



**Greater Norwich  
Housing Strategy  
2008 – 2011**

**March 2008**



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Housing Challenges in Greater Norwich**

Greater Norwich's housing market has substantial imbalances. We need to improve the situation by increasing the supply of homes, especially in the affordable housing sector. This housing activity must contribute to building sustainable and thriving communities. A key challenge is addressing the annual need for 841 affordable homes.

It is essential to ensure that the existing housing stock is in good condition and meets the needs of residents. Even with an adequate supply of good quality housing, it is necessary to ensure that people can gain access to it; this means providing support in appropriate circumstances.

Partnership working is essential to deliver all aspects of housing activity through the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership.

### **Strategic Aim 1: Moving Towards a Balanced Housing Market**

The Greater Norwich Sub-region is a housing market in its own right, centred on the Norwich urban area. It contains ten housing market areas. The Housing Market Assessment has provided detailed analysis, and we will build on its findings by agreeing policy recommendations. While delivering the Regional Spatial Strategy, we will seek to move towards a more balanced housing market in a sustainable way and ensure that the type of housing available is capable of meeting a diversity of needs and requirements.

### **Strategic Aim 2: Building Sustainable and Thriving Communities**

Housing activity can make a significant contribution to delivering the government's and Greater Norwich's aspirations. We will contribute to place shaping by working with local communities. Policies will take account of diversity by addressing social exclusion and meeting the needs of minority groups, including Gypsies and Travellers.

This aim also includes the encouragement of a more cohesive society and an acknowledgement of the government's Respect agenda which aims to create communities where mutual respect is present.

We will support communities through improved management and joint working at the local level. This should reduce the fear of crime and improve community safety. Local communities must have a sense of ownership of plans so that their neighbourhoods provide the living environment that residents want.

### **Strategic Aim 3: Maximising Opportunities for Delivering Affordable Housing**

We will pursue policies to address all aspects of affordable housing need, recognising that intermediate tenures are required as well as social rented

accommodation. The Housing Corporation's 2008/11 funding programme will be important, and planning policy will be crucial.

We will work together to improve delivery and pursue innovation. Housing in rural areas and supported accommodation will address specific shortages. The overall effect will be a year-on-year increase in the stock of affordable housing.

#### **Strategic Aim 4: Achieving Decent, Healthy and Environmentally Sustainable Homes Across all Tenures**

Social landlords will achieve the government's target of all their stock reaching the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. In the private sector we will work towards the target of 70% of the homes occupied by vulnerable households being decent by 2010.

Home Improvement Agencies will co-ordinate activity to improve the private sector stock and make it suitable for residents' needs. This will include improving energy efficiency and targeting Houses in Multiple Occupation. We will also direct resources to deal with empty homes.

#### **Strategic Aim 5: Providing Choice and Fair Access to Services**

We will improve people's opportunity to obtain accommodation suitable for their needs. This will involve tackling homelessness and ensuring that the Sub-region's hostels operate effectively. The introduction of a Choice Based Lettings Scheme in November 2007 will improve the service to applicants for affordable housing.

Supported accommodation and floating support will enable people to live independently in the community, and new provision will help Norfolk Supporting People's priority client groups. We will encourage priority groups to participate in our delivery mechanisms through active feedback and involvement.

We will ensure that all new policies have an impact assessment, and we will target policies and resources at minority groups in appropriate ways.

#### **Strategic Aim 6: Delivering Outcomes through Effective Partnership Working**

Effective partnership working is essential to meet the challenges identified in the Greater Norwich Housing Review. The Greater Norwich Housing Partnership is well-established, and will evolve on the basis of a review by an independent consultant. We will ensure that internal structures and working arrangements are appropriate, and will act sub-regionally when liaising with other agencies.

## FOREWORD

The Greater Norwich Housing Partnership is pleased to present the new Housing Strategy for Greater Norwich, which sets out the key challenges and our vision for housing activity over the next three years. It is important to note that this Strategy is a commitment by all members of the Partnership, not just the three local authorities.

This Strategy comes at a crucial time for Greater Norwich, with rapid growth planned for the area. We have sound intelligence about existing pressure points and imbalances within our housing market, and this Strategy reflects our commitment to tackling these challenges in a planned and holistic way.

The Strategy reflects the strong and effective partnership working that is already established in our Sub-region – the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership – a partnership of all organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors with an interest in housing.

We recognise the substantial benefits of working sub-regionally and of acknowledging that people seek housing solutions across the administrative boundaries of the three councils. Whilst there are differences across Greater Norwich, most notably the contrast between urban and rural areas, there are considerably more housing-related challenges in common. By taking a sub-regional perspective there is an opportunity to find new ways of addressing housing matters locally.

All partners are committed to further strengthening of current joint working arrangements to improve outcomes for all our residents. We are clear that delivering this Strategy also relies on sustaining and developing the current strong collaborative work between local authority, RSL, voluntary and statutory sector partners, benefiting from our ongoing contribution of resources, expertise and energy.

This Strategy is deliberately ambitious and challenging. Greater Norwich is a great place to live and work – we are determined to make it even greater.

### The Greater Norwich Housing Partnership

Anchor Trust	Norfolk Probation Service
Broadland District Council	Norfolk Supporting People
Broadland Housing Association	Norfolk YMCA
CircleAnglia Housing Group	Norwich City Council
Cotman Housing Association	Orbit Housing Group
Flagship Housing Group	Orwell Housing Association
The Guinness Trust	Places for People Group
Habinteg Housing Association	Saffron Housing Trust
Hanover Housing Group	South Norfolk Council
Hastoe Housing Association	St. Martins Housing Trust
Home Group	St. Matthew Housing
Lovell Homes	

## OUR VISION

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

### STRATEGIC AIMS:

- **Moving towards a balanced housing market**

Encouraging a market where people can access the type of homes they want, in a tenure of their choice, for prices they can afford, taking into account the opportunities provided by the Greater Norwich Growth Agenda.

- **Building sustainable and thriving communities**

Developing 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.

- **Maximising opportunities for delivering more affordable housing**

Providing high quality affordable homes of the right types and tenures where people who cannot meet their need on the open market want to live.

- **Achieving decent, healthy and environmentally sustainable homes across all tenures**

Ensuring that new and existing homes meet the requirements of their occupiers, thereby contributing to social and environmental sustainability.

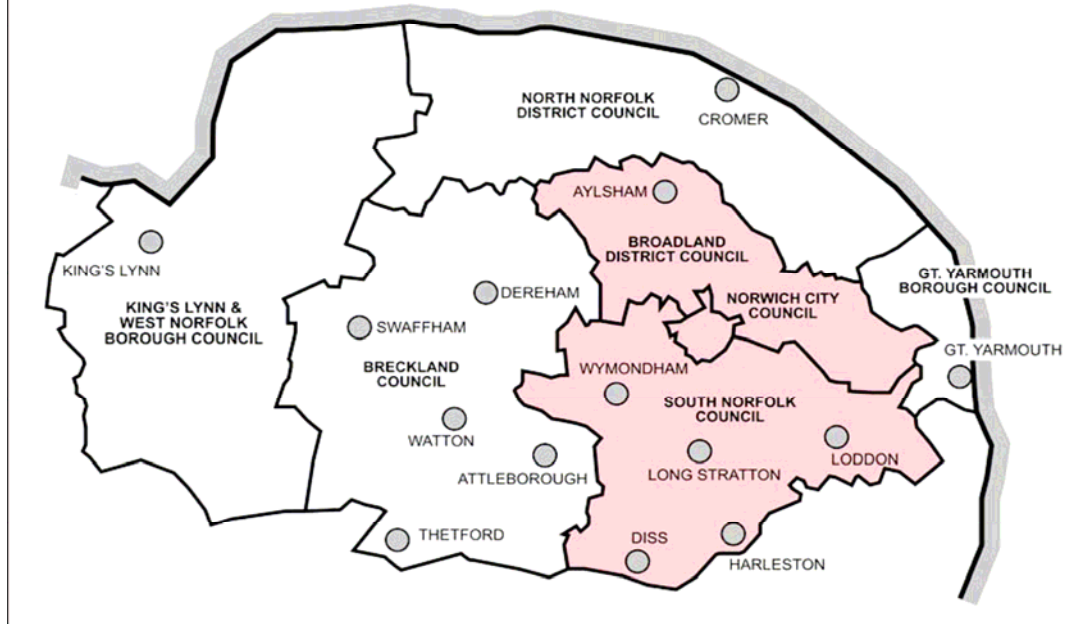
- **Providing choice and fair access to services**

Ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity and the necessary support to obtain and retain a suitable home.

- **Delivering outcomes through effective partnership working**

Developing current partnership arrangements to make the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership a more integrated structure, focusing on delivering sub-regional priorities.

## Greater Norwich Housing Partnership ~ Working Together



### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Under the Local Government Act 2003, every local authority must produce a comprehensive Housing Strategy, which lays out the way in which an authority will address its local housing needs. Strategies must also be approved by the local Government Office to ensure that common standards are adhered to, and that strategic considerations have been fully addressed.
- 1.2 National and regional policy provides the context for the Housing Strategy. The key national document is '*Sustainable communities: building for the future*' (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, February 2003). Planning Policy Statement 3 is also important as it provides the basis for the planning policy which guides new housing development. At the regional level, the Regional Spatial Strategy (currently being finalised) and the Regional Housing Strategy provide guidance and targets with which this Strategy accords.
- 1.3 This sub-regional Housing Strategy provides each local authority and its partners with an appropriate document to guide and deliver its housing policies. The document also supersedes the Greater Norwich Housing Strategy 2005-10, which is being replaced because there have been major changes since it was written.
- 1.4 This Strategy is one of a suite of three documents:
  - The Greater Norwich Housing Review,
  - The Greater Norwich Housing Strategy,

- The Action Plan.

In addition there is a Local Housing Delivery Plan for each local authority, detailing how it will ensure Action Plan is implemented.

- 1.5 The Review is structured to reflect the overall context of the Sub-region and the housing market that operates within it. We have focused on the broader issues first, and then moved onto the specific details within the themed chapters that follow.
- 1.6 This Strategy is structured to reflect the Strategic Aims (see page 5) agreed by the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership. Throughout this document, reference will be made to related Strategies and projects that seek to address specific housing concerns in more detail. Full details may be found in the Review (Appendix B).
- 1.7 At the end of each chapter is a summary of the resources required to deliver the Action Points in that chapter. If some expenditure will meet the aims of more than one chapter, it is included in each of these chapters.
- 1.8 It is intended that this Strategy will inform county and regional level decisions, and will be a useful and informative document for professionals and others who have an interest in the housing solutions of the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership.
- 1.9 Although covering a period from 2008 to 2011, this Strategy is designed to be a living document, and will be flexible and responsive to changes that might occur within its lifetime. New and on-going research and analysis, such as updating the Greater Norwich Housing Market Assessment, will influence policy changes, and the Strategy will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- 1.10 The Action Plan, the key to delivering the Strategy, will also be monitored regularly to ensure its continued effectiveness.

## **Methodology**

- 1.11 In writing the Review and Strategy, a team of officers were brought together from each of the three local authorities. They used a wide range of sources to ensure that the Strategy is soundly-based, and has appropriate policies:
  - A review of local, regional and national policy and guidance;
  - Attending a range of meetings as observers or participants;
  - The results of the Local Authority staff Away-day held in October 2006;
  - A Stakeholders Event, held in Norwich in March 2007, and attended by over 70 people.
- 1.12 The Housing Strategy, the Review and the Action Plan were subject to formal consultation between July and October 2007, for 12 weeks, during which comments were invited from stakeholders and residents. A Response to

Consultation was produced (available on the websites of the three councils), setting out comments and the responses of the Project Team. The comments resulted in many changes to the Strategy and the Action Plan.

- 1.13 Each council consulted on its Local Housing Delivery Plan between November 2007 and January 2008. This enabled organisations with an interest in local delivery to ensure that they were satisfied with the way each local authority had interpreted the Action Plan, and had incorporated actions generated more locally than the sub-regional level.

### **Key Drivers**

- 1.14 The key themes driving this Strategy are growth and sustainability. The Sub-region is growing economically and demographically; and national, regional and local policy seeks to improve the economic, social and environmental sustainability of Greater Norwich.
- 1.15 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are fundamental to building sustainable communities, and this Strategy contributes to delivering the aims of each of the three in Greater Norwich. Of particular relevance are the Sustainable Community Plans and the Norfolk Local Area Agreement (LAA), Norfolk Ambition. Each Local Strategic Partnership has endorsed this Strategy.
- 1.16 Norfolk Ambition includes indicators concerning homelessness, housing conditions, housing supply and the delivery of affordable housing, and the targets in our Action Plan contribute to delivering its intentions. The Greater Norwich Housing Strategy will contribute to achieving improvement targets.
- 1.17 This Strategy is compatible with the aims of the three Sustainable Community Plans:
- It complements Broadland's Community Plan, whose vision includes 'to have choice about homes appropriate to our needs', and which aims to achieve improved housing provision through the LAA targets.
  - It contributes to delivering Norwich's Sustainable Community Strategy's themes concerning environmental excellence, safe and strong communities, and health and well-being.
  - It helps to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy for South Norfolk, whose vision includes making the District 'a place where suitable accommodation, support and care are available for all whatever their needs'.

### **Links with Other Strategies**

- 1.18 Chapter 2 of the Housing Review (published as a separate document) provides full details of national and regional strategies which provide the context for the Housing Strategy. The Regional Spatial Strategy, the Regional Housing Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy are important documents which provide policy context and determine government

expenditure priorities. We have also taken note of other major initiatives such as the 2007 Housing Green Paper and the government's 'respect agenda'.

- 1.19 This Strategy provides the context for sub-regional and more local strategic activity. Examples include the Greater Norwich Homelessness and Hostels Strategies, and Home Options, the choice based lettings scheme introduced in November 2007.
- 1.20 The evolving Local Development Framework is the spatial implementation of the Local Sustainable Communities Strategies. It will implement the Norwich Growth Point implications and be the means of delivering all the housing policies in the Strategy which are to be implemented through planning policy.

### **Approval by GO-East**

- 1.21 The government department, Communities and Local Government, produces specific criteria which a housing Strategy must meet to be deemed 'Fit for Purpose'. The relevant criteria, issued several years ago, are summarised in Appendix F of the Greater Norwich Housing Review, and were taken into account when this Strategy was written. However, the government has recently reviewed the criteria in the expectation that it would issue revised guidance in early 2008. Therefore, as this Strategy was due to be adopted by the three Greater Norwich Councils before publication of the revised guidance, the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East) has taken a pragmatic approach and expressed satisfaction with the Strategy and Action Plan in January 2008. Consequently, we are confident that the Strategy meets the necessary requirements to deliver its objectives in accordance with government and regional expectations.

## **2 HOUSING CHALLENGES IN GREATER NORWICH**

### **Overview**

- 2.1 Building on the research carried out by Opinion Research Services (ORS) into housing need and stock condition, the Greater Norwich Housing Review identified key pressure affecting housing in Greater Norwich:
- a) Rapid growth is taking place, with up to 2,000 new homes predicted every year to 2021.
  - b) There are already housing pressures within the sub-region, with shortages identified by research, especially of affordable housing.
  - c) We must ensure that existing communities continue to thrive, and ensure that new communities are sustainable.
  - d) Work is required to ensure that the existing stock is in good condition, and continues to provide suitable homes for residents.
  - e) There are problems for people in not only obtaining a home, but many also require assistance to maintain and retain it.
  - f) It is clear that close co-operative working is essential to deliver the housing and broader objectives of housing activity.

### **Moving Towards a Balanced Housing Market**

- 2.2 The term 'Housing Market' is not restricted to the private sector. In this Strategy, the term refers to all tenures:
- the owner occupied sector,
  - the private rented sector,
  - affordable housing:
    - social rented accommodation, owned by a council or a Housing Association,
    - intermediate tenure (purchase or rent at less than market value, but more than social rent).
- 2.3 Ideally the supply of housing in each tenure should match requirements. We have undertaken a Housing Market Assessment, looking at how the sub-regional housing market operates, focussing on the future because of the substantial growth planned for Greater Norwich. Work on the Housing Market Assessment demonstrates that there is substantial imbalance across Greater Norwich. Problems arise from:
- house prices rising more rapidly than incomes, making it more difficult for people to enter into owner occupation,
  - a shortage of properties in the open market,
  - although the right types of properties might be present in the right numbers at the sub-regional level, they might not be in the right places within the Sub-region (e.g. a shortage of smaller properties in the more rural areas),
  - a shortage of affordable housing throughout Greater Norwich.

## **Building Sustainable and Thriving Communities**

- 2.4 Central to this Strategy is our view that housing is about much more than 'bricks and mortar'. It is essential that we use housing activity to enhance community well-being and create successful neighbourhoods. Good design and management can contribute to:
- reducing crime and the fear of crime and improving community safety,
  - addressing the issues of domestic violence and hate crime,
  - improving tenant and resident participation,
  - improving the reputation and perception of an area.
- 2.5 The outcome should be communities where people want to live and which are fully sustainable. We anticipate that our approach will also encourage the development of more cohesive communities with a greater understanding and appreciation of the various component parts.

## **Maximising Opportunities for Delivering More Affordable Housing**

- 2.6 ORS research showed that each year 841 additional affordable homes are required in Greater Norwich. Addressing this need will require effective co-operation between housing and planning services within each local authority, partnership working between all agencies within the Sub-region, and close working with funding organisations, especially the Housing Corporation.
- 2.7 Increasing the supply of affordable housing will provide more suitable accommodation, improve choice and reduce homelessness. Although research by ORS shows that 12% of the need can be met through low cost ownership (shared ownership and discounted sale price), the majority of need is for the social rented sector.

## **Achieving Decent, Healthy and Environmentally Sustainable Homes Across All Tenures**

- 2.8 We need to ensure that the sustainability of new and existing homes improves. It is essential that the existing housing stock is in good condition and meets the requirements of residents. The government has introduced the Decent Homes Standard for council and housing association properties. All social landlords have in place a programme to ensure that their properties achieve this standard by March 2010.
- 2.9 The private sector also requires substantial investment. We must respond to prevent it from deteriorating, providing assistance for owner occupiers and landlords where appropriate. We will work to improve the condition of the existing stock, especially for the large number of households which suffer from excess cold and other hazards which can have a serious effect on the health and well-being of occupants. The government has introduced a private sector Decent Homes Standard, based on the suitability of the property for the occupier. Action is required to address this issue, and to help people to adapt their home to meet their medical requirements.

## **Providing Choice and Fair Access to Services**

- 2.10 Even if there is an adequate supply of good quality housing, it is essential to ensure that people in need can gain access to it. Operational policy and practices will be inclusive and fair. The outcome should be greater sustainability: for the individual, the means to live independently in the community; for the community, certainty that no group is excluded. The new Home Options scheme is designed to provide equal access for people with special needs. We acknowledge that people such as young vulnerable people or substance misusers require a home in the right location with suitable support.
- 2.11 Housing activity has the ability to assist people directly: preventing homelessness and helping those who are homeless; providing a fair means of access to affordable housing for those who require it; and providing accommodation and support for vulnerable people. The Commission for Racial Equality's Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing (England) is important in ensuring that key agencies provide appropriate services for disadvantaged groups.

## **Delivering Outcomes through Effective Partnership Working**

- 2.12 It is clear that no single organisation can deliver all aspects of housing activity on its own. Partnership working is essential to address all the issues identified above, and we anticipate that sub-regional working arrangements will continue to evolve, involving a range of organisations from all sectors. Delivering the Action Plan will provide the focus for the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership; some of the action points will explicitly require closer working relationships, while others will clearly benefit from such an approach.
- 2.13 The three local authorities have formally adopted the strategy and the Action Plan, and all other partners have endorsed them. Therefore all partners are committed to the Vision, the Strategic Aims and all Action Points. Each of the three councils will take responsibility for delivery within its area through its Local Housing Delivery Plan, but mutual understanding between partners will continue to deliver outcomes in the most effective way.

### 3 STRATEGIC AIM 1: MOVING TOWARDS A BALANCED HOUSING MARKET

<b>Action Points</b>	
<b>We will:</b>	
1A	Implement agreed recommendations arising from the Housing Market Assessment,
1B	Deliver Regional Spatial Strategy (East of England Plan) targets,
1C	Plan and budget for a new Housing Needs Survey,
1D	Increase the supply and availability of good quality private sector rented property.

- 3.1 The over-riding priority of this Greater Norwich Housing Strategy is to move towards a balanced housing market where people can access the type of homes they want, in a tenure of their choice, for prices they can afford. We will do this by addressing identified pressure points. We acknowledge that in the open market people are better able to acquire what they want. In the affordable sector, while promoting choice, scarcity means that the property must be appropriate for the needs of the household.
- 3.2 The Greater Norwich Sub-region is a housing market in its own right, with people moving between the three administrative areas fairly fluidly. The research by Opinion Research Services for the Housing Needs Survey identified ten housing market areas within Greater Norwich, which are shown on the map below. The largest is the Norwich market, which extends well beyond the urban area, including over almost three quarters of the population and over two thirds of the area of the Sub-region. The other areas are mainly centred on the market towns.



- 3.5 In 2006, the government published targets for Public Service Agreements, the new working arrangements for Local Strategic Partnerships. PSA Delivery Agreements 5 and 20 include indicators which reflect the balance of the housing market. The measurements include empty homes, house prices, homeless households in temporary accommodation, the ratio of house prices to earnings and the number of affordable homes completed. As we move towards a more balanced housing market, these indicators should improve.
- 3.6 The Housing Market Assessment (HMA), a large research project which reported in September 2007, included detailed analysis of how the anticipated growth of the Sub-region will impact on the market. Its brief restricted it to research, analysis and the identification of issues. However, the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership will use the work to generate options and policies so that the Sub-region moves towards a more balanced housing market in a sustainable way. Other sections of the Housing Strategy and the Action Plan include various action points contributing towards balancing the housing market as well as addressing their immediate objective.
- 3.7 The HMA itself did not finish when the report was published. We will continue to monitor key aspects of the housing market, undertaking annual reviews so that we can assess whether events are moving as expected. We will undertake the first full review in early 2009. We will review the Action Points, and if necessary re-focus activity to move the market towards a balance. We will also undertake further research into housing requirements in 2009/10, ensuring that information is up to date as a basis for policy.
- 3.8 A crucial aspect is delivering the Regional Spatial Strategy target of 1,875 homes to be built each year. Achieving this target will increase the supply of affordable homes because builders will be obliged to deliver an agreed proportion of new developments as affordable housing.
- 3.9 In addition to providing new affordable homes, private sector renting provides flexible access to housing through Assured Shorthold Tenancies. We will seek to increase the supply of good quality properties. We will also take action to bring empty properties into occupation.

<b>Resources for Strategic Aim 1</b>	
Capital	The vast majority of capital for housing and infrastructure comes through the private sector from land value and the money received by developers when they sell newly-completed homes. The Housing Corporation's 2008-11 investment programme will provide an estimated £60 million subsidy for affordable housing.
Revenue	The Housing Market Assessment project was funded by Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Councils, and there will be ongoing work to keep the evidence up-to-date. Calculations show that existing staff resources of the three councils will suffice.

## 4 STRATEGIC AIM 2: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

<b>Action Points</b>	
<i>We will:</i>	
2A	Contribute to the production of a Joint Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework (LDF),
2B	Ensure successful completion of the BME research, and develop and implement an action plan,
2C	Increase the supply of good quality accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller communities,
2D	Investigate the need for and feasibility of a sub-regional foyer (accommodation and support for young people),
2E	Review housing and support for dealing with Domestic Violence within the Sub-region and create a strategy to address gaps in provision,
2F	Establish effective neighbourhood links between landlords and police across the Sub-region,
2G	Contribute to drawing up and delivering local area action plans to target specific issues within neighbourhoods that could benefit from housing management and support input,
2H	Appraise the merits of all social landlords using introductory tenancies,
2I	Assess opportunities for sharing landlord services,
2J	Contribute to training and employment initiatives for residents,
2K	Ensure there is a housing contribution to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CRDPs).

### Context

- 4.1 The government's publication Sustainable Communities: Homes for All (ODPM, January 2005) envisages '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.' A wide range of organisations contributes to building sustainable communities, and housing is recognised as a major component of community partnerships. Housing activity can make a significant contribution to delivering the government's and Greater Norwich's aspirations.

### Place Shaping and Sustainability

- 4.2 The government has stressed the role of partners in place shaping. This can be at the high level, such as pooling resources through Local Area Agreements to direct them effectively to deliver agreed outcomes. At the lower level it can involve relevant organisations and individuals working together to deliver what people want in the area around their home.
- 4.3 We need to ensure that all places are sustainable. There are three different aspects of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. This chapter concentrates mainly on the first two, with environmental sustainability being addressed in Chapters 5 and 6.

- 4.4 The Greater Norwich Housing Partnership recognises that the places in which we live are important in more than just bricks and mortar terms. Sustainable places need strong social capital and clear visions. Local authorities have a vital role in helping communities through their place shaping role, but this cannot be done in isolation.
- 4.5 The policies to deliver all aspects of sustainable development are contained in the Local Plans of the three district councils. These will provide a coherent approach through the emerging Local Development Frameworks, which will share a common Joint Core Strategy, currently being developed by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP). Members of the GNHP will contribute to the creation of appropriate policies.

### **Promoting Social Inclusion**

- 4.6 It is widely recognised that diversity is a key issue for housing activity. We must take account of the population profile and tenure issues in helping people to contribute to establishing stable and sustainable neighbourhoods and communities. All agencies active in Greater Norwich will be expected to be positively committed to promoting equality and accessibility, and to combating discrimination and social exclusion in the housing field. Providing accessible options, including affordable and suitable housing, is key to our sub-region's continuing social and community cohesion.
- 4.7 Some specific groups have already had their requirements identified whilst others are still to be defined or detailed. We are committed to involving residents in this process, and this is strengthened by local authorities having a statutory public duty. In the exercise of all their public functions, public authorities are expected to discuss the impact of any proposals on particular groups in society (e.g. disabled people) directly with those groups. The Partnership will be positive and proactive in its approach to undertaking these public duties in relation to a diverse range of groups with specific needs.
- 4.8 We will assess the findings of recent research into the housing and support needs of Black and Minority Ethnic communities. The research highlighted access to services as a concern. We will agree with community representatives and other partners how to address this issue and ensure that action is effective.
- 4.9 We will also actively search for innovative ways to enable people to access the most appropriate housing for their needs, be this through devising purpose built properties or encouraging the most effective use of existing stock. We will look to reduce tensions between communities, and to regenerate areas of poor housing for our most vulnerable residents.

### **Gypsies and Travellers**

- 4.10 Gypsies and Travellers have very individualised needs due to their lifestyle and cultural heritage. We will work with Gypsies and Travellers and local communities to promote better understanding and mutual respect.
- 4.11 In Norfolk a county-wide Needs Assessment was undertaken, and results have been published. Our approach to addressing needs will reflect national and regional guidance, and will include:
- ensuring that permanent sites are located appropriately, with the best forms of management;
  - considering suitable locations for transit sites;
  - minimising disruption to the ways of life of Traveller and settled communities by drawing on the expertise of liaison officers and partners.
- 4.12 We will seek accommodation solutions which are respectful and sustainable. Following the results of the East of England Regional Assembly's Single Issue Review, and the Norfolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, we will work through the Local Development Framework process to identify suitable sites, and seek funding to enable development to take place.

### **Fear of Crime and Community Safety**

- 4.13 Crime and fear of crime can have a devastating effect on the quality of life, even where the crime rate within an area is quite low. Good design can help in allaying residents' concerns by reducing visible crime such as the use of drugs in public areas. We will address this issue by:
- encouraging developers and landlords to incorporate a high level of physical security into new and refurbished buildings;
  - improving design in public areas, especially with regard to street lighting, car parking, access control and defining public and private space;
  - encouraging developers to consult with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer at an early stage of planning a new development, and to adopt the principles of Secured by Design, achieving certification where possible;
  - removing rubbish and graffiti;
  - maintaining communal areas;
  - encouraging the owners of empty buildings to bring them back into use;
  - participating in the activity of Safer Neighbourhood Action Panels.

This approach will complement other activity in delivering the government's Respect Agenda. We will nominate GNHP representatives to represent housing issues within Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

### **Domestic Violence and Hate Crime**

- 4.14 We will contribute to achieving the aims of the Norfolk Domestic Violence Strategy when it is complete. Having participated in the county-wide strategic review of refuge provision in 2007, we will review housing and support for dealing with Domestic Violence and address gaps in provision. We will

maintain our involvement in initiatives such as the Sanctuary Project, which helps the victims of violence to stay in their own homes, by providing a safe and secure environment through adaptation and support. However, recognising that sometimes staying in the home may not be possible, we have successfully bid for funding for a bigger, replacement Women's Refuge in Norwich. We will be seeking funding in the Housing Corporation's 2008/11 programme for a Refuge in Broadland, the only local authority area in Greater Norwich without such provision. We will also give priority for permanent alternative accommodation to victims of domestic violence and hate crime.

- 4.15 We will continue to work closely with our colleagues in the County Council, the Police, Probation, Victim Support, Women's Aid, Health Social Services and Stonham Home Stay to find ways in which the survivors of domestic violence and hate crimes can lead safe, healthy lives.

### **Supporting Communities**

- 4.16 Regardless of tenure, location or social status, people belong to local communities, whether the community is established or new. But it is recognised that not all communities are healthy ones or work well. The Greater Norwich Housing Partnership will contribute to ensuring that communities are places where people want to live by:
- maintaining the physical structure of the home;
  - reducing neighbourhood disputes through effective management and negotiation;
  - sensitive letting policies within Choice Based Lettings arrangements;
  - promoting shops, community halls and play spaces;
  - mixed tenure schemes to reflect the diversity of our population;
  - providing play facilities;
  - tackling drug use and drug dealing;
  - projects that bring the community together;
  - developing local solutions through community engagement, building on the social capital contained within those communities.
- 4.17 We are keen, therefore, that RSL partners and neighbourhood managers undertake an expanded role within the wider context of the housing agenda. Bearing in mind that on any one 'patch' there may be several tenures, the GNHP has proposed a new sub-group with the purpose of looking at issues of community and neighbourhood. This group, to be chaired by an RSL, will investigate ways in which residents and officers within our neighbourhoods can best work together to bring about better engagement, increase social capital and create a virtuous circle of sustained improvement. We will complement and assist the work of our colleagues in other disciplines and agencies, and uphold the values articulated in our Local Strategic Partnerships that work as a catalyst for the social, environmental, cultural and economic development of the Districts.

- 4.18 We will co-operate with other agencies to improve local level practices which contribute to place shaping. Such arrangements are likely to differ across the Sub-region, depending on local arrangements. This will involve liaison with Police Community Support Officers, neighbourhood wardens (where they operate), Safer Neighbourhood Action Panels, Neighbourhood Forums, and tenants' and residents' associations.
- 4.19 Because of the clear links between housing problems and economic exclusion we will seek opportunities to improve the employment prospects of residents. We will contribute to training and employment initiatives.
- 4.20 The links between housing problems and economic exclusion for young people are well-established. We will assess whether a foyer is required in Greater Norwich to provide accommodation and support for those aged 16-25, and if so we will investigate options for delivery.

<b>Resources for Strategic Aim 2</b>	
Capital	Women's refuge in Norwich (available): £852,000 Women's refuge in Broadland (to be sought): to be costed.
Revenue	Women's refuge in Norwich: current funding to be transferred, no additional revenue funding required. Women's refuge in Broadland (Supporting People): to be costed. For most organisations, contributing to community sustainability is part of their ongoing activity. The way the service is delivered is intended to contribute to this aim without requiring extra staff resources.

## 5 STRATEGIC AIM 3: MAXIMISING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DELIVERING MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

<b>Action Points</b>	
<b>We will:</b>	
3A	Deliver the local sub-regional target for affordable homes across the Sub-region,
3B	Implement a more consistent approach to negotiations with developers,
3C	Investigate the feasibility of a joint local authority Single Development/Enabling Team,
3D	Maximise the development potential of the Delivering Affordable Housing Partnership (DAHP) to deliver affordable housing,
3E	Deliver affordable homes in innovative ways with minimal public subsidy,
3F	Proactively identify sites where increased sustainability standards and quality of design can be achieved,
3G	Carry out a review of the DAHP in 2009/10,
3H	Deliver supported housing schemes where funding is already in place,
3I	Deliver new supported housing schemes still requiring funding,
3J	Ensure all new developments comply with agreed design and quality standards.

### **Need for Affordable Housing**

5.1 The main findings of the ORS housing need research with regard to need for affordable housing are:

- Each year there is a need for 841 additional affordable homes in Greater Norwich.
- 37% of the households in need require only one bedroom.
- 29% of the households in need require three or more bedrooms.
- 55% of the need arises within the administrative area of Norwich City Council.
- 12% of the total need can be met through low cost ownership. The remaining households require social rented accommodation.

5.2 We will pursue policies to address all aspects of affordable housing need. As well as increasing numbers we will seek to ensure that the right types, sizes and tenures become available where they are wanted. Joint working by GNHP partners and with external organisations such as the Housing Corporation is essential if we are to maximise resources and deliver an affordable housing programme which addresses needs effectively. Within the GNHP, the RSLs are the key organisations which will deliver and manage the accommodation.

### **Sources of Affordable Housing**

5.3 We will pursue all options to increase the supply of affordable housing. All affordable housing (for social rent and low cost ownership) requires subsidy, which comes from various sources.

### ***The Housing Corporation***

- 5.4 The period to March 2008 is covered by the Housing Corporation’s National Affordable Housing Programme 2006-2008, which provides more than £27.4 million subsidy to Greater Norwich, and is expected to deliver over 700 affordable homes across the Sub-region.
- 5.5 The Housing Corporation is currently preparing for its next National Affordable Housing Programme, and is preparing an investment package for the period 2008-2011. It is working with the East of England Regional Assembly on identifying regional investment priorities, based on the Regional Housing Strategy. We will be working to deliver schemes with funding allocated at the beginning of the programme, and we will generate funding bids for further schemes through the Housing Corporation’s ‘market engagement’ during the next three years.
- 5.6 Within this programme, Greater Norwich is seeking a balance that will deliver the most appropriate mix of housing for our population and the expected growth within the area. In April 2007 Greater Norwich submitted to the East of England Regional Assembly the following proposal for a three year programme from April 2008, based on a working assumption of £40 million funding for Greater Norwich:

Investment Theme	Predicted Number of Homes		Proportion	
	Social Rent	Intermediate Tenure	Social Rent	Intermediate Tenure
Growth	431	194	48%	22%
Rural needs	134	41	14%	6%
Supported housing	38	0	10%	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>28%</b>

*Note: The tenure split was based on guidance for the response, but we said that we would like to deliver 80% social rented housing.*

- 5.7 In November 2007 the government announced that it was proposing the East of England’s share of the National Affordable Housing Programme to be £711 million. If this sum is confirmed and is apportioned sub-regionally as proposed, Greater Norwich can hope for up to £60 million over the three year period, enabling us to exceed the numbers in the table above. We will strive to deliver a development programme which maximises this funding.

**Local Authority Resources**

**Planning Policy**

- 5.8 The three local authorities already have in place Local Plan policies seeking affordable housing through negotiation with the developers of larger sites. Currently, each council has its own separate policy. However, we are working together to co-ordinate these policies through the Local Development Framework process in order to meet Sub-regional need, rather than that of the individual local authority where development is taking place. A new Core Strategy for the Sub-region will use evidence in this Strategy as the basis for

negotiation with developers and provide a coherent sub-regional approach to negotiation.

### ***Improving Delivery***

5.9 The GNHP has created the Delivering Affordable Housing Partnership (DAHP). It involves local authorities, housing associations and a private developer, delivering a continuous supply chain of sites with planning permission for affordable housing. This approach is intended to reduce costs and improve efficiency. We will review the effectiveness of the partnership in 2009/10. We will also investigate options to make working relationships even closer through the DAHP and in other ways.

5.10 GNHP partners make direct contributions to the funding of development. All three Councils provide finance and free land to enable the development of schemes which would not otherwise be financially viable, or to finance schemes which would not attract funding from other sources. RSLs contribute land and finance from their reserves, as well as re-cycling Housing Corporation funding.

### ***Pursuing Innovation***

5.11 We will continue to seek ways to deliver affordable housing without public subsidy, and will endeavour to follow best practice wherever possible. We will pursue innovation, and are keen to explore new ideas that may improve the delivery of our aims. Within Norwich this includes the possibility of providing new council-owned properties through new arrangements with the Housing Corporation.

### **Rural Housing**

5.12 Broadland and South Norfolk Councils have policies permitting affordable housing for local needs as an exception to normal planning policy. Property prices in rural locations are often beyond the means of newly forming households, which results in young, or new families being forced to move away. The 'exceptions' policy can counter the strain on urban capacity and help rural sustainability, so both local authorities will work with their partners to deliver affordable housing in this way.

5.13 Both local authorities are prepared to target finance at these schemes to reduce the Housing Corporation's grant requirement. Broadland District Council has committed £200,000 per annum to subsidise rented homes on exceptions sites. South Norfolk Council is to make available £2 million over three years: subsidising proposals based on local housing needs surveys, and subsidising an innovative package which is intended to deliver small numbers of homes for rent in many villages, possibly on leased land.

### **Supported Housing**

5.14 Some people require accommodation with support to enable them to live independently in the community. Provision of this kind is typically found in

hostels, sheltered housing, or group homes, and it is usually a condition of the tenancy to accept a programme of support. Only people requiring the support, either to maintain or improve their existing levels of independence are offered such housing.

5.15 Newly planned schemes with funding already available include replacement accommodation for the Norwich YMCA, a new women’s refuge in Norwich, a housing with care scheme for elderly people in Costessey, replacement and additional accommodation for people with mental health problems in Norwich, and a supported housing scheme for people with learning difficulties in Norwich. Priorities for the Housing Corporation’s 2008-11 National Affordable Housing Programme (there is no order of priority) are:

- Domestic Violence Refuge (in Broadland),
- Four homes for ex-offenders (in South Norfolk),
- Eight homes for people with physical disabilities (in Broadland),
- Supported accommodation for people who misuse substances (in Norwich),
- Refurbishment and extension of a hostel for vulnerable, homeless single women (in Norwich).

## Impact

5.16 We anticipate a continuation of year-on-year increases in the stock of affordable housing. The table below summarises projections.

Year	Net Change	Cumulative Total of Affordable Stock
Stock at March 2007	N/A	31,282
2007/08	672	31,954
2008/09	726	32,680
2009/10	730	33,410
2010/11	734	34,144

## Delivering the Programme

5.17 The commitment to deliver more affordable housing will be a key driver of closer working arrangements between organisations in Greater Norwich. New planning policy through the common documents in the Local Development Framework will ensure a common approach by local authorities through the Greater Norwich Development Partnership. The Greater Norwich Housing Partnership will ensure that all resources are directed as effectively as possible at maximising numbers, while continuing to promote environmental, social and economic sustainability.

<b>Resources for Strategic Aim 3</b>	
Capital	<p>Housing Corporation 2006/08: £30 million.  Housing Corporation 2008/11 (estimate): £60 million.  Local authorities 2008/11:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finance: £14 million,</li> <li>• value of free land: £650,000.</li> </ul>
Revenue	<p>Supporting People: Funding is not yet confirmed for the Domestic Violence Refuge in Broadland district, but sufficient funding is available for all other schemes (with funding or proposed) providing support.</p>

**6 STRATEGIC AIM 4: ACHIEVING DECENT, HEALTHY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE HOMES ACROSS ALL TENURES**

<b>Action Points</b>	
<b>We will:</b>	
4A	Achieve the government’s target that RSLs meet the Decent Homes Standard,
4B	Achieve and sustain the Decent Homes Standard within Norwich City Council stock,
4C	Seek to achieve the government Private Sector Decent Homes Standard by 2010 (PSA7),
4D	Agree a consistent process that will ensure improved performance in relation to assessment and processing of adaptations,
4E	Investigate and appraise options for improved delivery of Home Improvement Agency services,
4F	Improve the energy efficiency of existing private sector housing,
4G	Ensure that all qualifying Houses in Multiple Occupation are licensed,
4H	Review grants and loans policies with the aim of agreeing a single sub-regional policy,
4I	Ensure partner social landlords agree a consistent approach to prioritising aids and adaptations in their own stock,
4J	Improve the quality and location of temporary accommodation,
4K	Ensure that we have up to date stock condition information,
4L	Produce a joint project plan for empty homes and implement locally,
4M	Undertake analysis in order to allow each local authority to target activity and resources in areas of greatest need,
4N	Increase the environmental standards of new-build and existing properties,
4O	Promote the private sector landlord accreditation scheme.
<b>Norwich City Council will:</b>	
4P	Conduct a further Stock Options Appraisal,
4Q	Continue to lobby for a ‘4 <sup>th</sup> option’ through the Association of Retained Council Housing.

6.1 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. The wide scope of the Action Points above is intended to address these issues. We acknowledge that housing activity will affect the ‘carbon footprint’ of Greater Norwich and have an impact on the environment. We will seek to minimise the environmental impact of new development through sustainable construction, and take action to reduce the energy consumption of the existing stock.

- 6.2 Advice is available for homeowners and tenants in all tenures on how to reduce energy use in their homes. This reduces their energy costs and can have beneficial impacts on debt reduction and the prevention of rent or mortgage payment problems.
- 6.3 The exceptionally high demand for housing in Greater Norwich makes it especially important to make the best use of the existing stock. The key aspects are:
- ensuring the stock is in good repair across all tenures with adequate heating and insulation,
  - enabling people to live in their homes by addressing their personal requirements for adaptations,
  - ensuring that private rented accommodation is in good condition and well-managed,
  - acting to bring empty homes back into occupation.
- 6.4 The Public Service Agreement Target 7 provides the context for all Decent Homes activity. All social housing is to achieve the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. In the private sector, 70% of vulnerable households should live in decent homes by the same date.

## **Social Housing**

### ***Decent Homes***

- 6.5 The Government's Decent Homes Standard for social housing has four basic criteria, which are:
1. To meet the legal minimum standard;
  2. To be in a reasonable state of repair;
  3. To have reasonably modern facilities (e.g. kitchens and bathrooms); and
  4. To provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
- 6.6 Broadland and South Norfolk Councils have disposed of their stock to Wherry Housing Association and Saffron Housing Trust respectively, who are confident of meeting the government's Decent Homes Standard by March 2010. Other Registered Social Landlords in the Sub-region indicate no concerns about achieving this target.
- 6.7 Norwich City Council, which has retained its stock of approximately 16,000 council properties, is undertaking an extensive programme of work within its Housing Revenue Account capital programme to ensure that its stock achieves the Decent Homes Standard, and is confident that it will achieve the target.

## **The Private Sector**

- 6.8 The sub-regional approach to the private sector is to deliver a comprehensive range of services both directly and through Home Improvement Agencies. (HIAs are not for profit, locally based organisations that assist vulnerable home owners or private sector tenants.) An HIA service is provided in Norwich by Orbit Housing Association, and a partnership exists between South Norfolk

and Broadland Councils to deliver the service in these two districts. The Agencies provide a single point of contact and the ability to select the most appropriate solution(s) from a wide range which is available. Supporting People funding is being increased to improve the range of assistance by making a 'handypersons' service available in all districts.

### ***Decent Homes in the Private Sector***

- 6.9 Nearly 30% of the private sector homes in Greater Norwich do not comply with the Government's decency standard, with the most frequent reason being inadequate thermal comfort. 9% of homes present Category 1 Hazards, and require urgent attention.
- 6.10 The government has set challenging targets to reduce the number of non-decent private sector homes occupied by vulnerable people. Each local authority will make grants and loans available to enable landlords and people on low incomes to bring their homes to an acceptable standard. The targeting and marketing of externally-funded improvements in thermal efficiency (e.g. through 'Warm Front' – see 6.13) will also contribute.

### ***Better Housing Conditions for Vulnerable Occupiers***

- 6.11 Vulnerable groups, who may be at particular risk of hazards in the home or ill health because of poor housing conditions are specifically targeted for assistance. We will work towards the Government target for each district: 70% of the homes occupied by vulnerable households to be decent by 2010.

### ***Disabled Facilities Grants***

- 6.12 Some people have a disability or condition which makes their current home unsuitable for them. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) can be made available to make adaptations to their homes. Examples include hand rails, ramps, showers and stair lifts. We will work with the County Council to address present difficulties resulting from growth in demand and significant pressure on resources, both officer time and grant funding. We will seek to reduce the length of time the process takes and improve communication with service-users.

### ***Affordable Warmth and Energy Efficiency***

- 6.13 Fuel poverty occurs when the amount a household spends on heating the home (including the provision of hot water) exceeds 10% of their net income. Addressing this issue is important to improve the health and financial circumstances of these households. We will make advice available to help householders to improve insulation and improve the energy efficiency of heating. People who are on means-tested benefits may be referred to the 'Warm Front' scheme, which provides grants for upgrading and improving heating and insulation.

### ***Working with Private Landlords***

- 6.14 In November 2006, Greater Norwich launched its Landlord Accreditation Scheme with the Eastern Landlords Association to encourage and provide

official recognition for good landlords. We will build on the positive response from many landlords.

### ***Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)***

6.15 Although there are a great number of HMOs in the Greater Norwich Sub-region, the majority are located within the Norwich City Council area. HMOs consisting of three or more storeys and which have five or more tenants must be licensed. However, less than 1% of the HMOs in the Sub-region are licensable, and these will have been licensed during 2008. HMOs tend to have more hazards to health and safety than other types of accommodation, so resources will be targeted at this part of the privately-rented sector.

### ***Area Based Options***

6.16 It is recognised that area-based action to tackling housing problems can be effective, particularly where there is a prevalence of old, defective housing, high levels of vulnerable occupants, or concentrations of houses in multiple occupation. Within Greater Norwich, this would be most suitable for the urban built up areas, principally in Norwich.

6.17 We are currently investigating whether this approach would be an effective way to deliver affordable warmth and energy efficiency having regard to the high concentrations of pre-1920 houses in the centre of Norwich. Consideration will also be given to dealing with HMOs on an area basis in Norwich with particular focus on the Riverside, Golden Triangle and Carrow Road areas, initially to identify properties that should be licensed.

### ***Enforcement***

6.18 The three authorities in the Sub-region are committed to the full use of the new powers introduced in the Housing Act 2004 to bring about improvements in sub-standard housing, particularly in the privately-rented sector. A sub-regional project to test the new Empty Dwellings Management Order is already under way.

### ***Empty Homes***

6.19 In April 2007 there were approximately 3,900 empty homes in Greater Norwich (2.4% of the housing stock). This is a wasted asset, and such properties can attract anti-social behaviour. We have obtained Government funding for the Greater Norwich Empty Homes Project, which we will use as incentives for the owners of empty properties to bring 120 into occupation between April 2006 and March 2008.

### ***Delivering the Programme***

6.20 The GNHP will ensure that its approach to the housing stock addresses all aspects in a comprehensive way. The action points are supplemented by detailed milestones in the Action Plan. These will ensure that all the housing stock in the Sub-region is suitable to meet the requirements of residents. However, it is important to ensure that the stock continues to improve after

2010, so we will again investigate its condition, and ensure that appropriate policies are in place for the next Housing Strategy.

<b>Resources for Strategic Aim 4</b>	
Capital	Funding available per annum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norwich City Council (for its own stock): £15,900,000,</li> <li>• Private sector renewal assistance: £1,830,000,</li> <li>• Disabled Facilities Grants: £1,807,000,</li> <li>• EDMO funding (April 2006 – March 2008): £900,000.</li> </ul>
Revenue	Funding for Home Improvement Agencies: £952,000

## 7 STRATEGIC AIM 5: PROVIDING CHOICE AND FAIR ACCESS TO SERVICES

<b>Action Points</b>	
<i>We will:</i>	
5A	Implement the sub-regional Homelessness Strategy Action Plan,
5B	Deliver the Greater Norwich Hostel Strategy Action Plan,
5C	Improve the Choice Based Lettings scheme as identified through the review,
5D	Contribute to the development of the Supporting People programme,
5E	Ensure oversight and monitoring of the sub-regional floating support contract,
5F	Agree sub-regional supported accommodation priorities,
5G	Ensure new and existing supported housing provision for specified Supporting People client groups makes best use of revenue attached to it,
5H	Review existing client group strategies,
5I	Ensure actions allocated to GNHP partners in action plans for all client groups are delivered,
5J	Collaborate to produce a Norfolk strategy for Substance Misuse as part of our contribution to the Norfolk Supporting People Programme,
5K	Formulate and adopt sub-regional service standards and information in key areas,
5L	Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on all new policies and schemes,
5M	Adopt best practice within the Partnership, including the adoption of a Compact committing partners to a positive programme of action.
5N	Evaluate recommendations from the Rural Housing Commission for relevance to GNHP.

### Overview

7.1 Improving choice and access covers a wide range of activity. It involves ensuring that all people have an opportunity to obtain accommodation suitable for their needs, and providing them with the skills and opportunity to live as independently as possible in the community.

### Tackling Homelessness

7.2 The GNHP has produced a new sub-regional Homelessness Strategy, which will continue to emphasise the importance of preventing homelessness before it occurs. It identifies six strategic aims:

- To prevent homelessness through the earliest possible intervention;
- To reduce the use of temporary accommodation;
- To provide a cost-effective excellent, responsive, practical and proactive service to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- To prevent repeat homelessness;
- To develop partnership working further to prevent homelessness;
- To increase the housing options available to homeless households.

- 7.3 This Housing Strategy supports and underpins the more detailed work described in the Homelessness Strategy. It also works to support the county-wide protocols and strategies that aim to reduce youth homelessness and alcohol misuse, to address the need for housing and support for offenders, and the consequences of domestic violence.

### **Hostels in Greater Norwich**

- 7.4 Hostels provide short term accommodation for people with urgent housing need, who are not yet able to live independently. The Greater Norwich Hostels Review, produced with the Norfolk Supporting People Team in 2006, has investigated the range of services and accommodation provided in the Sub-region. The Review was prompted by a recognition that, although there was a willingness to provide effective and efficient services to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, the service was fragmented and unco-ordinated.
- 7.5 Following a thorough assessment involving providers, the following priorities have been agreed:
- To take a strategic and integrated approach towards all accommodation provision;
  - To provide clear access routes into hostel accommodation;
  - To provide appropriate supported accommodation in Greater Norwich;
  - To provide effective resettlement into more independent accommodation;
  - To maximise funding to support the recommendations identified in the Hostels Review.
- 7.6 An action plan has been produced, and is being adopted by all relevant organisations. Consequently, in the near future there will be a more comprehensive better-co-ordinated service. It will also provide an evidence base for new provision, which must fill identified gaps in the service. We will participate in a Supporting People initiative in 2008, aimed at facilitating move-on from hostels and other temporary accommodation. We will implement agreed actions that are consistent with the Hostels Strategy.

### **Choice Based Lettings**

- 7.7 Greater Norwich introduced a Choice Based Lettings Scheme in November 2007. The system, called Home Options, provides greater transparency to the allocation process for social housing. It also gives applicants a better understanding of options available and demand for types of property and locations. Applicants are banded according to need, and are able to bid on specific properties of their choice. Details of available properties are advertised through a variety of accessible methods, and applicants with the highest need, and who have been waiting the longest, are allocated the property.

7.8 The scheme is designed to help people in need and to provide an access route to affordable housing that people understand and trust. Success will ensure that people whose 'housing pathway' requires affordable housing (e.g. those who are homeless or in hostels) are able to obtain a suitable home.

### **Supported Accommodation and Floating Support**

7.9 Much of the support is provided through the Supporting People programme. Supporting People administration is a county-wide arrangement, but there are clear sub-regional priorities. We will work together as a Sub-region to deliver our needs within the county-wide structure.

7.10 Although the Supporting People (SP) Programme is the key provider of support funding, it is not the only solution. Please refer to the Review for full details of Supporting People: structure, providers, client groups etc.

7.11 In October 2007 Norfolk Supporting People issued a consultation draft of its Supporting People Strategy 2008-2013. The draft contains the current priorities for new support provision:

- **First priority** : victims of domestic violence; offenders and ex-offenders; Gypsies and Travellers.
- **Second priority**: people who misuse substances; young people at risk and leaving care; teenage parents; refugees.
- **Third priority**: vulnerable older people; people with learning difficulties; people needing help to prepare for or sustain independent living; people with a mental illness; people who are homeless; people with a physical or sensory disability.

The consultation sought views on possible changes in these priorities. We will work with Supporting People through the Commissioning Body to produce a new Supporting People Strategy which provides clear priorities, and we will deliver a programme based on those priorities.

7.12 The current distribution of funding across Norfolk is still substantially based on historic patterns, which evolved without much co-ordination. However there has been some re-distribution of funding and remodelling following the review of every service. In early 2007 the Audit Commission inspected the Norfolk Supporting People Service, and judged it to be good with excellent prospects for improvement. During the next three years we will concentrate on re-balancing funding on a basis of need through the Supporting People structure, based on further analysis of need, client group strategies and a new Supporting People strategy. The GNHP will continue to work to benefit the residents of the Sub-region, recognising that there might be greater priorities elsewhere in Norfolk.

7.13 New services will be funded where there is evidence of need and relative priority over other services in other areas. Please refer to Chapter 5 for details of priorities for new accommodation-based supported housing in Greater Norwich.

### **Floating Support**

- 7.14 Floating support is provided to an individual regardless of where they live and is usually only available to an individual for a maximum of two years. A thorough review of floating support services in Greater Norwich was completed in 2006. As a result, since April 2007, floating support services are provided by one organisation, Stonham Home Stay, who provide a single point of access (the Gateway service). Recognising that it is more flexible for the client and is sometimes more cost-effective than accommodation-based support, we will work to increase the availability of floating support.
- 7.15 Supporting People funding is directed mainly at people who require low level support to help them to live independently. Some service users require more intensive assistance, so there are joint funding arrangements in place so that a single provider can deliver the appropriate level of support. An example of this is the service provided by Julian Housing Support for people with mental health problems, whose service is jointly funded with Norfolk Adult Social Services and Norfolk PCT.

### ***Client Group Strategies***

- 7.16 It is intended that there will be a Norfolk-wide strategy and action plan for each Supporting People client group by 2010. Each client group has a district as a lead authority for this purpose. Strategies are already in place for some client groups, others are still to be completed; notably work is still to commence on a strategy for housing and support for substance misusers, that will be discussed with their representatives and will involve direct stakeholder participation.

### **Ensuring Equality**

- 7.17 Equality and diversity means considering much more than ethnicity or nationality. Certain practices could discriminate against a group for various reasons by introducing or including practices which have discriminatory effects that can not be objectively justified. Examples are gender (e.g. a lack of hostel accommodation for women), age (e.g. a minimum age for being offered sheltered housing) or location (e.g. a lack of affordable housing in remote rural areas). We will ensure that all new policies have an impact assessment to ensure that they will not adversely affect any minority group, and move towards common standards of service delivery across the Sub-region.
- 7.18 There are various Codes of practice concerning housing and equality based on statutory legislation which ensure that key agencies provide appropriate services which are accessible to all and deliver fair and non-discriminatory outcomes. We will adopt best practice within the Partnership, including the adoption of a Compact committing partners to a positive programme of action. It is important that delivery mechanisms incorporate equality and diversity and that the Strategy is evaluated from this perspective whenever appropriate, involving key stakeholders/beneficiaries in dialogue and discussion.
- 7.19 The final report on research into the housing and support needs of Black and Minority Ethnic groups was received in Autumn 2007. Its main findings were

that no special housing provision is required, but there should be better access to services for minority groups.

- 7.20 The project brief was for objective research and conclusions, but no recommendations. We will ensure the data is analysed and fully utilised in policy development and, where necessary, target resources at those groups which require support or assistance and ensure it is provided in the most effective way. Activity is likely to be co-ordinated Norfolk-wide to share good practice. Within Greater Norwich, all GNHP working groups have a responsibility for maintaining an oversight of equality and diversity issues. There will be opportunities to link housing projects with wider community cohesion initiatives.

<b>Resources for Strategic Aim 5</b>	
Capital	<p>New hostels (Housing Corporation funding available): £4,008,000            New hostels (funding bids to Housing Corporation ): £1,066,000 (bids submitted November 2007).            New refuge in Norwich (funding available): £852,000            New refuge in Broadland (proposed funding bid): to be costed.</p>
Revenue	<p>New refuge in Broadland district (Supporting People): to be costed.            Housing Benefit &amp; Housing Allowance 2007/08: £74 million.            Local authorities' homelessness and advice service: £3,861,000 p.a.            Government grant for homelessness prevention: £430,000 p.a.            Accommodation-based support in Greater Norwich: £6.9 million p.a.            Floating Support in Greater Norwich: £1,185,000 p.a.</p>

## 8 STRATEGIC AIM 6: DELIVERING OUTCOMES THROUGH EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING

<b>Action Points</b>	
<i>We will:</i>	
6A	Implement specific actions arising from the GNHP evaluation,
6B	Appoint a Sub-regional Strategic Co-ordinator,
6C	Establish clear links, communication and structures to ensure alignment with the Greater Norwich Development Partnership,
6D	Ensure active participation in the Regional Housing Advisory Group,
6E	Seek and respond to opportunities to bid for funding to support the delivery of the Housing Strategy,
6F	Respond to government consultations on a sub-regional basis, where appropriate,
6G	As part of the annual budget setting process realise opportunities for aligning and pooling resources,
6H	Assess the appropriateness of stock rationalisation between landlords,
6I	Create and deliver a GNHP Training Programme,
6J	Create a GNHP Housing Strategy and Action Plan for future years.

8.1 The Greater Norwich Housing Partnership is the key organisation in addressing all the issues identified in the Review, through consultation and in the Equalities Impact Assessment: agreeing on appropriate policies, and implementing them. We need to ensure that the structure and working arrangements are appropriate, both internally and when working with external partner organisations.

### **Organisation of the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership**

8.2 In 2006 the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership commissioned a review of its practices and effectiveness. This evaluation exercise was undertaken by an independent consultant, Solace Enterprises Ltd, and looked specifically at issues surrounding leadership, vision, partnership working, roles and responsibilities, and performance management.

8.3 The evaluation confirmed that the GNHP was well-respected both within the Sub-region and by external agencies, and had achieved some very good results. However, it lacked a clear view of what it was trying to achieve. The Review concluded with a series of specific actions which were recommended to improve performance.

8.4 The structure of the Partnership remains substantially unchanged, and is illustrated in Appendix C. The day-to-day work is overseen by sub-groups. The sub-groups shown in Appendix C have been created to deliver this Housing Strategy, and we have ensured that every Action Point is the responsibility of one of them. Ensuring equality and diversity becomes a particular remit of each element of the Partnership's delivery mechanisms.

8.5 The Review recommended the appointment of a Sub-regional Strategic Co-ordinator to co-ordinate delivery and future development of the GNHP and to ensure effective delivery of the Housing Strategy and Action Plan. The three local authorities have agreed to jointly-fund the post, which we expect to be filled in Spring 2008.

**External Relationships**

8.6 Greater Norwich can benefit from a united approach to national and regional matters, and in bidding for funding. The Sub-region is already regarded by government and regional agencies as working effectively to the benefit of its residents. We intend to build on this by expanding our active participation in regional housing activity, jointly seeking to maximise the potential benefits of bidding opportunities for funding, and providing sub-regional responses to consultation.

**Internal Relationships**

8.7 We recognise that there are differences between the partners of the GNHP, but by working with these differences, and utilising the range of skills and experience within organisations, we feel this diversity is a strength of the partnership.

8.8 There are opportunities to bring together the resources of partners, and we will investigate the potential for pooling budgets and merging staff structures. There will be a GNHP training programme for council/board members and officers. There is also the potential for stock rationalisation between social landlords, although we acknowledge that there are major technical issues to address if this is to be achieved.

8.9 We believe in clear, open and accessible communication to underpin these relationships. To this end, the Partnership will be accountable, reporting regularly to its members. In addition we will seek to engage stakeholders and potential beneficiaries in positive ways. All our communications will be available in other formats on request. e.g. Braille, different foreign and community languages and in large print.

<b>Resources for Strategic Aim 6</b>	
Capital	No capital investment is required to deliver the Action Points in this chapter.
Revenue	Sub-regional Strategic Co-ordinator (full financial year, including on-costs): £50,000

## **APPENDIX A TAKING THE HOUSING STRATEGY FORWARD**

### **Consultation**

The process of collecting the ideas and establishing commitment for the Strategy began in Autumn 2006. Appendix B contains a table of all the consultation that was undertaken. There were a series of presentations and discussion groups as well as the formal 12 week consultation period when drafts of the Review, Strategy and Action Plan were available for comment.

A conscious effort was made to involve as many people as possible in formulating the Strategy. Considerable time was invested in developing strong support for realising the aspirations of the Strategy, including discussion about and choice of options.

In November 2007 we produced a Response to Consultation, which summarised the comments, and provided our response to them. The Response to Consultation is available on the websites of the three councils, and many changes were made to text, Action Points and detail in the Action Plan. In essence, the Strategy is a distillation of the ideas generated during consultation.

### **Monitoring**

Everyone who has been involved in production of the Strategy is determined it should remain an important and relevant document long after its formal adoption. Key to this aspiration is monitoring, and every effort will be made to track progress against the Action Plan, reappraise targets, and make sure the Strategy stays relevant to the reality of “frontline” housing services. The new Sub-regional Strategic Co-ordinator will have a central role in monitoring and reporting progress to elected members and partners, and the Strategy will be part of the ‘day-to-day’ work of staff across all Partnership organisations.

Integral to the Strategy is an Action Plan, expressing the exact tasks to be undertaken over the next three years. The Action Plan has been designed to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, resourced, and timed). In addition, each district council has its own Delivery Plan that accords with the sub-regional Action Plan but also reflects the unique circumstances in each area.

Measuring achievement against the Strategy will be monitored by the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership Forum. Reports on progress against the Action Plan are to be provided to the Forum, which meets on a six-monthly basis, and an Annual Report, including recommendations for continued improvement within the Sub-region, will be made to the Policy Group. The GNHP Directors’ Group is to be kept fully apprised, with regular reporting on recent progress, resource implications, and outcomes both in terms of service delivery and benefits to the community.

The content and implementation of the Local Housing Delivery Plans is the responsibility of each Council. Monitoring arrangements will be at the

discretion of Council, so will vary to match organisational structures. However, co-ordination of activity will be ensured. Various joint working groups exist between the three Councils, and will be maintained in the future.

The ability to respond to change is vital for the success of this Strategy. During the next three years new challenges will emerge, such as increases in house prices, and plans for substantial house-building, which will put pressure on the housing market. Effective monitoring will allow the Strategy and Action Plan to adapt in response to these changes, and remain relevant.

### **Scrutiny and Accountability**

The GNHP Policy Group will ultimately be accountable for the work of the GNHP through the Strategy, including implementing the Action Plan. Ensuring delivery will be a key part of the role of the Sub-regional Strategic Co-ordinator.

However, the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership Forum retains its function of scrutinising and questioning the work and projects done by sub-groups and officers. All documentation will be available through links from the websites of the three local authorities.

### **Endorsement**

Wider commitment to the Strategy is essential to success. This Strategy has been formally endorsed by the GNHP Policy Group, and by the three Councils: Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council. Other partners have obtained formal endorsement by their own Boards, in accordance with their own constitutions.

## APPENDIX B CONSULTATION DURING PRODUCTION OF THE STRATEGY

The following table shows the key consultation events, detailing the “how”, “why”, “who”, “where”, and “when”.

How	Why	Who	Where	When
Consultation exercise on strategic housing issues.	To engage a variety of Broadland DC stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broadland Housing Forum</li> </ul>	Pinebanks, Thorpe	20 <sup>th</sup> September 2006
Informal discussion.	To obtain GO-East approval of proposed methodology and details of Fit for Purpose assessment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Norfolk Council</li> </ul>	South Norfolk House	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2006
Greater Norwich Housing Forum agenda item.	To engage all Partnership members in the process. The Fit for Purpose criteria was explained, and other themes discussed – such as the National Affordable Housing Programme and the Housing Market Assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater Norwich Housing Forum</li> </ul>	City Hall, Norwich	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2006
Local Authority Away Day around Strategy themes, GNHP sub-groups, and team building.	To facilitate better partnership working amongst local housing authority staff, to provide information on the GNHP and gather ideas and issues through workshop sessions on the themes of 2008/11 Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic and operational staff from Broadland District Council, South Norfolk Council and Norwich City Council</li> </ul>	Kings Centre, Norwich	16 <sup>th</sup> November 2006
Presentation to sub-group meeting and discussion.	To inform the sub-group; to gather information; to gain feedback; and to gather ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sub-group 2: Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing</li> </ul>	Guildhall, Norwich	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2006

<b>How</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>When</b>
Presentation to sub-group meeting and discussion.	To inform the sub-group; to gather information; to gain feedback; and to gather ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-group 4: Making Best Use of the Existing Stock</li> </ul>	South Norfolk House	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2006
Homelessness Seminar: Presentation about the Strategy, with workshops about housing.	<p>To engage officers and stakeholders, and keep them informed about the Strategy, its aims and its progress.</p> <p>To gather information and thoughts about what is being covered. To gauge response to, and ideas for, proposed actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness Specialist Groups</li> <li>• Front Line Team Leaders</li> </ul>	City Hall, Norwich	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2007
Members Visioning Day: Presentation and discussion about the Strategy.	The vision and priorities for the Strategy were discussed and agreed in principle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GNHP Policy Group</li> </ul>	Broadland Housing Association	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2007
Neighbourhood Seminar: 'Round table' discussion	<p>To inform stakeholders, and gauge response to initial Strategy framework.</p> <p>To ensure neighbourhood concerns and solutions were being properly addressed from a stakeholder perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSLs</li> <li>• Front Line Team Leaders</li> <li>• Neighbourhood services (NCC)</li> </ul>	City Hall, Norwich	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2007

<b>How</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>When</b>
Stakeholder Event, including presentations	To engage and inform stakeholders, statutory and voluntary partners on the Strategy, the regional perspective, investment themes and Workshops were held in order to gain 'sign up' to the Strategy's Strategic Aims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GO East</li> <li>• Housing Corporation</li> <li>• EERA</li> <li>• RSLs</li> <li>• Elected Members Parish Councillor</li> </ul>	Blackfriars Hall, Norwich	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2007
Presentation and discussion to the GNHP Forum.	To feedback on the progress of the Strategy and to invite further views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GNHP Forum</li> </ul>	City Hall, Norwich	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2007
Newsletter	To inform on progress of the Strategy, and to invite ideas and discussion on where actions should be focussed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational staff</li> <li>• Internal colleagues</li> <li>• External colleagues</li> </ul>	By e-mail to all colleagues	May 2007
Formal twelve-week consultation.	To give all interested parties the opportunity to influence, and engage in the delivery of the Strategy's objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational staff</li> <li>• Partnership colleagues</li> <li>• Other stakeholders</li> </ul>	By e-mail to all stakeholders	July - October 2007
Elected Members' Seminar	To give members a specific opportunity for discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected members of the three councils</li> </ul>	Thorpe Lodge and South Norfolk House	September 2007

<b>How</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>When</b>
Consultation event in Broadland.	To engage a variety of Broadland District Council stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadland Housing Forum</li> </ul>	Pinebanks, Thorpe	September 2007
Consultation event in South Norfolk.	To engage a variety of South Norfolk Council stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Norfolk Housing Forum</li> </ul>	South Norfolk House	September 2007
Consultation in Norwich	To engage a variety of Norwich Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders</li> </ul>	Members' bulletin,  Tenants' magazine,  Citizen magazine.	September - October 2007
Formal consultation on each of the three Local Housing Delivery Plans	To enable local stakeholders to comment on detailed proposals to deliver the sub-regional Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational staff</li> <li>• Partnership colleagues</li> <li>• Other stakeholders</li> </ul>	By e-mail to all stakeholders.	November 2007 – January 2008