



Greater Norwich Housing Strategy Key Issues in the Housing Strategy and Action Plan



2008 – 2011
March 2008

“To ensure there are sufficient decent homes which people can afford, in places they want to live, within sustainable and thriving communities.”



Introduction

Greater Norwich covers the administrative areas of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Councils. After extensive research and analysis (collated in the Greater Norwich Housing Review), the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership created a new Housing Strategy and an Action Plan for the Sub-region. Both these documents were adopted by the three Councils in early 2008, and were endorsed by all other members of the Partnership.

This document summarises the main issues that affect housing in Greater Norwich, and sets out how the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership will work together and with others to deliver the vision set out above. Activity is set out under the same six Strategic Aims that form the basis of the Strategy and the Action Plan.

All associated documents are available on the websites of the three Councils:

www.broadland.gov.uk

www.norwich.gov.uk

www.south-norfolk.gov.uk

All members of the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership will be involved in delivering the actions: local authorities, Housing Associations, private developers and voluntary organisations.

Moving towards a balanced housing market

Comment	Issues	What we are going to do
<p>We have completed a Housing Needs Survey and a Housing Market Assessment, which provide a lot of information about all aspects of the Greater Norwich housing market (owner occupation, private rent and affordable housing – including social rented accommodation).</p> <p>We want the housing market to be 'balanced'. Ideally this would mean that the supply of accommodation by size, type, location and tenure matches what people want. Prices would also be affordable so that nobody was prevented from obtaining the home they need because they could not afford it.</p> <p>Clearly, this aim is a long term ambition, but we are determined to intervene to make the housing market more balanced by 2011.</p> <p>Greater Norwich is growing rapidly, with 40,000 new homes needed between 2006 and 2026, so we need to ensure that new housing complements the existing stock.</p>	<p>There is a shortage of family homes in some parts of Greater Norwich (mainly in Norwich) and a shortage of smaller properties in other areas.</p>	<p>We will use research evidence to justify policies which influence developers to build an appropriate mix of property types and sizes.</p>
	<p>The new homes must be well-planned so that there is good availability of shops, schools, health facilities and access to employment.</p>	<p>Planning for the growth of Greater Norwich is through the Local Development Framework. Evolving policies are intended to ensure that locational and design aspects deliver high quality development.</p>
	<p>Despite high rates of building by developers, many newly-forming households are unable to afford to buy a home on the open market. We need to keep up the supply of new homes and make available alternative tenures for those who cannot afford to buy.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver the number of homes required each year by the East of England Plan; • work to ensure that 30% of new homes are affordable (available at less than their market cost); • work with landlords to increase the supply of good quality private rented accommodation.
	<p>The housing market is likely to change during the next three years. We need to be aware of what is happening so that we can respond quickly if necessary.</p>	<p>We will update the findings of the Housing Market Assessment in 2009, and we plan a further Housing Needs Survey for 2010. The findings will inform planning policy and provide the context for the next Housing Strategy.</p>

Building sustainable and thriving communities

Comment	Issues	What we are going to do
<p>Housing is about much more than bricks and mortar. The Greater Norwich Housing Strategy acknowledges the government's vision of sustainable communities: places that offer everyone a decent home that they can afford in a community in which they want to live and work, now and in the future.</p>	<p>Social inclusion: we need to take account of the population profile in establishing stable and sustainable neighbourhoods. This includes responding to the requirements of minority groups.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote equality and accessibility; • act on the findings of recent research into the housing and support needs of Black and Minority Ethnic communities; • identify and deliver suitable locations for Gypsies and Travellers.
<p>Housing activity can contribute greatly to 'place shaping' and the economic and social sustainability of communities. The Housing Strategy sets out how this is to be delivered.</p> <p>As landlords, Norwich City Council and Housing Associations can have a direct impact through the design of homes, and the design, maintenance and management of communal areas.</p>	<p>Fear of crime can have a devastating effect on the quality of life, even where the crime rate is quite low. Good practice and working with partners can build and maintain social sustainability.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage development which includes a high level of security; • improve design standards; • maintain communal areas; • participate in Safer Neighbourhood Action Panels and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.
	<p>Victims of domestic violence and hate crime require suitable accommodation and support.</p>	<p>We will create a strategy to deal better with domestic violence. We will improve and increase the women's refuge provision in Broadland and Norwich.</p>
	<p>Regardless of tenure, location or social status, communities may require support to ensure they are healthy and work well. A wide variety of agencies are involved, and housing organisations can ensure that communities are places where people want to live.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate and implement improved management practice; • contribute to training and employment initiatives for tenants; • investigate the need for accommodation and support for young people.

Maximising opportunities for delivering more affordable housing

Comment	Issues	What we are going to do
<p>Affordability is a serious problem in Greater Norwich. Currently the average cost of a home is over 8 times the average income, so few potential first time buyers are able to achieve owner occupation.</p> <p>Increasing the supply of affordable housing and making it available are key strategic issues for the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership.</p>	<p>Each year there is a need for 841 additional affordable homes in Greater Norwich. All sizes and types are required, from one bedroom flats for newly-forming households to larger family houses. Well over 80% of the need is for social rented housing, but 'intermediate tenure' such as shared ownership can meet the requirements of significant numbers of people.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximise the potential of the £60 million available during 2008-11 from the Housing Corporation to provide a range of affordable housing; • improve the efficiency and effectiveness of working arrangements; • develop further planning policy and use it to maximise the delivery of affordable housing through negotiation with developers.
<p>Some groups within the community require specialist accommodation to help them move towards living independently. Identifying need and creating the opportunity to provide suitable housing entails close partnership working by Housing Associations, local authorities and other partners within the sub-region and beyond it.</p>	<p>There is a specific issue in rural areas, where people are often unable to acquire a home in the village where their social links are.</p>	<p>Working with parish councils and Housing Association partners, Broadland and South Norfolk Councils will use planning policy to provide housing for local needs, and will provide finance toward the cost.</p>
	<p>Supported accommodation is required for: young people, older people, people with physical disabilities, people who misuse substances, offenders and vulnerable women.</p>	<p>We will deliver more supported housing for these identified groups. Arrangements will include revenue funding to provide support. We will ensure the completion of schemes with funding in place and work together to create viable proposals to meet other identified requirements.</p>

Achieving decent, healthy and environmentally sustainable homes across all tenures

Comment	Issues	What we are going to do
<p>We need to ensure that all housing, whether newly-built or already in existence, is suitable for modern requirements and is as environmentally sustainable as possible.</p> <p>Over 80% of homes in Greater Norwich are in the private sector. It is vital that the occupiers (whether owners or tenants) are able to remain in their home. Therefore the condition must be maintained or improved, and any necessary adaptations must be made.</p> <p>Energy efficiency is a key issue in improving environmental sustainability. Action is required to improve standards in new and existing housing in all tenures.</p> <p>The private rented sector, although not large in comparison with other sub-regions, fulfils an important role in providing housing which meets people's needs. We want the sector to grow and to provide good quality accommodation.</p>	<p>Work is still required to bring all social housing up to the Decent Homes standard by 2010.</p>	<p>Norwich City Council and all Housing Associations have programmes in place to achieve the target.</p>
	<p>Vulnerable people in the private sector need assistance to improve their home so that it meets their requirements.</p>	<p>We will target help, seeking to increase the proportion of vulnerable people in decent homes to 70% by 2010.</p>
	<p>People in all sectors need help to adapt their home to make it suitable for their physical requirements.</p>	<p>We will review working arrangements and make funding available for occupiers of private sector and Housing Association properties.</p>
	<p>The energy efficiency of the housing stock must be improved to contribute to environmental sustainability.</p>	<p>Decent Homes work is increasing the standards in Housing Association homes. We will raise public awareness and focus our resources on the private sector.</p>
	<p>The private rented sector requires regulation and quality control so that those who rely on it can be sure that the quality will be acceptable.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that all qualifying Houses in Multiple Occupation are licensed; • promote the private landlord accreditation scheme.
	<p>Empty homes are a wasted resource. At a time of housing shortage we want to see homes occupied.</p>	<p>We will produce a joint project plan for empty homes and implement it.</p>
	<p>We need to be assured that the quality of housing in the private sector is improving.</p>	<p>We plan another private sector stock condition survey for 2010 so that we can monitor the effectiveness of our activity and review our priorities if necessary.</p>

Providing choice and fair access to services

Comment	Issues	What we are going to do
<p>We need to ensure that all people have an opportunity to obtain accommodation suitable for their needs, and provide them with the skills and opportunity to live as independently as possible in the community.</p> <p>This Aim covers a wide range of activity such as preventing homelessness, providing a fair and transparent means of accessing affordable housing, and making the best use of hostel accommodation.</p> <p>The availability of and access to support is crucial in enabling people to obtain and retain their home if they are unable to do so without assistance.</p> <p>An overriding consideration is to ensure equality. Arrangements must ensure that no individual or group encounters problems because of their background or circumstances. It is essential that all activity has embedded within it procedures to ensure fairness and equality of service.</p>	<p>Homelessness: the focus is on prevention, and we need to ensure that parts of society are treated fairly.</p>	<p>We will implement the new Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy and its Action Plan.</p>
	<p>Hostels fulfil a vital role in providing people with the ability to live independently. We need to make the best use of this resource.</p>	<p>We will implement the new Greater Norwich Hostel Strategy and its Action Plan. This includes effective move-on arrangements for residents.</p>
	<p>Arrangements for access to affordable housing must be clear and fair. The new Choice Based Lettings scheme is intended to achieve this.</p>	<p>We will monitor carefully how the scheme is working, and respond to any problems. We will undertake a thorough review of the scheme in 2009.</p>
	<p>Support for people who require it to enable them to live independently is an integral part of housing activity. We need to ensure that this limited resource is delivered to those who need it and is used effectively.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to the development of the Supporting People programme; • contribute to monitoring the sub-regional floating support contract; • ensure that new and existing supported housing makes the best use of revenue attached to it; • contribute to creating, delivering and reviewing client group strategies.
	<p>The Housing Strategy itself has undergone an Equalities Impact Assessment, and we need to ensure that this approach applies to all activities of Partnership members.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage and use data to ensure that services are fair and equitable; • adopt best practice, including a Compact committing partners to a positive programme of action.

Delivering outcomes through effective partnership working

Comment	Issues	What we are going to do
<p>The Greater Norwich Housing Partnership is the key organisation in delivering the Housing Strategy and Action Plan. In 2006 the Partnership commissioned a review of its practices and effectiveness. This led to a series of action points which are intended to improve performance.</p>	<p>The Greater Norwich Housing partnership needs to implement the actions agreed following the review. This will ensure the best use of the Partnership members' resources.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appoint a Sub-regional Strategic Co-ordinator; • use the Co-ordinator to monitor the implementation of the Housing Strategy Action Plan; • seek ways to co-ordinate training and pooling of resources.
<p>The actions in this section concern the internal structure and how partners work together, and how the Partnership acts coherently in the context of national and regional policy.</p>	<p>As housing policy evolves through the Local Development Framework, we need to ensure that sub-regional housing and planning structures work together.</p>	<p>We will establish and use clear links with the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, including Joint Policy Group meetings.</p>
<p>The benefits of implementing the review's findings include better outcomes through effective working, the chance influence national and regional policy, and the ability to increase funding for the Sub-region.</p>	<p>Greater Norwich can gain clear benefits by acting sub-regionally when in contact with bodies such as central and regional government and the Housing Corporation.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure active participation in the Regional Housing Advisory Group; • respond to consultation on a sub-regional basis where appropriate; • seek opportunities to bid for funding to support the delivery of the Housing Strategy.
	<p>We expect the Partnership to be the basis for creating the next Housing Strategy which will take forward policy and deliver a new Action Plan from 2011.</p>	<p>We will establish a project team and a plan to deliver a Fit For Purpose Housing Strategy in 2011.</p>