

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HOUSING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING
CABINET MEMBER**

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010 - 2015

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval of the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010 – 2015.
- 1.2 The key points of the report are as follows:
- A Private Sector Stock Condition survey was completed in December 2008 and the results were used to inform the development of the Private Sector Housing Strategy.
 - The Strategy prioritises vulnerable households living in non-decent housing; helping people who are struggling to afford to heat their homes; encouraging and enabling people to make their homes more energy efficient; and enabling people to live independently.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The majority of people in North Lincolnshire own their own home or rent privately. The Private Sector Housing Strategy has been produced in order to set out our approach to supporting and assisting people living in private accommodation to live in a home that is safe and healthy.
- 2.2 North Lincolnshire Council also has certain responsibilities and duties regarding private sector housing. The Housing Act 2004 requires that a local authority must keep the housing conditions in their area under review with a view to identifying any actions that may need to be taken. As such a private sector house condition survey was carried out in 2008 and the Private Sector Housing Strategy has been developed to respond to the issue raised by the survey.

- 2.3 A report on the findings of the Private Sector House Condition Survey was presented to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Strategic Planning in July 2009 (minute 40 refers).
- 2.4 The Private Sector Housing Strategy (referred to as The Strategy) has been produced following consultation with colleagues within the Council, partner organisations, private landlords and members of the public.
- 2.5 The Strategy sets out the vision for private sector housing in North Lincolnshire as: *“Everyone can live in a safe and healthy home, at a price they can afford and that meets their needs”*.
- 2.6 The following three priorities are identified:
- Safe and Healthy Homes
 - Affordability
 - Adapting homes to meet housing needs
- 2.7 The priorities in the strategy under the various sections are identified below.

Decent Homes

- 2.8 North Lincolnshire has a high number of private homes that meet the Government’s decent homes standard (80% compared to a national average of 65%).
- 2.9 Most people would agree that the responsibility for maintaining and improving privately owned properties rests with the owner of the property. However, it is also recognised that this may be difficult for some people. Some 2,567 vulnerable households are living in non-decent housing in North Lincolnshire, from a private sector stock of 61,525 homes. A vulnerable household is defined as those in receipt of means tested or disability related benefits. The Government has set a national target that 70% of vulnerable households should be living in decent housing by 2010 and 75% by 2015/2020. In North Lincolnshire, 69% of vulnerable households were living in decent housing in 2008.
- 2.10 The Private Sector House Condition Survey identified that overall issues around non-decency tend to exist in pre-1919 properties, in the Scunthorpe North area and in private rented accommodation. These factors are often interrelated, for example much of the private rented accommodation is pre-1919 and is in the Scunthorpe North area.
- 2.11 The biggest serious hazard in private sector homes identified in the Private Sector Stock Condition survey was Excess Cold due to inadequate heating and insulation.
- 2.12 In response to these issues, the Strategy proposes attention should be focused on the following priorities:

- Increasing the number of people living in decent homes
- Reducing the number of vulnerable households living in non-decent housing
- Tackling Excess Cold
- The regeneration of the Advance Crosby area
- Reducing fuel poverty

Private Rented Accommodation

- 2.13 The private rental sector plays an important part in successful housing markets. Renting privately is often seen as convenient, flexible and offering real choice for those who do not wish to, or are unable to own their own home.
- 2.14 The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey raised some issues around the level of decency in private rented accommodation when compared to the overall level of decency in North Lincolnshire (30% classed as non-decent in private rented accommodation compared to 20% non-decent in the total private sector housing stock). This can be explained in part through the high number of older properties in the private rented stock, which are shown to be the type of properties in the worst condition. These results do highlight the need to look at private rented accommodation in the area.
- 2.15 The majority of landlords are responsible in the way they manage their properties and run their business. We do have some evidence however, that not all landlords are acting in a responsible manner, either through ignorance of the law or a disregard for appropriate practices. We will investigate this further and look to ensure landlords can access appropriate advice and information where needed and promote good management standards through the use of landlord accreditation schemes, training and working with private landlords and private tenants where possible.
- 2.16 The Strategy therefore identifies as a priority the improvement of conditions and management standards in private rented accommodation.

Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth

- 2.17 The importance of promoting energy efficiency and carbon efficiency within North Lincolnshire has been highlighted through the choice of National Indicator 187 in the Local Area Agreement (NI 187: per capita emissions in the Local Authority area).
- 2.18 As domestic homes account for 28% of all carbon emissions in our area, improving the energy efficiency within our homes can go a long way to helping achieve our goals for the area.

- 2.19 Closely linked to reducing carbon emissions is the need to tackle the issue of fuel poverty. Fuel poverty is defined as when a household needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel use to achieve a satisfactory standard of warmth.
- 2.20 Fuel poverty is caused by a number of interrelated factors including the energy efficiency status of the property, the cost of energy, household income and under-occupation of the property. The health impacts of fuel poverty are widely recognised and can lead to debt, mental health issues, accidents through trips and falls, increased hospital admissions and GP visits and excess winter deaths.
- 2.21 The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey identified 18% of all private sector households and 11% of vulnerable households as living in fuel poverty. The National Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001 set an aim to end fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010 and in all households by 2016.
- 2.22 In promoting energy efficiency, carbon efficiency and affordable warmth, we aim to work in partnership with others, including those in health, other Local Authorities, energy companies, local housing associations, house builders and private landlords.
- 2.23 Our priorities identified in the Strategy for energy efficiency and affordable warmth are as follows:
- Increasing energy efficiency measures in homes throughout North Lincolnshire.
 - Reducing carbon emissions from homes in North Lincolnshire
 - Reducing the number of people in receipt of means tested benefits living in homes with a SAP rating below 35.
 - Reduce Excess Winter Deaths and cold related accidents.
 - Reducing the number of vulnerable households who are living in fuel poverty.

Adapting homes to meet housing needs

- 2.24 Thanks to better healthcare, new technologies and a more prosperous society we are now all living longer. This is good news, but presents challenges and issues we must address. As well as an aging society, more people with physical or medical conditions are living longer as well.
- 2.25 It is estimated that by 2030 over 40% of North Lincolnshire's population will be over 50 including 26,000 people aged 75 or older. In addition, one in five children born today can expect to live to 100 years of age, and on average, over 10 of those years will be spent living with a disability.

- 2.26 At present, the primary form of assistance to adapt people's homes to meet their needs is the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). Approximately 70% of DFG applicants are older people.
- 2.27 A review has taken place on the whole DFG process from initial assessment, to formal application, to selection of contractors and completion of works and we aim to reduce the time taken to deliver adaptations.
- 2.28 Our overall aim is to work in partnership with others to make best use of limited resources and to offer a range of potential solutions to people's needs rather than rely solely on DFGs. This includes the handyman service, equity release, repayment loans, or even help to move.

Empty Properties

- 2.29 Generally, North Lincolnshire has fairly low levels of vacant properties with 3% of the private sector housing stock reported as being vacant at the end of March 2009, and 1.4% as being vacant for more than six months.
- 2.30 Our approach to empty properties is to closely monitor the figures to ensure they remain at a low level and to only focus on bringing empty properties back into use where a clear benefit can be gained, taking into account the time and resources required to bring that property back into use.
- 2.31 We will carry out further analysis to identify any patterns or concentrations of vacant dwellings across all tenures.

Monitoring of the Strategy Action Plan

- 2.32 An action plan is currently being produced based on the priorities in the strategy. Due to uncertainty around current funding levels for future years from the Regional Housing Board and from internal budgets, it is not possible to finalise the action plan at this stage. Once the levels of funding are confirmed, the action plan will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Strategic Planning for approval.
- 2.33 Progress on the action plan will be monitored via the private sector housing strategy steering group, with an annual update to the North Lincolnshire Housing Investment Board and to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Strategic Planning.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1 – That the Private Sector Housing Strategy be approved.

- 3.2 Option 2 – That the Private Sector Housing Strategy is revised and re-submitted for approval at a later date.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

Option 1 is the preferred option as the completed document has been widely consulted upon and all key partners have been involved in its production.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

Financial

- 5.1 Chapter 8 of The Private Sector Housing Strategy looks at resources to finance the strategy. The Strategy action plan will identify the level of resources required for each action. This funding will be a mixture of council resources, external funding (e.g. from the Regional Housing Board), and through private investment by home owners and private landlords.

Staffing

- 5.2 No additional staffing requirements.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Statutory

The Housing Act 2004 requires that a Local Authority must keep the housing conditions in their area under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them under any provisions of the Act.

Appendix 9 of The Private Sector Housing Strategy covers the legislation relevant to the strategy.

6.2 Diversity

A Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Private Sector Housing Strategy and is submitted as an appendix to this report.

6.3 Risk

The risks associated with delivering the Private Sector Housing Strategy are identified in Chapter 10 of the strategy along with actions to mitigate those risks.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation was conducted with colleagues within the Council, partner organisations, private landlords, North Lincolnshire Homes and members of the public via consultation events, the Council's website,

and questionnaires. The consultation results were discussed at the private sector housing strategy steering group and were used to decide on the priorities for the strategy and also in developing the actions.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010 – 2015 be approved.
- 8.2 That an action plan is fully developed and reported to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Strategic Planning once the funding levels have been agreed.
- 8.3 That the Cabinet Member receives annual update reports on progress towards achieving the desired outcomes of the strategy.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

- Draft Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010 – 2015.
- Private Sector House Condition Survey 2008.

North Lincolnshire Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010 – 2015

Foreword by Cllr Mick Grant

This document is the Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy for the period 2010 to 2015. This strategy sets out how the council and its partners will work to help improve conditions and the management of owner occupied and privately rented homes in North Lincolnshire.

Good progress has been made over the last few years. A 30% improvement in the energy efficiency of domestic homes has been achieved since 2006 and 80% of private sector properties now reach the Government's decent homes standard, well above the national average.

This is significant progress, however, we know there is more to do. Our 2008 survey on the condition of private sector homes shows we need to target our attention to assist those who most need our help; assisting vulnerable households living in non-decent homes and helping people who are struggling to afford to heat their homes to a comfortable level. We also need to work in partnership to ensure private rented accommodation is consistently meeting the Government's standards of decency, and is managed well.

This strategy builds on the issues raised at a consultation day with internal and external partners, from questionnaire responses as well as other consultations that have taken place. By being clear in our priorities and linking these to the strategic plans for the local area, we strive to meet our objectives in a now difficult financial climate.

Councillor Mick Grant
Cabinet Member for Housing and Strategic Planning

Executive Summary

Chapter 1 - Why we need a private sector housing strategy?

The majority of people in North Lincolnshire own their own home or rent privately and this strategy has been produced in order to set out our approach to support and assist people living in private accommodation to live in a home that is safe and healthy.

Our vision for private sector housing is outlined in Chapter 1:

“Everyone can live in a safe and healthy home, at a price they can afford and that meets their needs”

The following three priorities are identified:

- Safe and Healthy Homes
- Affordability
- Adapting homes to meet housing needs

Chapter 2 - National, Regional and Local Priorities

This chapter sets the context for the strategy in terms of the Government’s priorities and the priorities identified at a local level in the Local Area Agreement. The basis for focusing on decent and safe housing and helping vulnerable households is outlined.

Chapter 3 – Decent Homes

Chapter 3 discusses the Government’s decent homes standard and in particular sets out our approach to helping vulnerable households living in non-decent housing.

Priorities

- Increasing the number of people living in decent homes
- Reduce the number of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes
- Tackling Excess Cold
- Reducing Fuel Poverty
- Continuing to assist people who are living in private rented accommodation, particularly those struggling as a result of the recession.

Chapter 4 – Private Rented Sector

The 2008 Private Sector House Condition survey raised some issues regarding private rented accommodation in North Lincolnshire. Chapter 4 discusses these issues and outlines our approach to working to improve both conditions and management standards across the private rented sector.

Priorities

- Improve conditions and management standards within the private rented sector
- Continue to assist people who are living in private rented accommodation, particularly those struggling as a result of the recession.
- Raise awareness of housing support available through the Supporting People programme and promote existing and additional referral arrangements.

Chapter 5 – Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth

Chapter 5 sets out our approach to promoting energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions from domestic homes and helping vulnerable households out of fuel poverty.

Priorities

- Increasing energy efficiency measures in homes throughout North Lincolnshire
- Reducing carbon emissions from homes in North Lincolnshire
- Reducing the number of people in receipt of means tested benefits living in homes with a SAP rating below 35
- Reduce Excess Winter Deaths and cold related accidents
- Reduce ill health, GP visits and hospital admissions related to Excess Cold
- Reducing the number of vulnerable households who are living in fuel poverty.

Chapter 6 – Adapting Homes to Meet Housing Needs

Chapter 6 sets out our response to increasing demands for disabled adaptations due to an aging population and explores issues around personal choice and responsibility.

Priorities

- Give people better information at the initial point of contact on how their needs can be met. Promote individual choice and responsibility
- Empower service users to access the correct information, advice and ensure that those who decide to self-fund make the right decision for now and years to come.
- Continuously monitor the delivery of disabled facilities grants and minor adaptations to identify and implement service improvements.
- Develop forum of service users and providers to ensure all partners have an opportunity to raise issues and ideas.

Chapter 7 – Empty Properties

Generally, we have fairly low numbers of long terms empty properties in North Lincolnshire. Given the large amount of time and resources often required to bring empty properties back into use, our approach will be to focus attention

on empty properties where a clear benefit can be gained.

Priorities

- Assessing the need to bring empty properties back into use in rural areas with high levels of housing demand
- Working in partnership across the Yorkshire Humber Region to maximise existing skills and resources.

Chapter 8 – Resources

Chapter 8 gives information on known resources which are available to fund the proposals within the strategy.

Chapter 9 – Monitoring the Strategy

The strategy will be monitored via a number of methods, including using the Council's Performance Management System and through the establishment of a Housing Quarterly Performance Review.

Chapter 9 details how the strategy will be monitored.

Chapter 10 – Risk Management

The risks associated to the delivery of the strategy are identified in Chapter 10.



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CHAPTER 1: Why we need a private sector housing strategy

Living in a home that is safe and healthy is a necessity.

Our main reason for producing this strategy is that we believe everyone in North Lincolnshire should live in a home which is safe and which enables them to live a healthy life. No one should live in a home that is dangerous to themselves or to their visitors. We also think everyone in the area should be able to afford to heat their home to a level that they find comfortable and that they should be able to access and make use of all areas of their home as necessary.

The majority of people in North Lincolnshire own their own home or rent privately and this strategy has been produced in order to set out our approach to support and assist people living in private accommodation in North Lincolnshire to live in a home that is safe and healthy. This strategy sits underneath our overarching Housing Strategy and provides more detail on our desired outcomes for private sector housing.

In addition, as the Local Authority, we have certain responsibilities and duties regarding private sector housing. One of these is to make sure we have reliable data around the condition of homes that are owner-occupied or privately rented. In 2008, we therefore commissioned a Private Sector House Condition Survey and this strategy has been developed to respond to the issues raised by the survey. Further details about the House Condition Survey can be found in Appendix 1.

OUR VISION

Everyone can live in a safe and healthy home, at a price they can afford and that meets their needs.

All of our aims within this strategy are focused on achieving this vision. Therefore, we have identified 3 overall priorities that are reflected throughout the strategy. These are:

- Safe and Healthy Homes
- Affordability
- Adapting homes to meet housing needs

Priority 1 - Safe and Healthy Homes

When we refer to a home that is safe and healthy, we mean it meets the government's decent homes standard. A safe and healthy home:

- is free of significant health and safety risks to the occupants and visitors.
- is in a reasonable state of repair
- has reasonable modern facilities and services
- provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

These are the Government's basic standards of decency and more detail on what these standards refer to are provided in Appendix 5.

Priority 2 - Affordability

In looking at issues of affordability we mean that people should be able to:

- afford to heat their home to a level they find comfortable
- afford the necessary repairs and upkeep of their home to ensure it is a safe place to live.

Priority 3 - A home that meets your needs

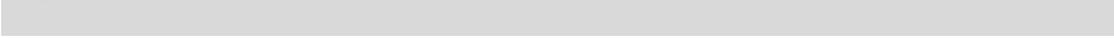
When we refer to a home that meets needs we mean a home where:

- access is available to services that are required
- assistance is provided to support people to live independently, for example, through adapting certain aspects of the home
- people can live in their whole house and are not restricted in the use of their home.

Achieving our vision cannot be done in isolation and the aims and actions within this strategy involve working with many other partners, agencies, individuals and organisations.

The Council transferred the housing stock to North Lincolnshire Homes in 2007 and although this strategy mainly focuses on private sector housing, there are clearly areas where we cannot work in isolation from social housing providers. In particular, there are clear links in the priorities on energy efficiency and affordable warmth and those of the North Lincolnshire Homes investment programme which incorporates the aim to make existing homes and any new homes that are built energy and fuel efficient.

This strategy will have an accompanying action plan that will set out the areas we will focus our attention on between 2010 and 2015 and the partners we will be working with. With clear plans in place, we hope to maximise our chances of drawing in additional external funds to assist in achieving our targets.



CHAPTER 2: National, Regional and Local Context

This Private Sector Housing Strategy does not sit in isolation to other strategies. Below are some of the overarching plans and strategies that influence and direct our focus towards private sector homes within North Lincolnshire.

Communities and Local Government's Sustainable Communities Plan

In February 2003 the then Deputy Prime Minister launched the £22bn Sustainable Communities Plan. It set out a long-term programme of action for both urban and rural areas in all the English regions and aimed to offer people:

- A greater choice in where they live
- Improved quality of housing through decent homes
- An enhanced environment.

The Sustainable Communities plan provides the basis for the priorities in this strategy looking at the quality of the current stock in North Lincolnshire and bringing these up to a decent standard.

Energy White Paper 2007

As discussed in Chapter 5, the Energy White Paper provides the Government's strategy for greater energy efficiency in the long run.

Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Housing Strategy – 2005 - 2021

The Regional Housing Strategy sets out the strategic housing priorities in the region, ensuring that it is within the context of the region's strategic framework, "Advancing Together" and is consistent with other key strategies: notably the Regional Economic Strategy and Regional Planning Guidance/Regional Spatial Strategy and the Northern Way Growth Strategy.

The Regional Housing Strategy summarises the key relevant strategic housing issues for the Humber region as including:

- urban regeneration to help sustain ailing neighbourhoods and communities;
- meeting decent homes standards and tackling fuel poverty in both the social and private housing sectors;
- the provision of specialist housing and/or appropriate support services for older people and other vulnerable client groups.

These priorities are reflected within this strategy.

The Sub-Regional Context

The Draft Humber Housing Strategy 2010 – 2019

At the time of writing, a Housing Strategy for the Humber sub-region was in the final stages of being prepared. The drafted strategy outlined the areas where the four Local Authorities across the Humber sub-region, Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire, plan to increase their partnership working across the sub-region.

The strategy sets out that, although economic regeneration is considered the most fundamental requirement for the sub-region, it is important to recognise the contribution that housing regeneration can make to ensure the sustainability of any economic regeneration led activity.

The draft sub-regional housing strategy identified 3 priorities:

- Balancing housing markets in the Humber
- Providing high quality homes in the Humber
- Meeting the diverse housing needs of the Humber¹

The priorities for investment in private sector housing in the Humber region identified in the draft sub-regional housing strategy are:

- Improving decency standards in the pre-1919 properties
- Improving decency standards in privately rented housing
- Resolving category 1 hazards – particularly in relation to Excess Cold
- Improving energy efficiency across all tenures and
- Bringing empty properties back into use

These priorities have been developed by the Humber sub-regional private sector group that meets on a monthly basis and are directly related to this strategy in varying degrees.

“Building a Better Future” The Joint Housing Strategy for North and North East Lincolnshire 2007 – 2010

The vision for housing in our area has been clearly set out in our Joint Housing Strategy, “Building a Better Future”, 2007-2010.

“for everyone to have access to sustainable, good quality housing within supportive and safe communities at a price they can afford.”

North Lincolnshire worked with North East Lincolnshire to produce the joint housing strategy. Locally, 4 priorities were identified for housing:

- **Creating quality homes**
- **Securing affordability and choice**
- **Reaching out to everyone in housing need**
- **Creating safe and strong communities**

These priorities continue to be reflected throughout this strategy, with a particular focus on decent and safe housing and helping vulnerable households via advice and assistance.

¹ “Humber Housing Board – Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2010 – 2019”, Draft 18 August 2009

The North Lincolnshire Community Strategy – ‘Many Faces, One Community’

The North Lincolnshire Community Strategy, *Many Faces One Community*, sets out how the Council will work with local people to improve their quality of life. The Community Strategy has the aim that North Lincolnshire will be a place where we all:

- live in decent homes and safe neighbourhoods and have choices about our future;
- have the chance to learn, develop skills and work in satisfying jobs;
- lead healthy lifestyles and make use of a wide range of quality leisure and cultural facilities;
- make special efforts to improve conditions for the least well off in our communities and ensure that quality of life improves for everyone over the next 10 years;
- take pride in our area, respect our neighbours, and protect our natural environment.

This strategy clearly links into these aims and will assist in achieving the vision for North Lincolnshire.

The Ambitions for North Lincolnshire

The council has eleven ambitions it would like to achieve, some of which are internal ambitions and some are shared with our partners in the North Lincolnshire Local Strategic Partnership.

The internal ambitions are:

- Improved customer care
- Improved capacity
- Improved business systems
- Improved value for money
- Improved development
- Improved performance
- Improved place to work

The shared ambitions for the area are:

- An area that is thriving
- Communities that are confident and caring
- Individuals can see the difference
- Everyone works for the benefit of North Lincolnshire

The Local Area Agreement sets out a plan showing how each of these ambitions will be monitored and national indicators have been chosen to reflect the priorities of the area.

In developing this strategy we have focused on where we can help achieve the ambitions for the area as identified in the Local Area Agreement.

The following National Indicators are included in the North Lincolnshire Local Area Agreement and we will be contributing towards these by the implementation of this strategy.

- NI 186 – Per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area
- NI 155 – Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
- NI 141 – Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living
- NI 021 - Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
- NI 054 – Services for disabled children
- NI 116 – Proportion of children in poverty

Of particular relevance is NI 186, as this strategy will directly assist in delivering a reduction in carbon emissions through tackling fuel poverty and increasing energy efficiency measures in private homes.

A number of other national indicators relate to this strategy and these are linked to our action plan to assist us in measuring our success.



CHAPTER 3: Decent Homes

Introduction

Safe and Healthy Homes

In July 2000, the Government announced a significant increase in resources for housing and introduced the Decent Homes Standard. As part of its desire to link increased spending to better outcomes, the Government established a target to “ensure that all social housing meets set standards of decency by 2010”.²

The Government defines *vulnerable households* as those in receipt of means tested or disability related benefits

In 2002, this target was extended to cover vulnerable private sector households and the Government set the following targets:

70% of vulnerable private sector households to be living in decent housing by 2010 and 75% by 2015/20.

Full details around what is measured in the Decent Homes Standard is included in Appendix 5.

The findings from the 2008 private sector house condition survey show we are doing well in terms of increasing the levels of decency overall (with 80% of properties reaching the decent homes standard). The current focus and Government target, however, is to increase the number of *vulnerable households* living in decent properties. In this regard, our approach needs to be focused on vulnerable households if we are to achieve the target of 75% of vulnerable households living in decent housing by 2015/20.

² “A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation”, CLG, June 2006 update.

What we know in North Lincolnshire

Safe and Healthy Homes

- 80%³ of private sector homes are classed as decent, compared to a national average of 65%⁴. This is a 5% improvement on the 2003 stock condition figure⁵.
- 69%⁶ of vulnerable households are living in decent housing in 2008⁷, compared to a national average of 59%⁸, and 71% in 2003.
- As can be seen from Table 3.1 below, the greatest number of decent homes failures is due to properties being in disrepair.
- The total cost to bring all private sector properties up to the decent homes standard would be £41.9 million.
- To bring all properties containing vulnerable households up to the decent homes standard would cost £9.3 million.
- The overwhelming reason why properties were identified as having a Category 1 hazard (a significant risk) was Excess Cold (60% of Category 1 hazards).⁹
- Overall, the private sector stock condition survey findings show that problems around non-decency tend to exist in:
 - pre – 1919 properties
 - private rented accommodation
 - the Scunthorpe North areaThese factors are often interrelated, for example, much of the private sector accommodation is pre-1919 and is in the Scunthorpe North area.

³ “North Lincolnshire House Condition Survey 2008”MSC Ltd 2009

⁴ “English House Condition Survey 2006”Communities and Local Government, 2008, p51

⁵ North Lincolnshire Council Stock Condition Survey 2003”, Fordham Research, 2004, p73

⁶ “North Lincolnshire House Condition Survey 2008”MSC Ltd 2009, pxx

⁷ The Government defines vulnerable households as those in receipt of means tested or disability related benefits.

⁸ EHCS 2006, CLG, p173

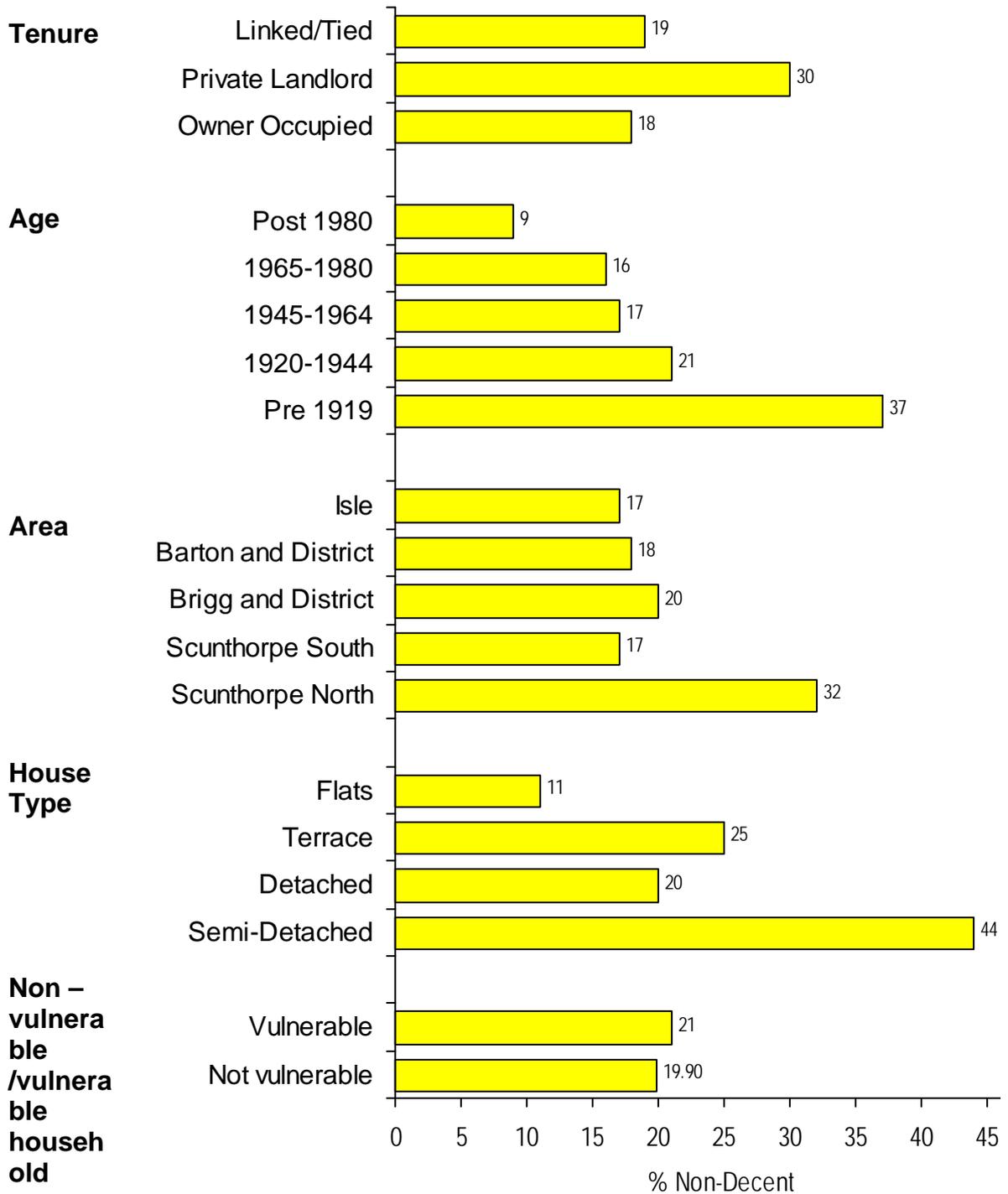
⁹ See Appendix 5 for details on Category 1 hazards

Table 3.1 – Number of dwellings classed as non-decent and the costs to make these dwellings decent.

Reason for property being non-decent*	Number of dwellings	Cost to make Decent	% of total stock
Serious hazard/s have been identified	3,446	£1.4m	5.6%
It is in disrepair	9,211	£31.4m	14.9%
It lacks modern facilities and services	205	£1.1m	0.3%
It does not have adequate insulation and heating	3,609	£8.1m	5.8%

*Please note these are not the official definitions used to describe the decent homes standard. See Appendix 5 for the full and accurate definitions and terminology.

Chart 1.1 – Summary of decent homes failures



The above chart shows a summary of non-decent dwellings by tenure, age of property, area, dwellings type and vulnerable household.

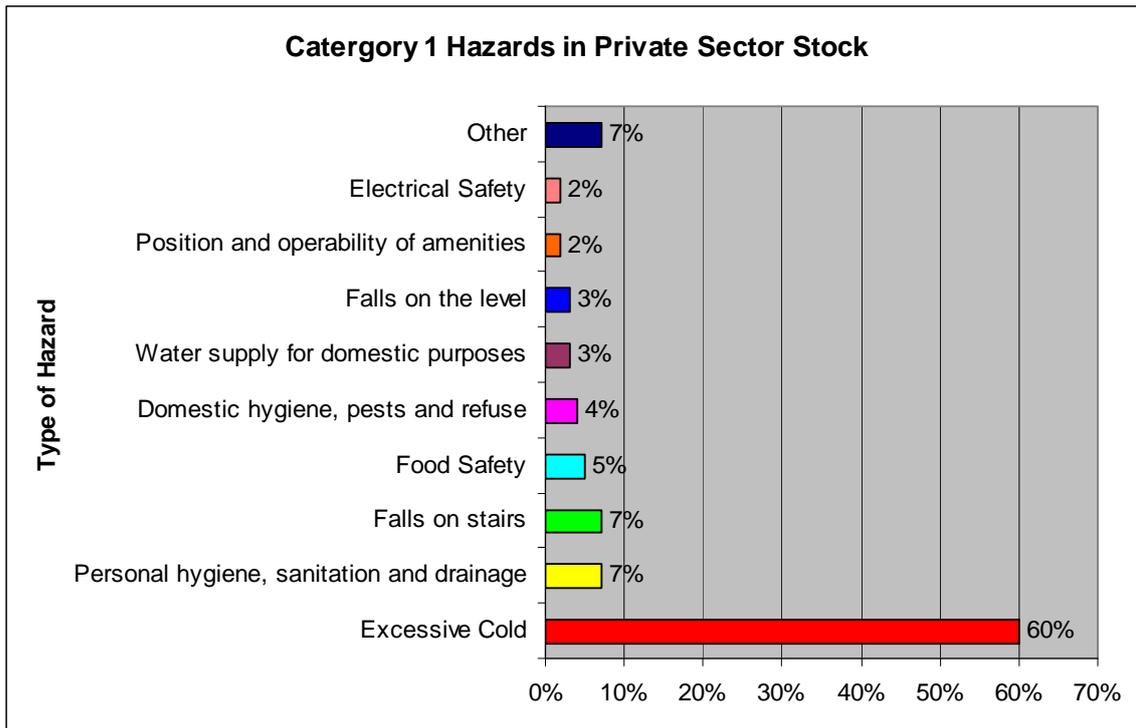
Tackling Category 1 hazards (Serious hazards)

Safe and Healthy Homes

In order to be classed as 'decent', no home should contain a serious risk. These serious risks are known as Category 1 hazards and are identified using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Appendix 5 gives full details on the HHSRS.

The graph below (Graph 3.1), shows the occurrence of Category 1 hazards identified in the 2008 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey.

Graph 3.1 – Category 1 Hazards in Private Sector Stock



Source: 2008 Private Sector House Condition Survey

The Council has a duty to take action where a Category 1 hazard is identified and has discretionary powers to deal with Category 2 hazards, depending on the circumstances.

Where Category 1 hazards are identified, we will follow up and take the necessary persuasive or enforcement action available to us to address the hazard. Please see Appendix 5 for details of the enforcement action available to the Council.

**Safe
and
Healthy
Homes**

Over the last 3 years, the Council has assisted in making many homes free from Category 1 hazards. We monitor the number of homes that the council has been directly involved in making free from Category 1 hazards and will continue to monitor these and set targets for all officers involved.

In North Lincolnshire, of the most serious hazards identified, 60% were related to Excess Cold (homes that are expensive or difficult to heat).

Our approach for tackling Excess Cold and fuel poverty is outlined in Chapter 5: Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth.

OUR CURRENT APPROACH

Most people would agree that the responsibility for maintaining and improving privately owned properties lies with the owner of the property. However, it is also recognised that this may be difficult for some people.

**Safe
and
Healthy
Homes**

The Council has a Home Improvement Policy that is updated on an annual basis and sets out the Council's approach to assisting home owners to get their homes to reach the decent homes standard. The policy is amended on an annual basis and will be reviewed in 2010 as a result of this strategy. The full policy is available on the Council's website www.northlincs.gov.uk

The Council, however, does not work in isolation to help and encourage home owners to invest in their property/properties.

North Lincolnshire Council:

- Provides advice, assistance, information and a technical support service through the Home Improvement Team to assist homeowners to make home improvements, repairs or adaptations.

- Gives advice about how to access sources of finance, such as loans or savings tied up in the property, to fund repairs and improvements.
- Administers the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for people who need to adapt their home to make it easier and safer to live in¹⁰.
- Undertakes mandatory licensing for properties that are three or more storeys and have five or more unrelated occupants.
- Implements enforcement powers granted under the Housing Act 2004¹¹, used as a last resort, to ensure owners maintain properties to relevant standards, address anti-social behaviour or nuisance behaviour and tackle long-term empty properties.

Safe and Healthy Homes

- Assists people to access private rented accommodation by providing advice, practical assistance, help with paying a Bond and ongoing support to people who may not otherwise be able to access privately rented accommodation.
- Runs a landlord accreditation scheme and provides support to the North Lincolnshire Private Landlords Forum.

Home Improvement Trust

- Provides the 'Houseproud Scheme' to help arrange funding for property improvements, repairs and adaptations.

The Police

- The Council works with the Police through the *One Community Handyman* project to offer security measures to help victims of crime and to prevent future burglaries.

Other Local Authorities

- The Council works with other local authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber area to provide the Regional Loans Service to help vulnerable homeowners carry out essential works where health and safety is at risk and to bring the property up to the decent homes standard.

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Several issues arise when looking at levels of decency over time:

1. The impact of the recession on home owners

¹⁰ See Chapter 6 for more on Disabled Facilities Grants

¹¹ See Appendix 9 for details of the Housing Act 2004

2. Properties falling into non-decency over time
3. High levels of non-decency concentrated in certain areas

Issue 1 – The Impact of the Recession on Home Owners

One of the major impacts of the recession is obviously an increase in the number of people who are out of work and claiming benefits. Evidence of this can be seen by the increase in the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance. From the first quarter of 2008 to the first quarter of 2009, North Lincolnshire saw an increase in claimants from 3.3% to 5.1%¹².

Affordability

Some of the consequences of the current economic climate on homeowners include:

- People struggling to maintain, repair and pay for the upkeep of their home
- People struggling to pay for household expenses, for example heating their home
- Loss of income leading to mortgage repossessions
- Possession action by private landlords

In regard to the latter issues of people losing their homes and facing possible homelessness, the Government has taken a number of steps to prevent mortgage repossessions by providing financial support for homeowners who are out of work or having a temporary drop in wages. In addition, some additional funding has been provided to local authorities.

In response to the possibility of a significant increase in homelessness due to an increase in repossessions, the Housing Division has taken the following actions:

Affordability

- Setting up the Debt and Housing Advice Network (DHAN)
- Effective liaison with the local court and court desk
- Comprehensive monitoring of enquiries and outcomes
- Publicity about the importance and availability of early money debt and housing advice
- Close working with private landlords in terms of a) enabling people to access private rented accommodation via a bond scheme and b) offering a first point of contact for landlords experiencing problems with tenants.

The Council established a recession group to pull together all the actions that the Council is taking to support people through the recession. These actions are outlined in Appendix 13.

¹² “The State of North Lincs”, Update 2009 North Lincolnshire Council’s Economic Development Team. ,

Another point to be mindful of is that there are an increasing number of people who are classed as *vulnerable* and who may require assistance with the upkeep and maintenance of their homes. Therefore, in measuring the number of vulnerable people who are living in decent housing, the group of vulnerable people is currently growing at some pace.

**Safe
and
Healthy
Homes**

Issue 2 - Properties falling into non-decency

Another issue to consider when looking at levels of decency is that properties that are currently classified as 'decent', are likely, due to the age of the property and the property's elements, to fall into the non-decent category.

We will further analyse the data from the 2008 Private House Condition Survey to look at the number of properties likely to fall into non-decency over the coming years.

Issue 3 – High levels of non-decency concentrated in certain areas

The findings from the 2008 Private Sector House Condition Survey show there are clearly decency issues within certain areas. In particular, Scunthorpe North is singled out as having high levels of non-decent dwellings (32%) compared to North Lincolnshire as a whole (20%).¹³

Looking at why Scunthorpe North has high levels of non-decency, one reason is the high numbers of pre-1919 properties, which due to their age are most likely to fail the decency standard. The area also contains wards that show high levels of deprivation¹⁴ and contain high numbers of 'vulnerable households', in other words households in receipt of income or disability related benefits. The obvious impacts of this are that more people in that area will struggle to find the resources to make the necessary improvements to their homes, struggle to afford to heat their homes to a comfortable level and may find themselves living in poor quality accommodation, with the subsequent negative impact on their health and lifestyle.

Scunthorpe North also has clusters of certain minority ethnic groups and this suggests that a number of factors may lead to some ethnic minority groups experiencing poor housing conditions.¹⁵

Scunthorpe North contains the former Crosby Renewal Area which has been receiving substantial investment in housing renovations since

¹³ A map of the areas is shown on page 88.

¹⁴ "The State of North Lincs", update 2009, North Lincolnshire Council's Economic Development Unit, referring to the DCLG, Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2007.

¹⁵ "Minority Ethnic Housing Experiences in North Lincolnshire", Sheffield Hallam University, April 2005, p10

1996.

The Council are now taking a more focused approach when looking at specific areas and directly linking actions to particular targets e.g. improving energy efficiency levels.

A major strategic priority for the Council has been the regeneration of the Advance Crosby area. This involves the acquisition and selective demolition of unpopular pre-1919 properties which front directly onto the street, to create the opportunity to develop aspirational new homes. Whole street improvements are planned to the remaining properties, e.g. in the Home Zone area.

Information was gathered on the former Crosby Renewal Area in the 2008 Private Sector House Condition survey and as the results below show, there are still issues to be addressed.

Results for the former Crosby Renewal Area:

- there are a significantly higher proportion of non-decent properties (38%) in the area compared to the North Lincolnshire average (20%).
- Over half of the non-decent dwellings in the area (51%) are occupied by vulnerable groups.
- A large proportion of the non-decent dwellings (67%) are in the private rented sector.
- Just under one in three households in the area are living in fuel poverty¹⁶ (31%) and 12% of people are living in 'severe fuel poverty' compared to the North Lincolnshire total of 7%.
- Health and safety within the homes in this area is a bigger issue compared to North Lincolnshire as a whole, with 11.5% of dwellings having Category 1 hazards compared to 8% across North Lincolnshire.

Safe and Healthy Homes

A key challenge will be to ensure that the overall improvement in housing conditions achieved over recent years is maintained, whilst bringing the worst performing areas up to similar levels.

OUR APPROACH

Our approach is focused on people and also on particular areas where projects are expected to show demonstrable improvements in regard to the amount of investment put in.

OUR PRIORITIES

Safe and Healthy Homes

¹⁶ Fuel poverty is defined as a households that needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel use to achieve a satisfactory standard of warmth.

- Increase the number of people living in decent homes.
- Reduce the number of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes
- Tackle Excess Cold
- Improve conditions and management standards within the private rented sector.
- The regeneration of the Advance Crosby area

Affordability

- Reduce fuel poverty.
- Continue to assist people who are living in private rented accommodation, particularly those struggling as a result of the recession.

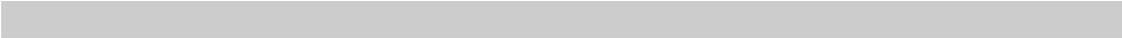
OUR PROPOSED ACTIONS

Safe and Healthy Homes

- Maintain, and where possible improve, the overall condition of dwellings, with particular focus on worst performing areas and dwelling types.
- Reduce the number of properties with Category 1 hazards (as identified by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System).
- Train front line staff to increase the number who can recognise risks to health and safety arising within the property.
- Encourage and support greater use of home improvement loans to fund home maintenance and improvements.
- Seek funding to resource the sub-regional loans scheme targeted at private landlords to improve the levels of decency in private rented accommodation overall.
- Explore a sub-regional landlord's accreditation scheme
- Inspect 100% of properties where a council Bond is to be issued¹⁷.
- Develop a specific Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and Procedures.
- Undertake a mapping exercise to look at how many properties are likely to fall into the non-decent category over time due to the age of the property.

¹⁷ See Chapter 4: Private rented accommodation for details on the Council's Bond scheme

Affordability

- Reduce the incidence of fuel poverty, particularly amongst vulnerable households.
 - Increase awareness of the range of services available to encourage people to maintain and improve their homes and signpost to relevant services.
 - Promote the range of services available to help people maximise income, manage money and deal with debt.
 - Identify and access funding to help us increase the number of decent homes within North Lincolnshire.
- 

CHAPTER 4: Private Rented Accommodation

Introduction

The private rental sector plays an important part in successful housing markets. Renting privately is often seen as convenient, flexible and offering real choice for those who do not wish to or are unable to own their own home.

A strong housing market; high demand for social housing; the increase in 'buy to let' mortgages; demographic changes, and an increasingly mobile society means the role of the private rented sector in meeting housing need is increasingly being brought into focus.¹⁸

Nationally, the private rental sector has grown from housing 8% of households in 1988 to 12% of households in 1996. Within North Lincolnshire, approximately 14% of the private sector housing stock¹⁹ is private rented accommodation.

The 2008 Private Sector House Condition Survey raised real issues regarding the condition of private rented sector properties within North Lincolnshire as shown below.

What we know about private rented sector accommodation in North Lincolnshire

- Some 30% of private rented properties were classed as non-decent, compared to 20% across the area overall.
- Private rented accommodation accounts for the highest percentage of pre-1919 properties, which are shown to be the type of properties in the worst condition.
- 24% of people living in private rented accommodation are estimated to be living in fuel poverty (2,103 people), compared to 18% across North Lincolnshire overall.
- 729 homes in the private rented sector have a category 1 hazard/s identified, 8.2% of the total private rented sector, compared to 5.6% of the total housing stock.
- A high concentration of private rented properties are in the Scunthorpe North area.

The consultation with landlord's and those who work with people living in

¹⁸ Centre for Housing Policy website, <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/chp/Projects/PRSreview.htm>
07/09/2009

¹⁹ "North Lincolnshire Private Sector House Condition Survey", Managed Services and Consultancy Ltd for North Lincolnshire Council, Draft June 2009, p18

private rented accommodation, highlighted the desire for the Local Authority to actively tackle 'bad landlords' and to provide advice and assistance and promote training to landlords who required such assistance. There was also a strong place for increased strategic partnership working between the Council and private landlords to work towards addressing the individual housing needs of tenants and reaching the aims of this strategy in regard to decent homes and energy efficiency.

Whilst there is overall agreement that the majority of landlords have high standards of management and the condition of their properties are very good, there was also agreement amongst those consulted that there are areas of concern. We should therefore work towards better property conditions within private rented accommodation and the promotion of better standards of management.

OUR CURRENT APPROACH TO WORKING WITH PRIVATE LANDLORDS AND PRIVATE RENTING TENANTS

North Lincolnshire Landlord's Accreditation Scheme

The Council has been running an accreditation scheme for some time and there are a number of landlord's who have registered with the scheme. The North and North East Lincolnshire Housing Strategy set a target of 10 landlord's being accredited each year, but at this time that target has not quite been achieved.

At consultation events, private landlords have intimated that while accreditation schemes in principal are useful in raising standards in the private sector, the current scheme does not appear to have enough benefits or incentives to encourage them to join the scheme.

Our future focus in regard to raising standards across the private rented sector will be to utilise the activities taking place at a sub-regional, regional and also at a national level.

Safe and Healthy Homes

We will be working with our private sector colleagues in East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull City and North East Lincolnshire Councils to research successful accreditation schemes in terms of raising standards across the private rented sector and developing a sub-regional approach to accreditation. This is in recognition that many landlords operate not only in North Lincolnshire, but across other local authority areas also.

In addition, we will encourage landlords to join both local and recognised national landlords accreditation schemes and promote the benefits to landlords and tenants of such schemes.

North Lincolnshire Accredited Tenant Scheme

The issue of 'bad' tenants, was raised during the consultation prior to the strategy development and whilst there are 'good' and 'bad' landlords, equally, not all private renting tenants are aware of or adhere to certain responsibilities and expected behaviours regarding the property they are renting and the area in which they live.

One reason for this is often that, due to the short term nature of many lets, tenants do not view a private rented property as their 'home' in the same way they would if they were a home owner.

The Council currently runs an Accredited Tenant Scheme which is supported by the North Lincolnshire Landlord's Forum. The aim of the scheme is to acknowledge and encourage responsible tenants by providing an accredited tenant's certificate to tenants who comply with the requirements of a Tenant's code.

Again, this is a good scheme in principle, however, further work is required to assess the best way of working with private renting tenants who are not meeting their responsibilities in terms of acceptable behaviour, particularly where this could lead to possible increases in homelessness.

Meeting Housing Need **Helping households to access private rented accommodation**

Although house prices fell by 12%²⁰ between April 2008 and April 2009, over the past few years North Lincolnshire has experienced significant house price increases. House prices more than doubled, for example, in the 5 years from 2001 – 2006.²¹ This has meant that home ownership is out of reach for many people and coupled with high numbers of people on the housing register²², this has meant more people are looking to rent privately.

Affordability

The "*Strategy for Preventing and Dealing with Homelessness in North Lincolnshire 2008 – 2013*", states that about four years ago, the private rented sector in North Lincolnshire was inaccessible to most people threatened with homelessness. With a few exceptions, landlords and agents would not let properties to people who had come to the council for help and/or people on benefits. One reason for this was people did not have access to funds for a deposit or a bond to secure the property.

²⁰ "*North Lincolnshire Local Housing Market Report*", North Lincolnshire Strategic Housing Team, June 2009, p1

²¹ "*Building a Better Future: North and North East Lincolnshire Joint Housing Strategy*", 2007 – 2010, p23

²² As at June 2009, 4,923 households were on the current active housing waiting list of North Lincolnshire. Taken from "*North Lincolnshire Local Housing Market Report*", North Lincolnshire Strategic Housing Team, June 2009, p8

In response to this situation, the council introduced a new bond scheme that provided a rapid service for landlords and tenants who needed it. The scheme was highly successful, enabling over 400 lettings in less than two years.

Many of those lettings were to people who might be described as 'hard to house', including a significant number of people who social landlords were not prepared to house because of their previous or current behaviour. Several lettings were to people who already were, or otherwise would have been, sleeping rough²³.

The scheme in its original form, however, was expensive to run and therefore a comprehensive review of the scheme took place in summer 2009 with the following aims:

- Ensure private landlord's management standards and property conditions meet the council's expectations and requirements
- Increase the percentage of payments recovered.
- Review the effect of the Bond scheme in light of the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance.

Safe and Healthy Homes

As a result of the review, 100% of properties are now inspected where a Council Bond is to be applied for.

In certain instances, bonds have been withheld temporarily while landlords bring their properties upto the required standard for letting.

Demand for bonds remain high with almost 500 applicants each year, however, due to the 'affordability test'²⁴ the average amount of bond loaned has decreased to an average of just under £400 as opposed to previous bonds, which averaged in excess of £800. This obviously makes recovery more likely.

Young people

Young people under 25 are often living in private rented accommodation. The council are currently reviewing housing related support services for this client group with a view to increasing and improving support to help young people live independently. This work will be linked to the Private Sector Housing Strategy through the young persons housing strategy working group.

²³ "A Strategy for Preventing and Dealing with Homelessness in North Lincolnshire 2008 - 2013", North Lincolnshire Council, 2008, p32

²⁴ A test to see if the rent being asked for a private rented property is affordable for the person seeking a Council Bond.

Energy Efficiency in Private Rented Accommodation

The Joint North and North East Lincolnshire Housing Strategy 2007 – 2010 includes an objective to increase the uptake of energy efficiency measures within private rented properties to 10% of the total assistance per year.

The 2008/09 update of the Housing Strategy Action Plan shows that this target has not been consistently achieved and therefore this is an area where further focus could result in increased energy efficiency in private rented accommodation and to help people struggling to afford to heat their homes. We plan to target our assistance to those vulnerable households living in private rented accommodation who are experiencing fuel poverty.

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Private Sector Management Standards

The majority of private landlords are responsible in the way they run their business and adhere to good management practices in the way they let their properties.

Unfortunately, there are some incidents where a minority of private landlords are not adhering to statutory and common place letting standards. The Housing Advice Team, for example, interacted with private landlords on 588 occasions in the first 7 months of 2009 around a number of issues including: tenancy issues; unlawful evictions; threats to evict; benefits issues etc. Positive intervention by the Housing Advice Team resulted in a number of successful outcomes, including: 28 cases of the unlawful notices being withdrawn; no further action being taken by the private landlord regarding their threats to evict with no notice; proper notices being served; and tenants choosing to leave but in a planned and proper way.

**Safe
and
Healthy
Homes**

The above evidence illustrates that not all private landlords are acting in a responsible manner, either through ignorance of the law or due to a disregard for appropriate practices. We will investigate this issue further and look to ensure landlords can access appropriate advice and information where needed and promote good management standards through the use of landlord accreditation schemes and training.

Improving decency levels in the private rented sector

The 2008 Private Sector House Condition Survey clearly showed a need for more work with private landlord's to improve the overall condition of private rented accommodation in the area.

**Safe
and**

In terms of financial assistance over the past few years, grants and loans

Healthy Homes have not been readily available for private rented accommodation. A sub-regional loans scheme was developed to offer assistance to private landlords however this currently lacks funding to continue. We will continue to seek funding in order to offer this scheme.

Planning for an aging population

Adapting homes to meet housing needs Chapter 6 addresses the issues around an aging population and increasing numbers of people living with a disability and requiring property adaptation in order to enable them to continue to live independently. We would like to explore this issue with private landlord's in more detail to ascertain their approach to accommodating private renting tenants who have disabilities.

OUR PRIORITIES

Safe and Healthy Homes

- Improve conditions and management standards within the private rented sector.

Affordability

- Continue to assist people who are living in private rented accommodation, particularly those struggling as a result of the recession.

Meeting Housing Need

- Ensuring private renting tenants are able to access Supporting People services to assist them to maintain a tenancy.

OUR PROPOSED ACTIONS

Safe and Healthy Homes

- Seek funding to resource the sub-regional loans scheme targeted at private landlords to improve the levels of decency in private rented accommodation overall.
- Review the current landlord's accreditation scheme and explore options for a sub-regional scheme.
- Encourage and increase membership of the North Lincolnshire Private Landlord's Forum and/or membership of a recognised landlords association.
- Inspect 100% of properties where a Council Bond is to be issued.
- Increase the take up of energy efficiency measures within private rented accommodation.

- Carry out further research with private renting tenants around private rented accommodation to identify any particular issues for certain groups e.g. young people.

Affordability

- Promote the range of services to private landlord's available to help people with debt advice and assistance.
- Identify and access funding to help us achieve our aims in regard to increasing the number of decent homes within North Lincolnshire.

Adapting homes to meet housing needs

- Research successful tenant accreditation schemes and explore options for a sub-regional scheme.
- Raise awareness of housing support available through the Supporting People programme and promote existing and additional referral arrangements.



Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Carbon Efficiency

Introduction

Tackling climate change is an issue that is recognised throughout the world and local authorities have been given a clear remit to not only play a part, but to look at leading the way in delivering local action to address these crucial issues. Energy is fundamental to our way of life and the threat of climate change and reduced UK oil, gas and coal production must be addressed.

The 2007 Energy White Paper “Meeting the energy challenge” provides the Government’s strategy for greater energy efficiency and a secure, low carbon energy mix for the long-term.

The Energy White Paper sets out the major role that energy has to play in meeting the challenge of climate change, and sets four goals to be delivered by 2050:

- An 80% reduction in our carbon dioxide emissions – with a major role for energy efficiency and renewables
- Reliable energy supplies - which means delivering diverse and secure forms of energy
- An updated energy infrastructure and supply that takes advantage of the global economic opportunities arising from such development
- Ensuring that every home is adequately and affordably heated – getting all vulnerable households out of **fuel poverty** by 2010.²⁵

Fuel Poverty and Affordable Warmth

Definition of Fuel Poverty

What do we mean by fuel poverty?

Fuel Poverty is defined as a household that needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel use to achieve a satisfactory standard of warmth.

Severe fuel poverty is defined as any household that needs to spend more than 20% of its income on heating to achieve a satisfactory standard of warmth.

Prior to the 2003 Energy White Paper, the Government developed a

²⁵ Government Office Yorkshire and the Humber website, <http://www.gos.gov.uk/goyh/menvrur/enrgy/?a=42496>

Fuel Poverty Strategy in November 2001 that aims to end fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010 and in all households by 2016.

On a regional level, an Affordable Warmth Action Plan for Yorkshire and the Humber was produced in 2006 to help the region achieve the Government target's around tackling fuel poverty.

North Lincolnshire's Approach to Climate Change

Locally, the Council has signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change. By doing so the Council has joined many other local authorities that have promised to reduce their CO2 emissions. The Council has subsequently developed a Climate Change Action Plan and put in place a Climate Change Steering Group.

In North Lincolnshire we have significant challenges to rise to in regard to reducing our CO2 emissions overall and also within all of our homes. Energy use in the home is responsible for approximately 30% of energy consumed in the UK and in North Lincolnshire, overall, our houses account for 28% of all carbon emission²⁶.

The Council has made the need to reduce CO2 emissions from North Lincolnshire a priority and as such has included **National Indicator 186** in the Local Area Agreement.

NI 186: Per capita CO2 emissions in the Local Authority area

The local target is to reduce CO2 emissions by 33% over a 5 year period starting in 2009.

Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP)

The Government-specified energy rating for a dwelling. Rated on a scale between 1 and 120. The higher the number the

National Indicator 187 measures people receiving income based benefits living in homes with both high and low energy efficiency ratings.

NI 187: number of people in receipt of means tested benefits living in properties with a low energy efficiency (a) and high energy efficiency (b).

The baseline data gathered in March 2009, indicates that 11% of people on income based benefits had a home with a SAP rating of less than 35 and 13% of people on income based benefits had a home with a SAP rating of more than 65.

It is important that NI 186 and NI 187 are looked at together, as one of our key impacts on carbon emissions will be through a reduction in fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency measures in our homes

²⁶ Based on 2007 figures from DEFRA.

better the standard.

across the area. Closely linked to this is the need to educate people on home energy efficiency and carbon efficiency.

In regard to domestic energy use, **The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995** requires a 30% energy efficiency improvement in domestic housing stock over the 15 year period from 1996 to 2011. This target was achieved in North Lincolnshire in 2009.

WHAT WE KNOW IN NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE

- A 30% improvement in energy efficiency in domestic homes has been achieved since 1996.
- The average home SAP rating for the area is 56 out of 120, a significant improvement compared to 43 in 2003 and to a national SAP rating average for all dwellings of 51.
- Overall, 6% (3,772) of the total private sector housing stock has a SAP rating of less than 35.
- Loft insulation levels overall have improved since the 2003 Private Sector Stock Condition survey, with a 28% increase in the number of dwellings with 200mm or greater levels of insulation. 17% however, still only have between 0mm and 75 mm of insulation.
- 18% (11,264) of households would be classed as being in fuel poverty, compared to the England average of 22%.²⁷
- 4,582 households would be classed as in severe fuel poverty.
- 11% of vulnerable households are living in fuel poverty
- The area with the highest occurrence of fuel poverty is Scunthorpe South (34% of the number of people living in fuel poverty).

BACKGROUND

The causes of fuel poverty

Affordability Fuel poverty is caused by the interaction of a number of factors, including:

- The energy efficiency status of the property
- The cost of energy
- Household income²⁸

²⁷ 2001 English House Condition Survey

- Under-occupation of the property.

Energy Efficiency and Carbon Efficiency

Affordability To state the obvious, the less energy efficient a home is, the more expensive it will be to heat it.

Income

Those on low wages may struggle to afford to heat their home adequately. The average annual income in North Lincolnshire for residents who are in the bottom 25% of earners is £11,839. This is higher than elsewhere in the sub-region and the regional average, but it is lower than the national average.

Affordability As the number of people on income related benefits continues to increase as a result of the current economic climate, this will have a knock on effect on the number of people experiencing difficulties paying for their heating. In this case there is a need to give people the necessary support and advice so they can receive the benefits they are entitled to.

Fuel costs

Higher fuel prices reduce the affordability of fuel and energy prices are reported to have risen by 50% since 2003²⁹. The average heating costs per annum has risen to approximately £1,400 a year in North Lincolnshire.

Under occupation

Larger houses are generally more expensive to heat than smaller properties. Occupancy levels can play an important part as those living in under-occupied homes tend only to heat one or two rooms.

As a general rule, under-occupancy tends to be more of an issue facing rural areas rather than urban areas. In rural North Lincolnshire, a larger proportion of households are classified as under-occupied than the regional average according to the Survey of English Housing 2006/07 (44.1% compared to 36.6%).³⁰

The issues of fuel poverty in rural areas requires further attention and we will look at this further through methods such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The benefits of affordable warmth

²⁸ "Fuel Poverty: The Cold Hard Facts" A report by Yorkshire Futures for the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly, Winter 2007/08, p6

²⁹ "Environmental Health News", Vol. 23, No. 13, 4 April 2008, p1

³⁰ "North Lincolnshire Rural Affordable Housing Needs Survey", Fordham Research, August 2009, p16

Affordable warmth means that a household is able to afford to heat their home to the level required for their comfort and health.

Affordable warmth has several benefits, which include:

- increases life expectancy and reduces inequalities in health;
- improves householders' mental health and well being
- improves children's educational achievements and school attendance, and reduces the incidence of childhood asthma;
- promotes social well-being and independent living, with older people able to use the whole house following central heating installation. This potentially reduces/delays admission to hospitals and care homes.

The health impacts of fuel poverty

Affordability

Just as there are many positive impacts of being able to afford to heat your home to a comfortable level, the health impacts of living in fuel poverty are also widely recognised:

- People living in cold, damp houses are more likely to suffer from a respiratory disease such as asthma or bronchitis and this would affect the rate of hospital admissions.
- As people get older they are more susceptible to experiencing health problems related to living in a cold property and this has an impact on hospital admissions and also on Excess Winter Deaths³¹.
- Fuel poverty can have mental health impacts related to not being able to pay fuel bills, resulting debt, isolation and living with particular health conditions.

North Lincolnshire has an aging population and over the next 25 years the population over 65 is predicted to almost double, it is therefore essential that health professionals and front line staff remain alert to the impact of cold homes.

OUR CURRENT APPROACH

Safe and Healthy Homes

Energy Efficiency grants

These grants provide assistance for energy efficiency measures such as cavity wall insulation, loft insulation and heating measures for households in receipt of certain benefits. Assistance can also be obtained through this grant to install renewable technologies.

SHEEP scheme (South Humber Energy Efficiency Partnership)

The SHEEP scheme is a partnership between North Lincolnshire and

³¹ Excess Winter Deaths are defined as the difference between the number of deaths which occurred in winter (December to March), and the average number of deaths during the preceding and subsequent four month periods (August to November and April to July).

North East Lincolnshire Councils and provides discounted loft and cavity wall insulation to anyone who is a homeowner. The scheme also provides discounts on renewable technologies such as solar panels and ground source heat pumps.

Safe and Healthy Homes

Warmfront

Warmfront is a Government-funded initiative to make homes warmer, healthier and more energy efficient. The Warm Front Grant provides a package of insulation and heating improvements up to the value of £3,500 for households connected to the gas grid and up to £6,000 in areas off the gas grid. Homeowners or those who rent from a private landlord may be eligible for a grant under the Warm Front scheme, subject to certain criteria³².

Low Carbon Building Programme

The Council promotes the Low Carbon Building Program. The Program provides grants of up to £2,500 per property towards the cost of microgeneration technologies.³³

Further details on these schemes are available on the Council's website at www.northlincs.gov.uk

Working in partnership

With the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) through:

- The Well-being and Health Improvement Partnership (WHIP)
- The Environment Group
- The Economic Board

With other Council departments

- to maximise promotion opportunities for energy efficiency measures and available support
- library loan scheme for energy efficiency SMART metres.

With the Primary Care Trust (PCT):

- to promote the availability of energy efficiency schemes
- to develop the HOT SPOT referral card where issues of fuel poverty may be identified.
- To attend flu clinics and other health related events.
- To undertake joint strategic needs assessments on identified priority groups.

With Energy Companies:

- to promote SMART metres to households generally and those in

³² Further details on qualifying criteria can be found at <http://www.warmfront.co.uk/do-i-qualify.htm>

³³ More information on these can be found at www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/home

- receipt of income benefits in particular.
- To provide free energy saving light bulbs to households regardless of tenure

With North Lincolnshire Homes

- joint bids for funding to improve the homes in particular areas regardless of tenure,
- to provide eco-friendly new build housing
- supporting and providing innovative energy efficient heat sources e.g. air source heat pumps
- to provide extra insulation measures, double glazing, new efficient heating systems, external cladding of non-traditional homes as part of the decent homes investment programme
- Making tenants eligible for free energy saving light bulbs and Shower Smarts to reduce energy use.
- Providing debt advice and maximising household income for North Lincolnshire Homes tenants.

With Registered Social Landlords

- To develop new affordable homes to Code for Sustainable homes level 3 and 4 and beyond.
- To undertake joint working on area based project regardless of tenure.

The Code for Sustainable Homes

From May 2008 the Code for Sustainable Homes has introduced new mandatory levels of carbon emissions reduction, arranged on 6 levels:

Level 1 = 10%

Level 2 = 18%

Level 3 = 25%

Level 4 = 44%

Level 5 = 100% (carbon neutral)

Level 6 - 100% + ancillary equipment and appliances.

As part of the Climate Change Action Plan, the Council are looking to introduce a commitment to developing new homes to comply with the levels as set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes.

There are significant advantages to local homeowners, house builders and architects and designers by taking up the requirements of the Code thereby reducing future carbon emissions as a result.

We are currently working with partner housing associations to develop new affordable homes to the Homes and Communities Agencies Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 and 4 and beyond.

The learning and skills gained through these projects will be shared throughout the area to continue to reduce the carbon emissions from our homes and to lower the cost of keeping them warm.

CASE STUDY: Cherry Grove: Code Level 3 for Sustainable Homes

As part of the Build Your Future project, four two-bedroom apartments for young people aged 16-25 were constructed at Cherry Grove, Ashby by Longhurst Havelok Homes.

The new homes all meet the Code for Sustainable Homes Level three, which ensure minimal energy and water consumption during the use of the homes and reduced carbon emissions. Other key areas of the code are environmentally friendly materials, managed rainwater discharge, recyclable waste, pollution control, ecology assessment/management, management of the homes during construction and in use and measures to ensure the long term health and well-being of the residents.

All of the measures required by Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 were considered and incorporated within the development, however one key element which helped towards achieving several of the aims was the inclusion of an Exhaust Air Heater, Hot Water and Ventilation System.

The Exhaust Air Heating System draws fresh air in from outside the home, mixes it with air from within the homes and then heat is extracted from this warm air to provide the full requirements for hot water and heating whilst also providing controlled ventilation.

It is expected that the total electrical energy costs for the new homes at Cherry Grove could be as little as £520 per year (less than £1.50 per day) if the Exhaust Air System is used correctly. Longhurst Havelok Homes have provided training on the system to new residents and will be monitoring the energy use.

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Funding challenges

As outlined in Chapter 8, the Regional Housing Board will be experiencing cuts of 20% on their annual budget and therefore each Local Authority must prioritise their programmes. This may have an impact on energy efficiency programmes.

In addition, programmes such as Warm Front are also receiving cuts

to the overall budget and this will have a knock on effect on available funds at a local level.

Continuing to improve on performance

The Council has been very successful in promoting the use of energy efficiency measures over the last few years. In order to continue to tackle fuel poverty and promote energy efficiency the council needs to work in partnership with others. This includes taking advantage of all funding opportunities, for example the recent GoWarm initiative (a targeted area based programme of insulation measures, benefits assistance and energy advice).

OUR PRIORITIES

Safe and Healthy Homes

- Increasing energy efficiency measures in homes throughout North Lincolnshire
- Reducing Carbon emissions from homes in North Lincolnshire
- Reducing the number of people in receipt of means tested benefits living in homes with a SAP rating below 35.
- Reduce Excess Winter Deaths and cold related accidents.
- Reduce ill health, GP visits and hospital admissions related to Excess Cold.

Affordability

- Reducing the number of vulnerable households who are living in fuel poverty

OUR PROPOSED ACTIONS

Safe And Healthy Homes

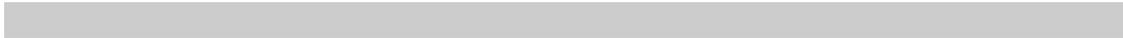
- Actively target vulnerable households to increase energy efficiency measures resulting in an increased SAP rating.
- Work with GoWarm, to deliver a targeted area based programme of insulation measures, benefits assistance and energy advice.
- Increase the take up of energy efficiency measures within private rented accommodation.
- Raise awareness and provide more training to frontline

professionals - from healthcare and home visitors to the fuel and energy sector to recognise and tackle fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

- Use the Strategic Needs Assessment to look at the impacts of fuel poverty in more detail.

Affordability

- Target vulnerable households to maximise income and reduce the cost and consumption of energy.
- Raise the profile of affordable warmth and issues around fuel poverty amongst internal and external partners.
- Raise awareness amongst the general public of Climate Change and energy and carbon efficiency through promotion events, for example, an annual Energy shop in Scunthorpe Town Centre.
- Train front line staff to recognise people who may be living in fuel poverty and develop referral procedures.



CHAPTER 6: Adapting homes to meet housing needs

Introduction

Thanks to better healthcare, new technologies and a more prosperous society we are all now living longer. This is good news, but it also presents challenges and issues that we must address. As well as an ageing society, more people with physical or medical conditions are living longer as well.

Ensuring that older or disabled people have access to good quality housing is a vital part of helping them maintain their independence and their quality of life. We want homes to be safe and familiar havens rather than obstacle courses to be negotiated each day.

We will be living in a society where there are more and more older people, and they are demanding a much better quality of life than previous generations. One in five children born today can expect to live to 100 years of age, and on average, over 10 of those years will be spent living with a disability. Already one in ten children in the UK suffers some form of disability.

By 2041 the composition of the older age group will have changed dramatically. There will be a higher proportion of over 85s, a greater number of older people from black and minority ethnic groups, and double the number of older disabled people.

In future, housing, health and care will be increasingly interdependent. The Government's approach is set out in an overarching ageing strategy 'Opportunity Age'. This strategy builds on the 'Communities and Local Government's' Green Paper, Homes for the Future, and shares themes with the Department of Health's White Paper, 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say' and 'Putting People First'. One of the government's new approaches to social care is personalisation, or self-directed care. This is based on the idea that people know what is best for them.

What we know in North Lincolnshire

- It is estimated 8% (4,875) dwellings are occupied by people with disabilities.
- The demand for adaptations is going up every year due to North Lincolnshire's ageing population
- It is estimated that by 2030 over 40% of North Lincolnshire's population will be over 50 including 26,000 people aged 75

or older

- Amongst other activities, our handyman service fitted 1808 grab rails, 465 chair raisers, 103 bathing aids and cleared 300 gardens during 2008/09.³⁴

Background

Meeting Housing Needs

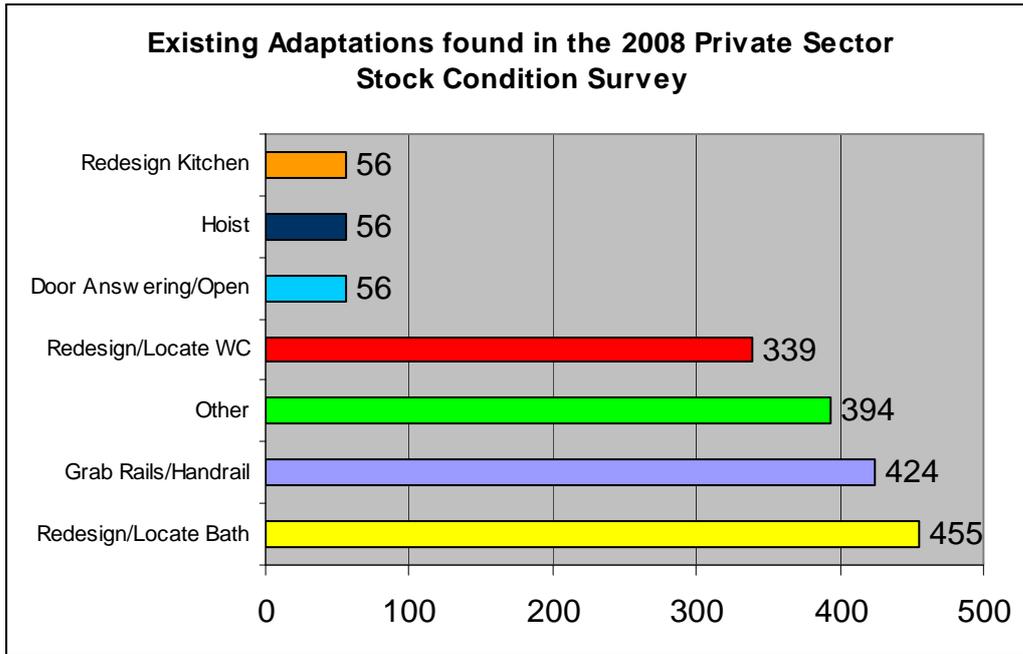
At present the primary form of assistance to adapt people's homes to meet their needs is the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). Whilst there is a mandatory entitlement to this grant, this is subject to an assessment of need and a means test. It is available to disabled home-owners, and private and social rented sector tenants to help pay for adaptations to be made to their homes so that they can live as comfortably and independently as possible. Approximately 70% of disabled facilities grant applicants are older people.

The work for which a grant may be made is wide ranging, providing for access to the property and access to the basic facilities within a home, including: ramped access, walk in showers, stairlifts, door widening, and adapted toilets.

The main criticism of disabled facilities grants relates to the complexity of the system and the bureaucratic nature of the process, and due to the demand for adaptations, the need for ever more resources. This has a direct impact on DFG applicants who have to wait far longer than is desirable to get work done. The programme is therefore in need of updating and improving.

Table 6.1

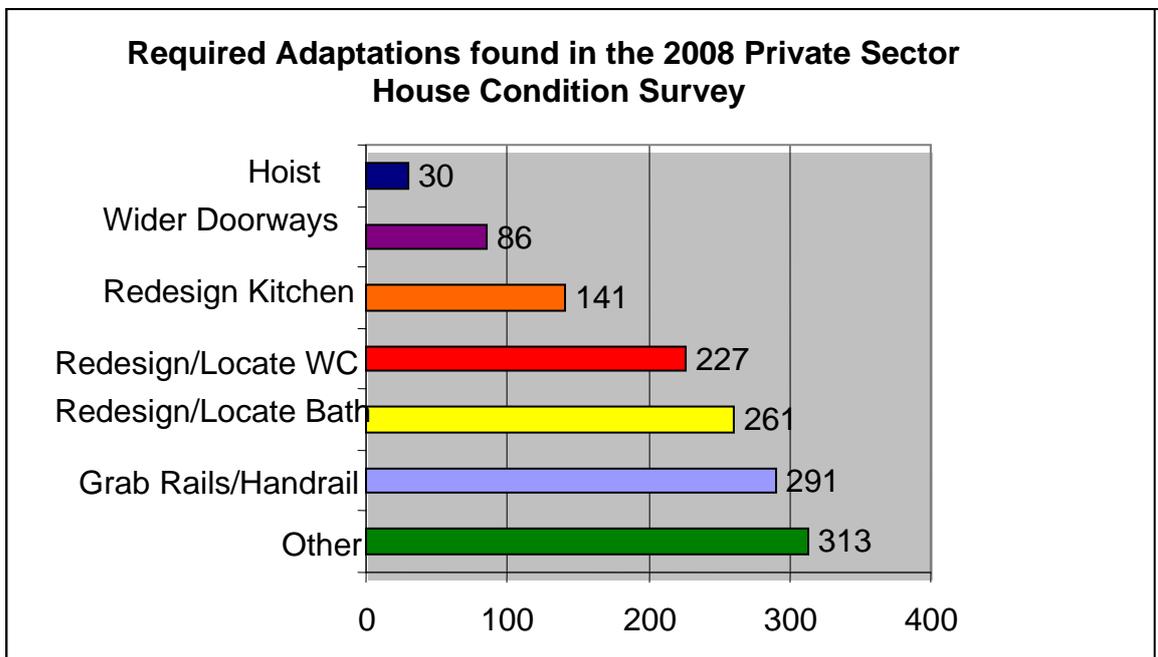
³⁴ Other activities included 23 target hardenings, 52 domestic violence target hardenings, 81 temporary ramps, steps and external handrails, 45 home safety items (including handrails and stair posts).



(Other in this instance includes Chair Lifts, Stair Lifts and a Walk in Shower)

The above chart shows the number of existing adaptations found during the 2008 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and the table below shows the number of adaptations that are required.

Table 6.2



(Other in this instance includes Ramp at front of house and Stair lift)

OUR CURRENT APPROACH

Meeting Housing We work jointly with adult and children's social services to improve our delivery of disabled facilities grants. We have

Needs reviewed the whole process from initial assessment, to formal application, to selection of contractors and completion of work. The aim is to reduce the time taken to deliver adaptations.

We are using Social Services Fair Access to Care criteria to identify those who need help most urgently. In order to make the application process easier the Local Link service is assisting people to complete the necessary paperwork and speed up the means testing.

We offer a full agency service to design adaptations to meet individuals needs, select contractors via a competitive procurement process to achieve value for money and supervise them until the job is complete.

In order to improve the quality of the adaptation work and reduce the time taken between the approval of a grant and the completion of the work we are putting in place procurement framework agreements with a number of contractors in preference to tendering each job.

Additional social care, support or interim measures may also be offered when major adaptations cannot be provided within a reasonable time.

As the funding for disabled facilities grants is limited, social care, support and minor or temporary adaptations may be provided where appropriate.

We offer assistance to obtain loans or charitable funding as alternative means of paying for adaptations, particularly where peoples needs are less severe than others. We employ a loans officer with appropriate financial qualifications and experience in order that the council does not offer inappropriate assistance.

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

There is a big challenge to make adaptations more affordable and quicker to provide.

Affordability Care in the community is being replaced by personalisation or individualised care. Funding for disabled facilities grants funding may be moved into the Local Area Agreement funds with a view to abolishing them altogether. In their place people may be given personal budgets to design and provide their own solutions.

The government has an ambition that local housing

information services will enable older people to find out about their range of housing options, whether staying put or moving home, or considering finance options such as equity release. We will need to ensure that social care, health and benefits are linked together.

Key Issues

- Budgets are not rising in line with the growing number of people requiring assistance.
- The need to manage expectations vis a vis to what the council and housing associations can provide with the limited resources available.
- Legislation and government guidance results in different approaches to meeting the needs of adults and children.
- Enabling people to review their housing options based on good information.

Our future focus

Meeting Housing Need

We want to work in partnership with others to make the best use of the limited resources available. For example, we work closely with North Lincolnshire Homes to provide the adaptations that their tenants require. In this way we have been able to reduce the average cost of adaptations to their properties, releasing more funds to be spent in owner-occupiers or private tenant's homes.

We want to offer a range of potential solutions to meet people's needs rather than rely solely on disabled facilities grants. This includes the handyman service, equity release, repayment loans, or even help to move.

OUR PRIORITIES

Meeting Housing Need

Meeting Housing need

We will continue to work closely with colleagues in social services to ensure that disabled facilities grants are appropriate to individuals needs and that they are reasonable with regard to cost. We cannot spend all our resources on a handful of cases.

Where it is no longer appropriate for people to remain in their existing home we are working to advertise those social housing properties that are accessible to disabled people more effectively. From October 2010, the Home Choice Lincolnshire scheme (choice-based lettings) will allow people to apply for vacancies that are openly advertised on a dedicated website.

Where accessible properties are advertised, they will be properly described as such with the type and level of access features, so that those with disabilities can select housing which is appropriate to their needs.

OUR PROPOSED ACTIONS

Meeting Housing Need

- Give people better information at the initial point of contact on how their needs can be met and promote individual choice and responsibility.
- Empower service users to access the correct information, advice and ensure that those who decide to self-fund make the best decision for now and years to come.
- Continuously monitor the delivery of disabled facilities grants and minor adaptations to identify and implement service improvements.
- Develop a forum of service users and providers to ensure all partners have an opportunity to raise issues and ideas.
- Review current methods for gathering customer satisfaction feedback with the disabled facilities grant service related to service standards.
- Implementation of a robust IT system to monitor and measure performance.



CHAPTER 7: Empty Homes

Introduction

Empty properties require our attention because:

- we need to maximise how we use our existing housing stock due to the demand for additional housing in North Lincolnshire³⁵
- run down vacant properties can detract from the quality of the local environment and
- they can cause significant problems for local residents.

There are lots of reasons why properties are left vacant for periods of time beyond the normal housemoving cycle. These include:

- people inheriting properties and being unsure of what action to take with them or probate delays
- people holding onto properties as an investment
- properties being in disrepair and the costs are too great for the owners to afford to repair them.

Nationally, empty properties account for 3% of the housing stock. The national average over the last couple of years for properties that have been vacant for longer than 6 months is 1.6%.³⁶

What we know in North Lincolnshire

- 3% of the total housing stock are vacant overall
- 1.4% of the total private sector housing stock have been vacant for more than 6 months³⁷.
- North Lincolnshire has the lowest number of long term vacant properties in the Humber region (the Humber is 2%).

Background

Until 2007, the Council reported on the Best Value Performance Indicator 64 – *the number of private sector dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished...as a direct result of action by the Local Authority.*

North Lincolnshire always performed well in regard to this

³⁵ The 2008 Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy has identified the need for 750 new homes to be built in North Lincolnshire each year up to 2021 and the 2006 North Lincolnshire Strategic Housing Assessment identified the need for 302 new affordable homes to be built each year up to 2011.

³⁶ CLG website, 13 September 2009,

³⁷ Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix 2009

indicator and was in the top quartile in 2007 with 176 properties returned to occupation or demolished as a direct result of action by the Local Authority³⁸.

In dealing with empty properties, there are a number of options available to the Council as described below.

Advice

In dealing with empty properties, the Council will always start by trying to work with the owner of the property and offer advice and assistance if appropriate to encourage the owner to bring the property back into use.

The advice could include a number of areas:

- Seeing if the owner qualifies for any assistance in the form of a loan to bring the property back into use.
- Advice on the current VAT rates for developing empty properties
- Information on local estates agents and lettings agents
- Information about the Landlord Accreditation scheme and the Council's Bond scheme if the owner would like to rent out the property.
- Advising the owner of action that will be taken if complaints have been received about the property in regard to vermin, build up of rubbish, nuisance to adjoining properties and so on.
- Refer to a Housing Association for the property to be bought and/or let as affordable housing.

Enforcement Action

If the necessary action is not taken by the owner of the property, where the empty property has been identified as requiring further action, enforcement action may be taken.

Enforcement action could include:

Compulsary Purchase Order (CPO)

CPO's are carried out under section 17 of the 1985 Housing Act (as amended).

A CPO is a final solution to a problem empty property as it removes ownership from the current owner.

Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO)

These were introduced as part of the Housing Act 2004 and came into effect from April 2006. It involves the Local Authority taking over management of a property, carrying out works if applicable and then renting the property out. Management

³⁸ BV 64 – Upper quartile performance was 95. North Lincolnshire's actual result for 2007 was 176.

costs and any refurbishment costs can be reclaimed from the rental income – with any balance going to the owner.

Enforced Sale Procedure

Carried out under s103 of the Law of Property Act 1925, this allows the Local Authority to force the sale of a property with a local land charge on it. The Council does not acquire the property, it is sold to a third party. Any outstanding charges against the property, including the mortgage, are paid following the sale and money remaining (if any) is put into account for the owner to claim.

OUR CURRENT APPROACH

Generally, we have fairly low numbers of long term empty properties. Given the large amount of time and resources often required to bring empty properties back into use, our approach will be to only focus attention on empty properties where a clear benefit can be gained.

For example:

- In areas of high housing demand, as identified in some of our rural areas, where the benefits to the local community will be worth the investment to bring an empty property back into use, particularly for affordable housing use.
- In order to achieve wider objectives linked to our urban and rural renaissance regeneration plans, e.g. the objectives of the Town Centre Master Plan.
- In order to meet an identified housing need where bringing an empty property back into use will be part of a spend to save initiative e.g. for homeless families or young people.

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Due to the current low levels of long term empty properties within North Lincolnshire, the Council feels that the limited resources available would be better focused on the priorities identified elsewhere in this strategy, particularly increasing levels of decency within the private sector stock and contributing to tackling climate change and fuel poverty.

The Local Strategic Partnership has not identified tackling empty properties as a priority for the area. We will, however, closely monitor the vacant property figures to ensure the current low levels continue or decrease and review our strategy should this change. We will also carry out further analysis to identify any patterns or concentrations in areas of vacant dwellings across all tenures.

OUR PRIORITIES

Affordability

- Assessing the need to bring empty properties back into use in rural areas with high levels of housing demand.
- Working in partnership across the Yorkshire and Humber region to maximise existing skills and resources.

OUR PROPOSED ACTIONS

Meeting Housing Need

- Work with the other Humber Local Authorities to establish a Humber Empty Homes Task Group.
 - Work with existing Housing Association partners to access Homes and Communities Agency Funding to bring empty properties back into use where they will address a housing need.
 - Mapping all empty properties to identify any areas of concern.
- 

CHAPTER 8 - Resources to finance the strategy

Introduction

The resources available to fund the proposals in this strategy come from a variety of sources.

Revenue Funding

This covers staff associated premises and other costs. Some of the ambitions within this strategy require intensive staff time. The council has struggled to appoint qualified environmental health officers and project managers to posts in the past and this has affected our ability to deliver consistently and move from a reactive service to our desired pro-active and preventative agenda. All local authorities will be affected by the recession and the governments need to reduce public spending – this is likely to impact further on our ability to deliver our ambitions. However considerable work has gone on to look at how staff are currently working through a business process re-engineering assessment to streamline activities, minimise bureaucracy for smarter working practices to improve productivity with the resources we have.

Capital Funding

The local authority receives some direct funding for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) where the government (Communities and Local Government – CLG) funds 60% of the budget and the council the rest. Other funding comes from the Regional Housing Board (RHB) in order to help achieve the Regional Housing Strategy, with a particular emphasis on 'place shaping', which includes the Advance Humber Towns project (of which Advance Crosby is North Lincolnshire's project), which includes energy efficiency, decency, choice and fair access to housing. The private sector element of that funding is known as the single pot.

Other funding

Other funding comes directly from the council's own capital resources through borrowing and housing capital receipts from the sale of former Council houses.

Funding has also been obtained from energy suppliers to assist with the provision of energy efficiency measures and more recently funds have been obtained from the wind farm developers for specific targeted support to locally affected communities, e.g. Dragonby. Other funding has been sought from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and

from the energy suppliers through Certs (Carbon Emissions Reduction Targets) and more recently CESP (Community Energy Saving Programme) obligations.

Each of these funding streams has their own criteria or rules relating to how the funding can be used and whether match funding is expected from the authority.

Resources 2009/10

Source	Detail	2009/10 £,000s	2010/11 £000s
Council funding	Hardship renovation grant	50	
	Energy Efficiency	88	
	Regional Loans	200	
Regional Housing Board		1,214	
Disabled Facilities Grant	Combined CLG 60% and Council 40%	941	
Discretionary	For DFG top up	500	

A 20% funding cut is expected to the original 2010/11 Regional Housing Board funding indicative allocation which is a result of a national decision to re-direct resources to the provision of new affordable housing.

Please note that the resources chapter is not yet complete as funding for 2010/11 has not yet been finalised at a sub-regional level.



CHAPTER 9: Monitoring the Strategy

The chart below (Chart 9.1) shows how this strategy will be monitored. The Council have a robust Performance Management System (PMS) in place which enables the actions in the strategy to be distributed to relevant staff and reported on via a specialist IT system.

Updates on progress on the action plan will be reported to a Housing Quarterly Performance Review (QPR) meeting. The Housing QPR will take place every 3 months and include monitoring of performance information from the following teams:

- The Strategic Housing Team
- The Housing Advice Team
- The Home Improvement Team
- The Private Sector Housing Team

An annual report on progress towards delivering the strategy will also be taken to the North Lincolnshire Housing Investment Board and to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Strategic Planning.

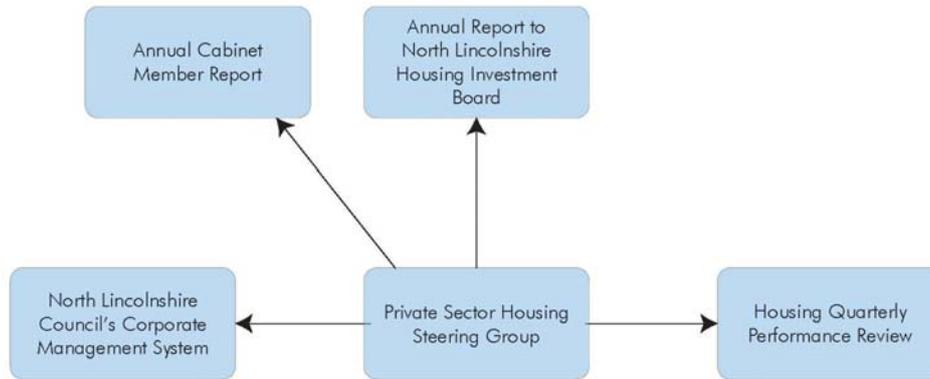
North Lincolnshire Housing Investment Board

The Investment Board is the strategic housing board for North Lincolnshire and reports to the Humber Housing Partnership Board Executive Group. Our board is made up of the Cabinet Member for Housing, Council officers, representatives from the private rented sector, estate agents and Housing Association representatives.

The Board meets quarterly and has responsibility for prioritising and monitoring funding from the Regional Housing Board for housing projects across North Lincolnshire.

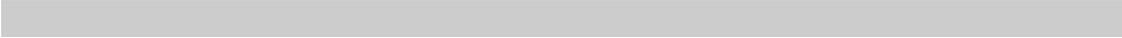
Chart 9.1

Monitoring the Strategy



Links to Local, Sub-regional and Regional Structures

The links between the strategy, and the Local Strategic Partnership structures and sub-groups, as well as between the sub-regional and regional housing structures are shown in Chart 9.2 below.



CHAPTER 10: Risk Assessment

The risks associated with delivering the Private Sector Housing Strategy are identified below along with actions to mitigate these risks.

Risk	Likelihood of risk occurring	Potential Impact of risk on delivery of strategy	Mitigating action
<p>Significant cuts to budgets and funding</p> <p>Internal Capital funding</p>	High	<p>High</p> <p>Targets within the strategy are not reached and private sector homes decline.</p> <p>Match funding not available impacting on external funding bids</p>	<p>Incrementally move to loans from grants</p> <p>Maximise funding from external sources</p> <p>Champion the importance of the priorities within the strategy to the Local Strategic Partnership, Partner organisations and regionally.</p> <p>Ensure a robust evidence base to ensure internal and external bids are successful.</p>
Internal Revenue funding	High	<p>High</p> <p>Ability to delivery projects</p>	SMART working Business Process Re-engineering in place
Partner organisations experiencing cuts	High	<p>High</p> <p>Ability to delivery projects</p>	Requests to partner organisations are kept specific and output focused.
Reallocation of Government resources	High	<p>High</p> <p>Ability to deliver actions in plan</p>	Strategy action plan regularly reviewed to

Risk	Likelihood of risk occurring	Potential Impact of risk on delivery of strategy	Mitigating action
			ensure relevant and demonstrating impact. Look for opportunities reallocation of resources may create.
Continued increase in vulnerable households as a result of the recession	High	Medium More vulnerable households living in non-decent housing	Implement Council wide and partner response to assist vulnerable households struggling as a result of the recession
Lack of engagement with stakeholders	Medium	Medium Do not meet needs of stakeholders	Regular engagement with service users Maximise opportunities for feedback.
Recruitment and retention of specialist and technical staff	Medium	High	Follow Corporate Recruitment Policy
Keeping existing staff skills up to date and developing new skills	Medium	Medium	Employee Development Review (EDR) Training identified and budgets recognised.
Failure to meet public expectations	Low	High	Regular engagement with public Strategy development in response to public feedback
Unforeseen	Medium	High	Emergency plan

Risk	Likelihood of risk occurring	Potential Impact of risk on delivery of strategy	Mitigating action
natural or man-made disaster			

Appendix 1: The Private Sector House Condition Survey

Good practice guidelines require that a private sector house condition survey is conducted every 5 years. The previous survey for North Lincolnshire was conducted in 2003 and reported in February 2004. Our latest survey was conducted by Managed Services Consultancy (MSC Ltd) on behalf of the Council. The fieldwork was carried out in 2008 and reported in June 2009.

The survey only looked at properties in the private sector (excluding Housing Associations and public sector owned premises) and took a random sample of 1250 properties from a total of 61825 dwellings from 5 sub-areas within North Lincolnshire.

The sub areas are:

- Barton and District
- Brigg and district
- Scunthorpe North
- Scunthorpe South
- The Isle

Barton and District includes the following wards:

- Alkborough
- Barrow upon Humber
- Barton upon Humber
- Burton Upon Stather
- Croxton and Kirmington
- East Halton
- Flixborough
- Goxhill
- New Holland
- North Killingholme
- South Killingholme
- Thornton Curtis
- Ulceby
- West Halton
- Whitton
- Winteringham
- Winterton
- Wooton

Brigg and District includes the following wards;

- Appleby
- Barnetby le Wold
- Bonby
- Brigg
- Broughton
- Cadney
- East Butterwick
- Elsham
- Hibaldstw
- Holme
- Horkstow
- Kirton in Lindsey
- Manton
- Melton Ross
- Messingham
- Redbourne
- Roxby cum Risby
- Saxby all Saints
- Scawby
- South Ferriby
- Worlaby
- Wrawby

Scunthorpe North includes the following wards:

- Burringham
- Crosby
- Gunness and Town

Scunthorpe South includes the following wards:

- Ashby
- Bottesford
- Brumby
- Froddingham
- Kingsway
- Lincoln Gardens

The Isle includes the following wards:

- Amcotts
- Belton
- Crowle
- Eastoft
- Epworth
- Garthorpe
- Fockerby
- Haxey
- Keadby
- Luddington
- Owston Ferry
- West Butterwick
- Wroot

The basis for carrying out a condition survey

The duty to regularly consider the condition of the housing stock was consolidated within the Housing Act 1985. Section 3 of the Housing Act 2004 requires that a local authority must keep the housing conditions in their area under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them under any of the provisions (*of the Act*) – including -
 Part 1 (Housing conditions),
 Part 2 (licensing of HMOs),
 Part 3 (selective licensing of other houses), and
 Chapter 1 and 2 of Part 4 (management orders),
 Part 9 of the Housing Act 1985 (demolition orders and slum clearance) and
 Part 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (renewal areas).

Stock condition surveys are essential to a local authority for a number of reasons, namely:-

- Providing an authority-wide picture of housing conditions as part of a strategic survey of housing demand and supply within the authority's 'enabling' role;
- Assessing the need for an 'intervention' role by the authority, for example through enforcement or financial assistance;
- Ascertaining the stock condition element of a local regeneration initiative;
- Meeting information needs on specific stock.

An important point to consider when looking at the findings of this survey is that it only looked at the private sector housing stock within North Lincolnshire. As far as it was possible to do so, using council tax data and other information held by strategic housing, social housing dwellings such as

Housing Association owned properties, were excluded from the survey sample.

APPENDIX 2: Profile of the North Lincolnshire Housing Stock

Dwelling Age

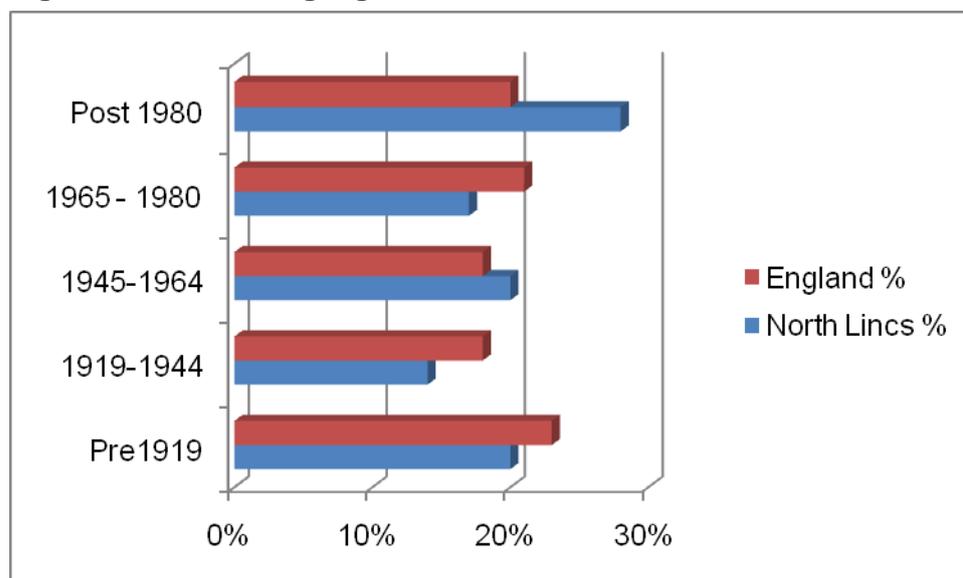
The survey results shown in table 2.1 provide an indication of the age profile of the private sector stock. The results would suggest that North Lincolnshire has 3% less pre 1919 and 4% less 1919-1944 stock as against the national levels. In general the area has a significantly greater number of more modern stock than the national average.

Table 2.1: Dwelling Age Profile

<i>Dwelling Age</i>	<i>Number of Dwellings</i>	<i>North Lincolnshire*</i> %	<i>England</i> %
Pre1919	12,082	19.6%	23%
1919-1944	8,890	14.4%	18%
1945-1964	12,516	20.3%	18%
1965 - 1980	10,713	17.4%	21%
Post 1980	17,324	28.2%	20%
Total	61,525	100.00%	100%

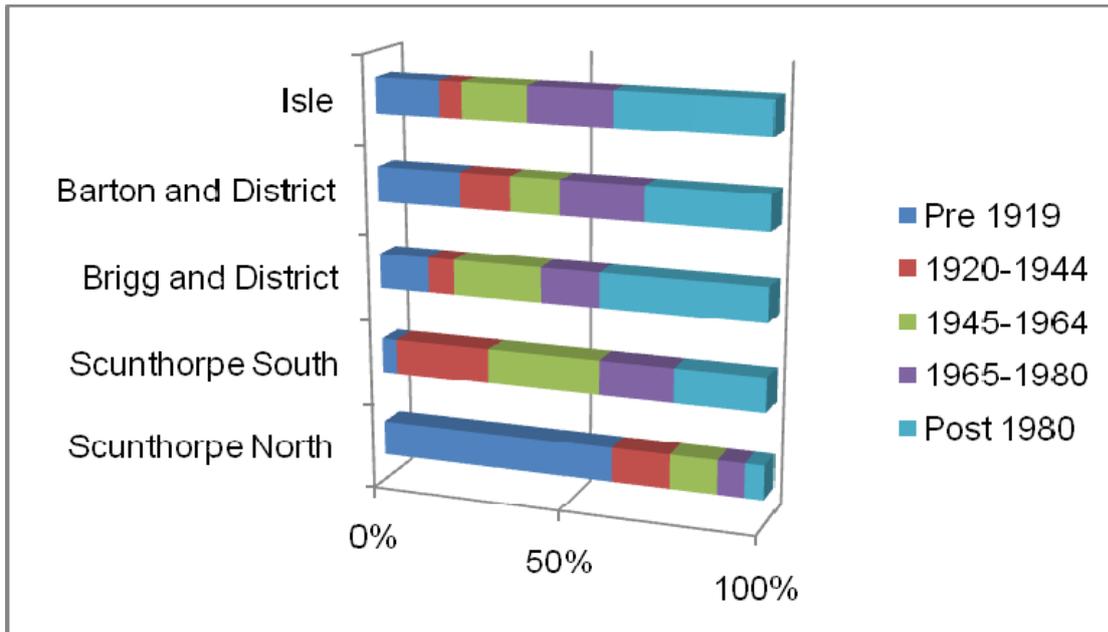
Please note that due to the weighting applied it will not always be possible to get percentages to exactly add up to 100.

Figure 2.1 - Dwelling Age Profile



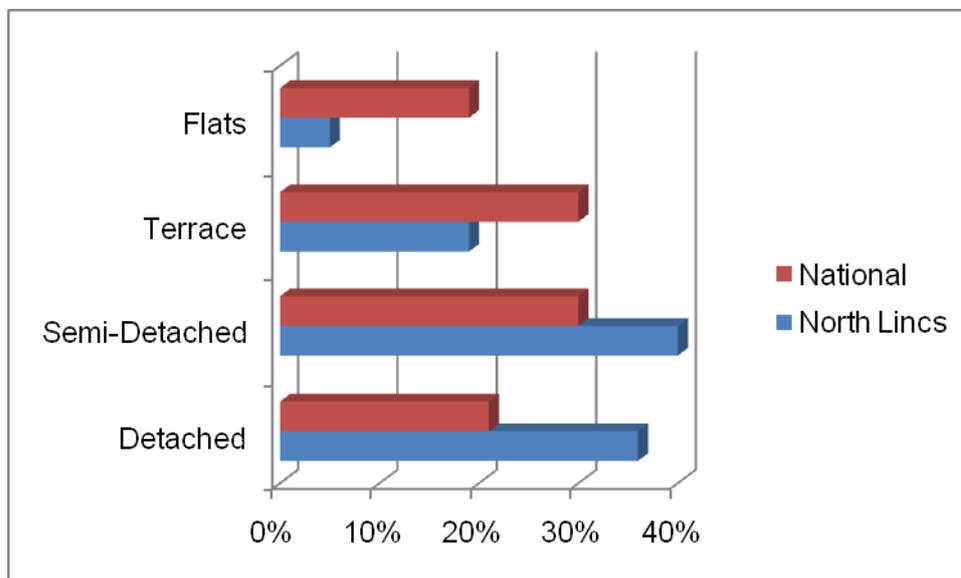
The above chart shows that North Lincolnshire has more modern stock than the England average.

Figure 2.2 – Dwelling types by Area



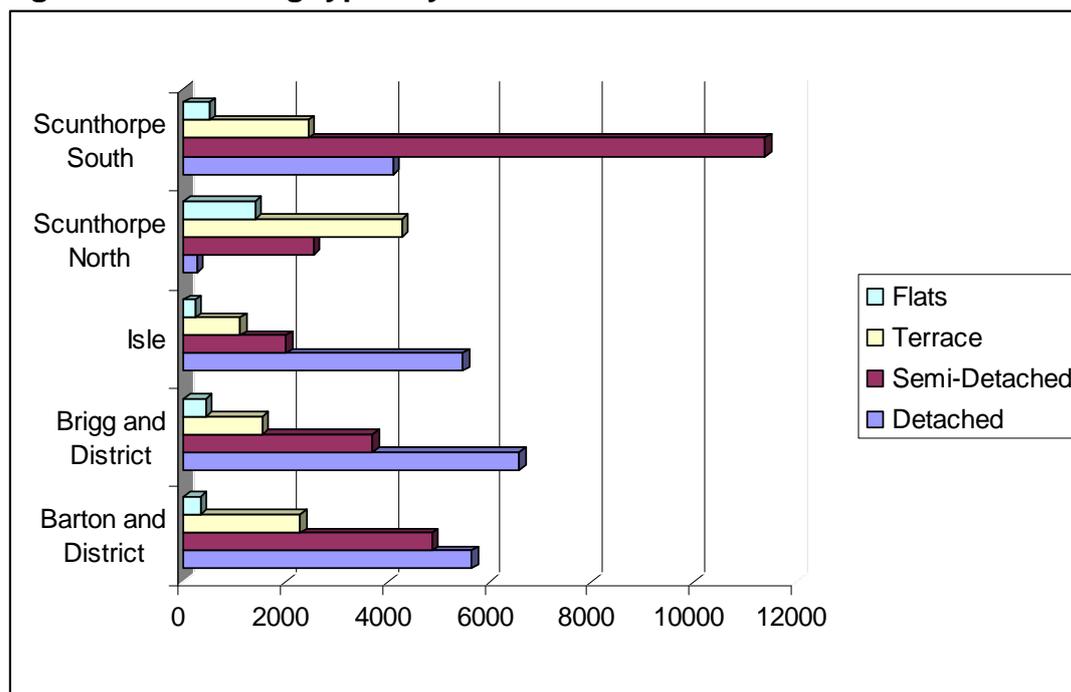
The above chart shows that the area with the highest percentage of Pre 1919 stock, (which historically has always been found to have the most intrinsic problems) was found to be Scunthorpe North, with 62% of its stock being made up of the oldest properties.

Figure 2.3: Dwelling types: North Lincolnshire and National Dwelling types



The above chart shows that there are marked differences between the profile of building types in North Lincolnshire and the National profile. The proportion of detached and semi-detached is significantly higher while conversely flats and terrace properties are significantly lower than the national average.

Figure 2.4: Dwelling types by area



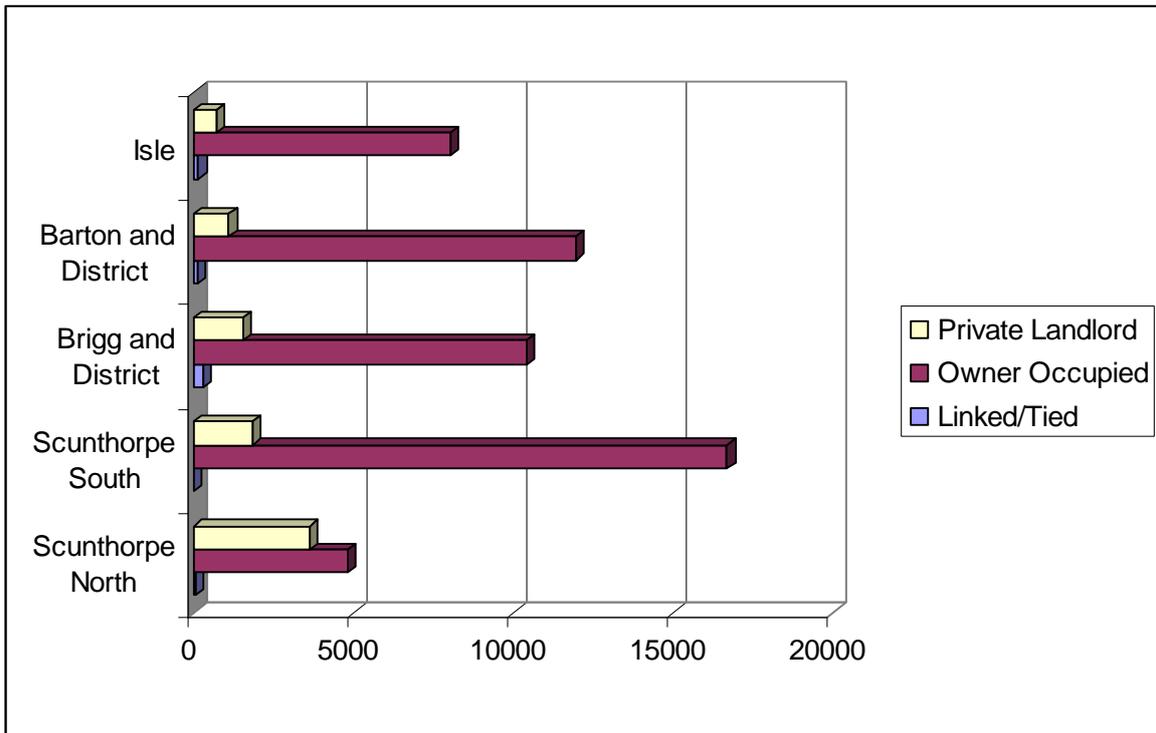
When looking at the dwelling types by area. It can be seen that the terraced type property is greater in numbers in Scunthorpe North and this would match the age profiling previously noted. Scunthorpe South was found to have the largest number of Semi-detached properties.

Table 2.2 - Number of Private Sector dwellings by Tenure

<i>Tenure</i>	<i>North Lincolnshire</i>	<i>England</i>
Owner occupied	85% (51,962)	80%
Privately rented	14% (8,891)	12%
Tied/Shared	1% (672)	<1%
Total	100%	100%

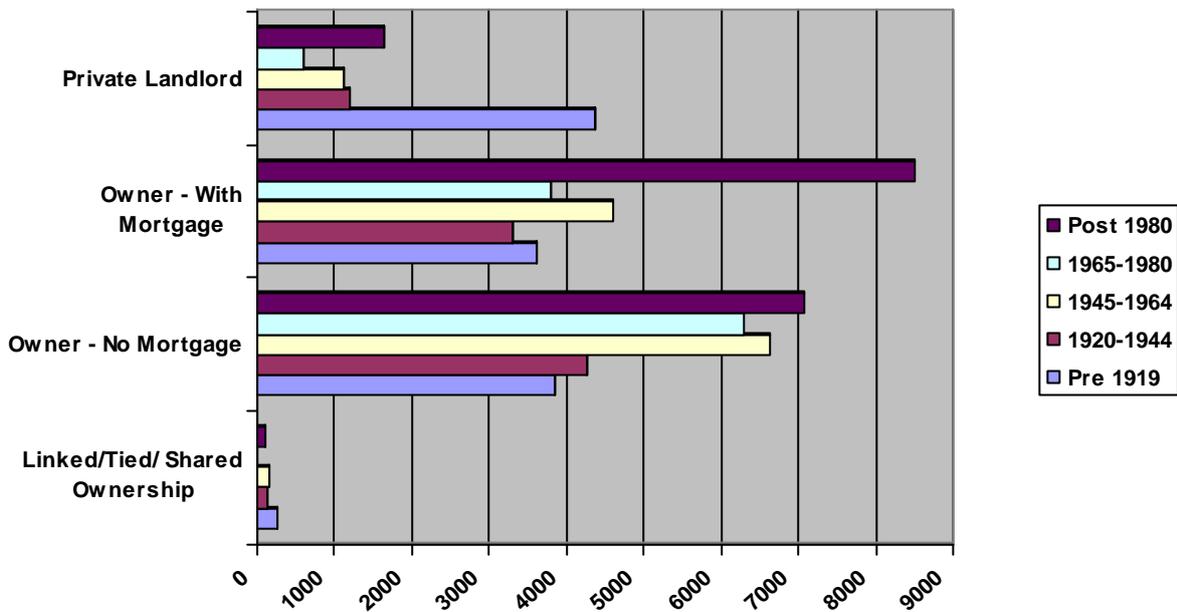
The above table shows there are no marked differences between the profile of tenure types in North Lincolnshire and the national profile for all private sector stock in all areas.

Figure 2.5: Number of Private Sector Dwellings by Area and Tenure



The above chart shows the tenure type of properties by each of the sub-areas.

Figure 2.6: Tenure by date of construction



APPENDIX 3 – Data on North Lincolnshire

For this strategy, it will be useful to set the scene for what is happening in North Lincolnshire in terms of the changes to our population and the make up of that population with a view to the subsequent impact this will have on our resources and service requirements.³⁹

North Lincolnshire covers an area of 85,000 hectares of which 89% is farmland. Scunthorpe is North Lincolnshire's major town.

The population of North Lincolnshire is 156,500 with 69,110 living in Scunthorpe.

- 20% of the population are under 16 years old
- 23% of the population are over 60 years old

North Lincolnshire	Humber	Yorkshire and Humber	England
+4.7%	+3.6%	+4.4%	+4.7%

Source: ONS, mid-year population estimates

The population in North Lincolnshire has increased by nearly five per cent over the last 10 years. This is in line with the increase nationally, and marginally more than within the city region.

Year	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Population	166,900	175,400	184,000	191,900	198,900

Source: ONS, population projections, 2007

The population in North Lincolnshire is forecast to grow steadily over the coming years. The increase is likely to be around 8,000 more people every five years. This estimate is based on previous growth in the area and projected growth nationally. It does not reflect the impact of our flagship projects, such as Lincolnshire Lakes, that seek to have a positive impact on growing the population.

	North	Yorkshire and	United Kingdom

³⁹ Much of the data presented is taken from "The State of North Lincs", updates, 2008 and 2009. This document is available on request from the Council's Economic Development Team.

	Lincolnshire	Humber	
0-19	23.5%	24.4%	24.2%
20-34	15.1%	20.0%	19.7%
35-49	24.6%	21.6%	22.1%
50-64	19.7%	18.0%	18.0%
65-79	12.6%	11.6%	11.5%
80+	4.5%	4.4%	4.5%

Source: ONS, mid-year population estimates 2007

The age profile of North Lincolnshire has some considerable differences compared to the national and regional profiles. In particular the proportion of people aged 20-34 is significantly lower in North Lincolnshire than elsewhere – three in every 20 people in North Lincolnshire compared to four in every 20 regionally. Conversely, North Lincolnshire has a greater proportion of those aged 30-79.

These figures have impacts for our resources around disabled facilities grants and adapting properties in generally. See chapter 6, “Adapting homes to meet housing needs”, for further details.

Table 3.4: Percentage of LSOA's in the most deprived 10% of LSOA's nationally		
	IMD 2004	ID 2007
North Lincolnshire	8.0%	9.0%
Yorkshire and Humber	17.4%	16.7%
England	10.0%	10.0%

Source: DCLG, Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation 2007 consists of individual indices based on three themes, or domains. Each of these contains a number of indicators that are combined to provide an overall score for each domain index. The scores are then weighted and combined into a single score known as the Index of Multiple Deprivation. In 2007, North Lincolnshire had a below average percentage of its Lower Super Output Area's (LSOAs) in the 10 percent most deprived LSOAs in England. However, more LSOAs are now in the most deprived 10% in North Lincolnshire compared to 2004.

Table 3.5: Percentage of LSOA's in the most and least deprived 20% of LSOA's nationally		
	Most Deprived	Least Deprived
North Lincolnshire	17.0%	8.0%
The Humber	27.5%	14.3%
Yorkshire and Humber	27.5%	14.4%
England	20.0%	20.0%

Source: DCLG, Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2007

North Lincolnshire has a lower proportion of LSOAs in both the most deprived and least deprived quintiles when compared nationally, regionally and city regionally. This suggests that North Lincolnshire is a more homogenous area than many others, and that the deprivation gap is not as large as elsewhere.

Table 3.6 : SOA's in the most and least deprived quintiles by domain						
Domain	North Lincolnshire		The Humber		Yorkshire and Humber	
	Most	Least	Most	Least	Most	Least
Income	19%	15%	27%	16%	24%	19%
Employment	18%	3%	26%	12%	27%	14%
Health Deprivation and Disability	12%	1%	21%	15%	27%	11%
Education, Skills and Training	26%	2%	34%	9%	33%	14%
Barriers to Housing and Services	11%	39%	8%	59%	8%	33%
Crime	41%	4%	45%	13%	31%	13%
Living Environment	2%	33%	24%	20%	26%	11%
Total SOA's	100		579		3293	

Source: DCLG, Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2007

Examining the different domains of the indices, it is clear that North Lincolnshire still suffers from greater levels of deprivation in some aspects. In particular, over 40 per cent of LSOAs are in the most deprived quintile for crime.

North Lincolnshire has a greater proportion of LSOAs in the least deprived quintile for living environment and barriers to housing and services. This suggests that the natural environment in North Lincolnshire is a key asset, and that housing is more affordable and services more accessible in North Lincolnshire.

Table 3.7: Index of Deprivation Scores by Ward		
	Average Score	National Rank (Out of 7932, 1 being the most deprived)
Brumby	36.51	759
Crosby and Park	34.45	911
Frodingham	33.38	993
Town	32.64	1,052
Ashby	29.08	1,382
Burringham and Gunness	23.28	2,113
Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens	22.07	2,298
Barton	21.32	2,427
Axholme North	19.54	2,736
Brigg and Wolds	16.06	3,589
Ferry	15.66	3,686

Burton upon Stather and Winterton	13.29	4,458
Axholme South	13.16	4,517
Broughton and Appleby	12.19	4,877
Ridge	11.96	4,950
Axholme Central	11.51	5,116
Bottesford	9.16	6,109

Source: DCLG, Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2007

This shows that within North Lincolnshire there are disparities. The urban wards of Scunthorpe are more deprived than the national and local average; wards which contain the more rural market towns feature around the national median ranking; and the wards which contain the smaller rural towns and villages are amongst the least deprived nationally. Bottesford comes out as the least deprived ward in North Lincolnshire, performing particularly well in relation to the environment, employment, health and income domains.

The data can also be examined at an even more detailed level of lower-level super output area (LSOA). None of the LSOAs in North Lincolnshire are in the most deprived 100 overall in England. However, within the crime domain there are four LSOAs in North Lincolnshire that fall into the 100 most deprived in the country.

There are nine LSOAs in North Lincolnshire that are in the 10% most deprived overall LSOAs in England. Four of these are in Crosby and Park ward, two in Brumby, and one each in Frodingham, Town and Ashby. This means that just under nine per cent of the North Lincolnshire population live in the most deprived areas.

North Lincolnshire has only one LSOA in the 10 per cent least deprived in England. This is in Ridge ward. Overall, there are more LSOAs in less deprived areas than there in more deprived areas when compared to the national median. This is reflected in the fact that North Lincolnshire's overall IMD score is just below the national average.

	North Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and Humber	England
Q1 2007	14.2%	14.1%	13.4%
Q2 2007	12.6%	12.9%	12.3%
Q3 2007	11.8%	12.3%	11.9%
Q4 2007	11.4%	12.0%	11.6%
Q1 2008	11.5%	12.1%	11.7%
Q2 2008	11.4%	11.9%	11.6%
Q3 2008	11.5%	12.2%	11.8%
Q4 2008	11.6%	12.2%	11.9%
Q1 2009	11.9%	12.5%	12.2%

Source: DWP benefit claimants

The proportion of people of working age on out of work benefits (Job Seeker's Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Employment Support Allowance and Lone Parent Benefit) declined sharply over the course of 2007 and remained steady through 2008. More recently there has been a slight increase, as a result of the large increase in JSA claimants. This pattern matches the profile seen regionally and nationally.

Table 3.9: Working age people on out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods			
	North Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and Humber	England
Q1 2007	28.47%	30.18%	30.79%
Q2 2007	28.31%	29.94%	30.54%
Q3 2007	28.00%	29.64%	30.24%
Q4 2007	27.67%	29.28%	29.89%
Q1 2008	27.50%	29.03%	29.64%
Q2 2008	27.45%	28.88%	29.48%
Q3 2008	27.33%	28.87%	29.44%

Source: DWP benefit claimants

The proportion of people on out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods in North Lincolnshire has reduced consistently over recent months. This pattern has also been seen regionally and nationally, although the rate in North Lincolnshire is lower than both.

The worst performing neighbourhoods are classed as those with a claimant rate of over 25% at February 2007. All of the worst performing areas are in Scunthorpe (four in Crosby, two in Town, two in Frodingham, two in Brumby and one in Ashby).

Table 3.10: People falling out of work onto incapacity benefits			
	North Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and Humber	England
Q1 2007	0.82%	0.77%	0.63%
Q2 2007	0.82%	0.76%	0.62%
Q3 2007	0.69%	0.75%	0.62%
Q4 2007	0.70%	0.74%	0.60%
Q1 2008	0.68%	0.74%	0.60%
Q2 2008	0.69%	0.72%	0.58%
Q3 2008	0.69%	0.67%	0.53%

Source: DWP benefit claimants

Table 3.11: JSA Claimant count: total	
	Total
North Lincolnshire	5.2%
Yorkshire and Humber	4.8%
Great Britain	4.1%

Source: DWP, claimant count, July 2009

Historically North Lincolnshire has had a lower JSA claimant count than regionally, although it has consistently been slightly higher than nationally. However, from the final quarter of 2008 to the first quarter of 2009 North Lincolnshire saw a massive increase in claimants from 3.3 per cent to 5.1 per cent. Whilst regionally and nationally there were also increases in this period, the jump in claimants has been much higher in North Lincolnshire.

Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) Communities

In 2001, there were estimated 3,800 residents from BME communities in North Lincolnshire, representing just 2.5% of the local population compared with 8% nationally. By 2005, this population was estimated to have grown by more than a third to 3.5% of the local population⁴⁰.

The largest BME communities are people of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage.

Official population estimates and projections do not take account of the likely impact of more recent migrants to North Lincolnshire as they are not recorded in official statistics. These include Kurdish refugees as well as economic migrants from the Baltic and the European expansion states, attracted to the area by the availability of work on the farms and food processing plants around North Lincolnshire. Although it is hard to put precise figures on the number of recent migrants to North Lincolnshire, one 2005 study put the figure at between 1100 – 1500 a year, of which two thirds were estimated to be either Kurdish, Eastern European or Portuguese. It is not know how many of these migrants will stay in the long term, and what impact they have on local services.

⁴⁰ “*Health and social care in North Lincolnshire: Finding the future together – Consultation on North Lincolnshire’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment*”, North Lincolnshire Council and North Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust, May 2008

Appendix 4: Links to Other Strategies

Our strategies and actions in relation to private sector housing do not sit in isolation to other strategies and plans. Some of these are referred to Chapter 2: National, Regional and Local Priorities, however, there are many other local strategies that require mention as they relate to the aims and objectives outlined in this document.

A Strategy for Preventing and Dealing with Homelessness in North Lincolnshire 2008 – 2013

The Strategy for Preventing and Dealing with Homelessness in North Lincolnshire has 5 key objectives:

Objective 1 – Prevention

- To prevent homelessness whenever possible, regardless of entitlement under the homelessness legislation

Objective 2 – Solutions

- When homelessness cannot be prevented, to offer a range of solutions whenever possible

Objective 3 – Support

- To ensure that appropriate support mechanisms are in place, when required, to sustain accommodation and prevent repeat homelessness

Objective 4 – Partnership

- To further develop multi-agency working, using and focusing the enthusiasm and resources which exist

Objective 5 – Gap Analysis

- To identify trends and gaps as soon as they occur, and identify and implement solutions.

A range of agencies work to assist a range of households and prevent homelessness, many of these households currently live in owner-occupied or private rented accommodation.

Homes that Last: Delivering Housing for Older People in North Lincolnshire

The current strategy for older people's housing has the following objectives.

- Older people as valued partners
- Sharing and developing a choice of good quality services
- Promoting independence
- Creating homes that are appropriate and lasting
- Fostering a sense of belonging

A new strategy for older people will be produced by the middle of 2010 and the actions as outlined in this strategy will directly impact on the plans for our aging population, particularly around the issue of adapting properties to meet people's needs.

Young People's Housing Strategy

The vision for young people's housing in North Lincolnshire is

That all young people making the transition to independent living should have fair and equitable access to quality, safe, affordable accommodation that meets their living and support needs.

The strategy to fulfill this vision has seven elements – to:

1. Improve access to permanent housing
2. Improve supply of housing
3. Improve intelligence on housing needs
4. Improve information about housing issues
5. Prevent or reduce homelessness
6. Improve access to temporary/emergency housing
7. Improve access to support

Young People's housing needs, aspirations and assistance has been considered in the development of this strategy, particularly around the area of private rented accommodation.

North Lincolnshire Health and Well Being Strategy 2009 – 2011

The vision for Health and Well Being in North Lincolnshire is:

“That everyone in North Lincolnshire enjoys improved well-being and health and that health inequalities are significantly reduced and ultimately eliminated”⁴¹

The objectives within the strategy are to:

1. Improving the health and well being of older people
2. Reducing smoking
3. Reducing alcohol harm
4. Improving mental and emotional health
5. increasing life expectancy
6. Increasing being active
7. Increasing healthy eating
8. Reducing sexual ill health
9. Promoting independence
10. Improving health in priority neighbourhoods and targeted groups
11. helping young people to be healthy.

⁴¹ “North Lincolnshire Health and Well Being Strategy 2009 – 2011”, North Lincolnshire Council 2009, p5

The North Lincolnshire Sustainable Community Strategy has the reduction of health inequalities and improvement of health as a key priority. Clearly there are links to this strategy focusing on the areas of reducing fuel poverty and helping people who require adaptations to their properties to assist people to live independently.

***Safer Neighbourhoods North Lincolnshire
The Safer Communities Plan 2008 - 2011***

Priority Action 1

Reduce the most serious violence, including tackling serious sexual offences and domestic violence.

Priority Action 2

Continue to make progress on serious acquisitive crime through a focus on the issues of greatest priority in each locality and the most harmful offenders – particularly drug-misusing offenders.

Priority Action 3

Tackle local priorities by dealing effectively with the crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour issues of greatest importance in each locality, increasing public confidence in the local agencies involved in dealing with these issues.

Priority Action 4

Reduce re-offending through the improved management of offenders (including drug misusing offenders)

Priority Action 5

Further develop the partnership

The North Lincolnshire Supporting People Five year strategy

The Supporting People Strategy sets out to ensure the delivery of high quality and needs focused services to vulnerable people which will help to:

- Promote choice
- Promote independence
- Facilitate inclusion within the community
- Keep people safe and secure.

National and Regional Context

In July 2000, the Government announced a significant increase in resources in housing and introduced the Decent Homes Standard. As part of its desire to link increased spending to better outcomes, the Government established a target to “ensure that all social housing meets set standards of decency by 2010”.

In 2002, this target was extended to cover vulnerable private sector households.

Definition of a Decent Home

A decent home is one which is wind and weather tight, warm and has reasonably modern facilities. It must meet the following four criteria:

A – It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those containing one or more hazards assessed as serious (‘Category 1’) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

B – It is in a reasonable state of repair

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:

- One of more of the key building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or,
- Two or more of the other building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair.

C – It has reasonably modern facilities and services

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:

- A reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less)
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout
- A reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
- An appropriately located bathroom and WC;
- Adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem)
- Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats

A home lacking two or less of the above is still classed as decent therefore it is not necessary to modernise kitchens and bathrooms if a home passes the remaining criteria.

D – It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

For more information on the Decent Homes standard visit the Decent Homes section of the Department for Communities and Local Government at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/decenthome>

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System

National and Regional Context

In April 2006, the Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to replace the previous fitness standard as a method of assessing the health and safety standards of a dwellings and defining how a local authority can or should intervene.

The HHSRS generates a score which represents the seriousness of any hazard. This takes into account the likelihood of an event occurring and the likely severity of its outcome. Any hazards that have a score of over 1,000 are described as 'Category 1' for which the Local Authority should consider the appropriate form of enforcement action.

The risk is assessed on the basis of a person who would be most vulnerable to the hazard(s) present. The presence of a Category 1 hazard in a home therefore does not necessarily mean that its current occupants are at serious risk, but that a person vulnerable to that risk would be so.

The HHSRS assessments determines and informs enforcement decisions by taking into account the likelihood of a hazardous occurrence and its potential severity. Where a hazard scores more than 1,000 this is considered a Category 1 hazard. The Housing Act 2004 makes it a duty on local authorities to take action to resolve a hazard which scores 1000 or more, a Category 1 hazard.

The English House Condition Survey found that 24% of private sector dwellings were likely to have a Category 1 hazard.

Local Context

In North Lincolnshire, Category 1 hazards were identified in 8.2% (5,027) of the private sector housing stock.

Within this number some 36% (844) hazardous dwellings contain households with a vulnerable occupant and 39% (911) of hazardous dwellings house contain residents over the age of 60.

Both at the national and local level, the most frequent serious hazard, is excess cold.

Decription	Total	Percentage
Excessive Cold	3022	60
Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage	373	7
Falls on stairs	369	7

Food Safety	262	5
Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse	198	4
Water supply for domestic purposes	172	3
Falls on the level	142	3
Position and operability of amenities	116	2
Electrical Safety	86	2
Fire	60	1
Lighting	56	1
Falls in bath	56	1
Damp and mould	55	1
Flames, Hot Surfaces	30	1
Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products	30	1
Total	5027	100

Enforcement Action available

Where an HHSRS assessment determines that a hazard has a rating termed as Category 1, the authority is obliged to take action. For hazards identified under Category 2, the local authority will have discretionary powers. The legislation enables Local Authorities to decide that, despite the presence of a Category 1 hazard, immediate enforcement action is unnecessary or not practical. This may arise where, for example, the occupant is not vulnerable to the hazard in question, or the hazard is an integral feature of a listed building which cannot be dealt with and of which the occupants are fully aware.

The enforcement powers available to the Council are listed below.

- Serve an Improvement Notice
- Make a Prohibition Order (similar to the current Closing Order provision)
- Serve a Hazard Awareness Notice (a notice advising the person on whom it is served that a hazard exists)
- Take emergency remedial action
- Make an Emergency Prohibition Order (these two emergency provisions are a new concept which will be welcomed to deal with imminent risks to occupiers)
- Make a Demolition Order
- Declare a Clearance Area.

Over the last three years, 80 private sector dwellings have been made free from Category 1 hazards as a direct result of action by the Local Authority.

The National Focus

The **UK Low Carbon Transition Plan** plots how the UK will cut the emissions set out in the budget of 34% on 1990 levels by 2020⁴². A 21% reduction has already been achieved.

The challenges of climate change provide a focus for a shift towards becoming a low carbon economy, through energy efficiency and the development of renewable and sustainable energy sources.

The **2007 Energy White Paper** “Meeting the energy challenge” provides the Government’s strategy for greater energy efficiency and a secure, low carbon energy mix for the long-term.

The **Fuel Poverty Strategy** (November 2001) sets out the target of ending fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010 and in all households by 2016.

The Regional Focus

The Regional Economic Strategy sets the region on the path to a low carbon economy with the challenging targets of at least a 20% reduction in green house gas emissions in the region by 2010 as a first step to 60% reductions by 2050.

The Regional Spatial Strategy supports the drive to a low carbon economy and the delivery of energy targets including the generation of 674 MW of renewable energy within the region by 2010 and some 1850 MW of renewable energy by 2021.

The Regional Housing Strategy includes a section on fuel poverty, highlighting this is a key issue for the region. A subsequent Regional Affordable Warmth Action Plan has been developed focused around highlighting the problem in the region, maximising regional access to national funding and supporting delivery on the group through the promotion of consistent referral schemes and other measures.

In addition, the **Integrated Regional Framework for Yorkshire and the Humber** area states that the key priority regarding fuel poverty will be to: “improve the quality and energy efficiency of existing (housing) stock and make sure that new stock is of the highest standards in terms of design and construction.”

⁴² Department of Energy and Climate Change website
http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/publications/lc_trans_plan/lc_trans_plan.aspx

Information from the 2008 Private Sector House Condition Survey

Table 6.1 - Average Energy rating and age of dwelling

<i>Age Band</i>	<i>Mean Average SAP</i>	<i>Mean Average NHER</i>
Pre 1919	50.8	5.3
1920-1944	51.3	5.2
1945-1964	55.7	5.8
1965-1980	57.1	6.0
Post 1980	64.2	6.9

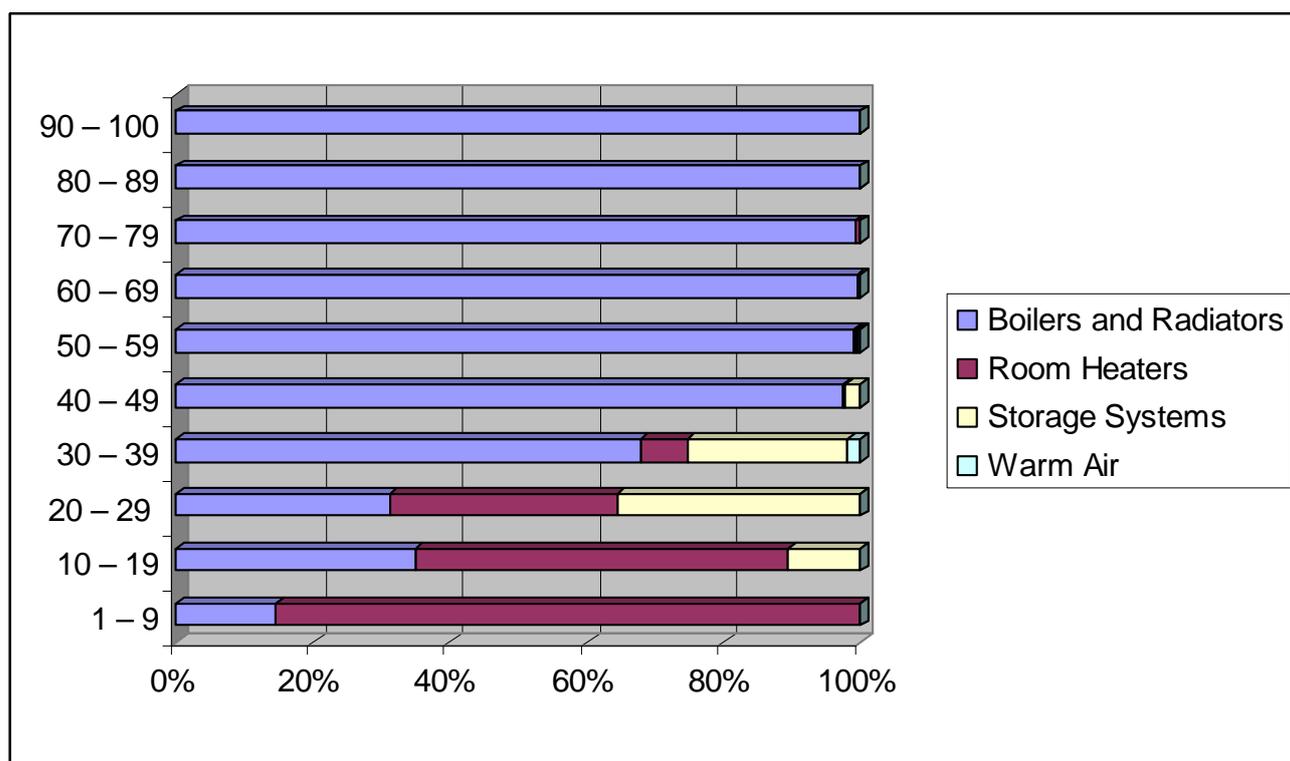
As would be expected, new properties tend to be more energy efficient than older properties.

Table 6.2 Average energy rating by Area

<i>Area</i>	<i>Average SAP</i>
Scunthorpe North	55
Scunthorpe South	56
Brigg and District	59
Barton and District	56
Isle	56

The above table shows the average SAP rating across by area North Lincolnshire.

Figure 6.1 SAP (Banded) by Main Heating Type



The above chart shows the SAP rating by the main heating types and shows that boilers and radiators are the most energy efficient heating types and room heaters are the least energy efficient.

Insulation

Overall, the Private Sector House Condition Survey showed that it is estimated that 11,420 dwellings (that have a loft space), equating to approximately 20% of the dwellings within the Area, have only 100mm of loft insulation (this compares with a figure in the 2003 survey of 27.9%).

There are 13,899 (24%) dwellings that have 150mm of insulation and 39% are estimated to have 200mm or greater of insulation (in 2003 these figures were 37.3% and 11% respectively).

A total of 9,675 (17%) (19.8% in 2003) have between 0mm and 75mm of insulation.

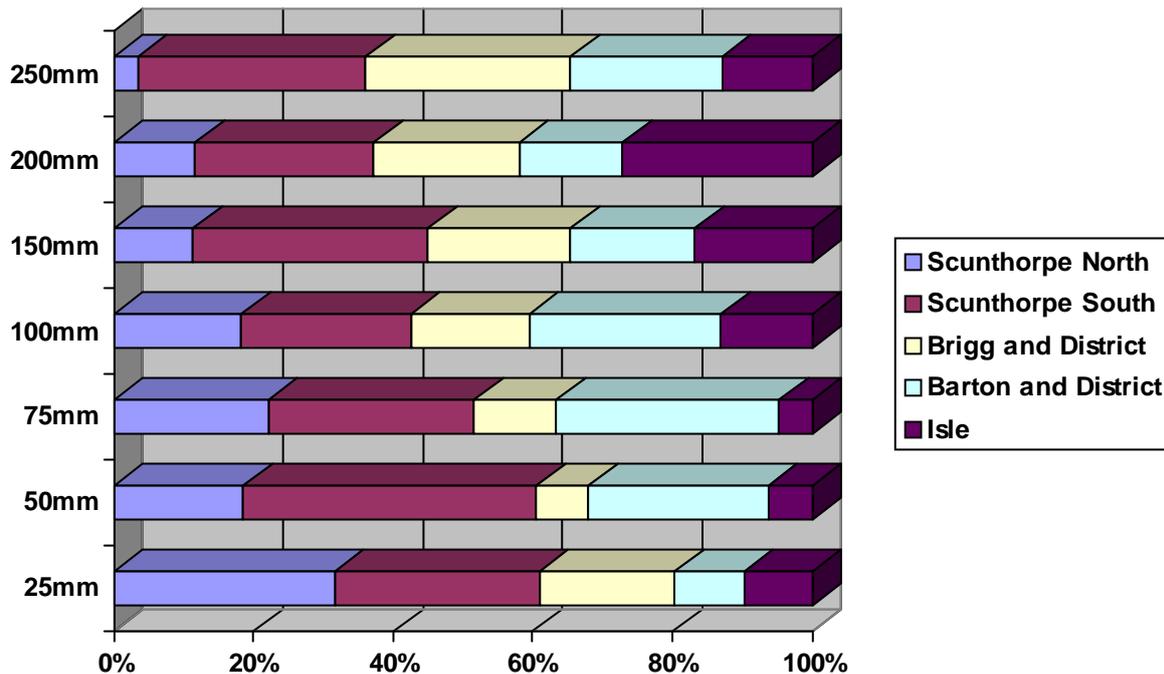
Table 6.3 - Loft Insulation Thickness

Insulation Thickness	Number of Dwellings	Percentage
25mm	569	1%
50mm	4,377	8%
75mm	4,729	8%
100mm	11,464	20%
150mm	13,899	24%

200mm	8,006	14%
250mm	14,708	25%

Assuming that all dwellings had the prescribed levels of loft insulation when built, the results of the survey shows that the occupants in varying degrees have added loft insulation over the years.

Figure 6.2: Loft Insulation Thickness by Area



The above chart shows the levels of loft insulation measures by each of the areas looked at in the House Condition Survey and shows that Scunthorpe overall has the lowest levels of loft insulation generally.

Figure 6.4: Loft Insulation Thickness by Vulnerable Occupant

Insulation Thickness	Number of Dwellings
25mm	60
50mm	690
75mm	175
100mm	1,294
150mm	1,556
200mm	1,334
250mm	2,446

The table above shows the levels of loft insulation in homes occupied by vulnerable households and shows that 925 vulnerable households are living in a home with less than 75mm of loft insulation.

Fuel Poverty

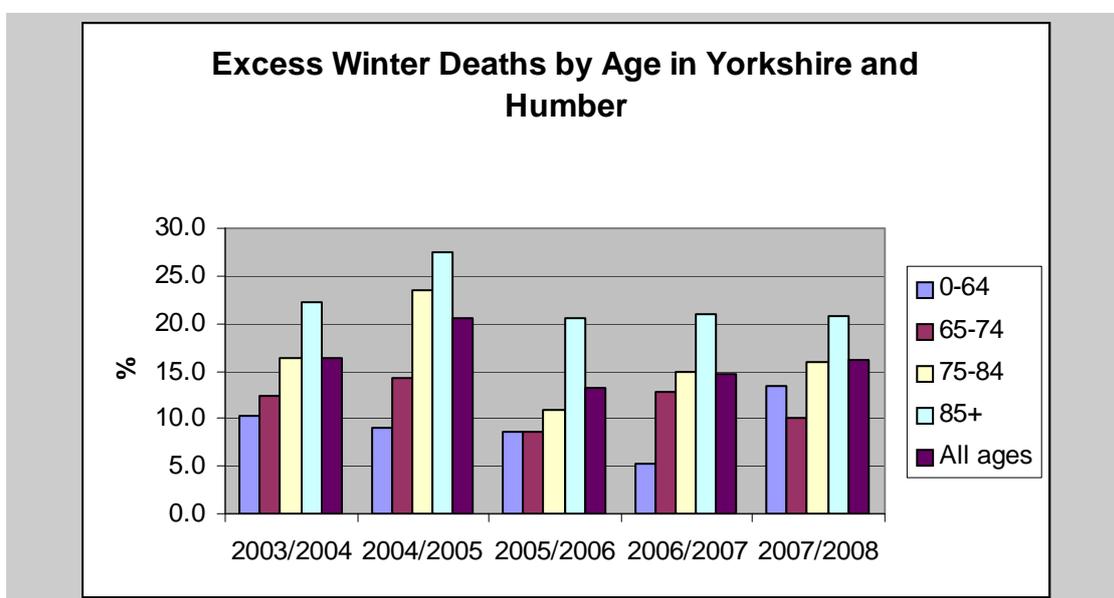
The table below shows the health impacts of different levels of temperature and illustrates the importance of people living in homes that are heated to a temperature they find comfortable, especially those who may be classed as vulnerable.

Effect of temperature on health⁴³

21 oC	Recommended living room temperature
18 oC	Minimum temperature with no health risks
Under 16 oC	Resistance to respiratory disease may be diminished
9 – 12 oC	Increases blood pressure and risk of cardiovascular disease
5 oC	High risk of hypothermia

Excess winter deaths in Yorkshire and Humberside

The 2009 Health Profile for North Lincolnshire suggests that excess winter deaths in North Lincolnshire are not significantly different from the England average.⁴⁴ The chart below illustrates the impact of excess winter mortality as it relates to age⁴⁵.

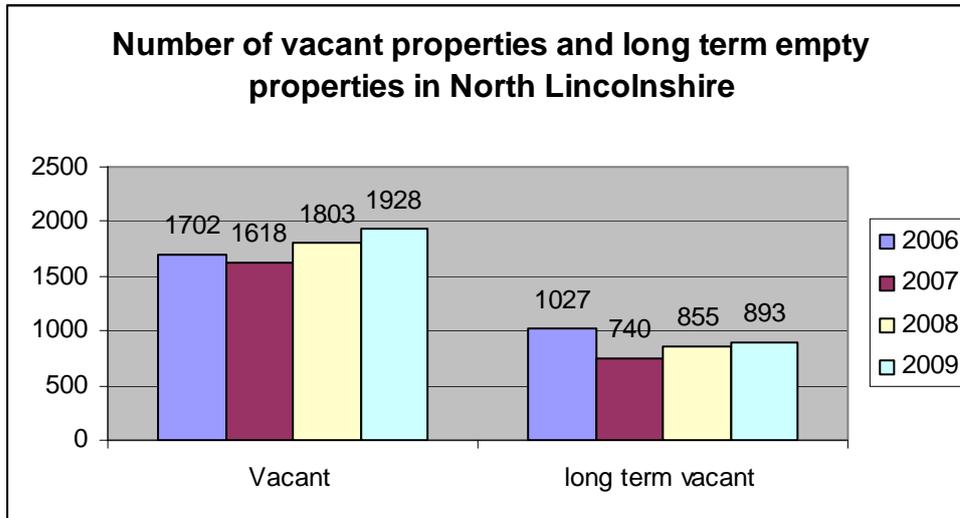


⁴³ "Fighting winter cold in the South West- Reducing health inequalities", Department of Health South West and South West Public Health Observatory, 2008, p8 from Centre for Sustainable Energy

⁴⁴ 11.5% for North Lincolnshire compared to 17.0% England average, "Health Profile North Lincolnshire 2009", APHO and Department of Health. © Crown Copyright 2009.

⁴⁵ Source, Office of National Statistics

APPENDIX 8: Empty Properties



The above chart shows the number of vacant properties in North Lincolnshire between 2006 and 2009.

APPENDIX 9: Legislation

The responsibilities and legal basis on which the council operates is set out below.

Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order (RRO) 2002

The RRO introduced the following changes:

- It introduced a new general power enabling local housing authorities to provide assistance for housing renewal
- It repealed the detailed legislative provisions in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 regarding Renovation Grants, Common Parts Grants, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Grants, Group Repair and Home Repair Assistance.
- It repealed the provisions in the 1985 Act relating to loans given by local housing authorities for housing renewal. The 1985 Act powers for loans remains available for authorities that are not housing authorities.
- It streamlined the provisions governing the declaration and operation of Renewal Areas.
- It made minor changes to the provisions in relation to Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) but the system for providing mandatory DFGs remains largely unchanged.

Housing Act 2004

The Housing Act 2004 became operative in April 2006 and set out the following changes:

- The replacement of the existing housing fitness standard with the objective evidence based Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as a more effective basis for enforcement against unacceptable housing conditions
- Improving the controls on high risk HMOs including a mandatory national licensing scheme to tackle poor physical and management standards.
- The granting of powers to local authorities to licence all landlords in areas of low housing demand or similar areas where the growth and poor management of the private rented sector frustrates efforts to create sustainable communities.
- The requirement to anyone marketing a home to assemble a home information pack so that the information needed by buyers and sellers is available when the property is marketed costs on the buyer are reduced.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

This piece of legislation provides the following powers:

- Powers to make it clear that authorities can purchase land compulsorily for the full range of planning and regeneration purposes.
- It provides for greater flexibility in the ways by which authorities can demonstrate that their proposals are justified having regard to the public interest.
 - It speeds up the procedural aspects of the confirmation and implementation phases of the compulsory purchase process.

APPENDIX 10: Consultation to inform the strategy

Our partners

A consultation day was held at Normanby Hall Country Park in June 2009 with partners from departments across the Local Authority, as well as representatives from other organisations and private landlords. A feedback newsletter was produced to show the results of the day.

These findings have been included in the development of this strategy.

Private Landlords

Private Landlords have been consulted via a number of means including:

- Attendance at the Healthy Homes, Healthy Lives consultation day as noted above.
- Discussions held at North Lincolnshire's Private Landlord's Forum
- On-Line questionnaire to private landlords.

Residents of North Lincolnshire

A Energy Efficiency Shop was opened for a week in October 2009 and local residents were invited to give their comments on the priorities for private sector housing as set out in the strategy.

Involving staff

A staff performance improvement group exists involving staff from the Housing Advice Team, Home Improvement Team, Housing Strategy, Energy Efficiency, and Environmental Health Team. This group looks at particular issues and areas where improvements have been identified and makes recommendations to the senior management team. This group has also been used as a means to involve staff in the development of this strategy.

Relevant staff were involved in the consultation day held on the 9 July 2009.



APPENDIX 11 – Glossary

Accreditation scheme	<p>A set of standards relating to the management or physical conditions of privately rented property. Landlords who join a scheme and abide by the standards are ‘accredited’.</p> <p>Also relates to tenants who agree to abide by certain standards for renting a privately owned property.</p>
Affordable warmth	Affordable warmth means that a household is able to afford to heat their home to the level required for their comfort and health.
Bond scheme	A scheme which assists people who are unable to afford the Bond in order to access private rented accommodation. The scheme is run by the Housing Advice Team.
Affordability test (for the Council’s Bond scheme)	Test to see if the rent being asked for a private rented property is affordable for the person seeking a Council Bond.
Decent Homes Standard	<p>A Decent Home is one which meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing, it is in reasonably good repair, has reasonably modern facilities and services and provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.</p> <p>Appendix 5 provides full details.</p>
Disabled Facilities Grant	Government funding to local housing authorities to provide and improve adaptations services to disabled people enabling them to continue to stay in their own home.
Excess Winter Deaths	Excess winter deaths are defined as the difference between the number of deaths which occurred in winter (December to March), and the average number of deaths during the preceding and subsequent four month periods (August to November and April to July).
Fuel Poverty	A household that needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel use to achieve a satisfactory standard of warmth.
Severe Fuel Poverty	Any household that needs to spend more than 20% of its income on heating to achieve a satisfactory standard if warmth.
Home Energy Conservation Act	The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995 requires a 30% energy efficiency improvement in domestic housing stock over the 15 year period from 1996 to 2011.

Housing Act 2004	The Housing Act 2004 became operative in April 2006.
Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)	The HHSRS replaced the previous fitness standard to assess the conditions within a property. A score is produced and houses in properties are assessed as either category 1 (higher risk) or category 2 (lower risk). Full details are provided in Appendix 5.
Housing in Multiple Occupation	<p>A building, or part of a building, such as a flat, that is occupied by more than one household.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where more than one household shares, or lacks, an amenity such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities • And is converted building which does not entirely comprise or self-contained flats (whether or not some amenities are shared or lacking) 'corridor' flats where one or more of the amenities provided for the exclusive use of a unit are located outside of that unit e.g. along a corridor or landing are not self contained and as such falls under the definition of a HMO or • Is comprised entirely of converted self contained flats but does not meet as a minimum the requirements of the Building Regulations 1991 and that at least one third of the flats are occupied under short term tenancies.
Licensable HMO	A licensable HMO is a property comprising 3 or more storeys, occupied by 5 or more persons living in two or more households who share one or more amenities such as bathrooms, toilets or kitchen or where the occupant must cross a common area to access accommodation (corridor flat).
Owner occupied (without mortgage)	Households who own their home outright.
Owner occupied (with mortgage)	Households buying their own home with a mortgage or loan. Includes shared ownership schemes.
Private rented and tied/shred	Households living in a privately owned property, which they do not own. Households living rent free or in tied homes related to their employment.
SHEEP scheme South Humber Energy Efficiency Partnership	The SHEEP scheme is a partnership between North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire and provides discounted loft and cavity wall insulation to anyone who is a homeowner. The scheme also provides discounts on renewable technologies such as solar panels and ground source heat pumps.
Standard	The Government-specified energy rating for a dwelling.

Assessment Procedure (SAP)	Rated on a scale between 1 and 120. The higher the number the better the standard.
SMART metres	Metres that help people see how much energy they are using.
Vulnerable household	<p>A vulnerable household is defined as one “in receipt of at least one of the principle means-tested or disability-related benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income support • Housing Benefit (does not include single person 25% discount) • Income based job seeker allowance • Attendance allowance • Disability living allowance • Industrial injuries disablement benefit • War disablement pension • Pension credit • Working tax credit that includes a disability element and where recipient has a relevant income of less than £15,460 • Child tax credit where recipient has a relevant income of less than £15,460.
Warm Front Programme	A programme providing grants for packages of heating and insulation measures to certain households in the owner-occupied and private rented sector. Qualifying households must contain either a child or an older or disabled person and be in receipt of certain means or disability related benefits.



APPENDIX 11: Neighbourhood and Environmental Services Enforcement Policy

North Lincolnshire Council

Neighbourhood & Environmental Services

Enforcement Policy (2009)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The enforcement policy provides guidance to officers, businesses and the general public on the range of options that are available to achieve compliance with legislation enforced by North Lincolnshire Council Neighbourhood & Environmental Services. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Environmental & Communities has approved the policy

Our primary objective is to achieve regulatory compliance. We recognise that prevention is better than cure, but where it becomes necessary to take formal action against a business, or member of the public, we will do so. There is a wide range of tools available to us as an enforcement agency, with prosecution being the most serious. We will always choose an enforcement method that is relevant and proportionate to the offence or contravention. We will also take account of an individuals or a business's past history when making our decision.

The policy is built around a process of escalation. We will only prosecute in circumstances where a defendant had acted wilfully and where their actions are likely to cause material loss or harm to others, or where they have ignored or are likely to ignore, written warnings or formal notices, endangered, to a serious degree, the health, safety or well being of people, animals or the environment, or assaulted or obstructed an officer in the course of their duties.

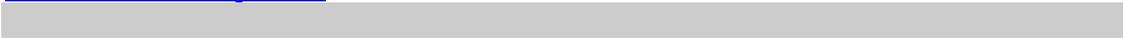
The options available to us include:

- No action;
- Informal Action and Advice;
- Fixed Penalty Notices;
- Penalty Charge Notices;
- Formal Notice;
- Forfeiture Proceedings;
- Seizure of goods/equipment;
- Destruction of an animal;
- Injunctive Actions;
- Refusal/revocation of a licence;
- Simple Caution;
- Prosecution;
- Proceeds of Crime Applications.

The policy is designed to help you understand our objectives and methods for achieving compliance and the criteria we consider when deciding what the most appropriate response is to a breach of legislation.

All our decisions will have regard to current statutory guidance and codes of practice, particularly the Regulators' Compliance Code, the Code for Crown Prosecutors and the Human Rights Act.

The full Enforcement Policy is available on the Council's website at www.northlincs.gov.uk



APPENDIX 12: Response to the Recession

The Government's response

The Government introduced a number of actions to reduce the risk and effects of homelessness caused by the economic downturn:

Pre-action protocol for mortgage repossessions

Sets out what lenders should do to try to resolve households' difficulties before taking possession action due to mortgage arrears.

Mortgage rescue scheme

A £280m scheme involving joint working between local authorities, lenders, money advisors and nominated social landlords aimed at enabling approx 6,000 households nationally remaining in their homes on a shared equity or mortgage to rent basis.

There are a number of restrictions on this scheme which limit the number of people who can access this.

Homeowners mortgage support

This is aimed at helping households suffering an "income shock", e.g. temporary drop in pay etc.

Enhanced support for mortgage interest

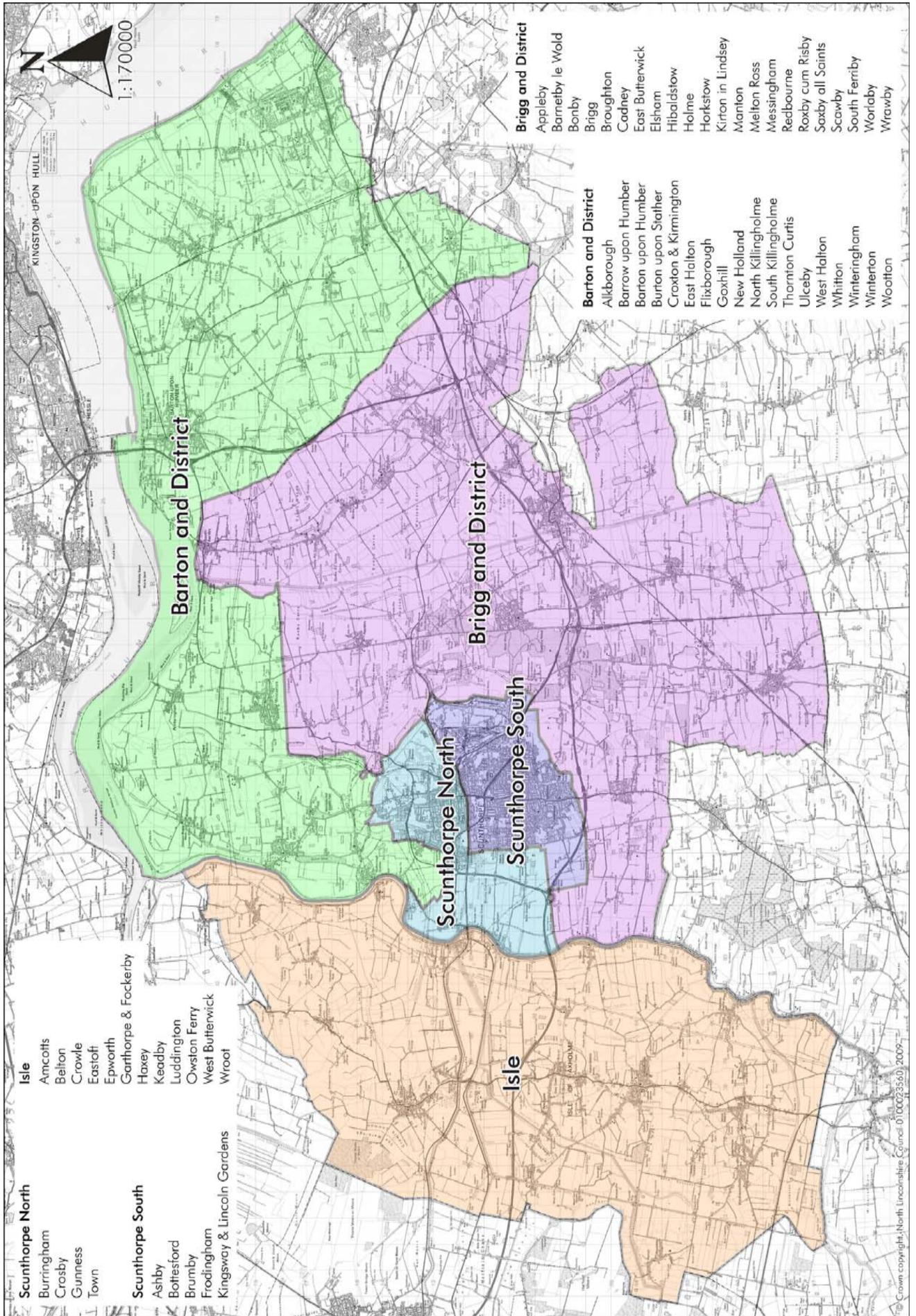
This is aimed at supporting out of work households.

In addition to the above schemes, the government has provided additional funding for local authorities including:

- An increase in the homelessness grant
- Sub-regional fund for tackling the threat of repossessions
- Repossessions prevention fund
- Housing benefit additional subsidy
- Targeted support fund for third sector providers

North Lincolnshire Council's response

- Established a Recession Group to pull together what the Council can do to support people through the recession.
- Produced the "*Recession Survival Guide*", which includes information, advice and contact details on the areas of housing, personal finance, employment, skills and business.
- Produced a new advice booklet "*Looking after your money – budgeting and debt*" to help prevent people with debt problems from becoming homeless.
- Running events to link job seekers to local organisations who are recruiting.
- Information on the Council's website giving advice for people and businesses on the recession.



Diversity Impact Assessment – ensure a screening grid has been completed.

Step one - Responsibility and Involvement (Named lead establishes a project group)

We ask that you identify a lead officer however it is strongly recommended that they do not undertake the impact assessment on their own (refer to page 8 of the toolkit)

Please ensure that the policy / procedure / proposal has been screened for relevance to the equality duties before proceeding to complete this assessment

Service Area Strategic Regeneration, Housing and Development		Team / Function Strategic Housing	
Name of lead officer completing the assessment Kate Robinson	Job title & Ext Housing Strategy and Information Officer	Start date 11 November 2009	Signature
Policy / Procedure/ Proposal: Private Sector Housing Strategy			

Name of those involved in project group	Role / Service / Status
Mark Sherwood	Head of Housing
Claire Startin	Strategic Housing Co-ordinator
Liz Webster	Performance Manager
Kirstie Cairns	Monitoring Officer

David Ricketts

Housing Advice Team Leader

Step 2 – Identifying the aims and objectives of the policy / procedure / proposal

1. What are the aims and objectives of the policy / procedure / proposal and the intended outcomes?

To develop a strategy for private sector homes in North Lincolnshire.

The intended outcomes are to:

- Increase the number of people living in decent homes
- Reduce the number of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes
- Tackling Excess Cold and reducing fuel poverty
- Continuing to assist people living in private rented accommodation
- Ensuring private renting tenants are able to access Supporting People services to assist them to maintain a tenancy.
- Increasing energy efficiency measures in domestic homes
- Reducing carbon emissions from homes
- Reducing the number of people in receipt of means tested benefits living in homes with a SAP rating below 35
- Responding to the increasing demands for disabled adaptations and exploring issues around personal choice and responsibility.

2. Who is it designed to reach? List the main groups who are likely to benefit from it and other stakeholders?

Owner occupiers, people living in private rented accommodation, vulnerable households.

3. Are there any other organisations involved in its delivery?

PCT

Warm Front

South Humber Energy Efficiency Partnership

Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council

Home Improvement Team

Framework contractors
South Humber Energy Efficiency Partnership Installers
North Lincs Homes
Private Landlords

4. How and where will information about this policy / procedure / proposal be publicised?

On The Council's website under Housing Strategies.

Step 3- Consultation

For this step it is important to refer to any consultation exercises that have been undertaken (locally or national findings) and any complaints received.

5a. What have service users / members of the public or other stakeholder including employees already told you about the policy/ procedure / proposal or related areas and any negative impacts? Who has been consulted and what methods were used?

Research was conducted by Sheffield Hallam University, reported in April 2005, into the Minority Ethnic Housing Experiences in North Lincolnshire. 71 minority ethnic people were interviewed as part of the research.

Consultation events:

Private landlords conducted via survey and attendance at Private Landlord's Forum.

With partners and private landlords at a consultation event.

With the public at the Energy shop over the priorities in the draft strategy.

With staff at the Performance Improvement Group

Draft strategy was put on the website

5b. If you have not carried out any consultation, or if you need to carry out further consultation, who will you be consulting with and by what methods?

Consultation required with people who have approached the Home Improvement Team for a disabled facilities grant. A focus group will be held.

Explore options for ongoing consultation with service users either through existing mechanisms e.g. physical disability forum, or with the establishment of a service user panel.

Mechanism to be established to gain feedback from private renting tenants.

Step 4 – Monitoring and Research

For this step it is important to refer to any monitoring information that is already held. Arrangements need to be set up for effective monitoring if this is not already in place.

6a. How do we know whether our proposal is accessible to all groups?

Research has taken place and highlighted some issues that need exploring to ensure services are accessible to all groups.

“Minority Ethnic Housing Experiences in North Lincolnshire”, April 2005

“Private Sector Housing House Condition Survey” 2008.

Personal information is gathered as part of the request forms for:

- Disabled facilities grants
- Energy efficiency loans/grants
- Home Improvement Scheme loans.

Monitoring reports are currently prepared and distributed to North Lincs Homes on DFGs but not currently reported on for the areas above. This will be established.

6b. If there is a lack of information, what research will be carried out and for what groups?

Personal information is gathered as part of the request forms for:

- Disabled facilities grants
- Energy efficiency loans/grants
- Home Improvement Scheme loans.
- Handyman scheme

Monitoring reports are currently prepared and distributed to North Lincs Homes on DFGs but not currently reported on for the areas above. This will be established.

6c. If this is a new policy / procedure / proposal, or one that is not currently monitored, what are the arrangements to begin monitoring the actual impacts of the policy? [These will go in the action plan]

The Strategy will have an action plan that sets out the actions to achieve the objectives within the strategy. The action plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis and reports will be submitted to the private sector housing strategy steering group. An annual progress report will be made to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Strategic Planning as well as to the North Lincolnshire Housing Investment Board.

Step 5 – Impact Assessment

	Specific group identified	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Race - People from different ethnic groups	<p>Research in 2005 identified that: Certain minority groups (including Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi population are far more likely to be living in terraced accommodation in Crosby and Town wards). We know Scunthorpe North ward has high levels of non-decent housing. The White Irish, Chinese and, to a certain extent Indian population are more dispersed and likely to be living in detached and semi-detached properties.</p> <p>The Private Sector Stock Condition survey 2008 suggested that some ethnic minority groups may have higher costs to make their home decent suggesting more work is required. This may be linked to the higher number of certain BME communities living in the Scunthorpe North area and in the older terraced properties.</p>	<p>Targeting some area based initiatives in the Advance Crosby area e.g. GoWarm. This should have a positive impact on BME communities living in that area.</p>	<p>Need to ensure that people from different races are not experiencing barriers to access the services e.g. because of language difficulties.</p>
Gender and gender identity - Men -Women -Transgendered people	N/A	None identified	None identified

Disability - Consider physical, sensory, visible and hidden impairments and long term limiting illnesses / conditions	People using disabled facilities grants. People with disabilities may be more susceptible to experiencing fuel poverty and Excess Cold.	The implementation of the strategy should lead to increased information on options for people for disabilities. Increased customer involvement through the introduction of a Forum for service users and providers. Improved monitoring of DFGs.	Some people may find it harder than others to deal with the personalisation agenda.
	Specific group identified	Positive Impact	Negative Impact

Step 5 – Impact Assessment continued

	Specific group identified	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Sexual Orientation - Lesbians - Gay men and women - Bisexual people	No specific group identified	None identified	None identified
Religion and belief	None identified	None identified	None identified

	Specific group identified	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
- Or lack of religion and belief			
Age -Young people and children -Older people	Many of the schemes are age specific. Older people People with children	Certain age groups are targeted for assistance: e.g. Houseproud Scheme – over 60 Cavity wall and loft insulation – free for those over 70. Children who require DFG are not means tested. Implementation of the strategy should result in a reduction in time from initial approval to completion of work via a disabled facilities grant.	Assistance is not available for people who do not fall into particular age brackets.

Step 5 – Impact Assessment Continued

	Specific group identified	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
People with caring responsibilities	People who live with a disabled person.	More customer involvement through the development of	The personalisation agenda may be worrying and confusing

		service user panel. Reduction in time from approval of DFG to completion. Increased choice.	for some people. Need adequate support.
Other groups			

Additional Comments
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Step 6 – Action Planning

Example action planning template – you have the option to use the template used in your own service / area.

Objective	Action required	Expected outcome/s	Resources required and assigned responsibility	Target date
Ensure any subsequent actions related to the implementation of the strategy do not discriminate directly or indirectly against any group	Complete a DIA on the Private Sector Housing Strategy Action Plan	Actions in the plan do not have negative outcomes for particular groups.	Staff time Kate Robinson to complete assessment and report to Private Sector Housing Strategy Steering group.	April 2010.
Ensure all policies and procedures are not discriminating directly or indirectly against any groups.	DIA on the Home Improvement Policy.	Home Improvement Policy is reviewed accordingly.	Staff Time Mark Sherwood / Sheila Barker	April 2010
	DIA on the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy	Priorities in the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and the actions related to it do not have negative outcomes for particular groups.	Staff time Geoff Emberlin	End of January 2010.
	DIA on revised Enforcement Policy	The Enforcement Policy does not have negative outcomes for particular groups.	Staff time Liz Webster	December 2010

Objective	Action required	Expected outcome/s	Resources required and assigned responsibility	Target date
Set out your arrangements for monitoring the policy / procedure / proposal and reporting back on actions				
A Private Sector Housing Steering group meets on a regular basis to monitor the private sector housing strategy action plan. An annual report on the achievements as part of the strategy implementation is reported to the North Lincolnshire Housing Investment Board.				

Step 7 – Sign Off

Please complete the **Website Summary** for publishing on our website (with screening document) and append summary to any reports to elected members, CMT or SMT as appropriate. Please forward a copy of the **whole assessment** to the diversity standards officer, T16, Pittwood House email: diversity@northlincs.gov.uk telephone 297301.

Completed DIA	Key Findings	Future Actions, Monitoring and Review
<p>Service area: Strategic Regeneration, Housing, and Development Neighbourhood and Environment</p> <p>Team / Function: Strategic Housing Housing Division</p> <p>Policy / Procedure / Proposal: Private Sector Housing Policy</p>	<p>Monitoring is required on the policies and procedures that are referred to in the private sector housing strategy, in particular the Home Improvement Policy, to assess the impact of the policies on all groups.</p>	<p>Conduct Diversity Impact Assessments on the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Private Sector Housing Strategy Action Plan – by April 2010. b) Home Improvement Policy – by April 2010 c) The Prevention of Homelessness Strategy – by end of Jan 2010 d) Revised Enforcement Policy – December 2010. <p>Establish ongoing monitoring and</p>

<p>Status: (New, changing or existing) New</p> <p>Name of lead officer completing the assessment: Kate Robinson, Strategy and Information Officer</p> <p>Date: 27 November 2009</p>		<p>reporting arrangements on who is accessing the services and on customer satisfaction levels.</p>
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