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1. Foreword

I am pleased to introduce Warrington’s Housing Strategy for 2008 to 2013. The purpose of the strategy is to provide an assessment of the housing needs of the Borough, to identify the resources available to meet these needs and to evaluate the priorities which provide the most cost effective solution. It also provides the framework for the direction of action by the Council and other agencies in addressing local housing problems. However, we also recognise the wider corporate planning context within which the strategy plays a key role in contributing to the pledges of the Community Plan. Our overall vision is to achieve sustainable communities by ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations. We have to consider how to balance and integrate the sometimes potentially conflicting economic, social and environmental impacts on our community.

So this strategy does not confine itself merely to the provision of housing, but also with how housing policies can improve the local environment and quality of life for the benefit of all residents. We recognise that housing professionals need to work with other colleagues, for example in the alleviation of crime, poverty, health inequalities and to input into economic development and transport policies and the planning and provision of recreation.

The Council is not complacent and recognises the significant challenges to be met over the next few years. It is only through our partnerships that we can successfully achieve our priority actions and ensure that resources are used where they can have maximum impact. Our partnerships with Registered Social Landlords continue to get stronger. We are also committed to operating within the regional and sub regional framework, which is continuously being developed in the North West.

I hope you will find this document an interesting and informative read. As part of our ongoing process of consultation I would welcome any comments that you may have on the Housing Strategy.
2. Summary

Significant expansion and change has been a feature of life in Warrington over the past forty years during which time the population has increased by 32%. The resident population in Warrington is estimated at 194,711 (mid year 2005) ranking it as the 106th largest local authority and the 17th largest unitary authority in England and Wales.

Warrington was designated a ‘New Town’ in 1968 which led to a rapid, planned expansion in the number of residents, homes and jobs accommodating migration from Liverpool and Manchester.

Warrington’s central position within the Manchester and Merseyside corridor provides an excellent location for housing, business and leisure. This position at the heart of one of the busiest transport systems in Europe is key to the economic prosperity developed through the planned expansion of Warrington during the 1970’s and 1980’s which established new housing and commercial areas at the periphery of the town. Warrington has replaced many of its traditional industries with knowledge, high technology and service based businesses.

Whilst the buoyancy of the local economy means that overall unemployment is relatively low there are extremes of wealth and poverty co-existing within the Borough. There are 34 areas ranked within the 20% most affluent nationally. In contrast there are 19 areas ranked within the 20% most deprived nationally. Of these 10 areas were ranked within the 10% most deprived and all but one is located in Warrington’s six central urban wards. These areas require a comprehensive regeneration package that includes investment in housing, improvement in health, education, provision of facilities, enhanced transport links and to benefit from job opportunities.

In terms of housing Warrington is a popular high demand area with a substantial need for affordable housing. With the increase in house prices over the last few years the outer areas such as Lymm and Appleton have become unaffordable, particularly for first time buyers. Even the central areas of Warrington have become less affordable combined with the need for regeneration and investment in the housing stock.

The key aims of the Housing Strategy are to increase the supply of affordable housing, improve housing conditions and develop sustainable communities.

Good quality affordable housing is needed to attract and retain workers of all skill levels to improve social and economic inclusion. At the same time it is important that new homes are built to a high standard that provides environmentally sustainable materials that minimises the use of energy and its impact on the climate.

The provision of more good quality affordable housing and the regeneration of existing housing is critical to the economic development of the Borough and Warrington’s contribution to the wider economy of the region.

Key Housing Priorities
In producing the Housing Strategy 5 key strategic housing priorities have been developed which can be summarised as follows:

**HOUSING PRIORITY 1:**
To provide decent, sustainable and affordable homes in places where people want to live

**Reason for this priority:**
- Annual shortfall of affordable housing of 419 units
- Over 11,000 households on the Council’s housing waiting list which has increased from 1,835 in 2002
- Private sector stock condition survey in 2002 identified almost 18,000 non-decent dwellings occupied by people aged over 60
- Maintaining decent homes for the Council’s housing stock after 2010

**Actions:**
- Provide more affordable housing and increase the choice of housing within the Borough
- Reduce the number of long term vacant private sector properties
- Improve the energy efficiency of homes and reduce fuel poverty
- Identify and reduce the level of non-decency in the private sector through a stock condition survey
- Review the options for the long term future of the Council’s housing stock
### HOUSING PRIORITY 2:

**To help people live at home, improve their independence, health and quality of life**

#### Reason for this priority:
- Ageing population with people aged 65 and over forecast to increase by 38% by 2021
- 316 households accepted as homeless in 2006/07
- Increasing demand to adapt people’s homes
- One third of enquiries at the Housing Advice Centre are a monetary or debt related problem
- Established link between poor quality housing and poor health e.g. cold and damp housing can contribute to respiratory disease, heart attacks and strokes

#### Actions:
- Develop proposals to meet the needs of an ageing population
- Prevent people from becoming homeless
- Reduce the impact of poor housing on health
- Reduce health problems arising through housing related problems such as anxiety about debt or eviction

### HOUSING PRIORITY 3:

**To promote the case for housing investment to sustain a balanced housing market in Warrington**

#### Reason for this priority:
- Reduction in housing funding over the last few years from the Regional Housing Board
- No Housing Corporation funding from 2003 to 2005 to provide new affordable housing
- The end of additional funding in March 2008 to meet the Council’s decent homes programme

#### Actions:
- Generate more housing investment in Warrington
- Increase the provision of new affordable housing
- Provide funding to tackle the regeneration of the deprived central wards
- Encourage a thriving and healthy private rented sector

### HOUSING PRIORITY 4:

**To work with communities and partners to improve the social and economic well being of people living in Warrington**

#### Reason for this priority:
- 19 areas ranked within the 20% most deprived nationally
- Pockets of high unemployment
- Crime linked to drug and alcohol abuse
- Anti-social behaviour

#### Actions:
- Narrow the gap of deprivation
- Provide job opportunities
- Reduce drug and alcohol abuse
- Reduce anti-social behaviour and tackle bad behaviour

### HOUSING PRIORITY 5:

**To ensure equality of access to housing services**

#### Reason for this priority:
- Increase in the black and ethnic minority population to 3.87%
- Increase in the number of migrants from the European Union
- Almost 4,000 people receiving housing related support through the Supporting People programme

#### Actions:
- Ensure housing meets the needs of our diverse communities
- Improve access to housing services
- Improve access to advice and support
3. National & Regional Context

National Perspective
In February, 2003 the Government published “Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future” which sets out the long term action plan for delivering sustainable communities by the following:

- The regeneration of deprived estates
- Increasing housing supply in growth areas
- Providing more affordable housing for low income households and key workers
- Addressing low demand and abandonment
- Bringing Council homes up to a decent standard
- Introducing a regional approach to housing policy

Outlined below are a number of examples of how the Council has responded to the Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future:

- Prioritised Council housing investment on meeting the decent homes standard
- Targeted the regeneration of deprived estates for non-decent homes investment
- Provision of affordable housing via the planning system
- Demolition and redevelopment of low demand properties
- Implementation of a range of initiatives such as furnished lets and tenancy support workers to address low demand and abandonment

Regional Perspective
During the 1970’s and 1980’s Warrington, in accordance with its designation as a New Town, played a significant role in the North West to accommodate “overspill” population from the conurbations and natural population growth by voluntary migration.

In 2003 the government announced the 9 Market Renewal Pathfinders to deal with low demand and abandonment in the North. Four of the Pathfinders were in the North West:

- East Lancashire: Blackburn, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle and Rossendale
- Manchester and Salford
- Merseyside: Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral
- Oldham and Rochdale

In order to stimulate investment in Liverpool and Manchester housing development was constrained in areas such as Warrington. Within this context the Secretary of State has published proposed changes to Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) which has given Warrington a low growth option. An annual rate of housing provision of 380 per year is proposed for Warrington, applying up to 2016 or until changed through a review of RPG.
The housing market has changed since 2003 with large increases in house prices and the demand for social housing. Most local authorities now need to provide more affordable housing and this is recognised by the government with the publication of the Housing Green Paper.

In August 2007 the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) invited expressions of interest from local authorities wishing to bid for Growth Point status as foreshadowed in the Housing Green paper. Along with many other North West authorities the Council submitted an expression of interest in October 2007. In response CLG suggested that there may be benefits in Warrington pursuing a combined bid with Halton and St Helens. On the 9th January 2008 the 3 authorities agreed to pursue a tripartite proposal in the next stage of the bidding process. A successful bid could be expected to bring in additional resources to open up new development opportunities and expand our affordable housing programme. Appendix 1 shows a copy of the map outlining the key elements of the Council’s bid.

The North West Regional Housing Strategy has identified 4 regional priorities which are as follows:

- Urban renaissance and dealing with changing demand
- Providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities
- Delivering decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods
- Meeting the region’s needs for specialist and supported housing

The issue of changing or low demand is the only regional priority that does not apply to Warrington.

Warrington’s central location within the Manchester and Merseyside corridor has led it to be included in both the Manchester and Liverpool City Region areas. As a result Warrington has been included in both city regions strategic housing market assessments and sub regional housing strategies.

In the Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy the 3 functional housing markets have been identified as follows:

- **Northern Housing Market Area**
  Liverpool, Sefton, Wirral, Knowsley and West Lancashire

- **Southern Housing Market Area**
  Chester, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Wrexham, Flintshire and Vale Royal

- **Eastern Housing Market Area**
  Warrington, Halton and St Helens

Both city regions have concluded that the housing market is not fit for purpose and needs to address the
imbalance between the existing housing supply and the new demand which will be generated by economic growth. Despite its diversity the overall housing offer of the City Regions does not provide the type and quality of choice which the new economy will demand. In addition affordability is a major issue and could act as a constraint on economic growth.

The Omega development located in Warrington is a key regional economic site which will contribute to the delivery of the Northern Way Growth Strategy. Additional housing, particularly affordable housing, will be required to support economic growth.

4. Corporate Context

Sustainable Community Strategy
Warrington Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership covering the Borough of Warrington. Working together with local people and organisations the Partnership has developed a shared vision which states that:

Over the next 10 to 15 years, Warrington will increasingly be a place where communities enjoy a sense of social, economic, physical and spiritual wellbeing; they are cohesive and welcome diversity

The Council’s Planning Framework
The Council's planning framework has 5 levels which are as follows:

i) Sustainable Community Strategy
This is the high level statement of the Warrington Partnership’s aims, aspirations and priorities for the Borough. It shows how the Council and its partners intend to develop the Borough over the medium to longer term, and the principles and values that we wish to demonstrate.

ii) The Corporate Plan
This plan translates the Community Strategy into a statement of priorities for action for the Council, identifying the Council-wide key tasks.

iii) The Directorate Plans
These plans are prepared across a group of front-line services, and reflect the priorities that need to be addressed by each directorate for the forthcoming year either as contributions to corporate improvement outcomes or in delivering the service priorities of the directorate. They give a more detailed work programme for Council staff to guide their efforts in the year ahead.

iv) Service Plans
These are prepared for each Council service, both front-line and support, and contain the more detailed work programmes and service targets.

v) Team/Individual Plans
These are prepared annually as part of the Performance, Review & Development scheme process to assign individual accountability for action.

The Council’s Vision for the Borough
“To make Warrington an outstanding town in the North West with opportunities for all.”

Council’s Ambition & Improvement Outcomes
The Council has agreed a number of corporate ambitions and improvement outcomes which it is targeting and guides our work. These have been developed by Members through a series of workshops and following consultation with a wide range of partner organisations and the people of Warrington. These are summarised in the Council’s Corporate Plan as follows:
**Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan**

There is a close interrelationship between the Community Plan, the Council’s ambitions and strategies such as the Capital Strategy, Asset Management Plan, Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan. The priorities within the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan reflect those outlined in the Community Plan and the Council’s ambitions. For example, a key priority for the Community Plan and one of the Council’s targets is to ensure that the Council’s housing stock meets the Government’s Decent Homes standard. The Asset Management Plan identifies the number of non-decent homes and this feeds into the Capital Strategy that allocates the level of resources for investment.
5. Warrington: The Local Context

Census 2001
The main findings from the 2001 Census are as follows:

- Increase in population by 4.36% since 1991 which compares with an increase of 4.31% in England & Wales and less than 1% in the North West
- The largest decrease in population between 1991 and 2001 Census has been in the number of 16 to 24 year olds, which have decreased by nearly 19%.
- The largest increase has been in the number of over 85 year olds which have increased by over 36%.
- Between 1991 and 2001 the number of households that are owner occupied has increased by 13.4%
- The most significant change is in the private rented sector in which the number of households privately renting has increased by nearly 65% from 1991 to 2001.

Population Forecasts
Population forecasts for 2005 to 2021 underline the demographic trends such as an ageing population.

- Number of children aged 0 to 15 will decrease by 14%
- Number of adults aged 16 to 44 will decrease by 15%
- Number of adults aged 45 to 65 will increase by 12%
- Number of older people aged 65 and over will increase by 38%
- Number of households is forecast to increase from 81,460 in 2005 to 89,985 by 2021, an increase of 10.47%
- Average household size is expected to fall from 2.39 persons in 2005 to 2.16 persons by 2021, a decrease of 9.44%


Strategic Housing Market Assessment
In December 2006 the Council commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), in accordance with the requirements of national planning guidance. The SHMA is designed to give an understanding of the way the local housing market works in a sub-regional context. In doing so, the SHMA updates the 2002 Housing Needs Study and identifies measures to achieve a “balanced housing market”, in which new supply is tailored to rectify any imbalance or shortfall in particular types of accommodation across all housing tenures.

- 750 households per annum (net) are estimated to be in housing need of which 419 are in need of affordable housing
- Under-occupation affects 40.6% of all households and overcrowding occurs in 1.7% of households
- 20.1% of households have one or more members within an identified special needs group
- 58.1% of special needs households included members with a medical condition, whilst 48% included members who are physically disabled.
- 18.1% included members with a mental health problem and 10.4% a learning disability
- 1.6% of households with a mortgage receive income support, whilst 13.6 % of owner-occupiers with a mortgage are paying more for their housing than is recommended in government guidance.
- 27.1% of private rented households are in receipt of housing benefit, with a further 28.2% paying more than is recommended in guidance
- 51% of households in the affordable (social rented) sector are receiving housing benefit
House Prices
Land Registry Property Reports show that between the 4th quarter of 2001 and 4th quarter of 2006 average property prices for Warrington rose by 83.7%, which compares with an increase of 74.7% for England & Wales, and 95.8% for the North West. However, the table at Appendix 1 shows that average house prices in Warrington are generally higher than the North West average.

The SHMA has identified distinct patterns in house prices across the Borough, with postcode areas south of the Manchester Ship Canal boasting the most expensive properties, and postcodes for the centre of the town having the cheapest. The North East of the borough also displays higher than average property prices.

Appendix 3 illustrates the changes over the last few years on house prices.

Affordability problems (measured as the ratio of lower quartile house prices to earnings) have risen sharply since 1997. For Warrington the affordability has worsened by 140% with the ratio reaching nearly 8 times the income in 2006.

Incomes and Affordability
A questionnaire survey undertaken as part of the SHMA reveals that the average annual income of first-time buyer households £38,540 which is higher than the average income for the housing market area of £30,774. Both of these figures are considerably higher than the figures for mean average workplace earnings in Warrington published by the Office for National Statistics, which currently stands at £23,811. This is because the survey takes into account all household income, rather than the earnings of the household head.

The survey also indicated that first-time buyer households required average savings of about £22,500 and that 23.4% of first-time buyers are spending a higher proportion of their income than is recommended in the Department of Communities and Local Government guidance. The financial situation of successful first-time buyers shows that households have to be on a relatively high income before they can access homeownership, and implies that the number of first-time buyers in Warrington is being restricted by the cost of housing.

10.7% of all existing younger households (1,603 households) would like to become homeowners, but their average annual income is £23,248 with average savings of £1,517, which are both below the average across Warrington. The financial capacity of successful first-time buyers is £138,120 compared with £71,261 for aspiring first-time buyers (note: financial capacity = household income x 3 + savings).

The survey data also reveals that 4,576 concealed younger households are likely to form within the next two years. 2,856 of these households would like to become homeowners during that time, however only 12.2% of these households would be able to buy at current prices as the average annual income of this group is just £14,802.

Housing Waiting List and Lettings
The Council’s housing waiting list has increased from 1,835 in 2002 to 11,320 in February 2008. This increase appears to be due to a combination of a number of factors relating to an increase in house prices and a greater awareness or demand for social housing with the introduction of choice based lettings.

In contrast the number of lettings made by the Council illustrates almost a year on year reduction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Type</th>
<th>2003/04</th>
<th>2004/05</th>
<th>2005/06</th>
<th>2006/07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungalow</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maisonette</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered flat</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,311</td>
<td>1,077</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>1,112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The reduction in lettings is also likely to be due to a combination of factors including the loss of housing stock through the Right to Buy (RTB) scheme, the elderly living longer, demolition of low demand stock, the reduction in abandoned properties through a range of initiatives such as tenancy support workers. In addition the introduction of choice based lettings has increased the stability of tenancies and reduced voids because applicants have chosen the property they wish to live in.

**Council Property Sales Under The Right to Buy Scheme**

Whereas the number of sales under the RTB scheme dramatically increased throughout the period 2000/04, there is now an evident downward trend. From a high of 463 sales in 2003/04, there were only 126 sales in 2005/06 and 87 sales in 2006/07. This slowing down in RTB sales is expected to continue for the foreseeable future as house prices and the cost of borrowing continue to rise. Between April 1999 and the end of March 2007 the Council has lost a total of 1,886 properties under the RTB scheme. The table below outlines the number of sales through the RTB scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Acceptances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>1,511</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>1,933</td>
<td>1,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>1,824</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From April 2005 onwards the Council started to separate applications into housing advice and homelessness casework as part of a continued approach to be more pro-active in preventing homelessness. Housing advice staff help customers by trying to prevent homelessness or by assisting them to obtain accommodation rather than presenting themselves as homeless.

In 2005/06 there were 582 housing advices cases and 1,061 in 2006/07. In addition in 2005/06 there were 31 prevention cases which increased to 86 in 2006/07 and the target for 2007/08 is 181.

**Private Sector Empty Properties**

For the purposes of this strategy an empty home is defined as a property which has remained vacant for more than 6 months. In April 2007 1,309 dwellings or 1.8% of the housing stock had been vacant for more than 6 months. This has increased from 967 or 1.37% in 2006.

**Homelessness**

The Homelessness Act 2002 extended homelessness duties and, consistent with the national picture, the number of people presenting as homeless has increased. Non violent relationship breakdown is one of the main causes of homelessness in the UK and Warrington reflects this national trend. Anyone under 18 years, who has children or is “vulnerable” can claim priority need for housing under the homelessness legislation. The table below outlines the number of statutory homelessness acceptances over the last few years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>No. of Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/02</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000/01</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999/2000</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From April 2005 onwards the Council started to separate applications into housing advice and homelessness casework as part of a continued approach to be more pro-active in preventing homelessness. Housing advice staff help customers by trying to prevent homelessness or by assisting them to obtain accommodation rather than presenting themselves as homeless.

**Index of Multiple Deprivation**

Warrington ranks between 64th and 134th out of 354 local authorities according to the six district summary measures of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004. The IMD 2000 was based on electoral wards whilst the IMD for 2004 is based on Super Output Areas (SOA) which are a statistical geography based on the 2001 Census data output areas. Warrington
has 23 SOA’s ranked within the 20% most deprived nationally of which 16 SOA’s are ranked within the 10% most deprived nationally. These SOA’s are located within the wards of:

- Bewsey and Whitecross
- Birchwood
- Fairfield and Howley
- Latchford East
- Orford
- Poplars and Hulme
- Poulton North

**Economic Market and Unemployment**

The Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) is an annual survey of employers undertaken by the Office for National Statistics. The ABI results for 2005 show that there were 110,000 employee jobs located within the Borough. 72.2% of these jobs were full time compared to 68% nationally. There has been a 2.4% increase in the number of full time jobs over the 12 months between 2004 and 2005 compared to 1.7% nationally.

In March 2007 there were 2,409 claimants on unemployment related benefits. The Claimant Count Rate in Warrington was 2% lower than the regional average of 2.8% and the national average of 2.6%.

The additional allocation of resources was based on a 10% stock condition survey carried out by consultants FPD Savills in 1999 and in April 2001 there were 4,400 non-decent homes.

As at the 1st April 2006 the housing stock was 8,954 and 95% (8,575) stock condition surveys have been completed by Golden Gates Housing (GGH) and their capital partners. The remaining 379 properties (5%) have not been surveyed due to problems in gaining access. In May 2006 the stock condition information was independently validated to ensure its accuracy. This has confirmed that more non-decent homes had been identified than originally planned for which equated to an extra 2,574 (excluding the 397 properties not surveyed). These figures do include 505 properties which have been surveyed and tenants have either refused to have all or part of the work carried out.

**Private Sector Stock Condition Survey**

There are significantly marked differences between the national figures in terms of age and building type profiles and those within Warrington. At the national level problems of dwelling disrepair and unfitness are associated with a range of issues. Of all the physical factors the age of stock has the strongest association with dwellings in poor condition. In general the stock in Warrington is more modern, which normally leads to fewer problems of disrepair and unfitness.

The Council commissioned consultants in 2002 to undertake a stock condition survey of owner occupied, Housing Association and the private rented stock. Unfit dwellings in Warrington occur at a rate of 3% which is below the national figure of 7% determined by the English House Condition Survey in 1996. Multiple unfitness occurs at a lower rate than the national average, which suggests that most dwellings that are unfit are likely to suffer from difficult problems.
The most frequently occurring unfit building type is the terrace. However, the terrace type only constitutes 26% of the stock, which reflects the large proportion of unfitness in this type of dwelling.

The stock survey indicated that borderline unfitness is predominant within the 1944 to 1964 age group and this age group will contribute heavily to future unfitness. The overall findings indicate that 5,146 dwellings are likely to become unfit in the next 5 years.

With regard to non-decent homes by vulnerable groups the stock survey identified the following:

- 4,118 non decent dwellings occupied by a person with a disability
- 13,975 non decent dwellings occupied by people with an income of less than £200 per week
- 17,784 non decent dwellings occupied by people over the age of 60

In April 2006 the Fitness Standard was replaced by the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS). There is no direct comparison between the 2 standards and future stock condition surveys will need to reflect the HHSRS.

Disabled Facilities Grants
A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a local authority grant to help towards the costs of adapting a person’s home to enable them to continue to live there. A grant is paid when the Council considers that changes are necessary to meet a person’s needs and that the work is reasonable and practical.

Under the provisions of this policy DFG Safe and Secure Grants were introduced in 2004 to “fast track” stair lift applications for clients on qualifying benefits. The grant is discretionary up to £5,000 and available to applicants in receipt of one of the following benefits: Income Support, Council Tax Benefit, Income based Job Seeker’s Allowance, Working Tax Credit, Disabled Person’s Tax Credit (or equivalent) and Housing Benefit. This grant is not available to Council tenants.

Over the last few years the Council has provided the following grants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DFG</th>
<th>DFG Safe &amp; Secure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>115*</td>
<td>20*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* grants up to 31/1/08

Supporting People
Supporting People is a national programme which in Warrington involves Warrington Borough Council, Warrington Primary Care Trust, The National Probation Service (Cheshire), Service Providers and Service Users. The Supporting People programme focuses on the planning, commissioning and monitoring of housing related support services. The aim of Supporting People is to provide support to help develop a person’s capacity to live independently or sustain their capacity to do so.

At the time the Supporting People Strategy was produced the service commissioned 3,945 units which were as follows:

- Older people and frail elderly 3,254
- Learning disability 187
- Mental health 173
- Generic 128
- Single homeless 74
- Young people 63
- Domestic violence 25
- Homeless families 20
- Physical or sensory disability 17
- Rough sleeper 12

The main focus for the Supporting People programme over the last few years has been about carrying out service reviews, identifying needs,
setting out the future direction for investment and securing the long term future of the programme within the financial resources available.

**Neighbourhoods – Stronger Together**
The Safer and Stronger Community Fund has been introduced for all Councils to help neighbourhoods tackle issues such as crime, anti-social behaviour and drugs misuse. It is also aimed at empowering communities, improving skills and supporting learning opportunities for adults so residents can play a more active part in community life and influence what happens in their area.

Stronger Together in Warrington aims to improve the quality of life in 5 neighbourhoods within the Borough which are as follows:

- Bewsey
- Dallam
- Greater Blackbrook
- Longford and Orford
- Grasmere & Greenwood

The government has allocated £1.6 million over 4 years to Warrington under the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund’s Neighbourhood element. The focus of activity for the Neighbourhood Involvement team will be on raising levels of engagement across the neighbourhoods, extensive consultation to identify the priorities and aspirations residents have for their individual communities. Then working with partners to shape, co-ordinate and refocus service delivery to meet these priorities. This Neighbourhood Management pilot project will build more engaged communities, identify residents able to assist in the targeting of resources thus improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

**Black & Ethnic Minorities (BME)**
A Consultation Draft BME Housing Strategy was published in May 2006 and circulated to known representatives of local BME communities and other stakeholders. The purpose of this consultation exercise was to identify the housing needs and aspirations of the BME communities, gaps in provision and provide a focus for improving access to services.

The Draft Strategy sought to identify the housing circumstances of BME groups drawing upon 2001 Census data and the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2002, and compared the situation in Warrington with national trends. This exercise indicated that many national trends are not reflected in Warrington, and that housing issues are not a major concern for the local BME population. Key findings from the analysis showed that:

- The total BME population in 2001 was 3.87%. The largest ethnic minority groups are White Irish and White Other, with the Asian community making up the largest non-white group and the Black community being the smallest
- BME households are widely distributed throughout the Borough
- The majority of BME households are homeowners and all of Warrington’s BME groups show higher rates of home ownership than are found nationally
- Only 3.2% live in social rented stock with Black and Asian people accounting for 0.1% and 0.4% respectively
- 35% of the local BME population live in areas ranked nationally as being within the 20% most deprived, including only 17.5% from non-white groups
- Warrington’s BME households are generally less likely to include someone with a long term limiting illness than White British households, but are more likely to experience overcrowding

In an effort to update these findings a BME Housing Needs questionnaire was issued, but the widespread distribution of BME groups throughout Warrington made direct engagement extremely difficult. The most practical way to distribute the questionnaires was via established BME stakeholder groups.

In total 356 questionnaires were issued but only 29 completed questionnaires were returned. This limited response means that the results are not sufficiently robust or representative across the whole spectrum of Warrington’s BME communities to inform future policy.

The consultants appointed to undertake the SHMA were, therefore, asked to include a specific section on BME housing needs and aspirations. The ethnic origin categories used in the survey forms were consistent with those used in the 2001 Census, but
any household describing themselves as ‘White Irish’ or ‘White Other’ were included in the White population, with the remaining BME households grouped as Non-White households. Results were weighted to be representative of the population in 2006. The key findings indicate that:

- Only 1.6% of households are non-white
- Non-white households have a larger average household size with an average of 3 persons compared to 2.39 in white households
- 71% of non-white households are owner-occupiers, compared with 79% of white households
- No non-white households in the sample were renting from the Council, although there is a larger proportion renting from a social landlord when compared with white households, with a higher proportion of non-white households renting privately (18.1% compared with 4.8%)
- White households are more likely to contain pensioners than non-white households
- Non-white households have significantly higher average incomes than white households (£41,500 per annum compared to £30,341) but white households have higher average savings (£19,825 compared to £12,873)
- Non-White households are less likely to be living in unsuitable housing: 98.7% of all households living in unsuitable housing are white

Source: Fordham Research Warrington HMA 2007

The analysis of Census and SHMA data tends to support the view that Warrington’s BME population is untypical of national and regional trends in that it is predominantly characterised by owner-occupiers in the private housing sector, boasts relatively high levels of income and economic activity, and is not concentrated in areas of poor housing. However, anecdotal evidence gathered in interviews with stakeholder groups does indicate a wish for more accessible information about the range of housing services provided by the Council.

The future direction for the BME Housing Strategy will, therefore, be concentrated upon promoting access to the Council’s housing services by:

- Monitoring take up amongst BME groups
- Ongoing engagement with BME stakeholders
- Ensuring staff are properly trained to promote equal opportunity and prevent discrimination in the delivery of housing services

Energy Efficiency

Efficiency of the heating and the effectiveness of the insulation in a dwelling is a key element of the Decent Homes Standard. The Private Sector Stock Condition survey identified 39,101 dwellings that would fail to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

In 2007 an evaluation carried out under the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) has rated the Council’s housing stock as an average 71. Under the Decent Homes standard Golden Gates Housing have provided central heating insulation and upgrades to over 300 properties.

On the 7th September 2007 the Council formally opened the “Eco Hut”. Based in the town centre the “Eco Hut” provides domestic energy efficiency advice to all residents within the Borough and particularly targeting those on low incomes. Wealthier residents are also encouraged to install energy efficiency measures to help reduce their carbon footprint. The Eco-Hut is accredited under the Energy Savings Trust’s Domestic Energy Efficiency Advice code of practice.

Respect and Anti-Social Behaviour

Respect is a strategy aimed at tackling bad behaviour, nurturing good behaviour and in the process create a modern culture of respect. This is about central government, local agencies, local communities and ultimately every person working together to build a society in which we can respect one another, where anti-social behaviour is rare and tackled effectively so that communities can live in peace together.

On the 17th August 2006 the Respect Standard for Housing Management was launched. This outlined the core elements essential to delivering an effective response to anti-social behaviour for landlords.
Golden Gates Housing has signed up to the standards which are as follows:

- Accountability, leadership and commitment
- Empowering and reassuring residents
- Tailored services for residents and provision of support for victims and witnesses
- Protecting communities through swift enforcement
- Support to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour

Gypsy and Travellers
In accordance with the requirements of the Housing Act 2004, local authorities have been preparing to develop and implement strategies to respond to the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities living in their areas as part of their wider housing strategies and the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS).

Warrington has been addressing the issue as part of a wider sub-regional partnership that includes the County, District and Unitary authorities of Cheshire, and St Helens. The partnership jointly commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment in September 2006 and the findings were released on the 2nd July 2007.

The headline findings of the assessment are that:

- There is a shortage of suitable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.
- There is a need for between 25 and 47 transit pitches over the same period across the whole of the partnership area
- There is a need for an extra 79 to 112 permanent residential pitches over the ten year period 2006 to 2016 distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>To 2011</th>
<th>To 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chester</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congleton</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crewe and Nantwich</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellesmere Port and Neston</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halton</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macclesfield</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helens</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vale Royal</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that local authority boundaries generally have little meaning to the Gypsy and Traveller population a regional and sub-regional approach to providing accommodation is being developed.

The assessment includes recommendations for member authorities to ensure that principles of equality in relation to Gypsies and Travellers are embedded in to the wide range of services provided. In particular this includes:

- Housing policies
- Homeless policies
- Harassment
- Communication and engagement
- Statement of community involvement
- Site management
- Housing-related support
- Choice based lettings
- Planning policies

Authorities are urged to be sensitive to the different cultural and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers who may present as homeless and those who may require local authority accommodation.

Migrant Workers
On 1st May 2004 ten countries joined the European Union (EU). Those countries are Cyprus, Malta, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Nationals of Malta and Cyprus have had full free movement rights and rights to work throughout the EU. Prior to enlargement, existing EU member states have had the right to regulate access to their labour markets by nationals from the eight other Central / Eastern European ‘Accession’ countries.

From 1st May 2004, people from the A8 countries have been granted full access to the UK labour market. Migrant workers are obliged to register on the Home Office administered Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) if they are employed in the UK for a month or more. In total there were 447,000 applicants nationally to the WRS between 1st May 2004 and 30th June 2006. This number far exceeded the Government’s forecasts of a net inflow of only 13,000 migrant workers to enter the UK labour market annually from the A8 countries, prompting concerns at national level about the impact of this influx of migrant workers on local services and jobs. This has been countered by an argument that migrant workers are beneficial to the national...
economy, filling unpopular jobs in agriculture, manufacturing or warehousing and in some cases plugging skills gaps.

In this context, a review has been undertaken of the available information on migrant workers in Warrington. The two relevant national sources at a local authority level include registrations to the WRS and for National Insurance (NI) numbers for all non UK nationals.

- Between 1st May 2004 and 30th June 2006 there were 872 migrant workers registering for work with the Home Office from the A8 countries, employed within the Warrington Borough area.
- Between 2002/03 and 2004/05 the number of NI number registrations for all non UK nationals within Warrington rose 26.2% to 530, ranking Warrington lower mid table of North West authorities.
- Golden Gates Housing has identified an increase in the number of tenants accessing the ‘Language Line’ service for Polish over the last twelve months, but still relatively small numbers involved (38 calls / month).

There are concerns as to the accuracy of the WRS as a mechanism for recording the number of migrant workers from the A8 countries employed within the Borough. The figures also do not indicate how many of those migrant workers employed within the Borough actually live here. However, National Insurance number registrations do tend to indicate that the increase in migrant workers of all foreign nationalities over the last two years has been less dramatic within Warrington than is the case for other neighbouring authorities.

Nevertheless, the Council is committed to identifying and addressing service issues relating to migrant workers and has established a working group with voluntary sector partners to produce a Migrant Worker Action Plan. From a housing perspective, only a relatively small number of migrant workers and their families have thus far presented themselves as homeless, or applied to the Golden Gates Housing waiting list. There is a lack of information as to where most vulnerable migrant workers are living, and there are concerns over multiple-occupation of migrant workers living in overcrowded privately rented housing. It is likely that the actual number of migrant workers living in the borough is not reflected in housing applications, as they are not able to claim housing benefits for 12 months after registering on the WRS.

6. Partnership & Consultation

Warrington has a proven track record of consulting and working in partnership with statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations. One example of this is the successful implementation of the Council’s Private Finance Initiative which is a partnership between the Council, Arena Housing Association and Cruden Construction. It is only through consultation and working in partnership that the Council can successfully achieve its priorities and ensure that resources are used where they can have a maximum impact.

An effective tenant participation structure has been developed over the years, which includes a Federation of Tenants & Residents, 31 Tenant & Resident Associations, a Customer Consultative Panel, leaseholder focus group and tenant inspectors. The Council’s approach to consultation and involvement is outlined in Golden Gates Housing’s Tenant Participation Compact (Involvement Agreement) with clear and measurable targets to monitor the outcome of involvement across all services. In addition Golden Gates Housing hold an Annual Tenant & Residents Conference every year.
A Housing Conference was held on the 16th February, 2007 for tenants, residents, partners and stakeholders. This provided an opportunity to discuss the housing issues facing the Borough, identify priorities, influence and feed into the review of the housing strategy. For example, the affordable housing workshop emphasized the importance of funding from the Housing Corporation and working with partners. In response to this a group has been established involving Housing Association partners and the Housing Corporation to consider potential schemes for affordable housing including schemes secured via the planning system known as section 106.

The housing issues and ideas arising from the conference produced a series of potential priorities for action for the Council and its partners. These priorities have been considered and reviewed by the Warrington Partnership and the Warrington Housing Partnership. The first draft of the Housing Strategy has been subject to widespread consultation and amended in the light of comments received.

To engage effectively with residents and landlords the Private Sector Housing service has developed a Customer Contact Programme. This sets out a programme which includes the Private Sector Landlords Forum, surveys and targets for resident and landlord involvement and consultation.

As part of the development and implementation of the Supporting People initiative a forum has been successfully established involving a wide range of statutory, voluntary, charitable and private sector organisations.

Disability Awareness Day
Disability Awareness Day (DAD) is the largest “not for profit” voluntary led disability exhibition in Europe. With over 280 exhibitors from voluntary, statutory, private and business organisations with hundreds of ideas for independent living supported by a fun packed day out for all the family.

DAD 2007 was the 16th annual event and is organised by Warrington Disability Partnership supported by the Council and continues to be a great success with over 25,000 people attending. At the event the Council outlined the various services provided and sought people’s views and comments to feed into the Housing Strategy.
7. Resources

The Housing Strategy seeks to inform the choices and the way that resources targeted for housing are used. The financial resources available for the Council to directly invest or enable other housing organisations to invest in housing within the Borough are as follows:

- **Borrowing Approvals**
  The Council is able to borrow to fund housing investment up to a limit determined by the Government.

- **Capital Receipts**
  Resources from the sale of land or Council properties under the Right to Buy scheme.

- **Major Repairs Allowance (MRA)**
  Funding from the Government, which can only be spent on repairs and improvement to the Council’s housing stock.

- **Disabled Facilities Grant**
  The Government provides a 60% grant towards Disabled Facilities Grants for adaptations to properties for people who are disabled.

- **Private Finance Initiative (PFI)**
  Government funding which can be bid for as part of a partnership between the Council and the private sector to improve existing housing or the provision of new housing.

- **National Affordable Housing Programme**
  Funding provided by the Housing Corporation for Housing Associations to refurbish existing properties or to provide new housing for rent or sale.

- **Affordable Housing via the Planning System**
  Developers are required to provide affordable housing as part of a planning approval to build new housing.

- **Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)**
  Local Authorities are able to bid for additional funding to improve public sector stock to ensure they meet the Decent Homes Standard.

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**Local Area Agreements**

The Local Government White Paper ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’ October 2006 established the arrangements for Local Area Agreements. Local Area Agreements set out the agreed priorities between central government and Warrington to make the Borough a better place to live. The aim is to make spending priorities locally based with a reduction in the number of ring fenced grants provided by central government.

There are 4 “blocks” which are as follows:

- Healthier communities and older people
- Safer and stronger communities
- Economic development and enterprise
- Children and families

The Warrington Partnership establish the spending priorities and this informs the Capital Strategy which determines the level of resources available for housing investment after taking into account the priorities contained within the Council’s Sustainable Community Plan, Asset Management Plan and the various strategies such as the Housing Strategy. A Capital and Asset Management Working Group evaluates the level of resources and considers these against agreed criteria. The overall investment programme is then reviewed and approved by the Corporate Management Board and the Executive Board.

As part of the Council’s Private Finance Initiative a sharing agreement with Arena Housing Association and Cruden Construction was established. This agreement meant that if the 87 properties for sale sold above an agreed price the additional resources would be shared 50:50. This has now been calculated and the Council will receive an additional £467,649 in 2007/08.
When proposals for new housing are considered for planning permission the Council is able to negotiate for the provision of affordable housing. Instead of providing affordable housing as part of a scheme the Council, in certain circumstances, receives a financial contribution to provide affordable housing elsewhere. This is known as a commuted sum and the payment from a developer is often linked to certain stages such as starting to build on site, completion of the first property etc. A review of the commuted sums already received and future projections has been completed and forms part of a feasibility on the provision of affordable housing in partnership with Golden Gates Housing.

Supporting People Programme
At present the funding for Supporting People is paid separately to be administered by the Council. The government has announced a ‘pathfinder project to assess the impact of delivering housing support through a non-ring fenced grant’. This is effectively a piloting process aimed at understanding the impact of removing the Supporting People ring fence and pooling the money with other LAA funding as part of a new Area Based Grant. Following the pathfinder project the government will decide whether the Supporting People programme will end. The earliest point at which this could happen nationally is April 2009.

Next years supporting people grant and the estimated level of future resources are outlined in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>£7,611,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>£7,373,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>£7,004,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>£6,654,511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the challenges facing the Supporting People programme over the next few years is the continuing reduction in funding. In the first year of the Supporting People programme the Council received a grant of just less than £8.3m and by 2010/11 this is projected to reduce to £6.6m.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan
The Council is required to produce a 30 year “Business Plan” by the government which involves and informs tenants, leaseholders, Councillors and other stakeholders. This business plan looks at the long term future of Warrington’s Council housing stock and considers the level of resources available producing a well thought out plan to improve and maintain the housing stock ensuring that the Government’s Decent Homes Standard target is achieved.

Following consultation with tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders the Council established Golden Gates Housing (GGH), an Arms Length Management Organisation, in February 2004 as a vehicle to achieve the decent homes standard. When GGH achieved 2 stars in September 2004 this released £30.4m (subsequently reduced to £30.2m by a government efficiency target) and resulted in a £65m programme to deliver the decent homes standard over 4 years. This means that the decent homes programme is on target to be completed by the end of March 2008 compared to the government target of 2010.

The HRA Business Plan has been reviewed to provide the most up to date information to inform our long term planning. If we continue to invest to the current standard of ongoing maintenance and improvement by 2017/18 the HRA will be in deficit. It is also recognised that there are still a number of unknown factors which could affect the business plan such as job evaluation, review of the housing subsidy system etc. With regard to capital investment there is insufficient funding to ensure that the Council’s housing stock is kept to the decent homes standard. Despite the work that has been undertaken, there will still remain at the end of the programme in March 2008, 517 kitchens and 956 bathrooms to be
renewed. In addition the Council is unable to address the following issues:

- Double glazing
- Environmental improvements
- Off street parking
- Fencing and boundary walls
- Crime prevention measures such as security lighting
- Measures to improve demand such as estate remodelling
- Dealing with other assets such as garages

Last years housing capital programme and projections for future years are outlined in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME</th>
<th>2007/08 £’000</th>
<th>Estimate 2008/09 £’000</th>
<th>Estimate 2009/10 £’000</th>
<th>Estimate 2010/11 £’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Council Housing Programme</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decent Homes Programme</td>
<td>6,737</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Voids</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Maintenance</td>
<td>1,471</td>
<td>2,294</td>
<td>3,905</td>
<td>3,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptations</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered Housing</td>
<td>1,562</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Housing Offices</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock Condition Survey</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,051</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,049</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,275</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,275</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private Sector Housing Programme</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewals Assistance</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Facilities Grants</td>
<td>1,055</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latchford Environmental</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,734</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,600</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,595</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,595</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Housing Capital Programme</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,785</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,649</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,870</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,870</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Priorities for Action

Priorities have to support and are set within the context of the Council’s Community Plan and other strategic spending priorities. As a result the housing strategy is integrated within the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan.

HOUSING PRIORITY 1:
To provide decent, sustainable and affordable homes in places where people want to live

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

House prices have risen more quickly than earnings in Warrington. Lower quartile house prices in 2006 are almost 8 times more than lower quartile earnings. As a result affordability in Warrington has worsened by 140%. In order to increase the provision of affordable housing the priorities for action are as follows:

1. Land Supply
The Council is carrying out a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which will identify the extent of future housing land opportunities within the Borough. This study will provide information about land availability which will then be used by the Council to identify sufficient sites for a 15 year period.

In response to the government’s Housing Green Paper “Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable” a bid has been submitted for Warrington to become a housing growth point.

As a landowner and enabler of affordable housing in Warrington the Council will maximise its opportunities to provide affordable housing. This includes work on the feasibility of using prudential borrowing and commuted sums from section 106 agreements to provide new housing, bring back into use empty properties or purchase existing properties.

2. Planning System
The Council will continue to maximise opportunities for affordable housing via the planning system. Affordable housing will be sought on planning applications for 15 or more dwellings.

The government has decided on radical changes to the planning system and how development plans are drawn up. These reforms have encouraged a shift away from viewing planning as a narrow, regulatory system to thinking of it as a positive way to shape places and communities in which we live, through sustainable development.

The Council is now required to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF) which will replace the Unitary Development Plan. The issues relating to housing demand, need and supply including affordable housing will be addressed within the Core Strategy of the LDF. This will be supported by evidence emerging from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The initial step in preparing the Core Strategy has been the issue of a “Borough Portrait” in September 2007. Its purpose is to present a “state of the borough” report describing the area’s main characteristics with a view to asking the community to identify the key issues to be addressed by the Council’s policies for the next 15 years or so. This will lead to an “Issues Report” towards the end of 2007 and the development of policy options in the period through to Spring 2008.

Community consultation will remain open throughout this period. Further consultation will accompany the process of appraising the various policy options before the Council is asked to decide its “Preferred Options” later in 2008. This will then form the Core Strategy to be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination and approval by the end of 2010.

3. National Affordable Housing Programme
The Council is working in partnership with the Housing Corporation, Housing Associations and Golden Gates Housing to provide affordable housing funded under the National Affordable Housing Programme 2008 to 2011. A key priority for the Council will be to maximise the provision of affordable housing through the National Affordable Housing Programme and this will be achieved by regular engagement with the Housing Corporation.
For 2008/9 the National Affordable Housing Programme has allocated Warrington £4.7m to provide 94 units of affordable homes. A rolling programme of schemes for affordable housing will be developed working in partnership with the Housing Corporation, Housing Associations and Golden Gates Housing.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. Climate Change Strategy
Climate Change is the term used to describe changes in weather patterns which threaten our environment and the way we live our lives now and in the future. Action is needed now to reduce the impact of the changes taking place in our planet before it’s too late.

The UK Climate Impacts Programme produced models of future weather for local areas. For Warrington these predict more flooding, more unpredictable or violent weather, average temperature increases of 2% by 2050 along with summers drier by 13% and winters wetter by 13%.

The Council has recently signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change. This is a voluntary pledge for local authorities to address the issues of climate change. By signing the declaration the Council is committed to the following:

- Work with central government to contribute to delivering the UK Climate Change Programme and the target for CO2 reductions by 2010
- Participate in local and regional networks on climate change
- Develop our own plans with our partners and local communities to address the causes and impacts of climate change according to local priorities and securing the maximum benefit for our community
- Publicly declare our commitment to achieve a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions form our own operations
- Assess the risks associated with climate change and the implications for our services and community and adapt accordingly
- Encourage all sectors in our community to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change

2. Sustainable Development
Linked to the Climate Change Strategy is the issue of sustainable development which is about delivering a better quality of life for everyone, now and for the future. To achieve this requires a balance between environmental, social and economic objectives in our decision making. For example, in the construction of new homes and refurbishment of existing ones any works carried out need to minimise the environmental impact.

The new Code for Sustainable Development was published in December 2006. This sets out a single national standard for the design and construction of new homes to minimise the use of energy and reduce harmful emissions. As part of this national standard each new home is assessed and awarded a star rating. The star rating is from one star (minimum standard) to 6 stars (highest level). From 2008 any new build affordable homes will need to meet level 3 of the code for sustainable development increasing to level 6 by 2016. In view of the importance and impact on climate change the Council will aim for all new build affordable homes to meet level 6 by 2013.

DECENT HOMES

1. Public Sector Housing
The government’s target is to ensure that all public sector housing meets the decent homes standard by 2010. Despite the increased number of non-decent homes Golden Gates Housing (GGH) is still on target to meet the decent homes standard by March 2008. However, some tenants have refused to have their home brought up to the decent homes standard and these will be done when the properties become empty.

The Council’s contract with GGH ends in February 2009. To consider the long term options in light of the government’s discussion paper on Decent Homes to Sustainable Communities the Council will review the options for future investment. This will involve the establishment of a Housing Options Panel consisting of tenants, Councillors and staff from GGH who will examine the full range of options including the following:

- Return to the Council from GGH
- GGH in the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system
- GGH self financing outside subsidy system
- Stock transfer
- The Community Gateway
2. Private Sector Housing
The last Private Sector Stock Condition survey was carried out in 2002. In order to obtain up to date information a further survey will be carried out in 2008.

It is recognised that poor housing can be a problem for older and disabled people contributing to immobility, social exclusion, ill health and depression.

The Council will also carry out a review of the current Housing Renewals Policy 2003 with the aim of maximising opportunities to bring private sector housing up to the Decent Homes standard. This will be achieved by:
- Providing assistance to homeowners and landlords under the renewals policy
- Administration of renewals assistance by the Council’s appointed Home Improvement Agency Care & Repair, Warrington
- Enforcement of housing conditions
- Landlord self-regulation
- Encouraging and promoting home energy efficiency through interest free loans and grants

3. Private Sector Renewal Areas
The Council has made a long term commitment, through the Housing Strategy, to tackle concentrations of poor housing in the private sector. During the 1970’s and 1980’s the Council used area based regeneration strategies through the General Improvement Areas (GIA) mechanism. This methodology of urban renewal was refined when Statutory Renewal Areas were introduced under the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.

In accordance with the Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (NRA) process 3 areas were evaluated and a programme of urban renewal has been implemented starting with the declaration of Fairfield I in July 1996. The success of this was built upon with the declaration of Fairfield II in December 1997 and Latchford Renewal Area in February 2001. There are no plans to declare any more renewals areas.

4. Private Sector Empty Properties
There are currently 1,309 long term empty properties within the Borough. Research is underway to assess the extent of the “buy to leave” market.

The Council will continue to proactively bring back into use long term vacant properties through the following options:
- Advice and assistance
- Enforcement
- Enforced sales procedure
- Empty dwelling management order
- Compulsory purchase order

In addition to the above the Council also provides financial assistance to encourage a healthy private rented sector. Landlord Renewal Assistance (Vacant Properties) is available to owners of properties which are recorded on the Vacant Properties Register as a high priority and have been vacant for more than 12 months. Grant funding amounting to 50% of the eligible costs up to a maximum of £25,000 plus fees is available to bring the property back into the rented market with the Council having nomination rights.

Following consultation with owners with properties registered as low or medium priority on the Vacant Properties Register the Council introduced a new Vacant Homes grant in 2007. This grant will be offered for eligible expenses up to £5,000 plus approved fees. To be eligible a property must have been vacant for at least 6 months and be recorded as low or medium priority on the Vacant Property Register. The grant will be offered in return for nomination rights with rents set at an affordable level.

5. Providing Effective Help to Owners of Poor Quality Housing
The Government’s view is that it is primarily the responsibility of homeowners to maintain their own property. However, the Council has an ongoing commitment and an important role in assisting the
improvement of housing across all tenures. This includes the owner-occupied sector where it is accepted that some householders, particularly the elderly and vulnerable, do not have the necessary resources to keep their homes safe and in good repair. Renewals Assistance was developed to assist owners in need and who are living in poor housing conditions. For owner-occupiers this takes the form of an interest-free loan of up to £35,000 in some circumstances, plus fees, to invest in the home to bring it up to the Decent Homes Standard (previously the Fitness Standard). This assistance is targeted at elderly and vulnerable people on low incomes and living in lower Council Tax banded property. The assistance remains for the duration of the occupancy; however when the beneficiary relinquishes occupation, then the award is repaid on disposal of the property and can be recycled for the benefit of other applicants.

6. Affordable Warmth and Fuel Poverty
A key element of the Decent Homes standard is the efficiency of the heating and the effectiveness of the insulation in a dwelling. The private sector stock condition survey identified 39,101 dwellings that would fail to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Working in partnership with Warrington Housing Association the Council has, over the last 7 years, successfully delivered energy advice and information from the Energy House 21. Following on from this a new domestic energy advice and information centre called the “Eco Hut” has moved into the Warrington Retail Market in the town centre.

The “Eco Hut” will enable individuals to gain free access to general energy efficiency information. In addition a bespoke service is provided looking at the needs of individuals, the availability of assistance and improvements in order to maximise incomes.

Encouraging home energy efficiency will be facilitated by providing domestic energy advice as well as financial assistance in the form of grants and interest free loans.

**Housing Priority 2:**
To help people live at home, improve their independence, health and quality of life

1. Access to Advice and Support
The provision of advice and assistance is a key element to help people live at home, particularly the elderly or those with a disability.

A new service called the Warrington Home Information and Improvement Agency (WHIA) has been established to provide a wide range of advice, support and develop new services particularly for older people and those with a disability. This service builds on the previous Care & Repair (Warrington) service which provided help and assistance to the elderly and disabled to maintain and repair their home. This assistance included help in getting a builder, identifying what works were required and supervising the works. These words ranged from small jobs such as fixing a dripping tap to larger works such as replacing the roof.

Working in partnership with organisations the following areas have been identified for the development of new services:

- Advice and information service
- Finance/loans
- Handyperson service
- Gardening service
- Security scheme
- Housing options
- Home improvements/maintenance
- Disability housing register
- Trusted trader scheme
- Benefits drop in service
- Social/leisure activities
2. Disabled Persons Adaptations
Warrington has an ageing population and projections indicate that the greatest need is from people who live in their own home in the community, but whose accommodation fails to meet their needs. This also applies to people who are disabled at a young age and people whose disabilities are deteriorating. A priority system for queuing enquiries is in place following an assessment of need. This complements the provision of adaptations for disabled people, facilitating hospital discharge and the handy person service.

This will be achieved by:
- Provision of mandatory disabled facilities grants
- Disabled facilities safe and secure grants for stairlifts for qualifying applicants
- Other discretionary disabled facilities loans and relocation assistance

3. Addressing Major Hazards in the Homes of the Vulnerable
Certain types of housing defect can create serious health and safety hazards to the occupants. Around 2.8 million non-fatal accidents occur in the home each year, many caused by falls and fires. The cost to society of home accidents in the UK was estimated in 1996 as £26 billion every year. Vulnerable people are likely to be at greater risk where potential hazards exist. The Council is working in partnership with the Primary Care Trust, Age Concern and Care & Repair, Warrington to monitor the effectiveness of our policy and its benefits using health impact assessments.

This will be achieved by:
- Surveys
- Advice, safe & secure grants to remedy hazards in the home
- Interest free loans scheme to tackle repairs and hazards in the homes of the vulnerable

4. Ageing Population
In June 2006 the Council approved the “Building the Voice of Older People: A Warrington Strategy for an Ageing Population.” The strategy was based on the views and priorities identified by older people themselves about how they want to grow older in Warrington. It sets out how, working together, we plan to improve the quality of life of people over 50 living in Warrington.

The Older Persons Partnership Board was established and a group of all stakeholders is working together to identify how these needs will be met in the future.

Following the option appraisal of the Council’s sheltered housing schemes the Council is implementing the following:

**Extra Care Housing**
Remodelled the bedsits into flats and provided Extra Care Housing at:
- Broomfields
- Sankey Manor
- Woolston Hall

**Stock Transfer**
To remodel bedsits into flats following the transfer to Warrington Housing Association at:
- Raven Court

**Improve to Decent Homes Standard**
- Penketh Court

**Demolition and Redevelopment**
- Croft House
5. Homelessness and Housing Advice
In 2006/07 316 households were accepted as homeless. A key priority is the prevention of households becoming homeless.

The Council, in partnership with stakeholders, will carry out a review of the Homelessness Strategy. Until this review is completed we will continue with the following priorities:

- Advice and assistance
- Prevention of homelessness
- Reduction in the use of bed & breakfast accommodation
- Increase in the quality of temporary accommodation
- Increase in the provision of move on accommodation

6. Supporting People
The Commissioning Body in consultation with service users, providers and stakeholders have agreed a Supporting People Strategy. The priorities within the strategy are as follows:

1. Achieving the savings target
2. Re-focus existing services, funding or resources
   - People with a learning disability
   - People with a physical or sensory disability
   - Young people at risk
   - Generic services
3. Priorities for additional or new investment
   - Older people and frail elderly
   - People with drug or alcohol problems
   - Black & ethnic minorities

Verve Place: Centre for Learning and Living
Verve Place is a 38 unit supported housing scheme (including 2 flats suitable for wheelchair users) for 16 to 25 year olds developed in partnership with Arena Options. The capital funding for the scheme is from the Private Finance Initiative and the revenue costs are provided by the Supporting People programme.

The aim of the scheme is to provide accommodation, onsite training, assistance accessing employment and employment opportunities where young people receive the support they need to make the transition to independence.

Every resident living at the scheme will draw up an individualised support plan to meet their specific needs. In addition there are a wide range of facilities including:
Cantilever Gardens Supported Housing Scheme
Proposals have been developed to build a supported housing scheme for people with learning disabilities. This scheme will provide 11 two bed flats with communal facilities and 2 two bed bungalows. As part of a pilot initiative assistive technology will be installed to help support their independence.

Floating Support Strategic Review
Floating support is a flexible service provided to people within their own homes. The support provided aims to promote independence to ensure that service users can maintain their accommodation. This support can in turn prevent the need for more costly services i.e. hospitalisation or residential care.

The completion of the Service Review Programme identified unmet need/service gaps and the development of the Supporting People steady State contract requires the programme to critically evaluate the existing level, scope and operational delivery of Floating Support in Warrington. It was, therefore, decided to conduct a Strategic Review of Floating Support. The strategic review was completed in 2007 and recommended that all floating support services should go out to tender and that services should be remodelled to provide 3 specialist and 2 generic services as follows:

- Young People at Risk
- Re-settlement from Supported Housing
- Women at risk of domestic violence including the Sanctuary Project
- Resettlement – “Generic”
- Resettlement – Complex needs

HOUSING PRIORITY 3:
To promote the case for housing investment to sustain a balanced housing market in Warrington

1. North West Growth Point
The Council has submitted an expression of interest as a North West Growth Point for housing. Warrington’s growth point bid seeks to be proactive, forward looking and strongly focussed on the future development of a successful urban area based on the following key principles:

- Maximising the delivery of affordable homes
- Long term sustainability
- Carbon neutrality and eco principles
- Tackling deprivation and creating an inclusive society
- Maximising partnership and private investment leverage
- Maximising development quality
- Not challenging existing land use policy

Warrington’s bid is not just about housing numbers instead it proposes to create a sustainable and distinctive place within a growing economy to enhance the prosperity of the North West region.

2. Raising Warrington’s Profile
To promote Warrington’s case for housing investment the housing strategy and other supporting evidence will be presented to organisations such as the Regional Housing Board,
the Housing Corporation and the Government Office for the North West.

3. Promoting A Healthy Private Rented Sector
Research is underway to determine the extent of the “buy to leave” market in Warrington. This is a situation in which a property is purchased for investment purposes and is unoccupied. Depending on the results of this research a variety of initiatives will be implemented to encourage owners to rent out empty properties.

The Council and our partners will evaluate a range of initiatives such as private sector leasing to ensure that the private rented sector can contribute to meeting our affordable housing needs.

A key priority for the Council is the promotion of a private rented sector, which is in a good and safe standard of repair. A healthy private rented sector provides additional housing choices for people who do not want to, or are not ready to buy their own home.

This policy will be achieved by:
- Enforcement
- Encouraging self-regulation
- Landlords forum
- HMO licensing scheme
- Landlord accreditation scheme
- Provision of grants to landlords
- Assistance with energy efficiency such as a 100% grant towards cavity wall insulation

The Board is working in partnership with residents, voluntary organisations, Warrington Strategic Partnership, Warrington Borough Council, Health Service, Primary Care Trust, Cheshire Police, Job Centre Plus, Sure Start for All, Golden Gates Housing, Warrington Housing Association and Arena Housing Association. Ideas and proposals are being developed in consultation with local residents which will form part of the Council’s Housing Strategy once they have been agreed.

2. Neighbourhood Hubs
It is recognised that a community requires a range of facilities such as local shops, doctor’s surgery, library, school, park and bus stop. These are considered to be neighbourhood hubs consisting of a village high street or a neighbourhood shopping centre. The aim will be for the Council and its partners to build upon these by reinforcing this network of services and facilities.

3. Neighbourhood Management
To establish Neighbourhood Management Areas that work in partnership with residents, local communities and partners business to achieve the following:

- Reduce the level of crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Improve neighbourhood environments with reductions in litter graffiti, fly tipping and vandalism
- Target access to learning and transport options to improve long term employment opportunities
- Improve resident involvement in social housing provision and reduce rent arrears and vandalism
- Develop the wider community role of schools and area based Children’s Services
- Promote health and wellbeing
- Target further development of service based activity within deprived wards

HOUSING PRIORITY 4:

To work with communities and partners to improve the social and economic well being of people living in Warrington

1. Neighbourhoods: Stronger Together
A new team of neighbourhood wardens has hit the streets in areas across the Borough as part of the Stronger Together in Warrington project.

The project is aiming for improvements in the following areas:

- Adult learning and improving levels of qualifications
- Employability and helping those that want to get back to work
- Healthier living and healthier lifestyles
- Quality of life and feeling safe with a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour
- More volunteering opportunities
To develop a co-ordinated programme of improvement and promotion of Warrington’s green spaces and leisure opportunities for healthy living, education, amenity, enjoyment and sustainable transport & development. This would comprise of the following:

**Green and Waterways**: a linked network of green spaces, rediscovery and use of our waterway corridors for health, amenity, leisure and sustainable transport
- Mersey Corridor
- Manchester Ship Canal Corridor
- Bridgewater Canal Corridor
- Greenway network
- Parks and Open Space Investment Programme

**Warrington Sports & Leisure Park**: a centre of excellence in sports and leisure with the sub-regional and local facility at Orford Park

**Walton Hall Park & Gardens Project**: develop as a major sub-regional park, visitor destination, hotel, conference & events with a centre of horticultural excellence

**5. Supporting Economic Growth**
It is important that housing is aligned with economic growth and job creation, particularly for areas which have pockets of deprivation and higher unemployment levels.

Part of the legacy of the new town is the extensive Omega site. Omega is owned by English Partnerships and has a long standing planning permission for strategic regional investments and is identified as critical to the effective implementation of the Regional Economic Strategy. The location of the Omega site in the north west of Warrington’s urban area makes it ideally suited to not only provide employment and training opportunities in Warrington, but also promote social inclusion in neighbouring areas in Halton, St Helens and Wigan.

The total number of jobs in Warrington is forecast to increase by 17,000 (14% to 134,600 in 2015). This is a forecast growth of 0.9% each year which is higher than the regional and national growth rates. The recent approval of phases 1 and 2 of Omega and continued development at Lingley Mere, Birchwood and Centre Park will ensure growth rates are sustained.

Warrington’s town centre makes a valuable contribution to the Borough’s wider economy and received a significant economic boost with the recent completion of a £120 million extension to the Golden Square shopping centre.

**HOUSING PRIORITY 5:**
To ensure equality of access to housing services

All policies and strategies will have an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment and this be reviewed every 3 years. Any new policy or procedure will have an Equality Impact Assessment as it is written. Any equality or diversity complaint about a policy will result in an immediate Equality Impact Assessment.

1. **Access to Services, Information & Advice**
It is essential that everyone is able to access housing services in a way that meets their needs. A range of projects will be implemented ranging from ensuring that information is in an accessible format to the investigation of a single common housing application process, register and waiting list.

In order to improve the information and access to adapted properties it is proposed that a Disabilities Housing Register is established. The aim of the Disability Housing Register is to improve the use of a limited valuable resource, accessible housing. By accessible housing we mean accommodation which is either purpose built or adapted to meet the needs of disabled people. The register will improve the effectiveness of matching the housing needs of disabled people with available accommodation.
2. **Gypsy and Travellers**

In the light of the findings and recommendations from the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment it is the intention of the partnership to develop a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Strategy. In turn, the content of the Accommodation Strategy will be fed into future reviews of the Council’s Housing Allocations Policy, and Homelessness and BME Strategies.

3. **Migrant Workers**

Housing Services will be actively involved in the development of the Migrant Worker Action Plan and will work to promote relevant housing services to migrant workers where a lack of information is an issue.
9. Analysis of Options

COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK
Before the Council decides on a course of action all options are considered and assessed in consultation with tenants. This process is known as an option appraisal.

In consultation with tenants and leaseholders the Council is implementing a strategy which consists of a combination of the following options to address the investment needs of the Council’s housing stock. These options are as follows:

- Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)
- Private Finance Initiative
- Extra Care Housing Fund
- Demolition and redevelopment
- Stock transfer

Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)
Following consultation with tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders the Council established the ALMO, Golden Gates Housing, in February 2004.

The ALMO option relates to the majority of the Council’s housing stock and involves funding from the government for £30.2 million to achieve the Decent Homes standard by March 2008.

The 5 year contract with Golden Gates Housing will come to an end in February 2009 and a review of all options will be carried out in 2008/09.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)
The PFI option was evaluated to assess its viability to address specific investment needs at an estate level. The Anson/Blenheim estate in Blackbrook had been identified as one of three key priority investment areas within the HRA Business Plan 2001, and a PFI bid was submitted in January 2002. In May 2002 the Council was informed that the PFI bid had been successful and involved the demolition of 261 properties followed by redevelopment with a mixture of affordable homes for rent, and open market sale. The Council selected Arena Housing Association and Cruden Construction as its preferred partners to redevelop the site and provide 105 affordable homes for rent and 87 for open market sale.

Extra Care Housing
A Best Value Review of Older People recommended that a separate option appraisal was required for the Council’s 6 sheltered housing schemes consisting of 205 units. A successful bid under the Department of Health’s Extra Care Housing Fund provided funding of £3.1m to remodel 3 of the Council’s sheltered housing schemes at Broomfields, Woolston hall and Sankey Manor. The outcome of the options appraisal has led to the following:

- Raven Court
  - Ballot with 100% in favour of stock transfer to Warrington Housing Association

- Croft House
  - Demolition and redevelopment to provide 100% affordable housing

- Penketh Court
  - Provision of a new lift and bring the properties up to the Decent Homes standard
Future Options for the Council’s Housing Stock
The Council has established the Housing Options Panel to consider the future of the Council’s housing stock and identify the best means to:

- Meet and maintain the properties at as a minimum the Decent Homes Standard for at least the next 30 years
- Identify tenant aspirations in relation the quality of homes, neighbourhoods and standards of service
- Continue the provision of well managed social housing in Warrington at affordable rents
- Maintain and, if possible, improve the quality of housing management and maintenance services to tenants
- Meet the Council’s legal requirements and tenant aspirations
- Provide more social housing to rent
- Meet the Council’s strategic duties
- Have regard to the concerns of tenants and staff
- Direct investment so as to maximise the potential for regeneration in the areas concerned and in ways that will benefit the local economy and communities.
- Identify the options available to the Council in light of an unsustainable HRA business plan

The Housing Options Panel will consist of the following:

- 5 representative tenants
- 5 representative employees and
- 5 Members of the Borough Council (to be nominated by the Council)
- participant observer status will be provided to:
  - the trade unions with affected members
  - Golden Gates Housing
  - A representative leaseholder
  - A senior representative from Government Office North West
  - A representative of an Independent Tenant Advisor

The initial appraisal process is due to be completed by the end of July 2008 with a recommendation to the Executive Board in September 2008.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING
On the 18th July 2002 the Government introduced proposals to reform the current legislation for the private sector. The Regulatory Reform Order has repealed most of the existing prescriptive legislation governing the provision of renewal grants to homeowners and replaced it with a new wide ranging duty to provide assistance for housing renewal. This provided an opportunity to challenge and review the Council’s approach and options to housing renewal. The following options were considered:

- Do nothing
- Status quo
- Mixed approach

After assessing the various options the Council decided to implement a mixed approach. This option was considered the most appropriate because it considered the Council’s responsibility role in assisting and improving housing across all tenures, particularly those who are elderly or vulnerable. In addition it also took into account the new opportunities for resources from equity release to increase the level of resources available.
10. Delivery and Monitoring

National priorities, focused on cross-cutting outcomes, have been identified as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. A new set of national indicators which reflects government priorities have been agreed and supplemented by local priorities identified by the Warrington Partnership.

A range of outcome measures, performance indicators and targets have been established as part of the Housing Strategy Action Plan. The action plan will form the basis for monitoring and reviewing performance. These performance indicators can be summarised as follows:

- **National Indicators**
  Example: the number of affordable homes delivered

- **Local Indicators:**
  Example: Number of vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished

- **Housing Strategy Targets:**
  Example: Completed study identifying the extent of non-decent housing in the private sector housing stock

The Warrington Housing Partnership consists of a wide range of statutory, private and voluntary organisations and will feed into the Safer Stronger Communities Thematic Board. The Thematic Board will feed housing issues through to the Warrington Partnership.

The Housing Strategy Action Plan will be monitored by the Warrington Housing Partnership with an annual review which will amend and update targets for the following year. The Partnership will also consider annual reports on the local housing market to inform whether a review of the Housing Strategy should be carried out before 2013.

On a quarterly basis the Councillors who attend the Executive Member meeting will receive a monitoring report to track progress of the action plan. In addition Councillors are able to investigate any aspect of performance as part of the scrutiny arrangements.

Warrington Housing Partnership

It is recognised that delivering the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy is the responsibility of many organisations not just the Council. There are many organisations providing a range of housing services or involved in setting policies. The aim of the Warrington Housing Partnership is to ensure that this work is co-ordinated in an effective way with all partners influencing and contributing to a coherent agreed strategy. The key objectives and responsibilities of this forum are as follows:

- Oversee the development and review of the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy
- Oversee the implementation of the strategies including monitoring performance against the action plan and targets
- Agree outcomes and targets
- Ensure that housing is reflected in all relevant local plans and strategies
- Influence commissioning decisions about housing services
- To be consulted on all aspects of housing policy and proposed amendments
# 11. Action Plan

## Performance Targets for 2008 to 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>OUTCOME/SUCCESS MEASURES</th>
<th>TIMESCALES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Priority 1: To provide decent, sustainable and affordable homes in places where people want to live</td>
<td><strong>To provide affordable housing within the Borough</strong></td>
<td>Walter Manns</td>
<td>Housing Corporation Section 106</td>
<td>To provide 500 units of affordable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Walter Manns</td>
<td>Housing Corporation Section 106 funding</td>
<td>To provide 1,000 units of affordable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>David Cowley</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>To minimise the use of energy and reduce harmful emissions all affordable homes must achieve level 3 of the code for sustainable development. Achieve level 6 of the code for sustainable development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frank Pacey</td>
<td>£2m PFI credits</td>
<td>To investigate alternative funding methods to increase the provision of affordable housing such as Community Land Trusts and Private Finance Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frank Pacey</td>
<td>£1m</td>
<td>To provide 38 units of supported housing for 16 to 25 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ann Woods</td>
<td>£5k</td>
<td>To pilot the provision of 9 units of temporary good quality housing for homeless families to reduce the use of B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>To assess local housing supply</strong></td>
<td>Peter Stephens</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Completed study providing information on potential housing sites for a 15 year period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Walter Manns</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Study outlining the scale of the “buy to leave” market within the Borough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Prepare a Local Development Framework</strong></td>
<td>Walter Manns</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Revised planning policy for affordable housing which maximises the potential for affordable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Policy on quality and space standards for new affordable housing developments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Establish new standards for all new homes to ensure they are built to age friendly designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>To improve the Council’s housing stock</strong></td>
<td>Angela Perry</td>
<td>£6.8m</td>
<td>To ensure the Council’s housing stock meets the decent homes standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gerald Davies</td>
<td>£400k</td>
<td>To complete the evaluation of all options for the future of the Council’s housing stock and provide a recommendation to the Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTION</td>
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<tr>
<td>To improve the private sector housing stock</td>
<td>Carolyn Haining</td>
<td>Capital Programme</td>
<td>To meet the government target to increase the proportion of private housing in decent condition occupied by vulnerable households to 70%</td>
<td>March 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | Carolyn Haining | Staff time | To demolish or bring back into occupation private sector vacant properties:  
- 20  
- 100 | March 2009 March 2013 |
| | Carolyn Haining | Staff time | To reduce the number of empty private sector dwellings which have been vacant for more than 6 months from 1.82% to:  
- 1.52%  
- 1.00% | March 2009 March 2011 |
| To carry out a private sector stock condition survey | Carolyn Haining | Staff time | Completed study identifying the extent to the following:  
- non-decent private sector housing  
- category 1 and 2 hazards  
- fuel poverty  
- low SAP ratings | March 2009 |
| To review the Housing Renewals policy | Carolyn Haining | Staff time | A revised policy to improve private sector housing based on the outcome of the private sector stock condition survey | August 2009 |
| To raise awareness amongst homeowners and landlords on the effects of cold damp homes on health | Carolyn Haining | Staff time | To achieve 200 referrals to Warm Front for vulnerable households on low income | March 2009 |
| To raise awareness to reduce households carbon footprint | Carolyn Haining | Staff time | To achieve 500 referrals to the Utility Company’s energy efficiency schemes | March 2009 |
| To provide a comprehensive energy advice service for homeowners | Carolyn Haining | Staff time | Homeowners provided with specific energy efficiency advice:  
- 1,000  
- 5,000 | March 2009 March 2013 |
<p>| Work with Registered Social Landlords to meet the Decent Homes Standard | Walter Manns | RSLs | To ensure compliance with the government decent homes standard | March 2010 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>OUTCOME/SUCCESS MEASURES</th>
<th>TIMESCALES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To provide new social housing built to meet the needs of an ageing population</td>
<td>Walter Manns</td>
<td>Staff time Housing Corporation</td>
<td>To ensure that new social housing is built to the Lifetime Homes standard</td>
<td>March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide advice on housing options</td>
<td>Warrington Home Information &amp; Improvement Agency</td>
<td>Staff time Supporting People</td>
<td>60 households provided with advice</td>
<td>March 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To investigate a range of financial products to help vulnerable people live at home</td>
<td>Warrington Home Information &amp; Improvement Agency</td>
<td>Staff time Supporting People</td>
<td>To help vulnerable people fund improvements, repairs and adaptations to their home</td>
<td>August 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To investigate establishing a Borough-wide handyman service</td>
<td>Warrington Home Information &amp; Improvement Agency</td>
<td>Staff time Supporting People</td>
<td>Handyman service to help people live at home and improve their independence.</td>
<td>October 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To carry out a feasibility one establishing a Borough-wide gardening service</td>
<td>Warrington Home Information &amp; Improvement Agency</td>
<td>Staff time Supporting People</td>
<td>Gardening service for the elderly and disabled to help them live at home and improve their independence</td>
<td>October 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To research the potential for introducing a Trusted Trader scheme</td>
<td>Warrington Home Information &amp; Improvement Agency</td>
<td>Staff time Supporting People</td>
<td>Completed feasibility study on Trusted trader scheme</td>
<td>December 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide grant funding to help towards the costs of adapting a person’s home</td>
<td>Carolyn Haining</td>
<td>Staff time Capital programme</td>
<td>Disabled facilities grant to enable a person to continue to live at home:</td>
<td>March 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 130 households</td>
<td>March 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 500 households</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To produce an Older Persons Housing Strategy</td>
<td>Walter Manns</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Completed strategy to meet the needs of an ageing population within the Borough</td>
<td>August 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the use of Bed &amp; Breakfast accommodation</td>
<td>Ann Woods</td>
<td>Staff time Housing Corporation Section 106</td>
<td>Reduce by half the use of B&amp;B for homeless</td>
<td>March 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>End the use of B&amp;B for 16/17 year olds</td>
<td>March 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide 20 good quality move on accommodation for the homeless</td>
<td>March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the number of homeless households through prevention</td>
<td>Ann Woods</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Achieve 250 prevention cases</td>
<td>March 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTION</td>
<td>RESPONSIBILITY</td>
<td>RESOURCES</td>
<td>OUTCOME/SUCCESS MEASURES</td>
<td>TIMESCALES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain the reduction in the number of families in temporary accommodation</td>
<td>Ann Woods</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Ensure that the number of families in temporary accommodation has reduced by 50% from the level in December 2004</td>
<td>March 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reduce the number of Council tenant evictions</td>
<td>Ann Woods</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>To prevent homelessness in 75% of cases referred by Golden Gates Housing for those tenants who are 8 weeks or more in arrears but less than 12 weeks</td>
<td>March 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Priority 3: To promote the case for housing investment to sustain a balanced housing market in Warrington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To submit evidence to the Regional Housing Board, Housing Corporation and Government Office North West on the housing investment needs in Warrington</td>
<td>Tommy Wallace</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>To increase the amount of housing investment within the Borough</td>
<td>November 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure that elected members and partners are engaged in developing the housing agenda</td>
<td>Tommy Wallace</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Awareness of housing issues within the Borough and policy development</td>
<td>October 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop monitoring tools to manage the local housing market</td>
<td>Walter Manns</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>To provide up to date information on the housing market with a completed annual Local Housing Market Study</td>
<td>April 2009 then annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing for houses in multiple occupation</td>
<td>Carolyn Haining</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Regulate and ensure safe housing conditions in appropriate properties that comply with the provisions of the Housing Act 2004</td>
<td>March 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide advice, assistance and support the work of the Landlord Forum</td>
<td>Carolyn Haining</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Provide advice and support in the management and condition of the private rented sector with 2 Landlord Forum meetings a year</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate providing a managing agent service within the private rented sector</td>
<td>Ann Woods</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Increase in the access of housing for homeless households in the private rented sector</td>
<td>April 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Housing Priority 4: To work with communities and partners to improve the social and economic well being of people living in Warrington**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>OUTCOME/SUCCESS MEASURES</th>
<th>TIMESCALES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To provide accommodation and access to training and employment opportunities</td>
<td>Ann Woods</td>
<td>Supporting People programme</td>
<td>40 young people aged between 16 and 25 years old provided with support to access training and employment opportunities</td>
<td>March 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTION</td>
<td>RESPONSIBILITY</td>
<td>RESOURCES</td>
<td>OUTCOME/SUCCESS MEASURES</td>
<td>TIMESCALES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To evaluate the equality impact of the Housing Strategy</td>
<td>Helen Catterson</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Completed Equality Impact Assessment on the Housing Strategy</td>
<td>August 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To establish a Disability Housing Register</td>
<td>Irene Gilbert</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Database on the location and type of adapted properties suitable for the disabled</td>
<td>December 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the potential for a simple common housing application process, register and waiting list</td>
<td>Walter Manns</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Accessible and simplified application process for housing</td>
<td>April 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To survey customers and seek their views on the Disabled Facilities Grant service</td>
<td>Carolyn Haining</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>Completed survey on the DFG service and to identify potential improvements to service delivery in light of the survey findings</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To survey tenants and seek their views on the Housing Service provided by GGH</td>
<td>Golden Gates Housing</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>To carry out a survey to obtain tenant’s views on: • satisfaction with the overall service provided • satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management and decision making</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure that tenants have an opportunity to participate in the running of GGH</td>
<td>Golden Gates Housing</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>To hold an Annual Tenants Conference</td>
<td>Sept 2009 to Sept 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACHIEVEMENTS

Listed below are the achievements made from 2004 to 2007:

Objective:
To provide a choice of good standard, affordable housing which meets the needs of residents within the Borough

- 105 affordable homes for rent under the Private Finance Initiative
- 50 units of affordable housing via the planning system by March 2005
- 150 units of affordable housing via the planning system by March 2007
- Completed Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Completed research on the needs of Gypsy and Travellers
- 135 completed Health Impact Assessments in the homes of elderly and vulnerable households
- The percentage of unfit dwellings in the Latchford Renewal Area reduced to 18%
- Percentage of long term vacant in the Latchford Renewal Area reduced to 1.03%
- The number of dwellings benefiting from environmental works in the Latchford Renewal area was 1,362
- Average increase of £81,365 (103%) in residential value within the Latchford Renewal Area compared with pre-declaration
- Total private sector investment in the Latchford Renewal Area of £2,188,858
- 1,768 dwellings benefiting from environmental works in the Fairfield Renewal Areas
- £2,993,976 private sector investment in the Fairfield Renewal Areas

Objective:
To use all the means and resources at our disposal to improve the standard of the Borough’s housing stock

- 4,442 Council properties brought to the Decent Homes Standard by March 2007
- Golden Gates Housing achieved 2 star in December 2004 and then 3 stars with excellent prospects for improvement in February 2007
- Remodelled 3 sheltered housing schemes to provide Extra Care housing
- Completed option appraisal for 3 sheltered housing schemes at Croft House, Penketh Court and Raven Court
- Penketh Court brought up to the Decent Homes Standard
- Decanted tenants from Croft House with proposals for redevelopment to provide affordable housing
- Stock transfer of Raven Court to Warrington Housing Association who will spend £0.98m to remodel and modernise
- Increased the proportion of private housing in decent condition occupied by vulnerable groups to 65% by 2006
- 29 private sector properties either demolished or made fit

Objective:
To empower tenants in the management of their homes through effective consultation and real participation

- Completed survey of tenants seeking their views on the Housing Service provided by Golden Gates Housing
- Annual Tenants Conference held
- 4 newsletters produced for all of the Council’s tenants and leaseholders to provide access to accurate and up to date information on Golden Gates Housing
- Implemented choice based lettings Borough-wide
Objective:
To provide services at the price that residents are prepared to pay and which are efficient, effective in accordance with the principles of Best Value

- 98.10% of rent collected by March 2006 and increasing 98.56% March 2007
- Achieved an average relet time of 29.21 days in March 2006
- Completed 98.75% of urgent repairs to the Council's housing stock in government timescales

Objective:
To raise awareness and engage the community in safety initiatives which reduce crime, help people feel safer and tackle anti-social behaviour

- 105 homes installed with sprinkler systems
- 6 HMO inspections completed under the HMO Risk Assessment
- 162 hazard assessments completed to reduce the risk of fires
- £111,599 spent on the installation of stairlifts in the homes of the disabled
YOUR COMMENTS AND VIEWS

If you require any further information please contact:

Walter Manns, Email: wmanns@warrington.gov.uk
Principal Policy & Strategy Manager,
Community Services Directorate,
Housing Services,
PO Box 875,
Warrington, Telephone: 01925 443205
WA1 1WP

Thank you for taking the time to read Warrington’s Housing Strategy. We would welcome any comments you have on this strategy. Please use the space below and return your comments to the address above.

This document can be made available in large print, audio tape and translated into other languages.

Comments on the Housing Strategy 2008 to 2013

Please return your comments to Walter Manns, Community Services Directorate, PO Box 875, Warrington WA1 1WP
Appendix 1: Warrington's Growth Point Bid
Appendix 2: Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Regional Spatial Strategy
Historically Warrington experienced increased housing growth due to its new town status, but it became apparent that this growth could not continue at the same rate. In the January 2006 draft of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Warrington is grouped with Halton and St Helens as Mid Mersey. The recommended housing provision in these areas is described in the RSS as:

“Provision of sufficient new residential development to support the potential for economic growth and local regeneration strategies (including replacement and renewal of housing stock), a wider range of general and high quality market housing (in sustainable locations which are well served by public transport), while at the same time ensuring the ability to meet local needs and requirements for affordable housing.”

It goes on further to state that: “In Warrington the focus will be on continued restraint, limiting housing provision to that which meets local and affordable housing needs, plus a limited amount of general market housing to support agreed local regeneration strategies.”

The distribution of regional housing provision allocates a maximum housing provision of 6,840 net new dwellings between 2003 and 2021 in Warrington, which equates to 380 per year. This is one of the lowest figures in the area. The draft RSS is expected in May, Warrington BC have not sought an increase in their build allocation, however it is not yet known whether an increase will be allocated.

The RSS also identifies Warrington as being one of the authorities of the North West that will have the greatest need for affordable housing. A green belt was established in Warrington under RPG13 this has been safeguarded according to the UDP until 2026, there is expected to be continuity with this policy with the new RSS. The RSS target when annualised to 380 is lower than the level of need in the area, and lower than the development that is already in the pipeline in Warrington. The development in Warrington is expected to concentrate upon regenerating older parts of the town, building on brown field sites.

Regional Housing Strategy
Warrington is not considered a high priority in the regional housing strategy; it has always been considered a balanced market. Pathfinder areas in Manchester and Liverpool have been allocated regional resources. In the context of the region Warrington is not considered a high priority in terms of affordable housing; however the increasing affordability problem in Warrington is not being recognised within the region.

Many of the sites available for development in Warrington are on brown field sites, these sites are expensive to develop therefore it has been difficult to place affordable housing upon these sites.

Regional Economic Development Strategy
There is an acknowledgement within the strategy of Warrington’s economic success, with emphasis given to maximising the growth opportunities within Warrington.

The OMEGA development is identified as having the potential to provide employment opportunities to residents of Warrington, with phases one and two planning 8,000 jobs over a 10-15 year period. The business park will be focused upon the creation of jobs with knowledge based industries, but the likely salaries that the employees will be receiving are unknown.

Cheshire & Warrington Sub-regional Economic Strategy
The strategy for the sub-region indicates that the area is projected to witness job growth alongside a re-balancing of the employment profile. It is forecast that 60,000 extra jobs will be created in the sub-region between 2004 and 2015. It is intended that many of them will be knowledge based industries, building on the
high proportion of the workforce already employed in this sector (31%). At the same time there is a projected decline in the manufacturing sector. Warrington is described as "an important growth node in the regional economy." The growth in Warrington will be based on the area’s excellent transport links. The Warrington Crossroads is the name of the package of measures planned for the Borough with investments specifically aimed at Omega, Birchwood and Daresbury, which is just outside the Borough. The package will also improve the retail and leisure facilities in the town centre alongside housing led regeneration schemes.

It is envisaged that much of this employment growth will take place in knowledge based industries. However, it is recognized that the growth potential of Warrington “cannot be filled just be local residents, even with upskilling and re-training” and that the opportunities will be suitable for residents of neighbouring authorities.

Halton Housing Needs and Market Assessment Survey
A borough wide housing needs survey was carried out for Halton in September 2005. Halton is a neighbouring borough to the South West of Warrington. There are close connections between Halton and Warrington and along with St. Helens they are termed the ‘mid-Mersey’ authorities.

The report suggests that the area economically is based upon a low skills base and has higher than average unemployment than regionally.

The study also finds that house prices in the area are lower than national and regional averages.

In terms of affordable housing need, the report recommends 25% of new units should be subsidised for affordable housing.

St Helens Market and Needs Assessment
St Helens Borough Council commissioned their housing market and needs assessment in March 2006. Demographically alike it’s ‘mid-Mersey’ neighbours St Helens’ population is ageing, it is particularly noted that there is expected to be out migration of younger economically active households.

Economically, St Helens has seen the decline of its traditional glass making industries and coal mining. There has been an increase in the number of service sector jobs in the area with low incomes predominant.

The housing stock is skewed towards semi-detached and terraced housing.

The level of affordable housing need has been estimated at 306 units per annum, with a particular emphasis on building viable, sustainable developments recognised.

Warrington within the sub-region
Using data from the 2001 Census we are able to consider the relationship between Warrington and its neighbouring Boroughs of Halton and St. Helens. By viewing the migration (numbers of people) between the areas and travel to work (numbers of people) we can see how the housing markets are related to each other.

In terms of migration between Warrington and Halton, Warrington had a net inflow of 45 residents in 2000. However with St. Helens, Warrington had a net outflow of 79 residents in 2000.

The table below shows the travel to work numbers between Warrington and its neighbouring Boroughs of Halton and St. Helens. As we can see Warrington has a net TTW inflow from both Halton and in particular St. Helens. This confirms Warrington’s success economically, with relatively large numbers commuting into Warrington to work.

When considered as a proportion, Halton residents commuting into Warrington account for more than a quarter (26.7%) of all Halton residents who travel to work outside of the Borough. The equivalent proportion for St.
Helens is 19.9%. Interestingly for both Halton and St. Helens their largest gross travel to work outflow is to Warrington.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
<th>TTW</th>
<th>Net TTW into Warrington</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>Halton</td>
<td>4,434</td>
<td><strong>Halton</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halton</td>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>4,950</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>St. Helens</td>
<td>2,131</td>
<td><strong>St. Helens</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Helens</td>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>6,502</td>
<td>4,371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy**

The strategy published in December 2006 considered the whole of the City Region including Warrington, and works towards identifying the large scale Housing Market Areas that cover the City Region.

The study identified that Warrington exhibits very different housing needs to those evident throughout the Northwest, it suggests that Warrington experiences low crime, low unemployment and low vacancy rates that are not common within the region.

Warrington is therefore not seen as a priority in terms of improving the quality of the housing stock within the region.

The report did identify a growing affordability problem, with consequent effects being a lack of access particularly for young people into owner occupied housing. This coupled with a shortage of affordable housing is making it more difficult for young people to establish themselves within the area.

The situation of the market

Before the boundaries of the Warrington housing market are discussed it is valuable to present information on the nature of the wider housing market.

The map below is taken from the Ecotec study into the housing market of the North West, in it Warrington is considered as a self contained housing market. It identifies the characteristics of the housing markets in the region. The map clearly indicates that Warrington is part of a balanced housing market with the unbalanced markets of Liverpool and Manchester to the west and east.
The map below compares the earnings of workers with the earnings of residents for a range of local authorities in the vicinity of Warrington. This helps identify ridges in the regional housing market. Areas in which the resident population earns more than the workplace population are likely to be net exporters of workers, whilst the reverse is true of areas in which workers earn more than residents.

The map shows that the authorities next to Liverpool and Manchester are the employment centres of the region with the surrounding authorities, including Warrington, likely to be within the commuter belt of these two large cities.
Local Housing Market

Warrington has 79,980 household spaces and of these 78,030 were occupied in 2001. Therefore 97.6% of all properties in Warrington are occupied, which compares with 95.3% regionally and 96.1% nationally.

The table below shows the tenure of Warrington household recorded by the Census. Warrington differs from both the regional and national picture, in that there is a substantially higher proportion of residents who are owner occupiers. The majority of these owner occupiers own with a mortgage, the proportion who own outright are similar to the regional and national averages.
Dwelling Types
There is a high fraction of detached and semi-detached dwellings in Warrington. This is only partly explained by the higher proportion of owner occupied housing. There are also significantly fewer flats. The area’s terraced housing fraction is well below the regional as well as the national proportions.

Table 4.3 Tenure (Census 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure category</th>
<th>Warrington</th>
<th>North West of England</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owns outright</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owns with a mortgage or loan</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared ownership</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council (local authority)</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Association/RSL</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private landlord or letting agency</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ONS neighbourhood statistics – 2006

Figure 4.3 Dwelling Types (2001)

Source: ONS neighbourhood statistics – 2006
Dwelling Types
As can be seen from the figure below, the number of rooms per dwelling is larger in Warrington than either the national, or regional, average. This may be consistent with house type profile, with higher proportions of detached and semis than elsewhere, and fewer flats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling Types</th>
<th>Warrington</th>
<th>North West of England</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detached</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-detached</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terraced</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat/maisonette</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caravan/Mobile Home</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ONS neighbourhood statistics – 2006

House Prices
The table below shows average prices in the 4th quarter of 2006 for each of England and Wales, the North West and Warrington. The table shows that average prices in Warrington are 88.5% of England and Wales, however the prices do compare well with regional figures.
Information from the Land Registry shows that between the 4th Quarter of 2001 and the 4th quarter of 2006 average property prices in England and Wales rose by 74.7%. For the North West the increase was 95.8% whilst for Warrington the figure was 83.7%.

**Land Registry Information**

The land registry contains information on average property prices by postcode sector. The map below shows house price variations within Warrington. Each postcode is shown as a percentage of the Warrington Borough average. The map indicates that there are distinct patterns in house prices across the borough. The postcodes south of the Manchester ship canal are the most expensive in the borough, whilst the postcodes towards the centre of Warrington have the cheapest properties. The North East of the borough also displays higher than average property prices.

**Table 4.5 Land Registry average prices (4th Quarter 2006)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Average price</th>
<th>As % of E &amp; W</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>£207,573</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>£153,112</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>£183,675</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land Registry

Note: Postcode WA4 4 approx 25% in Warrington. Postcodes WA5 0, WA5 7 WA5 8 WA5 9, have merged into WA5 5 for the purposes of this map. WA1 1 No data available.
Owner-occupied sub-markets within Warrington

A range of data sources were used to obtain detailed information about the local variations in housing markets across Warrington, including the land registry information presented above. These included the interviews with estate and letting agents, the views of stakeholders and community members and the internet search of estate and letting agents.

This analysis of the cost of housing at the local level revealed five sub-markets for owner-occupation across the housing market area. The five sub-markets were based on the ward boundaries in Warrington. The map below illustrates the five individual areas and the following commentary describes the character of the sub-markets and the main neighbourhoods in each.

**Map 6.2: Warrington owner-occupied sub-markets**

**South Sub Market**
The ‘South’ sub market has a clear boundary of the Manchester Ship Canal separating it from the remainder of Warrington. It is characterised by high quality housing and the area appears to be quite distinct to the area north of the ship canal with a very strong sense of identity and community.

It is the most expensive part of the Borough, which the stakeholders stated was a result of the area’s legacy as previously being a part of Cheshire. It contains the wards of Stockton Heath, Hatton & Stretton & Walton, Appleton, Grappenhall & Thelwall and Lymm. The village of Lymm was found to be marginally more expensive than the rest of the submarket.
Property prices were identified for different sized accommodation (in terms of bedrooms) at two levels – minimum and median. These results are presented in the figure below. The minimum price recorded equates the cheapest cost of housing in good repair of which there is a reasonable supply.

The figure shows that estimated entry-level prices ranged from £99,500 for a one bedroom property up to £224,000 for four bedrooms. Median prices were generally around 15-20% higher than the minimums.

The South recorded the highest entry-level prices of all sub-markets in the Borough with the exception of one bedroom property which is more expensive in Culcheth and Croft due to a much smaller supply.

North West Sub Market
The ‘North West’ submarket was found to be quite distinct from the central area of Warrington. It contains the peripheral settlement of Burtonwood, which although generally more expensive than Warrington town is not as distinct as the more cut off settlements of Culcheth and Croft. It also contains the peripheral settlement of Winwick which displays property prices similar to the more urban parts of the sub-market.

The sub-market also contains the Western part of the town which includes the neighbourhood of Penketh which is considered by the estate agents to be quite unique. The wards that make up this sub market include, Burtonwood & Winwick, Westbrook, Whittle Hall, Great Sankey North, Great Sankey South and Penketh & Cuerdley.

Again minimum and average property prices were identified for one, two, three and four bedroom homes. These results are presented in the figure below. The figure shows that estimated entry-level prices ranged from £87,500 for a one bedroom dwelling to £189,000 for a four bedroom property. Average prices were generally around 10-20% higher than the minimums.
Culcheth and Croft Sub Market

The settlements of Culcheth and Croft are considered to be less easy to access from Warrington than other nearby towns and villages making them quite distinct. They record the highest house prices north of the Manchester Ship Canal and therefore the north eastern corner of the borough can be viewed as a separate sub-market. It contains just one ward, that of Culcheth, Glazebury & Croft.

The figure below shows entry-level and average prices in the Culcheth and Croft submarket. The figure indicates that entry-level prices ranged from £109,500 for a one bedroom property up to £198,000 for four bedrooms. Average prices were generally around 25-30% higher than the minimums.
The Eastern part of the town was also different to the town centre area and was identified as a separate housing market. The 'East' sub market contains the wards of Birchwood, Rixton & Woolston, Poulton North and Poulton South. The price differences across this area are generally small. The character of this sub-market was not dissimilar to the character of the North West sub-market, although entry-level costs were found to be cheaper. It is acknowledged that the settlement of Hollins Green on the eastern edge of the borough boundary is likely to have different characteristics to the rest of the sub-market but it is too small to be able to accurately separate. The figure below shows entry-level and average prices in the remaining East sub-market. The figure shows that estimated entry-level prices ranged from £80,500 for a one bedroom property up to £170,500 for four bedrooms. Average prices were generally around 20% higher than the minimums.
Central Sub Market
The ‘Central’ sub market is focused on the town centre and contains the wards of Poplars & Hulme, Orford, Bewsey & Whitecross, Fairfield & Howley, Latchford West and Latchford East. This sub-market recorded the lowest entry-level prices in the Borough, however there are no visual signs of market weakness in this area such as long term vacant properties or unusual untidiness.

Again minimum and average property prices were identified for one, two, three and four bedroom homes. These results are presented in the figure below.

The figure shows that estimated entry-level prices ranged from £73,500 for a one bedroom dwelling to £153,500 for a four bedroom property. Average prices were generally around 25-35% higher than the minimums, the highest of all sub-markets reflecting evidence for two distinct markets in operation in the town centre.

![Figure 6.5 Property prices Central Sub Market](image)

Source: Survey of Estate and Lettings Agents (2007)

Private Rented Sub-Markets Within Warrington
Average and minimum rents were also collected from agents and the internet. Whilst there were five distinct markets for owner-occupation only three were identified for the private rented sector. There are relatively few properties available for rent in Culcheth and Croft so this area is considered part of the North West rental market. No real distinction was recorded between the rental costs in the East and Central areas so these were grouped to form one private rented sub-market. The map below illustrates the three areas.
The table below shows the average and minimum rents in the South. The table indicates that minimum weekly rents varied from £124 (one bed) to £230 (four beds) with average rents around 15% more expensive than this.

### Table 6.1 Minimum and average private rents in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property size</th>
<th>Minimum rent (weekly)</th>
<th>Average rent (weekly)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>£124</td>
<td>£135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms</td>
<td>£136</td>
<td>£154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>£156</td>
<td>£189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bedrooms</td>
<td>£230</td>
<td>£297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey of Estate and Lettings Agents (2007)
The table below shows the average and minimum rents in the North West market of Warrington. The table indicates that minimum weekly rents varied from £106 (one bed) to £203 (four beds) with average rents around 15% more expensive than this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property size</th>
<th>Minimum rent (weekly)</th>
<th>Average rent (weekly)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>£106</td>
<td>£117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms</td>
<td>£121</td>
<td>£134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>£142</td>
<td>£166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bedrooms</td>
<td>£203</td>
<td>£258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey of Estate and Lettings Agents (2007)

The table below shows the average and minimum rents in East Central. The table indicates that minimum weekly rents varied from £97 (one bed) to £179 (four beds) with average rents around 12% more expensive than this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property size</th>
<th>Minimum rent (weekly)</th>
<th>Average rent (weekly)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>£97</td>
<td>£104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms</td>
<td>£113</td>
<td>£127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>£132</td>
<td>£156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bedrooms</td>
<td>£179</td>
<td>£222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey of Estate and Lettings Agents (2007)

**Affordable Housing Required**

Overall the survey suggests a shortfall of affordable housing in the Borough of 419 per annum. However, it is also important to look at what types of shortfalls exist within the current stock of affordable housing. This section looks at any mismatches between the need for affordable housing and the supply for different sizes and types of accommodation. This is done through looking at past patterns.

The size and type of accommodation required by households in need is balanced against the size and type of accommodation secured by those who have recently moved into affordable accommodation. This information is derived from the survey. It is assumed that the profile of bedroom requirements for homeless households is identical to that of other households in current need. The size and type of accommodation required is a sustainable measure that reflects the number of people in a household and the household type and ensures the accommodation is suitable for the household over a period of time.

This analysis is shown in the table below which indicates that there are shortfalls for all accommodation types with the exception of three bedroom houses. The largest shortfall is for four bedroom houses followed by one
bedroom flats. The table also suggests that the shortage relative to supply is also greatest for four or more bedroom houses where it is estimated that none of the need can be met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation type</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Supply</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>% of net shortfall</th>
<th>Supply as % of need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom flat</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedroom flat</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedroom house</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedroom house</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+ bedroom house</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,973</td>
<td>1,554</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 3: House Prices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Detached</th>
<th>Semi Detached</th>
<th>Terraced</th>
<th>Flat/ Maisonette</th>
<th>Average Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>£106,131</td>
<td>£55,980</td>
<td>£42,748</td>
<td>£37,356</td>
<td>£67,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>£108,410</td>
<td>£56,265</td>
<td>£36,495</td>
<td>£48,777</td>
<td>£59,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>£121,082</td>
<td>£69,819</td>
<td>£60,257</td>
<td>£72,803</td>
<td>£79,804</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land Registry Property Price Report 3rd Quarter 1997 (July to September)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Detached</th>
<th>Semi Detached</th>
<th>Terraced</th>
<th>Flat/ Maisonette</th>
<th>Average Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>£129,202</td>
<td>£66,619</td>
<td>£49,682</td>
<td>£52,105</td>
<td>£78,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>£121,075</td>
<td>£61,612</td>
<td>£40,434</td>
<td>£59,615</td>
<td>£67,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>£144,746</td>
<td>£83,732</td>
<td>£74,096</td>
<td>£93,672</td>
<td>£97,616</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land Registry Property Price Report 3rd Quarter 1999 (July to September)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Detached</th>
<th>Semi Detached</th>
<th>Terraced</th>
<th>Flat/ Maisonette</th>
<th>Average Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>£193,136</td>
<td>£96,377</td>
<td>£67,772</td>
<td>£74,485</td>
<td>£114,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>£150,056</td>
<td>£74,717</td>
<td>£46,232</td>
<td>£77,806</td>
<td>£79,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>£220,695</td>
<td>£127,009</td>
<td>£108,684</td>
<td>£144,167</td>
<td>£146,150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land Registry Property Price Report 3rd Quarter 2001 (July to September)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Detached</th>
<th>Semi Detached</th>
<th>Terraced</th>
<th>Flat/ Maisonette</th>
<th>Average Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>£225,123</td>
<td>£120,136</td>
<td>£82,101</td>
<td>£89,036</td>
<td>£134,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>£209,511</td>
<td>£109,652</td>
<td>£64,692</td>
<td>£104,680</td>
<td>£107,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>£250,715</td>
<td>£145,576</td>
<td>£120,685</td>
<td>£152,446</td>
<td>£161,665</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land Registry Property Price Report 3rd Quarter 2003 (July to September)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Detached</th>
<th>Semi Detached</th>
<th>Terraced</th>
<th>Flat/ Maisonette</th>
<th>Average Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>£258,855</td>
<td>£156,872</td>
<td>£110,295</td>
<td>£126,678</td>
<td>£167,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>£267,385</td>
<td>£146,908</td>
<td>£94,238</td>
<td>£132,683</td>
<td>£140,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>£284,145</td>
<td>£170,816</td>
<td>£143,771</td>
<td>£172,196</td>
<td>£187,971</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land Registry Property Price Report 3rd Quarter 2005 (July to September)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Detached</th>
<th>Semi Detached</th>
<th>Terraced</th>
<th>Flat/ Maisonette</th>
<th>Average Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>£296,110</td>
<td>£155,260</td>
<td>£128,489</td>
<td>£136,787</td>
<td>£180,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>£280,306</td>
<td>£155,102</td>
<td>£105,056</td>
<td>£135,006</td>
<td>£152,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>£319,746</td>
<td>£189,929</td>
<td>£167,259</td>
<td>£189,868</td>
<td>£211,453</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land Registry Property Price Report, 3rd Quarter 2006 (July to September)