

‘Charnwood Housing Strategy: Successful, Thriving and Inclusive’ 2005-2010

Why have a Housing Strategy?

The Council is a landlord to almost 6,000 tenants and over 250 leaseholders as well as several community shopkeepers. It also has powers and responsibilities to influence housing activity through:

- planning powers to deliver new affordable housing
- enforcement powers against owners of unfit or empty properties and
- statutory responsibilities to prevent and respond to homelessness

This Strategy explains how the Council will balance its differing roles, what its priorities for housing are and how it will deliver them in partnership with others.

The Local Government Act 2003 requires Local Authorities to produce a ‘fit for purpose’ housing strategy. The reasons for this are clear; the lack of appropriate housing is linked to a whole range of social factors including poor health, environmental problems, and homelessness. The way in which the Council improves housing and sets its strategic objectives can help to address these problems and, in doing so, ensure services are provided which achieve the Council’s quality of life objectives.

The Council’s vision for housing is to:

‘Deliver improved access to good quality affordable homes and related services for the people of Charnwood to support a sustainable and balanced community.’

This will only happen if it makes sure its priorities and plans for housing have been developed in the wider context of creating and maintaining sustainable communities. This strategy also embraces the vision for the Borough of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which is the Charnwood Strategic Partnership (CSP):

‘An improved quality of life for everyone living and working in Charnwood.’

The CSP ensures that local businesses, statutory agencies, the community and voluntary sectors work together to determine long, medium and short-term visions for the Borough through the delivery of the Community Strategy.

The Housing Strategy will make a significant contribution to the achievement of plans and targets contained both in the Community Strategy and the Council’s Corporate Plan, ‘Leading in Leicestershire’.

The strategy is also required to meet both national and regional priorities, therefore the Council has also reflected the vision and objectives of the Government’s ‘Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future’, agenda and the East Midlands Regional Housing Strategy within this document.

Developing a Strategy for Housing

The strategy has been developed with partners to meet the needs of the local community. A critical part of the process was to identify the priorities to be addressed over the next five years. With finite resources, it is not possible to achieve everything the Council and its partners would want, so it has been necessary to make some difficult choices about housing priorities (Appendix 2). Extensive consultation has produced a strategy that reflects the issues of greatest concern to stakeholders and consultees, whilst meeting the wider strategic objectives of national, regional, sub-regional and local priorities. Further details of the Housing Strategy Consultation Framework can be found in Chapter 1 and Appendix 4.

Housing Consultation Event

Held in February 2005, over 100 partners, stakeholders and customers attended the CSP’s stakeholder conference. Delegates considered the key housing issues within the Borough and developed priorities for the Housing Strategy, the Stock Options Appraisal (SOA) for the future of the Council’s housing stock, and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.

Virtual Stakeholder Panel

The Virtual Stakeholder Panel emerged and developed out of the Housing Consultation event. The panel comprises a range of Members, including representatives of partner organisations, tenants and customers, who act as the ‘quality controllers’ overseeing the content and accessibility of this strategy. The panel will also assist in monitoring the effective delivery of the Action Plan.

Consultation on Stock Options Appraisal

The Council has been required to undertake an appraisal of the options available for the future management of its own stock. As part of this process tenants appointed the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) to undertake a series of consultation events with key partners, stakeholders and customers. This included presentations to the Council’s SOA Steering Group, tenant roadshows and a briefing for all Borough Councillors. The outcome of the appraisal will have some impact on the delivery of the housing strategy Action Plan.

Summary and Priorities

Setting the Objectives

Through the consultation mechanisms outlined above, the Council has identified three key overarching objectives:

- **Objective 1 - Enabling Regeneration and Affordable Homes**

- **Objective 2 - Decent Homes in All Tenures**
- **Objective 3 - Supporting a Healthy Thriving Community**

Within each objective, a series of aims and priorities for delivery was identified. These are outlined in the table below.

Summary of Strategy Objectives, Aims and Priorities

Objectives	Strategic Aims	Priorities & Ranking
Objective 1 Enabling Regeneration and Affordable Homes	Aim 1 - Creating Sustainable Communities Ensure all new developments are planned to ensure infrastructure is already available. Involve all communities in the sustainable future of their neighbourhoods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural affordability 2. Affordable homes 3. Impact of student population on the housing market in Loughborough
	Aim 2 - Balanced Housing Markets Understand the local housing market to ensure a balanced provision of housing across all tenures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Closer consideration of the type and size of housing provided locally 2. Provision for ageing population 3. Key Worker provision
	Aim 3 - Delivering Affordable Housing Increase the availability of good quality affordable homes for people in housing need as part of a co-ordinated approach to regeneration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More flexibility in housing provision 2. Increase affordable housing targets on new developments to 30% 3. More specialist housing
Objective 2 Decent Homes in all Tenures	Aim 4 - Providing Decent Homes Ensure all social housing and private sector homes occupied by vulnerable people meet the Decent Homes standards by 2010	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achieving the 'Decent Homes Standard' 2. Improvements which produce lower running costs for tenants 3. A logical approach to the programming of work to tenants' homes
	Aim 5 - Promoting Affordable Warmth Improve energy efficiency in all homes with the aim of eradicating fuel poverty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High quality maintenance 2. Upgrading home insulation 3. Installing energy efficient appliances
Objective 3 Supporting a Healthy Thriving Community	Aim 6 - Promoting Healthy Homes Identify the links between housing situation/condition and the underlying determinants of health and deal with the related long-term causes of health inequalities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving community health using development control interventions and policies 2. Addressing health inequalities and targeting specific groups (e.g. older people, teenage parents, the homeless, Gypsies and Travellers) 3. Health checks for neighbourhoods using pilot money from the Office of The Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
	Aim 7 - Protecting the Community Ensure residents feel safe within their homes, their neighbourhood and their wider community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate intervention to anti-social behaviour 2. Designing out crime in the physical environment 3. Community development and engagement
	Aim 8 - Tackling Homelessness Increase the prevention of homelessness, and support to those who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased resources for prevention 2. Direct access emergency accommodation 3. Improved inter-agency working with common aims and resources
	Aim 9 - Supporting Vulnerable People Improve the quality of life for the vulnerable people of Charnwood through the provision of well-planned, high quality housing and related support services based on individual needs that enable people to live independently	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individually tailored support 2. Supported accommodation for different needs 3. More effective joint working

Delivering the Strategy

A number of issues will impact on the successful delivery of this strategy over its lifetime:

- Setting up an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) for the management of the Council's Housing Stock
- A review of the Homelessness Strategy
- Development of key elements of Charnwood's Local Development Framework (LDF) including affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Documents
- Development of a Green Spaces Strategy and other neighbourhood strategies
- A review of the Charnwood Community Strategy
- Revision of Crime Reduction & Safety Strategy.

The Action Plan identifies proposals, resources and dependencies for ensuring the successful and effective delivery of this strategy. This will be monitored through a structured performance management framework to assess the impact of these actions (Chapter 1).