

East Devon Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2008/2011

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1.0 Introduction:

Private Sector Housing - Renewal Strategy 2008 – 2011

- 1.1 This document sets out East Devon District Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy for 2008-2011. It addresses the need for housing renewal in East Devon and then explains how we intend to meet this need. It builds upon two major private sector housing documents, the East Devon District Council Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2003-2007 and East Devon's Corporate Strategy developed in 2007. Together these documents set the Council's aims for private sector housing renewal for a period of five years and identifies delivery tools in an action plan.
- 1.2 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 gave local housing authorities wide ranging powers to provide assistance for housing renewal which had to be formally adopted and published.
- 1.3 East Devon District Council's Strategy for Private Sector Housing Renewal was adopted in July 2003. This new Renewal Strategy builds on the successes of the previous document and takes into account new national, regional and local issues now evident in private sector renewal. A survey of the condition of the private sector housing stock carried out in 2007, has also been used to help set our priorities for private sector housing renewal.
- 1.4 This housing renewal strategy replaces the previous strategy of 2003-2007.

2.0 The need for a Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy

2.1 Effects of poor housing

Housing conditions have a major impact upon the health and wellbeing of individuals, households and communities. By tackling private sector housing renewal, we can improve the availability and condition of the housing stock as well as the wellbeing of our residents.

The links between health and housing are well documented. A briefing carried out for the NHS by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) pulled together much of this documentation and reviewed it. NICE confirmed that there are a wide range of specific elements relating to housing that can affect health outcomes. They noted however that the relationship is complex and the link can work on a number of different related levels. Poor housing conditions often co-exist with other forms of deprivation (unemployment, poor education, ill health, social isolation etc), which make the housing / health link difficult to isolate. As part of their research they attempted to categorise the range of housing-related factors known adversely to affect health:

- agents that affect the quality of the indoor environment for example asbestos, carbon monoxide, radon, lead, moulds and volatile organic chemicals.

- cold and damp, housing design or layout (which in turn can affect the accessibility and usability of housing), infestation, hazardous internal structures or fixtures, noise.
- factors that relate more to the broader social and behavioural environment such as overcrowding, sleep deprivation, neighbourhood quality, infrastructure deprivations (i.e. lack of availability and accessibility of health services, parks, stores selling healthy foods at affordable prices, etc), neighbourhood safety and social cohesion; and

factors that relate to the broader macro-policy environment such as housing allocation, lack of housing (homelessness, whether without a home or housed in temporary accommodation), housing tenure, housing investment and urban planning.

2.2 Local Housing Need

Without repeating information already provided within the Housing Strategy, please refer to Housing Strategy 2008 -11 Chapter 4 for the detailed information on this area.

2.3 Demand for Housing

Please refer to paragraph 3.4 and East Devon Sustainable Communities Plan 2006 – 2016.

2.4 Availability of affordable housing

Key issues for private sector housing in East Devon are affordability, suitability and sustainability.

House prices in East Devon are amongst some of the highest in the south of the country and as they have continued to rise, incomes have not at the same rate. Affordability of housing is therefore of great concern. It is important we fully utilise private sector housing in East Devon as it has a key role in meeting the overall housing need in the district.

3.0 The Strategic Context -

It is vital that all Strategies are developed in the context of relevant regional and national strategies

3.1 National and regional issues

3.1.1 Decent Homes

A number of measures relevant to private sector housing renewal have been approved at a national level since the introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The first and most important of these came in the 2002 Governmental spending review which extended the Decent Homes Standard, first developed for public sector dwellings, to the private sector.

In the same year the government introduced a Public Service Agreement (PSA) that set a target for the private sector. This PSA target initially involved a commitment to increase the proportion of private sector housing in decent condition occupied by vulnerable groups. The subsequent Decent Homes target implementation plan (published in 2003) introduced targets for the proportion of vulnerable households in the private sector whose homes achieve the Decent Homes Standard:- 65% by 2006, 70% by 2010 and 75% by 2020.

From 1st April 2008 this PSA was replaced by a Communities and Local Government Departmental Strategic Objective – DSO 2 -:

To improve the supply, environmental performance and quality of housing that is more responsive to the needs of individuals, communities and the economy.

Indicators include:-

2.8 - Percentage of vulnerable households in decent houses in the private sector

2.10 - Percentage of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living

2.11- Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living

To date there is no guidance on these indicators or what are to be used as measures of success.

A decent home is defined as one which is wind and weather tight, warm and has modern facilities. In particular a decent home must;

- meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing;
- be in a reasonable state of repair;
- have reasonably modern facilities; and
- provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

The Government's five year plan "Sustainable Communities – Homes for All" confirmed the Government's commitment to achieving the Decent Homes target.

3.1.2 Housing Act 2004

This Act introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as a new means of assessing housing conditions together with new procedures for enforcing housing standards. The HHSRS provides the method for assessing the statutory minimum standard for housing under the Decent Homes Standard. The Act also introduced the scheme for licensing of certain houses in multiple occupation and a series of management order provisions including powers to deal with long term empty dwellings.

3.1.3 Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

- 1) Energy Efficiency is increasingly important; at an international level because of global warming and climate change, and locally because it is a factor which plays a major part in making a dwelling comfortable and healthy. Clear links exist between the energy efficiency of a dwelling and

the likelihood of condensation and mould growth. One of the four elements of the Decent Homes standard is that a dwelling has a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (with effective insulation and efficient heating).

- 2) As a result of the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 the Government published the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2001 setting out how it proposed to ensure affordable warmth for all households. Following this, in 2003 it published its Energy White Paper – “Our Energy Future – Creating a low carbon economy”. One of the four key energy policy goals in the White Paper was the need to ensure that every home was adequately and affordably heated, with the aim that as far as reasonably practicably no household in England should have to live in fuel poverty by 2016.
- 3) The 5th Annual Progress Report 2007 on the UK fuel poverty strategy reaffirmed the aim of the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations to eradicate fuel poverty, as detailed in the ‘UK Fuel Poverty Strategy’ published in November 2001; a commitment reaffirmed through measures set out in the 2003 and 2007 Energy White Papers.

The aim in England, restated in ‘Fuel Poverty in England: The Government’s Plan for Action’ is, as far as reasonably practicable, to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010, (a vulnerable household is deemed to be one with children, or with those who are elderly, sick or disabled.) Fuel poverty in other households will also be tackled as progress is made on these groups, with a target that by 22 November 2016, as far as reasonably practicable, no person in England should have to live in fuel poverty.

Two definitions of fuel poverty figures are used in England – the first (which is used to calculate progress towards the Strategy’s targets) includes all benefits received, whilst the second excludes housing benefit and income support for mortgage interest, and is used in order to enable historical comparison.

Recent fuel price increases have meant the potential for persons being in fuel poverty has increased. Government policy to combat fuel poverty will be directly affected by these increases and it will make the pledge to eliminate fuel poverty by 2016 increasingly difficult.

3.1.4 Adaptations for the disabled

Although the Regulatory Reform Order removed most of the raft of policy tools the Council previously used for housing renewal, the mandatory disabled facilities grant remains. In 2004 the government commenced a review of these grants. This outcome was published in 2005 and the government, through the later publication in February 2008 of – ‘Disabled Facilities Grants – The Package of Changes to Modernise the Programme’ issued directions setting out some immediate improvements. These included the raising of the maximum grant limit and changes to means testing and also proposed long term changes to improve the overall programme.

3.1.5 Older People

The ageing society poses one of our greatest housing challenges. By 2026 older people will account for almost half (48 per cent) of the increase in the total number of households, resulting in 2.4 million more, older households

than there are today. By 2041 the composition of the older age group will have changed dramatically. There will be a higher proportion of the older age groups, including the over 85s, a greater number of older people from black and minority ethnic groups, and double the number of older disabled people. One in five children born today can expect to live to 100 years old.

Today, most of our homes and communities are not designed to meet people's changing needs as they grow older. Older people's housing options are too often limited to care homes or sheltered housing.

In February 2008 the government published its national strategy for housing an ageing population, 'Lifetime Homes in Lifetime Neighbourhoods'. This set out its response to the global challenge of ageing and outlined its plans for making sure that there is enough appropriate housing available in the future to relieve the forecasted pressures on homes,

Private sector housing renewal can have a positive effect in a number of areas especially around promotion of independent living, reducing falls and promotion of a healthy and active life in older age.

3.2 South West Regional Housing Strategy

The South West Regional Housing Strategy for 2005-2016 ranks the priorities for housing investment in the South West from 2006-2008. The three key priorities to be updated on a two yearly cycle are:-

- Priority 1** The provision of additional affordable housing (approximately £280,000,000 over two years).
- Priority 2** Improving the quality of private sector homes occupied by vulnerable households (approximately £64,000,000 over two years).
- Priority 3** Meeting the government's Decent Homes target in the social sector by 2010 (approximately £16,000,000 over two years).

The Strategy recognises the link between non decent housing and health issues. It cites the example of fuel poverty leading to excess winter deaths, of which the South West Region had 3,700 in 2001/02 (15.5% of the national total). The Strategy also highlights the poor condition of the housing stock in the private sector and notes that many owners cannot afford to repair their homes (particularly those on low income and pensioner households).

The Regional Strategy identifies ways to tackle the under-provision of housing and supports the delivery of "The Way Ahead" – the region's proposals for delivering planned growth and new housing in the most strategically important places on an accelerated timescale. (South West Regional Development Agency, 2005). Securing high quality new housing in places where jobs and services are closely linked is essential to the region's desire to create sustainable communities in the South West.

The role of intermediate housing tenures as a potential solution to some types of housing need is recognised within the Strategy and innovative solutions are sought from private developers, co-operatives, registered social landlords,

local authorities and financial institutions for new models of provision. Similarly, the role of the private rental sector in tackling the region's housing problems is recognised and further work to engage with private landlords is identified as essential.

Housing renewal has a key role in the delivery of several of the Council's strategies and policies locally.

3.3 Exeter and Torbay Strategic Housing Assessment 2007

The overall tenure of housing stock in the East Devon district shows that 79% of properties are owned outright or are owned with a mortgage, 12% are rented from social landlords (¾ of which is owned by the Council) and 9% are in the private rented sector.

A total of 1046 households are currently living in technically overcrowded housing – though about as many as 505 of these households (48%) consider their home to be about the right size.

As many as 45700 (81%) technically under-occupy their property – over half of these by a factor of two bedrooms or more.

There is a tendency for more houses in rural areas to be in a poor physical condition and have problems with energy efficiency because of the typical building ages and construction types.

A total of 9% of households reported that there was at least one serious problem with their property with the most common problems being roof repairs, damp penetration or condensation and window repairs with all of these being prevalent in the Honiton area.

3.4 East Devon Sustainable Community Plan 2006-2016

The Sustainable Community Plan for East Devon sets out the priorities for the district for that ten year period based in part on what the community felt were important issues. It compiled a summary view of how people would like to see East Devon in the next ten years and listed twelve aspirations, two of which related to housing: -

- Everyone should have access to adequate affordable housing or other housing appropriate to their needs.
- Everyone should be able to live healthy, independent and fulfilled lives.

The Plan highlighted that not only does poor access to housing cause social problems but it impacts on our local economic viability. The new community at Cranbrook provides a unique opportunity to plan well for new housing.

Due to large in-migration, high numbers of second homes, low average incomes, and high housing prices, many local people find themselves unable to buy their own home. In an attractive environment development land is hard

to find. 2.2% of all households are in “housing need” and 22% of households are in “fuel poverty”.

3.5 East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy 2008

The Council’s Corporate Strategy espoused its vision and values and undertook to work towards 7 corporate priorities:-

Priority 1a - is to significantly increase the supply of affordable homes.

It identifies the outcomes it wishes to achieve through the private sector’s contribution to this priority utilising both a Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy and an Empty Homes Strategy. It looks to maximise the use of existing properties through conversion, reusing redundant farm buildings and bringing back into use empty homes. It seeks to explore innovative ways to create affordable housing including the reinvestigation of the scheme to let flats above shops for accommodation

Success indicators

- Return 20 vacant properties a year back to use in the rented sector.
- Provide 6 additional homes a year through the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy.

Priority 3a is to contribute to a safe environment by:-

Applying new housing standards in privately rented properties to ensure they are safe and have adequate facilities.

Success indicator

- A reduction in the number of dwellings which fail to meet the Housing Health and Rating System.

Priority 3c is to contribute to a Green Environment by:-

Declaring a series of ‘Warm zones’ across the District and by working in partnership with energy providers and other agencies to improve energy efficiency of houses and reduce fuel poverty.

Success indicator

- Reduce by 5% a year the estimated number of 7,150 households in fuel poverty in East Devon.

3.6 Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The LAA 2008-2011 is important to Devon. It is the place where performance improvement targets are agreed with Government and as such a key focus for improving performance over the next three years. The LAA will underpin future performance assessments and, from April 2009, the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

The proposed priorities for the LAA 2008-2011 have been developed in conjunction with public, private and third sector partners across Devon. They have been the subject of initial consideration by the Devon Strategic Partnership’s Delivery and Partnership Boards and the County Council Executive. Negotiations with Government Office for the South West have been positive and productive.

The proposed Devon LAA 2008-2011 priorities were formally submitted to Government in May 2008. The LAA will be signed-off by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government by the end of June 2008.

East Devon's priorities include a number of housing related priorities:-

LAA 26 - Increase the delivery of affordable housing

The proposed delivery assessment uses NI 154: (Net additional homes provided) to measure the net increase in dwelling stock over one year. The net increase in dwelling stock over one year is calculated as the sum of new build completions, minus demolitions, plus any gains or losses through change of use and conversions:

LAA 27- Improve housing options for the homeless and vulnerable clients

LAA 33 - Improve energy performance of housing stock and reduce fuel poverty.

Delivery of this priority will be primarily achieved through the development of Devon Warm Zones (DWZ); an initiative established in November 2007 by the District Councils in Devon and the two unitary authorities developing a project to coordinate the various available schemes on an area by area basis. (See Paragraph 3.9).

3.7 East Devon Housing Strategy

The East Devon District Council Housing Strategy for 2008-2011 set out 10 aims, which in priority order, are at the centre of the Council's Housing Strategy and were devised to address the main housing issues in the district. Below is list of those aims and targets that can be influenced through the Private Sector Housing Strategy:

Provide a range of affordable housing to meet housing needs.

Prevent homelessness and ensure accommodation is provided.

Bring sub-standard housing up to current standards.

Improve the use & safety of housing

Enable elderly and disabled people to remain in their own homes.

Improve the energy efficiency of housing and eliminate fuel poverty.

Widen the choice of housing, especially for those in priority need.

This Private Sector Renewal Strategy feeds into the Council's new Housing Strategy.

3.8 Local Development Framework (LDF)

The Local Development Framework deals with spatial issues; the use of land and the movement of people and access to opportunities. Its aim is to balance environmental, economic and social needs for land and buildings and to deal with the spatial issues raised by the Community Strategy. One of the Framework's key issues is the provision of new housing.

Private Sector Housing Renewal contributes to the welfare of the housing stock and is, therefore, important in relieving some of the pressure on new housing provision in the District.

3.9 Empty Homes Strategy

The Council works as partner of the South East Devon Empty Homes Initiative (SEDEHI). This is a partnership between: three local authorities and seven housing associations.

As East Devon has a long stretch of attractive coastline, many people living outside of the district have chosen to buy property here to use as holiday homes. The result of this has been not only that many of these properties are empty for much of the year, but also that the high demand has contributed to rising house prices in the area which are unaffordable for many local people.

East Devon District Council Empty Homes Strategy 2009 - 11 sets out an action plan for dealing with empty homes until 2011.

A recent house condition survey estimated that approximately 1,780 private dwellings were vacant in East Devon. This showed a greater problem than in other parts of Devon with a clear impact on local housing.

3.10 Other Strategies and Initiatives

Other Strategies and initiatives that inform the Private Sector Renewal Strategy include:

- Warm Front and Heat Devon Initiative – see Paragraph 4.3.6
- Affordable Warmth Strategy –see Paragraph 4.3.2

4.0 Local housing conditions

Private Sector Housing is of significant importance in East Devon. There are proportionally more privately owned homes here than in the rest of England. Private Sector House Condition Surveys were carried out in 2007 and 2008 and provided information on the physical condition of the housing stock and also socio-economic details of residents.

Many of the recommendations made as a result of the survey are incorporated as actions within this strategy.

All of the foregoing strategies inform this strategy and action plan.

4.1 General profile for East Devon

The East Devon Private Sector House Condition Survey 2008 estimates the total private sector housing stock of East Devon at 55200 dwellings. The following gives a summary of some of the key characteristics of the stock:

- Comparison against all England statistics for the private sector housing stock shows that there are more dwellings that are privately owned, roughly 90% compared to 79% for all England. The private rented sector is 10%, roughly the same as England, with Housing Association properties being substantially less than the national picture totalling 3% compared to 7% across England.
- Housing is split between the oldest (pre 1919) housing and the more modern (Post 1964) dwellings, with fewer than average built between these periods. Just under 28% of the stock was built pre 1919 and this age group has the highest rates of non decency, unfitness and Category 1 hazards.
- There are fewer residents younger than 50; more older residents (60+). There are also fewer single parents, but more adult couples and adult groups sharing.
- Overall average incomes are slightly below the national average and there are significant levels of lower income households with 30% having an annual income of less than £10,000, rising to 45% on less than £15,000.
- Benefit receipt at 19% is above average with 28% of the private rented sector receiving benefits compared to 13% owner occupiers.

4.2 Housing Conditions

There are 2 tests used to measure the suitability of housing conditions.

1. The Decent Homes Standard requires that a dwelling:

- be above the legal minimum standard for housing, and
- be in a reasonable state of repair, and
- have reasonably modern facilities (such as kitchens and bathrooms) and services, and
- provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (effective insulation and efficient heating).

2. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System introduced in April 2006 for assessing the risk of health and safety issues to residents.

- The system is based on information about accidents and illness caused by hazards such as damp, mould, very cold homes, dangerous stairs and steps, the risk of fire etc. Where a hazard is likely to result in a very bad injury or illness it is considered a 'serious hazard'.

The Council must take action where a serious hazard is found in order that people will not be seriously hurt or become ill because of the hazard. Where such a hazard exists in a rented house or flat, the Council can ask the landlord to fix the problem and make the home safe.

4.2.1 Key Local Housing Condition Problems

This survey makes it possible to look at where homes that are not decent, or that have a serious hazard, are located. It is also possible to see what sorts of homes are most likely to be non decent, or have serious hazards, and what sorts of problem are most likely to occur.

In 2008, 16500 (28.9%) of East Devon private sector and RSL housing stock was considered Non Decent. This compares to 36.7% of the corresponding stock in England as a whole.

- Failure rate largely driven by Category 1 hazards and energy efficiency standards
- Non decency has become a greater problem since April 2006 with the introduction of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System

Although 67.2% of vulnerable households, in the private sector, are living in decent homes, this percentage needs to be raised to 70%.

This means there is currently a 1,270 dwelling shortfall against the 2010 decent homes target.

- Privately rented houses, and flats in particular, are more likely to be non decent compared to owners' homes, with 37.9% failing the standard.
- Dwellings in the rural areas of the district were found to be far more likely to fail the Decent Homes Standard than in other areas.
- The oldest housing, (that built before 1919) was found to be much more likely to be non decent than the more modern housing.

The survey found that 12500 homes (21.9%) had at least one serious hazard. The most common types of serious hazard were the risk of excess cold and the potential for falls on stairs and steps.

- Slightly more dwellings were found to need repair than the national average. Far more dwellings than average had health and Safety risks, in particular the potential for falls and being cold in the winter.

- Older residents, people with disabilities and people in receipt of benefit are more likely to be at risk from a 'serious hazard' in their dwelling.

The Council will be using the findings of the survey to review the best ways of helping some of the people described above deal with some of the issues raised. The Council has to maintain a strategy for improving private sector housing and is judged on how well it does this. Part of this judgement is the provision of survey findings.

4.3 Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

4.3.1 Home Energy Conservation Act 1995

The Local Authority has a duty under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 to help reduce energy consumption in domestic dwellings by 30% in the period 1996 - 2011. Given the work that has already been carried out it is considered that the target of 30% is achievable. However households that have already improved energy efficiency are likely to be those more able, it is likely that those remaining will be more difficult to identify and therefore the targets will still be difficult to achieve.

4.3.2 Affordable Warmth /Fuel Poverty

The Devon Affordable Warmth Strategy sets out the Devon Local Authorities' plans for the provision of affordable warmth, and the commitment to improve access to affordable warmth for all residents in Devon. Following on from the Devon Affordable Warmth Strategy the East Devon Affordable Warmth Strategy was approved in 2006 and is now under revision in light of the House Condition Survey 2008 and the Devon Warm Zone Initiative.

A key issue in reducing energy consumption is tackling fuel poverty. The occupiers of a dwelling are considered to be in fuel poverty if more than 10% of their net household income would need to be spent on heating and hot water to give an adequate provision of warmth and hot water. Not only do dwellings where fuel poverty exists represent dwellings with poor energy efficiency, they are, by definition, occupied by residents with low incomes least likely to be able to afford improvements. In " Fuel Poverty in England: The Government's Plan for Action" published in 2004, the government set a target for the total eradication of fuel poverty by November 2016.

In East Devon there are an estimated 6400 (11.2%) dwellings in fuel poverty, compared to approximately 13.9% in England, based on the fuel poverty projection issued in the Sixth Annual Report of the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group.

In 2006 the rate of fuel poverty was found to be 13.2% so the current rate shows an improvement.

These 6400 dwellings represent a significant number of dwellings that are in fuel poverty and will present issues in terms of both energy efficiency and occupier health. As is usual, the highest rate of fuel poverty is found in the private rented sector where 18.6% of dwellings are in fuel poverty, compared with 12% in the owner-occupied stock. By the very nature of fuel poverty, it is almost always associated with those residents on the lowest incomes. The

survey found that 42.8% of households identified as being in fuel poverty had the lowest income.

4.3.3 Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP)

The Standard Assessment Procedure or SAP is a government rating for energy efficiency. The SAP rating is the energy rating for a dwelling and is based on the calculated annual energy cost for space and water heating. The calculation assumes a standard occupancy pattern, derived from the measured floor area so that the size of the dwelling does not strongly affect the result. The result of the assessment is expressed as a single figure between 1 and 100. The higher the figure, the more energy efficient the dwelling is.

The House Condition Survey 2008 found that the average SAP rating in East Devon was 46 which equals the average SAP rating for England. Because of changes to the way that the rating is calculated comparisons with previous assessments are not valid. It is, however, still far from the ideal position, as by modern standards a SAP rating of 65 is considered an acceptable minimum standard. Most dwellings constructed under current building regulations will have SAP ratings above 80.

There are approximately 7830 (13.7%) dwellings in East Devon with a SAP rating of less than 30, these properties are difficult and expensive to insulate and heat.

Within the new National Indicators there is an indicator specifically requiring surveying of the Private Sector Housing Stock for setting a target for the reduction of properties presently considered to be at or below the SAP 30 level.

In terms of dwelling age, as would be expected the SAP rating decreases with age, with the lowest average of 39 for pre 1919 properties. The dwelling type, again influences SAP rating with converted flats averaging 40 and medium/large terraced houses with mean SAP ratings of 45. Room heaters rather than central heating tend to occur most commonly in converted flats, which contribute to low SAP rating. With tenure, privately rented stock has the lowest average SAP at 42, whilst Housing Association dwellings and owner occupied dwellings are most energy efficient.

The House Condition Survey 2008 also looked at modelling changes in energy efficiency by reference to the following standard improvement measures which are loosely based on the Warm Front scheme:-

- Loft Insulation to 270mm
- Cylinder insulation to 70mm Jacket (unless foam already)
- Double Glazing to all windows
- Cavity Wall insulation
- Installation of a modern high efficiency gas boiler where none is present
- Full central heating where none is present

If all combination of improvements listed above were carried out to all dwellings the total cost would be £109.7 million, an average of £2,040 per

dwelling, where improvements are required. The total cost given above is distributed among 53700 dwellings (94.1% of the housing stock).

4.3.4 Issues in East Devon, with regard to heating homes:

Making homes energy efficient and making sure that people can afford to heat them has been an important part of private sector housing for over 10 years now. The following points list some of the reasons why Fuel poverty occurs where the household has to spend more than 10% of its income on heating and hot water. People in fuel poverty are generally those on the lowest incomes, often older residents who are most vulnerable to cold and therefore most in need of homes that can be heated at reasonable cost.

- The overall rate of fuel poverty is 11.2%, (6400 dwellings) but the rate in the privately rented sector is 18.6% and Seaton and East 14.8 in Exmouth the rate is 11.8%.
- Just over 3,600 homes would be much easier to heat if the heating system was changed from room heaters to central heating. Given that nearly 30% of properties have no mains gas this could make the provision of central heating more expensive and problematic.
- Another 4,100 homes have adequate heating, but have little or no insulation in their roofs or walls. A significant number of these are older, solid wall properties where achieving an upgrade is problematic.
- Most homes (at least 90%) can have some improvement in energy efficiency, even if only a small increase in insulation or a more modern boiler.
- Improving energy efficiency affects a wide range of areas including helping the environment, making people more comfortable & reducing winter deaths.

4.3.5 Warm Front, Heat Devon and Warm Zones Initiative

From April 2008 Devon Warm Zones (DWZ) have taken an area by area approach to facilitating coordinated access to the various schemes available to reduce Fuel Poverty. A Warm Zone is to be established in each district and unitary authority in Devon.

Warm Zones have been selected on a number of criteria including the incidence of fuel poverty, household tenure, the incidence of pensioner households and the condition of the housing stock.

Reductions in Fuel Poverty will be achieved through a targeted marketing campaign, door to door canvassing and the development of a network of partnerships within each Warm Zone to champion the schemes and refer householders to the project. Whilst the focus is spatial, particular effort will be made to reach vulnerable groups. Groups with special needs e.g. those whose first language isn't English will be reached through the formation of partnerships with local representative organisations such as charities for the deaf and blind or religious leaders.

Information will be gathered from householders which will enable the project team to assist them to access the most appropriate scheme for their needs and circumstances. Every householder contacted will be offered some form of measure, either free or at a subsidised cost to reduce their energy consumption or improve their heating system. In addition it is planned to offer householders welfare rights advice to maximise their potential income along with general energy efficiency and consumer rights advice to minimise their energy costs. This aspect will link across to the emerging anti-poverty work also being proposed through the LAA.

Many of the measures installed under DWZ will be financed either through the 'Warm Front' or 'Carbon Reduction Emissions Target' (CERT) schemes. However these schemes are limited in their eligibility criteria. The ability to install measures in households where the householder falls outside the eligibility criteria, and is unwilling or unable to contribute, or where the property cannot be treated within the limitations of those schemes (e.g. solid walled properties, properties needing small scale renewable generation) is limited by available resources.

The project will target 51,000 households across Devon. It is considered viable that up to 6,000 (10% of the Devon total) households could potentially be removed from fuel poverty. A further 15,000 households will be fuel poverty 'proofed' through increasing the energy efficiency of the home. The scope of the project is limited only by the resources available; once the infrastructure is in place it would be relatively straightforward to expand the project.

It is estimated that the cost of measures will total £42 million. However this is fluid dependent on any expansion of the project. It is estimated that 40% of the cost will be financed by Warm Front. It is at present unclear how much would be funded through CERT as the energy suppliers are still refining their schemes. However it is not unreasonable to foresee a further 30-40% funded through CERT. This leaves a funding gap for measures of approximately £8-10 million over the three year period

Currently the East Devon wards of Littleham Urban, Littleham Rural, Withycombe Urban, Withycombe Raleigh, and Halsdon are proposed but this may be refined following further comparison against later Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and other health data.

The main government funded initiative to tackle fuel poverty is the Warm Front programme. There are two private firms operating as scheme managers in Devon. The contractor responsible for the South West is the EAGA Partnership (an employee owned company).

There are two types of assistance - Warm Front and Warm Front Plus. Both can be made to the owner-occupied sector and tenants in the privately rented sector who are on specified benefits.

(1) Warm Front package provides for grants up to £1,500 to provide packages of insulation and limited heating improvements (e.g. gas wall heaters, dual element foam insulated immersion tank, electric storage heaters).

(2) Warm Front Plus is an enhanced package of measures up to £2,500 available to those householders who are over 60. The package includes

insulation measures and, for those who do not have an existing heating system, a central heating system for the main living areas.

4.4 Conclusions and Key Issues from House Condition Survey.

Based on the summary above and the findings of the main report, certain key issues for private sector homes in East Devon can be identified. These are areas where the Council is obliged to monitor the progress of private sector housing and intervene if necessary.

- Vulnerable people living in non decent dwellings (PSA7): Currently 64.6% of vulnerable households live in private sector homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard. This means there is a shortfall of 1270 properties for the 70% target for 2010. The Council will need to devise a plan for how this shortfall is to be addressed and how best to help people in these homes.
- Identification of homes with serious hazards: All Councils have been used to looking at 'unfit' dwellings, but now Councils must consider health & safety hazards instead. With 15900 homes rated as 'non decent' having a serious hazard (which may be associated with inadequate thermal insulation) there is a substantial change in emphasis needed. 37.9% of private rented sector properties have at least one category 1 (serious) hazard.
- Continuation of energy efficiency improvement schemes: 11.2% of households (6400) are in fuel poverty, including 5200 owner occupied dwellings this will need to remain a high priority. In the privately rented sector in particular there is significant potential to get landlords to improve energy efficiency in the homes that they let, especially in the Exmouth area.
- Funding sources and appropriate alternative means of providing financial assistance: The Council can bid to the Regional Housing Board and other agencies for assistance, but these funds are limited and are competed for by all Councils in the region. Without more thought to how other forms of funding might be used, it is unlikely that many of the challenges outlined can be met.
- There are an estimated 1740 vacant properties in East Devon.

5.0 Private Sector Housing Finance.

Government funding for private sector renewal has been primarily delivered through Private Sector Renewal Grant (PSRG) from the Regional Housing Pot. In recent years the distribution of PSRG to individual LAs has been 100% based on a formula. This was applied by the Government Office for the South West (GOSW) from a ready reckoner devised by Communities and Local Government (CLG). In the autumn of 2007 it was announced that PSRG would be reduced and resources diverted to fund more new affordable housing. As a result East Devon's allocation was reduced from £616,000 to

£416,000. Apart from the immediate financial difficulties this caused to the Council this has had a significant impact on our ability to develop new initiatives to improve conditions in the private sector.

In line with CLG advice, the Regional Housing Board decided that from 2009-10 onwards it would move away from a formulaic allocation to one based on bidding. The South West region has been given a provisional Regional Housing Pot grant allocation for PSR of £27 million for 2009-10. This funding will be allocated through a combination of bidding and a percentage allocation based on the formulaic approach of previous years. For 2009-10 70% of the Regional Housing Pot grant PSR funding will be given on a pro-rata apportionment of the 2007-08 formulaic allocation and 30% of the PSR funding will be subject to the bidding process. If Ministers confirm the total Regional Housing Pot grant PSR allocation at £27m for 2009-10, a 70:30 split would ensure that every local authority would be guaranteed to receive, at minimum, approximately the same amount as in 2008-09 (when the regional allocation stood at £19m), in East Devon's case it would remain at £416,000. It is intended that the level of percentage formulaic allocation to LAs will be phased out. For the year 2010-11 it is anticipated that 50% of the funding will be subject to bidding and 50% will comprise the percentage formulaic allocation.

In line with CLG advice the RHB is keen to promote the use of loans and equity release within the region to fund private sector renewal works.

There will therefore be a top slice of the Regional Housing Pot grant. The purpose of this top slice will be to encourage those LAs who currently do not offer a loan scheme in their area. It is intended that this will amount to £3m for 2009-10.

Housing Renewal Capital Estimates from 2008/09 to 2010/11

Income	Scheme	Actuals		Budget	
		08/09 £	09/10£	10/11 £	
	Private Sector Housing Renewal	419000	416,384. Plus 150,000 for loan scheme set up and 87,000 for fuel poverty project	416,000 plus bidding.	
	Disabled Facilities Grants	369,000	402,000	402,000	
	Total	£ 788,000	1,055,384	1,055,000	

Expenditure	General Fund Housing	Actuals 08/09 £	Budget 09/10 £	Budget 10/11 £
	Disabled Facilities Grants		701,000	512,000
Discretionary Grants		148,000	393,000	393,000
Loan Scheme Set up			150,000	150,000
Fuel Poverty Project			87,000	87,000
Total		849,000	1,142,000	1,142,000
Net cost £		61,000	87,000	87,000

6.0 How are we going to tackle Private Sector Housing Renewal?

In order to tackle the issues highlighted in 4.6 we have identified clear priorities for action. The priorities have been informed by the various national and regional drivers for Private Sector Housing Renewal and are set in relation to the results of the recent Private Sector House Condition Survey. These priorities are detailed in an Action Plan set out in Appendix A along with a set of 'policy tools' in Appendix B that we will use to tackle the issues. Contained within the priorities are actions to be taken to contribute to each of the priorities aims. We will concentrate our resources based around the health and well-being of the residents.

6.1 Partnership Working

Partnership working must lie at the heart of any successful Housing Renewal Strategy. In particular the following partners have a key role along with us in ensuring the success of this strategy;

6.1.1 Home Improvement Agency

We have benefited from a very successful partnership with Care and Repair which has resulted in an effective Home Improvement Agency service for residents. Home improvement agencies are able to target the most vulnerable, disabled and low-income people living in the worst housing conditions and provide them with advice and assistance to maintain, repair or adapt their homes to meet their needs.

6.1.2 Private Sector Landlords

As seen from the results of the House Condition Survey, 9% of our total housing stock is in the private rented sector. Landlords therefore play an essential role in meeting the housing need of the district. By working with landlords we aim to encourage their investment into the sector to improve the overall quality, safety and accessibility of privately rented accommodation.

6.1.3 Education Institutions

Previous Private Sector Renewal Strategies have identified targets and priorities for improving student accommodation particularly in Exmouth. However this year the University of Plymouth has closed Rolle College and

relocated to Plymouth. This has meant that many of the student shared houses which have been subject to mandatory Licensing have been sold and returned to single family units or have been converted into self contained flats. Bicton Agricultural College have few properties that are used by students in the same way as Rolle College. Further work will be carried out to maintain links with Bicton College to provide advice and assistance.

6.1.4 Rural Estate Landlords

The District is predominantly rural with a substantial number of dwellings owned by large rural estate landlords and occupied, in the main, by workers or past workers of these estates. The Private Sector House Condition Survey identified a trend that suggested that rural rented homes tended to be in poorer condition than homes occupied by owner-occupiers. In tackling the issues in this sector it is imperative that we work in partnership with estate landlords to improve the housing conditions in these rural areas.

6.1.5 Primary Care Trust

As has been highlighted Housing Renewal has a crucial role to play in health improvement. It is crucial therefore that we work in close partnership with other health professionals in the district. The Devon Primary Care Trust has particular knowledge on the needs of our community, and is therefore an important partner in developing strategies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

6.1.6 Devon County Council Social Services

Devon County Council Social Services are presently undertaking a major transformation programme in line with the White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say'. Adult Services provide help and support to people who want to stay in their own homes. We have a very good relationship with Adult Services and in particular with the Occupational Therapists with whom we carry out disabled adaptations for those people that need such support.

6.1.7 Devon Fire and Rescue Service

One of Devon Fire and Rescues main functions is the provision of fire safety and fire prevention advice. We have developed a close working relationship with the Fire and Rescue Service in the enforcement of fire safety, especially in the privately rented and multiply occupied housing sectors.

6.1.8 Devon Energy Advice Centre

The Devon Energy Advice Centre run by the Energy Savings Trust provides an important resource with regard to energy efficiency and fuel poverty. Our partnership with the Energy Advice Centre will play a key role in our activities to combat fuel poverty.

6.1.9 Gangmaster Licensing Authority

The Gangmaster Licensing Authority (GLA) was set up to curb the exploitation of workers in agriculture, horticulture, shellfish gathering and associated processing and packaging industries. This is a relatively new

agency and we will ensure that we foster close working relations with the GLA to ensure such workers are not only working in safe environments but are also provided with safe and secure housing.

6.1.10 Immigration Service

We work closely with the Immigration Service and the Devon Migrant Worker Task Group particularly regarding housing conditions.

6.1.11 Impact of tourism and second homes

The 2001 Census showed that 2170 (3.7% of household spaces) in East Devon were second/ holiday homes. Previous proactive requests have been made to those owning second and holiday homes, to provide rental accommodation in the area but have met with little or no interest. Further research will be made to see what other areas across the country do to incentivise these groups of people.

East Devon have adopted the government policy of surcharging owners of second homes.

6.2 Strategy Priorities

6.2.1 Decent Homes

As mentioned previously the Decent Homes Standard has been extended to vulnerable households in the Private Sector. Although we have achieved the 2006 target of ensuring that 65% of vulnerable households are living in decent accommodation we still have a challenging target of ensuring that 70% of vulnerable households are living in Decent Homes by 2010. This Government target is considered a priority area for action.

In order to achieve this aim we must introduce targets to monitor our progress towards the 2010 target. From the East Devon District Council Private Sector House Condition and Energy Survey 2007 we know that there are 9600 vulnerable households living the District and 3140 of these vulnerable households are living in nondecent homes. 32.8% of all vulnerable households therefore are living in nondecent homes. In order to meet the 2010 target we need to reduce this proportion to 30%; a 2.8% change. This change equates to 1270 vulnerable households whose homes need to be brought up to the decent homes standard over the lifetime of this strategy.

The approach to making private sector homes decent is very different from that adopted for homes in the social sector, reflecting the different ownership responsibilities and the various enforcement powers of the Council. The Department for Communities and Local Government's guidance for implementation of the Decent Homes standard notes that achieving the standard in private sector housing will only be achieved by adopting a combination of policies which will involve a range of assistance, advice and encouragement to homeowners and using enforcement powers only as a last resort. Our principal means of assisting vulnerable households to improve their homes will be through Discretionary Home Stay Grants. This Policy Tool is detailed in Appendix A. PSH A1 – 1.5

We recognise the important link between a Decent Home and Affordable Warmth. It is very likely that vulnerable households living in non-decent

accommodation are also going to be at the greatest risk of being in fuel poverty.

As such when assessing eligibility for Decent Homes Assistance we will apply a greater standard in relation to the properties ability to provide thermal comfort and use this to specifically target fuel poverty.

Although not specifically highlighted in the results of the House Condition Survey there was anecdotal evidence from the survey that much of the nondecent accommodation in the District is owned by rural estate landlords.

This housing is provided for past and present employees of the estates in many cases. Over the past years we have built up good working relationships with a number of these large landlords, however, in order to increase the numbers of vulnerable households living in decent accommodation we will look to build upon these relationships and work in partnership with large rural estate landlords.

Such partnerships will demonstrate the Council's commitment to tackling poor housing conditions in the private rented sector and for the most vulnerable of tenants.

6.2.1.1 Home Improvement Agencies

Home Improvement Agencies such as Care and Repair are seen by the Government as having a particularly important role to play in taking forward the Decent Homes agenda. Care and Repair plays a vital role in helping elderly, disabled and vulnerable people to remain living independently in their own home. They can assist in organising repairs and improvements, advise on major adaptations (disabled facilities) and minor adaptations. They operate a handyperson and maintenance scheme and can provide free home safety assessments

We will continue to promote our home improvement agency in the provision of an invaluable service to vulnerable households living in nondecent accommodation. This is detailed in Appendix A PSH A1 – 1.0 & 1.6 and Appendix B Policy Tools.

6.2.2 Safe and Healthy Homes

As we have already identified housing conditions have a major impact upon the health and well-being of individuals, households and communities. Falls in the home, for instance, have a major impact on the lives of those concerned. They are a major cause of disability and the leading cause of mortality in people over the age of 75. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) statistics show that there are some 2 million accidents in the home each year, 18% of victims are over 65 years of age and 20% of victims are under 5 years of age.

We will aim to ensure all residents live in homes that do not adversely affect their health and safety. This is detailed in Appendix A PSH A2 and Appendix B Policy Tools.

We will prioritise those hazards in the home with the greatest potential to cause harm and use a number of tools to achieve improved standards.

- Enforcement

We will encourage and help good landlords and make bad landlords perform better by, if necessary, using enforcement action within the scope of the Environmental Health and Health Equalities Enforcement Policy. However it will remain our aim to encourage the provision of good quality and safe accommodation in the private rented sector and only use enforcement as a last resort.

- Licensing

We will maintain an inspection regime of Houses in Multiple Occupation to ensure early identification, inspection, licensing and continued compliance with conditions and regulations. This Policy Tool is detailed in Appendix B PSH A2.

The Council is mindful of the needs of migrant agricultural workers and gypsies and travellers in East Devon.

Much of this focus centres on health needs and access to healthcare. We will support investigations with regard to housing needs and conditions of these workers and at the same time support the ongoing activity of the Gangmaster Licensing Authority.

- Care and Repair

As identified earlier, East Devon has an ageing population and it is older people who often live in the poorest housing with the greater risk to health. Many older people's homes require only minor works to prevent the occurrence of what are sometimes quite substantial risks to health and safety. Often older households do not have the means to carry out these minor works and therefore require assistance. Home Stay Grants, Home Safety Assessment, and a Handyman Scheme provided through the Care and Repair Agency which assisted more than 600 clients in the year from April 2007 to March 2008 are important elements and compliment the Primary Care Trust's strategy to reduce falls and fractures amongst older people. We will seek to increase the provision of this service to ensure more households are able to benefit from it.

These are detailed in Appendix A PSH A1 and Appendix B Policy Tools

6.2.3 Disabled People

From the results of the House Condition Survey and the known demographics of the District the need for disabled adaptations is very evident. We believe that disabled people requiring financial assistance to carry out adaptations to their homes should have their cases dealt with promptly. We have a good working relationship with Devon County Council Occupational Therapists. Quarterly meetings are held at a strategic level with senior occupational therapists and representatives from the Housing team to ensure that Disabled Facilities Grants are administered as efficiently as possible. Disabled

Facilities Grants remain the only mandatory grant administered under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

6.2.4 Warm Homes

The overall rate of fuel poverty in East Devon is 13.2%, but the rate in the privately rented sector is 18.6% and in Exmouth the rate is 16.9%.

It is important that the eradication of fuel poverty is maintained as a priority and we have developed a specific Fuel Poverty Strategy to raise the profile of Fuel Poverty issues in the District and to explain how we are going to combat the problem. The Fuel Poverty Strategy 2006 - 2011 sets out our aims and objectives for eradicating fuel poverty, the main objectives being to:-

- Promote awareness of the causes and consequences of living in fuel poverty to Members and Council staff, as well as the ways in which the Council can help to reduce the number of residents who are not currently provided with affordable warmth.
- Ensure that all residents at risk of fuel poverty are given information on how to achieve affordable warmth and are provided with financial assistance (where possible) for the installation of energy efficiency measures, such as loft and cavity wall insulation and efficient heating systems.
- Ensure that information from exercises such as the House Condition Survey 2008 and other forms of deprivation mapping is used in the identification of specific areas of the District for implementation of initiatives aimed at tackling fuel poverty and in particular, targeting residents who are at the highest risk of fuel poverty or extreme fuel poverty (e.g. vulnerable groups, people living in rural areas and residents in the private rented sector).
- Ensure that, in addition to provision of energy efficiency information, all residents likely to be at risk from fuel poverty have access to information on keeping warm and maintaining good health (particularly during the winter months) and maximising income through increased uptake of benefits and allowances.
- Ensure that energy efficiency is promoted to all households within the District to raise awareness and reduce the likelihood of more residents becoming at risk, particularly with increases in energy prices.

Housing renewal plays a key role in delivering the objectives of this Fuel Poverty Strategy and in particular will improve people's living conditions and help them to achieve affordable warmth and improve their health. A considerable amount of Government funding in the way of Warm Front Grants and Energy Company (Energy Efficiency Commitment) funding is available for providing energy efficiency measures and therefore for alleviating fuel poverty. However in order that this Strategy complements this external funding when considering the works eligible under Decent Homes Assistance we are proposing to impose a higher standard in relation to criterion 4 of the

Decent Homes Standard. Under criterion 4 we will interpret 'a reasonable degree of thermal comfort' as meaning the provision of affordable warmth.

As has been previously identified in this strategy housing conditions are often worse in the private rented sector and this is also the case as regards poor energy efficiency, with over 20% of privately rented homes classed as 'very poor'. One of the barriers to improving energy efficiency in the private rented sector is communicating the benefits to landlords. In our activities with private landlords and the estate managers of the landed estates we will ensure that landlords are made aware of the improvement in the capital value which energy efficiency improvements make to a property and the cost saving for their tenants on heating costs.

6.2.5 Secure Homes

Although crime rates in the East Devon remain among the lowest in the country the fear of crime still impacts greatly on quality of life.

One in three household burglaries happen when windows and doors of properties are insecure. We will continue to use the Keepsafe Project as a means to provide basic security measures to vulnerable households.

This project is a partnership between the Council, Police and Care and Repair. As part of this project we will be able to use the Staying Put Assistance policy tool as a means of complementing equipment provided by Police.

6.2.6 Accessible Homes

The Private Sector House Condition Survey identified that the proportion of empty homes in the East Devon was around the national average at 3.5%. The survey estimates the number to be in the region of 1,500 with almost 180 having been vacant for longer than 6 months. By tackling empty properties we are able to provide additional homes thus reducing the need to build new properties. We will make available grant assistance as part of a Living over the Shop Scheme to owners of suitable empty accommodation who wish to bring them into use for residential purposes.

This is detailed in Appendix A PSH A3 1.2 and Appendix B Policy Tools.

There is a large proportion of elderly homeowners who are under occupying large homes and are struggling on fixed incomes to keep the home in good repair and warm. In some instances these homeowners may wish to move to a more 'manageable' home and release equity to supplement their income. There are a number of barriers stopping many elderly households 'downsizing' like this. We will investigate these barriers and if appropriate introduce support to such homeowners.

There are a number of large premises in East Devon, many occupied by single households. In some situations homeowners may wish to convert premises to make them suitable for more than one household. Such conversions can, as with bringing empty homes back into use, contribute to meeting the overall housing need of the District. We will make available Conversion Assistance in such circumstances; this Policy Tool is detailed in Appendix B.

There are also potential opportunities for converting disused space above commercial premises into living accommodation.

How we intend to monitor and review this strategy.

Monitoring

Monitoring will be carried out using the Action plan. A template will be constructed with the Priorities, Targets, Outcomes and Resources where applicable, as headings and a description of the progress will be provided including costs and outcomes.

The Monitoring will be carried out on an annual basis with the monitoring report presented to the Head of Service and Portfolio holder, for comment and assessment.

As strategy items change so the action plan will reflect these changes and show progression.

Review

A full review will be carried out in 2011 when the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy will be redrafted and the full consultation exercise will be carried out with partners.

ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE

Leaflets and general information including initial assessment forms will be available from the Council Offices at Knowle, Sidmouth, EX10 8HL. Requests may be received by:

- Personal visit to offices
- In writing
- Telephone 01395 516551
- Fax 01395 517507
- Email @eastdevon.gov.uk

Office hours are 8.30am - 12.30pm & 1.30pm – 5.00pm Mon to Fri

Assistance can also be obtained at other Council Information points:

- Axminster, The Guildhall, West Street
10.30am - 12.30pm Mon, Tues, Thurs for enquiry office only
01297 33333
- Budleigh Salterton, Council Offices, Station Road

01395 442245
10.00am - 1.00pm Mon, Wed, Fri

- Exmouth, Town Hall, St Andrews Road
01395 264356
9.00am - 1.00pm & 2.00pm - 4.30pm Mon to Fri
- Honiton, Council Offices, New Street
01404 42957
10.00am - 1.00pm Mon to Fri
- Ottery St Mary, Council Offices, Silver Street
01404 812252
- Seaton, Town Hall, Fore Street
01297 21388
9.00am - 12.00 noon Mon to Fri

In addition, you may contact the Care & Repair Home Improvement Agency direct in the Sidmouth Council Offices. The contact details for Care & Repair are:

- Telephone 01395 514790
- Email

COMPLAINTS / APPEALS

If any person has cause for complaint regarding this policy, procedures for financial assistance or the way in which their application for assistance has been handled, they can make a complaint under the terms of the Council's Complaints Procedure. A leaflet that explains how to make a complaint and the action that the Council will take in response is available from:

The Council Offices
Knowle,
Sidmouth,
EX10 8HL

Tel. No. 01395 516551

Fax 01395 517507

Email eddc@eastdevon.gov.uk

If a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, a complaint can be made to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Ombudsman contact details are as follows:-

Jerry White
Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No 2
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park

Coventry CV4 8JB
Phone: 024 7682 0000 Fax: 024 7682 0001
Email: enquiries.coventry@lgo.org.uk

If there are special circumstances and strong reasons for considering an exception to the policy, the Head of Environmental Health & Health Equalities may present a report to the Portfolio Holder for Communities for decision.

Appendix A

Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2008/11 Action Plan

Aims, Priorities and Targets

PSH A1					
Provide a range of affordable housing to meet housing needs Improve the use & safety of housing Enable elderly and disabled to remain in their own homes					
Ref	Priority	Target	Completion date	Outcome	Resources
1.0	Working in partnership to provide an effective and efficient service for disabled people within East Devon	Continue to work in partnership with DCC, Social Services, Supporting people and the other Devon LA's to maintain and develop an effective and efficient service for disabled people within East Devon through the Devon-wide HIA Refresh the procedural guidelines and working arrangements with Devon HIA.	Three year contract to be reviewed 2008/9 On going	Faster, more effective and efficient service for elderly, vulnerable and disabled people.	Within existing resources
1.1	Administer Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants efficiently and effectively	Average number of DFG's per year = 70 completed. Assist 70 clients with adaptations to their homes within agreed time-scales.	Ongoing	Helping the elderly, disabled and other vulnerable groups to continue living in their own homes	Mandatory Grant Budget = £602k

1.2	Provide a suitable mandatory relocation package for disabled homeowners who cannot adapt their property.	<p>Following DFG Review, relocation to be developed as part of mandatory options.</p> <p>Develop suitable criteria for relocation approved circumstances</p>	<p>Implementation September 2009</p> <p>Implementation September 2009</p>	To help disabled people to move to suitable homes and avoid excessive costs adapting properties which are not suitable.	<p>All requests for relocation to be considered by EH Manager (Private Sector Housing) before enquiry pursued</p> <p>Previous involvement of this type of scheme has produced on average 2 applications per annum.</p>
1.3	Research suitable alternatives for adapting properties	<p>To provide suitable alternatives to permanent adaptations to properties</p> <p>To request Devon HIA to carry out a feasibility study to find out about alternative solutions and the cost effectiveness across Devon.</p> <p>To work with the Devon HIA steering/management board to consider this matter in more detail on a Devon-wide basis</p>	Feasibility study to be requested by December 2010	<p>To help disabled people live in their existing properties and use recyclable adaptations</p> <p>The use of innovative and practical alternative solutions to adapting properties for both Social and Private Housing eg modular prefabricated units which could be recycled More cost effective adaptations, which could also be recyclable in the future.</p>	Within existing resources
1.4	Place charge on property where DFG is £5,000 or more. Maximum charge being £10,000 for 10	To develop and instigate a suitable charging procedure to provide a recyclable fund from mandatory DFG's to be used to top-up the Mandatory Grant pot.	Implementation Sept 2009	Provision of additional source of funding to top up the mandatory grant funding pot	<p>Cost of placing the charge on the property and monitoring the sales of adapted properties.</p> <p>Setting up a process to review hardship cases.</p>

	years	Write a draft policy and procedure including an appeals mechanism			Monitoring the sales of adapted properties to be processed through the Land Charges process.
1.5	Provision of Discretionary Home Stay Grants funding for minor repairs, Decent Homes Standards (repairs and energy efficiency measures) and minor adaptations.	Assist 80 clients annually with work to their homes within agreed time scales. To agree a reporting mechanism with Devon HIA through the steering/management board on Decent Homes	Ongoing To request a reporting mechanism by September 2009	Provision of small repairs and small adaptations to assist elderly and vulnerable people to remain in their own homes Clients of Care and Repair able to live independently in their homes.	From within existing resources. Discretionary Grant budget = £393k. Amount to be reviewed and consideration made to balance amounts to demand for other discretionary schemes. Note budget to divided to include PSH – A2 1.5 = £10k PSH – A2 1.11 = £50k PSH – A4 1.8 = £10k PSH – A4 1.9 = £100k Home Stay Grants = £223k
1.6	Provide via Devon Care & Repair a Home Safety scheme	Provision of Home Safety advice and measures through the Devon Care & Repair service for vulnerable and elderly. To agree a reporting mechanism with Devon HIA through the steering/management board. Implement a review of scheme through the Devon wide HIA contract	Reporting mechanism revised during Contract Review with implementation date of September 2009	To reduce the number of home accidents	Within existing resources

1.7	Utilise the Neighbourhood Assessment surveys to improve communications of Private Sector Housing services to rural areas and hard to reach groups across East Devon	Work with Neighbourhood assessment co-ordinator to provide literature and information about the private sector housing service Target 3 rural areas per annum	To discuss with Andrew Ennis for future target areas	Reaching 'hard to reach' and rural areas to promote Private Sector Housing Services particularly regarding Housing Standards and Energy Efficiency Ensuring that the Private Sector Housing services are widely known and offering the ability to reach the maximum number of residents within East Devon giving greater opportunity to access the services.	Within existing resources
1.8	In partnership with The Police Women's Aid, Devon Care and Repair, The Council, Devon and Cornwall Housing Association develop a Sanctuary Scheme to consider development of scheme into the private sector	Prepare a report to be presented to the Council on the financial implications of this scheme being developed into the Private Sector	September 2009	To provide security for those suffering Domestic Violence within the Private Housing sector, to remain in their own homes and feel safe. Providing vulnerable people with choice.	See 1.5 above Scheme already available to EDDC tenants.

PSH - A2

Prevent Homelessness and ensure accommodation is provided
 Bring sub standard housing up to current standards
 Widen the choice of housing, especially for those in priority need

Ref	Priority	Target	Completion date	Outcome	Resources
1.0	Following successful bidding process to PSR Grant pot initial set up costs for loan scheme available. To discuss implementation date with WRT.	To move from grant assistance to loans for people who are able to service a low-cost loan	Implementation of loan scheme to be in April 2010	Provision of alternative assistance with partners for elderly and vulnerable home owners to carry out repairs to their properties and to remain in their own homes.	Within existing resources
1.1	Review the Customer Charter for Private Sector Housing work, to provide customer feedback on satisfaction of services provided.	Monitor the levels of customer satisfaction and review systems and standards to improve service where appropriate.	Monthly sampling of worksheets that have been completed	To provide an equitable service	Within existing resources

1.2	Develop clear service standards for timeliness and quality.	Service standards published for key activities.	Annually	Clear standards of service published for customers.	Within existing resources
1.3	Review and update Private Sector Housing Website	<p>Monthly monitor and maintain with up to date and timely information</p> <p>Develop the site to provide customer consultation and feedback.</p> <p>Develop 'on line' enquiry forms and application forms.</p>	<p>Monthly monitoring</p> <p>December 2009</p> <p>January 2010</p>	Provide all residents within East Devon greater access to information, access to online application/enquiry forms and the opportunity to be consulted and provide feedback.	within existing resources
1.4	To develop further links with Landlords to build working relationships with Private Sector Landlords	<p>To produce a bi-annual newsletter for all Private Sector Landlords and Managing Agents.</p> <p>To produce a questionnaire, to be sent out to all</p>	Initial newsletter completed December 2008	<p>To develop a working relationship with Private Sector Landlords. Giving the opportunity to consult and provide feedback to the service received.</p> <p>To promote greater working relationships with Private Sector</p>	Within existing resources

		groups/individual landlords on what sort of 'communication' they would consider appropriate ie an annual Forum, newsletters, website blogs etc.	Second newsletter June/July 2009	Landlords Reduce the need for enforcement action and the time taken to improve privately rented properties.	
1.5	To implement a Lodgers scheme.	To provide suitable amenities to 5 properties per annum to assist homeowners to offer lodging accommodation	April 2010	To reduce the number of people accessing the Housing Waiting List and to reduce the under occupation of large properties. An additional option to the provision of affordable accommodation within East Devon	See PSH A1 - 1.5 Capital cost = £10,000
1.6	Carry out annual House Condition Survey (either sample or larger survey depending on statistical analysis) including information regarding Energy Efficiency deficiencies and SAP ratings in line with NI 187 presently under consultation.	To be carried out on an annual basis, during March/April	Annually	The House Condition Survey provides information, which assists with the review of the PSR strategy. Providing up to date information regarding the condition of housing within the district and where assistance and effective work should be directed by the Private Sector Housing Team	Annual cost = £14k for sample survey of 200 properties Every 4 years cost of 1,000 property survey = £25,000 + (to discuss involvement with Devon wide group to identify savings)

1.7	Annually consult with all RSLs with housing in EDDC to seek information regarding their plans to meet the Decent Homes standard.	To alert and obtain information from RSLs on their policies for obtaining the Decent Homes Standard. to devise questionnaire	December 2009	To improve the condition of Social Housing within East Devon and ensure they meet the Decent Homes Standard.	Within existing resources
1.8	Maintain the mandatory licensing of HMO's system	Review the HMO licensing application arrangements annually.	Annually	Safe and healthy and affordable housing	within existing resources
1.9	Inspect all mandatory licensed premises to ensure compliance with conditions and regulations	Inspect all mandatory licensed HMO's within the 5 year licensing period. 15 properties to be inspected annually	ongoing	As required by the Housing Act 2004	within existing resources
		Continue the procedure on an annual basis of receiving gas/electric and fire safety certification from all Licensed HMO's	ongoing	Maintenance and inspection of gas/electric and fire safety logs	Within existing resources
1.10	Implement a targeted inspection programme within East Devon to	Targeted inspection programme to run on an annual basis and begin by	Annually	Bringing up to standard and provision of safe accommodation for vulnerable people.	within existing resources

	identify HMO's which should be licensed	investigating already known HMO's in East Devon. Visit target number of 30 properties annually. Initial target area is Exmouth	Annually		
1.11	Develop a financial assistance package for landlords of HMO's to provide energy efficiency and heating measures	Provide 10 'grant/loans annually	April 2010	Safe decent warm homes To encourage the provision of safe decent warm homes	See PSH A1 - 1.5 Provision of 10 'grant/loans', maximum of £5,000 per grant/loan = £50,000 Grant/loan to be repayable after 5 years or sooner if property sold or changes.
1.12	Pilot scheme with Housing Needs to inform PSH of all private rented sector tenants offered EDDC housing	Implement a questionnaire survey to be sent to PS Tenants leaving their PR property for EDDC accommodation	Initiated March 2008 ongoing	Inform us of the level of non-decency in the Private Rented sector Provide us with the opportunity to get landlords to improve their accommodation Stop properties being used as a 'spring-board' to EDDC accommodation via the non-decency route.	within existing resources
1.13	Implement the enforcement 'charging' for statutory notices under the Housing Act 2004.	To implement the enforcement charging for statutory notices. Review the charges annually	September 2009	Covering the cost of administration and service of statutory notices	Self financing

PSH – A3

Implement and Develop the long term Empty Property Strategy in partnership with others. Provide a range of affordable housing to meet housing needs.

Ref	Priority	Target	Completion date	Outcome	Resources
1.0	Refer to the Empty Homes Strategy 2008, monitor the number of empty properties from available sources of information including the Council Tax Register.	Monitor the up to date data on Empty Property position within East Devon	Being rewritten completion in May 2009	To determine the number of Empty Properties within the District	Within existing resources
1.1	Maintain the Private Sector Leasing Scheme in partnership with EDDC Housing Service and Exeter Empty Homes Service	To be varied in order to maintain the present level of properties already within the Private Sector Leasing Scheme.	ongoing	Increase the options available for providing homes for homeless households and others in need	Within existing resources

1.2	Living Over the Shops (LOTS) Scheme	Implement A Living Over the Shops (LOTS) scheme. Deliver 5 schemes	March 2010	Provision of additional affordable accommodation and the use of empty space.	To be developed with Exeter Empty Homes service negotiating with Housing Associations and EDDC Housing - unknown resource implications. Financial resource implications unknown
1.3	Develop and link with the Rent Guarantee Scheme, Deposit Bond Scheme to provide incentives for landlords to provide Decent Homes	Develop an incentive scheme for landlords to provide Decent Homes Standard accommodation within the scheme	March 2010	Provision of decent safe affordable alternative accommodation	No resource implications at this stage
1.4	Review the Empty Homes Strategy	Monitor the effectiveness of the Empty Homes Strategy	See 1.0 above	East Devon District Council policy for Empty Homes	Within existing resources
1.5	Review the partnership arrangement with Exeter	To consider whether this is an appropriate	Annually	Provision of an effective and efficient service	Financial and time implications within the review process which may result in

	Empty Homes Service in light of the work that is being carried out on Long Term Empty Homes	use of resources			<p>the investigation of long term empty homes being brought back in house</p> <p>If brought back an addition of half FTE technical officer post would be needed to take on the role of an Empty Homes Officer and develop a greater involvement with this area of private sector housing</p>
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PSH - A4

Improve the energy efficiency of housing and eliminate fuel poverty

Ref	Priority	Target	Completion date	Outcome	Resources
1.0	Work in partnership with the Devon Energy Advice Centre to deliver a Devon Wide Affordable Warmth Strategy to which the Council have signed up.	To monitor the performance of the DEAC through the HECA reporting requirements	Annually	This acts as an information resource on energy efficiency measures promoted by the Government scheme "Warm Front".	Initially this is to be provided within existing resources.
1.1	Review the HECA 1996 Strategy and update it in response to achievements and new initiatives HECA review underway may be repealed 2008	HECA target = 30% reduction	Annually	To maintain a steady reduction in CO2 emissions and an increase in the uptake of energy efficiency measures installed.	Within existing resources
1.2	Work with Energy Brokers like Heat Devon, and independent organisation focusing on energy efficiency schemes outside the Governments Warm Front scheme.	Continue to monitor performance of these independent schemes to ensure they provide efficient and effective schemes for residents in East Devon on an	Annually	Increase awareness of energy efficiency and fuel poverty issues	See 1.0 above

		annual basis			
1.3	Promote the availability of Government grants and other forms of financial assistance towards energy saving measures in rural areas	Implement planned schemes in rural areas in conjunction with the Devon Warm Zones scheme. 3 rural areas to be targeted annually. To discuss with Andrew Ennis regarding the Neighbourhood Assessment process	To discuss with Andrew Ennis re Neighbourhood assessment areas	Greater take up of Government Warm Front grants and greater understanding of energy saving measures	See 1.0 above
1.4	Review the EDDC Affordable Warmth Strategy and update it in line with the latest schemes and National Indicators	Carry out a review of the EDDC Affordable Warmth Strategy and implement changes to it in light of National indicators and actions	April 2010	Targeting domestic sector to undertake energy efficiency measures such as cavity walls insulation, domestic loft insulation and energy efficient lighting. Priority to tackle homes with worse than average energy performance in rural areas.	Within existing resources
1.5	Continue to make a contribution to the funding of a Devon Affordable Warmth	Monitor through the Devon HECA group the activity of the	Annual	Increase awareness of energy efficiency and fuel poverty issues	Annual charged agreed

	Officer post to promote Affordable Warmth, reduce Fuel Poverty and develop the Sustainability and Climate Change agendas.	Devon AWO in East Devon area			
1.6	Through the CEEF bid work in partnership with the Devon HECA group and Devon AWO to establish a Warm Zone in Exmouth to focus efforts on fuel poor households.	The primary objective will be to provide the basic energy efficiency measures funded by "Energy Efficiency Commitment" and "Warm Front" free of charge. Monitoring arrangements to be set up through the Devon HECA group. Project to take 3 years to roll out.	Warm Zone established and launched	Links with Decent Homes and Health targets	See 1.0 above
1.7	Investigate the viability of providing energy audits for the private sector. Promote the concept of energy audits so families can be involved and responsible by assessing their own carbon footprint.	Consider a DIY kit and other methods in order to promote energy audits	April 2010	Increase awareness of energy efficiency and fuel poverty issues	See 1.0 above
1.8	Private Landlords Energy Efficiency Action Grant (PLEA) and Landlords enhanced	Develop with Wcea (Devon EAC) a PLEA scheme plus	April 2010	Maximum of £1,000 for insulation and heating Letting conditions to	See PSH A1 – 1.5 Resource implications =

	heating scheme	enhanced heating scheme to provide 10 schemes annually		apply.	£10,000 budget per annum
1.9	Warm up East Devon scheme to run in conjunction with the Warm Zone scheme	Owner Occupiers and tenants 60 yrs + or household income below £18,000, outside the Warm Zone area	April 2010	Maximum of (£100 - £400) or 50% whichever is less Loft insulation and cavity wall insulation	See PSH A1 – 1.5 Resource implications = £100k budget per annum

PSH – A5

Develop better external communications with Private and Public Sector Housing Groups within Devon and nationally.

Ref	Priority	Target	Completion date	Outcome	Resources
1.0	Review the workplans of the pan-Devon EH and Housing sub-group to exchange best practice and develop partnership working	To work in partnership with Devon Authorities and to maintain an equitable service and share best practice.	On going	Sharing best practice, equitable services across Devon and working in partnership to provide cost effective housing schemes.	Within existing resources
1.1	Extend/Develop links with private sector landlords and develop better links with private sector tenants.	To consult with and ensure private sector landlords and tenants are involved with all housing issues within East Devon	On going	More integration and partnership working. Customer satisfaction. Provision of a customer led service.	Within existing resources
1.2	In partnership with Public and Private Sector housing providers assist in the development of a	To ensure that housing standards are maintained and improved in all sectors	ongoing	Decent Homes Standard, Unfitness rates and Housing and Health standards are maintained and improved	Within existing resources

	choice based lettings scheme				
1.3	Develop communication links with Portfolio Landlords, Rural Estate Landowners and College/University Accommodation Offices, linked with A2 1.4	To ensure safe and healthy living accommodation for all private sector tenants and students living in East Devon	May 2010	Provision of safe and healthy living accommodation	Within existing resources
1.4	Develop communication and working links with the Gang Master and Immigration Services	To ensure safe and healthy living accommodation for migrant workers and immigrants relocating to East Devon	May 2010	Provision of safe and healthy living accommodation	Within existing resources
1.5	Be part of the new Affordable Housing initiative in East Devon	To ensure that the highest standard of affordable housing within the private and public sector is encouraged and maintained	Date to be discussed with John Golding	Provision of safe and healthy living accommodation	Resources linked to work with Neighbourhood Assessment Areas

PSH – A6

Develop and improve our understanding of the use of Residential Caravans and site management.
Improve the energy efficiency of Residential Caravans

Ref	Priority	Target	Completion date	Outcome	Resources
1.0	Inspect all residential caravan sites Identify and inspect all single and multiple sites	Annually inspect all residential caravan sites. NUMBERS	Annual	To ensure safe, decent and warm alternative accommodation	Within existing resources
1.1	Identify and Implement the New Model Standards 2008 for residential sites	Consult and implement the new model standards as appropriate	New model standards received April 2008	To ensure safe, decent and modern sites	Within existing resources
1.2	Develop with other LA in Devon schemes to assist in the improvement of energy efficiency and heating of residential mobile homes	To provide residents of mobile homes in East Devon are able to insulate and heat their homes to an efficient level	Develop scheme in 2011	Warm and efficient alternative accommodation	Link with PSH A4 1.0 resource implications

PSH – A7

Private Water Supplies

Ensure that domestic properties in East Devon who use Private Water Supplies comply with the existing regulations and are informed of the requirements of the new regulation requirements

Ref	Priority	Target	Completion date	Outcome	Resources
1.0	Inspect and sample XX number of domestic private water supplies in line with the regulatory requirements	Annual inspection programme	Annual inspection programme	Safe private water supplies to domestic premises. Early detection of unsafe private water supplies	Within existing resources
1.1	Develop a series of information packs to ensure that all domestic users of private water supplies are kept informed of the New Regulatory requirements	February 2009	When new regulations are made available	Ensuring that all occupiers of domestic premises utilising private water supplies are informed of the requirements of the new regulations	Within existing resources
1.2	Develop a suitable Devon-wide inspection scheme for domestic	As soon as it is known when the new regulations are to be implemented and	As soon as it is known when the new regulations are to be implemented	Ensuring that all private water supplies are risk assessed and any improvements required are	Presently being considered by the Devon-wide group. The risk assessment of all private water supplies is likely to require additional resources but this is unknown at the present

	premises using private water supplies	in what manner	and in what manner	implemented in a timely manner	time.
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Appendix B – Policy Tools

This appendix provides the Policy Tools and general framework of financial assistance provided by the Council for Housing Renewal. For issues outside of this, regard should be had to legislation regarding disabled facilities grants and any Housing Renewal Guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

In all cases approval of any financial assistance will be dependent on the availability of sufficient resources to finance that assistance.

Further Policy Tools will be developed over the course of this strategy in line with Government, Regional, and corporate priorities.

The Council's Environmental Health Private Sector Housing Team will operate a preliminary enquiry system to advise people of their options.

Mandatory Grant Assistance

PSH A1

1.1 Disabled Facilities Grant Assistance (DFG)

Mandatory means- tested grant aid is available for essential adaptations to give a qualifying disabled person better freedom of movement into and around their home and to essential facilities within it. Where necessary it can also provide the essential facilities themselves. To improve access in and out of the dwelling by, for example, widening doors and installing ramps;

Mandatory grant aid is available for essential adaptations to give a qualifying disabled person better freedom of movement into and around their home and to essential facilities within it. Where necessary it can also provide the essential facilities themselves. The types of work are:

- to improve access in and out of the dwelling by, for example, widening doors and installing ramps;
- ensuring the safety of the disabled person and other occupants by, for example, providing a specially adapted room in which it would be safe to leave a disabled person unattended or improved lighting to ensure better visibility;
- to make access easier to the living room;
- by providing or improving access to the bedroom, and kitchen, toilet, washbasin and bath (and/or shower) facilities; for example, by installing a stair lift or providing a downstairs bathroom;
- to improve or provide a heating system in your home which is suitable to the needs of the disabled person;
- to adapt heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use; and
- to improve access and movement around the home to enable the disabled person to care for another person who lives in the property, such as a spouse, child or another person for whom the disabled person cares.

In April 2008 changes were brought in to the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant scheme and included access to gardens/outside space.

Capital allocation for the financial year 2008 - 2009 is £512k

The administration of the grant scheme will continue to be carried out by the Home Improvement Agency Care & Repair through the Devon-Wide Home Improvement Agency Contract.

1.2 Mandatory Relocation Package

In some cases the payment of a mandatory DFG to undertake adaptations may not be considered the most appropriate course of action, usually because adaptation would not be cost effective due to the size or layout of the accommodation or because a disabled person has knowingly moved to an unsuitable property. In such cases grant assistance may be offered, to assist disabled applicants to move to more suitable accommodation or accommodation which is adapted for the applicants needs rather than to adapt an unsuitable property. In such cases the level of assistance available will be assessed on the merits of each case, but it will be no greater than the equivalent Disabled Facilities Grant

1.4 Legal Charge on Property

It will be possible to place a recoverable charge on Owner Occupied properties where the DFG exceeds £5,000 up to a maximum charge of £10,000. This will be introduced on 1st April 2009. All applicants who will be affected will be advised prior to the grant being approved and confirmation of the charge will be made once the works have been completed.

Discretionary Financial Assistance

Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant

There has been discretion to give grants for a wide range of other works to make a home suitable for a disabled occupant's **accommodation, welfare or employment** needs. For example, providing a safe play area for a disabled child or providing or adapting an existing room to enable a housebound disabled person to work from home. The council also has discretion to give grant for works, which qualify for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, where the cost would exceed the limit of £30,000.

1.5 Home Stay Grant Assistance

The Council will make a Home Stay Grant available towards the cost of small-scale works of repair, or improvement to dwellings, houseboats and mobile homes subject to the policy set out in this document

The grant is discretionary and subject to adequate financial resources being available. Applicant must have lived in the property for at least two years (except in the case of disabled adaptations) and must be in receipt of a means tested benefit. It must be repaid if the property is disposed of within 20 years thereby ensuring that resources are 'recycled' for future use.

The Council will determine what works qualify for assistance taking into account the circumstances of the applicant and the condition of the dwelling. The purposes for which an application for a home repair assistance grant may be approved are the following:

- Repairs and improvement to secure the basic fabric of a property from the entry of wind or rain;
- Works to repair or replace services in the home
- To protect the occupants from immediate exposure to dangerous or insecure building elements or foul drainage;
- Small scale adaptation works to enable elderly or disabled persons to remain living at home, such as access ramps or grip rails, on the recommendation of the County Council Occupational Therapist;

The council will determine what works qualify for assistance taking into account the circumstances of the applicant and the condition of the dwelling following an inspection of the whole property using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. Grant assistance may be approved towards the following purposes:-

- Repairs and improvements to make the property wind and weather tight (See Decent Homes standard below)
- Works to repair or replace services in the home;
- Works to protect the occupants from immediate exposure to dangerous or insecure building elements or foul drainage;
- Small scale adaptation works to enable elderly or disabled persons to remain living at home, such as access ramps or grip rails, following a recommendation from the County Occupational Therapists
- Works to remedy Category 1 hazards under HHSRS (Also included in Decent Homes standard)
- Works to bring properties up to the Decent Homes standard criteria B (reasonable state of repair) and D (provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort – insulation and heating, if Warm Front not applicable)

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

A Decent Home meets the following 4 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 assess as serious ('Category 1') under the HHSRS.

b) It is in a reasonable state of repair

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

- One or 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 that 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); and
- Adequate size and layout of common areas in blocks of flats

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

d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

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

The Council will pay 100% of the cost of the works determined by the Council as fair and appropriate to be carried out, up to a maximum of £5,000 in respect of the same dwelling

1.8 Sanctuary Scheme

EAST DEVON SANCTUARY SCHEME PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOL

A sanctuary scheme is an alternative to homelessness and temporary accommodation for families that have experienced domestic violence.

It provides additional security measures to the families home that allow them to feel safe enough to remain in their own home. This can range from providing extra/new locks to a front door to providing a safe room within the home that the victim can escape to and call the Police.

It is available to any victim of domestic violence irrespective of tenure. In other words, it is available to anyone who lives in Council and Housing Association housing, private rented housing and those who are home owners.

The following agencies have agreed to develop and implement a sanctuary scheme in East Devon.

The Police Women's Aid;
Devon Care and Repair;
East Devon District Council
Devon and Cornwall Housing Association

It is recognised that a process already exists to improve the security/safety of victims of domestic violence to enable them to remain in their own home; however, it is not called a 'sanctuary scheme'.

This partnership protocol sets out how victims of domestic violence can access the sanctuary scheme; the responsibilities of partner agencies and the process to enable additional security measures to be installed in the victim's home.

To access the scheme, a family must firstly be considered a "victim of domestic violence", potentially be homeless and require temporary accommodation if they were to leave their home.

Any agency working with victims of domestic violence should refer cases to either the Police or Women's Aid. A risk assessment and an assessment of need for the sanctuary scheme will be made by one of these agencies. An assessment of the security measures that need to be implemented will be made by the Crime Prevention Officer who will recommend the work needed to allow the victim to remain safely in their own home.

Once it is known what works are required the Police or Womans Aid or will request the Council (Housing Needs) to arrange for the work to be carried out. If the victim lives in a Council property then the work will be managed by the Housing Services Manager.

If the victim is a home owner or living in private rented or housing association accommodation then the work will be organised by Devon Care and Repair.

The cost of works undertaken will be charged as follows:

Council property – Housing Revenue Account
Private rented or home owner – Environmental Health
Other – Homelessness Prevention Fund

Partner agencies anticipate that 20 victims of domestic violence will access the sanctuary scheme each year. The average cost of works is expected to be £1,000. The total budget required to fund security measures to victim's homes is estimated to be £20,000.

It is anticipated that the cost of works will be shared as follows:

Environmental Health - £10,000

Housing (HRA) - £8,000

Housing (GF) - £2,000

The main principle of the protocol is that the welfare of the victim is paramount.

All agencies agree to work in partnership and share relevant information to enable the sanctuary scheme to operate.

All agencies agree to maintain maximum confidentiality of the victim and their circumstances.

The Council will accept the judgement and decision of the Police and Women's Aid when deciding whether:

- A family is a victim of domestic violence, and
- The additional security measures should be undertaken to enable the victim to feel safe in their own home.

When requesting works to a victim's home referring agencies should ensure that only relevant information is provided to the Council e.g. Name, Address and specification of works to be carried out. No other details are required.

Each application should be based on its merits and a flexible approach will be adopted.

Agencies should maintain appropriate up to date records of victims of domestic violence and referrals to the Sanctuary Scheme, including the specification and cost of work, to enable an analysis of the effectiveness of the Sanctuary Scheme to be made.

The administration of the Sanctuary scheme in the private sector will be carried out by the Home Improvement Agency Care & Repair through the Devon-Wide Home Improvement Agency Contract.

PSH A2

1.0 Loans, Equity Release etc

Other forms of financial assistance not directly given by the Council will play a major part in improving housing standards and availability of housing. It will reinforce the message that homeowners have ultimate responsibility for maintaining their properties.

The Council will not directly provide loans or equity release funding but will consider suitable schemes as and when they become available in partnership with other Local Authorities and agencies. Initially all appropriate enquiries will be directed to Independent Financial Advisory services for advice on options to fund their own home repairs utilising existing financial lending markets. However, there is recognition that some vulnerable people particularly the very elderly, living on their own, have very few support mechanisms in place and need extra help and guidance.

The council in partnership with other Devon Authorities is researching the Wessex Reinvestment Trust who have established a Loan/Equity Release Scheme in Somerset, Bristol and North Devon. The scheme provides suitable loan/equity release for elderly and vulnerable home owners to carry out repairs and improvements to their properties to enable them to remain in their own homes.

Wessex reinvestment trust scheme

If suitable start – up funding is made available from the bid submission for 2009 – 10 the following policy will be implemented.

All enquiries for Home Stay Grants will be passed to WRT scheme to be assessed for a loan product and only those who are assessed as being unable to qualify for a loan will be considered for a straightforward grant. This will mean that the Council will be assisting only the most vulnerable people within the district.

The loan scheme commitment will mean that the Council will be required to make a substantial initial contribution to WRT to set up a loan scheme fund and then a percentage fee for each loan administered.

This scheme will allow the Council to increase the size of assistance towards renovation and repair of properties.

The scheme will also show a commitment to increasing private sector funding leverage and recycling of funds, which has only been limited in its success in the past.

It will allow greater flexibility in the products provided by the Council which means that those schemes presently detailed as EDDC **providing grant assistance** will be amended to include access to loan finance via Wessex Reinvestment Trust.

1.5 Lodger Scheme

To reduce the number of people accessing the Housing Waiting List and to reduce the under occupation of large properties.

This scheme aims to provide grant assistance towards the provision of amenities and small scale conversion work to enable an owner occupier to provide suitable lodging accommodation.

The property must be Owner Occupied and have sufficient accommodation to provide a bed/living room with whb and hot and cold water, and access to a suitably sized bath/shower and WC and access to Kitchen facilities.

Grant assistance may be applied for to provide:-

- a) WHB, with hot and cold water and suitable drainage within the bedroom to be available for a lodger
- b) Small scale conversion work to provide a suitable room to be used for a lodger.

The property will be inspected prior to any grant provision being made available to ensure that the property is in good repair and suitably insulated and heated and there is sufficient accommodation available for both a lodger and the present occupiers.

A report with a schedule of works which may attract grant assistance will be provided. Prior to grant approval the applicant must seek planning and building regulation approval.

An application form will be required to be completed and approved before works are commenced.

Two estimates for the work as stated in the schedule/list will be required as part of the estimate.

A land registry search will be carried out at an appropriate cost to identify ownership of the property prior to approval of the grant - this amount will be deducted from the grant amount. The maximum amount of grant assistance that will be available is £2,000 and this will be placed as a charge on the property and will be refundable on the sale of the property or if the property stops providing lodging accommodation within 5 years.

The budget will be available for 5 properties per annum and will be on a first come first served basis only. A waiting list will be compiled.

The administration of the grant scheme will be offered to the Home Improvement Agency Care & Repair through the Devon-Wide Home Improvement Agency Contract, with the initial survey carried out by the Private Sector Housing Team.

1.11 HMO energy efficiency and heating scheme

To provide suitable insulation and heating systems in HMO's where there is an identified Category 1 Hazard (Excess Cold and/or Damp and Mould)

Provision of grant/loan assistance to privately rented HMO's.

The property must be inspected under the HHSRS and a report submitted identifying Category 1 and 2 Hazards.

The Category 1 Hazards must be reported to the landlord and if they are Excess Cold and/or Damp and Mould grant assistance may be considered towards the provision of Loft Insulation, Cavity Wall insulation, draught proofing and adequate affordable heating.

An application for grant assistance will be required to be completed by the landlord and a schedule of works will be provided following the HHSRS inspection. All works will be required to be completed whether the owner applies for grant assistance only or for the grant/loan package.

The maximum amount of grant assistance that will be available will be £1,000 with a loan provision of £4,000 which will be repayable over 5 years.

The Local Authorities enforcement function regarding Category 1 Hazards will not be compromised by the offer of this grant assistance.

PSH A3

1.2 Living over the shops Scheme (LOTS)

Provide a grant of up to £10,000 towards the conversion following planning approval and building regulation consent of accommodation over commercial premises.

The grant to assist towards the provision of living accommodation in the major towns within East Devon.

Initial project to consider five £10,000 schemes.

Project to be worked up through the Exeter Empty Homes service and a suitable RSL and EDDC Housing Services

The living accommodation which is made available must be initially offered to suitable people from the Housing Register through the Choice based lettings scheme.

The grant to be used for conversion costs and will be payable on successful completion of the scheme.

A refundable charge will be placed on the property for 5 years, and reclaimed if the property is sold or is not occupied.

PSH A4

1.8 Private Landlords Energy Efficiency Action Grant (PLEA) and enhanced heating scheme

A grant of £1,000 be made towards the cost of providing insulation and gas fired central heating in privately rented properties where there is presently no fixed heating or the heating provided is identified as being insufficient and the accommodation is assessed as being Category 1 Excess Cold.

The property must be rented and occupied by either families on benefits or elderly people on benefits, where Warm Front Heating grant is not applicable.

The property must also have Loft and cavity wall insulation (as appropriate) up to the maximum level. (All of which should be available through Warm Front for tenants to apply for).

**Properties with single glazing will be considered for a further £500 grant towards the provision of double glazed units.

*** Properties with inadequate cavity wall space to insulate or have solid walls a further £500 grant towards the provision of alternative insulation will be considered.

1.9 Warm Up Warm Zone East Devon

To run in conjunction with the Warm Zone scheme, working with WCEA (Devon EEAC). A grant available to Owner Occupiers and tenants 60 yrs + or household income below £18,000, within specific Warm Zone areas. Initially to be offered in the Exmouth area.

Maximum of (£100 - £400) or 50% whichever is less to provide loft insulation and cavity wall insulation

