 rd quarter 2009	Publish review
2 nd quarter 2010	Review housing strategy and action plan	3 rd quarter 2010	Publish review

What difference will this housing strategy make?

By 2010, we want Southwark to be a place where

- the majority of homes are warm, safe and healthy and appropriate to the needs of the occupiers
- there are 7,000 or more new good quality homes which are adaptable to the changing lifetime needs of those who live in them
- public and private spaces around people's homes are more attractive, environmentally friendly and feel safe
- fewer families live in overcrowded homes
- people have more choice about where they live and their housing tenure
- vulnerable people have the housing support they need to enable them to live as fully and independently as possible
- fewer people in Southwark become homeless
- temporary accommodation is of a good quality and meets the wider social needs of the occupiers
- housing services are integrated with other council services, easy to access and culturally appropriate

³ 52 housing associations have housing stock in Southwark and are represented on SOUHAG

⁴ South East London Housing Partnership is a sub-regional partnership of the boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lewisham and Southwark

⁵ RSL – registered social landlord, more commonly known as housing associations

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PARTNERSHIP WORKING		
Partners	Partner Resources	Outcomes
Scheme - Silwood Estate		
Lewisham and Southwark Councils	Linking housing improvement schemes with neighbouring SRB (Single Regeneration Budget) schemes and corporate initiatives. Funding from Silwood SRB (Lewisham)	Over 90 council properties have been made decent and we are working with the SRB to redevelop the rest of the Southwark part of the Silwood estate.
Scheme – Linden Grove Estate		
Wandle Housing Association and Habinteg Housing Association	Social housing grant, private finance	A total of 121 units were built. All were built to the Lifetime Homes Standard. 47 were new council homes, 46 were Wandle homes including 10 shared ownership units. 28 were Habinteg units including 5 specifically wheel chair designed homes.
Scheme - The Empty Homes Forum		
Former and current empty homes' owners, private developers	Private finance Working in partnership with Housing Associations using temporary social housing grants Networking, small business skills, construction management and support	The forum helps steer the way the council works with owners of empty home, and develops new options for owners to bring their property into use. It informed policy change on empty homes grants - which are now available to owners to let property on the private market as well as offering it for council nominations.
Scheme - Crack House Protocol		
Police, registered social landlords (RSLs) and voluntary agencies	Intelligence, investigative and legal resources of Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and Metropolitan Police combined with specialist housing needs support	50 crack houses closed down (including 12 Closure Orders) 22 vulnerable tenants offered support Home Office award and Police Commissioner commendation for scheme
Scheme - Bellenden Renewal Area – Street Scene		
Local businesses, artists, residents	Renewal area resources – capital programme, private investment	A number of outcomes, one is that improved street lighting was introduced which is helping to reduce crime. Artists were involved in developing <i>Street Scene</i> improvements
Scheme - Sub-regional common standards for housing developments		
Boroughs of Bromley, Bexley, Greenwich, Lewisham and Southwark	Sub-group of officers from partner boroughs, consultation with partner housing associations	Developed <i>The Guide for RSLs and Developers working in the South East sub-region</i> , which includes priorities and standards. This is on the South East London Housing Partnership Board website.
Scheme – Black on Board		
OLMEC – Subsidiary of Presentation,	Housing Corporation Innovation and Good Practice grant.	Increasing BME representation on housing association boards. 25 BME people have been trained

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SOUHAG	£20,420 + £4,500 from RSLs + Free use of space from Central and Cecil Housing Association	At the start of June 2005, 10 course participants had been appointed to housing association boards with 4 more awaiting decisions/ interviews. The aim is to run the course sub-regionally.
Scheme – Building London Creating Futures		
A range of London boroughs, private developers, Cross London Partnerships	European Social Fund's Equal Programme, Cross River Partnership/SRB, London Development Agency, Funding is in place for the existing workplace coordinators through to September 2007	Construction trades training and help to find employment. Since July 2002, nearly 250 have found jobs through BLCFs Workplace Coordinators, 125 from BME communities. 851 have been helped to achieve valuable construction qualifications.
Scheme - The Homelessness Forum		
Southwark housing and social services, advice agencies, SOUHAG, primary care trust, Shelter	Members of the forum share knowledge and expertise to develop effective strategy and to monitor delivery of key targets.	Developed the 2003/2006 Homelessness Strategy. Developed and monitors the action plan, information exchange. Contributes to priorities for prioritisation and allocation of ODPM Homelessness Grant.
Scheme - Sanctuary scheme		
Police, Homelessness Unit, Supporting People, Victim Support Southwark, SASBU, Women's Housing	Homelessness grant funding is £80k. Supporting People will be funding a support worker provided by refuge Women's Housing to the scheme at a cost of £38,600p.a.	The target number of sanctuary placements for the current year is 50.
Scheme – Gateway Foyer – accommodation for young offenders		
Supporting People, Youth Offending Teams	Revenue budgets	Jointly funded 4 units in Gateway Foyer for young offenders leaving institutions who would otherwise be homeless
Scheme – Step-down - temporary sheltered housing for elderly people leaving hospitals		
Supporting People, Social services	Revenue budgets	Jointly funded 4 units of TA for elders who would otherwise be bed blocking in local acute hospital beds
Scheme - Borough wide Neighborhood Safety Scheme		
Victim Support Southwark (VSS)	Council Joint Security Initiatives Programme (£118k) VSS referral network	1,777 vulnerable council tenants received security devices and advice aimed at reducing burglary artifice and fear of crime. VSS were able to refer those who did not qualify for this project onto partner projects..

2. POLICY FRAMEWORK

Our housing strategy must take account of an increasingly complex web of strategies, policies, plans and targets. In this chapter we summarise the key national, regional and local influences, focusing on those that have emerged since we last reviewed our housing strategy in 2002/03. Southwark council actively seeks to influence national and regional policy through membership of local authority associations and other bodies and by responding to policy consultations, with the aim of getting the best possible outcome for Southwark. Members and officers participate in a wide range of forums which influence national and regional policy and provide opportunities to share information and good practice.

National

Housing strategy and legislation

- *The Way Forward for Housing (ODPM⁶, 2001)/Sustainable Communities: Homes for All (ODPM, 2005)* – the aim of the strategy is to offer everyone a decent home at a price they can afford. The priorities are: increase the supply of housing, including social rented housing; energy efficient sustainable buildings; help for first time buyers; ensuring social housing tenants and vulnerable people in the private sector live in decent homes⁷; expanding choice for social housing tenants through choice-based lettings and the chance to buy a stake in their home; improving private rented accommodation; providing for those who need more support or special types of accommodation; creating sustainable mixed communities by tackling disadvantage, empowering people and making places cleaner, greener and safer.
- *Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes; Changing Lives (ODPM, 2005)* - the strategy aims to encourage and support stronger partnerships between local authorities, housing associations, private landlords and other statutory and voluntary agencies to prevent homelessness, expand housing opportunities, increase the supply of social housing, provide help for those who need additional housing support, and to halve the numbers of homeless households living in temporary accommodation by 2010.
- *Homelessness Act 2002* places a duty on all local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area to inform a homelessness strategy which moves away from short-term crisis management towards a longer-term strategy based on early intervention and support.
- *Housing Act 2004* – the Act replaces the fitness standard for housing with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System giving powers to local authorities to tackle poor housing condition in all tenures. It provides improved controls for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), including a national licensing scheme and enables local housing authorities to extend licensing to other categories of HMOs, licensing covers a wide range of issues including matters such as anti social behaviour.
- *Regulatory Reform Order (Housing Renewal) 2002* repealed nearly all of the housing grants legislation, thereby ending the renovation grants system; only mandatory disabled facilities grants remain. The Order replaced a national framework of assistance with a new general power to give assistance, enabling each local authority to develop a genuinely local housing renewal policy.

⁶ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

⁷ The government defines a 'decent home' as one that meets the statutory minimum standard for housing (currently this is the fitness standard, soon to be replaced by the housing health and safety rating system) and is in a reasonable state of repair and has reasonably modern facilities and services and provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. For social housing the standard applies to all homes. For private housing, the standard applies to the homes of older and/or vulnerable people only.

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Other strategies and legislation

- *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* – this aims to improve conditions and life chances in the most deprived neighbourhoods and to narrow the gap between these areas and the rest of the country in terms of quality of life and life chances.
- *Home Energy Conservation Act* and related government strategies, such as sustainable development, climate change and fuel poverty strategies, set targets for improving the energy efficiency of housing, sustainable heating and power and reduction of carbon dioxide emissions
- *Ten Year Vision for Local Government (ODPM, 2004)* – the government wants local and central government to work together to build better outcomes for people and places, emphasising the role of local government in community leadership, community engagement and effective partnership working.
- *Firm Foundations (Home Office, 2005)* sets out the framework for community capacity building as a necessary step in developing sustainable communities.
- *Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003* – this Act together with other recent legislation (for example the Housing Act 2004) has increased the powers that local authorities have both as landlords and as partners in crime and disorder reduction partnerships, with the expectation that councils will use these powers in a robust approach to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.
- *Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004* – these are just two of the key documents setting out the government's reform of children's services. There is a duty on all local agencies to co-operate to improve children's well-being. All council services must contribute to achieving five key outcomes for children and young people: stay safe; be healthy; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; economic well-being.
- *Choosing Health: Making Healthy Choices Easier (2004)* – the public health White Paper aims to provide an integrated system of services and legislation to improve the health of the population and enable individuals to make healthier lifestyle choices. Housing is a key determinant of health, with poorer health associated with poor housing condition, overcrowding and homelessness.
- *Releasing Resources for the Front Line: Independent Review of Public Sector (2004) (Gershon review)* – the government requires savings of 2.5% per year from local authorities as a whole. Social housing efficiency gains must be included in councils' Annual Efficiency Statements.

Regional

- *London Plan* – the spatial development strategy for London sets out a statutory framework for London boroughs' own land use and other strategies and plans. It sets annual targets for the supply of new homes in each London borough (these are currently under review) and seeks to achieve high standards for residential developments while encouraging increased housing density in some areas to achieve the housing growth required.
- *London Housing Strategy 2005* – **CHECK AGAINST FINAL LHS – NOT DUE OUT UNTIL END OF JUNE**. In 2003 the government established regional housing boards with responsibility for producing regional housing strategies and advising ministers on the allocation of funding for housing investment. Having received the regional allocation, the boards then decide how to allocate housing investment money to deliver regional priorities. The priorities of the London Housing Strategy are in line with government policy on increasing housing supply and access to decent homes. But the strategy places additional emphasis on the need for affordable homes, tackling overcrowding and homelessness and reducing the gap of unmet housing needs amongst some black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and between those with special housing needs and others. There is an expectation that many of London's housing problems can best be tackled by working across borough boundaries in regional and sub-regional partnerships.
- *South East London Housing Strategy 2003-2006* – the aims and objectives of the sub-regional strategy are in line with those of the London housing strategy and individual boroughs' housing strategies. The

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focus of the strategy is on meeting housing needs through working to sub-regional targets, working more effectively through joint procurement, joint programmes and joint training and offering more housing choice to residents in the sub-region.

Southwark strategies and priorities

Southwark's community strategy (see chapter 1) is the overarching strategy for the borough, but other local strategies also impact on our housing strategy. There are also changes in organisational structures, governance and performance management which we need to take account of.

- *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy* – developed and monitored by Southwark Alliance, the strategy aims to close the quality of life gap between those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods and the average for Southwark and the country as a whole. Resources are targeted at Priority Neighbourhoods.
- *Healthy Southwark* – the health improvement and public health partnership board leads the implementation of *Choosing Health*, the key aims of which are: tackling health inequalities; reducing the number of people who smoke; tackling obesity; improving sexual health; improving mental health and well-being; reducing harm and encouraging sensible drinking.
- *Crime and Drugs Strategy 2005-2008*– owned by the Safer Southwark Partnership⁸ (SSP) the strategy aims to make Southwark safer in ways that meet the needs and concerns of all sections of the community. There are also a number of new SSP sub-strategies, including *Anti-social behaviour strategy*, *Hate Crime and domestic violence strategy* of particular relevance for housing..
- *Unitary Development Plan* - the land use plan for the borough sets the framework for housing developments and related infrastructure and is informed by our assessment of housing needs
- *Southwark Equalities Scheme* – based on our commended race equality scheme, Southwark equalities scheme has six equality strands: race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and faith/belief. All council strategies and key policies must carry out a full equalities impact assessment.
- *Young Southwark* – this is a starting point for developing Southwark's children and young people's strategic plan. It provides a high level framework within which those responsible for planning and delivery of services can work together to deliver the five *Every child matters* priorities.
- *Community Councils* – Southwark now has eight community councils which have a developing role in service and resource planning.
- *Capital Strategy, Asset Management Plan and Procurement Strategy* – see chapter 4
- *Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and service reviews* - In 2005 Southwark achieved the Local Government Chronicle award for the most improved council, having moved from a 'weak' to a 'good' assessment in only 18 months and improved resident satisfaction with the council by 6%. We are reviewing all our services and functions in the light of the Audit Commission's new inspection tool, Key Lines of Enquiry. We are also implementing improvement plans following best value reviews across the council. In housing, we reviewed two major service areas, housing management and community housing services, which led to significant changes in services that are still ongoing. These link to the development of our Customer Service Centre which aims to provide one-stop access to a wide range of council services (see chapter 9)
- *Other housing strategies* – we incorporated our homelessness strategy into our new housing strategy (see chapter 7). Southwark supporting people strategy is a separate strategy which has been developed by a commissioning body⁹ and deals with the housing support needs of vulnerable people. The overall priorities and themes of the supporting people strategy have been integrated into this housing strategy

⁸ The Safer Southwark Partnership is Southwark's crime and disorder reduction partnership and Drug and Alcohol Action Team, with responsibility for reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse

⁹ Southwark Supporting People Commissioning Body is a partnership of housing, social services, the primary care trust and the probation service

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(see chapter 8) to get a complete picture of housing priorities. The key themes of our housing renewal policy are also included in this strategy (see chapter 5). *Celebrating diversity*, our BME housing initiative, seeks to ensure the council is identifying and addressing the housing needs of Southwark's ethnically varied communities and relevant priorities are therefore included in this strategy.

Challenges for our housing strategy

- Ensuring we have the resources and capacity to meet targets for decent homes and energy efficiency.
- Providing more housing of different sizes, types and tenures to meet changing demands, taking into account local, sub-regional and regional housing needs and the needs of vulnerable people
- Adapting and improving housing services to meet the corporate customer service agenda and to reflect changes in the balance of tenure and management arrangements. We now have over 13,000 council leaseholders/service charge payers and 4,898 council properties are managed by tenant management organisations¹⁰
- Ensuring that we successfully align housing services with other services and those of partners to promote the well-being of children and young people
- Ensuring that the provision of housing and housing services contribute to wider socio-economic goals including improving health, tackling poverty, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, building sustainable and socially cohesive communities while meeting housing targets
- Ensuring other policy drivers, for example, tackling anti-social behaviour, do not compromise our ability to prevent homelessness and tackle the problems associated with homelessness
- Achieving efficiency savings while ensuring service quality is not compromised
- Delivering more housing choice while ensuring that we make the best possible use of available housing and meet the housing needs of disadvantaged groups and communities.

¹⁰ A Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) is a democratic group of tenants who join together to form an incorporated legal body, either an Industrial and Provident Society or Company Limited by Guarantee. These are usually known as Co-operatives. A Management Agreement is negotiated with the Council so that the TMO can then take over the management of their homes. Their homes continue to be owned by the Council, and the tenants stay as secure tenants.

3. HOUSING DEMAND AND NEED

Our housing strategy is based on a robust analysis of housing need, which includes:

- Southwark Housing Needs Survey 2003/04
- Southwark Council Stock Condition Survey 2003/04
- Southwark Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2003/04
- Ongoing local and sub-regional analysis of housing market trends
- Crime, health, education, employment and other socio-economic data
- Local housing data including homelessness, lettings and supported housing needs

This evidence has been brought together in a comprehensive document, *Housing needs in Southwark*, available on the council website. A summary is set out here for quick reference.

Overview

Southwark is a multi-cultural borough, with over 100 languages spoken. The average age of the population is younger than the national average, in particular BME groups tend to have a younger age profile. The retired population is getting smaller but the number of people over 85 is increasing, and there is an increase in BME elders. It is projected that by 2016 there will be an additional 24,000 households living in Southwark.

Unemployment is about twice the national average and around a quarter of the population are economically inactive. Southwark is the 12th most deprived borough in England and the sixth most deprived in London¹¹. In some wards there are high levels of poverty and deprivation.

Average incomes are low and the proportion of owner-occupiers is nearly half the Greater London average. The average cost of owner occupation and private renting is very high compared to national prices but slightly lower than the Greater London average. Over half of households live in social rented housing¹² compared to 19% in England but we do not have enough affordable housing to meet identified needs. Consequently, there are high levels of homelessness within Southwark. A lot of the accommodation is in flats. There are a large number of non-decent properties in both the social and private sector.

Objective 1 – Improve the quality of homes and neighbourhoods

39% of Council properties were non-decent at the 31st March 2005. The table below provides a snapshot of the condition of housing in other tenures in 2003.

¹¹ Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (Using the average rank of SOA method) See *Housing needs in Southwark* for more information.

¹² Social rented housing is owned by either a council or housing association.

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The proportion of non-decent housing (Source: Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2003)

Tenure	Total Stock	Proportion non-decent
Owner Occupied (no mortgage)	11,278	40%
Owner Occupied (with mortgage)	25,398	28%
RSL	12,413	33%
Private Rented	17,490	40%
Private sector stock containing vulnerable household	16,104	39%

Energy efficiency ratings of properties are usually measured as a SAP rating¹³. The national average SAP rating across all tenures is 53.¹⁴ Southwark tends to have quite high SAP ratings as it has a high proportion of flats. The average SAP rating of all Southwark Council managed dwellings in 2002/03¹⁵ was 55, as was the average SAP rating of private housing. Only 3.3% of private sector dwellings had a SAP level below 20 compared with a national average of 14%.

In 2003 there were 3,865 buildings in Southwark that contained houses in multiple occupation. Of these, 84% were houses converted into flats.

The 2004 MORI customer satisfaction surveys of council tenants and leaseholders found that 65% of tenants and leaseholders were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live and with the overall appearance of their estate. However, the top three things considered most in need of improvement were: overall quality of the home; quality of the estate; repairs and maintenance.

Objective 2 – Increase the supply of all housing, in particular affordable housing

There are around 110,000 households in Southwark. There is a very high demand for private accommodation in Southwark as in all London boroughs. As a result house prices and private rents in Southwark are extremely high. In April 2005, the weighted overall average property price in Southwark was £256,100. This was slightly below the Greater London average of £262,700 but significantly above the national average of £162,100. In London the weighted average private rent was £1,668 per month compared to a national average of £738.

The average net annual household income of all households in Southwark is only £17,599¹⁶. As a result there are a large proportion of people who are unable to access the private sector and therefore there are very high levels of demand for affordable housing. The high cost of housing is seen to be a factor in recruitment and retention of key workers such as teachers. In 2002, a teacher's salary was 40% below the income required to buy an average priced house in Southwark. Escalating property prices have widened this gap.

Our Housing Needs Survey found a need for an additional 1,937 units of affordable housing each year over five years to deal with the backlog of need and meet newly arising need. Using a balancing housing market approach, the main shortfall in the affordable housing sector is for three-bedroom accommodation, with slight surpluses of one and two bedroom homes.

¹³ SAP = Standard Assessment Procedure. It is a scale of 0 – 120 where a higher figure is better

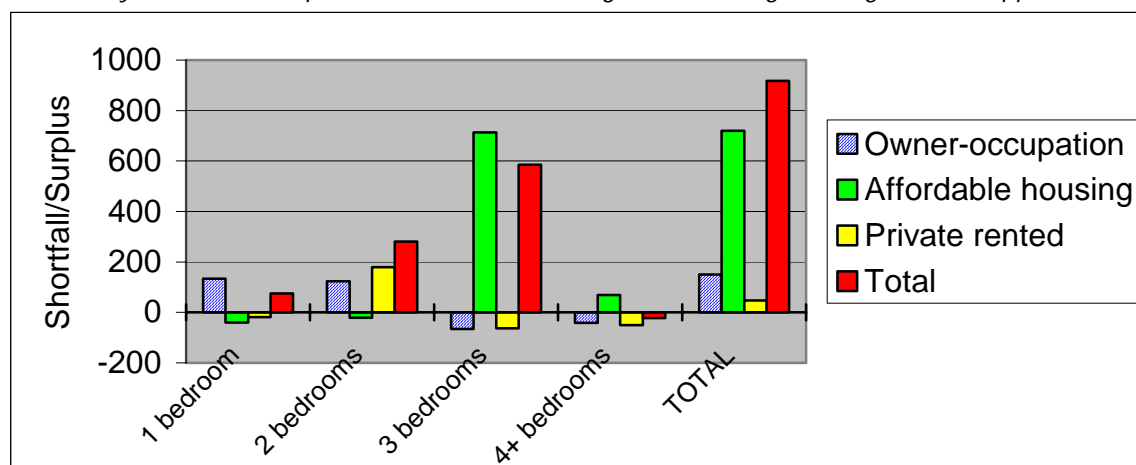
¹⁴ National Energy Action (NEA) 2004

¹⁵ HIP 2003: Business Plan Statistical Appendix

¹⁶ Southwark Housing Needs Survey

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Demand by house size requirement and tenure using the balancing housing markets approach



Note: Negative numbers represent a surplus.

Non-white ethnic groups make up 37% of Southwark's population. This is significant, as some ethnic groups tend to have larger households.¹⁷

Household size and ethnicity

Number of persons in household	White British	White Irish	White Other	Mixed	Asian	Black Caribbean	Black African	Chinese/Vietnamese	Cypriot	Other	Total
One	23,911	1,013	2,537	688	915	3,194	3,416	320	336	638	36,969
Two	18,816	1,164	2,680	505	817	3,703	4,357	365	534	757	33,698
Three	7,524	519	1,909	244	678	2,335	3,606	957	457	391	18,620
Four	4,340	346	1,607	490	632	1,082	1,688	411	293	0	10,887
Five	1,955	0	239	26	260	588	1,483	362	232	131	5,277
Six	517	235	273	0	206	56	622	0	0	69	1,978
Seven or more	111	23	87	0	49	70	204	42	0	59	644
TOTAL	57,174	3,300	9,331	1,953	3,557	11,028	15,376	2,456	1,852	2,046	108,073
Average hh size	2.01	2.38	2.52	2.31	2.81	2.33	2.75	3.12	2.76	2.35	2.28

Source: London Borough of Southwark Housing Needs Survey 2003¹⁸

In the past ten years there has been a significant change in the tenure profile of housing in the borough. In the past three years alone

- The number of council homes decreased by over 4,500 (mainly due to sales under Right to Buy)
- The number of housing association homes increased by nearly 1,000
- The number of private sector homes increased by over 6,500

There has also been a significant reduction in the number of social housing lettings available to the council¹⁹ as less people can afford to move out into private renting or home ownership. Between 2000/01 and 2003/04 the number of lettings including transfers fell by 9.6% from 3,128 to 2,828.

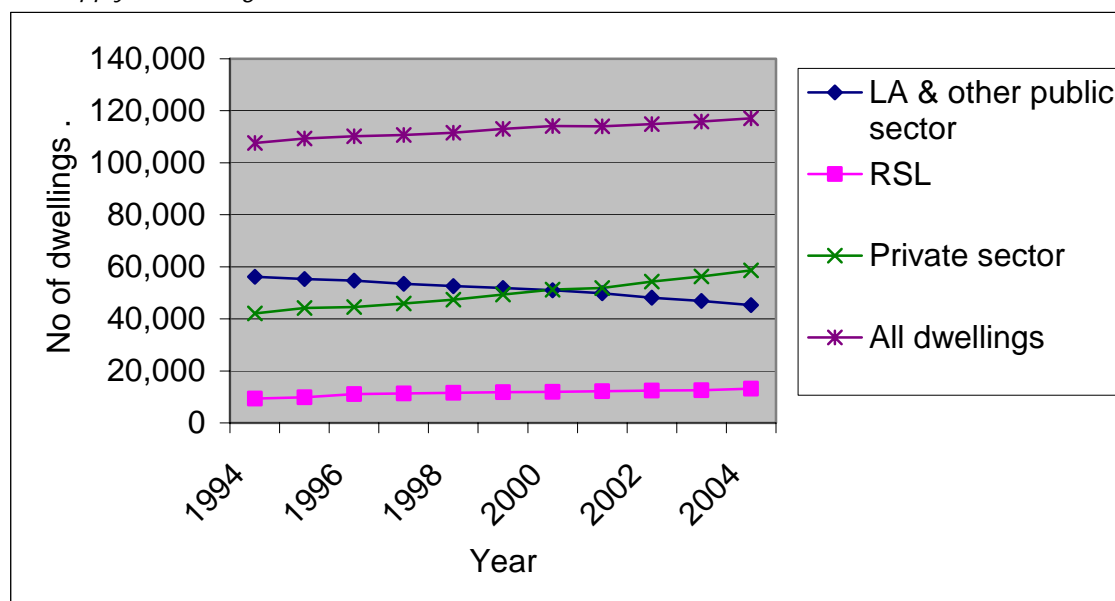
¹⁷ Data from Census 2001

¹⁸ Note: Student households are not included in this data therefore the number of households is 2,431 lower than the number stated earlier in this document

¹⁹ As well as letting council homes, the council has nomination rights to housing association homes in the borough through a nomination agreement. Currently, the agreement entitles the council to 100% of nominations to new housing association homes supplied through council funding (a small proportion of new housing association homes) and to 50% of one bedroom and 75% of two-bedroom and over housing association vacancies.

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The supply of housing within Southwark 1994-2004



Source: London Borough of Southwark Housing Needs Survey 2003

In 2003, 18% of households were living in accommodation that was in some way unsuitable for their requirements. Across all tenures, 9% of households were overcrowded whereas 19% were under occupying. In council rented properties 13% of households (6,196) were overcrowded and 14% of households (6,607) were under occupying²⁰. Almost half of dependent children in Southwark live in overcrowded accommodation, compared to 13% in England, and 73% live in rented accommodation compared to 33% in England. Overcrowding can have detrimental effects on people's health and quality of life and a negative effect on children's life chances.

Our Private Sector Stock Condition Survey estimated that there were 3,044 vacant properties in the private sector representing 4.6% of the total private sector stock.

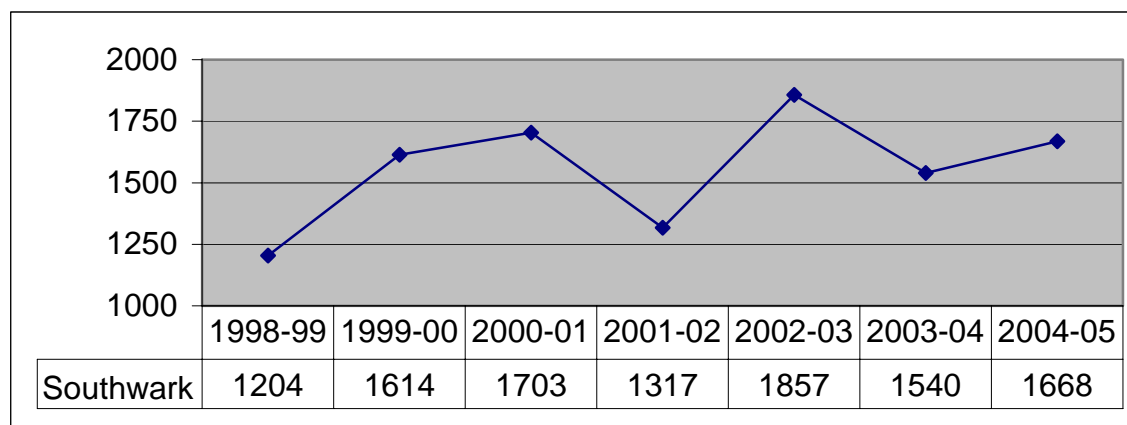
Objective 3 – Reduce homelessness and improve the standards of temporary accommodation

Although homelessness levels have fallen slightly in Southwark and London as a whole in recent years, they are still high compared to the rest of the country. In 2004/05, Southwark accepted 1,668 households as unintentionally homeless and in priority need, of which 1,032 contained dependant children or a pregnant woman. Over 64% of the households accepted as homeless lost their last settled home because family/friends were no longer willing to accommodate them. Black African/Caribbean households are over represented in households accepted as homeless making up around 40% of homelessness acceptances.

²⁰ Southwark Housing Needs Survey 2003/04

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Homeless acceptances in Southwark 1998-99 to 2003-04



Source: Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix 1998-2005

As a result of the high level of homeless acceptances and the shortage of affordable housing, we have a large number of homeless people living in temporary accommodation. At the end of March 2004, there were 926 households in temporary accommodation and 451 of these were households with dependant children and/or a pregnant woman. 294 of the households stayed in hostels and another 278 were accommodated in Southwark's own housing stock.

In March 2005 our count of rough sleepers found seven people sleeping out, which was below the ODPM target of ten.

Objective 4 – Improve the quality of life for vulnerable people through housing support

There are a large number of people in Southwark who need some form of housing support. These are described in detail in the Southwark Five-Year Supporting People Strategy.

There are an estimated 19,893 households in Southwark with one or more persons with special needs²¹. 18% of all households contain one or more people with special needs but this rises to 29% of all council households. Of households with special needs, 62% include someone with a physical disability and 23% frail elderly. Of all special needs households, 8% (1,598) had two and 2% (322) had three or more people with special needs. 15% of households with special needs are owner-occupiers and 67% are renting from the council. 4% of all special needs households need to use a wheelchair all of the time and 8% some of the time.

Objective 5 – Deliver community focused services

The MORI 2004 customer satisfaction survey of council tenants and leaseholders found that 58% of people were very or fairly satisfied, while 24% were either fairly or very dissatisfied. However, satisfaction rates among leaseholders were significantly lower (35%). The over 65s tended to be more satisfied at 70% while in the 16-34 age group 50% were satisfied. BME tenants were less satisfied (56%) than white tenants (60%). 55% of people were satisfied with their contact with the housing department.

Our most recent survey of all residents (2004) found:

²¹ The data in this paragraph is from Southwark Housing Needs Survey 2003/04 which defined special needs households as having one or more members who fall into one or more of the following categories: frail elderly, a physical disability, a learning disability, a mental health problem, vulnerable young people and children leaving care, severe sensory disability.

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- 71% were satisfied with Southwark as a place to live but only 53% were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live – this has fallen from 57% in 2000
- 9% of all residents but 13% of council tenants and 14% of people with disabilities felt that improving existing housing was one of the most important improvements required
- 54% of people said they felt safe after dark (up from 39% in 2000) but 18% felt there is a high crime rate or do not feel safe

A recent survey of customers of services provided by the Community Housing Services Division found that:

- Twice as many users were satisfied than dissatisfied. Just under half (46%) of those customers who took part in the survey said they were satisfied with the service they had received, whilst a quarter (25%) said they were dissatisfied. A further quarter (26%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- Amongst those who were dissatisfied, the most common reasons given were that staff were unhelpful (19%), the service was being too slow in dealing with their issue (18%), no accommodation had been found for them yet (12%), they were kept waiting too long at reception (7%), the process is too complex and stressful (5%) and poor advice or information was given (2%).

4. RESOURCING THE HOUSING STRATEGY

Investing in buildings

The council's housing investment programme

Our housing investment programme sets out what resources we think will be available to the council over the next five years and how we will allocate them to

- Improve council homes and their immediate environment
- Improve private sector homes
- Contribute to building new affordable homes
- Maintain other types of accommodation such as travellers sites.

Our resource planning framework includes:

- The council's capital investment strategy which sets the framework for allocation of capital resources across the council and is geared to delivering our community strategy priorities. Bids are submitted to the capital expenditure working group which makes recommendations to be ratified by the Executive and full Council. The council, while retaining year on year bidding, is intending to move to three-year profiling of anticipated resources to provide a greater degree of certainty for investment planning purposes.
- The council's asset management plan which ensures the best value for money use of all the council's assets
- Cross-borough planning groups, for example the Rough Sleepers Consortium, Single Regeneration Budget Boards. The South East London Housing Partnership will have an increasing role to play in resource planning for housing investment across the sub-region. For example, funding from the London Housing Board for private sector programmes has been allocated to sub-regions rather than individual boroughs
- The annual policy-led business cycle aligns planning, decision-making and budget allocation with the priorities of the community strategy over a three-year period.

We aim to maximise resources for our investment programme by:

- Making representations to the London Housing Board through the Association of London Government to ensure that the needs of the borough and of the south east sub-region are adequately reflected in regional priorities for resource allocation.
- Working with developers to maximise available funding. For example, we have generated £10 million from land receipts at Bermondsey Spa to be invested in making council homes decent in the area. Canada Water will offer similar benefits.
- Bidding to government and other partners for additional funding where appropriate opportunities occur.
- Efficiency savings – our major works procurement working group is develop partnering arrangements for all major works schemes, with the aim of delivering all major works and programmed planned maintenance through partnering contracts by April 2007. We have piloted this partnering approach in two housing management areas and tested for cost predictability and against traditionally tendered contracts. We have a strategic partnering forum to benchmark partnering contractors and consultants to achieve best value and are developing a supply chain and local labour schemes linked to partnering.
- Partnership working - see chapter 1 for examples.
- Linking housing improvement schemes with neighbouring SRB (Single Regeneration Budget) schemes and corporate initiatives.
- Bidding to local funding streams. For example, through the community councils, the council is funding door entry schemes and playgrounds on estates.

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- Recycling 100% of capital receipts from HRA (Housing Revenue Account) assets for housing programmes wherever possible, usually to support a comprehensive LASHG²² programme, working with RSLs to provide new affordable housing.
- Using our affordable housing fund to complement the Housing Corporation National Affordable Housing Programme
- Maximising private sector contributions to private housing renewal. We have moved away from purely grant funding housing renewal to a system of loans and targeted grants – see chapter 5.
- Pursuing partial stock transfer where residents select this as a viable option.
- We will consider the investment potential of the government's Social HomeBuy proposals as part of our stock options appraisal (see chapter 5).

Key issues

- The recent changes in the allocation of housing resources via regional housing boards has introduced an additional element of uncertainty into resource planning at local level. Increasingly the London Housing Board seems likely to divert resources away from allocations to individual boroughs (which would then be spent according to local priorities) in favour of allocating resources for specific programmes. Other than funding for decent homes, local authorities are likely to have to put in bids for funding from discretionary pots, with little advance notice of bidding criteria and eligibility. This leads to schemes being pulled together quickly and therefore greater risk of problems delivering such schemes within timescale. It is therefore not possible to build in any assumptions to the investment programme around future funding from discretionary regional pots.
- Buoyancy of the construction market – we are concerned that building costs are increasing faster than inflation which, taken together with the widespread skills shortages in building trades could compromise our ability to deliver major schemes.
- We aim to improve all council homes to the decent homes standard but are aware that our tenants have other priorities not included in the standard that currently cannot be met because there are insufficient resources.
- With pressure on achieving the decent homes standard for council housing, there is a need to ensure that continued priority is given to allocating resources for non-council housing.
- As there is no new Single Regeneration Budget or New Deal for Communities Funding, there is now a funding gap for large regeneration projects.

Investment programme 2005-2010

The tables below set out the funding we anticipate and our housing investment programme for the next five years. The programme is reviewed and updated regularly.

PROGRAMME AS AT 130505 – TO REVIEW FOR FINAL DOCUMENT AND UPDATE

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME – ANTICIPATED RESOURCES (£ millions)					
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Credit approvals	12.526	13.443	13.443	13.443	13.443
Grants	16.180	6.143	0.360	0.360	0.360
Major repairs allowance (inc. reserves)	69.345	45.146	41.330	36.528	36.307
Revenue contributions	21.652	19.775	15.416	15.437	15.458
Capital receipts	17.594	20.884	24.461	35.760	16.000
ANTICIPATED RESOURCES TOTAL	137.297	105.391	95.010	101.528	81.568

²² Local Authority Social Housing Grant

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Notes to anticipated resources table

- Credit approvals – the expected allocation of credit approvals made on a formula basis annually by the London Housing Board, mainly for bringing council homes up to the decent homes standard. We are currently negotiating to increase this allocation.
- Grants – includes some government grants, energy grants from partners, the council's affordable housing fund and contributions from Leathermarket and Tabard tenant management organisations.
- Major repairs allowance – allocated on a formula basis by government for spending on council homes only.
- Revenue contributions – all housing revenue account contributions. This includes over £6.5 million per year allocated to external decorations which may be used partly as a contribution to the investment programme and therefore needs to be taken into account.
- Capital receipts – includes receipts generated by and for Southwark Estates Initiative schemes only, receipts from land sales, allocation of capital receipts from the council's pooled receipts, some of which have been allocated to specific cross-cutting schemes by community councils.
- The anticipated resources do not include resources allocated to the south east London sub-region by the London Housing Board. In 2005/06 £2 million is allocated to the sub-region for private sector housing schemes

PROGRAMME AS AT 13.05.05. WILL BE UPDATED IN FINAL VERSION TO LINE UP WITH HOUSING STRATEGY STATISTICAL APPENDIX

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME – ANTICIPATED ALLOCATIONS (£ millions)					
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Council homes/neighbourhoods					
Major regeneration schemes	41.504	28.048	18.181	6.870	1.270
Other regeneration/decent homes/PPM	92.235	93.011	93.67	94.663	93.905
Schemes on individual properties	6.989	5.743	5.000	3.000	3.000
Landlord obligations	15.732	15.610	9.890	9.200	9.200
Miscellaneous	6.116	6.821	1.645	1.649	1.653
Non-council homes/neighbourhoods					
Private housing renewal	5.232	5.056	4.303	4.303	4.303
Affordable housing (housing associations)	0.960	1.426	0	0	0
Affordable housing (Aylesbury)	0	0	1.000	7.000	0
Gypsy site refurbishment	1.196	0	0	0	0
Hostel new build (Southampton Way)	0.250	1.250	0	0	0
ANTICIPATED PROGRAMME TOTAL	170.214	156.965	133.689	126.685	113.331

Notes to investment programme table:

- The investment programme for council homes and neighbourhoods exceeds anticipated resources as over-programming is built in to ensure 100% delivery of the programme.
- Major regeneration schemes – the largest part of the programme is accounted for by schemes on East Dulwich, Friary and Elmington estates
- Other regeneration/decent homes/PPM – the bulk of the programme is for works to meet decent homes standards, other programmed planned maintenance (PPM) and includes external decorations
- Schemes on individual properties – the bulk of the programme is for the major voids²³ programme, works to acquired street properties and the capital element of the adaptations programme

²³ Major voids describes those empty council homes which need significant investment

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- Landlord obligations – the largest part of the programme is accounted for by lifts replacement and refurbishment, rewiring in tenants homes and communal areas, heating improvements and replacement and tank/tankroom refurbishment and replacement
- Private housing renewal – this covers grants for improving private sector housing (including disabled facilities grants), street renewal schemes and environmental works in renewal areas
- Affordable housing – due to changes in policy more recently there has been a focus on on-site development rather than developers making commuted payments to the council's affordable housing fund. However, our new Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance has the potential to generate funding from schemes of less than 15 units, but it is not possible at this stage to assess the scale of future resources.
- Affordable housing (Aylesbury) – this relates to land receipts invested as part of the plans for the south west corner of the estate.

Delivering the investment programme

A range of measures are in place to ensure delivery of the investment programme, including:

- Over-programming normally occurs on schemes funded from BCA (basic credit approvals), MRA (major repairs allowance) and revenue contributions. This is where flexibility lies to consider necessary virements and/or releasing schemes that can spend within the relevant year, or delaying schemes if necessary.
- Investment Programme Group (IPG) and sub-groups. Chaired by the Strategic Director of Housing, IPG has strategic responsibility for setting, monitoring, and delivering the investment programme.
- Corporate procurement guidance and specific regular training of investment programme managers and officers
- PRINCE2 project management training for staff managing contracts
- Project monitoring by each business unit and across business units
- Investment Managers meetings sharing good practice and problem solving
- Voids Panel which monitors performance and decides investment on individual empty council homes.

Appendix XXX sets out our performance in delivering our housing investment programme over the previous two years.

New affordable housing programme

Social housing grant

The biggest source of funding for new housing is allocated as social housing grant to housing associations by the Housing Corporation through their National Affordable Housing Programme (formerly known as the Approved Development Programme (ADP)). The council holds quarterly meetings with the Housing Corporation to discuss existing and future affordable housing programmes and priorities for investment. Currently our priorities are for larger homes, our regeneration areas and housing for vulnerable people which meets the priorities of Southwark's Supporting People Strategy.

With the boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham we agree investment priorities for the south east London sub-region with the Housing Corporation, as the Corporation allocates resources sub-regionally taking into account boroughs' Housing Needs Index scores. However, ultimately the Corporation's resources will be directed to schemes which are deliverable. Southwark has a good track record for deliverable schemes as joint working between housing and planning officers has put robust enabling structures in place which ensure that affordable housing schemes are ready to go on site as soon as funding becomes available. As a result, in recent years Southwark has benefited from around £25 million annual investment from the Corporation and we are assuming similar levels of investment in

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future as we still have development opportunities in the borough and a good track record of enabling delivery of schemes.

Section 106 agreements

Affordable housing can also be secured as part of private developments through planning agreements known as Section 106 Agreements (See chapter 6). We have been successful in delivering an increasing number of affordable homes through planning agreements without the need for public subsidy, leaving public subsidy to generate new affordable housing elsewhere. If all developments currently on our planning applications database get developed out, this will deliver over 900 additional affordable housing units.

Key issues

- As the Thames Gateway is a major government programme which is a key part of delivering the planned increase in housing in London and the South East, it is likely that resources will be diverted from the five London housing sub-regions to Thames Gateway.
- From July 2005, unregistered bodies²⁴ can submit bids for social housing grant to the Housing Corporation. This may have a negative impact on our successful track record in delivering S106 schemes without public subsidy
- The government's emphasis on numbers at cheapest cost possible could have a negative impact on the quality of new affordable homes and may not deliver the type and size of homes to meet identified needs.

Investing in services

Revenue resources for Housing Revenue Account²⁵ and Housing General Fund²⁶ services are allocated annually according to council and departmental priorities. New services must be justified against strategic priorities and costed in detail. Divisions and business units are required to produce business plans covering all responsibilities and to exemplify savings to meet target levels. Monthly budget monitoring reports are presented to housing senior management team. A strategic review of HRA income and expenditure has been commissioned to identify a baseline financial position for future years and income/cost drivers able to be managed to achieve priorities within planned resources.

Key issues for the future include:

- Revenue support for the capital programme in providing decent homes
- Housing the homeless using short term leases and other available property
- Redevelopment schemes and the effects, during and afterward, on dwelling stock
- Electronic delivery of services
- Right to Buy effects, including leasehold management.

We aim to maximise resources for housing services by:

- Maximising rent and service charge income by improving collection methods and giving benefits advice to enable householders to maximise their income
- Bidding for Government funding for specific initiatives. For example, we

²⁴ Unregistered bodies are those which are not registered with the Housing Corporation and includes developers. Previously, only housing associations registered with the Housing Corporation could receive social housing grant

²⁵ Housing Revenue Account (HRA) this is the council's landlord account. Council's which do not have any council housing do not have a HRA

²⁶ The General Fund is the council's revenue account. Housing is allocated funding from the General Fund to pay for non-landlord services

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- achieved funding for our Neighbourhood Management pilot in South Bermondsey
- receive funding from the Homelessness Directorate for homelessness prevention initiatives. For 2005/06 we have a grant of £1.050 million and anticipate that we will receive grant at around this level for at least the next two years as we have a good track record in delivering the programme we have agreed with our Homelessness Forum and the Homelessness Directorate
- Efficiency savings in procurement of office supplies and services – our corporate procurement strategy is achieving savings across the departments

Appendix XXX sets out the planned and outturn spend on the Housing Revenue and Housing General Fund Accounts for the previous two years. Notes to the table explain major variations between planned and outturn spend.

Supporting People funding is allocated by Southwark Supporting People Commissioning Body and contributes to delivering our housing strategy. This government funding stream is currently ring-fenced (it cannot be diverted to other services) to pay for housing support services to vulnerable people. The government is introducing a new distribution formula for allocating supporting people grant and we are hopeful the new formula will not result in any significant further cuts in grant in Southwark. Therefore, we are assuming that supporting people funding will be around £19 million per year over the next five years. However, supporting people grant cannot be spent on new buildings or repairs, so we have to pay for these from the council's or partner housing associations' housing investment programmes.

5. IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ALL HOMES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

Why this objective?

Our homes and neighbourhoods are key to our well being. Poor quality housing and local environment is often a symptom of poverty and has an adverse impact on many areas of our lives such as health, feelings of security, education and employment opportunities. Our first objective must therefore be to improve the quality of our homes and neighbourhoods. Our key priorities for improving the physical quality of homes and neighbourhoods are explained below, with details of how we will deliver them. We can also develop services that contribute to achieving better quality, more sustainable neighbourhoods –these are covered in more detail in chapter 9.

Recent achievements

- Over 4,000 council homes were brought up to the decent homes standard in the last two years and over 5,000 more are now having decent homes work undertaken on them
- Completed the refurbishment of 750 homes and environmental improvements on the Kingswood Estate under Southwark Estates Initiative
- Agreed with tenants in East Dulwich a £25 million estates refurbishment programme partly funded by sale of void properties to key workers.
- Installed smoke alarms in over 40,000 council homes
- A new housing renewal policy assessed as 'outstanding' by Beacon Status assessors
- Bellenden Area Renewal and private sector empty homes work assessed as excellent by the Beacon Council assessors. Over the life time of the Bellenden Renewal Area, 564 properties have been made fit for habitation or put in a reasonable state of repair.
- First Southwark solar hot water systems installed
- Declared two additional renewal areas in Nunhead and East Peckham
- We developed a new Unitary Development Plan which set challenging standards for new housing

What we want to achieve by 2010

- All council homes meet the decent homes standard
- Completed Coopers Road and East Dulwich Southwark Estate Initiative programmes
- An increase of at least 5% in the proportion of vulnerable households in private housing who are living in homes which meet the decent homes standard
- Improved private housing and local environments in Nunhead and East Peckham
- A new combined heat and power system up and running
- Recycling collection facilities available to most council homes
- Increase in energy efficiency of council homes to an average SAP rating of 65
- A higher quality private rented sector which is accessible to people on low incomes

OUR PRIORITIES AND WHAT WE WILL DO TO DELIVER THEM

Bring all council homes up to the decent homes standard

Why this priority?

More people in Southwark live in council homes than in any other single tenure and over half of Southwark's children live in council homes. The government has set a target to bring all social housing

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up to the decent homes standard by 2010 and has linked the allocation of funding to local authorities to achieving this target. Access to decent homes is essential to achieving the priorities of Southwark's community and neighbourhood renewal strategies and makes a significant contribution to improving health and the well-being of children. Therefore, this is the highest priority for housing investment.

We will do this by

- Consulting council tenants and leaseholders on an overarching options appraisal for our housing stock, which will demonstrate how we will meet the decent homes standard by 2010 either through using our own resources or through one or more of the three funding options²⁷ outlined in the government's communities plan. We have agreed with the Government Office for London that we will submit our options appraisal to them in September 2005. A working group of tenants, leaseholders and councillors is steering the options appraisal and an independent tenant advisor will work with tenants throughout the process. Pending the outcome of our options appraisal, our approach is to direct virtually all funding to decent homes other than that already earmarked for established regeneration schemes, landlord obligations and other statutory and contractual obligations.
- Completing major regeneration/estate renewal schemes which will achieve 100% decent homes as a minimum, as well as wider social and economic regeneration. Examples include our completed Kingswood Estate scheme and schemes for East Dulwich and Friary estates (currently 90% of homes on the estate are not decent so we have a refurbishment partnering contract with Apollo to address this). Schemes may mean demolishing homes and replacing with new better quality social housing. Examples include Coopers Road, Elmington and Linden Grove estates where we have worked with partner housing associations to build and manage new replacement homes and provide enhanced community facilities for the estates
- Entering into partnering contracts to deliver capital works schemes to ensure better planning of area investment programmes. Long term partnering offers a number of benefits including the scope to develop other initiatives, for example we are developing local labour initiatives with two contractors. We are also looking at bringing housing associations into partnering agreements
- Investing in empty council homes to bring them up to the decent homes standard before re-letting. Although this has a negative impact on our re-let times, we consider it an effective way to bring homes up to the standard.
- Increasing the proportion of programmed planned maintenance to responsive repairs, linking this to achieving decent homes. This will give us best value from our investment, for example through discount with suppliers by aggregating our works – this is specially relevant for the decent homes elements we will renew, for example, windows, kitchens and bathrooms.
- Ensuring that all housing works contracts contribute to decent homes and justifying why not if this is not the case (for example, repair and renewal of lifts is not included in the decent homes standard but is essential).

Bring private housing occupied by vulnerable people up to the decent homes standard

Why this priority?

Support for vulnerable households is a theme of our neighbourhood renewal, supporting people and social care strategies and meets the community strategy priority of tackling the symptoms of poverty. The government has set a target to increase the proportion of private housing in decent condition occupied by vulnerable households to 75% nationally by 2020. Our private sector stock condition survey

²⁷ Currently, the options for additional funding to reach this standard are: transferring council housing to another social landlord (such as a housing association), setting up arms length management organisations to manage the housing or establishing a private finance initiative to improve the housing.

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estimated that, in Southwark, over 39% of vulnerable households are living in non-decent private housing.

We will do this by:

- Giving priority in our housing renewal policy to providing financial assistance (grants and loans) to vulnerable home owners and private tenants who are on low incomes and living in homes that do not meet the decent homes standard.
- Ensuring that sub-regional funding for private sector decent homes is appropriately targeted to deliver Southwark targets
- Providing a home maintenance service to private tenants and home owners who are on benefits, the aim being to prevent their home falling into disrepair and non-decency.
- Providing financial advice and other support, through our home improvement agency
- Providing an environmental health service to assist private tenants in securing improvements to their homes through regulation of their landlords.

Improve the energy efficiency of all homes

Why this priority?

Energy inefficient homes lose heat, which is damaging to the environment and makes the homes more expensive to heat. Households on low incomes living in energy inefficient homes can therefore suffer fuel poverty²⁸. Families with young children, pensioners, people with disabilities and the unemployed are more likely to suffer from fuel poverty. Poorly heated homes have a particularly adverse effect on the health of young children, older people and those with disabilities. The government has set targets to improve the energy efficiency of housing, reduce carbon dioxide emissions and develop sustainable energy sources. We therefore consider it a priority to promote and enable energy efficient homes to tackle the effects of poverty, improve residents' health and meet environmental targets.

We will do this by:

- Meeting decent homes targets for council homes and vulnerable private sector residents (see above). This includes upgrading heating systems and increasing thermal insulation where needed.
- Restructuring and extending our energy service to ensure enhanced strategic and technical capacity, focused on improving energy efficiency in housing across all tenures to meet HECA targets and strengthening capability in terms of managing our own energy and tapping into external funding.
- Continuing to resources Southwark's energy agency, Sustainable Energy Action, which provides energy efficiency initiatives and advice to residents.
- Promoting sustainable living and green energy measures such as solar powered hot water and heating through council grants under the Solar for London scheme.
- Working with the Energy Savings Trust and Greater London Energy Efficiency Network to provide grants and loans to private landlords to improve heating systems and insulation standards in private rented property.
- Referring households to schemes such as Warm Front²⁹ for help and promoting HelpCo Energy Club³⁰.
- Applying the requirements of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to improve private tenants' homes, requiring their landlords to undertake the necessary improvements.

²⁸ Fuel poverty is defined as spending more than 10% of household income to heat the home to a satisfactory standard

²⁹ Warm Front is a Government flagship scheme to eradicate fuel poverty in the private sector.

³⁰ An energy services company which arranges for the supply of energy, advises on energy efficiency and grants, mediates in disputes with energy companies and provides payment options for fuel for those without bank accounts.

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- Developing community heating systems to deliver heat and power to housing and other users in an area. Southwark already has the largest housing CHP (Combined Heat & Power) plant in London at Wyndham Estate in Camberwell. The council is keen to offer the benefits of CHP to more people, starting with the conversion of existing community heating systems. With this in mind a major feasibility study was undertaken in 2003 that was jointly funded by the council and the Community Energy Programme (CEP). The study of Rodney Road and Taplow housing neighbourhoods showed that CHP is the best option for all estates in the area from an environmental, economic and social perspective. We have been awarded a £4.3 million grant to develop a combined heat and power scheme in the area of the Aylesbury estate and are looking to create a non-profit making company to generate the rest of the investment needed.

Improve run-down private housing

Why this priority?

In Southwark, there are significant levels of unfit and empty homes in the private sector. Many home owners are on low incomes and cannot afford to do the repairs their homes need and their health may suffer as a consequence of the poor condition of their homes. Homes that have been empty for a long time are usually in very poor condition and an eyesore, blighting the local area. Some areas of the borough have concentrations of poor quality private housing. We have legal responsibilities to ensure that houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) meet fire and health and safety standards. While it is primarily the responsibility of home owners to maintain their properties, the council has general legal powers to provide assistance to residents and landlords in order to repair, improve or adapt homes. We also have powers to compel landlords to undertake necessary improvements. To achieve our aims of making Southwark a better place to live, improve residents' health and tackle poverty we will use these general powers to improve run-down private housing.

We will do this by:

- Providing council loans to households on low incomes living in areas of the borough declared as renewal areas. Our work in the Bellenden Renewal Area has received national recognition and the council has recently agreed two additional renewal areas in East Peckham and Nunhead.
- Providing council small works grants to vulnerable owners and private occupiers who are liable for repairs. These will be particularly targeted at adaptations or improvements enabling discharge from hospital, energy efficiency and security improvements, meeting fitness or decency standards
- Providing council loans to vulnerable home owners to bring their homes up to the decent homes standard, provide necessary adaptations or improved security and energy efficiency
- Providing council grants and loans to bring long term empty properties back into use. Where the owner will not live in the property, a condition of assistance is that it be made available for private or social renting (thereby contributing to meeting housing needs). Increasingly we will join with our south east London partner boroughs to publicise the boroughs' empty homes hot lines, share information and good practice (including a joint approach to the Empty Dwelling Management Orders, introduced in the Housing Act 2004) and develop empty homes schemes with sub-regional funding
- Providing home maintenance advice and a home maintenance service with sliding charges based on income to improve homes and prevent homes falling into disrepair and unfit
- Providing non-vulnerable households with advice on getting private finance to repair and improve their homes
- Monitoring grants and loans take up and keeping our private housing renewal policy under review, adapting it where necessary to meet changing circumstances and identified gaps in services. We have recently agreed more assistance to: bring homes up to the fitness or decent homes standards;

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improve fire safety and energy efficiency; bring empty homes into use; carry out whole street improvements to the outside of houses in declared renewal areas

- Implementing the new Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) coming into force in October 2005, ensuring we use our enforcement powers effectively to improve the quality of homes. We gave trained enforcement officers to be able to assess homes against the new standard and they are authorised to enforce improvements where necessary
- Using our regulation and enforcement powers to compulsorily purchase properties in serious disrepair where the owner will not remedy the problems
- Licensing all HMOs as defined in the Housing Act 2004. We are developing a policy for the regulation and licensing of HMOs to ensure the safety of tenants. We are considering whether to extend licensing to other categories of HMOs. Our existing HMO registration schemes in Bellenden renewal area and Old Kent Road will be transferred to the new licensing schemes.
- Participating in a London-wide landlord accreditation scheme (see chapter 9)
- Working with the South East London Housing Partnership to deliver sub-regional schemes to improve private housing

Improve neighbourhood environments

Why this priority?

Residents tell us that the quality of the environment surrounding their home (their neighbourhood) is often as or more important than the quality of their home. It makes sense therefore, to try and improve the local environment alongside improving homes – this is the sustainable approach. Improving neighbourhood environments contributes to environmental and safety priorities and improves quality of life. Given the extent of overcrowded households in Southwark, it is particularly important to provide accessible play spaces.

We will do this by:

- Where resources allow, investing in environmental, security, play and recycling facilities on council estates, in particular as part of whole estate regeneration schemes. Tenants and leaseholders have told us they want environmental improvements and security features that are not part of the decent homes standard and so would be an additional cost. As part of our options appraisal (see above), we will work with tenants to see how resources could be made available to deliver improvements to council housing and neighbourhoods.
- Looking for opportunities to bring in additional resources to improve the environment and facilities on and near council estates, for example, working with education and health to provide facilities in the neighbourhood such as safe and attractive playgrounds and sports pitches
- Prioritising the installation of door entry systems to council blocks based on information on crime hot spots from the police and Southwark anti-social behaviour unit
- Working in partnership with housing associations to improve community facilities on neighbouring council and housing association estates. Family Housing Association built a new doctor's surgery on Lamps Court Estate and the council is developing plans to build one on the Silwood Estate.
- Working with residents, local businesses and artists in private housing renewal areas to enhance employment, training and leisure opportunities and to improve the look of public areas through grant-aided environmental works
- Increasing the availability and number of recycling points on our estates. Working with tenants and residents groups to identify suitable sites, we have installed 200 recycling sites on council estates.
- Increasing refuse storage capacity on council estates and moving it underground
- Combating the problems of dog mess on estates through poster campaigns on the health impact and through providing dog bins.

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- Improving the natural environment by replacing diseased and dead trees with native trees and planting bulbs on council estates, involving local children to give a sense of ownership.

Set quality standards for new housing

Why this priority?

In the longer term we will improve the quality of homes and neighbourhoods by ensuring new housing developments are of a high standard and contribute to meeting local strategic objectives.

We will do this by:

- Working with planning officers to set clear standards for housing design and type and for the local environment in Southwark's *Local plan* (also known as unitary development plan)
- Ensuring the council and its housing association partners work to enhanced standards as set out in our *Housing design and specification guide*.

Risk assessment

- Whether we can generate sufficient funding to bring all the council's homes up to the decent homes standard by 2010 is subject to the outcome of our options appraisal and decisions on resource allocation by the London Housing Board over the next five years, about which there is a considerable degree of uncertainty (see chapter 4)
- Given the pressure on council resources to meet decent homes targets, our ability to deliver improvements in neighbourhood environments is highly dependent on the availability of partner resources
- Improving private sector housing is largely dependent on owners' ability to obtain private finance, including the availability of suitable equity loan products
- A slump in the housing market could result in more private sector homes being left empty
- Delays in issuing government guidance on the HHSRS and national HMO licensing scheme mean we cannot yet put the appropriate systems in place to meet these new challenges.

ACTION PLAN

Key targets to achieve by 2010

- 100% of council homes meet decent homes standard
- 95% of council-managed households have recycling collection facilities
- 5% increase (to total of 66%) in vulnerable households in private housing living in decent homes
- completed area renewal programmes in two areas of the borough

TARGETS 2005/2006

Target	Date	Lead officer
Complete overarching Options Appraisal to meet council decent homes targets	September 2005	Rachel Sharpe
68.5% council homes meet decent homes standard (BVPI 184)	Jan 2006	Rachel Sharpe
East Dulwich housing regeneration scheme on site	Jan 2006	Rachel Sharpe
62% of vulnerable households in private housing living in decent homes	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe

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Average SAP rating of council homes increased to SAP 58 (BVPI 63)	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Launch London Landlord Accreditation Scheme in Southwark	December 2005	Margaret O'Brien
Over 4% of unfit private dwellings made fit or demolished as a result of council action	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Achieve £250k spend on loans and grants in new renewal areas	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Deliver programme of street lighting improvements in new renewal areas	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Install door entry systems to council blocks in ten crime hot spot areas	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe / Chris Brown
Introduce trial door-to-door recycling collection services for council managed properties	March 2006	Chris Brown / Mary Morrissey

MILESTONES

2006/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73.15% council homes meet decent homes standard • Average SAP rating of council homes increased to 62 points • 63% of vulnerable households in private housing living in decent homes • Launch home maintenance zone in one renewal area • Complete first street renewal scheme
2007/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77.81% council homes meet decent homes standard³¹ • Average SAP rating of council homes increased to 63 points • Combined heat and power scheme up and running in Aylesbury area • Complete Coopers Road housing regeneration scheme • 64% of vulnerable households in private housing living in decent homes
2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average SAP rating of council homes increased to 64 points • 65% of vulnerable households in private housing living in decent homes • Complete new private sector stock condition survey
2009/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete East Dulwich housing regeneration scheme • Average SAP rating of council homes increased to 65 points • 66% of vulnerable households in private housing living in decent homes

³¹ Year 2 and 3 milestones are as planned spring 2005. However, we will be revising these milestones once we have completed our overarching options appraisal. Therefore we have not included milestones for Years 4 and 5

6. INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING, IN PARTICULAR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Why this objective?

Southwark, like London as a whole, is an area of high housing demand and we will need to provide housing for an anticipated 24,000 additional households by 2016. The rate of owner occupation is far lower in Southwark than in London or England but we know from our housing needs survey that we will continue to have a very high demand for affordable housing. So long as the economy of London and the South East remains buoyant, the shortfall in the supply of housing will continue to push prices up beyond the reach of those on moderate and low incomes. So we need more homes and this is recognised by national and regional government with plans to increase resources in such areas of high demand to bring about a step change in housing supply.

We believe that a mix of housing types and sizes is key to developing sustainable communities and that this is more important than whether homes are owned or rented. Overall, there is a shortage of larger homes (three or more bedrooms) in Southwark, so we are placing a particular emphasis on increasing the number of larger affordable homes to tackle overcrowding in social housing and to meet the needs of specific BME communities. It is particularly important that we focus on improving the living conditions of families with children to break cycles of deprivation and improve children's life chances.

Recent achievements

- Our partner housing associations have completed over 1,600 new affordable homes since 2000/01
- Completed the redevelopment of the Linden Grove Estate through Southwark Estates Initiative, providing 130 new homes, including new council homes
- Completed 40 new council homes and 20 housing association homes through Southwark Estates Initiative on Coopers Estate, with more to come
- Helped over 100 households secure private rented accommodation through our rent deposit scheme
- Re-housed 300 under-occupiers to smaller accommodation through our under-occupation scheme
- 314 private sector vacant dwellings were returned to occupation or demolished in the last two years as a direct result of the council's action

What we want to achieve by 2010

- All tenants on the Heygate re-housed, with the council in vacant possession of the site
- Over 7,000 new homes of all types, sizes and tenures, built to a high standard
- More affordable homes with three or more bedrooms
- More homes for people with mobility problems and wheelchair users
- An increase in housing choices (area and tenure)
- A reduction in overcrowded council households
- At least 500 empty private sector homes brought back into occupation

OUR PRIORITIES AND WHAT WE WILL DO TO DELIVER THEM

Increase opportunities for housing developments

Why this priority?

We know we need more homes to meet housing needs but we also need to be mindful of conserving green areas and other facilities which are important for residents. So we need to be creative in

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identifying sites and enabling housing development on those sites to provide the type of homes needed. The *London Plan* requires boroughs to identify additional sources for new housing³² and for opportunities to increase housing density (increasing the number of homes in an area). It also requires local plans to ensure that new developments contain a range of housing types and sizes, paying attention to the needs of different groups such as older people or families with children and to changing lifestyles, such as working from home. Southwark's new unitary development plan is in general conformity with the *London Plan* in seeking increased opportunities to provide a range of housing.

We will do this by:

- Identifying and encouraging development of significant housing sites in the Opportunity Areas³³ of Elephant and Castle and London Bridge and in the Action Areas³⁴ of Peckham, Canada Water, Old Kent Road, Bankside and Borough, Bermondsey, West Camberwell and town centres
- Exploring opportunities for additional housing on existing housing developments and/or over shops and other appropriate workspaces. We are looking at ways of increasing supply and creating safer spaces on council estates by turning surplus laundries and drying areas into homes
- Increasing housing density in particular in the north of the borough and in areas with good transport links
- Considering any development site that is not specifically identified for another use (for example, open space, employment use) as suitable for housing provided an acceptable living environment can be achieved
- Requiring all new homes to be built to lifetime homes standards. This will make it easier to adapt homes to meet future needs, for example mobility problems
- Encouraging a mix of sizes and types of housing but particularly addressing needs for family or multi-adult accommodation and for housing for people with mobility problems. Larger developments will be expected to supply mostly homes with two or more bedrooms and at least 10% of homes should have three or more bedrooms. At least 10% of all major new developments should be suitable for wheelchair users, where the physical constraints of the site do not prevent this
- Working in the South East London Housing Partnership, to ensure that opportunities for housing development are realised across the sub-region.

Ensure a supply of new affordable³⁵ homes to meet a range of needs

Why this priority?

Our housing needs survey shows that Southwark is an area of relatively low average incomes and a high level of need for affordable housing, in particular social rented housing. The *London Plan* requires that 50% of all additional (new) housing should be affordable and, within this, 70% should be social housing and 30% intermediate housing. This is because it is recognised that many people in employment cannot afford market housing to meet their needs, but would not have much chance of getting social housing in areas of very high demand. However, they could afford to rent or buy if there were some subsidy to make the housing more affordable than market housing. This group includes key

³² The *London plan* identifies three housing sectors: social housing (in general, this is rented housing provided by a council or housing association); intermediate housing (below open market prices and affordable to households on annual incomes of less than £40,000); market housing (owner occupied and private rented housing that does not meet the criteria for the other two sectors).

³³ Opportunity Areas are designated by the *London plan* as areas for regeneration and growth.

³⁴ The *London plan* requires local planning authorities to identify areas where changes are expected in the coming years to work towards meeting London's strategic objectives; Southwark has identified these areas in our Unitary Development Plan as requiring further strategies to guide these changes

³⁵ 'Affordable housing' is housing that is accessible to households who cannot otherwise afford the cheapest habitable dwelling with the same number of habitable rooms available anywhere within the borough at market price. Affordable housing includes low cost home ownership (such as shared ownership) and key worker housing.

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workers who are usually defined as people considered essential to maintain London's economy and infrastructure (for example hospitals, schools, transport).

We want to ensure a range of affordable housing opportunities to meet housing needs. Because of the funding regime for new housing³⁶, most new affordable homes in Southwark will be built and managed by housing associations. It is unlikely that we will be able to meet the whole range of needs for affordable housing within Southwark, so it will be increasingly important to work with partners to identify affordable housing opportunities outside the borough.

We will do this by:

- Achieving our target of 50% of all new housing as affordable by making the most efficient use of public subsidy to build developments of a very high percentage, or wholly, affordable housing and by securing affordable housing as part of private developments through planning agreements. Private developments of 15 or more units will be required to provide affordable housing on the development site (percentages vary according to area of the borough). Developments of 10-14 units will be required to make commuted payments to the council's affordable housing fund
- Using the council's affordable housing fund to provide additional housing association homes – either for rent or shared ownership
- Increasing the supply of key worker housing by selling empty council homes on the East Dulwich Estate to key workers. The money generated is then used to improve other homes on the estate. The scheme was developed with and has the full support of the tenant and resident association.
- Advertising key worker housing schemes effectively across the sub-region to ensure take-up by key workers given priority in the sub-region: police, teachers, health staff, probation officers, prison wardens, local authority planners and social workers. The key worker programme is largely fixed by government, so the challenge locally is how to influence the programme to meet identified needs in the sub-region and promote take up.
- Engaging with children's services and housing providers locally and in the sub-region to review how housing can contribute to the recruitment and retention of qualified workers, a key challenge in delivering sustained improvement in local children's services
- As part of the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle area, appointing housing association partners who will deliver the new affordable housing for the area. The regeneration of the Heygate Estate will take place over four years and begins with the redevelopment of Wansey Street by Southern Housing Group.
- Providing over 1,000 new affordable homes in the Canada Water regeneration scheme, following agreement of the masterplan with main developer British Land.
- Making the best use of the council's land and property portfolio to fund additional affordable housing development. For example, we are rehousing very elderly people living in prefabs in to better homes, demolishing the homes and using the land for additional affordable homes.
- Working with other south east London boroughs and our partner housing associations to agree common standards for housing development, affordability criteria and joint marketing of affordable housing options, including key worker schemes. The SELHP has agreed sub-regional standards for new build properties. The partnership has also adopted a shared ownership strategy and a protocol with the health service. We aim to ensure an overall 50% take-up by BME groups of the range of affordable housing options

³⁶ Councils and housing associations have different funding arrangements. The key difference is that housing associations can borrow money on the private market to meet non-grant funded costs of new housing. Councils cannot do this and must find the money for new developments from their own resources. The main source is receipts from sale of land or buildings.

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- Identifying sites suitable for sub-regional nominations³⁷ and agreeing nomination arrangements to affordable housing schemes in the sub-region. We have agreed to take 22 lettings from our sub-regional partners, funding for the initiative has been provided by the Housing Corporation
- Identifying groups whose housing needs could be better met on a sub-regional rather than local authority basis and developing schemes to meet those needs through joint funding. Working with the South East London Housing Partnership to identify priorities for particular BME groups
- Considering the government's HomeBuy options and their potential impact on the supply of affordable homes.

Make better use of existing housing to meet housing needs

Why this priority?

In calculating the need for additional housing of all types, we must ensure and demonstrate that we are using the existing housing efficiently. This is particularly important in assessing the need for additional affordable housing to inform planning policy, as it helps to avoid unnecessary challenges by developers. While we know we need to build many more homes to meet identified needs, we can meet some of these needs, at least in the shorter term, by making better use of the housing already here.³⁸

We will do this by:

- Bringing private sector empty homes back into use (see objective one)
- Extending existing homes where possible to create larger units. This may be either through a Southwark scheme or sub-regional and is dependant on funding becoming available through the London Housing Board
- Reducing the time taken to repair and re-let empty council homes, and actively encouraging housing associations to do the same
- Converting estate based council sheltered accommodation which is unsuitable and cannot be remodelled into general needs housing
- Considering adopting a cash incentive scheme to help council tenants to buy a home, releasing their council home to re-let to someone in housing need
- Working with zone agents to ensure that NewBuild and Open Market HomeBuy options are targeted strategically to release council and housing association homes that are in short supply
- Reviewing the incentives and scope of our under occupation scheme to encourage more under occupiers to move to smaller homes. This will include looking at incentives such as providing new homes for under-occupiers in partnership with other south east London boroughs to enable the release of larger homes for families living in overcrowded conditions
- Marketing opportunities for council and housing association tenants to move to other areas through mobility schemes such as Changing Places, Homeswap and Seaside and Country Homes
- Improving access to the private rented sector through schemes such as rent deposits.
- Improving information on homes that have been adapted for someone with a disability and working with social services and health to match people with mobility problems or other disabilities to homes that already have the adaptations they need.

³⁷ Councils have rights to put forward (nominate) tenants for housing association homes. Sub-regional nominations means councils can put forward tenants for housing association homes in other boroughs in south-east London

³⁸ Our calculations of the need for additional affordable housing already take into account the potential impact of measures outlined in this section.

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Risk assessment

- For market reasons outside the council's control, housing developers may choose to build in other areas if they are seen to provide a more economically advantageous option
- Housing Corporation funding may be redirected to other areas of London, or other regions, to meet government targets in areas earmarked for intense development
- Lenders may withdraw or reduce their funding to housing associations. There is a particular concern that the government's proposed changes³⁹ to housing benefit (HB) could have a knock-on effect on the preferential borrowing terms housing associations enjoy with lenders. If housing associations lose guaranteed income from HB, lenders might see them as a higher investment risk.
- The emphasis at national level on increasing the quantity of affordable housing at lowest possible cost may compromise quality and our ability to achieve the type and size of housing needed
- Decent homes work on empty council homes is likely to have a negative impact on meeting our targets for reducing the time taken to re-let homes
- Although we are giving priority to larger homes as overcrowding is a particular problem in Southwark (and London), it is difficult to quantify at this time what impact new supply, our new choice based lettings scheme and other initiatives (such as our under-occupation initiative) will have on the levels of overcrowding

ACTION PLAN

Key targets to achieve by 2010

- Overall supply of housing increased by 7,400
- Over 2,500 new affordable homes, of which at least 250 with 3 or more bedrooms
- Returned 500 empty private sector dwellings to occupation

TARGETS 2005/2006

Target	Date	Lead officer
22 affordable housing units available for sub-regional nominations	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
With housing association partners, ensure provision of 550 new affordable homes	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Start development of first Elephant and Castle housing site at Wansey Street	June 2005	Rachel Sharpe
Achieve average relet time for council properties of 50 days for voids under £10,000	March 2006	Chris Brown
Return 135 private sector dwellings to occupation as a result of council action (BVPI 64)	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Achieve 70 moves via under-occupation initiative	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien

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³⁹ The Queen's speech 2005 included a proposal for a housing benefit bill which will introduce a flat rate housing allowance across the private and social housing sectors with rent paid direct to tenants. The Bill may also include proposals to dock benefit to anti-social tenants

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2006/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,480 additional homes • Complete 600 new affordable homes, of which at least 60 with 3 or more bedrooms • Complete council pre-fab replacement programme • Achieve 70 moves through the under-occupation scheme • Achieve average relet time for council homes of 49 days – CHECK • Return 145 empty private sector dwellings to occupation
2007/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,480 additional homes • Complete 600 new affordable homes, of which at least 60 with 3 or more bedrooms • Complete Elmington Phase 2 construction • Achieve 65 moves through the under-occupation scheme⁴⁰ • Achieve average relet time for council homes of 45 days – CHECK • Return 150 empty private sector dwellings to occupation⁴¹ • Update Housing Needs Survey • Review supply, housing registrations and lettings data and agree targets for reducing overcrowding in council homes
2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,480 additional homes • Complete 600 new affordable homes, of which at least 60 with 3 or more bedrooms • Achieve 65 moves through the under-occupation scheme
2009/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,480 additional homes • Complete 600 new affordable homes, of which at least 60 with 3 or more bedrooms • Achieve 60 moves through the under-occupation scheme

⁴⁰ The reduction in target moves through the under-occupation scheme in years 3-5 is a recognition that there will be a diminishing supply of under-occupied homes as a result of the initiative

⁴¹ Empty homes targets for future years will be reviewed in light of results of the planned stock condition survey

7. REDUCE HOMELESSNESS AND IMPROVE THE STANDARD OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Why this objective?

We carried out a review of homelessness in Southwark and published a three-year homelessness strategy in 2003. In developing our new five-year housing strategy, we consulted Southwark's Homelessness Forum⁴² and decided to re-integrate our homelessness strategy into our housing strategy. We think this is a better use of resources, will lead to better investment and service planning around homelessness and that it makes most sense to consult on homelessness priorities at the same time as consulting on our housing strategy.

Southwark Homelessness Forum will continue to review priorities around homelessness and to engage in setting priorities and monitoring outcomes of the strategy. This will include setting priorities for any government Homelessness Grant. We do not believe homelessness is purely a housing problem but that it is bound up with, and a symptom of, wider issues of disadvantage and social exclusion. So there will always be some level of homelessness, particularly in areas of high house prices and very mobile populations such as London. However, we know there is much we and our partners can do to reduce the levels of homelessness and to improve services for homeless people. To achieve longer-term sustainable improvements requires wider ownership of the problem and a joined up approach working across council departments, with partners and with other local authorities.

Recent achievements

- Developed our first homelessness strategy with Southwark Homelessness Forum
- Met and sustained the government target to have no families with children in bed and breakfast accommodation (except for short-term emergencies) six months early
- Launched new rent deposit and fee finders schemes to enable homeless people to access private rented accommodation
- Agreed a new housing domestic violence policy
- Restructured our homelessness and housing options services, focusing on homelessness prevention
- Introduced a tenancy sustainment service (SUSTAIN) for council tenants at risk of losing their home
- Reduced rough sleeping in the borough to less than 10 people

What we want to achieve by 2010

- A reduction in the level of repeat homelessness
- An overall reduction in the numbers of homeless households
- Maintain the levels of rough sleeping at 10 or below
- More housing options for homeless people
- No homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation other than for very short term emergencies
- Better quality temporary accommodation for those who need it, including specialist accommodation for people with support needs
- More joined up services for homeless people

⁴² See partnership working table for details of membership of the Homelessness Forum

OUR PRIORITIES AND WHAT WE WILL DO TO DELIVER THEM

Improve the quality of information on homelessness

Why this priority?

High quality information is key to tackling homelessness. We need the right information to plan the best services, identifying what services homeless people want and what works. We also need to give good quality and up to date information to the public and partners to prevent and manage homelessness.

Our homelessness review found that we need to do more to analyse the root causes of poverty and homelessness and work together to try and combat these. While we are aware of what some of the root causes are such as family breakdown, lack of employment opportunities, lack of education etc, we need to research how we can actually reduce the impact of these causes, developing appropriate interventions. We also need to become more performance focussed, monitoring the success of schemes in reducing repeat homelessness and the effects of housing advice. The council and its partners must share information efficiently about the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping, and knowledge about effective ways to tackle them. This will allow us to determine the best allocation of resources to achieve best value.

We will do this by:

- Building on national and regional research on homelessness. We will research the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping, concentrating on particular high-risk groups such as young people, people from black and minority ethnic groups and people experiencing domestic violence. We will also focus on understanding the causes of repeat homelessness and how to intervene to prevent this, to inform support services. With partners St Mungos, we are researching the extent of 'hidden' rough sleeping, that is those who are not included in the ODPM rough sleeper count methodology. Where appropriate we will carry out research with other South East London boroughs to inform a sub-regional response to homelessness.
- Developing effective mechanisms for consulting with homeless people about improving services and successful homeless prevention.
- Continuing to fully map the resources available locally and sub-regionally for homelessness prevention, accommodation and support.
- Putting in place better data collection management systems, with a particular focus on equalities information, to ensure equality of access and outcome. We will use this data to inform development of strategy and services to tackle homelessness and to monitor the effectiveness of schemes to ensure value for money. We also need to utilise information on key indicators of homelessness or potential homelessness held by our partners and other sections of the council.
- Monitoring the impact of the new choice-based lettings scheme. Compared to the existing allocations policy, the new policy gives increased priority to some groups such as non-statutory homeless and single homeless with support needs, and lower priority to statutory homeless people.
- Monitoring outcomes for vulnerable homeless or potentially homeless households to find out if resettlement and tenancy sustainment services are effective. This includes sharing information on vulnerable households between relevant agencies and housing associations.
- Further developing joint working protocols around homelessness between housing, health and social services. We will participate in relevant joint forums to share information and good practice.
- Developing targeted information and referral mechanisms for key partners such as probation and Connexions services.

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Improve access to information

Why this priority?

To provide an excellent service we need to improve the way we share information between agencies through an effective referral process providing a better joined up service. The council and its partners also need to give clear understandable information about the range of options and services open to homeless or potentially homeless people. Quality information is essential in preventing homelessness and providing a decent service to those who are homeless. The council and partners are committed to taking a more proactive approach, being more accessible and providing better advice at an earlier stage, to attempt to prevent homelessness.

We will do this by:

- Continuing to develop our Housing Options services, which will provide a more strategic role in managing and preventing homelessness. In future, all potential homeless applicants will need to first go through the housing options/advice route where they will get information on the range of options available to them. A housing advice telephone line is the first stage of this process.
- Working with particular groups and community leaders, particularly in BME communities, to make information on homelessness services and housing options more accessible to the whole community. This is in addition to written information including special formats like large print and translations. Many people use facilities such as schools, places of worship etc as the first point of contact. The Southwark Law Centre and Blackfriars Citizens Advice Bureau are working to train people in these agencies about housing law so that they can help people and refer them to the relevant organisations.
- Mapping homelessness and housing advice services in the borough, both statutory and non-statutory, referral routes, client groups etc and producing an accessible updated directory of services for advice providers and service users.
- Relaunching Southwark Housing Advice Forum to improve joined up working between advice agencies in the borough.
- Educating young people in schools and colleges about homelessness and housing options through an outreach programme and information pack.

Prevent homelessness, in particular against the main causes

Why this priority?

In the longer term the structural causes of homelessness need to be addressed by linking homeless people into education, training, employment and health services. Over the lifetime of this strategy we want to move away from the current distinction between housing options for priority and non-priority homeless to one where there are a broad range of options available to people who have different housing needs. These options may include a move to other areas in London, or to other areas of the country where there is a surplus of housing together with opportunities for employment and training.

In the short to medium term we need to focus our efforts on reducing the levels of homelessness among 'at risk' groups. In Southwark, as in most areas with high levels of homelessness, the main cause of homelessness is "family/friends no longer willing to accommodate", this is particularly the case for young people. Relationship breakdown due to domestic violence is also a significant cause. We are therefore targeting our activities at reducing the levels of homelessness due to these two main causes. As well as these priorities we are working across the board to reduce levels of homelessness and to reduce rough sleeping to as near zero as possible.

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We will do this by:

- Continuing to prioritise homelessness prevention initiatives for ODPM homelessness grant, reviewing and evaluating these initiatives annually in consultation with the Homelessness Forum to ensure they are effective and provide value for money. Currently, homelessness grant is supporting our domestic violence Sanctuary scheme, rent deposit and fee finders scheme, rough sleepers and homelessness day centre services, resettlement, home visiting and youth homelessness project
- Working with education, Connexions, youth services and youth offending teams to develop life skills programmes around housing options for young people and to ensure effective referral arrangements for those who are vulnerable or at risk
- Reviewing our mediation services, targeting these on 16-17 year olds and others in danger of eviction by family/friends.
- Implementing a new housing domestic violence policy. We are moving away from crisis intervention to more proactive advice services, which provide support and information on housing options to those experiencing domestic violence and are taking action to tackle perpetrators living in social housing. A sanctuary scheme is being set up in partnership with Victim Support Southwark to help victims of domestic violence wishing to stay in their own home, but needing help to do so in safety.
- Preventing homelessness due to eviction for rent or mortgage arrears, a significant cause of homelessness. We are increasing debt counselling and benefit advice services, aiming to increase incomes and manage arrears and other debts. The council provides advocacy services at the county court for non-council tenants facing possession proceedings and works with mortgage providers and residents to manage arrears. We also give advice to leaseholders regarding land rents and service charge increases.
- Preventing harassment and illegal evictions by private landlords through our tenancy relations service
- Providing tenancy sustainment services to help vulnerable council tenants and those at risk of eviction for rent arrears. By providing debt counselling and benefits advice as well as general support to maintain the tenancy, evictions have been prevented in many cases. An eviction protocol between housing and social services for vulnerable households aims for early intervention when problems are first identified.
- Working with social services to ensure that asylum seekers who are granted indefinite leave to remain by the Home Office (either on an individual basis or as part of a general amnesty) do not become homeless. This can occur during the transition from their housing costs being funded by social services, to claiming and receiving housing benefit. The council has been working closely with landlords to renew their tenancies. So far, of 146 decisions only three cases have been unsuccessful.
- Increasing the emphasis of supported housing services on homelessness prevention by providing suitable supported accommodation targeting those most vulnerable to sleeping rough. In addition we are expanding floating support services and targeting them at vulnerable homeless and potentially homeless people.
- Developing a programme of action around homelessness prevention with other south east London boroughs. We are jointly planning a series of workshops over the next year around common issues related to homeless prevention and will be developing an action plan.
- Exploring the potential for housing options for young people which are linked to education and training opportunities, working with other South East London boroughs and housing associations operating in the area.
- Encouraging housing associations to adopt eviction protocols for vulnerable households and domestic violence policies similar to Southwark Council's

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- Reviewing SHNAG⁴³. To ensure that the providers currently participating in the scheme are strategically relevant
- Making renting in the private sector more appealing and accessible. To do this we need to make renting to people on moderate to low incomes more appealing to private landlords by reassuring them that housing benefit claims will be processed quickly and that rental income will be sustained. The council now has one of the best housing benefit services in London. We also need to ensure that private renting is a fair housing option. So we are working to ensure a good standard of private rented accommodation, that landlords do not withhold tenants' deposits unreasonably, and that accommodation agencies do not charge illegal 'up front' fees. To enable those on low incomes to access private renting we also offer rent deposit and finders fee schemes.

Provide good quality temporary accommodation and related support services

Why this priority?

The council has a responsibility to provide housing to meet a range of housing needs, including homelessness. Ultimately most people require decent settled accommodation. This means we need to make best use of existing housing and increase the supply of affordable housing. Our priorities for achieving this are covered in chapters 5 and 6.

We must provide temporary accommodation for priority need homeless households while they are waiting for settled accommodation. The reduction in available social housing lettings together with the requirement to provide people with more choice about their long-term housing through choice-based lettings, means that homeless households are likely to be in temporary accommodation for longer periods. This means that the supply and quality of temporary accommodation are even more important. We also need to understand and reduce the negative impact of homelessness, maintaining as far as possible links to support networks and services.

We will do this by:

- Housing homeless people within Southwark, where possible and appropriate, so that they can maintain links to schools, training, employment, health, social and support networks. By comparison with some London boroughs, we have been successful in ensuring that most of our temporary accommodation is within the borough.
- Providing information to homeless people to enable them to access services such as health, training, employment and other support networks.
- Continuing to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. Having met the government's target for families in bed and breakfast accommodation ahead of target, we aim to reduce the use of bed and breakfast for other groups, reserving it for very short-term emergency use only.
- As far as possible, using non-self contained accommodation on an emergency basis only while homeless assessments are carried out. Once a household is accepted they will move to self-contained, good quality temporary accommodation. In the case of supported housing, non self-contained housing may have to be used, although we will encourage providers to move to self-contained accommodation if appropriate for the client group.
- Investing in improving the quality of the council's temporary accommodation hostels and increasing the number of self-contained units.
- Completing a new build temporary accommodation scheme for people with physical disabilities.

⁴³ SHNAG is a long established mechanism by which certain supported housing providers are given nomination rights to permanent lettings to achieve move-on within schemes and to maximise use of supported housing projects in the borough for vulnerable homeless people

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- Replacing shared hostels for single homeless people with support needs with self-contained cluster schemes with support attached, and improving move-on opportunities.
- Developing a further short-stay 24-hour hostel for statutory single homeless people and referrals from probation. This will act as an assessment centre to ensure people are allocated to appropriate services where their needs will be met effectively.
- Ensuring the provision of effective day centre services for homeless people
- Developing a new type of refuge for local women at risk of domestic violence who do not want to leave the borough, linked to advice and support.
- Making the most appropriate temporary accommodation placements possible for vulnerable people by working with resettlement and support services to assess the accommodation and support needs of homeless people.
- Increasing the supply and maximising the use of temporary accommodation through private sector leasing⁴⁴. We have provisionally agreed a common South East London approach to private sector leasing which avoids competition between boroughs for available properties.
- Continuing to use empty homes on council estates in development programmes as temporary accommodation, putting in place a package of support and intensive housing management. This includes information packs with details of local facilities such as GP surgeries, schools, and residents' associations, to help people locate themselves in their new community.
- Developing new sources of good quality temporary accommodation that provides value for money and affordable rents. This includes working through the South East London Housing Partnership to identify opportunities for joint capital projects, for example for particular client groups.

Risk assessment

- Identifying the resources to meet new government targets (yet to be finalised) on quality of temporary accommodation. This would include the costs of surveying all our temporary accommodation in light of emerging government guidelines
- Shortfall in delivery of new affordable homes
- Increases in costs of market housing leading to more people losing their homes as a result of inability to pay rent or mortgages
- The government's proposed changes to housing benefit (see chapter 6, footnote XX) would put at risk private landlords' willingness to accept tenants on benefits.
- Unforeseen reductions in supporting people funding or a reconfiguring of supporting people priorities
- Reduction in or cessation of the ODPM Homelessness Grant would put a number of our homelessness prevention initiatives at risk

⁴⁴ Private sector leasing is a scheme where housing associations procure properties from the private sector for five years, for use as temporary accommodation.

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ACTION PLAN⁴⁵

Key targets to achieve by 2010

- Prevented homelessness for a minimum of six months for over 400 households per year
- Reduced the level of repeat homelessness by providing tenancy sustainment and support
- No homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation other than for very short-term emergencies
- 50% reduction in number of homeless households in insecure temporary accommodation and/or poor quality temporary accommodation
- No more than 10 rough sleepers in the borough

TARGETS 2005/2006

Target	Date	Lead officer
Hold regular homeless prevention outreach sessions in schools	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Relaunch Southwark Housing Advice Forum	June 2005	Margaret O'Brien
Launch Housing Advice Line	April 2005	Margaret O'Brien
Provide weekly housing advice outreach service	April 2005 on	Margaret O'Brien
Prevent homelessness for 6 months or more in 350 cases	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Secure 300 private rented properties through finders fee and rent deposit schemes	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Prevent homelessness for 6 months or more for 50 victims of domestic violence through Sanctuary Scheme	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
8 or fewer rough sleepers	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
82% of resettled households receiving resettlement services sustained tenancy after 2 years	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Review temporary accommodation supply/demand model linked to ODPM targets	June 2005	Rachel Sharpe

MILESTONES

2006/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUSTAIN service to prevent tenancy breakdown for minimum of 125 council tenancies per year • 82% of clients receiving resettlement services retain their tenancy for two or more years • 10% reduction in cases accepted as homeless due to domestic violence that had previously been rehoused in the last two years due to domestic violence • 2% increase over previous year in number of private tenants on housing benefit • 8 or fewer rough sleepers
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⁴⁵ See also Homelessness Forum Action Plan

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2007/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop Housing Options Centre• SUSTAIN service to prevent tenancy breakdown for minimum of 125 council tenancies per year• 82% of clients receiving resettlement services retain their tenancy for two or more years• 10% reduction in cases accepted as homeless due to domestic violence that had previously been rehoused in the last two years due to domestic violence• 2% increase over previous year in number of private tenants on housing benefit• 8 or fewer rough sleepers
2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SUSTAIN service to prevent tenancy breakdown for minimum of 125 council tenancies per year• 82% of clients receiving resettlement services retain their tenancy for two or more years• 10% reduction in cases accepted as homeless due to domestic violence that had previously been rehoused in the last two years due to domestic violence• 2% increase over previous year in number of private tenants on housing benefit
2009/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SUSTAIN service to prevent tenancy breakdown for minimum of 125 council tenancies per year• 82% of clients receiving resettlement services retain their tenancy for two or more years• 10% reduction in cases accepted as homeless due to domestic violence that had previously been rehoused in the last two years due to domestic violence• 2% increase over previous year in number of private tenants on housing benefit

8. IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE THROUGH HOUSING SUPPORT

Why this objective?

Local authorities and strategic partners in health and probation, are responsible (through a commissioning body) for planning, funding and monitoring housing support services⁴⁶ to vulnerable client groups. These plans are set out in full in Southwark Supporting People Strategy. We believe it is essential to integrate supporting people priorities into our housing strategy to ensure that housing support is fully integrated into delivering the priorities of the housing strategy and other key associated plans and strategies. In providing housing support services we aim to identify and respond to needs and promote choice and independence.

Sub-regional working has a significant role to play in providing services for vulnerable people. It can make sense to provide shared services across as there may not be a critical mass of demand in Southwark to support a service for a numerically small client group. For people fleeing domestic violence, placements may be safer outside the borough. Many vulnerable people are very mobile and, for a number of different reasons, are unable to access supported housing in their borough of origin. Southwark hosts many services that target vulnerable people from outside the borough, most notably single homeless people, ex offenders, drug and alcohol users and women fleeing domestic violence, and this will continue. Similarly many vulnerable people from Southwark access services in other areas. In Southwark, there is not likely to be a significant redirection of funding between supporting people client groups, although the two largest budget areas (single homeless and elders) are likely to see a limited transfer of funding to a number of areas that are significantly under resourced (physical disabilities, offenders, domestic violence and alcohol users to reduce anti social behaviour).

The issues and level of provision relating to one supporting people client group may differ significantly from those of another client group. We have therefore identified the overarching themes of our first two priorities and then set out some of our key plans for specific client groups. Our third priority focuses on identifying and meeting the needs of young people generally as well as those who are classed as vulnerable within the supporting people framework.

Recent achievements

- Excellent rating for Southwark's first (Shadow) Supporting People Strategy
- Completed reviews of 70% of supporting people services resulting in funding being directed towards new more strategically relevant services
- All supporting people payments to service providers made on time
- Established new adaptations service for council residents
- Improved joint working between supporting people, drug and alcohol action team and social services, including combining budgets to achieve shared goals
- Improved understanding of the housing support needs of BME communities
- Completed extensive consultation with young people on their housing issues

What we want to achieve by 2010

- Replaced most of the current shared housing for vulnerable people with self-contained forms of

⁴⁶ Supporting People services are focussed on enabling people to live independently and often include an advocacy role, whereas Social Care services deliver personal care (for example washing, shopping, cooking) to an individual. There are many interfaces between Supporting People and Social Care services, particularly where clients have high support needs.

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housing

- An extended range of housing options for older people
- Increased the number of units for people with more complex needs
- A big increase in floating support services to enable people to live independently in their own homes
- Quantified unmet needs amongst different communities and put in place services to meet those needs
- Significantly reduced 'bed blocking' in acute hospitals and silt-up in supported hostels
- Completed a number of capital projects including specialist temporary accommodation and additional Extra Care schemes for very frail older people

OUR PRIORITIES AND WHAT WE WILL DO TO DELIVER THEM

Support Independent Living

Why this priority?

There is a wealth of research that tells us that most people want to live as independent a life as possible in their own home, for as long as possible. Many people who are considered to be vulnerable in some way do not need a different kind of home but do need some degree of practical support, or adaptations to their home, to help them achieve this. Housing support services also contribute to preventing homelessness (through tenancy sustainment), enable earlier discharge from hospital and decrease admissions to residential, acute, or custodial institutions.

We will do this by:

- Having an action plan for each supporting people client group, which includes provision for high, medium, and low floating support services⁴⁷.
- Moving away from providing low support shared housing to more floating support models. We will assess if there are common support needs in Southwark that cover a number of client groups and where there is a need for support services to meet specific more difficult needs. The key issue for configuring services will be whether the need is for high, medium or low support.
- Decreasing the number of contracts for floating support services and accommodation-based services while keeping the same level of supply. This will reduce duplication of services and ensure provision is more targeted at those in need.
- Continuing to work with our partners in the South East London Housing Partnership and with other neighbouring boroughs on cross authority commissioning, benchmarking, accreditation, joint commissioning and shared capacity building. We will also work with the Association of London Government to ensure that issues are addressed on a pan London basis.
- Improving referral procedures from health and social services to housing providers, to ensure appropriate housing support packages are in place.
- Monitoring service providers to assess their responsiveness to the cultural needs of BME service users and assessing where floating support services need to be culturally specific. Southwark's BME community comprises recent arrivals as well as first and second-generation communities, and we have a relatively high number of refugees and asylum seekers. So we are researching the needs of different communities and considering whether to establish increased numbers of BME only services or ensure that all services are culturally appropriate. There does not appear to be one

⁴⁷ Floating support services are delivered to people in their own home. The terms high, medium and low refer to the amount (hours) and type of support given

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solution regarding the role of BME specialist supported accommodation provision. The needs vary within communities and between different models of housing related support services. Our research so far suggests a need for services for newer communities, including refugees and asylum seekers.

- Carrying out equalities impact assessments of all supporting people service reviews and, where there is an identified need for specialist provision, building the capacity of smaller specialist providers (including black and minority ethnic service providers) to deliver support services to the specified standard
- Looking at what type of alarm scheme is needed in Southwark and how new technology can help in supporting vulnerable people to live independently
- Providing tenancy support services for 'at risk' client groups to prevent homelessness (see also chapter 7)
- Linking clients of working age to work opportunities and training and promoting peer support initiatives to address social isolation when people move from supported housing to independent living.
- Developing the capacity of existing services to deal with clients who have complex needs and challenging behaviour
- Continuing the sub-regional Healthy Homes Handyperson service. This delivers a falls prevention, hospital discharge and general handyperson service across tenures.
- Continuing to deliver a home maintenance service for private sector residents (see chapter 5)

Provide housing to meet specific needs

Why this priority?

Support services cannot meet all housing needs, so we need to provide adapted housing and/or housing with on-site support to meet specific needs. A lot of supported accommodation is outdated and can be relatively hard to let, for example, some sheltered accommodation. We need to facilitate better movement into, out of, and within the supported housing sector and develop more housing choices for vulnerable adults.

We will do this by:

- Developing an action plan for each supporting people client group which includes, where necessary, provision of a specific type of supported housing
- Phasing out supported shared housing and replacing it with self-contained housing and floating support services. However, it is acknowledged that shared housing will remain a feature of supported housing in Southwark for many years.
- Identifying key priorities with the SE London sub-regional supporting people group, such as capital investment joint developments that would provide supported housing for vulnerable individuals across two or more of the five boroughs. These include: specialist BME elderly services, potentially Traveller's services, short-term supported temporary accommodation for people with physical, sensory or neurological impairment, young statutory homeless 16 and 17 year-olds, and extra care housing for the elderly.
- Improving referral procedures from health and social services to housing providers to ensure the most appropriate use of supported housing.
- Expanding the role of our resettlement service and ensuring that 'move on' quotas are strategically targeted
- Moving away from providing shared hostels to providing purpose-built self-contained clustered models of accommodation. There is a particular need for such schemes for people with dual diagnosis (for example suffering from mental health and drug problems) and for people with learning difficulties

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- Using spot purchasing/commissioning arrangements to meet individual client's needs, where considered appropriate.

Older people and frail elders

- Increasing the emphasis on floating support services to older people in their own homes, including specialist services for black and minority ethnic elders.
- Evaluating the council's new out of hours team, to establish whether the service could be expanded to cover out of hours response across the borough and the interface between this and the community alarm service.
- Evaluating the new out-reach services being established in 2005, especially the BME aspects of the services to establish their effectiveness in supporting elders to stay at home.
- Providing, with social services, a specialist domiciliary care and floating support service for older people with mental health problems and dementia, with the emphasis on facilitating hospital discharge and averting crises necessitating hospital admissions
- Jointly funding, with social services, a number of temporary units in sheltered housing schemes, for elders who would otherwise be bed blocking in local acute hospital beds.
- Developing specialist support for older people with mental health problems, former homeless elders, and those with alcohol dependency.
- Expanding the role of Southwark's Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to link in care and repair services for older people who are owner / occupiers, and close working with the out reach services.
- Reviewing the Borough's sheltered housing portfolio to ensure that it can meet existing and future needs in terms of number of units and level of care provided. Our sheltered housing review and research with older people shows that current sheltered housing does not meet the needs and aspirations of some of Southwark's BME communities. Most BME elders are not in favour of increased specialist sheltered housing provision for people from BME communities, but some communities are interested in ethnically specific provision.
- Developing a higher standard of council and housing association sheltered accommodation which reflects the needs profile of the borough, and the likely reduction in future demand.
- Providing three more Extra Care schemes for very elderly frail people in the borough. This will be either through remodelling existing council or housing association sheltered housing schemes or through new build funded by capital receipts from decommissioning existing sheltered
- Converting a sheltered unit to provide 19 self-contained units of high support long term housing for elders with mental health and substance misusing issues (24-hour on site cover).
- Maintaining an interim housing service, operating across existing sheltered housing services, for elders who are medically fit for discharge from acute hospital beds but unable to return home because of the need for adaptations, equipment or care services in their home or who need to move to more suitable accommodation
- Ensuring that information and advice on housing and support options is accessible both to professionals and older people themselves.

People with a physical and/or sensory disability

- Requiring all new homes to be built to lifetime homes standard so they are more easily adaptable to changing mobility/disability needs and 10% of all new homes to be built to wheelchair standard.
- Developing a temporary accommodation scheme (6-9 units) to provide short-term supported housing for people with disabilities moving out of registered care or rehabilitation schemes, prior to a move on to general needs adapted accommodation.
- Providing supported temporary accommodation for homeless physically disabled people, and those awaiting planned discharge from residential and nursing care.

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- Providing disabled facilities grants (to private residents) and an adaptations service (to council tenants) to improve the freedom of movement of residents with disabilities into and around their home and access to personal facilities within it.
- Developing models of floating support for people with disabilities to increase independent living and offer more flexible support that is tailored to suit individuals changing needs. The review of the sector has concluded that a number of accommodation based services will be re tendered as a single floating support contract in 2005/06.

People fleeing domestic violence

- Adopting a new housing domestic violence policy which is in line with the London Mayor's strategy on domestic violence and which increases the emphasis on preventing victims becoming homeless
- Providing short-term crisis refuge with high support and security for women fleeing domestic violence, with priority for local women. This includes providing a new women's refuge
- Developing specific services for women from BME communities including those who have no recourse to public funds. This includes purchasing a number of bed spaces with joint funding from Southwark's corporate community safety unit
- Establishing more creative and effective ways of providing housing support to women experiencing domestic violence in Southwark
- Increasing emphasis upon supporting women who choose to remain at home through floating support and piloting a "Sanctuary scheme" offering additional security to women in their own homes.

People with learning disabilities (PWLD)

- Providing outreach support services to enable people with learning difficulties to live independently in general needs housing, to prevent tenancy breakdown and to assist with succession issues for those living with elderly relatives in social housing
- Developing extra care sheltered housing specifically designed to respond to the needs of PWLD, who wish to continue living with their aged parents
- Building the capacity of existing supported housing services to meet the needs of PWLD from ethnic minorities.
- Redirecting funding from registered care to increase supported housing options
- Continuing to develop-clustered and dispersed self contained models of accommodation, by which PWLD may offer and provide peer support, through both accommodation linked and more floating models of support.

People with mental health problems

- Increasing the range of services that support people with mental health problems to remain within the community, including tenancy sustainment and floating support services
- Improving funding for planned hospital discharge and move-on arrangements from registered care schemes to supported housing to ensure individuals with mental health problems who are able to live in the community with support have the opportunity to do so.
- Developing more self-contained cluster models of longer stay and permanent accommodation
- Providing suitable temporary accommodation for those being discharged from hospital as homeless.
- SP and Social Care pooling budgets to fund specific high supported accommodation schemes

People with alcohol and/or drug problems

- Providing more tenancy support services to prevent homelessness
- Improving access to services for people with drug and/or alcohol problems

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- Developing more focus upon supporting substance mis-users to either remain drug or alcohol free, or ensure risk minimisation
- Increasing self-contained supported accommodation for those who use alcohol (including 'wet' provision for those still drinking) and for those who are currently abstaining,
- Moving towards supported temporary hostels to stabilise drug users, either moving from or to detox, or to alternative supported accommodation.

Offenders and people at risk of offending

- Targeting resettlement services on young and adult offenders
- Developing an assessment and referral outreach service to work with probation which will be based in the housing department.
- Increasing suitable supported accommodation, which assists in the management of risk and supervision and subsequently attempts to reduce offending behaviour.
- Improving access for offenders to existing services as opposed to development of specific offenders projects. There will be an increased emphasis upon the management of risk and addressing associated problems such as substance misuse.
- Jointly commissioning, with the Youth Offending Team, hostel beds for those being released as homeless from young offenders institutions.

Homeless families with support needs, single homeless and rough sleepers

See chapter 7

People living with HIV/AIDS⁴⁸

- Targeting services at those with additional complex needs and those recently diagnosed, or not responding to therapy
- Assessing the feasibility of whether or not support resources can be transferred from some or all of the fixed units of accommodation, to offer a more floating model of short term support for those in general needs accommodation, or in asylum seekers accommodation
- Reviewing the Health Pilot to determine whether there is a need for a specific out reach service targeting hard to reach homeless people with HIV and the need for specific designated units of temporary accommodation
- Continuing to build family units for people with HIV/AIDS

Refugees/Asylum seekers

- Establishing whether there needs to be specific services for this client group, or alternatively whether services targeting "vulnerable adults" should be made more responsive. The review will link to the Southwark Refugee and Asylum Seeker Strategy .

Travellers⁴⁹

- Mapping traveller's needs to establish whether housing-related support could help address social and medical needs, illiteracy and poverty.
- There is currently no SP funded services targeting this client group, and therefore, further work will be undertaken to establish need. In particular, whether services could be commissioned on a

⁴⁸ People who are diagnosed HIV positive, or have an AIDS related condition. This includes both adults and families with dependant children either infected or affected by HIV or AIDS.

⁴⁹ Those who originate from an Irish traveller or Romany tradition, who are still currently travelling, residing on fixed sites or have recently been re-housed.

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regional basis. None of the 4 sites in Southwark provide support other than general site management. The SP review of the sector will identify the exact levels of support need by undertaking further consultation with the community and stakeholders in 2005/6. Any development in this sector will be on a South East London regional cross authority basis.

- The Council secured significant funding from the ODPM for a programme of upgrading a number of our travellers sites.

Victims of hate crime⁵⁰

- Providing practical and emotional support to victims of hate crime either in their own home or supporting a move to a different home
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot floating services, which were established to support victims of hate crime.

Provide support for young people to live independently

Why this priority?

All council services must contribute to achieving five key outcomes for children and young people: stay safe; be healthy; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; economic well-being. Unsuited housing is closely linked to poor educational achievements, health issues, anti-social and offending behaviour among young people. In boroughs like Southwark, young people have few affordable options for independent living and are at increased risk of homelessness (see chapter 7). Housing services for some groups of vulnerable young people are included in the supporting people framework. However, from our consultation with young people and those who work with and for them⁵¹, it is clear that all young people need a degree of support to enable them to live independently and to contribute to their community.

We will do this by:

- Developing closer links and joint working with training, education, and employment services
- With the youth service, developing reciprocal youth and housing awareness training for front line staff
- Developing stronger links and joint working with voluntary agencies offering support to young people from a variety of backgrounds and with a variety of needs
- Looking at different ways young people could access advice on a range of services, including housing, utilising the Southwark youth website and publications aimed at young people and exploring the potential to provide one-stop-shop type services appropriate to young people
- Looking at the feasibility of providing low cost furniture and other help to young people taking up their first tenancy
- Developing housing options information targeted at young people, involving them in designing and circulating the information
- Investing in community schemes which increase young people's involvement in decision making and which divert them from involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour
- With other boroughs and partners, looking at the need for developing semi-independent housing for young people, linked to a programme of independent living skills
- Establishing the need for a floating support service with higher/lower banding of support to work across all young person client groups.

⁵⁰ People who have been the victims of crime due to their, race, sexuality, age, religion or disability (excluding women at risk of domestic violence from male partners, but including same sex domestic violence).

⁵¹ See *Engaging young people in housing* on the council's website

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- Developing homelessness prevention education and training packages in partnership with schools, colleges and youth services
- Providing suitable supported accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year olds and for young people with complex and challenging needs who are usually excluded from traditional young people's supported accommodation.
- Increasing joint planning of provision between Supporting People and Care Leavers services. Developing supported accommodation for care leavers between the ages of 18 and 21, who are not able to take up an independent tenancy and increasing supported housing units that target vulnerable care leavers
- Improving referral routes between statutory and voluntary providers and the Southwark Youth Offending Team.
- Continuing to provide supported accommodation for young lone parents. We believe we have sufficient housing of this type in the borough to meet projected need. Older teenage lone parents will be directed towards services for homeless families with support needs where appropriate. The SP review of the sector will establish whether these should be new build accommodation or whether capacity can be built into existing services to cater for demand from this client group. If any new build accommodation is required we will aim to offer self-contained units.

Risk assessment

- Further changes to the distribution formula for supporting people funding may not be to Southwark's advantage
- The government is considering removing the ring-fencing from supporting people funding from next year. Should that happen, funding could be diverted to other service priorities
- Smaller service providers are having difficulty coping with the bureaucracy of the SP funding regime and may not be geared up to compete successfully in tendering for contracts. Therefore there is a risk of a reduction over time in the range of service providers
- Uncertainty over availability of capital funding to meet supported housing priorities

ACTION PLAN⁵²

Key targets to achieve by 2010

- Increased floating support services by 500 units
- Improved supported accommodation by replacing 200 units of shared accommodation, converting 50 to self-contained, implementing the sheltered housing options appraisal and providing 2 Extra Care schemes
- Improved access to supported housing for vulnerable people
- Enabled more people with disabilities to remain in their own homes by providing over 2,000 home adaptations
- Increased the supply of mobility and wheelchair standard homes

TARGETS 2005/2006

Target	Date	Lead officer
Complete review of mental health support services	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Establish two pre-tenancy and resettlement support services for offenders and people with disabilities	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien

⁵² See also Southwark Supporting People Strategy Five-Year Action Plan

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Commission vulnerable adults floating support service	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Reduce by 80 units the number of shared communal living schemes of supported accommodation	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Secure capital and revenue for vulnerable care leavers pre-tenancy scheme	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Secure capital and revenue for physical disabilities temporary accommodation scheme	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Secure capital and revenue for an Extra Care sheltered scheme	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Convert 10 council homes to either full wheelchair or mobility standard	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Complete 180 major adaptations and 160 minor adaptations	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Complete 50 Disabled Facilities Grants	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
MILESTONES		
2006/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase floating support services by 100 units • Implement centralised allocations system for supported housing • Complete 50 Disabled Facilities Grants • Complete 180 major adaptations and 160 minor adaptations • Convert 10 council homes to either full wheelchair or mobility standard 	
2007/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase floating support services by 100 units • Temporary accommodation scheme for people with disabilities in place • Three-year accommodation strategy for people with learning disabilities in place • Complete 50 Disabled Facilities Grants • Complete 180 major adaptations and 160 minor adaptations • Convert 10 council homes to either full wheelchair or mobility standard 	
2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase floating support services by 100 units • Complete 50 Disabled Facilities Grants • Complete 180 major adaptations and 160 minor adaptations • Convert 10 council homes to either full wheelchair or mobility standard 	
2009/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase floating support services by 100 units • Complete 50 Disabled Facilities Grants • Complete 180 major adaptations and 160 minor adaptations • Convert 10 council homes to either full wheelchair or mobility standard 	

9. DELIVER COMMUNITY FOCUSED SERVICES

Why this objective?

Delivering community focused services is an essential part of delivering all our housing plans over the next five years and ensuring housing services contribute to achieving the wider goals of Southwark's community strategy and other key strategies. In doing this, we aim to fully involve residents as we think this is the best way to provide the services that people need.

Over the next five years there will be some major changes that will have a big impact on the type of housing services we deliver and how we deliver them. Southwark will become even more culturally diverse as new communities settle here. We will see a change too in the age profile of the population, with more older black and minority ethnic people and an increase in the numbers of very elderly people. The council now has one of the largest long lease portfolios in the country and over the next two years or so the proportion of council tenants to council leaseholders (who bought their council home under right to buy) will exceed the current 3:1 ratio. Major regeneration schemes like the Elephant and Castle will have a big impact on the physical and housing environment. The government wants public services, like local councils, to use new technology to deliver services more effectively. The Freedom of Information Act means that much more information about the council's policies and services needs to be freely and easily available to the public. In a rapidly changing world, there is increasing emphasis on building sustainable communities where people want to live, feel safe and value good neighbourliness and cultural diversity. All these changes and more have an impact on our service priorities.

Recent achievements

- Completed best value review of housing management services and reconfigured service to align with community council areas and customer service centre agenda
- Opened a new customer service centre and one-stop-shop
- Won a gas safety award
- Became the fifth cleanest borough in London by integrating our street and estate cleaning and grounds maintenance contract into one in-house contract
- Reached top performance quartile for processing housing benefit claims
- Agreed crack house protocol with partners
- Introduced improved housing complaints procedure
- Completed our BME initiatives consultation and report

What we want to achieve by 2010

- A significant increase in customer satisfaction with all our housing services, in particular closing the satisfaction gap between BME and other service users
- Be the best performing council in London for services to leaseholders
- A significant reduction in rent and service charge arrears
- An equalities profile of all our service users which will enable appropriate targeting of services and information
- A fully integrated housing options service and centre offering housing choices
- An 'excellent' rating for our housing service in the council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment
- An 'excellent' rating for our revenues and benefits service
- A significant increase in the proportion of council tenants who say they feel safe in their home and immediate neighbourhood

OUR PRIORITIES AND WHAT WE WILL DO TO DELIVER THEM

Improve customers' access to our services

Why this priority?

If customers are to benefit from the housing services the council offers, we need to make it as easy as possible for people to get information about our services, to receive services and to be able to tell us when things go wrong, so we can put things right.

We will do this by:

- Integrating the way we deliver services with the council's customer service centre programme. In the longer term people will be able to access many housing services along with other council services in Southwark's three one-stop-shops. The Bermondsey office is already open, with the new Walworth and Peckham offices opening in 2006. The majority of telephone queries (including reporting housing repairs) will be handled by the council's call centre which opened in May 2005
- Publicising our service standards and putting more information on the council's website about services, strategies and policies
- Improving the way we handle enquiries and complaints, making it easier for people to register complaints (for example by telephone or email), having better recording and monitoring systems (including equalities monitoring) and feeding information from complaints into improving services.
- Taking services to where people live. For example, taking benefit take-up campaigns to housing estates and carrying out assessments in customers' homes
- Providing disabled access and comfort facilities, on-line payments and accounts services and freephones in all housing offices open to the public, and improved interpreting facilities.
- Keeping our new tenants' handbook under review. This explains the new tenancy agreement, the council's and tenants' responsibilities, opportunities for tenants to get involved in decision making, service standards and how the council works in terms of governance
- Improving the quality, range and promotion of translation and interpreting services
- Getting better equalities information about council tenants and other service users to enable better targeting of information and services. This includes continuing to refine our ethnic monitoring categories to get a more accurate profile which fully reflects the diversity of communities, including new and emerging communities. The homelessness service is piloting the council's new equalities monitoring system.
- Carrying out equalities and community impact assessments of services and policies and working with trained community facilitators to better understand the needs of, and improve services to, all communities
- Publicising our service standards.

Involve residents in strategic and service planning

Why this priority?

We have a long history of involving council tenants and residents in service and policy development and aim to extend opportunities for other housing service users to be involved. Involving residents is a cornerstone of the agenda for modern local government, contributes to community cohesion and is key to the council's equalities scheme. We believe we can achieve better outcomes and services by engaging residents in developing strategies, policies and services and in monitoring their delivery. Some examples of the ways we have involved residents are given in Appendix XXX.

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We will do this by

- Implementing the review of community development. A key target is to establish a new umbrella organisation for all tenants which recognises, respects and meets the differing needs of its members. This will include a self-managing section to address the needs and concerns of BME communities working in partnership with the council and the umbrella organisation. Representatives will be elected by tenants and residents associations and the organisation will act as the pivotal organisation for tenants across the borough. The focus will be on encouraging wider participation of tenants in the consultation structure⁵³
- Exploring with the council's leaseholders and service charge payers the extent to which they wish to be involved in the new umbrella organisation and to benefit from training and other support offered through the Tenants Fund.
- Providing training through the Tenants Fund to meet the needs of BME and other under-represented groups to increase their understanding of and participation in tenant and resident associations.
- Working with the Housing Partnership Board ⁵⁴ to ensure that tenants and leaseholders are represented on strategic working groups and further developing the Board as a strategic partnership.
- Increasing BME representation on housing association boards (see partnership working example, Black on Board))
- Developing tenant compacts in addition to our borough-wide tenant and leaseholder compact. We have agreed a local compact with Salisbury Estate and are at an early stage of developing an area compact in Nunhead and Peckham Rye. We are also developing a compact with Travellers and aim for this to have a wider remit than site management.
- Reviewing ways of including young people living in council homes in decision making, linking this corporate and partner initiatives.
- Ensuring residents are actively involved in developing schemes and strategies in our housing renewal areas. We are talking to residents in the two newly declared renewal areas about the consultation arrangements they want over the lifetime of the renewal area.
- Engaging service users in service reviews, for example our best value review of community housing services and on-going reviews of supporting people services.
- Involving communities and their representatives in equality impact assessments of services, key strategies and policies

Achieve excellence in our services

Why this priority?

Providing services that are recognised by the government and other partners as excellent gives the council opportunities to work more flexibly and bring in more resources to use for the benefit of people who live and work in Southwark. Excellent services are important to our residents and provide value for money. We have included a focus on leaseholder services because council leaseholders has been the fastest growing group of housing service users over recent years and our service delivery needs to reflect the important change to managing a mixed tenure portfolio. We also recognise that leaseholders

⁵³ The consultation structure includes tenants and residents associations which elect representatives to their area forum. The 13 area forums send representatives to Tenant and Leaseholder Councils. Tenant Management Liaison Committee deals with issues of mutual concern to TMOs

⁵⁴ Housing Partnership Board – a partnership of council tenant and leaseholders, councillors and senior housing officers

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tend to be less satisfied with the housing service than other users and are working hard to address this. We also aim to encourage our housing partners to deliver excellent services.

We will do this by:

- Building on our good track record of partnership working to provide integrated services for residents across the borough and ensuring residents benefit from sub-regional service developments
- Improving the way we buy goods and services through a new council procurement strategy. This includes developing more partnering arrangements, having longer term arrangements for groups of services, and delivering services to council homes alongside services to other residents
- Continuing to develop our tenant and leaseholder management services, ensuring effective alignment and joint working with other council services and with partners
- Completing our review of all supported housing services.
- Monitoring delivery of and updating service improvement plans, setting challenging targets to achieve top quartile performance against key performance indicators. Benchmarking our services and sharing good practice with housing associations and other councils
- Carrying out regular customer satisfaction surveys and using the results to improve services in the way customers want
- Delivering ongoing equalities training for staff
- Working with private landlords to improve landlord services through accreditation schemes, information and shared good practice. This includes promoting training opportunities and understanding of landlord responsibilities within BME communities. We participate in the London-wide landlord accreditation scheme and support and promote good practice in property management, aiming to reduce disputes between landlords and tenants by providing up to date information on changes in legislation or administrative procedures. We will be consulting landlords to find out if they want a local accreditation scheme and, if so, what it should include.
- Working with housing associations in Southwark and the south east London sub-region to develop common tenant satisfaction surveys for housing associations working in the sub-region. We will also continue monitoring housing associations working in the sub-region against key performance indicators. In selecting partner housing associations in Southwark, we will continue to monitor capacity, track record in delivering schemes, experience and their policies on tenancy services; in general we would expect partner housing associations to have a four green traffic light assessment (the best) from the Housing Corporation
- Improving housing benefit (HB) services by meeting national processing time targets, providing an advisory service for housing management on a tenant's eligibility for benefit, attending court to deal with HB issues. We have agreed a housing benefit protocol with all housing associations that operate in Southwark. This protocol has speeded up housing benefit claims from housing association tenants, reducing the incidence of rent arrears.
- Developing a new framework for monitoring tenant management organisations building on best practice, which will form part of the new management agreements with our TMOs. We are also undertaking a major review of the resources the council allocates to TMOs to ensure they can provide a high quality of service.

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Focus on: Right to Buy and Leaseholder Services

- We have restructured and expanded the Leasehold Management Unit to enhance strategic and operational capacity .
- We have set new challenging service standards and developed a service improvement plan. Key aims over the next two years are to
 - improve the time taken to process Right to Buy applications, to achieve statutory timescales in 99% of cases. We have greatly reduced the backlog of outstanding Right to Buy applications to just under 1,500 (June 2005) and will be adapting IT systems and processes and redrafting leases to take account of changes to the Right to Buy introduced in the Housing Act 2004.
 - improve service charge accounting, billing and collection. We are constructing revenue service charges in accordance with the terms of the lease and all charges are now on a block or estate basis. We have made significant improvements in the accuracy and timeliness of service charge billing and aim to calculate and dispatch the annual revenue service charges before the start of the financial year and calculate actual charges within three months of the closing of accounts. We have set up processes to calculate estimated major works service charges before they are invoiced as part of the statutory consultation regime. These processes include inspection of accounts so leaseholders can inspect how charges are calculated and the construction of actual accounts once the contract final account has been produced. We will be establishing processes for statutory service charge accounts (required under the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act) and are procuring a new service charge IT system.
 - improve communication. We have agreed and funded a communications plan which includes a regular 'Homeowner News' feature in Southwark Housing News, a new leaseholder handbook, a new Right to Buy booklet , a welcome pack (for new leaseholders, both Right to Buy and those who buy on the open market) and the development of web pages outlining all of the council's policies and procedures in this area..
- The necessary work that the council has to carry out on its housing stock to meet decent homes standards also impacts on leaseholders who, although they do not receive or contribute to the cost of internal non-communal works, must pay the relevant proportion of the costs of communal works to the whole block or estate. We will be providing leaseholders with more information about the impact of decent homes works with the aim of correcting any misunderstandings about their liability with regards to costs of works. The council's measures to contain costs and improve quality through its procurement and partnering strategies (see chapter 4 and 5) will directly benefit leaseholders
- We will continue to offer leaseholders options to pay service charges in monthly or quarterly instalments and to offer a range of options to leaseholders in financial difficulty over payment of major works bills. These options include taking a low interest loan from the council secured as a mortgage on the flats with an option to make monthly payments or pay the whole debt when the property is sold on. The council now manages a growing mortgage portfolio where the relationship with the leaseholders is also a mortgagee/mortgagor relationship. For council leaseholders who cannot afford owner occupation and are (usually) vulnerable, , vulnerable we have a Buy Back scheme which enables the leaseholder to remain in the property as a secure tenant . We also have a service charge reduction policy which takes advantage of the limited circumstances in which a council may reduce service charges.
- Plans are in place to improve the pre-assignment, postponement and lease variation/rectification processes which have been established in the past year and which are essential in managing a large lease portfolio.
- We will continue to develop policies and procedures to assist in the management of a mixed tenure portfolio. For example we are exploring the potential to extend our accredited gas servicing service to leaseholders. We will also be developing procedures around individual and collective enfranchisement and formalising our disposal of ad hoc interests to leaseholders.

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- All of these leaseholder processes have, where appropriate, equivalent arrangements for freeholders who live on our estates and are contractually bound to pay service charges.
- We will continue to work with the ALG to present the case to government for a different and more appropriate legal framework for council leaseholders which would enable social landlords to make better arrangements when providing services to their leaseholders.

Provide services that increase choice

Why this priority?

We want to provide services in ways that are appropriate to individual's needs. So we need to make it easy for people to tell us what they need and then give them as much choice as possible about how those needs are met, within the resources available. We know from our research, *Making estates work*, that tenants tend to feel happier with their home if they feel they had some choice about living there. Also, other research we have carried out recently into homelessness amongst young people and around housing options for older people, clearly shows that 'one size' does not fit all – for example, different communities express different preferences around culturally specific services. In addition, national and regional governments are seeking to increase choice across a broad range of public services.

We will do this by:

- Introducing a choice based lettings scheme. So instead of the council offering properties to individuals on the housing and transfer lists, vacant properties will be advertised and people will be invited to apply for the property they want. The property will then be offered to the highest priority household bidding for it. We will provide additional support to help vulnerable people exercise choice through the new scheme, working with social services, and we will ensure ethnic monitoring of applicants and lettings. Our choice based lettings system will be compatible with those of the other south east London boroughs and we will be looking at the merits of having a single sub-regional choice based lettings scheme
- Setting up a housing options advice line and centre (see chapter 7)
- Working with partners to offer social housing choices in other parts of London or outside London (see chapter 6)
- Increasing tenure choice by increasing the number of private landlords who will accept HB claimants as tenants (see chapter 7)
- Increasing tenure choice by working with housing associations to build more shared ownership homes (see chapter 6)
- Increasing housing choices for vulnerable people by providing support to enable them to live independently ensuring culturally specific services are provided where needed (see chapter 8)
- Providing capacity building for BME and other smaller supporting people service providers
- Working with HomeBuy scheme providers to extend housing choices for Southwark residents,
- Working in the South East London Housing Partnership to identify housing priorities for particular BME and vulnerable groups which might be more effectively met through sub-regional housing schemes.

Provide services that tackle deprivation and which support sustainable communities

Why this priority?

Southwark is one of the most deprived boroughs in the country and therefore tackling poverty and other symptoms of deprivation such as poor health are key priorities of Southwark's community strategy. People's quality of life is affected by how they feel about the area they live in, which in turn is affected by

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the facilities on offer, levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, how they get on with their neighbours and the way their area looks. All services need to make a positive contribution to tackling deprivation, problem neighbourhoods and building sustainable communities.

We will do this by:

- Providing a healthy homes handyperson service through the South East London Housing Partnership. This helps those over the age of 60, people with disabilities, those in hospital who require repairs in order to return home. Clients on certain benefits only pay for the cost of materials
- Improving the HB service (see above), including participating in campaigns such as the Rightfully Yours initiative to identify HB claimants most likely to be eligible for other benefits and tax credits and following this up with personal contact to encourage people to claim their benefit entitlement.
- Providing financial counselling to private residents on low incomes who need to carry out improvements to their home. The service has been very successful in increasing client's disposable income by helping them claim benefits they are entitled to
- Implementing a range of schemes for council leaseholders in financial difficulties (see Focus on leaseholder services above)
- Tackling fuel poverty (see objective one)
- Within the limits of the government's rent restructuring scheme⁵⁵, keeping council rents affordable
- Setting affordability criteria for shared ownership schemes
- Negotiating on rental guarantees with housing association partners in regeneration schemes in order to make new housing as affordable as possible
- Looking at the feasibility of providing low cost furniture to young people taking up their first tenancy.
- Providing community facilities for council tenants and residents on estates and exploring with them how such facilities can be used for the benefit of the wider community.
- Improving estate environments (see objective 1) and encouraging resident parking schemes on council estates and strictly enforcing them
- Enabling local labour and training schemes through partnering contracts (see chapter 4) and encouraging our partners to offer schemes that help our residents back into work, such as Get On With It, run by People for Action, part of the Horizon Housing Group (see partnership working table).
- Working in partnership with the police and other partners in the Safer Southwark Partnership to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Housing services play a key role in enforcement, prevention and strengthening communities. For example, by
 - Using the full range of management tools to manage anti-social behaviour on our estates, such as introductory tenancies⁵⁶, demoted tenancies⁵⁷, anti-social behaviour orders, injunctions and where necessary possession. Our statement of policies and procedures covering our landlord functions provides residents on our estates with a clear framework of what action we can take and how we will deal with their complaint. The re-organisation of housing management has been instrumental in the development of a team of tenancy officers who specialise in dealing with cases of anti-social behaviour, providing an improved service to residents. Each housing management area has an anti-social behaviour champion who influences the central agenda, feeds down strategic objectives to case workers, disseminates best practice, ensures consistent working, acts as the local partnership link, monitors case management and undertakes performance management.

⁵⁵ Rent restructuring – this is a regime developed by the government is designed to bring housing association and council rents in line with each other by 2010. Rents are set almost entirely by formula but the government suggests limits on annual rent increases aimed at keeping rents more affordable. The council has adopted these guideline limits.

⁵⁶ Introductory tenancies can run for at least one year and make it easier for the council to get possession of the home if the tenant breaches the conditions of tenancy.

⁵⁷ Demoted tenancy – the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows secure tenancies to be demoted to introductory tenancies where tenants or any member of their household has been convicted of anti-social behaviour.

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- Having a Joint Security Initiatives (JSI) programme which enables council tenants and residents to build partnerships with the police, statutory and voluntary sectors at estate and small area level to combat crime and anti-social behaviour. The priorities identified by council residents have led to a large part of the annual programme being geared towards developing schemes for young people which offer opportunities for them to be involved in local decision making and to participate in activities such as sport and art to divert them from anti-social behaviour. We are reviewing JSI to ensure that it links effectively to other initiatives around tackling anti-social behaviour and building stronger cohesive communities.
- Jointly managing (with our Community Safety Unit) Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (SASBU) which deals with serious cases of anti-social behaviour which the police or housing providers have been unable to resolve alone. The Unit can use one or more of a range of measures to address the problem, including: Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, warning, injunctions, possession proceedings (which can lead to eviction), Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. The Unit has lead on developing Southwark's crack house protocol, which is a joint agreement between the police, the council, housing associations and voluntary agencies. Under the protocol the police exchange information on drugs raids with the council to help housing providers take fast track legal action to close down crack houses and provide support to vulnerable tenants who have had their homes taken over by drug dealers.
- Contributing to and working with our community warden schemes which provide a highly visible, reassuring presence and can deter crime and anti-social behaviour. The wardens work closely with the police to report crime and suspicious behaviour and address environmental concerns by identifying and reporting litter, graffiti, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles
- Linking housing services with corporate and partner initiatives which foster community cohesion

Risk assessment

- The government's plans for reform of the housing benefit system (see chapter 6) will present a significant challenge to managing council rent payments and reducing rent arrears.
- If we cannot deliver planned improvements to tenants homes this will have a negative impact on customer satisfaction levels
- If we cannot deliver the required level of social housing efficiency savings through our procurement and partnering strategies this will impact on resources available for service development

ACTION PLAN ⁵⁸

Key targets to achieve by 2010

- An excellent CPA rating for the housing service
- An excellent CPA rating for the revenues and benefits service
- An average of 10% increase in customer satisfaction with housing services
- XX% increase in council tenants and leaseholders who say they feel safe in their home and immediate neighbourhood (**CHECKING BASELINE BEFORE SETTING TARGET**)

TARGETS 2005/2006

Target	Date	Lead officer
Analyse results of self assessments against KLOEs putting in	August 2005	Joe Brady

⁵⁸ See also service improvement plans

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place new service plans which address identified gaps		
Meet 90% of targets across all service improvement plans	March 2006	All DSMs
Complete comprehensive equalities profile of council tenants	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Resolve 80% of complaints at Stage 1	March 2006	Joe Brady
Achieve ratio of programmed to responsive repairs of 60:40	March 2006	Chris Brown
All day to day repairs and maintenance procured through partnering contracts	March 2006	Chris Brown
Average time of 35 days to process new benefit claims (BVPI 78a)	March 2006	Joe Brady
Develop housing procurement strategy	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Finalise Leasehold Management Improvement Plan	June 2005	Chris Brown
Publish Leaseholder Handbook	March 2006	Chris Brown
Achieve London top quartile performance for Right to Buy turn round	March 2006	Chris Brown
Finalise agreed improvement to leaseholder billing	March 2006	Chris Brown
Achieve 62% overall tenant satisfaction with services	March 2006	Chris Brown
Achieve 50% overall user satisfaction with Community Housing Services	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Reduce rent arrears by 50% (from 02/03 levels)	March 2006	Chris Brown
Implement choice-based lettings scheme (Southwark Homesearch)	October 2005	Margaret O'Brien
Achieve 25 moves under Changing Places scheme	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Delawyck tenant management organisation operational	November 2005	Rachel Sharpe
Agree new monitoring framework for tenant management organisations	September 2005	Rachel Sharpe
Agree Travellers compact	March 2006	Chris Brown
Review implementation of vision for resident involvement	December 2005	Chris Brown
Deliver Joint Security Initiatives programme to address crime and fear of crime on council estates	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Review housing statement of anti-social behaviour policies and procedures and consult with tenants and leaseholders on review	March 2006	Chris Brown
72% of ASB cases where the victim reported that the matter had been successfully dealt with by the council	March 2006	Chris Brown
MILESTONES		

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2006/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated benefits process for council tax and housing benefit in place • Complete move towards electronic records • 84% of housing complaints resolved at Stage 1 • 63% of tenants, 53% community housing service users satisfied with the service • Review baseline and set targets for increasing leaseholder satisfaction with services • Review and consider standardisation of, all council leases • Complete comprehensive equalities profile of all council tenants and leaseholders • Agree extension of cross-borough nominations arrangements • 2.5% increase over previous year of anti-social behaviour cases where the victim reports that the matter had been successfully dealt with by the council • 5% reduction over previous year in hate crime repeat victimisation
2007/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Customer Service Centre area working • Achieve top quartile performance nationally for housing benefit service • Housing investment programme and programme planned maintenance delivered via partnering contracts in all housing management areas • 86% of housing complaints resolved at Stage 1 • 2.5% increase over previous year of anti-social behaviour cases where the victim reports that the matter had been successfully dealt with by the council • 5% reduction over previous year in hate crime repeat victimisation • 66% of tenants, 56% community housing service users satisfied with the service
2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete reviews of back office processes to inform business process re-engineering • 88% of housing complaints resolved at Stage 1 • 2.5% increase over previous year of anti-social behaviour cases where the victim reports that the matter had been successfully dealt with by the council • 5% reduction over previous year in hate crime repeat victimization • 68% of tenants, 45% of leaseholders, 59% community housing service users satisfied with the service
2009/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of housing complaints resolved at Stage 1 • 2.5% increase over previous year of anti-social behaviour cases where the victim reports that the matter had been successfully dealt with by the council • 5% reduction over previous year in hate crime repeat victimisation • 71% of tenants, 62% community housing service users satisfied with the service •

APPENDICES TO BE INCLUDED IN FINAL DOCUMENT:

- EXAMPLES OF RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT IN STRATEGIC AND SERVICE PLANNING
- WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STRATEGIES, POLICIES, PLANS AND INITIATIVES REFERRED TO IN THE HOUSING STRATEGY
- OUTURN OVER LAST TWO YEARS OF HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME, HRA, HGF

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- GLOSSARY OF TERMS
- EXAMPLES OF CONSULTATION AND OUTCOMES AS PER PREVIOUS HOUSING STRATEGY
e.g. Choice based lettings consultation
- THE EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESMENT – It is council policy to undertake an EIA of all council strategies and key policies. This has been undertaken as a desk exercise and will result in an action plan to address identified gaps/weaknesses in the strategy.