

DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2015

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FOREWORD

The Council recognises that access to good quality housing which people can afford is at the heart of achieving the social and economic well-being of communities. Its Housing Strategy should therefore identify the key housing issues that matter most and set objectives for the Council and its partners to achieve which will make a real difference to local people.

Our current strategy was written to cover the period 2005-2009 and set out a number of priorities with related actions. We have successfully delivered many of the actions that were originally identified and many of the housing issues we now need to address are the same. However, the context within which we need to plan for the future has changed at the national, regional and local level.

In February 2009 the Council adopted the Local Development Framework Core Strategy which had been approved by the Government's Planning Inspector following its Examination in Public. This key document sets out the Council's 'big picture' development objectives for the District as a place to live, work, relax and visit. An assessment of the current housing market and future need for housing in relation to regeneration objectives, economic growth and associated population growth is a key element of the Strategy. The Strategy provides a rationale for a 'high growth' policy in relation to housing with a an overall target of 14,000 new homes, 10,100 of which are to be delivered by the end of 2026 in accordance with the requirements of the South East Plan.

In addition to setting a broad target for housing growth the Core Strategy considers where housing should be provided, the need for different types of home to help balance local housing markets, the need for affordable and housing quality and sustainability in terms of design and construction.

We therefore recognise that the Housing Strategy must reflect the key strategic aims of the Council as a whole and support the objectives of all parts of the Council as well as addressing local housing needs. Equally, we understand that delivering the Strategy will require strong partnership working with a wide range of different partners.

The Strategy identifies key priorities and broad objectives which reflect the Council's corporate goals and delivery of the Strategy will be via a range of specific actions. Many of these originate from work undertaken in preparation of the suite of housing sub strategies and are set out in a single, consolidated action plan.

1. STRATEGIC CHANGES SINCE 2005

There have been a number of key developments since 2005 in terms of strategy and policy at the national, regional and local levels.

National

Key publications include:

- **Homes for the future (2007)**: more affordable, more sustainable (Housing Green Paper on increasing the supply of new homes with a strong emphasis on providing more affordable homes).
- **Sustainable communities (2005)**: settled homes; changing lives (national strategy on dealing with homelessness).
- **Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (2008)**: (the national Strategy for housing in an ageing society).
- **Creating strong, safe, prosperous communities (2008)**: (statutory guidance on the central and local government, partners and citizens working together through Local Strategic Partnerships, delivery of Sustainable Community Strategies, etc).

Regional & Sub Regional

Strategic direction for the region and sub-region has been set out in the following:

- **South East Plan 2006-2026**: identifies housing growth targets for local housing authorities across the region.
- **Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11**: strong emphasis on the delivery of affordable homes.
- **Vision for Kent 2006**: the sustainable community strategy for Kent developed by the Local Strategic Partnership delivered through the **Kent Local Area Agreement** targets (recognises the need for regeneration in coastal towns, delivering a range of high quality new homes and improving the condition of homes across all sectors)
- **Lighting the Way to Success 2009**: the sustainable community strategy for East Kent (focus on regeneration, access to quality housing, building strong communities and tackling health and social disadvantage).
- **Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015**: new strategy at final draft stage which sets out commissioning priorities for housing related support services designed to help vulnerable people live independently
- **Homes & Communities Agency - Single Conversation**: this is the new sub-regional investment planning process which will lead to the development of a local investment plan identifying priorities for investment in housing, regeneration and associated infrastructure. Work on this is currently in progress.

Local

Key local strategic documents include:

- **Dover District Council Corporate Plan 2008-2020**: the Plan places strong emphasis on economic development, regeneration and building safe, sustainable and inclusive communities. Specific housing priorities and targets include the provision of 'a wide range of good quality and accessible housing that meets the needs of the whole community', improving the existing housing stock and meeting the housing needs of vulnerable households.
- **LDF Core Strategy**: recently approved by the government's planning inspector and adopted by the Council this is the key local development strategy which sets a course for development and regeneration that will shape the district over the next twenty years including a key housing growth objective of 14,000 new homes.

- **East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009:** a robust assessment of the need for affordable and market housing of different types across East Kent with an analysis of the need within the four main local housing market areas in the District. A key finding is the very significant need for more affordable homes.

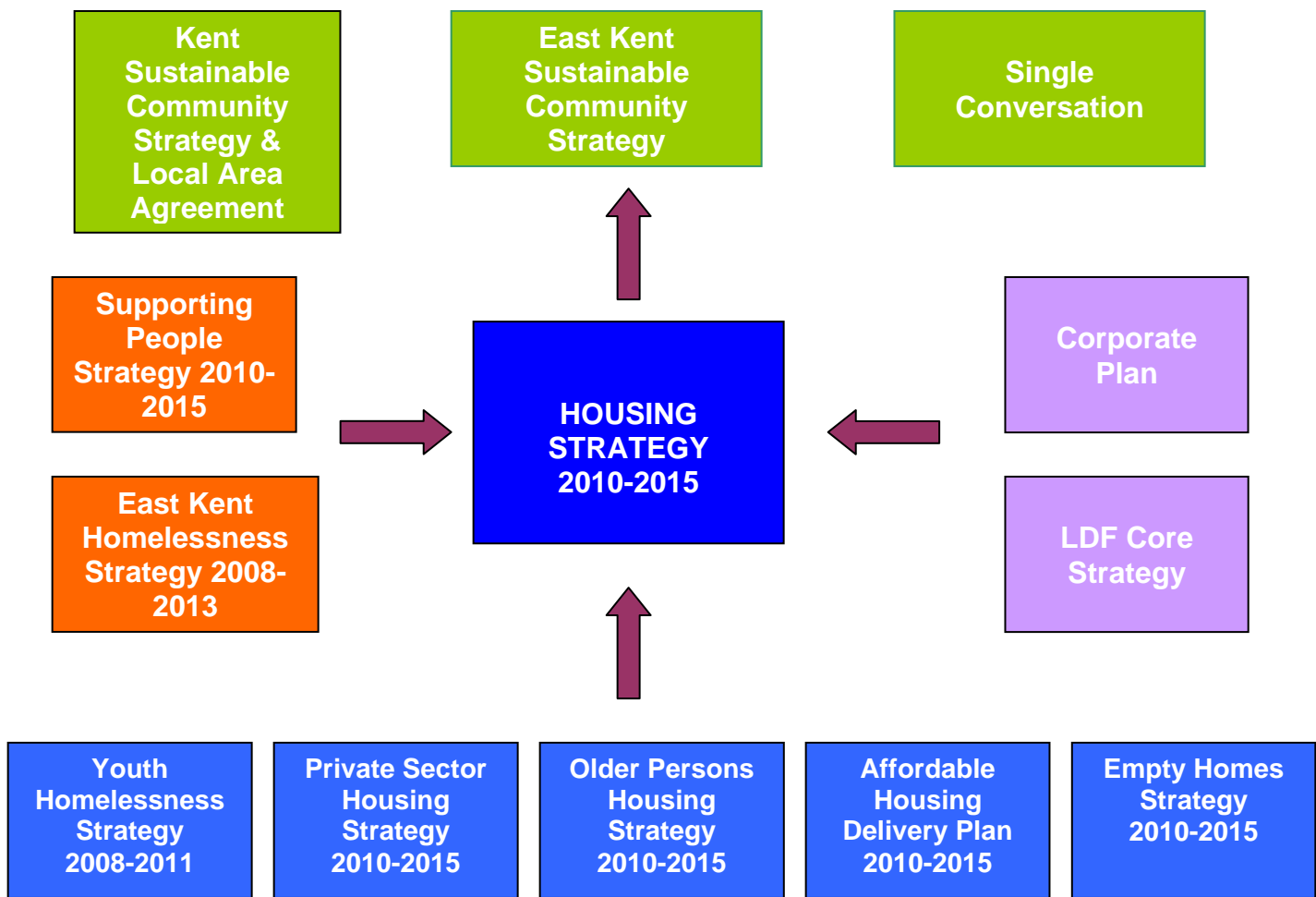
In addition to the housing growth and regeneration objectives set out in these strategies, the district has also been awarded ‘Growth Point’ and ‘Regional Hub’ status.

Growth Point status was awarded by government in recognition of the Council’s commitment to delivering higher rates of new housebuilding. In return, the government provides funding for related infrastructure projects and essential studies to support sustainable growth.

Regional (Transport) Hub status has been conferred by the South East Regional Assembly and prioritises the district for transport and related infrastructure investment in support of planned sustainable development and regeneration.

Appendix B provides a more detailed summary of the above documents.

2. STRATEGIC LINKS



3. KEY ISSUES

As well as developing a Strategy which reflects the strategy and policy changes above there are a number of key housing issues which the Council will need to address over the next five years:

- Delivering overall housing growth to support regeneration and economic development objectives within safe, sustainable and inclusive new communities.
- Meeting the need for affordable housing.
- Delivering good quality market housing and affordable housing at a time when the future direction of the economy, housing market and public investment remains uncertain.
- Improving the particularly poor housing conditions in the private sector (especially Dover town) and tackling fuel poverty.
- Responding to the climate change agenda.
- Making best use of the housing stock including bringing empty homes back into use.
- Addressing the housing needs of a growing population of older households. By 2026, it is expected that those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%.
- Addressing housing causes of social and health inequality and ensuring that vulnerable people are able to access good quality housing and housing services.
- Continuing to address the problem of homelessness and especially youth homelessness.

More detailed consideration of these issues can be found in Appendix B.

In response to these issues the Council has developed a suite of sub strategies which consider these in greater detail and set out proposed actions to address the issues. A number of these are currently being consulted on. Details of the strategies, together with their web link, are as follows:

- East Kent Homelessness Strategy 2008-2015
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/HomelessnessStrategy2008.pdf>
- Youth Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/Youth%20Homelessness%20strategy.pdf>
- Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/Empty%20Homes%20Strategy%20-%20DRAFT.pdf>
- Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 (consultation draft)
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Dover%20Draft%20PSHS%20Consultation%20Draft%20final.doc>
- Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015 (consultation draft)
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Consultation%20Draft%20ADHP.doc>
- Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 (consultation draft)
(<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Consultation%20draft%20OPHS%20strategy.doc>)

4. PRIORITIES

Based on our analysis of the key housing related issues the Council will be facing over the next five years and the wide ranging consultation already undertaken we believe that the key housing priorities for the new Housing Strategy should be:

1. Delivering housing growth in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives.
2. Delivering more affordable homes to ensure we meet the housing needs of the whole community.
3. Improving the condition of the existing housing stock and making better use of it.
4. Addressing social and health inequality and enabling vulnerable people to access good quality housing and to live independently.

The broad objectives which reflect these priorities and how they link to other key strategic aims are set out below.

1. Delivering housing growth in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives	
<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards the delivery of the housing objectives set out in the LDF Core Strategy. • Take a ‘place-shaping’ approach to new housing development to create sustainable, inclusive communities where people want to live. • Play a proactive role in the development of the single conversation process and promote the district’s housing growth and regeneration potential. 	
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient homes of the right type built in the right places to meet identified housing need and help re-balance the housing stock. • New housing makes a positive contribution to regeneration and economic development in the district. • New housing is of a good quality, within sustainable new safe communities and designed to minimise impact on the environment. 	
Strategic Links	
<i>South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-2011</i>	Sustainable development
<i>South East Plan 2006-2026</i>	Closer alignment between jobs and homes growth Sufficient level of housing development will be delivered Reductions in the consumption of water and energy Development will be delivered in a manner which mitigates the effects of, and adapts to, climate change Development will be of high quality sustainable design and construction
<i>The Vision for Kent 2006-2026</i>	High Quality Homes
<i>EKLSP Sustainable Communities Strategy – ‘Lighting the Way to Success’ 2009-2029</i>	Fairer, stronger and healthier communities, in resurgent coastal towns, enjoying high quality homes and an enviable quality of life
<i>Kent LAA</i>	National Indicators 154, 159, 188 &186
<i>DDC Corporate Plan 2008-2020</i>	World-Class Economy & Environment: A wide range of good quality housing to meet our residents’ ambitions, including our community’s most vulnerable

	households World-Class Communities: Communities that are strong and safe with a sense of identity
LDF Core Strategy	Deliver sufficient additional housing (14,000 new homes) to broaden the range and improve the quality and market perception of the District's, and especially Dover's, housing offer and meet the changing needs of the population. Ensure the delivery of the Strategy through active intervention by the Council and through continuous partnership working with public, private and voluntary sectors.

2. Delivering more affordable homes, including low cost home ownership, to ensure we meet the housing needs of the whole community

<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the specific actions set out in the (draft) Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015 • Work effectively with a range of partners to increase the supply of affordable homes across the district and take a proactive role in exploring new housing delivery initiatives • Work with partners to deliver high quality sustainable homes that are designed to be as affordable as possible • Select affordable housing delivery partners who can 'add value' to the development of sustainable communities and long term management of homes

<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced and sustainable communities • Reduction in homelessness • Reduction in the housing waiting list • Increased housing choice
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Strategic Links

South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11	Provide more affordable homes Raise standards of sustainability in design, construction and access for new affordable housing
South East Plan 2006-2026	Substantial increase in the supply of affordable housing will be pursued
The Vision for Kent 2006-2026	High Quality Homes
Kent Local Area Agreement	National Indicators 154, 159, 186 & 188
EKLSP Sustainable Communities Strategy – 'Lighting the Way to Success' 2009-2029	Fairer, stronger and healthier communities, in resurgent coastal towns, enjoying high quality homes and an enviable quality of life
DDC Corporate Plan 2008-2020	World-Class Town: Enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households World Class Economy & Environment: Communities that are strong and safe with a sense of identity

3. Improving the condition of the existing stock and making best use of it

Objectives:

- Implement the specific actions set out in the (draft) Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015.
- Bring all Council owned homes up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.
- Target private sector housing resources in areas where there is a concentration of poor quality housing and take a pro active approach to exploring potential area focused initiatives.
- Meet our statutory obligations in relation to the enforcement of standards, ensuring housing is free from serious hazards and that HMOs are licensed.
- Work with partners to develop new approaches to reducing under-occupation
- Work with private sector landlords and provide advice and assistance that will enable them to provide good quality housing.
- Work with partners to further develop the range of tools that can be used to bring empty homes back into use.

Outcomes:

- More homes, across all tenures, achieving the decent homes standard
- More people, especially vulnerable people living independently in safe, warm, healthy homes
- Fewer households in fuel poverty and reduced CO2 emissions
- Areas of poor quality housing improved and increased long term sustainability of communities
- Less under-occupation and fewer empty homes

Strategic Links

<i>South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11</i>	Improve the quality of the existing housing stock Reduce the percentage of non-decent homes in private ownership.
<i>The Vision for Kent 2006-2026</i>	Improved health, care and well-being
<i>Kent Local Area Agreement</i>	National Indicators 21, 186, 187 & 188
<i>EKLSP Sustainable Communities Strategy - 'Lighting the Way to Success' 2009-2029</i>	Fairer, stronger and healthier communities, in resurgent coastal towns, enjoying high quality homes and an enviable quality of life
<i>DDC Corporate Plan 2008-2020</i>	World-Class Town: Enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households World Class Economy & Environment: Communities that are strong and safe with a sense of identity

4. Addressing social and health inequality and enabling vulnerable people to access good quality housing and live independently.

Objectives

- Implement the specific actions set out in the (draft) Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015, East Kent Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 and Youth Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011.
- Work with partners to identify unmet need and develop appropriate housing solutions.
- Provide new housing that meets the needs and aspirations of older people including frail older people.
- Within new schemes, seek to incorporate a range of housing, including different tenures, which will meet the needs of vulnerable people and people with disabilities.
- Play an active role in the Supporting People Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group and the Kent Joint Planning & Policy Board.
- Provide effective advice and information to residents with housing problems in ways that enable vulnerable households to access services and live independently.
- Improve housing conditions in the private sector, reduce the number of Category 1 hazards, increase the number of vulnerable people living in decent homes and reduce fuel poverty.
- Work with private landlords, agents and other partners to develop pathways into private sector housing for vulnerable people.
- Strengthen engagement with local BME groups to better understand and address any specific housing needs.

Outcomes:

- A wider range of good quality housing options and housing advice that meets diverse needs.
- Reduction in social and health inequality.
- Vulnerable people are able to access housing which meets their needs.
- A range of housing related support services available which help people live independently.
- Effective housing advice which helps prevent homelessness together with a range of specialist accommodation where housing provision is required.
- A strong partnership approach to assist with the identification of need and development of new services and housing solutions

Strategic Links

<i>South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11</i>	Meeting the housing needs of an ageing population Increased provision and improved standards of accommodation for gypsies and travellers
<i>South East Plan 2006-2026</i>	Economic and social disparities within the region will be reduced
<i>The Vision for Kent 2006-2026</i>	Stronger and safer communities Improved health, care and well-being
<i>Kent Local Area Agreement</i>	National Indicators 39, 40 & 141
<i>Eastern & Coastal Kent PCT Strategic Commissioning Plan 2008-2013</i>	Revolutionise services for older people Promote well being and good mental health
<i>Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015</i>	Target resources on clearly evidenced housing related support needs of vulnerable people Ensure that vulnerable people can maximise their independence by moving onto independent living in a timely fashion

<i>EKLSP Sustainable Communities Strategy - 'Lighting the Way to Success' 2009-2029</i>	Fairer, stronger and healthier communities, in resurgent coastal towns, enjoying high quality homes and an enviable quality of life
<i>DDC Corporate Plan 2008-2020</i>	World-Class Town: Enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households World Class Economy & Environment: Communities that are strong and safe with a sense of identity Reduce the amount of Super Output Areas within the top 20% most deprived nationally
<i>LDF Core Strategy</i>	Have no areas falling within the 20% of those most deprived in England

DELIVERY & MONITORING

Successful delivery of the strategy will depend on effective joint working with local people and a range of public, private, community and voluntary services across the district, and also by working in wider partnerships at a regional and national level. We understand that we need to work with all those that have a knowledge and stake in our local communities to achieve the aims of this strategy and achieve real improvements in the lives of our residents.

The action plan is a key delivery mechanism which has been developed in consultation with our partners. The plan shows the role that a number of our partners will play in delivering the actions.

The monitoring of delivery will be undertaken through the various partnership forums that meet on a regular basis as well as by the Council's Strategic Housing Executive.

HOUSING STRATEGY CONSOLIDATED ACTION PLAN

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
Priority 1: Delivering housing growth in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives					
HS 1	Pro-active engagement in the 'Single Conversation'	Local housing, regeneration and economic development priorities reflected in the Local Investment Plan	On-going	Officer time	Head of Regeneration Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.2	Coordinated corporate approach to negotiation of affordable housing provision on S.106 sites	30% affordable housing achieved unless proven economic viability reasons for reduced %	Effective from July 2010 and then every year	Officer time Consultancy costs re viability assessment	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.4	Produce a portfolio of HRA owned land with development potential	Portfolio produced and development potential and financial implications assessed	July 2010	Officer time	Senior Valuer/ Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.3	Increase the number of RSL development partners	Develop new process for RSL partner accreditation. At least 2 additional RSL partners active in the district	December 2010	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager
Priority 2: Delivering more affordable homes, including low cost home ownership, to ensure we meet the housing needs of the whole community					
AHDP1.1	Enable the delivery of new affordable housing	250 new affordable homes delivered 650 new affordable homes	March 2012 March 2015	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.5	Explore initiatives that will enable the delivery of new rural affordable homes	Consider the possible development of an East Kent rural affordable housing partnership. Investigate potential development of the Community Land Trust model	April 2012 April 2012	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.6	Work with the Rural Housing Enabler to promote affordable rural housing and develop managed programme	Programme for 2 village needs surveys per annum	Effective from January 2011 and then every year	Officer time/RHE financial contribution	Housing Initiatives Manager/ RHE
AHDP1.7	Develop a planned approach to the delivery of affordable rural housing	2 new rural schemes per annum	April 2011 and then every year	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.8	Utilise 'off site' developer financial contributions	Possible schemes identified, appraised and reported to AHWG	October 2010	Officer/RSL time HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager/Development Control Manager

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
AHDP1.9	Actively monitor the progress of schemes and facilitate their development	Bi monthly 1-2-1 meetings with all RSL partners and quarterly meetings of the AHWG	July 2010 & on going	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP1.10	Update the evidence bases which support the delivery of affordable housing	SHMA updated Analysis of the demand for intermediate housing within the district	April 2014 August 2010	Cost shared across EK LAs. Estimated cost £15,000	Housing Initiatives Manager/Forward Planning Manager Housing Initiatives Manager/Moat Housing Group
AHDP2.1	Affordable housing is well integrated within a mixed community	Develop a process for the selection of partner RSLs for strategic sites	December 2010	Officer/HCA time	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP2.2	All new schemes to contribute to achieving a balanced community	Regular monitoring report prepared and reported to AHWG	Effective from July 2010 and then every year	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP2.3	New affordable homes and neighbourhoods to be well designed	All new affordable homes to achieve 16 out of 20 'Building for Life' score	Effective from July 2010 and then every year	Officer/RSL time	RSL partners
AHDP2.4	Enable the development of safe & secure neighbourhoods	All new schemes to achieve 'secure by design' accreditation	July 2010 & ongoing	RSL	RSL partners
AHDP2.5	Assess levels of customer satisfaction with new affordable housing	Customer satisfaction monitoring process developed and reported to AHWG	April 2011	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
AHDP4.1	4.1 Ensure new homes are cheap to run with low carbon emissions	Where financially viable new affordable housing schemes to achieve Code Level 4.	Effective from July 2010 and then every year	Additional build cost will need to be considered as part of scheme viability assessments	RSL partners
AHDP4.2	4.2 Minimise service charges by influencing the design of schemes	No unreasonably high service charges	Effective from July 2010	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
Priority 3: Improving the condition of the existing stock and making best use of it					
PSHS 1.1	Increase public access to energy efficiency by signposting householders to information about financial help.	Ensure sufficient promotion of Warmfront to provide for 300 heating and insulation measures.	April 2011	Provided through existing budget for leaflets and advertisements. Time input from Climate Change Officer	Climate Change Officer
PSHS 1.2	Review operation of Handyperson service.	Revised charging regime introduced.	December 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 1.3	Improve ways to give householders advice on repairs and maintenance	New advice service developed.	December 2011	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 1.4	Link the Rent Deposit Scheme to accreditation standards	Bond Scheme amended to include requirement for landlords to meet accreditation criterion	April 2011	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager; Housing Needs Manager
PSHS 2.1	Adopt a more fast track approach to enforcement	Publicity measures undertaken, service standards revised, monitoring arrangements in place.	August 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.2	Introduce charging for statutory notices	New charging regime in place and publicised, recovery procedures in place.	October 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.3	Identify and target resources at areas of worst housing using proactive inspections	Planned inspections programme in place.	December 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.4	Take more formal action of illegal eviction and harassment.	Effective arrangements in place to ensure that prosecution initiated where warranted with illegal eviction and harassment	1 November 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager; Housing Standards Manager
PSHS 2.5	Link proactive work to development of area regeneration proposals	Arrangements for both planned inspections and information feedback procedures in place	1 December 2010	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.6	Ensure HMOs meet current standards	Updated database in construction and pro active inspections are carried out.	1 August 2011	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 3.1	Continue to target financial assistance to areas with high levels of unsatisfactory housing.	Increased number of loan applications in targeted areas.	1 April 2011	Officer time; significant additional capital resources if potential area intervention identified	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 3.2	Evaluate the introduction of	Decision taken whether to implement.	1 April 2011	Officer time	Private Sector

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
	Minor Works Loans at next review of Housing Assistance Policy				Housing Manager
PSHS 3.3	Investigate opportunities to provide assistance to households areas of deprivation through CESP	Funding bids made and assistance programmes in place	1 October 2010	Officer time	Climate Change Officer
PSHS 3.4	Explore alternative ways to facilitate equity release drawing on private sector funds	Research done, evaluation of alternative opportunities in place and recommendation for future action made	1 December 2012	Officer time	Private Sector Housing Manager
EHS 1.2	Identify unused commercial space that could be used for residential use	Potential of additional homes provided by the conversion of commercial space	April 2011	Officer time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 1.3	Risk rate all active empty homes using new risk scoring system and record on database	Resources more effectively prioritised upon those properties giving rise to greatest concerns	October 2010	Officer time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 1.4	Set up quarterly cross departmental meetings to gather and share relevant information	<p>'Joined up' approach to new initiatives such as Street Scene and regeneration projects.</p> <p>Provide a more effective co-ordinated action between sections of the council,</p> <p>More considered approach in taking the most effective action on the worst properties</p>	Meet every 6 to 8 weeks	Officer Time	Private Sector Housing Manager
EHS 1.5	Continue with the regular meetings with KCC and other authorities to develop best practice	Improved cross boundary working, training and sharing of best practice with East Kent local authorities & KCC	Meet every 6 to 8 weeks	Officer Time	Private Sector Housing Manager
EHS 2.1	Carry out review of how the Empty Homes Service is publicised,	Raised awareness of the empty homes issue & advice/assistance available.	October 2010	Officer Time. Regional Housing Board Budget	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 2.2	Actively promote the strategy through key Council communication channels including DDC website, residents newsletter and community and landlord	Raised awareness, greater understanding of how we prioritise our actions, increased reporting of empty homes and reduction in the number of empty homes	March 2011	Officer Time	Empty Homes Officer

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
	forums				
EHS 2.3	Continue to work with partners such as KCC- No Use Empty Campaign to raise awareness in Kent of the issues with empty homes.	Raised awareness, increased reporting of empty homes and reduction in the number	Ongoing	Officer time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 3.1	Produce and distribute an information pack for for empty home owners	Empty home owners better informed regarding assistance available and possible sanctions. More empty homes brought back into use.	November 2010 & on going	Officer Time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 3.2	Build links to other professional bodies who can provide additional advice services	Empty home owners will have access to a wider range of specialist advice services.	August 2010	Officer Time	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 3.3	Maintain a list of potential purchasers interested in buying empty homes	Increased options for empty home owners	August 2010	Capital and officers time.	Private Sector Housing Manager
EHS 3.4	Provide loans or grants to carry out Improvements and repairs to properties.	Property improved to enable it to be re-occupied. Conditions for assistance can provide additional social housing to the council.	August 2010	Capital and officers time	Private Sector Housing Manager
EHS 4.1	Commence use of Section 215 notices	Improved external appearance of properties	Identify priority cases and serve notices during 2010	Liaise with KCC & Planning and legal sections in DDC to determine resource implication	Private sector Housing Manager/ Development Control Manager. Principal
EHS 4.2	Identify properties where the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO) can be used and obtain approval from tribunal to serve an order.	Most problematic empty homes brought back into use, problems of anti-social activity resolved, and neighbouring property values increased	July 2010	Liaise with KCC & Managing Agent to determine resource implication	Empty Homes Officer
EHS 4.3	Continue to use Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers for high priority cases where owner is not cooperating	Most problematic empty homes brought back into use, problems of anti-social activity resolved, and neighbouring property values increased	Identify suitable properties and seek Cabinet approval to take action. June 2010	Officer Time and CPO budget	Empty Homes
EHS 5.1	To explore possible joint initiative with Housing	Homes improved and brought back into use for people in housing need.	September 2010	Officer & HA staff time. HA private finance and	Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
	Association (HA) partner aimed at acquiring and refurbishing empty homes for social rent or intermediate tenures.	Problems of anti-social activity resolved, and neighbouring property values increased		Government (HCA) grant funding.	
EHS 5.2	5.2 In conjunction with forthcoming review of East Kent private sector leasing scheme to consider how scheme might be targeted at bringing empty homes back into use.	Homes brought back into use for people in housing need.	September 2010	Officer & HA staff time.	Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer
EHS 5.3	5.3 Examine the use of private sector expertise and resources in relation to enforcement action including: i. external surveys ii. preparation of schedules of work	More efficient of resources and quicker response times	October 2010	Additional cost based on agreed price per survey	Private Sector Housing Manager
Priority 4: Addressing social and health inequality and enabling vulnerable people to access good quality housing and live independently					
AHDP3.1	Ensure all new affordable homes are designed to be flexible to the changing needs of occupiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new affordable homes to meet the Lifetime Homes Standard where practically achievable 	Effective from July 2010 and then on-going	Additional build cost will need to be incorporated within scheme viability assessments	RSL partners
AHDP3.2	Enable the development of new housing that meets the needs of physically disabled people	Deliver 4 wheelchair standard units per annum	Effective from July 2010 and then on-going	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
AHDP3.3	Enable new supported housing provision that will meet the needs of other vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a dual diagnosis scheme for people with a mental health/substance misuse problem Deliver 2 schemes for people with mental health needs Deliver 2 schemes to meet the needs of young homeless people Deliver 40 unit extra care scheme 	<p>April 2011</p> <p>April 2011 & April 2015</p> <p>December 2011 April 2012</p>	<p>HCA grant funding</p> <p>HCA , KCC and Supporting People funding</p> <p>HCA and Supporting People funding PFI funding</p>	<p>Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners</p> <p>KCC/Housing Initiatives Manager</p>

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
AHDP5.2	Increase housing options for older people	In partnership with KCC, deliver PFI Extra care scheme. At least 50% of homes in any new older persons schemes to be 2 bedroom.	April 2012 Effective from July 2010	PFI funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
AHDP5.3	Increase the options and pathways available for people with a housing need to access the private rented sector	Identify best practice and develop potential schemes	April 2012	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager/Housing Needs Manager
EKHS 3.1	Promote management standards within the sector - promote it as a viable long-term housing solution to applicants	Increased accessibility to the private rented sector for vulnerable households	Ongoing	Existing Resources	EKHF partner Local Authorities
EKHS 3.2	Continue to provide rental deposits and bonds to enable applicants to access private rented accommodation	Increased accessibility to private sector rented housing	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities
HSOP 1.1	New affordable homes include properties that older people want to occupy	All affordable housing to be built to Lifetimes Homes standard wherever practically achievable	Effective from July 2010 and then on-going	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
HSOP 1.2	An effective under-occupier scheme supports older people to move from family sized homes	Explore good practice elsewhere and assess this in the context of Dover. Draft out and consult older people to see whether it would be effective. If approved, run as a well-advertised pilot from. Assess and adjust and roll out final scheme	December 2010 December 2010 April 2011 October 2012	Unclear at present – will need to be reviewed as the scheme is designed	Housing Needs Manager as Dover rep. with E. Kent group developing joint scheme
HSOP 1.3	New market housing includes a proportion of homes that are attractive for older people and meet their needs	The inclusion of 2 bedroom, ground floor, one level homes with small gardens are to be considered for inclusion within suitable new developments.	Effective from July 2010 and then on-going	None	Housing Initiatives Manager / Forward Planning Manager
HSOP 1.4	Deliver sufficient new extra care units to meet needs and enable a sustainable community within schemes	40 units by October 2011	40 units by October 2011	Private Finance Initiative / HCA funding	Housing Initiatives Manager

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
HSOP 1.5	All regeneration areas should consider how a lifetime neighbourhood can be achieved as part of master planning and delivery plans	Linked to regeneration delivery plans	Effective from July 2010 and then on-going	None outside regeneration funding	Housing Initiatives Manager/ Regeneration manager
HSOP 1.6	Planned work across existing neighbourhoods are completed in such a way as to deliver lifetime neighbourhood elements	Principles of Lifetime Neighbourhoods to be considered as part of every new housing scheme	Effective from July 2010 and then on-going	None outside mainstream funding	Housing Initiatives Manager/ Regeneration and Transport managers
HSOP 2.1	Further target affordable warmth resources to reach those most at risk of cold homes and in fuel poverty	Thorough and targeted publicity towards areas with high levels of energy loss and towards older people	April 2011	Identified in Private Sector housing action plan	Climate change officer
HSOP 2.2	Carry out a fundamental review of adaptations for council tenants to remove the long waiting time and meet needs as they arise	With social care and health partners, process map adaptations provision in council homes, looking for ways to reduce demand, improve delivery and assess ongoing resource requirement; resulting from this, amend the process to provide optimum delivery; work with partners to identify sufficient resources to remove the backlog and keep pace with demand;	July 2011 April 2012 April 2012	Likely to be substantial capital resources to remove the backlog – to be assessed and reported	Private Sector Housing Manager
HSOP 2.3	Monitor needs for adaptations and delivery times in private sector housing to ensure that needs for adaptations continue to be met	Quarterly monitoring	Quarterly	None	Private Sector Manager
HSOP 2.4	Review grants and loans policy to improve accessibility to funding for low income older people	Review by July 2010	January 2011	None for review, may be call on resources for loans	Private Sector Manager
HSOP 2.5	Identify how the Handyperson service can be expanded and secured in the longer term	Review of the Handyperson scheme and its funding by April 2011. Confirmation of new scheme arrangements by June 2011	April 2011 June 2011	None for review, may be call on resources dependant on outcome of review	Private Sector Manager

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
HSOP 2.6	Work to expand the availability of advice on repairs and maintenance	Identify good practice elsewhere to look for ideas and opportunities	December 2011	None for review, may be call on resources depending on findings	Private Sector Manager
HSOP 2.7	Work across staff and partners to raise awareness of the issues of safety and security in the home and encourage referrals to agencies that can provide advice and practical assistance.	Engage PCT and SP providers in this project Agree a training programme and deliver to a wide range of staff across agencies	Engage PCT and SP providers in this project - by December 2010 Develop and implement a multi agency training programme from April 2011	None for engagement; may be some funding required to enable training to be delivered	Tenancy Services Manager
HSOP 2.8	Explore joint working with the NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT on initiatives to enable older people to live independently and reduce the incidence of falls	Engage with PCT in a joined up strategic approach and initiatives that enable older people to live independently	August 2011	None for engagement	Private Sector Manager/Housing Initiatives Manager
HSOP 3.1	Explore in partnership with Supporting People the possible extension of housing related support to older people living outside sheltered housing	Increased access to housing support across all housing sectors	April 2011	None for option appraisal	Supporting People with Tenancy Services Manager
HSOP 3.2	Work with the INVOKE project to improve its profile amongst council staff and partner agencies to ensure best use is made of these services.	Engage INVOKE in the activity – by August 2010. Agree what needs to be done to achieve the outcome – by December 2010. Delivery of agreed actions – from January 2011	Engage INVOKE in the activity – by August 2010. Agree what needs to be done to achieve the outcome – by December 2010. Delivery of agreed actions – from January 2011	None anticipated	Tenancy Services Manager

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
HSOP 3.3	Ensure that older people and wider agencies are aware of reliable and responsible equity release schemes such as the HouseProud scheme	Complete research into and evaluation of HouseProud and other schemes Council backing of HouseProud confirmed or other option agreed Publicity to ensure that all agencies and older people have the relevant information completed	October 2010 April 2011 April 2012	None anticipated until later stages of the project	Private Sector Manager
HSOP 3.4	Work with older people to explore the relevance and usefulness of the FirstStop advice service for local people and provided it meets older people's requirements will develop and publicise this service across the Dover district.	Establish with older people how the FirstStop service can best be tested Carry out testing to decide whether the service meets the needs of older people in Dover district, and evaluate Agree way forward	Establish with older people how the FirstStop service can best be tested – by December 2010 Carry out testing to decide whether the service meets the needs of older people in Dover district, and evaluate – by June 2011. Agree way forward – by July 2012	Resources to pay for expenses of older people engaged on the project	Tenancy Services Manager
YHS 4	Monitor effectiveness of new multi agency housing team to agreed indicators.	No young person is accepted as homeless without a thorough investigation, involving their parents or carers, of their housing options	July 2010 and on-going (report quarterly to YHF)	Officer time	Housing Needs Manager
YHS 6	Ensure existing B&B accommodation, for use in an emergency, is of an appropriate standard (ensure accommodation is inspected on a regular basis)	Ensure emergency accommodation is of an appropriate standard	July 2010 and on-going (report annually to YHF)	Officer time	Housing Needs Manager
YHS 7	Explore options, develop and introduce additional emergency (short term) accommodation alternative to bed and breakfast	To meet Government target: to eliminate the use of B&B accommodation for 16/17 year olds except in an emergency	2010/11 SP input to determine exact timescales	Officer time SP funding	DDC & Supporting People

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
YHS 8	Introduce additional schemes of (longer term) accommodation for YP	To meet Government target: to eliminate the use of B&B accommodation for 16/17 year olds except in an emergency	2010/11 (first year of operation of alternatives, allowing time to research, raise funding and develop)	Officer time SP funding	DDC & SP
HS 2	Implement the Learning Disability Action Plan	Better understanding of needs leading to increased housing options Improved advice and information and easier and fair access to services	Ongoing	KCC funding	Housing Needs Manager
EKHS 1.0	Implement the Kent Reconnection Policy	Better coordinated approach to enabling vulnerable households to access housing and support in the areas they are normally resident in.	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities Provider Agencies
EKHS 1.1	Support vulnerable homeless households to bid through Kent Homechoice	Easier and fair access to housing for vulnerable people	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities and Support Provider Agencies
EKHS 1.3	Implement the Ex-offender protocol	Improved, better co-ordinated and more timely housing options advice for offenders	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities and other agencies
EKHS 1.4	Continue partnerships with local housing advice agencies to maximise options available to clients	Improved and better coordinated housing options advice	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities
EKHS 1.5	Explore the options for introducing an East Kent wide set of Housing Options information leaflets	Improved information for vulnerable households and easier and fair access to services	April 2011	Existing Resources	Local Authorities
EKHS 2.0	Continue to quantify levels of rough sleeping within East Kent	Up to date understanding of the issue	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities/ Porchlight
EKHS 2.1	Report emerging homelessness trends to the EKHF	Early awareness of emerging issues	Ongoing	Existing Resources	All EKHF partners
EKHS 2.2	Continue to support the Kent Wide Rough Sleeper outreach Service	More co-ordinated approach to tackling rough sleeping and a reduction in the number of rough sleepers	Ongoing	Existing Resources	All EKHF partners

Strategy Ref	Action	Outcome	By When	Resources Required	Lead
EKHS 5.0	Carry out study into the outcomes of single people leaving temporary accommodation in East Kent	Better understanding of issue to help address revolving door issue	April 2011	Existing Resources	Porchlight
EKHS 5.2	Implement the Countywide Temporary Accommodation Protocol	Reduced concentrations of vulnerable households in temporary accommodation and improve services to them.	Ongoing	Existing Resources	Local Authorities
HS 3	Develop mechanisms for engaging with BME groups	Better understanding of BME housing needs, improved housing options, easier and fairer access to services	April 2011	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager

Key to Strategy References

HS: Housing Strategy 2010-2015

AHDP: Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

HSOP: Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015

PSHS: Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015

EHS: Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015

YHS: Youth Homelessness Strategy 2010-2015

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Key developments at a national, regional and local level in terms of context since the Council's last Housing Strategy was prepared include:

National

- Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable (Housing Green Paper on increasing the supply of new homes)
- Sustainable communities: settled homes; changing lives (the national strategy on dealing with homelessness)
- Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (the national Strategy for housing in an ageing society).
- Creating strong, safe, prosperous communities (statutory guidance on the central and local government, partners and citizens working together through Local Strategic Partnerships, delivery of Sustainable Community Strategies, etc)

Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable

This Green paper was published in July 2007 and sets out the government's vision that '*everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford, in sustainable communities where they want to live and work*'. It also set out plans for increasing housing supply including more affordable homes and included proposals for accelerating the rate of new housing delivery, establishing new growth points, making the most effective use of existing housing and ensuring homes are well designed and greener.

Homes & Communities Agency

In December 2008 the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) was formed bringing together the functions of English Partnerships, the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities, and key housing and regeneration programmes previously delivered by Communities and Local Government. The HCAs housing, regeneration and infrastructure investment role means that it will be a key partner in relation to how the Council will deliver many of its housing and wider corporate objectives. This investment required will be planned as part of a 'single conversation' process that the HCA will engage in with the Council and other local authorities in the South East sub region.

Other potentially relevant national policies and strategies which are anticipated but not yet published, include:

- A Housing Reform Green Paper to provide a better system for those living in rented housing. This will respond to some of the challenges set out in the Hills Review of Social Housing, the Cave Review of Social Housing Regulation, and the Rugg and Rhodes Review of the Private Rented Sector. It will aim for greater fairness in social housing and making the best use of resources including getting better use out of the existing stock; increasing housing supply, choice and quality in the private rented sector; clarifying the government's approach to mixed communities, etc.
- A Review of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System.
- Changes to the Revenue and Capital Rules for New Council Housing which would enable Councils to build social housing

- A Single Equalities Bill which will combine existing anti-discrimination legislation and statutory instruments into a single Act of Parliament to give everyone 'a fair chance regardless of gender, race, sexuality or disability.

Regional

South East Plan

The South East Regional Assembly formally submitted the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (The South East Plan) to Government in March 2006. The Strategy included an assessment of the number of new homes needed in the region each year up until 2026 and set growth targets for individual local authorities. The target set for Dover district is 10,100 new homes.

Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11

This sets out the housing priorities for the region and a framework for investment. The Strategy's key priorities are:

- To build more affordable homes
- Bring decent housing within reach of people on lower incomes
- Improve the quality of new housing and existing stock.

Increasing the supply of affordable housing is considered to be especially important.

Vision for Kent

In April 2006, the Local Strategic Partnership for Kent published its county wide Sustainable Communities Strategy setting out its 'Vision for Kent' over a twenty year period in terms of improvements to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the County. Among the key themes identified in the Strategy are; housing growth, economic development, the ageing population and tackling disadvantage and promoting independence.

This Strategic aims are delivered through the Kent Local Area Agreement (LAA) which comprises targets relating to an agreed set of National Indicators which partners have agreed to work together to achieve.

Lighting the Way to Success

More recently, the Local Strategic Partnership for East Kent published its Sustainable Communities Strategy '*lighting the way to success*' in 2009 which places strong emphasis on the regeneration of Dover as well as picking up the Kent LSP themes of tackling social disadvantage and the need for economic growth.

Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015

A new strategy has been produced by the Supporting People Commissioning Body for Kent setting out priorities for the future delivery of housing related support services that will enable vulnerable people to live independently in their community. A key focus of the strategy is on prevention and providing support within people's own homes.

Local

Regeneration and Growth Plans

The Council has ambitious plans to regenerate parts of the districts and stimulate economic growth. This regeneration priority is consistent with the Kent wide and East Kent Sustainable Community Strategies and is embodied in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

Dover Masterplan 2006

Dover Pride the local independent regeneration and economic partnership comprising public authorities, businesses and the voluntary and community sectors has produced a strategy for the

regeneration of Dover Town in 2005 which has been further developed through a master planning process and subsequent report in 2006. The report sets out various options for housing growth linked to population and economic growth. A high growth strategy for the district as a whole was subsequently identified in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy as the preferred option.

Along with specific, planned development and regeneration projects we anticipate that the formal opening of the high speed rail link to London in 2009 will act as an important catalyst in helping Dover realize its full potential.

One of the overarching themes of the Plan is *'Improving existing neighbourhoods and creating new communities'* with *'A well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes'*.

A wealth of underpinning evidence has been gathered which demonstrates the essential link between housing growth, regeneration and economic development in the district. These key corporate objectives are clearly established, based on robust research and reflect national and regional priorities. The Council is therefore well positioned to achieve its objectives with an approved Core Strategy in place and having obtained growth point and regional hub status

The key national and regional themes of housing growth, regeneration and economic development are therefore reflected at the local level in these and a range of key corporate documents.

Dover District Council Corporate Plan 2008-2020

This is a long term plan with a strong emphasis on economic development, regeneration and building safe, sustainable and inclusive communities. Specific housing priorities and targets include the provision of 'a wide range of good quality and accessible housing that meets the needs of the whole community', improving the existing housing stock and meeting the housing needs of vulnerable households.

LDF Core Strategy

The Core Strategy was found to be 'sound' by an Independent Inspector in January 2010, following an examination in public, and was formally adopted by the Council in February 2010. The strategy sets out the Council's long term vision for the district as a place to live, work, relax and visit and how this will be achieved. An assessment of the key issues as well as the interventions that will be needed to achieve the strategic objectives is underpinned by robust research and wide ranging consultation.

The aim is to 'transform Dover into a leading town in the region and regenerate the District so that economically and socially it equals or out-performs the region'. Once again the economic development and regeneration ambitions of the Council are strongly to the fore but with housing growth seen as playing a key role in achieving the overall aim. A stated objective within the Strategy is to *'deliver sufficient additional housing to broaden the range and improve the quality and market perception of the District's, and especially Dover's housing offer and meet the changing needs of the population'*. To achieve this and the other strategic objectives a high growth strategy has been adopted based on a delivery target of 14,000 new homes.

The Core Strategy identifies four key development opportunities which are "of such scale and significance that they are central to the success of the Strategy". These are:

Dover Waterfront
Mid Town, Dover
Former Connaught Barracks, Dover
Expansion of Whitfield, Dover

These developments have the potential to deliver around 7,000 new homes and are therefore key to the delivery of the Housing Strategy.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

In 2008 consultants were appointed to carry out a Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the East Kent sub-region the purpose being to help determine the location and amount of affordable and market housing needed across East Kent and within each local authority district.

The results were published in a report in 2009, and in addition to highlighting the need for more housing generally which has provided the supporting evidence for the high growth strategy in the Core Strategy, it also revealed a very substantial need for affordable housing within the district. The research identified 21 local housing markets within the sub region and four operating in the district:

- Dover
- Deal
- Sandwich
- East Kent Rural South

The report ranked the 21 local housing market areas in terms of the relative need for affordable housing and Dover, Deal and Sandwich were all found to be in the top 6 with Deal and Sandwich ranked 2nd and 3rd respectively.

KEY ISSUES

This appendix provides a summary of our understanding of the key housing issues we need to address. This is informed by the work undertaken in relation to the related sub strategies and by key documents such as the LDF Core Strategy, East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Supporting People Strategy

Demographic Trends

The overall household population has been growing at a slower pace than the national and regional rate and the following chart shows a reduction in the number of younger people and a significant increase in the number of people aged 65 and over.

This demographic trend is identified in the Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment as one of the main challenges that local authorities will face given its potential impact in terms of a declining working age population and increased public spending in areas of health and social care.

The proportion of older households (60 and over) within the district has been increasing over a number of years and currently there is a higher than national and south east average population of older people in the district.

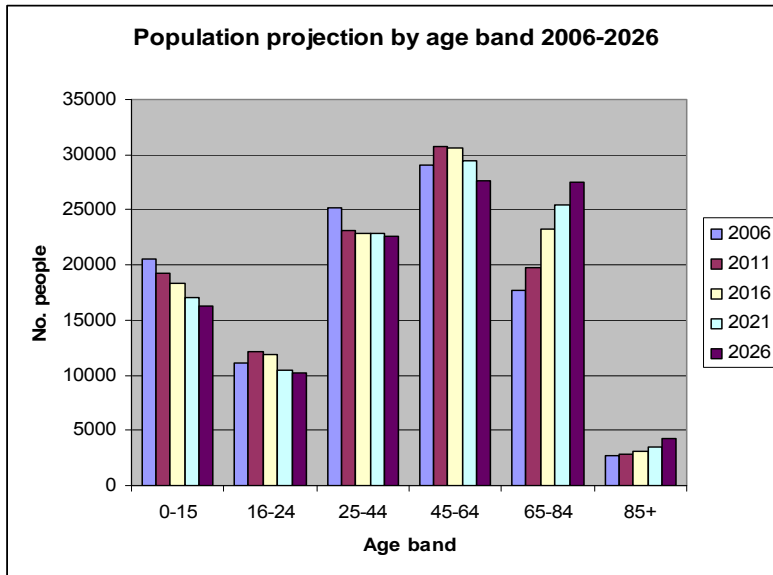
The projection for the district is that by 2016

- The population of over 55s will have increased by almost 17% against an overall population increase of only 0.75%.
- The majority growth will be in the 65 to 74 year old age band which will have increased by almost 38% - an addition of 4,000 people in this age group.
- Over 75 year olds will increase by around 16% or a total of 1,500 people
- Over 85's will also increase by 16%; around 500 people

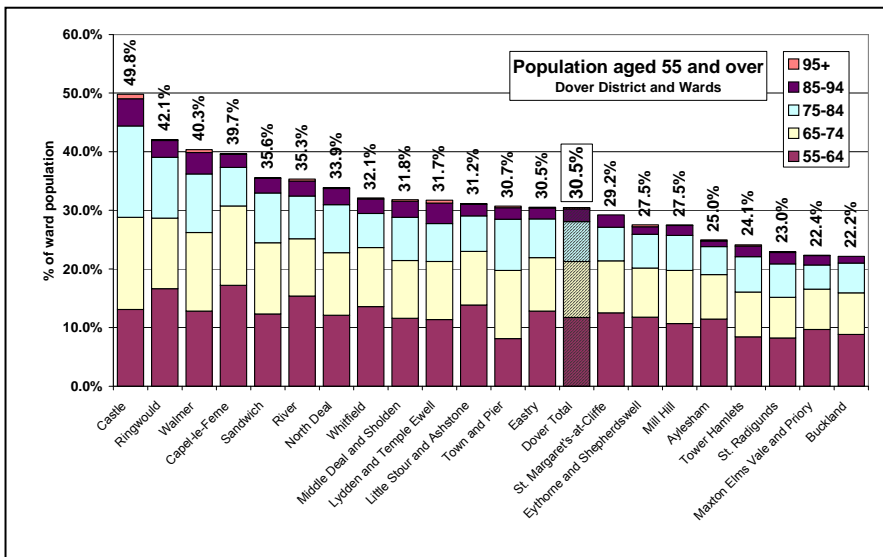
The forecast is that by 2026, the number of households aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%.

This projected growth in the proportion of older households will be a significant issue and is highlighted within the SHMA report as being a *“critical factor for the future housing markets and economy of East Kent”*.

This trend will have implications in terms of how we will ensure the provision of appropriate housing and support services to enable older people to live independently for as long as possible and at the same time try to maintain a sustainable population balance by making sure we provide housing that will be attractive to working age households in order to maintain a local workforce and support economic growth.



Source: South East Plan Strategy forecasts 2007 Kent County Council



Housing Growth

The Council has adopted a high growth approach to the provision of new housing and the underpinning rationale together with the framework for delivery is clearly set out in the LDF Core Strategy. Overall housing growth is seen as being a key element in the regeneration of parts of the district, delivering economic growth and helping to re balance the housing market and facilitate the delivery of affordable homes.

The relationship between jobs and housing growth together with milestones for delivering key elements of the Strategy is clearly set out in the Core Strategy. The delivery mechanism highlights the need for effective partnership working across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The Council's Housing Strategy and Enabling Team is committed to working corporately to help strengthen this approach and deliver the Core Strategy objectives.

The development of 14,000 new homes across the District is a challenging target and will require significant investment in supporting infrastructure development and improvements. The quality of new developments will also be important in terms of delivering new homes designed to minimise impact on climate change and new communities which are sustainable and well connected to key employment sites as well as retail and leisure amenities. The Single Conversation with the Homes & Communities Agency will provide a mechanism by which we can highlight to government the intrinsic link between essential infrastructure investment and housing delivery in order to achieve national, regional and local priorities.

While the growth agenda presents many opportunities we also need to be aware of the potential impact that substantial amounts of new housing may have on existing areas of poorer quality housing in terms of outward migration and because the poor amenity within those communities will be even more apparent when compared to new communities elsewhere. This risk may need to be managed to ensure that housing growth and maintaining the existing housing stock complement each other.

The Core Strategy provides more detailed information regarding the Council's approach to future housing growth and the mechanisms for delivering the strategic objectives:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/Adopted%20Core%20Strategy%20February%202010.pdf>

Housing Aspirations

As referred to previously the LDF Core Strategy recognises the need to provide *'an improved range, flexibility and quality of housing which will also better accommodate local needs. Growth will be used to promote higher quality design that reinforces local distinctiveness and sense of place, a more efficient use of natural resources, more healthy lifestyles and a reduction in social inequalities'*.

The East Kent SHMA included survey of housing aspirations which found that the most popular property type amongst Dover respondents were semi detached houses (30.6%) followed by detached homes (20.7%). Dover residents who responded also indicated that they were much more likely to want to buy a new home (15.7%) than residents in the other 4 districts.

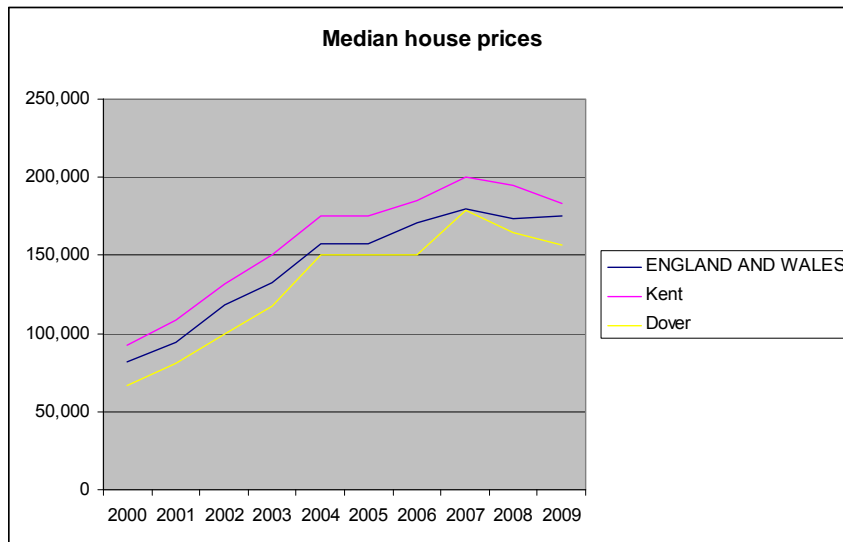
A more detailed analysis of the housing stock and how housing growth will help deliver greater choice and a more balanced stock profile can be found in the Core Strategy. The approach set out in the Strategy accords with the recommendations set out in the East Kent Futures Study 2008 which provides the underpinning analysis on which the East Kent Sustainable Communities Strategy 2009 is based.

Economy and The Housing Market

Unfortunately, while the Council has been putting the building blocks in place to deliver its growth and regeneration objectives this has coincided with a dramatic economic downturn which has had a significant impact on the housing market. The 'credit crunch' and tighter lending criteria imposed by mortgage lenders has resulted in a significant reduction in house buyers and a consequent fall in house prices and loss of confidence amongst buyers and house builders. Although there appears to have been some slight improvement in the mortgage market recently and a stabilisation of house prices, the general economic position remains fragile and the speed of recovery remains very uncertain.

We anticipate that bank lending will continue to be constrained in the short to medium term which will impact on house builder confidence and house prices while at the same time we expect public expenditure in respect of infrastructure and affordable housing subsidies will also come under pressure.

Locally, Land Registry data shows that median house prices during the period 2007 to December 2009 fell more sharply in Dover district than nationally but that the fall was broadly in line with Kent as a whole.

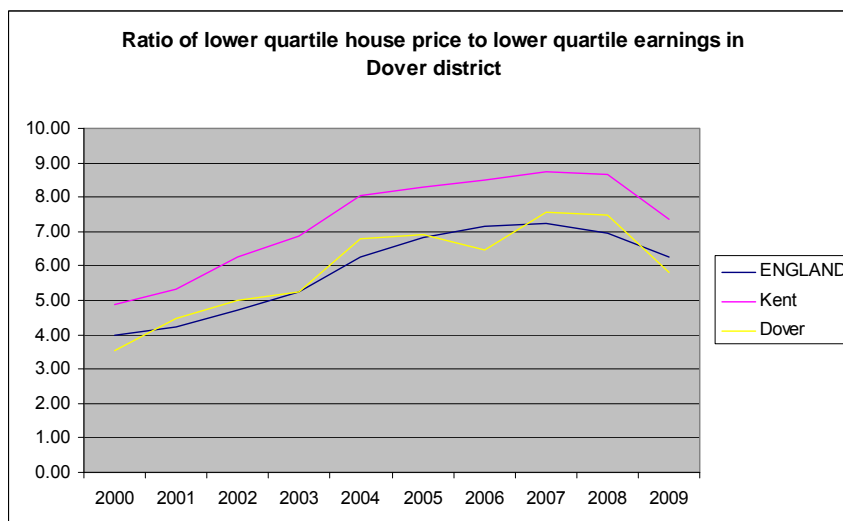


Source: CLG Live Tables

House price falls, market uncertainty and the increased cost of finance has impacted on the financial viability of many proposed new housing developments with many developers including housing associations scaling back their house building programmes.

Average house prices and sale prices of new homes have historically been lower in the District than other parts of Kent and the region. While this may help to some extent in terms of affordability of housing it has, in the past, acted as a disincentive to volume house builders especially in respect of Dover where prices are generally amongst the lowest in the region. This is especially problematic as Dover is identified in the Core Strategy as the focus for future housing growth.

The importance of housing delivery in respect of achieving wider corporate objectives means that we will closely monitor market conditions and provide support where we can. In the 2009 budget, the government announced a financial package called Kickstart designed to help developers progress 'stalled' housing schemes. A successful bid for financial assistance was made under Round 1 of the programme for a scheme in Deal and a further bid has been submitted under Round 2 in respect of Aylesham.



'Housing Need' - The Need for Affordable Housing

“Housing need” is defined by Government as “the quantity of housing required for households who are unable to access suitable housing without financial assistance”. It includes people who do not have a home of their own because they cannot afford to buy or rent, and people whose housing is unsuitable (eg: because it is too small or in poor condition) and who cannot afford to make it suitable or to move to alternative accommodation.

Indicators of housing need include the cost of market housing relative to incomes, and the demand for affordable housing. The Government defines affordable housing as “social rented and intermediate housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market”.

The large number of new homes to be built provides good opportunities to secure the provision of new affordable housing through approved planning policies.

Affordability

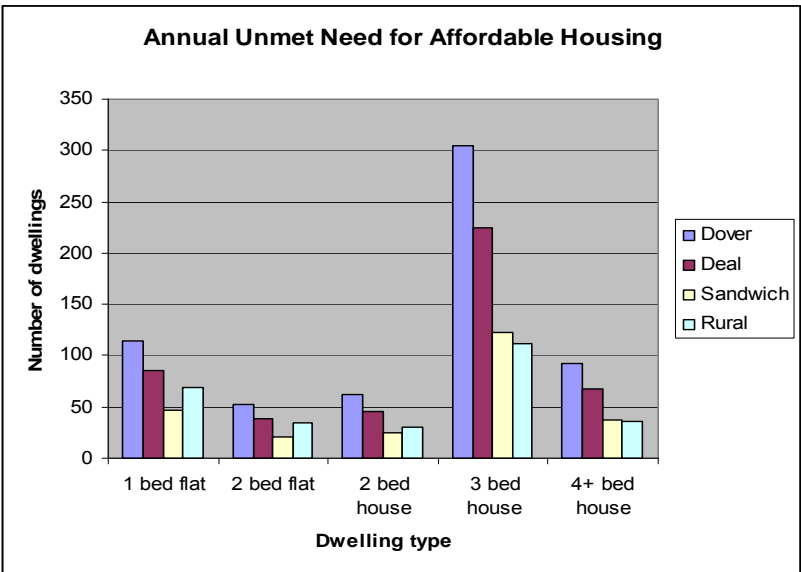
While the fall in house prices since 2007 and the reasons behind it, have had an adverse impact on the delivery of new housing it has resulted in a reduction in the ratio between lower quartile house prices and earnings. However, while this helps make housing more affordable for some households at the margins of affordability, the steep price increases in previous years means that the current ratio is still more than five times lower quartile average income. Recent indications also suggest that house prices are starting to increase once more and this combined with stricter mortgage lending criteria will continue to result in many households finding it difficult to access housing they can afford.

East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report 2009 (SHMA)

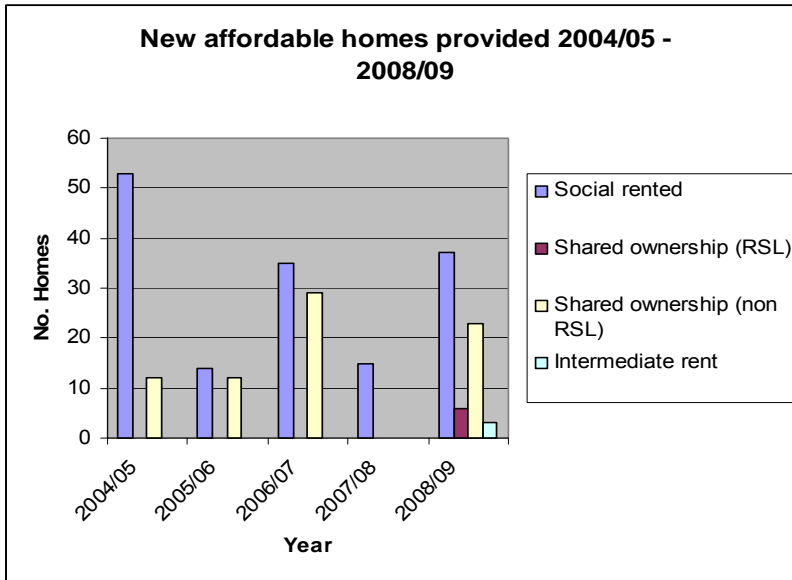
The assessment of the need for affordable housing was a key component of the SHMA and was carried out in accordance with government guidance. The assessment has identified a need for 1,489 new affordable homes per year in order to meet the backlog of unmet need and newly arising need over the next five years.

The SHMA report also highlighted a general need to provide more family homes which would be attractive to economically active households in order to support economic development and help offset the demographic trend towards an increasingly older population.

There is also an identified need for affordable family sized homes which can clearly be seen from the chart below.

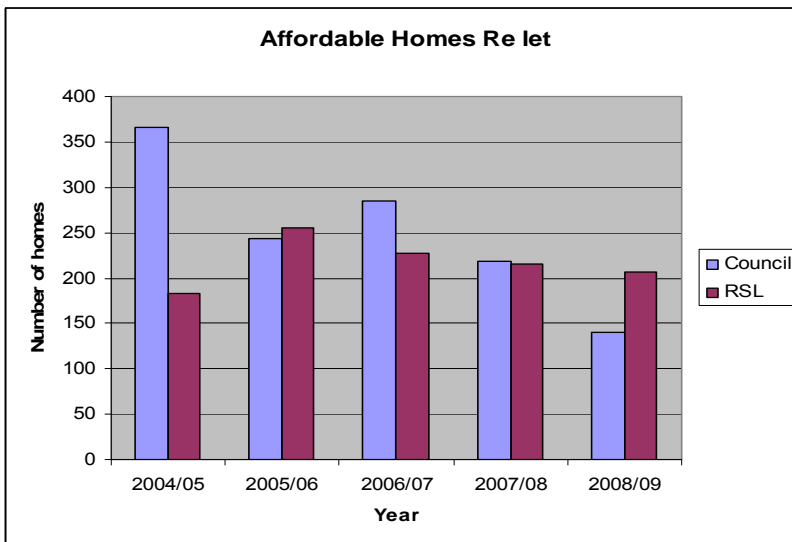


The need for affordable homes has outstripped supply for many years resulting in an increasing backlog of need. The supply of new affordable homes has been relatively modest with 239 homes delivered in the 5 year period 2004/05 – 2008/09 although we expect a further 110 homes to be delivered this year (2009/10).



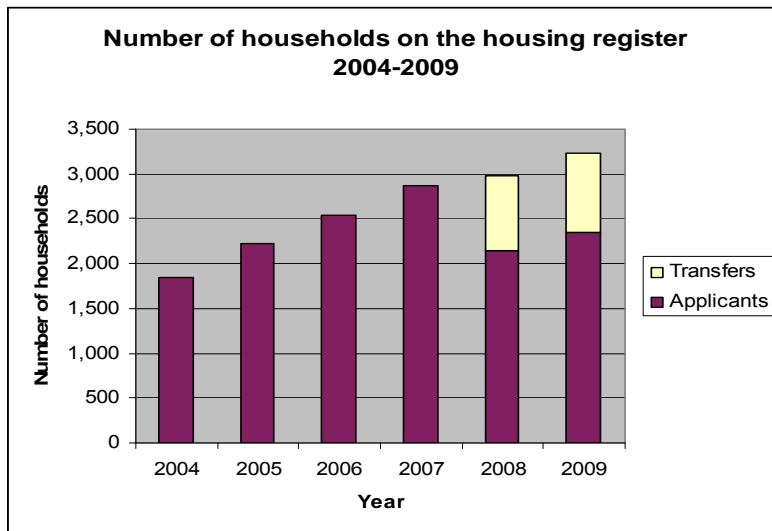
Source: CLG Live Tables (data from Local Authority Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns)

Fortunately, the supply of new homes is bolstered by existing affordable housing becoming available for re let on a regular basis becoming available on a regular basis. Over the period 2004/05-2008/09 2,340 affordable homes (Council and housing association) were re let, but as the chart below shows the number of homes becoming available for re letting has been reducing in recent years.

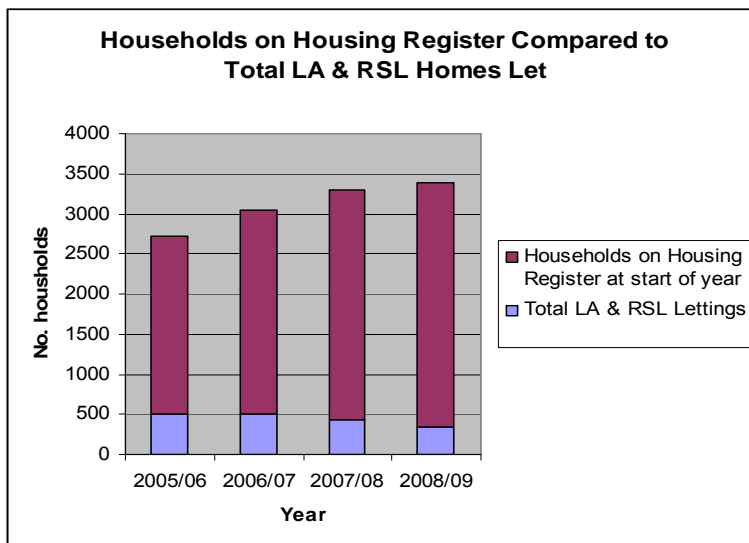


Source: CLG Live Tables (data from Local Authority Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns)

At the same time the number of people waiting for housing on the Council’s Housing Register has been growing as can be seen from the table below. The register comprises existing tenants seeking transfers as well as first time applicants although the statistical breakdown for the two categories is only available for 2008 and 2009.



Source: CLG Live Tables (data from Local Authority Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns)



Source: CORE Data and CLG Live Tables

Rural Housing Need

Low incomes and disadvantage are not confined to the urban areas within the district. House prices are generally higher in the rural areas and household incomes can be low. Consequently, the accessibility of affordable housing is a significant issue in many rural settlements as is the general sustainability of important community facilities.

Future Delivery

Policy DM5 of the approved Core Strategy states that the Council will 'seek applications for residential developments to provide 30% of the total homes proposed as affordable home'.

Given the high growth approach to new housing and the identification of a number of strategic developments there will be a significant opportunity to deliver more affordable homes over the life of the Strategy and beyond. However, the future availability of public subsidy to assist with the delivery of affordable housing is very uncertain and the HCA has already indicated that it expects output of new affordable homes to fall by 34% next year from the 45,500 target for the financial year 2019-10 to 29,900 in 2010-11. The output of social rented homes is expected to half from 30,390 in 2008-09 to

14,500 in 2010-11. This is largely due to higher grant levels and pulling forward expenditure in the current Comprehensive Spending Review period to offset falling private sector building.

Our Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015 sets a target for the delivery of 650 new affordable homes over the life of the Strategy with 250 homes being delivered in the first two years.

More information about the need for affordable housing and how it might be delivered across the district is set out in the following documents:

East Kent SHMA 2009:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/East%20Kent%20Main%20Report%20Final.pdf>

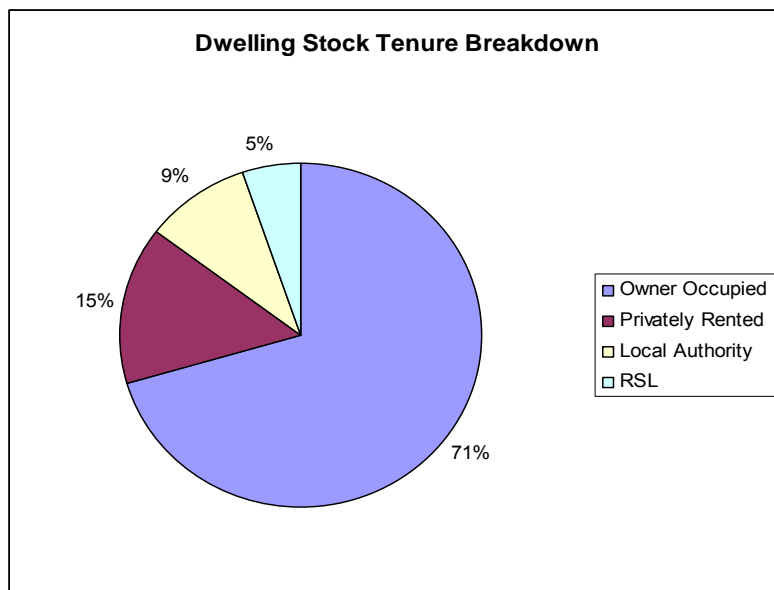
<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/East%20Kent%20Annexes%20Final.pdf>

Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Consultation%20Draft%20ADHP.doc>

Improving the Existing Housing Stock

Approximately 85% of the housing stock in the District is privately owned, which is consistent with the Kent and South East average, but slightly higher than the average for England (83.6%)¹. The privately rented stock is over 20% higher than the national average and the proportion of social housing is appreciably lower than nationally.



Source: HSSA 2008 & House Condition Survey 2008

We have substantial numbers of private sector homes built before the First World War, nearly 75% more than the national average. The figures show that almost 55% of our private sector homes were built before the Second World War compared with 39% nationally.

One of the most striking features of the private sector stock in Dover is the high proportion of terraced homes, which is substantially higher than the national average and the relatively low proportion of flats. The stock profile imbalance and the relatively high proportion of terraced homes is identified as a particular issue in the Core Strategy in terms of its impact on Dover's housing market appeal and the

¹ CLG, Local authority housing strategy and business plan data

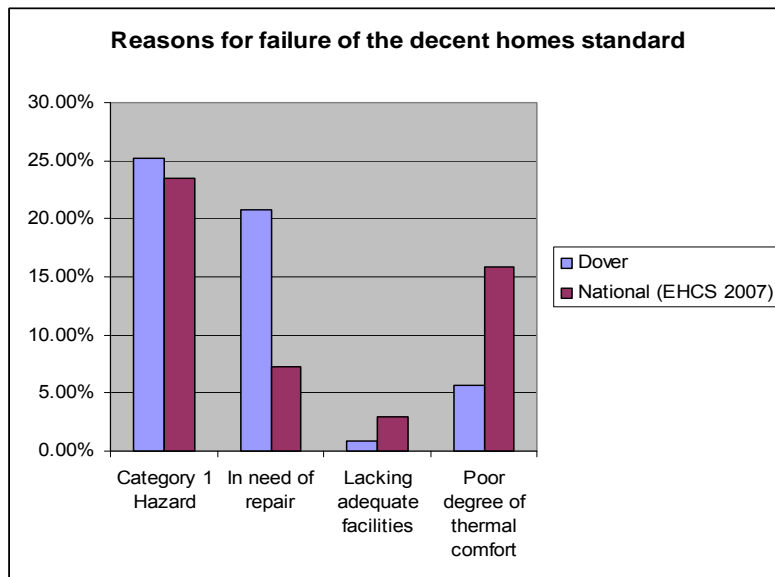
Strategy recognises the need to “broaden the range and improve the market perception of the District’s and especially Dover’s housing offer”².

Stock Condition

A house condition Survey carried out in 2001 found that Dover district had the highest percentage of unfit homes in the south east.

In 2008 a further survey was carried out. Direct comparisons with the 2001 figures are difficult to make as the condition of housing is now measured on the basis of a hazard rating system rather than unfitness measure. However, this new system shows that the rate of serious (Category 1³) hazards in the district’s homes is 25.2% and above the national average of 23.5%⁴.

The overall rate of non decency at 41.2% is worse than the national figure of 35%. Of particular concern is the low number of vulnerable households living in decent homes which is only 50.6% compared with the target for 2010 of 70%. An estimated 3,040 homes occupied by vulnerable households would have to be made decent to meet the 2010 target previously set by Government.



Source: Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2009 & English House Condition Survey 2007

The other key findings in relation to tenure, property age and build type were as follows:

- A relatively high percentage of non decent homes in the private rented sector (65.7% compared to 45.4% nationally);
- 73.1% of pre-1919 homes are non decent and surprisingly 38.2% of homes built between 1981-1990 were also found to be non decent probably due to a combination of electric heating and inadequate insulation.
- A relatively high rate of rate of terraced homes are non decent.

The house condition surveys especially the 2001 survey also show that there is a concentration of poor housing in particular wards in Dover urban areas. These are also areas where there are relatively high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

² LDF Core Strategy

³ Highest hazard rating as defined by the Housing Health & Safety Rating System

⁴ English House Condition Survey 2007

Because of significant issues relating to the age and decency of sizeable pockets of private sector housing and the impact on vulnerable households, the Council has developed a Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 which analyses the issues in more detail and sets out specific actions for addressing many of the problems.

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Dover%20Draft%20PSHS%20Consultation%20Draft%20final.doc>

Making Best Use of the Housing Stock

Empty Homes

The Council recognises the need to make best use of the available housing stock and that empty homes are a waste of a valuable resource and can have an adverse impact on the community. It also understands that homes may become empty for short periods of time whilst they are renovated or improved prior to letting or sale. These homes do not generally represent a problem. It is the number of homes that have been empty for more than six months (long term empty homes) that we are particularly concerned about.

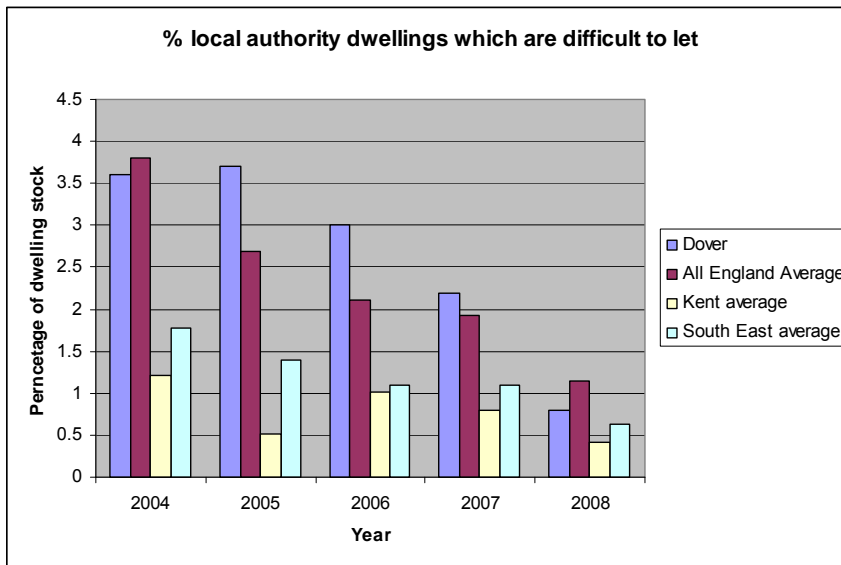
As at 1 April 2009 there were 2006 empty homes in Dover district, of which 951 had been empty for six months or more. The proportion of empty homes (1.8% of the total stock) was higher than the national average (1.3%) and Dover district had the second highest percentage of long term empty homes in Kent.

In recognition of the scale of the problem and the wasted resources the Council has adopted an Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015 which provides more detailed information about the issue, the tools that the Council will use to tackle the problem and a range of actions it intends to carry out:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/Empty%20Homes%20Strategy%20-%20DRAFT.pdf>

Local Authority Stock

The Council has taken action in recent years to address the problem of sheltered housing which was no longer 'fit for purpose'. This has followed a tenant centered approach to the closure of schemes and re housing of residents designed to minimise the impact on tenants as much as possible. The project is nearing completion and the table below shows the effectiveness of the policy in reducing the number of difficult to let dwellings.



Source: CLG, Local authority housing strategy and business plan data

Under occupation

Underoccupied social housing inevitably means that it isn't being used to its full potential. However some level of under occupation of stock is not necessarily a bad thing. Our primary concern must be to consider whether or not we making the very best use of our stock in the context of wider policies on tackling social exclusion and on building mixed and sustainable communities. Some level of underoccupation may be an appropriate way to reduce child densities in an area with high numbers of children.

We are currently working with a range of partners across East Kent to explore the issue in more detail and to develop an approach to reducing underoccupation where this is appropriate.

Adapted Homes

Adaptations to homes play an important role in helping disabled people remain in comfort and safety in their own homes. The Council plays a key role by carrying out adaptations directly within the Council's own housing stock and working with a local Home Improvement Agency to provide Disabled Facility Grant adaptations in the private sector.

Adaptations range from small items such as handrails through to specialist showers and major alterations to provide a downstairs bedroom or bathroom. It is important that where social housing has been specially adapted and subsequently becomes vacant and available for letting, we should try to make best use of it. This is also referred to in the Supporting People Needs Assessment Report 2009 which states that there is a need to '*ensure that the existing supplies of supported housing or adapted accommodation is effectively utilised*'.

The Council maintains a comprehensive database of all homes that have been adapted over the past 16 years and uses this information when letting homes to try and select tenants with an appropriate need. We will look to see how we may be able to develop and share good practice with other providers of social housing in the district.

closely with a range of specialist service providers and other voluntary and statutory agencies including the Supporting People Team for Kent.

Draft Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015

The commissioning of housing related support services is administered by the Supporting People Team and their priorities for service delivery are set out in the new Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015. This builds upon the previous strategy and existing service provision with the emphasis on prevention and helping people live independently. It also identifies the need for additional services based on need to help some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. The strategy proposes a shift in emphasis away from services provided in specialist accommodation to what are known as floating support services. However, it recognises that accommodation based support will still play an important role, especially where people need accommodation in an emergency. The highest priorities for new service provision have been determined according to the level of need and the risk of harm from individuals to themselves and the community and are as follows:

- Young people at risk, particularly 16 and 17 year olds
- People who have serious mental health problems and misuse substances (dual diagnosis)
- Gypsies and travellers and other minority ethnic communities.

Homelessness

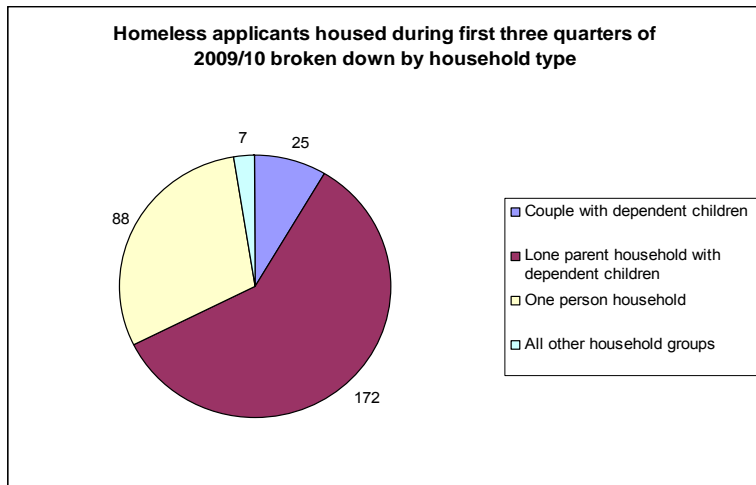
Homelessness is the most dramatic expression of housing need and in light of the need for affordable housing and economic situation it might have been expected that the numbers of homeless households would be growing. In fact, both nationally and locally, the numbers of households officially recognised as homeless have been falling in recent years mainly due to a stronger approach to homelessness prevention. Nationally the numbers are half what they were in 2004 and well below what they were a decade ago. This trend has been reflected locally with the number of homeless households in 'priority need' falling consistently year on year over the past 4 years.

In 2008, together with other local authority partners and a range of key stakeholders the Council helped develop an East Kent Homelessness Strategy with a range of actions designed to address the problem homeless across the sub region. Delivery of the action plan is monitored by the East Kent Homelessness Forum. The Strategy is currently being refreshed and the action plan reviewed.

	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010*
Households accepted as homeless and in priority need	97	90	83	61	49
Eligible homeless and in priority need but intentionally homeless	6	2	11	1	1
Eligible homeless but not in priority need	3	2	6	4	1
Eligible but not homeless	34	34	52	30	37
Total decisions	140	128	152	96	88

*Source: P1E returns *Data is for first three quarters of the year*

We are acutely aware that we cannot afford to be complacent in addressing homelessness and that official statistics can often mask significant numbers of 'hidden homeless', for example people who don't meet the definition of being in priority need (single people in the main) and concealed households who may be living in severely overcrowded conditions with friends or family.



Source: P1E returns

We must also be prepared for the potential impact of adverse economic conditions both directly, in respect of home repossessions and also indirectly in terms of the health and social impact of unemployment. Increased unemployment and higher mortgage interest rates have resulted in an increase in the number of house repossessions nationally with many regions seeing repossessions increase by more than 15% between the first quarters of 2007 and 2008.

While the overall trend in respect of homelessness has been downwards in recent years we have more recently seen a worrying increase in the number of young people (under 18) becoming homeless.

According to a research summary published by Communities and Local Government in 2008, young people aged 16 and 17 accepted as homeless were an extremely vulnerable group who had often experienced educational and/or family disruption, violence at home and mental health and/or substance misuse problems.

In the first three quarters of 2009/10 14 young people aged 16 or 17 were accepted as homeless and in need of housing. This is a trend which is reflected across Kent and which is identified as a major issue in the Kent Supporting People Strategy.

The Supporting People Needs Analysis Report 2009 recognises that the highest numbers of acceptances for this particular client group were recorded in Shepway, Dover, and Dartford—all districts without or with only minimal dedicated provision for this client group. The report identifies a need for more appropriate accommodation-based support services, including some type of emergency provision, for young people at risk and recognises that there is currently only minimal provision in Dover district.

The issue of homelessness and youth homelessness are addressed in the East Kent Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 and the Council's Youth Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/pdf/Youth%20Homelessness%20strategy.pdf>

Older People

The importance of addressing the issue of an increasing proportion of older households has already been referred to. In response to this the Council has developed an Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015. The Strategy's key findings are as follows:

- The older population of Dover district is larger than the housing market and county averages. By 2026, those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%. This highlights the need to tackle the housing needs of older people now and in the future.

- Proportions of older people vary across the district by over 100% but intensive domiciliary care inputs indicate that levels of dependency do not match the distribution: this needs to be further investigated in order to effectively target services
- Although relatively well off now, the number of older people on lower incomes will increase over time and this has implications for the ability of people to meet their own housing needs
- Currently, 48% all single person households in the Dover district are aged over 65 years and this will increase over time, so it is particularly important that new smaller homes should meet lifetime standards including lift access to upper floors
- A higher than average proportion of our older population is likely to live alone, with implications of isolation and mental ill health. It is important that this is considered when making decisions about local community facilities and support services
- Rates of respiratory illnesses are relatively high; these are particularly linked to cold and damp conditions, so improving these issues will particularly contribute to better health amongst older people
- 22% all households in private housing include someone with a disability and this proportion is likely to be much higher in social housing. These numbers will increase as the population ages, indicating increasing demands for adaptations
- Falls are the leading cause of injury and death amongst the over-75s; adaptations and falls prevention advice and practical measures significantly reduce disabilities arising from falls.
- Increasing rates of dementia need to be considered when designing supported housing and services for older people. Research indicates that the incidence of dementia will grow by up to 50% over the next 20 years.
- Over 8,000 retired households live in homes that are more difficult to keep warm, and over 1,100 live in homes that are very cold and expensive to heat. This places occupiers at severe risk of ill health
- People who are 85 or over are more likely than the average to live in private rented properties. 40% all private rented homes fail the decent homes standard so this highlights the need to ensure that all agencies visiting older people at home are aware of and refer issues to the private sector housing team.
- There is unmet demand for affordable rented homes amongst older people; mostly for retirement (but not sheltered) units of two or more bedrooms. The projected demand by 2026 represents 78% of all additional affordable homes expected to be built in this area.
- There is no apparent unmet need for market retirement housing, although this may change over time as the housing market recovers and the older population grows.
- There is a need for almost 190 additional units of extra care housing: half for people with high dependency levels and half to provide a more mixed and lively community.
- Older people want, and expect, to stay in their own homes and most expect to stay in their current home for the rest of their life.

The Supporting People Needs Assessment Report 2009 identifies a likely future need for more extra care accommodation for frail elderly people across the districts/boroughs where the highest proportions of older persons live. The Council has already worked in partnership with Kent County Council to enable the delivery of one extra care scheme in Dover through a Private Finance Initiative and a further scheme is planned.

A more detailed analysis of housing issues relating to older people can be found in the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015:

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/docs/Consultation%20draft%20OPHS%20strategy.doc>

People with Mental Health Problems

Mental ill health has a well established link with deprivation. In terms of specific aspects of deprivation, unemployment is associated with social exclusion, which has a number of adverse effects, including reduced psychological wellbeing and a greater incidence of self-harm, depression and anxiety.

Research estimates that:

- 300 out of 1000 people will experience mental health problems every year and over two thirds will consult their GP.
- 102 out of 1000 people will be diagnosed with a mental health problem.
- 24 out of 1000 people will be referred to specialist psychiatric services

Dover has a significantly worse than England average in respect of the number of people claiming incapacity benefit for mental illness⁸.

The Supporting People Needs Assessment Report 2009 recognises that housing-related support services will be an important element in the on-going shift towards community-based alternatives to hospital admission and that there may be a need for longer-term accommodation-based services in some districts such as Dover where there is currently no or only minimal provision.

Kent & Medway Partnership Trust has been developing a new model to deliver mental health services in the community, part of which includes the development of intensive supported housing for people with severe mental health problems. These are people who have traditionally been unable to sustain tenancies either at an independent level or within current supported accommodation, but do not require residential care. The East Kent Local Housing Authorities, KCC and KMPT have supported the development of this service. They have committed to developing 33 units of accommodation across the 6 East Kent local authorities. This service is known as Horizons and will provide this vulnerable group of people the opportunity to reintegrate with their local communities with the level of support that they need to ensure that this is successful.

A problem highlighted by the KMPT is the discharge of patients who no longer require hospital treatment but who find it difficult to sustain tenancies either at an independent level or within traditional supported accommodation. A census of adult in-patients carried out during 2005 identified 145 inpatients whose 'home' locality was Dover/Deal but who had no discharge address. This indicates that there is a need to provide a level of supported accommodation for a complex and hard to move on group of people.

We also know from research that 8-15% of people on their caseload are likely to have a combined mental health and substance abuse (dual diagnosis) problem. There is currently no provision for this group and the development of services is identified as one of the highest priorities in the draft Supporting People strategy 2010-2015.

We are currently working with KMPT to deliver specialist housing to help meet these identified needs.

People with Learning Disabilities

The Government's strategy 'Valuing People' identifies over 1.4 million people with learning disabilities aged between 18-74 of whom 1.2 million have some form of mild to moderate Learning Disability (or about 2.5% of the population) and 160,000 to 210,000 have a severe or profound learning disability.

Research shows that the health of people with learning disabilities is much worse than the rest of the population (they are 58 times more likely to die before the age of 50 than the rest of the population). There is also a link between people with mild to modest learning disabilities and poverty; rates are higher in areas of deprivation and urban areas, and we know that many people with mild learning

⁸ Association of Public Health Observatories and Department of Health

difficulties have a complex range of needs with many also having mental health problems or misusing substances.

The Supporting People Needs Assessment report 2009 identifies gaps in service provision in relation to the level of choice of supported accommodation for people moving on from residential care to more independent accommodation and a need for transitional supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities currently living with ageing carers both in the form of long and short-term supported housing.

We know that People with learning disabilities can live successfully in many different kinds of housing and that in many cases they can cope with a full range of tenures, including owning their own homes.

Additional specialist accommodation has recently been provided in Dover through a Private Finance Initiative partnership and we are currently implementing the Kent Housing Action Plan for people with a learning disability. This has involved setting up regular local meetings of key stakeholders and a survey to establish the housing needs of people with a learning disability. Further work will include the provision of information in new easy to read/access formats and inter agency and stakeholder training.

People with a Physical Disability

As referred to previously, the Council meets the needs of many physically disabled people through its own Council house adaptations programme and the Disabled Facilities Grant programme providing adaptations in the private sector.

DFGs are part government/part Council funded (60/40) and we recognise that the cost of future adaptations could be significantly reduced when new homes are designed and built. The additional 'up front' build cost is relatively small compared to the potential future cost of adaptations. We will therefore work with housing association and developer partners to maximise the number of new homes that are built to a recognised 'Lifetime Homes' standard.

Core⁹ data in respect of local authority lettings indicates that over the three year period 2006/07 – 2008/09, 48 homes were let to households where at least one member is a wheelchair user. We will therefore also seek to provide a small number of specially designed homes for wheelchair users within future affordable housing schemes.

People with Substance Misuse Problems

Alcohol and drug misuse is commonly linked to housing problems with 14% of people who accessed structured treatment in the County in 2008/09 classed as having no fixed abode or having housing problems, i.e. were in unsettled short-term accommodation.

Floating support services can provide an effective means of helping people with a substance misuse problem to sustain tenancies and continue living independently. Between April 2008 and March 2009 the highest referral rates of 'people with drug problems' for floating support were recorded in Dover. The needs assessment carried out by Supporting People indicates that current specialist floating support services seem to meet existing need.

Ex-offenders

Being released from prison without a home to go to is a common cause of homelessness and offenders are one of the client groups least likely to be accepted as statutorily homeless. A significant proportion of ex-offenders have drug and alcohol problems. National research suggests that up to 55% of

⁹ The COntinuous REcording System for England (analysis of local authority and RSL lettings)

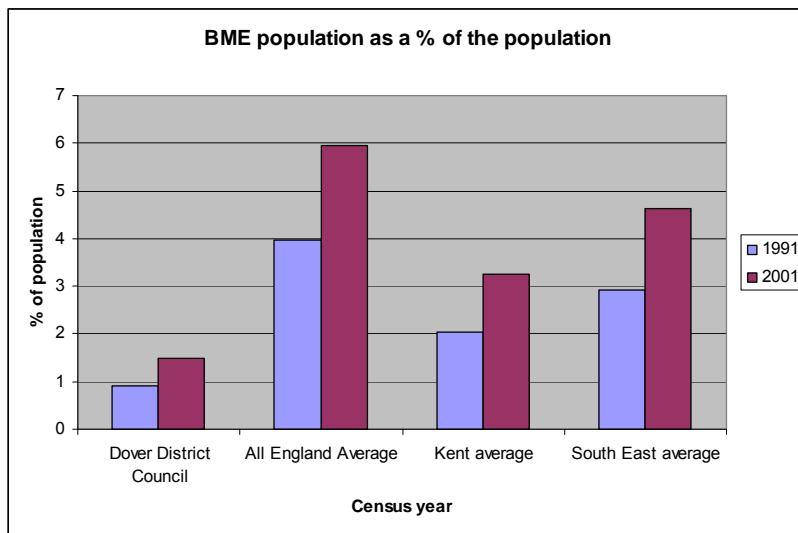
prisoners have no stable home to return to and that a homeless ex-offender is twice as likely to re-offend as one with a stable home.

Currently Dover District has 16 units of short term supported accommodation to meet the needs of this group, which is more than all other Kent local authorities with the exception of Maidstone.

The Supporting People Needs Assessment Report 2009 highlights a need a need for more dedicated accommodation-based provision for ex-offenders.

Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Households

On the basis of 2001 Census data the percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic households living in the district is relatively small, significantly less than the South East average and only grew by 0.6% between 1991 and 2001.



Source: Census 2001

However, we are aware that this information is old and that the situation may well have changed. Ethnic group population estimates for mid 2007 produced by the Office for National Statistics indicate that the non white British population of the district is 6.7% and that the non white population is 3.6%.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there may be a significant Eastern European community living in a specific area within Dover. Our Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 refers to our belief that some of the worst privately rented accommodation is occupied by non British ethnic groups in the town centre of Dover but, that because we rarely receive enquiries from them, our understanding of any specific needs they may have is very limited.

There are recording mechanisms that we can use to monitor some key aspects of service delivery to BME households such as lettings and homelessness and we have undertaken a customer profiling survey of our own tenants so that we can ensure our management services are responsive to BME needs. However, we recognise the need to take a more proactive approach in understanding BME housing needs whether this is in terms of improving access to information and services or to specialist housing. We will therefore be identifying ways that we can most effectively engage with these groups in the future.

Gypsies & Travellers

Gypsies and Travellers are recognised as amongst the most disadvantaged BME groups¹⁰ in the country, and it is as important to try to meet their housing needs, as it is for the settled community.

In 2007, the four East Kent local authorities (Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Shepway District Council, and Thanet District Council), undertook a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). The aim of the GTAA was to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the sub-region from 2007 – 2011; and then from 2012 –2017 in accordance with CLG guidance.

The study found quite high proportions of households suffering poor health especially those who were living on the roadside.

In terms of additional pitch provision the study identified a need for an additional 3 pitches up to 2012 and a further 4 during the period 2012-2017.

In terms of accommodation preferences, 97% of Gypsies and Travellers who responded to the survey indicated that they would prefer to live on either a private or local authority site. None said that they wanted to live in a house or bungalow.

Since the East Kent study was conducted the South East Regional Assembly has, as part of a partial review of the South East Plan carried out its own consultation and formulated preferred options in respect of site provision across the County. This has been subject to an Examination in Public which took place in February 2010 and it is anticipated that a report will be published in Spring/early Summer 2010.

¹⁰ The 1976 Race Relations Act recognises Gypsies and Irish travellers as an ethnic group