



REDCAR & CLEVELAND HOUSING STRATEGY 2006 - 2010

DEVELOPING THE HOUSING STRATEGY

This Housing Strategy has been developed by the Redcar & Cleveland Strategic Partnership (RCSP), a partnership representing the Council, housing associations, statutory agencies, private sector, community and voluntary groups. Members of the Partnership have made a commitment to work together to make the Strategy Vision a reality.

The Strategy has been developed following a process of research and analysis, using new and existing information from a range of sources and local partners, and feedback from consultation with the community and other stakeholders. Following this analysis, the RCSP developed and agreed priorities and actions, considering the options and resources available for delivery.

In addition to considering the evidence of housing issues in Redcar & Cleveland, the RCSP assessed how priorities and actions would contribute to the [Community Strategy](#) vision for Redcar & Cleveland to be **“an attractive place to live, visit, work and invest.”**

This Strategy reflects the main priorities for investment and improvement in housing within Redcar & Cleveland, and include a vision and objectives that public, private, voluntary and community agencies can share. It sets out the long-term aims for housing within the Borough, looking at the challenges we need to address and identifying the necessary actions to deliver long lasting improvements.

The main elements of the Strategy are set out as follows:

Vision

Our Vision for Housing in Redcar & Cleveland is

‘To make Redcar & Cleveland the place to live’

Objectives

To deliver this vision we have identified four strategic priorities. The RCSP prioritised them with reference to local conditions and the aims of the [Regional Housing Strategy](#). In order of importance they are: -

- 1. To address housing market failure and to create sustainable, inclusive and cohesive communities where people choose to live**
- 2. To improve and maintain the conditions and management of existing housing and neighbourhoods and provide housing that is healthy, energy efficient and safe;**
- 3. To facilitate the development and adaptation of housing to meet the specialised needs of specific sections of the community; and**
- 4. To facilitate the development of new housing in sufficient numbers to meet the present and future needs of the Borough, and to take account of aspirations for better housing and a balanced housing stock**

The Housing Strategy is structured around these priorities.

ADDRESSING HOUSING MARKET FAILURE

The problems associated with housing market failure are the most significant issue to address within the Borough. The oversupply of older housing, particularly within the Greater Eston area, has precipitated a serious decline within these communities.

A number of areas are suffering from low demand and declining neighbourhoods and these include a mixture of houses in the rented sector. Grangetown, South Bank and Dormanstown form a concentrated area along the south bank of the Tees with high proportions of homes in the housing association sector, with a similar picture in Kirkleatham. Coatham in Redcar has a notably different profile with two-thirds of its properties owner-occupied and almost 30% in the private rented sector.

The problems of low demand and neighbourhood decline are not solely the result of the poor condition of older housing or concentrations of poorly designed rented housing, but stem from a number of factors. These include crime and anti-social behaviour which lead to a spiral of decline and decay. Our plans seek to address all the contributing factors including community safety, poor community infrastructure, worklessness, poor health, and low educational attainment.

Sub-regional housing market renewal

We understand that housing market failure is a cross local authority boundary issue and, as such, can only be effectively addressed by neighbouring authorities and housing providers working in partnership. We have, therefore, been instrumental in developing the sub-regional partnership, [Tees Valley Living](#) (TVL), who have recently attracted £18.25m housing market renewal funding from the Government. TVL will continue to play a significant part in the effective delivery of plans. Housing associations contribute towards addressing housing market failure through their business plans, although it is recognised that this in itself will not provide sufficient resources to tackle the scale of the problem.

The TVL Housing Market Renewal Strategy has identified Greater Eston in its entirety and the Redcar wards of Dormanstown, Coatham, Newcomen and Kirkleatham as within the strategic boundary for intervention. There is also recognition of the need for regeneration within the East Cleveland villages of Brotton and Loftus.

Our plans for Greater Eston

Addressing housing market failure in Greater Eston is our top priority for investment. Greater Eston is formed by six wards: Eston; Grangetown; Normanby; Ormesby (northern part); Teesville; and South Bank.

In 2001 the [Greater Eston Planning and Regeneration Strategy](#) (GEPRS) was produced which provided a robust and visionary long-term strategy for the future planning of the area, including issues associated with the operation of the housing market, retail provision, environment and urban design, the economy, and transportation. It seeks to stabilise the housing market through the creation of sustainable communities.

The Greater Eston approach has been further developed by the production of a Sustainable Communities Plan. The Plan compliments the GEPRS and the development of the [South Bank Housing Renewal Plan](#). The process of producing these plans involved extensive consultation with the community in the form of workshops and drop-in sessions, and with stakeholders and community groups.

The South Bank Housing Renewal Plan, which was agreed by Cabinet in March 2006, recommends the demolition of 350 terraced properties within a Priority Area, linked to the development of 900 new mixed-tenure houses on a site at Low Grange Farm integrated with a new district centre, a new Health and Social Care Village, community woodland, linking with PFI funded primary and secondary school development and improved recreation and leisure provision.

The impact of this intervention on the retained housing area will be closely monitored over the next two years, including any potential developer interest in the cleared site. It is recognised, however, that there can be no certainty that this 'retain and monitor' approach will achieve the level of housing market stability required to secure a long-term future for this area.

Delivery to date has been funded by a successful bid for Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) funding, enabling us to acquire 150 properties for clearance. A second SHIP bid, made on a sub-regional basis, has also been successful, securing a further £2.8m to deliver the South Bank Housing Renewal Plan over the next two years, which will be supplemented by a share of the Government funding allocated through TVL. A mixture of funding, including Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), has been secured to employ a Renewal Team who have operational responsibility for delivering the Plan.

The Council has also identified £1.1m capital receipts from the sale of land within Greater Eston for investment in housing market renewal. This development will also provide 78 low-cost homes, contributing to the aims of the GEPRS.

In addition to the South Bank Housing Renewal Plan, there is recognition that there is a need to develop a Masterplan for the rest of the Greater Eston area, in particular Grangetown, which is a recommendation within the Sustainable Communities Plan. NRF funding has been secured to progress this work during 2006/07.

Our plans to address housing market failure in other neighbourhoods

Although our priority for investment is Greater Eston, we recognise that other areas of the Borough are facing housing market failure and will need intervention.

The Courts redevelopment in West Redcar has been the focus of recent investment to demolish over 200 obsolete system-built flats and redevelop the site to provide 370 homes (100 of which are housing association rented) retail outlets, a new library and a range of community facilities including a Youth and Community Centre. Bellway, Persimmon and Tees Valley Housing Group formed a business partnership to deliver this project; the first phase of housing was delivered in 2005.

A further priority area is Brotton. A neighbourhood renewal assessment (NRA) was completed in 2005. It covers an area of mixed residential/commercial use comprising 385 pre-1919 privately owned terraced houses demonstrating early signs of market failure. A stakeholder steering group has operated throughout the implementation of the study.

Brotton is typical of many villages in East Cleveland, which expanded to meet the housing needs associated with the former iron stone mining industry. The final report recommends an investment plan comprising renovation and selective demolition to

achieve a sustainable community. However, in order to deliver this programme, additional funds will need to be secured from other sources.

The Council and private developer Persimmon are leading on [Coatham Links](#), an ambitious redevelopment plan to create a vibrant leisure destination in Redcar to re-energise a popular tourist, seaside, visitor and cultural destination. In addition to offering a range of leisure facilities, there are plans for over 300 homes comprising apartments, town houses, family houses and retirement apartments within a unique seafront location. An element of affordable housing will also be included in the development.

To inform where money should be spent to bring homes to the decent homes standard and contribute to sustainable communities, the major housing association in the Borough, Coast & Country Housing (CCH), is carrying out neighbourhood assessments. These are based on areas, identified by their business plan, at risk of housing decline and low demand. These high-risk areas are priority areas targeted by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF).

In addition to those listed above, they include the [Burnmoor/Blayberry](#) estate in West Redcar (where work has commenced on the demolition of 240 properties, with plans to re-provide a mixed-tenure development); [Westfield Estate](#) in Loftus; parts of Newcomen ward in Redcar; and the western extremity of Dormanstown. The Council will seek to work with CCH in securing funding to deliver the outcomes of these assessments to create long-term sustainability.

WHAT WE WILL DO THROUGH THIS HOUSING STRATEGY

BY 2007

- Deliver Phase 1 of the South Bank Housing Renewal Plan
- Commission a Masterplanning Exercise for Greater Eston
- Secure Funding to Deliver Recommendations of Brotton NRA

BY 2008

- Monitor the Impact of Intervention on the Wider South Bank Housing Market
- Deliver the Remaining Phases of The Courts Redevelopment
- Finalise, Assist in Securing Funding and Deliver the Neighbourhood Assessment Outcomes within NRF Areas

BY 2009

- Deliver Affordable and Special Needs Housing Elements of Coatham Links Development

BY 2010

- Assist with the Delivery of the TVL HMR Strategy

IMPROVING THE CONDITION AND MANAGEMENT OF EXISTING HOUSING

Homes and neighbourhoods play a large part in the health and wellbeing of people. This chapter describes how we will deliver housing services to contribute to healthy communities to ensure residents feel secure in their home and neighbourhood.

Decent Homes

The Government has set a target to ensure that 70% of housing occupied by vulnerable residents in the private sector is of a decent standard by 2010. The decent homes target for social housing is for 100% compliance by 2010.

The RCSP has identified decent homes as the second highest strategic priority in the Borough.

Social Housing

Whilst acknowledging and endorsing the Government's decent homes target, the RCSP does not recognise the term 'social housing' as we believe it is unhelpful and makes a negative contribution to the Housing and Social Inclusion agenda. We prefer to identify the rented sector, managed by both housing associations and private landlords.

Housing associations (HAs) manage 13,760 homes in Redcar & Cleveland; these account for 22% of the Borough's housing.

In 2002 the Council successfully transferred its stock of 11,500 homes to Coast & Country Housing (CCH). This decision was taken to secure investment of £176m to bring houses up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010, and to create sustainable communities. CCH is on course to meet the target, having reduced the percentage of non-decent homes from 79% in 2002/03 to 35% in 2005/06.

The issue of non-decent housing owned by other HAs is less significant, with 12.5% of their total housing stock in the Borough failing to achieve the standard. The RCSP has established monitoring arrangements to ensure that the decent homes target is achieved by all HAs in the Borough by 2010.

Private Sector Housing

69% of the Borough's homes are owner occupied and 5.5% are privately rented (Census 2001). Therefore, the biggest challenge facing housing partners is to bring homes in the private sector up to a decent standard and, in particular, to meet the Government's decent homes targets.

Stock Condition

The last comprehensive private sector house condition survey was undertaken before the Government set the Decent Homes target. However, the Council has developed a measure of decency using the ODPM 'Ready Reckoner'. This indicates that there are 47.6% of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes in the private sector.

An up-to-date Private Sector Stock Condition Survey will be commissioned during 2006. This will provide the baseline information needed to measure progress towards the Government's decent homes targets in the private sector.

There is a clear link between low value owner-occupied properties and housing condition; 64% of homes in the Borough are in Council Tax Bands A or B. Low value

owner-occupied properties are more likely to be in poor repair. Owners of such properties are least likely to be able to afford repairs and improvements to their property.

The introduction of the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS), replacing the housing fitness standard, has now been determined, and the Council will use this when commissioning the comprehensive survey of private sector housing condition. The results will be used to further enhance our private sector housing policies.

Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy

The Council published its first [Housing Renewal Policy 2003](#) (updated in [2004](#)) which describes how we will assist people in the private sector.

In 2002, a Tees Valley Private Sector Housing Group was set up to ensure that individual housing renewal policies had the flexibility to accommodate local priorities and maintain consistency at a sub-regional level. Work is now focussed on the introduction of the key Housing Act 2004 requirements, including joint training and consistent enforcement of the Decent Homes Standard, HHSRS and licensing in the private rented sector.

Our Housing Renewal Policy was developed in consultation with service users and the general public, neighbouring authorities, representatives of vulnerable people, Age Concern, Langbaugh PCT, contractors and funders, housing associations and private landlords. This work has ensured we are in a good position to implement the Housing Act 2004. The policy offers a range of financial and non-financial assistance including loans (recognised in the ODPM Good Practice Guide), Homeswap and relocation schemes, a range of housing advice and a Home Improvement Agency.

Managing Empty Homes

There are 1300 empty homes in the Borough, of which 750 have been empty for more than six months. We are developing a more comprehensive and up-to-date database of empty homes in the Borough.

There are two distinct issues: -

- 1) There is an over supply of obsolete housing within Greater Eston
- 2) There are individual empty properties in areas of housing demand.

The [Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy](#) aims to contribute to creating a sustainable environment by bringing homes back into use where there is an identified need, and through a range of alternative solutions in areas of oversupply.

It includes the development of housing assistance for empty properties and the formation of a corporate working group, taking into account private sector housing renewal reforms including the use of empty home management orders.

The Empty Homes Strategy will be reviewed during 2006/07 through the RCSP, and the process will include extensive consultation utilising, at its core, the Community Empowerment Network and Compact, the council website and other appropriate media.

Affordable warmth and energy efficiency

To address the issues of fuel poverty, the Council launched an [Affordable Warmth Strategy](#) in summer 2001. Through the development of the strategy, the Council was able to negotiate the location of a Warm Zone within our Borough.

The Warm Zone ended in March 2005; its main aim was to assist at least 80% of the fuel poor homes in the Borough to achieve affordable warmth, through the installation of energy efficient measures inclusive of loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and heating measures.

In order to build upon these successes, the Tees Valley local authorities have devised a joint project to offer residents, particularly vulnerable and those on low incomes, a package of energy efficient measures such as wall and loft insulation. This will build upon existing successful partnerships with major energy suppliers in the sub-region, and will deliver a reduction in fuel poverty and a saving to the environment. The project has been successful in attracting SHIP funding from the North East Housing Board.

Managing Houses in Multiple Occupation

There are 474 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the Borough of which 35 have been assessed as licensable. The Housing Act 2004 introduced mandatory licensing of HMOs and licence fees were set in March 2006. The Council is working with landlords to ensure that appropriate licences cover all such premises by summer 2006.

Managing the Private Rented Sector

We work with private landlords through the Teesside Landlords Forum; this ensures that consultation and the promotion of activities in the private sector are consistent across the Tees Valley authorities. We will consider introducing selective licensing within low demand areas; this will be subject to consultation, in particular with the [Community Safety Partnership](#).

WHAT WE WILL DO THROUGH THIS HOUSING STRATEGY:

BY 2007

- Commission an Up-To-Date Private Sector House Condition Survey
- Review the Empty Homes Strategy
- Ensure Full Coverage for Mandatory HMO Licensing Scheme

BY 2008

- Deliver the Tees Valley Energy Efficiency Project

BY 2009

- Consider the Introduction of Selective Licensing in the Private Rented Sector

BY 2010

- Ensure 100% of Housing Association Homes Meet the Decent Homes Standard
- Ensure 70% of Vulnerable Households in the Private Sector Live in Decent Housing

MEETING THE NEEDS OF SPECIFIC SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY

We recognise the diverse needs of households and will continue to provide advice, support services and accommodation that will prevent homelessness and enable people to live independent lives. This supports the [Community Strategy](#) and Council's [Strategic Plan](#) objectives to promote social inclusion, reduce social inequalities and ensure equality of access for all.

We have developed a partnership approach to meeting housing related support needs in Redcar & Cleveland. The Homelessness and Supporting People Strategies were developed on this basis, and during the process of developing this Strategy we reviewed the effectiveness of existing arrangements.

Reducing Homelessness in Redcar & Cleveland

This Strategy supports the [Homelessness Strategy](#) in seeking to reduce homelessness. The Homelessness Strategy aims to: -

- Prevent homelessness;
- Secure sufficient temporary accommodation;
- Maximise the provision of permanent accommodation, and
- Deliver support services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

The strategy identified specific action to tackle the main causes of homelessness. Preventative measures have been introduced and this work will be expanded. Levels of homelessness in Redcar & Cleveland have begun to reduce since the introduction of the strategy, down by 27.2% in 2005/06, and we will continue to monitor this to identify trends and causes.

The Homelessness Strategy will be due for review during 2007. As with the current strategy, this review process will be co-ordinated by a multi-agency steering group, under the auspices of the RCSP, to ensure that a partnership approach and action plan is developed.

Supporting People to Live Independently

This Strategy supports the aims and objectives of the [Supporting People Strategy 2005 - 2010](#).

The strategy identifies three priorities: -

- Enabling support and accommodation for older people
- Enabling support and accommodation for young people
- Researching the housing related support needs to inform strategy development

Supporting People programme

The RCSP and Supporting People Commissioning Body work together to ensure our strategies and plans complement each other. Other partnership boards e.g. Learning Disabilities and local planning groups are also involved in developing and managing the programme.

In conjunction with the Community Safety Partnership, we have developed a Risk Assessment Tool for housing providers to use to improve access into mainstream and supported housing for people with drug problems. We will continue to work

with housing providers to increase the awareness and use of this tool, in order to improve assessment of the risk of housing current or former drug users.

The 2006/07 Supporting People programme is £2.24m and supports 60 services offering support to 3670 service users. The reduction in the programme from 2005/06 was smaller than most other authorities and this reflects that the Borough would be likely to see an increase in funding in future years should the Government decide to implement its distribution formula as originally proposed. The Commissioning Body and RCSP will work closely to manage future increases or decreases in programme funding.

The RCSP, through its NRF programme, together with the Council's own resources, has identified funding to commission consultants to research support needs across the Borough and to make recommendations on future commissioning priorities. This research will look at the needs of all vulnerable groups and consider how well the current processes of joint planning and commissioning will support the delivery of future priorities.

The results of this research, which also includes how key elements such as housing, health and care needs affect the way in which support can be delivered, will be used to inform the annual review of priorities for the Supporting People Strategy. Future priorities will also take account of the National Strategy for Supporting People due to be published in autumn 2006.

Gypsy and Traveller Needs

The Council adopted its first [Gypsy & Traveller Strategy](#) in 2005. The objectives of this strategy are: -

- To balance the rights and needs of resident communities with those of Gypsies and Travellers
- To manage unauthorised camping having regard to the level of nuisance and the rights and responsibilities of Gypsies and Travellers
- To work with partners to address issues of social exclusion amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities

The Council will take lead responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the strategy. A full review will be undertaken, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, residents and members of the travelling community, during 2007.

WHAT WE WILL DO THROUGH THIS HOUSING STRATEGY:

BY 2007

- Complete and Publish the Supporting People Needs Analysis
- Review Supporting People Priorities on an Annual Basis

BY 2008

- Expand the Range of Homelessness Prevention Initiatives
- Review the Current Homelessness Strategy
- Review the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy

BY 2009

- Work with Housing Providers to Increase Awareness and Use of the Risk Assessment Tool for Housing People with Drug Problems

BY 2010

- Deliver the Agreed Priorities of the Supporting People Strategy

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