

A Housing Strategy for Sunderland - 20 17- 2022

Growth, Choice, Quality

Our Vision for Sunderland

Our vision is for a greater choice of good quality homes which meet not just the needs but the aspirations of our residents and City so we can all grow and prosper. These homes will be based in thriving neighbourhoods where everyone feels part of their community.

Foreword

Having a good home is vitally important. It is important for our health, education, feeling of security and of course our economic well-being. It can give the best start in life to our children and the best care and support required in our later years. Housing encompasses every aspect of our life and all stages of our life. It is the foundation of achieving a great quality of life.

New housing and a greater choice of housing is also a key part of our economic transformation strategy. The right mix of good quality housing of all types, sizes and tenures will underpin our skills offer to new business investment by meeting the needs of our current and future residents. It is important that we support housing growth to meet a growing population and to support economic growth but this cannot be achieved solely by developing new homes but also by focusing on our existing stock and making better use of it for everyone, including our vulnerable households.

We know that achieving our vision will not be easy in these times of constant change and continuing austerity but it is important that we are ambitious and innovative in realising our vision and continue to improve the excellent housing services we have in Sunderland. Partnership working will be key to this. The economy will continue to change and new housing policy will emerge through the life of this strategy. We need to make sure we are prepared for these changes and can adapt to meet local housing need.

With our partners we will work hard to bring to reality our vision and the priorities within this strategy.

Cllr. Graeme Miller

Portfolio Holder for Health, Housing and Adult Services

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic Context

The Housing Strategy for Sunderland does not stand alone and most of the priorities and actions within it operate alongside existing strategies, delivery plans and policies. In particular it will help deliver emerging planning policies and priorities outlined in Sunderland's Local Plan, Housing Investment Prospectus and Housing Delivery Plan (September 2016).

This strategy has also been developed in the context of the role of the North East Combined Authority, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and the Northern Power House which aims to boost the regional economy. It is important that Sunderland continues to contribute towards regional ambitions for growth by continuing to work with other Local Authorities, the Homes and Communities Agency and regional partners.

From a national perspective, the Government is currently introducing a raft of new legislation to stimulate and speed up housing supply and to reform the welfare system. Whilst it has been possible to determine some of the implications of the Housing and Planning Act and the Welfare Reform and Work Act much of the detail has yet to be established. It is, therefore, important that we are responsive to legislative changes as they emerge and shape these policies to meet the needs of our local housing market.

The table below sets out the national, regional and local context.

(insert table – separate document presently as landscape – See Appendix 1a)

The strategy and the priorities have been developed in the context of national, regional and local policies and also take into account supporting evidence and documents. These are shown below.

Image of a folder for each three sections with links to evidence and supporting documents inside.

We are Sunderland

Sunderland has a lot to be proud of. Lying at the heart of the North East; Sunderland is well placed for local jobs and amenities. And there are good reasons why over 250,000 people want to live in our communities. It could be said that Sunderland has it all: coast, country and city life. One of only three UK cities on the coast, Sunderland has six miles of stunning coastline, recently enhanced by major regeneration spending. We are proud to be one of the top five greenest cities in the country; a massive 57% of our area is green space.

With over 275,000 residents, the City is a great place where people want to live and work. The city is transforming. Over the last two years, over £1.2bn of public and private investment has been announced that will strengthen the economic base and contribute to the ambition to create 20,000 new jobs in the City by 2025. With the region's high tech automotive industry centred on Sunderland, combined with significant elements of the advanced manufacturing, transport and off-shore sectors, the city is central to the North East's £12.1bn export trade.

As part of the Sunderland City Deal, in partnership with South Tyneside, we are seeking to deliver an International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) on land to the north of the existing Nissan complex. The IAMP is expected to create approximately 5,200 new jobs within the automotive and advanced manufacturing sectors, unlocking £300m of private sector investment.

Key Achievements

This strategy is built on the strong foundation of many achievements; most through close working with housing partners and our residents.

- The city is ranked in the top 5% of local authorities for the quality of the living environment
- A massive 91% of residents are satisfied with their current accommodation (PHSCS)
- The City's private housing stock has improved with 84% of houses meeting the decent homes standard in 2014 compared to 77% in 2009. (PHSCS)
- The City has a nationally recognised Extra care Housing programme with 776 units of mixed tenure accommodation.
- In 2015 – 2016, 895 homes were completed – the highest number of private housing completions in Tyne and Wear
- Between 2014 – 2016, 1593 new houses were built, compared to 765 in the previous two years.
- All social housing meets the Decent Homes Standard.

Challenges for the City's Housing Market

As a City we have achieved a lot with regard to housing. However, there are also many challenges we have to face and overcome. Some challenges emerge from national policy and legislation and some from our unique local housing market. We will make it a priority to tackle these issues; working closely with our partners and residents to overcome or lessen any negative implications.

One of our real challenges is that we know that we are losing families to neighbouring areas because of a lack of larger family homes and also as families state they wish to live in "better neighbourhoods". A top priority is to increase the number of quality, family homes available within the City in order to meet the needs of all of our existing families and those

moving into Sunderland to take up employment opportunities and also to regenerate the City and its neighbourhoods.

Sunderland has a need for more homes. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) will identify the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing in the City and the Council's emerging Local Plan will identify sites to meet this need.

Whilst there is a need for new homes to boost the economy, there is also a need to address challenges within the existing stock.

The condition of Sunderland's existing stock is getting better each year but there is also still much to be done particularly in: improving the private rented sector; tackling empty homes; and regenerating some of our neighbourhoods showing symptoms of housing decline.

This Housing Strategy for Sunderland comes at a time of great change and reform. Recent changes in legislation and national policy have created challenges for the City resulting in us having to think more innovatively about how we deliver quality housing services with fewer resources, particularly for vulnerable and homeless residents. Welfare reform and austerity measures have resulted in our residents and social landlords having less income to spend on housing. A key impact of this has been the increased need for affordable housing for families who can no longer afford to buy a house at market values and at the same time fewer affordable houses being built. These changes have particularly affected our vulnerable families who are turning more and more to the private rented sector to find homes.

This strategy will explore all of these challenges in more detail and provide potential solutions and actions to tackle them.

Purpose of the Strategy

Our Housing Strategy sets out a clear direction, over the next five years, to offer more choice in housing by developing new homes and by improving existing homes and neighbourhoods. This in turn will help communities be sustainable in the longer term and contribute to the City's prosperity and well-being. It also commits to supporting our most vulnerable residents to access and maintain good quality housing which meets their needs.

The strategy is divided into three chapters which recognise our three greatest housing priorities. However, each impact on the other and much of the work around these priorities will necessarily be overlapping and interdependent.

The Council cannot achieve this alone. It believes that this can only be achieved by working closely with its partners, as shared resources and innovative partnerships and solutions are the best way forward to meet future challenges.

This strategy is a framework; setting direction for everyone involved in housing – residents, ward members, housing associations, developers, government bodies, regulators, investors, private landlords, charities and voluntary groups and the Council – to provide the right type of homes that are needed. This in turn provides the foundation for our residents to reach their potential and contribute to the prosperity of the City.

Strategic Housing Priorities

The previous section has described our vision and the context in which our housing market is operating. However, vision and direction are not sufficient. Using the comprehensive evidence bases available to us, taking into account current and future legislation and by consulting with a range of partners, ward members and local people we have developed three key strategic outcomes and key priorities to take forward over the next five years.

Our Priorities (Format to be changed)

Maximising Housing Growth and Increasing the Choice of Housing
Increasing the supply of available housing land. Increasing the speed and delivery of new homes. Diversifying the Housing Offer to meet identified housing needs.
Making the best use of Existing Homes and Improving our Neighbourhoods
Reducing the number of homes that have been empty for over 2 years or create problems within communities. Intervening into priority areas of housing decline. Raising standards in the private sector to improve health and well-being.
Supporting Vulnerable People to Access and Maintain Housing
Limiting the negative effect of welfare reform on homelessness. Reducing the numbers of people presenting as homeless. Supporting vulnerable people and older people to find and keep suitable housing. Improving the health of vulnerable and homeless people. Improving accommodation for residents with disabilities

The following chapters will explore in more detail what the key challenges and priorities are and how we intend to deliver them.

CHAPTER ONE – MAXIMISING HOUSING GROWTH AND INCREASING THE CHOICE OF HOUSING

“MORE HOUSING – STRONGER CITY”

We are continually seeking to improve the quality, quantity and choice of type, location and price of housing within the city to meet aspirations and demands to support economic growth.

Everyone in the city, and those wanting to come to Sunderland, should have the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford, in a place where they want to live and work, and to be part of a safe, diverse, healthy and strong community. In addition, getting the housing offer right in terms of numbers, type, size, tenure and price/affordability is critical in underpinning the economic success of the city.

Transforming Our City - The 3,6,9 Vision” (link) is an ambitious blueprint that will stimulate local demand and economic impact and aspires to: Support the creation of 20,000 new jobs in the city between 2015 and 2024 ; secure £1bn of economic investment; and achieve a total additional Gross Value Added (GVA) of £1.8bn generated over the period to 2024.

To support the economic growth and prosperity the city aspires to, there is a need to build more housing that is able to support a variety of incomes and circumstances.

Appropriate housing is fundamental to any holistic care and support provision for older people, vulnerable people and those who are disadvantaged. It will be necessary to ensure the housing needed to support these groups is also provided and this will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Three.

This chapter will cover how the council and its partners, both in the public and private sectors, will increase housing quantity, quality and choice to support economic growth and meet the needs and aspirations of the city’s existing population and those moving to the city.

Facts and Figures to be presented as infographics (acknowledging source)

- Council tax band percentages in comparison with national – See Appendix 1b
- 3.45% of people with specialist housing needs
- Imbalance of 615 net affordable units per annum over the next 5 years
- 27% of all new housing completions within the last 5 years were 4-5 bedroomed houses. (727/2733)
- Approximately 40,000 people commute into the city on a daily basis.

- 84% of households that have moved over the last 5 years chose to stay in the city. 81% of households that intend to move in the next 5 years wish to remain in the city.
- Of households moving in the open market, most would like to move to a house (71.8%), 23.4% would like to move to a bungalow (including Sunderland Cottages) and 4.7% to a flat.
- There are 1538 homes with planning permission which have not started or are currently under construction.
- There are 12 “stalled” housing sites
- It is estimated that less than 5% of completions over the last five years were developed by SMEs. (UNIFORM)

Key Challenges for Investment and Growth

Land Supply

There are currently insufficient new homes to meet the housing needs and aspirations of the city and as such there is a programme to increase housing supply in Sunderland. However, Sunderland does not have sufficient available land, in the right places, to build the homes the City needs. This is partially down to its success in delivering a significant amount of brownfield sites. As such, it will be necessary to explore different opportunities to increase the City’s housing land supply including: bringing vacant properties back into use; utilising surplus to requirement industrial land, considering some open space that no longer performs its original function and exploring the potential use of Green Belt land.

The Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) assesses potential sites for future housing development and is updated regularly. The most recent SHLAA, which was published in 2016, identifies land for 15581 homes over the next fifteen years of which 4036 are in the Coalfields, 7025 in South Sunderland, 1499 in North Sunderland, 2038 in the Central area and 983 in Washington.

A Local Plan is currently being prepared for Sunderland which is set to replace the city’s current Unitary Development Plan. The Local Plan will ensure that the supply of housing meets the needs of the current and future population of the City and give us the ability to guide and direct where it goes and what it looks like.

Housing Delivery

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) assesses the future requirement for homes in Sunderland. The SHMA identifies that Sunderland’s housing stock is dominated by terraces and semi-detached properties and there is a shortage of detached dwellings. Three quarters of all homes fall into the lowest Council Tax bracket (A and B) which indicates a need to diversify the existing housing stock to ensure that sufficient homes are provided of the right type, in the right place and in the right tenure.

With the country accelerating its housing growth, there is a known lack of capacity within the larger and mainstream housing developers and as such there is an increasing role for exploring modern methods of construction and for working with Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs). Currently less than 5% per cent of dwellings developed in Sunderland are developed by SMEs. This is because SMEs often have problems identifying and purchasing appropriate development sites, due to inability to commit funding at risk or speculative developments and tendered sites, as well as the costs involved to create a fundable scheme. These costs typically include securing an interest in the land and costs associated with obtaining planning and survey work. In addition to this, SMEs are unlikely to have the direct access to the necessary professionals such as surveys, planners and solicitors and require support and advice in these areas.

Self-build in this country and in the City is also very low compared to rates in Europe. Put in as a link or footnote to reference this - <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06784/SN06784.pdf>

The Council and its partners need to take positive action to support and advise SMEs and self-builders to bring forward packages of small sites, making them available to smaller builders and “de-risking” sites as much as possible by facilitating permissions on windfall sites - this will be facilitated by the Council’s self-build register and the completion of a small sites register.

Outward Migration

The limited choice in the City’s housing stock and the importance of place and neighbourhoods remains an important factor affecting why people, particularly those within economically active age-groups, leave the city for neighbouring areas. This is particularly prevalent when neighbouring authorities are developing new housing. This creates problems for the city, as schools, shops and services come under increasing pressure to remain viable. There is a need to stem outward migration by providing new housing and great neighbourhoods which meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents. Currently, approximately 40,000 people commute into the City on a daily basis for employment purposes. We want to provide housing that meets their needs. This will help us move towards more sustainable patterns of development that support opportunities to live, work and socialise without the need to travel long distances.

There is a particular need to provide executive homes for higher income groups, who aspire to move to larger properties. There are less than 0.5% of houses within Council Tax band G-H within the city, whilst the SHMA indicates that of the 6,280 households earning a minimum of £950 per week, 43.8% would like to move to a larger house, with 31.3% expressing an interest in moving in the next five years and 90.8% identifying Sunderland as their first preference for a home. However, their aspirations differ from their expectations,

because the housing options the City's higher income groups aspire to are not being delivered, with a notable lack of executive homes being developed

There is also a need for graduate focused accommodation with 3,000 students graduating each year from the City's University; particularly for those wishing to start small businesses from home.

Ageing Population

Housing plays a fundamental role in ensuring the health and wellbeing of its residents, particularly older persons and vulnerable groups. The number of older persons aged 65+ in Sunderland City area is projected to increase by 42% from 2015 to 2039. This presents a strategic challenge for the City. It is important that plans are put in place, based on sound evidence of need. Working with partners and providers is vital to ensure increased housing choices are available to support the increasing group of older persons with a variety of housing needs. Currently there is a real shortage of bungalows.

Affordable Housing

There continues to be an increasing demand for affordable housing units particularly with the current economic situation and the impact of welfare reform. The SHMA identifies an imbalance of 615 affordable units per annum. Planning policy requires 10% affordable housing from all residential developments of 15 units or more, through Section 106s (S106s). This is insufficient to meet the affordable housing imbalance and other methods of providing affordable housing will need to be explored, including affordable home ownership.

However, at the current time, the affordable housing sector is experiencing a period of rapid change as a consequence of the recession, development viability and a number of recent changes in government policy. This has created a climate of uncertainty and heightened risk and consequently less affordable housing is being delivered by Registered Providers and/or through S106s. The council and its partners will have to be creative and flexible in securing the levels of affordable housing that the city needs for the future and consider many forms of affordable housing within the context of emerging Government policy.

Regeneration Sites and Housing Renewal

There are some areas of the City where the priorities are not about a shortage of supply or affordability. They are around low value, obsolete, empty or unfit stock in need of renewal. In some cases these lie adjacent to strongly performing neighbourhoods and physically highlight economic divisions that need to be resolved. Housing developers have advised that location is all important and they are reluctant to build close to these areas even where brownfield sites are available.

The Council has previously undertaken programmes of area renewal in partnership with Gentoo and the Homes and Communities Agency, which resulted in high levels of housing clearance in parts of Castletown and Hetton Downs. Gentoo has also undertaken large scale area renewal in Southwick, Doxford Park, Ford and Houghton-le-Spring and has future renewal planned for Glebe, Hetton Downs, Pennywell and further phases at Doxford Park.

A series of Masterplans and Area Action Plans were implemented to guide delivery of new housing on the renewal area sites, ensuring the right type, mix and tenure of housing was delivered. Through this programme the Council and its partners successfully reversed housing decline, regenerating neighbourhoods and improving the quality of life for its residents. Two key housing renewal areas remain outstanding, which the council and its partners must continue to progress, addressing any hurdles or viability issues to the sites coming forward; the sites are Hetton Downs and Pennywell.

Viability of Sites

New housing alone does not create sustainable communities and it is important developments do not adversely impact on the city's existing infrastructure. As such there is often a requirement for development to provide or fund supporting infrastructure including utilities, transport, highway improvements, schools, health, social and leisure services.

However, it is recognised that current market conditions can be a key challenge to viable development on some sites and some areas of Sunderland, thus hampering development coming forward. The Council takes guidance from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) regarding viability.

The Council already has a good track record of adopting a proactive flexible approach to providing solutions to make development work and will continue to explore further opportunities to assist on difficult sites. This may include, de-risking sites by addressing environmental and infrastructure issues or by securing outline planning permission. The Council will also continue working with developers of privately owned sites to secure financing or grants.

Sustainable Housing

Developers will also be encouraged to provide higher levels of energy efficiency and sustainability in housing development. Housing can play a significant role in reducing energy demands through incorporating the principles behind low carbon development. The layout and orientation of buildings and green space play an important role in mitigating the effects of climate change and improving energy efficiency. Passive solar gain is the siting and design of buildings to harness the sun's energy for heating and cooling and should be incorporated into designs for new housing. The prudent and efficient use of natural resources and materials should also be incorporated into the construction of new properties.

The design of housing should be informed by a commitment to sustainability and energy conservation issues to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Sustainability in its widest sense should be fundamental to any housing development proposals through the successful integration of the development into existing communities, providing appropriate infrastructure and good quality connections.

Our Key Priorities

Based on the challenges described and our robust evidence base, it is clear what our priorities are. The table below sets out what these priorities are and what key actions will be taken to meet them.

Headline Outcomes	Key Priorities	Headline Actions	Evidence of priority
Maximising Housing Growth and Increasing the choice of housing	Increasing the supply of housing land	<p>Deliver a greater choice of housing through best use of Council assets.</p> <p>Work with partners and proactively look for opportunities to create additional housing land and site assembly options.</p> <p>Consider the potential for surplus to requirement employment land for housing through future reviews of the city's employment land portfolio.</p>	SHLAA and completions
	Increasing the speed and delivery of new homes.	<p>Deliver increased number of new homes (both affordable and market housing) in order to meet demand.</p> <p>Council to explore ways to directly influence and invest in new homes for sale and rent.</p> <p>Facilitate stalled sites so that they can come forward.</p> <p>Continuing practical support</p>	SHMA Housing Investment Prospectus Housing Delivery Plan

		<p>and dialogue with all developers, including SMEs and self/custom builders. Explore financial support to accelerate delivery on these sites.</p> <p>Work with the construction industry to explore the use of new technologies and modular construction.</p> <p>Continue to support the regeneration sites of Groves, Pennywell, Vaux, Sunnyside, Hetton Downs and any future regeneration sites.</p> <p>Investigate the use of partnership vehicles which may allow the Council to draw in private finance to accelerate the delivery of new homes.</p> <p>Prepare Masterplans and strategies as required to facilitate delivery.</p> <p>Explore and secure different sources of funding e.g. HCA, DCLG</p>	
	Diversifying the housing offer to meet identified housing needs	<p>Maximise the delivery of affordable housing, including flexibility in use of affordable housing contributions in lieu and a diverse range of affordable housing.</p> <p>Promote information about grant funding opportunities to support delivery of affordable housing.</p> <p>Ensure information on a range of financial options is available to allow first-time</p>	SHMA Adult services Market Position Statement

		<p>and second-time buyers to purchase and maintain new homes.</p> <p>Ensure more higher-value, executive housing is built to attract high income earners to live within the City.</p> <p>Deliver with partners accommodation solutions for older people and those with specialist housing needs.</p> <p>Specifically identify council assets to be used to deliver housing that meets particular housing needs/ aspirations e.g. executive housing, affordable housing, bungalows</p> <p>Encourage a wider range of housing in the privately rented sector; especially new housing at the higher end of the market.</p>	
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Our approach will be founded on building strong relationships with partners to improve the quality, quantity and choice of housing within the City to meet the aspirations and needs of all our residents both now and in the future. At the same time we will be sensitive to any environmental or social issues from new developments and work to mitigate these in consultation with the existing local communities.

CHAPTER TWO – MAKING BETTER USE OF OUR EXISTING HOUSING AND IMPROVING OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

“BETTER HOUSING – STRONGER COMMUNITIES”

Strong and safe communities, where people can live healthy and happy lives, cannot simply be an aspiration but must be a vital requirement for a thriving and growing City like Sunderland.

The condition of our housing has a direct impact on our communities – on their health, well-being, education, prosperity and safety. Good housing standards are key to making being “healthy, wealthy and wise” a reality.

This chapter deals with how the Council and its partners will improve our housing, our neighbourhoods and the quality of life for all of our residents, including those who are the most vulnerable, living in neighbourhoods in need of renewal.

Partnership working and sharing our resources is key to improving our housing and neighbourhoods. This means working closely with and listening to communities, residents, ward members, landlords, housing developers and housing and health professionals.

Context/Key Facts as info graphics

- What our existing housing stock looks like - Pie chart/house chart of housing stock – 123,000 properties. 27% social 12% private rented 61% owner occupied. Compared to nationally 22.5 million households (63% o/o, 20% private rented, 17% social)* PHSCS 2014 and English Housing Survey 2015
- With regard to its housing stock, Sunderland City Council transferred its council stock to Sunderland Housing Group in 2001.
- Gentoo owns 29,148 properties which are let at affordable rents or shared ownership (155 units)
- Private rented sector is the fastest growing sector and has doubled within the last 10 years.
- 5684 students living in Sunderland with 2911 living in the private rented sector
- Houses in Multiple Occupation with 5 or more people in England 234,000 (DCLG 2016)
- HMOs of which 169 (0.1% of the total housing stock) are licensed (60,000 in the UK) and estimate of 1640 HMOs in total (1.3%) – stock is 123,000
- 2756 (2.2%) empty (private and Social) for over 6 months in City– Council Tax September 2016
- North East Figures – 1.33% or 16,030 empty. Total stock 1,205,096 Empty Homes England

- 2.2% of empty homes compared to region 1.34% and 0.88% England* Government Live Tables
- All data below is from the PHSCS 2014
 - 15.7% of private homes fail to meet the decent homes standard compared to 20% in England.
 - 9.9% of private sector homes are estimated to be in fuel poverty compared to 11% in England
 - 23% of private households are affected by long term illness or disability.
- 19% of all housing stock was built pre 1919, 92% was built before 2000. 2.4% of all housing has been built since 2010. (VOA stats)

Key Challenges for Sunderland's Existing Stock

Providing more choice

We will seek to increase housing choice and quality through improving existing housing in the City, no matter what the tenure. Increased new housing is extremely important, however; 19% of our existing housing was built before 1919 and 92% was built before 2000 and so it is equally important in times of great housing pressure that this stock is used to maximum effect. To this end we must make sure there is a good standard across all housing types and tenures for all of our residents.

The Private Rented Sector (PRS)

If we are to increase housing choice, Sunderland should have a well- managed and flexible private rented sector that provides a range of good quality housing for our residents. The private rented sector is the fastest growing sector in the City and has doubled over the last 10 years to 12% of the total housing stock. This is relatively small compared to the picture nationally where 20% of the housing stock is for private rent. However, this is the least regulated part of the rental market.

The private rented sector should not be seen as a last resort but as a good option for residents wanting flexibility and wishing to access a range of housing types in all areas of the City.

The private rented properties within Sunderland are presently at the lower priced end of the market or aimed at students. Moreover, rents are reducing due to welfare reform and increased competition in the student sector. **There is a gap in the market for good quality privately rented accommodation for professionals and working families and those attracted to Sunderland by employment opportunities.** There is an opportunity for private renting to play a major role in underpinning the growth of employment to be created by the International Advanced Manufacturing Park.

The solution to a well- managed private rented sector is **a balance between landlord engagement and partnership on the one hand and targeted enforcement action by the Council on the other.** (Link to enforcement policy and Housing and Planning Act.)

The proposed wider definition of a licensed House in Multiple Occupation ([link](#)) will result in closer regulation of some of the higher risk HMO properties in the sector. However, the most important relationship in the PRS is that between a landlord and a tenant with Council intervention as a last resort. The Council and its partners can facilitate this relationship by providing advice, education and guidance to landlords, agents and tenants so landlords can self-regulate and become more professional and tenants have the knowledge required to maintain their tenancy.

Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal

There are some neighbourhoods that are not as prosperous as others and have a lack of good housing and poor physical environments where intervention is vital to make them sustainable and to provide equality for all residents. It is important that alongside developing new homes and communities we align our strategies for housing and economic development to invest in and regenerate our existing communities.

Poor housing conditions are found more in privately rented houses with economically and socially disadvantaged households. There are some places in the City already **showing symptoms of housing decline** and anti-social behaviour: these are most prevalent in parts of Hendon, Hetton Downs, Sulgrave, Millfield, Pallion, Eden Vale, New Silksworth Cottages and pockets of the Coalfield area. ([link to PSHCS 2014 Hotspot Areas](#))

If left unaddressed, while the wider housing stock continues to improve, this will result in some of Sunderland's most vulnerable residents becoming less healthy, less prosperous and more isolated and their communities becoming less sustainable. In the longer term it could potentially lead to costly demolition programmes for non-decent housing. It also lowers land values and acts as a disincentive for developers to provide housing in or adjacent to these areas especially when some low demand areas are connected to places of relative economic prosperity.

Student Accommodation

Exacerbating the symptoms of decline in some of our neighbourhoods, is the recent **trend of students moving to purpose built student accommodation** in the City centre ([link to map of student accommodation trends](#)). This is having an impact on some traditionally private rented areas some already showing symptoms of housing decline (parts of Millfield, Pallion, Roker and the Barnes), with increased numbers of empty HMOs and privately rented properties. This is being intensified by an overall decrease in the number of students coming to study at Sunderland University.

Whilst the purpose built accommodation has driven up standards and provided greater choice for students, the impact on traditional student neighbourhoods must be monitored and managed.

[Link to Student Accommodation Policy](#)

Empty homes

Over 2000 houses are currently empty in Sunderland.

Most empty homes are only empty for a short time with problems arising when a house is empty for a longer period. A home can be empty for a number of reasons such as a person moving to a care home or while it is being refurbished. However, high numbers of empty homes in an area can also be a symptom of housing decline where demand for housing is low and this is reflected in low house prices.

In addition to being a waste of a vital housing resource, longer term empty homes often attract vandalism and anti-social behaviour and have a negative impact on communities. It is these empty homes which require more intervention.

The Council and its partners work closely with the owners of longer term empty homes, in targeted renewal areas, to offer advice, support and financial assistance to encourage reoccupation of their empty property. This also provides additional housing for those families on the Council's Housing Register. Where required, the Council carries out targeted enforcement action against particularly problematic empty properties and their owners who otherwise fail to engage with the council.

Properties, that have been brought back into use to date, have largely gone back into the private sector and not the social sector. It is important that we look now at increasing the affordable housing provision and other options for returning empty homes back into use to be well-managed by competent, professional landlords.

Due to welfare reform and a growing private rented sector at the lower end of the housing market, we need to examine the possibility of either the Council and/or partners becoming a provider and manager of private rented sector properties. This would provide greater choice to families, improve the quality of the sector and help return to use empty homes, as well as potentially helping the Council's wider plans around looked after children and meeting homelessness needs.

Healthy Homes/Healthy People

Our home is not just a dwelling place. It should be a place of comfort, shelter, safety and warmth...it is the main setting for our health throughout our lives.* Public Health Matters blog – Public Health England 2015

It is said that poor housing costs the NHS at least £1.4bn* per year. In Sunderland this is estimated to be £0.117m ** PHSCS. We cannot ignore the role that housing plays in keeping people in good health and keeping people out of hospital. “*The Cost of Poor Housing to the NHS” Nicol, Roys, Garrett 2014 Briefing paper.

The major health issue within Sunderland's private housing (rented and owner occupied) is **damp and excess cold** which has been assessed as a major hazard in 1957 houses.

Falls are also an issue with 537 homes having falling and tripping hazards. Removing these hazards would save the NHS £99,162 each year. These issues are being addressed by the Council's Falls Co-ordinator.

Bringing together health and housing is fundamental if we are to rise to the challenge to improve the City's health

In December 2014, "A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to Support Joint Action on Improving Health through the Homes" was agreed between Government bodies, Local Government Association, NHS England and other health and housing professionals.

The MoU details areas of improvement and an action plan to ensure organizations work together to: establish and support national and local dialogue; coordinate health, social care, and housing policy; enable improved collaboration and integration of healthcare and housing in the planning, commissioning and delivery of homes and services; promote the housing sector contribution to addressing the wider determinants of health; and develop the workforce across sectors so that they are confident and skilled in understanding the relationship between where people live and their health and wellbeing and are able to identify suitable solutions to improve outcomes.

In the last 4 years approximately £11 million have been spent in providing aids and adaptations for sick and disabled people to allow them to remain in their own homes across all tenures. Also, a range of equipment can be installed in the homes of disabled and elderly people which is attached to an alarm system. This is provided by Sunderland Care and Support. However, those homes with permanent adaptations can then be difficult to sell or rent to other people. Other solutions such as relocation and support to do this must also be considered.

Affordable Warmth

Affordable warmth is a key priority for the City and driving local domestic energy efficiency improvements will bring significant benefits for Sunderland residents including:

- helping reduce residents' fuel bills
- helping make homes warmer and healthier
- making a vital contribution to reducing local and national carbon emissions
- supporting wider local strategic priorities on issues such as health and poverty

Within the private housing stock, 9.9% of households are estimated to be in fuel poverty. Although this is lower than the national average of 11%, rates of fuel poverty are above average for households living in the PRS (44.8%) and in pre 1919 housing (22.4%) and this needs to be addressed.

In January 2017, the Government updated guidance to the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 on local authorities' duty to submit reports regarding their priorities and targets to improve energy efficiency in all residential accommodation in their areas. Sunderland's report for 2017 is being developed and will detail opportunities across the City for energy efficiency improvements in residential accommodation. The 2017 Report will also highlight recent successes in the City, including:

- Warm-up North Partnership between several north-east local authorities and British Gas to address fuel poverty by providing energy efficiency measures to eligible households. (<https://warmupnorth.com>)
- Sustainable Sunderland Project to promote energy efficiency behaviour change (<http://www.sustainablesunderland.org.uk>)
- Low Carbon Energy Demonstration project providing heat to 100 Gentoo properties in Glebe, Washington
- The launch of the Sunderland Housing Investment Prospectus (<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11841>)
- DECC Local Authority Funding to reduce the extent of fuel poverty primarily through the provision of improvements to the thermal efficiency of dwellings amongst low income and vulnerable households

From April 2018, private domestic and non-domestic landlords will need to ensure that their properties reach at least an E Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating, or have installed those improvements through subsidies available to pay for them, before granting a tenancy to new or existing tenants. Currently, 5.9% of properties in the PRS do not reach an E EPC rating.

Owner occupied stock

Over 16% of owner occupiers live in properties that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard. Over half of these have no mortgage and an estimated equity potential of £7.655 billion but they are reluctant to borrow money to improve their homes. Solutions to advise owner occupiers on the importance to health of a decent home must be further explored.

Social Stock

Sunderland's social housing stock is owned and managed by Registered Providers and Housing Associations.

The physical condition of social stock in the City is good, meets the Decent Homes Standard and it is generally well-managed. However, neighbourhood assessments based on socio economic data, health and housing management undertaken by Gentoo, the largest provider of social housing in the City, show that a number of neighbourhoods need monitoring and possible intervention. These include central

Hendon, Sulgrave and Marley Potts which largely reflect the areas of housing decline in the private sector.

Our Key Priorities

Based on the challenges described and our robust evidence base, it is clear what our priorities are. The table below sets out what these priorities are and what key actions will be taken to meet them.

Headline outcomes	Key Priorities	Headline actions	Evidence base
Making the best use of existing homes and improving our neighbourhoods	Reduce the number of homes that have been empty for over 2 years or create problems within neighbourhoods.	<p>Bring empty homes back to use through Council or partners schemes; especially to increase affordable housing provision.</p> <p>Council to explore ways to directly invest in empty homes with the aim of bringing these back into use.</p> <p>Targeted enforcement action to bring problematic empty homes back into use</p> <p>Offer financial assistance (as set out in the Financial assistance Policy) for acquiring, refurbishing and bringing empty homes back into use.</p> <p>Continue to monitor the impact of student accommodation trends on empty homes numbers, in targeted wards.</p>	Council Tax Data Student Accommodation project

	Intervening into priority areas of housing decline	<p>Agree and resource renewal areas where intervention is required.</p> <p>Use enforcement powers where necessary to ensure private rented stock is free from Category 1 hazards.</p> <p>Acquire empty homes to be used as an affordable housing solution.</p> <p>Explore block improvement and environmental schemes to attract families and developers to areas in decline.</p> <p>Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour</p>	PHSCS Council Tax data
	Raise standards in the private sector to improve health and well-being	<p>Council and its partners continue to educate and advise landlords, owner occupiers and tenants.</p> <p>Council to establish proposed Rogue landlords' database and implement Banning Orders and civil penalties as needed.</p> <p>Council to implement the proposed new definition of mandatory HMOs and "fit and proper."</p> <p>Council to support and facilitate landlords and investors to provide</p>	PHSCS Housing and Planning Act 2016

		<p>privately rented housing at the higher end of the market to provide greater choice</p> <p>Health and Housing professionals to explore new ways to work together to improve residents health by improving housing.</p> <p>Consider establishing a private rented sector provider as an alternative to the market.</p> <p>Develop an affordable warmth strategy and monitor minimum standards for energy efficiency in the PRS.</p>	
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Our existing stock is made up of the homes where we all currently live. It is vital that it is of a good standard, no matter what the tenure. All of our residents deserve a decent home where they can live healthy and prosperous lives and live in a neighbourhood which is safe. This chapter shows what actions we will take to do this.

CHAPTER THREE – SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE TO ACCESS AND MAINTAIN HOUSING

“BETTER SUPPORT – STRONGER PEOPLE”

Everyone has the right to access a good quality home to allow them to lead a fulfilling and independent life.

We believe that communities must respond to the needs of all its members, including those who are vulnerable, in order to be strong, inclusive and sustainable. We recognise that vulnerability is not necessarily permanent and therefore provision for a range of general needs and specialist support services to ensure people lead healthy and happy lives is important. Our residents can be vulnerable for a whole range of reasons. (See chart APPENDIX 2)

In considering our strategic approach to support vulnerable people to access and maintain housing, national and local context need to be taken in to account; inclusive of: the Care Act 2014, the Sunderland Health and Well-being Strategy and the Homelessness Duty. (Provide links).

Our Market Position Statement Analysis on Care and Support Services in Sunderland highlights that Sunderland’s total population in 2015 was 276,000 and is projected to rise to around 280,000 by 2030. Within the overall population there will be people who will have particular accommodation needs that will need to be provided for within our Housing Strategy and other related policy documents. These accommodation needs will provide a range of challenges which will be addressed through this strategy including the housing needs of older people, disabled people, victims of domestic abuse, gypsies and travellers and homeless people.

The Council and its partners will enable all people to access and maintain a good quality home by connecting them to services across health, education, training and employment, and provide the support they need to live happy, independent lives; especially those facing barriers and are less able to help themselves.

The Council works in partnership with various advice services. (See Appendix TO INSERT) to offer early advice and support to work with individuals.

Context/Key Facts as info graphics

- 68% of Gentoo’s tenants are in receipt of benefits
- 375 Gentoo households are struggling to pay their rent.

- As At 25/01/17 there were 2084 people on the Housing Registration database. This has increased since last year.
- There are 55 expressions of interest under Choice Based Lettings for each nomination to Gentoo property advertised; most of these are in the 22 – 34 years age group.
- There are 15,191 vulnerable households in the private sector
- 3.45% of people with specialist housing needs (need source)
- During 2015-2016, 262 people presented with as homeless citing domestic abuse from partner as the reason
- 4 rough sleepers in 2016 – verified by DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government
- 46% of homeless people had accessed A and E in the last twelve months (Health Needs Audit 2016)
- 48 People with alcohol and drug dependency presented as homeless.
- 42 people left hospital with either no accommodation or unsuitable accommodation.
 - The number of people across the Sunderland area aged 65 or over is projected to increase by 42.2% from 51,600 in 2015 to 73,400 by 2039¹. (SHMA)
- Between 1.4.15 to 13.12.16 there were 119 cases accepted as homeless of those, 13 (11%) were vulnerable.
- Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Show people needs – there is a need for 18 additional plots for Travelling Show People between 2013 and 2023

Key Challenges in Supporting Vulnerable People and Preventing Homelessness

Whilst we have an excellent track record in supporting vulnerable people and preventing homelessness there are some key challenges that may affect our approach going forward and necessitate both a change in strategy and in approach.

Introduction of a Housing First approach

The Council's financial position means that we cannot continue delivering services for vulnerable people in the way that we do currently. A "whole system" change in approach is required to ensure that we continue to meet our statutory duties whilst introducing new ways of working that will be more sustainable in the long-term and ultimately lead to improved outcomes for residents. There will need to be even greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention and a move away from a reliance on crisis intervention. A move to an integrated solutions approach, involving relevant partners is essential.

With the above in mind, we are introducing a Housing First approach. It is an approach based on homelessness assistance that prioritises providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, particularly those who may have multiple and complex needs. It

is different from other approaches in that it does not require people experiencing homelessness to address all of their problems or to graduate through a series of service programmes before they can access housing. Supportive services will be offered to support people in achieving housing stability and individual well-being but this is reliant on a person choosing to engage as this is seen as more effective in the long-term.

There are some key principles that underpin the Housing First approach; namely:

1. People have a right to a home;
2. Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed;
3. Housing and support are separated;
4. Individuals have choice and control;
5. An active engagement approach is used;
6. The service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations;
7. A harm reduction approach is used.

These principles will be the bedrock of our new approach which will be rolled out over the coming months.

Whilst our focus will be on prevention and early intervention, there is an acknowledgement that we will need to consider options for crisis accommodation, inclusive of homeless young people and those who are victims of domestic abuse. For the former there will be joint work undertaken with Children's Services to consider needs and how services are commissioned.

Challenges arising from Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Act (2012) brought in numerous changes that affected the income of people living in Sunderland. Firstly, the 'spare room subsidy' (commonly known as the 'bedroom tax') meant that social housing tenants could no longer claim benefit for bedrooms they did not require. It has also capped housing benefits to 4 bedroomed properties only, meaning any large families occupying 5+ bedroom private sector houses have to pay the extra rent not covered by housing benefit. For some people welfare benefits have been capped and for people under 21 years it is proposed to stop automatic entitlement to housing benefits if it was currently in place.

The Welfare Reform Act (2012) and further government announcements relating to the welfare and benefits system have affected finance and other entitlements to households in Sunderland. The announcement in the Queen's Speech 2015 and the summer budget 2015 of the Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill, is likely to increase the challenge further by decreasing benefits at a time when housing costs are rising is likely to continue to produce a significant challenge.

Over the next three years Sunderland will also see the roll out of the Government's flagship welfare reform policy – Universal Credit. This will see a major change in the way that people

can claim benefits and what they will receive. Payment levels have been frozen until 2020 and when taking into account inflation and rising prices elsewhere claimants may see their support cut in real terms. It will be important that we help people understand what these changes will mean to them and support them in managing their finances to ensure they do not present as homeless due to the change.

These benefit reforms and welfare caps will also affect elderly residents who may not receive sufficient income to pay for their accommodation and support needs.

Preventing Homelessness

The Council has a statutory duty to provide assistance to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within the City. **The Council adopts an early intervention strategy to help find alternative accommodation for potential homelessness. We continue to develop partnerships with housing providers across all tenures, including the private rented sector, to enable permanent safe accommodation for homeless applicants.** The Council and its partners work to enable all people to access and maintain a good quality home by connecting them to services across health, education, training and employment, and provide the support they need to live happy, independent lives; especially those facing barriers and less able to help themselves.

This approach, which is founded on a good understanding of need, has enabled us to become one of the highest performing authorities in the country with low use of bed and breakfast accommodation, low numbers of rough sleepers and a reduced number repeat homelessness applications. We are committed to the principles of “No Second Night Out” and ensuring that there is appropriate housing accommodation for all.

Preventing Rough Sleeping

People can end up living on the streets for a number of reasons which can be often complex reasons including: mental health issues, substance misuse, and relationship breakdowns. Welfare reform could have an adverse impact by increasing the number of homelessness people, some of whom may go on to sleep rough.

The Council has excellent partnership working arrangements to ensure rough sleeping is minimised. The focus is on assertive outreach but one of the major challenges is the availability of funding for these services in the future.

In response, working with South Tyneside Council, we have bid successfully to the Government’s Rough Sleeping Fund, which will allow us to have a coordinated approach to rough sleeping across both areas and break the cycle of rough sleepers migrating between both areas.

Challenges for Housing Support

Currently, we have a range of services funded through our Housing Related Support programme, which provides accommodation and support for people who have an identified need, some of whom have multiple and complex needs and may be fleeing domestic violence.

Whilst the current approach has provided positive outcomes for some people with support needs, there are still too many people who are being turned away from services. Due to the austere financial position the council is in, this type of approach is no longer sustainable. This is a key challenge going forward and will require new ways of working to be introduced.

The Government is currently consulting on how supported housing could be funded in the future and this may involve some funding for local authorities for them to use to meet locally identified support needs. Whilst the detail on how the new funding is yet to be defined there are opportunities to bring together various partners – both internal and external to the council – to develop a holistic approach to the future commissioning of services taking in to account housing, health and social care needs.

Domestic Abuse

Sunderland has long been a trailblazer in regards to domestic abuse services, including the provision of crisis accommodation needs, and will continue to be so. We are one of three national pilots for 'Change that Lasts', which has been developed by Women's Aid. The pilot supports domestic abuse survivors and their children to build resilience and foster independence. It aims to reduce the number of women and children living with abuse and the long-term costs associated with abuse. A key element of the pilot is around safety and well-being with the focus being on a victim's own resources and minimum reliance on external and public resources. This chimes with our Housing First approach and will be more sustainable in the long-term as it will provide for a range of accommodation options within the community along with specialist advice and support for victims.

Our new approach to domestic abuse is again founded on collaboration with partners, ensuring that the support needed is provided by the specialists in their respective fields, particularly where there may be mental health or substance misuse issues. The collaborative approach also extends to working with other local authorities in the region, illustrated by a collaborative bid that has been submitted by six authorities to the Government's Domestic Abuse Fund, with a focus on providing crisis accommodation for those with complex needs, who are often turned away from services.

Improving the Health of those in Temporary and Hostel Accommodation

A Health Needs Audit (HNA) was undertaken through engagement with 182 homeless clients in the City in 2016. The aim of the audit was to Increase the evidence available about the health needs of people who are homeless and to help commissioners understand the effectiveness of their services. The main conclusions from the report are:-

- Differences in the make-up of the homeless population and the general population (homeless people are younger, more ethnically diverse, higher proportion of males).
- The homeless population has high levels of health needs, with high levels of both mental and physical health conditions.
- The top five physical health needs in this group were: - joint and muscular, dental health, eye health, fainting and blackouts, respiratory problems - heart and circulation.
- The top five mental health conditions in this group were: - depression, anxiety/phobia, PTSD, Schizophrenia, Personality disorder.
- Results from the local audit shows homeless people are heavy users of health services, with the number of A&E visits and hospital admissions per homeless person four times higher than the general public.

We are committed to working with our health partners to ensure that the health needs and inequalities presented in the audit are addressed and that a more preventative approach is adopted that will ensure that homeless people can access health services in a more inclusive way. In addition, there are issues with the discharge process from hospitals whereby the accommodation needs of individuals have not been fully considered which leads to inappropriate accommodation being provided. Work is on-going to consider how this can be improved in the future.

Ageing Population

Of the total population, the number of people aged over 65 in 2015 was 51,900 of which 5,900 people were aged over 85 years, which equates to around 20% of the overall population (check figures). This is projected to rise to 56,600 and 7,300 by 2020 and 68,800 and 10,100 by 2030. By 2020 the number of older people with dementia is expected to increase from 1075 in 2015 to 5165 by 2030. Moreover, the City's population in the 65years+ age range is predicted to increase and those of working age decrease. The number of people across the Sunderland area aged 65 or over is projected to increase by 42.2% from 51,600 in 2015 to 73,400 by 2039². (SHMA) with those aged 15 – 64 years being projected to decrease from 181,000 to 169,300 (-6.4%) (see SHMA). In short, there is likely to be a greater demand for supported housing and less income to pay for it.

Over the past few years we have been very progressive in providing accommodation with care options for older people through our Extra Care housing programme. Nearly 800 units have been developed with partners with another 75 units in development.

In addition, there are over 1200 units of sheltered housing in the city; so in accommodation terms we are currently well served in meeting the accommodation needs of older people in the city. We have established an Older Person's Accommodation Forum, through which we will engage with our housing provider partners to consider how we make best use of the accommodation on offer.

Going forward, to meeting the growing population of older people, a key challenge for the Council and its partners is to ensure a greater diversity of support services are made available to older people wanting to stay in their own home and to develop funding mechanisms to achieve this. Particularly noted is the need for help with gardening, repair and maintenance and cleaning.

Additionally, the range of housing options available to older people needs to be diversified, for instance through the development of open market housing designed for older people and the development of sheltered accommodation and co-housing for rent or sale. (link to Market Position Statement)

Providing Suitable Housing for People with Disabilities

Within the city there are currently there are a range of accommodation options for **people with learning disabilities**, some of which are directly commissioned by the Council. Accommodation options range from registered homes, core and cluster properties to properties providing supported living with care.

A Deregistration programme is currently being undertaken which is in line with the Council's vision to support people with learning disabilities, autism or complex needs to live in their own home and to enable them to have the same rights as everyone else.

People with learning disabilities are living longer and it is important therefore that there is a range of high-quality accommodation options available to support people who have a care and support need.

There are 3 core and cluster schemes offering 20 properties for **people with physical disabilities**. There is though a need to consider further options to meet need in the future.

In terms of new housing built in the city it is important that "lifetime homes" is considered in the design of new properties so that people who do have physical disabilities can be appropriately accommodated and those who may develop a physical disability can remain in their property where possible. This is vitally important if we are to manage social care requirements and associated costs.

There are currently 46 core and cluster properties within the city, with a further 2 supported living schemes for people with **mental ill health**. We will need to consider accommodation needs going forward and work with our partners, to provide accommodation solutions that meet the needs and the associated care and support provision.

We will continue to update our Market Position Statement on care and support services in Sunderland to help inform the planning and decision making of the Council, provide certainty to providers in respect of needs and to ensure that people who require care and support services have choice of provision that is both of good quality and meets their needs.

Gypsy and Travellers' Accommodation

Sunderland is home to 3 Travelling Show person yards, accommodating 100 permanent plots for the city's Travelling Show people families. The South Tyneside and Sunderland Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (2014) identifies a need for a further 34 yards in the city up 2036 with a particular demand for further plots in Houghton-le-spring, Hetton-le-hole and Washington. The Assessment also identifies that there are no Gypsy and Travellers residing permanently in caravans in the city and there are no future requirements for pitches. Notwithstanding this, there is a history of unauthorised camping by Gypsy and Traveller communities; this suggests that the city does have a clear need for a Gypsy and Traveller stopover site. A stopover site is an authorised area of land with limited facilities and the site is accessed on a temporary basis. Local Planning Authorities are required though Planning Policy to identify appropriate sites for the needs for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show People. As such the Council will look to identify appropriate specific sites in its forthcoming Local Plan to ensure the needs of these communities are met.

Our Key Priorities for Supporting Vulnerable People

Based on the challenges described and our robust evidence base, it is clear what our priorities are. The table? Below sets out what these priorities are and what key actions will be taken to meet them.

These can be presented in a more accessible way

Headline Outcomes	Key Priorities	Headline Actions	Evidence Base
Supporting Vulnerable People to Access and Maintain Housing	Limiting the negative effect of Welfare Reform on homelessness.	Work with customers who have experienced significant negative changes to their finances to: stay in their own homes; to help find alternative suitable accommodation; or increase their income.	The Council (Housing Benefits and Welfare Rights) is currently undertaking a piece of work to determine how many people will be affected by this. Benefits data Welfare reform legislation
.	Reduction in people presenting as homeless.	Working with partners to address the underlying causes of homelessness.	Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Statistical Return.

	<p>Supporting Vulnerable people to stay in their homes or find suitable housing.</p>	<p>Working with South Tyneside partners to prevent and reduce rough sleeping.</p> <p>Using the “Housing First” approach to support people in their homes and ensure that vulnerable residents, including elderly and disabled people, have the support they need to live independently.</p> <p>To provide a range of housing options to older people to meet their housing needs.</p> <p>To explore relocation to suitable homes for disabled people as an alternative to aids and adaptations.</p> <p>To identify appropriate and specific sites which meet the needs of Gypsy and Travellers.</p>	
	<p>Improving the health of vulnerable and homeless people</p>	<p>Inspect city’s private hostels on a regular basis to continue to improve standards</p> <p>Work with health commissioners and partners to reduce attendance at health services (especially A</p>	<p>Health Needs Audit 2016</p>

		& E) Explore making health services more accessible to homeless and vulnerable people.	
	Improving Accommodation for Residents with Disabilities	Enable people with learning disabilities to stay in their own homes. Lifetime Homes to be promoted in new housing developments across the City. Work with partners and disabled people to define need and identify housing solutions to people with mental ill health.	

How a city treats its vulnerable residents is a measure of its strength. In proactively supporting our vulnerable residents and using prevention at an earlier stage we are also making our city stronger.

CONCLUSION

These three chapters do not sit in isolation – they are interlinked and reinforce the vision of the Council for a greater choice of good quality homes which meets not just the needs but also the aspirations of all of our residents and the City so we can all grow and prosper.

Also this is just the start of the journey, providing the direction and some of the initial steps. So what happens next and how will we ensure that the vision is turned into actions?

Delivering the housing strategy (maybe present in chart rather than narrative)

The delivery of the Housing Strategy for Sunderland will be overseen by its Housing Champion (Cllr Graeme Miller) and the Council's Strategic Housing Board chaired by the Chief Operating Officer for the Place Directorate.

Below this will be three working groups for each section of the Housing Strategy:

Maximising Housing Growth and Increasing the Choice of Housing; Making Best Use of Existing Homes and Improving Our Neighbourhoods and Supporting Vulnerable People to Access and maintain Housing.

These working groups will be made up of housing professionals and specialist partners from both inside and external to the Council.

The purpose of the groups is to develop more detailed action plans and targets around the priorities outlined in this strategy and to oversee their delivery over the next five years. Where resources are not available it will be the role of these groups to seek and secure additional resources.

The chairs of each group will report progress made against the action plans and targets back to the Housing Board, the Housing Champion and to our partners and residents.

Reviewing the Strategy

In this fast paced world of frequent policy and legislative changes, the housing strategy will be reviewed annually and revised if required. The views of stakeholders and partners will be considered and used to influence the housing strategy and its direction of travel.

Closing Statement

We recognise the important role housing plays both to the City and to its residents and that is why we want to make this commitment through a written strategy to grow and improve the quality of our housing and strengthen our neighbourhoods. It will be a long and challenging

journey which we want our partners to be part of so we can all reap the rewards that stronger housing offers.

Draft