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SOUTHWARK HOUSING STRATEGY 2005 TO 2010

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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PAGE 2 – FOREWORD BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING, WITH PHOTO

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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 local, regional and national housing trends and policies, along with 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, it contributes to delivering Southwark's [community strategy](#) vision to make Southwark a better place to live, learn, work and have fun by

- tackling poverty (both causes and symptoms);
- 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 attended a wide range of 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 held a housing conference in February 2005 attended by over 130 delegates who discussed the strategy priorities in small groups.

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 for 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 6

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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

Chapter two, three and four describe the policy context of our housing strategy, a summary of our assessment of housing needs and the resources to deliver the strategy. Chapters five to nine cover the five key objectives of our strategy and our priorities to deliver them, with risk assessments. 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 an impact on delivering 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 many examples of these partnerships throughout the strategy. In particular, we work closely with housing associations through Southwark Housing Association Group (SOUHAG)³ to meet housing needs. SOUHAG and its sub-groups works with the council on strategic issues as well as day to day operational issues and is represented on the local strategic partnership (Southwark Alliance). Increasingly we are working with housing associations through the South East London Housing Partnership and have set out a joint framework in the partnership's *Guide to RSLs and developers working in South East London*.

Monitoring delivery and updating the housing strategy

Targets in the housing strategy action plan are incorporated into 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.

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.

What difference will this housing strategy make?

The key aim of this housing strategy is to improve resident's lives, so over the life of this strategy we want to deliver some major changes to bring this about. By 2010 our aim is that

- the majority of households in Southwark will be living in warm, safe and healthy homes which are maintained to a good standard and which meet their needs
- public and private spaces around people's homes will be more attractive and environmentally friendly and will feel safer
- there will be more homes in the borough to meet existing and newly arising needs which are of a good quality and adaptable to the changing needs of those who live in them
- fewer families will be living in overcrowded homes
- people will have more choice about where they live and their housing tenure, whether in Southwark or in other areas of London or elsewhere in the country
- vulnerable people will have the type of housing and support they need to enable them to live as fully and independently as possible
- less people in Southwark will become homeless and those that are homeless will have more housing options
- we will have less temporary accommodation because less people will be waiting for a settled home and the temporary accommodation will be of a higher quality and meet the wider social needs of the households living in it
- easier access to services – **DEVELOP** + **CHECK ALL**

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

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Partners	Partner Resources	Outcomes
Scheme - The Empty Homes Forum		
Former and current empty homes owners, Private Developers	Empty homes grants for private renting and social housing Working in partnership with RSL's using TSHG funding Private finance Networking, small business skills, construction management and support	The forum helps steer the way the council works with empty homes owners, and develops new options for owners to bring their property into use. It helped policy change on empty homes grants - which are now available to owners to let property on private market as well as council nominations.
Scheme - European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC) - Free energy advice and low energy light bulbs		
Sustainable Energy Action (SEA) - A satellite of EEAC - Run by Lewisham for Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark	Approx £1795 (EST) <i>£15,000 towards all SEA schemes (Southwark Council)</i>	5,984 households received free advice and low energy light bulbs in 2004/05
Scheme - Silwood		
Lewisham Council Southwark Council	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 - Crack House Protocol		
Police, registered social landlords (RSLs) and voluntary agencies	AWAITING DATA	X number of cases fast tracked. X number of crack houses closed down X number of vulnerable tenants offered support
Scheme - Bellenden Renewal Area – Street Scene – AWAITING DATA		
Local businesses, artists, residents		
Scheme - Partnering Contracts – Bermondsey West (formerly Alfred Salter) A similar scheme has also been developed in Peckham		
United House Ltd	The budget allowance to March 2006 is £19m and for 2006/07 is £6m.	The works comprise all capital and planned maintenance except for lifts, and each block worked on complies with the Decent Homes standard once finished.
Scheme – Linden Grove		
Wandle housing association and Habinteg housing	Social housing grant, private finance	A total of 121 units were built. All were built to the Lifetime

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association		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 - Sub-regional common standards for housing developments		
The London Boroughs of Bromley, Bexley, Greenwich, Lewisham and Southwark		Developed a guide for RSLs and developers, which includes priorities and standards. This is on the South East London Housing Partnership Board website.
Scheme – Black on Board Increasing BME representation on housing association boards		
OLMEC – Subsidiary of Presentation SOUHAG	Funding from Housing Corporation via an Innovation and Good Practice grant. £20,420 + £4,500 from RSLs + Free use of space from Central and Cecil	25 BME people have been trained 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 – Elmington Special Needs Project		
Family Housing Association CHECK	Capital - Social Housing Grant Running costs - Supporting People funding,	SMART assisted technology, programmed to anticipate residents' needs. There is also a large unit for learning difficulties.
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, London Borough of Southwark, Funding is in place for the existing workplace coordinators through to September 2007	Since July 2002, nearly 250 have found jobs through BLCF's Workplace Coordinators, 125 from BME communities. 851 have been helped to achieve valuable construction qualifications.
Scheme - The Homelessness Forum		
Southwark Council, Advice Agencies, Housing Associations	The members of the forum share knowledge and expertise to develop effective strategy and to monitor delivery of key targets. Southwark Council also	Developed the 2003/2006 Homelessness Strategy. Developed and monitors the action plan and priorities, information exchange.

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	provides the administration and venue of the forum.	Contributes to priorities for prioritisation and allocation of ODPM Homelessness Grant.
Scheme - Sanctuary scheme		
Police, Homelessness Unit, Supporting People, Victim Support Southwark, SASBU	Borough's 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 - Beds in hostels for those released as homeless from young offenders institutions		
Supporting People, Youth Offending Teams	4 beds at the Gateway Foyer project are jointly funded by the YOT team and Supporting People for young offenders leaving institution who would otherwise be homeless.	Avoid repeat offending and homelessness
Scheme - Temporary sheltered housing for elderly people leaving hospitals		
Supporting People, Social services	Step-down project is a jointly funded initiative between Supporting People and Social Services by which 4 LA sheltered housing units are block booked as emergency temporary accommodation for elders who are temporarily unable to return to their permanent place of residence.	Provided 4 units of TA for elders who would otherwise of been bed blocking in local acute hospital beds
Scheme - Borough wide Neighborhood Safety Scheme		
VSS contacted tenants to offer, arrange, and complete the installations of security devices aimed at reducing Burglary Artifice (ie. bogus callers) and the fear of crime.		
Victim Support Southwark (VSS)	Funding from Southwark Council Housing Department Joint Security Initiative £118,172	1,777 properties were improved. 98% of users said they were generally satisfied with the service.

2. KEY INFLUENCES ON OUR STRATEGY

Our housing strategy needs to 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. In later chapters, we show how our housing priorities link to these.

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.

MAY PUT IN 2-4 EXAMPLES OF FORUMS EG CLIP, ALG FORUMS. CHECK

National

Housing strategy and legislation

- *The Way Forward for Housing (ODPM⁴, 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 and of 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 homes⁵; 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 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, for example to tackle 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.

⁴ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

⁵ 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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- *Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act (2002)*- this is being enacted in stages and has a number of challenging implications for the management of council properties which have been purchased under the Right to Buy

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 **CHECK**
- *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. There is an emphasis on the role of local government in community leadership, community engagement and effective partnership working. The vision is being developed in a series of discussion documents.
- *Firm Foundations (Home Office, 2005)* sets out the framework for community capacity building as a necessary step in developing sustainable communities. Linked to this is guidance on building community cohesion from the Local Government Association. **(CHECK)**
- *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 relating to the government's biggest reform of children's services in more than 30 years. There is a duty on all local agencies to co-operate to improve children's well-being. There are five outcomes which all council services must contribute to achieving: 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, living in houses in multiple occupation 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. The Plan sets out 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, in order to achieve the housing growth required. The Plan designates areas of London for targeted activity and investment – London Bridge and Elephant and Castle in Southwark are identified as Opportunity Areas.
- *London Housing Strategy 2005* – **CHECK AGAINST FINAL LHS – NOT DUE OUT UNTIL END OF JUNE**. In 2003 the government established regional housing boards to be responsible for producing regional housing strategies and advising ministers on the allocation of funding for housing investment. Having received the regional allocation, the London Housing Board then decides how to allocate

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housing investment money to the individual London boroughs and for pan-London or sub-regional schemes. 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 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

Alongside our community strategy other local strategies have a particular 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 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, including reducing health inequalities. Priority Neighbourhoods have been identified and resources are targeted to these areas
- *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 Partnership⁶ (SSP) the strategy aims to make Southwark safer in ways that meet the needs and concerns of all sections of the community. There are a number of new SSP sub-strategies, including *Anti-social behaviour strategy*, *Hate Crime and domestic violence strategy*.
- *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 meet the needs of children and young people, delivering the five *Every child matters* priorities.
- *Community Councils* – Southwark now has eight community councils with some devolved budgets and decision-making powers. These will become an increasingly important factor 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

⁶ 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

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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 body ⁷ 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 (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 strategy, seeks to ensure the council is identifying and addressing the housing needs of Southwark's ethnically varied communities and those priorities are therefore included in this strategy.

What are the key challenges for our housing strategy?

CHECK

- 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 organisations⁸
- 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.

⁷ Southwark Supporting People Commissioning Body is a partnership of housing, social services, the primary care trust and the probation service

⁸ 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.

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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 and employment data
- Local 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 has a very multi-cultural community, 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 London⁹. 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 cost of owner occupation and private renting is extremely high compared to national prices but slightly lower than the Greater London average. Over half of households live in social rented housing¹⁰ 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 Southwark of other tenures.

The proportion of non-decent housing in 2003

Tenure	Total Stock	Proportion non-decent
Owner Occupied (no mortgage)	11,278	40%
Owner Occupied (with mortgage)	25,398	28%

⁹ Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (Using the average rank of SOA method) See *Housing needs in Southwark* for more information.

¹⁰ Social rented housing is owned by either a council or housing association.

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RSL	12,413	33%
Private Rented	17,490	40%
Private sector stock containing vulnerable household	16,104	39%

Sources: Council Stock Condition Survey 2003 and Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2003

Energy efficiency ratings of properties are usually measured as a SAP rating¹¹. The national average SAP rating across all tenures is 53.¹² 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 2002/03¹³ was 55, as was the average SAP rating of private housing. Only 3.3% of private sector dwellings had a SAP level below 20 and 38.4% had a SAP rating of 60 or more compared with a national average of 14% for both.

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 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 £17,599¹⁴. 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 2003 found that there is a need for an additional 1,937 units of affordable housing per annum over the next 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.

¹¹ SAP = Standard Assessment Procedure. It is a scale of 0 – 120 where a higher figure is better

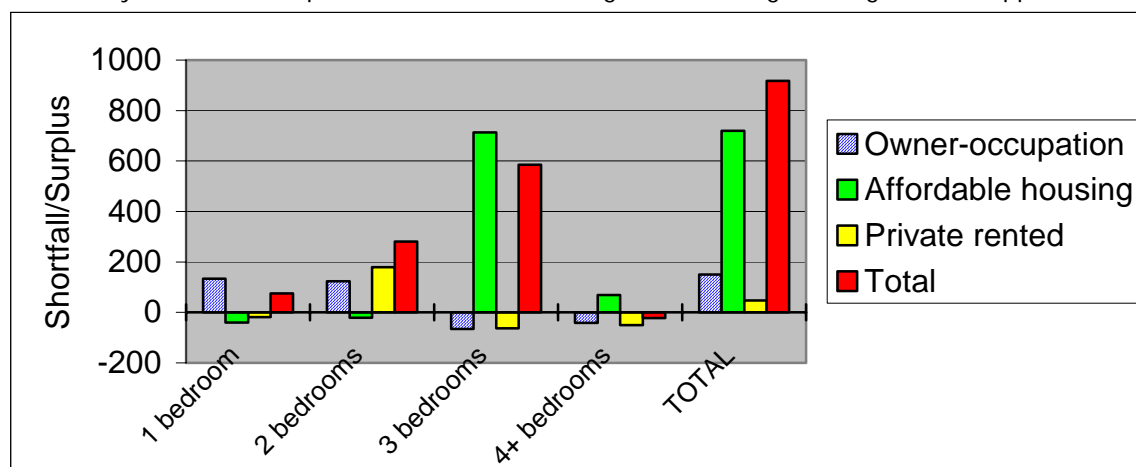
¹² National Energy Action (NEA) 2004

¹³ HIP 2003: Business Plan Statistical Appendix

¹⁴ 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. 25.9% of people are black. 16.1% of all people in Southwark are black African and 8% black Caribbean. This is significant, as some ethnic groups tend to have larger households.¹⁵

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 2003¹⁶

In the past ten years there have been significant changes 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 because of 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 as less people can afford to move out into private renting or home ownership. For example, over the years 2000/01 to 2003/04

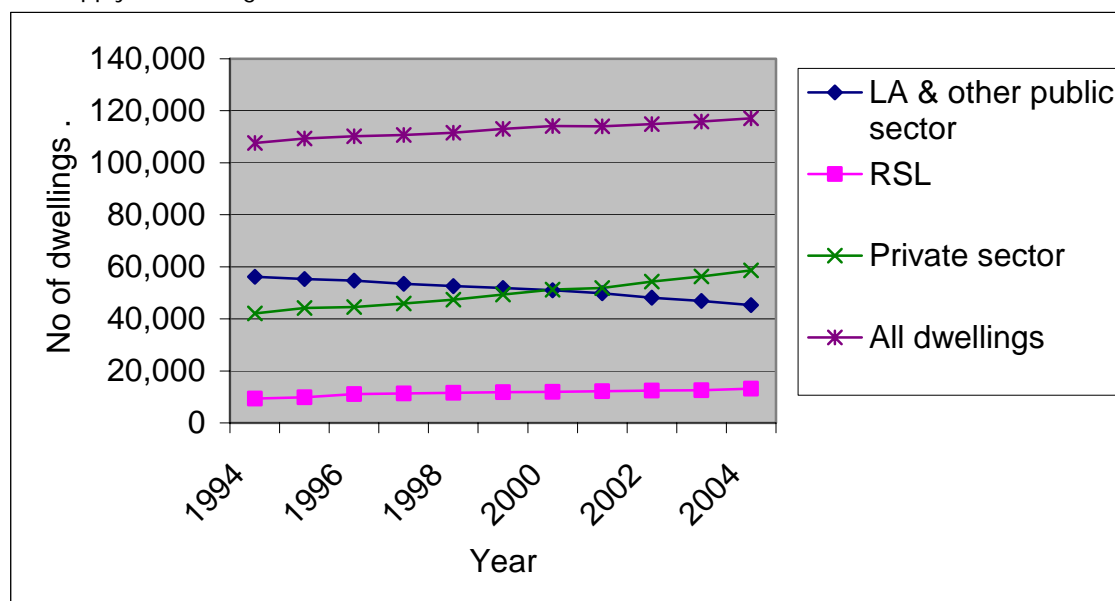
- The number of lettings of council homes decreased by 364
- The number of housing association lettings decreased by 214.

¹⁵ Data from Census 2001

¹⁶ 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

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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. In 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 occupying. 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.

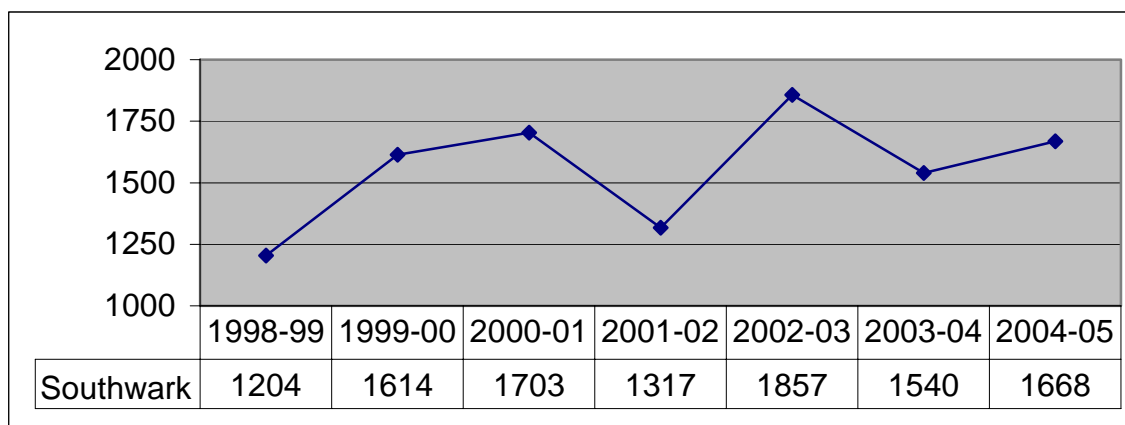
Our Private Sector Stock Condition Survey estimated that there were 3,044 vacant properties in the private sector representing 4.6% of the total private sector stock.

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

In line with the London trend, in Southwark households accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need rose from 1,204 in 1998/99 to 1,857 in 2002/03. Although levels have fallen slightly, in 2004/05, 1,668 households were accepted 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.

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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 additional housing support. These are described in detail in Southwark Supporting People Strategy, available on the council website.

There are an estimated 19,893 households in Southwark with one or more persons with special needs¹⁷. 18% of all households contain one or more people with special needs but this rises to 29% of all council households. The largest groups are those with a physical disability (62%) and frail elderly (23%). 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.¹⁸ 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.

¹⁷ The Housing Needs Survey 2003 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.

¹⁸ The data in this paragraph is from the Housing Needs Survey 2003

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Just under one in four tenants feel that the housing department takes no account at all of tenants' views when making decision, while three in five feel that the housing department take those views a little into account. Again, leaseholders tend to be less positive than tenants, with over two in five feeling that the housing department takes no account at all of leaseholders' views.

Our most recent residents' survey 2004 found:

- 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
- 67% of all residents found that members of staff were helpful on first contact with the council.

- NEED TO PUT IN SOME DATA RE OTHER HOUSING SERVICES

CHAPTER 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
- Maintaining 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, the sub-regional development group meets with the Housing Corporation to discuss priorities for social housing grant across the sub-region.
- 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 wherever appropriate opportunities occur.
- Efficiency savings – we have set up a major works procurement working group to develop partnering arrangements for all major works schemes. We aim to deliver 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 these partnering contracts are tested for cost predictability and against traditionally tendered contracts. We have developed 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 pages XXX for examples.

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- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Recycling 100% of capital receipts from HRA (Housing Revenue Account) assets for housing programmes wherever possible, usually to support a comprehensive LASHG¹⁹ programme, working with RSLs to provide new affordable housing.
- We will consider the potential for our investment programme of the government's Social HomeBuy proposals once details are finalised.

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.

¹⁹ Local Authority Social Housing Grant

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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

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 – receipts generated by and for use on 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 HSSA

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 RESOURCES TOTAL	170.214	156.965	133.689	126.685	113.331

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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 voids²⁰ programme, works to acquired street properties and the capital element of the adaptations programme
- 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 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. Monthly meetings are held between the housing department investment strategy team and relevant budget holders and data analysed to enable relevant decisions to be made, following presentation to the Investment Programme Group (IPG) which is chaired by the Strategic Director of Housing. Major adjustments between programmes are agreed at IPG which has strategic responsibility for 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 voids.

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

New affordable housing programme

Social housing grant

²⁰ Major voids = CHECK

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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 our 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 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). 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 bodies²¹ 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 Account²² and Housing General Fund²³ 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:

²¹ An explanation of the term "unregistered bodies" will be provided in final document CHECK

²² 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

²³ 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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- 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
 - 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 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.

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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 objective 5.

Recent achievements

- Between 2003/04 and 2004/05 over 4,000 homes were brought up to the decent homes standard. Currently over 5,000 homes are 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 pound 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 in Comprehensive Performance Assessment (ADD FIGURES ON HOMES IMPROVED ETC) CHECK
- First Southwark solar hot water systems installed
- Declared two additional renewal areas in Nunhead and East Peckham
- New Unitary Development Plan setting 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 decency 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 to moderate 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 up to the decent homes standard by 2010 and has linked the allocation of funding to local authorities to

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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 options²⁴ 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 members 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 is 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 estimated that, in Southwark, over 39% of vulnerable households are living in non-decent private housing.

²⁴ 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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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, for vulnerable residents – **CHECK**

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 poverty²⁵. 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 also 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.
- Meeting Home Energy Conservation Act requirements to promote energy efficiency in public and private sector housing. This includes informing residents about energy efficiency measures they can take and telling them about any financial help available
- 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 Front²⁶ for help and promoting HelpCo Energy Club²⁷.
- 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

²⁵ Fuel poverty is defined as spending more than 10% of household income to heat the home to a satisfactory standard

²⁶ Warm Front is a Government flagship scheme to eradicate fuel poverty in the private sector.

²⁷ 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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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. 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 we are focusing resources on two additional areas of the borough. 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; 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 at the end of 2005, ensuring we use our enforcement powers effectively to improve the quality of homes.. We are considering joint training on the HHSRS with other south east London boroughs.
- Using our regulation and enforcement powers to compulsorily purchase properties in serious disrepair where the owner will not remedy the problems

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- Reviewing our HMO licensing schemes in Bellenden Renewal Area and Old Kent Road when the national HMO licensing scheme is implemented in late 2005. We may consider extending the scheme to other categories of HMOs which are outside the national scheme.
- 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 can 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. Our *Guide for registered social landlords working in Southwark* encourages housing associations to deliver housing plus initiatives which will contribute to meeting our community and neighbourhood renewal strategy objectives. Family housing association built a new doctor's surgery on Lamps Court and the council is currently developing plans to build one on the Silwood Estate, for instance.
- 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.
- 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?

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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 high 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 the availability to owners of private finance, including 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 that 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
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 (BVPI 62)	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Achieve £250k spend on loans and grants in new renewal areas	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe

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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 standard²⁸ • 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 	
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 	

STILL TO COME – ANNUAL MILESTONES ON RECYCLING FACILITIES – PENDING APPOINTMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNER TO DELIVER INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS AND SPG FOR DESIGN OF WASTE COLLECTION FACILITIES

²⁸ 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

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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 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 between 2003/4 and 2004/05 as a direct result of Local Authority 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 significant reduction in overcrowded households living in council homes
- 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 and we have to make the best use of the available supply of land and conserve green areas which are important for residents' quality of life. So we need to be creative in 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 housing and for opportunities to increase housing density (increasing the number of homes in an area). The 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). It also requires local plans to ensure that new developments contain a range of housing types and sizes, paying attention to the particular 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 Areas²⁹ of Elephant and Castle and London Bridge and in the Action Areas 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 with other London boroughs, particularly those in the South East London Housing Partnership, to ensure that there are sufficient homes of all tenures to meet housing needs and promote housing choice.

Ensure a supply of new affordable 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

²⁹ Opportunity Areas are designated by the *London Plan* as areas for regeneration and growth.

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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 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 there is a range of affordable housing opportunities to meet housing needs. Because of the funding regime for new housing³⁰, 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 an in-lieu contribution 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 homes on the East Dulwich Estate to key workers. The money this generates for the council is then used to improve other homes on the estate. The scheme was developed with the local tenant and resident association and has its full support
- 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, demolishing the homes and using the land for additional affordable homes.
- Converting estate based council sheltered accommodation which is unsuitable and cannot be re-modelled into general needs housing

³⁰ 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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- 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
- Identifying sites suitable for sub-regional nominations³¹ 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 where 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 in relation to their potential impact on the supply of affordable homes, once the proposals are finalised.

Make better use of existing housing to meet housing needs

Why this priority?

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.³² We know that efforts to regenerate local neighbourhoods would be compromised if we left private sector homes empty and in disrepair. We also know that we need to ensure and demonstrate that we use social housing efficiently so that we can accurately predict future demand for affordable housing to inform our affordable housing planning policy and avoid unnecessary challenges by developers. We must ensure homeless households do not spend an unnecessarily long time in temporary accommodation, so we need to turn round empty properties as quickly as possible to make them ready for occupying.

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
- 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.

³¹ 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

³² 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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- 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.

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
- 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

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
- Rehoused XX overcrowded council households – **CONFIRM CHECK**
- 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 (LHPI 3)	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

MILESTONES

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 Elmington Phase 2 construction CHECK YEAR • 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
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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 council pre-fab replacement programme CHECK YEAR• Achieve 70 moves through the under-occupation scheme• Achieve average relet time for council homes of 45 days – CHECK• Return 150 empty private sector dwellings to occupation
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 70 moves through the under-occupation scheme• Return 35 empty private sector dwellings to occupation CHECK
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 70 moves through the under-occupation scheme• Return 35 empty private sector dwellings to occupation CHECK

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 Forum³³ and decided to re-integrate our homelessness strategy into our housing strategy. We believe 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 we do not think we can completely eradicate homelessness but that 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 in Southwark. To achieve longer-term sustainable improvements requires a wider ownership of the problem and a joined up approach to tackling the issues through joint working across council departments, with partners and with other local authorities.

Recent achievements

- 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
- Developed our first homelessness strategy with Southwark Homelessness Forum
- 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
- Better joined up services for homeless people

³³ 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 do not meet 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 enable better monitoring of access to and take up of homelessness services. This will help us 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 key indicators of homelessness or potential homelessness from 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.

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- Developing targeted information and referral mechanisms for key partners such as probation and Connexions services.
- Increasing the supply of supported housing for vulnerable homeless young people and improving early intervention and mediation, and joint working and assessment mechanisms.

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. It is also important that the council and its partners can give clear understandable information about the range of options and services open to homeless or potentially homeless people. Quality information is essential in both preventing homelessness and in providing a decent service to those who are currently 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 call. 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. We are developing a schools 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

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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.

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 services, 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. For young people in particular, we may need to increase emphasis on one-stop shop type provision of information and on mediation services.
- 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 taking action to tackle perpetrators living in social housing. A sanctuary scheme is being set up in partnership with Victim Support Southwark (see partnership working table) to help victims of domestic violence wishing to stay in their own home, but needing help to do so in safety.
- Working to prevent 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 households

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- 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
- Reviewing SHNAG³⁴. To ensure that the providers currently participating in the scheme are strategically relevant
- Making renting in the private sector more appealing and accessible to people on moderate to low incomes. To do this we need to make renting to these client groups more appealing to private landlord 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 (see partnership working table).

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 under objectives one and two.

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 are maintained.

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 have been successful in ensuring that most of our temporary accommodation is within Southwark.
- Providing information to enable all homeless people 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.

³⁴ 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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- 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.
- 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.
- 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 leasing. Private sector leasing is a scheme where housing associations procure properties from the private sector for five years, for use as temporary accommodation. We have provisionally agreed a common South East London approach to private sector leasing with the aim of avoiding 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 with 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
- Changes to housing benefit (see chapter 9)
- Unforeseen reductions in supporting people funding or a reconfiguring of supporting people priorities

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ACTION PLAN

Key targets to achieve by 2010

- Prevented homelessness for a minimum of six months for over 400 households per year through provision of housing advice
- Reduced the level of repeat homelessness by providing tenancy sustainment and support
- No homeless families placed 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 – **CHECK**
- 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
Prevent XX households becoming homeless by giving housing advice CHECK	March 2006	Margaret O'Brien
Provide weekly housing advice outreach service	April 2005 onward	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
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 and SELHP initiatives	CHECK	Margaret O'Brien / Rachel Sharpe
Survey council temporary accommodation hostels to inform investment programme	CHECK	Margaret O'Brien / 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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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, along with strategic partners in health and probation, are responsible (through a commissioning body) for the planning development, funding and monitoring of housing support services³⁵ 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 the role of housing related 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.

Over the lifetime of the strategy, there is not likely to be a significant redirection of funding between supporting people client groups, although the two largest budget areas of supporting people spend (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).

Sub-regional has a significant role to play providing services for vulnerable people. It can make sense to provide shared services across sub-regions as there may not be a critical mass of demand in Southwark to support a service for a numerically small client group in one borough. 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 is and will continue to host 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. Similarly many vulnerable people from Southwark access services in other areas.

The issues and level of provision relating to one supporting people client group may differ significantly from those of another client group, as the range of groups covered by the programme is so diverse. 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 our first (Shadow) Supporting People Strategy
- Completed reviews of 70% of supporting people services and on target to complete 100% of reviews by March 2006
- All supporting people payments to service providers made on time
- 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

³⁵ The difference between Supporting People and Social Care will be summarised here

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What we want to achieve by 2010

- Replaced most of the current shared housing for vulnerable people with self-contained forms of housing
- Less accommodation-based services but a big increase in floating support services to enable people to live independently in their own homes
- To have quantified unmet needs amongst different communities and put in place services to meet those needs
- To have significantly reduce 'bed blocking' in acute hospitals
- To have completed a number of capital projects identified in 2005 for specialist temporary accommodation and for 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 services³⁶.
- 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.
- Monitoring service providers to assess their responsiveness to the cultural needs of BME service users and remodelling services where appropriate to meet the needs of culturally diverse communities
- 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 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. Any review of the future of

³⁶ 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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these services, will need to involve partner boroughs and agencies on a local, pan London and on occasions national basis.

- Improving referral procedures from health and social services to housing providers, to ensure appropriate housing support packages are in place.
- Assessing where floating support services need to be culturally specific by researching the needs of different communities. 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 assessing how best to meet the housing support needs of the diverse BME communities in Southwark, for example, whether to establish increased numbers of BME only services or ensure that all services are culturally appropriate. There does not appear to be one 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 Healthy Homes Handyperson service. This delivers a falls prevention, hospital discharge and general handyperson service across tenures. The team is part funded by the London Housing Board and consists of two handypersons, a coordinator and an administrator. **CHECK**
- Continuing the Home Maintenance Initiative, which is aimed at assisting homeowners maintain their homes. This is achieved by providing information, guidance, and training for homeowners. Further support is provided by home maintenance videos/DVDs, surveys and manuals. **CHECK**

Provide housing to meet specific needs

Why this priority?

Support services cannot meet all housing needs. Therefore, we also 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 for vulnerable people. There is also a severe lack of appropriate move on accommodation and we need to 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.

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- 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, HIV (out reach), 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
- Using spot purchasing/commissioning arrangements to meet individual client's needs, where considered appropriate.
- Maximising move on into, out of, and within the supported housing sector in Southwark and the sub-region.

Older people and frail elders

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.

- Increasing the emphasis on out-reach floating support services to support older people in their own homes, including specialist services for black and minority ethnic elders. This will help avoid the use of residential care and prevent delayed discharge from hospital wards
- 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 the 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.
- Review 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.
- 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 schemes that are unsuitable for current needs or for remodelling.

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- 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.
- 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 violence³⁷

- Addressing below average levels of supply, including commissioning a new women's refuge to provide short term respite (6 units) along with high levels of security and support
- Purchasing a number of bed spaces for women with no recourse to public funds who are fleeing DV. Southwark Corporate Community Safety Unit is currently capital funding bed spaces for women with no recourse to public funds, whilst SP pays for associated support costs.
- Providing short-term crisis refuge with high support and security for women fleeing domestic violence, with priority for local women.
- Developing specific services for women from BME communities including those who have no recourse to public funds
- Adopting a new housing domestic violence policy which is in line with the London Mayoral Strategy on domestic Violence and which increases the emphasis on preventing victims becoming homeless
- 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 disabilities³⁸

³⁷ Domestic violence is categorised as coming from a perpetrator with whom the person has some form of domestic relationship, such as a current or former partner, or an immediate member of their family with whom they may currently or had been expected to reside.

³⁸ Valuing people sets out the Government's principles, expectations and actions for the development of learning disability services in the UK. It defines learning disability as:

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- 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
- Building the capacity of existing supported housing services to meet the needs of PWLD from ethnic minorities.
- Developing supported housing options for people with learning disability, as an alternative to hospital or residential placements
- Redirecting funding from registered care to increase supported housing options for people with learning difficulties
- 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.
- Developing extra care sheltered housing specifically designed to respond to the needs of PWLD, who wish to continue living with their aged parents.

People with mental health problems

- Increasing the range of services supporting people with mental health problems to remain within the community
- Maintaining the emphasis on tenancy sustainment support services
- Expanding floating support models
- 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
- 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, and for those who are currently abstaining, including 'wet' provision for those still drinking
- 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 Southwark Housing department.
- Increasing suitable supported accommodation, which assists in the management of risk and supervision and subsequently attempts to reduce offending behaviour.

"A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills with a reduced ability to cope independently which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development".

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- 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.
- Managing risk relating to some adult offenders by providing self-contained supported accommodation
- SP and Youth Offending Team jointly commissioning beds in a hostel 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/AIDS³⁹

- Moving away from accommodation-based to more flexible models that can provide support to people in general needs accommodation
- 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 which aims to ensure better service provision by linking various services currently being provided to this group

Travellers⁴⁰

- Mapping traveller’s needs to establish whether housing-related support could help address social and medical needs, illiteracy and poverty.
- There is presently 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 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.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ 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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Victims of hate crime⁴¹

- 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?

The Government's White Paper, Every Child Matters, sets out a number of proposals for reforming the delivery of services for children, young people and families and these are picked up in the Young Southwark strategy. The aim of these proposals is to build upon existing measures to ensure that children at risk are adequately protected and are supported to develop their full potential. Unsuitable housing is closely linked to poor educational achievements, health issues, anti-social and offending behaviour among young people. Housing services for some groups of vulnerable young people are included in the supporting people framework. In addition, in boroughs like Southwark, young people have few affordable options for independent living and are at increased risk of homelessness (see objective three). We therefore considered it a priority to engage with young people about their housing issues so we talked to young people themselves and with organisations that work with and for young people. The outcome of this consultation was a report and action plan – *Engaging young people in housing strategy* – and the decision to ensure that we give priority to supporting young people to live independently.

We will do this by:

- Developing joint working to address young people's housing issues and closer links 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, including improving the Southwark youth website and ensuring housing information in publications aimed at young people
- 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.
- Developing homelessness prevention education and training packages in partnership with schools, colleges and youth services

⁴¹ 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).

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- 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.
- Developing services for very vulnerable young people and those with challenging behaviours.
- 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 PLAN

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

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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. Southwark 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) is likely to be 3:1. 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, particularly among BME communities and council leaseholders
- A significant reduction in rent and service charge arrears
- Equalities profile of council tenants and leaseholders to enable better targeting of services and information
- 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 and leaseholders 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 such as housing management 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 and enquiring about housing repairs) will be handled by the council's call centre which formally opened in May 2005
- Putting more information on the council's website, including housing strategies and policies as well as service information
- 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
- Drawing up an equalities profile of council tenants and residents to enable better targeting of information and services. We will continue to update and refine our ethnic monitoring categories to get a more accurate profile which fully reflects the diversity of communities, including new and emerging communities
- Carrying out equalities 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 are working to increase opportunities for other housing service users to be involved. Some examples of the ways we have involved residents are given in Appendix XXX. We believe that you can achieve better services by engaging service users in developing and monitoring services. Also, community involvement is a key part of realising the council's equalities scheme and agenda to foster community cohesion.

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We will do this by

- Reviewing council tenant and leaseholder involvement services and assessing how best to modernise the way the council engages and supports residents. Following consultation with residents, we have recently restructured council tenant and leaseholder forums into 13 area forums and will be assessing their effectiveness with residents. Local tenants and residents associations send delegates to their area forum and each area forum sends delegates to Tenant and Leaseholder Councils. Our Tenant Management Liaison Committee deals with issues of mutual interest to our 14 TMOs
- Providing training to meet the needs of BME groups and individuals to increase their understanding of and participation in tenant and resident associations
- Working with the Housing Partnership Board ⁴² to ensure that tenants and leaseholders are represented on strategic working groups and further developing the Board as a strategic partnership. For example, the Housing Strategy Review Board, a sub-group of the Housing Partnership Board, included tenant and leaseholder representatives and helped shape this housing strategy.
- 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 will be focusing on developing compacts at smaller area level and/or with specific groups, building on four pilot compacts for: a housing neighbourhood; travellers; an estate where participation is felt to be effective, and; an estate where participation appears less successful **CHECK PROGRESS**
- Involving young people in decision making through neighbourhood based youth forums and a play area strategy for council estates **CHECK**. This includes working in partnership with education to focus on extending play facilities for the local community
- Ensuring residents are actively involved in developing schemes and strategies in our three housing renewal areas
- Aiming to get service user representation in other service area forums – for example on our Homelessness Forum
- Involving communities 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 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

⁴² Housing Partnership Board – a partnership of council tenant and leaseholders, councillors and senior housing officers

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- Restructuring and expanding services to council leaseholders and service charge payers. Our immediate aims are to improve the time taken to process right to buy applications and improve service charge accounting, billing and collection. A particular challenge will be managing the many changes to right to buy in the Housing Act 2004 as it is enacted and issues arising from the full enactment/enforcement of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act
- Completing the restructuring of community housing services to achieve the targets in the five-year best value action plan
- Reviewing all supported housing services for effectiveness and value for money.
- 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
- Developing 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, providing landlords the support needed to offer their tenants safe and high quality accommodation. We will support and promote good practice in property management and aim 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 to monitor the performance of housing associations working in the sub-regional partnership against key 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 partners 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. This has helped reduce the incidence of arrears among housing association tenants caused by delays in housing benefit.
- Developing a new framework for monitoring tenant management organisations which builds on best practice and 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 a high quality of service can be provided.

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

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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
- Working with partners to offer social housing choices in other parts of London or outside London (see objective two)
- Increasing tenure choice by increasing the number of private landlords who will accept HB claimants as tenants by improving HB administration, HB advice packs for landlords and confidence building measures such as the rent deposit and fee finders schemes
- Increasing tenure choice by working with housing associations to build more shared ownership homes (see objective two)
- Increasing housing choices for vulnerable people by providing support to enable them to live independently (see objective four)
- Working with HomeBuy scheme providers to extend housing choices for Southwark residents, ensuring culturally specific services are provided where needed
- Providing capacity building for BME and other smaller supporting people service providers
- Supporting and promoting development of particular or specialist housing provision for BME groups where a specific need is identified. Working with the South East London Housing Partnership to identify priorities for particular BME groups.

Provide services that tackle deprivation and which support sustainable communities

Why this priority?

Southwark is one of the most deprived boroughs in the country. Poverty is both a symptom and a cause of deprivation and is often associated with (though not caused by) poor quality housing and neighbourhoods. Poverty is also a major factor in poor health. People's quality of life is affected by how they feel about the area they live in. How they feel is affected by the facilities on offer, levels of crime and anti-social behaviour (or perceived levels), how they get on with their neighbours and the way their area looks. Housing services can 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. The scheme is designed to help those over the age of 60, people with disabilities, those in hospital who require repairs in order to return home. Clients on certain benefits will 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 benefits they are entitled to.

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- Continuing to provide 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 Buy Back scheme for council leaseholders who cannot afford to pay their service charges and are otherwise in financial difficulties and, usually, vulnerable. The leaseholder then remains in the property as a secure tenant and, in the longer-term the home becomes available for re-letting
- Providing payment options, including loans, to help council leaseholders in financial difficulties pay their major works bills
- Tackling fuel poverty (see objective one)
- Within the limits of the government's rent restructuring scheme⁴³, 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 **CHECK**
- Improving estate environments (see objective 1) and encouraging resident parking schemes on council estates and strictly enforcing them
- 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 housing management tools to manage anti-social behaviour by council tenants, including stronger clauses in our tenancy agreement, introductory tenancies⁴⁴ and demoted tenancies⁴⁵. Our statement of anti-social behaviour policies and procedures for landlord services gives council residents a clear framework to assess our performance in this area. Each of the housing management areas has an anti-social behaviour champion who will encourage more of an estate presence and housing staff will be able to issue fixed penalty notices. **CHECK RE REMIT OF AREA ASB CHAMPS**
 - 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). Where housing officers (council tenants) and the police (other landlords, leaseholders and freeholders) feel that they have a serious case of anti-social behaviour which they have been unable to resolve, the case is referred to the Unit which 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.

⁴³ 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.

⁴⁴ 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.

⁴⁵ 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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The Unit has lead on developing Southwark's crack house protocol, which is a joint agreement between the police, the council, registered social landlords (RSLs) 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
- 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).
- Continuing our Housing Modern Apprenticeship scheme (CHECK)
- Linking housing services with corporate and partner initiatives which foster community cohesion

Risk assessment

- Government's plans for reform of the housing benefit system will present a significant challenge to managing council rent payments and reducing rent arrears. This could also have a major impact on our ability to encourage private landlords to accept tenants on benefit and could also impact on housing association partners' ability to attract private finance
- 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

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 (CHECK TO ENSURE MEASURABLE VIA MORI RESIDENTS SURVEY)

TARGETS 2005/2006

Target	Date	Lead officer
Analyse results of self assessments against KLOEs putting in place new service plans which address identified gaps	August 2005	Joe Brady
Meet targets in XXX Improvement plans CHECK		
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
Average time to process new benefit claims (BVPI 78a)	March 2006	Joe Brady
Develop housing procurement strategy	CHECK	Joe Brady

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Finalise Leasehold Improvement Plan ANY TARGETS/MILESTONES RE LEASEHOLD?	June 2005	Chris Brown
Achieve 37% over all leaseholder satisfaction with services	March 2006	Chris Brown
Achieve 62% over all tenant satisfaction with services	March 2006	Chris Brown
Achieve 50% over all 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
Deliver Joint Security Initiatives programme to address crime and fear of crime on council estates	March 2006	Rachel Sharpe
Following on from best value review, complete consultation on options, agree and implement new model for council tenant and resident involvement	December 2005	Chris Brown
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		
2006/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve social housing efficiency savings of xx – CHECK • Achieve top quartile performance against following BVPIs – CHECK • 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, 39% of leaseholders, 53% community housing service users satisfied with the service • Complete comprehensive equalities profile of all council tenants and leaseholders • TENANT COMPACT MILESTONE/S? CHECK • Xx% of anti-social behaviour cases where the victim reports that the matter had been successfully dealt with by the council – CHECK • 5% reduction over previous year in hate crime repeat victimisation • CHOICE ?- CHECK 	

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2007/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Customer Service Centre area working • Achieve social housing efficiency savings of xx – CHECK • Achieve top quartile performance against following BVPIs – CHECK • Housing investment programme and programme planned maintenance delivered via partnering contracts in all housing management areas • 86% of housing complaints resolved at Stage 1 • Xx% of anti-social behaviour cases where the victim reports that the matter had been successfully dealt with by the council – CHECK • 5% reduction over previous year in hate crime repeat victimisation • 66% of tenants, 42% of leaseholders, 56% community housing service users satisfied with the service •
2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete reviews of back office processes • Achieve social housing efficiency savings of xx – CHECK • Achieve top quartile performance against following BVPIs – CHECK • 88% of housing complaints resolved at Stage 1 • Xx% of anti-social behaviour cases where the victim reports that the matter had been successfully dealt with by the council – CHECK • 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"> • Achieve social housing efficiency savings of xx – CHECK • Achieve top quartile performance against following BVPIs – CHECK • 90% of housing complaints resolved at Stage 1 • Xx% of anti-social behaviour cases where the victim reports that the matter had been successfully dealt with by the council – CHECK % • 5% reduction over previous year in hate crime repeat victimisation • 71% of tenants, 48% of leaseholders, 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
- GLOSSARY OF TERMS
- EXAMPLES OF CONSULTATION AND OUTCOMES AS PER PREVIOUS HOUSING STRATEGY e.g. Choice based lettings consultation
- THE EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT – 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.